

# **1998 : "ISRAEL-PALESTINE : GLOBALISATION AND MICRO-NATIONALISMS"**

EXCERPS

## **THE LAND**

*Palestine : Mondialisation et micro-nationalismes* (Palestine : Globalisation and Micro-Nationalisms) was published in 1998 (Éditions Acratie).

It is largely the result of the experience I gained during seven years as a presenter on Radio Libertaire's programme "Les Chroniques du nouvel ordre mondial" (Chronicles of the New World Order) from 1990 to 1997.

However, this book would not have been possible without the friendship of Moïse Saltiel, our long conversations, the documents he provided me with and his thesis, which he shared with me : "Sur la Palestine, terre nourricière, Israël, base militaire" (Paris, May 1988).

This book also owes a great deal to Arna Meir-Khamis, whom I interviewed on Radio Libertaire in 1991 during the Gulf War.

I would also like to add that the friendship of Wallid Attallah and Issa Wachil, two Palestinian friends, was invaluable to me in writing my book, not to mention Raouf Raïssi, Tunisian publisher and humanist.

The text presented here is an excerpt from the book dedicated to the question of land.

Israel is undoubtedly the only country whose borders are not officially demarcated. Golda Meir, the former Prime Minister, said: “Our borders will be where we settle...” When looking at a map the “Greater Israel”, we notice surprisingly that the country’s borders overflow onto Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Turkey. This is a unique case. One can easily imagine the upheaval that would be caused by a similar situation if any other country published even unofficial expressions of its territorial ambitions...

Let us remember that David Ben-Gurion declared in 1938 that “the frontiers of Zionist aspirations include South Lebanon, southern Syria, present-day Jordan, the entire West Bank, and the Sinai.”<sup>1</sup>



Map of Greater Israel

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Israel Shahak, *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Spring 1981.

## The purchase of land

At first, the Jewish immigrants in Palestine were old pious Jews who came there to pray and end their days. From 1896 the Jewish Colonisation Association got interested in the settlement of Jews in Palestine and consequently in the purchase of land. Between 1880 and 1910 the Jewish population of Palestine increased by 55,000 people. The frictions with the indigenous population began immediately, because the Jews ignored the Arab customs, in particular the use by the shepherds of the common lands (the *Musha*)<sup>2</sup> and considered their incursions as attacks on the right to property.

The methods of land acquisition by the Jews were varied and caused many conflicts. Absentee landowners were selling their land at advantageous prices to new immigrants, causing the expulsion of the peasants who cultivated it. The usurers who recovered the lands of the indebted peasants sold them back to the Jews. As early as 1886, expelled Palestinian peasants attacked Jewish colonies. The Ottoman authorities and educated Palestinians quickly understood that the Zionists were seeking to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Protests, petition campaigns sometimes managed to slow down Jewish immigration.

Zionism constituted in organised a movement in 1897 in Basel; a program was adopted in which one can read that “the aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine, guaranteed by law”, achieved through colonies of farmers and artisans. Theodore Herzl thought that it was necessary to work in a more systematic and organized way. The Jewish Colonial Trust and the Colonization Commission were created in 1898, the Jewish National Fund in 1901, the Palestine Land Development Company in 1908.

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<sup>2</sup> The *musha* lands belonged to the village but were farmed individually, with a portion of the land allocated to each male member of the village. The land was redistributed every two to five years depending on the village's population growth. It was obviously impossible to sell this collectively owned land. Population growth led to a constant parcelling of the land, which prevented the creation of large estates.

The second wave of immigration (aliya) between 1904 and 1907 was more organised. Above all, the ideological context had completely changed, as evidenced by Ben Gurion:

“Among the first disappointments was the sight of the Jews of the first aliya, now living as effendis, deriving their income from plantations and fields cultivated by hired labour, or professions of the kind by which we will never carry out national rehabilitation.”<sup>3</sup>

The objective of this second aliya was to create a community independent from an economic, cultural, linguistic point of view and, above all, “capable of defending itself”, that is to say, an embryo of the state. A real struggle was waged against the Jewish landowners who preferred the Arab labour force to that, without experience, of the Jews. Until then, the Palestinian peasants who cultivated the land that the landowners had sold to the Jews were hired as agricultural workers; now their hiring was prevented, which increased resentment.

The Zionists in no way intended to agree on the presence of the Palestinians. Eli Eliachar tells us<sup>4</sup> that when, in 1921, prominent Eastern Jews offered themselves as mediators between the Zionists and the Palestinian notables, their proposal was categorically rejected par les juifs. According to Eliachar, the indigenous Jews supported the idea that the Jews of Palestine should *integrate* into the region, which was not at all the project of the Zionists. The latter also opposed the existence of a common educational system for Jews and Palestinians. A mediation proposed by the indigenous Jews, after the creation of the State of Israel, in order to find a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem, also have received a categorical refusal.

The Ottoman Empire, which dominated Palestine, registered a significant debt and tried to increase and rationalise tax revenues by intensifying the exploitation of the peasantry and by reorganising agricultural production. It eliminated tax collectors to establish more direct access for the State to tax revenues and encouraged the

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<sup>3</sup> David Ben Gourion, *Years of Challenge*, Londres 1964.

<sup>4</sup> Eliahu Eliachar, *Vivre avec les Palestiniens*, Jérusalem, 1975.

establishment of large estates. A law of 1858 classified land into five categories and required peasants and landowners to register in the real estate register

Wary, the peasants regarded this recording with suspicion because they rightly saw it as a way for the State to increase taxes, since the State would know very precisely what each one owned or cultivated... To evade registration, they resorted to various procedures: false declarations, land declarations in the name of local potentates and clan leaders whose tax relief they hoped for through their influence, partial land declarations, even under false names or of deceased people. Lands of entire villages were thus declared under a few names; the Ottoman state then sold at auction the land that had not been declared and which belonged to a few rich families, further increasing concentration. The State also abolished *musha* lands.

Another law, of 1869, authorised the possession by foreigners of land in Palestine, facilitating the work of Zionist agencies. In 1920, a law imposed by the mandatory power, Great Britain, extended the right to sell land regardless of its classification, even if it was considered inalienable, such as *wakf* lands, that is to say, which were religious properties and whose product was intended for charitable activities. Another law, in 1926, allowed the expropriation of land necessary for public utility purposes, with peasants only entitled to compensation. Finally, a law allowed the army to acquire land for military purposes; these lands were often sold or subsequently ceded to Zionist organisations. This law is still frequently used in the West Bank.

Ottoman, then British, legislation systematically facilitated the transfer of land into the hands of the Zionist movement. Until 1936, the origin of the land thus purchased was:

52.6% from absentee owners, that is to say, who lived elsewhere, often very far away and who for the most part had never even saw these lands;

24.6% came from resident landlords, mainly Lebanese families (Sursuq, Tayyan, Tuéni, Madawar, etc.), but also from Palestinian owners, mainly Christians (Kassar, Roch, Khoury, Hanna, etc.). Some lands were sold by Muslim notables.

13.4% of the Mandatory government, the church or foreign companies;  
and only 9.4% from the peasants themselves.

In almost 90% of the cases, therefore, the peasants had been unwillingly expelled from their livelihood.

This process of concentration of land capital had several consequences:

- the increase in the number of landless peasants, who represented 29.4% of peasant families in 1930;
- the significant decrease in the average size of farms of the Palestinian peasantry;
- the exodus of displaced peasants to the mountainous regions of central Palestine, which are still today places of concentration for the Palestinian population that the Israeli authorities do not want to annex and to which they are willing to grant a form of autonomy.

In 1936, the Jewish National Fund had acquired 2.6% of the surface area of the Palestinian territory; in terms of arable land this amounts to much more, since half of Palestine is occupied by the Negev desert; a quarter of the territory is occupied by the coastal plains, fertile, where the Zionist movement buys land from absentee owners, and the Jordan Valley; the remaining quarter is occupied by the mountains, where most of the Palestinian population is concentrated.<sup>5</sup>

The revolts of the years 1936-1939 had their origin in the impoverishment of the Palestinian peasantry, an impoverishment mainly due

- to the policy carried out by the British occupier,
- to the exorbitant interest rates of 30% which created a spiral from which the peasants could not escape,
- to the acquisition of land by the Zionist movement,
- to the extension of the latter's activity in all economic sectors at the expense of the Palestinian economy.

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<sup>5</sup> The observation of a map of the West Bank shows that Palestinians are gradually being expelled towards mountainous areas.

Despite this, a 1947 UN report reveals that the Palestinians still held 93% of the country's land at that date, which belies the constantly rehearsed argument that the Jews have legally acquired the land of Palestine.

## **The land policy**

In the very territory of Israel, pre-existing laws to the state constitution were maintained and used to expropriate Palestinian peasants from their land. Depending on the circumstances, the Israeli authorities resorted to Ottoman, Jordanian or British laws and when this was not enough, they created new ones. It is estimated that the process of evicting Palestinian citizens from the State of Israel is now practically completed. After the 1967 war and the occupation of the West Bank, until then in the hands of the Jordanians, the same policy of eviction was implemented in this occupied territory. But in addition to the annexation of land in the West Bank, the Israeli authorities extended a system of "vertical" domination over the Palestinian economy. They organise the total dependence of the economy on the occupied territories. The West Bank is isolated from the rest of the Arab countries and the world. An extremely complex set of laws ensures political and economic hegemony in the double form of dislocation and integration:

- Dislocation occurs in the form of land grabbing allowing the installation of settlements, control over water resources, and the establishment of a monetary and banking system that lead to the flight of savings and lower investment. To which can be added an arbitrary fiscal policy that aggravates the non-competitiveness of the Palestinian economy compared to the Israeli economy. Generally speaking, everything is done to ensure that the Palestinian economy cannot at any time compete with the Israeli economy.

- The integration of the Palestinian economy of the occupied territories is the classic image of the colonial economy: massive employment by the occupier of cheap labour; obligation of bilateral relations that prohibit Palestinian producers from having trade relations with another economic partner than Israel; specialisation of

the dominated economy based solely on the needs of the occupying power.

The Israeli policy in the occupied territories, however, has this characteristic that it does not seek to integrate the Palestinian population into an economic relationship of domination but to empty the territory of its population. Classical colonialism aims to guarantee maximum benefits to the dominant power but does not deny the right of existence to the dominated population. Israeli policy, for its part, seeks not only the maximum exploitation of Palestinian resources and population but also to create living conditions that are sufficiently unbearable to provoke the evacuation of the local population. The Israelis want the occupied territories, but not the population living there.

## **Law as an instrument of conquest**

In this perspective, the law is widely used to try to discourage the Palestinian population and force them to leave. Indeed, the status of land in Palestine is governed by several legal levels corresponding to the provisions made by the different political regimes that have dominated the country.

The Israeli authorities are keen to present themselves as a rule of law and claim that the confiscations they carry out respect the law and respect the laws that are applied locally and internationally. Jean-Paul Chagnollaude<sup>6</sup> says on this subject:

“Whatever the nature of a conflict, the law considered in itself always holds an irreducible part of legitimacy that it is tactically essential to put on one’s side; moreover, bringing a debate of this kind to the legal field makes it easier to overcome difficult and embarrassing questions about the true nature of these appropriations by recovering them from the (apparent) neutrality and the (formal) respectability of the legal norm. Wondering

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<sup>6</sup> Editorial Director of *Confluences Méditerranée*, a quarterly journal, created in 1991, which deals with major political and cultural issues concerning the peoples and societies of the Mediterranean basin.



about what the law can say, in fact amounts to deciding what we are going to make the law say.”<sup>7</sup>

In 1936, emergency laws had been enacted by the British authorities to repress the revolt that was spreading in the Palestinian countryside between 1936 and 1939. New emergency laws in 1945 supplemented those of 1936, but targeted the Zionist political and military organisations. The Zionist lawyers challenged these laws which stripped citizens of their fundamental rights, regulated freedom of movement, press, speech, allowed the authorities to expel an individual, confiscate or destroy his property. These laws were not be abolished after the creation of the State of Israel and are still used against Israeli Arabs and in the occupied territories.

Israel has, however, made its own contribution to the legal apparatus intended to appropriate land. Order No. 125, for example, allows the military commander to declare by decree any territory or place as a closed zone. Anyone entering this area without permission is charged with violating the laws and expelled. After the wars of 1948 and 1967, the Israeli authorities were thus able to empty villages and entire regions of their indigenous population and prohibit the survivors of the exodus from returning. The application of this article 125 is left to the sole discretion of the military commander and the procedure is as quick as it is brutal for those who are the victims. The majority of confiscations between 1949 and 1953 were based on this article.

During this same period, the Israeli authorities set up a legal mechanism to legalise the confiscations of what was still left for the Arabs who remained inside the State of Israel:

– In 1949, the Knesset passed a law that deemed any owner of a plot of land within the territory allocated to Israel, who, between the UN vote to partition Palestine on November 29, 1947, and the proclamation of Israel's independence on May 19, 1948, was a citizen or resident of an Arab country other than Palestine, or who left his place of residence and stayed in an area held by forces that fought against Israel, to be declared an “absentee”, his civil rights to

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<sup>7</sup> **Paul Chagnollaud**, *Israël et les territoires occupés, la confrontation silencieuse*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

be abolished, and his property to be confiscated. One-third of the Arab population of the State of Israel was affected by this law.

- The confiscation of the property of the Muslim *wakf*, that is to say, property belonging to God, according to the Muslim religion and whose income is used for charitable works. These properties, which were transferred to the Administrator of the Absentee Owners' Property, constitute a considerable fortune because the land of the *wakf* represented 6.25% of the area of Palestine.

- 1953: the “law on land acquisition and the authorisation of compensation operations”. The Minister of Finance is authorised for one year, from the promulgation of the law, to confiscate any land which, on the date of 1 April 1952, was not held by its owner or which is necessary for development, colonisation or security.

- The use of old Ottoman laws such as the Uncultivated Land Law allows for the nationalisation of uncultivated land to justify expropriations.

- After the 1967 war, the Israeli military command in the West Bank issued proclamation No. 2 concerning administration by military forces. Israel had no intention of annexing the occupied territories and was content to issue military orders that took the place of laws without changing the Jordanian legal basis of the territories. Indeed, the outright annexation meant the recognition of the presence of one and a half million Palestinians to whom it would have been necessary to grant a status and rights.

- The confiscations in the occupied territories first concerned uncultivated lands that were not likely to be claimed by Arab owners. Ordinance No. 59 confiscated the property that belonged to Jordan, which administered these territories. All land that was not registered in the cadastral registers became state property.

- The State applied in 1967 the same laws by which it confiscated Arab lands in 1949. A decree of July 23, 1967 considered that the land of any person absent on the day of the occupation in 1967 became property of the State.

- Israeli authorities often used the Jordanian Land Expropriation Law for public purposes to seize plots of land needed for road construction or other settlement uses.

- Indirect appropriation: the military governor can declare “closed sector” areas in which it is forbidden to enter and from which it is

forbidden to leave without prior authorisation. The entire Jordan Valley is thus declared a closed area.

## **Settlement of the West Bank**

Unable to forcibly evacuate the Palestinian population, the Israeli strategy consists of spreading settlements across the coveted territories, which serve as many focal points of fixation. The existence of each of the colonies is a vital issue and the evacuation of only one of them would be a threat to the entire project. In the aftermath of the 1967 war, the government of Levy Eshcol did not have a clear policy on the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories. However, the main current of the Labour party insisted on the Jewish character of the state and opposed the integration of the Palestinians, considering that the only option left to them was to integrate into the Jordanian state.

The first accomplished fact was the annexation of the eastern part of Jerusalem and the region of Latrun. This annexation had required the destruction of three Palestinian villages close to the ceasefire line between Israel and Jordan. A settlement was established, Kfar Etzion, between Jerusalem and Hebron, near the Green Line.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after, the colony of Kiryat Arba was created in Hebron, at the initiative of fundamentalist Rabbi Levinger. The initiative was supported by both Jewish nationalist religious parties and Labour party officials.

Throughout the period when Labour was in power, the Israeli settlement policy in the occupied territories was defined by the Allon plan, which provided a clear reference framework. Without going into the details of the plan, it envisaged a concentration of settlements along the Jordanian border in the Jordan Valley and the creation of an Arab enclave – in a region with a high concentration of Palestinian population – linked to Jordan by a corridor, the Arab enclave being itself bordered by a network of Jewish colonies.

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<sup>8</sup> The Green Line, or 1949 Armistice border, is the demarcation line set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between the armies of Israel and those of its neighbors (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria) after the 1948 Arab–Israeli War.

The Judaisation of Jerusalem was also a key issue, to which the Labour Party devoted itself attentively. The annexation of the Arab part of the city itself was only one element of a much larger overall plan. Eleven Jewish neighbourhoods and residential suburbs were built in and around the city between 1967 and 1973, and 19 between 1973 and 1977. Considerable sums had been spent on road construction and the extension of electrical and hydraulic networks.

When the Likud came to power in 1977, it only inherited a perfectly oiled machine that it was going to perfect. It increased land confiscations and accentuated colonisation. The Sharon plan succeeded the Allon plan.

Ariel Sharon, the head of the inter-ministerial committee on settlements, had adopted a “double backbone” project developed by a certain professor Abraham Fokhman. This project, adopted in 1978, would be called the “Sharon Plan”. It consisted of:

- establishing, within a period of twenty years, two lines of settlement extending, one along the coastal plain, the other from the Golan Heights in the north to Sharm el-Sheikh in the south;
- constituting six major urban centres in the very heart of the West Bank;
- encircling the Palestinian population with civilian and military settlements by isolating Palestinian urban areas such as Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho, and Hebron;
- increasing the segmentation of centres with a high Palestinian population by creating three East-West routes linking the Jewish settlements with each other and with Israel.

One month after the signing of the Camp David agreements between Israel and Egypt, a master plan for the development of settlement in the West Bank 1979-1983, known as the Drobless project, provided for the establishment of nearly 70 settlements over five years, the increase in the population of the colonies to 120-150,000 inhabitants, the abandonment of existing colonies in Egyptian Sinai. This colonisation policy was to be carried out methodically and provided for:

- the creation of twenty-two dense blocks joined together and forming large urban centres;
- the creation of a continuous band of settlements around the West Bank mountain range in order to encircle areas populated by the Palestinian “minority”;
- the creation of Jewish colonies within areas inhabited by Palestinians.

The general idea was that each settlement of Jewish settlers required a much larger security zone and that the more settlements there were, the less surface area would remain for the Palestinians. The most characteristic example of this policy of provocation is Hebron, where 450 Jewish fanatics in the middle of a city of 120,000 Palestinians occupy, together with the security zone, practically 20% of the surface area of the city. We can also mention the colonies of Ariel and Maaleh Adumim which are located in the heart of Arab areas.

Generally speaking, the settlements were considered an integral part of the Israeli defence system: during calm periods they ensured presence and control; during periods of crisis they served as a point of support for repression against the Palestinians.

To complete this arrangement, the Israeli government planned in the early eighties to increase to 165 the number of settlements in the West Bank – excluding Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley – in order to accommodate 1.3 million inhabitants. The dispersal of the colonies was ultimately intended to allow for a claim of territorial continuity between the areas of Jewish settlement and to accentuate “bantustinisation”, that is to say, the separation of the Palestinian population areas from each other. This is exactly the policy currently applied by Netanyahu.

Land that could not be immediately appropriated was declared a natural park. While Labour had established 86 colonies in ten years, under the Likud government between 1977 and 1984, 115 colonies were thus formed: 42 in Nablus, 23 in Hebron, 15 in the Jordan Valley, 19 in Jerusalem, 16 in Ramallah. The policy of *accomplished fact* aimed to create a situation in which it became impossible to envisage the separation of the Jewish colonies from the occupied territories.

The Shamir government tried to speed up the process of occupation until its departure in 1992. In 1985 Israel had confiscated 51% of the total area of the West Bank; in 1991, 66%, an increase of 30% on the area initially occupied in 1985.

However, Shamir did not follow the same path as his predecessors: he undertook to increase the density of the population which already occupied existing colonies, in order to accommodate the influx of immigrants coming from Eastern Europe. The number of new colonies established was relatively small. Eight of the eleven settlements under Shamir were established during the first year of peace negotiations. At the end of 1992, the number of settlers in the occupied territories was estimated at 200,000.

There is a perverse logic in the settlement policy organised by successive Israeli governments. Indeed, settlements are being set up, that is to say, women and children, on the edge, even within areas with high Palestinian population, to defend Israel's security, which implies the establishment of new colonies, etc. Ilan Halevy quotes an Israeli about this absurd situation:

“Every time we conquer and occupy a new territory, we do it not because of our appetite for the land, but because the enemy threatens our homes, our women and children. We must therefore repel this enemy by constantly pushing the boundaries of the borders that protect our homes. Then, after we have become, against our will, the owners of new territories, we cannot endure the sight of a land not inhabited by Jews. We bring our women and children to the new front line and there, they are threatened by enemy fire; when these enemies hit us, again we have no choice, we are forced to expand our territory. And so, with the help of God, we will be able to establish ourselves not only on Mount Arasa, in the north of Turkey, at the place where Noah's Ark washed up, but also in Yemen, beloved homeland of our well-known sage King Solomon.”<sup>9</sup>

## About the kibbutzim

The creation of kibbutz has been, on a practical level, one of the ways of settlement of the Jewish population in Palestine; it has also been, on an ideological level, an effective means of legitimising this settlement with the left-wing Western opinion.

The activists who constituted the kibbutz movement were inspired by the European socialist tradition, by a culture, an experience coming from the European labour movement. A mythical element of the Jewish colonisation of Palestine, the kibbutz, a kind of egalitarian commune based on socialist ideals, provided generations of pro-Israeli left-wing activists, including in the anarchist movement, with an argument legitimising the colonisation of Palestine. For a long time, the “Israeli socialist experience” was talked about in the same way as the Yugoslav or Soviet experience. But even though they were communitarian, the kibbutzim exploited land which for the most part had been confiscated from the Palestinians.

Things were however less angelic than the European left believed. The population of kibbutzim represents a little more than 2% of the population of Israel. But the kibbutz took over half of the most fertile land in the country that belonged to the expelled Palestinian peasants. Also knowing that the kibbutzim consume more than half of the country’s agricultural water, at highly subsidised prices, the share of the Israeli “miracle” must be put into perspective. During the 1948 war, kibbutzim, all political tendencies combined, took an active part in the expulsion of Palestinians from their towns and villages.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> A friend who had long lived in a kibbutz told me that while walking outside the boundaries of the colony, she had stumbled upon stones. Curious, she removed the land that was around and eventually discovered that there were actually foundations. She interviewed kibbutz elders, who at first seemed reluctant to answer. One of them eventually revealed to her that there was previously a Palestinian village in this place, that it had been razed and its population had been deported. Shocked, she made an investigation (which proved difficult) and found the camp in which the village’s population had been

However, the kibbutz movement was undergoing a serious crisis that has been overlooked for a very long time. The Institute of Sociology of the Unified Kibbutz Movement published a study in 1994 which revealed the deep crisis suffered by the kibbutz movement.

The crisis of the movement certainly does not date from the publication of this report but for the first time it highlights it in an official way. “After decades of secrecy and efforts to fend off any journalistic attempt to stick their nose into what is really going on inside the kibbutzim, the movement’s leadership has finally decided to bare its heart.”<sup>11</sup>

The kibbutz movement forms, in the country, a significant lobby which has been favoured by successive governments and which obtained numerous subsidies. According to political science professor Shlomo Avineri, the kibbutz has become one of the most conservative sectors of Israeli society; what once made it a social and national model has shattered.

The movement made bad business on the stock market in the eighties and swallowed up millions of shekels (1 shekel = 1.85 Franc<sup>12</sup>). To cope with their enormous debt, many kibbutzim have transformed arable land into expensive real estate and prestigious areas.

The egalitarian values that characterised the kibbutz disappear. One notably notices the disappearance of gender equality, which was one of the foundations of the movement: women are excluded from any position of power. Although the desertion of kibbutzim is the most serious phenomenon, affecting 55% of those born in the kibbutz, the percentage of girls who leave is a half times higher than that of boys.

If the crisis of the movement is not recent, it would be appropriate to conduct a reflection on its economic usefulness. The idea of a

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deported. She discovered that the deported Palestinians used to group themselves by village and, several generations after the events, the descendants still considered themselves as belonging to this village.

<sup>11</sup> Amnon Barzilai, *Haaretz*, quoted in *Courrier international*, 6-12 Oct. 1994.

<sup>12</sup> Today in 2025: 0.27 Euro.



kibbutz is indeed associated with that of a group of pioneers who, through their hard work and in difficult conditions, “fertilised the desert”. In fact, most of the kibbutzim are located on agricultural land previously used by the Palestinians, who are excellent farmers. Care has often been taken to raze the houses of the villages down to their foundations, whose existence the second or third generation of kibbutzniks often even ignores.

Moshe Dayan stated to the students of the Israeli Institute of Technology in 1969:

“We came here to a country populated by Arabs, and we are building a Hebrew, Jewish state here. In place of the Arab villages, we established Jewish villages. You don’t even know the names of these villages, and I do not blame you, because the corresponding geography books no longer exist. And not only the books, but the villages no longer exist (...) There is not a single settlement that has not been established on the site of a former Arab village.”<sup>13</sup>

In a country that itself is totally dependent on external subsidies – to the traditional \$3 billion of American official aid, many others are added<sup>14</sup> – Israeli agriculture is largely dependent on subsidies, direct or indirect, which largely relativises the “miraculous” aspect. When water is paid largely below its cost price, there is no miracle. An Israeli sociologist, Mr. Seltie, could thus ask: “If one supplies a kibbutz in the Negev with water brought by the national pipeline for one seventh or one eighth of its cost price, why would one deprive oneself of using it for cotton irrigation, who in the Negev requires a per hectare water allocation double that needed on the coastal plain, and why would it save water for its gardens or swimming pool?”

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<sup>13</sup> Moshe Dayan, *Ha'aretz*, 4 April 1969.

<sup>14</sup> In 1994 Israel received 3 billion dollars of aid from the United States, 1 billion to buy F 16 planes, 2 billion bank guarantees, about 1 billion from secular Jewish organizations, 1 billion funds from Orthodox Jews in the diaspora, not counting collections for hospitals, to “reforest”, for universities, museums, etc.

## Several types of colonisation

The term “colonisation” covers multiple realities.

1. Settlers driven by essentially ideological reasons. The Goush Emmounin movement, made up of far-right religious, demands the annexation of all the occupied territories. They are widely represented in the regional councils of settlers. Their political influence is exercised through a pressure group set up in 1985 in the Israeli parliament.

2. The “suburbanites”. They began to invest in the occupied territories from 1980 for economic reasons. 70% of the Jewish population of the occupied territories is there for economic reasons. The influx of Soviet immigrants created a serious housing crisis and an unprecedented increase in rent prices. The extremely high cost of real estate in Israel has led to residential settlement in the Palestinian territories. The prices of the land were low, so were the rents. Tax benefits were granted to Jewish companies and citizens of Israel to build and buy in the occupied territories. Acquirers could obtain advantageous public loans, students could enjoy better scholarships, companies, teachers, social workers could deduct from their taxes a part of their profits or income. These provisions had favoured the expansion of colonisation in the eighties. A poll published in *Yediot Aharonot* on 3 February 1993 reveals that 33% of these settlers would agree to leave if they were properly compensated.

In 1995, a hundred settlers from the West Bank contacted Meretz, a left-wing party that usually does not have the favours of the settlers, to ask them to negotiate their settlement within the pre-1967 borders, with monetary compensation. This initiative was received with the most extreme violence by the organisations of settlers: quarantine, threats, circulation of lists of names...

When they came to power in July 1992, the Labour Party had abolished incentives. Netanyahu, of course, reinstated them on December 13, 1996, by deciding to grant the 127 colonies in the West Bank – 135,000 inhabitants, to which must be added the 160,000 of East Jerusalem – the status of a “priority development zone”.

The demarcation between “ideological” and “suburban” settlers is blurring as the latter organise themselves to defend their interests and prevent the dismantling of colonies. In February 1989, hundreds of settlers from the dormitory city of Ariel, in the district of Tulkarem, invaded the Palestinian town of Bidya and spread terror there, destroying homes and vehicles before being dispersed several hours after the beginning of their raid. A Member of the Knesset and member of the Civil Rights Movement, Dedi Zuckerberg had, as early as 1983, published a report in which he established that the violence of the settlers were “deliberate acts with the intention of expanding regions already controlled by Jews”. The MP adds that the settlers “consider themselves as the armed arm of the state with the aim of establishing order, punishing and imposing sanctions”.

## **Conclusion (2025)**

This very brief presentation on the land issue highlights the various methods through which the State of Israel and settlers are gradually appropriating Palestinian land. It sheds light on the systematic nature of these practices, which fit into a well-defined framework of occupation and territorial expansion policies.

It is important to be aware that this document, dating from 1998, describes a situation that has significantly worsened since then. Events over the past decades, marked by escalations of violence, military operations, and massive destruction, have exacerbated the crisis. The situation in Gaza, in particular, has culminated in the total destruction of the Gaza Strip, resulting in tragic loss of life and destruction of essential infrastructure.

In summary, this analysis highlights not only the methods of land appropriation but also the devastating impacts on the daily lives of Palestinians. The systematic nature of these practices underscores a persistent dynamic of oppression, driven by state policies and colonial interests.

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## **Press Release from October 9, 2023 – The Attack on the Israeli Population**

Cercle d'Études libertaires – Gaston-Leval

Monde-nouveau.net

The attack on the Israeli population initiated on October 7 by the “military branch” of Hamas resulted in a horrific massacre.

Militants and libertarian organisations cannot in any way legitimise such a massacre, which cannot be identified as an act of resistance: *it is indeed a crime*.

Tomorrow, it will be the Palestinian population that will suffer the reprisals of the State of Israel.

*The necessary analysis of the chain of events that led to this massacre must not be overlooked*, when the time comes, nor the reflection on the causes by which a religious fundamentalist organisation has appropriated the right to represent an oppressed population.

For anarchists, *no religion* can be a bearer of emancipation, and the national emancipation of a people cannot result from acts of barbarism.

October 9, 2023