
”Evacuation – compensation” - The Baha’i’s settlement at Al-Samra between 1948-1951

Shay Rozen*¹

¹Department of Land of Israel Studies, – Israël

Résumé

The relationship between the state of Israel and the Baha’i community in Israel and the Baha’i World Center (the global leadership center of the Bahai religion based in Haifa) is a thrilling story of the relations between government and a religious community under its charge. This relationship is reflected, among other things, by the issue of ownership of plots of land and settlement that have a strategic importance.

At my lecture I will review the processes and measures taken by the State of Israel to transfer the ownership of the land owned by members of the Baha’i community in Al-Samra village in the Jordan Valley after the 1948 War (War of Independence).

Unlike other Arab villages within Israel, the lands of the village of Al-Samra were owned by members of the Baha’i community. This community advocated multi-religious existence, opposed the national struggles and showed a neutral position in the war, and therefore placed special case to the Israeli authorities. The State of Israel preferred Therefore, to buy the village lands from their owners and compensate part of the tenant farmers who lived in the village. However, the state responded firmly against villagers who refused to leave in return for compensation.

The lecture will examine the chain of events and processes in which the lands of Al-Samra, owned by members of the Baha’i community, was transferred to the State of Israel and the deferent ways the Israeli government treat the various landowners and tenants against the backdrop of the relationship between Israel and Syria and the debate about the demilitarized areas.

*Intervenant