

"IL GIARDINO DI TEODOLINDA": AN ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUE

"Teodolinda's Garden" is the latest luxury residential development in Perledo (LC). According to the official website, the development overlooks the so-called "Golden Triangle" of Lake Como – the most iconic and picturesque area of the central lake, nestled between the villages of Bellagio, Varenna and Menaggio.

The development covers approximately 9,000 square metres, with 6,500 square metres spread across two plots, and comprises around 40 residential units with private terraces or gardens, an outdoor swimming pool, BBQ areas and parking spaces.

The project's architects are **Arturo Montanelli, Emanuele Colombi and Yehiel Tsubery.**

Yehiel Tsubery was born in the illegitimate state of Israel in 1977; he studied at the Polytechnic University of Milan and has carried out numerous projects in the lands of historic Palestine, which were wrested from the Palestinian people and are illegitimately occupied by Israel.

His projects include:

- a 20,000-square-metre shopping centre in Mevaki'im, a moshav (Jewish agricultural settlement) near Ashkelon, an area just a few kilometres from the Gaza Strip. The moshav was founded in 1949 as a kibbutz by demobilised soldiers from the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) who had immigrated from Hungary, on land that belonged to the Palestinian village of Barbara. Barbara was to be included as part of the Arab state under the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, but its inhabitants were forcibly expelled by Zionist forces in 1948. After the war, the Israeli government prohibited the Palestinian residents from returning.
- a 12,000-square-metre commercial area in Modiin, a Haredi Jewish-Israeli settlement in the West Bank, situated halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Built on the land of five Palestinian villages (Ni'lin, Kharbata, Saffa, Bil'in and Dir Qadis).
- a 40,000-square-metre educational complex in Or Yehuda, a town situated in the Tel Aviv district, in the central region of the country. Founded in 1949 (the year following the Nakba) as a ma'abara, that is, a temporary reception camp for Jews who had recently immigrated to Israel. At the end of April 1948, the Haganah (a Zionist paramilitary organisation) launched Operation Hametz, a military operation aimed at capturing several villages in the hinterland of Jaffa in order to isolate it from the rest of the Arab world. The fate of the inhabitants was not made clear, apart from the promise that they would be allowed to leave their homes, but a general order called for the 'cleansing of the area' (tihur hashetah) and the villages of Kafr 'Ana and Saqiya were depopulated.
- a 19,000-square-metre residential and commercial complex in Ramat Beit Shemesh, 35 minutes from Jerusalem, inhabited largely by immigrants from English-speaking countries.
- the main transport building in Jerusalem (originally Al-Quds), covering 80,000 square metres.
- a commercial building in Ness Ziona; within the city limits lie the ruins of the Arab village of Sarafand al-Kharab, which was depopulated in 1948.

As staunch anti-Zionists, we cannot tolerate the mountains being sold and inhabited by Israelis guilty of apartheid, ethnic cleansing and genocide. The Lario region is, alas, no stranger to the presence of IOF (Israeli Occupation Forces) soldiers, who often retreat here on holiday to recover from the massacres, or of people who simply choose to emigrate. According to figures presented to the Knesset, as early as 2023, 82,800 Israelis had left the country, a figure that remained high in 2024 as well. During the same period, the number of returnees fell dramatically.

Italy, in general, is a popular destination: Sardinia, Puglia, Tuscany, Piedmont.

Israelis enjoy the immense privilege of global mobility: a passport (often two), the opportunity to buy a home wherever they wish, and to start a new life far from their own bombs in a country of their own choosing. These opportunities are not merely a matter of individual good fortune; they are the result of a violent, hierarchical system of domination that elevates some people whilst crushing others, and the consequence of a legal and political status that continues to be denied to Palestinians (and not only to them). It is not possible to leave Gaza freely, and even movement within the territory is monitored militarily and technologically: specific authorisations are required from the Zionist entity – the very same entity that perpetrates genocide and decides on the life and death of Palestinians.

Furthermore, on a global level, the Palestinian people are treated as a category to be examined, assessed, and authorised on a case-by-case basis, often with extremely long waiting times.

Yet, in the meantime, Israeli citizens, without any restrictions and whenever they wish, can buy a ticket, board a plane, arrive in Italy under escort and protection, go on holiday, buy houses and even obtain residency, as is the case in Valsesia (in Piedmont) with the 'Baita Project', which welcomes Israeli families fleeing the conflict (ironic, isn't it?). Or as is the case in Salento (Puglia), where the estate agency Coral 37 has launched the 'Israeli Colony in Salento' project, aimed at attracting investors to purchase land and property and create a self-sufficient community (it almost sounds like a kibbutz). Or again in Sardinia, where numerous army reservists and their families, escorted by a massive deployment of law enforcement officers, are passing through the airports of Alghero, Olbia (bound for five-star resorts in Gallura) and Cagliari-Elmas (heading for the Forte Village Resort in Santa Margherita di Pula). Many of these destinations are inaccessible to the general public due to exorbitant costs, whilst they are more than willing to facilitate the 'relaxation' of those who are massacring the Palestinian, Lebanese and Iranian peoples.

Furthermore, as if this were not already enough to provoke outrage and firm opposition to the construction of the 'Il Giardino di Teodolinda' project, we denounce yet another act of defacement of the landscape. Following the mobilisation against the Winter Olympics, against funding for low-altitude ski resorts, and against overtourism which takes away homes and makes the area unliveable, we are now also mobilising against the 'Il giardino di Teodolinda' project.

Because we recognise the rampant speculation surrounding the lake and the mountains, and we can see the environmental and territorial risks involved.

- **hydrogeological risk:** the Perledo area is prone to landslides and rockfalls. Heavy rainfall has caused road subsidence and poses a risk of further collapses in areas such as the Masna Valley. A 9,000 m² development on a steep hillside could exacerbate these risks. Indeed, the area had previously been designated as a no-build zone, and previous building applications had been blocked. Why not this time?
- **landscape and land use:** once again, we are witnessing the reckless use of mountain terrain for the construction of architectural monstrosities.
- **an increase in overtourism,** with consequent negative impacts on quality of life and environmental sustainability.
- **disconnect from the real economy:** as with many projects of this scale, the wealth it is set to generate will in no way benefit the Lecco area; it will remain in the hands of a few wealthy entrepreneurs.
- **risk of the 'amusement park' effect:** an area of great natural and cultural value is being transformed into an amusement park for a privileged few.

The mountains are not spaces to be ravaged.

The valleys are not commodities for colonisers.

Lake Como will not be the resort of Zionism.

Those who bomb and commit genocide will never find peace on the shores of lakes, on the slopes of mountains, in cities, or on coastlines. They will not be welcome anywhere.

We do not wish to be complicit in the massacres in Palestine, Lebanon and Iran, nor do we wish to host the Israeli occupying forces taking a break from genocide.

Perhaps they will claim that God has promised them Italy and Lake Como?

The 'Golden Triangle' will not be the new Promised Land. There is no promised land, neither here nor anywhere else.

Solidarity with the Palestinian people and with all peoples oppressed by colonialism and imperialism.

Barricades against luxury speculation.

Israel out of Palestine. Israeli Zionists out of Italy.

Being outraged and expressing solidarity is not enough.

We need to take a clear stand; we need a united and cohesive popular front.

Let us stand ready to mobilise.

From the river to the sea.

From the Lake to Palestine

