



The disease ridden style of sewage disposal found in most West Bank and Gaza Strip refugee camps/SF photo

to make him agree to declare himself the saviour of the Maronite population. Then the Israeli army will enter Lebanon, will occupy the necessary territory and will create a Christian regime which will ally itself with Israel. The territory from the Litani southwards will be totally annexed by Israel» (from «Israel's Sacred Terrorism» by Livia Rokach). The creation of the Haddad - now the Lahad - militia was the first step in the realization of that idea, the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the fulfillment, though 'Israel' did not succeed in creating its allied Christian regime in Lebanon. 1983 was flooded with eyewitness reports stating Israeli attempts to make use of the Litani waters. As usual, UNIFIL forces were prevented from confirming or denying the reports, as Saad Haddad had denied them passage to the area, because 'Israel' had declared the Khar-dali area a «military zone» and blocked all civilian access to it.

Any connection to the recent Israeli fencing of the Wazzani/Hasbani rivers? It would be possible to divert the Hasbani river and so also the Wazzani into the Litani, and with a bit of work divert the Litani river waters into 'Israel'. And as Reuters stated, the Israelis had made engineering work which seemed to aim directly to «another river». If the Israelis lack any scruples about international laws, this could easily be done. So far Israeli politics have not been marked by any scruples in this respect.

'Israel' has jumped quickly and boldly from one Arab river to the next implementing their «water sharing policy» as they call it as quickly as possible.

Consequences of Israeli «water sharing»

It is impossible to cover all the consequences of Israeli so-called water sharing even in a fairly large book, the subject is apt for a doctorate thesis. Even when using the West Bank as an example, we are far from covering the topic, we are just giving a few examples. Israeli policy is designed to ensure water for the Israeli settlements. «The Arabs in Judea and Samaria will not get more water than they have today», Moshe Dayan remarked in the course of negotiations with the US over Israeli «autonomy» proposals. Water Commissioner Ben-Meir has insisted that even joint administration of the West Bank water under «autonomy» is not enough. 'Israel', he maintains, must retain sole control over water sources and even have a say in any Arab immigration to the West Bank. Virtually no deep drilling is permitted to the Palestinians there, and the deep drilling of the Israeli authorities dries up the wells of the Palestinians. Since the occupation 12 Palestinian irrigation wells have run dry, while many others, especially in the Jordan Valley, are plagued by a declining water table and increased salinity. Since the occupation began, not a single Palestinian village has received permission to drill a well for irrigation. Irrigation wells have been metered and stiff fines imposed on Palestinians who exceed posted limits. Settlements are of course not restricted. Early in the occupation the Israeli army destroyed some 140 Palestinian water pumps in the Zor strip along the Jordan River. When the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) program offered to replace dirty canals with pipes in one area in order to double the efficiency of water use, permission was refused. In the Jordan Valley the Israeli water plan calls for an eventual total of 36 wells which will extract half of the available ground water in the eastern drainage for the 23 settlements. This at a time where the several thousand Palestinian inhabitants are threatened by ever dwindling water supplies.

Statistics don't bleed, but people do. Lack of running water in the Palestinian villages is a major reason for the high infant mortality of the Palestinian population in the West Bank (29.1% of 1000 live births). The lack of running water forces the population to cut water for washing the children and cleaning the food. The Palestinians depend largely on spring water, and local scientists have yielded results showing serious contamination in the sources of natural water. Palestinian health professionals charge the military government with not securing running water to most of the Palestinian villages and towns, while making it available for the new Jewish settlements constructed in the midst of Arab areas. Many Palestinians, faced with the situation of lacking even drinking water, can see Jewish settlers a few miles away happily swimming in modern swimming pools.

It is not a question of seeing the writing on the wall, the warning is engraved in the lived reality on the West Bank, Gaza and Golan, and the Israelis do not at all seem to want to treat the population of South Lebanon any better than they have treated the Palestinians and Syrians. There can be little doubt that the only way of securing Lebanese waters is to throw the Israelis out. Hence the armed struggle and resistance must continue in order that the people and their resources can be freed from Zionist exploitation and occupation.

Additional sources:

Joe Storke, «Water and Israel's Occupation Strategy», MERIP Report, July-August 1983.

John Cooley, «The Hydraulic Imperative», Al Fajr, August 5, 1983.