The Kibbutz and "Development Towns" in Israel:
Zionist utopias: Ideals ensnared in a tormented history

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Abstract:

This article first retraces the development of the kibbutz utopia through its 100 years of history prior to examining another utopia that has arisen out of Zionism: The "development town."

Simultaneously a revolutionary movement and a network of rural communities, a town planning alternative distinct from both the city and village, and an avant-garde of Zionist nation-building, the kibbutz later appeared to be part of the affluent elites of Israeli society. So, the kibbutz is light-years away from the underprivileged social strata of the "development towns", even while in geographic proximity to them. The kibbutz utopia, caught in a stranglehold between social and national ideology, between egalitarianism and productivism, has come up against the political contingencies and contradictory evolutions of Israeli society. Plunged into an unprecedented crisis during the 1990s, the kibbutz has since been undergoing a process of complete, multiform mutations. Unlike the kibbutz, which was born of pioneers' desire, the "development town" is the product of coercive planning doomed almost inevitably to social failure. Founded in the 1950s, these cities without a true economic or social horizon, functioned like "warehouses" for immigrants, primarily of Middle Eastern origin. Israel's evolution since has widened the gap between the centre and the periphery even further, to the detriment of these localities.

Introduction:

Utopias are "places" towards which we strive without ever fully achieving them and it is in this sense that they are "non-places", proposals or controlling ideas orienting possible common practices, "elsewhere" becoming "here." Once a utopia is started, it comes up against realities that transform it, occasionally to the point where it is unrecognizable. The social dynamic engendering its creation often surprises even its promoters. Every utopia is the carrier of a plan for renewal and reformation intended to correct the errors of an established system; it is a plan intended to be more just. In principle, social justice is thus at the heart of all utopias. But the course of history and collective practices alike frequently end up "booby-trapping" the initial ideals (Paquot 1996).

The Zionist utopia was born of the precarious existential condition of the Jews, particularly in Eastern Europe, who were subjected to discrimination, and suffered recurrent deterritorialization, as well as chronic violence. Motivated by virulent anti-Semitism and influenced by the national imagination rapidly growing in 19th century Europe, this utopia envisioned the return of a Jewish people to the land of Israel after more than twenty centuries of dispersion. So, when the first wave

of immigration took root in Ottoman Palestine in the 1880s thanks to the support of philanthropist [Baron Edmond-James de] Rothschild, the Zionist utopia found its promoter in the person of Theodor Herzl, founder of the world Zionist organization that held its first congress in 1897. Herzl – a liberal humanist – left a totally utopian description of the Jewish state he aspired to in a novel he published in 1902. It lacked the ethnic conflicts as well as the capitalist exploitation that produced social hardship in his time.

The Zionist utopia gave birth to another more specific utopia – the kibbutz – that developed in Palestine as a network of primarily agricultural communities starting in 1910. Influenced by the ways of thinking ranging from anarchism to socialism in its every form, the members of the first kibbutzim (plural of kibbutz, in Hebrew) set themselves in the forefront of a new type of socialist revolution. The kibbutzim multiplied: 7 in 1920, 32 locations in 1930, 85 in 1940 and nearly 150 on the eve of the State's birth in 1947 (Avrahami, 1998). The main tool of the Zionist national structure, the kibbutz was also one of the most downright successful socialist experiments in the world (Curtis 1973), hailed until a few decades ago by numerous intellectuals, notably in France (Friedman, Desroche, etc.). Today, after twenty years of profound crisis, there are still 268 localities with the legal status of kibbutz but the early pioneers' ideal of social justice is still alive in only a small minority of kibbutzim.

All utopian plans are the translation of a particular concept of social justice and this justice is expressed in part in terms of space. Justice, in its Zionist conception, is arrived at through a socially equitable re-territorialization of the Jewish people, at the cost, however of a certain number of collateral inequities which are, moreover, sources of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the Palestinian problem. This conception is therefore closely tied to a spatial policy. Space was declared a public resource upon creation of the State and has been subject to territorial development plans forming the framework for the redistribution of space among Arabs and Jews but also between rural and urban areas. Thus nearly 400 rural localities were created in the country's first decade of existence.
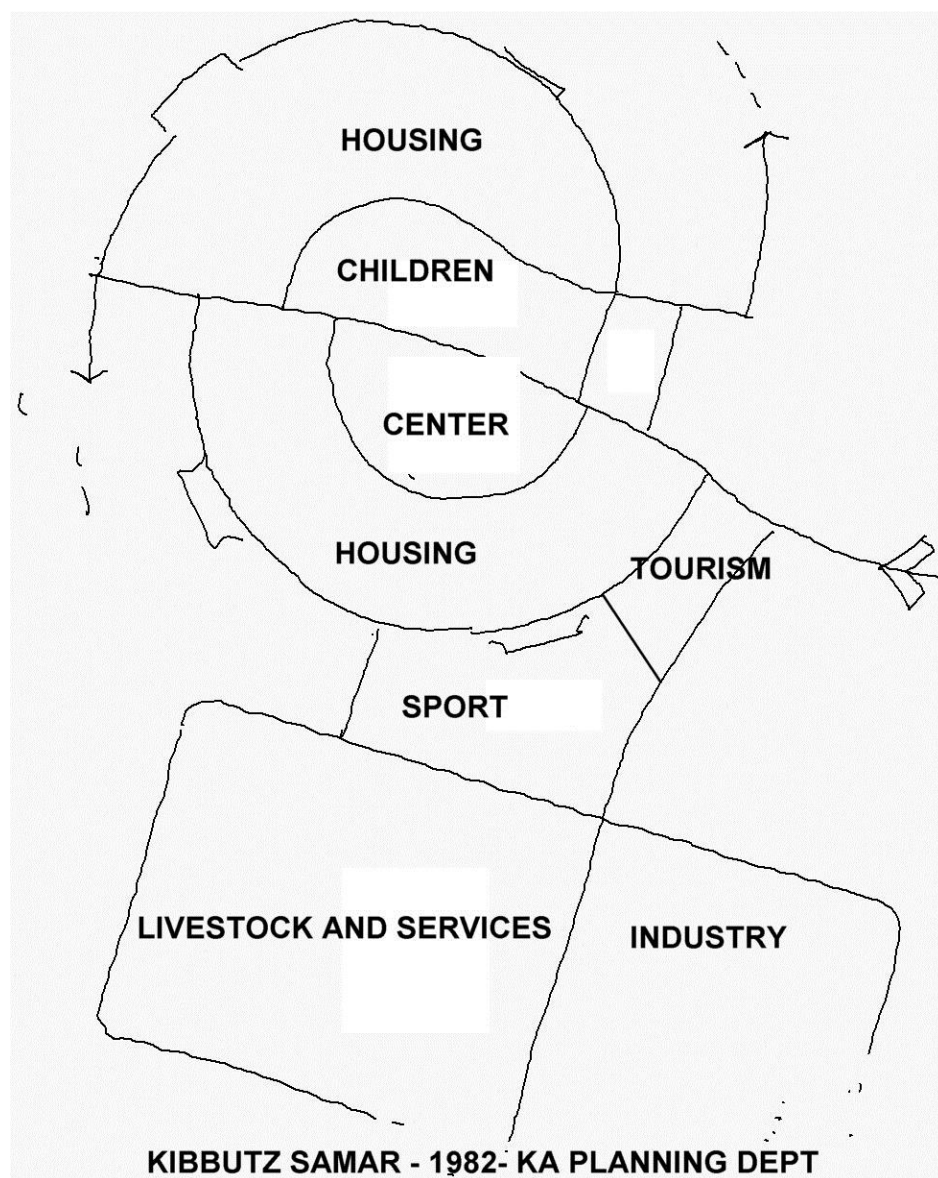
Space also plays a key role in the kibbutz utopia. First, as an instrument of the Zionist plan, the kibbutz got down to conquering the land of Israel even in the most remote and hostile regions of Palestine,"dunam[1] after dunam". Then, as a means of agricultural production, and later, after the demographic upset caused by the war of independence and mass immigration of Holocaust survivors and refugees from Arab and/or Muslim countries, space became the focus of national development plans in which the kibbutz federations actively participated. In the 1950s and 60s these plans led to the creation of 28 new cities (or "Development towns", "*ayarat pitouah"* in Hebrew) across the country that share the space on the State's periphery along with the rural sector and various ethnic and religious minorities.

As a planning concept that became necessary starting in the 1930s, the kibbutz, "neither city nor village" based on Tabenkin's (1887-1971) formula, is an urban planning alternative to the capitalist city similar to Howard's garden cities, or town planning in the first decade after the revolution in the

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[1] The dunam is unit of area dating back to the ottoman era, and equals in Israel 1,000 sq. meters.

U.S.S.R. It is a "mini-utopia" structured to blend collective ownership and self-management, community on a human scale and urban modernity (Kahana, 2011).

The space inside kibbutzim received special treatment that bore witness to the fundamental values of equality and participation. Over the years, a functionalist, lush development model crystalized which imparted a common physiognomy to most of them: community and government services, and particularly a common dining room were located in the center of the locality; activities in the periphery: livestock production and/or industry; and finally, the residential areas with housing fulfilling the criteria of modesty and unity, all in an open space.

Sketch of the kibbutz Samar development plan established in 1976

Kiboutz Nahal Oz: Residential area according to the conventional planning with gardens and walkways in an open space (copyright Yad-Tabenkin).

View of the Kibbutz Ein Harod, founded in 1921, in the 40s (copyright Yad-Tabenkin).

The cultural changes in the last twenty years have resulted in a new treatment of the space inside the kibbutz, reflecting today's predominant values and the accompanying trend toward privatization. While the kibbutz landscape used to express social justice founded on equality and collective ownership in its allocation of space, this landscape gradually transformed, consecrating

private ownership, and from then on it increasingly resembled small, luxury suburbs where fences and two parking spaces clearly mark out every lot.

This article proposes to retrace the historic evolution of the kibbutz utopia by closely examining its conception of social justice and its expression in space as well as understanding how the early revolutionary vision of social justice adapted to successive realities: the evolution of Zionism, the founding of the State of Israel, the profound crisis that has affected it since the mid-1980s and the neo-liberal shift of the years from 1990 to 2000. We will analyze the kibbutz' responses to this crisis and will interpret their meaning in terms of social justice. The course of the kibbutz utopia throughout the young history of the Jewish State will also be compared to that of another Zionist utopia, the "development town", which quickly became a dystopia and relegation space, especially relative to the elitist kibbutz.

Degania or the origin of the kibbutz

Colonization based on private enterprise and philanthropy characterizing the first wave of Zionist immigration (1881-1902) culminated in the founding of some twenty agricultural settlements. However, these operations of these localities frequently accumulated deficits, particularly during the first years, and survived thanks to generous donations from Baron de Rothschild. The difficulties of subsistence in Palestine and the reorganization of Zionist activity based on economic criteria led the institutions to seek a new settlement model (Shilo, 1986). From 1903 to 1914, a new wave of Jewish immigration arrived in Palestine, primarily from Russia and composed mainly of young people embracing socialist ideals. Some of them, who had participated in the failed 1905 revolution in Russia, wished to export their ideals of social justice. At this time, community experiments were multiplying; first, there were consumer communities where a few workers would pool their meager wages to survive, then the first production community (in Sejera, 1907-1908) bound by contract to an employer and which would serve as a model. In 1914, a dozen of this type of community brought together roughly 200 workers. But these communities were temporary. They came and went at the mercy of employment contracts and the workers moved based on what was offered. In 1912, after a two-year contract, a community of farm workers decided to stay in Degania and thus the first kibbutz was born. The three components that would later characterize the kibbutz movement and its concept of social justice appeared in Dagania: community of consumption, community of work and production, and permanence of the community (Near, 1983). Thus the land purchased by the institutions of the Zionist movement, entrusted collectively to groups of workers, became the new development method of Zionism in Palestine.

These pioneers of the second wave of immigration, the originators of the kibbutz, forged their political convictions in late-19th century Russia at a time when Marxism had not yet been established as the dominant stream of socialism. Their influences were various socialist, utopian and libertarian currents, Russian populism through peasant idealism, its wisdom and farm work. The third wave of immigration (1919-1923), which was also made up of socialist youth, nonetheless constituted a new generation (Manheim, 1990). Many of them had participated in the 1917 revolution and Marxism's

influence on them was noticeable. From 1920 to 1930 these ideological differences between pioneers would form the basis of the debate on the ideal profile and the essence of a kibbutz as a small, rural, close-knit community, emphasizing the humanist values of friendship, dialogue, self-redemption through physically working the land, the connection to the land and other members of the community, or alternatively, a large community of the "urban village" type, open to economic activities other than farming, collectivist and centralized, the tool of a socialist revolution to come (Kashtan & Bar-Sinai, 2003). These differences would lead to the formation of a number of kibbutz federations (Landshaut, 1944/2000) and various planning approaches. This proliferation of working-class communities in Palestine strengthened Sirkin (1868-1924), a socialist Zionist leader, in the formulation of his "constructivist socialism" utopia: a non-state-controlled (unlike the kolkhozes) socialist society of communities in Palestine founded on the consensus arising from the identification of its members. Sirkin recommended "skipping the capitalism stage". He did not deny the importance of class struggles in the historic dynamic but he believed that in Palestine this struggle would take a different, less violent and less destructive form than in Europe. In his opinion, it was a matter of building socialism in a place where there was no capitalism to be destroyed (Kanari, 1993).

The kibbutz between Zionism and socialism (1936-1948)

While the kibbutz was investigating the ideal social justice model, the reality of political events in Palestine would be a partial diversion from its social project and redirect it towards the national focus. Following the fourth (1923-1929) and early in the fifth waves of immigration (1929-1939), the Jewish population of Palestine went from 10% to 35% of the total population in 1935. It would also change the social composition. These last two waves of immigration, which were numerically much larger than the previous two, consisted primarily of members of the middle class: merchants, artisans and professionals. This meant that the working class would no longer be the majority of Palestine's Jewish population. On the one hand, this new situation would contribute to putting off the prospect of forming a socialist society, and on the other would encourage Ben Gurion's dominant workers' party to realign in order not to lose its political hegemony. But even more, this marked growth in the Jewish populations in Palestine would precipitate the crystallization of Palestinian nationalism, which would translate into the great Arab revolt of 1936 to 1939. From then on, it became clear to Ben Gurion that Palestine was caught in a tug-of-war between two nationalisms. In response to Arab hostility, the Zionist movement sped up the founding of new Jewish settlements, especially in the outlying regions where the Jewish population was still sparse, with a view to the next plan for partitioning, such as the one proposed by the Peel Commission (1937) and rejected by the Arabs. In this race to multiply Jewish localities, the kibbutz was the big winner: of the 52 Jewish settlements founded in that period, 37 were kibbutzim. Initially a community of young single people where subsistence and security were organized collectively, the kibbutz was better suited than all forms of locality founded on the family unit in the face of the reigning insecurity at the time.

If Zionism was thought to be a plan for correcting the social injustice that the Jews in Europe had been hit with, the first kibbutzim at the start of the century were even further ahead in their commitment to seeking an ideal society that would correct the deemed aberrations of the diasporic Jewish identity, notably its lot of inequalities, through a model of rural development that underscored the socialist character of its world view and social relations. Nonetheless, starting in the late 1930s, the social project faded to the benefit of the national project. The kibbutz, with organized federations and political strength, became involved in the conflict for the creation of the future State; this investment was productive and in the years that followed would enable it to accumulate various resources: the institutions of the Zionist movement gave the kibbutzim more land to be populated and developed; the British provided more immigration certificates, which had been limited under pressure from the Arabs (1939 white book); Zionist institutions gained more power; and, finally, the kibbutz rose in prestige in the eyes of the Jewish population in Palestine (Ben Rafael, 1992). Thus, in 1947 on the eve of independence, 145 kibbutzim were home to 54,000 people, or 7.5% of the Jewish population.

This struggle between opposing nationalisms would cause profound upheavals in terms of both (re-)distribution of the space in the Middle East and demographics. To begin with in 1922, the territory given to the British after the First World War was partitioned in the prelude to the creation of the kingdom of Transjordan. From then on, Jewish settlement east of the Jordan was prohibited. Then, in 1937, a proposal came about for partitioning the territory west of the Jordan into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, but this would fall through. The 1947 UNO partition plan would lead to the Israeli-Arab conflict and the continuous moving of the boundary between Jews and Arabs at the mercy of wars, cease-fires and peace agreements, and finally the rampant colonization on the West Bank: the 1949 cease-fire agreements; the 1967 Six-Day War and occupation of the West Bank by Israel; the 1979-1982 peace agreements with Egypt and withdrawal from the Sinai; the 1993 Oslo and West Bank zoning agreements, the 1994 peace agreement with Jordan, a quickening of the rampant colonization of the West Bank since 1993; and, the 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Getting back to the kibbutz, its commitment to national independence continued and intensified during the 1940s but at the same time, political dissension developed among the kibbutz federations and the workers' party of Ben Gurion, who was the leader of Palestine's Jewish political system and the Zionist movement. These dissensions would lead to various splits and later to the formation of a political party that was supported by both major kibbutzim federations and would compete against that of Ben Gurion. This political clash would peak upon creation of the State of Israel. In the first parliamentary elections in 1949, the MAPAM, identified with the kibbutz movements, became the second largest party in Israel after Ben Gurion's party, but the MAPAM would not make his party part of the coalition. In political opposition, undermined by the divisions concerning its position toward the Soviet Union, and unable to adapt to the demographic revolution of Israel's first decade, the kibbutz began a long process of political and social marginalization.

The war of 1947-1949, called "The Catastrophe" or "The War of Independence" depending on the perspective, would provoke immense movements of populations: between 500,000 and 750,000 Arabs were chased out and/or fled the territories controlled by Israel (Morris, 2004), while 136,000

Holocaust survivors and nearly 800,000 Jewish refugees from Arab or Muslim countries immigrated to Israel. Thus, the 1950s were marked by an effort to integrate the enormous wave of immigrants resulting from the war of independence. Between 1948 and 1952, the Jewish population doubled and the total population of the country in fact nearly tripled at the end of the decade, going from 750,000 inhabitants in 1949 to nearly 2 million in 1960. At the same time, if only 7% of the land was in Jewish possession in 1947, 80% of the land was controlled by the Jewish State after the war. Under the direction of the architect Arieh Sharon, the first national land development plan got started with the priorities of: housing for the mass of immigrants, and correction of the "anomaly" characterizing Palestinian authority in which 2/3 of the Jewish population was concentrated in the 3 large cities (Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and Haifa) and 82% in the coastal plain between Haifa and Tel-Aviv. Sharon's task therefore, was to disperse the population to a network of small and medium-size rural and urban agglomerations in the periphery. He hoped to bring the population of the large cities to 45% of the total population. Over 400 rural agglomerations were created as part of this plan, but the "gem" was the "development town", which according to how it was imagined by its builders, was conceived as a sub-regional, very "Christallerian" (see infra) "central place", "accommodating" a population that would range from 20,000 to 50,000 so as not to lose the community aspect of the small city and thus prevent certain consequences that were deemed harmful - such as alienation - and which supposedly characterized big cities (Efrat, 2010).

Poster in the exhibition on urban planning, Arieh Sharon (Department of Planning), Museum of Tel Aviv (1950)

The kibbutz: Transformation of a revolutionary utopian movement into an upper-middle class bourgeoisie

The war of independence and the years that followed would be critical for the kibbutz utopia. Then at the peak of its demographic and political power, through its pioneering and military action, the kibbutz was profoundly committed to the national independence project. Between late 1947 and late 1952, the number of kibbutzim went from 145 to 217, i.e. 72 new kibbutzim in 5 years, including 41 in 1949 alone. These kibbutzim were founded on the land allocated to them by the State. This meant that the kibbutzim's production tool – the land surface – went from less than 500,000 dunams in 1947 to over 1.5 million in 1952. However, in the face of this considerable growth in production means, the kibbutz was sorely lacking in manpower. Paradoxically, alongside this shortage, the country was submerged under a considerable torrent of new immigrants, crammed into transit camps and looking for work. This situation should have led the kibbutz to engage in intensive recruitment of members from among the newcomers, particularly as due to awareness of the importance of integration for its own development, the kibbutz was, up until the time that the State was created, one of the main factors in the integration of immigrants (Ben Rafael, 1992). In reality, this was far from being the case. For a multitude of complex reasons, the kibbutz failed in its national mission to integrate the massive number of immigrants in the young State's first decade. Beyond the unattractiveness of the kibbutz to the eyes of the newcomers, the failure was due to a number of factors, including:

- The cultural gap existing between the kibbutz population of eastern European origin from before the war and the vast majority of new immigrants coming from northern Africa and the Middle East; this cultural gap often translated into ethnocentrism and disdain toward newcomers (Segev, 1984).

- The kibbutz' inability to adapt the integration systems from the pre-state period (pioneer youth movements responsible for the socialization of future recruits) to the new mass immigration situation.

- The pioneer spirit of the early kibbutz lost steam, particularly after a decade of intensive mobilization for creating the State and an especially devastating war of independence. In fact, during the 1950s the kibbutz demonstrated a certain introversion and reluctance to engage in the integration battle, and there was a growing chasm between the declared revolutionary ideology and the considerably more conservative practices (Shapira, 2008).

- Ben Gurion's political ineptitude. On the one hand, he attempted to hitch the kibbutz movement to the integration task, and on the other, attacked it for its feeble mobilization. In a sense, the political struggle between the MAPAM party, supported by the kibbutzim, and Ben Gurion's MAPAI was waged on the back of new immigrants (Tzur, 2006).

Kibbutz Tze'elim at its creation in 1949

In response to the relative failure to integrate the immigrants who arrived during the 1950s, a failure to which the kibbutz greatly contributed, during the 1960s and 70s, two population sectors crystallized in Israeli Jewish society, which instead of "merging"[2] into one culture based on the model advocated then by the elites, formed cultural alternatives which would lead to post-Zionism (Kimmerling 2001). On the one hand was the Israel of the elders from the pre-State period ("*vatikim*"), the Ashkenazi socio-economic elite; and on the other, the newcomers, primarily Middle Easterners, proletariats from peripheral regions. In this divide, the kibbutz was no longer perceived as a revolutionary, avant-garde socialist movement, a utopia thirsting for social justice, but rather as one of the privileged pockets of society, using an "uncouth" proletariat of middle-eastern origin for its own productivist purposes. As a matter of fact, while although ideologically opposed to salaried work due to the exploitation that goes with it, on the periphery of Israel's (social) space, the kibbutz became one of the main, if not the main, employer.

In fact, from the time it began, the kibbutz has been shared between an egalitarian ethos testifying to its socialist commitment, and a productivist ethos, part of the Zionist project of redemption though productive work for the diasporic Jew and expressed through his willingness to optimize the use of the production means at his disposal (Ben Rafael, 1992). Up until statehood, the kibbutz managed to maintain a balance between these two polarities but starting in the 1950s, this balance was broken. The areas in which the kibbutz stood out to that point (safety, rural development, integration of immigrants) were then gradually absorbed by the state, with the kibbutz thus losing its elite status to the service of the national cause. While production means greatly exceeded its ability to exploit them, the kibbutz then considered itself not as an avant-garde struggling for the institution of socialism but as a competing alternative to the Israeli society surrounding it. In this competition with the milieu, the kibbutz had to prove that its socialist economic model could

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[2] Integration was thought of in terms of "the merging of exiles".

compete with the young state's capitalist economy. It was in this historic moment that the productivist ethos became dominant at the expense of the egalitarian. Since the sudden change in this balance, socialism and equality were limited to being an internal issue on the kibbutz, which *de facto* renounced its revolutionary role and the constructivist socialist utopia. Starting in the 1950s productivism and the economic aspect (called *"meshekism"* on the kibbutz) of the kibbutz began to dominate the social and revolutionary dimension. Thus, the economic (production, work, benefits) was no longer considered a means of individual and/or collective redemption, nor as a profound structure on which a system of social justice founded on equality and participation was based, but rather as an end in itself, what the American sociologist Robert Merton (1965) deems a deviance of the "ritualistic" type (Zamir 1985)[3]. This deviance would become more pronounced with the crisis during the 1980s. Although the socio-spatial gaps appeared between the kibbutz and the "Development towns" during the 1970s, the political changeover and the end of the workers' party's hegemony following the Likoud's (right wing political party) victory in the 1977 elections marked a turning point in the history of the kibbutz and heralded the crisis. At that time, the kibbutz went from enjoying the favor of the power in place, which facilitated its access to the necessary resources of all kinds (economic, financial, territorial, etc.), to being the number one enemy of the new power, which saw in the institution the political power base of its historic adversary, the workers' party. Prime Minister Begin's remark describing the inhabitants of the kibbutzim as "millionaires with their swimming pools" is carved into Israel's collective memory, condemning the differences in living standards between the kibbutz and neighboring "Development towns", fuelling the socio-ethnic conflict between those of European and Middle Eastern origins that has characterized Israeli society since that time. This hostility, together with a very risky government monetary policy, would plunge Israel's economy, and the kibbutz in particular, into a deep economic crisis in the mid-1980s. However, unlike previous crises in its history, the state (or the previous pre-statehood institutions) did not bail out the kibbutz, whose debts would skyrocket through the1980s. This economic crisis rapidly transformed into a multi-dimensional crisis: it was initially demographic with the mass desertion by youth and families starting in the late 1980s, and it was also ideological with a loss of confidence in the cultural values of the kibbutz. This led to a wave of structural changes in the kibbutz that were social, economic and political. This wave spread in two stages.

The first, which went until the mid-1990s, was marked by:
- The modification of methods for distributing goods and services (e.g.: food, electricity, and informal education). Budgets, which until that time had been managed collectively, were transferred directly into those of the families; the corresponding services and goods, distributed for free previously, from then on had to be purchased by the families themselves with their own moneys.
- A change in governance structures, often with the replacement of the general assembly – the symbol of a direct, participatory democracy – with an elected council (indirect democracy).

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[3] Although Merton's model is intended to explain individual rather than group deviance, it seems relevant here. Merton defines ritualism as a means of adaptation of those who are looking for a way out of the frustrations related to ambition. They renounce the social goals but they hang on tight to reassuring routines and usual standards. Thus, the kibbutz renounced the institution of a socialist society in Israel but hung on to the cult of work, productivity and profit.

- Reinforcement of the pecking order and domination of senior managers in businesses at the expense of self-management and worker participation (Rosolio, 2004). Overall, the demands for economic and organizational efficiency born of the crisis in the 1980s led to the abolition of the traditional kibbutz' democratic mechanisms such as the rotation of leadership positions, for example, thus transforming democratic governance into executive governance in which the role of the general assembly/elected council was often limited to the election of directors, free to make all decisions once elected (Pavin, 2002).
- The drastic reduction of political, social and cultural activities of the federations, the last bastion of the kibbutz' influence on the surrounding society.

The second phase of change started in the late 1990s and included transformations that were even more fundamental, such as:

- The mass introduction of the salariat system as practiced in the job market, i.e. salaries set based on the job description and/or worker's performance. Reflecting the worker's contribution to the business, the salariat system is indicative of the kibbutz' renunciation of the distributive justice system which had characterized it and set it apart (Rosner et Getz, 1996). The move to this system even more greatly symbolized the renunciation of the principle of social justice in effect until that point: the abandonment of "from everyone based on his means, to everyone based on his needs", often considered by its members as responsible for the kibbutz' economic failure (Achouch, 2005).
- Accession to land ownership with the privatization of housing.
- Accession to ownership of the means of production through implementation of share ownership based on member seniority.

These privatizations of the kibbutz lifestyle were analyzed as the means for the kibbutz' transition from a traditional community social system to a market system with hierarchical structures (Rosner and Getz, 2006). This transition lasted for over 20 years. It was a period of social anomie during which the former standards of behavior were no longer legitimate but the new ones were not always respected (Achouch, 2000). This meant that by becoming the families' means of livelihood, all income from a job was taxable but occasionally the job was not declared and thus, not taxed. If this was true concerning taxes, it was even more so with regard to spatial distribution. The main characteristic of the traditional kibbutz landscape was its openness: Common lawns between rows of houses edged with small gardens, with a total absence of fencing and little vehicular traffic. With the ripple of privatization in the 1990s and well before the plans for division that would allow legal land ownership in the 2000s, as many signs of illegal appropriation of collective space appeared, whether fences or hedges marking territory seized by individuals, or alternatively, the marking of private parking spaces without the consent of local authorities.

Today, the development plans drawn up following the changes in lifestyle, with a view to the privatization of housing, legitimize the transformation of the kibbutz landscape. They set the boundaries for each private lot, and provide for certain roads and gardens that were previously open to everyone to be closed to the public. The plans and completion of new residential areas that have multiplied in the kibbutzim in the periphery of the country also testify to this
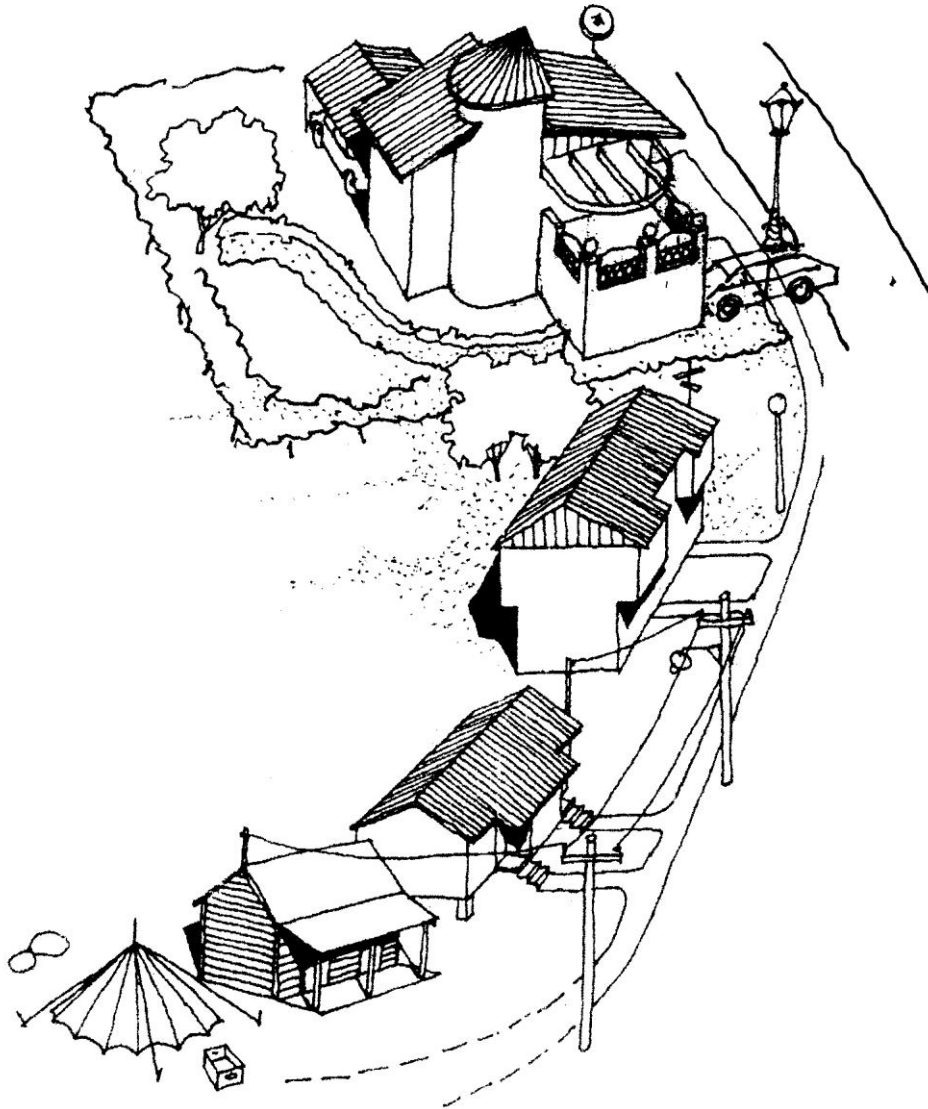
(irreversible) structural evolution, their residents receiving the keys to their purchased[4] already demarcated and fenced lot. Common spaces are reduced to a minimum in these neighborhoods.

New residential area according to development plans in an era of privatization. Kiboutz Hanita 2012 (Picture Yoann Morvan).

Thus, in a single generation, the kibbutz landscape changed more than in the three previous ones. From "not a city, not a village" as conceived by its promoters, the kibbutz has increasingly taken on the characteristics of a middle-class suburb, simultaneously both city and village. Due to its closure, the quality of its landscaping amenities, and the social origin of its new residents, every day the kibbutz more and more resembles gated communities. This evolution is part of an urban Israeli society that is ever more fragmented. Successive layers of urbanization have left certain components on the edge of this society, enduringly ghettoizing some urban areas, such as the "Development towns."

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[4] At the same time as new residents are arriving, a trend is noted in recent years for young people who were born on the kibbutz and left, to return. When making their own homes, they prefer the more community-style structure, quality of life, and "rural" environment of the kibbutz to the city. For these young people, once the kibbutz had got rid of its egalitarianism, it was once again attractive to them as property owners...

The housing developments in the Kibbutz. Drawing of the architect Vittorio Corinaldi.

Failure announced of the "Development towns": A fundamentally flawed utopia

In the shadow of the grid of peripheral spaces created by the kibbutzim, the new cities of the 1950s and 1960s, or "Development towns", represent another face of the Zionist utopia. Considering the period when they were created, they were immediately turned toward the national focus described above. They were designed to fulfill a dual objective: absorbing the subsequent immigration, particularly of Middle Eastern Jews (*Mizrahim* in Hebrew); and, de-concentrating and spreading out the urban population to make use of strategic ramparts in the peripheral areas most exposed to risk of attack in the event of war, following the example of the

kibbutzim. The utopian nature of this "balanced" and harmonious regional development was largely inspired by the "central places" theory of the highly controversial German geographer Walter Christaller[5], although he was never explicitly mentioned in the plan of former Bauhaus student Arieh Sharon (1951). This was administrative generation, generally *ex nihilo,* of a network of urban localities of modest dimensions intended to be used as a link (services, businesses, etc.) to rural back country areas, kibbutzim and moshavim (agricultural cooperatives), themselves in full transformation. The new urban network completed that of the rural entities and pertained to the state's desire for control of national territory. As legislated urbanism, the "Development towns" were a pure product of the modern movement from both an architectural and urban perspective. Made up of a juxtaposition of blocks of cement-block apartment buildings four to six storeys high with an egalitarian aesthetic and vegetation based on the English *new town* model - which itself was once upon a time inspired by the garden cities - the "Development towns" were built according to plans that were just as functionalist, if not more so, as those of the kibbutzim. However, while the latter had long been a benchmark of participatory democracy, the "Development towns" were spaces of relegation and marginalization from the outset. One of the best examples of symbolic violence accompanying the creation of these new cities is told by André Chouraqui: Moroccan migrants were sent by force at night to the new city of Dimona in the middle of the Negev Desert although the Jewish agency had promised them they would be going to Jerusalem. They refused to get off the trucks transporting them and it wasn't until an attack by Arabs had been faked that they ended up agreeing to settle in this city in the middle of nowhere (Chouraqui 1998). Entitled "from the boat to the 'development town'", the purpose of this policy was the relatively urgent intake of the waves of migration that followed Israel's independence. Because the new cities had not yet, for the most part, been built, many of the Middle Eastern migrants were temporarily housed in transit camps ("*ma'abarot*"), a traumatic recollection that left indelible marks in the collective memory of the Mizrahim. A few years later, more aware of the injustice they had suffered, revolts broke out (in Wadi Salib (Haifa) in 1959, then the "Black Panthers" in the 1970s).

Many reasons explain the failure of most of these new cities that were unable from the outset to generate the social equality promoted or the spatial justice planned; and this failure was aggravated by the new West Bank settlement strategy following the 1967 war and then by the loss of economic impact of Israeli agriculture as well as decades later, the de-industrialization tied to globalization. Urban planning and regional development marked by functionalist modernism separating uses were hardly favorable to integration and potential reconversions, making future socio-spatial redemption of the segregational territories difficult. Nonetheless, the main cause of these new cities' failure lies in the "from the boat to the 'development town'" policy. As a matter of fact, at that time a mass movement/displacement of Middle Eastern Jews was occurring in the development areas, especially in comparison with other migratory origins,

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[5] See on this point the research of Marie-Claire ROBIC, including "Cent ans avant Christaller : une théorie des lieux centraux", *L'Espace géographique*, vol. XI, 1982, pp. 5-12. Moreover, it is not by chance that Christaller's "ancestor" is a follower of Saint-Simon, this highlights even more the prescriptive and rather utopian aspect of German geographer's theory.

as testified to in the tables and figures[6] reported by Shlomo Sitton (1963). This population policy was, in great part, coercive. Based on a survey carried out in the late 1990s, over half of those questioned stated that their location was forced on them (Yiftachel 2006). This contributed to the disintegration of ancestral community structures. Communities found themselves dispersed across the country, families separated, and traditional chiefs dismissed from their duties. Moroccan Jews in particular were mainly the poorest to come, "a social body cut off from its elites" (Chouraqui 1998), and prey to acculturation in the face of the promised Zionist identity. Surprising for a supposed return from exile.

The feeling of inequality was rekindled with subsequent waves of migration. This was particularly the case with the arrival of migrants from the former Soviet Union during the 1990s. The Middle Easterners felt that the latter had the benefit of more assistance than they had received themselves. Locally, the relative majority of the Mizrahim would be challenged in the "Development towns". This swing occurred when the Middle Easterners had scarcely managed to become a political force through the Shas party; this party was connected to the Sephardic Jews and supported in particular by those of Moroccan origin and their descendants although its voter base was broader. The emergence of the (Russian-speaking) party led by Avigdor Liberman, Israel Beitenou, made the Shas party fear having its recently acquired political weight eclipsed. The Mizrahim thus saw the former Soviets as underhanded competitors; the "socio-spatial inequalities were drawn along ethnic lines" and a "dialectic of differences" was noted (Berthomière 2005). Moreover, this dialectic was repeated within groups, among the Middle Easterners between the Levantines and those of North African origin, and among those from the former Soviet Union - far from being a homogeneous group - between those of Russian or Ukrainian origin and those from the Caucasus, or Central Asia.

In the face of these glaring injustices experienced by the inhabitants of the "Development towns", with the exception of the revolts and the Shas party mentioned above, few pressure groups, like the NGO "Hakeshet ha Mizrahit" ("Democratic Mizrahi Rainbow" or Keshet), wishing to promote greater social justice in the Middle Easterners' regard, found a voice in the matter. In the early 2000s, this NGO rose up against a bill intended to transfer "public" agricultural properties in an act of rampant privatization favoring the kibbutzim and moshavim, once again penalizing the "Development towns". Nonetheless, the members of the Keshet – even if they were of fairly similar ethnic origin – included a good many intellectuals who were accordingly, sociologically rather remote from the populations living in the "Development towns". Moreover, by defending these inhabitants, they exposed themselves to the skepticism of the Israeli Arabs, who were even more disadvantaged by the Zionist land system (Yiftachel 2006). Caught in a stranglehold in the "dialectic of differences", the Middle Easterners in the "development towns" illustrate the complexity of the stacking of post-Zionism socio-spatial injustices. Within the critical academic sphere, the interpretations of the causes and consequences of the "development towns'" failure have themselves evolved, moving from the (neo-) Marxist in terms of social classes (Smooha, Swirsky) to approaches marked by post-colonial thought (Yiftachel,

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[6] By way of example, from 1956 to 1959, over 67 % of immigrants from northern Africa, as opposed to only 30% of those from Hungary.

Tzfadia) (Tzfadia 2007), or cultural studies (Shohat), particularly under North American influence. An evolution of this type is evidence not only of the passage to post-Zionism, but also a form of decline of utopian thought among Israeli intellectuals of the left.

The "development towns" were a sort of "warehouse" for successive waves of immigration. While some of their inhabitants managed to pull themselves out through growing social and residential mobility, others found themselves captives in this economically useless urban grid. Planned to be an intermediate level in terms of urban services, the "development towns" almost never succeeded in this role, the populations of the surrounding localities (kibbutz, moshave, etc.) preferring to go directly to the larger urban centers, particularly due to the very repulsive image these new cities conveyed.

Kiryat Gat

To better gauge the evolution of these "development towns", we need to understand the case of Kiryat Gat at the edge of the Negev Desert in south central Israel, some 40 kilometers from Beer Sheva, about 50 kilometers from Tel Aviv and roughly 60 from Jerusalem. This is a typical case of the relative failure of the "development towns'" creation policy plan for an urban network.

Founded in 1954, the new city was first a refugee camp (*ma'abara*) "welcoming" many Moroccan Jews but also Indian Jews and more. With 17,000 inhabitants in 1969, it obtained city status in 1972. Numerous immigrants from the former Soviet Union settled there during the 1990s and today they represent nearly one-third of the population. The population is currently approximately 50,000 and has tried countless ways to transform its negative image. With the withdrawal of government resources related to the decline of the welfare state, the effects of which were also felt at the communal scale, a polymorphic urban marketing scheme was put in place, intended to draw investors and/or new inhabitants. Symbolically, the old city hall was sold to a bank and has relocated to the top floor of an adjacent new shopping center with no indication of its new location. Marketing nevertheless has not changed the living conditions of the poorest. By increasing consumer desire, there is keener awareness of how little buying power they have. The new consumeristic Israel seems far indeed from the egalitarian myth that prevailed in its early days.

Former town hall transformed into a bank, in the background, the shopping center that houses the new town hall on the top floor. (Copyright: Yoann Morvan).

On the left, a poster showing the ambitions of the municipality, on the right, the old ma'abarot doomed to political neglect. (Copyright: Yoann Morvan).

A few meters away from the "absorption" center where large numbers of Ethiopians live cheek-by-jowl, there is a new real estate project intended to attract both local and non-local middle-class residents. The idea is to (again) give a positive image of the heart of the new city, the most economically depressed area of the small agglomeration, with new urban developments of slightly higher status all being built in its periphery. This is in part due to local real estate promotion aimed at seducing the employees of the new businesses that have recently moved into the industrial area a few kilometers away from Kiryat Gat. Initially, agricultural products were processed in this area and there was traditional industry, but these activities were clearly losing ground (the Polgat textile plant closed in the 1990s) and were either complemented or replaced by high tech businesses, a field Israel excels in, but which with the exception of unskilled jobs, is a poor fit in the urban economy of a "development town" like Kiryat Gat. With over $500 million in assistance from the Israeli government, the first Intel plant opened in 1999 (manufacturing the Pentium 4 processor), followed by a second in 2006/2008. Nothing but casual consumption connects these high tech industries to the city. Despite the presence of these prestigious companies (Intel, HP) and their unquestionable financial contribution to the communal budget, the locality's endemic socio-economic problems have not been halted. The

unemployment rate in Kiryat Gat remains one of the highest in Israel, as these firms are not a match for the local labor market. The only point of intersection is the shopping center at the edge of the city beside the industrial area. The high-tech employees' presence along with the "development town's" inhabitants only serves to accentuate the feelings of poverty of the latter. The local promotion of real estate has only managed to attract certain segments of internal populations on their way up the social ladder, with the overwhelming majority of high tech companies' personnel carefully avoiding living in Kiryat Gat. The good highway access (particularly due to the new Highway 6) to the business zone is paradoxically detrimental to the "development town", which remains at a standstill in the face of the mobility it struggles to benefit from.

Conclusion

Zionism is an ideology with a utopian component, particularly to the extent that it is at odds with a diasporic Jewish history of migrations and deterritorializations. The Palestine fantasized about becoming a place that was possible but fairly abstract, with a new identity based on the conception of a more just Jewish society. The "by-products" of this ideology – the kibbutz and the "development town" – are accordingly aspatial, or at the very least decontextualizing, in nature which gives them a structural affinity with the concept of utopia. However, over the decades and the establishment of the young State, the initial ideals of socio-spatial justice would find themselves impacted by the nationalistic aspect of Zionist ideology, to the detriment of the social aspect. The thus ensnared utopian ideals were put into the service of a multi-tier urban society. One of the indicators of these injustices generated by the utopias that had become dystopian can be provided by Amartya Sen's theory of "capabilities" (2010). In fact, despite the financial liquidity they lacked until just recently, the members of the kibbutzim continue to have, if to a lesser degree, privileged access to the center of Israeli Jewish society; meanwhile, the reluctant residents of the "development towns" struggle to have equal access to the "capability" enabling them to get out of their condition of social and spatial relegation.

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