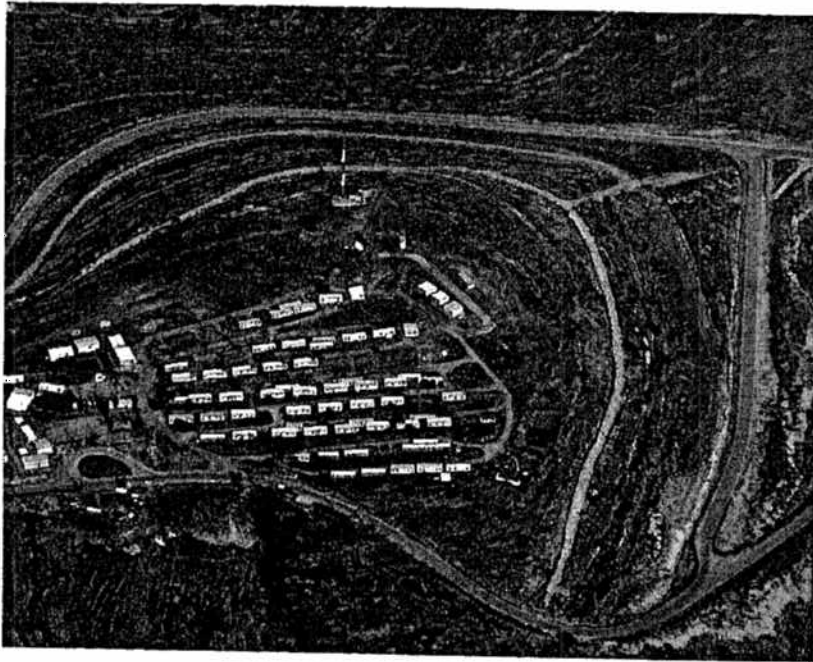# Hollow Land

Israel's Architecture of Occupation

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EYAL WEIZMAN

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London • New York

Migron. Milutin Labudovic for Peace Now, 2002

Introduction: Frontier Architecture

Robinson believed that if he looked at it hard enough, he can cause the surface of the city to reveal to him the molecular basis of his own sorrowful events, and in this way he hoped to see into the future.[1]

Patrick Keiller (London)

The duality of intelligence and stupidity has been part of the Zionist project from the beginning[2]

Mourid Barghouti

'Nu'a nu'a sof'[3]

Yeshayahu Gavish
(Move, move, out – the order for the beginning of the assault of the 1967 war)

A frontier scenario

In the years following the 1993 signing of the first Oslo Accord, which was intended to mark the beginning of the end of the conflict over Palestine, it became increasingly difficult for Israeli settlers to obtain official permits to establish new settlements in the West Bank. As a result, settlers resorted to increasingly sophisticated methods of piracy to help the government – which, unofficially, was keen to see settlements established but could not be seen to be helping in their foundation – bypass its own laws and international commitments.

In 1999 several settlers complained to the military of bad reception on their cellphones as they drove round a bend on the main highway, Road 60, leading from Jerusalem to the settlements in the northern West Bank. In response, the cellphone provider, Orange, agreed to erect an antenna in the area. The settlers

pointed to an elevated hilltop overlooking the bend as a potential site for the mast. The same hilltop had been the site of previous – unsuccessful – settlement attempts: three years earlier settlers claimed that the summit was an archaeological mound under which the biblical town of Migron was buried. Sample excavations unearthed the remains of nothing older than a small Byzantine village, but the hilltop was named 'Migron' regardless. Two young settlers occupied the hill, living in converted shipping containers, but, with no prospect of being able to develop the site, left after a short time.

The hilltop, its slopes cultivated with figs and olives, was owned by Palestinian farmers from the villages of Ein Yabrud and Burka who were shepherds there. According to the emergency powers invested in the Israeli military, however, the construction of a cellphone antenna could be considered a security issue, and could therefore be undertaken on private lands without obtaining the owners' consent. Following a request by Orange, the Israel Electric Corporation connected the hilltop to the electricity grid and the national water provider connected the hilltop to the water system, purportedly to enable the construction work.

Because of delays in the mast's construction, in May 2001 settlers erected a fake antenna and received military permission to hire a 24-hour on-site private security guard to watch over it. The guard moved into a trailer at the foot of the mast, and fenced off the surrounding hilltop; soon afterwards, his wife and children moved in and connected their home to the water and electricity supplies already there. On 3 March 2002, five additional families joined them, and the outpost of Migron formally came into being. The outpost grew steadily. Since families were already living onsite, the Israeli Ministry for Construction and Housing built a nursery, while some donations from abroad paid for the construction of a synagogue.[4] Migron is currently the biggest of the 103 outposts scattered throughout the West Bank. By mid-2006 it comprised around 60 trailers and containers housing more than 42 families: approximately 150 people perched on the hilltop around a cellular antenna.[5]

The antenna became a focus of territorial intensity in the surrounding landscape. The infrastructure built for it allowed the outpost to emerge. The energy field of the antenna was not only electromagnetic, but also political, serving as a centre for the mobilizing, channelling, coalescing and organizing of political forces and processes of various kinds. Migron is not the only outpost established around a cellphone antenna. The logic of cellular communication seems oddly compatible with that of the civilian occupation of the West Bank: both expand into territories by establishing networks that triangulate base stations located on high ground along radiation- or site-lines. Moreover, the cellular networks serve a military function. Using them for its own field communications, the military was able to replace its bulky military radios with smaller devices
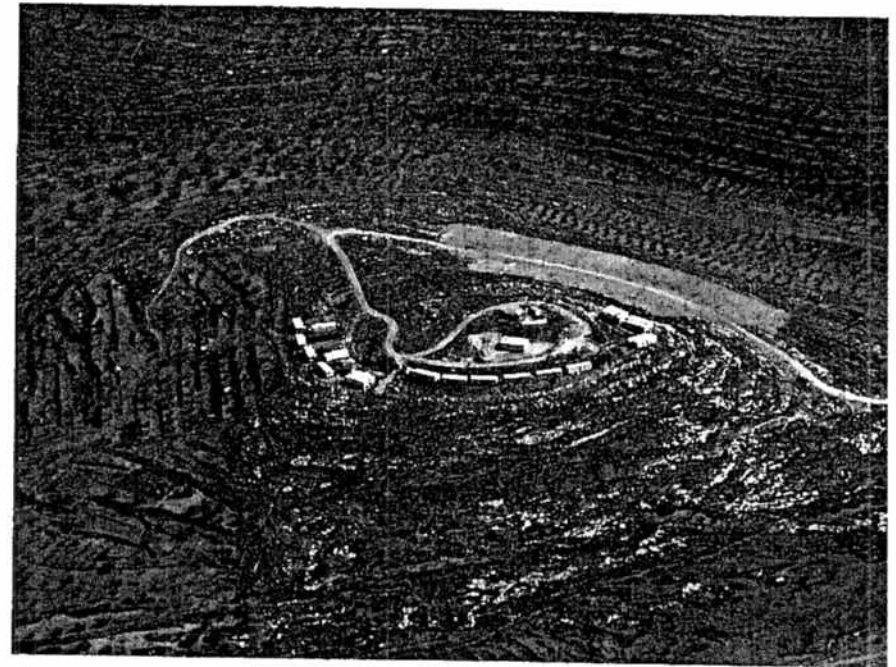
The outpost of Antenna Hill. Note antenna at centre of the outpost. Milutin Labudovic for Peace Now, 2002

capable of transmitting field imagery and GPS locations between soldiers and units.

An upsurge in the establishment of outposts has always been an indication of what settlers suspected to be 'impending territorial compromises'. Such activity is intended to sabotage prospects of political progress, and secure as much land as possible for the Israeli settlers in the Occupied Territories, in case partial withdrawals are to be carried out. After returning from negotiations with the Palestinian Authority and the Clinton administration at the Wye Plantation in Maryland in October 1998, Ariel Sharon, then Foreign Minister, rushed settlers 'to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can . . . because everything we take now will stay ours. Everything we don't grab will go to them.'[6] In recent years, many outposts have been constructed in an attempt to influence the path of Israel's Separation Wall that, at the time of writing in 2006, is carving a circuitous route through the West Bank, the logic being that by seeding the terrain with 'anchor points' in strategic places, state planners would reroute the Wall around them in order to include them on the 'Israeli' side. Outposts thus mark some of the most contested frontiers

of the Israel–Palestine conflict. Often, rarely beyond their teens, the so-called 'youth of the hill' reject their parents' suburban culture for a sense of the wild frontier, one equally influenced by the myth of rough and rugged Western heroes as with the Israeli myth of the pioneering Zionist settlers of the early twentieth century. The armed outpost settlers often clash with local Palestinian farmers, violently drive them off their fields and steal their produce. In retaliation, armed Palestinian militants often attack outposts. Other outposts are then established as 'punitive measures' near locations where settlers have been killed.

Outposts have thus become the focus for political and diplomatic squabbles. Local and international peace organizations engage in direct actions against outpost expansion. In 2004 several Israeli peace activists managed to steal five trailers from Migron, provocatively placing them in front of the Ministry of Defence building in Tel Aviv, demonstrating that evacuation could be carried out if the will to do it exists.[7] Human rights lawyers petitioned the Israeli High Court of Justice with a string of legal challenges against the outposts, the most recent of which, against Migron, is still pending.[8] As international pressure mounts, Israeli governments announce (usually with great fanfare) their decision to enforce Israeli law and evacuate a number of outposts. Occasionally, clashes occur between government and settler forces: thousands of policemen battle with thousands of settlers, who travel for the televised fight from across the frontier. Often, however, a compromise is reached: the trailers are reattached to trucks, and relocated to another Palestinian hilltop.

Against the geography of stable, static places, and the balance across linear and fixed sovereign borders, frontiers are deep, shifting, fragmented and elastic territories. Temporary lines of engagement, marked by makeshift boundaries, are not limited to the edges of political space but exist throughout its depth. Distinctions between the 'inside' and 'outside' cannot be clearly marked. In fact, the straighter, more geometrical and more abstract official colonial borders across the 'New Worlds' tended to be, the more the territories of effective control were fragmented and dynamic and thus unchartable by any conventional mapping technique.[9] The Occupied Palestinian Territories could be seen as such a frontier zone. However, in relation to the dimensions of ancient empires – 'optimal', by several accounts, at forty days' horse travel from one end to the other – within the 5,655 square kilometres of the West Bank, the 2.5 million Palestinians and 500,000 Jewish settlers seem to inhabit the head of a pin. In it, as Sharon Rotbard mentioned, 'the most explosive ingredients of our time, all modern utopias and all ancient beliefs [are contained] simultaneously and instantaneously, bubbling side by side with no precautions'.[10] These territories have become the battlefield on which various agents of state power and independent actors confront each other, meeting local and international resistance. Within them, the mundane elements of planning and architecture have become tactical tools and the means of dispossession. Under Israel's regime of 'erratic occupation', Palestinian life, property and political rights are constantly violated not only by the frequent actions of the Israeli military, but by a process in which their environment is unpredictably and continuously refashioned, tightening around them like a noose.

Accounts of colonialism tend to concentrate on the way systems of governance and control are translated into the organization of space, according to underlying principles of rational organization, classification, procedure and rules of administration. What the above scenario demonstrates, however, is that in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the organization of geographical space cannot simply be understood as the preserve of the Israeli government executive power alone, but rather one diffused among a multiplicity of – often non-state – actors. The spatial organization of the Occupied Territories is a reflection not only of an ordered process of planning and implementation, but, and increasingly so, of 'structured chaos', in which the – often deliberate – selective absence of government intervention promotes an unregulated process of violent dispossession. The actors operating within this frontier – young settlers, the Israeli military, the cellular network provider and other capitalist corporations, human rights and political activists, armed resistance, humanitarian and legal experts, government ministries, foreign governments, 'supportive' communities overseas, state planners, the media, the Israeli High Court of Justice – with the differences and contradictions of their aims, all play their part in the diffused and anarchic, albeit collective authorship of its spaces. Because elastic geographies respond to a multiple and diffused rather than a single source of power, their architecture cannot be understood as the material embodiment of a unified political will or as the product of a single ideology. Rather, the organization of the Occupied Territories should be seen as a kind of 'political plastic', or as a map of the relation between all the forces that shaped it.[11]

The architecture of the frontier could not be said to be simply 'political' but rather 'politics in matter'.

This book is an investigation of the transformation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories since 1967. It looks at the ways in which the different forms of Israeli rule inscribed themselves in space, analysing the geographical, territorial, urban and architectural conceptions and the interrelated practices that form and sustain them. In doing so, it provides an image of the very essence of Israeli occupation, its origin, evolution and the various ways by which it functions.

It does so not by offering a comprehensive history of the four decades of Israeli domination, nor by drawing a detailed portrait of its present spatiality, but

by probing the various structures of territorial occupation. The following chapters form an 'archival probe',[12] investigating the history and *modus operandi* of the various spatial mechanisms that have sustained – and continue to sustain – the occupation's regime and practices of control. *Hollow Land* reveals how overt instruments of control, as well as seemingly mundane structures, are pregnant with intense historical, political meaning. Cladding and roofing details, stone quarries, street and highway illumination schemes, the ambiguous architecture of housing, the form of settlements, the construction of fortifications and means of enclosure, the spatial mechanisms of circulation control and flow management, mapping techniques and methods of observations, legal tactics for land annexation, the physical organization of crisis and disaster zones, highly developed weapons technologies and complex theories of military manoeuvres – all are invariably described as indexes for the political rationalities, institutional conflicts and range of expertise that formed them.

Architecture is employed in this book in two distinct ways. On the one hand, the book deals with the architecture of the structures that sustain the occupation and the complicity of architects in designing them. It seeks to read the *politics of Israeli architecture* in the way social, economic, national and strategic forces solidify into the organization, form and ornamentation of homes, infrastructure and settlements. On the other hand, architecture is employed as a conceptual way of understanding political issues as constructed realities. As the subtitle of this book – *Israel's Architecture of Occupation* – implies, the occupation is seen to have architectural properties, in that its territories are understood as an architectural 'construction', which outline the ways in which it is conceived, understood, organized and operated. The architects in this book are therefore military men, militants, politicians, political and other activists. I shall return to this latter meaning in the last section of this introduction.

Elastic geography

As the foundational narrative of Migron demonstrates, the frontiers of the Occupied Territories are not rigid and fixed at all; rather, they are elastic, and in constant transformation. The linear border, a cartographic imaginary inherited from the military and political spatiality of the nation state has splintered into a multitude of temporary, transportable, deployable and removable border-synonyms – 'separation walls', 'barriers', 'blockades', 'closures', 'road blocks', 'checkpoints', 'sterile areas', 'special security zones', 'closed military areas' and 'killing zones' – that shrink and expand the territory at will. These borders are dynamic, constantly

shifting, ebbing and flowing; they creep along, stealthily surrounding Palestinian villages and roads. They may even errupt into Palestinian living rooms, bursting in through the house walls. The anarchic geography of the frontier is an evolving image of transformation, which is remade and rearranged with every political development or decision. Outposts and settlements might be evacuated and removed, yet new ones are founded and expand. The location of military checkpoints is constantly changing, blocking and modulating Palestinian traffic in ever-differing ways. Mobile military bases create the bridgeheads that maintain the logistics of ever-changing operations. The Israeli military makes incursions into Palestinian towns and refugee camps, occupies them and then withdraws. The Separation Wall, merely one of multiple barriers, is constantly rerouted, its path registering like a seismograph the political and legal battles surrounding it. Where territories appear to be hermetically sealed in by Israeli walls and fences, Palestinian tunnels are dug underneath them. Elastic territories could thus not be understood as benign environments: highly elastic political space is often more dangerous and deadly than a static, rigid one.

The dynamic morphology of the frontier resembles an incessant sea dotted with multiplying archipelagos of externally alienated and internally homogenous ethno-national enclaves – under a blanket of aerial Israeli surveillance. In this unique territorial ecosystem, various other zones – those of political piracy, of 'humanitarian' crisis, of barbaric violence, of full citizenship, 'weak citizenship', or no citizenship at all – exist adjacent to, within or over each other.

The elastic nature of the frontier does not imply that Israeli trailers, homes, roads or indeed the concrete wall are in themselves soft or yielding but that the continuous spatial reorganization of the political borders they mark out responds to and reflects political and military conflicts. The various inhabitants of this frontier do not operate within the fixed envelopes of space – space is not the background for their actions, an abstract grid on which events take place – but rather the medium that each of their actions seeks to challenge, transform or appropriate. Moreover, in this context the relation of space to action could not be understood as that of a rigid container to 'soft' performance. Political action is fully absorbed in the organization, transformation, erasure and subversion of space. Individual actions, geared by the effect of the media, can sometimes be more effective than Israeli government action.[13] Although it often appears as if the frontier's elastic nature is shaped by one side only – following the course of colonialist expansion – the agency of the colonized makes itself manifest in its success in holding steadfastly to its ground in the face of considerable odds, not only through political violence, but in the occasional piece of skilful diplomacy and the mobilization of international opinion. Indeed, the space of the colonizer may as well shrink as frontiers are decolonized.

In the meantime, the erratic and unpredictable nature of the frontier is exploited by the government. Chaos has its peculiar structural advantages. It supports one of Israel's foremost strategies of obfuscation: the promotion of complexity – geographical, legal or linguistic. Sometimes, following a terminology pioneered by Henry Kissinger, this strategy is openly referred to as 'constructive blurring'.[14] This strategy seeks simultaneously to obfuscate and naturalize the facts of domination. Across the frontiers of the West Bank it is undertaken by simultaneously unleashing processes that would create conditions too complex and illogical to make any territorial solution in the form of partition possible (many of the settlements were indeed constructed with the aim of creating an 'irresolvable geography'), while pretending that it is only the Israeli government that has the know-how to resolve the very complexity it created.

One of the most important strategies of obfuscation is terminological. The unique richness of settlement terminology in Hebrew was employed after 1967 in order to blur the border between Israel and the areas it occupied, and functioned as a kind of sophisticated semantic laundering. The controversial Hebrew term *hitnahlut* – a term with biblical roots describing the dwelling on national patrimony – is generally understood by the Israeli public to refer to those settlements of the national-messianic right, built in Gaza and the West Bank mountain range near Palestinian cities. In the popular grammar of occupation, settlements created by the centre-left Labor governments are referred to and seen more empathically as agrarian *Yeshuvim* (a generic Hebrew term for Jewish settlements within Israel) of the 'Kibbutz' and 'Moshav' type, as 'suburbs', 'towns' or, if within the boundaries of expanded Jerusalem, as 'neighbourhoods' *(Shhunot)*. Semantic distinctions are also made between 'legal' settlements and 'illegal' outposts, although the latter are often the first stage in the development of the former in an enterprise that is illegal in its entirety. For the Israeli public, each of the above terms carries a different moral code. Large suburban settlements such as Ariel, Emanuel, Qiriat Arba and Ma'ale Adumim were officially declared 'towns' *(Arim)* in an exceptional process, long before their population had reached the demographical threshold of 20,000 required within the recognized borders of Israel 'proper'.[15] This was done in an attempt to naturalize these settlements in Israeli discourse, make their existence fact, their geographical location unclear, and keep them away from the negotiation table.[16] Indeed, accordingly, most Israelis still see the Jewish neighbourhoods of occupied Jerusalem and the large towns of the West Bank, not as settlements, but as 'legitimate' places of residence. Within this book all residential construction beyond the 1949 borders of the Green Line are referred to as 'settlements' – which in this context should be understood as 'colonies'.

In fact, despite the complexity of the legal, territorial and built realities that sustain the occupation, the conflict over Palestine has been a relatively straightforward process of colonization, dispossession, resistance and suppression. The Israeli critical writer Ilan Pappe explains: 'generations of Israeli and pro-Israeli scholars, very much like their state's diplomats, have hidden behind the cloak of complexity in order to fend off any criticism of their quite obviously brutal treatment of the Palestinians . . . [repeating] the Israeli message: This is a complicated issue that would be better left to the Israelis to deal with . . .'[17] The attempt to place issues regarding conflict resolution in the domain of experts, beyond the reach of the general public, has been one of Israel's most important propaganda techniques. This book asks not only that we examine the complexity of the occupation and the sophisticated brutality of its mechanisms of control, but that we simultaneously see through them.

Laboratory

Although this book is largely framed between 1967 and the present, and primarily within the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, it does not seek to claim that the spatial injustices of the conflict started only after the Six Day War of June 1967, and that the extent of the present injustices are confined to the 1967 occupied territories. Nor does it underestimate the century-old process of Zionist colonization, land-grab and dispossession that preceded it. It suggests though that any adequate address of the injustices and suffering of the conflict must begin by ending Israeli rule in the Occupied Territories and the daily horrors conducted in its name. Focusing on the occupation itself, furthermore, allows Israel's spatial strategies to be investigated in their most brutal and intense manifestation, as within a 'laboratory of the extreme'. The technologies of control that enable Israel's continued colonization of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are located at the end of an evolutionary chain of techniques of colonization, occupation and governance developed throughout the history of Zionist settlement. Furthermore, every change in the geography of the occupation has been undertaken with the techniques and technologies of the time and in exchange with other developments worldwide. The main surge of the colonization of the West Bank in the 1980s coincided with the Reagan-era flight of the American middle classes and their fortification behind protective walls – both formations setting themselves against the poverty and violence they have themselves produced. Perfecting the politics of fear, separation, seclusion and visual control, the settlements, checkpoints, walls and other security measures are also the last gesture in the hardening of enclaves, and the physical and virtual extension of borders in the context of the more recent global 'war on terror'. The architecture of Israeli occupation could thus be seen

as an accelerator and an acceleration of other global political processes, a worst-case scenario of capitalist globalization and its spatial fall-out. The extended significance of this 'laboratory' lies in the fact that the techniques of domination, as well as the techniques of resistance to them, have expanded and multiplied across what critical geographer Derek Gregory called the 'colonial present', [18] and beyond – into the metropolitan centres of global cities.

Indeed, beyond their physical reality, the territories of Israel/Palestine have constituted a schematic description of a conceptual system whose properties have been used to understand other geopolitical problems. The 'Intifada' unfolding in Iraq is a part of an imaginary geography that Makram Khoury-Machool called the 'Palestinization of Iraq'. [19] Yet, if the Iraqi resistance is perceived to have been 'Palestinized', the American military has been 'Israelized'. Furthermore, both the American and Israeli militaries have adopted counter-insurgency tactics that increasingly resemble the guerrilla methods of their enemies. When the wall around the American Green Zone in Baghdad looks as if it had been built from left-over components of the West Bank Wall; when 'temporary closures' are imposed on entire Iraqi towns and villages and reinforced with earth dykes and barbed wire; when larger regions are carved up by road blocks and checkpoints; when the homes of suspected terrorists are destroyed, and 'targeted assassinations' are introduced into a new global militarized geography – it is because the separate conflicts now generally collected under the heading of the 'war on terror' are the backdrop to the formation of complex 'institutional ecologies' that allow the exchange of technologies, mechanisms, doctrines, and spatial strategies between various militaries and the organizations that they confront, as well as between the civilian and the military domains.

The politics of separation

Each of the spatial technologies and practices to which the following chapters are dedicated is both a system of colonial control and a means of separation. Israeli domination in the West Bank and Gaza always shifted between selective physical presence and absence, the former dealing with Israel's territorial and the latter with its demographic strategy – aiming to gain land without the people living in it. It thus operated by imposing a complex compartmentalized system of spatial exclusion that at every scale is divided into two. The logic of 'separation' (or, to use the more familiar Afrikaans term, 'apartheid') between Israelis and Palestinians within the Occupied Territories has been extended, on the larger, national scale, to that of 'partition'. At times, the politics of separation/partition has been dressed up as a formula for a peaceful settlement,

The "ascent" of the Elon Moreh Settlement core to Sebastia, West Bank, December 1975.

Settlements: Battle for the Hilltops

Although he played a central role in the settlement of the mountain region of the West Bank, and his visions were partially implemented, Sharon cannot be said to be the master-planner of the settlement project there. The 'authorship' of this project was diffused rather amongst a multiplicity of agents and organizations and embodied more contradictions than a set of coherent strategies. Far from being a result of an ordered government-led master-planning process – the translation of a single governance or defence rationality to a process of territorial organization – the colonization of the mountain district of the West Bank has in fact emerged out of a series of fundamental crises and conflicts that took place between various ministers and ministries within a series of Israeli governments, and between these governments, the settler organization of Gush Emunim, other non-government organizations and the High Court of Justice from 1967 to 1981. These conflicts, a feature of both the Labor governments of the first decade of occupation (1967–77) as well as the first Likud government of Menachem Begin (1977–81), were physically acted out on the hilltops of the West Bank, but also within the halls of the Israeli High Court of Justice in a number of landmark legal cases. During these years the High Court was transformed into an arena in which government agents, military officers, settlers, Palestinian landowners and Israeli peace and rights groups battled over land expropriation and the establishment of settlements. In the process of these legal battles, terms such as 'defence', 'security', 'temporariness' and 'divine right' were argued and defined in a way that continues to inform the practices and strategies of the occupation to this day.

The organizational chaos and improvisation that characterized the settlement project in these years could be contrasted with what Israeli architectural historian Zvi Efrat called the 'Israeli Project' – the top-down planning and construction of the physical environment of the Israeli state in the first two decades of its existence prior to 1967. According to Efrat, during the 1950s and 1960s the

'Israeli Project' was based on state-centric master-planning that he described as 'one of the most comprehensive, controlled and efficient architectural experiments in the modern era', echoing 'Stalin's Five Year Plan for the Soviet Union . . . the American New Deal infrastructural projects and public works of the 1930s . . . and the post-World War II British schemes of New Towns'.[1] This project was subjected to centralized political control, it was governed by rational principles of organization and standardization, a clear division of labor and the distribution of the population according to a single plan and a book of instructions that were prepared in 1949 by the Bauhaus school graduate, architect Arie Sharon. Whereas in the 1950s and early 1960s state planning was undertaken by professional architects and planners, after the 1967 war it was mainly undertaken by politicians, generals and ideological activists. While the Arie Sharon plan regarded the borders of the state as fixed, post-1967 settlement efforts, in which Ariel Sharon played a major role, saw the territoriality of the Occupied Territories as 'elastic' and up for grabs.

Shortly after the end of the 1973 war, a group of young women, led by Daniella Weiss, who would later become secretary-general of the settler organization Gush Emunim, met with Prime Minister Golda Meir. They came to ask for government permission and assistance in establishing a small settlement in the mountain region of the West Bank. The location, recommended by Ariel Sharon, who had recently left military service to begin his political career, was a disused Ottoman-era railway station located near the Palestinian village of Sebastia, northwest of the town of Nablus. The site was well outside the borders of the Allon plan, which sought to colonize mainly the Jordan Valley and the areas around Jerusalem, and thus in contradiction to its principal goal of only settling areas sparsely populated by Palestinians. Meir was personal and supportive, but politely declined the request. Her refusal led to eight consecutive attempts in the following three years to settle the location without government permission.

The 'ascents,' as the settlement-establishing expeditions were called, were led by a group of would-be settlers who comprised the 'settlement-core' of Elon Moreh, logistically supported by the Israeli National-Religious Party. On occasion they were accompanied by a large entourage of rabbis, university professors, writers and Knesset members. The ascents were often confronted by demonstrators of the Zionist left and were disbanded by the military. Sharon himself had a role in organizing some of the ascents, and in evading military attempts to break them up. Leading a group of settlers in July 1974, Sharon broke through military roadblocks, leading soldiers on a wild goose chase through the surrounding hills, only to let another group quietly arrive on site from another direction. When the settlers arrived at the railway station they chained themselves together, so

that Arie Shalev, the then military governor of the West Bank, had 'to bring a large hammer from the prison house in Nablus to break apart the steel chains that held together a settlement constructed of living bodies'.[2] In February 1974 the members of the Elon Moreh core and various other national-religious groups joined together to form Gush Emunim. In the winter of 1976, during the holiday of Hanukkah, after another ascent, a compromise was reached between the settlers and the government in the main hall of the Sebastia railway station. In one of his famous 'creative solutions', Shimon Peres — serving as Minister of Defence in the Labor government of Yitzhak Rabin, formed after Golda Meir's forced resignation in April 1974 – allowed the settlers to remain within a specially allocated section of the military base of Qadum, southwest of Nablus. Over the next two years, the settlers' enclave grew larger than the entire base, and was officially civilianized into the settlement of Qedumim.[3]

This *modus operandi* exemplified the power and capabilities of Gush Emunim. The group's function was twofold: to act as an extra-parliamentary activist pressure group in the halls of power, and to serve as a settlement organization in the hills of the West Bank. By these means, it tried to fashion itself as the true heir to the pre-1948 Labor pioneering movement. In its 'ascents' to the hilltops of the West Bank, Gush Emunim also attempted to resolve the paradox inherent in the territorial approach of Zionism: while seeking a return to the 'promised land', early Zionists settled in the coastal plains and northern valleys that had good agricultural soil but relatively little in the way of Israelite history. The later 'ascents' were seen as the 'regeneration of the soul' and the achievement of 'personal and national renewal', infused with the mystical quality of the heights. For these settlers, the 1967 occupation was not understood as a mere progression along the horizontal axis of expansion. It was primarily an uphill assault from the Israeli coastal plains to the mountains of the West Bank, the Syrian Golan Heights and the Sinai mountains. For them the mountains were seen both as strategic ground as well as the cradle of the nation. Years later Ephi Eitam, the retired general who further radicalized the National-Religious Party, opposed any dismantling of the mountain settlements of the West Bank in these terms: 'Whoever proposes that we return to the plains, to our basest part, to the sands, the secular, and that we leave in foreign hands the sacred summits, proposes a senseless thing.'[4]

According to Gush Emunim, the state's 'weak governments', those administrations responsible for the catastrophe of the 1973 war, were to be suppressed by the group's outpouring of religious energies and mystical power. The settlements became a tool in the modern struggle between the people and the sovereignty of the state of Israel.

That the government could be pressured into authorizing and establishing settlements had become evident only three months after the 1967 war when, in

September of that year, Kfar Etzion became the first settlement to be established in the West Bank southwest of Jerusalem. It was established contrary to general government guidelines in response to insistent pressure by a group of settlers, some of whom were relatives of the residents of the original community of Kfar Etzion, one of several Jewish communities that fell to Palestinian militias and the Jordan Legion at the beginning of the 1948 war.

Gush Emunim's most effective tactic was to settle sites without government permission with the intention of forcing it to give retrospective legitimacy to settlements whose existence was already established in fact. The strategy was to build many settlements in areas that the government may have otherwise evacuated under international pressure, thereby forcing it to hold onto as much of the territory occupied in 1967 as possible.

The methods of Gush Emunim demonstrate the difference between the top-down master-planning logic of governments and the bottom-up operational logic of independent political organizations. While a masterplan generally seeks to mobilize resources and organize the landscape and the built environment in a manner that embodies a political strategic vision, Gush Emunim sought to identify cracks and fissures within the organization of executive power, and exploit conflicts between government members, political opportunities and ad hoc alliances.[5]

In 1977, shortly after the handover of power from Labor to Likud, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made a visit to Jerusalem and the peace process began. Although Menachem Begin's government was engaged in peace talks with Egypt, it was not yet inclined to acquiesce fully to the impatient demands of Gush Emunim, although it did authorize some settlements and continued building around Jerusalem. However, the organization again found an ally in Sharon, then head of the government's Settlement Committee, seeing in him a champion in their battle against the 'defeatism' of the other members of the government, who seemed all to have fallen under Sadat's charm. Angry at having been excluded from the peace negotiations by Begin, who feared his impulsive nature, Sharon timed the launch of new settlements to coincide with impending diplomatic breakthroughs, or to clash with the trips to Egypt of his main political rival, Minister of Defence Ezer Weizman, whose job he coveted – and four years later got.

Together with Gush members, Sharon even initiated some 'Potemkin settlements' – empty decoys and ship containers that could be mistaken for settlements in order to convince the Americans, who were monitoring the area from the air, that new settlements were being constructed under their noses in areas of the Sinai that Israel had already agreed to hand back – thereby causing the Egyptians to suspend negotiations.[6] Settlement construction therefore provided Sharon with the means to intervene in, or interfere with, Israel's foreign policy. A hilltop scattered with several mobile homes and manned by a group of young zealots was the kind of micro-tactics, replete with geopolitical implications, that was his particular forte.

Settlement chaos

One of the characteristics of Sharon's military command and civilian ministry was his reluctance to outline precise operational plans. 'I settle where I can,' he often said. What Sharon said, what he did, what he proposed, was based on general improvisations, which he decided upon only at the moment he needed to act, had an opportunity to act or felt compelled to act. His advantage was that if he did not know what he was going to do the following day, neither would his enemies and rivals. One of Sharon's other obvious talents was the use of maps and cartography. In photographs of various periods, both as soldier and as politician, he is often seen pointing to details on maps, or marching with a rolled-up map tucked under his arm. Taking advantage of the limited experience among his colleagues in the government, he drew complex maps of new settlements that could not be easily understood or, in total contempt for his colleagues' abilities, presented maps of areas other than those in discussion, and still forced through decisions in his favour.[7] At other times he helped disguise new settlements from his fellow ministers by claiming they were actually only ad hoc 'workers camps', 'military bases' or 'archaeological sites'.

In early 1978, Sharon persuaded the rest of the government to award a group of Gush Emunim members a permit to establish a 'work camp' for the purpose of archaeological excavation at the presumed site of the biblical town of Shiloh. There, on the foothills of a ridge separating the present-day districts of Ramallah and Nablus, during the time of the biblical 'occupation and settlement' of Canaan by Yehoshua Bin-Nun, the Tabernacle was believed to have temporarily rested on its way to Jerusalem. Although the 'archaeologists' were more engaged in prayer and dance than in digging, the deeper the excavation went, the more established the encampment became. Soon after, the 'site accommodation' of the 'archaeological expedition' was expanded and family members of the 'archaeologists' arrived to live with them on site. Mobile homes replaced tents, water towers were built, and electricity was provided courtesy of a nearby military base. When the excavation camp was finally exposed as an act of optical-political camouflage, the modern settlement of Shiloh was already a fact on the ground.

Until the end of 1981, when the second Begin government fully adopted Gush Emunim's ideology, and was so acquiescent to its demands that the organization considered disbanding itself,[8] the settlement project in the mountain district
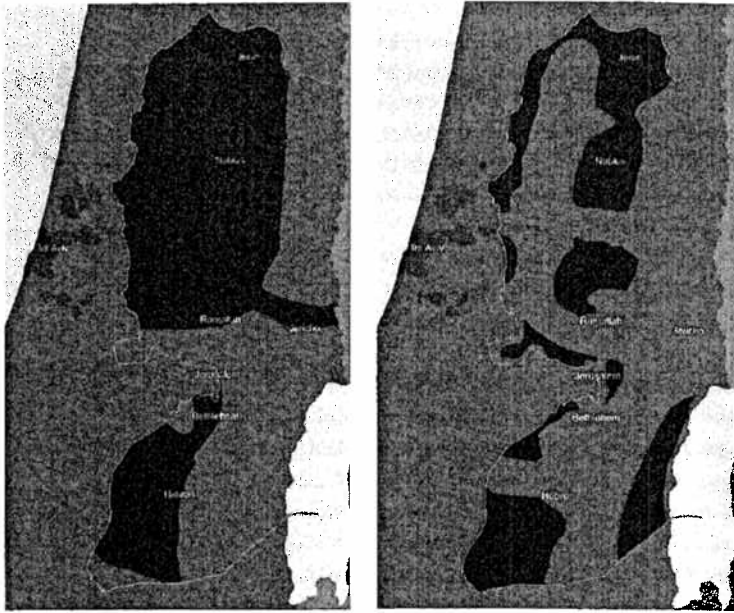
Left: Allon Plan, 1967-77. The dark sections mark the areas to be handed back to Jordan (58 per cent of the West Bank). Right: Sharon Plan (the H Plan), 1977-82. The separate areas of Palestinian autonomy would extend over 40 per cent of the West Bank. In both plans the separate parts of the West Bank are to be linked by extra-territorial roads.

of the West Bank could be described as an 'anti-government' project conducted by Gush Emunim with support from allies within the government.

The number of settlers and settlements in the West Bank rose, no doubt, after Likud was elected to power in May 1977. At this time there were about 4,500 settlers living in twenty-eight settlements throughout the West Bank (a further 50,000 settlers were already living in Jerusalem), most of them in the Jordan Valley according to the Allon plan, but also in several Gush Emunim settlements in the mountain region as well. At the end of the Likud government's first term of office, in June 1981, the number of settlements had more than doubled to sixty-eight and the number of settlers almost quadrupled to 16,200.[9] In these years, however, the geography of the occupation did not emerge out of clear government decisions and planning guidelines, but mostly evolved out of confused interaction between different, mostly inconsistent, and often opposing political agents and ideological interests. In fact, although many people – including Sharon himself – would have liked recognition as the master-planner of the

settlement project, the colonization of the occupied territories did not grow out of any masterplan; rather, it evolved as a 'strategy without a strategist'.[10] Because the settlement project was founded through ad hoc improvisation, opportunist actions and conflicts between different politicians, its imprint on the ground cannot be read as the material embodiment of a single coherent ideology. Despite there being countless government masterplans for settlements, in its early years the project deliberately fostered an 'anti-planning' ethos. 'Operators' on the ground, and the facts they managed to establish, rather than the master-planners, dictated the larger political priorities and agendas, intentionally limiting some political options of the government, and opening others.

The indecisive nature of the post-1967 war Eshkol government, the paralysis that has plagued the traumatized post-1973 Meir government, the power struggles between Rabin and his Minister of Defence Shimon Peres during the first Rabin government, and the contradictions between the desire to settle and the peace process with Egypt during the first Begin government, meant that most often executive political power in these years did not fully mobilize for the settlement effort but swung behind the makers of 'facts on the ground'. The indecision of these governments was often in fact structural; successive Israeli governments decided not to risk splitting public opinion by outlining a clearly defined policy on this deeply divisive issue; instead, they let events take their course.

There were, however, several colonization plans prepared; indeed, during this period, planning became something of an obsession. Israeli technocrats, ideologues and generals all put forward their own plans, each proposing different areas to be carved out of the West Bank and annexed to Israel. Throughout the 1970s each of these colonization plans tried to outdo the others in its territorial ambition, thereby unleashing a process of ever-increasing territorial radicalization. Immediately after the 1967 war, the Eshkol government believed it would have to return the West Bank to Jordan, but sought to annex only Arab Jerusalem and the areas around it.[11] The first settlement plan debated by the government after the 1967 war was, as previously mentioned, the Allon plan,[12] according to which the strategic prerequisite was to separate the West Bank from the Arab countries on its eastern border. Consequently, the plan primarily envisioned settlement along the Jordan Valley that runs between the West Bank and Jordan, on the river's western bank. Allon, the main political rival of Minister of Defence Moshe Dayan, was at the time seen as the most likely candidate to succeed Eshkol as prime minister. In 1968, in response to Allon's plan – and no doubt in order to refute it with a completely different vision – Dayan suggested a diametrically opposed solution in which the most important strategic requirement was in fact to settle the mountain strip of the West Bank, the high terrain that dominates the Israeli cities on the coastal plains. To this end Dayan proposed building five large military bases along

the central mountain range of the West Bank, and surrounding them with what he called 'fists of Jewish settlements' that would 'dismember [Palestinian] territorial continuity'.[13] Unlike Allon's settlements, these were to be not agricultural but industrial, turning the local Palestinian population into a source of cheap labor. Around the same time, Chief of Central Command Rehavam Ze'evi submitted yet another strategic plan. This positioned settlements according to a military logic, near all tactically important crossroads throughout the entire depth of the West Bank. Sharon's plan of a few years later incorporated elements of previous plans: it sought to settle the Jordan Valley along the outline of the Allon plan, the mountain range along that of Dayan's, and, adding his own unique contribution, settlement blocks on the western slopes of the West Bank mountains that were meant to completely envelop Palestinian habitable areas, physically separating them from the villages and towns of nearby Palestinian citizens of Israel.[14] Although it never followed formal plans – even those of its own devising – Gush Emunim presented to the government a series of provocative masterplans that further radicalized Sharon's proposal. Gush Emunim suggested locations for settlements not only according to military-strategic or economic-suburban logic, but also according to a national-religious one, near 'historical [that is, Arab] towns . . . in order to naturalise the Jewish people as a healthy nation sitting safely in all its land'.[15]

Most settlement masterplans, drawn up by people either within or outside the government, were also partition plans: planners placed settlements in the areas they wanted the government to annex. The logic of partition of the Occupied Territories has always swung between selective presence and absence, addressing two contradictory Israeli strategies: territorial (attempting to annex as much empty land as possible); and demographic (attempting to exclude the areas most heavily populated by Palestinians). Moreover, as has been seen, each successive plan aimed to undermine politically the plans that preceded it. In these years it seems that Israeli politics was acting out its internal and external conflicts on the hilltops of the West Bank. None of the plans provided the basis for a coherent settlement policy, and none was officially adopted by the government, although certain elements of each of the different plans were followed in the construction of settlements.

Governments gradually learned to benefit from the settlement chaos; indeed, they sometimes promoted or even agitated it, creating the atmosphere that allows certain crimes to take place.[16] Although the trajectory of political initiative has swung from the institutions of the centre to the organizations of the frontier, when the settlement activity seemed to degenerate into complete chaos it was because this chaos was often promoted from the centre. Actual or claimed loss of control in the Occupied Territories thus itself became an effective government

strategy. The appearance of being out of control allowed the state to achieve its ideological objectives without accepting responsibility for them.[17] When criticized internationally, the state was always able to absolve itself of responsibility, claiming that what was taking place were illegal actions, local initiatives of non-governmental organizations or exceptional excesses undertaken by 'rogue citizens' – when, in fact, these exceptions were the norm. In the late 1970s, the fact that settlement activity could be presented as 'rogue' allowed the Begin government to negotiate with the Americans and Egyptians in seemingly good faith, while settlement activity was still going on. The fact that settlements were illegally established helped Begin explain to the Americans the significance of the West Bank to Israeli public opinion and argue that this area could not simply be handed back as the Sinai Peninsula had been. Speaking to the 'outside', the government did not own the settlements; but when speaking 'inside' it boasted about them.

Adding to the organizational chaos was the 1977 change in power which also led to wholesale changes in state bureaucracy. The largely well-tested functionaries of the Labor movement, accustomed to running state matters, were replaced with inexperienced new political functionaries, resulting in increasing institutional chaos.[18] The geography of the West Bank settlements became the territorial result of pressure by Gush Emunim and other settler organizations, the willing suspension of government control, irregularly imposed 'facts on the ground', Sharon's haphazard improvisation, military 'emergency solutions', and conflicts between different Zionist agencies and ideologies. This incoherent, conflictual process and the involvement of independent activist agencies seem to have increased motivation and efficiency and was, paradoxically, one of the reasons for the success of the settlement project – both in terms of politically dictating national priorities from this point onwards, and in terms of its burgeoning population and economic sustainability. Significantly, all of this was achieved against the backdrop of the general economic and social failures of the state-centric 'Israeli Project' of the 1950s and 1960s.

Legal tactics

Throughout the 1970s the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) became the central arena where conflicts regarding settlement activity were played out between Palestinian landowners, settler organizations, the military and relevant government ministries. These took place in three consecutive landmark cases debated in response to petitions of Palestinian landowners and Israeli human rights groups against land requisition for the purpose of establishing the settlements of the Rafah Salient in north Sinai (1972); the Bet-El settlement near Ramallah (1978);
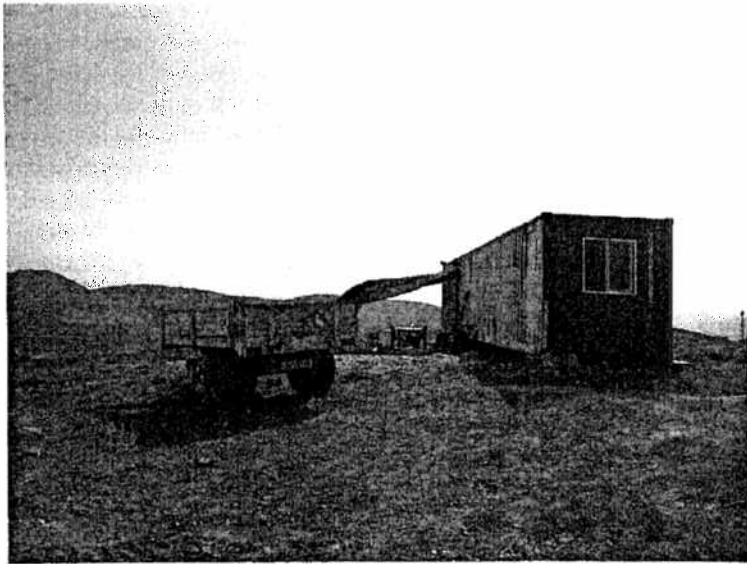
Outposts, the West Bank. Daniel Bauer, 2001

and the Elon Moreh settlement (1979) near Nablus in the West Bank. In these cases the High Court determined the legal rationality that helped define the political, ideological and military nature of the occupation.

Access to land was essential for the establishment of settlements. However, according to the principles of the Hague Convention on the laws and customs of war on land, and the accompanying Hague Regulations of 1907, which define the rights of civilians and the duties of armed forces in situations of belligerent occupation, and were accepted by Israeli courts as binding, an occupying power may only requisition land and undertake physical transformation in occupied territory if such acts serve one or both of two purposes: 'urgent military necessity' or 'benefit to the local population'.[19] An occupying power could, for example, erect temporary barriers on private fields or temporarily take possession of buildings in strategic locations in order to house its military forces and administrative units.[20] Requisition is distinct from land expropriation or seizure in that it does not change the title of ownership over the land, but rather constitutes only the *temporary* right to its use. Therefore, when the reasons for requisition no longer exist, the land is to be returned to its owner. The lawmakers' emphasis on this category of 'temporariness' reflects the perception that belligerent occupation was understood to be a transient state, one to be quickly resolved by agreements on annexation or return after wars are won or lost. In the imagination of its European lawmakers, war was a temporary aberration in a general history of peace.[21] Suspension of rights was therefore defined by this vague concept of 'temporariness' – to which, however, no prescribed time limits applied.

'Temporariness' and 'security' have thus become the two central categories around which the aforementioned three High Court of Justice cases revolved. The tactical-legal manipulation of the term 'temporary security necessities', testified to whenever needed by the military, has turned into a government charade in attempts to deny the HCJ the possibility of blocking government access to private Palestinian land.

Strategic settlements

The first High Court of Justice petition challenging the legality of land requisition for settlement took place in 1972 in response to actions undertaken by Ariel Sharon, then still Chief of the IDF's Southern Command. As part of his counterinsurgency campaign in Gaza, Sharon wanted to sever the strip from the Sinai Desert and thereby from the PLO guerrilla supply lines that supposedly traversed it. The area south of Gaza, known as the Rafah Salient, was settled by a 5,000-strong Bedouin tribe. 'Between the dunes, in places where the meagre rainfall

collected, Bedouin farmers tended almond, peach, olive, and castor-oil trees and patches of wheat. Near the coastline, where groundwater rose almost to the surface, they farmed a strip a few hundred meters wide that yielded richer crops. Herds of sheep and goats added to their livelihood . . . they were settled tribes; some lived in tents, but more in tin shacks and concrete houses.'[22] In the winter of 1972, acting without an explicit government order, but very likely in response to an indirect oral suggestion from Dayan, Sharon ordered the destruction of the orchards, the blocking up of the water wells and the deportation of the villagers. He drew a line on the map where the encampment was located and ordered bulldozers to drive along it, carving a swathe several dozen metres wide that crushed all obstacles in its path.

The eviction of the Bedouin from their lands provoked outrage in a nearby Kibbutz, whose members commissioned a human rights lawyer to represent the villagers via their tribal elder, Suleiman Hussein Uda Abu Hilo, in an HCJ petition against the state of Israel in general and against Ariel Sharon as the military commander in particular. This is how the eviction was described in court: 'In the early morning hours of the 14th of January, 1972, Petitioner no.1 [Abu Hilo] was urgently alerted by members of his tribe that soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces had ordered them, orally, to leave their homes and their community. Petitioner no. 1 proceeded to those IDF soldiers, addressed their commander, a second lieutenant, and asked that he explain the actions of his soldiers. The officer answered Petitioner no.1 that, "This is a government order to expel you from here." '[23]

Although Sharon appeared personally in court, bringing with him maps and documents that apparently demonstrated existing, urgent 'security concerns', the petitioners claimed that the evacuation was undertaken for no other reason than to make way for the construction of a town and several smaller agricultural settlements, which they further argued should not be considered a 'temporary security matter' at all. Indeed, while the case was still pending in court, the Tel Aviv-based architects Yehuda Drexler and Ze'ev Drukman, together with a group of planning experts, were secretly commissioned by Minister of Defence Dayan (who had known Drexler when he was an officer in the military) to prepare the blueprint for the development of the small port town of Yamit in the Rafah Salient. After the planners had – rather naively – produced a design brochure for distribution, soldiers arrived in their office and confiscated all copies in case they should come to the attention of the court. Their design replicated existing moulds of Israeli development towns with rows of block housing. In its ruling, however, the HCJ was prepare to accept that these settlements, if indeed constructed there, might in themselves be considered as a legitimate security measure, in creating a wedge of loyal Israeli residents between the Gaza Strip
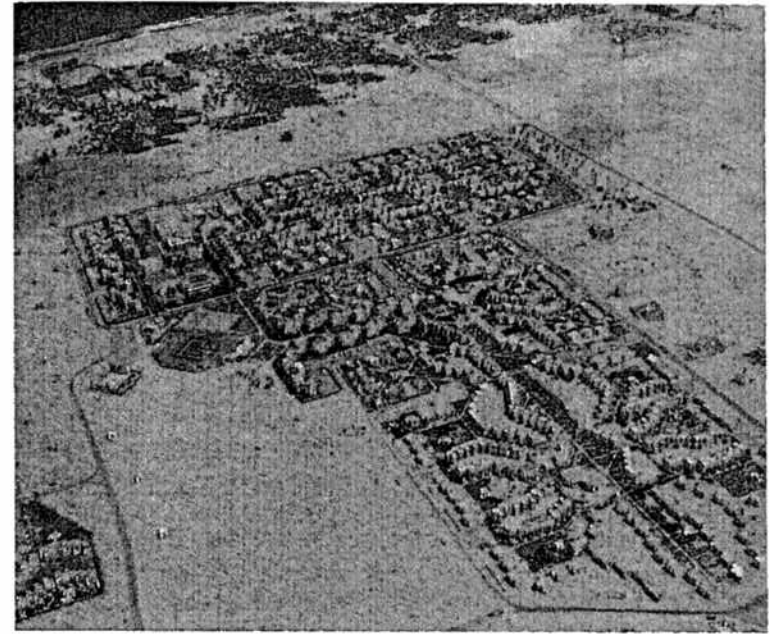
Yamit, circa 1980. Yehuda Drexler and Ze'ev Drukman

and Sinai. In ruling this and in most other petitions, Justice Vitkon represented the general spirit and tone of the court. He stated that although 'the area [or part thereof, may be] designated for settlement of Jews [these settlements] . . . are in themselves, in this case, a security measure'.[24]

A similar use of the 'security value' of settlements was again tested in 1978, when Suleiman Tawfik Ayub and Gamil Arsam Mataua petitioned the HCJ on behalf of themselves and five other Palestinian landowners against the requisition of their land for the establishment of the settlement of Bet-El near Ramallah. In this verdict, Justice Vitkon explained in further detail his decision to allow the land requisition for the sake of settlement:

> In terms of purely security-based considerations, there can be no doubt that the presence in the administered territory [the occupied territories, according to the terminology of the time] of settlements – even 'civilian' ones – of the citizens of the administering power makes a significant contribution to the security situation in that territory, and facilitates the army's performance of its tasks. One need not

be an expert in military and defence matters to appreciate that terrorist elements operate more easily in territory occupied exclusively by a population that is indifferent or sympathetic to the enemy than in a territory in which there are also persons liable to monitor them and inform the authorities of any suspicious movement. With such people the terrorists will find no shelter, assistance and equipment. These are simple matters and there is no need to elaborate.[25]

That a High Court Judge imagined that this matter needed no elaboration testifies to how far the idea of settlement was coextensive with that of security throughout Zionist history. From the perspective of international law, the problem with Vitkon's rulings was that, under these conditions, the reverse must also be correct: if settlements are used for security purposes, they may also become legitimate targets for attack.[26]

Curtain of sand

In June 1979, in an operation again directed by Ariel Sharon, the settlement-core of the Elon Moreh settler group once again made an 'ascent' on a site near Nablus. The Palestinian owners of the land on which the provisory encampment was set, Azat Muhamed and Mustafa Dweikat, representing sixteen others, petitioned the HCJ against the requisition of their land by the state of Israel.[27] In an affidavit presented to the court in support of the government's position, IDF Chief of Staff Refael Eitan, then still a protégé of Ariel Sharon (the relationship between them soured during the Lebanon war of 1982 and over responsibility for the massacre in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila), provided a historical account of the military function of Zionist settlements. This was undertaken in order to demonstrate that the settlement of Elon Moreh was, like its historical predecessors, of the highest military necessity. This account could help explain how Zionist mythologies, which celebrated the significance of early agrarian frontier settlements in setting and buttressing the borders of the areas under Jewish control, eventually evolved into a set of legal arguments, used for the establishment and post factum justification of contemporary suburban settlements.

For a man notorious for being economical with words (and with a bizarre tendency to speak in basic rhyme), Eitan's account was rather surprising in its extent. His narrative began in the pre-state years of Zionism, during the years of the 'Arab Revolt' of 1936, with the story of the paramilitary 'Tower and Stockade' – a prefabricated, fortified settlement system designed to be assembled in one night across the frontier zones of pre-state Palestine, and be strong enough to withstand counter-attacks in the morning after its establishment.[28] Eitan's

narrative also took in other periods of Zionist expansion. According to him, the architecture of the Zionist rural settlement was shaped not only by the methods of agricultural production and in response to its socio-ideological organization, but also according to tactical considerations dictated by a militarized logic. In his account Eitan was nourished by generations of military generals involved in physically planning Zionist frontier settlements.

Foremost amongst those was Yigal Allon. In his role as the commander of the Palmach, the Haganah's (the Labor movement's pre-state armed group) elite guerrilla battalion – Allon, himself a Kibbutz member (Kibbutz Ginnosar on the Sea of Galilee) was instrumental in locating and planning new frontier settlements. Allon later dedicated an entire chapter to settlements in his 1959 strategic and political manifesto *Curtain of Sand*, observing that,

> The integration of the civilian settlement in the military regional defence, and especially in frontier areas . . . will provide the state with forward observation posts, saving on military men. These settlements are capable not only of informing the military in advance about a surprise enemy attack, but of trying to halt it, or at least delaying the progress of the enemy until the military reinforcements arrive to control the situation . . .[29]

'Regional defence' was a military doctrine that sought to integrate civilian settlements with military units in the protection of the borders of the state. For Allon the organized layout of the Kibbutz – a cooperative settlement sharing its means of production with separate areas demarcated for housing, public functions, fields and farms – was superior to all other forms of Zionist settlements. Moreover, the Kibbutz 'is no less valuable than a military unit, and may even surpass it'.[30] Indeed, as he himself remarked, some Kibbutzim in the Negev, Adan's Kibbutz Nirim being one,[31] played a role in holding back regular military units of the Arab armies during the 1948 war.

Strategic and tactical considerations also informed the design of other settlement types, and led to the formulation in 1948 of a military document entitled 'Security Principles in the Planning of Agricultural Settlements and Workers' Villages', by the Settlement Department of the IDF General Staff's Operation Branch.[32] The fact that such a department existed at all testifies to the strategic importance that the military attributed to rural settlements. The 'Security Principles' provided some guidelines on the organization of Moshav – a type of settlement, which unlike the Kibbutz, combines private property with joint ownership of some means of production.[33] To prevent infiltration or the return of Palestinians to their lands, the 'Security Principles' instructed planners to devise a compact and dense layout, in which homes were located no more than 30 metres apart,
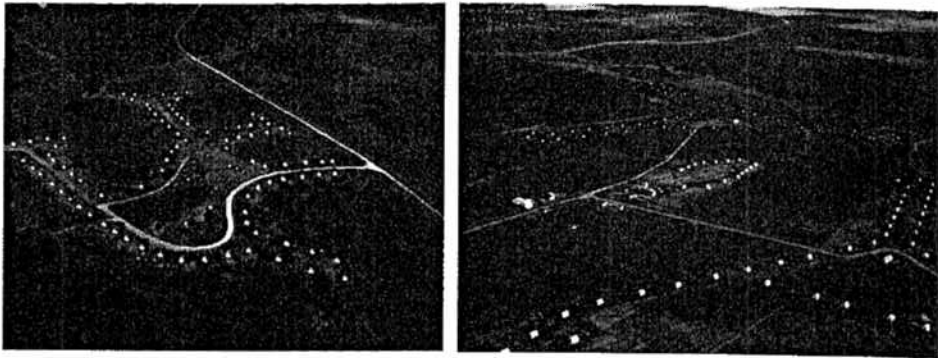
Moshav Settlements in Lahish region, Israel, 1953. Images courtesy of IP

and laid out concentrically so that, when under attack, settlers could gradually withdraw to a more secure core. Following the principle of military perimeter fortifications, the report also advised that the roads of the Moshav, along which homes and farms were organized, should form 'star shapes' so that 'flanking fire could be maximised'.[34]

In his affidavit to the HCJ, Eitan, himself a Moshav member (Moshav Tel Adashim in the Jezre'el Valley), criticized his predecessors' neglect of the principle of 'regional defence'. Eitan claimed that this neglect was one of the main reasons for the initial setbacks suffered by the Israeli Army during the 1973 war,[35] and he had already taken it upon himself to reverse this trend. 'Today the settlements of regional defence are armed, fortified and trained for their task, which is to defend their area. Their location was dictated after consideration of their contribution to the control of the region, and in assisting the IDF in its various tasks.'[36] Eitan further explained the primary advantage of civilian settlements over military positions.

> In times of war, the military forces exit their bases in order to undertake dynamic and offensive tasks [whereas] civilian settlements [whose population] remains in its place, are essential in controlling their immediate surroundings by observation, and would resist enemy's attempts to take control of them. In the early stages of a war, it is important to keep the roads open, in order to ensure fast movement towards the enemy.[37]

Eitan was one of the officers who, supporting Sharon, clashed with Bar Lev on the issue of fortifying the Suez Canal, and who supported 'defence in depth'. Eitan believed that the frontline of the Allon plan would quickly fall under attack just as the Bar Lev Line had fallen, and that a network of settlements throughout the depth of the terrain would serve military purposes to far better effect.

Permanent temporariness

To obtain a legal ruling in favour of land requisition the government had to convince the court that the settlement in question was designed to meet 'pressing security needs',[38] and also that it was a 'temporary intervention', and not a 'permanent transformation of the occupied area'. If the role of settlement in defence was well established in Zionist culture, Palestinian petitioners wondered how settlements built on land requisitioned from them could possibly be considered as 'temporary'. Commenting on the ruling of the 1978 Bet-El case, Justice Landau addressed the issue:

> to answer . . . how is it possible to establish a permanent settlement on land that was requisitioned only for temporary purposes? This is a serious question. The civilian settlement will be able to exist only as long as the IDF holds the land on the strength of a requisition order. This possession itself may one day come to an end as a result of international negotiations which could end in a new arrangement that will gain force under international law and will determine the fate of the settlement, like all other settlements in the Occupied Territories.[39]

Settlements could be understood by the judges of the HCJ as 'temporary' in the context of contemporary developments. The Bet-El case was argued in court in the winter of 1978–9, when the terms of the peace process with Egypt had to start to be fulfilled. In the Camp David peace talks, Menachem Begin agreed to evacuate all Israeli settlements from Sinai, including the town of Yamit and the smaller agricultural settlements of the Rafah Salient. This was enough to convince the court that all homes, public institutions, roads and industrial zones that had been built in the West Bank and Gaza since 1967 had a purely temporary presence on the ground. Indeed, in the same Bet-El ruling, Justice Miriam Ben-Porat recorded the judgment that the term 'permanent community' was a 'purely relative concept'.[40] Indeed, the nature of property title deeds in the settlements reflects their temporary nature. They consist of the standard Israeli renewable 49-year leases, but include a clause that emphasizes that the deeds are valid only as long as the Israeli military maintains a presence on the ground. The title explicitly leaves with the military commander the authority to regain immediate possession of the property.[41]

Two seemingly contradictory conditions thus maintained the 'temporary' state of Israel's military regime: the persistence of violence, on the one hand, and initiatives for political resolution, on the other. The fact that some degree of violence persisted justified the continual application of what the military understands as 'urgent, temporary security measures'. Violence allows 'security' to be invoked as a legal argument to justify the undertaking of transformations that could otherwise not be accepted. For security to go on fulfilling its role, a condition of insecurity and instability must therefore be continually present. Security measures should thus not bring about absolute security, because that would mean the loss of the rationale for the further application of such measures.[42]

Secondly, the constant presence of political initiatives on the diplomatic table – and there have been proposals for conflict resolution from day one of the post-1967 war era, right through to the present day – helps create and maintain the perception that the conflict is always just on the brink of being resolved, and that therefore the 'temporary' measures and violations of rights will no longer be relevant. Indeed, throughout the occupation, arguments based on 'temporary' security needs have not been confined to court cases, but have been deployed in order to create political facts of various kinds.[43] Israeli writers Adi Ophir and Ariella Azoulay claim that the entire logic of military rule in the West Bank and Gaza relies on the principle of 'temporariness', and that it is the very definition of the 'temporariness' of the state of conflict that allows it to continue indefinitely:

> Temporariness is now the law of the occupation . . . temporary encirclement and temporary closures, temporary transit permits, temporary revocation of transit permits, temporary enforcement of an elimination policy, temporary change in the open-fire orders . . . This occupier is an unrestrained, almost boundless sovereign, because when everything is temporary almost anything, any crime, any form of violence is acceptable, because the temporariness seemingly grants it a license, the license of the state of emergency.[43]

The position of the HCJ demonstrates the extreme tautology embodied in the term 'occupation'. Because the occupation is 'temporary' – and an occupation is 'temporary' by its very legal definition – any project carried out across the Occupied Territories could also be 'legalized' as 'temporary'. The use of the term 'occupation' for the forty-year-old Israeli military control and administration of the West Bank and Gaza Strip may thus itself be complicit with the legal charade on which its entire system rests. An 'occupation' is understood as a transitional state, in process of being resolved or terminated politically or militarily.

There is another anomaly in the legal use of the category of 'temporariness' in the context of this conflict. In international law the definition of 'temporariness' is predicated on the states of 'war' and 'peace' being clearly distinguishable. Wars between states may be long, but they tend to have clearly delineated beginnings and ends. By contrast, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, like many other colonial conflicts, is an ever-present asymmetrical, low-intensity conflict between a state and quasi-state actors. It is a conflict that persists throughout time rather than one which disrupts its flow. Throughout the occupation, 'war' and 'peace' are no longer simple dialectical opposites, but merge into a single extended continuum. Resistance is violent, constant, but sporadic; pacification missions are sometimes brutal and at other times bureaucratic. Peace is not possible but war has no end.

Between 1967 and 1979, on the basis of the exceptions of 'temporariness' and 'security' the government issued dozens of orders for the requisition of private land in the West Bank. When called upon to do so, the government and the military demonstrated their claim for the pressing security needs by inviting expert witnesses, usually high-ranking military officers or the Chief of Staff himself, to testify that a particular settlement dominated a major artery, or another strategic location, that it could participate in the general effort of 'regional defence', or in the supervision and control of a hostile population. As long as this claim was maintained, the High Court of Justice rejected all petitions of Palestinian landowners and accepted the government's interpretation of the term 'temporary military necessity'.

Security vs. defence

In its rulings the High Court of Justice tends to place a good deal of weight on the professional evaluation of the security forces. Military officers appearing before the court presented 'security' as a specialized discipline and implied that the court should simply accept its logic as objective and final, rather than trying to question it. However, the trust placed by the court in the military ability to evaluate security issues was eroded after the setbacks suffered by the Israeli military during the 1973 war.[44] High Court Justices gradually started insisting on the necessity of comprehending, evaluating and ruling on issues of security. The court started examining military and settlement plans, and defining its own position in relation to them.[45]

In his affidavit to the 1979 Elon Moreh case, Chief of Staff Eitan claimed that the settlement was strategically necessary, as its location – dominating a major crossroads – served urgent security needs in taking part in the military effort of 'regional defence'. However, in this case the petitioners invited several former Israeli military generals to testify to the opposing view. Two of the generals were Sharon's political rivals – Minister of Defence Ezer Weizman and the then

general-secretary of the opposition Labor Party, Chaim Bar Lev. Both intended to give their professional opinions – but they were also eager to disrupt any plans associated with Sharon. Bar Lev challenged the arguments of military necessity in establishing the settlement. In his own affidavit on behalf of the petitioners he stated that in a time of war the settlement would not contribute at all to defence of the state: 'Elon Moreh, to the best of my professional evaluation, does not contribute to Israel's security.'[46] To expect a suburban settlement to withstand an attack by a regular Arab army with artillery and tanks seemed to him nothing but preposterous. Moreover, Bar Lev claimed, the settlement would present a drain on military resources because the IDF would have to allocate forces to protect it. Instead of guarding, the settlement would itself have to be placed under guard.

Referring to his former rulings, Justice Vitkon made an important distinction that raised another considerable objection to Eitan's testimony:

> In my ruling concerning the Rafah salient and in my ruling on Bet-El, I assumed that the Jewish settlements are located to help the quotidian struggle with the terrorists . . . but this time the Chief of Staff Eitan explained to us that the most important security value of the settlements is in their integration to the system of regional defence in a case of a 'total' war . . . I must say that this [argument] is not clear of doubt.[47]

For an HCJ judge to directly criticize the military judgement of the Chief of Staff was no light matter. But with it Vitkon insisted on a distinction between two military concepts: 'defence' and 'security'. Of the two, he was willing to accept only that of 'security' as an acceptable legal basis for settlement, questioning that of 'defence'.

The difference between the terms is spatial as much as it is conceptual. The logic of defence deals with wars and seeks to constitute with borders, barriers and fortifications clear distinctions between 'inside' and 'outside' – the territory that falls within the state and that which is exterior to it. The danger that is perceived to exist outside borders generally comes in the form of a regular army threatening full-scale war. In the logic of defence, settlements were seen as components in a fortification system to keep this threat at bay. The logic of 'security', on the other hand, presupposes that the danger is already inside, presented by a population in which subversive elements exist. The relation that 'security' implies between 'inside' and 'outside', as well as between military and police action, is ambiguous. Although the logic of security tends to be ever-present and formless, covert and ghostly, its practices engage with an active and constant reconfiguration of the built environment. If defence engages directly with the concept of war,

security engages with the temporarily ill-defined and spatially amorphous 'conflict' not only between societies, but within them as well. 'Security' conceives new spatial practices and arrangements. It erects barriers and channels and rechannels the flow of people and resources through space. According to the logic of security, only a constantly configured and reconfigured environment is a safe environment. The logic of security conceives of the settlements not as fortification systems, but as components in a project of pacification, as places from which observation and control can be generated and the circulation of people can be managed.

Interpreting the order and intensity of danger – deciding which threats are more serious than others – is a political-ideological process that reflects more than objective professional valuations. The umbrella term 'security' includes a variety of concepts, many differing from the common uses of the term (usually in referring to protection from bodily harm or damage to property) and morphing into political and ideological uses directed at the preservation of political hegemonies. In Israel, 'security' has always been associated with the ability of the state to remain sovereign and Jewish. This is the very reason why the demographic growth of one category of its citizens – Arab Palestinians – can always be presented as a 'security problem'.

'Security' replaced 'defence' as the legitimate consideration in the High Court of Justice's ruling because, given the nature of the political situation, judges viewed the Palestinian problem as more crucial than the problem Israel had with the Arab states. Indeed, as the 1970s drew to a close, with the terms of the peace agreement with Egypt finalized and Soviet military assistance to Arab states declining, the danger Israel faced from an armoured invasion was considerably reduced. The Israeli military apparatus, which had grown so monstrously large in the years immediately following the 1973 war, accumulating excessive armament and technology designed to defend the state's borders from another war like the last, would gradually begin to focus on the Palestinian problem both in Lebanon and the Occupied Territories. In the latter instance, Israel has turned its back on the cease-fire lines to concentrate on regulating and controlling the population already inside.

Other differences in the perception of settlements emerged during the 1979 Elon Moreh court case. Several Gush Emunim settlers of the new Elon Moreh core, called as witnesses for the state, sowed even more confusion when they claimed that their right to settle the 'land of Israel' was based neither on 'security' nor on 'defence' but on biblical commands, and is thus 'permanent' and not 'temporary'. Encouraged by the 1977 handover of power from Labor to Likud, which seemed to share some of their ideology, settlers decided to challenge the

security concept which, thus far, had done them a service. Their right to the land, they claimed, was not 'temporary' at all – rather, it was ineffably 'permanent'. Menachem Felix, one of the Gush Emunim settlers called to testify in the trial, explained the difference between Gush Emunim's view, and that of the state and military, in the following way: 'Basing the requisition orders on security grounds in their narrow, technical meaning . . . can be construed only in one way: the settlement is temporary and replaceable. We reject this frightening conclusion outright, and see Elon Moreh to be a permanent Jewish settlement . . .'[48]

Given its own criticism of the military position based upon settlers' testimony, the HCJ had no option but to order the settlement dismantled and the land returned to its owners. However, the previous requisition orders undertaken for the purpose of constructing settlements were not reversed. The Elon Moreh case was the first in which contradictions in the Israeli discourse of settlement and security were publicly exposed. No land requisition for the purpose of settlement construction based on security considerations has since been permitted by the HCJ. Land requisition for 'security' purposes, based on a similar justification of 'urgent and temporary military needs', has, however, continued to allow the establishment of 'sterile security zones' around the settlements, for the construction of settlers' bypass highways, as well as, years later, for the construction of the Separation Wall. Use of private Palestinian land went on after 1979 regardless of the ruling mainly because private landowners had not the means, the physical access or the political inclination to address the Israeli High Court of Justice.[49]

Although the liberal press celebrated the Elon Moreh ruling as a victory over the Likud government, it later became clear that this ruling was nothing but a Pyrrhic victory. Not only was Elon Moreh established on an alternative site; indeed, for whoever wished to read it, the ruling's wording itself indicated alternative methods of access to land. The court confirmed that future access to land in the Occupied Territories for the construction of settlements would be permitted on public land entrusted to the custodianship of the military power, and added that if the state adheres to this principle, the court would no longer interfere in its future settlement efforts.[50] The government thus managed to make the best of this ruling, transforming the High Court's prohibition concerning the expropriation of private land into a potential for seizure of huge quantities of public land in the Occupied Territories.

Indeed, with the possibility of gaining regular access to land opening up before it, and with a more solid right-wing coalition, the second Begin government embarked on an ordered, national and master-planned process that sought to turn an improvised, 'temporary', occupation into a permanent one, and with it to domesticate and close the open frontiers of Palestine.

Hollow Land

Israel's Architecture of Occupation

◆

EYAL WEIZMAN

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VERSO

London • New York

The settlement of Efrat – note the Palestinian fields around and within the settlement, and the small pine-planted areas on the left. Milutin Labudovic for Peace Now, 2002

these perimeters was prohibited. Whatever housing or other buildings were subsequently 'illegally' constructed there were, sooner or later, demolished.

Suburban colonization

Although before 1979 the case for Israel's settlement policy was argued on the basis of strategic and security considerations, the settlement process was also driven by other impetuses: religious-ideological (seeking to settle the higher summits close to sites of biblical history); political (trying to pre-empt the possibility of territorial compromise by settling areas in and around the major Palestinian towns and cities); and economic (the search for cheap land for the construction of suburbs and urban sprawl close to the metropolitan centres). Each of these approaches saw the mountains of the West Bank as a different kind of resource, finding in the contours of its terrain different locations to suit its requirements. Israeli policy towards the settlements in the West Bank has undergone various changes over the years, reflecting the divergent political views of decision-makers, the relative weight of various interest groups active in this field, and developments in the international arena. While these divergent approaches have been manifested in changes in the scope of resources allocated

to the settlements, and in the areas in which it was decided to establish them, all Israeli governments, Labor, Likud or Unity governments, have actively contributed to the strengthening, development and expansion of the settlement enterprise.

The centrifugal forces that led the Israeli middle classes to flee the city centres for suburbia started to gather momentum in the early 1980s. They reflected a global phenomenon of metropolitan sprawl and segregation into ethnically and religiously homogenous communities that mirrored the American and South African gated communities. With the exception of the national-religious Gush Emunim, which inhabited the mountain ridges of the West Bank, the majority of settlers moved into suburban settlements located close to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, only a few kilometres beyond the 1967 Green Line. They were drawn there by the promise of high living standards – a better quality of life at a very affordable price.

Since the inhabitants of suburban settlements have to seek work outside them, they rely on a road system to connect them with the employment centres in the metropolitan areas around Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The population mostly consists of secular, middle-class Israelis, but includes two other groups encouraged by the government to move into the area: new immigrants from the former Soviet republics and the ultra-Orthodox non-Zionist communities. The latter, large families of limited economic means, were concentrated in dense, custom-built settlements, such as Modi'in Ilit, Beitar Ilit and Kiyat Sefer, close to the Green Line and on the road between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. These settlements have been designed to cater for their particular way of life, and have also been a magnet for large corporations establishing factories where ultra-Orthodox women are employed as cheap manual labor in the high-tech industries.[35]

However, settlement growth has been fuelled not so much by economic forces of supply and demand, but by a sophisticated government programme designed to encourage Israeli citizens to migrate there from the urban centres of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The government keeps as one of its most closely guarded secrets the precise amount of money allotted for the benefit of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The state budget was deliberately constructed so as to make this information opaque, with the money allocated to support settlements divided between general categories without mentioning whether the communities in question are within Israel or the Occupied Territories. In the most comprehensive audit of this issue, conducted at the end of 2003, the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* claimed that the additional cost of the settlement project since 1967 had already passed the $10 billion mark.[36]

However, the geography of economic incentives was already outlined in a

The settlement of Giveat Ze'ev, circa 1983 (ZE)

masterplan prepared by the rural settlement division of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) at the beginning of 1983. The *Masterplan for Settlements in the West Bank through the Year 2010* was prepared by Likud party member Matityahu Drobless, who worked in collaboration with Sharon's Settlement Committee. This plan was also known as *The Hundred Thousand Plan*, a reference to its main objective to bring the total Jewish population in the West Bank to 100,000 by 1986.[37] In the accompanying text, the masterplan admitted that 'the settlement process as a whole includes "natural" motivations for settlement guided by economic demand, as well as "artificial" motivations for settlement based on ideological commitments'.[38] It went on to suggest the principles of the geography of economic incentives: the amount of government subsidy was to be inversely proportional to the level of economic demand. Thus, areas of low demand were highly subsidized, with the government covering most development expenses, and effectively offering almost free housing to whoever agreed to settle there, while high demand areas in the West Bank received less (but still considerable) financial aid. High demand areas were defined as those within a 'travel time of 30 minutes from the outer ring of Tel Aviv metropolitan region, and about 20 minutes' drive from that of Jerusalem', and were marked on the map as a strip of 15–20 kilometres wide, immediately east of the Green Line, and as a band 10 kilometres wide around Jerusalem. Other factors defining high demand areas included 'local elements with positive attraction, such as the

view', while low demand areas included elements possessing 'negative attraction value, such as proximity to Arab population'. Areas of medium and low demand were generally defined as those located 'in the mountain range . . . fifty minutes drive from Tel Aviv and thirty-five minutes drive from Jerusalem'. There, 'ideological population with high human potential and social quality is to be located in small groups within small settlements . . .'[39] In general, the government's subsidy policy followed a simple rule: the more settlers were willing to undertake personal hardship and danger, the further they were from Israeli employment centres, the higher the government subsidy.

The policy of financial incentives was successful in continuously channelling increasing number of Israelis into the West Bank. This could be demonstrated by the following statistics. In May 1984, at the end of the Likud government's second term in office, 35,000 settlers were living in 102 settlements in the West Bank. By 1992, when Likud lost power to Labor and the Oslo process began, about 100,000 people occupied 123 settlements. In the following decade, under the Oslo process, although the number of settlements did not increase, each settlement became much more densely populated, with the population doubling to about 200,000.[40] Despite the violence of the second Intifada, the growth in the number of settlers continued, especially in the ultra-Orthodox settlements, increasing the total number of settlers by 15.3 per cent in the first four years of the conflict, so that the total number of West Bank settlers (excluding Jerusalem) had reached 268,000 inhabitants in 2006.[41]

The community settlement

The settlements established in the West Bank fall into a range of different types. Cooperative agricultural settlements of the Kibbutz and Moshav types are the historical settlement forms of the Labor Zionist movement.[42] There are currently nine settlements of the Kibbutz type and twenty-two of the Moshav type in the West Bank, most of them established during the 1970s under the Labor governments and situated in areas within the Allon plan. The remaining settlements established throughout the 1970s were *urban* or *rural settlements*.[43]

Since the method of land seizure restricted settlement construction to uncultivated land annexed by the Israeli state, and since the Israeli-Jewish settlers (both the national-religious Gush Emunim as well as secular city-dwellers seeking an improvement in their quality of life) had no experience in agriculture nor any wish to start engaging in it, a new settlement typology had to be conceived. In the early 1980s the 'community settlement' was developed by the settlement division of the WZO together with Amanah, the settlement arm of Gush

Emunim, for the purpose of settling the mountain areas under Israel's control, both within Israel in the Galilee, and in the occupied areas of the West Bank. In both regions this was part of the national effort to create a 'demographic balance' between Jews and Arabs.[44]

The 'community settlement' is legally defined as a cooperative association registered with the Israeli Registrar of Associations; in essence, it is a private, members-only, suburban village. Each 'community settlement' has an independent admission process and a monitoring mechanism that regulates all aspects of community life, from religious observance and ideological rigour to the very form and outdoor use of homes. Members can be expelled after ignoring warnings, if they refuse to conform to community regulations, or if they do not integrate socially, religiously or ideologically. The 'community settlement' was conceived in this way to avoid the possibility that Palestinian citizens of Israel might make their homes in these settlements.

The system developed other mechanisms of exclusion against Palestinian citizens of Israel that were designed to bypass Israeli laws prohibiting the allocation of resources according to preferential criteria. 'State land' within Israel or the Occupied Territories was transferred to the custody of either the Jewish Agency (JA) or the WZO, both non-governmental associations registered in the United States. Their registration outside Israel enabled the state to circumvent its own laws.[45] The WZO and the JA represent not the citizens of Israel but 'world Jewry', and their stated mission is to direct resources exclusively to the state's Jewish population. Both organizations are sustained by donations from Jews abroad and, as US-registered charities, benefit from special tax exemption.[46] When a 'suitable' settlement core is formed, the WZO and the JA pass the lands on to it and the cooperative association of the settlement is thereafter entrusted with the further screening of members.[47]

Residential construction in these settlements might be undertaken by government development companies, by a commercial developer, or on a private basis. Uniformity of architectural taste is often imposed through the repetition of a small variety of single and double, family house-and-garden designs. Another option that exists within some settlements is the 'build your home' scheme, in which people are encouraged to design and build the 'house of their dreams' on a small plot of land.[48] Within all these types, the red pitched roof became the emblem, the ubiquitous symbol of Jewish settlements. In an interview, a young architect based in the West Bank explained this issue to me:

A lot of ink was spilled [in critical discussion] over the issue of the red roofs . . . I personally think that there is something interesting about it though . . . since it was inaugurated as the common practice some twenty years ago . . . you can easily
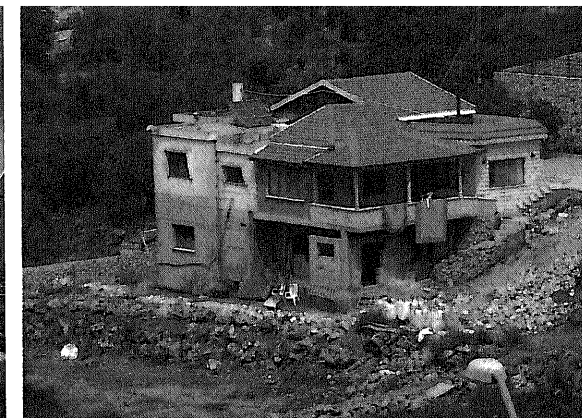

Left: A house in a Jewish settlement in the 1980s; Right: A house in a Palestinian village

recognize, even as you are coming from the distance a Jewish settlement! . . . maybe it really does not blend in with the surrounding, but it makes a strong statement and marks an orientation point – this settlement is Jewish![49]

Beyond responding to typical middle-class suburban aesthetics, the adorning of settlement homes with red roofs also serves a security function: the sites can be identified from afar as Israeli. This common architectural practice was formalized when, in the 1980s, the military recommended that settlement councils impose the construction of red-tiled roofs as part of the settlement planning bylaw. Besides allowing the settlers to orient themselves within the landscape, the roofs aid the military to better navigate and identify 'friend from foe', from both ground and air.

The red roof has also become a common sight in Palestinian cities and villages, with red roofs being constructed over what is otherwise a perfectly serviceable flat roof common to Palestinian single-family homesteads. During the urban euphoria of the Oslo years (1995–2000) a real-estate boom in Palestinian cities was fuelled by wealthy returnee elites, and new neighbourhoods were built on the peripheries of Palestinian cities and towns. As French theorist Sylvain Bulle observed, the architecture of these housing schemes resembled the suburban and semi-urban nature of the settlements, reproducing many of its urban and architectural typologies – and similarly responding to the anxieties that drive the middle class everywhere to seek privacy and security away from the congested and potentially dangerous city centres. New Palestinian housing, built on hilltops with concrete domes, arches and other oriental paraphernalia, sometimes followed
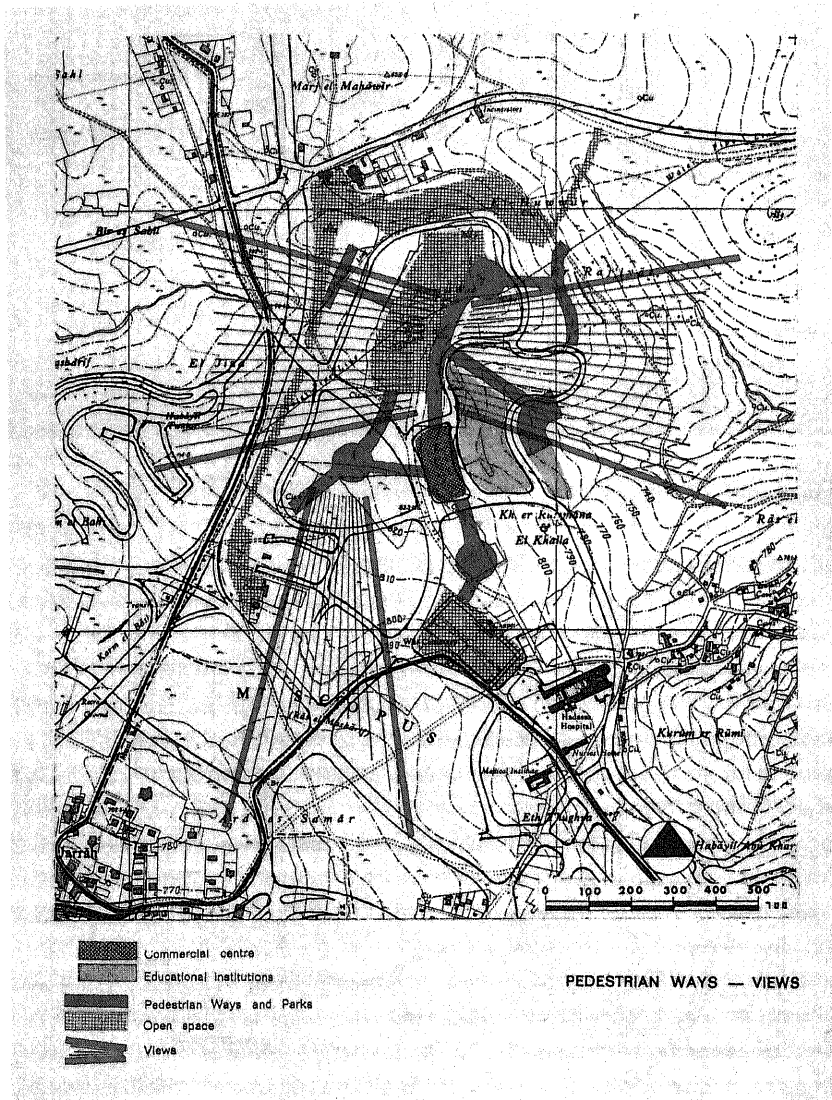
Study Drawing of the Jerusalem neighbourhood of French Hill, showing view lines as the generator of the urban layout. Source: Israel Builds, Ministry of Construction and Housing, 1972.

Facing page: Above, the settlement of Geva'ot (road plan); below, the settlement of Har Shmuel (outline plan)
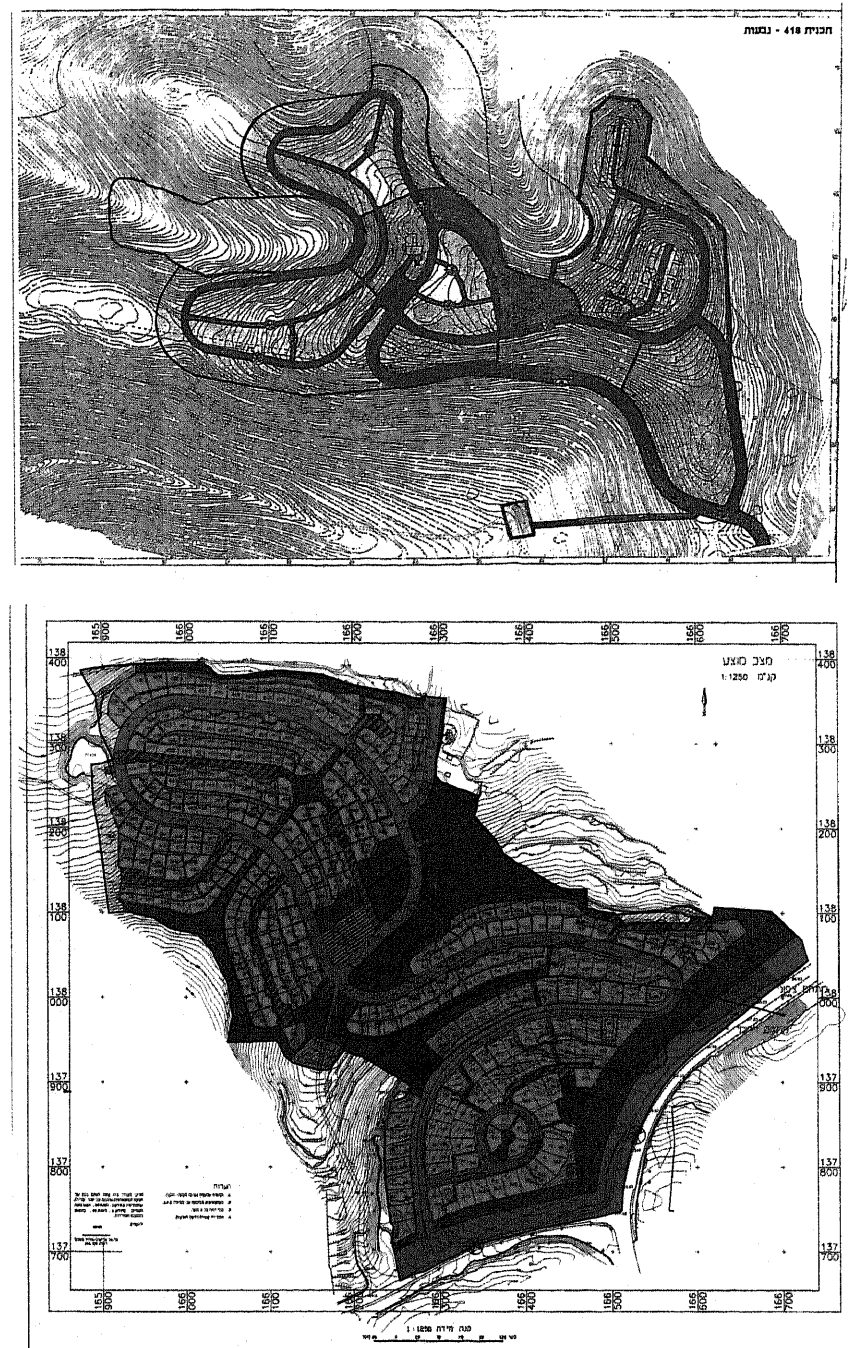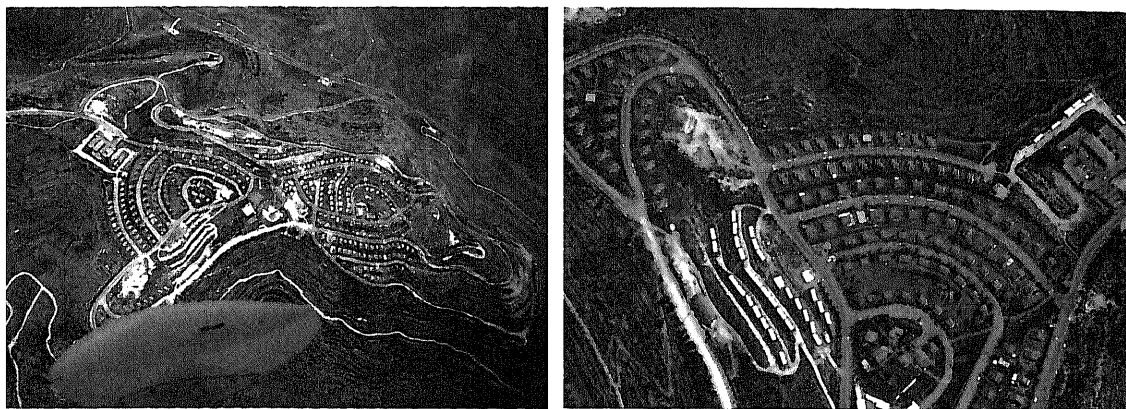
The settlement of Eli. Eyal Weizman, 2002

romantic inclinations similar to those of the Jewish neighbourhoods of occupied Jerusalem.[50] Such mimicry, or perhaps – considering the military directive mentioned above – camouflage, sustains a discourse of mirrors which destabilizes the decisive visual boundaries, creating two types of architectural hybrids that challenge the visual binary opposition of 'settler' and 'native' architecture.[51]

Optical urbanism

In 1984 the Ministry for Construction and Housing published a guidebook entitled *Building and Development in the Mountain Regions*.[52] Its author, the Israeli architect Michael Boneh, aimed to provide what would in effect become the first official advisory guideline for architects engaged in the design of settlements in the mountain regions under Israeli control. These were primarily areas inhabited by Palestinians: the Galilee (inside Israel proper), and the mountain district of the West Bank. Summarizing the experience gained in the construction of settlements and Jerusalem suburbs, the publication testifies to the shift in the focus of Zionist planning, from the coastal plains and agricultural valleys to the mountains. It stated that: 'the continual growth of settlements in the Jerusalem, Galilee, Judea and Samaria Mountains [the West Bank] is dependent on the development of difficult mountainous areas' and concedes that 'the expertise in building on mountain regions is not yet fully established'.[53]

The construction of the mountain settlements necessitated building in areas with steep slopes. Boneh divided up the mountain area according to various topographical conditions, allocating a distinct settlement typology to each.[54] In these formal codifications, which base the design of mountain settlements on distinct topographical conditions, the laws of erosion have seemingly been absorbed into the practice of urban design. The specific morphology of the hilltops on which settlements were to be designed became the blueprint for the layout of the settlement. According to this guideline, and following the principles tested by Leitersdorf in Ma'ale Adumim, the suburban layout of a mountain settlement typically follows a principle of 'concentric organization', in which the topographical contours of the map are retraced as lines of infrastructure. The roads are laid out in rings following the shape of the mountain to create a complete circuit around the summit, with the water, sewage, electricity and telephone lines buried under them. The division of lots is equal and repetitive, providing small, private red-roofed houses positioned along the roads, against the backdrop of the landscape.

Most often, settlement layouts aspire to create an 'ideal' circle around an elevated civic centre positioned on the summit (generally, it is the synagogue that stands at the centre of the settlement at the hilltop's highest point). But in reality, a settlement's contours are distorted by specific topographical morphology and by the constraints of land ownership, as well as in response to a generally accepted rule – first defined in Leitersdorf's planning of Ma'ale Adumim – that sought to limit to 250 metres the distance pedestrians have to walk from their homes to access civic services and amenities, preferably without having to cross a main road.

However, a major issue arose in the Ministry's guidelines of views and sightlines as outlined in Boneh's text. His guidelines advise that: 'Positioning openings [windows] in the direction of the view is usually identical with positioning them in the direction of the slope . . . [the optimal view depends on] the positioning of the buildings and on the distances between them, on the [built] density, the gradient of the slope and the vegetation.'[55] The publication further advises that in order to maximize visibility, the inner circle of homes should be positioned in front of the gaps left between the buildings along the outermost ring. Vision dictated the discipline and mode of design in all aspects, down to the positioning of windows in houses. Discussing the organization of the buildings themselves, the text recommended that sleeping quarters be oriented towards the inner public spaces and living rooms oriented towards the distant view.

This geometric order seeks to produce what can in effect be understood as optical devices on a suburban scale. The type of mountain settlement in the Galilee – akin to that in the West Bank – is referred to in Hebrew as *Mitzpe* (Lookout) settlement, a term that itself indicates the primary function of settlements in the mountain regions. The arrangement of homes and roads as rings around summits imposes on the dwellers an axial visibility oriented in two

directions: out and down, towards the surrounding landscapes; and in and upwards, a gaze folded in on itself, overlooking the common public spaces and homes of the other members of the community. Each of these constructed gazes, inwards and outwards, embodies complexities and contradictions of different kinds. The inward-looking gaze aims to reinforce a sense of community, facilitating the intimate management of the inhabitants' lives, and with it, regulating 'acceptable' public behaviour. The disciplinary power of this urban layout conforms the subject under a common gaze which is diffused amongst all other community members. The fact that the circular layout is closely oriented inwards towards the common public areas, promotes an 'unconscious policing' with controls on acceptable public behaviour.[56] With the social and physical cohesion of its cul-de-sac environment, closed off to its surroundings, the 'community settlement' promotes a communal coherence in a shared formal identity. Indeed, many inhabitants of West Bank 'community settlements', initially coming in search of an improved quality of life, have been gradually drawn into a more nationalist ideology, and will no doubt struggle against any policy initiatives to remove them from their homes. It is in everyday life and its small rituals, travel, work and spare time that the ideology of settlers is transformed and sustained.[57]

The outward-facing arrangement of homes orients the view of the inhabitants towards the surrounding landscape. In this context the wording of the verdict of High Court Justice Vitkon on the security function of the settlements of Bet-El should be revisited.[58] It attests to the perceived role of visual control in the state project of pacification: 'terrorist elements operate more easily in territory occupied exclusively by a population that is indifferent or sympathetic to the enemy than in a territory in which there are also persons liable to *monitor* them and *inform* the authorities of any suspicious movement'[59] [my emphasis]. Implicit in this statement is the Israeli government's enlisting of its civilian population to act as its agents alongside the agencies of state power, and the fact that the settlers' presence is being used to serve the state's security aims.[60] The task of civilian settlers – men, women and children – is to investigate and report Palestinian movements in the West Bank, to help turn the occupied territory into an optical matrix radiating out from a proliferation of lookout points/settlements scattered across the landscape.

In a further affirmation of the power of observation, until the recent Intifada made the life of settlers extremely precarious, only few settlement councils accepted the advice of the security establishment to fence themselves in from the surrounding landscape. The thinking behind their refusal to do so combined the metaphorical with the practical. Fencing themselves in might signify that settlements have no further territorial claims beyond their outer

fences. Confirming this argument, in one of his documentary films, Israeli film-maker Avi Mugrabi recorded Sharon bragging off record while sitting down to a meal in one West Bank settlement: 'I told [them]: don't build fences around your settlements. If you put up a fence, you put a limit to your expansion . . . we should place the fences around the Palestinians and not around our places.'[61] On the other hand, some settlers believed that the self-protection afforded by visual supervision rendered the material protection of a fortified wall or of a fence redundant and even obstructive. The security officer of the settlement of Qdumim, Shlomi Hazoni, stated this in a manner that confirms the prejudices which Israeli security officials are thought to harbour against Palestinians and Arabs: 'Fences project fear that the Arabs can sense . . . When they can sense our fear they will attack . . . fences are definitely not working as a security measure.' Instead, Hazoni proposed that 'the layout of the settlement and the design of its houses should be part of a single security concept'.[62]

Seeking safety in vision, Jewish settlements are intensely illuminated. At night, across the landscape, they are visible as brilliant white streaks of light that contrast with the yellowish tint of the light in the Arab villages and towns. Seeking their safety in invisibility, Palestinian neighbourhoods, on the other hand, employ black-outs to protect themselves against impending aerial attacks. During the Intifada, the military finally ruled that settlements be surrounded by several layers of fencing systems, cameras equipped with night-vision capability and even motion detectors placed on the perimeter fence, further extending the function of the naked eye. Reinforcing this one-way hierarchy of vision, according to rules of engagement issued by the occupying forces at the end of 2003, soldiers may shoot to kill any Palestinian caught observing settlements with binoculars or in any other 'suspicious manner'.[63] Palestinians should presumably avoid looking at settlements at all.

But it is hard not to see a settlement from wherever one is in the contemporary West Bank. The Israeli journalist Gideon Levy writes:

> You can hardly find a window in a Palestinian house that does not open onto some red-tiled roof of the neighbouring settlement . . . From the window of a burnt clothing store in re-occupied Bethlehem, from a bathroom window in Kafr Beit-Dajan, from a living room window in the village of Sinjel, from the mouth of a cave belonging to the cave-dwellers in southern Mount Hebron, from an office in Nablus, from a store in Ramallah – from everywhere you can spot the settlement on the hilltop, looming, dreadfully colonial . . . alienated, threatening, conquering houses, lusting for more.[64]