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NIS - 10

December 1990

*SOVIET JEWISH IMMIGRATION
AND ISRAELI SETTLEMENT
in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*

*The
Jerusalem
Media and
Communication
Centre*

**Soviet Jewish Immigration and Israeli Settlement
in the West Bank and Gaza Strip**

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December 1990
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"Had the Middle East been enjoying peace, and had the Palestinian people been practicing the right to self-determination, the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel wouldn't have been of much significance. But since the situation is far from so, such immigration is rightfully considered one of the most serious developments in the political situation here since Israel's occupation of Arab land started...The human rights of nations are a whole and complement each other, or rather should do so. Therefore, one community's rights to migrate should not jeopardize another's right to exist..."

Palestinian journalist Khalil Touma, Al-Fajr, 29 January 1990.

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The information contained in the following report has been gathered from a number of sources including:

Benvenisti, Meron, The West Bank Handbook, The West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem, 1986.
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Bishara, Azmi, Soviet Jewish Immigration to Israel In the Age of Perestroika, (Arabic), The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), East Jerusalem, 1990.

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Shehadeh, Raja, Occupier's Law: Israel and the West Bank, Revised Edition, Institute for Palestine Studies, Washington D.C., 1988.

Selected references from the Israeli press and the East Jerusalem-based Arabic Press have also been used, together with excerpts from international magazines and periodicals on the Middle East.

1. Introduction

During 1990 the issue of the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel made international headlines. The mass influx of Soviet Jewish immigrants to Israel was made possible by the relaxation of emigration restrictions in the Soviet Union and the introduction of immigration quotas in the USA, the country where most Soviet Jews permitted to emigrate during the 1980s had preferred to settle.

The Palestinians and the Arab world as a whole expressed their concern that the large-scale immigration to Israel, facilitated by the superpowers, would reduce the prospects for a negotiated peace between Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab states. In particular, attention was focused on the resettlement of Soviet Jews in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, territories occupied by Israel during the 1967 Israeli-Arab war.

At the time of writing (October 1990) the issue remains controversial, and a matter of discord especially between the governments of Israel and the United States respectively. With the wave of immigration precipitating a housing crisis in Israel, the Israeli government requested additional US aid to help in resettling the new immigrants. The US administration pressed for assurances that the new immigrants would be settled only within the pre-1967 borders of Israel and not in the occupied territories. US officials, moreover, called for a freeze to Israel's settlement policy in general.

At the beginning of October 1990, the US finally approved the housing loan after having received the required assurances from Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy. The furor over Levy's letter to US Secretary of State James Baker however, has highlighted the extent to which the US administration and the Israeli government disagree on the settlement of the Soviet Jewish immigrants. While in his letter Levy pledged that Israel would not settle the

new immigrants in the occupied territories, Prime Minister Shamir and other government members immediately distanced themselves from this pledge, thus widening the rift between Israel and the US.

The aim of this paper is to examine the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel in the context of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is not the large-scale immigration per se which has given rise to the current controversy; rather, the mass influx of immigrants to Israel has exacerbated a situation that has been controversial ever since Israel embarked on the policy of settling its citizens in the occupied territories.

According to the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, an occupying power is not allowed to settle its own civilian population in the territory it occupies.¹ Israel, however, in order to further its settlement of the occupied territories, has chosen to misread this stipulation as applying only to the "forcible" transfer of civilians. Ever since the housing of Soviet Jewish immigrants in Israel settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has again focussed international awareness on the illegality of these settlements, Israel has consistently tried to divert attention from this central issue and instead advanced the Soviet Jews' right to live where they want.

Chapter II of this paper will provide background information to the current controversy over immigration to Israel and settlement of the occupied territories. A brief historical overview (2.2) will focus on official government policy in support of Israeli settlement of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israeli rule over Arab East Jerusalem will be treated separately (2.2.2) since the case of East Jerusalem is a striking illustration of how Israel implements demographic policy at the expense of the Palestinian population.

Chapter III will discuss the settlement of the Soviet Jewish immigrants in the occupied

territories, with particular emphasis on the way the Israeli government minimises its own role in this settlement process. A separate section on Palestinian family reunification (3.5) serves in this context to highlight the double standards the Israeli authorities apply to Jewish immigrants and the indigenous Palestinian population respectively. On behalf of Soviet Jews, Israel usually quotes Art 13.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, according to which "everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." While Israel advocates the Soviet Jews' right to emigrate, it is the right to return to their country which, since 1967, Israel has been denying to tens of thousands of Palestinians from the occupied territories. The international response to the settlement of Soviet Jewish immigrants in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be the subject of chapter IV.

2. Background

2.1 Changes in Soviet Jewish Emigration Patterns

In the course of the dramatic changes in the Soviet Union under President Gorbachev and the resultant unfreezing of the Cold War, the USSR radically altered its policy on emigration of Soviet citizens. At the end of the 1980s, the tight restrictions, which had prevented international travel and emigration in previous decades,² were substantially eased for Soviet Jews in particular. While freedom of emigration was not yet conferred on all Soviet citizens equally,² in 1989 the Soviet Union opened its borders for any Soviet Jew who wished to leave to do so. The Soviet Union denied that there was any relation between relaxing emigration restrictions for certain groups and US pressure.

Concurrently, the changes in Soviet policies had a significant impact on the immigration policy of the United States. During the Cold

War, the US had repeatedly criticised the Soviet Union's human rights record, referring in particular to the restrictions on emigration. In the early 1970s, the US Congress passed a number of bills linking US trade with human rights in communist countries, especially in the Soviet Union. The 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which conditioned receipt of Most Favoured Nation trading tariff status on freedom of emigration,³ was viewed as being specifically aimed at pressuring the Soviet Union to open its borders for Soviet Jews to leave.⁴

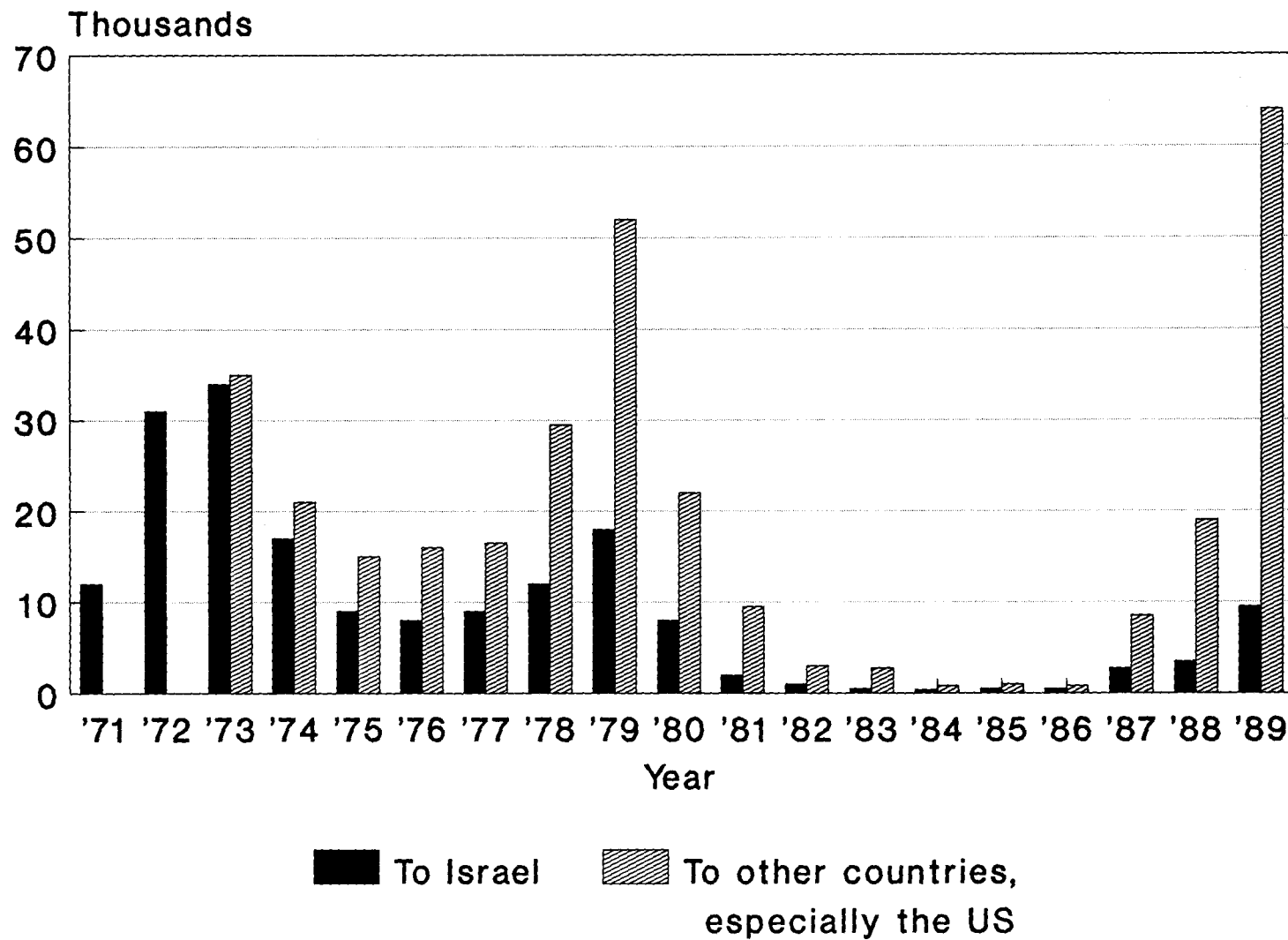
In the US, Soviet Jewish emigrants enjoyed the prerogative of being conferred automatic refugee status; no other group, including non-Jewish Soviet emigrants, was eligible for automatic asylum and the financial aid for resettlement that the receipt of refugee status entailed.⁵ With the Soviet Union facilitating emigration of its Jewish citizens, the US for its part cancelled this policy, citing the cost as a reason: transport and settling each Soviet Jew cost the US government about \$5,000.⁶

Experience had shown that, when given a choice, the preferred destination of most Soviet Jews was the United States or other Western nations rather than Israel. During the 1980s the proportion of Soviet Jews who chose destinations other than Israel, mainly the US, climbed as high as 90%.⁷ Moreover, according to some researchers, many Soviet Jews who had originally immigrated to Israel during the 1960s and 1970s subsequently resettled in the US.⁸ (See Chart No. 1).

During the first five months of 1988, 4,672 Soviet Jews were permitted to emigrate from the USSR. Of these emigrants, only 613 went to Israel. The following month, June 1988, the Israeli government announced a new policy whereby Soviet Jews who received Israeli visas would be flown directly from Moscow via Bucharest to Israel. Some American Jewish organisations objected to the new Israeli policy on grounds that Soviet Jews were being denied

Emigration of Soviet Jews

CHART NO. 1



Source: Nat'l Conference on Soviet Jewry/NY Times 14 Dec. 1989,
reprinted in Middle East Report, May-August 1990

the freedom to choose their ultimate destination.⁹

In 1989, the US introduced a quota of 40,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants per year. This number constituted part of an annual 50,000 quota for all Soviet citizens who wished to immigrate to the United States.¹⁰ The United States currently accepts approximately 125,000 refugees per year with the government providing a per capita sum for resettlement to American organisations which sponsor the emigrants.¹¹

Furthermore, on 1 October 1989, the US government phased out the system through which Soviet Jews could leave the USSR on Israeli visas for Vienna or Rome, where they had then been able to apply for refugee status in other countries, including the US.¹² After 1 October 1989, Soviet Jews could no longer use Israeli visas to migrate to the United States. Instead, processing operations were moved to Moscow: any Soviet Jew wishing to emigrate to the US now had to apply for a US visa like other Soviet citizens.¹³ In addition to congressional reluctance to liberalise overall US immigration quotas in the face of a potential large-scale exodus of Soviet citizens, persistent Israeli pressure, combined with campaigns organised by most of the major American Jewish organisations, ensured that immigration to Israel was almost the only option open for the large numbers of Soviet Jews wishing to leave the USSR.¹⁴

In response to criticism of the new restrictions on immigration to the US, the Bush administration denied that it was deliberately forcing Soviet Jews to go to Israel. One official told the *Los Angeles Times* that "if someone has a firm resettlement offer in another country, we'd rather make our resources available to other people who don't have offers". Added another official: "We're not doing this for Israel. We're just recognising that Israel is an option for Soviet Jews".¹⁵

"As long as the Americans could use Jewish emigration as an instrument in their struggle with the Soviets, they wanted us. Now they don't need us anymore".

A young Soviet Jew applying for emigration to Israel
Jerusalem Post, 30 January 1990.

On 12 September 1990, the 100,000th immigrant to arrive in Israel since the beginning of the year landed at Ben Gurion Airport. The immigrant, a man born in Leningrad, arrived on a flight carrying more than 140 other Soviet Jews.¹⁶ Almost 20,000 immigrants, including 18,725 from the Soviet Union, arrived in Israel during September alone, more than in any month since the massive immigration seen during the first four years following the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.¹⁷ Another 20,000 new immigrants were expected to arrive in the month of October.¹⁸ According to the Israeli Ministry of Absorption, between January and the end of September 1990, a total of 113,385 immigrants arrived in Israel, 101,736 of whom were Soviet Jews.¹⁹

Israeli government budgets earmarking NIS1.25 billion for the absorption of the new immigrants were originally based on projections of 100,000 immigrants arriving over a period of three years.²⁰ However, estimates of the total number of Soviet Jews expected to arrive in Israel rose as the year proceeded.²¹ In September Israeli Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i announced that Israel would need US\$ 8 billion from outside sources during the next three to four years to aid the absorption of an anticipated one million Soviet Jewish immigrants.²²

Such was the scale of the immigration that, by the summer of 1990, Israel was beginning to experience a major housing crisis.²³ In

addition, Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz predicted a significant rise in unemployment in Israel as a result of the large-scale immigration.²⁴ At the end of July 1990 the Israeli government announced that subsidies on basic foods, including bread, would be cut in order to finance the absorption of new immigrants. Other proposed cuts effected, amongst others budgets, those allocated for child allowances and education.²⁵ In the late summer Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i announced the inauguration of a second shift in Israeli schools, beginning in the academic year 1991/92, in order to make room for the new students.²⁶

2.2 Israel's Settlement Policy Since 1967

The current influx of Soviet Jews to Israel first became the subject of international controversy when objections were raised in the Arab world that the Israeli government intended to settle the new immigrants in the territories occupied by Israel during the 1967 Israeli-Arab war. The immigration was consequently viewed as a means by which Israel would attempt to consolidate its hold on these territories. In particular, the immigration was viewed as coming at the expense of the Palestinians living under Israeli military rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

During the 1967 Israeli-Arab war (The Six-Day War), Israel invaded and occupied a number of regions formerly under the control of the various surrounding Arab states, including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This territory included Arab East Jerusalem, which was immediately incorporated into the West Jerusalem municipality and declared part of "united Jerusalem", the new capital of Israel. In 1980 the Israeli Knesset passed the "Basic Law: Jerusalem" which stated that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel."²⁷

Israeli officials and government statements refer to the West Bank as "Judea and Samaria"

and to the Gaza Strip as the "Gaza District". These territories are "administered", not "occupied", according to official Israeli terminology, while East Jerusalem is viewed as an integral part of Israel.²⁸ The former boundary between the state of Israel and the West Bank/Gaza Strip, also known as the "Green Line", has been erased from official Israeli maps.



Since 1967 the final status of these territories has become one of the main diplomatic issues to be resolved concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. Repeated UN resolutions - most notably 242 and 338 - have called for Israeli withdrawal; Israel, however, has not withdrawn its armed forces. Rather, with the Israeli

military remaining in control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, successive Israeli governments have systematically built civilian settlements in the disputed territories, despite continued international condemnation. Most would agree that any viable peace process for the Middle East must deal with Israel's settlement policy.

No foreign country recognises the occupied territories as part of Israel.

No foreign government, with the exception of Costa Rica, the only country to have an embassy in Jerusalem, has ever recognised Israeli sovereignty in East Jerusalem.

2.2.1 Settlement of the Occupied Territories

Since 1967 Israel has carried out a programme of massive land confiscation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. According to Israeli researcher Meron Benvenisti, by 1985 Israel controlled over 52% of the total land area of the West Bank, with 41% of the area being "under direct Israeli possession" and 11% placed "under severe restrictions" of use.²⁹ In the Gaza Strip, 49% of the total land area is now under Israeli control.³⁰ Land seizure was at first carried out under the pretext of acquisition of land for military purposes. Later the practice of land expropriation for supposedly 'public purposes' and the declaration of 'state land' became more common.³¹ A small proportion of the seized land was used for army bases, training grounds and military communications. Much of the remaining appropriated land has been used for the construction of Israeli civilian housing projects - settlements. Some army bases, especially Nahal paramilitary outposts, were later transformed into civilian settlements. Benvenisti points out that the system for controlling the land of the occupied territories is perceived by both Palestinians and Israelis as a single system which "suits the convenience of the administration, and the needs of the settlers."³² He quotes the example of the settlement of Shilo, located in the West Bank between Ramallah and Nablus, which has

been constructed on land 'requisitioned' for alleged military purposes, on declared state land and land expropriated 'for public purposes'.³³

Since 1967, both the Likud and the Labour Party, Israel's two major political groupings, have encouraged the construction of settlements in the occupied territories. The Labour Party, which dominated Israeli politics from 1967 to 1977, emphasised settlement in the Jordan Valley on grounds that this regions was vital for Israeli security, and built a bloc of settlements in and around East Jerusalem to strengthen Israeli control of the city. Labour used the plan drawn up by Yigal Allon ('Allon Plan') as the basis for its settlement drive, yet the unclear language of the plan effectively allowed the construction of settlements beyond the regions originally envisaged by Allon.³⁴ The Likud Party, which came to power in Israel for the first time in 1977, supported settlement in between and among the Palestinian population centres as a means of enclosing the Palestinian population and creating a maximum spread of settlements across the occupied territories. It became clear that the settlements were intended to establish a permanent Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and thus prevent any return to Israel's pre-1967 borders (See Appendix 1).³⁵

Palestinians are permitted to use only 20% of the underground water potential of the West Bank – the 20% is strictly regulated through fixed use quotas, punishment by steep fines for overuse and denial of permission to dig or deepen artesian wells. Palestinian farmers in the Gaza Strip are limited each to 800 – 1000 cubic metres per year. These restrictions placed on water use are a major factor limiting agricultural production since intensive citrus and agricultural production are impossible without access to sufficient water supplies.

Most of the remaining 80% of West Bank water is used by Israeli settlements or pumped inside the Green Line. In the Gaza Strip in 1984 Israeli settlers consumed an average 14,500 – 28,400 cubic metres of water compared to an average consumption of 200 cubic metres for every Gazan. There were then an estimated 2,000 Israeli settlers compared to 500,000 Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip.

Source: Sara Roy, The Gaza Strip Survey, West Bank Data Base Project, 1986, p.51/p.139.

Successive Israeli governments have invested millions of dollars in establishing and developing settlements in the occupied territories. Between 1968 and 1985 a total of \$2 billion was spent on settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (see Appendix 2). In addition to government ministries, including the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Agriculture, which are involved in planning, building and funding the settlements, various other governmental and non-governmental bodies participate in the settlement programme including the Histadrut, the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organisation, settler organisations and private developers (see Appendix 3).

The Israeli settlements are divided into regional councils which function directly under Israeli government ministries and receive allocations directly from the state budget. Israeli settlers in the occupied territories, although they have, in a legal sense, settled outside the borders of their state and are thus subject to the local law of the West Bank and Gaza Strip respectively, are equal in personal and communal status with Israeli residents in Israel proper.³⁶ A wide discrepancy exists between Israeli government allocations to the settlement councils and the Israeli military

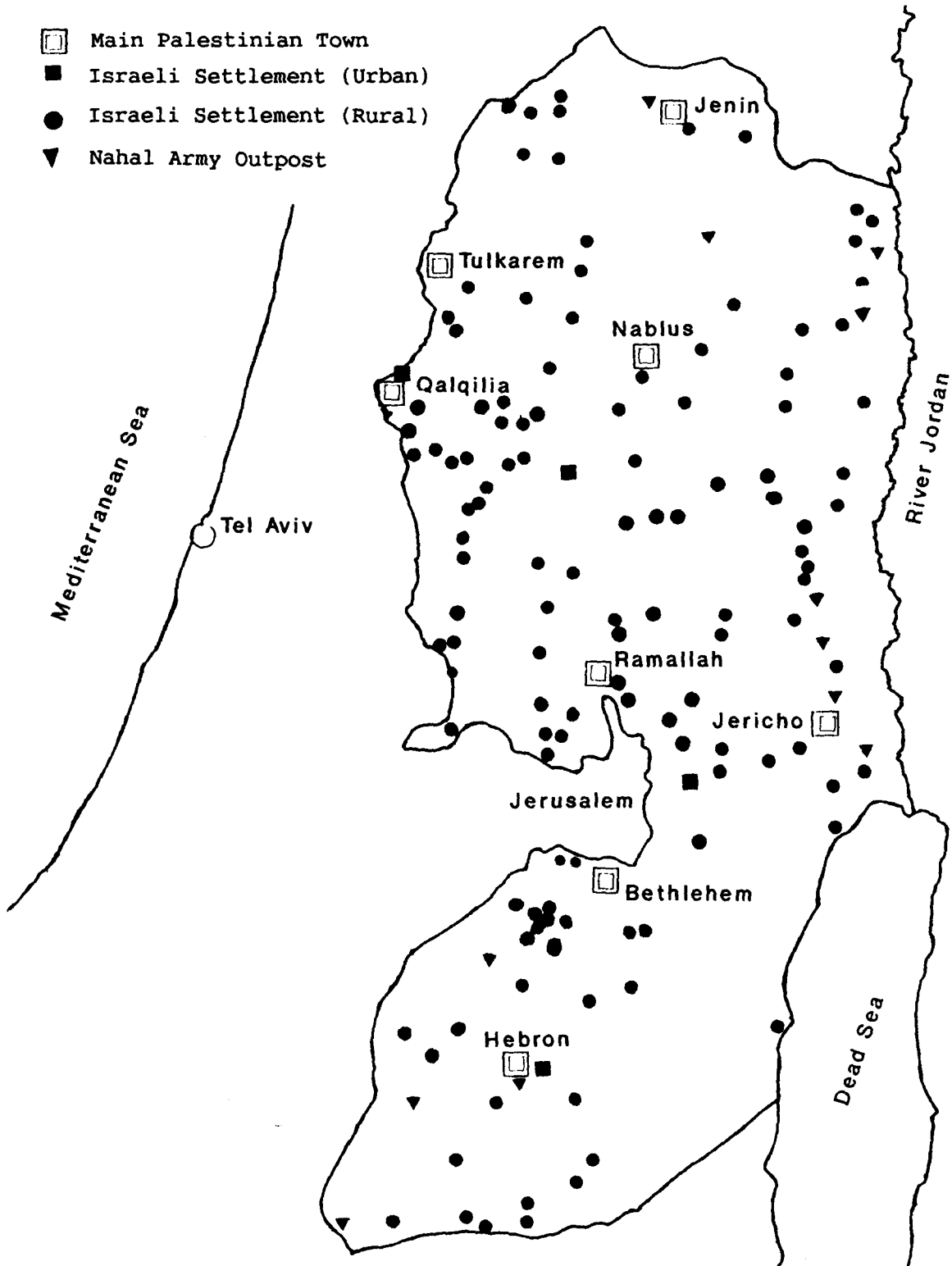
government budget allocations for services to the Palestinian population in the occupied territories. In 1983 Shomron Regional Council in the northern West Bank received \$568 in grants per capita while the Jenin military sub-district subdistrict, the Palestinian district ruled by the military government, had \$12 per capita to spend on municipal services; Shomron and the Jenin subdistrict spatially overlap each other yet function under two entirely separate systems.³⁷

A network of roads has been constructed which link the settlements to one another and to the major population centres inside the Green Line, thereby facilitating the integration of the settlements into the infrastructure of pre-1967 Israel. The roads bypass Palestinian communities, isolate them and restrict their potential for development. Israeli-controlled planning schemes impose tight boundaries around built-up Palestinian areas, beyond which no local development is permitted.³⁸

Israeli researcher Meron Benvenisti argues that the occupied territories are, for all practical purposes, already incorporated into Israel to such an extent that there is no need for Israel to formally annex them.³⁹

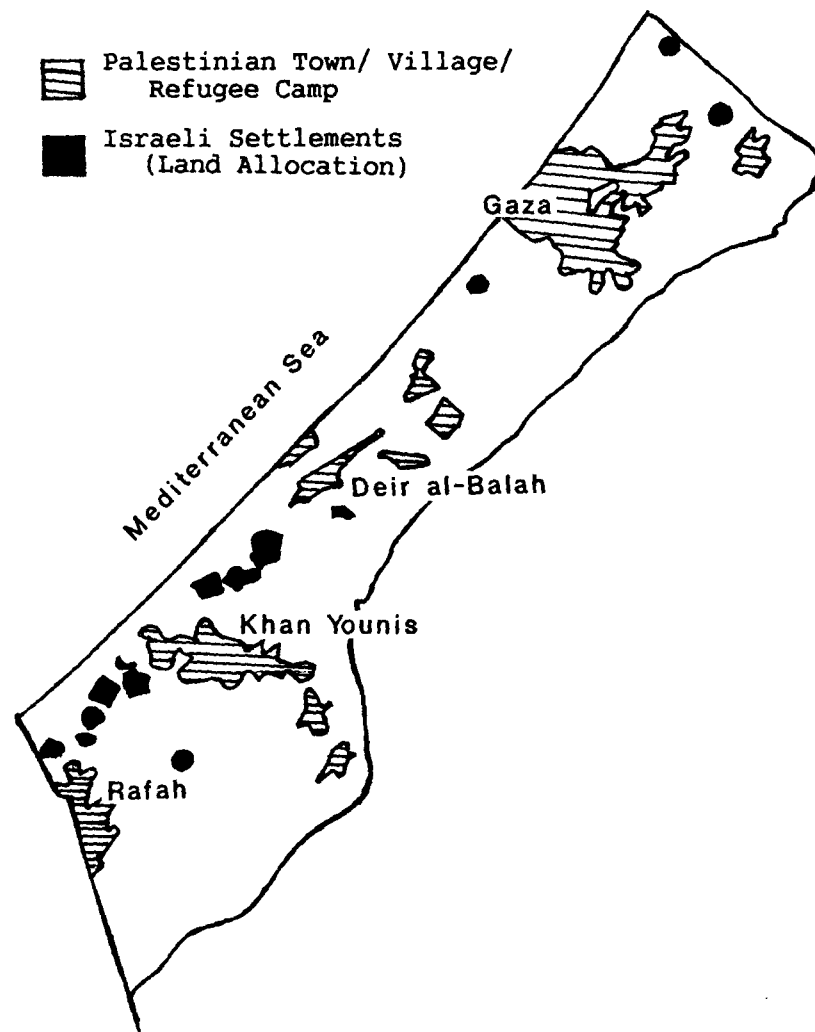
MAP 2 ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK

- Main Palestinian Town
- Israeli Settlement (Urban)
- Israeli Settlement (Rural)
- ▼ Nahal Army Outpost



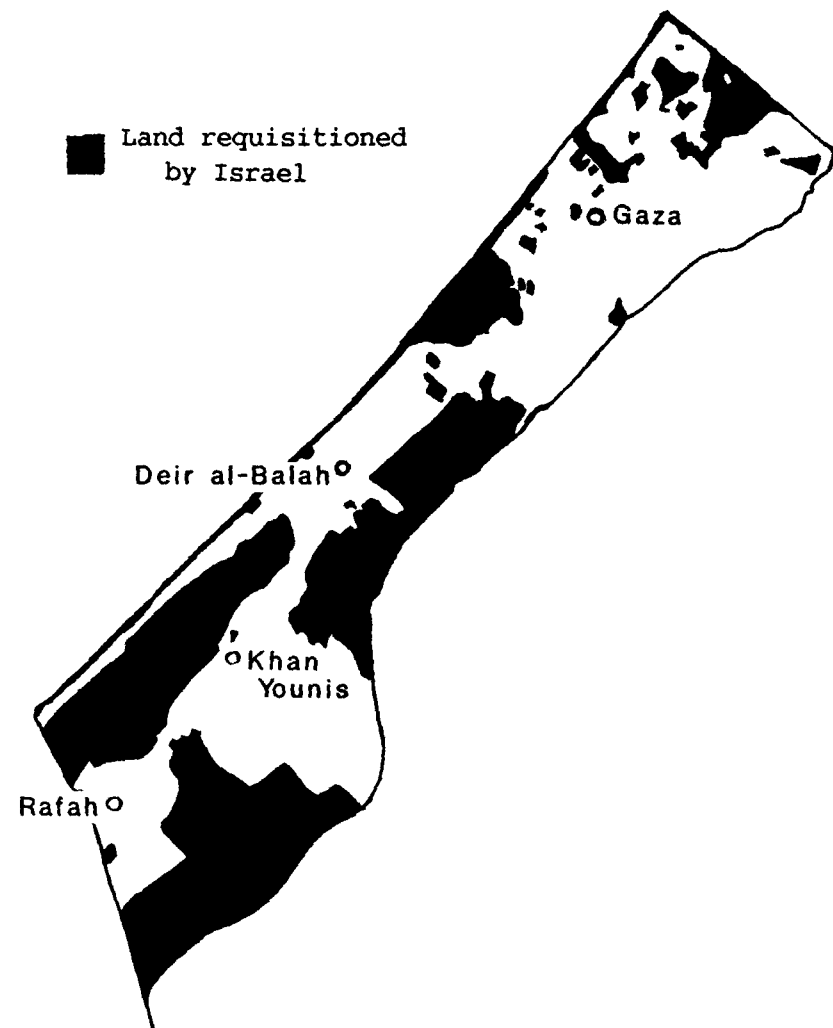
MAP 3

ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE GAZA STRIP



MAP 4

GAZA STRIP LAND CONFISCATION
UNTIL 1985



Motivation for Settlement

In an effort to encourage more Israelis to settle in the West Bank and Gaza Strip the Israeli government provides a number of financial incentives, including highly subsidised mortgage rates, low rent levels and generous development grants. In 1983, grants to a settlement council in the northern West Bank amounted to \$357 per capita compared to \$97 per capita for the Upper Galilee regional council inside the Green Line. On average incentives and assistance to Israeli families living in settlements were 50% higher than for families living inside Israel's pre-1967 boundaries.⁴⁰ Given the relatively small number of Israelis living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip compared to the number who live in pre-1967 Israel, disproportionate priority is given to settlement compared to developing locations inside the Green Line.

In view of the material advantages of living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements, many Israelis have taken up residence there for mainly economic reasons. A profile of settlers living in the suburban settlements in parts of the West Bank which provide easy access to the Tel Aviv area indicated that, during the mid-1980s, financial considerations had been the motivating factor for 65%.⁴¹ An earlier survey conducted in 1983 showed that of 20-25,000 families residing in the Tel Aviv area who were contemplating moving to a settlement, only 17% cited ideological reasons as a primary factor.⁴²

Israelis who have settled in the occupied territories for ideological considerations include those who are convinced that settlement of the occupied territories is necessary for Israel's security, and that the West Bank and Gaza Strip should remain as 'buffer zones' between pre-1967 Israel and the surrounding Arab states. Others believe that Jews have the right to live in the occupied territories, based on the fact that Jews lived there 2,000 years ago. Prominent amongst groups advocating the "Jewish historical rights"

argument is the ultra-nationalist settler movement Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) whose followers are motivated by messianic religious beliefs and believe that Jews have a divine right to all the land within the biblical borders of "Eretz Israel" (Greater Israel).

However, despite the efforts made to encourage Israelis to settle across the Green Line, the actual numbers who came to live in settlements still fell short of predictions made by settler organisations that there would be large numbers of Israelis residing in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by the 1990s. "Today, we number 2,000 but soon there will be 30,000 of us in the Gaza Strip", proclaimed the head of the Gush Katif settlement bloc, Reuben Rozenblat in 1986.⁴³ By 1988 there were 2,400 settlers living in the Gaza Strip, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics.

The official Likud government settlement plan (the "100,000 Settler Plan") introduced in 1983 aimed to arrive at 100,000 settlers living in the occupied territories, excluding East Jerusalem, by the year 1986. In actuality, the settler population reached 60,000 by 1986, some 40% short of its target. Demand for housing in settlements by those attracted by economic as opposed to ideological factors, fell off during late 1986 and mid-1987 due to the worsening "security" situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁴⁴ The outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in December 1987 further deterred increase, according to surveys published in the Hebrew press.⁴⁵ However, with the mass immigration of 1990 leading to a severe housing shortage and increased unemployment inside the Green Line, this trend was likely to be reversed.

Population estimates vary due to the fact that no official census has been carried out in the occupied territories since 1967. Since Jerusalem is considered "united" there are no official Israeli figures for the number of Palestinians and Israeli settlers living in East Jerusalem.

TABLE 1

	<u>ISRAELI SETTLERS</u>	<u>ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS</u>	<u>PALESTINIANS</u>
WEST BANK:	57,000 ¹⁾ 65,000 ²⁾	110 ²⁾	631,117 ²⁾ 887,000 ³⁾
GAZA STRIP:	2,400 ¹⁾ 2,700 ²⁾	18 ⁴⁾	633,000 ²⁾
EAST JERUSALEM:	124,000 ²⁾	7 ⁵⁾	136,000 ⁶⁾ 150,000 ⁷⁾

Sources:

¹⁾ Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, 1988

²⁾ Meron Benvenisti and Shlomo Khayat, "The West Bank and Gaza Strip Atlas", The West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem, 1988.

³⁾ State of Israel, Ministry of Health, "Health in Judea and Samaria and Gaza 1988 - 1989"

⁴⁾ Sara Roy, "The Gaza Strip Survey", The West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem, 1986.

⁵⁾ map reproduced by Jerusalem Post 2 June 1990 showing Jewish neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem; the map does not show Pisgat Ze'ev which is included in the above figure.

⁶⁾ estimates used by Reuter News Agency, 1989.

⁷⁾ estimates used by Jerusalem Post, 1990.

* Israel Central Bureau of Statistics counts only settlers who changed their registration of residence to a settlement.

* Figures on settlers quoted by the West Bank Data Base Project are estimates arrived at from conflicting figures issued by different government ministries and its own records.

* Figures on settlements do not include those established after 1988.

The "Demographic Problem"

The so-called "demographic problem" has played a crucial role in the internal Israeli debate over the future of the occupied territories. In 1989 Jews constituted approximately 81% of the population of Israel, not including the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The remaining 19% of the population was composed of Arabs, mostly Palestinians, of varying religious and ethnic identities (see Table 2). The present Palestinian population of the occupied territories is expected to increase to two million by the year 2000. The annual rate of population increase amongst

Palestinians in the occupied territories, as with Palestinian Muslims living inside the Green Line, is today approximately double that of the Jewish population in Israel.⁴⁶ "All other things being equal, by the year 2010 the Jewish and Arab populations will attain parity", concluded Israeli researcher Meron Benvenisti in 1987.⁴⁷ In other words, without a dramatic change in current demographic patterns, Israel would no longer be a state with a Jewish majority were it to annex the territories and incorporate the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip into Israel.

TABLE 2

Population of Israel: 1989

Jews	3,717,000	81.5%
Muslims	655,000	14.1%
Christians	107,000	2.1%
Druse etc	80,000	1.8%
 TOTAL:	 4,559,000	

Source: Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, as cited in the *Jerusalem Post*, 28 August 1990.

The demographic factor has featured strongly in left-wing arguments for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Within the Israeli right, in the meantime, the idea of "transfer" - the forced mass expulsion of the Palestinian population to Jordan - has gained increasing support as the solution to the dilemma.

2.2.2 Annexation of East Jerusalem

Following the end of the Six-Day War on 22 June 1967, the Israeli government immediately declared East Jerusalem "united" with Israeli West Jerusalem. The East Jerusalem municipality was dissolved and the Palestinian mayor of Jerusalem was deported, together with a number of local community leaders. Three weeks later Israeli laws and administration were applied to East Jerusalem with expanded boundaries, thereby incorporating a 72 km² area of the West Bank into Israel's Jerusalem municipality, along with the 70,000 Palestinians who lived there.

"Applying the law' was a softer term than annexation - a delicacy aimed at reducing foreign criticism - but annexation is what it was", noted one Israeli journalist writing in the *Jerusalem Post*.⁴⁸ In 1980 the Israeli Knesset passed a law formalising the *de facto* annexation of East Jerusalem.

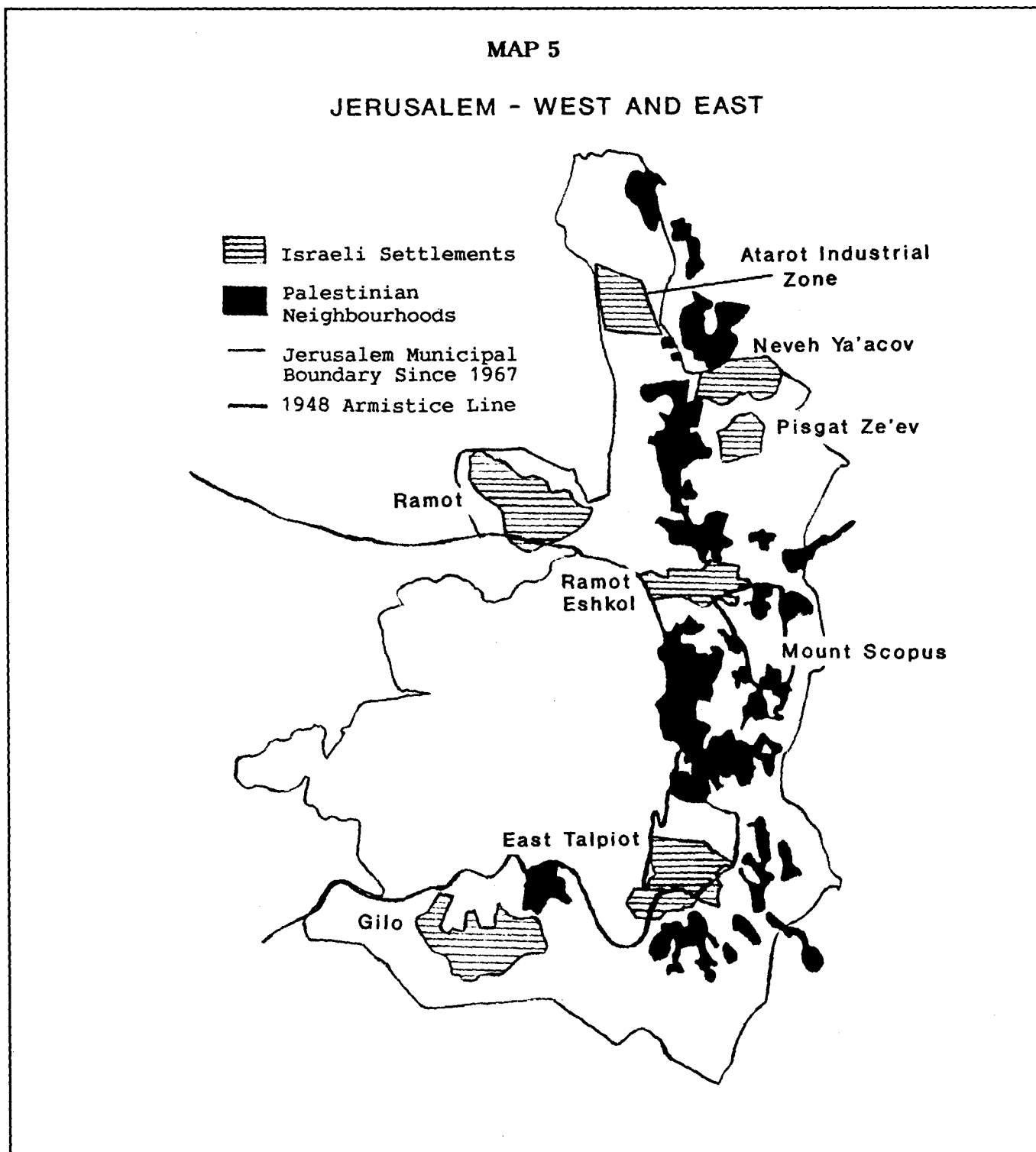
The area incorporated into Israel included land belonging to 28 different Palestinian villages which lay outside the former East Jerusalem municipality boundaries. The new municipal boundaries of Jerusalem were drawn up in such a way as to increase the territory of the municipality, yet exclude as much of the Palestinian population as possible. At the same time, restrictions on use were placed on much of the remaining Palestinian land, which in effect halted the expansion of the Palestinian population.

In 1968, 1,000 acres of privately-owned Palestinian land were confiscated for the construction of the first two Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem - French Hill and Ramot Eshkol. In addition an industrial zone - Atarot - was also established. In 1970 more tracts of land owned by Palestinians were expropriated in the East Jerusalem area, and four more residential estates were built - Ramot, East Talpiot, Gilo and Neveh Ya'acov. Further land was confiscated in 1980 near Neveh Ya'acov, part of which provided the site for the settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev.

Since 1982 the Israeli government has been in the process of implementing the plan "Metropolitan Jerusalem", which is designed to bring more areas of the West Bank under Israeli control by linking them to Israeli Jerusalem. Much of the land which lies within

the metropolitan area envisaged by the plan has been used for the construction of settlements which function as satellite towns such as Ma'aleh Adumim, Efrat and Ze'ev Givon.⁴⁹

There are already estimated to be approximately 120,000 Israelis living in settlements built across the Green Line in East Jerusalem as compared to 150,000 Palestinians.⁵⁰



"The passionate debate that once surrounded the new neighbourhoods [in East Jerusalem] has long since receded. Although some persons on the political left in the early years refused to move into them, it is doubtful if many make such a calculation today".

Israeli journalist Abraham Rabinovich, *Jerusalem Post*, 9 March 1990.

In the meantime, no housing provision has been made for the Palestinians of East Jerusalem: the official Israeli reason given is the lack of zoning plans for the Arab sector, without which no new housing can be built.⁵¹

At the end of 1989 a proposal to construct approximately 17,000 housing units in the Palestinian neighbourhoods of Shu'fat and Beit Hanina was rejected by the Israeli Housing and Interior Ministries and subsequently replaced with a plan which provided for some 7,500 units for the Arab sector. The original proposal had been put forward by the Mayor of Jerusalem's advisor on East Jerusalem, Amir Cheshin. He termed the reduced number "not nearly sufficient to meet the needs of the Arab population within the city limits".⁵² The revised plan was then rejected by the Ministry of the Interior.⁵³

According to one Jerusalem Municipal Council member, 13 zoning master plans for Palestinian villages and suburbs have been intentionally held up by the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of the Interior for more than 10 years. "This policy was designed to 'chase away' the Arabs of Jerusalem and prevent Arabs from the administered territories gravitating towards the area", stated council member Moshe Amirav.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, anonymous sources in the Jerusalem Municipality accused the Interior Ministry's Jerusalem District Planning Commission of intentionally postponing decision-making concerning housing plans for the Palestinian villages of Jebel Mukaber and

Issawia. The Jebel Mukaber plan was first submitted to the commission six years ago and has yet to be either approved or rejected.⁵⁵ Palestinians living in Beit Hanina, a suburb in East Jerusalem, cannot obtain building permits because no zoning plan has existed for the district since 1967. By contrast, a new housing plan for the Israeli settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev, built on land near Beit Hanina, was approved within four weeks of being submitted.⁵⁶

Jerusalem City Council member Amirav has detailed the discriminatory treatment of Jerusalem's Palestinian population as follows: "Since 1967, 70,000 apartments have been built for Jews, but only 5,000 for Arabs. Ten modern Jewish neighbourhoods have been established, but not a single one for Arabs. Six neighbourhoods have been rehabilitated by Project Renewal; not one was in the Arab sector. Dozens of master plans have been approved for the Jewish sector in the last 23 years, not even one has been approved for the Arabs in the east and north of the city".⁵⁷

The critical housing shortage for East Jerusalem Palestinians has forced people to either move out or build without the required Israeli construction permit and thus risk demolition of the building. According to the Israeli Ministry of the Interior, during the two-year period preceding November 1989, a total of 800 homes were demolished in East Jerusalem and court orders were issued for a further 276 house demolitions. All the houses affected were built by Palestinians unable to obtain Israeli construction licenses.⁵⁸

The position of the international community is that the final status of Jerusalem can only be decided through peace negotiations.

UN Resolution 298, passed unanimously in September 1971, deplored Israel's refusal to heed previous UN resolutions calling on Israel to refrain from changing the status of Jerusalem, and confirmed that "all legislative and administrative actions taken by Israel to change the status of the city of Jerusalem including expropriation of land and properties, transfer of populations and legislation aimed at the incorporation of the occupied section are totally invalid and cannot change the status".

3. Mass Soviet Jewish Emigration 1990: Israel's Response

3.1 Channeling Emigrants to Israel

In the years immediately following the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, large numbers of new immigrants arrived in Israel. Successive Israeli governments sought to encourage such large-scale immigration to continue. However, prior to the current influx of Soviet Jews, there had been growing concern amongst Israeli officials over the rate of emigration from Israel. According to Professor Arnon Sofer of Haifa University, between 1980 and 1987 some 90,000 immigrants arrived in Israel, while approximately the same number of Israeli citizens emigrated to other countries.⁵⁹

In the meantime, as previously noted, most Soviet Jews preferred to emigrate to the US or Western Europe with the "drop-out" rate to Israel climbing as high as 90% during the 1980s. The changes in Soviet and US policy on Soviet Jewish emigration referred to previously reversed this trend.

With large numbers of Soviet Jews waiting to leave the Soviet Union on Israeli visas, Israeli officials protested that the lack of direct flights between Israel and the Soviet Union was delaying bringing them to Israel. According to the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, 300,000 Jews in the Soviet Union had completed preparations for exit documents

and only the difficulties of arranging for their departure to Israel via Eastern Europe was impeding the rate of emigration.⁶⁰ Israeli officials estimated that direct flights could bring three times as many immigrants to Israel each month than was the case with transit points.⁶¹ However, according to Ida Nudel, a prominent former Soviet dissident ("Prisoner of Zion") who had eventually been permitted to emigrate to Israel, even with direct flights, it would take until 1991 to fly out all the Soviet Jews waiting to leave.⁶²

Choosing pro-Israel Transit Points

As the Soviet Foreign Ministry continued to withhold implementation of a commercial agreement reached in late 1989 to institute direct flights to Israel, the Israeli government sought to persuade various European countries to open more transit points through which Soviet Jews could be flown to Israel once they had left the Soviet Union. Bucharest was already in use as a transit point. During 1990 Budapest, Hungary, and Warsaw, Poland, also became transit points for Soviet Jews flying to Israel as these countries renewed diplomatic relations with Israel.

Following the restoration of formal relations with Czechoslovakia in February 1990, Prague was scheduled to become a fourth transit point with flights to Israel due to begin in June 1990. The Czech government however delayed implementation of the accord on grounds that Soviet emigrants were being denied the right to choose their final destination once they had

left the USSR. By September the Czech government was reportedly reconsidering its decision.

In addition, Finland also seemed likely to become a transit point until the Finnish government insisted on upholding the right of every emigrant to "free circulation" as stipulated in international law. At the beginning of June Finnish Foreign Minister Pertti Paasio stated that Soviet Jews in transit should be able to extend the five-day transit visa for Finland and thereby be given the

opportunity to apply either to travel to destinations other than Israel or to apply to settle in Finland. Declared the head of the Israeli Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee, Michael Kleiner: "This is an anti-Israeli policy that encourages drop-outs and Israel should not use countries that encourage dropping out."⁶³ Three weeks later Kleiner announced that Finland would not become a fourth transit point for Soviet Jews leaving the Soviet Union because Israel objected to the Finnish condition attached.⁶⁴

After Prime Minister Shamir was quoted in *The Jerusalem Post* as saying that *"if the Jews leaving the Soviet Union don't come to Israel, there is no importance in their emigration"*, the same newspaper published a letter of protest which noted that the Israeli government was contributing to the growing backlog of Jews waiting to leave the Soviet Union by stipulating that emigrants should go only to Israel:

"Acting on this policy, the Israeli delegation in Moscow will only issue an Israeli visa, necessary to leave the USSR, to those who hold tickets for those European cities where they have no choice but to go to Israel. Those without tickets, or with tickets to other intermediate destinations will not get a visa and cannot get out of Russia...Should we be so selfish and short-sighted as to not give them a chance to escape, even if they do go to other countries?"

Shamir's spokesperson later said that the Prime Minister had meant that *"our struggle is for the sake of Jews coming to Israel, and we aren't struggling for them to go to the U.S."*

Jerusalem Post, 14 May 1990.

Only one Israeli cabinet member publicly disagreed with the policy that Soviet Jews should come only to Israel. In February 1990 Absorption Minister Peretz told the Knesset that Israel must not stipulate that Soviet Jews come only to Israel, arguing that the priority should be for Soviet Jews to leave the USSR as quickly as possible, and that channeling them to Israel only was creating long delays for those who wished to emigrate. "We should not pose the egotistic and unpardonable condition that we will only get out those who are ready to come here. They are sitting on top of a volcano", argued Peretz, in reference

to the dangers widely perceived to be facing Jews in the Soviet Union. He added that he had "heard nobody else advocate this view, either in the cabinet or the Knesset."⁶⁵

Rumours of Persecution

There were conflicting views on the extent to which Soviet Jews were perceived to be in danger. Natan Sharansky told an American audience that traditional Russian anti-semitism had been made worse by 70 years of communist domination and that Soviet citizens were now "trying to pin the suffering that communism brought to the Soviet Union on the

Jews". According to Sharansky, the "newly open anti-Semitism" was the motivating factor behind the present exodus of Jews from the Soviet Union.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Ida Nudel warned of the impending threat of large-scale pogroms against Jew, calling on the Israeli government to use all possible ways of helping Jews to leave the Soviet Union, including via regular bus and train routes to Finland. "Every day is vital", she warned. "It would take one spark to set off a conflagration".⁶⁷

However, an Israeli Foreign Ministry source stressed that there was no need for panic, claiming that the dangers facing Soviet Jews were being exaggerated. "The fact is that up until now there have not been any cases of physical attacks on people because they are Jews". The same source claimed that some Jews in the Soviet Union were interested in creating an atmosphere of panic in order to force Western countries to open their doors to emigrants. Jews intent on settling in the US have an interest in "hysteria", continued the official, which then plays into the hands of those who advocate helping Jews to leave the Soviet Union as quickly as possible regardless of their destination.⁶⁸

In addition to refusing to use transit points in countries which upheld the right of emigrants to choose their final destination, new procedures were introduced which further reduced the number of Soviet Jews who "dropped out" en route to Israel. These included a regulation requiring all those who applied for Israeli visas to sign a statement authorising the State of Israel to confer Israeli citizenship on them when they left the USSR: Soviet Jews leaving on Israeli visas now become Israeli citizens as soon as they leave Soviet airspace.⁶⁹ The fact that Soviet Jews who leave on Israeli visas are already Israeli citizens by the time they arrive in various

Eastern European transit points considerably reduces their chances of being granted asylum elsewhere.

Some Israeli officials launched strong objections to a reported US decision to grant 8,000 more refugee permits to Soviet Jews at the request of an American Jewish organisation, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). The Chairman of the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee, Michael Kleiner termed HIAS "a cancerous growth" which should be "totally eradicated" because it was encouraging Soviet Jews to emigrate to the US rather than Israel. He voiced concern that the additional permits, while not a large number in themselves, constituted a precedent that could lead to many more Soviet Jews settling in the US than was presently the case.⁷⁰ In fact, HIAS had not requested additional refugee permits for Soviet Jews wishing to enter the US and the ceiling of 40,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants per year set by the American government was not raised until September 1990. Kleiner later told the *Jerusalem Post* that his outburst was based on a misunderstanding since the 8,000 permits were actually part of the original 40,000 quota agreed upon in late 1989.⁷¹

Discouraging Emigration from Israel

New regulations were also introduced which sought to discourage immigrants arriving in Israel from then emigrating to another country. New immigrants are now not permitted to leave for an alternative destination within their first five years of arrival in Israel, unless they pay back to the Israeli state all travel and initial living expenses, estimated at \$6,000 per person or \$24,000 per four-person family. Soviet Jews are not issued with an Israeli passport during their first year in Israel.⁷²

On 23 February 1990, the Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz* published an article entitled An Almost Secret Bank, which has been translated in summarised form below:

Flight costs to Israel, accommodation en route and a settlement grant for living expenses during the first year in Israel are all considered a standing loan. If the immigrant does not leave Israel within the first five years of arrival, these sums become a grant. If the immigrant however wishes to leave Israel to settle elsewhere during that period, the money must be paid back in full. A subsidiary of the Jewish Agency, the "Encouragement Bank" operates as a bank for the immigrants; it supplies the loans to the immigrants and acts as a debt collector. The general manager of the Encouragement Bank, Moshe Horowitz, explained that the Israeli government does not allow commercial banks to handle the affairs of immigrants because it is "more convenient and cheaper" to follow up the immigrants through the Jewish Agency enterprise. Whenever a passport is issued in the Israeli Ministry of the Interior, it is cross-checked with the list of debtors at the Encouragement Bank. Any immigrant who is deemed to owe the state money must secure a guarantor before being permitted to leave Israel for any purpose within the first five years of arrival. Many immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were not aware that travel and initial living expenses were given to them as a standing loan to be repaid unless they stay in Israel for five years. Immigrants from countries where the Jewish Agency operated openly, however, signed an agreement to repay the loan should they leave within the first five years of arrival.

Commented Benjamin Galevski, the general manager of the debt collection department of the bank: "It helps...to prevent emigration. There were many cases of immigrants who intended to emigrate, and when they saw they would have to pay back a lot of money, they changed their minds".

Israeli officials sought to further encourage Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel by attempting to allay fears concerning housing and employment in Israel as well as the controversy surrounding settlement in the occupied territories. In September 1990, for example, Minister of Housing and head of the Immigration Committee Ariel Sharon visited the main synagogue in Moscow and promised the congregation gathered that there would be enough housing to accommodate every immigrant and that business opportunities in Israel were plentiful. Sharon then declared that peace in the region depended on Israel being strong and that mass immigration would strengthen the state. "We are waiting for you in Israel", he concluded.⁷³

3.2 Encouraging Settlement in the Occupied Territories

When the current mass immigration of Soviet Jews began, a Likud-Labour coalition government headed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir (Likud) held power in Israel. As early as June 1989, then Minister of Housing David Levy (Likud) stated that a considerable part of the expected wave of new immigrants should be housed in West Bank settlements. During a visit to Ma'ale Levona settlement, located between Ramallah and Nablus, Levy announced his plan for each settler family already living in the West Bank to adopt a family of new immigrants. He added that the plan could double the number of settlers living in the occupied territories.⁷⁴

At the beginning of 1990 Prime Minister Shamir made a number of statements to the public which proffered a new rationale for continued Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Israel needed the occupied territories for absorbing the new immigrants.

Using Immigration to Maintain the Status Quo
Comparing the mass immigration of Soviet Jews to "all the miracles that have always rescued the Jewish people", on 14 January Shamir declared that "big immigration requires Israel to be big as well". The flood of immigrants made it imperative to hold on to the occupied territories, he said, as "we need the space to house all the people".⁷⁵

Shamir continued his speech, addressed to members of the Likud party, with an apparent challenge to the Labour Party argument that Israel should withdraw from the occupied territories because of the "demographic problem". Declared Shamir: "Just when many of us were saying that time is working against us, time has brought us this aliya [Jewish immigration to Israel] and has solved everything...In five years everything will change...everything will be bigger, stronger".⁷⁶ Many Israeli observers interpreted Shamir's statements to mean that the Prime Minister viewed the Soviet Jewish immigrants as the solution to Israel's "demographic problem" concerning the occupied territories.⁷⁷

One week later, during a tour of Neveh Ya'acov settlement in the Palestinian suburb of Beit Hanina in East Jerusalem, Shamir reiterated: "We need a big and strong land for a big and strong people". At a press conference following his tour of immigrant absorption facilities in Jerusalem he stated: "This is our country. Everyone knows that in my view Judea, Samaria and Gaza are part of Israel. As for the right of the immigrants to settle there - it is up to them". The Israeli prime minister then added that a number of immigrants had expressed an interest in settling in the occupied territories. "If anyone wants to go to

Ariel [an Israeli settlement in the West Bank] he has the right to do so...", emphasised Shamir.⁷⁸

In a commentary on Shamir's January statements published in the *Jerusalem Post*, the former cabinet secretary to Begin's government Ayre Naor wrote that *"the linkage that the premier noted between Soviet immigration and the future of the occupied territories has two aspects. On the one hand, holding on to the territories is a prior condition to a successful absorption of the mass immigration; on the other, holding the territories forever is a possible consequence of a successfully absorbed flow of immigration"*.

The same day a *Jerusalem Post* editorial on Shamir's 14 January speech explained further that the Israeli prime minister had again made it clear that *"the issue of the territories is foreclosed and in Israel's favour"*. The difference on this occasion, continued the same editorial, was that Shamir had this time *"linked the territorial issue not to historical imperative, nor to security needs, but to the imperative of absorbing masses of new immigrants from the Soviet Union"*. The editorial concluded that the Israeli premier could *"hardly have selected a betternail in the coffin"* to the peace process.

Jerusalem Post, 19 January 1990.

Not all Israeli officials and analysts, however, agreed with the claim that Israel needed the West Bank and Gaza Strip for absorbing the newcomers. Labour Party leader Shimon Peres, for example, argued that there was sufficient space within Israel's pre-1967 boundaries to absorb the new immigrants.

In an opinion piece entitled "Time is Against the Palestinians", a member of the *Jerusalem Post* editorial board, Yosef Goell, wrote that demographic, social and economic "realities" as opposed to "ideology" would make the settlement of new immigrants in the occupied territories inevitable. Goell argued that overcrowding in central Israel, combined with the limited resources available for immigrant absorption, would "create inexorable pressures for the settlement of large numbers of Israelis in the territories."⁷⁹

A letter published in the *Jerusalem Post* from an Israeli living in Beersheba, a development town in the Negev, rejected Goell's argument. The letter noted that the Tel Aviv area does not constitute the entire country any more than "London is England or New York is the USA" and that Israeli officials had long stressed the need to encourage new immigrants to settle in the new towns in the south and north of Israel in order to help develop these areas.⁸⁰

Most immigrants arriving in Israel during the previous decade had settled in the Tel Aviv area, further contributing to the disproportionate concentration of Israel's population in the central coastal plain. Israeli officials generally regarded this as undesirable both on economic grounds and in the event of war.

Daniel Doron, the Director of the Independent Centre for Social and Economic Progress, an independent research centre based in Tel Aviv, also drew attention to the fact that stated government policy had always been to disperse the population across Israel. He questioned the wisdom of failing to develop the northern and southern regions of Israel in order to achieve this purpose and argued that inadequate government housing and development policies had caused many Israelis living in new towns in the north and south to emigrate abroad. If the Israeli government put more funding into the development towns in the Negev and the

Galilee regions inside the Green Line instead of spending it on settlements in the occupied territories, these areas would become more attractive places for new immigrants to live in, it was argued.⁸¹

Settler organisations like Gush Emunim, on the other hand, were known to be pressuring the Israeli government to settle the new immigrants in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in order to boost settler numbers.⁸²

In February 1990 Absorption Minister Peretz stated that 56% of the new Soviet immigrants were settling in the centre of the country (Tel Aviv area), 29% in Haifa and the north of Israel, 10% in Jerusalem and 5% in Beersheba and the south. He then drew attention to the fact that some 100,000 people had left development towns in the previous five years, before stressing that settling the immigrants in the development towns was crucial to reversing the depopulation of those areas.⁸³

Leading Palestinian observers meanwhile drew attention to the possibility that the large-scale influx of immigrants would gradually erode the basis of the Labour Party's position supporting partial withdrawal in view of the "demographic problem". Argued Birzeit University professor Sari Nusseibeh: "The demographic incentive, after all, is Labour's only major incentive for withdrawal. Less incentive means less engagement in the peace process...". Nusseibeh went on to note that regardless of whether Soviet Jewish immigrants settled in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, "surely their influx in large numbers within the Green Line will generate all kinds of internal pressure that will strengthen the hands of those in Israel who call for settlement in the territories...".⁸⁴

The Immigrants' Choice?

In response to ongoing protests that new immigrants were being settled in the West Bank and Gaza, Israeli officials reiterated that Soviet Jews were not being directed to the occupied territories but that new immigrants,

like all Israeli citizens, were free to choose where they lived.

Amidst the uproar created by Shamir's statements in January, Avi Pazner, Shamir's media adviser, told Israeli reporters that the protest by the official Soviet news agency Tass against settling the Soviet Jews in the occupied territories was "all based on an misunderstanding." Continued Pazner, "Israel does not have a policy of settling immigrants in the occupied territories. All immigrants have a free choice where to go and live. Everyone has his own priorities. Nobody is directed."⁸⁵

Pazner was no doubt correct in asserting that no Soviet Jew was "directed", i.e. instructed to move, to the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; however, in settling in the occupied territories Israeli citizens have acted in full accord with the official ideology which, claiming that Israel has a right to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, has opened up the possibilities for settlement there. Moreover, any debate over whether the immigrants settle in the occupied territories, or are settled there, misses the real issue: namely that fact that the settlements have been established and continue to be established in violation of international law and at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian population.

A *Jerusalem Post* editorial, reacting to a resolution passed at a convention of the American National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council against settling Soviet Jewish immigrants in the occupied territories, argued that were immigrants to be barred from living in settlements in "Judea and Samaria", the Israeli government would not only be denying them the freedom to choose a place of residence, "a basic human right", but, would also, by placing restrictions on where Jews could live, be "imitating the revolting practices of anti-semitic societies."⁸⁶ The editorial obviously referred to Art. 13.1 of the Human Rights Declaration, which asserts the

individual's right of movement within the borders of one's state; in doing so, the writer intentionally ignored the fact that the West Bank and Gaza Strip are not part of the state of Israel but occupied territory. One delegate to the convention accordingly protested in response to the editorial, "In the case of the West Bank, another issue is at stake - the right of a country to direct its immigrants into areas over which it is not sovereign."⁸⁷

As international controversy over the settlement issue continued to mount, "freedom of choice" remained an important Israeli counter-argument. When the US and USSR objected to the settlement of new immigrants in the occupied territories Prime Minister Shamir emphasised that to give any kind of a guarantee that immigrants would not be settled in the occupied territories would restrict "freedom of choice" for those immigrants who wished to live in the settlements.⁸⁸ Telling the Israeli Manufacturers' Association that neither the US nor the USSR could force Israel to impose limits on where Jews settled, Shamir asserted that "our government allows its citizens, veterans and immigrants the freedom to settle in every part of the Land of Israel".⁸⁹

Arguing "freedom of choice" on behalf of the Soviet immigrants, the Israeli government, while presenting itself as a human rights advocate, denied its responsibility in encouraging Israeli settlement of the occupied territories at the expense of the Palestinian population. In reality, the housing crisis in Israel, for example, effectively restricted the choices the new immigrants were free to make. As press sources noted throughout the year, new immigrants who settle in the occupied territories, in addition to receiving government grants for new immigrants, benefit from the government-subsidised housing and employment opportunities available to all Israelis who move to settlements across the Green Line.⁹⁰ The material incentives offered to new settlers, in combination with the

worsening housing and employment situation in Israel, actually served to encourage new immigrants to take up residence in settlements in the occupied territories. At the beginning of February 1990, nine opposition factions in the Knesset submitted motions of no confidence in the government's absorption policy with centre and left-wing parties charging that the government was exploiting immigration from the Soviet Union to justify settlement of the occupied territories.⁹¹

"Freedom of choice" continued to be put forward by the Israeli authorities as if this was an abstract matter of principle, whereas, in fact, it had to be considered against the background of the Palestinian population living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and their legitimate rights. In this sense, the choice of a place of residence in a settlement in the

occupied territories by Israeli citizens has always conflicted with the rights of the Palestinian people whom the establishment of the settlements has deprived of the natural resources of their country.

Moreover, from the start of the current controversy, "freedom of choice" has been used by the Israeli authorities merely as an argument to suit their needs rather than an indivisible right applying to everyone. In Israel's interpretation, the non-Jewish citizens of the state of Israel, for example, do not enjoy the right to move to Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. Freedom of choice in this context is even more so denied those Palestinians from the occupied territories who are refused a permit to reunite with their families.

In a February 1990 interview with the Hebrew daily *Davar*, the mayor of Ariel, Ron Nahman, stated that construction units were in progress on 250 housing units in Ariel while plans for a further 800 units were approved in early February. Noted *Davar*:

"The money was provided, of course, by David Levy and the Housing Ministry, the work places abundantly subsidised by Ariel Sharon and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. No wonder that immigrants come and will come to apartments in Ariel... 'of their own free will and without coercion' (as Ron Nahman says). No force whatsoever will bring them... to towns like poverty- and unemployment-stricken Ofakim or Hatzor [inside Israel]".

Davar, 23 February 1990.

By the beginning of February 1990 there were 50 new Soviet Jewish immigrant families living in Ariel, the largest Israeli settlement in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) with a population of 8,000; Ariel is built on land confiscated from the nearby Palestinian village of Bidia in the Nablus region. On the wall of the classroom where the new immigrants learn Hebrew was hung a series of photos, beginning with pictures of Leningrad, continuing with photos from various parts of Israel and ending

with shots of Ariel.

One of the new arrivals, Grigorian Katzman, a 59-year-old house painter who emigrated from Byelorussia in late 1989, told journalists through an interpreter: "I knew nothing about Ariel before I came here. The only thing I heard was that it wasn't inside Israel's borders. But that didn't bother me. The main thing is that I don't have to pay a lot of money for an apartment. Politics don't interest me."⁹²

"To the extent that any of the immigrants are settled in East Jerusalem or in the occupied territories, they will constitute additional obstacles to the proposed historical compromise between the Palestinian people and the State of Israel, which is roughly the two-state solution. While many details remain to be worked out, it is generally thought that the outlines of such a compromise are for a Palestinian state to be created in the lands occupied in 1967, to live in peace with the State of Israel in which the Zionist dream will be restricted. Housing and settling Jews in the territories that were occupied in 1967 makes that type of compromise much more difficult and unrealisable..."

Palestinian lawyer and co-founder of al-Haq human rights organisation, Jonathan Kuttub in *Middle East International*, 30 March 1990, p.16.

In March 1990 the Likud-Labour coalition government fell and a caretaker administration headed by Shamir stayed in office pending the formation of a new government. During the subsequent three-month period of the caretaker government, construction work was started on the settlements of Dugit and Pe'at Sadeh in the Gaza Strip, and Allon in the West Bank; two settlements were inaugurated in Nablus (Joseph's Tomb) and East Jerusalem (East Pisgat Ze'ev); plans for two more settlements north of Nablus were moved into the advanced stage; three Nahal army bases were announced to be turned into civilian

settlements; and in East Jerusalem's Old City, settlers occupied St. John's Hospice in the Christian Quarter. One of the settlements planned north of Nablus, Hatsi Shomron, constituted one of eight new settlements agreed upon in the earlier coalition agreement between the Likud and Labour parties (see Appendix 4). Just prior to the collapse of the coalition government, another new settlement, Avnei Hefetz, had been established near the Palestinian town of Tulkarem in the West Bank, also in accord with the 1988 Likud-Labour agreement.⁹³

Under international law an occupying power is not permitted to change the demographic composition of the region occupied. UN Resolution 465, passed unanimously in March 1980, condemned Israeli settlements as illegal, including those built in East Jerusalem, and called for their dismantlement. Since 1967 official US government policy has been to oppose the building of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, including in East Jerusalem.

The Priorities of the New Government

In June 1990 Shamir succeeded in forming a Likud-led government, the most right-wing government to take office in the history of Israeli politics. The stated priorities of the new government were speeding up immigration from the Soviet Union and ensuring a smooth absorption process for the new immigrants. The government's policy document declared that "the eternal right of the Jewish people to Eretz Israel is not subject to question", and

that, among other goals, the aim of the new government was to "act to strengthen settlement, to broaden and develop it."⁹⁴

Prominent Palestinians in the occupied territories immediately expressed concern at both the policy statements of the new government, and more specifically, the appointment of various Israeli politicians to crucial cabinet positions. The new Minister of Housing, Ariel Sharon, was widely expected to

step up settlement activity in the occupied territories. As Minister of Agriculture under previous right-wing governments during the late 1970s and early 1980s, Sharon played a crucial role in the establishment of dozens of settlements in the occupied territories. In addition to the housing post, Sharon also became chairman of the ministerial absorption committee, a position which gave him great influence over government policy concerning immigration. Other appointments which gave rise to Palestinian concerns over future government policy on the West Bank and Gaza Strip included the choice of Rafael Eitan to head the Ministry of Agriculture. The current leader of the Tsomet Party, which openly advocates "transfer", Eitan was expected to increase land appropriation and Israeli control of water resources in the occupied territories.⁹⁵

Some two weeks after its inauguration, officials in the new government produced a series of conciliatory statements apparently aimed at placating world opinion. The statements, most notably those made by Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, came after both the Soviet Union and the USA had expressed their continued displeasure over the controversy concerning the settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories. In particular Soviet president Gorbachev had, for the first time since the controversy erupted, threatened to limit emigration to Israel unless he received assurances that the immigrants would not settle in the occupied territories.

On 25 June Sharon reiterated Israeli denials that there was no policy of settling immigrants in "Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria". Declared Sharon: "Immigrants will not be settled beyond the Green Line". However, he continued his speech by emphasising that government policy had not changed. "The new national government hasn't changed for a minute", said Sharon. "It recognises the strategic importance of the settlements in Judea, Samaria [West Bank] and Gush Katif [a

settlement bloc in the Gaza Strip]. This policy will continue but it will not be connected to absorption."⁹⁶ The policy on immigrants "does not mean that other people cannot settle in any place", declared Sharon on another occasion, stressing that "construction will continue, in accordance with government policy, in all parts of the land of Israel."⁹⁷

Sharon's assertion that immigrants would not "be settled" in the occupied territories again diverted attention away from the real issue, i.e. the existence of these settlements, and the fact that new ones continued to be set up. These facts made it indeed irrelevant whether it was new immigrants or "other people", i.e. any other Israeli citizens, who chose to move there. Apart from that, Sharon's government was in no position to prevent the new immigrants, who are equal in status with other Israeli citizens, from settling in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But in any event, as long as the government did not abolish its subsidies for housing, employment and services on settlements, official policy had to be regarded as supporting settlement of the occupied territories, public statements to the contrary notwithstanding. Commented Palestinian lawyer Jonathan Kuttub: "The protestation of the Israeli government that it does not direct new immigrants to the occupied territories is not credible, since in the present situation neither housing nor jobs can be provided for new immigrants except with heavy government subsidies. These subsidies are available in the West Bank and East Jerusalem to a far greater degree than in Israel itself."⁹⁸

According to Agence France Presse (AFP), a flat in Ariel settlement costs \$55,000, for which a 90% mortgage is available from the Israeli government; in Tel Aviv a similar flat costs \$120,000 at a 75% mortgage rate. Any Israeli deciding to build their own home without going through a contractor would pay still less, added AFP.⁹⁹

In Israel, the fact that settler circles did not

react with a storm of protest to Sharon's pledge confirmed that it was not to be taken seriously. A Reuter article noted that, despite the Israeli government statements, "its right wing-supporters were satisfied nothing had changed". The article went on to cite Meron Benvenisti as explaining that "the best way to measure [official government statements] is to see whether the settlers are upset and they are not upset; they aren't crying because they know it is meaningless. Why? Because the by-word for settling the occupied territories has now become 'expansion'."¹⁰⁰

By early July 1990, construction work was in progress in at least five different settlements in the Gaza Strip, according to the head of the Gaza Coast Regional Settlement Council. The press also carried reports of new housing being built in a number of West Bank settlements including Efrat near Bethlehem, where the settlement municipality advisor Ben Elisha told Agence France Presse that 150 housing units were presently being built in Efrat and that a further 1,500 - 2,000 units would be put up during the next two years. Meanwhile there were Jerusalem municipality plans in place for over 40,000 new housing units to be built on settlements in East Jerusalem over the next two years (see Appendix 5).

Knesset member Dedi Zucker of the Citizens Rights Movement furnished proof of the government's pro-settlement stance when he showed reporters gathered outside the Knesset a wall-map printed in Russian which had been distributed to absorption centres dealing with Soviet Jewish immigrants. As with all official Israeli maps, the Green Line dividing the West Bank and Gaza Strip from Israel had been erased so that there appeared to be no difference between towns inside Israel's pre-1967 boundaries and settlements built in the occupied territories since then. The reverse side of the map, however, carried information about various Israeli settlements and a list of names and phone numbers of settlement officials able to assist Soviet Jews settling in

"Judea and Samaria" and in settlements in the Gaza Strip. Zucker told the press that the fact that Absorption Ministry officials had personally put up such maps in some absorption centres contradicted government claims that immigrants were not being encouraged to settle in the occupied territories.¹⁰¹

Of the 11 localities highlighted on the reverse side of the map, only Beersheba and Haifa lie within the Green Line; of the remaining nine, five are settlements in the West Bank; one is the Gush Katif settlement bloc in the southern Gaza Strip; one is "Greater Jerusalem" (East and West), described as the "capital of Israel", and two are in the occupied Golan Heights. The settlements are built "on land liberated in 1967", according to the text on the reverse side of the map. The locality of each settlement, the number of families living there, the available employment opportunities, educational facilities and social amenities are described in detail; the scenic surroundings of the settlements; the convenient locations, "one hour's drive from Tel Aviv, half an hour from Jerusalem", are also highlighted.

In a letter addressed to Prime Minister Shamir and Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz, MK Zucker drew attention to the fact that Amana, the Gush Emunim settler organisation which financed the map, is an official settlement movement funded by the Israeli state. "Amana operates as an official agency of Israel's settlement policy," wrote Zucker.¹⁰²

Demand for housing in the settlements witnessed a sudden increase during the summer of 1990 as the effects of dramatic rent increases and rising house prices began to make themselves felt in Israel. By July 1990, some two months after tent cities had appeared in various parts of the country, demand for housing in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was such that it could no longer be met. Reports in the Hebrew press even spoke of settlements turning new applicants away since all housing units

presently available had already been filled.¹⁰³

A survey conducted by *Ha'aretz* during the summer of 1990 showed 88,000 settlers living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as compared to an estimated 70,000 in 1988. The same survey, based on interviews with settlement council heads, settlement secretaries and building contractors, forecast that the number of settlers would rise to 95,000 by September 1990.¹⁰⁴

3.3 The Question of East Jerusalem

In an effort to play down the international controversy concerning the settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories, Israeli officials stressed on a number of occasions that only a tiny proportion of the new immigrants arriving in Israel settled in the occupied territories. At the end of February 1990, for example, the Israeli Absorption Ministry stated that only 1-2% of the 13,000 Soviet Jews who arrived in Israel in 1989 settled in the occupied territories.¹⁰⁵ Israeli officials claimed that the proportion of Soviet Jews who chose to settle across the Green Line was so small as to be insignificant. It was therefore unnecessary for Israel to guarantee that immigrants would not settle in the occupied territories, they argued.¹⁰⁶

"If Gorbachev knew that so few Jews are going to the territories, he wouldn't even relate to this issue", commented one government source when the Soviet president threatened to limit emigration if Israel continued to refuse to guarantee that immigrants would not settle in the occupied territories.

Jerusalem Post, 4 June 1990.

However, as the US administration soon realised, Israeli official figures on settlement of the new immigrants did not treat East Jerusalem as part of the occupied territories; therefore, in line with the official Israeli view that East Jerusalem is part of Israel, the Israeli figures on how many new immigrants settled over the Green Line in areas occupied in 1967 did not include those who settled in Arab East Jerusalem.

In late February 1990, Absorption Minister Peretz stated that 10% of the new Soviet immigrants arriving in Israel were settled in Jerusalem.¹⁰⁷ The Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek later confirmed in a meeting with US President George Bush that he expected 10 - 12% of the Soviet Jews to settle in Jerusalem since that is approximately Jerusalem's share of the Israeli population today.¹⁰⁸ While such official data refers to Jerusalem as including occupied East Jerusalem, an internal US State Department document detailed in early March that an estimated 10% of all immigrants arriving in Israel were moving to housing built in the parts of Jerusalem captured by Israel during the 1967 war - East Jerusalem.¹⁰⁹

At the beginning of June 1990, Peretz stated that only 192 of the nearly 40,000 Soviet immigrants who arrived in the first five months of 1990 had settled in the occupied territories; at the same time he added that 10% of the new arrivals were living in Jerusalem,¹¹⁰ thus obviously not regarding Jerusalem as part of the occupied territories.

According to the Hebrew daily, *Ha'aretz*, of the 5,375 new immigrants who took up residence in Jerusalem between January and July 1990, the majority were housed in settlements over the Green Line, including for example, 557 new immigrants in Gilo, 452 in Neveh Ya'acov and 541 in Ramot. 81% of the cited 5,375 new immigrants were Soviet Jews.¹¹¹

TABLE 3

Number of Soviet Jewish families settled in East Jerusalem between January 1989 and March 1990 according to official registers:

Gilo	350 families	
Ramot	250 families	During the same period, 72 Soviet families settled in West Jerusalem
Neveh Ya'acov	250 families	
East Talpiot	50 families	
TOTAL:		900 families

Source: Extracted from Azmi Bishara, Soviet Jewish Immigration to Israel in the Age of Perestroika, PASSIA, East Jerusalem, 1990, pp. 24-25.

In mid-March 1990 Housing Minister David Levy laid the cornerstone for a new Israeli settlement, East Pisgat Ze'ev, in the suburbs of East Jerusalem. The entire Pisgat Ze'ev area (Pisgat Ze'ev and East Pisgat Ze'ev combined) is planned to become the largest housing estate in Israel.¹¹²

At the beginning of July 1990, Mayor Kollek proposed the construction of 40,000 new homes in Jerusalem, the majority of which were to be located beyond the Green Line. The sharp increase in Israeli construction in East Jerusalem was "expected to change the demographic balance in East Jerusalem". Detailed construction and planning schemes had already been drawn up and building was expected to begin by the end of the year (see Appendix 5).¹¹³

Today there are almost as many Israelis living in East Jerusalem as there are Palestinians.

3.4 Censorship

Beginning in March 1990 all news reports concerning Soviet Jewish immigration had to

be submitted to the Israeli military censor prior to publication. Israeli cabinet officials said that the requirement was introduced both to increase security for Soviet Jews in transit and to halt international criticism of Israel concerning the immigration issue.¹¹⁴ Two weeks earlier, during a cabinet meeting Prime Minister Shamir had told government ministers to "curb" their statements on immigration since the Arab media was using officials' remarks to campaign against the immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel.¹¹⁵

"The IDF announces that all material pertaining to immigration of Soviet Jews must be submitted to the censor prior to publication".

Israeli army announcement 1 March 1990,
Jerusalem Post, 4 March 1990

The decision to censor drew sharp criticism from some quarters of the Israeli establishment. Since all routes for Soviet Jews in transit had already been made public and covered in the media both at home and abroad,

the claim that the intention behind the censorship was to protect the safety of immigrants in transit hardly seemed genuine. Furthermore, information on the numbers of new immigrants arriving in Israel and the routes they used continued to be published in the Israeli press despite the censorship regulation throughout the year, which further discredited the government's line of reasoning.

Those Israelis who publicly criticised the censorship restriction also raised questions as to the real motive behind the new measure. Moshe Negbi, a legal commentator and author of a book on freedom of the press in Israel, argued that the restriction was an attempt to stifle legitimate debate concerning Israel's priorities such as whether more money should be spent on the development towns or on absorbing the new immigrants, and the effect on the peace process of immigrants settling in the occupied territories. "This is a clear case of the public's right to know", asserted Negbi. He warned that the censorship regulation would have a negative effect on Israel's image abroad since it would make the international public wonder what it was that Israel had to hide.¹¹⁶ Knesset member Yossi Sarid of the Citizens Rights Movement shared the same view that censorship would have a detrimental effect on public opinion abroad. When Israeli Environment Minister Ronni Milo defended the censorship on grounds that "Arab terrorist groups" had threatened immigrants in transit, Sarid charged that the government was really trying to conceal the settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories through introducing the censorship requirement.¹¹⁷

The way the Israeli government has publicly handled the controversial issue of Soviet Jewish immigrants settling in the occupied territories rather confirms this view. Many of the official pronouncements only give, at best, an incomplete picture of the issues involved. Both the extent to which new immigrants settle in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the government's involvement have

consistently been minimised by government members. It is not unreasonable to assume that this stance reflects Israel's concern over international public opinion and is a response to the widespread criticism of its settlement policy - especially in view of the fact that Israel is heavily dependent on foreign aid, and US aid in particular. The imposition of censorship on matters relating to Soviet Jewish immigration would thus appear as being motivated by the government's intention to prevent the publication of information which might arouse further criticism, and even jeopardise US support of Israel.

3.5 In Comparison: Family Reunification for Palestinians

While thousands of Soviet Jews were arriving in Israel, Palestinians were denied the right to return to their country and the right to reunite with their families there. According to former Defence Minister Rabin, of 88,429 Palestinians applying for family reunification between 1967 and 1987, only 13,509 were granted a permit.¹¹⁸

According to Israeli Knesset member Dedi Zucker of the Citizens Rights Movement, more than 250 Palestinian women and children living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were deported to Jordan between April 1989 and February 1990 alone because they lacked residency permits.¹¹⁹ The *Washington Post* explained the increase during this period as "an unannounced and largely unpublicised toughening of past policy [whereby] Israel has begun systematically expelling West Bank Palestinians who do not meet residency requirements".¹²⁰ (Such expulsions were being carried out in addition to the 58 Palestinians deported on "security" grounds following the outbreak of the Palestinian *intifada* [uprising] in December 1987.)

No issue exemplifies better than the issue of citizenship the double standard that the Israeli authorities have been applying to Jews and

Palestinians respectively. While Soviet Jewish immigrants to Israel (or Jewish immigrants from any other country for that matter) are granted Israeli citizenship instantaneously, Israel treats the Palestinians who were born in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as residents; evidence of residency is the *hawiya* [identity card], which the Israeli authorities hand out to Palestinian adults. Since the beginning of the occupation Israel has restricted the number of Palestinians who are eligible for residency in the occupied territories.

Thus, until September 1987 Israeli military orders defined as a resident of the occupied territories a person counted in the census conducted in 1967, or a child born in the territories and registered in the identity card of a resident parent. Accordingly, Palestinians who were not present in the occupied territories as a result of war hostilities in September 1967 when the census was carried out, or were absent because, for instance, they were studying abroad or visiting relatives, did not receive residency.¹²¹ Benvenisti estimates that from the outbreak of the 1967 Israeli-Arab war in June until September 1967, some 200,000 Palestinians left the West Bank - this in addition to those who were out of the country at the time the war started.¹²² Janet Abu-Lughod puts the number of Palestinians who left the West Bank and Gaza Strip from before the outbreak of the war until September 1967 at 325,000.¹²³ There are also Palestinians who were present in the occupied territories during the 1967 census but for bureaucratic reasons were not registered at that time.

Up until September 1987, Israeli military law also defined as a resident of the occupied territories a child born there and registered in the identity card of a resident parent. Military Order 1208, passed in September 1987, however, restricted this provision by stipulating that from then on, a Palestinian child born in the occupied territories could only be registered in the identity card of the mother. Therefore, if the mother does not have

an Israeli-issued identity card, i.e. if she is not recognised as a resident, the child is not granted residency either - even though s/he has been born in the occupied territories, even though his/her father is a resident there.¹²⁴

Palestinians from the occupied territories who fulfill either of these two requirements and are regarded as residents, however, can lose their residency status if they have been granted residency from another state, if they have, according to the Israeli authorities, 'settled abroad', or if they have stayed abroad beyond a certain period of time.¹²⁵ Any Palestinian from the West Bank and Gaza Strip wishing to travel abroad through Israel must obtain a *laissez-passer*, a travel document valid for one year only; it can be renewed twice in an Israeli embassy abroad, but within three years a Palestinian has to return to the occupied territories in order not to forfeit their residency status. Those who want to cross the border to Jordan or Egypt have to apply for a different document which is valid for up to three years, and renewable once. Six years is the maximum time period someone can stay abroad without risking the loss of residency.

Those Palestinians who do not meet the requirements for being granted residency, or who have lost their residency, risk expulsion if they come to the occupied territories and overstay the three-month time period of a visitor's visa. In February 1987, the Palestinian Centre for the Study of Non-Violence estimated that there are currently about 200,000 Palestinians who live in the occupied territories without residency rights; they all risk expulsion under the Israeli regulations.¹²⁶ The only way for them to live legally in the occupied territories is to obtain residency through applying for and being granted a family reunification permit.

Such applications, however, have only minimal chances of success. According to Benvenisti, "under no circumstances" do males between the ages of 16 and 60 have the possibility to

return to the occupied territories.¹²⁷ In comparison with the figures quoted by the Defence Minister earlier, statistics released by the International Committee of the Red Cross mention an even higher number of Palestinian family reunification applications that have been rejected; they show that of 140,000 requests for family reunification submitted between 1967 and 1987, only 9,000 were granted.¹²⁸ In early 1990, Israeli defence sources confirmed that "very few" applications had been approved during the previous few years, adding that the Israeli authorities had stopped counting the number of Palestinians still applying for residency permits.¹²⁹

The Israeli government has not made a secret of its position on family reunification for Palestinians in the occupied territories. During a case tried at the Israeli High Court, the government made it clear that it treats Palestinian family reunification as a privilege and not a natural right: cases are only considered on "exceptional" humanitarian grounds or because it is deemed in the interests of the Israeli military authorities to grant a permit.¹³⁰ In another court case, the Israeli government declared with reference to applications for family reunification that "only the minimum possible number" of permits would be granted.¹³¹ Reviewing the Israeli policy on family reunification for Palestinians, the US government concluded in its Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1989:

Requests for family reunification are granted only on a restricted basis. Persons who marry Palestinians in the occupied territories generally are not allowed to take up residence there. Entry of residency

permission is frequently denied spouses, relatives and children, following the emigration of the head of the household. ... Israeli officials acknowledge that family reunification is limited for demographic and political reasons ... Restrictions on residence, reentry, and family reunification do not apply to Jews, whether or not they are Israeli citizens.¹³²

A paper recently released by Al-Haq concerning the right to family reunification charged that Israeli policies violate article 16 of the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights and are designed to reduce the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.¹³³ The Palestinian Human Rights Information Centre investigated 81 cases of expulsion of non-residents between May and the end of October 1989. All were from the Ramallah area. Of these, four were men and 77 were women aged 17 - 72 years. 66 of the 81 expellees had applied for family reunification but had been turned down.¹³⁴

Most of the 250 Palestinians expelled between April 1989 and February 1990 were women (and their children) born in the West Bank who later left for Jordan or the Gulf States. They then married cousins from their home towns or villages of origin in the occupied territories. These women entered the West Bank on temporary visitors' permits, which are only valid for one month and can be renewed twice. They were obliged to leave the region every three months, stay outside the occupied territories for at least three months, and then attempt to re-enter on another visitor's permit.¹³⁵

Expulsion of Palestinian "Non-Residents", as described by Israeli journalist Yael Gvirtz:

"The army stages a small awakening at dawn. The men are concentrated in one place. They surround the home and Captain Yosef or Morris calls the woman by the loudspeaker to come out of her house with her children. They give her a maximum of 10 minutes. The babies are in pyjamas. There is no time to give them food or drink. They take those not registered on the father's ID card. Whoever is registered may stay at the authorities' grace. They make them pay a taxi to bridge. Pay a ransom (JD96) and over to the other side of the bridge. To the Jordanian diaspora on the other side. Many of them stay without money, a relative or acquaintance, with children and babies, for many days".

Hadashot, 8 December 1989

The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, B'Tselem, adds that the husband is often unaware of what is happening to his wife since he is rounded up with the rest of the men; that the documents of those children whose fathers are residents are torn up at the bridge, preventing those children from becoming residents in the future; that, at the time of the expulsion, the woman is promised that she will be allowed to visit her family again in three months but that either her application for a visitors permit is then refused or her entry is blocked at the bridge.

B'Tselem, Annual Report 1989, p.102

In June 1990, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) challenged in the Israeli High Court of Justice the Civil Administration's decision to deny family reunification permits to the 250 Palestinian women and children expelled from April 1989 to February 1990. In response to the ACRI petition, the military government declared that non-resident wives and children of Palestinian men who are residents of the occupied territories would be allowed to enter the occupied territories on six-month instead of three-month visitor's permits, which would automatically renewed at the end of the six months. This procedure would be applied unless 'security reasons' advised against it.

The first four women expelled from the Ramallah area were then allowed to enter the West Bank. So far the alleged change of policy remains an informal statement which has as

yet to be officially endorsed. However, even if this happens, the new policy will to some extent ease the plight of families which have been torn apart, but it will not address the basic discriminatory principles which determine Israel's policy on Palestinian family reunification. Changes such as the one the government allegedly plans to introduce can always be re-amended or withdrawn by another government under different circumstances. For Palestinians, even if they or their parents were born in the occupied territories, the right to live there is never a natural right, but always a privilege to be granted or withheld by the state of Israel. In other words, under Israeli law the right of a Soviet Jewish immigrant to live in the West Bank town of Nablus is a matter of course - for a Palestinian born in Nablus, however, it can never be taken for granted.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ARTICLE 13:

- 1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- 2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own and to return to his country.

4. International Aspects

4.1 The Arab World

Following the statements made by Israeli Prime Minister Shamir concerning immigration and settlement in the occupied territories, various Arab states protested that the Israeli government intended to use the immigration as a pretext for consolidating Israel's hold in the West Bank and Gaza Strip through further settlement in these disputed areas.

Israeli officials and parts of the media, however, portrayed the Arab states as using the issue of settlements in the occupied territories to hide their objection to any immigration to Israel. "The Arab states are shamelessly exploiting this issue, as they are mounting an offensive as a pretext for their war against all forms of immigration", declared a senior aide to Israeli Prime Minister Shamir in response to international criticism concerning the settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories.¹³⁶

Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said that the goal of the "systematic campaign" being organised by the Arab states was to halt Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel altogether. Responding to a protest by a high-ranking Soviet official against Israel's settlement policy, Netanyahu claimed that the Arab states were deliberately promoting the idea that Israeli policy was to direct the immigrants to the occupied territories as a way of masking their antipathy to any form of

Jewish immigration to Israel. "This Arab campaign against Jewish immigration has accompanied Israel throughout its history", declared Netanyahu.¹³⁷

"The reference to settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is only a pretext - it is the strengthening of Israel by this aliya that they [the Arab leaders] are fighting".

Prime Minister Shamir
Jerusalem Post, 5 March 1990.

Egypt, the only Arab state to be officially at peace with Israel, raised strong objections to the settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories. At the beginning of February Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak warned US President Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev that permitting Soviet Jews to settle in the occupied territories would have grave consequences for the possibilities of a negotiated peace between Israel and the various Arab parties and Middle East stability. Referring to Israel's allegation that the Arab states opposed immigration to Israel in general, Egyptian officials asserted repeatedly that Egypt recognised immigration to Israel in accordance with international and human rights conventions, but opposed settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories, as well as the establishment of new settlements in the occupied territories.¹³⁸ After discussing the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration with

Mubarak, the Israeli Labour leader Peres concluded that the Egyptian president was "against settling Soviet Jews in the territories as long as a solution [for the Palestinians] is not agreed upon."¹³⁹

In early May Mubarak told the Socialist International Council meeting in Cairo that the settlement of Soviet Jewish immigrants in the occupied territories "threatens the peace process" and "brings the entire region to the brink of a new, bloody confrontation". Elaborating on his view later, Mubarak warned that settling large numbers of Israelis in the occupied territories could lead to a civil war between the settlers and the Palestinian population and that, "if Israel tries to turn Jordan into alternative homeland for the Palestinians, things will get more complicated."¹⁴⁰

From the outset of the controversy, King Hussein of Jordan had repeatedly expressed concern that the Palestinians of the occupied territories might be expelled to his kingdom and replaced by new Israeli immigrants. Any such displacement would destabilise his regime.¹⁴¹ The inauguration of the new Likud-led government increased his fears that the immigration would be used as a pretext to expel the Palestinians.¹⁴² Likud Party policy concerning the future of the occupied territories was based on the tenet that territory should not be ceded, while large circles within the Likud advocating annexation regarded Jordan, which already has a sizable Palestinian population, as the "homeland" for Palestinians.

"Hussein's worst nightmare is that there will be an outflow to the East Bank", confirmed Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, a specialist in inter-Arab politics at Tel Aviv University. "Those who take the Likud and Sharon seriously believe Israel will create a dynamic whereby the Palestinians are forced off their land".¹⁴³ The perceived threat to Jordan posed by the immigration was reportedly an important

factor in pushing the king into a closer alliance with Baghdad.¹⁴⁴

At the end of January Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan al-Qassim conveyed serious concern to the Soviet Ambassador in Amman, demanding that, in accordance with international law, Soviet Jews be permitted to choose their final destination once in Europe, and urged the US to cancel tax exemptions on private donations to Israel as a way of discouraging the construction of new settlements.

In early February, King Hussein went to Baghdad to hold talks with Saddam Hussein on the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration, before embarking on a tour of European capitals to elicit support to pressure Israel into not settling Soviet Jewish immigrants in the occupied territories. Hussein viewed the issue as one which posed dangers not only for his own kingdom but for the possibilities of peace in the region as a whole. At a meeting in Amman of the newly-formed Arab Cooperation Council (consisting of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and North Yemen) Hussein told member states that Soviet Jewish immigration threatens "not only Jordan, but the security of the entire Arab nation and constitutes an obstacle to peace."¹⁴⁵

Meanwhile, also in response to Shamir's January statements, the PLO leadership met in Tunis at the end of January to formulate a response. At the final press conference Suleiman Najab, a member of the Executive Committee, announced that the PLO had decided to ask the Soviet Union to seek firm guarantees from Israel that immigrants would not be settled in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; to continue to delay direct flights; to reintroduce stopovers in Europe allowing Soviet Jewish emigrants a choice of destinations; to make it easier for Soviet Jews to return to the Soviet Union; to pressure the US government to make sure that US aid was not used to settle Israeli Jews in the occupied territories and to increase the number of

Soviet Jews permitted to settle in the US. "In the end [however]," concluded Najab, "the only guarantee that the emigrants won't settle in the occupied territories is Israeli withdrawal and recognition of the Palestinian right to an independent Palestinian state."¹⁴⁶

Palestinian officials also complained that the Soviet media was not giving wide coverage to the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, arguing that greater access to news from the occupied territories would give prospective Soviet Jewish immigrants more of an idea of conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and could serve to discourage them from settling there.¹⁴⁷

"We don't object to the Russians giving various nations, including the Jews, the liberty to leave. But we do object to the possibility of their being forced to go to one place only. Our plea is to the Russians and to the Americans, to let the Jews decide where they want to go. We object to forcing them to come to Israel only, and to their settlement in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank or East Jerusalem. But we don't object to them settling anywhere else, on condition that they arrive here of their own free will."

Faisal Husseini in an interview with *Hadashot*, 24 December 1989

By the end of January 1990 a number of Arab states were calling for the convening of an emergency Arab summit to discuss Soviet Jewish immigration and "Israeli expansionism".¹⁴⁸ The summit was delayed until late May, reportedly because the Gulf Cooperation Council countries felt inter-Arab differences, primarily the tensions between Syria and Iraq, should be resolved before any such meeting could usefully take place.¹⁴⁹

The 19th Arab summit finally opened in

Baghdad at the end of May. President Assad of Syria refused to attend because the summit was being hosted by his main rival, Saddam Hussein. The focus of the summit was the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration with the agenda inevitably extending to cover other issues related to the Israeli-Arab conflict, most notably Iraqi fears of an Israeli attack on its non-conventional weapons installations. The summit conference concluded that the Israeli intention was to use the immigration to cause "the emigration of the Palestinian people from its national land, and to extend the Israeli occupation and make it permanent by means of extensive settlement activities."

The settlement of new immigrants in the West Bank and Gaza Strip constituted a violation of the human rights of the Palestinians and was being carried out in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, stressed the Arab League Summit. Resolutions also drew attention to the illegality of the settlements and reiterated calls for their dismantlement. The international community was called upon to set up a special committee to monitor Israeli settlement activity and to take no part in funding or in any other way facilitating the creation of new settlements or expansion of those which already existed. One resolution placed "the fundamental responsibility for this situation on the US since it is the country which supplies Israel with military resources, financial aid and political backing, without which Israel would be unable to continue with this policy".¹⁵⁰

Whilst the summit resolutions warned that member states would revise their relations with other countries according to their position on Palestinian rights and Jewish immigration to occupied Palestine, the resolutions passed did not contain an outright threat of sanctions against any state that aided immigration to Israel without ensuring that new immigrants would not be settled in the occupied territories. Instead, the 21 Arab League members agreed to meet again within two

months to discuss economic relations and policies, including the possibility of implementing sanctions against countries facilitating immigration to Israel without regard to its impact on the peace process. With the eruption of the Gulf Crisis following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, no such second meeting took place.

Israeli commentator Dan Avidan noted that the overriding concerns motivating the summit were that the mass immigration would

extinguish any possibility of reaching a peaceful settlement with Israel over the occupied territories; that it could lead to a collapse of King Hussein's regime if the Palestinians were pushed out to Jordan; and that Israeli expansionism might ultimately extend well beyond the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was in this context that the Arab League termed the mass immigration "a dangerous threat to overall Arab security", explained Avidan.¹⁵¹

"The 12 reiterate their view that Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law. They are seriously concerned at the possibility that immigrants to Israel may be settled in the occupied territories. The further call made in recent days for increased Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza only increases this concern. The 12 deplore the Israeli settlement policy in the occupied territories. The Israeli statements on this matter are not conducive to establishing the climate of confidence necessary to make the progress which is urgently needed in the peace process...The 12 urge the Israeli government not to jeopardise the prospects of bringing peace to the region by either allowing or encouraging Jewish immigrants to settle in the occupied territories."

Statement by the European Community's ministerial conference, Dublin, 20 February 1990, released by the Consulate General of France in Jerusalem, 22 February 1990.

4.2 The USSR

Prior to the changes in Soviet policies under Gorbachev, Soviet foreign policy had tied the resumption of official relations with Israel to Israeli participation in an international conference as a means to arriving at a negotiated settlement to the Israeli-Arab conflict. The Soviet Union was the first state to recognise the State of Israel following its creation in 1948. However, following the 1967 Israeli-Arab war and Israel's subsequent failure to withdraw from the occupied territories, the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic ties with Israel. Under Gorbachev, Soviet policy appeared to move toward renewing relations with Israel and, by 1990, both countries had consular missions in Moscow and Tel Aviv respectively. While complete restoration of

ties between the two countries was still to be achieved, it was no longer clear whether such a move would remain contingent on an international peace conference to solve the Israeli-Arab conflict.

In December 1989 the Israeli national airline El Al signed an agreement with the Soviet national carrier Aeroflot to reinstate direct flights the following month. The Soviet Foreign office, however, delayed implementation of the commercial agreement, in part in protest at Shamir's remarks on immigration and settlement in the occupied territories.¹⁵²

According to the *Jerusalem Post*, Georgiy Martirosov, the head of the Soviet consular mission in Israel, stated that the chances of implementing the direct flights agreement

were "zero" because of certain Israeli statements hindering any possibility of moving this process forward. The statements included Prime Minister Shamir's 14 January comments that a "big" Israel was needed to absorb the wave of new immigrants.¹⁵³ The following day, however, Soviet and Israeli officials signed a memorandum concerning joint scientific and economic projects between the two countries, which included understandings on communications, tourism and transportation.¹⁵⁴

The Soviet government was subject to pressure from the US administration to normalise relations with Israel without linking them to a peace settlement. In February 1990 President Bush stated that Soviet normalisation of diplomatic relations with Israel, including implementing direct flights, would facilitate peace in the Middle East. The same month all 100 US senators signed a letter to Gorbachev asking that "prompt action" be taken to begin direct flights.¹⁵⁵ However, the Soviet Union reportedly rejected US appeals for direct flights to go ahead, and at the end of February US Secretary of State James Baker conceded that the Soviet Union would be more likely to authorise direct flights if Israel would stop building settlements and prevent immigrants from settling in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.¹⁵⁶

At the same time the Soviet Union was under mounting pressure from the Arab states to link emigration to Israel with concrete Israeli assurances that new immigrants would not settle in the occupied territories. Soviet officials consistently emphasised their opposition to the settlement of Soviet Jewish immigrants in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, yet also stated that the USSR had no intention of limiting emigration, which, they argued, was currently being brought into line with international standards on human rights. The officials argued that criticism should rather be directed at the Israeli government, which was violating international law and human rights by its policy of settling Israeli citizens in

occupied Arab territory.¹⁵⁷

On 15 March the Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations condemned the settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories during a UN Security Council session but repeated that his country would not restrict Jewish emigration. He added that tension over the issue would be alleviated were the US to ease its restrictions on Soviet immigration.¹⁵⁸

On 1 June Soviet President Gorbachev and US President Bush met in Washington to sign various bilateral accords, including one on trade, between the two nations. However, the US administration continued to withhold extension of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trading status to the Soviet Union, mainly on grounds that the Soviet government had yet to formally liberalise emigration rights for Soviet citizens. A proposed law which guaranteed freedom of emigration had been drafted but had not yet been passed by the Supreme Soviet.

During a press conference at the end of the superpower summit on 3 June, Gorbachev implied that an understanding had been reached whereby the US would support the USSR in limiting immigration to Israel if the Israeli government continued to refuse to guarantee that the immigrants would not be settled in the occupied territories. Gorbachev's hint created an uproar in Washington, with US Secretary of State James Baker quick to deny that the US had linked the two issues in the way the Soviet leader had suggested.¹⁵⁹

Baker, moreover, warned Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze that there would be "very serious consequences" if the Soviet government moved to limit emigration from the USSR: this was understood to mean that the US would continue to withhold trade benefits to the Soviet Union. Since the US administration still insisted on linking the granting of MFN trading status with the expected Soviet legislation guaranteeing free

emigration, it was felt unlikely that Gorbachev would actually implement his threat to reconsider the basis on which Soviet Jews were issued with exit visas.¹⁶⁰

The beginning of September 1990 witnessed the first official meeting in Moscow between a top Soviet leader and Israeli government ministers since ties were broken off in 1967. Israeli Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i and Science Minister Yuval Ne'eman held talks with President Gorbachev to further promote economic and scientific cooperation between the two countries. According to some reports, Gorbachev hinted broadly that Israel, because of its special trading relations with both the

US and the EEC, could be used by the USSR as a channel to American and European markets.¹⁶¹

At the end of September the Israeli and Soviet foreign ministers agreed to upgrade relations to the level of formal consular ties. The accord, however, still fell short of a restoration of full diplomatic relations. Israeli Transport Minister Moshe Katsav told the press that the Soviet Union had also agreed to begin direct flights by the end of October, reportedly with no conditions attached. Shevardnadze acknowledged that the matter had been discussed with Levy but refused to say whether the issue had been finalised.¹⁶²

Bashir Barghouti, editor-in-chief of the East Jerusalem-based Palestinian weekly *Attali'a*, proposed the creation of an international committee, including the Soviet Union and other members of the UN Security Council, to supervise guarantees that the immigrants would not settle in the occupied territories.

"If the United States can place conditions on its trading agreements with the Soviet Union to the effect that Soviet citizens must be allowed to emigrate if they so choose, then why cannot the Soviet Union, in response to the American conditions, insist on guarantees which prohibit immigrants [to Israel] from settling in the occupied territories...If the Soviet Union links the resumption of official relations with progress towards achieving a just peace settlement, then why not include in the package the question of immigration, so as to prohibit the settlement of immigrants in the occupied territories, thereby providing a means to accelerate efforts towards the international peace conference and the just settlement".

Al-Ittihad, 3 February 1990.

4.3 The USA

When the controversy over Soviet Jewish immigration erupted in early 1990, the Israeli government was requesting financial assistance from the US to help house the new immigrants arriving in Israel. In addition to the annual US aid package to Israel, the Israeli government wanted a \$400 million US government-backed loan under a US Agency for International Development programme. The terms of the proposed loan, like US aid in general, were extremely favourable to Israel and provided US government backing for low-interest

commercial bank loans with a 10-year grace period for repayment.

On 1 May 1990 Senator Robert Dole told the US Senate that the US government provides Israel with nearly \$4 billion in aid each year, not the \$3.5 billion that is usually cited. The figure he gave included side benefits as well as direct aid. He also drew attention to the fact that even if US aid, including the proposed housing loan, was not spent on settling immigrants in the occupied territories, it freed up other funds for the Israeli government to

channel into settlements. US aid, in other

words was fungible, explained Dole.

In late 1989 Israel requested an additional \$400 million in guaranteed housing loans from the US on top of their annual US aid package. In a speech delivered to the US Senate on 1 May 1990 Senator Robert Dole (Republican) noted that the 'housing' loan also covered infrastructure such as roads, utility systems, parks or even consulting services. The money could also be used for luxury housing since the new bill waived the previous requirement that the funds be used for housing the needy, Dole explained, adding:

"I might point out that on my just completed trip to Israel, I visited one new settlement near Bethlehem. I saw there the new houses, being provided to settlers under Israeli government subsidies. There were probably a hundred or more houses already built, and another 30 - 40 under construction. They weren't shacks. They looked like they might fit in pretty well somewhere off Embassy Row in the district [Washington DC]... Now to be clear: the homes I saw were not specifically for new immigrants... Our guarantees will permit Israel to borrow \$400 million. That money will go into Israel's treasury. Our language requires that money - that particular pile of dollar bills - to be used only for housing new immigrants. But what keeps Israel from taking \$400 million of its own money, that it would otherwise use for its housing programme, and now using it elsewhere? ... The \$400 million under the loan guarantee programme will free up \$400 million to use elsewhere. Anywhere."

Excerpts from Senator Dole's statement in the US Senate, 1 May 1990, published in The Washington Report On Middle East Affairs, June 1990, pp.16 - 17.

The official position of the US government during the Carter presidency (1976 - 1980) had been that Israeli settlements were "illegal", as in accordance with international law. With Reagan in office (1980 - 1988) this formulation was softened so that the settlements were termed "obstacles to peace", without reference being made to their illegality. On one occasion Reagan even stated that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were not illegal.

Under President Bush, the US State Department continued to refer to settlements as "obstacles to peace", but was quick to criticise Israeli Prime Minister Shamir's statements concerning "Greater Israel" and settling Soviet Jewish immigrants in the

occupied territories. "We do not think that building more settlements or putting even more settlers in the occupied territories promotes the cause of peace", pronounced US State Department spokesperson Margaret Tutwiler in response to Shamir's 14 January statements. Tutwiler went on to remind reporters present that US aid was limited to "Israel, inside the Green Line" and expressed the present US administration's "hope" that additional US aid would not release Israeli government funds for spending over the Green Line. One reporter attending the press conference noted, however, that despite previous US protests Israel was still pursuing the same settlement policy in the occupied territories.¹⁶³

"It would be very ironic and an unjust reward for all our efforts if their freedom were to be at the expense of the rights, homes and land of the people of the occupied territories".

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in a London address to the Board of Deputies of British Jews, in which she recalled the fact that "many people" had worked very hard to secure the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate.

Jerusalem Post, 20 February 1990.

On 24 January 1990 an unnamed senior US State Department official, known to be a top policy maker on the Middle East, stated that Israel was unlikely to receive the extra aid it needed to absorb the immigrants if it continued to stall on the peace process and tried to settle Soviet Jews in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The statement elicited an angry response from the Israeli cabinet. "The Americans know very well we can't be pressured", asserted a spokesperson for Prime Minister Shamir's office. Vice Premier Shimon Peres told reporters that such threats did not "impress him".¹⁶⁴

Deputy Israeli Foreign Minister Netanyahu returned from a trip to Washington at the end of February expressing concern that the Bush administration was using the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration as a form of pressure to force the Israeli government to make concessions on the peace process.¹⁶⁵ At the time the Israeli government was seen to be stalling on US-mediated efforts to open an Israeli-Palestinian peace dialogue as a step towards arriving at a solution concerning the occupied territories. The US administration was apparently beginning to lose patience with the Israeli government's failure to give an answer to US queries concerning the peace process. Moreover, American officials were known to be becoming increasingly dissatisfied with official Israeli denials that the government had no policy of directing the immigrants to the occupied territories since it was continuing to provide economic incentives for Israelis who settled over the Green Line.¹⁶⁶

Linking US Aid to Settlement

On 1 March US Secretary of State James Baker, apparently with the full backing of President Bush, told a congressional committee that loan guarantees to help Israel house the new immigrants must be linked to a freeze on all settlement activities by the Israeli government. Baker emphasised that the US administration wanted solid assurances that Israel was not engaging in "any new or additional settlement activity", and also drew attention to the fact that since aid was fungible, additional loans for absorbing the immigrants could free funds for settlements.¹⁶⁷ The linkage between US aid and a freeze on Israeli settlement activity marked a significant departure from the previous policy of merely requiring the Israeli government to pledge that US aid would not be spent across the Green Line.

"When you talk about furnishing guarantees to build housing, I don't think it's unreasonable of us...to ask for some assurances that those funds will not be used to create settlements or expand old settlements in the occupied territories."

US Secretary of State James Baker,
Jerusalem Post, 2 March 1990

Baker's remarks created an uproar within the Israeli cabinet and opened up what was to become a major rift between Washington and the Israeli government. Shamir rejected the

proposed linkage between additional aid and a freeze on settlement activity outright, terming it "totally unnecessary" and calling on the US administration to reconsider its decision. In response the State Department reiterated its original position: "We regard them [the settlements] as an obstacle to peace. As such, we draw a very clear distinction between absorption of Soviet Jews into Israel and their settlement in the territories", repeated spokesperson Tutwiler. The US would only support the loan if it could obtain "assurances respecting settlement activity", she added.¹⁶⁸

The rift between the US and the Israeli government widened considerably when President Bush then raised objections to the "new Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem".¹⁶⁹ On 3 March Bush reconfirmed that the US has regarded East Jerusalem as "occupied territory" since 1967.¹⁷⁰

"There are no settlements in East Jerusalem," responded Shamir. "Jerusalem is not subject to negotiations. We shall not be party to any action that brings into question the status of Jerusalem as Israel's capital". Added the Israeli Prime Minister: "Our policy is to bring as many Soviet Jewish immigrants to Jerusalem as soon as possible".¹⁷¹ Labour leader Shimon Peres also insisted that the political future of Jerusalem was not subject to negotiations. "Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Jewish people and will always be so", declared Peres one day after his Likud counterpart.¹⁷²

Activists in the Israeli peace movement then added their voices to the mounting criticism of the stand taken on East Jerusalem by the US administration. The respective heads of Peace Now, the Citizens Rights Movement and Mapam asserted that "Jewish areas" of East Jerusalem were rightful parts of Israel that should be open to settlement by new Soviet immigrants or any other Jews. The existing settlements in East Jerusalem "are established facts...whether they [the US] like it or not",

commented MK Yair Tsaban. Peace Now leader Tsali Reshef stated that Peace Now had "no problem" with Jews settling in East Jerusalem's Jewish areas. In the meantime, Mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek repeated Shamir's formula: "There are no settlements in East Jerusalem".¹⁷³

On 12 March the US State Department appeared to concede in the face of Israeli protests. "We recognise it as a sensitive issue. We've made it clear that Jerusalem should never be divided again", announced Tutwiler in Washington.¹⁷⁴ The following day, President Bush sent a letter to Teddy Kollek which stressed that the basis of the US position was an undivided Jerusalem. "Jerusalem must never again be a divided city. This was and is the policy of the United States, and it is my policy. Our efforts in the peace process are in no way designed to promote the division of Jerusalem", wrote Bush.¹⁷⁵ While such remarks remained in line with international proposals which envisage Jerusalem as a city shared between the various different national and religious groups, the statement marked a shift to a far more conciliatory tone towards Israeli refusal to countenance any peace negotiations involving the status of Jerusalem.

Bush's statements on East Jerusalem were later credited with pushing Shamir to a more rejectionist stance concerning the proposed US terms for an Israeli-Palestinian peace dialogue, and thereby helping to bring about the collapse of the Labour-Likud government on 15 March. Bush, however, later asserted that he did not regret his 3 March statement. In a letter sent to Shamir at the end of May 1990, Bush reportedly indicated that the US would oppose Israel, including at the UN, if Israel did not halt expansion of settlements in the occupied territories; the letter came in the wake of the new Israeli government's stress on settlement expansion. In his reply some two weeks later Shamir rejected US-sponsored terms for peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.¹⁷⁶

The issue of Israeli settlements and US aid again made the headlines when, in September 1990, US Secretary of State Baker held his first meeting with the new Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and again linked the issue of Israeli settlements to US assistance for housing the new immigrants. Israel's requested \$400 million housing loan had been approved by the US Congress in the spring, but had yet to be endorsed by the US president.

During the meeting, Baker told Levy that the US administration wanted a freeze to all Israeli settlement activity. Particular stress was laid on halting expansion of existing settlements, as well as ending the economic incentives provided by the Israeli government which attract Israelis to live in the settlements. In addition, the US administration made it clear that it no longer believed that verbal promises from the Israeli government that it would not spend US aid across the Green Line were sufficient, and instead wanted Israel to file reports on how much money was being spent on the settlements. Two thirds of the Baker-Levy talks were taken up with the issue of US aid and Israeli settlements.¹⁷⁷

On 2 October the Bush administration agreed to transfer the loan to Israel providing that the Israeli government use the funds only in "areas under Israeli administration before 5 June 1967" (i.e. excluding East Jerusalem) and to supply annual reports of Israeli funding for settlements as a form of verification that the \$400 million loan would not free an equivalent sum for settlement activity.¹⁷⁸

On 10 October the US State Department made public the letter written by Levy to Baker in return for the US administration's final approval of the housing loan guarantees. The text was publicised after Israeli government officials claimed that no commitment to halt settlement building and housing immigrants in East Jerusalem had been made.

In his letter of 2 October, Levy had written: "As I said in our meetings, I can confirm that the official policy of the Government of Israel with respect to the absorption of immigrants from the Soviet Union is in accordance with the statement by Prime Minister Shamir in his June 27, 1990 letter to President Bush and the statement by the Minister of Housing Sharon on June 25, 1990, namely the government of Israel's policy is not to direct or settle Soviet Jews beyond the Green Line ... Consistent with the traditional assurances which the Government of Israel provides in our assistance agreements...uses of the housing loan guarantees will be restricted to the geographic areas which were subject to the Government of Israel's administration prior to June 5, 1967. I also want to reconfirm...that no special incentives exist to encourage Soviet Jewish immigrants to settle beyond the Green Line, nor are we planning to provide such incentives in the future. ..."179

An aide to Levy later admitted that the letter constituted "a serious policy error" since the wording of the letter implied Israeli agreement not to settle immigrants in East Jerusalem as well as the rest of the occupied territories, while in fact, in the words of the *Jerusalem Post*, the Israeli government "has concrete plans" to settle Soviet Jews in East Jerusalem "by the thousands".¹⁸⁰

Meanwhile, Jerusalem's mayor Kollek reacted with dismay at what amounted to a pledge not to settle new immigrants in East Jerusalem. Stressing that Jerusalem was "one city", Kollek noted that there were already municipality plans in place for 12,000 housing units to be constructed for Soviet Jews in East Jerusalem "immediately". Kollek also drew attention to Housing Ministry plans, engineered by Sharon, to build houses for 5,000 Soviet immigrants in Jerusalem for each of the next eight years, with most of the construction envisaged over the Green Line.¹⁸¹

"East Jerusalem was not under Israeli control before 5 June 1967. I don't understand why this is not clear."

US Secretary of State James Baker speaking to reporters in Washington on 16 October concerning continued Israeli construction in East Jerusalem and the pledge not to spend the housing loan across the Green Line on 16 October 1990.

***Jerusalem Post*, 17 October 1990.**

A prominent Likud minister noted that there were "two serious problems" with the Levy letter, firstly that the letter falsely promised that Israel would not settle Soviet Jews across the Green Line, including in East Jerusalem, and secondly that the Israeli government would "now have to report all forms of settlement activity to the administration...including [the building of] new neighbourhoods in existing settlements, not just the construction of new settlements. This invites massive US pressure in the future..."¹⁸²

Less than a week after Levy confirmed that Israeli policy was not to "direct or settle Soviet Jews beyond the Green Line", Prime Minister Shamir declared that his government would continue to build housing in East Jerusalem and to settle new immigrants there. The assertion came in a speech delivered to hundreds of National Religious Party members who were gathered to mark the opening of a new yeshiva in East Jerusalem's A-Tur district.¹⁸³ The following week saw Housing Minister Sharon declare that "there is no Green Line in Jerusalem. The only obligation that the government undertook was not to initiate settlement of Soviet Jews in Judea and Samaria. It never undertook any obligation toward Jerusalem. Moreover, the government, and I myself, have made it known at every opportunity that we will do everything toward settling Jews in Jerusalem."¹⁸⁴

Another "informed source" quoted by the *Jerusalem Post* played down the actual implications of Levy's letter, maintaining that

"right now, both sides can claim ambiguity, as Israel can contend that the new housing in East Jerusalem is for all Israelis, not just Soviet immigrants."¹⁸⁵ In fact, several passages of the letter can be interpreted as ambiguous: Levy's assurance that the government's policy is "not to direct or settle Soviet Jews beyond the Green Line" was fully in line with the official contention that settlement is a matter of individual "freedom of choice". Levy could also claim to have been accurate in his reference to those "special incentives" which encourage settlement beyond the Green Line: after all, these special incentives exist for all Israelis, and not for Soviet Jews in particular.

On the basis of such an interpretation of the letter, the Israeli government could claim to have fulfilled US demands while at the same time pursuing its settlement policy. US Secretary of State Baker, along with Teddy Kollek and several members of the Likud, obviously interpreted Levy's letter as a commitment on the part of the Israeli government that Soviet Jewish immigrants would not end up living in Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. At the end of October 1990, Baker was still delaying the implementation of the housing loan guarantee programme because he reportedly remained doubtful of the Israeli government's position.¹⁸⁶ The dispute between the Bush administration and the Israeli government over the settlement of new immigrants remained unresolved. Furthermore, it was to be expected that Israel would continue to try, through misleading debates

over semantics, to throw sand in the eyes of its critics and distract from its real policy objectives.

On 19 October Senator Dole brought before the US Senate a proposed amendment to the 1990 foreign aid bill which asked the Bush administration to submit regular detailed reports to Congress "on [Israeli] settlement activity in all occupied territory." The resolution stated that Israel "sought to encourage an increase in the settlement of Soviet Jewish refugees in East Jerusalem" in contradiction of the assurances given by Levy in his 2 October letter. Introducing the proposed bill, Dole explained that reports on all settlement activity were essential since "with the fungibility of dollars, almost all US aid to Israel" has relevance to the issue. The bill was defeated by 90 votes to 8.

Jerusalem Post, 21 October 1990

The Congressional Research Service lists 43 special laws that have been enacted over the years solely to benefit Israel - at the cost of millions of dollars to the US taxpayer.

Middle East International, 8 June 1990.

5. Israeli Settlements and the Prospects for Peace

Following Israeli Prime Minister Shamir's January 1990 statements linking immigration to further Israeli settlement of the occupied territories, leading Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip appealed to the international community to prevent the Israeli government from settling Soviet Jewish immigrants in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A memorandum signed by 26 Palestinian

figures called on foreign governments to take "practical steps to ensure that no immigrant to Israel will be settled in the occupied territories...including East Jerusalem". The memorandum spoke of Israel's "creation of facts" and "the use of the Soviet Jewish immigration issue as a rationalisation for Israeli entrenchment, territorial expansion and intransigence [which] will inevitably have disastrous effects on peace in the region".¹⁸⁷

In the face of international criticism the Israeli government denied that it had a policy of settling new immigrants in the occupied territories, but refused to guarantee that immigrants would not settle in the occupied territories of their own accord. The present paper has shown that in the meantime Israeli government subsidies continued to encourage Israelis, including new immigrants, to move across the Green Line and take advantage of the cheap housing and employment opportunities available on the settlements.

As the year proceeded, new settlements were built and existing ones expanded. Palestinians in the occupied territories viewed the increased settlement activity as concrete signs of Israel's determination to perpetuate the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and, in particular, to strengthen its hold in East Jerusalem. In their view, increased Israeli intransigence in the wake of the mass influx of new immigrants to the country would result in an indefinite delay to a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.¹⁸⁸

Israeli settlements exist in violation of international law, which prohibits the transfer of civilians into occupied territory.¹⁸⁹ A consensus exists in the international community that Israel's settlement policy constitutes a major political obstacle to a negotiated peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Neither of these factors, however, has prevented Israel from creating facts on the ground by settling tens of thousands of its citizens in the occupied

territories. The present paper has highlighted the extent to which Israel is using the current mass immigration of Soviet Jews to step up its settlement policy.

In the face of such blatant disregard for international law and the rights of the Palestinian population under occupation, in May 1990 the Arab states at the United Nations engaged in drafting a resolution to condemn the settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories, including in East Jerusalem. The US was reported to be coordinating with the Arab states to arrive at a resolution which it would support. The original resolution proposed was to charge Israel with violating the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibition on the transfer of civilians in to occupied territories. The resolution was also to reaffirm Security Council Resolution 465 (1980) which termed the settlements "illegal" and called for their dismantlement, as well as declaring the need for "international protection" for the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.¹⁹⁰

Following the killing of seven Palestinians by an Israeli gunman in Rishon Lezion on 20 May, and the shooting dead of a further six Palestinians by the Israeli army the same day, an emergency Security Council session was called to debate a proposal to station an international UN observer force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in order to monitor Israeli activities in the occupied territories and provide international protection for the Palestinian population. Yet even when this proposal was downgraded to a call for a simple investigative mission to be sent to under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council,¹⁹¹ the US vetoed the resolution.

On 8 October, 17 Palestinian were killed by Israeli police gunfire at al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem's Old City. Again, the Arab states sought to bring before the UN Security Council a resolution which could lead to international

protection for Palestinians in the occupied territories. In the end a resolution passed welcoming the decision of the UN Secretary-General to send special envoys to investigate the incident and requesting that the envoys report back to the Security Council. The Israeli cabinet, however, rejected the dispatch of an investigative mission to be sent by the UN secretary-general. One senior Israeli government official explained that "Israel will not cooperate with a delegation which we fear may be seeking to undermine our sovereignty over the capital."¹⁹²

The same day that Israel refused to cooperate with any fact-finding mission, the Israeli government announced the establishment of a new settlement in East Jerusalem. The settlement, Har Homa, is intended to house some 25,000 Israelis and is to be built on Jebel Abu Ghneim between the Palestinian village of Um Tuba, now part of Israel's Jerusalem municipality, and the town of Beit Sahour near Bethlehem in the West Bank. Commented one Israeli peace activist: "Building yet another Jewish settlement in Greater Jerusalem's Jebel Abu Ghneim...is as counter-productive to peace as building settlements anywhere else across the Green Line."¹⁹³

The plan to set up another settlement in East Jerusalem, and the timing of its announcement, exemplified yet again Israel's disregard of international public opinion and its indifference towards the rights of the Palestinian population. It has been shown in the preceding pages that the widespread criticism by the international community has at best induced Israel to draw a veil over government settlement policy. If Israel is to be prevailed upon to actually alter its policy in the occupied territories, a crucial role will obviously fall on the US. The issue of the \$400 million housing loan shows that the US is in a position to enforce a change of Israeli government policy; in the past, however, the US has usually restricted its influence to criticising Israeli policy while at the same time

providing the means which helped Israel to implement that same policy. It has also been shown that in view of Israel's persistent efforts to divert attention from its settlement policy, if the US is serious about the conditions it has placed on granting aid to Israel, it will have to set up mechanisms to actually monitor Israel's compliance with such conditions.

Following the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, international attention has to an extent been diverted from Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and from the related issue of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel. However, some observers have noted that the interest of the international community in upholding international law with reference to the case of Kuwait might lead to a positive outcome for the Middle East as a whole if such efforts are not exclusively focussed on the Gulf crisis, but are expanded to embrace other issues including Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank and

Gaza Strip.

The central issue that the mass immigration to Israel has highlighted is the universal applicability of international law and human rights standards. Palestinians note that Israel's settlement policy in the occupied territories has openly flouted international law for 23 years without penalty or threat of sanctions, despite the fact that there is no disagreement within the international community about the meaning of the Fourth Geneva Convention. If superpower cooperation and the Gulf crisis have introduced an era during which the United Nations will play a more active role in upholding international law in world affairs, it is to be hoped that Israel's continuous occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the suppression of the human and political rights of the Palestinian population will finally be addressed by the international community in order to bring peace to the Middle East.

A Palestinian Memorandum

In January 1990, 31 leading Palestinian politicians from the occupied territories issued a memorandum calling on foreign consuls-general in Jerusalem to implement the following:

- 1. Issuing a clear and unequivocal statement and deciding on practical steps that will ensure that no immigrant to Israel will be settled in the Occupied Territories, i.e. Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.*
- 2. Taking practical steps to urge Israel to address the issue of the Palestinians, both in exile and under occupation, before any changes to the demographic status quo are carried out.*
- 3. Non-manipulation of the Soviet Jewish immigration issue for Israeli political ends, specifically as a means of undermining the peace process.*
- 4. Preventing Israel from creating demographic and geo-political changes which would threaten the stability of the whole area.*

(cntd.)

5. Lifting undue restrictions on the absorption of Soviet immigration in the West, in accordance with the Helsinki Accords' guidelines.

6. Preventing Israel from continuing its policy of oppression and human rights violations against the Palestinian population, and persuading it to refrain from carrying out any measures which are liable to aggravate the situation even further.

Source: Attali'a, 25 January 1990

APPENDIX 1

Israeli Settlement Plans

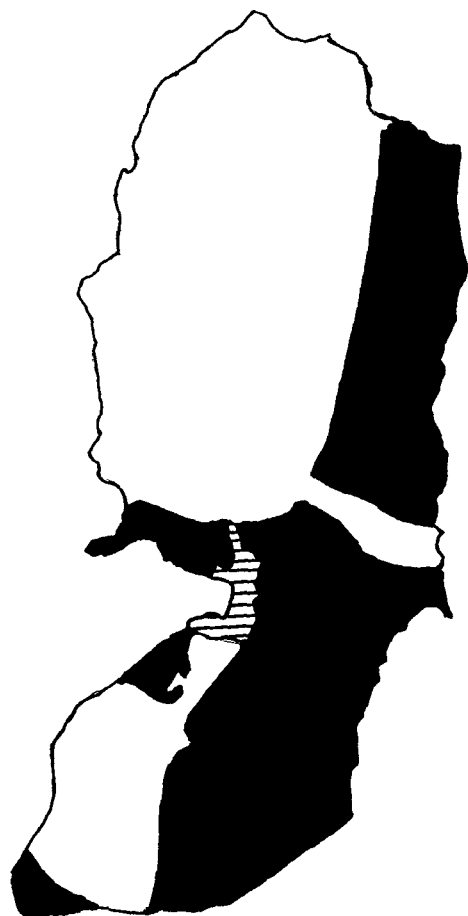
The Labour Party based their settlement policy on the **Allon Plan**, first put forward in July 1967, which stressed the need for Israeli settlement of the Jordan Valley, the Judean Desert and the Jerusalem area. The Allon Plan was later supplemented by a number of other plans which called for settlement to be expanded to the highlands north of Ramallah and south of Bethlehem. The updated Allon plan remains the basis of the **Labour Party's "territorial compromise" plan** which constituted part of the programme on which the party fought the last general election in Israel in 1988.¹⁹⁴ Under the "territorial compromise" plan Israel would annex parts of the West Bank while the remaining areas would be placed under Jordanian rule.

In 1978 the settler movement Gush Emunim submitted a massive settlement plan to the first Likud government to come to power in Israel. The plan was designed to divide Palestinian population centres into isolated blocs by establishing two chains of settlements cutting across the West Bank. By 1977 seven settlements had already been established outside the zones designated for settlement in the original version of the Allon Plan. Five had been established in defiance of official Alignment government decisions with the full support of Labour leader Shimon Peres as Minister of Defence in the Labour-led coalition government. The Gush Emunim plan provided the basis for the **Drobless Plan** implemented through the World Zionist Organisation during the Likud years of government; the stated goal of the plan was to "minimise the danger of another Arab state in the region" by creating a maximum spread of settlements all over the West Bank.¹⁹⁵

As Minister of Defence 1981 - 1983, Ariel Sharon put forward a settlement plan which defined 75% of the West Bank as "regions important to Israel's security". Settlements were to be built in these regions which would then be annexed to Israel while the remaining 25% were to become "self-governing".¹⁹⁶ The **Sharon Plan** constitutes one of several Israeli autonomy plans under which Israel would annex part of the occupied territories, while the remainder would remain under the ultimate control of the Israeli military with local municipalities responsible only for municipal affairs, education, welfare, industry and trade. The Israeli military would continue to issue military orders and would remain in charge of security, land matters and water resources; Israeli troops, army bases and civilian outposts would remain in the region permanently. According to Israeli researcher Meron Benvenisti, such autonomy schemes grant the Palestinians "even less authority than South Africa gives the self-governing black regions (Bantustans)".¹⁹⁷

MAP 6

ALLON PLAN, 1970



■ Areas to be annexed to Israel
▨ Annexed East Jerusalem

MAP 7

LABOUR SETTLEMENT PLAN, 1976

('Territorial Compromise' as of 1976)



■ Areas to be annexed to Israel
▨ Annexed East Jerusalem

MAP 8

DROBLESS SETTLEMENT PLAN, 1978-1981
(WORLD ZIONIST ORGANISATION)



■ Areas to be annexed to Israel
▨ Annexed East Jerusalem

MAP 9

SHARON PLAN, 1981
('Areas Vital to Israel's Security')



■ Settlement Bloc
▨ Annexed East Jerusalem

APPENDIX 2

Israeli Investment in Settlements in the Occupied Territories

Israeli governments invested some US \$2 billion in settlements in the occupied territories between 1968 and 1985:

1968 - 1977	approx. US\$750 million	Labour-led Alignment governments
1977 - 1984	approx. US\$1 billion	Likud government
1984 - 1985	approx. US\$250 million	Likud/Labour National Unity government
TOTAL:	US\$2 billion	

Figures are estimates only since official sources do not usually itemise their budgets by region. The figures do not include the huge amounts spent by the Ministry of Defence, part of which serves the needs of Israeli settlers. Ministry of Defence spending is classified information.¹⁹⁸ Under the Labour/Likud coalition government in 1985, construction in the West Bank amounted to 30% of total public construction, a figure higher than under preceding Likud governments.¹⁹⁹

Amount Invested by the Israeli government in settlements in the West Bank in 1983

Direct construction activity by the	
Ministry of Housing and Construction:	US\$40.0 million
Intermediate financing to contractors:	US\$18.5 million
Assistance to settlers (mortgages/grants):	US\$33.5 million
Road development:	US\$45.5 million
Water development:	US\$ 5.5 million
Land purchase:	US\$ 1.5 million
WZO settlement division:	US\$40.5 million
Ministry of Industry and Trade:	US\$26.0 million
Communications:	US\$10.5 million
TOTAL:	US\$221.50 million

According to figures of the state comptroller's office cited in Benvenisti, Meron, The West Bank Handbook, The West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem 1986, pp.123f.

APPENDIX 3

Israeli Government and Non-Governmental Bodies Involved in the Settlement Programme

The following list of various government and extra-governmental bodies involved in settlement planning, financing and building and their particular functions is summarised from Benvenisti, Meron, The West Bank Handbook, The West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem, 1986, unless otherwise stated:

THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR SETTLEMENT coordinates settlement activities between the various government ministries and extra-governmental bodies involved in settling the occupied territories. The committee is composed of seven Israeli government ministers and seven executive members of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO). The settlement committee is empowered to decide on settlement throughout the occupied territories; its decisions become government decisions if no minister objects at a cabinet meeting. The Minister of Agriculture presides over the committee. Depending on the subject under discussion, there are also representatives from other official bodies including the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces), the Jewish Agency and settler organisations present at the meetings, who inform and advise the committee on planning and establishment of settlements. Major decisions taken by the committee have included approving development plans for Jewish settlement; granting favourable terms for leasing government lands, and agreeing to permit private developers to build settlements in the occupied territories (The West Bank Handbook, pp.147f.).

THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION is the main government body responsible for construction of Israeli settlements and infrastructure in the occupied territories. The Ministry is involved in planning programmes; allocation of land; development of sites and infrastructure (roads, water, electricity, sewerage); construction of public institutions; interim financing and compulsory purchase of some of the housing units. It also assists in the purchase of houses on the settlements as well as rental and "build-your-own-home" schemes and subsidises public institutions and commercial centres through the Shikun Upituah Company (The West Bank Handbook, pp.151f.).

THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE is indirectly involved in settlement through the Israel Lands Authority; Mekorot, the Israeli national water company; the Nature Reserves Authority, and the settlement department of the World Zionist Organisation (The West Bank Handbook, p.151).

OTHER MINISTRIES involved in settlement programmes in the occupied territories include the Ministry of Defence (through the IDF and the Civil Administration); the Ministry of Trade and Industry (responsible for industrial zones and business projects); the Ministry of the Interior (through the regional settlement councils); the Ministry of Justice (deciding on land matters); the Ministry of Energy (through the Electricity Corporation); and also

the ministries of Health, Communications, and Education and Culture (in the provision of services).

THE JEWISH AGENCY functions in the occupied territories through the WZO in order to prevent political and legal complications arising over investments in the occupied territories; such activities are ruled out by the tax exemption on United Jewish Appeal (UJA) funds and by articles of the Jewish Agency institutions in the US (The West Bank Handbook, p.225).

THE WORLD ZIONIST ORGANISATION (WZO) serves as a cover for Jewish Agency work in the occupied territories. Channeling funds through this organisation, the Jewish Agency has provided some US\$0.5 billion for settlement activity since 1977 (Davar, 23 February 1990).

THE JEWISH NATIONAL FUND (JNF) is engaged in land acquisition activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; it then prepares the land for the building of settlements, roads and afforestation. It constructs roads as a subcontractor to the government. In 1984 the JNF invested US\$1.4 million in the West Bank alone (The West Bank Handbook, p.134).

THE HISTADRUT (Israeli Labour Federation) is involved in construction work on settlements. The Histadrut's holding company Hevrat Ha'ordim officially sanctioned the participation of its companies in building houses on settlements in 1983. During the preceding year, approximately 20% of a total of 3,000 new building projects in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) were already carried out by Histadrut enterprises (Jerusalem Post, 4 January 1983).

SETTLER MOVEMENTS, in particular GUSH EMUNIM, have become the "de facto settlement arm" or "vanguard" of Israeli government settlement policies (Shehadeh, Raja. *Occupier's Law: Israel and the West Bank*, Al-Haq, Ramallah, 1986, p.18). Gush Emunim (The Block of the Faithful) was founded in 1974 as an offshoot of the National Religious Party and professes belief in the messianic redemption of Jews through settlement of the biblical land of Israel. Amana, the official settlement arm of Gush Emunim, has been generously financed by government budgets and WZO funds (The West Bank Handbook, p.6/126).

PRIVATE DEVELOPERS have been permitted to participate in establishing settlements since 1982. Private developers build settlements while the Israeli government contributes to infrastructure, investment, mortgages and offers financial incentives. Under the "Build Your Own Home", scheme, the Ministry of Housing and Construction allocates plots of land for Israelis to build their own houses. Government aid given to encourage house construction in the West Bank is far higher than that available for building inside the Green Line. The Housing Ministry funds the infrastructure and development as well as providing additional subsidies in the form of low-interest loans for building cooperatives (The West Bank Handbook, p.15).

Or-SBA is one of the private companies which builds homes and industrial structures in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Or-SBA is a subsidiary of the parent company SBA founded by the Gush Emunim settlement movement, Amana and run jointly by the Samaria, Mateh Benyamin and Gush Etzion regional councils (Benvenisti, 1986 Report, Demographic, Economic, Legal, Social and Political Developments in the West Bank, West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem, 1986, p.59).

APPENDIX 4

New Israeli Settlements During the Likud-led caretaker Government (March - June 1990)

GAZA STRIP

Dugit, near Jabalia Refugee Camp: Construction work began on 18 April, with mobile homes put in place on 23 April. The first ten or so families were expected to move in by the end of July 1990.²⁰⁰

Pe'at Sadeh, near Rafah/Rafah Refugee Camp: Israeli settlement officials announced plans in mid-April to establish a new settlement near the Egyptian border. By early July construction work on 26 villas was nearing completion, with settlers then housed in caravans were expected to take up residence in their homes by mid-August.²⁰¹

WEST BANK excluding East Jerusalem

Allon, 15 km east of Jerusalem: mobile homes put in place on 25 April.²⁰²

Joseph's Tomb, Nablus: MK Dedi Zucker (Citizens Right Movement) revealed Defence Ministry plans to build living quarters for yeshiva students who study there. The tomb was taken over from the Islamic Waqf in 1982 and since then settlers from settlements surrounding Nablus have studied there by day under army guard. On 3 May prominent right-wing politicians attended a ceremony in which the cornerstone for a new building was laid at the site.²⁰³

MK Dedi Zucker also exposed Defence Ministry plans to improve living quarters for settlers in central Hebron.²⁰⁴

Prime Minister Shamir's Settlement Advisor Michael Dekel also set in motion plans for the construction of two new settlements, **Hatsi Shomron** and **Reihan Heh**, to be built north of Nablus. Hatsi Shomron is one of the eight settlements agreed on by the former Likud-Labour national unity government. At the beginning of May 1990, the government announced plans to turn several Nahal army bases in the West Bank into fully-fledged civilian settlements as well as to clear the ground for other settlements that would be civilian from the start. **Nahal Elisha** in the Jericho area and **Nahal Gevaot** in the Bethlehem area were expected to become civilian settlements within the next few months. **Nahal Eshkolot** was due to be handed over to civilians during the summer.²⁰⁵

EAST JERUSALEM

On 23 January 1990 the deputy mayor of Jerusalem announced that the city council had approved plans to build 2,200 apartments in north Jerusalem and to make more land available in several areas including in the vicinity of **Gilo**, an Israeli settlement near Bethlehem. On 12 February Education Minister Yitzhak Navon visited a school in Gilo where Soviet Jewish immigrant children were being taught.²⁰⁶

In mid-March Israeli Deputy Premier and Minister of Housing David Levy (Likud) inaugurated the new settlement of **East Pisgat Ze'ev** in the Beit Hanina Palestinian suburb of East Jerusalem.²⁰⁷ Israeli officials plan to develop the Pisgat Ze'ev settlement zone into the largest housing estate in Israel.²⁰⁸

On 12 April some 150 Jewish settlers moved into **St. John's Hospice** in the Old City's Christian Quarter. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, which owns the property, fought the eviction of the new residents in the Israeli courts. At the time of writing 20 settlers remained in the building after a Jerusalem Magistrates Court ruling that they could remain as representatives of the Panamanian real estate company which bought the sublease from the former tenant. Revelations that the Israeli Ministry of Construction and Housing provided US\$3.6 million for the purchase of the sublease sparked international protest. The settlers who occupied St. John's Hospice are affiliated with Ateret Cohen Yeshiva, which has long been active in taking over structures in the Old City's Muslim Quarter.²⁰⁹ Ateret Cohen continues to receive money from the Religious Affairs Ministry for buying property in the Muslim Quarter.²¹⁰

APPENDIX 5

Examples of Settlement Expansion July 1990

By July 1990 construction in the following settlements was either in progress or planned:

EAST JERUSALEM

According to a Jerusalem municipality official, by July 1990 preliminary administrative procedures had been completed for building 8,000 - 9,000 houses with construction expected to begin at the end of the year.

The Absorption Ministry estimated that 8,500 ready made units would be allocated within two years to Neveh Ya'acov, Gilo and Pisgat Ze'ev. A Jerusalem municipality plan for 40,000 new homes for Orthodox Jews in Shu'fat was approved by the Ministry of Housing. The Jerusalem Municipality also intended to add 1,000 new homes to Ramot, 800 to French Hill and several hundreds to Ramot Eshkol; this was compared to a total of 1,700 units planned for West Jerusalem.²¹¹

GAZA STRIP

According to the head of the Gaza Coast Regional Council, Zvi Hendel, by early July 1990 expansion work was in progress in 5 settlements with a total of 103 new homes under construction, including:

Neveh Dekalim, near Khan Younis Refugee Camp	60 homes
Eilei Sinai, near Beit Lahia	13 homes
Gadid, near Khan Younis Refugee Camp	10 homes
Atzmona, near Rafah/Rafah Refugee Camp	10 homes
Ganei Tel, near Khan Younis Refugee Camp	10 homes
TOTAL:	103 homes under construction ²¹²

WEST BANK

According to a spokesperson for the Citizens Rights Movement, between January and May 1990, construction work for additional housing commenced on at least 5 West Bank settlements:

Beitar near Jerusalem	305 homes
Efrat near Bethlehem	100 homes
Ariel near Nablus	100 homes
Alfei Menashe near Qalqilia	52 homes
Ma'ale Adumin near Jerusalem	26 homes
TOTAL:	585 homes under construction ²¹³

NOTES

1. Cf. Al-Haq, A Nation Under Siege. Al-Haq Annual Report on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: 1989, Ramallah, 1990, p. 126.

2. Between the 1930s and 1950s restrictions on international travel and emigration aimed at conserving economic and military strength and preventing internal "subversion" through contact with external elements hostile to the regime. During the 1960s exit policies became more liberal, with the result that, by the 1970s, it had become easier for Soviet citizens to emigrate. A number of factors, however, continued to discourage emigration. These included the cost of an exit visa, obligatory renunciation of Soviet citizenship upon leaving, and the need to obtain the consent of immediate family members. Members of the intelligentsia who applied for exit visas often lost their professional posts and worked instead as labourers while waiting for their application to be processed. Processing was a lengthy procedure and included investigations of applicants to ascertain that they had not had access to state secrets. Those involved in scientific or military work were often turned down. The breakdown of international detente and the revival of the Cold War at the end of the 1970s led to increased emigration restrictions as well as implementation of harsher measures against pro-Western Soviet dissidents.

For further background to the history of emigration policies in the Soviet Union and elsewhere see: Szymanski, Albert, Human Rights in the Soviet Union, Zed Books Ltd, London, 1984, especially "The Historical Logic of Restricted Emigration and Exit" and "Comparative Analysis", pp. 13-29 and p. 268.

2. A draft of a proposed emigration law affirming that "every Soviet citizen has the right to leave the country and return" existed but is still to be debated in the Supreme Soviet. "Only when all Soviet citizens enjoy the right to emigrate, can [Soviet Jewish] emigration be viewed as the result of the new Soviet policy of glasnost", noted one observer in view of the fact that freedom of emigration did not yet apply to all Soviet citizens. See Bishara, Azmi, Soviet Jewish Immigration to Israel During the Age of Perestroika, PASSIA, East Jerusalem, 1990, p.18.

3. Cf. The Jackson Amendment to the Trade Reform Act (1972), in: Laqueur, Walter, and Barry Rubin, The Human Rights Reader, New American Library, New York, 1979, p.279.

4. Cf. prominent Soviet Jewish dissident Andrei Sakharov's plea to the US Congress not to forget that there were other Soviet citizens, besides members of the Soviet Jewish community, who wished to leave the Soviet Union: "Open Letter to the United States Congress 1974", Ibid., pp.280f.

5. For further information concerning US foreign policy and human rights, including the definition of refugee status, see: The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Human Rights and US Foreign Policy Report and Recommendations: December 1988, New York, 1988.

6. Cf. Hunter, Jane, "Why Not Go to Israel?" in: Middle East International, 22 September 1989, pp.14f.

7. Middle East Report, May - August 1990, p.46.
8. Cf. Szymanski, Op. Cit., pp.98f.
9. Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, July 1988, p.23.
10. Jerusalem Post, 20 February 1990.
11. Jerusalem Post, 29 June 1990.
12. Ibid.
13. Hunter, Op. Cit.
14. Cf. Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin, "A Miracle Made in Moscow and Washington", in: Middle East Report, May - August 1990, pp.46f.
15. Cited by Hunter, Op. Cit.
16. Jerusalem Post, 12 September 1990.
17. Jerusalem Post, 2 October 1990.
18. Jerusalem Post, 21 October 1990.
19. Jerusalem Post, 2 October 1990.
20. Jerusalem Post, 25 January 1990.
21. In February 1990 senior Israeli immigration officials were already predicting that 750,000 Jews would leave the Soviet Union over the next decade, a figure which constituted one third of the total Jewish population in the Soviet Union (see Jerusalem Post, 21 February 1990). In June the Israeli government, in conjunction with the Jewish Agency, agreed on a programme to absorb 150,000 immigrants a year for the subsequent three years at a cost of \$2.3 billion. The Jewish Agency was to pay approximately \$362 million of the programme (see Jerusalem Post, 27 June 1990). By August 1990 Prime Minister Shamir was citing a figure of one million Soviet immigrants expected to arrive in Israel by the year 2000 (see Jerusalem Post, 28 August 1990).
22. Jerusalem Post, 27 September 1990.
23. In a number of locations across Israel homeless families pitched tents outside the Knesset, in parks and in other public places to protest their plight. Housing Ministry officials told homeless Israelis in Jerusalem that a long-term solution to the housing problem would not be achieved for years (see Jerusalem Post, 17 July 1990). In mid-July Israeli officials announced plans to begin sending new Soviet Jewish immigrants to hotels and guest houses due to the lack of alternative housing (see Jerusalem Post, 16 July 1990).

24. In July Peretz predicted that another 100,000 unemployed would soon to be added to the 150,000 Israelis already unable to find jobs. Peretz commented that, compared to the housing crisis, "the inevitable competition over employment is expected to be much more vicious, violent and personal" (see Jerusalem Post, 20 July 1990). Earlier in the year, Peretz had stated that only 26% of Soviet Jews who arrived during 1989 had found jobs (see Davar, 26 March 1990, translated by Israel Shahak). Unemployment in Israel then officially stood at approximately 9%. An economic study carried out by Bank Hapoalim concluded that in order to prevent unemployment rising and without allowing for any population increase, Israel must create 1.6% more jobs than existed. With an influx of an estimated 100,000 immigrants a year, 4% more jobs or 20,000 more jobs would have to be created at an investment cost of \$57,500 per job (see Jerusalem Post, 18 July 1990). - By the summer of 1990 unemployment in Israel had risen to 10.4% of the entire labour force. According to the Employment Service's director-general David Mena, 30% of all new immigrants who had arrived in Israel by August 1990 had joined the unemployment lines. Mena went on to note that many of the new immigrants who had found work were employed as unskilled labourers despite their professional qualifications (see Jerusalem Post, 22 August 1990).
25. Jerusalem Post, 23 July 1990.
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31. Cf. ibid., pp.61f.
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33. Ibid.
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36. Cf. Benvenisti, Handbook, p.166.
37. Benvenisti, Meron, 1986 Report: Demographic, Economic, Legal, Social and Political Developments in the West Bank, The West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem, 1986, p.57.

38. Cf. The Centre for Engineering and Planning, Land Use in the Occupied Palestinian Territory - Israel's Tool for Annexation, Ramallah, June 1990, pp.3ff.
39. Benvenisti, Handbook, p.40.
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42. Ibid. pp. 53f.
43. Cf. Hielsher, Almut, "Arabs vs. Settlers in the Gaza Strip", (Stern), World Press Review, January 1987, p.56.
44. Benvenisti, 1987 Report, p.53.
45. Cf., for example, a survey conducted by Israeli journalist Nadav Shragai for Ha'aretz, cited by Reuter News Agency in Al-Quds, 28 June 1990.
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48. Cf. Rabinovich, Abraham, "Settling in East Jerusalem", Jerusalem Post, 9 March 1990.
49. Cf. Matar, Ibrahim, "From Palestinian to Israeli Jerusalem" in: The Journal of Palestine Studies, Issue No. 48, Summer 1983, pp.58-63, for further information concerning land confiscation and settlement building in East Jerusalem as well as the "Metropolitan Jerusalem" plan.
50. Cf., for example, Rabinovich, Abraham "'Settling' in East Jerusalem", Jerusalem Post, 9 March 1990.
51. Reuter News Agency article published in Al-Quds, 9 May 1990.
52. Jerusalem Post, 21 November 1989.
53. Jerusalem Post, 25 February 1990.
54. Jerusalem Post, 22 July 1990.
55. Jerusalem Post, 25 February 1990.
56. Jerusalem Post, 23 March 1990.
57. Jerusalem Post, 18 October 1990.

58. Attali'a, 23 November 1989.
59. Middle East Report, May - August 1990, p.46
60. Jerusalem Post, 31 January 1990.
61. Jerusalem Post, 19 January 1990.
62. Jerusalem Post, 9 February 1990.
63. Jerusalem Post, 4 July 1990.
64. Jerusalem Post, 24 July 1990.
65. Jerusalem Post, 15 February 1990.
66. Jerusalem Post, 30 January 1990.
67. Jerusalem Post, 15 February 1990.
68. Jerusalem Post, 15 February 1990.
69. Middle East International, 22 September 1989.
70. Jerusalem Post, 19 February 1990.
71. Jerusalem Post, 27 September 1990.
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76. Ibid.
77. Jerusalem Post, 19 January 1990.
78. Jerusalem Post, 24 January 1990.
79. Jerusalem Post, 12 February 1990.
80. Jerusalem Post, 21 February 1990.
81. Jerusalem Post, 29 January 1990.

82. Jerusalem Post, 22 February 1990.
83. Jerusalem Post, 20 February 1990.
84. Jerusalem Post, 9 February 1990.
85. Jerusalem Post, 12 February 1990.
86. Jerusalem Post, 23 February 1990.
87. Jerusalem Post, 7 March 1990.
88. Jerusalem Post, 5 June 1990.
89. Ibid.
90. Cf., for example, Reuter News Agency cited in Al-Quds, 28 June 1990.
91. Jerusalem Post, 31 January 1990.
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95. Cf., for example, comments made by the head of the Arab Studies Society, Faisal Husseini, in the Jerusalem Post, 10 June 1990.
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98. Middle East International, 30 March 1990.
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110. Jerusalem Post, 5 June 1990.
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112. Jerusalem Post, 14 March 1990.
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114. Jerusalem Post, 4 March 1990.
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121. B'Tselem, The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Annual Report 1989, Jerusalem, p.101.
122. Cf. Benvenisti, Handbook, p.89.
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134. B'Tselem, Op. Cit., p.102.
135. Cf. Ha'aretz, 10 October 1989, translated by Israel Shahak.
136. Jerusalem Post, 4 June 1990.
137. Jerusalem Post, 1 February 1990.
138. Cf. for example, the Egyptian Ambassador to Israel quoted in the Jerusalem Post, 20 February 1990, and the Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs quoted in the Jerusalem Post, 24 May 1990.
139. Jerusalem Post, 24 May 1990.
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142. Cf., for example, Jerusalem Post, 22 August 1990.
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165. Jerusalem Post, 1 March 1990.
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172. Jerusalem Post, 6 March 1990.
173. Jerusalem Post, 7 March 1990.
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177. Cf. "A 'monetized' US-Israel relationship", Jerusalem Post, 28 September 1990.
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183. Jerusalem Post, 8 October 1990.
184. Jerusalem Post, 15 October 1990.
185. Jerusalem Post, 18 October 1990.
186. Cf. Jerusalem Post, 31 October 1990.
187. Attali'a, 25 January 1990.
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Redrawn from Map of UNRWA's Area of Operations, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, UNRWA HQ, Vienna (1990).

Map 2: Israeli Settlements in the West Bank (p. 8)

Redrawn from Benvenisti, Meron & Shlomo Khayat, "Jewish and Arab Settlements", The West Bank and Gaza Strip Atlas, The West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem, 1988, Map 23, p.24.

Map 3: Israeli Settlements in the Gaza Strip (p. 9)

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Map 4: Gaza Strip Land Confiscation (p. 9)

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Map 5: Jerusalem - West and East (p. 13)

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Map 6: Allon Plan (p. 48)

Redrawn from Yad-Tabenkin, Eyal ("The Allon Plan Map"), reprinted in Benvenisti, Meron & Shlomo Khayat, The West Bank and Gaza Strip Atlas, The West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem, 1988, Map 53, p.99.

Map 7: Labour Settlement Plan (p. 48)

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Map 9: Sharon Plan (p. 50)

Redrawn from "Areas Vital to Israel's Security", map published by Survey of Israel for Mr. Sharon, reprinted in Benvenisti, Meron & Shlomo Khayat, The West Bank and Gaza Strip Atlas, The West Bank Data Base Project, Jerusalem, 1988, Map 58, p.104.

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