

Editorial

Crisis continues to grip Israel's land policy. Decisions and amendments are being made affecting the allocation and leasing conditions of national land and loosening the foundations of the country's land regime.

Deviating from formally approved guidelines, land policy proposals are being raised that defy existing laws, as well as the 1961 Covenant concluded between the Government and the Jewish National Fund, and sanctioned by the World Zionist Organization. The crisis is further compounded by petitions to the Supreme Court to overturn previous decisions. The situation is fraught with uncertainty and leaseholders are losing faith in their contracts, fearing that their original spirit will not be upheld. Settlers are apprehensive about the future expropriation of land granted to them and their descendants for generations. This has given rise to forceful demands to change the leasing conditions and privatize the land.

No one disputes the fact that after almost a century of national land management, it is high time for a thorough review of its regulations, procedures and, especially, its performance. Such a review must be undertaken by authorized, professional parties at no lesser level than that of the 1963 State Commission; the inquiries and recommendations of that Commission resulted in the hitherto binding decisions on Israel land policy taken by the National Lands Council on May 17, 1965 and ratified by the Government in Resolution No. 489 of May 23, 1965.

One must, however, emphasize that not everything created a hundred years ago is to be discarded. Certain arrangements continue to serve man for decades, essentially unchanged, despite the spiralling rate of technological innovation. This is particularly true when it comes to values, retaining, as they do, their vitality for thousands of years.

In view of the abovementioned developments, the Land-Use Research Institute, publisher of **Karka**, saw it as its duty to contribute its modest share to finding a way out of the land crisis. Thus, within the framework of its Land Policy Discussion Group, it devoted a series of sessions to lectures and discussions on land management policy alternatives in Israel. This material, reproduced as a Forum publication, supplements the current issue of **Karka**.



The current issue opens with two articles on the preservation of agricultural land, one of the foci of the land policy crisis.