

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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NEWS

The Rabin government's first land expropriations in East Jerusalem since 1980—130 acres—were announced in late April. Additional expropriation of up to 1,000 acres is also planned. The seizures reflect continuing expansion of settlements in the annexed part of the city.

Government plans for further settlement construction in the West Bank have also been disclosed but not yet formally approved by a special ministerial committee. The new construction is proceeding in tandem with a multi-million dollar program of road construction. These developments are part of the Rabin government's policy to preclude Palestinian control over large portions of the West Bank. (See stories page 1.)

Also in this issue:

Helms on Settlements	2
Security Council Debates Settlements	3

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"FINAL STATUS" TO PRESERVE SETTLEMENTS

by Geoffrey Aronson

What is Israel's vision of the "final status" of the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, under the direction of Yossi Beilin, Israel's deputy foreign minister, and Palestinian Minister Nabil Shaath, are now engaged in secret talks on the main elements of a permanent agreement. Perhaps because of these discussions, Israel's political leadership in recent months has offered some revealing, public insights into its idea of the shape such an agreement should take.

The Rabin government has not forsaken the ideology of conquest, which is the foundation of Israel's view of the

occupied territories. This concept, not surprisingly, is at odds with even the most forthcoming Palestinian position. Nevertheless, Israeli government policies reflect both an attempt to build on the Camp David and Oslo accords and the need to fashion a plan that can attract support across the wide range of Israel's political spectrum, including many in the Likud party. The left wing of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's ruling coalition has been explicit in outlining a program for the future of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with their 300,000 Israeli settlers, that meets these requirements.

In Gaza, the Palestinian Authority

SETTLEMENTS, *continued on page 6*

NEW ROADS CREATE AN ASPHALT REVOLUTION

Israel has embarked on a multimillion dollar expansion of roads throughout the West Bank. The expansion has three purposes: it will tie the emerging system of modern roads built by Israel in the area to Israel's advanced transportation network; it will facilitate the movement of settlers between settlements and to and from Israel; and it will further restrict Palestinians living in the territories to an antiquated road network that has hardly been improved since 1967.

Highway 60 is the heart of this new construction—the central artery in a system of "bypass" roads to be constructed during the next three years around the major Palestinian towns of Ramallah, Tulkarem, Nablus, Jericho,

and Hebron. Highway 60 originates in the Israeli town of Arad, south of the West Bank, and continues to Afula, an Israeli town north of the area. From Arad, the road proceeds north around Hebron, to the Etzion bloc of settlements, where new roads will connect it to most of the bloc's settlements. From the Etzion bloc, the road will continue north along an almost completed highway, featuring tunnels and a bridge bypassing Palestinian Bethlehem and Beit Jalla, linking the Etzion bloc to the East Jerusalem suburb of Gilo.

Jerusalem itself is in the midst of a revolutionary transformation of its road

ROADS, *continued on page 7*

TO OUR READERS

Mattityahu Peled, Israeli soldier, politician, and statesman, died earlier this year. Peled was a tireless campaigner for an Israeli policy that would recognize the national rights of the Palestinian people. His forceful advocacy of this position, soon after the June 1967 war, was an inspiration to a generation of Israelis attempting to build a constituency favoring a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Zionism and Palestinian nationalism. Merle Thorpe, founder of the Foundation for Middle East Peace, was among the many friends who valued Matti's sense of justice.

One of the first Israelis to champion the need to recognize and speak with the PLO, Peled shocked many of his countrymen by his support for making East Jerusalem the

capital of the presumptive Palestinian state. And his arguments that peace agreements could be better guarantors of security than territory foreshadowed both the peace treaty with Egypt and the current negotiations with Syria. His courage was recognized by the Foundation when it included him in its Peace Awards in February 1994.

Peled started from the premise that an equitable peace with Israel's Arab neighbors was in Israel's own interest. At a moment when relations between Israelis and Palestinians are entering a critical period, this vital proposition has lost one of its most articulate spokesmen.



SENATOR—SAY IT ISN'T SO

Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, has asserted that Israel's settlements in the occupied territories are permitted by the Fourth Geneva Convention. This novel contention contradicts both the U.S. and the international consensus on the meaning of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Successive Israeli governments have never invoked the Geneva convention as a justification for the construction of settlements. Rather they have argued that the Geneva conventions do not apply to Israel's military administration of the territories captured in June 1967.

Helm's explanation appeared in a February 14 letter to a constituent who had asked the senator to act against "illegal settlements which [are] the biggest obstacle to peace at the present time."

Helms responded, "I do not support the United States pressuring Israel to abandon

its settlements, which are permissible under the Geneva Convention provisions governing lands under military administration."

The complete text of Senator Helms' letter is reproduced below.

February 14, 1995

Thank you for your letter concerning Israeli settlements on the West Bank.

There are currently about 110,500 Jewish settlers living on these lands in approximately 200 settlements. As a result the issue of Israeli settlements is an important consideration in the ongoing negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis over the future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

A continuation of talks between the parties is the best way to address the settlement question. I do not support the United States pressuring Israel to abandon its settlements, which are permissible under the Geneva Convention provisions governing lands under military administration.

Substantive negotiation between Israelis and Palestinians is the only way to achieve an equitable settlement that satisfies Israeli security requirements and recognizes Palestinian aspirations for increased autonomy.

Thank you for sharing your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,
JESSE HELMS

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"The occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

Article 49 of the Fourth
Geneva Convention

UNITED NATIONS DEBATES SETTLEMENT ISSUES

On February 28, 1995, the United Nations Security Council discussed Israel's settlement expansion policies in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. The meeting was held in response to a request by the 21-member Arab Group, spearheaded by the Palestine Liberation Organization, which demanded "the immediate and total cessation of any settlement activity." The Security Council adjourned without taking any action.

Israel's UN ambassador, Gad Yacobi, said that he was "pleased that the Security Council took no decision at the meeting. It's a major success for Israel."

Excerpts from the debate follow.

Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa Permanent Observer of Palestine

The minimum required for negotiations in good faith is that the negotiating parties desist from creating facts on the ground that affect the negotiating process and preempt the results of that process. Unfortunately, however, the Israeli Government is doing exactly the opposite with regard to the settlements, particularly around Jerusalem, with regard to Jerusalem in general and in respect of certain other areas, such as Hebron. . . .

The present Government of Israel claimed that its settlements policy would be different from that of previous Governments, but the facts do not bear this out. . . .

We firmly believe that any settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, constitutes a flagrant violation of the letter and the spirit of the Declaration of Principles, the Fourth Geneva Convention and relevant Security Council resolutions. What is needed now is the immediate and total cessation of all settlement activity, whatever its nature or volume full stop. The alternative could seriously undermine the peace process. Clearly, the Palestinian situation has reached the point where the average person can no longer accept any other position or practice.

Mr. Gad Yacobi (Israel):

The PLO's initiative to debate this [settlement] issue in the Security Council is incompatible with its signed commitments vis-à-vis Israel. In the first place, the PLO has committed itself repeatedly in its agreements with Israel to resolve all outstanding permanent-status issues, such as settlements and Jerusalem, in direct and bilateral negotiations. Secondly, in these same agreements the PLO committed itself to settling these issues at a specific time, namely, in the negotiations on permanent status, at the final stage of the process. It was agreed not to address these issues at the present time. . . .

For the record, I wish to explain the basic elements of Israel's settlement policy. . . . no new settlements have been established in the territories since [July 1992], nor will they be. The Government stopped allocating public resources to support the extension of existing settlements. No land has been or will be confiscated to establish new settlements.

Yes, we continue to build in Jerusalem, as the Arabs do. They have not stopped building, and this is their right. We have not stopped building, and this is our right.

Mr. Nabil A. Elaraby (Egypt):

In confronting the crisis currently facing the peace efforts, and in view of the lack of a decisive and comprehensive Israeli commitment to ending settlement activities, recourse to the Security Council has become necessary in order to secure respect for the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. This is a collective international responsibility: all States parties to the Conventions bear responsibility for verifying their implementation, as is stated explicitly in article 1 of the Fourth Convention. . . .

On the legal side, there is a consensus in the international community that there exist preemptory norms of international law better known as *jus cogens*. These norms cannot be violated, and one of them is the Fourth Geneva Convention. Under these comprehensive and binding rules, no party can argue that any bilateral agreement, of whatever kind, allows it to deny the right of the international community to discharge its fundamental responsibility for guaranteeing the implementation of these basic rules that have become firmly established within the international community. . . .

Mr. Jean-Bernard Merimee (France)

. . . . it is clear to my Government that continuing the expansion of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem which ignores article 49 of the Geneva Con-

vention of 12 August 1949 runs counter to the spirit of the Oslo Agreements and is therefore contributing to the difficulties now being encountered in the peace process.

France therefore encourages the Israeli Government, within the framework of its commitment to peace and of the decision of principle it took long ago, to find a way to halt the work on expanding the settlements, which is being carried out by private interests and with private financing.

Mr. Francesco Pallo Fulci (Italy):

As concerns the settlement policy, Italy cannot but support the precise stand unanimously taken by the European Union on 5 January last: that the settlements are illegal, since they are against international law and in particular against existing Conventions.

Sir David Hannay (United Kingdom):

The British Government's position on settlements is well known, and I reiterate it now: they are illegal, they contravene the Fourth Geneva Convention and they represent an obstacle to an overall peace.

Moreover, the Declaration of Principles defined settlements as a final status issue, and the implication of that is that the status quo would remain in the meantime. Any expansion of existing settlements thus clearly goes against the spirit of the Declaration of Principles. Settlement expansion also undermines the confidence of one party in the true intentions of the other. It cannot be in Israel's interest to sow doubt about its good faith on this crucial issue, especially when to do so plays straight into the hands of those hostile to the peace process.

Mr. Edward W. Gnehm, Jr. (United States of America):

The United States believes that the ultimate test for our activities in the Security Council must be whether our actions serve the cause of peace. My Government doubts that Council activity on this subject at this time is likely to pass that test. . . .

The Declaration of Principles signed by the parties in September 1993 represents an agreed approach to the negotiating process. My Government believes it would not be productive or useful for the Council to involve itself now in a question that the parties have agreed to cover when they address permanent status issues in their negotiations. . . . ♦

SETTLEMENT SNAPSHOTS

"The Labor-Meretz government, which raised the banner of stopping all construction in the territories, has been building thousands of housing units in the West Bank in recent months, practically everywhere. . . . Whoever examines the scope of taxpayers' money funneled to settling the territories would be surprised to find that under the Labor-Meretz government the allocations for settlements, not only were not cut, as we were promised two-and one-half years ago, but were even increased. In 1993 and 1994 the current government, urged on by Rabin and [minister of housing] Fuad [Benjamin] Ben Eliezer, has done a lot of building, all over the West Bank, and not only in greater Jerusalem. There is also construction in the most provocative areas, in the heart of Hebron or in that Kahanistic den, Tel Rumeida [near Hebron].

Motti Basok, *Davar*, December 30, 1994

"While I will never say that I am looking forward to a Likud government, I am already convinced that the prospect of the Likud returning to power is no reason to get scared. If any Israeli party is capable of dismantling Jewish settlements, it is the Likud, which at least proved its ability to do this in Sinai in 1982. When I see the speed with which the present government is enlarging and constructing settlements, I've concluded that, even for freezing settlements, we need the Likud."

Yoel Marcus, *Ha'aretz*, January 20, 1995

According to the Council for Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria, and the West Bank [YESHA], the settler population in Gaza increased from 5,160 in December 1993 to 6,215 in 1994. In the territories as a whole, the settler population increased by 10 percent in the last year [to 140,000].

Israel Radio, April 11, 1995

Fat'hi Shakaki, head of Islamic Jihad in Gaza: Israeli settlers in Gaza consume "half the water and live on 40 percent of the land. What do they expect from the Palestinian people? If they want us to stop operations in Gaza, let them evacuate the settlers and the soldiers."

Mideast Mirror, April 11, 1995

According to its leader, Imad al-Falouji, Hamas is working on a political program that includes, "a truce of five or ten years during which Israel would withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, remove Jewish settlements in these areas, and withdraw from East Jerusalem."

al-Alaam al-Yawm, March 5, 1995

"Every settler costs an average of 1600 shekels [\$530] a year, while a pensioner costs 300 shekels [\$100] a year. Make up your mind—either you want pension funds or settlements."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, to Likud members of Knesset, *Ha'aretz*, March 23, 1995

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said that "settlements do not contribute to our security, and they imperil the people living in them." He also acknowledged that efforts by the Israeli army to confront Palestinian terror "encounter serious difficulties because the settlements in the territories were planned based upon political considerations."

Ha'aretz, March 23, 1995

"In the coming days, 10 apartments of 60 in the new Nitzanit neighborhood [in the West Bank settlement of Bet El] will be populated. Recently three families were welcomed into the community. In the Draynoff neighborhood a large parking area was paved by residents. . . . Construction has begun on a security fence along the main road together with security posts. The culture hall is undergoing a basic renovation along with four youth centers."

"With Us at Home," *Binyamin News*, the Bet El settlement, January 29, 1995

As a result of action by YESHA, the government and finance ministry have decided to extend the 7 percent income tax exemption [granted to all settlers] for two more years.*

Binyamin News, February 12, 1995

[*When Prime Minister Rabin assumed office in July 1992, suggestions were made to curtail the wide range of benefits and incentives, including tax exemptions, available to settlers.]

"The IDF in Hebron isn't defending 450 Jews but 3,800 years of Jewish history. Those 500 Jews sitting there are the ones who make it possible for thousands of Jews to pray in the Machpela Cave [Tomb of the Patriarchs].

"When we return to the government, I want to tell all of you who doubt: Our first goal will be to increase the number of Jews in Judea and Samaria and Gaza from 141,000 to half a million. . . . Then the danger of a Palestinian state will no longer exist."

Ariel Sharon in the Knesset, March 28, 1995

SETTLEMENT SNAPSHOTS

A resolution has been reached in the five-year controversy over the ownership of the St. John's Hospice in Jerusalem's Old City. In 1990, a company controlled by the Jewish fundamentalist group, Ateret Cohanim, claimed to have purchased a lifetime lease on the building for \$3.5 million. Congress reduced U.S. aid by a corresponding amount.

More than 100 Israelis, including children, live in the building, just outside the compound of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The compromise turns over the building lease to the city of Jerusalem, which is supposed to use the building for offices. Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert is close to the Ateret Cohanim group, and renovations supervised by Ateret Cohanim are currently under way.

"A compromise like this," noted *Kol Ha'ir* on March 10, "is an achievement for Ateret Cohanim on the road to securing their objective, the Judaization of the [Christian] quarter." (Geoffrey Aronson)

Twelve students are studying at the new religious school [yeshiva] established recently at Rachel's Tomb outside Bethlehem. The school operates from 8 am to 5 pm, and the school's founder, Knesset Member Hanan Poorat, has requested assistance from the Ministry of Religious Affairs for improved accommodations at the site.

Ha'aretz, February 20, 1995

Israel's National Council for Building and Construction has published a master plan estimating an Israeli settler population of 300,000 in the West Bank in 2020. Cities like Ma'ale Adumim and Givat Ze'ev around Jerusalem and Ariel, east of the Green Line, are expected to attract most settlers.

Ha'aretz, March 26, 1995

Even if solutions to all secondary issues are reached, the issue of settlement activity will remain a basic problem requiring an immense effort. There cannot be peace as long as there is settlement activity. Since this issue is the one that will decide the future of the entire region, what calls for reproach is the U.S. position, which publicly opposes settlement activity but rejects the discussion of this issue at the UN Security Council.

AL-AQSA [Jericho], February 27, 1995

The Binyamin Regional Council plenum, representing some 31 settlements in the region, adopted a resolution [on 2 April] saying that if the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdraws from the region, settlers will be called

upon to act on the principle that "killing in self-defense is permissible."

Council head Pinhas Wallerstein said a special session of the plenum was called as a result of rumors that the IDF is considering a withdrawal from Ramallah in the near future.

The adopted resolution read, "If God forbid the IDF withdraw from the roads and leaves us under armed forces that are not subject to Israeli law or in conjunction with these forces, from the standpoint of saving an endangered life we will be forced to direct the residents to honor the rule, 'If anyone comes to kill you, kill them first.'"

The Jerusalem Post, April 4, 1995

"My job is not to support what the prime minister said. I do not concern myself with that. I think that . . . all residents beyond the Green Line should be considered children of Israel. As long as there is no political decision, we have to worry about them and safeguard them."

President 'Ezer Weizman,
Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el, April 4, 1995

At week's end, Arafat attacked Israel's settlement policy, calling it a violation of the [Oslo] agreement and Israel's commitments. Arafat spoke in this spirit to [U.S. State Department official] Dennis Ross, saying that settlement obstructed the continuation of the peace process. . . .

[Leaving a meeting of the PA], Arafat criticized the government of Israel which violated its commitments made some months ago to freeze construction in settlements and not to invest government funds there by deciding to construct 5,000 units in the West Bank. [This refers to a new plan by the Ministry of Housing to construct 5,800 units in settlements around Jerusalem.] "Israel intends to create facts and change the demographic map in the West Bank," Arafat said.

Ha'aretz, April 8, 1995

We have stated that settlements are a problem. They create difficulties, complications for the negotiation process with the Palestinians. That is very clear. They are not, however, confronting these negotiations. Terror is a far more immediate and a far more real problem with a direct impact on the ability of the negotiating process to move forward, but settlements do complicate negotiations.

David Satterfield, Director, Near East and South Asia Affairs, National Security Council

already exercises many attributes of statehood, a reality that Israel is prepared to accept.

Arafat's powers in the West Bank, however, are set to be far more circumscribed. Israel is anxious that the burden of administering Palestinian affairs be transferred to the Palestinian Authority, and in some instances to Jordan, but the scope of military security and territorial authority it is prepared to relinquish falls far short of what it has already ceded in Gaza. This system of interlocking, sectoral control by flexible lines of Israeli and Arab authority, some of it exercised informally, is at the heart of Israel's long-preferred system of "functional compromise" in the West Bank.

"When we achieve a solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," explained Rabin recently on Israeli television, "I would like to see the state of Israel as a Jewish state, not inside the pre-1967 borders, with a Palestinian entity that is not a state alongside it. Israel and Jordan, as sovereign states, together with the Palestinian entity, which is less than an independent state, will create a framework for coexistence."

In recent days, Rabin has voiced provisional acceptance of the idea of Palestinian statehood in Gaza, an offer that reportedly was also made to Palestinians in return for a freeze on the Palestinian claim to the West Bank.

Separation and Settlement

"Separation" is another, and perhaps the most revolutionary, change in Israeli thinking regarding the future of the occupied territories. For more than a generation Israeli policy was based upon the premise that its rule depended upon a quiescent Palestinian population, which in turn required Israel to open its labor market to tens of thousands of Palestinian casual laborers and Palestinian exports. Today, and in opposition to both the spirit of the Oslo agreement and the letter of its economic protocols, the Rabin government, with wide public support, has, in the name of peace, embarked upon a policy of separation that repudiates this concept and that has the capability of wreaking havoc upon the social and economic fabric of Palestinian society in ways that the occupation itself never did. For the first time since it captured the territories in 1967, Israel is prepared to pursue an expansive security and settlement policy while cutting off key elements of the Palestinian economy from Israel and impoverishing large segments of Palestinian society in the process.

Constantly growing and expanding Israeli settlements, protected by the Israeli army, which maintains decisive power in the territories, continue to be at the heart of the Rabin government's vision.

Regarding Jerusalem, there is no missing the fact that Rabin's settlement drive is aimed at putting the future of the city and its West Bank environs beyond the reach of diplomacy.

"The communities around Jerusalem contribute economically and socially to the capital," Minister of Housing Benjamin ben Eliezer said recently, "but they are especially

important as a defensive front for the capital of Israel."

"When we come to the final stage [of negotiations]," explained Israeli commentator Ze'ev Schiff, "nothing will be left [in Jerusalem] for the Palestinians to negotiate, apart from the Islamic holy places."

This continuing settlement momentum—not only around Jerusalem but throughout the West Bank, even in those few settlements Israel may be prepared to dismantle in a final settlement—has enabled the settlement population of the West Bank and East Jerusalem to grow by 50,000 to 310,000 during the three-year tenure of the Rabin government.

The settlements and the Israel Defense Forces are locked in a symbiotic embrace. Settlements require the army to protect them and limit the power that Israel can cede to the Palestinian Authority. The IDF, which still wants to control the occupied territories after a final settlement, requires the mission of protecting settlements if it is not to become simply an army of occupation.

No Change in Hebron

It has now become clearer than ever that Israel has no intention of removing more than a token number, at most, of settlers and settlements as part of a negotiated end to the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

"I hope that in the permanent agreement that we reach with the Palestinians, Jews will remain in Hebron," said Motta Gur, Rabin's deputy at the defense ministry and contact with the settlement movement. "This is part of our plan, we believe in this and we'll strive for it."

The Israeli presence in Hebron—400 settlers, most of them children in a town of some 60,000—is without doubt the most divisive and embittering of all settlements throughout the West Bank. To declare that Hebron will not be evacuated is to announce that no settlement, anywhere, will be dismantled.

Israeli spokesmen have recently introduced two unconventional justifications for continuing Israeli settlement. In one new formulation, the rights of Israeli settlers are deemed equal to those of Palestinians in the occupied territories. This claim is at odds with international law. The second asserts that the presence of settlers in the West Bank, which the international community has decried as a violation of the Geneva conventions, is no different than the existence of the community of Palestinian citizens of Israel.

"If there is building going on in the existing settlements," Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on March 2, "it's true all over the West Bank, in the Arab settlements too. You cannot stop life."

Even the "militant" dove Peres cannot envision a solution in which there will be no more Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza:

"Why should it be? . . . Why can't they live together? What's wrong? . . . There's a 17 percent Arab minority in Israel—no problem whatsoever. There's a 10 percent Jewish minority [in the West Bank]—why should it be a problem."

Why, indeed. ♦

network. The four-year, one-half billion Israeli shekel (IS) (\$166 million) plan includes a beltway around the city and new roads linking all settlements in greater Jerusalem. The road will continue north, bypassing Ramallah and El Bireh to the east and affording easy access to the settlements of Ofra, Shilo, and Eli. The highway will pass to the east of the Balatta refugee camp and the city of Nablus, bypass Jenin, and terminate in Afula. Ancillary construction will connect blocs of settlements to this main thoroughfare.

The completion of these, and other roads, at an estimated cost of IS one billion (\$330 million), is viewed by both the IDF and the Rabin government as a critical element of the anticipated redeployment of Israeli soldiers out of Palestinian population areas outlined in the Declaration of Principles.

"The plan is being pursued seriously," explained a senior IDF officer. "Its implementation will allow the army to control all the strategic sites and roads [after redeployment]. According to the plan, vehicles of Palestinian residents will not be permitted to travel on the strategic routes."

The network, which today is portrayed as a central ingredient in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, had its origins in a very different objective. From the inception of Israeli road-building activities in the early 1970s, these new thoroughfares in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem were viewed as ingredients critical to the expansion and consolidation of Israel's military and civilian presence.

In February 1984, "Road Plan 50"—outlining a national road grid for the entire West Bank—was published. Settlers had a prominent role in devising the plan, which survived a challenge in Israel's High Court. The plan was devised, according to Meron Benvenisti, who chronicles Israel's settlement policies, as part of the declared policy of "producing conditions that would enable the quick development of blocs of settlement in the West Bank." At that time, Raja Shehadeh, a Palestinian attorney, argued that the plan represented "the most important recent development in the furtherance of Israel's policy of eventually annexing the occupied territory."

In 1991, the Israeli organization, Peace Now, published a report critical of the Shamir government's plan to construct "intifada bypass" roads and roads connecting settlements with Israel, most of which had been foreshadowed in Road Plan 50.



"The purpose of these roads," contended Peace Now, "is to create for their users the illusion that the Green Line has disappeared and that there is no Arab population in the area."

In April 1992, Yitzhak Shamir's Ministry of Construction outlined its "Great Roads Plan" calling for the construction of 400 kilometers of roads, at \$1 million per kilometer, throughout the West Bank. The plan included roads that would bypass Hebron and Halhul, as well as Nablus and Ramallah.

With the change in government in July of that year, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin demonstratively canceled ten of the projects as part of his "change in the order of national priorities." Since then, some of these projects have been quietly resumed, sparking the confiscation of Palestinian lands necessary for their construction. Now, with the entire program of road construction in the West Bank having attained the status of an instrument for Israel-Palestinian reconciliation, most political restraints on its implementation have disappeared.

"The interest of those who support continuing the Jewish settling of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip is clear," declared Rabbi Yoel ben-Nun, an important figure in the West Bank settler community. "Under the present circumstances, the most reasonable way to preserve Jewish settlements is by increasing their daily security, creating settlement blocs, and joining them together with roads." ♦

After Baruch Goldstein's Massacre of Palestinians in Hebron, the Israeli Occupation Redoubles the Oppression

At his death, one year ago, Baruch Goldstein bequeathed to the settlers in Hebron a small Jewish canton in the heart of the city. For the Arabs in the city, except for the 29 whom he murdered, he created a continuous and increased state of oppression and suffering to which no one sees the end. . . . The security measures enacted in the city following the massacre, appeared at the time as temporary measures to cool off tempers, but have subsequently become permanent arrangements. In order to protect the Jewish settlers from revenge, the security authorities have turned Hebron inside-out. All the main roads have been closed off, but only to Palestinian vehicles. The wholesale vegetable market serving the Palestinians has been closed. Busses serving the Arabs, but not those serving the Jews, are prohibited from entering the city. A military base has been established in its center in order to connect two areas of tiny Jewish settlements. The Patriarchs' Cave has been turned into a fortress. . . .

It is difficult [for Hebronites] to adjust to a reality whose basis is insane, which forces upon them the presence of Jewish settlers in the center of the city and completely subordinates their lives to the settlers' interests. . . .

The wholesale vegetable market in Hebron [is] the "economic dynamo" of the region. . . . The market not only served the population of over a quarter of a million people. Now, at the new makeshift site, the market is semi-paralyzed. . . .

Within the Jewish enclave in the heart of Hebron, the Arab home and shop owners are still living in a sort of closure within a closure. The buildings which the settlers occupied in the

course of the occupation, which were previously isolated fortresses, have turned into an assemblage. This large and fast-growing Jewish enclave is right in the center of Hebron, in the area which was once its nerve-center—the wholesale market, the central bus station (which has long since been closed and been replaced by the new military base) and the main business center. All are now fenced-in and surrounding them are army checkpoints where Arab vehicles are forbidden to enter. . . .

The lives of the Arabs within the Jewish canton in the heart of Hebron and around it have become a nightmare. The Arab tenants in the buildings around Beit Hadassah, Beit Shneursohn and Beit Romano [inhabited by settlers] are only permitted to reach their homes on foot. They are only permitted to park their cars at a distance of one kilometer from their homes. . . . Many of the Arab tenants in that enclave have recently left. . . . From the large building, supposed to serve as a dormitory for the "Shavei Hebron" Yeshiva, come sounds of construction. The settlers are renovating it with donated funds that they raised in the United States. . . .

The emotional distress of the residents of Hebron is no less than their economic distress. . . . they see walls bearing slogans such as "Arabs Out," "Death to the Arabs," "Long Live Baruch Goldstein." The settlers have painted Stars of David on Arab houses in almost every corner. In the closed vegetable market the settlers have chained large dogs and set up doghouses, apparently to deter Arabs from entering the site, which is in the corridor leading to the renewed Jewish quarter. . . .

Ori Nir, *Ha'aretz*, February 15, 1995

"You are aware that at the time of the Camp David Accords [1978], there were 10,000 settlers in the West Bank. Today, more than 150,000 settlers live there. This is the real, basic, and major problem in the peace process: settlement activity first, second, and third. Settlement activity and settlements will destroy the entire peace process."

*Furayh Abu-Middayn, Justice Minister in the
Palestinian Authority, Jerusalem, AL-QUDS, April 2, 1995*

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