

In March 2006, settlers also took over a local compound, consisting of three buildings, from which 30 members of the Ghuzlan family were evicted.

### Others

In addition to the above, several isolated buildings have been occupied by settlers or used as offices, including buildings located in Ath-Thori (Abu Tor), Jabal Mukabber, on Nablus Road (opposite the US Consulate and near the YMCA building), etc.

### Purchasing Methods and Funding Sources

Settler associations employ the following, often dubious, means to *seize property*:

- Buying properties where a member of the family is embroiled in criminal cases and willing to sell everything he can for financial gain, even when he is not entitled to do so;
- Buying properties where a demolition order is about to be carried out, the idea being that rather than lose everything, the owners will choose to sell their property even to settlers. It is a known fact that municipal inspectors sometimes pass relevant information to the settler associations and that an Arab broker is often sent to close the deal on the settlers' behalf;
- Buying properties of families with huge debts who have no choice but to sell in order to remain financially solvent. This has come to represent a common phenomenon due to the socioeconomic hardships associated with the second *Intifada*.

Funding for the actions mentioned above comes from both the State and private sources. Until 1992, the State transferred absentee property and vast sums to the settlers through different ministries, especially the Ministry of Housing. However, the 1992 Klugman Report - commissioned by then PM Yitzhak Rabin to examine settlement activity in East Jerusalem - revealed extensive covert and largely illegal government activities (estimating, *inter alia*, that the Israeli Government transferred around \$8.2 million to the settlers to facilitate the purchasing of buildings and an additional \$12.8 million for renovating old buildings). Following the publishing of the report, this type of government support came to an abrupt halt. Today, the State provides support to the settlers in two ways, one, by financing the security companies at an annual cost of NIS 24 million, and two, by employing many of the settlers who work for them as security guards and managers of the City of David archaeological site.

There are also many private donors, the most prominent one being Irving Moskowitz. Another figure is US billionaire Ira Rennert of Brooklyn who is a major supporter of the Ateret Cohanim Association, and who, *inter alia*, funded the opening of the Western Wall Tunnel. There are many other wealthy Diaspora Jews supporting the various settler associations that, for reasons best known to themselves, demand anonymity.

(Source: Meir Margalit, "Like a Thorn in the Heart: Settlements and Settlers in East Jerusalem," ICAHD, Oct. 2005.)

## BEYOND THE OLD CITY

### ◆ Abu Dis

Abu Dis is situated just east of the Jerusalem municipal border.



Abu Dis

During the years 1920-30, the Agudat HaDayarim Jewish Cooperative Society was created in Jerusalem in order to establish Jewish neighborhoods for its members. In 1928, the Agudat purchased 598 dunums of land in the area known today as Abu Dis - due to its proximity to the Old City - in order to build a 'Garden Community' (homes with agricultural fields). Although it rapidly acquired a legal title to the area, the increasing Arab revolts and tense relationships between Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem resulted in the abandonment of the 'Garden Community' dream.

After the War of 1967, Abu Dis came under the jurisdiction of the General Custodian of the State of Israel. When the Israeli Government annexed areas of land to municipal Jerusalem, only 60-70 dunums of the Agudah's land remained inside Jerusalem proper, with the rest located beyond the Green Line.

The seizure of Abu Dis land began in June 2000, when a group of rightwing MKs and Jerusalem yeshiva students erected a barbed wire fence and planted olive tree saplings on confiscated property in Abu Dis. On 22 May 2000, the Ministry of Housing endorsed plans for a new settlement in the area to house - initially - some 200 settlers.

The West Jerusalem Municipality approved the construction of the new '**Kidmat Zion**' settlement - to consist, eventually, of 400 housing units, a kindergarten, a school, and a synagogue on some 64 dunums - in early 2004. On 1 May 2004, four settler families from the Ateret Cohanim movement, equipped with generators and personal items, moved into two homes in the area. The land in question is located next to the separation barrier, opposite the Palestinian Parliament, and most of it is said to have been purchased by Jewish American millionaire Irving Moskowitz.

As of 2006, two houses ('Bet Ha'Achim' and 'Bet Sara') had already been turned over to settlers and dedicated to the memory of Sara Blaustein, who is said to have been shot to death on the Gush Etzion-Jerusalem highway three years earlier. Construction at the site is still, however, on hold due to US pressure.



Site of Kidmat Zion Settlement