

EDITORIAL

Eleven decisions regarding the rezoning of agricultural land preceded the Israel Lands Council (ILC) Decision No. 533 and its successor, Decision No. 611.

Not one of these was implemented nor met the needs of the State of Israel.

The above two, particularly the latter were incompatible with general national planning and in defiance of approved, binding State land policy.

The ILC sought in its decisions to help make housing available at lower prices - a key, indeed critical, issue on both the financial and social levels - on the fundamentally false assumption that land was the sole determinant of housing prices.

The illusion that flooding the country with cheap land would result in reasonably-priced housing for new immigrants, young couples, demobilized soldiers, etc., was quickly shattered.

The ILC's penultimate decision, No. 533, on the rezoning of agricultural land was rescinded and its successor, No. 611, was frozen in the wake of the severe consequences they wrought.

The linkage between land and housing prices has been treated in more than one issue of **Karka** and the housing issue continues to preoccupy the various media; nevertheless, no solution to the housing problem has been found.

Are we trying to put a square peg into a round hole? This question should rightly be addressed by academia. But academia remains silent.

Its fine minds have not accorded the matter the attention it deserves and the field is thus relatively unknown to scholars.

Had they followed the development of land policy, had they built up a body of research on which ILC decisions could be based, the state's land regime would not be in crisis today.

The issue opens with three articles which directly or indirectly treat the above subject:

The first, by **Gideon Witkon**, director-general of Real Estate Participation in Israel Ltd. deals with **The Preservation of Agricultural Land in Decisions of the Israel Lands Administration**. The author argues that it is time for a re-examination of this principle, which has been one of the cornerstones of Israel's planning policy.

In the second article, **Decision No. 533 /611 of the Israel Lands Council**, engineer and surveyor **Zeev Cohen** analyzes Decision No. 533 (which was rescinded) and