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THE FABRICATION OF ISRAEL

About the usurpation and destruction of Palestine through Zionist spatial planning

A UNIQUE PLANNING ISSUE

V

Killing the Cities - the Example of Jerusalem/Al Quds, Hebron/Al Khalil and Jaffa in Israel

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3. Hebron-Al Khalil: a Step-by-Step Usurpation by Aggressive 'Settlers'

Conclusion from last part:

East Jerusalem is considered to be the capital of a Palestinian State by the Palestinians and the Palestinian Authorities. Hence, Israel under the known geographical aims and the efforts to legitimate the judaizing by constructing or fabricating Jewish history in that important place, was concentrating through planning on several aspects. For instance, the creation of something called David City, which is then the Citadel, Mamilla area and all the surrounding of the Bab Al Khalil, Jaffa Gate; upgrading and reshaping a quarter, that was inhabited by Jews in ancient times, to the New Jewish Quarter, including everything that surrounds the most holy Jewish place, the wailing wall. Also there is the concept of re-establishing Roman characteristics like the Cardo which must be understood as one part of eliminating Palestinian witness. The same interpretation can be done for the 'Cultural Mile', which is in parts a re-invention of a 'modern Jewish culture', like the windmill quarter of the end of the 19th century and the 'green belt' around the ancient city walls. Moreover and a crucial factor for the future of the city is the establishing of the colonies in and around the eastern part of the city usurping more land and establishing a majority of Jews in new borders. Again, planning is misused for demographic and geographic changes and reshaping the map and a country against international and human law.

See the following chapter about Hebron/Al Khalil.

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3. Hebron-Al Khalil: a Step-by-Step Usurpation by Aggressive 'Settlers'

Hebron is one of the oldest cities in the world, dating back 6,000 years and known in Arabic as "Khalil Al- Rahaman", referring to Ibrahim (Abraham): *"Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Allah, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the true in faith? For Allah did take Abraham for a friend."* (Holy Quran 4:125). He is believed to have been buried in the cave under the present Ibrahimi mosque. Except for about a century during the epoch of the Crusades, Hebron has remained a predominantly Muslim city. Jews were allowed to reside in the town, always being a small minority. Only access to the 'Haram', the area around the mosque, was restricted to Muslims. At the time of the British Mandate and the planned infiltration of Zionists, the Hebron Jewish Community was attacked during the upheavals of 1929. Sixty-seven Palestinian Jews were killed and the rest of the 2,000-strong Jewish community left the city. (PACE 1999: 95pp)

Hebron today, with around 150,000 inhabitants, is the second city in terms of population and the chief town of the southern part of the West Bank. It is the commercial centre for traders from more than 100 surrounding villages and communities.

Hebron is situated 36 kilometres south of Jerusalem and some 25 km from Bethlehem (see map 1).

Map 1 South West Bank with location of Hebron City



Source: wewewe.mcarta.msm.com

Hebron is the highest city in Palestine, with an altitude of 925 m in the Old City and 1,000 m in the New City areas. Its climate is temperate; it is also blessed with a rich water supply from natural reservoirs and springs. Its fertile soil provides it with agricultural potential and it was and is still an important agricultural town. Apples, plums, figs, almonds, grapes, melons, and a variety of vegetables are cultivated in

Hebron. The economic base for Hebron is small-scale industry producing cotton fabrics and clothes, leather products and other forms of handicrafts such as ceramics and glass. Dozens of quarries export stone and marble to the neighbouring Arab countries (PACE 1999: 101). The relatively stable and increasing prosperity of the city came to an end after the Israeli occupation in 1967 and the entrance of fanatical Jewish groups. There had no longer been a Jewish community since the thirties, and from the time of the occupation Israel started in two ways a silent and later aggressive usurpation process: a) allowing fanatical settler groups to enter the city occupying buildings in and around the Old City, and b) planting a huge colony alongside it, eventually leading to the division of the centre of Hebron by so-called agreements after 1993. In the words of the Zionist Movement, 'those who live here see the renewed vibrancy of the land as the fulfilment of the words of the Prophet Joel: "Nectar will flow from the mountains, and milk will run from the hilltops, and from all the channels water will stream ... and Judah will be established forever." (WZO 1984: 18)

3.1 Usurping Hebron through Fanatical Jewish Groups, Backed by the Israeli Government

Hebron until now is the only Palestinian city in the West Bank besides East Jerusalem in which there are Israeli settlements in the heart of the city. For this reason it was the only city in the West Bank not included in the agreement signed in 1995 and from which the Israeli 'Defence Force' (IDF) did not withdraw.

The first Jewish group entered the city already in 1967 under the famous Rabbi 'Levinger'. (Waltz/Zschiesche 1986) They moved into a city hotel, called the 'Daboja', and later occupied it, followed by further occupation of neighbouring housing including the Hadasa Building. (PACE 1999:98) Yuval Neeman, a member of the right-wing party Tekhiya, explained the occupation as follows: "Hebron has to be changed into a city with Jewish majority like Jaffa" (TAZ 12.7.1983). When the Palestinian mayor of Hebron complained to the Israeli government against these hostile acts, the following answer was given: "A small group of faithful Jews and their families spontaneously had decided to move their homes to Hebron, a city that has a long tradition of honourable Jewish life. We don't see any reason why neighbours cannot live together, friendly and peacefully in Hebron". (Israeli Government 1969) Backed with this point of view, more fanatical settler groups were encouraged to enter even the inner Old City, occupying buildings and roofs (1979) in the Kasaba of Hebron, as well as holy places, holy to the Muslim, Christian and Jewish religions alike: the Ibrahimi Mosque itself, the 'Hadassah-Daboja' area, 'Tel Rumeida' (1984) and 'Beit Romana' along the Shuhada Bazaar street. All of these places are located close either to densely populated or to busy commercial areas (see map 2). Most of these occupied places in the inner city number less than fifty families, that is approximately 400 people. However, 'secured' by Israeli military, these hostile spots of Jewish inhabitants produced an atmosphere and a factual situation that made it intolerable to live 'peacefully together', and in fact this was not the aim of these Jewish groups. Therefore, Palestinian families who had lived in the Old City for centuries left its poorest parts (see map 2).

Map 2 Colonies in the Old City, the centre and surroundings of Hebron 2007



Source: de Jong in: wewewe.fmep.org 16.09.07

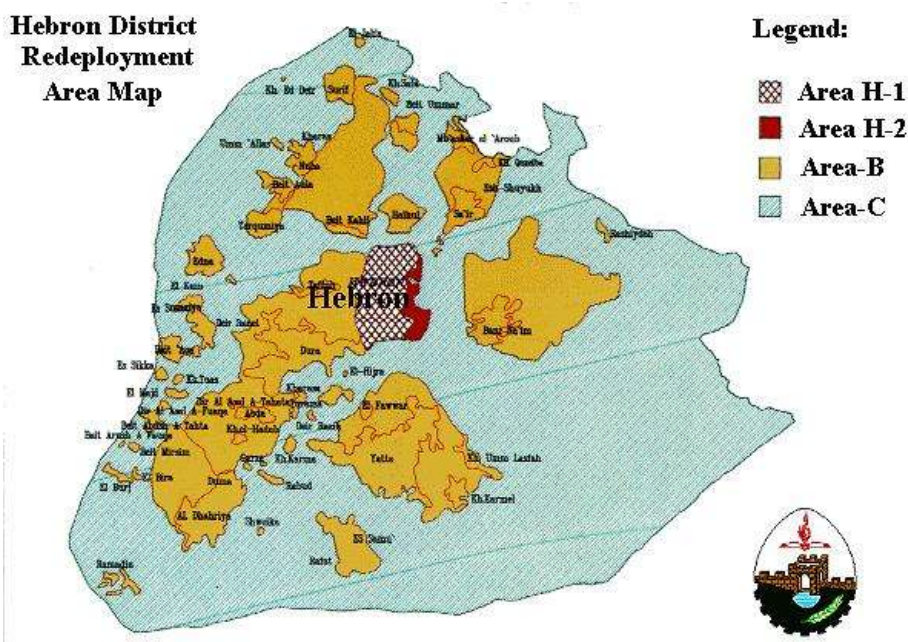
This 'frontline' found its supportive hinterland with the foundation of the colony of 'Kiryat Arba', started in 1986 by most racist and fanatical 'Gush Imunim' settler group. In 1972 Kiryat Arba was turned into an official Israeli colony, the state confiscated huge tracts of land as a 'military area' for further development under the familiar pretext of security. Today around 7,000 Jews live there.

3.2. The division of Hebron after Oslo

Since the signing of the 1995 Hebron Protocol as part of the interim negotiations for the 1993 Oslo Accords, the Hebron District has been divided jurisdictionally into three areas: "Area A" comprising Hebron City, in which the Palestinian Authority controls internal security and civil functions; "Area B" comprising populated villages, camps and other Palestinian built-up areas, where the Palestinian Authority controls civil functions only; and "Area C" comprising all other areas in the district, where Israel still exercises full authority (see map 3).

Map 3 Hebron district fractions following Oslo accords 1995

**Hebron District
Redeployment
Area Map**



Source: Arij Database 2007

Instead, in 1997 a special Hebron Agreement was signed and the Old City became divided into two parts: Area H1, comprising 80% of the city under Palestinian Authority control, and H2, under full Israeli military control. H2, however, includes the Old City with the Tomb of the Patriarchs/Al-Ibrahimi Mosque and the Jewish colonies inside the Old City (see map4).

Map 4 H1/H2, Jewish settlers in the heart of the city

Hebron – 2000



Source: wewewe.fmep.org: Hebron 2000, 16.09.07

Approximately 150,000 Palestinians live in Hebron, of which about 35,000 reside in the area of H2. Also living in H2 are 450 settlers, the majority of them live in occupied buildings and additional annexes close to each other in the Kasabah: the so-called 'Avraham Avinu' neighbourhood, 'Beit Romano', 'Beit Hadassah', and 'Tel Rumeida' (see map 2.4).

Tel Rumeida is an area plagued by violence. This small neighbourhood is also located in H2. Tel Rumeida colony is located on a hill, with Beit Hadasa colony at its base and the Tel Rumeida settlement at the peak. The paved roads surrounding the neighbourhood are frequently off-limits to the Palestinian families, who can be prohibited even from walking or playing in the streets. Palestinian vehicular traffic in Tel Rumeida is forbidden, forcing all the Palestinian Tel Rumeida families to park their vehicles outside the neighbourhood and walk home. (see map 5) Many Palestinian families were forced to create new routes to access their homes when their normal paths became permanently obstructed due to their proximity to the colony.

Palestinian families who live directly next to these settlers are often virtual prisoners in their homes, subject to the settlers' violent attacks and destruction of property. (see figure 1,2)

Map 5 Strategic Location of Tel Rumeida



Source: wewewe.telrumeidaproject.org 16.09.07

Image 1, 2 Soldiers threatening a protest demonstration at Tel Rumeida Checkpoint on 01.02.07



Source: wewewe.artunderapartheid.ps 16.09.07

Conclusion

Hebron differs from all other colonies because the settlers are located in the densely-populated centre of a large Palestinian city, occupying land and houses that are side-by-side with Palestinian homes. There are more than 4,000 Israeli soldiers based in Hebron. The presence of these soldiers makes life miserable for Palestinian residents. Checkpoints, this permanent presence of soldiers, and aggressive settlers harassing the women and children in the houses brought international groups and institutions into those areas most in danger as witnesses, and also to secure the lives of the Palestinian families. They accompany students to their school and other activities. During the current Intifada, many residents of Hebron's Old City moved, leaving just a few thousand Palestinian residents in H2, hence the danger of a full occupation of the Old City is increasing. Hebron is the most violent place in the usurpation war of Jews. Hebron is also an example on the hand-in-hand work of government and settlers; one does the occupation and destruction according to plans of the WZO for the Palestinian districts, the other supports by means of military power and confiscation orders. And also we can learn that any activity, even the smallest like a visit of some Jews in a hotel, has a meaning in the long-term planning project of usurping Palestine and changing it into a full Jewish area under Israeli control.

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