VI
The Future of Palestine and the Complicity of International Planners in Israeli Crimes - A Final Comment

From last chapter (see all chapters under archive Dec.2010-2011)

The occupation and infiltration of main cities of religious and historical importance for Jews, Christians and Moslems, is a clear indication of the malicious character of Judaization by means of planning. Since the 1967 occupation, two cities in particular, Hebron and Jerusalem, like Jaffa after the 1948 war, have faced an intensive program of destruction, aimed at eventually eliminating their Palestinian character and replacing it with a fabricated layer of Jewish 'cornerstones.' Constructing new realities in stone plays a dramatic role in reshaping the image of these cities into a Jewish one. In addition, the people, the original inhabitants are under threat due to the use of military force and the illegal use of power. Furthermore, creating Jewish majorities by inserting colonies into these cities is accompanied by a harsh policy of depriving the Palestinian inhabitants of their rights to their homes, properties and even citizenship, especially in Jerusalem.

The Judaization of East Jerusalem is an illegal act whereby the whole city was incorporated into the Israeli system and proclaimed the capital of Israel by Knesset legislation. This allows the Israeli government to justify the planning that is actually aimed at Judaization as official and legal development.

Hebron is an even more difficult case. After the agreements with the Palestinian Authority, the city was divided into different areas, like two countries with different legislation, culture and ways of life. Very racist, mostly American, settler groups did the dirty work of this usurpation process, breaking into the a densely populated Palestinian city before official activities and the state of Israel itself became involved as the military power over the city; later, the state concurred officially. These aggressive Israeli Jewish groups still play a vanguard role in Judaizing the city. Beyond legal constraints, rules and controls, they do their job more roughly and hence more efficiently than any government would be allowed to do. In cooperation with the WZO planners, these settler groups fulfil tasks that a government would have difficulty justifying. However, the moment these aggressive groups find themselves in a problematic situation, the role of the state is asserted on the pretext of having to guarantee the security of the usurpers. It is a malicious game.

This is what happened in Hebron and, in another way, in Jerusalem. In neither city has the process come to an end, however plans and actions to assert more control and reshape the map are ongoing. Will these cities suffer the same fate as Jaffa and other Palestinian cities in Israel, where Palestinian existence nearly disappeared?

After 1948, the Old City of Jaffa lost all its Palestinian inhabitants. Israel actually calls Jaffa the 'Old City of Tel Aviv,' a total negation of historical facts which shows clearly the intention to fabricate, even in words, what does not exist. Haifa has almost lost its Palestinian character; many quarters nowadays show more Russian influence than Palestinian presence. Palestinians in Acca are still fighting for the survival of the city's Palestinian character and to remain the majority. Other cities, like Ashdod or Ramle, were emptied of Palestinians in the 1947-49 ethnic cleansing, and those who returned after the census live a shadow life, unrecognized and socially and culturally deprived. According to WZO visions, this state of affairs is intended to be the future reality for Hebron, Jerusalem and other West Bank cities in the long run. Already the

ground is being prepared by brash Jewish settler groups from all over the world, in order to join with Israeli planners to create a new reality under Israeli governance.

VI

Isaac, Jad, Viktoria Waltz

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The story of the fabrication of Israel revealed in the previous sections has more facets than we have discussed so far. Certainly, main factors in the realisation of this construction were carefully chosen planning instruments and measures with long term perspectives.

However, the aims go beyond territorial claims. The whole idea belongs to an overall vision, an image of what Israel was and how it can be re-invented. (Abu-Lughod, Heacock, Nashef, 1999) New names are replacing the Palestinian names of cities and locations in order to re-establish locations mentioned in the bible or torah and thus reinvent a historic Israel in alliance with Christian symbols, while denying and disfiguring what is Palestine and Palestinian history and identity. As explained by Edward Said, "how the history of ancient Palestine was gradually replaced by a largely fabricated image of ancient Israel, a political entity that in reality played only a small role in the area of geographical Palestine." (Said 2000: 175)

The Christian world knows Hebron, but not the Arab name of Al Khalil, which reflects the religious significance of the city of Abraham/Ibrahim from a Muslim perspective. Sarah's tomb? A mysterious Jewish tunnel under the Muslim quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem? David’s city in Jerusalem’s Silwan? Even Israeli archaeologists have questions about it. The terms Samaria and Judaea replaced the West Bank, which is also not an original Palestinian name, but part of the British Mandate's division of the Jordan Rift Valley. Israeli settlements in the West Bank, such as Ofra, Bet El, Beit Horon and Shilo are not only reinvented names taken from ancient names mentioned in the Bible; they are also reinvented locations prepared by Zionist planners in the first Zionist visions and plans. There are no remaining traces of any ancient Jewish village from Biblical times, but it becomes reality and fact by renaming and rebuilding these places.

As a result, the invented Zionist narrative dominates and gains credibility in the western world. This is the power behind Israeli/Zionist planning policies. For example, what the WZO claimed in their 1984 propaganda booklet--that Gaza 'was never heavily populated' (WZO, 1984:19) re-imagines the prevalent European Christian view of the Holy Land long before the advent of Zionism. (See the description of the Holy Land in Selma Lagerloef’s novel *Jerusalem)*. In an essay on 'Renaissance Cartography and the Question of Palestine' (1999), Matar revealed how this question was posed cartographically with Palestine portrayed as a land 'without a people’. Focusing on holy locations only and the route of the biblical exodus, the European/Christian maps of last centuries seem justifying the Crusades conquer of the Holy Land. Matar points out that "This conflation of faith and cartography ... led to the emergence of one of the strongest heresies in the sixteenth century, that the exodus was a prophetic anticipation of the 'Restoration' of the Jews to the Promised Land in preparation for the Second Coming." (p. 149) (Matar 1999: 149)

Moreover, the struggle to judaize Palestine doesn't stop at locations. Landscape as well is under threat. Qleibo has outlined a dismal picture of Palestine in the future,

without its beautiful hilly silhouette since the Jewish colonies posted on hills are reshaping the skyline completely (Qleibo 1992). Har Homa, the recently established colony on Abu Ghneim hill, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, is constructed on an artificially constructed hill to give the impression of an ancient housing cluster that actually never existed, in the process destroying an ancient site accessed by the people of Bethlehem for leisure and enjoyment.

The Palestinians' fight for identity in harmony with their own history has become like the task of Sisyphus. Especially in Israel, the reshaping of landscapes and locations has almost eliminated a Palestinian spatial existence, also recognised as 'urbizid' (analogically used with genozid/genocide: „systematische Zerstörung oder Vernichtung von Städten"/'systematic destruction or elimination of cities', Funk 2005) and 'ecozid' (analogically used in environment context: destruction or elimination of ecosystems like rainforest). Parallel to Zionist destruction, modern life styles and techniques have replaced traditional Palestinian structures, while lack of space, money and resources allowed only small Palestinian spatial interventions to preserve or influence Palestinian localities. Hence, Palestinian presence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Region nowadays is materialised in European building style and adapting to international standards. Therefore, the naturally built-up history of rural and urban life is increasingly under threat from inside and external destruction. Moreover, the remaining signs of an indigenous history are being neglected. Further complicating the situation is the fact that Palestinians and their institutions still have no power or sovereignty over their own land, and continue to rely on foreign support, which entails foreign influence and intervention, whether European, Israeli or American. It is a colonial war and usurpation by all means - cultural, social, economic and spatial -imposed on a weak occupied society with no real sovereignty. In addition, international funding and international compliance with Israeli projects are also threats to Palestinian existence and identity.

International Projects for Palestine without Palestinians

At the beginning of the 'peace process,' many expectations and development scenarios came to the fore. The World Bank immediately provided international donors and supporters with statistics and material to assist in their planning. Future perspectives, like an international free trade zone for Gaza, were proposed, despite the fact that such plans were unrealistic in view of the fact that Palestinians had no independence or sovereignty over their land. The first 'Master Plan' for Palestine devised by Palestinians was drawn up by Mahdi Abdel Hadi's Center for Engineering and Planning in Ramallah, outlining the future sustainable development of what should become the Palestinian State (CEP 1992). The first official Palestinian Master Plan, entitled Palestine 2015, was created between 1994 and 1998 by the newly established Palestinian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC). Palestine 2015 is comprised of the Regional Plan for the West Bank Governorates, the Regional Plan for Gaza Governorates, the Emergency Natural Resources Protection Plan (e.g. water and wastewater, landscape, cultural heritage, ecology, agricultural land) and the Palestinian Development Plan (MOPIC 1998). These plans were supported by the Europeans. Starting from the assumption of two territorially separate parts of a Palestinian state, the approach adopted in these plans was to follow international standards of sustainability, democracy, participatory and balanced development between rural and urban areas, and agricultural and industrial sectors. Planning institutions like the Ministry of Local Government and city planners still try to

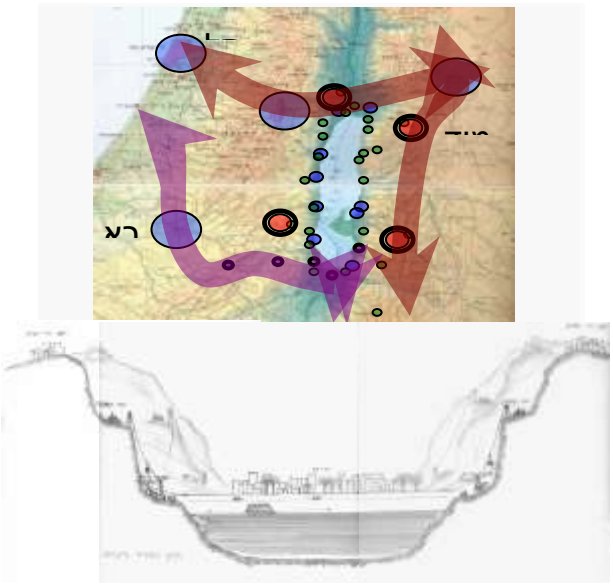
follow these guidelines in part. However, the continued existence of the occupation, the post-Oslo zoning of the West Bank into different areas of mainly Israeli control and the completely separate Israeli planning on Palestinian land, mainly in Areas B and C precludes coherent development policy. People build according to their needs, the rest is developing haphazardly, if not forced into a special direction by international investments like the creation of a program called 'Metropolitan Ramallah' or 'Ramallah-al-Bireh-Beituniya Metropolitan Area Project' (RABMAP) (Khamaisi 2006, Musleh 2006). The latter sounds like futile countermoves to the Israeli Metropolitan Plan for Jerusalem which intends to include Ramallah and Bethlehem in the usurped Jerusalem area (see section V).

In conclusion, it is not the Palestinians but others who are the main planners, and whether the planner is Israel, donor countries or institutions of diffuse nature, they are not necessarily working in the Palestinians' interest.

The Jordan Rift Valley Project *(1997)*

Everybody will agree that the Jordan Rift Valley is an important human heritage location, with great historic and religious significance for the formation of civilisations and cultures of the region. It has served as a retreat for many saints and prophets who chose this lowest place on earth and a unique surrounding of mountains to meditate and come close to God. Hence, the Jordan Rift Valley hosts many monasteries, convents and religious sites. At the city of Jericho are the main remains of what is known to be the oldest human settlement on earth going back to 9000 B.C. Moreover, the Jordan Rift Valley with its bio-diversity and sub-tropical climate attracts people from all over. The valley contains several medical resources such as mineral springs and the Dead Sea which provides clay and water with special medical and cosmetic qualities. Furthermore, the Jordan Rift Valley is a very valuable area in terms of agriculture and the most important water basin in the region. (PACE 1999: 108pp, see figure 1).

Figure 1 The Jordan Valley Basin and planned links



Source: Israel 2020 - Palestine 2015

In 1997, in accordance with the international peace efforts a 'Jordan Rift Valley Project' was initiated, the product of several economic conferences aiming at regional

economic development and partnership as part of peace achievement. HARZA, one of the world's top experts on power, water and wastewater issues, presented a preliminary study that eventually led to a master plan for the regional development of the Jordan Rift Valley (HARZA 1997). The follow-up process was undertaken by a steering committee composed of representatives for Jordan, the US and Israel, financed initially by the Italian Government. The Palestinian Authority was not included, but was promised to be a participant in a later stage. The change of the Valley's image and structure will be radical according to the master plan published by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA 1997). Main projects, besides an environment survey and nature reserves, include:

- Joint cross border ***tourism*** from North to the South and connected to tourism areas in Israel, Jordan and Egypt
- Cross-border ***transportation***, highways connecting Haifa with Irbid, the establishment of several new bridges over the Jordan River and the construction of a railway between Haifa and Mafraq (Jordan)
- ***Industrial* parks** *and high tech* incubators at Sheikh Hussein and King Hussein border crossings
- Joint ***agriculture*** and *aquaculture* for export, promoting agricultural production and fish farming
- Establishment of a joint East-West, Amman-Tel Aviv international ***telecommunication*** cable
- ***Energy plants*** in connection with the planned Red-Dead Sea Canal.(MFA 1997, HARZA 1997)

It is important to note that on the Jordan side the above-mentioned 'joint' activities appear in a special World Bank-financed program as East Bank projects under the title 'Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Jordan Rift Valley' which is already underway with the contract signed 12.7.2007. (wewewe.wd.worldbank.org 2007)

This Jordan Rift Valley Project is another instrument to determine territorial definitions and eventually redraw borders, creating conflicts instead of carrying new potentials and contributing to the political and economic stability of the region. This can be seen by the fact that the Palestinian Authority has been excluded from essential plans and decisions, in addition to Israel's expropriation, demolition and restriction policy in the West Bank which makes about 28% of the planned area. In truth, this project is a big and most profitable part of Israeli national development schemes to promote its regional aspirations, tackling water, transportation, environment, energy, tourism and communications and Israel's role in the region (IMFA 1997). Moreover, the Jordan Rift Valley Project must be understood as a chief factor in Israel's land grab and usurping policy aimed at creating a greater Israel and cementing imperial control over the region.

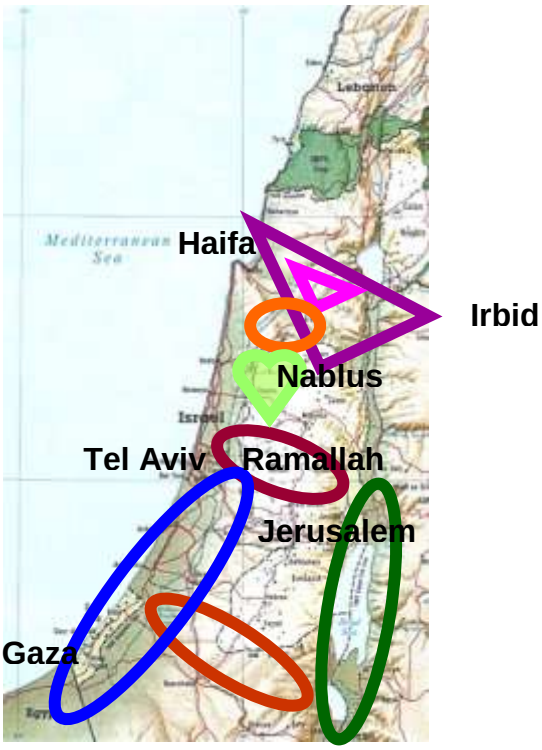
Israel 2020 - Palestine 2015 *(2000/2005)*
Coordinated Long-Term Planning between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean

In 2000 a preliminary workshop was held as a trilateral activity between Palestinian, Israeli and German (as coordinators) planners to coordinate what wasn't coordinated yet: the Palestinian 'Regional Development Plan for the Gaza and the West Bank Governorates,' Palestine 2015, and the Israeli 'Master Plan for Israel in the 21st Century,' Israel 2020. The problem was defined that the two sides were planning their

future without any connection between them. Europe and especially Germany wanted to give professional help to facilitate coordination between the two sides. At first, the meetings were funded by the Netherlands, but the purpose was unclear. Was it to support peace and find solutions? Or to keep Palestinians busy? There are more questions than answers.

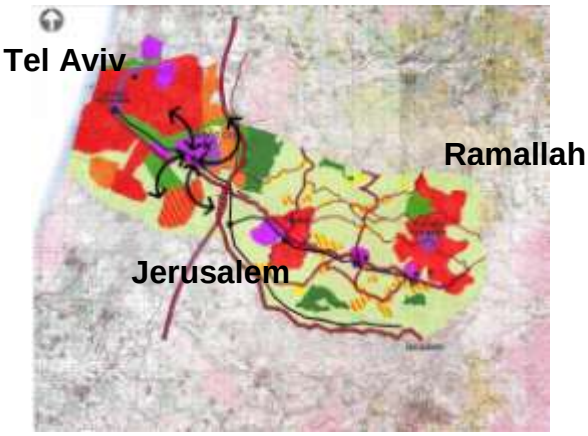
The issues discussed in several workshops in Berlin between 2000 and 2005 were 'Urban and Rural,' 'Infrastructure and Systems' and 'Geography.' Subgroups were formed to discuss 'spatial and physical planning,' 'economy' and 'social infrastructure.' Seventeen Israeli experts and twelve Palestinian experts were discussing, clarifying facts and developing scenarios with the help of international experts. Eventually, the main outcome was the proposal of some 'cross-border-metropolitan areas' (see figure 2)

Figure 2 Cross border metropolitan areas



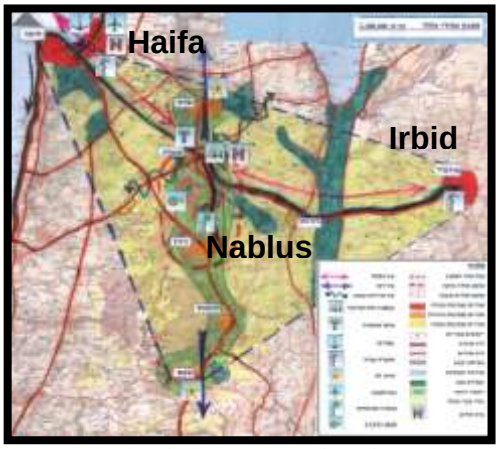
Source: Israel 2020 - Palestine 2015

Figure 3 Cross Border Area Ramallah/Tel Aviv



Source: Israel 2020 - Palestine 2015

Figure 4 Cross Border Area Haifa/Nablus/Irbid



Source: Israel 2010 - Palestine 2015

Under fantastic names like *'the secularity link'* (Tel Aviv/Ramallah), *'the green heart'* (Netanya, Wadi Arad, Tulkarem) and *'Individualism on the lowest point on earth'* (the Dead Sea), a cross-border and cross-cultural vision was outlined (see figure 3, 4). The most cross-cultural region of all, Jerusalem, was excluded. Perhaps it was excluded to avoid touching on Israel's crimes and land grab in this area, or to avoid reality altogether. This speaks for itself. Furthermore, the link between this game and the above-mentioned Israel/Jordan Planning under World Bank funding is obvious. Is this intended to involve Palestinian experts in their own destruction? Is it to keep them busy with visions which do not correspond at all to the new reality that Israel is creating day by day? Is it to keep Palestinians dreaming?

The Arc - a vision from RAND** (2005**)

The US-based RAND Corporation, which describes itself as a non-profit institution that contributes to improving policy and decision-making through research and analysis, interferes in another way with a 'gift' to the Palestinians. In 2005 RAND arrived at a revolutionary formula for the success of an independent Palestinian state (see figures 5-7). Given the future state within the 1967 borders, RAND proposes an 'infrastructure corridor' between the Gaza Region and the West Bank, an Arc, with a linear arrangement of connected cities, a 'Ladder,' comparable to the development of 'Cairo along the Nile' as an extended urban region. This Arc -'A Ladder of Linear Cities' - would support a 'high speed interurban rail ... an energy network… boulevards connecting the train stations to the towns would create new areas for housing and commercial activities.' Thus Palestine would be provided with 'sustainable development and preserve open land for agriculture, parks and nature reserves.' The Arc, linked not only to Gaza but also to Haifa in the future, would help '… to foster a coherent, unitary, and, it is hoped, a cohesive economic, political, and social Palestinian entity.' It would, moreover, 'open its markets to the world'. Costs are estimated at 6 billion US$$, completion time at five years and the number of employees at 100,000 to 160,000 Palestinians. The idea is that the refugee problem could also be dealt with in this way.

Figure 5-7 The ARC

Source: RAND Corporation 2005

The group proposes to start the project even before a state formally exists in order to 'enhance prospects for stability and security' (RAND 2005). Fantasy? A comment about this project is in order. Once again, it is a project proposed from outside without Palestinians or Palestinian input. It also completely ignores reality. As might be expected, the question of Jerusalem is not included. The realities created by Israel are assumed to be irrevocable facts. This Western dream is put forward at a time when nothing seems to be moving; it is just another lie and tantalising Palestinian

leaders to cope with and to keep them cooperative. Looking at their website, one finds RAND praising itself to the skies for such an extraordinary idea. Yet, when you look at the proposed links between Tel Aviv and Amman, and keep in mind what we know about the deepest Israeli aims, doesn't it look like part of another Israeli plan?

Outlook

There are many efforts from many sides to give advice to the Palestinians and the Israelis to finally make peace with each other. A 'fight over contested land' is one of the usual explanations for the conflict. Nobody wants to understand who has a right to the land and how and why the conflict started. Our aim is to shed light on the essence of this conflict and to create a deeper understanding of why the Palestinians' struggle for their land on the one hand, and why Israel follows an occupation policy with all means of planning to achieve a greater realm on the other.

This will not lead to peace solutions. We also want to state clearly that there are many distractions and no simple solutions, whether with one state or two states; nor is there hope for a quick solution. Furthermore, solutions are not possible in the absence of one of the partners, especially not by eliminating the voice of the weaker side, the oppressed Palestinians, no matter how well the intentions. Deceptions and false hope lead nowhere. A solution cannot be built on the total degradation and humiliation of a people; there is a limit.

Which solution is the best? One bi-national state? Two states? Associated? Confederation? Which borders should be used? Those of the British Mandate? Those specified by the UN? The 1967 borders? This can only be decided by the indigenous people themselves. The international forces, which originally fragmented Palestine, have a special responsibility to listen to the voices of the native people, those who lived for centuries in Palestine until being forced to flee the country in 1947-48, those who were born and are living in Palestine now. Their voice is the most important; they must be heard and involved in any discussion on an equal level and based on international law, which has repeatedly asserted their right to their land and condemned Israel. In addition, the Israeli society has to give up the vision of a 'Greater Israel' and Zionism and finally and officially admit that what they are today was and is at the expense of the Palestinians. Only then might talk and negotiations lead to a solution.

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The Authors

Amro, Jamal. Born 1956, PhD 1991, Faculty of Architecture, University of Stuttgart. Germany. MSc 1985 in Architecture, University of Stuttgart. Since 2001 Head of Master Program Urban Planning and Design UPLD, Faculty of Engineering, Birzeit University.

Recent Publications/Papers:

Amro, J. (2005) The Future of Jerusalem, Paper to the AESOP Conference 2005 in Vienna, Austria July 2005

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Awadallah, Faisal. Born 1955. PhD 1987 University of Maryland, USA. MSc in Civil Engineering University of Maryland, USA. Since 2004 Dean of the Faculty of Engineering. Birzeit University Palestine.

Recent Publications/Papers:

Awadallah, F, (2005) Roads for Integration and Roads for Separation Case Study: Palestinian West Bank and Gaza, Technical Papers for the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) Conference, Vienna, Austria, July 2005

Awadallah, F. (2005) "Theoretical Analysis for Design of Horizontal Curves Based on Actual Discomfort Speed, ASCE Transportation Engineering Journal. Vol. 131, No. 11, November 2005: 84-850.

Awadallah, F., (2005) Planning of Palestinian Cities: De facto Status quo and a Blocked Horizon, in: Palestinian Engineer Journal (Al-Muhadis Al-Falistini), Issue No. 49, January 2005 (arabic).

Egbaria, Kassem. Born 1970. PhD 2003 School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University, UK. MA1995 in Architecture, University of Arizona-Tuscon. USA. Planner and architect, head of office, lecturer at Birzeit University, UPLD program, Faculty of Engineering, Palestine

Recent Publications/Papers:

Egbaria, K. (2007) Housing condition in the Arab sector in Israel: between negligence and Shortage, in: European Journal of Scientific Research,Vol 16. No 1. January 2007

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Isaac, Jad E. Born 1947. PhD 1978 University of East Anglia UK. MSc 1974 in Food Science, Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA. Since 1990 Director General. Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem.

Recent Publications/Papers:

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Waltz, Viktoria. Born 1944. PhD 1986 University of Dortmund, Germany. MSc 1969 in Architecture. Technical University Berlin, Germany. Until 2007 Lecturer at Dortmund University, Faculty of Spatial Planning.
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El-Atrash, Ahmad, Born 1986. 2010 MSc in urban Planning and Landscape Architecture, Birzeit University, Palestine, 2004 BSc in Civil Engineering, Al Najah University, Nablus, Palestine. Since 2005 Research Associate at ARIJ, Applied Research Institute Jerusalem, Currently, coordinator of “Strategy Development of Palestinian Joint Councils” and “Planning the Geo-political Fate of Jerusalem” projects.
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Hilal, Jane Sami, Born 1975, 2003 MSc in Environmental Management, 2002 Diploma of Specialized Postgraduate Studies (D.S.P.U.) of Environmental Management, both Department of Environmental Management-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICH) Chania, Greece; 1997 B.Sc. of Science / Major in Chemistry Bethlehem University, Palestine
Since 1998 research associate in ARIJ, Currently Head of of the Water and Environment Research Department at the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ)
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