

Yehoshua Ben-Arieh

**The Making of Eretz Israel in the Modern Era**



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# **The Making of Eretz Israel in the Modern Era**



A Historical-Geographical Study (1799–1949)

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כיצד נוצרה ארץ-ישראל בעת ההדשה 1799–1949

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*For my wife and children, Ze'ev, Asher, and Orit and their families*

The Balfour Declaration was the turning point in the 150-year process of the making of Eretz Israel and the establishment of the State of Israel.

FOREIGN OFFICE,

November 2, 1917.

DEAR LORD ROTHSCHILD,—I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government the following Declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet:

**"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."**

I should be grateful if you would bring this Declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

Text of the Balfour Declaration in English (left) and Hebrew (below) as published in early 1918 by the London Bureau of the Zionist Organization. In the Hebrew version "Palestine" is translated as "Eretz Israel."

לשבת הענינים החצונים, ב' נובמבר, 1917.

רכבוד לורד רוטשילד.

בעונג רב הנני מוסר לך בשם ממשלת הוד מלכותו גלוי־דעת זה שלמטה, על דבר התיחסותה ברצון אל השאיפות הציוניות של היהודים — אשר הוצע לפני ועד הממשלה ונתאשר על ידו.

„ממשלת הוד מלכותו מביטה בעין יפה על יסוד מקלט לאומי (National Home) לעם ישראל בארץ ישראל ובמיטב כחותיה תתאמץ להקל השגת המטרה הזאת, אך בתנאי ברור ומפרש, שלא יעשה שום דבר העלול להזיק לזכויותיהן האזרחיות והדתיות של הכנסיות הבלתי־יהודיות אשר בארץ ישראל או לזכויותיהם ומעמדם המדיני של היהודים באיזו ארץ אחרת.”

אודך אם תואיל להודיע גלוי־דעת זה לפדרציה הציונית,

שלך באמוין־לב,

(על התחום) ארתור גיימס בלפור.



The four sancaks and main towns of Ottoman Palestine in relation to the borders of the Mandate (without the Negev).

## Preface

The aim of this book is to trace the making of a new geographical-political entity in the Middle East at the beginning of the modern era. The time frame of this study runs from Napoleon's invasion of Eretz Israel / Palestine in 1799 to 1948–1949, the years in which the State of Israel was established.

During the period of Ottoman rule the territory that would in time be called Eretz Israel / Palestine was not a separate political unit. In the administrative scheme of the Ottoman Empire it was divided up between several vilayets and sancaks. Moreover, the Muslims residing in the country at the time did not consider themselves a unique identity, but rather as part of the larger Arab population of the empire.

The Arab and Muslim nations began referring to the country as Falastin only after the beginning of the Mandate period, when the British officially called it Palestine. On the other hand, Christians, who already showed increasingly growing interest in this holy land in the nineteenth century, adopted the outlook – which was not new – that there was something unique about the territory known as Terra Sancta, the Holy Land. In addition, it was also referred to as “Palestine,” a historical name stemming from the name of the Roman province of Palaestina. Though Palestine was commonly used in diverse European languages for many centuries, it, too, did not refer to a clearly defined geographical territory.

Among the Jews the most widespread name for the country at the beginning of the nineteenth century was “Eretz Hakodesh” (the Holy Land). Use of “Eretz Israel” increased only after the beginning of Zionist activity, and more so after the Balfour Declaration.

“Eretz Israel” as the official name of a separate geographical territory in the modern era first appeared in the early translations into Hebrew of the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, while in the original document the country was referred to as “Palestine.” Its boundaries were not defined in the Declaration, nor its expanse or size. Furthermore, these were also not specified in the official document conferring the Mandate for Palestine on Britain, which included the verbatim text of the Balfour Declaration.

The territorial delimitation of Eretz Israel / Palestine began during the term of the first British High Commissioner for Palestine Herbert Samuel. It was also then, shortly after his arrival, that the Hebrew abbreviation for Eretz Israel comprised of the letters *alef* and *yod* in parentheses was formally introduced after the Hebrew transliteration of “Palestine” instead of the full name “Eretz Israel.”

\*

The thought of writing this book first came to me when I continued to give an annual course in the Department of Geography of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, after my retirement. In that course I chose to deal with the historical geography of Eretz Israel from the start of the modern era in it, at the beginning of

the nineteenth century, until the establishment of the State of Israel in the mid-twentieth century.

The choice of this theme was rooted in my own academic career. While studying at the university, towards the end of 1952 I joined the staff of the History Branch of the Israel Defense Forces which had been charged with preparing a first comprehensive history of Israel's War of Independence. Later, when I began teaching Historical Geography in the Department of Geography, I focused on the nineteenth century and then moved on to the British Mandate period. It was only natural that I felt I was closing a full circle by summing up what I had learned about the beginning of the modern era in Eretz Israel.

In this course I divided the lectures into two sub-periods: the late Ottoman period and that of the British Mandate. It was comprised of six lectures for each period, twelve in all. Due to the limited time at my disposal, I focused only on subjects which I considered to be especially significant. I gave this course year after year over a decade between the academic years 2008/9 and 2017/18.

This book follows the plan of the course, but differs from it in content and scope, since limited classroom time did not allow going into the entire subject in the manner I have done in the book. My choice of the subject matter of each chapter, including its sub-sections, is the result of my lengthy research and understanding of the period under study.

In writing the book I set myself four major objectives:

- (A) To provide a general *overview* of the formation of a new entity in the Middle East that emerged during a period of 150 years (1799–1949), from Napoleon's invasion of the region to the establishment of the State of Israel. This overview is presented basically from a historical-geographical perspective
- (B) To reveal *the history that lies behind the entity* with which I shall deal. Historical Geography, as a discipline, today acknowledges – at least regarding the modern era – that what is most important in it is the influence of man and society on the geographical landscape. The evidence and the sources are historical, while the objective is geographical: to trace the changes undergone during a certain historical period. Any landscape underwent development in stages. What happened in one stage continued to influence developments in later ones. When we deal with a lengthy period of time, we must learn about the different stages throughout the entire period. Since the goal is to explain what happened to the landscape of the past, obviously we cannot rely only on what can be seen today. From the moment a geographer asks, in one way or another, why a landscape is as he sees it, he sets out on historical-geographical research.
- (C) To conduct *an integrative study*. The subject of my study in historical geography is Eretz Israel, where several factors were active, each by itself and all of them together, which caused the changes and transformations that the country underwent. It therefore stands to reason that it is the interaction – the mutual

interrelationships and influences – of all these factors that will present us with a full picture of the developments in this specific territorial unit. In Eretz Israel, these factors were the Jewish community and the Zionist movement, the local Arab population and society and those in neighboring countries, Ottoman and British rule, and more.

- (D) To present *the significant role of Jerusalem* in developments throughout Eretz Israel during the period under study. At the beginning of the modern era, cities in Eretz Israel were small and the entire country was underdeveloped. Only Jerusalem had a unique status as the city holy to the three monotheistic faiths. During the nineteenth century, Eretz Israel was the scene of many important changes, most of which transpired in Jerusalem. Moreover, things that occurred throughout the country were increasingly connected to this holy city. Thus, discussion of developments in Jerusalem can clarify and explain much of what happened in Eretz Israel during the period covered by this book. Let it be clear, however, that I have no intention to deal with all topics connected with this unique city, whether in the final stages of Ottoman rule or during the British Mandate period, about which much has been written and published. Jerusalem will be discussed in the context of the overall framework of my book: the process by which a geographic entity known as Eretz Israel came about.

The 150 years that are the frame of time for this study have been the subject of much research and descriptive literature that continues to be produced to this day: literally many hundreds of books and thousands of articles. But as my book is an attempt to sum up and explain a lengthy process it was necessary to deal only briefly with many subjects during the years specified above. Since I only briefly mention others about which I chose not to go into great detail, I have added many footnotes that refer the reader to the articles and books I consulted during my research. The notes often clarify matters only partly explained in the text or not at all, sometimes with references to other, fairly similar, topics not dealt with in the book.

A Hebrew version of this book was recently published. In content, analysis, and conclusions the books are identical, the difference between them lying primarily in the bibliography and the footnotes. A great number of Hebrew articles and books have appeared in English versions; there are also a few relevant books originally written in English that have been translated into Hebrew. While sources in Hebrew have obviously been given precedence in the Hebrew edition, in the present volume an effort has been made to refer to translations or original works in English, some of which parallel the Hebrew studies. Hebrew articles and books for which no substitute could be found are cited by an English translation of their title with the addition of (Hebrew). The “Select Bibliography” includes all items referred to at least twice throughout the book, and a selection of items which appear only once. All books and articles are provided with full bibliographical details at their first – sometimes only – citation in the footnotes. Another difference between the two



books is that some of the local geographical details important for the Hebrew reader well acquainted with Eretz Israel have been deleted in the English version.

At the end of each chapter the text is supplemented by pictures of leading personalities mentioned in the book. Most are reproduced from the Photo Archives of Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi in Jerusalem, or from publications of this institution.

When presenting the various subjects dealt with in my study, I chose not to deal with them in the framework of any broad social theory or to compare them to those in other countries. I preferred to focus on the unique case of Eretz Israel in this specific period of time. Those 150 years have been divided into sub-periods, each marked by its own distinctive characteristics, but also influenced by that which preceded it. It is the combination of them all that produced what I believe to be the true broad picture that it is my intention to present to the reader. I believe that this is perhaps a first and even bold endeavor in the field of research in which I am engaged to recount, in one study, what happened during a lengthy and decisive period in the history of Eretz Israel in the modern era. I can only hope that I have successfully done so.

Since many topics in the book are relevant to present-day issues, dealing with them also contributes to arouse interest in these issues and adds to our knowledge of them. However, the reader should be wary of falling into the trap of anachronisms and to extrapolate from the present on historical events of the past. Similarly, we must also be careful not to deduce from what happened in the past to the present, for things have changed greatly over the years. Despite all this, there is no doubt in my mind that the past can teach us much about the present and influence our thinking about the future.

Another point I want to raise is possible criticism that may be leveled by scholars of this historical period. In this study I have focused primarily on the Jewish side, and within it on those adhering to Zionism. My analyses of other subjects such as, for example, Jewish relations with the Palestinian Arabs, the Ottomans, or the British, concentrate mostly on their support of or opposition to Zionist aspirations and activity during the period under discussion. I consciously chose to do so, for my objective, as noted in the first lines of this preface, is to trace the emergence of that new geographical-political entity that became Eretz Israel, in parts of which the State of Israel was later established. Had the Zionist movement not arisen, it is doubtful whether the development to which I have devoted this study would have occurred at all. The motivating force behind that process is without doubt the Jewish Zionist element. That explains why Jews are the major protagonists in my book, and there is no academic justification in this case to ask whether Zionism was a triumph of justice, or not. The process I have detailed in this book was the most important historical-geographical development in and around Eretz Israel during the period I have chosen to study. This also explains why I used the name Eretz Israel in the book's title and on many occasions throughout the chapters.



I take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues, friends, and acquaintances whose important research served me during the writing of the book. I extend my apologies to many others who researched and published works relevant to the period under discussion and to the topics with which I dealt, but to whose studies I have not referred in the notes. It was simply impossible to include all information within the limitations imposed by a book intended to provide an overall view of a lengthy period of time.

In the preface to the Hebrew edition I thanked many friends and colleagues who read parts of the manuscript and assisted me with their important comments. At times, I also noted such assistance in the footnotes. I especially thank my friend Yohai Goell who agreed to join me in preparing the English edition by locating translations of the Hebrew sources cited in the Hebrew volume, or parallel studies in English, and style edited the text. I am very much indebted to Orly Bruck who is responsible for the translation into English.

My thanks go also to the library of Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, whose collections include much important material on the history of Eretz Israel, and to the Ben-Zvi Photo Archives, whose holdings are constantly expanding, and its devoted volunteer, Yehuda Ahi-Miriam, who prepared the inserts of illustrations and maps.

Last, but not least, I wish to thank the three important academic publishers who jointly agreed to publish this book – De Gruyter Oldenbourg, the Magnes Press of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi – and their directors and staffs. Finally, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the private individuals and public institutions who supported the publication of this volume.

To all, my heartfelt thanks.

Jerusalem, March 2020

Yehoshua Ben-Arieh



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**Part One: The late Ottoman period 1799–1917/18**



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## Chapter 1: When did the modern era begin in Eretz Israel?

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## Three concepts and their rationales

A division into historical periods is a methodological division determined in retrospect by scholars studying and researching the past. Such a division should be justified and elucidated by significant foundational events which mark the beginning and end of each period, including its sub-periods. The early modern period, on which I have chosen to focus this geographical-historical study, should likewise be exemplified by the elements and events that brought about its beginning and end. The terminus ad quem I have chosen is obvious, the establishment of the State of Israel during the period of its War of Independence. The last chapter of this study will be devoted to that subject. However, there are several opinions regarding the start of the modern era in Palestine/Eretz Israel. There is no consensus among scholars of Middle Eastern history regarding them. Three main concepts prevail.

Before discussing the differences between the concepts, we should note that the beginning of a certain era may have a different timeframe in different areas of the world. The dawn of the modern era in the Middle East as a whole is not in keeping with the beginning of that period, as is nowadays accepted, in the countries of Europe, for example. The events that led to the development of the modern era in the Middle East were different from those in western Europe.

### First concept: The Napoleonic invasion

This viewpoint perceives of the external Western changes that began infiltrating the Ottoman space, including the Holy Land, as the determining factor that brought on the beginning of the modern era in the region. It points to the Napoleonic invasion of the Middle East as the foundational event that marks the actual starting point. In the case of the Holy Land, this occurred in 1799. Regarding the reasons for Napoleon's invasion, there is no doubt it was connected to the conflict between France and Britain, on land and sea, at the end of the eighteenth century. The military campaign against Egypt in May 1798 was not solely the result of the personal and strategic initiative of the great commander, but also a reflection of the long-term French tendencies and plans to gain a foothold in the region, accompanied by influence and power, with the aim of using it to usurp the British-held positions. The French saw the Levant, Egypt first and foremost, as a natural passage-way to India, through which they hoped to renew their hold in the area and put an end to the British rule which had caused its loss.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For French aspirations to undermine British interests in the Middle East so as to gain control of the routes to India, and how this ties in with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, see Eliahu Elath: *British Projects in 1834–1872 for Linking the Mediterranean with the Persian Gulf* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971), 25–33 (Hebrew). In the present volume, I have no intention to go into all the

With regards to Egypt, it is widely acknowledged that the Napoleonic invasion marked the start of the modern era in that country.<sup>2</sup> The important scholar of Egypt, P.J. Vatikiotis, notes some of the innovations introduced into Egypt by French rule, among them the establishment of a scientific institute. There were four sections in the Institute: Mathematics, Physical and Natural Sciences, Political Economy, Literature and the Arts. The Institute was required to publish the findings of its studies every three months. Over the course of the short-lived French presence in Egypt, important studies were conducted in a variety of areas: fuel, water energy, and the raw materials available in the country from which gunpowder could be produced. Additional studies were conducted on legislation, civil and penal jurisdiction, the state of education and its possible reform. Plans were drawn up for agricultural development, such as viticulture and wheat crops and drilling for water in the desert. The Institute set up laboratories for chemical and physical experiments and initiated archaeological excavations. Topographical and other maps of the Nile country, its canals and banks were drawn at the Institute. Animal and plant life were studied as well as available minerals, the geological formations of the soil, oases and lakes. An Arabic printing press was established and official journalism was founded, beginning with the publication of a political journal and a scientific and economic monthly.<sup>3</sup>

During the French sojourn in Egypt, the “Rosetta Stone” was also discovered, which paved the way for deciphering the Egyptian hieroglyphs. There were additional important archaeological finds as well, and Egypt became a focus of attention for scholars of antiquities, antiquarians, and famous architects. Tours arranged for European royalty and the wealthy began arriving in the East, with Egypt and the pyramids serving as their main focal point.<sup>4</sup>

An interesting idea raised during Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt was the digging of a water channel that would turn the overland route between the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Suez into a sea lane, thus totally transforming the route connecting Europe to India and the Far East. However, the corps of engineers and geographers charged with examining and planning this passage made a grave mistake. According to their measurements there was a substantial difference between the sea level of the Mediterranean and that of the Gulf of Suez, to such an extent that should a connecting channel between the two seas be dug, it

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details of Napoleon’s military campaign in the East, about which much has been published. In what follows I shall focus on topics that have bearing on the overall objective of the present work.

<sup>2</sup> Shimon Shamir, *A History of the Arabs in the Middle East in the Modern Period* (Tel Aviv: Reshafim, 1974), 19–34 (Hebrew). It is customary to consider Napoleon’s invasion as a turning point not only in the history of Egypt but of the entire Middle East.

<sup>3</sup> P.J. Vatikiotis, *The Modern History of Egypt* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 39–40.

<sup>4</sup> Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997), 36–38. About the painting on the cover of the present book, see *ibid.*, 24.

might well be that the waters would burst forth and flood the Nile delta, even endangering the city of Cairo itself.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps this conclusion also constituted one of Napoleon's considerations in invading the Levant, with the intention of examining another option for connecting the Mediterranean to the Euphrates River as an alternative route to India and the East. The subject of a canal became one of the heated topics of debate between engineers throughout the world in the first decades of the nineteenth century until, later in that century, the renowned engineer Francis Rawdon Chesney, by measurements he conducted himself, proved the error made by Napoleon's engineers. He elucidated what every child now knows, that sea level all around the world is the same, and a water canal between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Suez would not entail any danger of flooding. As a result, practical plans for the construction of the channel were initiated in 1859 lasting for ten years and directed by French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps. At the inauguration ceremony, de Lesseps did not forget to mention Chesney's important contribution to the construction of the canal.<sup>6</sup>

With regard to our discussion, the main question that remains open is whether Napoleon's invasion constitutes the opening of the modern era in the Levant, or was the beginning of that period delayed there until the campaign of Muhammad 'Ali. There are those who believe, as stated above, that Napoleon aspired to continue from here to Mesopotamia and India since at the time it was believed to be a possible route for reaching the desired destination. There are others who claim he was only chasing the Egyptian forces who fought against his invasion, some of whom retreated into the Holy Land, and that he later aspired to reach Istanbul to defeat Turkey and from there to return to Europe. It is important to remember that Turkey declared war on France in September 1798, after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and in response to it, and even requested British assistance.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, Napoleon remained in the Holy Land for only five months. He never got to Jerusalem at all. He stayed at a monastery in Ramle, a few short hours ride on horseback to the Holy City, but never

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5 Elath, *British Projects*, 50–51. It is quite surprising that Napoleon's engineers made such a mistake, but we should bear in mind that geographical knowledge of the Middle East was almost negligible at the time; see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), 11–17.

6 Elath, *British Projects*, 50–51. For a detailed analysis of Francis Rawdon Chesney and his measurements, see Haim Goren, *Dead Sea Level: Science, Exploration, and Imperial Interests in the Near East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), esp. 43–44. For Napoleon's intention to dig the channel and French interest in such a project since Louis XIV, see Haggai Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction to the Modern History of the Middle East*, 5 vols. (Tel Aviv: The Open University, 1987–1991), 1:191–92, 217–18 (Hebrew).

7 Vatikiotis, *Modern History of Egypt*, 39. For Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and the marching orders given him by the Directoire, see Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction* 1:96–116; for his letters relating to Egypt, see *ibid.*, 1:167–69. For the siege of Acre, see Nathan Schur, *Napoleon in the Holy Land* (London: Greenhill, 1999), 80–89, 122–50.

made it there, apparently because it held no attraction for him.<sup>8</sup> His arrival in Palestine was not as a Christian pilgrim, and the holy sites were not his objective. From Ramle he advanced north. He fought in the Galilee, mounted a siege against Acre, and then retreated after failing to conquer it. He returned to Egypt through Jaffa, and from there back to France. French forces remained in Egypt for another eighteen months until the British and Ottomans attacked them in May 1801. Finally, in August 1801, the remaining French forces in Egypt surrendered and left, thus ending French rule in Egypt which had lasted for about three years.<sup>9</sup>

Despite Napoleon's short stay and operations in the Holy Land, many researchers are of the opinion that the Napoleonic invasion of it should be viewed as the beginning of the modern era in that country. This because the invasion was an important event that heralded an awakening throughout the Middle East, dormant for hundreds of years, and brought about significant political and cultural developments that constitute the start of the modern era in the Holy Land as well.<sup>10</sup>

Supporters of this hypothesis also claim that the Egyptian invasion of the country, the subsequent Egyptian rule, and the ensuing reforms in the Ottoman constitution are all the result of the French invasion and conquest throughout the region. The ensuing conquest by Muhammad 'Ali, the founder of modern Egypt, also derived from the strong French influence that continued in Egypt after Napoleon's withdrawal. The Egyptian ruler was a protégé of French culture. Many officers in his army were French officers who helped him establish his state, and some even converted to Islam for the purpose. The excavation of the Suez Canal was also a concept raised during the Napoleonic period, and French engineers and geographers were in charge of it. Thus, subsequent events in the Ottoman Empire and the reforms in its constitution should be seen as fruits of the European intervention. Turkey became the "Sick Man upon the Bosphorus," and survived as such until the First World War, due solely to the competition between the Western powers for dominance over the country and over events in the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, the turning point marking the beginning of the modern era in the Middle East as a

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**8** In his book, *Korot ha-itim li-Yeshurun be-Eretz Yisrael* (Events of the Times of Jeshurun in Eretz Israel; 1839), Menahem Mendel of Kamenetz wrote that Napoleon reached Jerusalem and it was his artillery that damaged Absalom's Tomb in the Kidron Valley, but this information is incorrect. For the author and his book, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 104.

**9** I shall deal with the connection between Napoleon's invasion of the Holy Land and the idea of the "Restoration of the Jews," as reflected in Jewish historiography, later in this chapter. For the view that Napoleon's invasion marked the beginning of the modern era in Palestine, culminating in the establishment of the State of Israel, see also Thomas A. Idinopulos, *Weathered by Miracles: A History of Palestine from Bonaparte and Muhammad Ali to Ben-Gurion and the Mufti* (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1998).

**10** During the campaign in the Holy Land, a corps of French geographers and engineers drew a series of maps known as "Jacotin's Map." These were the first measured maps of the country, which differ in their degree of accuracy for its various regions. On the maps, and the atlas in which they were later collected, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 21–24, including part of one map.

whole started with the Napoleonic invasion, in whose wake came the beginning of European intervention which brought about significant changes in the character of Ottoman rule throughout the region, including the Holy Land.

### **Second concept: The Egyptian conquest of Muhammad 'Ali and the reforms in the Ottoman constitution**

According to this viewpoint, the Egyptian invasion and the reforms in the Ottoman constitution mark the beginning of the modern era in the Holy Land. Events and changes in the country during the nineteenth century greatly influenced the constitution and the character of Ottoman rule in the region to such an extent that they began a new era. According to this conception, the Napoleonic invasion and Napoleon's short sojourn were not a determining factor for the Holy Land. The continued rule of the country by the Ottoman pashas proves that no actual change occurred. Thus, the foundational events of the modern era in that area were its conquest in 1831 by Muhammad 'Ali, and his advance into Syria and Turkey with the aim of replacing the Ottoman ruler in his capital, Istanbul. According to the pact signed at the time, Syria and Palestine were included in the areas controlled by Muhammad 'Ali for a period of ten years (1831–1840). At the end of the period, in 1839, liberal reforms (the Tanzimat) were implemented in the Ottoman constitution. Upon the reconquest of Syria and Palestine by the Ottoman forces in 1840 with the support of a number of Western powers, mainly Britain, Egyptian rule was pushed back to the Egyptian borders. Subsequently, Ottoman reforms were applied to the reconquered area.<sup>11</sup>

### **Third concept: The turning point in Jewish aliyah: the Hassidim and the Perushim, or the First Aliyah**

According to this concept, all is contingent on Jewish history. Scholars of the Jewish history of the Holy Land seek the start of the modern era in developments in the Jewish people regarding their attitude towards the land of their forefathers. Among them, there are those who view the aliyah of the convoy of Rabbi Judah he-Hasid, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, as the starting point of the modern era in the Holy Land on account of new motifs in what led to this aliyah, in addition to the religious motifs that brought Jews to come in previous

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<sup>11</sup> This concept is discussed in detail by Shimon Shamir, "Egyptian Rule (1832–1840) and the Beginning of the Modern Period in the History of Palestine," in *Egypt and Palestine: A Millenium of Association (868–1948)*, ed. Amnon Cohen and Gabriel Baer (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1984), 214–31.

immigrations.<sup>12</sup> Other scholars perceive the aliyah of the first Hassidim, in the second half of the eighteenth century, to be the harbinger of the modern era and identify a new interest of an ideological nature.<sup>13</sup> Still others see the aliyah to the Holy Land of disciples of “HaGra” (HaGaon Rabbenu Eliyahu) from Vilna in the early nineteenth century, also called “Perushim” or “Mitnagdim” (opponents of Hassidism) as the start of the modern era. These scholars identify new conceptions in this aliyah, including messianic ideas of great momentum that motivated continued immigration to the Holy Land, even in large numbers. These immigrants arrived in Jerusalem and established a Jewish community later known as the “Old Yishuv.” Therefore, it is maintained, their immigration should be viewed as the start of the modern era in the country.<sup>14</sup>

Yet many scholars of Jewish history do not accept these views and perceive the Hassidic aliyah to the Holy Land and that of the disciples of HaGra to be religious *aliyot* (pl. of aliyah), similar to previous Jewish aliyah to the Holy Land, with their unique characteristics but with no innovative Zionist ideas that can indicate a new historical period in the Holy Land. The modern era in the Holy Land, in their view, dates only from the start of the “First Aliyah” in the early 1880s. They believe nationalist motives for coming to Eretz Israel can be found only among the members of this aliyah, ideas absent from all previous Jewish aliyot that were motivated only by ties and affinity to the land of the forefathers. There are even Jewish researchers who go one step further and only view the establishment of Theodor Herzl’s political Zionist movement (1896), or even the Second Aliyah (which was an ideological aliyah, secular in part), as the beginning of the modern Zionist movement.<sup>15</sup>

## Summary

It appears, then, that the three concepts presented above are derived from the fields of study of scholars dealing with the history of that country, each according to his

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**12** This was the view expressed by Ben-Zion Dinur (Dinaburg) in several of his studies on the history of the Jews in Eretz Israel.

**13** That view is clearly stated by Mordechai Eliav, *Eretz Israel and Its Jewish Community in the Nineteenth Century, 1777–1917* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1978), xii–xiii (in the introduction) and in his discussion of the aliyah of the Hassidim, 75–84 (Hebrew).

**14** This is the view adopted, for example, by Arie Morgenstern, *The Return to Jerusalem: Jewish Resettlement of Eretz Israel 1800–1860* (Jerusalem: Shalem, 2007) (Hebrew); id., *Hastening Redemption: Messianism and the Resettlement of the Land of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

**15** During a research seminar conducted at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem many years ago and chaired by Prof. Shmuel Ettinger, one of the leading scholars of modern Jewish history, he surprised his listeners by stating that perhaps one should consider the Second Aliyah as the beginning of the modern age in Eretz Israel, for only it differed in character and ideology from those of earlier, religious, aliyot.

area of expertise. Scholars dealing with modern developments that began to occur in the progressive Western world attempt to discover when these developments also got underway in the Middle East. For them, the Napoleonic invasion, the penetration of Western powers, the establishment of the foreign consulates, the development of postal services, the telegraph, marine and land transportation, trains, medicine, changes in building methods, wardrobe, food, furnishings, lighting, and on and on – all these are important topics for research and study. They question when the changes began, from where they originated, who were the agents of change, how did they penetrate the country, and what was their degree of influence throughout the land and in its different regions.

In contrast, scholars dealing with the period of the Ottoman Empire – for example by studying its character, rule, and language – will conceive of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, up to the end of Ottoman rule, as part of the Ottoman period. Some of them even view the beginning of the Ottoman period in the sixteenth century as the start of the modern era. Nevertheless, they, too, will agree that Ottoman rule underwent many changes during the nineteenth century in comparison with the previous Ottoman centuries. Many of these scholars perceive of the Egyptian invasion of the Levant in the 1830s and the subsequent reforms enacted in the Ottoman constitution as the beginning of the change marking the start of the modern period in the Holy Land.

The third group of scholars who deal with the history of the Jewish people in the Holy Land and throughout the world seek the changes that brought about the start of the modern era in the Jewish realm – in traditional-religious Jewish society, Jewish movements, and in new Jewish ideas such as the Haskalah movement that began taking shape and developing in Europe and elsewhere. They also look to changes that began within Jewish society itself, in the first stages of Jewish aliyah to the Holy Land and the increase of its Jewish population. Accordingly, they attribute these changes and innovations to the Hassidic aliyah and that of the Perushim, to the instigators of the Haskalah movement, the harbingers of Zionism, and the conceptual development of the Zionist movement.

I believe that the right path to be followed, in terms of the geographical-historical approach, is a combination of the varied approaches that point to different factors which operated on and influenced the geographical landscape at a certain period of time. This method focuses *on the study of the country as a whole*, and not only on one of the factors operating within it at the time. The combination of influences exerted by diverse factors on developments and changes in a country is what creates the cultural landscape of that country.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> On my views about how to teach historical geography, focusing on the geographical aspect, see my articles “Historical Geography in Israel: Retrospect and Prospect,” in *Period and Place: Research Methods in Historical Geography*, ed. Alan H.R. Baker and Mark Billinge (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 3–9; “Introduction: The Basic Lines for Scientific



Thus, the Napoleonic invasion of the Holy Land in 1799, on the eve of the nineteenth century, will open my study, while additional factors that greatly influenced the geographical landscape of the country will be incorporated. This combination will assist in determining chronological sub-divisions of the period marking the early modern era (1799–1948) which spans about 150 years.

The first sub-division of this period, as I defined it, necessitates a division into two separate sub-periods. The first is the latter part of Ottoman rule, from 1799 until the British occupation of Palestine in 1917–1918, while the second is the duration of British rule, from the British conquest of the country until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. That division is also followed in this book.

In the first sub-period – the latter years of Ottoman rule – we should also distinguish between two separate sub-periods, the differentiator this time being the Jewish factor: the first Zionist aliyah in 1882. This is the most important change in the development of the country, so much so that at the time it overshadowed other factors, the Ottoman government, and the penetration of Western powers. Thus, it appears that within the first major subdivision one should distinguish between two additional ones as well: the first, the initial eighty years of the nineteenth century until the eve of the First Aliyah; and the second, the final thirty-five years of Ottoman rule in the Holy Land (1882–1917).

I shall also divide the first part of the latter period of Ottoman rule into five stages. Here too I shall refer to the various factors that influenced the landscape of the land that together created this division, according to the importance of their influence on the settlement and landscape of the country at every stage. After a general picture is presented of the five stages until the First Aliyah, I shall try to clarify two subjects which I believe should be dealt with separately, since they are much related to the history of the Jewish people and determined the changes in the geographical landscape of the country at that time. The first is the connection between the Napoleonic invasion of the Holy Land and the concept of the “Restoration of the Jews,” and the question whether they were dependent on events or just messianic visions and hopes. The second is the connection between the “Damascus Affair” in 1840 and later political-geographical developments in the Holy Land. Did the Affair influence its development, and if so, to what extent? I shall end with a short summary of my conclusions regarding the two subjects, conclusions that will influence the rest of this study.

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Research in Historical Geography,” in *A Land Reflected in Its Past: Studies in Historical Geography of Israel*, ed. Ran Aaronsohn and Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem: Magnes Press; Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2001), 1–31 (Hebrew).



## The first eighty years of the nineteenth century and their division into five stages

In this section I shall present a concise summary of the five stages of the first eighty years of the nineteenth century and discuss what changes occurred in each stage.<sup>17</sup> The five stages are: (a) Continuation of the rule of the Ottoman pashas, 1799–1831; (b) The period of Egyptian rule in the Levant, 1831–1840; (c) The early period of Ottoman reform (the Tanzimat) to the end of the Crimean War, 1839–1856; (d) The Ottoman reform period continued, and urban development until the opening of the Suez Canal, 1856–1869; (e) Western penetration, changes in transportation, the militarist and Templer settlements, until 1882.

### Continuation of the rule of the Ottoman pashas, 1799–1831

The first stage of Ottoman rule in the Holy Land in the nineteenth century begins with the Napoleonic invasion and continues until its complete conquest together with Syria by Muhammad 'Ali. This conquest instigated another important pivot point in the history of the country. This stage is very similar in character to the period of Ottoman rule as it had been for hundreds of years. Administratively, at the start of the nineteenth century the country was divided into two Ottoman provinces, also called *pashaliks* or *vilayets*. Provincial borders changed according to the military prowess of their rulers, but in general terms their boundaries were as follows: (a) the mountain area north of Nablus to the south of Hebron belonged to the province of Damascus; (b) the Galilee and the coastal plains were part of the province of Sidon; (c) most of the Negev in that period was part of the province of Hejaz until 1908, and then transferred to the vilayet of Syria al-Shams (Damascus). Within the provinces, the pashas considered their main duty to collect taxes, and their armies served more to terrorize the population into paying taxes than to maintain order and security. In the absence of security, the Bedouins raided the settled areas and plundered their neighboring villages. The agricultural villages maintained an internal organization for self-defense purposes, based on the tribal unions, whose roots went back to the Arab invasion of Syria and Palestine. The Arab inhabitants of the land were divided into two unions: Qays (the northern one) and Yaman (the southern one). Although these unions had long been emptied of any ethnic or geographical significance, people continued to be called after the association they had belonged to in the past. Oftentimes, conflicts stemming from blood feuds, which were a frequent occurrence in the village

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<sup>17</sup> In my earlier book I divided the first eighty years of the nineteenth century into five sub-periods; for details see the contents pages of Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 9–10. That division followed the various stages of the geographical “rediscovery” of the Holy Land, which explains why it differs somewhat from the present one in which I intend to draw a more general picture.

communities of the country in the nineteenth century, took the form of hostilities, but the pashas only rarely acted to re-impose the order unsettled by these wars.<sup>18</sup>

As early as the eighteenth century, Acre became the capital of the province of Sidon. In 1775, Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar came into power in Acre. He curbed Napoleon's attempt to capture Acre in 1799, earning him prestige among the local Arabs as well as in Turkey and the countries of Europe. The life of Jazzar Pasha was extraordinary on a number of levels, but it serves to emphasize the relations between the pashas and the local population on the one hand, and between them and the Ottoman Sublime Porte in Constantinople (Istanbul) on the other. Jazzar Pasha did not deny his subordination to the Sublime Porte and even paid taxes to his superior in the capital, but within his region he operated as a sovereign ruler: he established a private army, built his own fleet, imposed taxes at will, and even appropriated unto himself a monopoly in various branches of internal and external commerce. He often sat in judgment, sentenced persons, and even personally carried out the verdict, including the death sentence. In actual fact, this manner of ruling was typical of other pashas during that period. Even in his later years, Jazzar Pasha did not deviate from his tyrannical ways, and after the echoes of the wars with France grew silent he set off on campaigns of plunder and robbery throughout the land. He threatened to massacre the Christians, claiming that they assisted Napoleon, and the only thing that prevented it was the intervention of British admiral Sir Sidney Smith, commander of the British fleet present in the area at the time to assist the Turks during the Napoleonic invasion. On May 7, 1804, after thirty years of a reign of terror, Jazzar Pasha passed away.<sup>19</sup>

Following the death of Jazzar Pasha, conflicts and wars broke out between claimants to the role of pasha of Acre. Finally Suleiman Pasha consolidated his rule and reigned for fourteen years (1804–1818). In his days deep poverty was widespread and the Bedouins operated unhindered. Yet, compared to the rule of Jazzar Pasha, these were times of comparative quiet and wellbeing. In those days, the central coastal plains were controlled by Muhammad Abu Nabbut, a local chieftain. Among other activities, he operated to develop, build, refurbish, and fortify the city of Jaffa. A short while before the death of Abu Nabbut, Suleiman Pasha succeeded in chasing him out. He escaped to Egypt where he found refuge under the protection of Muhammad 'Ali. Since then the central coastal plains were transferred to the control of the pasha of Acre.<sup>20</sup>

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**18** For a concise summary of the condition of the region at the end of the eighteenth century, see Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction*, 1:81.

**19** For Jazzar Pasha, see Izhak Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel and Its Community under Ottoman Rule* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1955), 339–40 (Hebrew) and the source he cites there. For the *cizye*, a special poll tax paid by non-Muslim residents that marked them as subjects of inferior status, see Stanford Jay Shaw and Ezel K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976–1977), 2:96–97.

**20** On Suleiman Pasha, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 27, based on Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel*, 340–41 and the source cited there.

After the death of Suleiman Pasha, he was replaced by the beloved Abdu Pasha, Abdullah Ibn 'Ali, who remained in power until the Egyptian invasion in 1831. During the reign of Suleiman, financial matters were handled by his faithful Jewish assistant, Haim Farhi, who had also filled that role under Jazzar Pasha. After the death of Suleiman, Abdullah Pasha did not remember Farhi kindly and within eighteen months of assuming power had him executed. In response to that act and following conflicts with Suleiman, the governor of Damascus, a punitive expedition was sent from Damascus. Abdullah Pasha set out to confront it, was defeated, and retreated to Acre. The attacking force arrived at the gates of Acre and besieged it from land and sea, but the pasha of Acre managed to bribe some of the officers besieging the city and reached a compromise with them. Afterwards Abdullah continued to reign supreme over a large area of the country until the Egyptian invasion, despite internal disputes and conflicts that occurred during his time.

Concurrent with developments in the country, things were happening in the Ottoman Empire that greatly influenced its rule over Palestine. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the political status of the Ottoman Empire reached a new low when its European areas started seething with the fire of nationalist revolts. The Greek Rebellion broke out in 1821, and Abdullah Pasha of Acre was required to assist the central government in repressing it. In 1826 Abdullah Pasha sent a force to assist in defending the city of Beirut, then under attack by the Greek fleet. With the outbreak of the Greek uprising, the rulers of the country began more efficiently to supervise the behavior of its Greek Orthodox inhabitants. Abdullah Pasha kept them under especially close surveillance and thus was awarded the epithet "Christianity Hater."<sup>21</sup>

The joint efforts of the Sublime Porte and the local rulers to extort money from the inhabitants led to rebellions and conflicts with the government. Thus, in 1825 the residents of Jerusalem and its surroundings rebelled after the governor of Damascus, Mustafa Pasha, demanded full payment of the high tax quota. The rebellion was so widespread that Sultan Mahmud II was forced to order Abdullah Pasha, the governor of Acre, to conquer Jerusalem and return it to the *vali* of Damascus. At the end of 1826, Abdullah Pasha went up to Jerusalem and conquered the city after placing it under siege and bombardment for a fortnight. Afterwards he instructed the *vali* of Damascus to send a garrison there. But calm did not reign throughout the land; a fellahin rebellion erupted in Nablus led by local sheiks. The rebellion spread south to Hebron and north to Safed. Thus, the years of Abdullah Pasha's rule were filled with many rebellions and uprisings. But despite the disquiet in his

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<sup>21</sup> For Abdullah Pasha, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 27–31, based on Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel*, 342–44 and the sources cited there; Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:106–7.

region, the country was almost wholly under his exclusive rule on the eve of its invasion by Muhammad 'Ali.<sup>22</sup>

### **The period of Egyptian rule in the Levant, 1831–1840**

Egyptian rule in the Holy Land lasted from its invasion by Muhammad 'Ali until its reconquest by the Ottoman Empire in 1840. There is no doubt that these two events were turning points in the history of the country and they point to later changes that took place there. Egyptian forces invaded Palestine and Syria at the beginning of the thirties under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, stepson of the Egyptian ruler Muhammad 'Ali. This invasion was part of the general rebellion against the Ottoman sultan mounted by Muhammad 'Ali. The rebellion also had a local dimension. One of the pretexts for its initiation was the refusal of the ruler of Acre, Abdullah Pasha, to return to Egypt army defectors who escaped their country and found refuge in his province. The Egyptian army advanced into the country by two routes: the infantry crossed the desert, while the navy set sail towards Jaffa and conquered it without battle. In July 1831, Egyptian forces reached Jerusalem. There, too, the Turkish guard surrendered without battle. From there the force proceeded to Acre and laid it under siege. However, after word arrived of the Ottoman military preparations in Syria, the army lifted the siege on Acre and rushed towards its enemies. After vanquishing them on the outskirts of the city of Homs, they returned to Acre and continued the siege for seven months. On May 26, 1832, the Egyptian army successfully breached the walls and conquered the city. Acre suffered much damage and many found their death under the rubble. Ibrahim Pasha immediately set about its restoration. A short while later the Egyptian army conquered Damascus and Aleppo, crossed the Taurus Mountains, and prepared for battle against a hundred thousand Turks commanded by the Grand Vizier. On December 20, 1832, Ibrahim Pasha attained a decisive victory near Konya and almost dealt a death blow to the Turkish sultanate. Only intervention by the Europeans, mainly Russia and Britain, prevented the end of the Ottoman Empire. Under their pressure the Egyptian forces stopped their advance and even agreed to retreat, but Syria and Palestine remained under Egyptian rule. Ibrahim Pasha became the overall governor of the invaded areas, and his seat was set in Damascus.

The success of Muhammad 'Ali's army, under the command of his son, was a result of the quality of its equipment and its modern fleet – in contemporary terms. Similarly to all of Muhammad 'Ali's realm in Egypt, the army, too, was built with

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<sup>22</sup> For more on Abdullah Pasha, see Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction*, 1:133, 135–37, with some information also on Suleiman. For Jazzar, Suleiman, and Abdullah, see also Constantin M. Basili, *Memories from Lebanon, 1839–1847: Syria and Lebanon under Turkish Rule: A Historical-Political Perspective* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1984) (Hebrew), under their names in the index.

the help of France, which since the Napoleonic invasion and despite the ensuing retreat wielded great influence there. Muhammad 'Ali himself was educated in France and greatly influenced by its culture. French officers trained and built his army, and it was France which stood behind all of Muhammad 'Ali's activities in the Middle East.<sup>23</sup>

Egyptian rule over the Levant lasted nine years and brought about many changes in the region. Ibrahim Pasha abolished the previous Ottoman administrative division and decreed a new system: one governor for all of Syria and Palestine ruling from Damascus. The whole country was one province. Acre lost its standing and Jerusalem became the capital of the southern part of the province. Ibrahim Pasha's centralized government weakened the feudal rulers and enhanced the power of the government representatives, the local Muslims. A great advance in administration came from the establishment of committees (*majlis*) which were composed of representatives of the population and whose function was to advise the administration with regard to taxes, levies, and commercial conflicts. The Egyptian government also reduced the judicial authority of the *mullah* and his supervisors, leaving them in control only of matters of inheritance and marital relations. The remaining matters were transferred to the urban councils. The Muslims were not content under Egyptian rule. For the first time in hundreds of years there was a strong central government in the land with its focal points in Damascus and Cairo. Order and security were imposed with an iron fist and the Muslim inhabitants were obligated to serve in the army and surrender their private weapons. The Muslim religious leadership was weakened as a result of the expropriation of the greater part of its public and judicial authority and the cessation of payments it had previously received from the Christian denominations and the Jewish communities.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, the status of Christians and Jews greatly improved under Egyptian rule. It was more liberal than that of the Ottomans and in those days was given to influence by the European powers, and thus the condition of the Christian and Jewish minorities was ameliorated, especially in Jerusalem. During the period of Egyptian rule, Christians were permitted to repair their places of worship and build new structures. There was freer access to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other holy sites, and the limitations on missionary activities were somewhat relaxed. In many ways the status of Christians was equaled to that of Muslims: they were represented on the municipal advisory committee, side by side with the Muslim representatives, and they began to fill government and financial posts. There was also substantial liberalization towards Jews who were permitted to

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<sup>23</sup> For Muhammad 'Ali, the founder of modern Egypt, see Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction*, 2:104–5. On the founding of modern Egypt, see *ibid.*, vol. 3, and the sources cited there. For his conquest of Syria, see *ibid.*, 3:101–4, 159–62, 193–94, including the victory at Konya.

<sup>24</sup> On Muhammad 'Ali and his Syrian campaign, see the extensive discussion in Yitzhak Hofman, "Muhammed 'Ali in Syria" (PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1963) (Hebrew).

renovate and repair synagogues, which had previously been forbidden, and to pray at the Wailing Wall without special permits; moreover, it was now much easier to take up residence in Jerusalem and other locations.<sup>25</sup>

Egyptian rule was much stricter than its predecessor. It enforced law and order, robbery on the roads was suppressed, and there was greater security in general. A growing number of European visitors and travelers arrived, and aliyah to the Holy Land increased. The Bedouins were restrained throughout the country, and there were several attempts to transfer them to permanent settlement in the Jordan valley. They feared the Egyptian ruler whom they called “The Egyptian Bulldog.” The Egyptian rulers tried to promote modernization. They built windmills and introduced new agricultural crops such as cotton; they tried to drain the Hula Lake and introduce new building methods to the cities. But the organized and efficient government also began to weigh heavily upon the inhabitants of the land: it was hard to evade paying taxes since the number of bribe takers was reduced; Muslim clergy did not view Ibrahim Pasha’s support of Christians kindly; public personages were removed from their official status; the Bedouins were prevented from looting and plundering; the fellahin were obliged to serve in the army – all these cumulated against the rule of the Egyptian governor, and rebellions erupted in the mountain areas. In 1834, a widespread open uprising known as the “fellahin rebellion” broke out. The rebels conquered Tiberias and Safed and mounted a siege on Jerusalem, Acre, and Jaffa. The rebels managed to penetrate Jerusalem through an ancient and forsaken water tunnel and took control of the city, with the exception of the Citadel of David. When the rebellion broke out Ibrahim Pasha was away from the city. He raised forces, and with the assistance of reinforcements sent from Egypt by Muhammad ‘Ali succeeded in regaining control of the city. After much effort, the Egyptian army once again controlled the country, but repression of the rebellion was very costly and required an additional raise in taxes, which in turn aroused all the more the resentment of the population.<sup>26</sup>

Towards the end of the 1830s, feelings of loathing towards the rule of Muhammad ‘Ali were continually on the rise. The Maronite Christians in Lebanon also aspired to oust the Egyptian ruler. The central government in Istanbul began inciting the population to rebel against Ibrahim Pasha with the aim of regaining control of the conquered areas. In 1839 a rebellion erupted among the Druze population, and in its wake the

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<sup>25</sup> For the activity of Muhammad ‘Ali in Palestine and Jerusalem, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 67–69, based on Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel*, 344–48. See also Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1: 107–11 with the sources cited there, and also in the index.

<sup>26</sup> On Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Muhammad ‘Ali and commander of his army, see Ehrlich, *Introduction*, 2:159–60. For the revolt of the fellahin, see *ibid.*, 2:190–93. See also George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1979).

Ottoman army invaded northern Syria, but was defeated by the Egyptian force in the battle of Nizip and retreated in panic.<sup>27</sup>

Following his victory, Ibrahim Pasha was about to leave for the north, and the Ottomans had already expressed their willingness to sign a new agreement with him. But the European powers had a different plan. Britain had failed to reach an accord with France regarding the Ottoman Empire. On July 15, 1840, it established a quadruple alliance to protect Turkey together with Russia, Austria, and Prussia. The allies decided to go to war against Muhammad ‘Ali. After the latter rejected their ultimatum, British and Austrian warships set sail for Beirut, bombarded the city and took control of it. Ibrahim Pasha retreated from Syria and set off to protect Acre. On November 3 the allied fleet arrived, commanded by Commodore Napier, and began the first bombardment of the city. A few of the shells fell on the central ammunition storeroom and caused a great explosion that destroyed many of the fortifications and killed hundreds of people. Following the hard hit on the city, Ibrahim Pasha began retreating southwards, his army destroying and burning villages and fields of crops. The allies and the Turkish government encouraged the Arab inhabitants to abandon Ibrahim Pasha and come over to their side. Thus did the Turkish army successfully complete the reconquest of the country. At the end of December 1840, the remainder of the Egyptian army arrived in Gaza where Ibrahim Pasha was informed of the surrender of his father, Muhammad ‘Ali, to the demands of the allies. According to an agreement signed by the parties, Muhammad ‘Ali’s authority was limited to within the Egyptian borders and the Ottomans once again ruled the Levant.<sup>28</sup>

### **The early period of Ottoman reform (the Tanzimat) to the end of the Crimean War, 1839–1856**

The Ottoman rule which returned to the Holy land in 1840 was very different from that preceding the Egyptian invasion. In 1839 a set of reforms, known as the Tanzimat, was introduced in the Ottoman Empire. In that year the Sublime Porte issued the “Hatt-i Serif of Gülhane” (the Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber) that marked the initial stage of the reforms. This stage ended in 1856, which was also the year the Crimean War came to an end (1853–1856). The treaty signed to end hostilities greatly influenced

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<sup>27</sup> On July 1, 1839, shortly after Ibrahim Pasha’s victory in the Battle of Nizip on June 24, Sultan Mahmud II died and was succeeded by his son, Abdülmecid, with authority placed in the hands of a vizier due to the sultan’s youth. However, as Muhammad ‘Ali was increasingly successful, so did intervention by European powers increase, as we shall see below. For the period of Mahmud II (1808–1839), see Shaw, *History*, 2:1–54.

<sup>28</sup> For a plan and description of the Battle of Acre, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 110. Towards the end of this chapter, I shall return to the final year of Muhammad ‘Ali’s rule in Greater Syria, and the Damascus Affair (known in Hebrew as the “Damascus Blood Libel”) during that same year.



the Holy Land. These two dates therefore can be said to denote the events that mark the third stage of the first sub-period of the country in the modern era.

Another central change was the much greater centralization of Ottoman rule upon its return to the country after the evacuation of Ibrahim Pasha's troops, which had a number of causes. The first was the military reform by Sultan Mahmud II that began even before the Egyptian invasion, resulting in the abolishment of the Janissaries corps and its replacement by a regular army, subordinate to the central government and independent of the local pashas and emirs. The second was the institution of direct tax collection through a central government mechanism. The third factor was the nine years of centralized Egyptian rule which exhausted the power of the feudal governors. It was now easier for the Ottoman government to act with much more authority than was previously possible. Yet, it appears that authoritative rule in the country was not immediately established. Clashes spread between the two main opposing factions of the Muslim population, the Qays and Yamans (see above), motivated by mutual provocations to settle old accounts. These clashes lasted sixteen years until after the end of the Crimean War. The imperial government implemented a process of Ottomanization within the higher levels of local officials and revoked their semi-independent standing. From the very start the new administration based itself on vigorous centralization, with officials transferred every year from one post to another. Local governors were deprived of the right to sentence to death and they themselves were subject to the judicial system and could be punished for abuse of their office.

After the return of Ottoman rule, changes in its organization were also reflected in the administrative structure of the country. While the whole of the Holy Land continued to be divided between the two provinces of Damascus and Sidon, now all of the western part of the country was included in the Sidon province, whose capital was transferred from Acre to Beirut. The area east of the Jordan River continued to belong to the province of Damascus. Each province was divided into sancaks and each sancak into kazas and nahiyes.<sup>29</sup> Authority was vested in a rigid hierarchy of Turkish officials who were assisted by a committee (*majlis*) that represented all of the local population – Muslims, Christians, and Jews. This system did not put an end to all manifestations of corruption that had been the norm prior to the Egyptian invasion, nor did it lead to government by elected officials in the province, but it did significantly reduce arbitrary acts by the district governors and granted the different religious denominations some influence, albeit small, in the management of public affairs.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> For the administrative division into sancaks and their sub-divisions, see ch. 3, esp. note 7, where I shall also discuss the Arab population and villages in the nineteenth century.

<sup>30</sup> This administrative framework will be discussed in Chapter Three. On the return of Ottoman rule in Jerusalem and the changes it underwent, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 111–18; id., *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:111–14. See also Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel*, 331–36 and the sources cited there. On Turkish rule in Jerusalem during the final century of the Ottoman Empire, see Moshe Ma'oz, "Jerusalem in the Last Hundred Years of Turkish Rule," in *Chapters in the History of the Jewish*



In 1839, the Ottoman government reforms (see above) came into force. These reforms, which were intended to appease the European powers that assisted the Ottomans in repelling the Egyptian forces, included regulations regarding equality of the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>31</sup> These regulations also enhanced the special status granted the foreign consuls and the Christian churches in the Holy Land, and likewise to the Jewish community by improving the status of the Chief Rabbi, the Rishon Lezion. In 1838 a British Consulate was established in Jerusalem, followed by the other powers, including the United States.<sup>32</sup> In many ways, the appearance on the scene of these consulates changed the lifestyle of the population, because there was a new and foreign element in the country. The consuls were firmly established and left their mark on those with whom they came in contact. As the consular class became firmly entrenched, it was prepared to receive orders only from its own government. Each consulate was a miniature government unto itself.<sup>33</sup>

The importance of the Christian denominations in the Holy Land increased as the foreign consulates became more powerful. Competition between them grew and they needed the support of the European powers. It was then that the Capitulation Treaty was renewed, when in 1842 the official in charge of the French embassy in Constantinople suddenly remembered the Capitulation Treaty of 1740 and demanded his government's right to repair the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This was after the Greek Orthodox Church had received a firman to do some renovations there at their expense. To the French claim that the church belonged to the Latin monks the Sublime Porte replied that the church belonged to all Christians. After they were forced to withdraw their demand, the French settled for sending a consul of their own to Jerusalem (1843), but since the Capitulation Treaty was once again implemented it assisted in maintaining the status of foreign representations in the country. More or less from that time on, international interest in Jerusalem greatly

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*Community in Jerusalem*, ed. Yehuda Ben-Porat, Ben-Zion Yehoshua, and Aharon Kedar (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1973), 260–72 (Hebrew).

**31** On the Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane issued on Mar. 11, 1839, before the expulsion of Muhammad 'Ali, by which the Ottoman government intended to show the European powers that it did intend to reform the constitution, see Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 104–7; Shaw, *History*, 2:59–61. For the persons in Istanbul behind the Tanzimat reforms, see *ibid.*, 2:61–69. See also Moshe Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine 1840–1861: The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968).

**32** Towards the end of this chapter I shall discuss the establishment of the British consulate in Jerusalem.

**33** For foreign consulates in Jerusalem, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:184–89, and in the index, s.v. Consulates, Consuls. See also Mordechai Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land: Selected Documents from the British Consulate in Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi; The Magnes Press, 1977), 15–16, and in detail in James Finn, *Stirring Times, or Records from Jerusalem Consular Chronicles, 1853 to 1856* (London: Kegan Paul, 1878), 1:84–100.

increased, as did friction among the Christian denominations. Russia now stood behind the Greek Orthodox Church, while France and other Catholic states, such as Spain and Italy, supported the Catholic Church. Protestant churches also began gaining a foothold in the country, with the backing of Britain, Lutheran Prussia, and other countries. Missionary activities by Protestants and Catholics increased, together with the number of missionaries.<sup>34</sup>

In 1853 tension peaked between the powers supporting the Christian churches, and the final cause of the outbreak of the Crimean War, “the straw that broke the camel’s back,” was the conflict between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Latin (Catholic) Church regarding the “Chapel of the Manger” in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where Jesus was born according to Christian tradition. Russia backed the Greek Orthodox Church while France stood behind the Latin Church. As a result, a Russian threat loomed against the Ottoman Empire. England and France came to its defense, and a three-year war broke out.<sup>35</sup> This war verified the words of Commodore Napier in the British House of Parliament while surveying the situation in the Middle East only two months after the conquest of Acre from Ibrahim Pasha. He stated that Palestine had become an inseparable part of the “Eastern Question” which occupied most European countries. British interests stood against those of France, while the goals of both of them were opposed to Russian aspirations.<sup>36</sup>

The Holy Land became the focus of international interest for the third time, following the Napoleonic invasion and the conquest by Muhammad ‘Ali, as the cause for the outbreak of the bloody war between the European powers. The battles themselves were fought outside the borders of the Holy Land, but the peace treaty that ended the war nullified Russian claims and further increased the influence of the European countries over events in the Holy Land.

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**34** See Rachel Simon, “The Struggle over the Christian Holy Places during the Ottoman Period,” in *Vision and Conflict in the Holy Land*, ed. Richard I. Cohen (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1985), 23–44. The extensive Protestant and Catholic missionary activity in Jerusalem is discussed in Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:184–264. See a survey of the Capitulations in Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel*, 123–36. For the nineteenth-century reforms, see Ma’oz, *Ottoman Reform*.

**35** On the reasons for the outbreak of the Crimean War and the role played by the Church of the Nativity in them, see Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction*, 3:207–9, 234–38, and also *ibid.*, 24–28. It also describes events leading to the end of hostilities: the death of Czar Nicolai I in March 1855 who was succeeded by Alexander II, the fall of Sebastopol on Feb. 1, 1856, and the Russian surrender on Feb. 26. This was followed by negotiations culminating in the Treaty of Paris signed in March. For the disputes between the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholics in Palestine, see Finn, *Stirring Times*, 1:3–83.

**36** Commodore Charles Napier was the commander of the battle for Acre and bombarded the city, leading to Muhammad ‘Ali’s decision to withdraw all of his forces; see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 111–18. For the British landing in Beirut before the defeat of Ibrahim Pasha, see Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction*, 2:211.

### The Ottoman reform period continued, and urban development until the opening of the Suez Canal, 1856–1869

The fourth stage of the first eighty years of the nineteenth century in the Holy land ranges from the end of the Crimean War until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. This was a foundational event, and there are those who see it as the most important event of all in the world in the nineteenth century. Upon the end of the Crimean War, the warring parties convened in Paris to formulate the peace treaty. Signed on March 30, 1856, it determined the status of the non-Muslim denominations in the Ottoman Empire, including the rights of priests and rabbis, their method of appointment, salaries, etc. Turkey, forced to appease the will of the European powers, continued to develop the Tanzimat. In 1856, in a ceremonious and grandiose manner in the presence of a gathering of local and foreign dignitaries, the governor of Jerusalem announced the decree known as the Hatt-i Hümayun (the Tolerance Decree). All adverse discrimination would be eliminated from the administrative protocol and all existing faiths would be granted official recognition. In this document, the sultan forbade any religious coercion and pronounced all subjects of the empire equal under law. Yet, despite these and other liberal amendments, such as release from military service in return for payment, the ingrained actual discrimination was not uprooted, and Jews were still required to pay an annual fee for their right to pray at the Wailing Wall.<sup>37</sup>

As the Ottoman government became increasingly dependent on the European powers and the system of capitulations more firmly established, the condition of the minorities improved, since the powers implemented the right to judge and defend their own subjects throughout the empire, and any injury to a foreign subject brought in its wake resolute intervention by his representative, the consul, who warded off any blow to the prestige of his country. Naturally, there were many people who sought the protection of the foreign consuls, and thousands of members of the various Christian denominations, as well as Jews, came under the patronage of the foreign representatives: British, Russian, German, French, Spanish, American, and others. Intent on increasing their influence over internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire, the consuls themselves agreed to take members of the diverse peoples and minorities under their wing. At the same time, it appears that the special terms of the Hatt-i Hümayun aroused great anger among the Muslims and was one cause of the peak of tension between Muslims and Christians in 1860 which resulted in the well-known massacre of Christians in Damascus.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> For the declaration of the Hatt-i Hümayun and additional reforms for two decades after the Crimean War, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:114–16; *ibid.*, *Rediscovery*, 159–62. On this decree, issued on Feb. 18, 1856, see Shaw, *History*, 2:124–26.

<sup>38</sup> For this outcome of the Hatt-i Hümayun, and the massacre in Damascus, see Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, 231–40; Finn, *Stirring Times*, 2:465–85, esp. 475–84. See also note 44 below dealing with

Increased intervention in the Holy Land by the Western powers brought an escalation in the number of pilgrims coming to the country, including Russian pilgrims. Following the peace treaty signed after the Crimean War, Russia began a policy of subversion from within. Demonstrating greater interest in the religious affairs of the Holy Land, it also began taking control of the Greek Orthodox Church in the country. The Catholic and Protestant countries, too, increased their involvement in religious affairs. All these were reflected in the establishment of religious organizations and institutions behind which political considerations were concealed.

Jewish immigration also increased. The sizable rise in the number of Christian pilgrims and Jewish immigrants led to the growth and development of the few cities then in the country. This was especially prominent in Jerusalem which was the destination of many Christian pilgrims and of the growing number of Jewish religious-traditional immigrants. Waves of pilgrims began to sweep Palestine, especially between Christmas and Easter. The streets of Jerusalem, Safed, Nazareth, Tiberias, and Hebron were filled with new people whose arrival demanded the construction of houses to receive them. Many hostels were built to house the upsurge of pilgrims. The Russian hostel known as “The Russian Compound” was constructed outside the walls of Jerusalem. New churches and monasteries were established within the Old City and outside its walls, not only for the priests and monks, but also to serve the visitors and tourists. At the same time, foreign schools were established in which thousands of children of different religious denominations acquired the cultural values and languages of Europe. Foreign influence was increasingly evident throughout the country. Russian, French, British, German, Austrian, and Italian postal services were established and operated; foreign stamps and coins became accepted currency in the country’s markets, not only among the foreign subjects but also among the local population. This was indeed a typical phenomenon throughout the Ottoman Empire, but it was especially prominent in Jerusalem due to the great number of tourists and visitors.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile there was a change of rulers in Istanbul. Mahmud II was replaced on the throne by Sultan Abdülmecid (1839–1861). After his death, he was succeeded by his brother Abdülaziz, whose attitude towards the reforms was less enthusiastic, and they were renewed only due to pressure by France.<sup>40</sup> The Law of the Vilayets was promulgated in 1864, regulating the provincial administration and the incorporation

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the settlement of Algerians in Damascus, some of whom moved on to the Galilee after the massacre. I shall return to this topic in Chapter Four.

<sup>39</sup> For the beginnings of urban expansion in Jerusalem, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 159–62, and Chapter Three in the present book, in the discussion of the cities.

<sup>40</sup> Sultan Abdülmecid I died on June 25, 1861 and was succeeded by his brother, Abdülaziz I who continued the policy of reform throughout the provinces, but at a very slow pace. For these two sultans, see Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction*, 3:46–60, 244–48.

of non-Muslims in the councils.<sup>41</sup> In 1868 the Tanzimat Council was reorganized to include the State Council and the “Council for Laws of Justice.” Educational institutions were also established, and a year later the Ottoman Citizenship Law was promulgated. There was an attempt to implement the Hatt-i Hümayun of 1856 and publication began of the “Mecelle,” a collection of Ottoman civil law based on the Shari’a, whose publication continued until 1876. But despite the reforms, the Ottoman Empire continued to be an Islamic state by definition and practice, and only its Muslims citizens were full members of the body politic.<sup>42</sup>

A new trend in the social composition of the Muslim population in the country began in the early 1860s, with the arrival of North Africans to the villages and cities of the country. The process began with the uprising instigated by the Algerian leader Abdel Kader who headed the struggle for independence in North Africa, first against the Moroccan sultan and then against the French who conquered Algeria in 1830. Although he succeeded in his first military clashes, Abdel Kader was finally forced to surrender to the French force in Algeria in 1847. He was jailed for a time in a French citadel, and when permitted to leave for exile he chose Damascus, where he arrived in 1852 with a number of his Algerian warriors. In 1860, an impassioned crowd of Druze, Arabs, Muslims, and Kurds burst into the Christian quarter in Damascus and slaughtered its residents. Although Abdel Kader was a devout Muslim, he set out with his warriors to fight the rioters and assist in stopping the massacre.<sup>43</sup>

As religious conflicts in Syria and Lebanon escalated, North African expatriates left Damascus to seek peace and quiet in Palestine. Many of them settled in Safed, accounting for a large part of the city’s Arab inhabitants. Other North Africans arrived in their wake. They settled in other cities in the country as well, revitalizing partly populated settlements and even totally desolate ones in the western parts of the country.<sup>44</sup>

There were similar developments among the Jews in the cities, mainly due to the efforts of Sir Moses Montefiore. In 1855, land outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem was purchased, with funds contributed by American philanthropist Judah Touro, to build almshouses for the poor. The acquisition of this plot of land gave rise to great excitement since it was a precedent for selling land in Jerusalem to a foreigner, even though he wasn’t a Muslim. The Mishkenot Sha’ananim neighborhood was established there in 1860. Touro simultaneously purchased another piece of land

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<sup>41</sup> On the Law of the Vilayets (1864), see Shaw, *History*, 2:88–89; for the constitution of 1876, see *ibid.*, 2:174–78.

<sup>42</sup> Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:115–16 and the source cited there.

<sup>43</sup> See note 38 above.

<sup>44</sup> For the settlement of Algerians in Damascus already in the nineteenth century, see Mustafa Abbasi, “From Algeria to Palestine: The Algerian Community in the Galilee from the Late Ottoman Period until 1948,” *Maghreb Review* 28 (2003): 41–59. Abbasi first divides the waves of Algerian immigration to Damascus into four periods from 1847 to 1920, before he describes how some of them moved on into the Galilee.

near the city of Jaffa, later known as the “Montefiore Orange Grove.” An orchard was planted on the property, and its management entrusted to a German convert to Judaism with agricultural experience who took upon himself to teach Jews how to till the land. During this period, Jewish immigration gained new momentum. In 1857, the small town of Haifa absorbed new Jewish families, the Jewish community in Jaffa grew, and the number of Jews in Jerusalem greatly increased. In 1854, the Russian government ordered Jews to cease monetary support of their brethren in the Holy Land. But this prohibition was a blessing in disguise, since after the Jews of Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias suffered from hunger for some time, the communities of western Europe organized and expanded their assistance to these Jewish communities. In the ensuing years, with the visits of Montefiore and other distinguished Jews, systematic assistance was organized for the Jewish community in the Holy Land. Its financial condition improved, while aid and educational institutions were established. Milestones of this development are varied building projects: the windmill in Jerusalem outside the walls; the great Hurvah synagogue within the walls; the Rothschild hospital; the Simon von Lämél School established by the efforts of Dr. Ludwig Frankl in 1857; the Evelina de Rothschild School built in 1864, and many other synagogues and health facilities. At the end of the decade, in 1869, the Suez Canal was opened, an important global event that once more turned the attention of the whole world to the Middle East and the Holy Land, and constituted another impetus for that country’s development.<sup>45</sup>

### **Western penetration, changes in transportation, the millenarist and Templer settlements until 1882**

In the fifth and final stage of the survey of the first eighty years of the nineteenth century, I shall consider the final developments in those years until the arrival of the first wave of Zionist aliyah known as the First Aliyah.<sup>46</sup> In the late 1860s and throughout the next decade, the landscape of the country continued to be shaped under the influence of foreign countries, their consuls, and the Capitulations Treaty, but also due to revolutionary developments in means of transportation and communication which brought the Ottoman Empire closer to Europe. Already in the early 1850s, the large shipping companies, “Austrian Lloyd” and the French “Messageries Maritimes,” used the country’s harbors as docking stations for their steamships on the way to the East.

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<sup>45</sup> I deal extensively with the development of the Jewish community in Jerusalem in Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, vol. 1, chs. 4–5. For the neighborhoods established and buildings erected outside the wall of the Old City, see vol. 2: *Emergence of the New City*.

<sup>46</sup> In Chapter Five I shall deal with the First Aliyah and why it is considered such an important turning point in the history of Eretz Israel, leading me to use its date to divide the final phase of Ottoman rule in the country into two periods: from the beginning of the modern era (1799) to the First Aliyah (1882) and from that date to the end of Ottoman rule (1917/18).

In addition, in 1856 the “The Russian Company for Shipping and Commerce” was established. Passenger ships of these companies were faster, safer, and more comfortable than sailboats, and they greatly increased the number of tourists and pilgrims to the Holy Land. This also brought about certain developments in the seaports, especially after peace reigned in Syria and Lebanon at the beginning of the sixties following the bloody events between Christians, Muslims, and Druze. The French began building the port at Beirut, which immediately became the central port of the Levant and diverted merchandise and passenger traffic from the harbors of Palestine. In 1863, a carriage route was laid down between Beirut and Damascus, the first such roadway in all of Syria, which for dozens of years served as the main thoroughfare for wholesale commerce throughout the region, including the Holy Land, diverting traffic in the direction of the modern port. In 1865 the first telegraph office was established in Jerusalem. The Suez Canal was opened in 1869 and brought the Middle East even closer to the heart of the Western world. That same year, a passable road was paved between Jaffa and Jerusalem, by which the Austrian Emperor and his son arrived to visit Jerusalem on their way to the Suez Canal inauguration ceremony. Afterwards the road deteriorated and was only repaved in 1881 when it became the chief carriage route in the country.<sup>47</sup>

Western penetration of the Holy Land was also manifested in Western agricultural settlement. At first these were mostly millenarist groups, such as that of the convert John Meshullam and Clorinda Minor in the village of Artas near Solomon’s Pools on the road to Hebron, and that of British consul James Finn in Kerem Avraham (Abraham’s Vineyard) outside the walls of Jerusalem’s Old City. There were also Christian settlers from the U.S. who arrived in the country under the influence of the mystic, George Adams. They settled in Jaffa and established the Church of the Messiah there. Conflicts and disputes quickly arose among them. Some returned to their homeland, others joined the “Spaffordists,” the first American settlers in northern Jerusalem, and still others joined the Templers who began erecting residential neighborhoods near urban centers and agricultural settlements throughout the country.<sup>48</sup>

The most important non-Jewish foreign influx is indeed the settlement efforts by the German Templers. They began settling in Palestine in the sixties and seventies. In

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<sup>47</sup> See Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 191–93. For the development of roads in Eretz Israel, especially to Jerusalem, see id., *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:82–90; for postal and telegraph services, see ibid., 2:98–100, and the sources cited there.

<sup>48</sup> For George J. Adams and his colony, see Reed M. Holmes, *The Forerunners: The Tragic Story of 156 Down-East Americans Led to Jaffa in 1856 by . . . G.J. Adams . . .* (Independence, MO: Herald Pub. House, 1981). For American settlers, see Ruth Kark, “Millenarism and Agricultural Settlement in the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 9 (1983): 47–62; id., *American Consuls in the Holy Land, 1832–1914* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994). On Americans see also Vivian D. Lipman, *Americans and the Holy Land through British Eyes, 1820–1917: A Documentary History* (London: V.D. Lipman, 1989). On the activity of German Catholics and Russian Orthodox in the Holy Land, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:138–45. See also Haim Goren, “*Echt katholisch und gut deutsch*”: *Die deutschen Katholiken und Palästina 1838–1910* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009).



1867 members of the Templar community, citizens of the Württemberg Duchy in southern Germany, immigrated to Palestine and settled on the lands of the Arab village of Samunia, near present-day Nahalal in the Jezreel Valley. They were plagued with malaria and the settlement attempt failed. Later Templar settlement activity expanded throughout the country, and will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Notwithstanding its liberal declarations, the Ottoman government created many obstacles to the development of these settlements. Despite the innovations the German farmers introduced into the primitive agricultural practices in the country, the authorities made it difficult for the Templars to establish themselves economically since they conceived of them as a precursor of German interests in the area. However, Ottoman responses were known for their slow pace, and until the actions taken to prevent expansion of the European powers' influence in the Holy Land materialized, they had already gained a strong foothold. In light of the thousands of Christian pilgrims, the central government placed under its patronage the *hajj* to Mecca and Medina and encouraged pilgrimage to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and Nabi Musa near Jericho. To counter German settlement and its ensuing Jewish counterpart, members of diverse communities were brought to the country: Muslims and Circassians from Czarist Russia; Maghrebis from North Africa, the followers of Abdel Kader who refused to accept the presence of French rule; Ottoman subjects from Bosnia who were faithful to the Ottoman government; and Bedouins who were forcibly transferred to permanent dwellings by the Turkish government. The settlement of diverse ethnic and religious elements in the country is mainly a product of the final forty years of Ottoman rule, to be discussed in detail in the fifth and sixth chapters.

At the beginning of the 1870s, the Ottoman government introduced additional tax reforms, and foreigners were permitted to acquire plots of land under condition that they waive the right for protection by their governments. However, it must be emphasized that Jews and Christians remained in a minority status, even an inferior minority status. Until 1855 they were still obligated to pay a poll tax, and that year they were also forced to pay the "Bedel" (a mandatory payment exempting from army service) and were not permitted to serve in the army until 1908.<sup>49</sup> Jews and Christians were still prohibited from testifying against Muslims, and such testimonies were often rejected in Muslim religious courts and even in the new secular Ottoman courts. It should also be noted that local non-Muslim denominations held the status of a *millet* which granted them substantial autonomy in matters of education, religion, and jurisdiction in marital relations. A Hakham Bashi, the Sephardi Chief Rabbi, was first appointed in Jerusalem in 1841 and invested with official status and broad authority. The status of the Christian patriarchs was similar. But as far as the state was concerned, its Christian and Jewish residents were considered inferior subjects. The attitude of many administration officials and the local Muslim

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<sup>49</sup> On the Bedel-i askeri tax and the Christians, see Shaw, *History*, 2:100, 152.



population towards these communities was one of contempt and disdain, and they missed no opportunity to strike at Jews and Christians and restrict their actions.<sup>50</sup>

With the death of Sultan Abdülaziz and the ascension of Abdülhamid II to the throne in 1876, there began marked changes in the Ottoman Empire, including the Holy Land. These came about as a result of political events in Europe in the seventies, beginning with the Franco-Prussian war, which I will discuss in chapters five and six that deal with the final thirty-five years of Ottoman rule.

Thus far I have focused primarily on the first eighty years of the nineteenth century. I shall now address two events that occurred in the nineteenth century: the first is the Napoleonic invasion of the country at the very beginning of the century, and the second, coinciding with the end of the rule of Muhammad 'Ali in 1840, is the blood libel against the Damascus Jews.

## Napoleon's invasion of the Holy Land (1799) and the concept of Restoration of the Jews

As early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a period of "Jewish renaissance" began in England and the countries of central Europe. In the second half of the eighteenth century "enlightened absolute monarchs" started changing their attitude towards Jews, for whom equality in rights and obligations was demanded. Groups of enlightened Jews (*maskilim*) emerged in some countries alongside development of the Jewish Haskalah movement.<sup>51</sup> In September 1791, when the French National Assembly approved the principles of the revolution, it counted among them the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen and prohibition of religious discrimination of any kind. The victorious army of the revolution brought equality of Jews to the conquered countries.<sup>52</sup>

In May 1798 Napoleon Bonaparte set sail from the port of Toulon on his campaign of conquest in the East. On July 2, 1798 he arrived in the port city of Alexandria and conquered it. On August 1, the famous British Admiral Horatio Nelson succeeded in attacking his ships and destroying them in the battle of Abukir Bay while Napoleon was advancing with his army on Cairo and taking it.<sup>53</sup> In January 1799, Napoleon began his invasion of the Holy Land through Sinai. On February 14–15

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<sup>50</sup> For the return of Ottoman rule in Jerusalem after the ousting of the Egyptians, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:111–14.

<sup>51</sup> This has been the subject of much research and does not call for further elaboration here.

<sup>52</sup> A summary of this subject, in the context of Zionism, is provided in Moshe Medzini, *Zionist Policy: From Its Beginnings to the Death of Herzl* (Jerusalem: Hasefer Printers, 1934), 221–39 (Hebrew).

<sup>53</sup> For Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, see Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction*, 1:96–117; on the destruction of the French fleet in the battle of Abukir Bay, see J. Christopher Herold, *Bonaparte in Egypt* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 319–21.

El-Arish was conquered, followed on February 21–28 by the battle for Gaza, ending in its conquest. Between March 3 and 11 Jaffa was invaded and taken. In April battles were waged in Galilee and the siege of Acre began, lasting from April 1 to May 21. The retreat of the Napoleonic army from Acre began on May 9–11 and was completed towards the end of May.<sup>54</sup>

Reports appeared in various journals throughout the world to the effect that during his siege of Acre Napoleon issued a proclamation regarding his aim to free Judea and Jerusalem in order to establish a Jewish state, and calling upon the Jews in the diaspora to assemble and come.<sup>55</sup> Most scholars are of the opinion that the proclamation is a forgery.<sup>56</sup> The hypothesis that Napoleon envisioned, in one form or another, the establishment of a Jewish state in the Holy Land has no basis and is probably the product of Jewish messianic and millenarist outlooks.<sup>57</sup> The only certified news reports regarding the proclamation are two items published in the French press, especially in the newspaper *Moniteur*. Professor Mayir Vereté, who researched the subject, explicitly explains that the proclamation discovered in Prague was not written by Napoleon and is a forgery (probably Frankist), while the news items that appeared in the papers were copied from European newspapers or fabricated in Paris, but did not reach there from the Middle East or Istanbul.<sup>58</sup>

Barouh Mevorah, who wrote his doctoral thesis on the question of the Messiah in the emancipation and reform controversy, is also of this view. According to him, Napoleon did not publish any proclamation and the words of the forged proclamation are at most “the thoughts and tricks of politicians and publicists.” He believed it was an attempt to exploit the messianic Jewish faith for political aims, which were compatible with French territorial expansion tendencies, and was also meant for the Jews of the world to view Napoleon as “The Messiah” who is to release them from their bondage.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> For a summary of Napoleon’s invasion of Palestine and details of the battles fought there, see Schur, *Napoleon*.

<sup>55</sup> For a survey of such reports, see Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism 1900–1918* (London: Longmans Green, 1919), 1:67–76, who also writes about the alleged ties with Haim Farhi whom Napoleon wished to influence, together with two Jerusalem rabbis who helped the Turks plan the defense of the Old City in the event that Napoleon would advance on it.

<sup>56</sup> This is the forthright opinion of Henry Laurens, *Orientales*, 1: *Autour de l’expédition d’Égypte* (Paris: CNRS, 2007), 123–43.

<sup>57</sup> The authors of many historical studies believed this to be true and included the story in their works. See, for example, Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel*, 320–23 as well as books published to this very day. I shall return to this subject in more detail.

<sup>58</sup> In a lecture delivered at the Second World Congress on Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 1957. See also Barouh Mevorah, “The Problem of the Messiah in the Emancipation and Reform Controversies, 1781–1819,” 2 vols. (PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1966), 1:49, n. 18; 2:37 (Hebrew).

<sup>59</sup> Mevorah, “Problem of the Messiah,” 1:49. I distinctly remember that when I discussed this matter with the late Prof. Vereté, he gave me a detailed explanation why he made those statements in his lecture.

In an article on Napoleon and Palestine, Nathan M. Gelber expressed his opinion that the proclamation is probably connected to the Frankists, the successors of Shabbetai Zvi's messianic sect. A few groups of Frankists lived in Prague at the time, where they established a new reformed synagogue.<sup>60</sup> They focused on messianic views of Jewish issues that were connected with ideas for the return of the Jews to the land of their forefathers.<sup>61</sup>

The rumors and news of Bonaparte's plan to settle Jews in the Holy Land also resonated outside of France. In a few cases the theological hopes for the Restoration of the Jews gained strength. There was much talk in the German and Habsburg states about Napoleon's campaign in the East as well as his proclamation issued to the Jews everywhere calling their scattered remnants throughout the world to assemble in the Holy Land. This was a topic of conversation for Jews and non-Jews alike at the time, and there are many stories about it. Most active were the Frankists, who, as noted, held renewed hopes for the realization of their dream through a revolutionary war.

After Napoleon's return from Egypt to France, he began establishing his rule and in 1804 proclaimed himself Emperor of France. In 1806 Napoleon enacted a number of laws supporting the status of Jews in the French Empire, and in 1807 he also established the "Grand Sanhedrin," the assembly of Jewish rabbis in France, whose purpose was to increase supervision of the Jews in the empire and win their support. That same year Napoleon even decreed that Judaism, together with Catholicism and Protestantism, were religions recognized by the state.<sup>62</sup>

The main issue on which I would like to focus is whether there was a connection between the concept of the Restoration of the Jews that began spreading among the Jewish diaspora in Napoleon's time and the vision concerning the establishment of a Jewish state in the Holy Land. Scholars are also divided regarding Napoleon's attitude to the Jewish people. There are those who perceive of him as supportive and benign regarding the concept of Restoration and sympathetic towards the Jewish people, while many others conceive of his actions and plans as a desire to incorporate

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**60** Nathan M. Gelber, "Napoleon and Palestine," in *The Dinaburg Book: ... Presented to Ben-Zion Dinaburg ...*, ed. Yitzhak Baer, Yehoshua Gutman, and Moshe Schwabe (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1949), 263–88 (Hebrew). On Jacob Frank and the Frankists, their connections with the Sabbateans, and their activity in Prague also in 1800, see also Gershom Scholem, "The Holiness of Sin," in id., *The Messianic Idea in Judaism, and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 78–141, 381.

**61** Gelber also published a small book about a manuscript he found, whose author he identified as Benjamin Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield). See Nathan M. Gelber, *The Plan of Lord Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli) for a Jewish State* (Tel Aviv: Leinmann, 1947) (Hebrew). Some historians have pointed out that Gelber erred in his identification. For Disraeli's visit to the Holy Land, see Robert Blake, *Disraeli's Grand Tour: Benjamin Disraeli and the Holy Land, 1830–31* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982).

**62** For a summary of the books, pamphlets, and more on this topic, see Mevorah, "Problem of the Messiah," 1:50–53 and the many sources cited in vol. 2.

the Jews in the French empire while keeping them under control. There are also scholars who believe Napoleon had no love for the Jews at all. For example, Raphael Mahler, a historian of the Jewish people in the last decades, explicitly states that it was a well-known fact that Napoleon bore hatred and contempt towards Jews and often, both in his speeches and writings, expressed the discontent of a military man with bankers and merchants. Regarding the proclamation for the convocation of the Grand Sanhedrin, Mahler writes that only Jews who did not understand the precise plans for the Sanhedrin believed that Napoleon truly aspired to help the Jews establish their state and began dreaming of the coming redemption.<sup>63</sup>

It is important to also bear in mind that the major religion in France was Catholicism, which was not sympathetic to Judaism, and that many Catholic clergy served in the French government. The concept of the Restoration of the Jews played a significant role in the theological conflicts between the Catholic and Protestant camps. The traditional Catholic sector, very strong in France, believed that the status of Jews anywhere was determined by Holy Scripture and it was a mistake and a sin to try to improve their fate. They had to remain separate and in suffering since their inferior status was punishment for a great sin, the implementation of a terrible curse, and therefore they would not become citizens with equal rights until they became Christians themselves. The Jews also willingly kept themselves apart from the Christians, much more than they were discriminated against by the laws of the French state.<sup>64</sup>

As an example of this viewpoint, Mevorah quotes the famous Romantic Catholic politician and author François Chateaubriand who visited Palestine in 1806–1807 and also served as a minister in Napoleon’s government.<sup>65</sup> This is how Chateaubriand describes his visit to Jerusalem and the small Jewish community there, which personifies the essence of the Jewish people as perceived by a French Catholic.

What they did five thousand years ago, these people still continue to do. Seventeen times have they witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem, yet nothing can discourage them, nothing can prevent them from turning their faces towards Sion. To see the Jews scattered over the whole world, according to the word of God, must doubtless excite surprise: but to be struck with supernatural astonishment, you must view them at Jerusalem; you must behold these rightful masters of Judea living as slaves and strangers in their own country; you must behold them expecting, under all oppressions, a king who is to deliver them. Crushed by the cross that condemns them and is planted on their heads, skulking near the Temple, of which not one stone is left upon another, they continue in their deplorable infatuation. The Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, are swept from the earth; and a petty tribe, whose origin preceded that of those great nations,

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<sup>63</sup> Raphael Mahler, *History of the Jewish People in Modern Times*, 7 vols. (Merhaviah: Sifriat Poalim, 1952–1980), 1:179; 2:197 (Hebrew).

<sup>64</sup> For more details, see Mevorah, “Problem of the Messiah,” 1:101.

<sup>65</sup> Chateaubriand, who was opposed to the French Revolution, returned to the fold of Catholicism in its wake. His book was first published in three volumes in 1811.

still exists unmixed among the ruins of its native land. If anything among nations wears the character of a miracle, that character, in my opinion, is here legibly impressed.<sup>66</sup>

It is important to note that in France, during the years of Napoleon's reign, practical politics began to greatly overshadow the theological element. Aspirations for the Restoration of the Jews were present mostly only among progressive Catholics. In England, in contrast, that concept had already developed in the eighteenth century, without direct relation to the controversy regarding the legal status of the Jews. In England, belief in the Restoration of the Jews became a millenarist expectation which at times also served as the basis for political plans and proposals.<sup>67</sup>

According to the millenarist viewpoint, the Thousand Year Reign of Christ on earth cannot begin until the Jewish people regroups in its ancestral homeland and is finally ready to accept Christ as the messiah. This belief had a long and continuous history in England, beginning in the Reformation period. For many circles, the Bible, not the ecclesiastical hierarchy, was the ultimate source of religious authority. Many believed that a simple reading of the Holy Scriptures enables to forecast the fate of humanity. A continuous tradition, based on a myriad of verses in the Old and New Testaments, took shape in the Church of England, one that connected the coming of the millennial age with the re-establishment of a Jewish entity in the Holy Land. Jesus Christ is anointed in Jerusalem and, surrounded by the twelve apostles, achieves peace with his people and rules the world for a thousand years until the War at the End of Days and the Final Judgment. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars changed the eschatological outlook, in general, and Restorationism in particular, and converted them from esoteric questions, as they had been until the eighteenth century, into an issue that began to interest the population at large. The Napoleonic invasion of the Holy Land, together with his alleged proclamation to the Jews asserting his support of their return to the Holy Land and the convocation of the Grand Sanhedrin in Paris in 1807, were all events that *prima facie* were in keeping with millenarist interpretations of the fate of the Jewish people.<sup>68</sup>

Vereté, in his in-depth study of the concept of the Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant thought, states that though it indeed resulted from a certain manner

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**66** François-René Chateaubriand, *Travels in Greece, Palestine, Egypt, and Barbary*, tr. Frederic Shoberl, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London: H. Colburn, 1812), 182–83. His admiration for the Jews is obvious from this passage, yet at the same time he emphasizes that they are “scattered over the whole world, according to the word of God” and are “crushed by the cross that condemns them.” For his views, which served as an archetype for the romantic-conservative attitude towards the Jews and their messianic beliefs, see Mevorah, “Problem of the Messiah,” 1:102–3.

**67** A comprehensive discussion of this subject is in Mayir Vereté, “The Idea of the Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought,” in *From Palmerston to Balfour: Collected Essays*, ed. Norman Rose (London: F. Cass, 1992), 78–140.

**68** On millenarism, see Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: “Ritual Murder,” Politics, and the Jews in 1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 285–89 and the sources cited there.

of interpreting the Scriptures, it was very much related to millenarism and thus greatly increased the interest in Jews, as well as the belief among the Jews themselves in the concept of Restoration. Vereté points out that the concept of the Restoration of the Jews had already emerged and developed in France in the late eighteenth century, where it gained a significant foothold. However, by the last decade of that century it was already possible to discern that there was a difference between England and France in the interest shown in the Jewish people, and that the idea of Restoration had struck deep roots among the British public. In England it continued to gain strength throughout the nineteenth century, while in France it gradually diminished.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, we can sum up and conclude that almost all the restoration projects originated in Christian millenarist circles, and the phenomenon was not limited to Britain alone. While there were also millenarist adherents of Jewish Restoration on the European continent and in North America, they became an important political force only in England and Scotland.<sup>70</sup>

Nevertheless, in terms of the world history of the Jewish people, we cannot underestimate the importance of the idea of the Restoration of the Jews, despite the great difference between Jews and gentiles. It appears that at the end of the eighteenth century, we can trace one element shared by all: the messianic aspiration for Restoration of the Jews. A by-product was the growing tendency in Europe to perceive Jews as suited to be part of European societies as a group of unique character, and not as people who should be stripped of their religious-national uniqueness and brought to convert to Christianity.<sup>71</sup>

Yet, with regard to the connection between the Napoleonic invasion and the idea of establishing a Jewish state, it appears that the truth lies with the scholars who maintain that Napoleon's proclamation never existed, but was created as a myth and a fantasy. Napoleon had other objectives for his invasion of the East and it is doubtful if he was even aware of ideas regarding the establishment of a Jewish state. In 1799, the Jewish people themselves were far from holding any Zionist nationalist idea of a return to the Holy Land. The Jewish community in the country at that time was very small, about 7,000 people, of whom only 2,000 lived in Jerusalem. Yet, like every legend, Napoleon's proclamation, albeit false – if indeed it was of his time and not a later fabrication – can certainly reflect something of the spirit of the times, a period of Christian millenarist messianic ideas, and in some way also of Jewish messianic concepts regarding the possibility that the Jewish people would return to the land of their forefathers.

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**69** For English Protestant thought on this issue between 1790 and 1840, see Vereté, "Restoration of the Jews." I shall discuss below the extreme anti-Jewish stance of the French consul in Damascus and central figures in France concerning the Damascus Affair.

**70** I shall immediately turn to millenarist influences on the Damascus Affair, which occurred forty years after Napoleon's invasion.

**71** Mevorah, "Problem of the Messiah," 1:12–13.

## The Damascus blood libel and political developments in 1840

A major event relating to Jews, forty years after the Napoleonic invasion of the Holy Land, was the severe case of the blood libel in 1840 in Damascus, the central city of Greater Syria. Much has already been written on blood libels against Jews, that already began in the Middle Ages. Many articles have also been published on the Damascus Affair. It should also be noted that there were blood libels in Greater Syria before the Damascus Affair: in Aleppo in 1810, in Beirut in 1824, in Antioch in 1826, in Hama in 1829, and in Tripoli in 1834.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, we may ask what were the central elements that caused the Damascus Affair to be so severe, with such a significant impact, and so famous throughout the entire world?

Jonathan Frankel has reconstructed the events. In February 1840, an Italian monk and his servant disappeared in Damascus. The charge of ritual murder was brought against the Jews. News of the case spread across the Middle East, Europe, and the entire Western world. Reports were published in newspapers in England, France, and Germany, and diplomats and governments became involved in it. Jews throughout the world sought ways to rescue the surviving prisoners in Damascus and save the repute of the Jews in the Levant.<sup>73</sup>

In an attempt to clarify the character, significance, and importance of the Damascus Affair for the Middle East as a whole and its special context for the Jewish people, the Holy Land, and the Restoration of the Jews, in what follows I shall focus on seven main aspects: (a) The city of Damascus and its Jewish community; (b) The political situation in 1840 between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire; (c) The French-Christian-Catholic perspective on the Affair; (d) The perspective of the local Christian and Muslim population; (e) Austrian and Protestant English involvement; (f) The appeal for global Jewish assistance; (g) The retreat of Muhammad 'Ali, and Jewish historiography.

### The city of Damascus and its Jewish community

In 1840, the Jewish population of Damascus numbered about 2,500 persons out of a total population of circa 100,000: Greek Catholic, 5,000; Maronites, 3,000; Greek Orthodox, circa 460 families; a few Syrian Jacobites and Armenians; a small number

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<sup>72</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 54 and the sources he cites. Frankel also mentions a blood libel in Jerusalem in 1838, while other sources locate it precisely in the neighborhood of Bab al-Huta. For blood libels in the Holy Land, including Bab al-Huta, see Eliezer Raphael Malachi, *Studies in the History of the Old Yishuv*, ed. Galia Yardeni-Agmon (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1971), 79–89 (Hebrew). From what we know about blood libels in the Holy Land, we can conclude that, in character and extent, even those that occurred elsewhere in the empire were nowhere similar to that in Damascus.

<sup>73</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 42–43.



of Europeans, mainly merchants; and all the rest were Sunni Muslims.<sup>74</sup> Most Jews lived in dire poverty, and the Jewish quarter left a general impression of filth and neglect. Nevertheless, there was a group of Jewish families that filled an important function in the city as bankers and merchants.<sup>75</sup>

The response of the Jewish community to the blood libel was one of utter shock. The Jews could not imagine that large sectors of the public would believe an accusation of such a ritual murder. In addition, the separation of the community from the mother community in Istanbul, which was still under the control of the Ottoman Empire while they were under the Egyptian rule of Muhammad 'Ali, made it difficult to transfer information and consult with the Jewish leadership there. Most surprising was that such a libel occurred in Damascus of all places, then an important city both in financial matters as the main city of the province of Syria al-Shams, and commercially as a trade center on the convoy route from Bagdad to Egypt. The blood libel, the subsequent imprisonments, interrogations, and torture all took place in the city in which served consuls of the European powers. It seems that the Jewish community did not anticipate the degree of hatred of the other city residents towards them, nor the arrests and torture of the Jews who were apprehended, such horrendous torture that caused some people to confess to acts they never committed.<sup>76</sup>

### **The political situation in 1840 between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire**

One cannot fathom the Damascus Affair without discussing the complex political situation in Damascus in 1840. After Muhammad 'Ali's invasion of Syria and conquest of Damascus and Aleppo, his army, under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, crossed the Taurus Mountains and won a decisive victory against the Ottoman forces near the city of Konya on December 20, 1832. The European powers, mainly Russia and England, put an end to his advance. Their threat to intervene in the war prevented the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The Egyptians were forced to retreat, and a peace agreement, accepted by all, was signed at the beginning of 1833. By its terms Syria and Palestine would remain under Egyptian rule. Ibrahim Pasha was to be the governor of the conquered area and Damascus became his seat.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Avraham Yaacov Brawer, "New Information on the Damascus Blood Libel," in *Shmuel Krauss Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1937), 261–62 (Hebrew).

<sup>75</sup> For the Jewish community in Damascus and its leading families, such as the Farhi family, see *ibid.*, 261–63 and references there to additional sources and to the appendices.

<sup>76</sup> For names of Jews who were arrested, their families, and others involved in dealing with the blood libel, as well as the persecutions and horrendous tortures undergone by the prisoners, see Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 31–51, esp. 40 for the tortures. See also Brawer, "New Information," 272–74.

<sup>77</sup> In the later years of Egyptian rule he moved his headquarters elsewhere. In 1840, the year of the blood libel, it was near the Turkish border.



Egypt and France approved the agreement in the hope that the other European states – England, Russia, and Austria – who also agreed to it, would accept Egyptian rule of Greater Syria and view it as a *fait accompli*. But those European powers had other interests in the Middle East and were biding their time, waiting for an opportunity to push the Egyptians out of the Syrian province. In contrast, France wished for the region to remain under the rule of Egypt which was then under its influence. Since the Napoleonic period, the government in Paris determined that the increased power of Muhammad ‘Ali and the Egyptian state were a primary French interest. However, during the period of Egyptian rule local uprisings broke out in the Levant: Hauran, and Mt. Lebanon. Furthermore, Muslims from the Nablus area, Druze, and Maronite Christians placed the stability of the new order in doubt. In 1839 a rebellion broke out among the local residents, following which the Ottoman army invaded northern Syria. It was repelled, and the Egyptian forces gained another crucial victory at Nizip. On July 27, 1839, the ambassadors of the large powers issued a joint communiqué declaring the conflict between the Ottoman sultan and the Egyptian ruler to be an international problem. England and Russia banded together against France, which stood with Egypt.<sup>78</sup>

### **The French-Christian-Catholic perspective on the affair**

In November 1839, at the height of the conflict that threatened to involve not only Syria in a war, but Europe as well, the first consul in Syria, Count Ratti-Menton arrived in Damascus, the administrative capital of Syria under Egyptian rule. His role was to fortify French influence in the area and use it to assist in intensifying Muhammad ‘Ali’s control over the agitated population. Three months later he was faced with the disappearance of Father Tommaso and his servant. According to most historians of the Damascus Affair, the French consul Ratti-Menton was deeply involved in the development of the story and was its driving force, aided by Christian monks and Catholic personages, but also by members of the other denominations in Damascus.<sup>79</sup>

Following is a reconstruction of the events as they unfolded. On February 5, 1840 Father Tommaso and his servant disappeared; on February 7 an interpreter and an official of the French consulate went to the governor general of Syria, Sharif Pasha, to inform him of their disappearance and share with him the suspicions against the Jews. The governor authorized Ratti-Menton to search houses and make arrests with the help of the local police. On Sunday February 9 a few Jews were

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<sup>78</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 19–20, and the sources he cites for the Battle of Nizip.

<sup>79</sup> Brawer, “New Information,” 267–69, writes that Consul Ratti-Menton brought together all the Christian groups in the city in the matter of the blood libel. He also notes the three Roman Catholic monasteries in Damascus, the smallest of which belonged to the Capuchin order, and provides information about Father Tommaso. See also Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 50–51 and the sources he cites.

arrested, who denied any connection to the deed. Several days later more Jews were arrested. Two weeks later, on February 28, the governor informed Ratti-Menton that there were a number of Jews who had begun confessing to the killing, and even described how it was done. On February 29 Count Ratti-Menton sent his first report to Paris regarding the disappearance of Father Tommaso and his servant.<sup>80</sup> As the affair developed, the French consul continued to play a central role in the attempts to prevent an investigation and the reopening of a new trial. The new French prime minister, Adolphe Thiers, supported him and saw it as a matter of “French prestige.”<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, there is no doubt that without the support of the non-Jewish population of Damascus, the libel could not have developed as it did.

### The perspective of the local Christian and Muslim population

As noted, the status of the Christian denominations had greatly improved during the period of Egyptian rule in Syria and the Holy Land (1831–1840). The Egyptian rulers gave preference to liberalization for Christians and Jews together with harsher treatment of Muslims. The status of the Greek Catholic community in Damascus improved greatly due to its strong Catholic connection with France, Muhammad ‘Ali’s ally. This was also the case with the appointment of Hanna Bahri Bey, a Greek Catholic, who was appointed minister of finance by Sharif Pasha, the Muslim governor of Damascus, and whose brother, too, received a prominent position.<sup>82</sup> It appears that in the first and crucial stage, in February, the entire Christian community of Damascus supported the accusation of ritual murder. This was not just a matter of the Greek Catholic Church, the Patriarch, and the Catholic monks, but of all who lived in the Christian quarter: Greeks, Maronites, and Armenians. Merchants and European diplomats in Damascus, of all Christian denominations, also believed it.<sup>83</sup>

Interestingly, the Muslim population, which was usually not involved in blood libels, joined the accusers, among them very dignified persons in the city, including Sharif Pasha, the adopted son and son-in-law of Muhammad ‘Ali.<sup>84</sup> As early as February 26, the deputy consul of Austria said that the blood libel was the initiative of Sharif Pasha, with the purpose of extorting money from the Jews. It is

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**80** For many details of the development of the blood libel, see Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 17–30. On the judge and the trial, see also Brawer, “New Information,” 274–75.

**81** Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 439.

**82** Brawer, “New Information,” 264–67, who also notes that the Papacy stood behind France in the Damascus affair. The papal secretary at times even complained about the appointment of Jewish consuls.

**83** *Ibid.*, 269–72. Brawer stresses that the Christian masses believed the blood libel, and at first so did the British and Austrian consuls. For more details, see Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 31–64.

**84** Brawer, “New Information,” 269–70, suggests that since Father Tommaso’s servant was a Muslim, his fellow Muslims also joined in the libel.

reasonable to assume that he also had other reasons. He probably believed that his actions would serve to enhance Muhammad 'Ali's standing in his informal alliance with France.<sup>85</sup>

Ben-Zion Dinur (Dinaburg) believes that the unrestrained incitement against Jews in the late winter and in the spring of 1840 was so widespread that it cannot be explained except as a pre-organized plot. According to him, this assumption is supported by the large number of reports from Syria in the European press.<sup>86</sup> However, it seems that one of the main causes was the determined policy of Muhammad 'Ali to augment the status of the Christian community in the regions under his rule, together with the fact that the Ottoman government, in order to bolster its own rule, began to take similar steps with the declaration of equal rights in the Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane (see above) promulgated in November 1839 that also included reforms to protect Christians and Jews, which in turn caused Muhammad 'Ali to advance this tendency even more.<sup>87</sup>

### Austrian and Protestant English involvement

Austria is a Catholic state. But unlike France, which throughout the centuries since the Crusades perceived of itself as the guardian of Catholics in the East and maintained good relations with the Ottoman sultans, in Austria the situation was different. Relations between Austria and France were tense, and the House of Habsburg was considered the rival of the French rulers. In addition, differences between the French and Austrian consuls created conflicts between them. Austria's interest in Syria lay mostly in economic matters, in which it was assisted by the wealthy families of Jewish merchants. While the Austrian consuls dealt mainly with commerce, the French consuls were involved in political matters.<sup>88</sup> It thus comes as no surprise that the first person to empathically come to the defense of the Jews was the Austrian consul general in Alexandria, Anton von Laurin. When he first heard about the blood libel he contacted Muhammad 'Ali on March 28 and a second time on April 10, demanding that he issue an order to stop the trial in Damascus and cease the false accusations and horrible tortures there. It is probably thanks to him that torture came to a stop after four of the nine accused Jews were already dead. He also instructed the Austrian consul in Damascus, who initially joined in the accusations, to firmly protect the Jews in his city. Thus the latter began protecting Jews of standing in Damascus who became his protégés. He spoke out openly against the French consul's

<sup>85</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 52–54 and the sources cited there.

<sup>86</sup> Ben-Zion Dinur (Dinaburg), "The Political Character of the Damascus Affair," *Hashiloah* 41 (1924): 519 (Hebrew).

<sup>87</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 60–62.

<sup>88</sup> Brawer, "New Information," 266–67.

activities and stance regarding the Affair. Laurin wrote letters to Baron James de Rothschild, the Austrian consul general in Paris, requesting him to intervene in the matter although it was not in his jurisdiction. On March 8 he directly contacted the Austrian Chancellor Metternich to ask him to take action and also requested that he contact the Papacy in Rome so that it should not intervene or support the blood libel. Metternich acquiesced to the request and indeed began exerting his influence in various places.<sup>89</sup>

In addition to the Austrian efforts, British activity also got underway with the purpose of stopping the trial and its harsh outcomes. Even earlier, during the rule of Muhammad 'Ali in Syria and the Holy Land, England began enhancing its standing in the East by exploiting that government's more liberal policy towards the minority sects, the Christians and Jews, under its patronage. This was especially conspicuous in Jerusalem where a branch of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews was established. The society had been established in London already in 1809 with the proliferation of millenarist ideas in Britain.<sup>90</sup> However until the thirties, the Ottoman government did not allow Protestants to establish their missions in the East, including Jerusalem. The London society's mission station was established in Jerusalem in 1835, represented by John Nicolayson, a Protestant missionary who was already in Jerusalem at the time.<sup>91</sup> This organization was one of the first to intervene in the Damascus Affair. The members of the society in Jerusalem convened on March 16 and decided to act. Nicolayson's diary documents that as soon as he heard about the blood libel he was determined to check the unsettling rumors coming from Damascus. After the facts were confirmed by the Muslim governor of Damascus, who was assisted by the Catholic monks in the city, Nicolayson and the small staff with him decided to send an envoy of their own to check the matter. The task was given to George Wilden Pieritz, a Jewish convert and member of the staff. Pieritz set out to Damascus via Jaffa on March 18 and arrived in Damascus on March 30, bringing a letter of recommendation from William Tanner Young, the British vice-consul in Jerusalem. Pieritz remained there for eight days. He made no effort to conceal his confidence that the accusation against the Jews was an absurd political move and a criminal act. After conversations with local officials he set out for Alexandria. Initially he failed to convince the

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<sup>89</sup> For details, see *ibid.*, 277–78. Brawer concludes that the Austrian consul was one of the leading heroes of the Damascus affair and should be considered a “righteous gentile” who came to the aid of the Jewish people. For this consul's visit to Jerusalem in 1836 and his help in receiving a firman permitting the Jews to build the Hurvah synagogue, see Morgenstern, *Hastening Redemption*, 114–15. See also Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 86–105.

<sup>90</sup> For the founding and activity of the society, which stressed the conversion of the Jews; see Mevorah, “Problem of the Messiah,” 1:142–43 and n. 40.

<sup>91</sup> On the beginnings of Protestant presence in Jerusalem and John Nicolayson, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 250–51.

British consul in Alexandria to come to the immediate defense of the Jews. But within a few days the picture changed completely. On April 20 and 25, documents were issued with orders from Muhammad 'Ali to immediately cease the torture and executions. Indeed these were stopped, but the masses in Damascus continued to demand that the Jews be found guilty. Continued foreign intervention led Muhammad 'Ali to issue additional orders for their cessation.<sup>92</sup>

The fact that Pieritz carried a letter from the British vice-consul has led many scholars to deduce that the involvement of the English mission in Jerusalem with regards to the Damascus Affair was also connected to the British consulate in the city and that the establishment of the consulate was related to millenarist ideas promoted by Lord Shaftesbury, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (1801–1885), whose name then was Anthony Ashley Cooper.<sup>93</sup> He also conveyed these ideas to Palmerston, the British foreign minister at the time, all derived from the concept of the Restoration of the Jews which both of them began to believe in more intensely, and his intention was to assist the Jews to return to the land of their forefathers.<sup>94</sup> However it appears that this was not the case. In a detailed article by Vereté regarding the establishment of the British consulate in Jerusalem, he proves that the idea of establishing the consulate was raised earlier, in 1834–1836, during the period of Egyptian rule in the city, and was realized in 1838 with the appointment of Young as the vice-consul in Jerusalem. That was before the Damascus Affair which occurred in 1840. Vereté did not find any Jewish aspect to have influenced the establishment of the consulate, such as Restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land, encouraging their immigration, or any interest in the condition of the Jews and their future. Nor was there any connection to the conversion of Jews to Christianity.

The main causes that led to the establishment of the British consulate in Jerusalem, according to Vereté, were fear of a stronger Russian foothold in Jerusalem and the firm establishment of the French Catholic presence which had already gained strength in that city even earlier. In his opinion, Zionist historiography and the literature dealing with the history of the Holy Land and its Jewish community written after the Balfour Declaration, which maintains that the establishment of the consulate at such an early date was an act in support of the Zionist idea by the British government and public, is mistaken. He believes this interpretation probably originates from the

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<sup>92</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 104–5, including his evaluation of the role played by Consul Anton Laurin.

<sup>93</sup> Following Vereté, I shall refer to him as Lord Shaftesbury, even though he became the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury only in 1851. Frankel refers to him as Lord Ashley, as he was known during the events discussed. For Shaftesbury, see Michael Polowetzky, *Victorian Intellectuals and the Birth of Modern Zionism* (Westport, CO: Praeger, 1995), 1–22. See also Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land*, 27–28.

<sup>94</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 291. It was probably Shaftesbury who decreed that the area of jurisdiction of the British vice-consul in Jerusalem extended to all of the Holy Land in its ancient biblical borders. See also *ibid.*, n. 31.

diary of Lord Shaftesbury and a certain section of it that is quoted in many sources. Shaftesbury writes there that he was the one who convinced Palmerston to establish the consulate in Jerusalem, all this due to his own millenarist views. Vereté tries to explain how such an interpretation of Shaftesbury's words, which are imprecise, led to the mistaken notion that the British established their consulate in Jerusalem due to their support of Zionism.<sup>95</sup>

Notwithstanding Vereté's conclusion, the importance of millenarist ideas in their time cannot be denied altogether. In another article, Vereté shows that Shaftesbury's ideas were rooted in the religious revival in England during the 1790s. He assesses the connection between this revival and the interest in the fate of the Jews and focuses on an innovative feature of the period. In his opinion, what aroused the Christian millenarists was related to the changes brought on by the French Revolution and the sense that the End of Days was drawing near. At that time various persons were involved with End of Days calculations, and there were differences of opinion among them concerning the return of the Jews to their homeland. They also differed as to whether the Jews had to convert to Christianity beforehand or not, and what would be Britain's part in this process of redemption.<sup>96</sup>

Lord Shaftesbury was among the most prominent British millenarists and took an interest in the Jewish issue. Indeed, in his diary entry for September 21, 1838, Shaftesbury notes that he had convinced Palmerston regarding the concept of Jewish return. In 1839 he published a long article to which he did not sign his name, in which he presented his hope that the Jews would return to their homeland to make its wastelands bloom. Napoleon Bonaparte had already realized the value of many of the Jews, and what Napoleon had planned with violence and pretensions the English are permitted to exploit intelligently and justly to maintain the empire.<sup>97</sup> However, as already noted, all this was later discovered to be imprecise.

### The appeal for global Jewish assistance

One of the surprising things about the Damascus Affair is the relatively few responses by the Jewish communities, including the Damascus community itself, at the beginning of the Affair. As noted, the community was surprised, unorganized, and cut off from

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<sup>95</sup> Mayir Vereté, "Why Was a British Consulate Established in Jerusalem?" in *From Palmerston to Balfour: Collected Essays*, ed. Norman Rose (London: F. Cass, 1992), 45–77, esp. the introduction and summary. See also id., "A Plan for the Internationalization of Jerusalem, 1840–1841," in *ibid.*, 141–57.

<sup>96</sup> Vereté, "Restoration of the Jews." For Christian millenarism, see Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 284–310.

<sup>97</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 281–83. On Lord Palmerston and his family connections to Shaftesbury, see *ibid.*, 284–310. For a summary of Palmerston's policy vis-à-vis Muhammad 'Ali and Sultan Mahmud II, see Ehrlich (ed.), *Introduction*, 2:207–9.

the mother community in Istanbul under Ottoman rule, thus making an appeal for assistance difficult. It was only on March 27, seven weeks after the Affair began, that the leaders of the community in Istanbul began to dispatch letters to Europe on behalf of the Damascus Jews. They noted that they could not help since they were under a government that did not have amicable relations with Egypt.

The Jewish community in Jerusalem did act in this matter and sent messengers to Istanbul and Alexandria, but could not do much. The Jews of Izmir (Smyrna) were aroused to action and wrote letters to Jewish personalities in the European countries, the Rothschild family bank managers, merchants and Jewish associations in Amsterdam, the Rothschild family in France, the Montefiore family members in England, and more, but they did so fairly late.<sup>98</sup>

Apparently, when news of the Damascus Affair initially reached Europe these were mainly news reports, so the gravity of the situation was not understood. Only later did many realize that the Affair was indeed very severe, that it lay mainly in the sphere of international politics, and that its results might influence the relative status of the Great Powers in the struggle over the Middle East and the political conflict between France and Britain, especially due to Prime Minister Thiers who perceived it as a matter of French “prestige” and was unwilling to back down from his position.

At the beginning of April 1840, leading Jewish personages began breaking their silence. On April 30, Lord Palmerston even received a delegation of the Council of Jewish Communities. Adolphe Crémieux, a member of the Rothschild family, became involved, as did the established leaderships of the Jews in England and France. All of them began to wield their influence. Jewish delegations headed by Crémieux and Montefiore set out to Alexandria and Constantinople. The central demand was to reopen the Damascus trial, conduct a new investigation, and fully exonerate the Jewish community of the horrendous accusation. There was wide support of this demand in Britain. On June 19, Lord Shaftesbury delivered a speech in which he noted Palmerston’s support of the demand. In contrast, Prime Minister Thiers of France opposed any attempt to reopen the trial. The conflict gradually became more severe.<sup>99</sup>

### **The retreat of Muhammad ‘Ali, and Jewish historiography**

In July 1840 it began to be clear that the final turning point had been reached. Suddenly the center of gravity moved from the Jewish issue towards the political

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<sup>98</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 79–85. See also Nathan M. Gelber, “The Question of Palestine, 1840–1841,” in *Long before Zionism: Jewish Nationhood and the Palestine Question*, ed. Shmuel Almog (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 1981), 107–14 (Hebrew).

<sup>99</sup> Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 186–94. Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land*, 130–32, introduced and published a document relating to Palmerston’s involvement in the Damascus Affair, and referred to articles by Albert M. Hyamson and Isaiah Friedman as well as to the diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Judith Montefiore in relation to that event.



struggle for control of Greater Syria, including the Holy Land. These developments were widely covered by the continental press and lent force to the claim that the Damascus Affair was *the result of the struggle between the European states for control over Syria*. After much effort four European countries – Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia – formed a quadruple alliance to return to the Ottoman Empire all the territories conquered by Muhammad ‘Ali. On July 15, 1840 an agreement was signed by these allies to that effect. The agreement was considered Palmerston’s personal victory. It also included a threat to use force against Muhammad ‘Ali if he did not agree to retreat from the territories he held and waive any claim to the area south of a continuous line from Rosh Hanikrah to the Sea of Galilee.<sup>100</sup>

Muhammad ‘Ali rejected the ultimatum. British and Austrian warships set sail to Beirut and subjugated the city after severe shelling. On November 3, the allied fleet also arrived, under the command of Commodore Napier, and opened fire at the walls of Acre (see above). It was only then that Muhammad ‘Ali decided on a general retreat from all the conquered territories. On December 29, 1840 he ordered his son, Ibrahim Pasha, to take his army out of Damascus, and the latter began a long retreat to Egypt through the Jordan Valley, Gaza, and El-Arish. The Ottomans once again ruled Greater Syria, including the Holy Land and Jerusalem.<sup>101</sup>

The final outcome of the Damascus Affair and the end of the Egyptian invasion of the Levant was a hard blow to French prestige and greatly enhanced the standing of Britain throughout the area. As early as summer 1841, immediately after the Egyptian withdrawal, the foundations were laid for the construction of Christ Church in Jerusalem, the first Protestant church in the Middle East. In addition, a joint Anglo-Prussian Protestant diocese was established in the city. The first bishop appointed to the Holy city was the Jewish convert Michael Solomon Alexander, who was consecrated for the role by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Westminster Cathedral.<sup>102</sup> The London Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews celebrated its achievements.<sup>103</sup> Lord Shaftesbury stood behind the efforts to achieve

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**100** Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 284. See the source Frankel cites for the delineation of this area as “Palestine south of a line from Ras en-Naqla to Lake Tiberias.”

**101** *Ibid.*, 386 and the sources cited in n. 4.

**102** On the establishment of the Anglo-Prussian bishopric in Jerusalem, see Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land*, 48–49; Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:250–51, also dealing with the establishment of Christ Church which was sanctioned by the Ottoman authorities since it was to serve as a chapel for the British consul, whose residence was next door. These pages also include a discussion of the Protestant “quarter” that developed there. See also the first chapters in Yaron Perry, *British Mission to the Jews in Nineteenth-century Palestine* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

**103** For the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, its membership and the Jewish converts who were active in it, and also about Alexander McCaul – a professor of Hebrew at Kings College, London – and his daughter Elizabeth Anne, who married James Finn, the second British consul in Jerusalem, see Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (London: Redman, 1957), 118–20. Tuchman believes that it was Elizabeth



the millenarist concept of the Restoration of the Jews, and Foreign Minister Palmerston supported and helped with these matters.<sup>104</sup>

To summarize, the Damascus Affair was one of the severe events that befell the Jewish people in the nineteenth century. A terrible accusation was leveled at the Jewish community. Nine of its people were arrested and underwent horrible torture, of which four died and the rest pleaded guilty to the baseless charge under torture. The Jewish community in Damascus and the entire Jewish people were stunned by the opinions that still prevailed among the Christian population of the time, including some of its leaders. They were also shocked by the fact that the Muslims, together with some of their foremost leaders, participated in the hatred and horrendous allegations against the Jews. But there were also a few millenarist Christians who viewed the salvation of the Jews from the terrible accusation as the beginning of hope for the redemption of the Jewish people and a first step in the return to the Jewish homeland.

### **Summary: 1799 and 1840, important turning points in the history of Eretz Israel but not yet the beginning of the Zionist movement**

One must utterly reject the view that the Napoleonic invasion had any connection to the issue of the return of the Jews to their fatherland. The importance of the Napoleonic invasion of the East lies mainly in the fact that it created the first shock wave in and the beginning of Western penetration of that region. During the Napoleonic invasion the territory of the Holy Land was part of the Ottoman Empire and had no status of its own. Furthermore, Muhammad 'Ali and his rule in Egypt, including the army he raised, were the result of French influence and French involvement. The year 1840 was also a turning point in the history of the Holy Land. The Ottoman rule that returned to the country was very different in character and organization from the one that ruled the land before the Egyptian invasion (see above). This year was also important in terms of Jewish history. In his article written in 1924, Dinur claims that the Damascus Affair provided the Jewish people with a unique opportunity to bolster its standing and pave the way to Jewish sovereignty

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Anne Finn who sent a copy of Shaftesbury's letter to Palmerston to Arthur James Balfour. On the Society and its leading personalities, see also Perry, *British Mission to the Jews*. Further discussion of the Finns will be provided in Chapter Four.

**104** Tuchman focuses her book primarily on these personalities. For her, Shaftesbury symbolized the Bible and Palmerston the sword of her title; see Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, ch. 10, esp. 113–15. She maintains that Shaftesbury was the most influential non-political person of the Victorian age, with the exception of Charles Darwin, and that he believed that the Jews were the means by which the biblical prophecy would be fulfilled. The return of the Jews to their ancestral homeland was a necessary precondition for that great event.

in the Holy Land, but that the Jewish leaders missed it because they were up to their necks in the blood libel affair. Other Jewish historians also pointed to a real opportunity at the time to lay the foundations for a Jewish state, and even criticized the Jewish leadership for not being aware of it.<sup>105</sup>

Frankel responded to all these, noting that there is no solid evidence for these assumptions. This is so since Palmerston vigorously rejected the idea spread by Christian millenarists that he should support the establishment of a Jewish state in the Holy Land. As a result, the governments of Europe gave no thought to the matter at the time. The truth of the matter is that the mere thought that the European powers would seriously consider the establishment of a Jewish state forty years before the establishment of the first Jewish nationalist movement “Hibbat Zion” (Love of Zion) is an anachronism.<sup>106</sup>

On the one hand, I cannot but support these unequivocal conclusions. On the other hand, it may be that we can connect the Damascus Affair with the aggregate of ideas regarding Jewish settlement raised by some of the “precursors of Zionism.” For example, Moses Hess, in his famous book published in 1862, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Last National Question*, devoted most of a chapter to how the 1840 crisis affected him. It is perhaps possible to identify in 1840 the very first sprouts of Jewish nationalism which arose among Jewish students in central Europe and in the visions of Jewish thinkers and dreamers who put forward plans for settling the Holy Land. In the country itself new Jewish institutions and initiatives began to be established, such as progressive schools, neighborhoods outside the walls of Jerusalem, involvement of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in matters of education, and the establishment of the Mikveh Israel agricultural school and other general ideas of productivization in the Old Yishuv, and the beginnings of agricultural settlement. But all these did not yet gain the practical support of a large part of the Jewish people, which did not progress in deeds, only furthering plans that remained solely in writing and were of a personal nature. The renowned geographer Avraham Yaakov Brawer, who wrote an in-depth study of the Damascus Affair, also concluded that nothing came of all the talk and ideas of the time, and another forty years were to pass until a real Zionist act. That came about only at the beginning of the 1880s, when the first organized Zionist aliyah to the Holy Land began. To the character and essence of this wave of immigration, the only one which should be seen as the beginning of revolutionary Zionist settlement in Eretz Israel, I shall devote Chapter Five.

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**105** Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 296–97, 428, where he also notes the opinions of Gelber and G. Kressel and their sources. Tuchman ties the activity of Moses Montefiore in 1839 to Lord Shaftesbury’s vision; see Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, 113–33 and elsewhere.

**106** Stein, too, assigns great significance to the deeds of Shaftesbury and Palmerston, and draws a connection between the Balfour Declaration and their ideas; see Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (London: Vallentine-Mitchell, 1961), 5–9, 227–28. The Balfour Declaration will be discussed in Chapter Seven.



Napoleon Bonaparte in Jaffa, 1799.  
Artist: Robert Ker Porter



Francis Rawdon Chesney.  
A forerunner of the Suez Canal



Jazzar Pasha sitting in judgment.  
Artist: Francis B. Spilsbury



An Arab sheikh, 1841.  
Artist: David Wilkie



Muhammad 'Ali, 1840.  
Ruler of Egypt



Ibrahim Pasha.  
Stepson of Muhammad 'Ali



The young Sultan Abdülmecid, 1840.



Akil Aga, 1848.  
Head of a Bedouin tribe in the Galilee



Lord Shaftesbury (Anthony Ashley Cooper).



Lord Palmerston.  
British Foreign Minister



Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer.  
A precursor of Zionism



Sir Moses Montefiore.



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## Chapter 2: Nineteenth-century travel literature

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## The literature of Holy Land travelers in the nineteenth century

Research and study of past times is first and foremost dependent on the availability of contemporary original historical sources and their character. This also holds true with regards to the first eighty years of the nineteenth century, with which I am dealing in the present chapter. There are many and diverse sources available from that period, but these are very limited vis-à-vis the geographical landscape. The same is true for sources dealing with Ottoman rule, Muslims, the Jewish community, and local Christian-Arab groups.

With regards to the official sources of the Ottoman Empire, it is important to remember that the Holy Land at the time was part of a marginal area of the Empire, and government sources we can consult deal mainly with the organization of government, tax collection, and general matters relating to government. As for the local Arab population, the majority at the time was illiterate; thus, most of the sources we have originate from the local elite Arab families. With regard to the sources from the local Jewish community, these focus mainly on internal developments in the different groups and factions, and the same is true for the local Christian population: Greek Orthodox, Latins (Catholics), Armenians, and others. As a result, it is difficult to draw one general picture of the cultural landscape of the country, the nature of the land, its human and social geography, and more general historical changes in the country, but only one from a specific local standpoint.

In contrast, with regards to the first eighty years of the nineteenth century there is a profusion of sources created by private persons visiting the Holy Land, as well as various organizations, groups, and institutions, all of whom wrote about it in detail. This corpus is known as “travel literature,” a diverse body of works which includes many types of sources. In this chapter I will discuss and evaluate these types of source materials.<sup>1</sup>

### Critique of travel literature as a historical source

Due to the great number of pilgrims who wrote travel literature at the time, sharp criticism has been expressed regarding the scientific value of this corpus, to the point of completely ruling it out as a reliable historical source. One major claim against it was that in large part it is nothing but plagiarism by travelers and pilgrims who never even visited the country or the sites described, and whose writings and descriptions were the result of copying one from the other. Of those who did visit the country, the

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is partially based on books and articles that I have published on Western travel literature, to which I will refer the reader for the sources, rather than repeating most of them here. Since the publication in 1970 of the Hebrew version of my *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* there has been growing interest in travel literature.

duration of their journey and sojourn in the land was very short, and they visited famous sites to which they traveled by the same safe routes. The travelers never visited most parts of the country. Accordingly, their descriptions reflect the point of view of passersby having only limited and superficial acquaintance with the sites visited. The extent of these works was often in inverse proportion to the length and scope of their visit. Their books were full of fantastic stories, irrelevant chatter, and lengthy, inexact, and valueless descriptions.<sup>2</sup>

Another criticism against travel literature was that since the majority of these travelers came due to Christian religious motives, they usually sought out Christian sites and elements. They stayed in Christian monasteries and their guides were the local monks, who had a fixed itinerary for the visits. They took the European travelers to the same sites and told the same stories related to the local and Christian traditions. This established a routine model which explains the similarity between different travel books even when they weren't directly copied one from another.

An additional criticism was that these works were replete with discussions of biblical subjects and theological arguments with almost no connection to the appearance of the land, its state, and the condition of the sites these authors visited. Some of the writers were often carried away into long and tedious biblical debates in order to justify things seen or certain Christian theories close to their hearts, but since they were not biblical scholars and had only scant and superficial knowledge of the topics they discussed, their books are valueless.<sup>3</sup>

However, the main claim against this corpus was that since the travelers were unfamiliar with the language, culture, and religions of the inhabitants of the Holy Land, they relied on local Arab guides, and since they couldn't gain much from their journey to the Holy Land their works were filled with facts and stories that were a *mélange* of local traditions, legends, and fantasies. It was even claimed that since the European travelers did not know the typical inclination of the local Arab inhabitants to do what they could to please their guests, they based themselves on the identification of topographic-historical sites by the guides even when the locals knew nothing about them. Accordingly, their books are imbued with the thoughts and opinions of the locals.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On this, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "Jerusalem Travel Literature as Historical Source and Cultural Phenomenon," in *With Eyes toward Zion—V: Jerusalem in the Mind of the Western World, 1800–1948*, ed. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh and Moshe Davis (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 25–26 and the sources cited there.

<sup>3</sup> Such criticism was voiced mainly by Bible scholars and experts in other fields of Jewish Studies. Western travelers were unfamiliar with matters pertaining to Jews, leading them to write very incorrect and inexact statements. See also Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 13–15.

<sup>4</sup> Criticism of this kind came particularly from scholars specializing in Islam and Muslim lands, who were well acquainted with the customs and culture of their inhabitants. Thus, they took a very negative view of the reports of Western travelers who "swallowed" all types of fantastic stories told them by local Arabs. For more details, see Ben-Arieh, "Jerusalem Travel Literature," 25–26.

These criticisms caused scholars of the Holy Land to avoid use of travel literature for research, and they turned to other sources, mainly the writings and archives of the many communities living in the land during the different historical periods.

### **The singularity of travel literature in the first eighty years of the nineteenth century**

A change of mind has come about in the assessment of travel literature, also with regards to previous historical periods, but mainly in relation to the nineteenth century. There was much diversity of travelers during this period that included those who remained in the country for extended periods of time and operated within it, such as missionaries, consuls, and men of the cloth who often became permanent residents. The number of travel books also increased from one decade to the next, mainly ever since the thirties and the forties. German bibliographer Reinhold Röhricht worked for twelve years on a comprehensive bibliography of these sources. His compilation, published in 1890, lists works from the start of the fourth century CE and ends in 1877. The chronological listing included 3,515 authors, most of them Europeans and Americans. Each entry gives the name of the traveler, the number of books he wrote, the place of publication, details and articles related to the books, and more. The number of items from 300 CE to 1800 CE is 1,561, i.e. an average of one per year. The number of books in the early centuries is small and gradually increases. From 1800 till the end of 1877, during the first eighty years of the nineteenth century, the number of authors is about 2,000, a tremendous increase. If we take into account that authors of that period wrote at length, their works at times comprising a number of volumes, and that they often wrote a number of books, we reach a scope of around 5,000 books written during the period.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the problem is not the lack of sources but their excess, raising the issue of how to assess them. Often the texts are unreliable, incorrect, and many times extremely lengthy on unimportant subjects. The classification of these sources into different types may make assessment easier since the differences between them are not just in quantity, but mainly in character and essence. I will therefore devote the following to the types of nineteenth-century travel literature.

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<sup>5</sup> Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 11–16. Röhricht's bibliography was reprinted in a facsimile edition, with an introduction by Prof. David Amiran: Reinhold Röhricht, *Bibliotheca geographica Palaestinae: chronologisches Verzeichnis der von 333 bis 1878 verfassten Literatur über das Heilige Land*, new ed. (Jerusalem: The Universitas Booksellers, 1963).

## Types of travel literature in the nineteenth century

### Christian-religious travel literature

It appears that Christian-religious literature about the Holy Land can be divided into three main genres.<sup>6</sup> Until the eighteenth century, the metaphysical conception was the one prevalent in this literature. The country was perceived as God's country, "the Holy Land." Its realia during the visit was unimportant and geographical facts were irrelevant. The geography was perceived as timeless, a unique land that was unlike any other country. The only relevant time factor was the date when the writer's religion originated.

This literature underwent a transformation of sorts in the nineteenth century. General global developments, political involvement in the East, and changes that occurred following revolutionary developments in transportation, industrial production, and demography, mainly in Western Europe, turned attention to contemporary reality, and the religious dimension lost strength. The metaphysical perception of the Holy Land was replaced with a metaphorical perception which, although religious, differed from the previous one. The main difference was that it was no longer based on theological doctrines, though actual realistic descriptions of the country were yet to come. The descriptions became more religious-pittoresque, the style of writing increasingly secular, and greater attention was directed to Ottoman rule and the population, however lacking accuracy, consistency, or clarity. Details were still considered of lesser importance; it was the general picture of the land that predominated. While the approach did not base itself on a "dogmatic" religious doctrine, it still lacked precision regarding the reality of the Holy Land.

The metaphorical conception continued into the nineteenth century, mainly its first decades, until it was followed by the third approach, the millenarist conception, in which the idea of Christianization of Jews, their return to the Holy Land, the Second Coming of Jesus and the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ were prominent. This conception, too, was far from presenting the true reality of the land, but emphasized issues close to it and was very descriptive.

The common denominator for the three approaches was the Christianity of the Holy Land, rooted in the religious-poetic past or the religious-poetic vision, more than the particular, realistic present or possible future. The change in the character of Christian religious travel literature and the penetration of the millenarist

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<sup>6</sup> The overwhelming majority of the travel literature was written by Christian travelers. The differentiation between the three literary forms is important, since there are significant differences between the various denominations and organizations represented by Christian travelers. For details, see Ben-Arieh, "Jerusalem Travel Literature," 27–28 and the sources cited there.

conception into that corpus was also caused by the actual increase in Protestant writing regarding the Holy Land.<sup>7</sup> Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman rulers did not permit the Protestant denominations to establish missions in the Empire. Until then, Christian European literature was mostly dominated by Western Catholics, led by the Franciscan Order, the Custodia Terrae Sanctae, and it was its monks who accompanied the Catholic pilgrims in their travels. Protestant travelers began to arrive in the nineteenth century. In the third and fourth decades of the century, Protestant denominations first received permission to establish missions in the Holy Land and throughout the Levant. The number of travelers and the ensuing travel books written about it grew at a speedy pace. The Protestant evangelist revival that characterized the nineteenth century was reflected in the different forms of Christian millenarism and greatly influenced this literature.<sup>8</sup>

### Christian missionary literature

The establishment of permanent Protestant missions in Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and the Levant increased the frequency of visits by missionaries and missionary delegations throughout the East in general and the Holy Land in particular, as well as encouraged greater European settlement in the Holy Land and its surroundings for short or even lengthy periods of time.<sup>9</sup>

Following the Protestant missions, the Latin (Catholic) Patriarchate and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate returned to Jerusalem in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The re-establishment of the Catholic Patriarchate led to the arrival of Catholic orders and missions. As missionaries began publishing books and articles about their visit and stay in the country, missionary literature dealing with the Holy Land and the East is an especially rich source.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the missionaries who came to the Holy Land in the nineteenth century were converts from Judaism. Their Jewish past is precisely what brought their

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<sup>7</sup> For the beginnings of Protestant presence in Jerusalem, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:250–64; Perry, *British Mission to the Jews*, chs. 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> I have dealt with British millenarism in relation to Jerusalem when discussing the Damascus Affair towards the end of Chapter One.

<sup>9</sup> On the German Protestant community in Palestine, see Alex Carmel, “The German Protestant Community in Palestine, 1840–1914,” *Cathedra* 45 (Sept. 1987): 103–12 (Hebrew). For British Protestants in Jerusalem, see Shaul Sapir, “Historical Sources Relating to the Anglican Missionary Societies Active in Jerusalem and Palestine toward the End of Ottoman Rule (1800–1914),” *Cathedra* 19 (Apr. 1981): 155–70 (Hebrew); id., “Bishop Blyth and His Jerusalem Legacy: St. John’s College,” *Cathedra* 46 (Dec. 1987): 45–64 (Hebrew); Perry, *British Mission to the Jews*, chs. 3–4.

<sup>10</sup> On Catholic activity, see the index in both volumes of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*; Haim Goren, *“Echt katholisch und gut deutsch”: Die deutschen Katholiken und Palästina 1838–1910* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009).

senders to decide to send them. They took special interest in the Jewish communities and their writings often included important details regarding these communities, although it is obviously necessary to take note of their missionary tendencies.<sup>11</sup> Other missionaries sent to the country were also mainly persons with a broad religious-educational background and wide knowledge of the Holy Land. Some of them stayed in the country or the area for many years and were among the important scholars of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century. One example is the American missionary William McClure Thomson. He lived in Lebanon for 44 years (1833–1876) and wrote his famous two-volume work, *The Land and the Book*, which was first published in 1859. The book dealt with the folklore of the residents of the country and became a bestseller.<sup>12</sup>

The Christian missions operating in the Holy Land in the nineteenth century also published journals and many other publications that contain a great deal of material about the country. The archives of a number of these mission orders have been preserved. Examination of nineteenth-century travel literature clearly reveals the dependence of their authors on the periodicals and publications of these mission societies as well as the personal reports of the missionaries themselves. The Western missionary literature published until 1877 was included in Röhrich's comprehensive bibliography, and many view it as *the* travel literature of the Holy Land, basically a corpus of religious Christian literature by Western travelers.<sup>13</sup>

Christian missionary literature has its own distortions and deficiencies. It was usually influenced by the ideology, goals, and ambitions of the missionary order to which it belonged and the general Christian missionary approach. Nonetheless, it is important to note that this literature is fundamentally different from the Western Christian pilgrimage literature of the previous centuries, and the disadvantages listed above do not apply to it since the missionary literature contains a considerable amount of information about the country and its inhabitants.<sup>14</sup>

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**11** On the travel literature of Christian visitors to the Holy Land, see Ben-Arieh, "Jerusalem Travel Literature," 27–28 and the sources cited there.

**12** For Thomson and his book, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 167 and the index. See also Yehoshua Ben-Arieh "Manners and Customs in Palestine as Perceived and Studied during the Nineteenth Century until 1948," in *Studies in the History of Eretz Israel Presented to Yehuda Ben-Porat*, ed. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh and Elchanan Reiner (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2003), 463 (Hebrew).

**13** Laurence Oliphant, *Haifa or Life in Modern Palestine* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1887), is also influenced by the author's evangelical beliefs. We shall return to Oliphant and his book in Chapter Four.

**14** The archives of missionary societies that were active in nineteenth-century Palestine also contain documentation on Jewish communities in other countries – in Europe, North Africa, the Orient, and Asia – since some missionaries were active both in Palestine and elsewhere and reported about matters pertaining to the Jews. For missionaries who took up residence in Palestine and also became important researchers, see Haim Goren, "*Zieht hin und erforscht das Land*": *Die deutsche Palästinaforschung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 298–306.

### Scholarly and scientific research literature

Another type of Western travel literature very typical of the nineteenth century and almost nonexistent in previous ones is that produced by scholars and scientists. The industrial revolution, positivist philosophy, the discipline of comparative religion developed in Germany, and the Darwinist theory all created a climate of scientific inquiry of every phenomenon. The Holy Land was now also a subject of scientific study.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Holy Land remained a scientific unknown. The foot of Western man had not trod in many of its regions for hundreds of years. Scholars took no interest in its inanimate objects, fauna, and flora. Its maps were nothing but general drawings, lacking precision and detail. The absence of knowledge concerning the physical structure of the Holy Land is borne out by the fact that in 1835 experts determined the geographical width of only ten settlements, and only in the 1820s was the height of topographic points first calculated according to atmospheric pressure based on the temperature of boiling water. Until 1837 no one realized that the Jordan depression was a few hundred meters below sea level, and it was only twenty years later that the precise level of the Dead Sea was determined.<sup>15</sup>

An increasing number of Western researchers came to the Holy Land in the early nineteenth century to study it scientifically. As scientific interest increased, so grew the recognition that scholars were unaware of the natural data of the country. Accordingly, these scholars, motivated by a desire to discover and learn, aspired to identify settlements, historical sites, or various geographical sites on the basis of as precise measurements as possible. They meticulously chose the routes of their journeys, traversed them with a compass in hand, noted and described details they came across, measured distances by walking hours, and tried to draw what they saw.<sup>16</sup>

As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, the goal and aspiration of some of the pioneers of scientific study of the Holy Land was to get to other Oriental countries or to Central Africa to discover the sources of the Nile. Touring and research of the Holy Land was only an initial stage in their larger plan to penetrate the region unknown to the Western world. Two of the prominent scholars were Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, who for the purposes of his journey was assisted by the museum in the city of Gotha in Germany, and Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, who was sent on his journey

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<sup>15</sup> Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 11–12. See also Goren, *Dead Sea Level* for Chesney's survey, and Ch. 1, n. 6 for the plans of Napoleon's engineers to dig a channel from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Suez.

<sup>16</sup> A few important explorers reached Eretz Israel already in the eighteenth century, adding much to research on that country and the entire Orient – as yet terra incognita. See Goren, *Zieht hin*, 29–36. However, the great influx of researchers arrived only in the nineteenth century.



by the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa. It was Burckhardt who revealed the location of Petra to the Western world, a discovery that created an upsurge in visits of Western personalities there.<sup>17</sup>

Research of the Holy Land demands focused and continuous study of subjects related to the country. The American Edward Robinson, one of the most important scholars of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century, laid the foundations for the biblical, geographic-historical, and archaeological study of the land. He was the first to discover the exact location of Massada, which many scholars had unsuccessfully tried to find, and was the first to note the famous arch in the Temple Mount wall that since then bears the name “Robinson’s Arch.” Robinson studied the Siloam Tunnel and discerned the remains of the “third wall” from the days of the Second Temple. Robinson also correctly identified the location of Beersheba, which since the period of the Crusades had been identified by Westerners with Beit Guvrin.<sup>18</sup>

The Western researchers of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century can be divided into two main groups: those who came to study the past history – mainly biblical – of the land, and those who came to study the Holy Land of their own time. Bible scholars and those interested in the history and archaeology of the Holy Land make up the first group. They were mainly religious people. The conflict between science and religion is reflected in their scholarly biblical and archaeological research. The transformation of biblical and archaeological study into a scientific discipline provided an arena in which religious fundamentalism often collided with modern secular science. Most of the scholars came from a religious background and all of them felt a deep respect for the Holy Scriptures. At the same time, they were committed to the modern scientific methods which created Darwinism. This clash of forces in the minds of scholars is reflected in research that tries to find solutions and compromises for the conflict.

Archaeology of the nineteenth century was mainly a discipline of toponymical history, i.e. identification of biblical locations with present-day sites, hence the close relationship between archaeology and the study of the Bible. The romance of archaeology is also linked to discovery and adventure, to finding hidden treasures and creating myths of the past. Archaeology intensified the interest in toponymical history and led to an increase in the numbers of scholars who began dealing with biblical archaeology and the history of the Holy Land. At the same

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<sup>17</sup> On Seetzen and Burckhardt, two important scholars who were active in Palestine in the early nineteenth century, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 31–43; id., “Pioneering Scientific Exploration in the Holy Land at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century,” *Terrae Incognitae* 4 (1972): 95–110. See also Goren, *Zieht hin*, 36–55. For further details about them, as well as James Silk Buckingham, see Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine* (London: Collins, 1987), chs. 1–2. <sup>18</sup> For Robinson, considered as “the founder of Palestine exploration,” see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 85–91; Goren, *Zieht hin*, 83–91, who notes Robinson’s close ties with German researchers of the Holy Land, particularly Carl Ritter, with whom I shall deal below.



time, it was the unique connection between the Holy Land and the events of the Old and New Testaments that caused disciplines of archaeology and biblical research to flourish, and also led scholars adhering to specific theological doctrines and dogmatic religious assumptions to consult research such as the results of archaeological excavation, biblical-scientific study, and Semitic philology.<sup>19</sup>

The second group of nineteenth century scholars and scientists is made up of those who aspired to know the Holy Land of the present in geographical terms. Among them are those who created cartographic maps of the country and laid the foundations for knowledge of the geographical and geological landscape, the climate, and the country's flora and fauna, and others who laid the groundwork for acquaintance with the population and society of Palestine, including all factions and groups. The leading scholars of this group took a special interest in the local Arab population and the Bedouin tribes wandering through the deserts. Some of them learnt Arabic to perfection, lived among the Arabs, studied their customs and lifestyle, and made another contribution to the study of the Orient. Oftentimes the motives of these scholars were also religious, and by coming to know the country in the present they also wanted to study the Holy Land of biblical times. In the climate, flora, fauna, and inhabitants of the nineteenth century they sought parallelisms with and grounds for comparison to ancient periods. Be that as it may, their research also constitutes an important asset in the study of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

Among Western scholars involved in the study of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century, there were a few leading researchers who never even visited it. They wrote summaries and important works that adopted details from the advanced study of the Holy Land, and also quoted from travel literature. Carl Ritter is among the most prominent. He wrote many books summarizing the geography of numerous countries around the world.<sup>21</sup> Of those, four volumes of his great undertaking were translated into English.<sup>22</sup> The earliest survey maps of the Holy Land were published during the first half of the nineteenth century. Some were drawn by researchers who visited the land, but such efforts also began developing in research institutes of the West which received data, diagrams, and precise drawings prepared by scholars of

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**19** I shall go into greater detail below when discussing the establishment of the Palestine Exploration Fund at Westminster Abbey, among whose founders were many clergymen. Other Christian societies, from diverse countries, were involved in archaeological research in Palestine; see note 77 below.

**20** A series of six books by scholars and travelers that were translated into Hebrew is a good example of the diverse types of travel literature. The works in the series are by Philip Baldensperger, Charles Warren, Francis Lynch, John MacGregor, Ermete Pierotti, and Mary Eliza Rogers.

**21** On Ritter, one of the two "founding fathers" of modern geographical research in the whole world, and on his studies about Palestine, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 145–47; Goren, *Zieht hin*, 83–91, including Ritter's role in German geographical research.

**22** Ritter's student, William L. Gage, prepared a four-volume English translation and adaptation of Ritter's writings on Palestine under the title *The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula*. See Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 183–84; Goren, *Zieht hin*, 70–74.

the Holy Land, including researchers of Jerusalem.<sup>23</sup> Maps of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from previous periods could now be critically reviewed and compared with the new information received.<sup>24</sup> Cartography, i.e. the geographical mapping of the Holy Land, was a central part of its scientific study in the nineteenth century and onwards. I shall discuss some of these maps and their great importance later in this study.<sup>25</sup>

### Military-political and consular literature

The opening up of the Ottoman Empire and the Holy Land to the Western powers was accompanied by military-political penetration. Thus, there are also written sources related to military and political events in the Holy Land and the Middle East during the nineteenth century. First were the publications that appeared after Napoleon's invasion of the Middle East. The most important is undoubtedly the *Jacotin Atlas* named after the main editor of the maps, a French officer of the Corps of Surveyors and Geographers who accompanied Napoleon on his journey.<sup>26</sup> Following this invasion, a series of publications appeared written by people of both sides who lived in the country during the war, from which we can learn about different aspects of the area. The heightened struggle between the Western powers for influence in the Ottoman Empire and dominance of the Mediterranean intensified the involvement of their fleets, especially that of Britain. Officers, sailors, physicians, priests, and other functionaries who served on these ships availed themselves of the opportunity offered by anchorage in the eastern part of the Mediterranean to tour the Holy Land. Some of them published accounts of their travels in the form of letters and books.<sup>27</sup> The involvement of the British fleet in the Mediterranean led it to conduct a comprehensive study of the coast and ports of the Holy Land. They carried out bathymetric charting (mapping by depth measurements) of the coast and studied the structure of the coastal towns. A British Admiralty expedition also drew the first maps of Jerusalem.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "The First Surveyed Maps of Jerusalem," *Eretz Israel* 11 (1973): 64–74 (Hebrew).

<sup>24</sup> For an exhaustive study of maps of Jerusalem, see Rehav Rubin, *Image and Reality: Jerusalem in Maps and Views* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999).

<sup>25</sup> About cartography, that was an integral element of the German exploration of Palestine in the nineteenth century, see Goren, *Zieht hin*, 91–110. See below for cartography by the British, in the discussion of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and other mapping ventures.

<sup>26</sup> See ch. 1, n. 10

<sup>27</sup> For the literature published by persons holding military, political, or diplomatic positions, see Ben-Arieh, "Jerusalem Travel Literature," 30 and the sources cited there.

<sup>28</sup> On the map of Jerusalem produced by the British Admiralty, see Ben-Arieh, "First Surveyed Maps"; for artists among the British Navy personnel, see id., *Painting the Holy Land*, 196–98.

The French fleet, too, continued to patrol the Mediterranean, and in 1861 its sailors visited the Holy Land and even left a souvenir in the form of a drawing of Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup> The American fleet also began basing itself in the Mediterranean. From its home port was on the island of Malta, its ships reached the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. In its wake, a naval expedition commanded by Lieutenant William Francis Lynch surveyed the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. A mix of religious American emotions regarding the Holy Land and the Jordan River in combination with curiosity about an unknown region was at the basis of this voyage. The publications resulting from this expedition included travel journals, an official report to the American Congress, sketches, and maps of great value.<sup>30</sup>

It was not the military presence alone that contributed handsomely to our knowledge of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century. With the opening of the region to the West, there was an increase in the number of foreign diplomatic representations. Jerusalem, until then without any Western representation, now became the site of numerous foreign consulates. As part of their function they had to report to their governments on diverse subjects concerning developments and the state of the country. The archives of the consulates in Jerusalem and throughout the Ottoman Empire are the richest source for study of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> Many of the consuls considered it their duty to write journals or memoirs of their journey and stay in the country and in the East. From an examination of these books and their comparison with parallel archival materials, it is clear that they do not suffer only from weaknesses. Their major flaw is, of course, their subjective nature, but there, too, lies their strength: while most are based on archival materials at the authors' disposal, they also include personal impressions that supplement the official consular reports.<sup>32</sup>

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**29** For French artists in the Holy Land, see Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 157–65, esp. 162 (Fig. 85), a painting of French sailors surrounding the Edicule of the Tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

**30** See Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "William F. Lynch's Expedition to the Dead Sea 1847/8," *Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1973): 15–21, including a discussion and evaluation of the expedition's report to Congress. See also Carol Lea Clark, *Clash of Eagles: America's Forgotten Expedition to Ottoman Palestine* (Guilford, CO: Lyons Press, 2012).

**31** Mordechai Eliav made extensive use of consular archives. See Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land*; id., *The Jewish Community in Eretz Israel as Reflected in German Policy: Selected Documents from the German Consulate in Jerusalem, 1841–1914*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1973) (Hebrew, with documents in German); id. *Österreich und das Heilige Land: ausgewählte Konsulatsdokumente aus Jerusalem 1849–1917* (Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000). For the American consulate and its consuls, see Kark, *American Consuls*.

**32** See ch. 1, n. 33.

## Touring and visiting the Holy Land

### Kings, princes, lords, dukes, and statesmen

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, travel tours were the fashion for wealthy young European gentlemen, mainly from England. These journeys were known as the “Grand Tour.” The purpose of the Grand Tour was to get to know neighboring countries, acquire historical knowledge, become familiar with classical culture, and gain prestige. After the Napoleonic wars, there was an upsurge in tours and the number of European visitors attracted to the classic and Middle Eastern world greatly increased. However, initially these tours did not usually get to the Holy Land, their main destinations being Italy, Spain, Greece, and the Mediterranean islands. A change came about in the nineteenth century when improved transportation and new political conditions enabled visits to the countries of the East, including the Holy Land.<sup>33</sup>

Political changes in the Middle East during the nineteenth century, the Egyptian conquest of Syria and the Holy Land in the 1830s, the reforms in the Ottoman Empire between 1839 and 1876, and developments in sea transport to the Holy Land – such as the steamships that plied the waters of the Mediterranean in the thirties and forties – all brought about an influx of travelers and visitors to the Holy Land. Among these were many dignitaries. They did not always set down their impressions in writing, but were usually accompanied by a large entourage that filled different roles. These entourage members prolifically documented their stay and their writings added much to knowledge of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

In the following I shall present a number of examples of dignitaries who arrived in the area from the beginning of the thirties, the period of Muhammad ‘Ali’s rule of the Holy Land. In 1834 the British statesman and scholar Robert Curzon arrived in the country, followed in 1837 by Lord Alexander Lindsay. In 1834, Prince Albert of Prussia visited the Holy Land as did Duke Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria in 1838. The flow of royal visitors increased in the fifties. The British Earl of Lincoln, later to become Duke of Newcastle and British Secretary of War during the Crimean War, toured the country in 1849–1850. Princess Marianne of the Netherlands arrived in 1850, while the Duchess and Duke of Brabant (Belgium), later King Leopold II of Belgium (1865–1909), came in 1855. Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian came from Austria, the younger brother of Austrian Emperor Franz Josef and later to become Maximilian I of Mexico, where he was executed. In April 1859, Russian Prince Konstantin visited Jerusalem, and the British Duke of Connaught arrived that same year. In 1862, the important visit of the Prince of Wales, later to become King Edward VII, took place.

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<sup>33</sup> For tours of Mediterranean countries by persons with an interest in archaeology, antiquarians, philologists and other scholars, adventurers, or just tourists wishing to broaden their education, see the introduction to Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 36–38.

<sup>34</sup> Ben-Arieh, “Jerusalem Travel Literature,” 30–31.

Among the members of his entourage were famous scholar and clergyman Arthur P. Stanley and noted photographer Francis Bedford. The prince's party received special permission to enter the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.<sup>35</sup> King Edward's brother, Prince Arthur, also visited the Holy land in 1865, as did in 1869 Austrian Emperor Franz Josef and the Prussian heir to the throne, en route to the opening of the Suez Canal. An important American visitor arrived in 1871, William H. Seward, Abraham Lincoln's secretary of state, and in 1872 came German Grand Duke Frederick of Mecklenburg-Schwerin accompanied by his wife Maria. That same year, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich of Russia was present at the inauguration of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in the Russian Compound in Jerusalem. In 1876 Baroness de Piellat came on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with her son, Count Marie Paul Amédée de Piellat, who decided to dedicate his life to Jerusalem. In 1878, as part of a general tour of the area, United States President Ulysses S. Grant visited the Holy Land. In 1880, the British Marquis of Bute visited the region as did Prince Rudolph, son of Austrian Emperor Franz Josef in 1881. The two sons of England's Prince Arthur arrived in the Holy Land in 1882, one of whom, George V, ascended the throne in 1898. The most famous visitor was German Emperor Wilhelm II in 1898. This visit had important ramifications concerning developments in the country and was widely discussed in the literature of the period. In 1900, the British Duke of Norfolk and Prince Adalbert of Prussia came to the Holy Land. In 1902 Prince Alfred von Windisch-Grätz and Princess Elizabeth Maria arrived in celebration of their marriage. The German heir apparent Friedrich arrived in the country in 1910, as well as two Catholic Bavarian princes, a Prussian prince and princess, and other official representatives of the German Empire, who came to celebrate the dedication of the Dormition complex on Mount Zion, the Saint Paul hospice near Damascus Gate, and the Auguste Victoria hospice on the Mount of Olives.<sup>36</sup>

Sir Moses Montefiore's seven tours can also be included among the visits by dignitaries to Jerusalem and the Holy Land (accompanied by physicians, secretaries, and others). His personal diary, that of his wife Judith, and others in his

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<sup>35</sup> For details about Stanley, see Ben-Arieh, "Manners and Customs," 460–66. His first visit to Palestine was in 1852–1853, after which he published his well-known book *Sinai and Palestine in Connection with Their History* in 1856. In 1862 he came for a second time, accompanying the Prince of Wales on his tour. Later, Stanley was among the leading personalities involved in the founding of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The photographer Charles Bedford was a member of the prince's entourage and took many photos at Stanley's request. See Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 155–56, 170–75.

<sup>36</sup> This partial list was compiled on the basis of Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, its index and appendices, and id., *Painting the Holy Land*, as well as a check of Röhricht's above-noted bibliography and other sources. Some of the personalities in the list have been the subject of individual studies. I shall deal with Disraeli in greater detail below, in the sub-section on authors.

entourage form an important part of Western travel literature of the nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> The writings of those who accompanied dignitaries and diplomats have singular features and advantages, as well as unique disadvantages, and differ from earlier Western pilgrimage travel literature.

### Authors and poets

Among the travelers to the Holy Land in the nineteenth century were also some of the greatest authors and poets of the period.<sup>38</sup> The religious and romantic impulses which emerged in post-Napoleonic Europe, together with the political and technological advances that made travel to the region much more accessible, led many noted authors of the period to visit the Holy Land and publish descriptions of their tours.<sup>39</sup>

I will note the important authors who visited the Holy Land during the nineteenth century, and shall do so by country and in chronological order, beginning with France. The first to be mentioned is the famous author and statesman Vicomte François Chateaubriand, one of the important French writers and an opponent of the French Revolution, who subsequently returned to the Catholic faith and served as a minister to Napoleon. His tour of Greece, the Holy Land, Tunisia, and Spain early in the nineteenth century (1806–1807) resulted in his book *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*. This work inspired many Catholic travelers to the Holy Land who viewed the land through Chateaubriand's religious-romantic "spectacles."<sup>40</sup>

Twenty-five years later, in 1831, Romantic French poet Alphonse Marie Louis de Lamartine, also an active statesman, followed in Chateaubriand's footsteps. As he attests, he intended to write not a travel diary, but rather a religious epic, the impressions by a poet and philosopher of the landscape and color of the East. Thus, his book *Souvenirs, impressions et paysages pendant un voyage en Orient* includes no details about the history, geography, or lifestyle of the Holy Land, but is filled with

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**37** Montefiore's first visit was in 1827, after his marriage, as part of a tour of Mediterranean countries and Eretz Israel, where he visited Safed and then Jerusalem. On this visit he learned of the extreme poverty of the Jews in Eretz Israel, leading to his future efforts to support them. For more on Montefiore, see Chapter Four.

**38** When choosing the authors to represent such visits to Eretz Israel, I decided to rely on Yaacov Shavit, ed., *Writers Travel in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1981) (Hebrew), devoted mostly to various Western authors with translated selections from their works.

**39** See Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, index of persons; id., *Painting the Holy Land*, index of names. See also id., "Jerusalem Travel Literature," 31–35.

**40** A section from Chateaubriand's book, published in three volumes in Paris in 1811, relating to the condition of the Jewish community in Jerusalem, was quoted in Chapter One, at n. 66 in the text. On Chateaubriand, see Elisa Gregori, "Chateaubriand, un 'archéologue' face à Jérusalem," *Perspectives: revue de l'Université Hébraïque de Jérusalem* 14 (2007): 95–108.

romantic, high-flown rhetoric which aroused criticism and sarcastic comments by other travelers and scholars of the period.<sup>41</sup>

Another renowned French author who visited the Holy Land was Gustave Flaubert. He came on a mission for the French Ministry of Education together with fellow author Maxime du Campe to conduct surveys of the region. His voyage to the East (1849–1851) inspired his novel *Madame Bovary* (Paris, 1856). Flaubert remained indifferent to the sites of the East. The churches, mosques, and landscapes of Egypt seemed all the same to him, and the dismal state of the Holy Land did not arouse religious sentiments, but rather repulsed him. Accordingly he advised his readers not to visit the Orient so as not to suffer disappointment.<sup>42</sup>

Towards the end of the century, French author Pierre Loti visited the Holy Land and wrote two books about his travels: *Jérusalem* (1895) and *La Galilée* (1896). He, too, wrote with romantic religiosity, adding a note of melancholy due to the present desolation of the land.<sup>43</sup>

Among the English authors I shall note first and foremost Benjamin Disraeli (Earl of Beaconsfield), the future prime minister of England, whose visit in 1830–1831 left an impression in several of his literary works. He did not write a book concerning his voyage to the East, but two of his novels, *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* (1833) and *Tancred, or the New Crusade* (1847) were inspired by his voyage.<sup>44</sup>

Alexander William Kinglake, an advocate by profession, but also a writer and close friend of Alfred Lord Tennyson, visited the country in 1835. His book, *Eothen*, written after his first journey, is humorous and witty and easily displays his talent. In 1854 Kinglake went on a second voyage to the region as well as to Crimea and wrote

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**41** Lamartine was also active in politics since 1833. His book was published in four volumes in 1835. Shavit, ed., *Writers*, 183, mentions that Lady Hester Stanhope noted that Lamartine's descriptions are inaccurate and that some of them are pure fantasy. See also Claude Vigée, "‘Esclaves et étrangers’: Flaubert, Chateaubriand et Lamartine à Jérusalem," *Pardès* 4 (1986): 169–75.

**42** Flaubert visited Palestine in August 1850. In his book *Voyage en Orient (1849–1851)*, he describes the miserable conditions in the country, just as did Mark Twain later, in 1869. His impressions left their mark on his short story "Herodias." See Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 228, for Maxime Du Camp, who accompanied Flaubert, and his unique collection of photographs. For both of them, see id., "Jerusalem Travel Literature," 32. See also Vigée, "Esclaves et étrangers."

**43** In both his books, Loti provided picturesque and colorful descriptions of the landscape and people, influenced by his religious views that were similar to Lamartine's. See Ben-Arieh, "Jerusalem Travel Literature," 32. See also Abdul Karim Abu Khashan, "Pierre Loti's Journey across Sinai to Jerusalem, 1894," *Jerusalem Quarterly File* 43 (2010): 18–30; id., "Pierre Loti's Perplexed Pilgrimage to Jerusalem," *ibid.* 48 (2011): 17–30.

**44** *Alroy* revolves around the image of David Alroi, a self-declared messiah of the twelfth century, while *Tancred* is the well known crusader who took part in the conquest of Jerusalem. Of Disraeli's novels, *Tancred* is "the one which most depends on his impressions of Jerusalem" according to Blake, *Disraeli's Grand Tour*, 76–77. For more on Disraeli, see Chapter Four; see also Polowetzky, *Victorian Intellectuals*, 23–62.



about the war there. Later he was elected to the British parliament.<sup>45</sup> Another British author who visited the Holy Land in the first half of the forties was William Thackeray, one of Britain's greatest authors in the nineteenth century. Thackeray left for the East on a whim, accompanying two friends who invited him to join them. After his tour he published a description of his visit, *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, published in 1846, and written in a satirical-journalistic style, ironic and amusing.<sup>46</sup>

Another British author who visited the Holy Land at the end of the century (in 1900) was Sir H. Rider Haggard, author of noted adventure tales, first and foremost *King Solomon's Mines*. The book recording his visit is called *A Winter Pilgrimage, Being an Account of Travels through Palestine, Italy, and the Island of Cyprus Accomplished in the Year 1900*, written in an ironic style in the hope it would have some historical merit a hundred years later.<sup>47</sup>

Among the American writers I shall note three: John Ross Browne, Herman Melville, and Mark Twain. The first was a famous writer of memoirs. His book of the voyage to the East in 1851 is entitled *Yusuf, or, the Journey of the Franji: A Crusade in the East* (1853) and is one of the most amusing works in the corpus of nineteenth-century travel literature to the Holy Land.<sup>48</sup>

Melville, the author of the renowned *Moby Dick*, set out on a tour of Europe and the Levant in 1856. In January 1857 he arrived for a short stay in the Holy Land. The purpose of the journey was also to bolster his ailing health. His journal was not intended for publication. He had a notebook in which he jotted down sporadic, short notes. The journal was published only in 1955 as *Journal of a Visit to Europe and the Levant, [October 11, 1856–May 6, 1857]*, edited by Howard C. Horsford. His descriptions of the Holy Land were gloomy and weighty. These impressions became the raw material for his epic poem *Clarel* published twenty years after his visit to the Orient.<sup>49</sup>

Mark Twain (Samuel Leghorn Clemens), a journalist, adventurer, and one of the greatest American authors, accompanied the first organized Cook's tour to set sail for Europe and the Holy Land in 1867. His book *The Innocents Abroad* became highly popular. With a witty pen he makes fun of the travel tales of his predecessors

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<sup>45</sup> For Kinglake, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 70–74.

<sup>46</sup> For Thackeray, see Shavit, ed., *Writers*, 145, who notes that his descriptions are similar to those of John Ross Browne and Mark Twain who visited Palestine after him. See also Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 209.

<sup>47</sup> For Haggard, see Shavit, ed., *Writers*, 163.

<sup>48</sup> On Browne, see Franklin Walker, *Irreverent Pilgrims: Melville, Browne, and Mark Twain in the Holy Land* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 33–106.

<sup>49</sup> For Melville, see *ibid.*, 107–61. See also Milton R. Konvitz, "Herman Melville in the Holy Land," *Midstream* 25, no. 10 (Dec. 1979): 50–57. Shavit, ed., *Writers*, 157, notes that Melville's journal is reminiscent of the letters of the famous Russian author Nikolai Gogol.



who wrote about an imaginary land and sketches the Holy Land as a mournful and dreary province, also extremely small.<sup>50</sup>

Worthy of note among Russian writers is famous author Nikolai Gogol who made a pilgrimage to the Christian holy sites in the Holy Land in 1848, during the period of his decline. The voyage brought him no inspiration and he returned to Russia full of despair and disappointment. A short while thereafter his nervous condition, which bordered on mental illness, grew more severe and he died at the early age of forty-three.<sup>51</sup>

The final two writers I shall mention are Swedish authors: Selma Lagerlof and the famous adventurer Sven Hedin. Lagerlof visited Jerusalem in 1900 and stayed with the residents of the American-Swedish Colony. A byproduct of this visit was her book *Jerusalem* (1903). Hedin visited Jerusalem during World War I. In his book, also entitled *Jerusalem* (1918), he adopted an enthusiastically pro-German and pro-Turkish stance, sharply criticizing England. His account of Zionism and the Jewish community, however, was objective, even sympathetic. In his opinion Turkish fears of the Jews establishing themselves in Palestine were groundless, and it would only benefit the development of the country.<sup>52</sup>

To summarize, one may say that the importance of all these books written by famous authors lies not in their historical accuracy as a source for studying the Holy Land, but in their literary value. These are literary works through which we can learn how authors, among the most significant in the Western world, saw the Holy Land in their time, though their conceptions and imagery were of the historical Holy Land, the land of the Bible and its sacred sites.

### Painters and paintings of the Holy Land

An additional important sphere related to Western nineteenth-century travel literature is that of painting.<sup>53</sup> Its importance lies not only in the great number of Western artists who came to the region in the nineteenth century to capture for posterity the Holy Land and its landscapes, but also in the wide distribution of their paintings, sketches, and engravings. The desire to immortalize the sacred sites of the Holy Land had already inspired many travelers in earlier centuries, and indeed drawings and sketches printed from copper and bronze engravings were used to illustrate the travel books of previous centuries as well. However, like the writers, the painters of the nineteenth century differ from their predecessors in their approach to the subject of their art. Their

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<sup>50</sup> For Twain, see Walker, *Irreverent Pilgrims*, 162–224; Ben-Arieh, “Jerusalem Travel Literature,” 32–33.

<sup>51</sup> For Gogol, see Ben-Arieh, “Jerusalem Travel Literature,” 32.

<sup>52</sup> On Lagerlof and Hedin, see *ibid.*, 33 and the literature cited in n. 27.

<sup>53</sup> In my *Painting the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century*, I go into greater detail about this subject. See also Ben-Arieh, “Jerusalem Travel Literature,” 33–35.

paintings are much more realistic, and in addition to the holy sites they also present natural landscapes and diverse aspects of the life of the inhabitants. Due to the precision of details and the realia depicted, it is often possible to locate the vantage point from which these artists made their sketches. Like the authors of travel literature, the number of artists and paintings continuously increased throughout the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the century, their task was not an easy one, especially in distant and remote locations, and often was very dangerous. The Arab inhabitants were hostile towards what they viewed as a profane occupation which desecrated their holy sites by perpetuating them in art. Over the course of the century, following the Egyptian conquest in 1831 security conditions improved, and many painters dared come to the Holy Land to depict previously unseen landscapes with their paintbrushes. These artists came from all European countries – England, France, Germany, the Low Countries, Russia, and more. Apparently, their primary motivation was the desire to unveil “Holy Land scenes” to the people back home. Thus their sketches and drawings decorated and illustrated historical works on the Holy Land, the Bible, the New Testament, the works of Josephus, and more. The drawings and engravings soon became a commercial enterprise which increased interest in and demand for travel literature.<sup>54</sup> European travelers, antique hunters, and scholars of ancient civilizations and histories often set out on their journey accompanied by artists. The painters developed regular artistic methods for these picturesque drawings in which the landscape was drawn according to the model of idealistic landscape, adapted to the Mediterranean region and the Oriental countries. These artists also often joined their scholar colleagues in their scientific research. For example, painters accompanied scholars and archaeologists and assisted them by drawing and sketching their findings and documenting and describing the excavation process itself. A prominent example is the excavations in Jerusalem by noted British archaeologist Charles Warren. He was accompanied by British artist William Simpson, a painter who had previously served as a military artist in the Crimean War and was now sent by the British Palestine Exploration Fund to document the archaeological excavations in Jerusalem.<sup>55</sup>

Other famous artist-painters from Victorian England painted impressive works of the Holy Land. I shall note a few: William Holman Hunt, Edward Lear, and David Wilkie. Hunt came to Jerusalem a number of times in the nineteenth century, resided there a few years and even built a house in the new city, outside the walls of the Old City. According to the principles of pre-Raphaelite art, Hunt sought the fitting background for the scenes of the Holy Land he wanted to paint. In order to follow these

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<sup>54</sup> On artists who focused on biblical scenes, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, “The Landscapes of Eretz Israel in Biblical Sketches of the Nineteenth Century,” *Cathedra* 60 (June 1991): 116–40 (Hebrew); id., *Painting the Holy Land*, 60–75. For the renowned French artist James Jacques Joseph Tissot, see *ibid.*, 265–68.

<sup>55</sup> About Simpson and his paintings of underground Jerusalem in the vicinity of the Temple Mount, see Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 232–35.

principles, he tried to find local models for his biblical paintings.<sup>56</sup> The noted artist Lear's paintings of the Holy Land are less well known. Among his impressive works is one of Massada in which the cliff seems to be aspiring to the heavens. Another famous British artist who visited the Holy Land in 1841 is David Wilkie, whose album of paintings includes twenty-six portraits, among them of Muhammad 'Ali, Sultan Abdülmeçid, the Bedouin sheik who protected him on his journey to the Dead Sea, Jewish women, and more.<sup>57</sup> The extent to which these paintings became fashionable is evident in the custom which developed among travelers of the period: they added sketches of the landscape to their writings, and upon returning home commissioned professional artists to transform their sketches into real paintings.

The most prominent example of the development and status of Holy Land paintings in the nineteenth century is the art of the noted Scottish artist David Roberts which brought him international prestige, membership in the British Royal Academy of Art, great respect, and a substantial income. Roberts was born in 1796 to a poor family. He drew a great deal in his childhood and youth. In 1823 he settled in London and began gaining a reputation among the artists of the city. He then traveled in Europe, drew many sketches of cathedrals and monuments, emphasizing architectural details and realistic perspectives that he reworked into paintings upon returning to London. Roberts was commissioned to improve sketches and impressions of sites and landscapes coming from the Holy Land. These awakened his interest and he decided to tour the East. In August 1838 he set out on a year-long tour of Egypt, Sinai, Petra, the Holy Land, and Syria. Upon returning to London, Roberts prepared his works for printing as lithographs and personally supervised the process by the noted lithographer of the period Louis Haghe. The lithographs and sketches were shown in a number of exhibitions in London, Edinburgh, and other major cities and aroused unprecedented enthusiasm.<sup>58</sup> His sketches were published in three volumes between the years 1842 and 1849 and included 250 plates divided equally between Egypt and Syria, including fifty of the Holy Land. A second, less expensive edition in six volumes was published in 1855. Roberts was taken ill with epilepsy in 1864. He died at the age of sixty-eight, a wealthy man with a worldwide reputation.<sup>59</sup>

Roberts' story and paintings are very similar to those of many other artists attracted to the Holy Land to depict its sites and people. I shall not repeat the long

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**56** Hunt was one of the three founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. On Hunt and his fellow artists Thomas Seddon and Edward Lear, see *ibid.*, 115–41.

**57** Wilkie died on the return journey to his homeland. For his views and Holy Land paintings, see *ibid.*, 106–13.

**58** For Roberts, see *ibid.*, 98–106. Another important British artist was William Henry Bartlett who painted many Holy Land scenes; see *ibid.*, 85–95.

**59** A facsimile edition was published in Tel Aviv and New York, with an introduction by then Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek: David Roberts, *The Holy Land: 123 Colored Facsimile Lithographs and the Journal from His Visit to the Holy Land* (Tel Aviv: Terra Sancta Arts, 1982). The volume is divided into five geographical areas.

list of these artists who appear in my book *Painting the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century*; I shall only note that the contents page is divided into subjects and countries from which many important artists from all over the world came to the Holy Land.<sup>60</sup>

### Photographers and photography

The earliest type of photographic technology, the daguerreotype, was made public on August 19, 1839. In early winter of 1839, a French photographer took the first photos of Jerusalem. Since then and until 1914 and the onset of World War I, more than a hundred photographers toured the Holy Land, most of them from the West. They photographed its sites, people, and landscapes. This new art of photography and the older arts of drawing and engraving developed an interesting relationship between them. Some artists admired the art of photography due to its exactness, but noted that photography would never replace the pen and paintbrush. They claimed that photography did not emphasize the difference between shade and color and in character it was unaesthetic, lacking color and picturesqueness. In reaction to this criticism, the photographers stressed the importance of naked realism and maintained that the public should be educated to appreciate the details and delicate rendering of nature in photographs.

Cooperation between artists and photographers was also enhanced due to the fact that until the beginning of the 1880s it was technologically impossible to print photographs in books. Copies of every photograph had to be pasted individually into each book. Another method prevalent at the time was to have an artist render the photo into a wood, copper, or bronze engraving, a technique that reached the height of its popularity at the time. While cooperation between artists and photographers brought the engravings to a new level of exactness, it also underlined the differences of approach between engravers and photographers.<sup>61</sup>

European artists could not divorce their art from the exotic and figurative subjects that became popular during the Romantic period. They attempted to make

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<sup>60</sup> See the Contents of Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*. In the chapters, footnotes refer the reader to the sources listed in the bibliography. Especially noteworthy is the German artist Gustav Bauernfeind who lived in Jerusalem and painted its scenes; for his paintings, see Alex Carmel, *The Life and Work of Gustav Bauernfeind, Orientalist Painter, 1848–1904: A Historical Introduction* (Stuttgart: Hauswedell, 1990) (German and English). Another important artist was the American, John Singer Sargent; see Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 221–23. More recently, a series of volumes with his complete paintings is being published under the editorship of Richard Ormond, one of them containing those from Eretz Israel. For Jewish artists and their Holy Land scenes, see *Art and Crafts in Eretz Israel in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Yona Fisher; research by Rina Peled (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1979) (Hebrew).

<sup>61</sup> For a short introductory discussion of art and photography, see Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 226–29. For the final victory of photography, see *ibid.*, 255–57.

every painting interesting and alluring, and thus added animals such as camels, horses, and donkeys as well as plants and human figures in unique and colorful Eastern garb. The advent of the camera took all these away. The engravers tried to somewhat remedy the situation. Oftentimes, before printing, they added touches of their own to the photograph – clouds in the sky, beautifully arranged bushes, traditional animals, and people typical of the East. Thus did emerge a unique type of artist who changed and improved the sights caught by the traveler with his camera. The use of photographs to create engravings was widespread and helped popularize scenes from the Holy Land, so much so that there were those who claimed that these scenes were more familiar to the English public than those of the British Lake District.

Widespread distribution of photographs also increased since they were sold as individual photographs pasted on cardboard or bound together to form diverse series. The distant landscapes also became familiar to the public on stereoscopic slides – a pair of small photos pasted on cardboard measuring ca. 9×18 cm, which became three-dimensional when viewed through a special viewer, the stereoscope. Stereoscopic photography had become widespread as early as the 1860s and was very popular in Europe and America. It greatly contributed to the popularity of documentary photography and in some ways played a similar role to that of television and cinema today.<sup>62</sup> Photographers became businessmen rather than artists, yet there were many among them who did not settle for photography as a business and found other uses for the camera. Important photographers accompanied the dignitaries and expeditions that visited the Holy Land in order to document the voyage and also create mementos of it. There were also photographers who aided scholars and authors who came to the Holy Land.<sup>63</sup>

The noted scholar Louis Félicien de Saulcy, often called the first archaeologist of the Holy Land, excavated the Tombs of the Kings in Jerusalem. De Saulcy arrived at the beginning of the 1850s accompanied by his friend, the renowned photographer Auguste Salzmann who took an interest in religious subjects. Supported by the French Ministry of Education, they created an important precedent of including photographers in archaeological missions. The natural scientist Henry Baker Tristram was also accompanied by a photographer whose photographs illustrate Tristram's books. The Palestine Exploration Fund made photographs of monuments and architectural ruins a focus of its scientific research. Photography became the constant companion of the surveyor, the scholar, and the scientist. There were also more and more local photographers. Their advantage over the numerous photographers from abroad who continued to arrive was knowledge of the terrain, the various sites, and the lifestyles of the Holy Land's diverse inhabitants.

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<sup>62</sup> For such photography in the Holy Land, see Dan Kyram, "Stereoscopic Photography of Eretz Israel," *Cathedra* 68 (June 1993): 161–87 (Hebrew).

<sup>63</sup> Yeshayahu Nir, *The Bible and the Image: The History of Photography in the Holy Land 1839–1899* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

Photographers of the period also were especially interested in race and people with skin darker than theirs. The publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859 aroused interest in exotic types. Western photographers showed greater interest in the physiognomic differences between members of the local subgroups. Ethnography also drew their attention to the garb, lifestyle, customs, and rituals of the local inhabitants. At times this also reflected a belief that the local inhabitants preserved the norms of biblical times. In all these, it was apparent that local photographers had the upper hand.<sup>64</sup>

Over time the local studio developed into an important business, one of the main roles of which was to supply indigenous photographs, an important commercial product which brought handsome gains to the local photographers. They often hired native inhabitants to serve as "models," dressing them in colorful costumes and accessories and positioning them in diverse poses. The story of the photographers of the American Colony in Jerusalem is the best example of how this field developed. It began with the visit of Emperor Wilhelm II to Jerusalem in 1898. Members of the colony decided to establish a photography department to document the visit. Following the great demand for its photographs, the department grew and continued to operate throughout the British Mandate period, creating photos of different sizes, including postcards and stereoscopic photographs. Its collection of approximately 20,000 items is currently in the Library of Congress in Washington DC and serves as an important source for the study of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.<sup>65</sup>

### Architects and the beginning of the new construction

Charles Barry is the best known architect, representative of the group of architect-painters, who visited the Holy Land as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century. At the age of twenty-two he left England on a three-year voyage (1817–1820) with the objective of touring the architectural sites of Europe. After a journey through France, Italy, and Greece, he arrived in Istanbul in August 1818 from whence he planned to return home. However, he was then hired by David Bailie, a Cambridge archaeologist, to serve as an accompanying artist. They left for Egypt, crossed the desert

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<sup>64</sup> For the manners and customs of the local population, observed by Western visitors in the nineteenth century and until 1948, see Ben-Arieh, "Manners and Customs." On the painting of biblical scenes and "the immovable East," see *ibid.*, 127, 129, 136.

<sup>65</sup> About the American Colony photographers, see Dov Gavish, "The American Colony and Its Photographers," in *Zev Vilnay's Jubilee Volume: Essays on the History, Archaeology, and Lore of Eretz Israel ...*, vol. 1, ed. Ely Schiller (Jerusalem: Ariel, 1984), 127–44 (Hebrew); Ben-Arieh, "Jerusalem Travel Literature," 37. See also Barbara Bair, "The American Colony Photography Department: Western Consumption and 'Insider' Commercial Photography," *Jerusalem Quarterly File* 44 (2010): 28–38.

from Cairo to Gaza, and from there to Jerusalem. They toured the city and its surroundings. From there they continued to Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon and returned to London via Italy and the Greek islands. In 1837, Barry was appointed head architect for the British House of Parliament whose construction began that same year.<sup>66</sup>

Another important figure was British architect Frederick Catherwood. He arrived in the Holy Land in the 1830s, drew a detailed map of Jerusalem, and according to it created a general panorama of Jerusalem. Later it was transferred to and displayed in London and from there in New York where it was destroyed in a fire.<sup>67</sup>

Among the noted foreign architects who visited the Holy Land in the nineteenth century were some who left their mark on the landscape by participating in the planning and construction of a series of impressive buildings that serve as historical sources in their own right. Material concerning these designs is found in books and archives, from which one can gather how various Western architectural styles became part of the architecture of Jerusalem. For example, architects from Germany were active in Jerusalem, including Professor Friedrich Adler of Berlin who designed the Church of the Redeemer in the Muristan area of the Old City in 1870; Heinrich Renard who designed the Dormition Abbey complex on Mount Zion and St. Paul's Hospice across from the Damascus Gate at the end of the nineties; and Robert Libniz was the architect of the Auguste Victoria complex in the early twentieth century. From France came architect M. Daumat who designed the Ratisbonne Monastery in the early 1880s and Gustav Boutaud, the architect of the Basilica of the St. Etienne Monastery in the nineties. Russian architect Martin Ivanovich Eppinger designed the Church of the Holy Trinity in the Russian Compound in the late 1850s. The Italian Antonio Barluzzi on the eve of World War I was the architect of the Italian Hospital and other Italian structures in the Holy Land. British architects, too, were active in the country. In the early 1840s architect Hillier designed Christ Church in Jerusalem but died shortly after he arrived in the Holy Land; William Edward Smith was the architect of the Mishkenot Sha'ananim neighborhood at the end of the 1850s; George Jefferey built the Cathedral of St. George towards the end of the nineteenth century in the style of Oxford and Cambridge, most similar to the New College in Oxford; and A. Beresford Pite planned the unique

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<sup>66</sup> For Barry and his diary, which has been preserved almost in its entirety, an album of his sketches, and his artistic approach, see Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 42 and the sources cited there.

<sup>67</sup> See details in Ben-Arieh, "First Surveyed Maps"; id., "The Catherwood Map of Jerusalem 1833," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 31 (July 1974): 150–60. See also id., *Painting the Holy Land*, 44–57. Special mention should be made of the many panorama paintings and models that provide information about various cities, including Jerusalem; see Rehav Rubin and Haim Goren, "Cartographic Representations of Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century: Maps, Relief Maps, and Models," in *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period (1800–1917)*, ed. Israel Bartal and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 323–48 (Hebrew) and the sources cited there. See also notes 24–25 above.



structure of the Anglican Hospital on Jerusalem's Street of the Prophets as a series of detached pavilions, after examining around twenty other hospitals.<sup>68</sup>

The foreign edifices built in Jerusalem aroused controversy at the time as to their appropriateness to the landscape of the Old City. Pite, the noted British architect, claimed that the high tower of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in the Muristan area, near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was frightful. In a letter he wrote to the Allies during World War I he asked that the building be destroyed after they conquered the city.<sup>69</sup>

### Guidebooks for touring and traveling

Like the development and greater use of photography in Palestine, the advent of modern tours to the Holy Land was one of the characteristics of the modern period and Westernization there. Outstanding evidence of this development was the many guidebooks for tourists and visitors to the Holy Land that began to be published in the nineteenth century. As political conditions changed in the Ottoman Empire, including the Holy Land, and the means of transportation improved, there was an increase in the number of people whose aim was solely travel and touring. The publication of guidebooks was intended to serve this type of visitors.

There are those who claim that the first geographical guide to the Holy Land was Josiah Conder's *The Modern Traveller*, published in London in 1825 as part of a popular series on the geography, topography, and history of various countries in the world. Some travel books to the Holy Land can also be viewed as guidebooks since they were written in order to provide information and knowledge for those who would want to follow in their authors' footsteps, and were written in this spirit. However, we should note that the practical guidebooks aimed at tourists to Syria and the Holy Land began appearing only in the 1850s. The first such guide, with a text written by the Irish missionary Josias Leslie Porter, was published in England by John Murray in 1856. The first edition of the guidebook by the Franciscan Father Liévin de Hamme appeared in 1869, followed in 1876 by the first edition of the famous Baedeker guide. The first traveler's handbook by Thomas Cook & Son was published in 1891 to accompany that company's organized tours of Jerusalem and the Holy Land which had begun in the 1860s.

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<sup>68</sup> See these names in the index of both volumes of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*. Hillier is commemorated in a plaque in Christ Church.

<sup>69</sup> For architects and their panoramas and scale models, see Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 44–56. See also Rehav Rubin, "Stephan Illes and His 3d Model-map of Jerusalem (1873)," *Cartographic Journal* 44 (2007): 71–79; Haim Goren and Rehav Rubin, "Conrad Schick's Models of Jerusalem and Its Monuments," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 128 (1996): 103–24.



One of the first English photographers, Dr. George S. Keith, decided to tour the Holy Land in order to find the link between its history and its geography. This tendency is reflected in the titles of the books published by his Scottish missionary father Alexander Keith. This objective was shared by many of the important scholars of the Holy Land, such as the famous clergyman Arthur Penrhyn Stanley who accompanied the Prince of Wales on his visit in 1862, author of *Sinai and Palestine in Connection with Their History* and one of the founders of the Palestine Exploration Fund, as well as George Adam Smith and his famous book *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*.<sup>70</sup>

By means of their photographs, these scholars hoped to find unquestionable proof of their opinions, since they believed a photograph to be irrefutable documentation. If this was true of photographs, a visit to the area was all the more so. Thus the guidebooks exhorted the readers: go visit the Holy Land and see the truths of the Bible for yourselves. How strongly people believed this is evident in the guidebooks of the period. Thomas Cook's report of that company's first organized tour of the Holy Land in 1869 states that indeed the fifty travelers could witness the truths of the Bible at first hand. John Murray's handbook claimed that the Bible is the best guide to the Holy Land. In the second half of the nineteenth century, with the growing influx of visitors, the number of guidebooks increased and new editions of the older ones were printed. Hebrew travel guides also began to appear as Jewish tourists came to Jerusalem, following the Christians. Naturally, since the guides had to be up-to-date and exact they were written by scholars and researchers of standing. This being the case, they also serve as an important source for study of how the Holy Land was undergoing transformation during the latter period of Ottoman rule.<sup>71</sup>

The great worldwide interest in Jerusalem and the Holy Land and the increase in visitors also intensified the need for maps of the country and its major cities. An increasing number of maps were included in the guidebooks and were updated from one edition to the next, while new ones were added. Thus, there is a veritable treasure trove of maps in the guidebooks that can inform us of the changing landscape in the late Ottoman period. The maps also served for education, teaching, and recreation since relief maps began to be produced, which spread throughout the world similarly to the stereoscopic photographs. Simultaneously, models were

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<sup>70</sup> On Stanley, see above in the sub-section on scholars and researchers. For George Adam Smith's book, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "Nineteenth-Century Historical Geographies of the Holy Land," *Journal of Historical Geography* 15 (1989): 76–77; Edwin J. Aiken, *Scriptural Geography: Portraying the Holy Land* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 133–85; Robin A. Butlin, "George Adam Smith and the Historical Geography of the Holy Land: Contents, Contexts, and Connections," *Journal of Historical Geography* 14 (1988): 381–404. During World War I Smith published his *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915) that aroused much interest. I shall return to Smith in Chapter Seven, dealing with the British occupation of Palestine during that war.

<sup>71</sup> On travel guides, see Ben-Arieh, "Jerusalem Travel Literature," 38–39.

created of important sites such as the Temple Mount, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the city of Jerusalem, and even the whole of the Holy Land. The models were displayed in different countries around the world and at important international exhibitions. The rising number of tourists to the Holy Land brought about other developments in tourism within the country as well. Old pilgrimage hostels were replaced by modern hotels, restaurants and guest houses sprang up throughout the country, mainly in the important cities. The changing landscape began to show the effects of tourism.<sup>72</sup>

### Westerners as local residents

Alongside the Western architects who contributed to the adoption of European building styles and architecture in Jerusalem, there were also other Westerners, brought up in European culture and education, who settled in the Holy Land in the mid-nineteenth century and were actively engaged in construction throughout the country. They tried to incorporate elements of local architecture with European building methods. Best known among them are Conrad Schick and Theodor Sandel. Schick became a researcher of Jerusalem and published many articles and books which are generally considered to be part of Western travel literature of the nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup>

A large number of Westerners can be mentioned together with Schick. They lived in the Holy Land for shorter or longer periods of time and afterwards published books about the country. Such are the writings of numerous missionaries who spent time in the Holy Land and the region for many years, for example Thomson's *The Land and the Book* noted above, books by consuls such as the famous works of Consul James Finn and his wife Elizabeth who lived in Jerusalem for a decade and a half (see ch. 1, n. 103) or the Russian consul Constantine M. Bazili who resided in Beirut (ch. 1, n. 22), books by people who resided in the Holy Land for a few years such as *Domestic Life in Palestine* by Mary Eliza Rogers, the sister of Edward Thomas Rogers who served in British consulates in the East.<sup>74</sup> Other examples are the books written by the Turkish government's engineer, the Italian Ermete Pierotti, and published between 1854 and 1864, *Jerusalem Explored* and *Customs and Traditions of Palestine*, in addition to books by many German consuls, some of whom were noted Oriental scholars. There were also books authored by physicians

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 38–39; Shimon Gibson, Yoni Shapira, and Rupert L. Chapman III, *Tourists, Travellers and Hotels in Nineteenth-Century Jerusalem* (Leeds: Maney, 2003).

<sup>73</sup> Much has been written about Schick; see Goren, *Zieht hin*, 273–92 and the index for many additional references.

<sup>74</sup> For Mary Eliza Rogers and her brother Thomas Edward Rogers, see Ben-Arieh, "Manners and Customs," 452–53.

who served in Jerusalem hospitals for many years and reported on the health conditions, hygiene, and lifestyle of the local inhabitants as well as books by other personages who lived in the country for various reasons and wrote about it, including some important scholars of the Holy Land.

Nineteenth-century Western literature also includes the works of Europeans who came to settle in the Holy Land for good, among them Jewish authors such as the famous scholar Joseph Schwarz who arrived in 1833 and took up residence in Jerusalem. His books on Eretz Israel and their translations into various languages appear in Röhrich's bibliography, as do the travel books of Rabbi David D' Beit Hillel of Jerusalem and the works of other Jewish and Christian authors who lived in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century and wrote diaries, memoirs, and scholarly works about the Holy Land.<sup>75</sup>

## From personal research to organized institutional research

Thus far I have summarized the Western travel literature by type of activity. In my book *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century*, I attempted to provide a chronological list of the names of all Western travel writers whom I considered as contributing to the knowledge and study of the Holy Land from the beginning of the nineteenth century, based on Röhrich's extensive bibliography of this literature until 1878 noted above.<sup>76</sup>

### The Palestine Exploration Fund

The foundational meeting of the Palestine Exploration Fund was convened on May 12, 1865 in the "Jerusalem Chamber" of Westminster Abbey in London.<sup>77</sup> From the outset the PEF received public support and Queen Victoria even agreed to become its patron. The archbishop of York, bishops, dukes, and dignitaries of

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<sup>75</sup> On Jewish art in nineteenth-century Eretz Israel, see *Art and Crafts in Eretz Israel*. For illustration by Jews, see Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 260–61. For Jewish researchers of Eretz Israel, see id., *Rediscovery*, 102–4.

<sup>76</sup> See Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, the Introduction and the appendices.

<sup>77</sup> For the founding of the Palestine Exploration Fund, see *ibid.*, 195–98. For English and Jewish members, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "Non-Jewish Institutions and the Research of Palestine during the British Mandate Period: Part 1," *Cathedra* 92 (June 1999): 136–41 (Hebrew). For A.P. Stanley's role in its founding, see id., "Manners and Customs," 451–53 and above, in the sub-section on scholars and researchers.

high standing from all religious factions, including Jewish representatives, were appointed to the Fund's council.<sup>78</sup>

On June 22, 1865 Captain Charles Wilson, who had just returned after conducting the first mapping operation of Jerusalem, was present at the second meeting after the founding of the PEF. Following his report, the Fund decided to send a small research commission to check the option of mapping the whole of the Holy Land. This group left in October 1865 in order to map the northern area and the Lebanese border. It returned in April 1866, and in view of its successful mission, the PEF decided to begin its operations in the Holy Land. These were the three main objectives it posited: (a) continued study of Jerusalem; (b) to locate Mount Sinai; (c) detailed mapping of the whole of the Holy Land.<sup>79</sup>

In 1867 the PEF sent another research mission headed by the young officer Charles Warren of the Royal Engineers to continue the work of his predecessor Wilson in the study of Jerusalem. The mission focused on the study of the Temple Mount and its environs, to the extent that this was possible. Surveys were also conducted in the City of David and the Ophel Hill. Its efforts, which continued from February 1867 to April 1870, aroused great interest throughout Britain. In those years Warren conducted voyages and surveys in other parts of the country, including Massada. He published reports in the PEF's journals that began publication in 1865, at first in the annual and from 1869 in the quarterly. The summaries of his studies in Jerusalem, including those of Wilson, were also published in books.<sup>80</sup>

The objective of the PEF's third research expedition was to locate Mount Sinai. Due to the great expense involved, a special fund for mapping the Sinai and researching the area was established. At first a team headed by Wilson operated in the area. Afterwards another one was sent, led by Professor Edward Palmer and accompanied by Charles F. Tyrwhitt-Drake, on behalf of Cambridge University. The results of the research in Sinai were published in a number of publications. Palmer also visited Jerusalem and studied and published aspects related to the Temple Mount. As for Sinai, the work of the researchers was not completed and this was done only in a survey conducted in 1913.<sup>81</sup>

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**78** Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, 153–60, connects the establishment of the PEF with Englishmen who were motivated by millenarist aspirations for the restoration of the Jews to Zion. Her claim seems to be too much of a generalization.

**79** About Wilson's mapping of Jerusalem, his published report, and the Fund's further plans, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 184–85. For the expedition to the northern part of the country, see *ibid.*, 195–98.

**80** For Warren's expedition, its publications, and the people involved, see *ibid.*, 199–203.

**81** On the Sinai expedition of Wilson, Palmer (who was murdered in Sinai), Tyrwhitt-Drake, and others, see *ibid.*, 203–9.

## Mapping and survey of western Palestine by the PEF

The greatest project of the PEF, which was also its central purpose, was the exploration and mapping of the Holy Land, including the Jordan Valley, the Negev, and Sinai. It also had vast military value. Apparently, deep religious interest in exploring the Holy Land was also combined with political-military considerations of accumulating knowledge that could be of future service in the Holy Land, as well as throughout the Ottoman Empire.<sup>82</sup> Apparently, similar reasons were at the basis for the establishment of the German, Russian, and American societies which I shall discuss below.

It was decided that the first stage of the project was to be mapping western Palestine. After the previous successes in studying Jerusalem and the surveys conducted, the PEF determined to set out on this operation which was entrusted to the Royal Engineers. The first expedition set out in 1871 under the joint auspices of the PEF and the War Ministry. Clearly, the assistance of the British government was also in keeping with its imperialist interests, as the mapping of the region close to the crucial Suez Canal was of major strategic importance. The expedition was headed by young officers from the Royal Engineers and accompanied by translators well versed in Arabic. Among the most prominent officers were Claude Reignier Conder, later one of the important scholars of the Holy Land, and Horatio Herbert Kitchener who later became famous as “Kitchener of Khartoum” and Britain’s Secretary of State for War during World War I.<sup>83</sup> The operation continued for seven years, with mapping of western Palestine ending in September 1877, covering an area of 6,000 square miles from the Tyre–Banias line in the north to the Gaza–Beersheba line in the south.

Two years after the mapping and survey operation ended, a large detailed map of western Palestine was published on twenty-six large sheets (on a scale of 1 English mile per inch, 1:63,630). Two years later a smaller scale map was published (1 mile to 3/8 of an inch) which encompassed the Holy Land in six sheets and was published in four different versions: (a) Arab names alone; (b) names of biblical sites; (c) names of sites from the New Testament; (d) marking the drainage

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<sup>82</sup> The mapping and survey project of the PEF with details of its two important researchers, Conder and Kitchener, is discussed in *ibid.*, 209–11. Since the publication of my book, additional important studies of the PEF have been published. See, for example, John J. Moscrop, *Measuring Jerusalem: The Palestine Exploration Fund and British Interests in the Holy Land* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000). He concludes that British interests in the PEF’s activities changed over time: at first religious motivations ruled the day, followed by military influence, and finally primarily interest in archaeology. See also Haim Goren, “Sacred, But Not Surveyed: Nineteenth-Century Surveys of Palestine,” *Imago Mundi* 54 (2002): 87–109.

<sup>83</sup> Kitchener, the hero of Khartoum and Secretary of State for War in the British cabinet during World War I, shall be discussed in Chapter Seven, together with the British Arab Office in Cairo, established in February 1916, which played an important role in the Middle East at the time.

basis of the streams in the country.<sup>84</sup> The twenty-six map sheets were supplemented by three accompanying volumes arranged according to the map sheets. In 1881–1884, the PEF published the comprehensive summary of the survey, in seven thick volumes under the name *Survey of Western Palestine*, among which were:

- (a) three books supplementing the maps which included illustrations, plans, and notes written by the survey personnel and supplemented with information taken from credible sources. The three books were organized according to the sheets of the map and each volume was divided into three parts: (1) a physical description of the area; (2) a detailed archaeological survey; (3) notes about the inhabitants supplemented by some Arab folklore;
- (b) a special volume that included over 10,000 names of locations collected during the survey period;
- (c) a volume of articles collected and re-edited after having appeared in the PEF journals;
- (d) a volume on Jerusalem, and a full report regarding previous excavations conducted in the city on behalf of the PEF;
- (e) a volume summing up observations of the flora and fauna of the Holy Land written and edited by Henry Baker Tristram.

There is no doubt that the mapping and survey of western Palestine was the most important geographical project of the nineteenth century, and its results serve as a source for study and research to this day.<sup>85</sup>

### Other societies for the exploration of the Holy Land

The American Palestine Exploration Society was founded in 1870 and was the first to be established following the PEF. The initial objectives of the APES were the study and mapping of the area east of the Jordan River. However, it was short-lived, due to lack of resources and faulty relations between the survey expedition and the directors. The American society was dismantled in 1884 without having realized its

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<sup>84</sup> For the cartographic aspects of the *Survey* maps, see Isaac Schattner, *The Map of Eretz Israel and Its History* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1951), 178–93 (Hebrew), who also described additional maps that were prepared on the basis of those of the PEF. On the published volumes of the *Survey*, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 214.

<sup>85</sup> Most interesting are the borders that the PEF set for western Palestine already in the 1870s: the biblical “from Dan to Beersheba.” These were reiterated once again during World War I by Prime Minister Lloyd George. I shall return to this subject in the summary at the end of this chapter and in Chapter Seven.

goals, yet between 1871 and 1877 it managed to publish four works.<sup>86</sup> After the failure of the Americans, the PEF decided to complete the mapping of the Holy Land as a whole. In 1881, a small team headed by Conder began measurement works in the southern area of the Gilead and the northern section of the Moab region. But the Turkish governor placed many obstacles in their path, finally forbidding the team to continue its work, and all efforts by the British ambassador in Turkey to change the decision were in vain. What both the Americans and British failed to achieve was carried out by one man, German engineer Gottlieb Schumacher, a resident of Haifa. For twenty years Schumacher mapped the area east of the Jordan, working alternately with a German society founded in the meantime, the *Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas*, the PEF, and the Turkish rail company which he served as an engineer and chief surveyor.<sup>87</sup>

The *Deutscher Verein* was founded on September 28, 1877 in the city of Wiesbaden. The first issue of its journal, similar in format to that of the PEF, was published as early as 1878.<sup>88</sup> Leading German scholars had begun studying the Holy Land even before the establishment of the *Deutscher Verein*. Earlier, I mentioned the activities of Ritter, one of the founding fathers of modern geography, his great interest in and extensive writing regarding the Holy Land and his collaboration with the American scholar Robinson, one of the originators of the historical-geographical study of the Holy Land. Special mention should be made of Dr. Titus Tobler who developed the method of monographic studies and demonstrated it in his comprehensive study of Jerusalem.<sup>89</sup> The first operation of the *Deutscher Verein* focused on the territory east of the Jordan, as is reflected by its first maps based on the works of Schumacher and the geologist Alphons Stübel. However, like the PEF,

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**86** On the American Palestine Exploration Society and its publications, especially those of Dr. Selah Merrill, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 219–20; Lester I Vogel, *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 199–203.

**87** For Conder's survey and publication about the area east of the Jordan, which he called Eastern Palestine, and the beginnings of Schumacher's research in that region, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 220–21.

**88** On the German society, the scholars who initiated its establishment, its journal and first activities, see *ibid.*, 221. For greater detail about its establishment, see Goren, *Zieht hin*, 317–44, where he also discusses its connections with Karl Baedeker who published the famous Baedeker Guides, including Palestine, and also with Albert Socin (see below) and other scholars.

**89** For the Swiss physician Titus Tobler, see *ibid.*, 222–43. Tobler preceded Röhricht by more than two decades when he published a bibliography of travel literature to Palestine in 1867, *Bibliographica Geographica Palaestinae*. He also coined the term "Palestineology" for research of Palestine. See also Shimon Stern, "Titus Tobler, Nineteenth-Century Researcher of Eretz Israel"; with an appendix: "A Bibliography of the Writings of Titus Tobler," by Shimon Stern and Haim Goren, *Cathedra* 48 (June 1988): 30–48 (Hebrew).



it soon turned its attention to archaeology and began conducting excavations in Jerusalem and other places in the Holy Land.<sup>90</sup>

The Russians, too, were very active in political and religious affairs in Jerusalem and the Holy Land and began taking an interest in the scientific study of the country. The impetus came from a member of the Russian intelligentsia, Vasili Nikolaevich Khitrovo. He broached the idea of establishing a Russian Pravoslav society that would be active in the Holy Land in religious and spiritual matters as well as on the economic and scientific level. The PEF expedition was his example which he wanted to imitate. He worked determinedly in Russia to further the idea among scholars, religious leaders, the Russian nobility, and the court of the tsar. In order to gain much public support, Khitrovo proposed that the society be headed by a royal member and that it be called the “Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society.” On May 22, 1882 Prince Sergei Alexandrovich adopted Khitrovo’s proposal and even took upon himself to serve as the first honorary president of the “Pravoslav Russian Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society.”<sup>91</sup>

Unlike the previous countries mentioned, the French did not establish a special society for the study of the Holy Land, but were very active in studying its past, especially archaeology, contributing much to the study of the country and its concealed secrets.<sup>92</sup> One of these was French archaeologist Charles Clermont-Ganneau, the secretary of the French consulate in Jerusalem. He began researching the Holy Land in the early 1870s in cooperation with the PEF, which even published his works in English in its journals. In 1876 his lecture, in French, *La Palestine inconnue*, was published under the sponsorship of the PEF which also published two volumes of his archaeological researches in English in 1899, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine during the Years 1873–1874*. His studies were also published in French in six volumes as *Recueil d’archéologie orientale* which appeared in 1881–1905.<sup>93</sup>

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**90** For comparison of the work of the Deutsche Verein and the PEF and the increase in organized German research in Palestine, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, “Non-Jewish Institutions and the Research of Palestine during the British Mandate Period: Part 2,” *Cathedra* 93 (Sept. 1999): 111–17 (Hebrew).

**91** Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:144, 302, with details of earlier religious delegations and Russian activity and construction in Palestine. On the Russian presence in Jerusalem in the late Ottoman period, including the establishment of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, see Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1914: Church and Politics in the Near East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Alex Carmel, “Russian Activity in Palestine in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Vision and Conflict in the Holy Land*, ed. Richard I. Cohen (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1985), 45–77. For greater detail, see Vladimir Tsibkin, “The Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society (1882–1914),” *Cathedra* 46 (Dec. 1987): 65–90 (Hebrew).

**92** Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 183, 224, esp. 183 for Victor Guérin. See also, id., “Non-Jewish Institutions, Part 2,” 117–23 for activity of French institutions and persons, such as the Dominican Fathers of the St. Etienne monastery, and French consul René Neuville, who was in Palestine from 1928 to 1937, and his involvement in prehistoric archaeological excavations and many other activities in the Holy Land.

**93** On Clermont-Ganneau, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 224.



It is only fitting to end this survey of Western travel literature to the Holy Land in the first eighty years of the nineteenth century with the magnificent opus of Charles Wilson published in 1880: *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt*. In preparing the work, Wilson collaborated (see above) with the greatest of Holy Land scholars of the period, and together they participated in collecting, choosing, editing, and writing the important chapters of the book, whose illustrations are the core of the volume. The illustrations and the accompanying texts serve as a visual summary which presents to the reader the successful and convincing study, exploration, and research of the Holy Land in the first eighty years of the nineteenth century.<sup>94</sup>

## Conceptions of the Holy Land in nineteenth-century travel literature

The majority of authors of travel literature to the Holy Land in the nineteenth century were Europeans born and raised in a Christian Western culture imbued with beliefs, views, and opinions about the Holy Land. In this sub-chapter I would like to present six images of that land which I believe form an inseparable part of this literature.<sup>95</sup>

### A sacred and divine land

“The Holy Land” was an expression filled with emotional associations and sentimentality for many of the Western travelers who visited it in the nineteenth century. This was the land where God himself set rules and precepts, sent angels, and conversed with human beings, a land in which God was revealed to man, the son of God descended in human form and graced the land with his footsteps, and from which he then returned to the heavens. The unique role of Jesus in Christian belief is what determines the sanctity of the Holy Land. The New Testament doctrine of sanctity obligates worship of the Divinity and sanctification of the land in which the divine revelation took place. The land is raised above reality and its physical

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<sup>94</sup> Ben-Arieh, *Painting the Holy Land*, 245–49. A German edition of the book was published in 1883, including most of the illustrations, many of which also appear in Victor Guérin’s *La Terre Sainte*, see *ibid.*, 249. An interesting article on Wilson’s *Picturesque Palestine* is Sue Rainey, “Illustration ‘Urgently Required’: The Picturesque Palestine Project 1878–83,” *Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies* 30 (2005): 181–260.

<sup>95</sup> This section is to a large extent based on Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, “Holy Land Views in Nineteenth-Century Western Travel Literature,” in *With Eyes toward Zion—III: Western Societies and the Holy Land*, ed. Moshe Davis and Yehoshua Ben-Arieh (New York: Praeger, 1991), 10–29. However, some changes have been introduced here when discussing the fourth and fifth perceptions, with emphasis on additional topics.

existence, becoming an intangible and unconceivable conception. However, crucial importance is attributed to the sites connected to Jesus, his history, journeys, and suffering and to the Christian bond to the Holy Land, and less so to the historical holy sites that had already existed in his lifetime.

The frequent use of the term “Holy Land” that intensified during the nineteenth century gives credence to this view. The term attaches a separate geographical singularity to a region that had no political uniqueness at the time. The term was amorphous and its borders undefined during the nineteenth century. It seems that its being set apart from other countries is what granted it its geographical singularity. The origin of this differentiation was in its unique sacredness. The land was the home of the “holy people,” the location of the Temple (Judaism), the birthplace of the human Divinity (Christianity), and the place where the Prophet ascended to the heavens (Islam). The presence of the divine spirit made the land more sublime in the perception of believers and differentiated it from the neighboring countries. Historically, the singularity of the land is what led to its being conceived as the center of the world. The concept of the Holy Land as the central geographic location on earth is a tenet deriving from the fact that it was perceived as having seen the revelation of divinity and become the focus of faith, and thus is identified with the physical core of the world, a perception stemming from Jewish biblical and rabbinical literature from which it passed on to Christian literature.<sup>96</sup>

### **Land of the Bible and the holy sites**

The second perception which was very common in Western travel literature of the nineteenth century was the religious view of the Holy Land as the land of the Bible and the holy sites. During the nineteenth century, the unique conception that this was the land of the Bible was greatly enhanced. It was thanks to the Bible that the Holy Land was first introduced into European thought as a physical entity. The translation of the Bible and the Holy Scriptures into various European languages in the previous centuries and the invention of printing enabled their widespread distribution, turning them into a central component of Western Christian culture in the early modern era. From a very young age, a Christian child was taught not only to read the Bible but also to listen to reading from it in the family home, at Sunday school, in festive celebrations, and at prayer both in church and in private homes. The Holy Land was that land familiar through the old narratives, even if those were stories of faith or part of the cultural heritage. As the number of tourists and visitors increased, they began seeking the landscapes and sites familiar to them from their childhood. Not only did they seek an ambience of sanctity, they also desired to see

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<sup>96</sup> Ben-Arieh, “Holy Land Views,” 10–12 and the sources cited in nn. 2–7.

with their own eyes the landscapes and locations they had heard and read so much about. Their attachment to the Bible was so great that upon returning home they would reopen the Scriptures in order to read once again about the places they had visited and viewed in their tour of the land of the Bible.<sup>97</sup>

Another aspect related to the Holy Land as the land of the Bible was the challenge posed by Bible criticism which reached a peak in the nineteenth century. During the Middle Ages, biblical exegesis had limited itself to literal, moral, and allegorical interpretation according to the needs of its main users. The Reformation made the Bible almost universally accepted, without challenge. However, the nineteenth century for the first time undermined absolute faith in the accurateness and truthfulness of the Bible. Western thought of the period perceived of general, analytical, and textual criticism of the Bible as a central challenge. The scientific materialism characteristic of the nineteenth century and the facts presented by Charles Lyell in *Principles of Geology* (1830) against the story of the Creation caused a crisis and skepticism regarding the accurateness of the biblical stories and descriptions.<sup>98</sup> Thoughtful believers began to seek a new approach to faith. It would seem, too, that the biblical descriptions of the Holy Land presented believers with certain difficulties. They grappled with the question of how the region depicted in the Bible as “a land of milk and honey” could have degenerated to such a desolate condition. Earlier generations of believers had responded that this was an incontestable divine curse. But Bible scholars criticized the inaccuracy of the Bible and its exaggerated descriptions of the land’s fertility. Nineteenth-century men of faith sought a scientific answer. Some attributed it to climatic changes, while others claimed that the cause should not be sought in physical transformations and that drastically changed social conditions and agricultural methods were sufficient explanation for the decline. The destruction of the forests that had once covered the hills, and of the terraces that formerly preserved the soil and enabled its cultivation, as well as basic changes in the population and its culture – all these were the source of the differences between the Holy Land of the nineteenth century and the one described in the Bible.<sup>99</sup>

### Land of ancient history

In nineteenth-century Western culture the Holy Land was also perceived as part of the historical ancient world, whether classical Mediterranean (Hellenistic-Roman) or ancient Middle Eastern. Europeans had long evinced respect and esteem for the historical ancient lands, although they were distant and in fact generally unknown.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 12–13 and the sources cited in nn. 8–9.

<sup>98</sup> On Charles Lyell and the innovative geographical research, see Goren, *Zieht hin*, 65–66.

<sup>99</sup> Ben-Arieh, “Holy Land Views,” 13–14 and the sources cited in nn. 15–17.

In addition to the Bible, since as early as the eleventh century the European world was also acquainted with the saga of Alexander the Great and other prominent Hellenistic historical narratives. Interest in these countries increased in the late Middle Ages and the number of visitors to the Mediterranean region and the Orient grew accordingly, at first to the Hellenistic-Roman world and later to the more ancient lands. A byproduct of tours in the ancient historical countries was the custom to purchase antiques and transfer them to the places of origin of the visitors and important museums in their countries: The British Museum in London, the Louvre in Paris, the German museums in Berlin, and others. Yet some ancient artifacts also found their way into private homes and gardens. The Holy Land, too, was thus pillaged. Archaeologist Lucien Félicien de Saulcy conducted the first excavation in the Tombs of Kings in Jerusalem and transferred sarcophagi found there to the Louvre. The famous Mesha Stele, discovered in Moab, also found its way to the French museum; the Siloam inscription was shipped to a museum in Istanbul, and more. Nevertheless, it should be noted that damage was not the only result of the interest in ancient lands during the nineteenth century; it also brought about the beginning of scientific study of the ancient world. The important discoveries in Egypt and Mesopotamia instigated the study of many languages and cultures of the ancient Near East. Many scholars and explorers were attracted to the subject. Exploration of the Egyptian pyramids, the deciphering of the Rosetta Stone hieroglyphs (1822) by Jean-François Champollion, the Austen Henry Layard excavations in Nineveh (in the forties) and the Heinrich Schliemann excavations in Troy (in the seventies), all these and others turned archaeology from a hunt for antiques into the basic discipline for the study of many and varied languages and cultures.<sup>100</sup>

### **An oriental country, part of the Arab world**

Beyond those who saw the Holy Land as part of the classic historical ancient world, there were Western travelers who perceived of it as an Oriental land, part of the Arab-Muslim East surrounding it. The Western world was familiar with the Orient and had set its attitude towards it prior to the nineteenth century. Orientalism had begun to occupy a central position in European thought and culture in the eighteenth century, but the perception was primarily romantic and fantasied. In contrast, during the nineteenth century the conception became more realistic. A number of literary works and personal memoirs were written at the beginning of the century that greatly influenced the works that followed and directed them towards a scientific approach to the Orient. First and foremost among the literary works is *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights* which as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century was translated into French

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 14–16 and the sources cited in nn. 18–21.

and then into English. The tales of *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights* gained unprecedented popularity. It was almost impossible to find a European intellectual in the nineteenth century who hadn't read the tales in his youth and couldn't remember them. The tales enriched Western languages with expressions and imagery, imprinting many images of Oriental lifestyle on Western minds. Many of the people visiting the area after having read the tales had a feeling that it was familiar to them: the cities with the vibrant bazaars, the mosques, merchants, dervishes, water carriers, letter writers, and fishermen. Yet, not only the realistic Orient emerged from those stories, but also an imaginary East of marvelous castles constructed and transferred at night from one place to another, cities of bronze and black marble, flying horses, magic carpets, wondrous potions, pretty-eyed girls, and more.<sup>101</sup>

Alongside the positive imagery of the exotic Orient accepted by many Westerners, there was also a wide range of critical and hostile views of Muslim society and its many faults. Many condemned the laziness of the local inhabitants. Various books written in the nineteenth century describe the Arabs as lazy, wasting their time on idle gossip and smoking nargilahs, while the great monuments of the past, right behind them, were being destroyed by neglect and desolation. Many viewed Arab laziness as the main reason for the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. Other characteristics of the Arab inhabitants condemned by Western literature were "innate fatalism," "passive submissiveness," and "extreme cruelty." The term "Muslim barbarism" was frequently used by various authors. The prevalent European point of view of Islam was that it was a society of ignorance and blind spite. Muslims were usually considered inferior, corrupt (taking bribes and baksheesh), dishonest, cruel, and capable of extreme cruelty towards non-Muslims. The wars between the Turks and Greeks and the massacre of the Christians by the Druze in 1860 were undoubtedly events that reinforced these views and made them widespread.

Yet, there were Western travelers who despite their criticism of negative Muslim characteristics sought other, positive, traits. For example, the Frenchman Alphonse de Lamartine, while accusing the Muslim believers of fatalism, lauded the depth of their faith, grace, hospitality, and patience, and even went so far as to state that the study of the Koran is no less important than study of Christianity. Many pointed to Muslim devoutness, stating that the most prevalent sensation when visiting a mosque is the unique religious atmosphere that prevails over the visitor that may be seen as fanaticism but also as a deep all-embracing faith. The oriental world also enchanted Western artists and they often painted a Bedouin praying in the desert. Muslim prayer served to equalize all men of faith: from the half-naked fellah, the rich effendi with his silk caftan, and the urban type sporting gold jewelry.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 20–25 and the sources cited in nn. 38–56.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 22–23 about Western artists for whom the Orient was a virtual gold mine. Their paintings from the Orient were hung in international and ethnological exhibitions in Western countries and were also sold in many reproductions.

### Land of “the Immovable East”

In contrast to the previous four perceptions, common to which is the historical past of the Holy Land, there were also original scholars among nineteenth-century writers of travel literature who began emphasizing the study of the Holy Land based on the origin and religion of the local Arab population, i.e. a land of “the Immovable East.” There were those who studied the fellahin and Bedouin and identified customs, lifestyles, and folklore influences of the ancient Near East as predating the Arab conquest in the seventh century, and tried to draw a connection between the folklore and customs and biblical times.<sup>103</sup> Others tried to discover influences of the ancient Middle Eastern culture in Muslim Arab literature and folklore. One school of thought attempted to present Arab culture as the legacy of the pre-Hellenistic Middle Eastern culture. Its assumptions were grounded in a belief in the basic continuity of race and culture in the Holy Land, arguing that the inhabitants of Syria had been Semitic at all times and had withstood a thousand years of encroachment by various conquerors. The Arab population of Syria, including the Holy Land, that is at the focus of “the immovable East,” is essentially Semitic with characteristics of primitive Semitism, thus representing the people and culture of the Bible.<sup>104</sup> This theory had many opponents. One was the noted archaeologist William Foxwell Albright who claimed that Muslim culture cannot be seen as a derivative of the biblical culture so distant in time from it, but as a continuation and result of the Hellenistic culture nearer to it in time. According to him, Islam itself stemmed from the Judeo-Christian tradition and had little in common with the religions of the ancient Near East. Albright believed that the gap between Hellenistic-Roman civilization and that of the ancient Orient was far greater than the one separating Islam from Hellenism, and any other point of view may lead to a misunderstanding of the process of the history, life, and thought of the Near East.<sup>105</sup>

Interestingly enough, among the first Jewish researchers were also some who tried to find a connection between the Arab inhabitants and the Jews who lived in the country in ancient times. Their objective was to find affinity between the two peoples, the Arabs and the Jews. They perceived of the Arabs as continuing the ancient Jews rather than the yet earlier Canaanites. In contrast, politically motivated pro-Arab researchers continue to promote the latter theory to this day. Thus they aim to bolster the Arab claim to ownership and primacy in the Middle East in general, and the Holy Land in particular. They claim that the Arabs currently living in Palestine are the successors of the Canaanites, that the Jewish inhabitants arrived

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**103** For “the immovable East,” which was the title of a book by Philip J. Baldensperger, see Ben-Arieh, “Manners and Customs,” 461–70, where mention is made of the epithet “Pompei of the biblical lands.”

**104** During the British Mandate period, research into Arab folklore continued at an institution devoted to that subject established in the village of Artas; see Ben-Arieh, “Manners and Customs,” 477–90.

**105** Ben-Arieh, “Holy Land Views,” 23–24 and the sources cited in nn. 48–54.

after them, and that the modern Jewish population is a foreign implant in the region.<sup>106</sup>

There were a few Western scholars who took their perceptions even further by comparing the local Arab population to the native populations of newly discovered countries around the world. The explorer and traveler John MacGregor drew the Arab Bedouins in the Hula area, who took him and his boat captive as he sailed down the Jordan River, as American Indians. Explorer Claude Reignier Conder, among the noted scholars of the Holy Land, notes that the Muslim natives are generally considered as counterparts to the American Indians and the indigenous natives of Australia, and even made racist comments about them. To summarize, I shall note the important fact that the unknown and unexplored condition of the Holy Land in terms of culture was similar to that of other unknown countries around the world, and that its rediscovery by the Western world began only in the nineteenth century.<sup>107</sup>

### Land of new beginnings

The final perception I shall note, also found in nineteenth century travel literature to the Holy Land, is that of a land of new beginnings. Three factors contributed to this view: (a) changes in the Ottoman Empire; (b) the religious revival; (c) developments in the Jewish community.

The first group includes developments, events, and changes that transpired throughout the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century and whose effect upon the Holy Land was particularly great, including the penetration of modernization and Western technological means. Additionally, a change began in the makeup of the local population as Jewish aliyah increased. All these generated actual changes and developments in the Holy Land and produced a sense that new things were taking place, and although appearances were often greater than the facts on the ground, they created a feeling that the historical biblical Holy Land was a land of new beginnings.

The second group of factors was the religious revival that swept through the world of Christianity. This revival caused people of faith to view the Holy Land not

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**106** There were also Jews who sought a connection between Arabs and Jews. See esp. David Ben-Gurion and Izhak Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel in the Past and Present*, ed. Mordechai Eliav and Yehoshua Ben-Arieh (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979) (Hebrew; originally published in Yiddish in New York in 1918).

**107** For theories about the provenance of the Arabs residing in Palestine, see Ben-Arieh, "Manners and Customs," 490–93, and the sources cited there. Among the British authors who toured the Holy Land was John MacGregor who wrote *Rob Roy on the Jordan: A Canoe Cruise in Palestine, Egypt, and the Waters of Damascus*; see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 228–28, including two illustrations from MacGregor's book.



only as a land of the past, but as a land of the future, “the Promised Land.” Growing Christian involvement in the region generated an increase in the number of pilgrims to the Holy Land and in turn accelerated Christian activities within it. The evangelical revival characteristic of the nineteenth century also ushered in various forms of millenarism and caused varied groups – American, German, and Swedish – to settle in the land in the hope of witnessing the second coming of Christ.

The third group of factors includes developments in the rapidly growing Jewish community in the Holy Land as well as developments in Jewish communities throughout the world that began heralding Zionist ideas. All these only strengthened and emphasized the sense of new beginnings in the Holy Land.

The six perceptions I have presented of the image of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century are found in a variety of manners in the plentiful Western travel literature of the nineteenth century. Two of them pertain exclusively to the Holy Land: its conception as the sacred land of God and its conception as the land of the Bible and the holy places. The next two conceptions perceived of the Holy Land as an integral part of the region in which it was located, the historical ancient Middle East or the contemporary Oriental space. The final two perceptions refer to the singularity of the Holy Land. True, desolation and neglect or new beginnings were also present in other parts of the Middle East. But these two perceptions of the Holy Land stemmed from its unique background and history. The desolation and neglect of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century was underlined by its former grandeur. The new beginnings, too, were important and special since they were seen as relating to the uniqueness of the ancient historical Holy Land, the land of the Bible and the New Testament, and both were the result of Divine Providence.

The term “geopietty” serves in geographical humanistic literature to describe the complex relations of people to place (geo: land, country, nation, fatherland; piety: awe, bonding, and loyalty to the land, nation, family, and the God who protects them). For the authors of nineteenth-century Western travel literature, geopietty was expressed in the form of deep emotional loyalty to the Holy Land as a place and as a past, and it was common to almost all of them. Thus in many ways the works reflect the authors and their opinions and images of the Holy Land. It seems that more than any other country in the world, the Holy Land created a strange combination of imagination and realism in the minds of Westerners. The Ottoman Holy Land was also the land of the Bible, where the drama of the birth of Christianity was enacted, while at one and the same time it was a neglected Oriental country and a biblical paradise; a desolate desert and the Promised Land; a center of missionary activity and the renewal of Jewish settlement; a tourist attraction and a place of messianic revelations; the arena for pioneering settlements and a treasure trove of antiquities. The pull of the past was so strong that any reference to the future was based on it. The very flow of people from all over the world to the Holy Land and the writing of diverse literary works about it is already part of the history and important events that took place there in the nineteenth century, together with the penetration of all aspects of Western culture and its spread



throughout the country. This phenomenon, too, is one of the characteristics of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century. These two phenomena are intertwined in many ways. The Western literature about the Holy Land in this century was thus not just a historical source for the study of the land, but a cultural phenomenon in itself.<sup>108</sup>

## Summary: Boundaries of the Holy Land according to travel literature

An important question arises regarding the geographical-historical literature about the Holy Land in the nineteenth century: what were the actual borders of the Holy Land? The area and boundaries of the Holy Land were never clear and defined during the Ottoman period or in previous historical periods. A political unit was created only after World War I, as a British Mandate, which was named “Palestine (Eretz Israel).”<sup>109</sup>

To answer this question I shall reference the works of some of the leading scholars of geographical-historical research in the nineteenth century. The most important and famous book in the field is that by George Adam Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*. First published in 1894; its twenty-fifth edition was published in 1931 with changes and adaptations by the author himself. The book was republished over the years in several editions and reprints.<sup>110</sup> Smith did not include Jerusalem in this book; that city was the subject of a separate two-volume study published in 1907–1908. The important *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the Holy Land* was first published in 1915 and sold, until Smith’s death (in 1942), in over thirty-five thousand copies. In *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, Smith considers the Holy Land to be the southern area of Syria. The book is divided into three sections: (a) the land in general; (b) the western parts of the Holy Land; (c) the eastern parts of the Holy Land. The book was very influential in England. During deliberations relating to the Balfour Declaration, British Prime Minister Lloyd George noted that the book guided his thoughts on the Holy Land and from it he learned to define the boundaries of the land as “from Dan to Beersheba.” General Allenby had two books in his knapsack during the conquest of the Holy Land – the Bible and Smith’s work.<sup>111</sup>

**108** For “geopiety” as reflected in the thought of scholars of cultural geography, especially in relation to the unique case of the Holy Land, see Vogel, *To See a Promised Land*, 6–10.

**109** This concluding section is based on Ben-Arieh, “Nineteenth-Century Historical Geographies.”

**110** The copy in my possession is a 1966 reprint of the edition of 1931, revised by Smith himself, containing updates and additions to that date: George Adam Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London: Collins, 1966). See also note 70 above.

**111** See the introduction by the editor of the 1966 edition, and also Smith’s introductions to the first edition (1894) and the revised edition of 1931. I shall return to his perception of the boundaries of the Holy Land as “from Dan to Beersheba” in Chapter Seven, in the discussion of the Balfour Declaration.

Jerusalem, for Smith, was the heart of the Holy Land to which, as noted, he devoted a separate study. It is abundantly clear that all those describing the Holy Land were in agreement about one thing: Jerusalem was the heart and center of the land. Then what of the remaining parts of the Holy Land? It seems that here too there was general agreement that the mountainous area Judea was the country's central region. One scholar, Ellsworth Huntington, even called Judea "Palestine Proper." West of Judea lay areas of lesser importance: the plains and the southern coastal area from Gaza in the south to Jaffa in the north. This area was usually known as Philistia. North of Judea extended the mountainous region of Samaria. It is interesting to note that during the nineteenth century, as Jerusalem's importance increased, these three areas, the sancaks of Jerusalem, Gaza, and Nablus in the Ottoman administrative system, were united into one administrative unit, the Jerusalem mutassariflik. Later the Nablus sancak was separated from the Jerusalem mutassariflik which now included the sancaks of Jerusalem and Gaza alone. The additional area of the country was northern Galilee. During the nineteenth century most of it was included in the sancak of Acre. It would seem that the sanctity of northern Galilee was near to that of Judea and Samaria and together they accounted for the main area of the Holy Land.<sup>112</sup>

As noted above, the PEF survey conducted in the 1870s was the most important scientific project of the century. It was carried out by European scholars with the purpose of knowing the Holy Land. At first only western Palestine was mapped, from Wadi Kasamiya (the Litani River) in the north to the Gaza–Beersheba line in the south. The eastern border was the line delineated by water, from the Litani River to the sources of the Jordan River, and from there it followed the river to the Sea of Galilee and southwards to the Dead Sea. The areas east of the Jordan and the Negev were not included in the mapping. This lends strength to the conclusion that the central part of the Holy Land as seen by the European visitors and scholars is the western area of the country, which it was then customary to describe as "from Dan to Beersheba."<sup>113</sup>

Secondary preference for mapping was assigned to the eastern parts of the Holy Land and the Negev. Those, too, were surveyed and mapped by the PEF and other societies, but only in the second stage, towards the outbreak of World War I. Other areas were often attributed to the Holy Land: Sinai in the south and the Hauran and Damascus areas in the northwest. At a lesser – third – level were countries and areas often termed "Bible lands" in the literature of the period since various events occurred there during biblical times and were mentioned in the Scriptures, but were not part of the Holy Land: Egypt, Mesopotamia, northern Syria, Anatolia, and at times even Greece and the nearby islands of Rhodes and

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<sup>112</sup> Ben-Arieh, "Nineteenth-Century Historical Geographies," 70–71 and a reference in n. 10 there to the book by Huntington, who first suggested some of what is written in my article. The sancaks will be discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>113</sup> About the PEF survey of western Palestine, see above at notes 82–84 in the text. The borders of Palestine as delineated in the British Mandate will be dealt with in Chapter Eight.

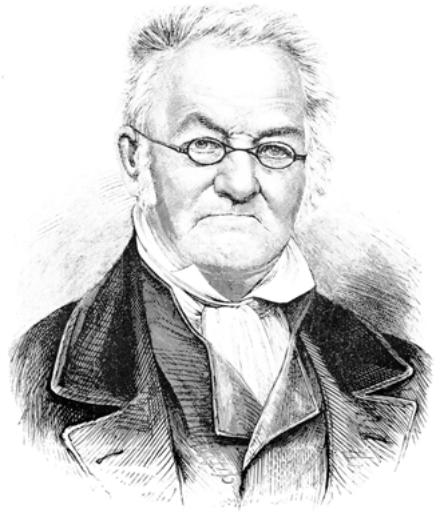
Cyprus. This image of the Holy Land and its surroundings is what emerges from consideration of the geographic-historical literature of the nineteenth century. Edward Robinson, who has very often been described as the father of the geographic-historical study of the Holy Land, called his two-volume first book, published in 1838, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea*. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley named his book *Sinai and Palestine*. His preface discusses Egypt and its relation to the Holy Land. The next two chapters mainly describe Sinai, and most of the others focus on the different areas of the western Holy Land. There is virtually no discussion of the eastern part of the land, and Stanley sets Dan as the northern border. William Gage, who translated and edited the four-volume selection from Ritter's works, following the author's instructions included Sinai, Palestine, and Syria in the "Holy Land," but in matters pertaining to the Bible and the relevant geographical area whittled it down to "from Dan to Beersheba" which he terms as "Palestine proper." The rest of the area east of the Jordan, the important cities of the north and the area of Egypt were, as far as he was concerned, "the lands of the Bible" and not "the Holy Land."<sup>114</sup> Should we look through additional nineteenth-century geographical-historical literature on the Holy Land, we would find this conception repeated with minor variations. The Holy Land is always the region west of the Jordan, and its core area is defined as "from Dan to Beersheba."

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114 For Gage's English translation of Ritter, see note 22 above.



Edward Robinson.  
The propagator of biblical geography



Carl Ritter.  
Founder of geographical research in Germany



Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, 1821.



James Silk Buckingham, 1822.



Alphonse Marie Louis de Lamartine, 1833.



William Francis Lynch, 1847.  
Head of the expedition to the Dead Sea



Artist Horace Emile Jean Vernet, 1839.

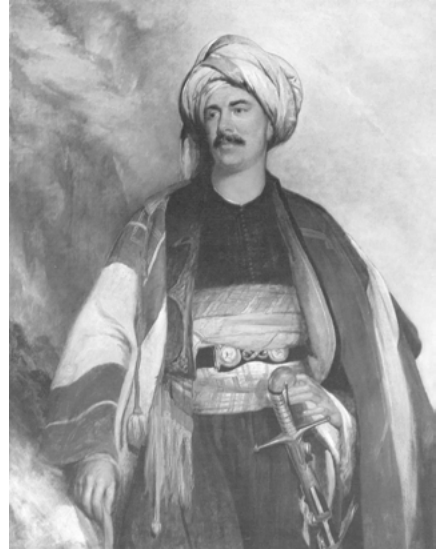


Count Marie Paul Amédée de Piellat,  
1874.





The Prince of Wales, 1862.  
(King Edward VII)



Artist David Roberts in local attire, 1841.



Henry Baker Tristram.  
The first to study nature in Eretz Israel



Conrad Schick.  
A pioneer researcher of Jerusalem

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## Chapter 3: Was the Holy Land empty or inhabited in the nineteenth century?

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## The Holy Land – four sancaks conjoined

### Urban and rural settlements

One of the central questions posited by scholars of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century deals with the size of the population and the number of permanent settlements in the country prior to the beginning of organized Zionist settlement in the early 1880s. In this chapter I shall attempt to answer that question.

The territory that is today referred to as Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel) was not a separate political entity on the eve of the Zionist settlement enterprise in the Holy Land, just as it had not been for hundreds of years previously.<sup>1</sup> It was only after World War I and the beginning of the British Mandate period that the boundaries of a political entity in the region were set. At first the area east of the Jordan River was included within it, but already during the time of Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner for Palestine, the area was divided into two separate entities, Palestine/Eretz Israel in the west and Transjordan, later the Emirate of Transjordan, in the east.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, when dealing with the size of the population and the number of settlements in the Holy Land, it is important to note that this refers to the area defined during the Mandate period as Palestine/Eretz Israel. During the Ottoman period, this region was part of the Ottoman Empire, divided into provinces called *pashaliks* or *vilayets*. The area of the Holy Land was part of two such provinces: Syria (al-Shams) in the east, the capital of which was Damascus, and the Coastal Plains in the west, whose capital was Beirut or other coastal towns as well.

Interestingly, there is a parallelism between the borders of western Palestine during the Mandate period, excluding the Negev (which was an area in which Bedouins moved about), and the borders of the four *sancaks* (sub-divisions of provinces) designated in the nineteenth century: the sancaks of Acre, Nablus, Jerusalem, and Gaza. The sancaks were always part of these two provinces. The inclusion of a sancak in this or that province changed from time to time, but during the Ottoman period, and certainly throughout the nineteenth century, the provinces themselves remained almost identical in size.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based, to a great extent, on some of my detailed studies published in several articles dealing with the population of the cities and villages included in the four sancaks which in the nineteenth century accounted for the territory that was to become known as western Palestine. In some of these studies I was aided by my students, whose names I noted in the articles but cannot go into such detail here. Reference will be made to these articles throughout the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Demarcation of the final borders of western Palestine and separation of the area east of the Jordan River from Eretz Israel will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

<sup>3</sup> This was already realized by David Vital, *Zionism, the Crucial Phase* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 5, who noted that the “Land of the Jews was . . . virtually identical . . . with geographical and historical Palestine as understood by European Christians,” i.e. the *mutasariflik* of Jerusalem and

The population living in these four sancaks during the nineteenth century can inform us of the size of the population living in the area known as “western Palestine” during the Mandate period. But how can we know the size of the population of the four sancaks? On the face of it, this could be ascertained by simply checking the Ottoman population registry. However, Ottoman sources are problematic. The Ottomans were mainly interested in tax collection, and most times would settle for collection through the mukhtars of the settlements. Until the mid-nineteenth century, tax collection and registration was based on households, which raises the question of the number of members per household. It was then that a change was made in the manner in which the population was registered: in most cases only men were recorded. Thus we can multiply the number by two to arrive at the number of men and women. However here, too, the reliability of the data is at best unclear, and there is no information whether the count is of all men or only of those capable of working.

Information is also sparse regarding the nature of the settlements, their sources of livelihood, and other such details. For example, no Ottoman detailed maps are available from that period, not even of the larger villages and cities, such as Jerusalem. Obviously, if Ottoman information is available, we should use it, but we have to take the disadvantages into account. Additionally, some of the inhabitants in the nineteenth century were foreign citizens, whose numbers increased consistently over the course of the century, but they were not included in the Ottoman registry. In Jerusalem, for instance, while the number of Jewish residents gradually grew, many of them maintained their foreign citizenship. Thus we also have to take into account non-Ottoman sources increasingly available in the nineteenth century, such as the publications of the British Palestine Exploration Fund, its survey and mapping projects, the seven volumes written by Victor-Honoré Guérin who toured the land and recorded varied information, as well as articles and books by others.

With regard to the four sancaks, it should be noted that after the mid-century, as the importance of Jerusalem increased, the Jerusalem and Gaza sancaks were united into one unit called the Jerusalem mutasarriflik that was directly subordinate to the Sublime Porte in Istanbul.<sup>4</sup> The Jerusalem mutasarriflik was divided into the smaller sancak of Jerusalem in the Judean Mountains, and the sancak of Gaza incorporating

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the two southernmost sancaks of the Vilayet of Beirut – Acre and Shechem (Nablus). See Map 1; the Negev was not included in these four sancaks.

<sup>4</sup> During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman authorities assigned greater importance to Jerusalem, which then became an independent unit. The sancaks of Jerusalem and Gaza – and earlier, for a short time, also that of Shechem (Nablus) – were combined into one mutasarriflik. See David Kushner, “The Last Generation of Ottoman Rule in Eretz Israel, 1882–1914,” in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The Ottoman Period, Part 1*, ed. Israel Kolatt (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2002), 8–9 (Hebrew).

the plains in the southern coastal area.<sup>5</sup> The sancak of Acre corresponded with the northern area of the Holy Land – the Galilee and the sancak of Nablus with the Samaria area.<sup>6</sup> The sancaks themselves were usually subdivided into smaller units called *kaza* and *nahiye*.<sup>7</sup>

By summing up the statistical information about the four sancaks constituting the area of western Palestine, we can ascertain the size of the population in the 1870s. However, the information from available sources from which we can study the population of the four sancaks does not include details of the major towns and villages within them, which call for separate research. Thus, I shall initially present a general picture of the thirteen urban settlements and their populations (see Map 1). Later I will move on to the rural population of the four sancaks: Acre, Nablus, Jerusalem, and Gaza. The survey of the urban settlements will focus mainly on their population data. By combining data from the cities with the data regarding the rural settlements we can arrive at the total number of settlements and the general size of the population of western Palestine in the 1870s.

It is important to note that the total population of western Palestine in the 1870s was not identical to that of previous decades. The population was already increasing during the nineteenth century, especially in the urban centers. Apparently, the beginning of the nineteenth century was a low point in terms of population size. The increase began during the period of Egyptian rule (1831–1840) and mainly after the return of Ottoman rule in 1840, when security conditions became more stable. In addition, improvements in marine transportation enabled easier travel to the Holy Land, and life was more comfortable under the protection of the foreign consuls. Improved health conditions, the establishment of hospitals and clinics and the introduction of modern medicine brought about a decline in mortality rates.

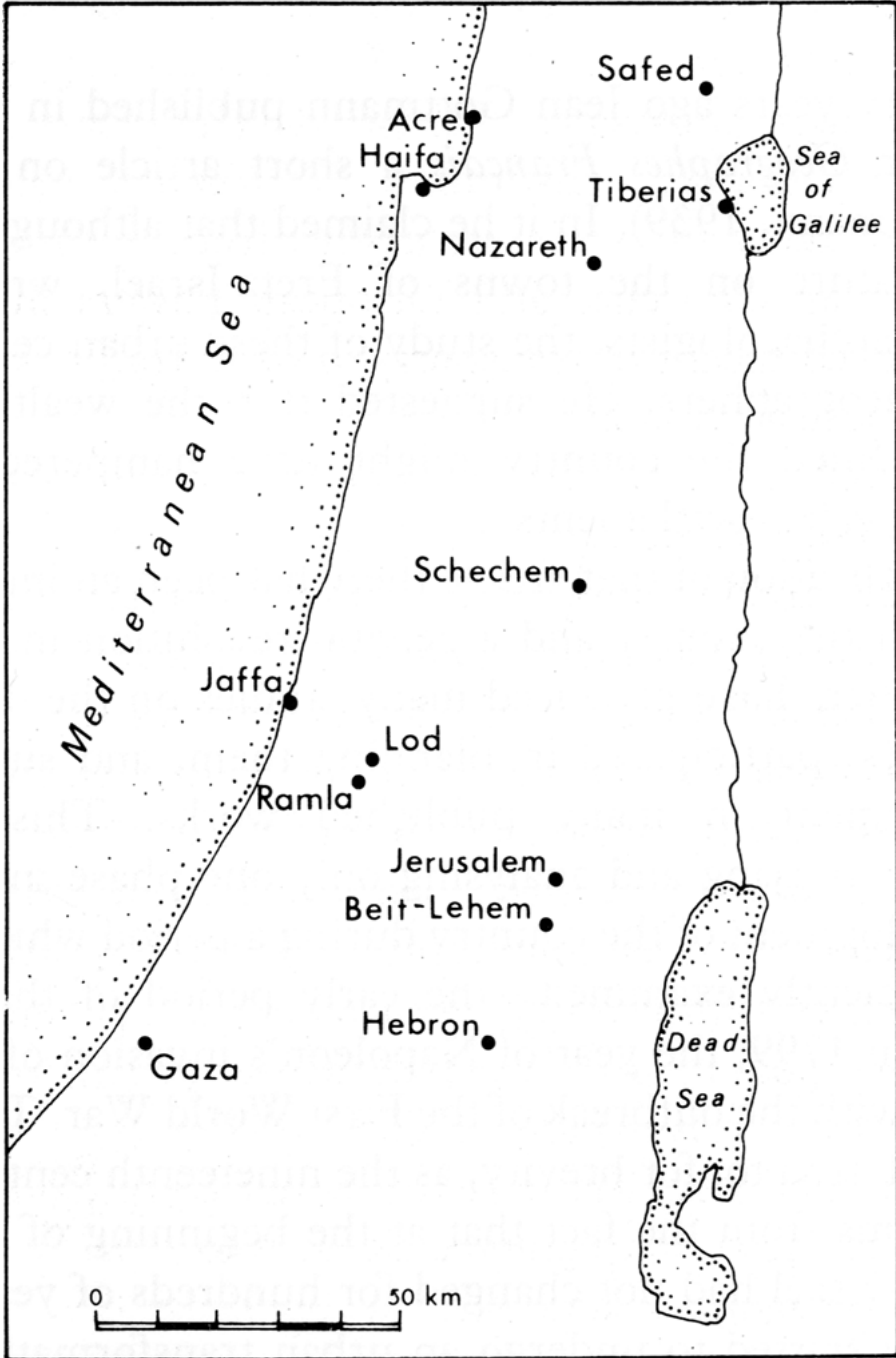
In addition to the permanent inhabitants of the land there were, mainly around the eastern and southern borders, nomadic Bedouin tribes who moved from place to place not only within western Palestine but also in the Sinai in the south and in the

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5 For more details about the union of the sancaks of Jerusalem and Gaza into one mutasarriflik, see also the section on Jerusalem in this chapter.

6 For the Ottoman administrative units during the second half of the nineteenth century, on the basis of the Law of the Vilayets of the years 1864–1871 and its later revisions, see Shaw, *History*, 2: 88–90. On the administrative division in 1900, with a map, see Rachel Makover, *Government and Administration of Palestine 1917–1925* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1988), 18–22 (Hebrew). This latter study deals with a period later than the one I am discussing at present.

7 These were the Ottoman administrative units and the titles of their governors in the nineteenth century: *vilayet* – *vali*; *sancak* – *mutasarrif*; *kaza* – *kaimakam*; *nahiye* – *mudir*; see Makover, *Government and Administration*, 19–22 and the sources cited there. Generally, a *kaza* was a sub-district of a sancak, while a *nahiye* was an even smaller area, sometimes a subdivision of a *kaza*, and at times referred also to the area of a township. See below the discussion of Ramle, Lydda, and Jaffa with respect to such *nahiyes*. See also notes 65 and 68 below.



Map 1: Major cities in the nineteenth century.

territory east of the Jordan River. It is difficult to estimate their numbers. It seems that an estimate of twenty to thirty thousand persons for the total nomadic population of western Palestine, without the Negev, would not be far from the truth. Towards the end of the chapter, I will devote a few lines to the distribution of the Arab population according to religious affinity – Christian and Muslim.

## Jerusalem: primate city in the Holy Land

### Jerusalem at the beginning of the nineteenth century

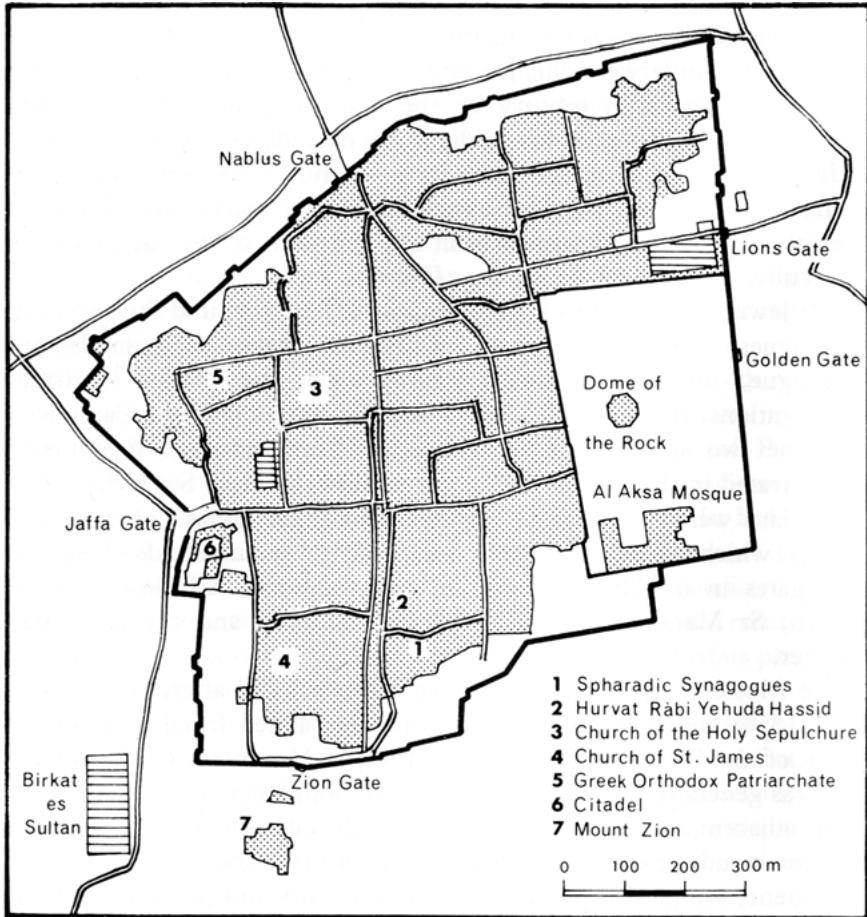
Jerusalem was not the largest or most important city in the Holy Land at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In all likelihood Acre was more important, serving as a government center and the major port of the Holy Land at the time. Apparently, the population of Gaza during the period was similar in size to that of Jerusalem. Gaza served as a point of entry and exit on the overland route from Egypt to Syria. Jerusalem filled no special governmental or administrative function, but served as a center for the rural area around it. Its prime importance was its historical past: its religious sanctity for Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. The status of the city changed during the nineteenth century and it became the “primate city” of the entire Holy Land.<sup>8</sup> During the period of Egyptian rule it was consigned a governing function second only to Damascus. When the Ottomans returned to rule the country, Jerusalem became the capital of the central sancak. The city became a focal center of Western activity, many foreign consulates were established, and the Christian and Jewish minorities greatly intensified their activities in the city. These changes were the result of reforms in the Ottoman Empire, the interest and involvement of the European powers and the various Christian churches, and the improvement in means of transportation which facilitated travel to the Holy Land.<sup>9</sup>

The entire city of Jerusalem was ensconced within the walls of the Old City at the beginning of the nineteenth century (see Map 2). These were historic walls erected by the Ottoman sultan Suleiman “the Magnificent” in the sixteenth century on the

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<sup>8</sup> “Primate city” is the term that denotes a city whose population is at least twice that of the second largest city in a state or country in which the term is applicable. Examples are London, Paris, Moscow, and more. Jerusalem became the primate city in the nineteenth century. The first measured maps of Jerusalem and other cities in the Holy Land in the nineteenth century will be displayed below.

<sup>9</sup> For the development of the roads to Jerusalem, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2: 82–98; for the involvement of the Western powers, see Haim Goren, “Nineteenth-Century Jerusalem as a Test Case of European Involvement in the Near East: A Reappraisal,” in *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period (1800–1917)*, ed. Israel Bartal and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 19–32 (Hebrew).



Map 2: Jerusalem 1841 (Alderson).

infrastructure of earlier walls. Within the Old City were also open uninhabited areas, some of which had been cultivated as vegetable gardens. The Jews were concentrated in the Jewish Quarter, around the ancient synagogues. The two largest Christian denominations, the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic, and the two smallest denominations, the Coptic and the Ethiopian, inhabited the Christian quarter around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Armenians congregated around the Cathedral of St. James in their neighborhood, which was surrounded by walls and inner gates, but smaller than today's Armenian Quarter. The small Syrian denomination resided around the Church of St. Mark, between the Jewish and Armenian quarters.

The Muslims remained close to the Temple Mount. The entry of non-Muslims to the Temple Mount was strictly prohibited until after the Crimean War (1856). No

one resided on the Haram al-Sharif, “The Noble Sanctuary.” The Muslim population was concentrated in the area between the Lion’s Gate and the Western Wall, and between this area and the wall in the north and the Christian Quarter in the west.<sup>10</sup>

Construction in Jerusalem, primarily public buildings, was renewed during the period of Egyptian rule. After the return of the Ottoman authorities, construction increased, including more public buildings, especially Christian and Jewish.<sup>11</sup> The first buildings outside the walls were erected in the 1850s. At first these were private buildings, followed by larger construction undertakings: the Russian Compound, the Mishkenot Sha’ananim neighborhood, and the Schneller orphanage. Until the 1870s the gates to the city were locked at sundown, with none coming or going. On Fridays, too, during the noon hours when prayers were conducted in al-Aqsa Mosque, the gates would close as their keepers joined in the prayers. When the gates to the city ceased being closed at night in the 1870s, the first to remain open was Jaffa Gate, then Nablus Gate, followed by the remaining ones. Nine Jewish neighborhoods were built outside the walls until the beginning of the 1880s, as well as a few European-Christian and Muslim homes and a number of public institutions, mainly Christian.

It is estimated that the population of Jerusalem at the beginning of the nineteenth century was 9,000: 4,000 Muslims, 3,000 Christians, and 2,000 Jews. The Christians included 1,400 Greek Orthodox, 800 Roman Catholics, and 500 Armenians, while the smaller Christian communities – Copts, Ethiopians, and Syrians – numbered a few dozen persons each.

The Jewish community was almost entirely composed of Sefardi Jews. There was no formal Ashkenazi denomination in Jerusalem at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Over the course of that century, a great increase was recorded in the Jewish population of Jerusalem, even before the start of Zionist settlement. The Ashkenazi community in the city was renewed in the second decade of the century. In the 1830s, during the period of Egyptian rule, conditions improved significantly. In 1834 Jews received permission to renovate the Sefardi synagogues and in 1837 to build the first Ashkenazi synagogue, “Menahem Zion.” The Jews of Safed and Tiberias suffered greatly from the earthquake of 1837 which caused a migration of Jews from these towns to Jerusalem. An impressive growth in the Jewish population was registered between 1840 and 1880, from around 5,000 in 1840 to 17,000 in 1880. The Old Yishuv grew and developed during those years and began to conduct a lively and

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**10** On Jerusalem in the nineteenth century, see both volumes of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*. For the prohibited entry of non-Muslims into the Haram al-Sharif, and the later beginnings of and conditions pertaining to permission to visit the site, see *ibid.*, 1:141–54.

**11** About the start of building activity in the Jewish Quarter, the renovation of the Sefardi synagogues, and the beginning of construction of the Hurvah and additional synagogues, both during the period of Egyptian rule and in the 1840s, see *ibid.*, 1:297–301.



vital life of its own. I shall devote the next chapter to the reasons for its growth, development, sources of livelihood, and its unique composition.<sup>12</sup>

### **Jerusalem: capital of a mutasarriflik, international city, and the livelihood of its residents**

The Ottoman rule which was renewed in the Holy Land in 1840 was committed, among other things, to the Tanzimat, the new reforms in its constitution concluded with the European powers. These reforms resulted in impressive developments for the three religions in the city. I shall deal in great detail with regard to the Jews in the next chapter. In the present chapter I shall focus on the Christians and the Muslims. Among the Christians, special mention should be made of the beginning of Protestant activities in Jerusalem. The Ottomans had prohibited the establishment of Protestant missions in Jerusalem until after the period of Egyptian rule. It was only in the 1830s, during that period, that the first Protestant missions officially began to operate in the city. In 1841, after the return of the Ottomans, they were even permitted to appoint a joint bishop for Anglicans and Lutherans. Years later the joint bishopric was dissolved and a Protestant community developed in Jerusalem comprised of the two separate denominations.<sup>13</sup>

The Greek Orthodox Patriarch returned to Jerusalem in the 1840s, the Roman Catholic Patriarchate was also renewed, and Catholic orders began to operate in the city. The Christian denominations established diverse public institutions: churches, monasteries, hospitals, schools, health and educational facilities, and more. The Jews built their own health, educational, and charity institutions as well. The Ottoman government, too, began construction of public facilities and the introduction of improvements in health and living conditions. A number of Christian communities subsisted on monetary support from abroad, as did the Jews. The major Christian denominations had considerable properties in the country. Such was the case with the Roman Catholics, headed by the Franciscan order, who received assistance from European Catholic countries, while many other Catholic orders began operating in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century. The Greek Orthodox community, the largest Christian denomination in the city, was headed by the Greek Patriarchate assisted by monks from Greece, while Russia, the Orthodox Christian power, supported it. The Armenian community, which maintained ties with other Armenian communities abroad, engaged in

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<sup>12</sup> For the growth of the Jewish community in Jerusalem and the development of Jewish sectors in Jerusalem during the nineteenth century, see both volumes of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*. More details will be provided in Chapter Four.

<sup>13</sup> On the beginnings of Protestant activity in Jerusalem, see *ibid.*, 1:250–66.



commerce and services and owned considerable property. Catholic, Greek, Russian, and Armenian pilgrims arrived in Jerusalem by the hundreds and thousands and were among the important sources of income in the city.<sup>14</sup>

Regarding the Muslims, it seems that they received less monetary support from outside than did Christians and Jews. The majority of the city's Muslims sustained themselves by engaging in crafts and services. Many also subsisted on agriculture around the city, mainly olive groves and field crops, many of them in the Kidron Valley. Among the crafts and industries prevalent in the city were the production of soap, textile weaving, indigo dye facilities, and leather tanneries. An important industry, mainly maintained by Christians but in which Jews and Muslims also apparently engaged, was the production of souvenirs and sacred artifacts (necklaces, crosses made from seashells, candles, and more). Other crafts were goldsmithing and silversmithing, stone and copper work, blacksmithing, ceramics, carpentry, tailoring, shoemaking, and the food industries. The flour mills also employed many. The city markets served as commercial and service centers for the population as well as the Bedouin tribes who came to trade. The building momentum brought in its wake an increase in the number of construction workers as well as of employees in the service of the various institutions.<sup>15</sup>

Appreciation by the Ottomans of the city's development was reflected in the decision, as noted above, to change the status of Jerusalem from the administrative center of a sancak to a city governing a mutasarriflik directly subordinate to the Sublime Porte in Istanbul. It was also the basis for the status of the city during the British Mandate period when it was declared the capital city of the country.<sup>16</sup> However, Jerusalem remained a city economically dependent on outside sources. No industrial enterprises were developed, nor were any other sources of subsistence. The population grew while the economic basis remained unstable. During

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**14** For the large Christian communities in Jerusalem – the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics, see *ibid.*, 1:220–34. On Christian denominations throughout Palestine in the Ottoman period, see Saul P. Colbi, *Christianity in the Holy Land: Past and Present* (Tel Aviv: Am Hassefer, 1969), 65–108. On the Armenian community, the third largest in Jerusalem with its special status, own quarter, and firm footing in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but also very much involved in early building activity outside the walls, see the indexes in both volumes of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*.

**15** On the Muslim population in the Old City of Jerusalem, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:126–40. Jerusalem's Muslims had ties with all Arab villages in the area around the city. They shall be discussed below in the section on the sancak of Jerusalem and in that dealing with the religious denominations.

**16** For Ottoman activity in Jerusalem in the late Ottoman period, see *ibid.*, 2:256–66; on the changed status of Jerusalem as an independent mutassariflik, probably since 1872, see David Kushner, "The Last Generation of Ottoman Rule," 9. See also *id.*, "The Ottoman Governors of Palestine, 1864–1914," *Middle Eastern Studies* 23 (1987): 274–90.

World War I, when outside sources were cut off, Jerusalem suffered a crisis and the population of the city was gravely afflicted.<sup>17</sup>

During the later Ottoman period, in addition to Jerusalem, there were twelve more settlements in the Holy Land that can be perceived as cities and towns. Following, I shall present ten initial measurement maps of these cities I have succeeded in locating, including one of the first measurement maps of Jerusalem dating from the nineteenth century. These are presented against the background of a map of the country showing the boundaries of the four sancaks. These maps constitute the opening for our discussion of the other twelve cities in the Holy Land besides Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> This will be followed by a discussion of the rural settlement character of the four sancaks, the settlements in them and the size of their population. I shall then summarize the Holy Land settlement landscape on the eve of Jewish Zionist immigration.

## The twelve additional cities

### The decline of Acre, the central administrative city, and the rise of Haifa, city of the future

*Acre.* At the outset of the nineteenth century, Acre was one of the most important cities in the Holy Land. This was the seat of the Ottoman provincial governor, and it served as the central administrative center of the province. This situation changed completely in the middle of the nineteenth century when the development of Acre came to a stop and it gradually lost its importance. It seems that the decline began in mid-century and was especially pronounced towards the end of the Ottoman period. Not only did the population stop growing, it even showed signs of dwindling. Acre's population at the beginning of the nineteenth century is estimated at only eight to ten thousand persons, most of whom, around 80 percent, were Muslims and the rest were Christians belonging to the different denominations. The two largest Christian communities in Acre were Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic, with a

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<sup>17</sup> The growth of Jerusalem during the nineteenth century was influenced by religious and social factors; see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "The Growth of Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65 (1975): 252–69.

<sup>18</sup> I first published an article on the other twelve cities in Hebrew in 1970, and returned to this theme on several occasions, lastly in an extensive study, Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "The Development of Twelve Major Settlements in Nineteenth-Century Palestine," *Cathedra* 19 (Apr. 1981): 83–143 (Hebrew). That article served as the basis for "Urban Development in the Holy Land, 1800–1914," in *The Expanding City: Essays in Honour of Professor Jean Gottman*, ed. John Patten (London: Academic Press, 1983), 1–37. Many of the references in this chapter will be to that article. Several of the maps included in this chapter are based on those in that essay, which are themselves reworked versions of maps published in my earlier articles.

small minority of Roman Catholics and Maronites. There was also a small community of members of the Baha'i faith in the city and a few Jewish families.<sup>19</sup>

Until World War I, Acre's built-up area was limited to within the city walls erected in the eighteenth century by Dahir al-Umar. Later the wall was partly destroyed and another built in its place by Jazzar Pasha, governor of Acre between 1775 and 1804. The city was attacked three times during the first half of the nineteenth century and suffered extensive damage, first by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799 in the failed siege of the city, the second time in 1832 upon the invasion of Acre by Ibrahim Pasha, and the third time in 1840 when it was re-conquered by the Ottomans, assisted by the British and Austrians. The main damage was caused by shelling in 1840, when one of the shells hit a munitions storeroom which exploded.<sup>20</sup>

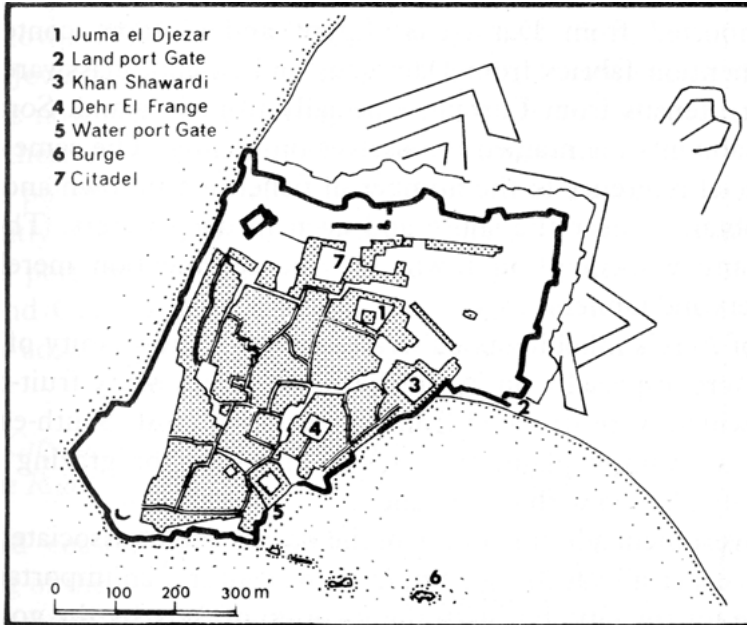
The city had only one gate from the mainland, in the southwest corner of the wall, near the seashore (see Map 3). Many public buildings stood within the walls, including khans which served the convoys and merchandise arriving in Acre. There were several mosques, among them the central mosque built by Jazzar Pasha, next to which were the governor's residence, an army camp, and a military hospital. There were also prominent Christian structures and institutions: a Greek Orthodox church and monastery, a Greek Catholic church, a Franciscan church and monastery, and a Maronite church. A most important installation in the city was the port which at the beginning of the nineteenth century was considered a good port, even though it wasn't suitable for large ships, being narrow and too shallow. There were many rocks at its entrance, and when the winds blew, especially from the southwest, it was increasingly dangerous to enter the port. Accordingly, large ships preferred anchoring in the open sea near Haifa. Cannons were situated on the walls to defend the city and port. Though a special area was allocated for loading and unloading, there were no storehouses in the port and the merchandise was directly transferred to the khans inside the city.

Abandonment of the port began in the middle of the nineteenth century as it filled with sand and became shallow, and ships preferred the competing port of Haifa. However, the important source of Acre's livelihood remained commerce, which centered on the port. There were special markets in the city for wheat brought in by camel caravans from around the country, trans-Jordan, and the Hauran. Ships were always present in the harbor waiting to transport the wheat to European ports and capitals. Grain merchants would come to Acre to choose their produce and supervise delivery by freight ships. Acre's markets were also a

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<sup>19</sup> For Acre in the nineteenth century as compared to Haifa and its population, see Ben-Arieh, "Urban Development," 20–22; id., "The Settlement Landscape of Eretz Israel on the Eve of Zionist Settlement," in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The Ottoman Period, Part 1*, ed. Israel Kolatt (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2002), 93–95 (Hebrew).

<sup>20</sup> About the conquest of Acre in 1840, see ch. 1, n. 28 with the text there, and in the discussion of the Damascus Affair towards the end of that chapter.

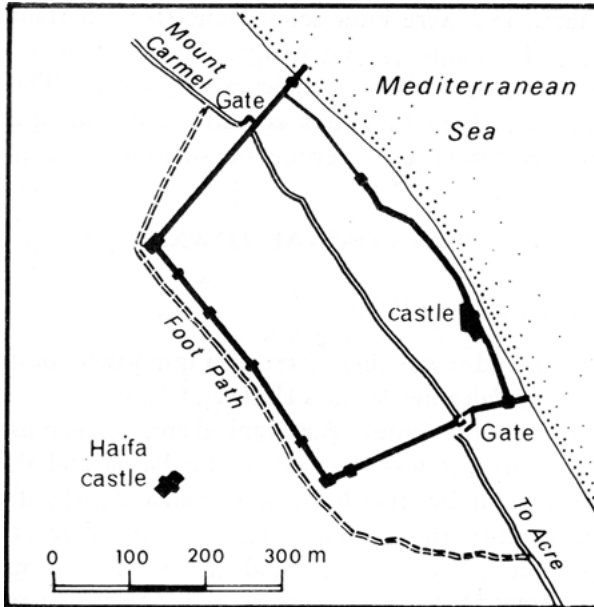


**Map 3:** Acre 1841 (Alderson).

commercial center for diverse agricultural produce brought to the city from the surrounding villages as well as more distant places, and produce brought in by Bedouins from afar. Various products were imported from Syria and Europe: fabrics from Damascus and Aleppo, glassware, knives, spoons, forks and other kitchenware from Europe, mainly from Britain. Fishing, both offshore and deep sea, was another important source of livelihood. There were almost no workshops in the city, except a few for tanning leather and its products. A small number of the city residents supported themselves as agricultural laborers in the area surrounding the city. Many orchards were cultivated around Acre, mainly to the north, some irrigated by the aqueduct leading water from the Cabri springs. Southeast of the city was a swampy plain partly used for pasture and partly for growing sugar cane. By the end of the century, Acre had lost its standing and importance.

*Haifa.* Compared to Acre, at the beginning of the nineteenth century Haifa was a small and insignificant town. This changed dramatically over the course of the century until it became one of the three largest cities in the Holy Land.

At the turn of the century, Haifa was a tiny settlement surrounded by walls built in 1761 by Dahir al-Umar. The walled area was rectangular, or more precisely an isosceles trapezoid with a perimeter of 630 meters. Each of the two equal sides were 120 meters long, the base along the sea coast was 230 meters, and the remaining side 160 meters (see Map 4). The wall was seventy-five centimeters thick and



**Map 4:** Haifa 1841 (Alderson).

four-and-a half meters high. A number of square towers were built on the four sides of the wall and cannons placed in them to defend the city. Two gates were located in the city walls – the eastern “Acre Gate” and the “Western Gate” opposite it, both of which were shut at sundown. The road between the gates cut across the entire length of the city and was part of the main Acre–Jaffa road. Some distance from the fortified city, Dahir al-Umar built a rectangular two-story fortress, summarily called El-Burj. The fortress overlooked the new city and its role was to protect it. A boat anchorage that began to develop already in the nineteenth century between Haifa and the Kishon river delta at first almost exclusively served Acre. This was where the merchants handling imports and exports did their business. Cargo unloaded in Haifa was immediately transferred to Acre, and goods for export were transferred from Acre to Haifa. The occupation of most Haifa residents at the beginning of the nineteenth century was agriculture. Grain crops, olives, figs, and vegetables were raised in the area surrounding the city, while some residents had herds of sheep and cattle that grazed on Mount Carmel. Only a few engaged in fishing at the time. The city began to develop during the period of Egyptian rule, and its commercial activity increased in the 1840s, mainly the export of crops and cotton.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See Alex Carmel, *Ottoman Haifa: A History of Four Centuries under Turkish Rule* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

At the beginning of the 1850s, two maritime companies, Austrian Lloyd and the French Messageries Maritimes, set Haifa as a station on their steamship passenger routes to the East. This gave Haifa a great impetus as the number of travelers increased, mainly on the longer steamship routes. European presence in the city also began to grow. The first houses outside the city walls were built in 1858 and the Russians built the first and only pier along the Holy Land–Syria coast in 1859. The German Templers arrived in Haifa in 1868 and built their neighborhood in the city. They developed transportation by carriages and the means for their maintenance, and also laid a carriage road between Haifa and Nazareth. Jews, too, participated in the development of the new city.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike Acre, government institutions did not play an important role in the status and development of Haifa. The city developed mainly because of the port, and in its wake came groups of German and Jewish settlers who took advantage of the economic benefits and contributed to Haifa's development and prosperity.

We can summarize and say that even before the 1880s and the beginning of the modern Zionist movement, there were clear signs of the rise of Haifa and its development into the northern port of the Holy Land in place of Acre. It is estimated that the population of Haifa at the beginning of the nineteenth century numbered between 1,000 and 1,500 persons, all Muslims. In 1914, its population had reached 22,000–23,000 persons of which 3,000 were Jews and the rest half Muslims and half Christians. The German Templers were one of the most prominent groups in Haifa even though they numbered only a few hundred. The remaining Christians were mainly Arabs.<sup>23</sup>

### **Gaza: the contact city with Egypt; Jaffa: the port city of the Holy Land**

Alongside Jerusalem and Acre, Gaza was one of the three large cities in western Palestine at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its importance went beyond its role as the capital city of a sancak in the Ottoman Empire. There were a number of points of resemblance between Gaza and Acre: both were the largest coastal cities in the country; in both the great majority of the population was Muslim; both served as markets and service centers for the rural area around them. The main difference between them was that Acre's importance was derived from its function as the seat of Ottoman governors, as well as being a port city, while Gaza was not a seat of government and did not have a port due to its

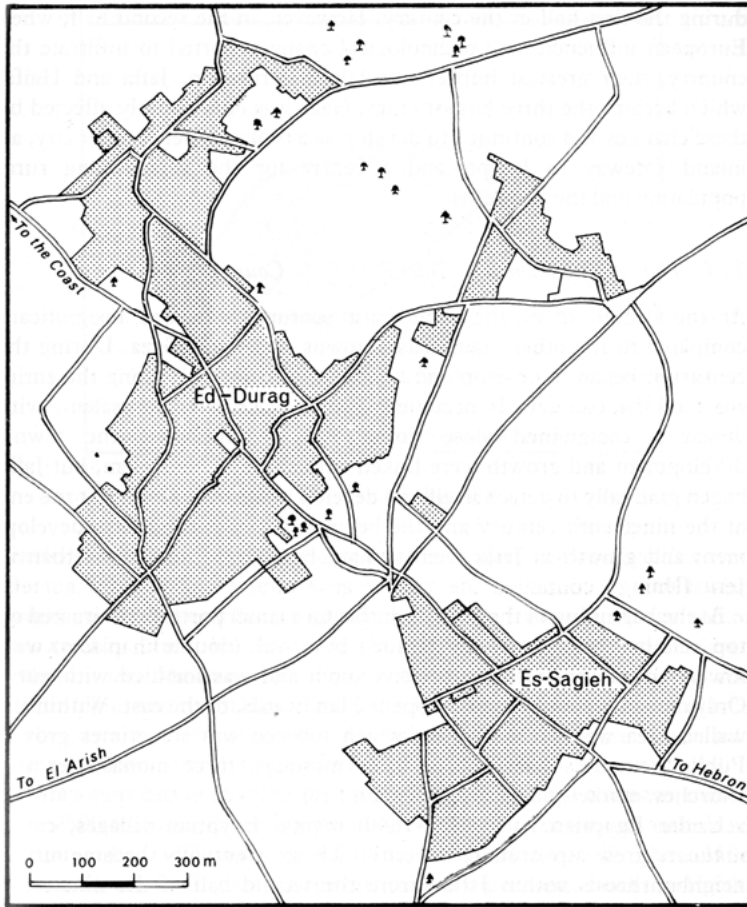
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<sup>22</sup> The establishment of the German Templer colony in Haifa, and other German colonies in Palestine, will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>23</sup> For the development of Haifa in the nineteenth century, including its population, see Ben-Arieh, "Urban Development," 19–23.

distance from the coast. Its main importance was due to the fact that it was located on the main overland route to Egypt and its being the final large city before the desert.<sup>24</sup>

*Gaza.* The city was divided into a number of quarters. The largest and most ancient was located on a low hill, 50–60 meters above sea level, and 20–30 meters above the plains surrounding it, a thirty-minute walk from the sea. This quarter was named ad-Durag since it was approached by steps (*darag*) and contained important structures and government buildings (see Map 5). The governor's mansion (*seraya*) stood on the northern sections of the hill as did the major mosque Jam'a el-Kebir and



**Map 5:** Gaza 1841 (Alderson).

<sup>24</sup> For Gaza in the late Ottoman period, see *ibid.*, 23–26.



the khan known as Khan ez-Zeit. This quarter was compact and, although not surrounded by a wall, remnants of a wall and ancient gates were observed there. Another residential quarter was es-Sagieh, east of the hill, which contained a busy marketplace and two mosques. Yet another quarter sprawled northwards, outside the city, with cemeteries in which many Muslim holy men were buried. In the east lay Jabal Muntar (Tomb of Samson Mount), which popular tradition claims was the location to which Samson carried the gates of Gaza on his back. A mosque is located at the site together with some ruins. Agriculture was undoubtedly the Gaza residents' main source of income. Sources describe the Gaza environs as abundantly covered with orchards and fields of agricultural crops, sometimes surrounded by cacti, mainly to the south, north, and east of the city. In the west, between the city and the shore were sand dunes with some bushes and trees. Around Gaza were groves of olive trees, date palms, fruit orchards, and wheat fields, mostly irrigated from the wells in the vicinity.<sup>25</sup>

Gaza served as a crossroads. Roads from Jaffa, Ramle, Jerusalem, and Hebron in the north converged there and the main road to Egypt emerged from there. The caravans leaving on the long desert journey purchased their provisions in the city. Gaza was also a station on the Muslim pilgrimage route to Aqaba, Ma'an, and Mecca. Gaza's residents would set out towards the pilgrims, supplying them with food and water. It also had a quarantine zone for those arriving from plague infested areas. The inhabitants of the surrounding villages brought their products to the city markets and a flourishing bazaar operated in the city, selling many food products and merchandise, including goods stolen by Bedouins and brought for sale in Gaza. Many Bedouins came to the markets, especially on Fridays, to buy the produce they needed. There were also chicken and wheat markets in the city. The shops in the markets were mainly owned by goldsmiths, blacksmiths, and tin-smiths, while some shops were located in other areas of the city, mainly those trading in cotton fabrics and carpets. There was also a vibrant carpet trade with Syria, while the fabric industry was mainly designated for Bedouin buyers. There was no real port in Gaza in the nineteenth century, only an open anchorage near the shore with no anchoring or storage facilities. Construction of the Gaza port began only at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup>

In sum, it should be noted that Gaza was an important city throughout the nineteenth century. During the first half of the century, its status was more important than that of many other cities in the country. However, when European

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<sup>25</sup> On the rural area surrounding Gaza, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "Settlements and Population of the Sancak of Gaza (Including Jaffa and Ramle) in the 1870s," lecture delivered at the conference "Ottoman Beer Sheva Centenary" held on December 11, 2000 at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 22–24. A copy is available at the Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Library in Jerusalem.

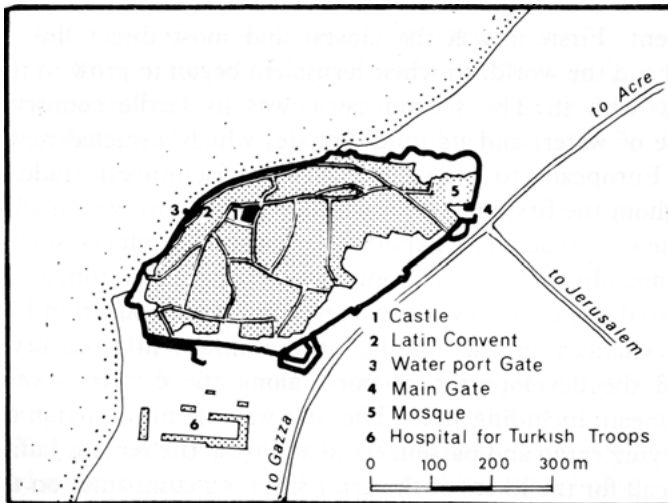
<sup>26</sup> For an interesting comparison of sixteenth-century Gaza with that of the nineteenth century, see *ibid.*, 34–36.



influences began penetrating the region in the second half of the nineteenth century, technological changes were more influential in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa, while Gaza remained almost unaffected. It continued to develop as a desert border city, an overland gateway to Egypt and a center for the rural and Bedouin populations in its vicinity. The estimated population of Gaza at the outset of the nineteenth century was 8,000–10,000 persons. The population increased to 25,000 on the eve of World War I. Most of the residents were Muslims and there was a small Christian minority, mainly Greek Orthodox, of about 200–250 persons. Catholics and Protestants, as well as a few Jewish families, came to the city in the nineteenth century.

*Jaffa.* At the beginning of the nineteenth century Jaffa was a small unimportant city compared to the two other coastal towns, Acre and Gaza. Most of its residents still engaged in agriculture. Travelers passing through the city during the period described the many gardens surrounding Jaffa watered by irrigation systems. Their major products were fruit, vegetables, and tobacco. The port was small and usually did not operate during the winter months. Some merchandise from Europe and rice from Egypt were imported there and agricultural exports included dried fruit, olive oil, seeds, cotton, soap, and the famous “Jaffa oranges.”

Jaffa was located atop a low coastal hill and surrounded by a fortified wall, even a double wall in some sections, with towers and a moat surrounding it. The city had only one gate by land, in the eastern wall, which was shut in the evening (see Map 6). Within the walled city were public buildings, three mosques, three monasteries and churches, water troughs, markets, cafes, and even open areas in which vegetables and tobacco were grown. During the period of Egyptian rule



**Map 6:** Jaffa 1841 (Alderson).

(1831–1840), Egyptian immigrants established a number of neighborhoods outside the walls, some of which later became urban suburbs. Since the mid-nineteenth century, houses and neighborhoods were built outside the city walls. There were also two failed settlement attempts by American religious mystical groups. The German Templers arrived in 1869 and established two colonies near Jaffa. That same year a new gate was breached in the eastern wall of the city and during the 1870s the wall was torn down, the moat was filled in, and the stones of the collapsed wall were taken for the construction of new buildings outside the walls. At the beginning of the 1880s there were already khans, shops, and workshops operating outside the walls and along the roads leading in and out of Jaffa. Residential neighborhoods developed mainly to the north and south of the city.<sup>27</sup>

There were two main reasons for the development of Jaffa: its relative proximity to Jerusalem and its connection to the fertile agricultural area around it. As Jerusalem expanded, mainly from the early 1840s, Jaffa, which served as its main port, grew accordingly. In addition, economic, technological, and maritime changes greatly affected the development of the ports on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, first and foremost the operation of steamships carrying freight and passengers. Jaffa became a port for ships setting sail to the west, and maritime traffic to the region was further increased by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. In addition, the Ottoman reforms which enhanced the status of the European countries in Jerusalem increased trade relations between Europe and the Holy Land and greatly affected immigration and pilgrim and tourist traffic to Jerusalem and the Holy Land through Jaffa port.<sup>28</sup>

The second reason for Jaffa's development was its connection to the fertile agricultural land surrounding it. In addition to being a port for foreign trade, Jaffa also served as an internal trade center. The city markets were points of contact to which villagers and Bedouins brought their merchandise, while Jaffa residents, mainly craftsmen and traders, provided them with services, including those related to transportation, produce, and merchandise. There were significant developments in the trades and crafts in Jaffa after the Crimean War (1856). Contemporary sources note a stream of merchants and craftsmen to the city, all of whom found employment and income. A plentiful water supply and the congenial climate attracted many new settlers: Europeans, American millenarists, and German Templers. The Templers made a significant contribution to the development of crafts in the city. New occupations were introduced, among them those related to the transport of passengers, agriculture, and the manufacture, supply, and repair of carriages and wagons.

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<sup>27</sup> For the population of Jaffa, according to religious denominations, see Ben-Arieh, "Twelve Major Settlements," 133–35.

<sup>28</sup> On Jaffa during the last century of Ottoman rule, see Ruth Kark, *Jaffa: A City in Evolution 1799–1917* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1990).

Jaffa grew and developed throughout the nineteenth century until it became the main port town in the coastal region and the second city, in terms of size and importance, to Jerusalem. Later in the century, Jaffa began to develop in its own right, a process to which Jews contributed significantly. It should be noted that even before the 1880s and the First Aliyah, the first signs of Jewish Jaffa were already apparent. The population estimates for Jaffa were as follows: at the beginning of the century between 2,500 and 3,000, as yet without any Jews. The population grew at a slow pace until 1840 when the number reached 5,000 persons, with a small Jewish community of about 200. The growth rate increased from mid-century until in 1880 the total population of Jaffa reached 10,000 persons, 1,000 of whom were Jews. Towards 1914 the population had mounted to 40,000–45,000 persons of whom 10,000–15,000 were Jews, including 3,000 living in the new neighborhood of Tel Aviv.<sup>29</sup>

### Three more cities holy to Jews: Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron

Safed and Tiberias were two important cities in the Galilee, holy cities in Jewish tradition. Important Jewish communities resided there in the nineteenth century, accounting for the majority of their population. Christian communities were almost nonexistent in these cities. Though the geographical circumstances of Safed and Tiberias are fundamentally different, yet there are many similarities in their development. Both were regional centers for the many villages around them, their Muslim residents maintaining close relations with the villagers; both suffered great damage from the earthquake of 1837, with much destruction of buildings and numerous residents suffering injury, most of them Jews.

*Safed.* At the beginning of the nineteenth century Safed was concentrated on the slopes of the hill at whose peak stood the citadel, and was divided into three residential quarters. Two were Muslim, one on the slope east of the citadel and the other on the hilly ridge south of it. The third quarter was Jewish, located on the steep western slope. The market was situated between the latter two, the Jewish quarter and the Muslim quarter on the eastern ridge. The Jewish quarter was badly damaged by the earthquake. The population of Safed at the beginning of the century numbered 5,000–6,000 persons, half of them Jews and the other half Muslims, without any Christians. Despite the earthquake, the population doubled in size during the nineteenth century; on the eve of World War I it numbered 13,000–14,000 persons, two-thirds of them Jewish and only a third Muslim. The increase in the

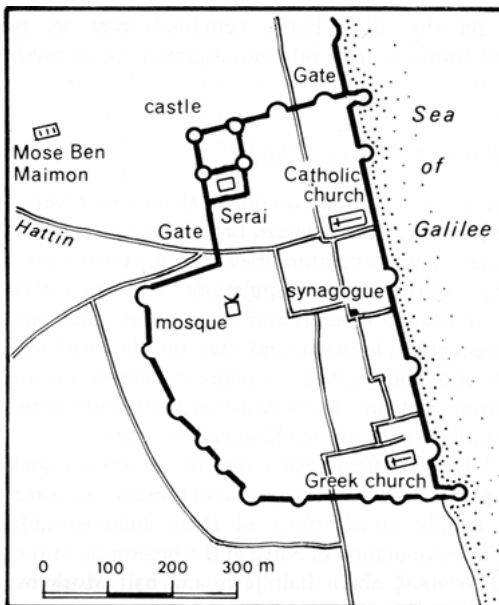
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<sup>29</sup> For Jaffa and its population in the nineteenth century, see Ben-Arieh, “Urban Development,” 26–29. The American and German colonies will be discussed in the next chapter.

number of Jews came mainly from the ranks of the Old Yishuv. The Jewish population of Safed was second in size only to that of Jerusalem and served as a center for this traditionally Orthodox society. Safed's Jewish community was hit hard by World War I; as the city's population contracted the Jews became a minority accounting for one-third of its inhabitants. The relative decrease in the Jewish population of Safed compared to other cities in Eretz Israel, continued throughout the British Mandate period until 1948.

To some degree, Safed's inhabitants earned a living from industry, mainly from the manufacture of oil, some of which was exported, wine, dyeing textiles with indigo, and production of items from olive wood. The city was renowned for its special cheese. Its markets served the villages in the vicinity and included coffee shops and money changers. A fair was held on Fridays, trading in diverse products.

*Tiberias.* During the period under study, Tiberias was a small town surrounded by walls and towers that enclosed it from three sides. Its eastern boundary was the Sea of Galilee (see Map 7). The houses were few and pitiable, but over the course of the nineteenth century, especially towards its end, the number of buildings multiplied, most of them built by Jews. The total population of Tiberias at the beginning of the century numbered 2,000, half of whom were Jews. The number of Jews increased throughout the century and on the eve of World War I stood at 6,000 persons, three-quarters of the total population of 8,000, the others being Muslims. Christian organizations arrived in Tiberias towards the end of the nineteenth



Map 7: Tiberias 1885.

century and began establishing their institutions. Construction outside the walls also began at that time.<sup>30</sup>

One can differentiate between the Muslim and Jewish communities of Safed and Tiberias by their financial condition. Most of the Jews in both cities lived off the *halukkah* funds.<sup>31</sup> A small minority, mostly Sefardi Jews, engaged in crafts and the provision of services in the markets, and there were even some merchants among them, but the majority of Jews made a living by studying Torah in the local yeshivas. By contrast, most of the Muslims earned their livelihood from agriculture in the fields outside the cities. Many olive groves surrounded Safed as well as vineyards and orchards. Field crops, wheat, and other grains were cultivated on the mountain slopes, on the terraces, and in the valleys. The hot Tiberias climate also enabled raising subtropical crops. Fishing in the Sea of Galilee became commonplace, especially towards the end of the century, with the catch marketed to Safed, Nazareth, and even Jerusalem. Tiberias, too, traded with the villages around it and with Bedouins from the Jordan Valley. It began developing towards the end of the period of Ottoman rule, and was connected by roads westwards towards Acre and Jaffa, and southwards to the Tiberias hot springs and the Zemah train station. Therapeutic springs were opened, as well as mail and telegraph services and a travel agency. It should also be noted that development of the two cities during the first half of the nineteenth century was relatively minor. The Jews, the majority of them members of the Old Yishuv, had little contact with the villages around them. The two cities began to grow and develop towards the end of the century, especially Tiberias whose growth rate was more pronounced than that of Safed, this for two reasons. First, Tiberias was situated at a crossroads of geographical areas that were beginning to develop during the period: the northern valleys, the Lower Galilee valleys, and the Eastern Galilee. Safed, in contrast, was situated in a mountainous area of Upper Galilee that underwent almost no development. The second reason was the change in the composition of the Jewish population of Tiberias. Slowly, elements of the Zionist New Yishuv began arriving in the city and they turned it into a center for all the new Jewish villages around the city.<sup>32</sup>

*Hebron.* Though it was one of the four holy cities for Jews, Hebron had a small Jewish community. Its population at the beginning of the nineteenth century was

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**30** For Tiberias, see Oded Avissar, *Tiberias: The City on Lake Kinneret and Its Community over the Ages* (Jerusalem: Keter Press, 1973) (Hebrew). Though the book deals only with the Jewish community, one can gain some insight into other aspects of the city.

**31** The *halukkah* system of support from abroad will be discussed in Chapter Four.

**32** About Safed and Tiberias in the nineteenth century, see Ben-Arieh, "Urban Development," 13–15. For Safed in a later period, see also Mustafa Abbasi, *Safed during the Mandate Period, 1918–1948: Arabs and Jews in a Mixed City* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2015) (Hebrew). Safed is the only city (with the exception of Ramle and Lydda, which were still small towns at the time) for which I was unable to find a nineteenth-century map.

estimated at 6,000, of which a mere 300 were Jews. The total population at the end of the 1870s reached 9,000 persons, of whom 700 were Jews. The Jewish community, members of the Old Yishuv, subsisted mostly on *halukkah* funds and its members spent most of their time studying the Torah in the yeshivah.<sup>33</sup> Hebron did not have any religious significance for Christians, and excluding a little missionary activity, mainly towards the end of the century, very few Christians lived there.

Hebron was one of the major cities of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century and the main city in the southern part of the sancak of Jerusalem. There are many similarities in the settlement situation between Hebron and Nablus (see below), and in some ways both were similar to Jerusalem. All three, Hebron, Nablus, and Jerusalem, provided services for the rural areas around them.<sup>34</sup> However, during the nineteenth century Jerusalem received a more important status while Hebron and Nablus remained provincial cities. Hebron is located in a fertile valley within a mountainous area, on an important route from the inhabited region to its north. There are a number of quarters in the city, the most important of which is that surrounding the Cave of the Patriarchs and the adjacent citadel. Below it was the quarter that housed the bazaars, the “*kasba*,” which included cotton and silk markets. There was also an area specializing in production of glass, next to which lay the Jewish quarter. In between the built-up blocs were agricultural areas, but the structure of the city was very compact: an elongated built-up area flanking the main road on both sides (see Map 8).<sup>35</sup>

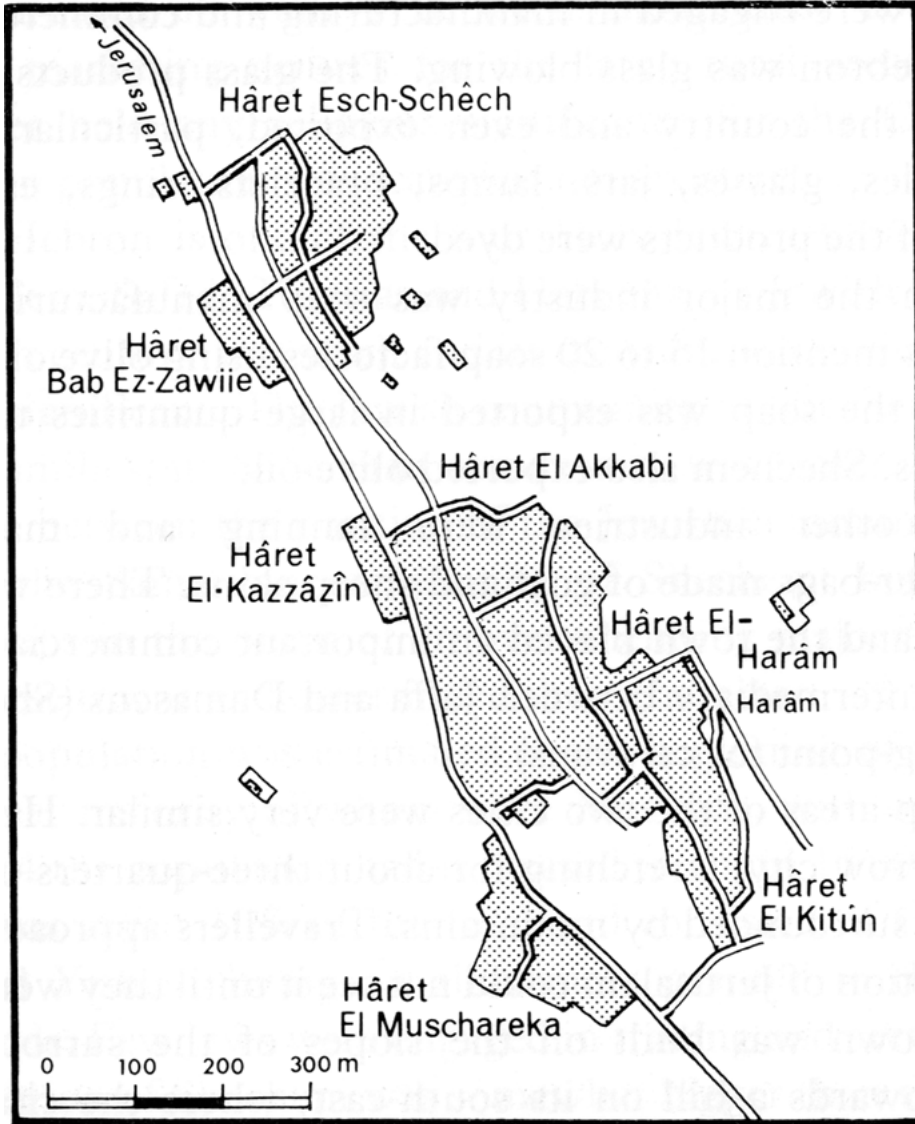
Agriculture, too, was the main source of livelihood in Hebron. The city was renowned for the rich vineyards around it. Though regular sources of water were few, the plentiful winter rains enabled extensive agricultural activity. Some of the city’s residents made their living in small industry and commerce. The main industrial field was glass production; Hebron glassware was marketed throughout the country and was even exported abroad, mainly to Egypt: bottles, glasses, nargilahs, rings, earrings, and necklaces, some colored. Other industries included leather products, mostly water bags made of sheep and goat skins, ceramics, woven fabrics, wool (brought from the Bedouins), and coarse carpets. There was also a food produce industry based on regional crops, especially raisins and other dried fruits. Trade

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33 For Hebron, see Oded Avissar, *Hebron: The City of the Patriarchs and Its Community over the Ages* (Jerusalem: Keter Press, 1970) (Hebrew). Like his book on Tiberias, it deals solely with the Jewish community but provides some information on other aspects of the city. See also David Kushner, “Zealous Towns in Nineteenth-century Palestine,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 33 (1997): 597–612.

34 Yehuda Karmon, “Changes in the Urban Geography of Hebron in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Selected Articles on the Geography of Eretz Israel* (Jerusalem: Ariel, 1985), 79–87 (Hebrew).

35 For Hebron, see also Ben-Arieh, “Urban Development,” 15–16; id., “Twelve Major Settlements,” 84–94, and in the sub-section below devoted to the sancak of Jerusalem.



**Map 8:** Hebron 1851 (Saulcy).

was also a significant source of livelihood since, as noted, an important trade route passed through the city from north to south and on to Egypt. Hebron was the meeting place for Bedouins from the south with the merchants, both local and those from the north. The Hebron merchants maintained close ties with the Negev



Bedouins who brought their merchandise to the city, and the local merchants marketed it throughout the country.<sup>36</sup>

### **The two Arab-Christian cities: Nazareth and Bethlehem**

*Nazareth.* During the nineteenth century Nazareth was the fifth largest city in the Galilee, and predominantly Christian. Its population at the beginning of the century numbered 1,000–1,500 persons. As the city expanded, on the eve of World War I the residents of Nazareth numbered 8,000–10,000 – two-thirds of them Christians and one-third Muslims. No Jews lived in the city. The largest denomination were the Greek Orthodox who accounted for two-thirds of all Christians, the rest being Roman Catholics, except for two very small communities, the Maronites and Greek Catholics, and a small minority of Copts. Protestants, both Anglicans and Lutherans, also arrived in Nazareth over the course of the century.

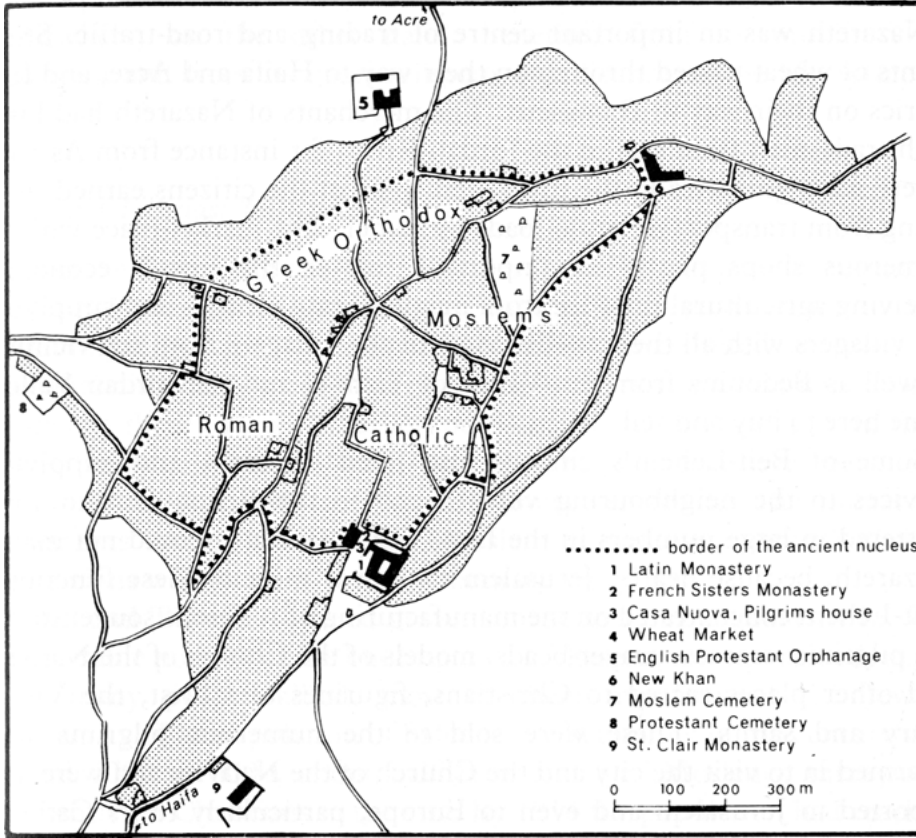
Nazareth was situated on a mountainous slope, with most of the houses arranged on the lower slope in the form of a sort of amphitheater, one house below the other. Since the middle of the century, the city grew and expanded, mostly towards the valley below, and houses with modern elements were added. Towards the end of the century, the number of houses was three to four times their number at its beginning. At the outset of the nineteenth century Nazareth was divided into three main quarters: Greek Orthodox in the north, Roman Catholic in the southwest, and Muslim in the east. The number of quarters increased over the course of the century, and various Christian associations built many large buildings in central locations: monasteries, churches, and educational, health, and welfare institutions (see Map 9).

Nazareth's residents made their living mostly from agriculture on the hills and ridges around the city and in fields as distant as the Jezreel Valley. Many engaged in sheep and cattle herding. Nazareth played a central role in Galilee trade and transportation, and crops passed through on their way to Haifa, Acre, and even Damascus. Nazareth's merchants maintained ties with their counterparts in other cities including such places as al-Salt, east of the Jordan. There were granaries in the city and some inhabitants were involved in transporting grain by camel caravans. The market had a central function in the city's economy, receiving agricultural produce from neighboring villages and supplying the villages with their needs. The villagers from the vicinity and Bedouins from the Jezreel and Jordan valleys came to Nazareth to buy and sell. It should be noted that the few workshops in Nazareth did not manufacture souvenirs for the Christian pilgrims who came to the city, but rather items for agriculture, for

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<sup>36</sup> There was a special relationship between Jerusalem and Hebron. As Jerusalem developed, many residents of Hebron came to work there. In Jerusalem's markets one could buy special items produced in Hebron, including the famous blue "Hebron glassware."





Map 9: Nazareth 1890 (Schumacher).

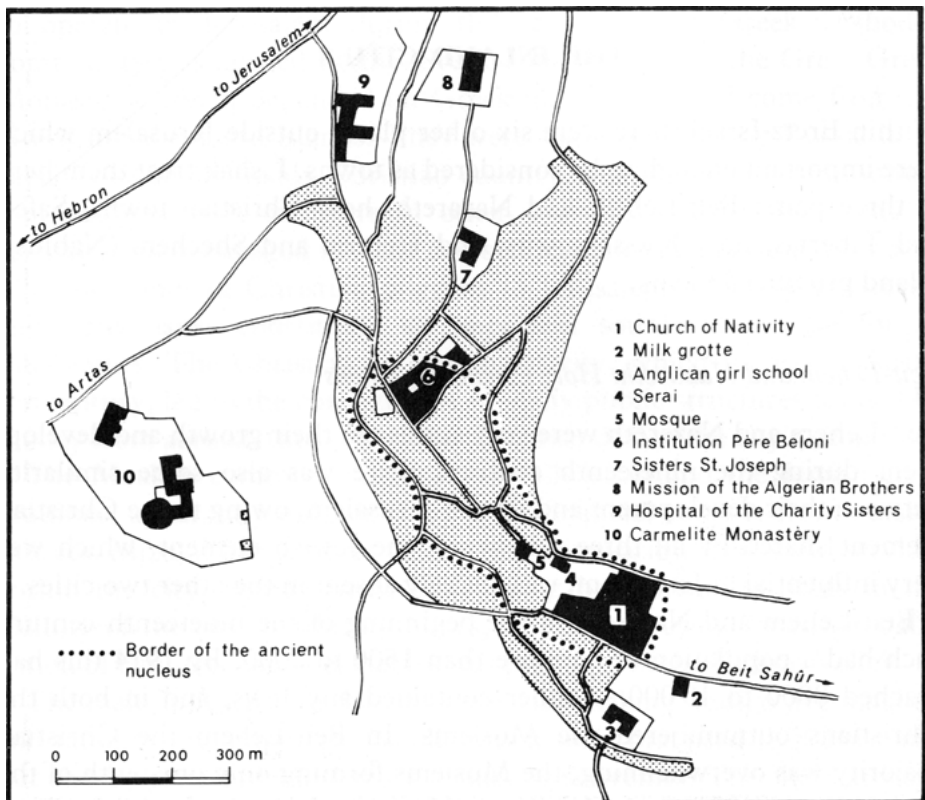
trade, and to meet the needs of the local population. Nazareth grew and developed mainly due to its importance and sanctity to Christians in the Holy Land and from abroad, to its role as a center providing services for the villages around it, and finally as a transit station between Acre and Haifa on the coast and Damascus, the Hauran, and trans-Jordan.<sup>37</sup>

*Bethlehem.* At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Bethlehem was a small city, home to 1,500–2,000 persons. By the eve of World War I its population had increased to 8,000–10,000 persons. The majority of the inhabitants were Christians

<sup>37</sup> For Nazareth in the years 1750–1914, see Shimon Stern, “Historical Geography of Nazareth, 1750–1914” (MA thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1966) (Hebrew). See also Ben-Arieh, “Urban Development,” 9–12. At the time, Nazareth had important ties with Haifa and it seems that the settlement of German Templers in Haifa was also, to a great degree, due to the ties between Haifa and Nazareth.

and the rest were Muslims; no Jews resided in the city. The Christians were almost equally divided between Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox, with a small lead to the Roman Catholics. There was also a small Armenian minority. Anglican and Lutheran Protestants also arrived over the course of the century.

At the beginning of the century Bethlehem had a very small area in which were one hundred to three hundred houses. The city was built on a narrow mountain crest running from west to east on which were two hills with a narrow connecting ridge between them. The compact center of the city was on the higher western hill, while a fortress-like building stood by itself atop the eastern hill – the Church of the Nativity (see Map 10). The city was divided into quarters, four of which already existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century: Latin, Greek, Armenian, and Muslim. Bethlehem expanded throughout the century and up to eight built-up areas can be discerned within it. Some of them included large, mainly religious, structures: monasteries, churches, and educational, health, and welfare institutions associated with various religious denominations.



Map 10: Bethlehem 1893 (Palmer).

The residents made their living mainly from agriculture in the vicinity. The valleys surrounding Bethlehem were intensely cultivated and diverse agricultural crops were grown: olives, grapes, various fruits and vegetables, some of which were marketed in Jerusalem, grains, and legumes. Other agricultural occupations included growing roses for use by the churches, beehives producing wax for the extensive candle industry supplying churches and pilgrims, and the production of high-quality wine that was also exported to Europe.

Some Bethlehem residents made their living by trading with and providing services to the villagers of the area and Bedouins from the Judean Desert area. It should be noted that Jerusalem predominated in trade and services and Bethlehem played only a secondary role. Bethlehem supplied Jerusalem with a large part of the Christian pilgrim souvenir industry: crosses, rosaries, models of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Nativity, as well of other sites holy to Christianity, statues of Jesus, Mary, and more. These were sold to pilgrims who came to visit the Church of the Nativity and marketed to Jerusalem and even to Europe, mainly to Catholic countries.

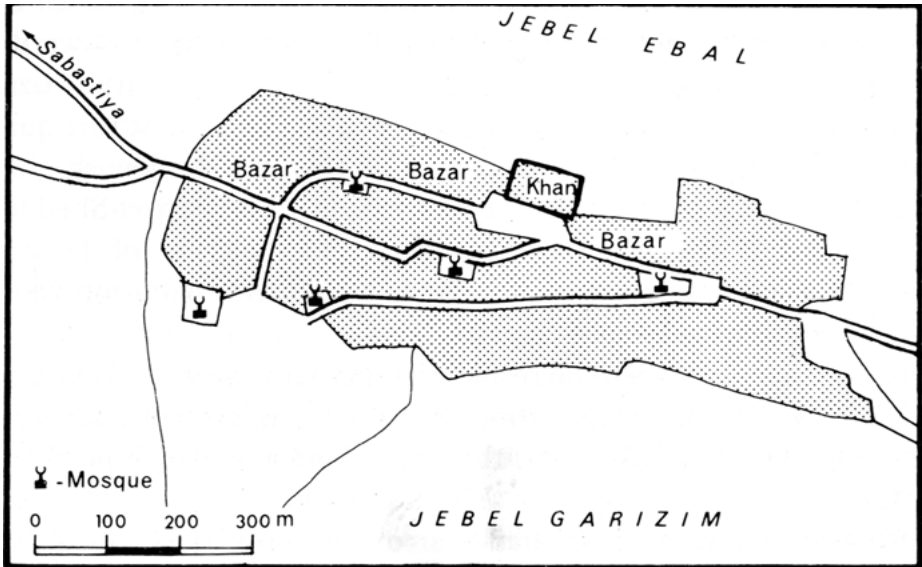
Occupations related to the building industry, such as stone work and quarrying, also developed in Bethlehem following the increase in construction throughout the Holy Land, mainly in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The Christian communities in Jerusalem were very active in new construction projects and those involved in them preferred employing Christian Arabs, among them workers from Bethlehem, thus making a significant contribution to the development of Bethlehem itself. It can be said that Bethlehem developed in the nineteenth century due to its importance to Christianity as the birthplace of Jesus and because of its proximity to Jerusalem, which was undergoing extensive development during the nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

### **Nablus, like Hebron, central cities; two small towns – Ramle and Lydda**

*Nablus (Shechem)*. During the nineteenth century, Nablus was one of the important cities in the Holy Land and the central city of the Samaria area, the sancak of Nablus. The city was located in an inner valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, on an important crossroads (see Map 11). The roads led from Nablus west to Jaffa and the coast, northwest to Nazareth, Haifa, and Acre, northeast and east to the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea and the territory east of the Jordan, and south to Jerusalem. Nablus played a central role in trade as a service station between Jaffa and Damascus, and had a large khan for the many caravans passing through it. It was also a central city providing

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<sup>38</sup> On Bethlehem, its topography and population, see Ben-Arieh, "Urban Development," 9, 12–13; id., "Twelve Major Settlements," 95–106.



Map 11: Shechem (Nablus) 1858 (Murray).

services for the large rural area around it. There were a small number of Christian residents, from several dozens to a few hundreds, and the Jews, too, were few, only fifty to one hundred persons. There was also a small community of Samaritans, one to two hundred members, but it was unique unto itself. The total population of Nablus at the beginning of the nineteenth century is estimated at 7,000 persons and around 10,000 in the 1870s. The main source of livelihood was agriculture. Nablus Valley was considered one of the most fertile valleys in the country. In the city and its environs were vineyards and orchards, field crops, such as vegetables and more, irrigated by water flowing in channels. Nablus is described as blessed with rain water, springs, and wells. Some residents made a living in trade and industry, the main branch being production of soap. Sources from the nineteenth century apprise of fifteen to twenty soap plants in which olive oil served as the raw material. Soap and oil were exported in large quantities to Egypt and other countries. Another main industry was leather work, mainly manufacture of water skins.<sup>39</sup>

Ramle and Lydda are the final two towns included in this discussion of the Holy Land cities in the nineteenth century. It is doubtful whether they should be considered cities since in size they were more similar to large villages. At the beginning of

<sup>39</sup> For Nablus (Shechem), its population, and source of income, see Ben-Arieh, "Urban Development," 17–19; id., "Twelve Major Settlements," 84–94, and in the sub-section below devoted to the sancak of Jerusalem. See also Kushner, "Zealous Towns."

the nineteenth century there were around 2,000 residents in Ramle and 1,000 in Lydda, while in 1880 the figures were around 3,500 and 2,000 respectively.

*Ramle.* The development of Ramle began with the improvement of security conditions in the country and the growing number of travelers along the Jaffa–Jerusalem road. The increase in population was more pronounced mainly after 1880. Ramle was situated on the eastern side of a low and wide ridge on the eastern coastal plain, on the road leading from Jaffa to Jerusalem. It was like a village, surrounded by olive groves and cultivated fields, while within its bounds were many trees, the most prominent of which were palm trees. The city had no walls, the residents lived in mud huts or stone houses, and there were some ruined ones among them. Most of the stone structures were covered by practical roofs with domes. There were four mosques and three monasteries in the city: Latin, Greek, and Armenian. The most prominent structure was the “White Tower” situated outside the city. The city also had underground cisterns for collecting water. The inhabitants’ major source of livelihood was agriculture, mostly from olives, as well as vineyards and fruit orchards, figs, pomegranates, citrus, and dates, and annual crops mainly grains such as wheat and barley, tobacco, cotton, and vegetables, in addition to sorghum and corn. There were also cattle and sheep owners among the residents. A regular market day was held serving the villagers of the vicinity, but the permanent bazaar is usually described as being most meager. There was also an oil and soap industry in Ramle, and the streets were filled with piles of black dust from the workshops manufacturing soap. Ramle filled an important function as the rest station for caravans traveling from the south northward – from Egypt to Damascus and other areas in Syria – and mainly as a station on the Jaffa–Jerusalem road. The telegraph line, installed in 1865, passed through the city. Beginning in the 1870s, modern inns were established in Ramle that replaced the monasteries which had previously been the main lodging places for travelers on their way to Jerusalem.

*Lydda.* In the nineteenth century, Lydda is described as a small village similar to the rest of the Arab villages in the area. Its houses were small, low, and unstable and there were many ruins. The village was located on a low hill surrounded by trees, mainly olive groves, with a few palm trees between the houses. Lydda began to develop in the 1870s. The prominent structures were the ruins of the Church of St. George, which was rebuilt in 1871 by the Greek Orthodox, and the mosque next to it. The renovated Church of St. George was the seat of the Greek bishop, the representative of the Patriarch residing in Jerusalem. The population of Lydda at the beginning of the nineteenth century is estimated at 1,000 persons, while during the 1880s the population grew to 2,000, among them Greek Orthodox. Lydda’s growth occurred mainly during World War I when it became a central crossroads for the railway lines. Lydda’s inhabitants made their living mainly from agriculture: olives were the main crop, together with vineyards and fruit orchards, as well as field crops such as wheat, barley, sorghum, corn, and vegetables, while some owned cattle and sheep. Olives served mainly for the production of oil and a small soap industry, and there were also industries producing straw mats and processing tobacco. The weekly Lydda

market, famous throughout the coastal plains for its merchants and produce, was held on Fridays, and a livestock market on Mondays.<sup>40</sup>

## The rural population of the four sancaks

Thus far I have discussed the thirteen cities of western Palestine in the nineteenth century and the size of their population. I shall now discuss the rural population of the four sancaks: Acre, Nablus (Shechem), Jerusalem, and Gaza (see Map 12). When we combine them, we will, in fact, have the nineteenth-century population of western Palestine.<sup>41</sup>

### The sancak of Acre

There are five main sources that served for reconstruction of the population of the sancak of Acre:<sup>42</sup> (a) the PEF's *Survey of Western Palestine* conducted in the 1870s. The survey includes numerical data of the population of the different settlements in the sancak of Acre as opposed to the sections devoted to the other sancaks; (b) the detailed study by Victor Guérin, *Description géographique, historique et archéologique de la Palestine*; (c) the sancak of Acre census of 1886 conducted by Gottlieb Schumacher, the Acre district engineer who supervised the work in the sancak on behalf of the Ottoman government. The census recorded all men capable of work aged 16–60 then living in the sancak; (d) the first detailed British statistical census from the Mandate period conducted in 1922. The numbers for the second half of the nineteenth century should also be compared to this census; (e) additional Ottoman

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**40** On Ramle and Lydda, see Ben-Arieh, “Twelve Major Settlements,” 137–38, and see also below, in the discussion of the nahiye of Jaffa in the sub-section on the sancak of Gaza.

**41** My discussion of the rural population in nineteenth-century Palestine is based on sources found during my research on the four sancaks then in the territory of western Palestine. This led to the publication of four articles in Hebrew, one on each sancak, between 1984 and 1987, two of which are also in English versions. Reference will be made to them in what follows. See the detailed maps of the sancaks of Jerusalem and Gaza included in this chapter. Maps of the sancaks of Acre and Shechem (Nablus) are found in the articles referred to in notes 42 and 45 below. See also David Grossman, *Arab Demography and Early Jewish Settlement in Palestine: Distribution and Population Density during the Late Ottoman and Early Mandate Periods* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2011).

**42** For an early joint article on the settlements in the sancak of Acre, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh and Amiram Oren, “Settlements in Galilee prior to Zionist Settlement Activity,” in *The Lands of Galilee*, vol. 2, ed. Avshalom Shmuely, Arnon Sofer, and Nurit Kliot (Haifa: Haifa University, 1983), 315–52 (Hebrew). For a detailed survey of the sancak of Acre including maps and tables of its sub-division, names of the villages and their population, and including the cities, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, “The Population of the Sancak of Acre in the 1870s,” *Shalem* 4 (1984): 307–28 (Hebrew).





Map 12: The four sancaks and main towns.

data published by scholars of the Holy Land that include general summaries of the five kazas of the sancak of Acre, but provide no specific information about cities and individual villages.<sup>43</sup>

A listing of the rural villages of the sancak of Acre resulted in detailed tables of all the settlements in the sancak distributed by size with the sources of information noted in separate columns. These tables appear in the second article cited in the previous note. They were supplemented by two general maps: one of the sancak boundaries and its sub-units, and the other included the names of all the settlements in the sancak by size. In addition, seven other detailed maps of the sancak settlements were added for its seven to eight sub-areas (kazas and nahiyes). The total population of the sancak of Acre in the 1870s, including the villages and five cities, numbered 77,061 persons living in 168 settlements.<sup>44</sup>

### The sancak of Nablus

In contrast to the sancak of Acre, which included five important cities that led to the division of the sancak into five main kazas, in the sancak of Nablus the city of Nablus served as a single central city that preserved the unity of the sancak as one unit until the latter days of Ottoman rule.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the details available from the sources listed above – excluding the Schumacher census which dealt only with Acre – it should be noted that the PEF survey data included no numbers for the sancak of Nablus, only a general definition of each village by size. This was also the case with the article by two PEF members, Robert A.S. Macalister and Ernest W.G. Masterman, published in 1905 in the PEF's quarterly. It is also important to note that the Jezreel Valley, Beit She'an Valley, and Ramat Yissakhar (the Yissakhar Plateau) were included in the sancak of Nablus and not in that of Acre.<sup>46</sup>

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**43** I wish to point out that when dealing with the Arab settlements I have no intention to touch upon all aspects of their existence and development. Books and articles have been published on these subjects. I intend to limit myself to the size of their population at specific periods, only briefly referring to the reasons for that.

**44** For the population of the sancak of Acre, see Table 1 in Ben-Arieh, "Population of Eretz Israel," 365.

**45** For details of the sancak of Nablus (Shechem), including maps and tables for all the sub-districts, the names of the villages and their size, and including the city of Shechem, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh and Arnon Golan, "Sub-districts and Settlements of the Sancak of Shechem in the Nineteenth Century," *Eretz Israel* 17 (1984): 38–65 (Hebrew). See also Yehuda Karmon, "The Samaritan Mountains: Physiographic Structure and Roads," in *Selected Articles on the Geography of Eretz Israel* (Jerusalem: Ariel, 1985), 95–104 (Hebrew).

**46** The article by Macalister and Masterman appeared in several installments in the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* in 1905 and 1906. For these two scholars, see Chapter Two.



Based on the method I adopted, and by my estimate, the rural population of the sancak of Nablus in the 1870s numbered 70,850 (excluding the nomadic Bedouin population). If we add the number of residents of the city of Nablus, 11,500, we arrive at a total population of 81,350. This figure is quite similar to the population of the sancak of Acre whose area is also fairly similar in size. The number of settlements in the sancak of Nablus was 226.<sup>47</sup>

The two sancaks, Acre and Nablus, differed in the internal distribution of their populations. While there were five major cities in the sancak of Acre (Acre, Safed, Tiberias, Nazareth, and Haifa) in which over a third of the population lived, Nablus was the only city in the sancak to which it lent its name that was inhabited by only one-eighth of the total population of the sancak. The number of rural settlements in the sancak of Nablus was larger, 226 compared to 168 in that of Acre. Most of the settlements were small, 60 percent of them even very small. Only one was defined as very big with one to two thousand persons, and another was considered a town, numbering between two to five thousand inhabitants.

It appears there were two main reasons for the differences between the two sancaks: the topographical structure of the two regions and their historical importance. In the sancak of Acre, mainly in the central Lower Galilee and Western Galilee, a large concentration of fertile land in the valleys enabled the development of large settlements. In contrast, the fertile land in the sancak of Nablus was found in relatively small areas next to which many small and intermediate-sized villages sprang up. As for historical importance, there were cities in the sancak of Acre – Safed, Tiberias, and Nazareth – that were holy and of historical-religious importance to Jews and Christians and attracted a diversified population, while the sancak of Nablus had no such cities and was populated mainly by Muslims, except for a few small minorities.

The sancak of Nablus, too, was divided into kazas and nahiyes. According to Macalister and Masterman, on the basis of the PEF survey there were eight to nine such units in the sancak. They noted that this division was an ancient one based on the areas of control by various local rulers and tribal clans who were the aristocracy of the country and despite their loss of power in the nineteenth century still managed to maintain some of their past status.

As for Ottoman rule, the administration was concentrated in the city of Nablus. Somewhat uncharacteristic was the northern kaza of Harta ash-Shamaliyah that was beginning to take shape around the town of Jenin together with parts of neighboring nahiyes. In the west, the kaza of Beni Tsab with parts of nearby nahiyes around the town of Tulkarm underwent a similar process until, towards the end of the Ottoman

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47 For the population of the sancak of Nablus, see Table 1 in Ben-Arieh, “Population of Eretz Israel,” 365. For a summary, see also Ben-Arieh, “Settlement Landscape,” 103–5 and the discussion of Shechem (Nablus) above.

period, it too was awarded the status of an independent administrative unit which during the British Mandate period was called the district of Tulkarm.

Another basic difference between the sancaks of Acre and Nablus was the distance from the sea. In the sancak of Acre the port towns of Acre and Haifa were major agents of development.<sup>48</sup> There were no coastal cities or even developed coastal areas in the sancak of Nablus, which continued functioning as a mountainous area conducting its lifestyle in a traditional rural manner.<sup>49</sup>

### The sancak of Jerusalem

The Ottoman sancaks of Jerusalem and Gaza were already united in the 1870s under the Jerusalem *mustasarriflik*.<sup>50</sup> I shall discuss each separately.<sup>51</sup>

Like the sancaks of Acre and Nablus, the sancak of Jerusalem was divided into *kazas* and *nahiyes*. The division was much the same as in the sancak of Nablus and was based on areas of control and influence by the local leaders and tribal clans. There were nine or more sub-units, divided into three groups (see Map 13).

The first group included four to five sub-units that surrounded the city of Jerusalem. The first sub-unit, El-Wadije, encompassed a large part of the Judean Desert and the Jordan Valley (see Map 14). It included only ten settlements, six of which are today neighborhoods within Jerusalem: Selwan, Isawiyeh, At-Tur, Aizariyeh, Abu Diz, and Sur Baher. The others were Jericho in the Jordan Valley, Bethlehem south of Jerusalem, which I have discussed above, and its two nearby villages, Bait Sahur in the east and Bait Jala in the west.<sup>52</sup>

The second sub-unit was comprised of two *nahiyes*, El-Kuds and El-Bire, and included settlements from north of Jerusalem to Ramallah and Al-Bireh (see Map 15).

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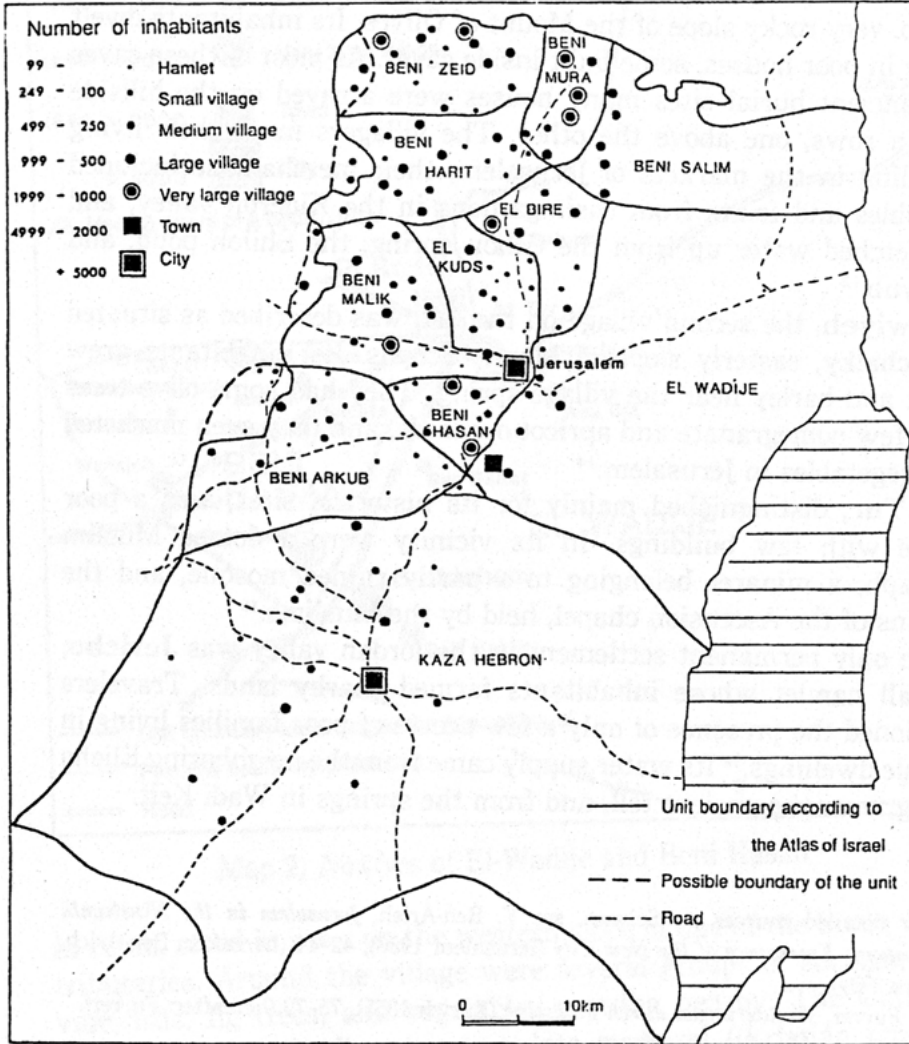
**48** In addition, especially during the summer, the small ports of Tantura and Abu Zabura (present-day Beit Yannai) were busy exporting hundreds of tons of watermelons to Egypt.

**49** In the late Ottoman period there were no villages in the coastal area of the sancak of Nablus; therefore it was one of the areas in which the first Jewish settlements were established. See Chapter Five on the First Aliyah, where I shall also discuss the settlement activity of the Jewish Colonization Association.

**50** For the sancak of Jerusalem, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "Settlements and Population of the Sancak of Jerusalem in the 1870s," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 35 (1994): 218–62.

**51** For a summary article on late Ottoman Jerusalem, see David Kushner, "Jerusalem under Imperial Ottoman Rule: Problems of Government and Administration," in *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period (1800–1917)*, ed. Israel Bartal and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 3–17 (Hebrew). See also id., "Ottoman Governors."

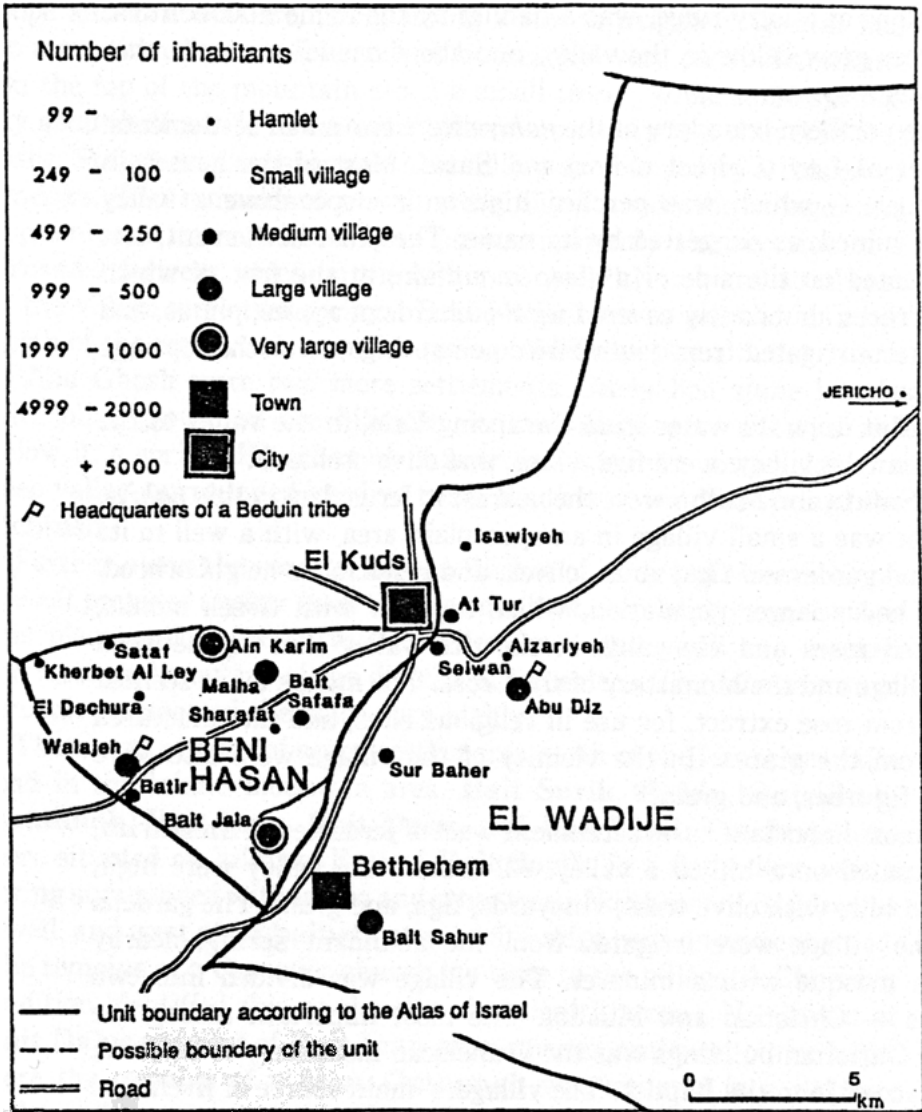
**52** Names of rural settlements are spelled in the text and on the maps according to John B. Barron, *Palestine: Report and General Abstracts of the Census of 1922* (Jerusalem: [Government of Palestine, 1923]). Names that do not appear there are spelled according to Eric Mills, *Census of Palestine 1931*, 2 vols. (Alexandria: Printed for the Government of Palestine, 1933).



Map 13: Sancak of Jerusalem.

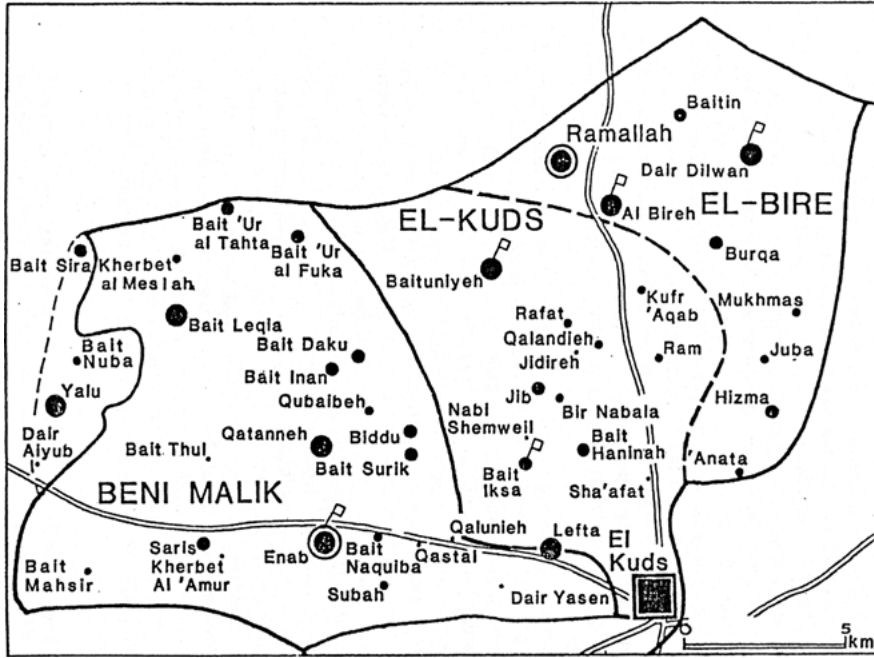
The third sub-unit, lying northwest of Jerusalem, was called the nahiye of Beni Malik and included settlements along the road from Jerusalem to Jaffa, including Abu Ghosh and the villages north of it.

The fourth sub-unit, to the southwest of Jerusalem, was called the nahiye of Beni Hasan which included the areas of Malha, Ain Karim, and more (see Map 14). Bordering upon it was the nahiye of Beni Arkub which encompassed Artuf and the area to the southeast up to the Jerusalem–Hebron road (see Map 17).

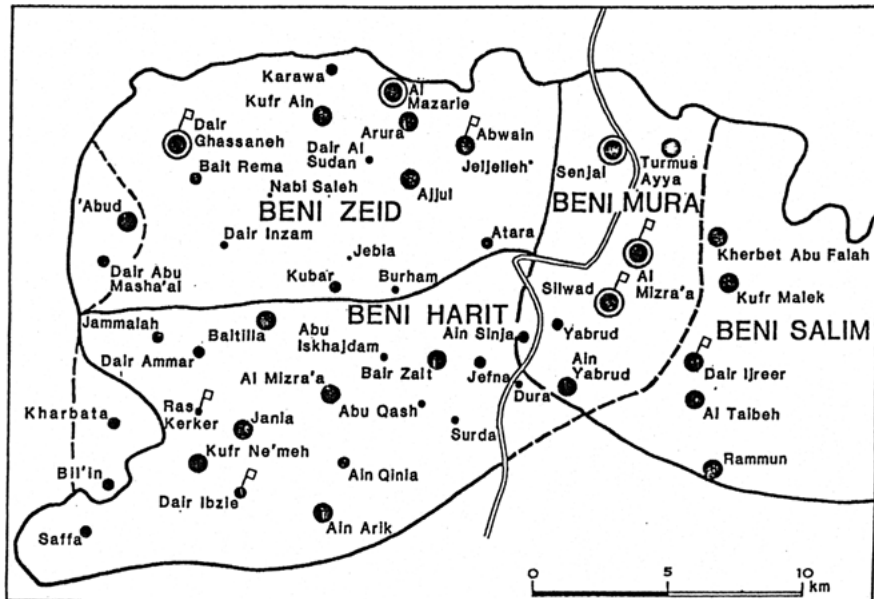


Map 14: Nahiyes of El-Wadije and Beni Hasan.

The second group incorporated four sub-units in the northern section of the sancak of Jerusalem up to the boundary with the sancak of Nablus. Its sub-units from east to west were the nahiyes of Beni Salim, Beni Mura, and Beni Zeid, and to the south the nahiyeh of Beni Harit (see Map 16). The settlements in these nahiyes were similar in their rural mountainous character to those in the sancak of Nablus.



Map 15: Nahiyes of El-Kuds/El-Bire and Beni Malik.



Map 16: Nahiyes of BeniSalim/Beni Mura, Beni Zeid, and Beni Harit.

The third group of the sancak of Jerusalem was its southern area, the kaza of Hebron (see above) which was semi-independent. It extended over a wide area in southern Judea (see Map 18). In the east it included part of the Judean Desert, which had no permanent settlements. To the west there was a bloc of five villages, at the foot of the Hebron hills near Bait Jebrin, which were part of the sancak of Gaza. North of Hebron were a number of settlements, the important of which was Halhul. In the southwest the most prominent was the large village of Dura. South of Hebron were the villages of Yatta, al-Samu, and al-Dahriyeh which was the southernmost permanent settlement on the Beersheba–Gaza road.<sup>53</sup>

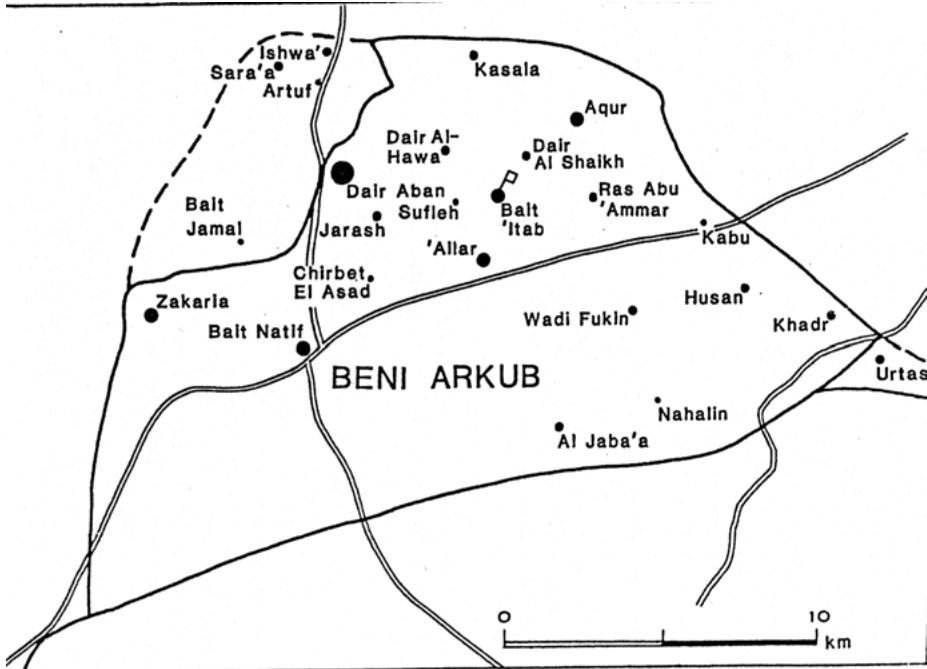
The sources I used to assess the size of the population of the sancak of Jerusalem are in part those consulted for the sancaks of Acre and Nablus, such as the maps and books of the PEF, relevant volumes of Guérin's book, the British census of 1922, and individual sources for particular settlements. But there are three additional sources for the sancak of Jerusalem, and that of Gaza as well, which include data regarding the permanent rural settlements of the mutasarriflik of Jerusalem that was comprised of both sancaks. The first and most important is the essay by Professor Albert Socin which was published in the journal of the Deutsche Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas in 1879 and includes an alphabetical listing of all the permanent settlements in the mutasarriflik of Jerusalem incorporating population data and the number of houses in each settlement. In his preface, Socin notes that the list had been in his possession for eight to ten years, and that he had received it from the *seraya* officials in Jerusalem. This list was a bad copy of an official statistical document compiled by an Ottoman clerk and given to him. The original list was arranged by sub-units, but Socin rearranged it alphabetically, although he did leave the original serial number from the Ottoman list before the entry for each settlement. There is a preface to the list in his essay: settlement total – population and houses by sub-units and for the area as a whole, and additional references. He also notes that the data for the cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Gaza, Jaffa, Ramle, and Lydda is not included in the list. He sent the list to a number of experts, including Conrad Schick, whose remarks were later added to the list with special markings. Schick also noted that the population data in the list probably refers only to the male population and that in order to receive full data the numbers should be multiplied by two. Other sources, too, indicate that from the 1850s the Ottoman authorities began including all the males in their censuses.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> We may conclude that in the late nineteenth century the sancak of Jerusalem was the most important one, for it surrounded Jerusalem, which continued to grow and develop, and also included the rural areas near the city that were influenced by Jerusalem's growth. It is for that reason that I have also listed the sancak's sub-units, also appearing in the maps. Hebron was included in the sancak and had close ties to and was influenced by Jerusalem.

<sup>54</sup> Prof. Albert Socin, a leading German scholar, was one of the founders of the Deutsche Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas; see ch. 2, n. 88. See also Goren, *Zieht hin*, 320–24, including a photo of





Map 17: Nahiye of Beni Arkub.

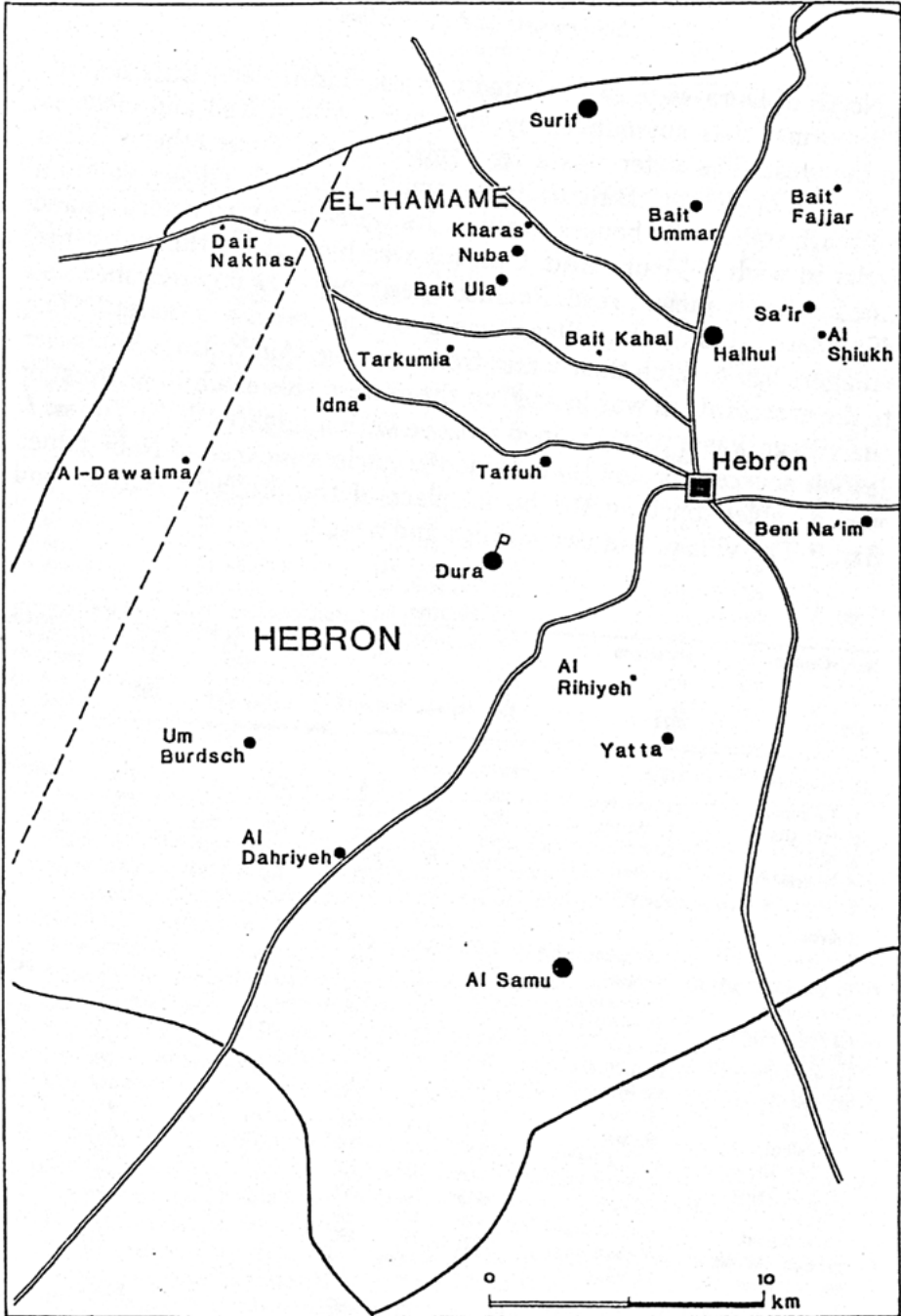
Four years following the publication of Socin's list, Dr. Martin Hartmann published a list of all the settlements of the district of Jerusalem extracted from the Ottoman yearbook for Syria in A.H. 1288 (1871). The common acronym for the yearbook, which Hartmann also used, was SS (*Syria Salname*). This article, too, was published in the journal of the Deutsche Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas in 1883, and Hartmann emphasizes that he changed nothing from the original 1871 document and published the list since he found that it contained interesting historical-statistical data. Unlike Socin, Hartmann retained the original arrangement of villages according to the sub-units of the mutasarriflik. The disadvantage of this list is that it does not include village population numbers, only of houses, which are almost identical to Socin's list. The list also incorporates additional details taken from the Ottoman yearbook such as the number of mosques, schools, and pupils, unlike Socin's list.<sup>55</sup>

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Socin and details of his research. He served as a professor of Semitic languages at the University of Basel, and later at the University of Tübingen.

<sup>55</sup> Hartmann's figures seem to be reliable, especially since he cites their source.





Map 18: Kaza of Hebron.

A third source, limited to the sancak of Jerusalem and also published in the *Deutsche Verein's* journal in 1896, is Conrad Schick's list of the number of inhabitants in the district of Jerusalem. According to Schick, when the road from Jerusalem to Jericho needed to be constructed, every man and adolescent from the sancak of Jerusalem was required to contribute his share. To that purpose, a list of all the settlements was prepared which included the number of men and adolescents able to work. Schick received a copy of all four parts of the list. In his opinion, in order to calculate the population data for the villages of the district of Jerusalem, the numbers should be multiplied by three.<sup>56</sup>

These three sources, when combined with the previous ones (maps and books of the PEF, Guérin's book, and the British census of 1922) enabled reconstruction of the rural population of the Jerusalem sancak. The total population of the rural settlements in the sancak of Jerusalem at the beginning of the 1870s, based on these sources, is 65,964 persons. The number does not include the population of Jerusalem and Hebron. If we add 25,000 for Jerusalem and 9,500 for Hebron, we will arrive at a total of 100,464 persons residing in the sancak of Jerusalem, of those, 78,526 were in the major regions of the sancak of Jerusalem and 21,938 in the kaza of Hebron (including the nahiye of Beni Arkub). The total of permanent settlements in the sancak of Jerusalem was 154 (including Jerusalem and Hebron).<sup>57</sup>

The majority of the settlements were concentrated in the inland mountainous area. It may be concluded that two main factors determined their existence and location. The first, the availability of minimal living conditions, i.e. sources of water and food, and the second, the state of security and defense. Water sources were springs, water holes, wells, and even pools in places where the natural conditions enabled their construction and maintenance. The second existential need for settlements was land suitable for agricultural cultivation. Some of the mountain villages also had intensive irrigation agriculture made possible by using spring water in their vicinity by gravitational irrigation and exploiting high-level underground water with the aid of the sophisticated watering techniques of the period. Agriculture was usually practiced in small plots, and most of the villages subsisted on dry agriculture of grains and orchards where rainwater was sufficient.<sup>58</sup> Olive

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<sup>56</sup> Schick was one of the most important researchers of nineteenth-century Jerusalem; see Goren, *Zieht hin*, 273–92.

<sup>57</sup> For how the population of the mutassariflik of Jerusalem was divided between the sancaks of Jerusalem and Gaza, see Ben-Arieh, "Sancak of Gaza," 28. The population figures listed there are: sancak of Jerusalem: 100,464 (as above); sancak of Gaza: 96,196. See also below, note 72.

<sup>58</sup> On this matter, see the sub-section above on Shechem (Nablus) with reference to the article by Macalister and Masterman.

groves and fruit gardens are noted in the mountain settlements, and nearby, in the Hebron hills, vineyards were prominent.<sup>59</sup>

The second condition necessary for the existence of these settlements was defense and security. For many years there was no powerful central government that could wield its authority over the inhabitants. Violence between groups and tribes in the population living in various areas was a common event. Bedouin tribes also roamed the land and terrorized the local residents. Thus, the permanent settlers withdrew and barricaded themselves in high or concealed places to which access was difficult and which could be defended relatively easily. The built-up areas of these villages were usually compact compounds. The exterior houses served as a sort of defense line for the interior houses. Ruins of walls and defense towers were found in a small number of villages. There was usually an earlier principal structure in the center of the village; in some settlements these were forts and strongholds that were the first nucleus of the village and led to its later development, or were built later for defense purposes. What stood out in other villages were khans, mosque minarets, and sacred gravesites. At times the intermediate-sized and large villages were divided into a number of units that were home to homogeneous groups, usually extended families (clans). Each unit had a sheik, its own leader. In the smaller and more distant settlements were many caves which constituted part of the inhabitants' residential and storage areas. In villages located in the warmer areas, open huts were built on the roofs of the houses to serve as living and sleeping quarters during the hot season.<sup>60</sup>

The final topic I shall discuss here is the continuity or decline of Muslim and Christian settlements in the sancak. A comparison of the names of 155 permanent rural settlements in the nineteenth century with the names of such settlements in the series of Ottoman censuses of the sancak in the sixteenth century leads to two important and fascinating conclusions. The first is that there was a continuum between the two periods; almost all the nineteenth-century settlements appear in at least one of the census lists from the sixteenth century. Secondly, another tendency stands out: the decrease in the total number of villages. The explanation for these two tendencies seems clear: the 155 settlements of the sancak of Jerusalem were usually located on the sites of ancient historical settlements. Geographical conditions dictated the location and encouraged continuity on the same site. Since a more powerful Ottoman government ruled the country in the sixteenth century, the population was even somewhat larger than it was in the nineteenth century when

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<sup>59</sup> Yehuda Karmon, "Vinculture in Hebron," in *Selected Articles on the Geography of Eretz Israel* (Jerusalem: Ariel, 1985), 88–94 (Hebrew).

<sup>60</sup> Nineteenth-century travel literature is replete with descriptions of these villages; see Ben-Arieh, "Sancak of Jerusalem"; id. and Golan, "Sancak of Shechem."

Ottoman rule was weaker and less stable. The smaller settlements of the sixteenth century were already abandoned in the nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup>

The two phenomena of continuity, on the one hand, and relative decline, on the other, when comparing the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries is also evident in the list of Arab-Christian settlements in the area of the Jerusalem sancak. Two such major concentrations of settlements can be discerned. The first, in the south, is around Bethlehem, and the second, in the north, around Ramallah. All are inhabited by Christian minorities in a total of a dozen settlements. In contrast, there were about seventeen Christian villages in the sixteenth century. The main change was in the south where, until the seventeenth century, there occurred a contraction of the settlement pattern stemming from the lack of a strong central government that could withstand the waves of nomadic tribes pouring forth from the desert. Nor could it deal successfully with the challenge of the desert itself. Thus, the non-nomadic residents of the area retreated towards the interior, inhabitable, mountainous areas.<sup>62</sup>

### The sancak of Gaza

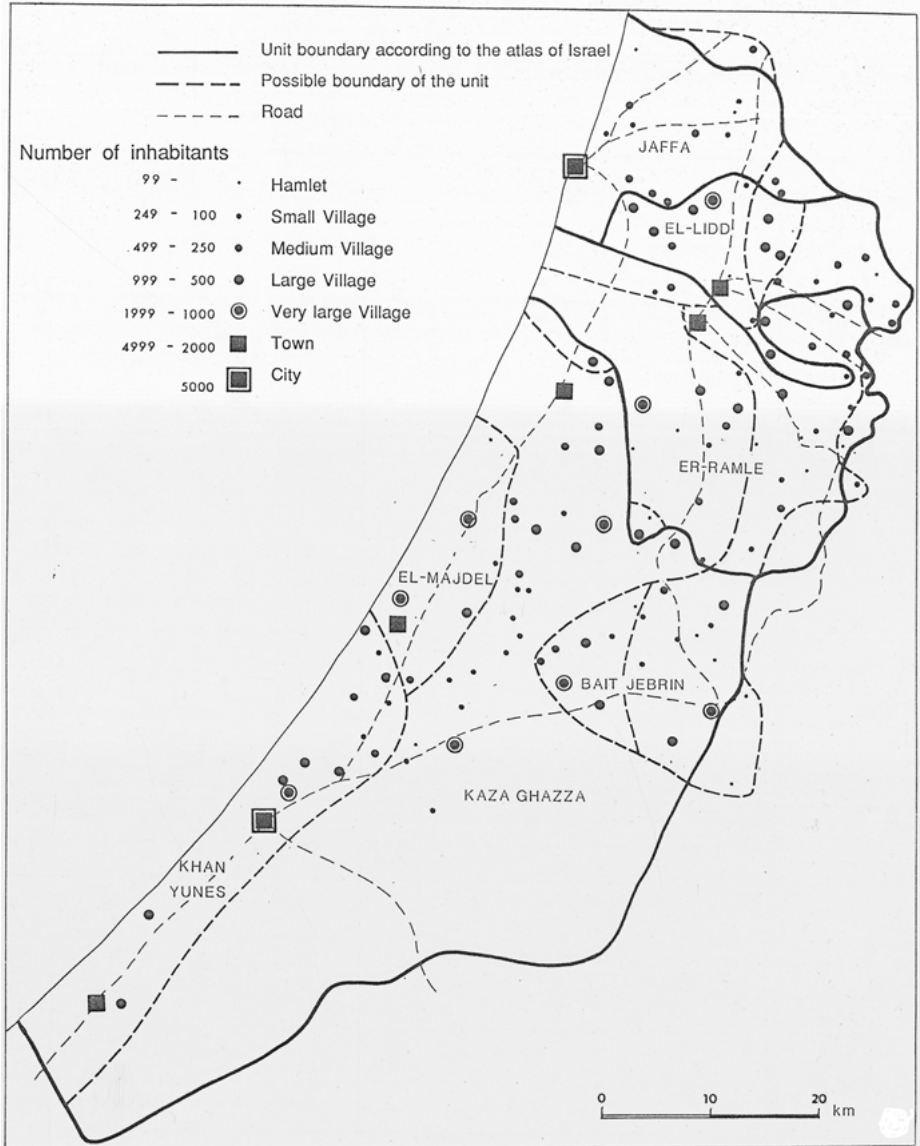
As noted above, at the end of the 1870s the sancaks of Jerusalem and Gaza were united into one mutasarriflik. The sources I noted above for the sancak of Jerusalem also served me in studying the sancak of Gaza. The latter was divided into two main sub-units: the kaza of Jaffa in the north and the kaza of Gaza in the south (see Map 19). Undoubtedly, the expansion and development of Jerusalem and Jaffa, including Jaffa port, are the reasons for the combination of the two sancaks into one larger province. The kaza of Jaffa was divided into three smaller units, the nahiyehs of Ramle, Lydda, and Jaffa. I discussed these cities above in the analysis of the development of the Holy Land cities in the nineteenth century. In what follows I shall limit myself to the rural settlements.

One should differentiate between the impressive development of the city of Jaffa in contrast with the rural area around it. Agriculture was the main source of livelihood of all the inhabitants of the region in the first half of the nineteenth

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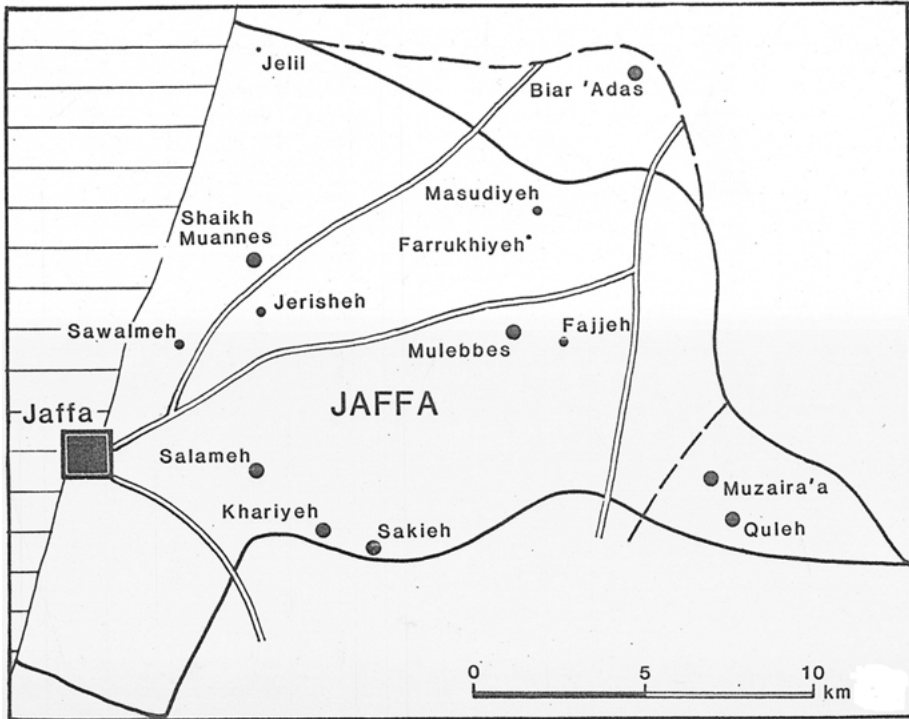
<sup>61</sup> For a comparison between the villages of this area in the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, see the tables in Ben-Arieh, "Sancak of Jerusalem," with references to Wolf D. Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan, and Southern Syria in the Late Sixteenth Century* (Erlangen: Palm & Enke, 1977). Similar results arise from such a comparison for the next section, which deals with another sub-unit of the sancak of Jerusalem.

<sup>62</sup> On the phenomenon of decrease and contraction together with the decline in the Christian population of Palestine from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, see Ben-Arieh, "Sancak of Gaza," 34–36 and in the concluding section of this chapter.



Map 19: Sancak of Gaza.

century. There was a rural nahiye surrounding the city marked by agricultural plots, fruit orchards (including oranges), vegetable crops, watermelons, and other agricultural produce. The Jaffa nahiye included eleven to twelve villages until the latter part of the 1860s (see Map 20). A change occurred in the 1870s when a large part of the nahiye of Lydda (including the city itself), as well as the majority of the



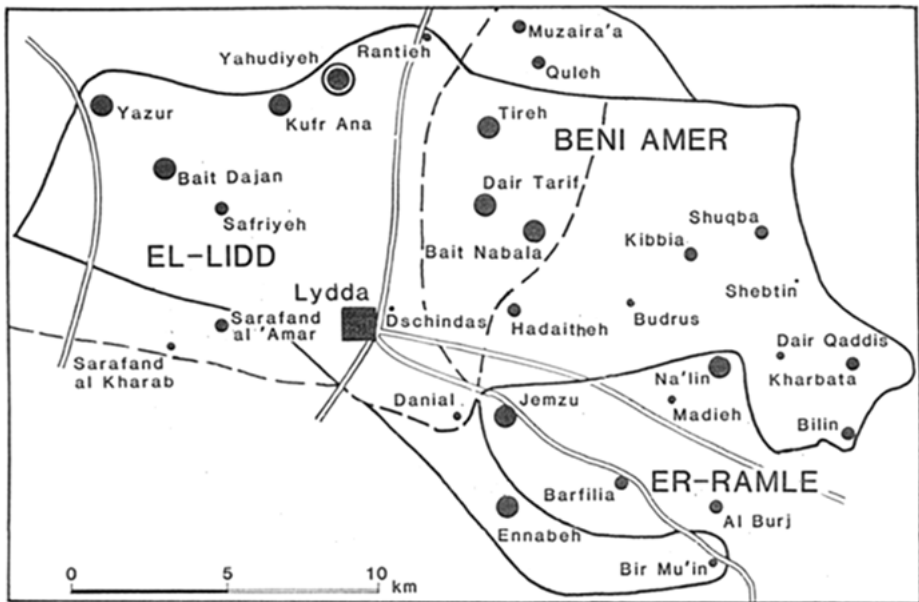
Number of inhabitants

99 -	• Hamlet	—— Unit boundary according to the atlas of Israel
249 - 100	• Small Village	- - - Possible boundary of the unit
499 - 250	● Medium Village	== Road
999 - 500	● Large Village	
1999 - 1000	⊙ Very large Village	
4999 - 2000	■ Town	
+ 5000	■ City	

Map 20: Nahiye of Jaffa.

nahiye of Ramle in the flatlands to the south, were combined with the nahiye of Jaffa and became a kaza. A series of Arab *sakanats* (neighborhoods) developed around Jaffa. The speedy growth of Jaffa in the second half of the nineteenth century brought about changes and an increase in the rural population as well.<sup>63</sup>

The larger administrative unit of Jaffa included two other nahiyehs: Lydda and Ramle. The nahiye of Lydda can be further divided: the western part, on flatlands, which included eight to nine settlements including Lydda itself (this part was added to the kaza of Jaffa in the 1870s), and the hilly area encompassing ten settlements (see Map 21). The town of Lydda was a center for the rural settlements in its environs. The Friday market was renowned for its merchants who came with their merchandise from throughout the area of the coast plain. A special livestock market was held on Mondays. The livelihood of the residents depended on agriculture in the vicinity of the town: olive groves, vineyards, and field crops such as wheat, barley, sorghum, and vegetables. Some of them had herds of cattle and sheep which grazed around the city. Among the small industries were olive presses for



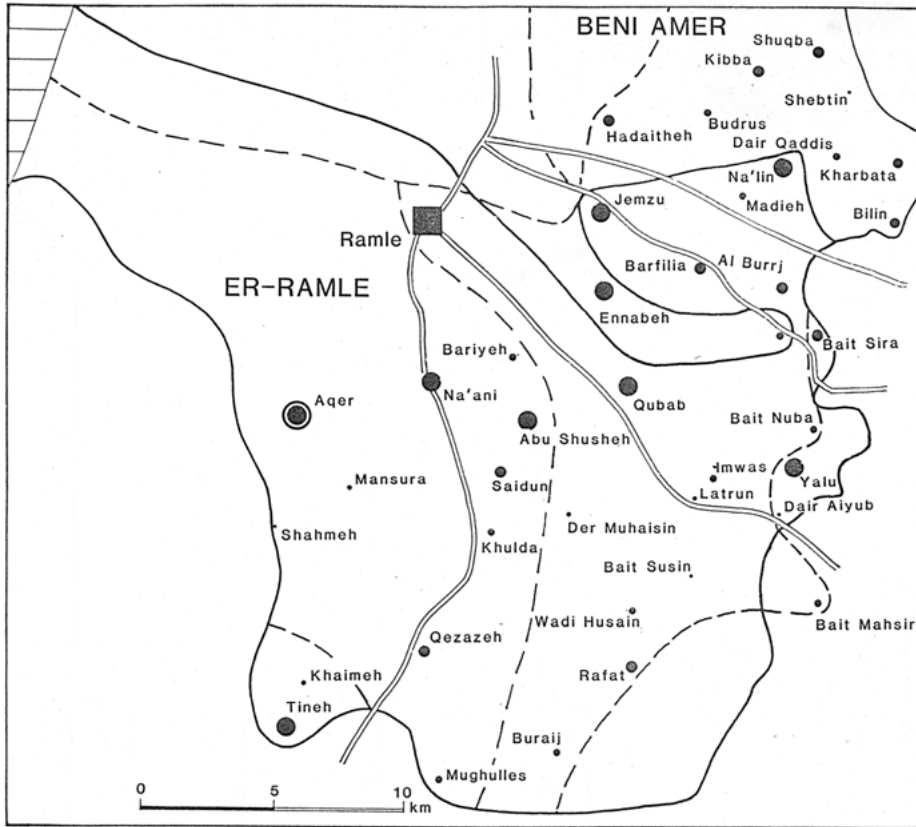
Map 21: Nahiye of Lydda.

<sup>63</sup> For details of the sancak of Gaza, see the tables in Ben-Arieh, "Sancak of Gaza." On the *sakanats* (residential neighborhoods) around Jaffa, see *ibid.*, 4–5; the table of the *sakanats* is based on Socin's listing for 1870. See also the maps of this sancak in the present chapter.



manufacturing oil, the production of soap, the processing of tobacco for consumption, and weaving of straw mats.<sup>64</sup>

The Ramle nahiye can also be divided into two distinct parts: the hilly mountainous area in the east and the plains and low hills in the southwest (see Map 22). The PEF surveys of the 1870s ascribe most of the settlements of this unit to the kaza of Jaffa. In contrast, the kaza of Ramle extends over the hilly areas of the eastern parts of the nahiyes of Lydda and Ramle. This kaza, too, was partially subject to the *kaimakam* in Jaffa. A *wakil* was seated in Ramle, subordinate to the *kaimakam* in Jaffa, who in turn was subordinate to the Jerusalem mutasarrif.<sup>65</sup>



Map 22: Nahiye of Ramle.

<sup>64</sup> On Lydda, see also above in the discussion of the cities.

<sup>65</sup> For the titles of the governors according to the administrative units, see note 7 above. *Wakil* is apparently another term for *mudir*.

Ramle, like Lydda was a center for the settlements of the area and a rest station for the caravans traveling from the south northwards, from Egypt to Damascus and other areas in Syria, but mostly it functioned as a stop on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem.<sup>66</sup>

The nahiye of Bait Jebrin was located south of Ramle. It too was ascribed as part of the kaza of Jaffa at times, but most of the time was part of the kaza of Gaza. The most important settlement in the nahiye was the village of Bait Jebrin itself. It had spread out over the northern slope of a hill and was divided into two parts in the nineteenth century: an upper quarter atop the hill to the south, and a lower quarter on the slope and valley in the northwest. The sheik's well-built two-story house was the prominent structure in the upper quarter. The rest of the village houses were for the most part wretched and badly constructed. Ancient ruins, destroyed buildings, graves, and fruit orchards surrounded the village. The ruins of a fortress, an impressive building with arches and vaults, were visible in the northern section of the village. The houses near the fortress were large and sound and belonged to the family of the sheik whose clan ruled the area for hundreds of years. Around the village were many wells and caves, and many herds belonging to the villagers grazed there. A carpet weaving industry was reported at the end of the century, made on simple looms standing on the rooftops of the houses.

The term "kaza of Gaza" meant a number of things in the nineteenth century. At times it served as an administrative term for the entire southern region of the Gaza sancak exclusive of Jaffa, Lydda, and Ramle.<sup>67</sup> At other times additional nahiyehs were included such as Bait Jebrin, which in other periods belonged to the kaza of Hebron. In some instances the narrow strip of the coastal plain was divided between two other nahiyehs, El-Majdel (Asqalon) in the north and Khan Yunes in the south, nahiyehs which apparently had a more independent status (see Maps 23 and 24). The remaining area north of Majdel was an inland region unconnected to the sea and it remained in the kaza of Gaza.<sup>68</sup>

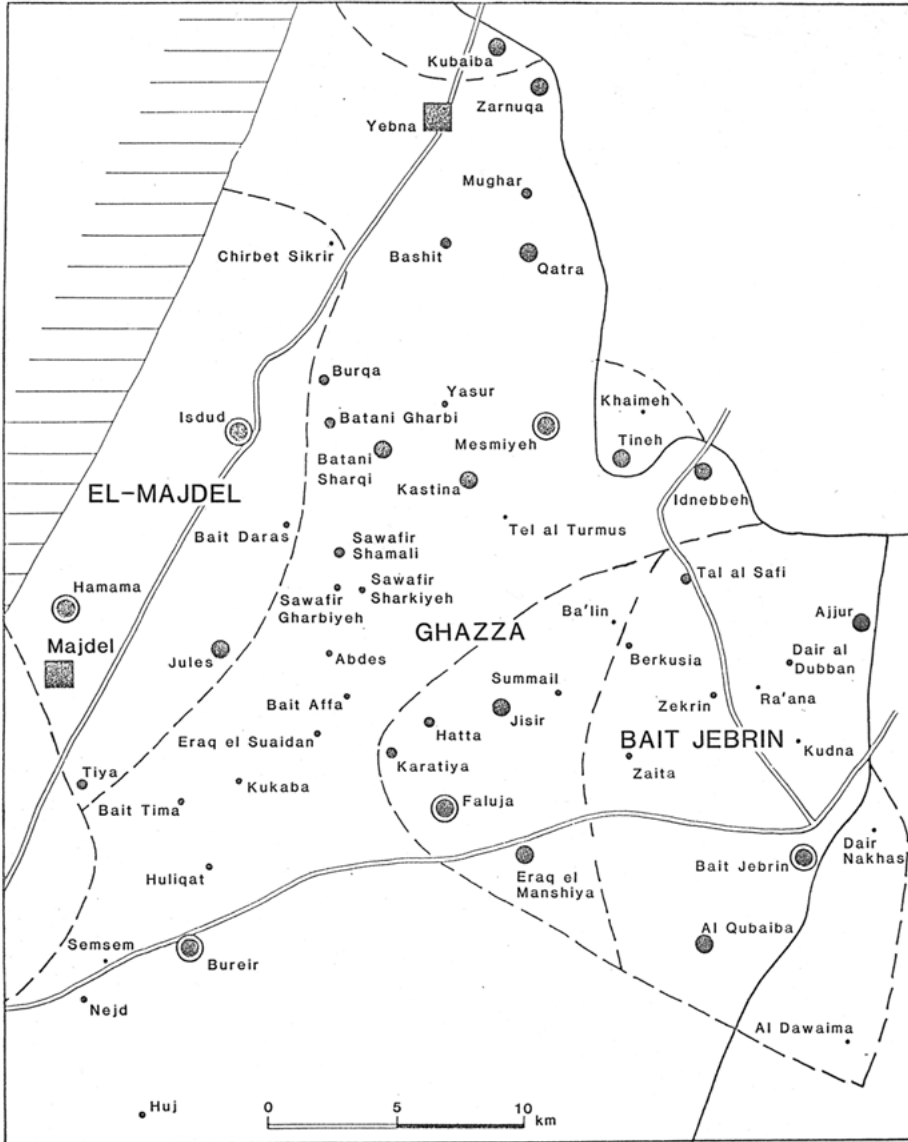
There were thirty-five villages in the kaza of Gaza (excluding Majdel and Khan Yunes) spread out between Majdel and Bait Jebrin in the area from the Elah Valley in the north to the last of the permanent settlements in the south. The largest of these was Faluja (west of present-day Kiryat Gat), surrounded by many fields. Apparently,

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**66** On Ramle, see above in the discussion of the cities. In time Ramle became an important way station on the road to Jerusalem. The first carriage road from Jaffa to Jerusalem was laid out in 1869, and travelers made a stop at Ramle.

**67** The nahiyehs of Jaffa, Ramle, and Lydda were part of the sancak of Gaza until a relatively late period. From this we learn that Gaza was still an important city and about the rural settlements, which were less dependent on the fact that Jaffa was the port for Jerusalem.

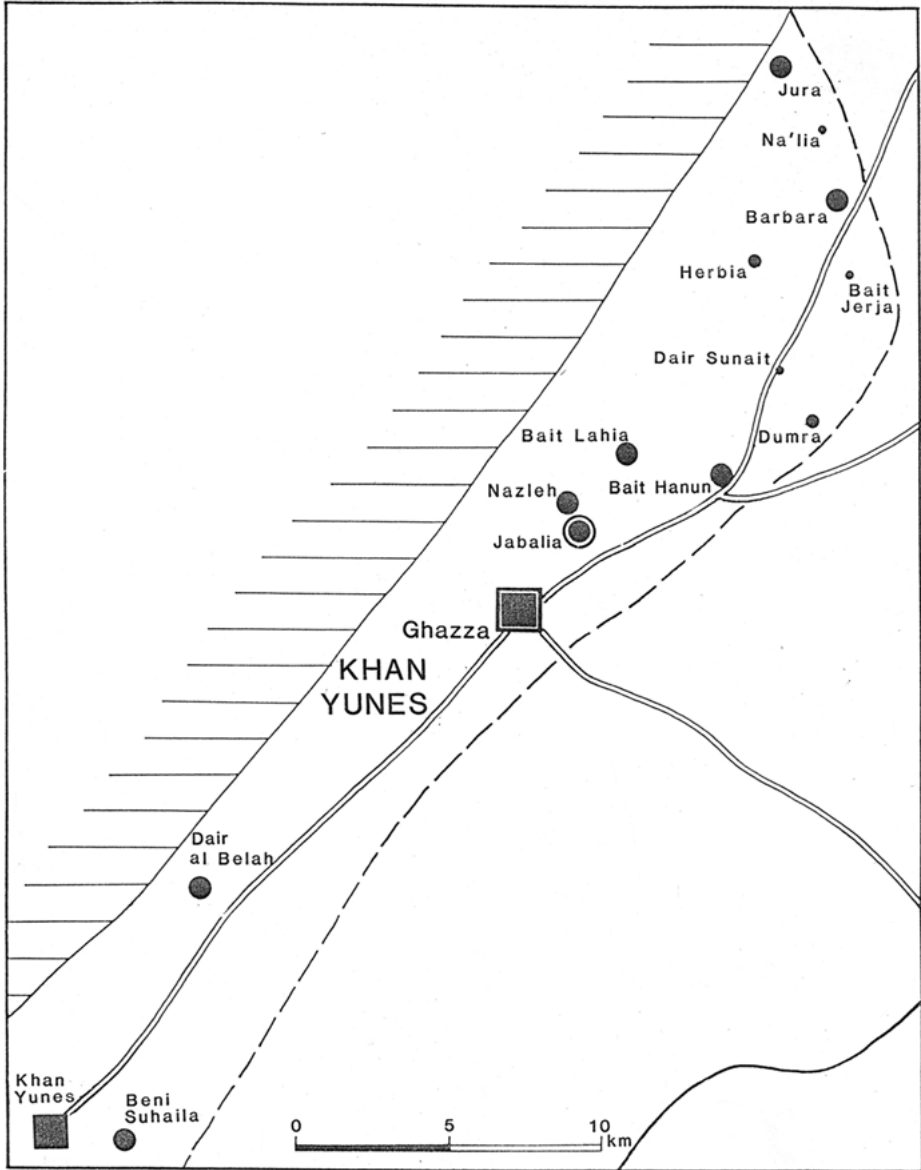
**68** While the Gaza administrative unit had the status of a sancak, at times it was also termed a kaza, a second-level unit. In the 1870s apparently both terms were at times applied to Gaza.



Map 23: Nahiyes of El-Majdel and Bait Jebrin.

the area underwent considerable development at the end of the nineteenth century due to the sedentary settlement of many nomadic Bedouin inhabitants.

Another group of villages was located in the north of the kaza of Gaza. The most prominent among them was Yebna. Many travelers visiting Yebna emphasized the size of the village and noted that it had a number of large houses surrounded



Map 24: Nahiye of Khan Yunes including Gaza.

by yards and small gardens. The remaining houses stood very close together. There were ancient ruins in the village and the remains of a church which later functioned as a mosque. Yebna was located near a main road, on a steep hill surrounded by orchards, wheat fields, and vegetable gardens. It had several wells and pools for

collecting rainwater. Many of the village houses, like other Arab houses on the coastal plains, were built of sundried clay bricks. A number of the villages such as Zarnuqa, Kubaiba and Huj, were built by Egyptian immigrants, and the small village of Qatra by immigrants from Libya.<sup>69</sup>

Apparently, the village of Majdel underwent considerable development during the nineteenth century, mainly its second half, thus bolstering the special status of the nahiye of El-Majdel. The village had a mosque topped by a lighthouse, and there was a graveyard in the western sector. It was surrounded by gardens growing figs, pomegranates, olives, strawberries, and lemons, where there were also some palm trees and sycamores. Numerous deep wells irrigated the gardens, with camels and oxen, provided by the owners in turns, operating the waterwheel (*saqia*). A large pool for storing rainwater was located in the eastern part of the village. Majdel served as a market town and was home to many merchants. A market operated on Fridays abounding in produce, mainly fruit and vegetables. There are also reports of rope production and cotton weaving.<sup>70</sup>

The nahiye of Khan Yunes was located in the southern part of the interior coastal plain. This was a group of villages, some of which were situated on the coastal strip near the sea, from where the permanent settlements continued southwards. The area of the nahiye included the entire southern part of the coastal plain, including the city of Gaza. The nahiye of Khan Yunes can be divided into three sub-units: the section bordering on the nahiye of El-Majdel in the north which began with the village of Jura, situated on the ruins of ancient Asqalon and continued up to the large village of Bait Hanun north of Gaza. The second sub-unit comprised the settlements between Bait Hanun and the city of Gaza, and the third from Gaza southwards to Khan Yunes, which in the nineteenth century was the southernmost permanent settlement throughout the coastal plain.<sup>71</sup>

The population of the sancak of Gaza at the beginning of the 1870s stood at 96,196 persons in 132 permanent settlements.<sup>72</sup> In the next section I shall try to calculate the size of the total population of the Holy Land during the period.

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**69** Migrants from Egypt apparently arrived in the 1830s, during the period of Muhammad 'Ali's rule. We have some information about their migration, especially to Jaffa but also elsewhere. Since the return of Ottoman rule in the 1840s and up to World War I there does not seem to have been a continuation of this migration, and even if there was, it had little effect on the increase in population. One should also be careful of information provided by travelers who tended to record outstanding, not routine, things.

**70** The nahiye of El-Majdel also included Isdud; see Ben-Arieh, "Sancak of Gaza," 21–22 and Map 23.

**71** For the nahiye of Khan Yunes, see *ibid.*, 22–24 and Map 24. The importance of the nahiye and town of Khan Yunes lies in their location along the caravan route to El Arish and Egypt.

**72** For details and a summary, including tables, see *ibid.*, 26–36. For the separate number of residents in the sancak of Gaza as part of the joint mutassariflik of Gaza and Jerusalem, see note 57 above.

## The total urban and rural population of western Palestine in the nineteenth century

### The size of the population in the cities and villages by sancaks

The total population of western Palestine in the 1870s, divided into the four sancaks is as follows: Acre 77,061; Nablus 81,350; Jerusalem 100,464; Gaza 96,196, for a total of 355,071. It is estimated that the population of western Palestine at the beginning of the nineteenth century was around 250,000 persons.<sup>73</sup>

According to estimates, 55,850 persons resided within the thirteen settlements I have defined as cities in 1800, accounting for 22 percent of the total population at the time. In 1880, 125,300 persons resided in these cities, 35 percent of the total population. It follows that the percentage of the urban population in the Holy Land at the time was higher than that in Russia and most east European countries, Sweden, Italy, and the United States. At the same time, it is doubtful whether many of the settlements described in 1800 and 1880 would have been considered cities today. However, it should be taken into account that the cities of Europe, too, were much smaller at the time and many of them had at least a partial rural-agricultural character. Obviously, in a small and poorly populated country such as the Holy Land there were no large cities, least of all any that could be defined as a metropolis. The Holy Land settlements which I have classified as cities had no large-scale industrial centers – not even by Middle Eastern standards – nor a large commercial center exceeding local importance. The distribution of permanent settlements in the 1870s, before the beginning of Jewish settlement, varied from region to region: it was relatively dense in some places and sparse in others, while some were almost empty.

The rural settlements, around 700 in number, were mainly small to medium sized. These included 345 small villages: 88 of which were very small, home to less than 100 inhabitants; 257 small settlements with less than 250 residents; 27 large villages with over 1,000 inhabitants; 9 small towns with over 2,000 residents; and 9 other towns with 5,000 inhabitants or more. In total there were 45 with a population of 1,000 or more persons.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> See Ben-Arieh, “Population of Eretz Israel,” which also includes details on the Jewish community; see also Grossman, *Rural Arab Demography*, 79–102.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, with references to the sources on which the total population is based. See the lecture, Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, “Size and Composition of Eretz Israel-Palestine in the 1870s,” delivered at the colloquium “Palestine 1840–1948: Population and Immigration” conducted at the University of Haifa in June 1986. Unfortunately, the papers were not published but a copy of the preliminary text is in the library of the University of Haifa and in that of Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi in Jerusalem. Most of the information in that lecture appears in my articles noted above.

## Comparison with the sixteenth century, and the distribution of Bedouin tribes

As noted, there were around 700 permanent settlements in the 1870s. A comparison of this list with the list of permanent settlements in the Holy Land during the sixteenth century, according to data published in official Ottoman censuses, reveals that the majority, over 80 percent of the permanent settlements in the nineteenth century, already existed in the sixteenth century. The changes are mainly in the total numbers. The number of villages in the sixteenth century is a little greater than in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the permanent settlements then spread out somewhat more towards the desert, for example, in the Judean Desert, east of Bethlehem, in the southeast Hebron hill region, and elsewhere. It should be noted that the 1870s were not the nadir in the number of permanent settlements since a change had just begun. Sultan Abdülmecid came to power in 1876 and adopted a policy of stabilizing and sedentarizing the Bedouins in permanent settlements in the Holy Land.

The distribution of Bedouin settlements shows that they encircled the interior mountainous area that was occupied by permanent settlements. Their presence was great mainly in the east and south, but also in the coastal plains and the inland valleys, and it is fair to say that they controlled wide areas. During the 1870s the struggle still continued between the cultivated areas and the desert, between the Bedouin tribes and the permanent settlements. Curbing the desert dwellers and turning them into sedentary residents began only towards the end of the nineteenth century. The most prominent example was the establishment of the city of Beersheba, which began in 1900. Until then the whole area was under the control of the Bedouin tribes living in the Negev who were often in conflict with one another, and there were no permanent settlements in the area at all.<sup>75</sup>

## Religious denominations: Christians and Muslim Arabs

### The Greek Orthodox Church and the Greek-Catholic community

The local Christian communities were a small minority in the population of the Holy Land in the nineteenth century. Like the Jews, they were mainly concentrated in a few cities. They numbered 6,500 persons in Jerusalem, 4,600 in Bethlehem, 3,900 in Nazareth, 3,000 in Jaffa, 2,000 in Haifa, and 1,500 in Acre. A few hundred Christians lived in Nablus and Gaza while Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias had virtually no Christian population. The total Christian population in the cities was about

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<sup>75</sup> For short summaries about the Bedouins in other regions of Eretz Israel, see Ben-Arieh, "Population of Eretz Israel"; for the sixteenth century, see note 61 above.



22,000 persons while the remaining 10,000–15,000 Christians lived in rural settlements. The total Christian population accounted for around 10 percent of the population of the Holy Land which stood at 350,000. The rural Christian population resided in around fifty villages, less than 10 percent of the 700 villages in the country. In terms of dispersion, very few Christians inhabited the sancaks of Gaza and Nablus. In the sancak of Jerusalem they resided in villages around Ramallah and Bethlehem, and in the sancak of Acre around Nazareth and the central regions of Lower and Upper Galilee, which was their major place of concentration. The Christians spoke Arabic, and apart from religion-related customs their lifestyle was similar to that of the Muslims. During the nineteenth century they were at times subject to legal limitations like those imposed on the Jews.<sup>76</sup>

Most local Christians belonged to the Greek Orthodox church whose center was in Istanbul, the seat of the patriarch and the synod. There was a decline in the influence of the Church among local Christians in the nineteenth century. All Greek Orthodox institutions were operated by Greek monks who prevented the penetration of Arabs into their ranks except at the lowest levels and solely in distant places. In the middle of the nineteenth century, following the establishment of the Roman Catholic Patriarchate and the Protestant diocese in Jerusalem, the Greek Patriarch decided to leave Istanbul and once again make Jerusalem his seat. The leading representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, maintained and managed all Church matters. The Brotherhood owned numerous properties in Jerusalem, elsewhere throughout the Holy Land, and abroad. These generated much income and its leadership could use profuse amounts of money to keep community members from leaving the Church since Catholic and Protestant missionary activities were often directed at this community's members. The Church provided food for the poor, often also clothes, other objects, and even housing at times, and mainly paid the community members' government taxes. Russia stood behind the Greek Orthodox Church and was also very active in local building projects.<sup>77</sup>

The Greek Catholic Church, also known as the Melkite Church, was established after the breach in the Greek Orthodox Church in northern Syria in 1700. Part of the community seceded and reorganized in a Church of their own, signing a communion agreement (uniate) with the Catholic Church. They recognized the supreme authority of the Pope, but maintained their independence regarding language, content of prayers, and customs – including marriage of clergy and organization of

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<sup>76</sup> On the Ottoman authorities, the Western powers, and the non-Muslim population, see Kushner, "Last Generation of Ottoman Rule," 45–51.

<sup>77</sup> For the Greek Orthodox Church, see Colbi, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 77–81; on Russian activity see ch. 2, n. 91. For the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem, see Yisca Harani, "Christian Sects: The Eastern Churches," in *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period (1800–1917)*, ed. Israel Bartal and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 147–63, esp. 147–54 (Hebrew).

the Church. As opposed to the Greek Orthodox Church, all of whose functionaries were Greek, the Greek Catholic Church was an all-Arab church. It began activity in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century and there were a number of villages in the Galilee whose inhabitants were members of this denomination.<sup>78</sup>

### The Roman Catholic Church and the Armenians

The Latin (Roman Catholic) Church arrived in the Holy Land with the Crusaders. It lost much of its power in the Holy Land following the expulsion of the Crusaders, but after the Ottoman conquest and the political and economic agreements signed with France in the days of François I and Sultan Suleiman “the Lawgiver,” it regained its influence. Until 1847, the Franciscan monks of the Custodia Terrae Sanctae, centered in Jerusalem, looked after Catholic interests in the Holy Land and the holy sites visited by pilgrims. The Catholic Church spent copious amounts of money to maintain religious representations in the country and to convert local residents, mainly Greek Orthodox, to the Catholic faith. Most of the Catholic income in the Holy Land came from collections organized in Europe. In 1847 the Roman Catholic Patriarchate was re-established in Jerusalem, and various Catholic orders arrived over the course of the nineteenth century including the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Sisters of Zion, Dominicans, Benedictines, Lazarists, and Cistercians (Trappists). The Catholic Church and its various orders were very active in the nineteenth century, mainly since the 1840s, establishing many educational institutions, among them vocational schools, in the cities and rural areas. It built many hostels for pilgrims and established medical services, hospitals, and charity and welfare institutions. The Arab Catholic communities were small, but they were aided by the European orders and monks, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, and gained in strength.<sup>79</sup>

In the nineteenth century, most Armenians lived within the territory of the Ottoman Empire and were its subjects. In the Holy Land they concentrated mainly in Jerusalem, constituting the third largest Christian community in the city with their own quarter and status in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Armenian Apostolic Church had other strongholds in Jaffa and Bethlehem. Some Armenians seceded from the Armenian Church and entered into a special agreement with the Catholic Church, forming the Armenian Catholic Church (also known as the Armenian Uniate Church) which also had representatives in the Holy Land, mainly in Jerusalem.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> For the Greek Catholic Church, see Colbi, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 98–100.

<sup>79</sup> For the Latin (Roman Catholic) Church, see *ibid.*, 94–97.

<sup>80</sup> On the Armenians, see Kevork Hintlian, *History of the Armenians in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1976). For the Armenian Apostolic Church in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century, the Armenian Quarter, and its community, see Harani, “Christian Sects,” 154–59. See also note 14 above.

### Copts, Ethiopians, and Syrians

Every Christian Church and denomination believed it was its duty and obligation to maintain monks and clergy in Jerusalem and receive “rights” in the holy sites. There were members of three such denominations in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century: Copts, Ethiopians, and Syrians. They had footholds in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and maintained other churches and residences in the city. They were few, but added their own touch to the multifaceted character of Jerusalem, and to some degree also to the Holy Land landscape, since they established themselves in other locations as well. The Copts had an important stronghold in Nazareth and Jaffa. The Maronites, too, returned to Jerusalem in the nineteenth century while some also lived in a number of villages in the Galilee.<sup>81</sup>

### Protestants

Protestants appeared on the scene in the Levant as missionaries only at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They arrived mainly from three countries: the United States, England, and Prussia. The Americans staked out their territory in Lebanon and left the Holy Land to the Anglican and Lutheran missions. In order to enhance the status of Protestantism, the two great Protestant powers, Britain and Prussia, decided to establish a joint bishopric in Jerusalem which would supervise activity throughout the Near East. Protestant activity by its various denominations in the Holy Land was very pronounced in the nineteenth century and included the establishment of many educational, health, and charitable institutions in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the country. It caused a chain reaction among all the other Christian denominations in Palestine. Protestant missionaries operated throughout the country, especially wherever there was a different Christian population. Within a short period of time, small Protestant communities were established in Jerusalem and in other cities and rural settlements. To this should be added the German Templers who arrived in the Holy Land in the late 1860s and 1870s and began operating throughout the country, even before the new Jewish aliyah. Thus, a Protestant community numbering hundreds of persons was active in the Holy Land in the 1880s. It wielded considerable influence and left its imprint upon the inhabitants and on the landscape of the country.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> For the Copts, Ethiopians, Syrians, and Maronites in Jerusalem, see the index of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, vol. 1. On the Churches of the first three denominations, see Colbi, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 103–8; Harani, “Christian Sects,” 160–62.

<sup>82</sup> For Protestants and their various denominations in the nineteenth century, see Colbi, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 85–94; see also note 13 above.

## Muslims and Druze

If we deduct the 27,000 Jews and 35,000 Christians from the total population of the Holy Land of 350,000, it turns out that the great majority of the country’s inhabitants in the 1870s, around 290,000 persons, were Muslims.<sup>83</sup> The Muslim community was the most homogeneous in terms of its ethnic and religious composition. Most were Sunni Muslims. There were also a few groups of Indian and North African Muslims with their unique characteristics. In addition, there were a few Shi’a Muslims in the Galilee and some members of the Baha’i faith in Haifa and Acre, but the most prominent group was the Druze.

The Druze population concentrated in two areas: in the Carmel Mountains and central Galilee. There were only two Druze villages in the Carmel Mountains: Isfiyah and Daliyat al-Karmel, both medium-sized settlements. In the passage from the Carmel to the Galilee, in the town of Shefa-‘Amr, the Druze accounted for a quarter of the population, around 500 persons. The majority of the Druze lived in the central Galilee where the Druze resided in a bloc of thirteen villages. In some of the villages the entire population was Druze, while in others there was a mixed population of Druze and Muslims or Druze and Christians. The concentration of the Druze in one central bloc is noteworthy. The Druze population in the 1870s totaled a little over 4,000 persons.<sup>84</sup>

## Summary: “A Land without a People for a People without a Land”: true or false?

What emerges from the distribution of settlements in the Holy Land in the 1870s makes it possible to answer the main question I posited at the beginning of this chapter: how populated was the Holy Land 140 years ago when the Zionist movement began settling Eretz Israel?

The answer, as stated above, is that at the time the permanent inhabitants of Palestine numbered 350,000 persons in around 700 settlements, and another 20,000–30,000 nomadic Bedouins. The number of Jews in 1880 was around 27,000. We can sum up and say that the country was by no means empty but can certainly

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<sup>83</sup> On the authorities and the Muslim community in the late Ottoman period, see Kushner, “Last Generation of Ottoman Rule,” 51–56. For many aspects of the Muslim population in Jerusalem, see Mustafa Abbasi, “The Changing Muslim Population of Jerusalem, 1840–1917,” in *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period (1800–1917)*, ed. Israel Bartal and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 127–40 (Hebrew).

<sup>84</sup> For a short survey of the Muslims in the nineteenth century, see Ben-Arieh, “Settlement Landscape,” 115–16. On the Druze, see Salman Falah, “On the History of the Druze Settlements in Palestine during the Ottoman Period,” in *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, ed. Moshe Ma’oz (Jerusalem: Magnes Press; Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1975), 31–48.

be defined as a sparsely populated land, and even more so at the beginning of the century. The estimated total population then was about 250,000 and the number of Jews was even smaller: 7,000 lived in the four holy cities – 2,250 in Jerusalem, 2,500 in Safed, 1,250 in Tiberias, 500 in Hebron and the rest in Acre and in a number of villages in Galilee: Peki'in, Shefa-'Amr, and others.

It is important to emphasize that within this sparsely populated land, many areas were almost empty of people, while the inhabited areas were dotted with many small wretched settlements, limited in area. The number of large developed settlements was very small, creating an image of a land that was sparsely populated.

The image of an empty and neglected land was further underlined by the backwardness of its agriculture, commerce, craftsmanship, transportation, and other economic fields. These were of a traditional, backward, and stagnant character. The country began changing in the nineteenth century. The wheels of change and modernization began turning in the 1830s and 1840s, at first slowly, but the pace grew from one decade to the next. Apparently, the lowest point in terms of population and economics was at the beginning of the nineteenth century and perhaps also in the preceding seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The country was in the process of change in the 1870s, and when the first Jewish pioneers arrived in 1882 they already found the land on the threshold of transformation.

The saying “A land without a people for a people without a land” is a famous expression regarding the emptiness of the Holy Land that was widespread before the beginning of Zionist settlement. It was attributed to Anglo-Jewish author Israel Zangwill who joined Theodor Herzl in his initial phase as leader of political Zionism. Later Zangwill established the “Jewish Territorial Organization” which supported the establishment of a Jewish state in any territory where that was possible, and not necessarily in Eretz Israel.<sup>85</sup>

However, it seems that contrary to popular belief, this saying was borrowed from previous personages who voiced similar views, among them Lord Shaftesbury, who as early as the 1840s stated that upon the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the Jewish people should be returned to the land of their forefathers. Shaftesbury drew the idea from the Christian millenarist movement which gained popularity in the nineteenth century and believed that the return of the Jews to the Holy Land would hasten the second coming of the Christian messiah at the start of the approaching millennium.<sup>86</sup> In addition to Shaftesbury, there were other persons, mostly Christians with millenarist inclinations, who voiced this saying in one formulation or another to lend force to the stance they adopted relating to the

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**85** Much has been written about this initiative, which came about in response to Herzl's Uganda Proposal. This issue is outside the scope of the present book; I only discuss the saying attributed to Zangwill.

**86** I have dealt with Lord Shaftesbury in Chapter One, in the discussion of the Damascus Affair and in nn. 94–97.

Christian belief in the future restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land.<sup>87</sup> It should be noted that there are many authors to this very day, especially those who support the Arab side in today's conflict and hold anti-Zionist views, who maintain that this saying reflects the position adopted by the Zionist movement. They single it out as an example of how the Jews shut their eyes to the presence of an Arab population in the country, as opposed to the growing Zionist Yishuv in the country, and prevented the Arabs from establishing a state of their own. Some even go so far as to relate this saying to the period of the Balfour Declaration and later, even to the entire duration of the British Mandate.<sup>88</sup> Finally, it matters little who said it, but it is clear it was not voiced by members of the Zionist movement with reference to the Jews' aspiration to return to their ancient homeland.

It should also be borne in mind that in Israeli Jewish society there are organizations and individuals who claim that the Holy Land was, to a great extent an unpopulated country.<sup>89</sup> They also maintain that the increase in the Arab population in the country was primarily a result of its development by the Zionist movement, which created a wave of Arab immigration from neighboring countries.<sup>90</sup> Both these assumptions are mistaken. As shown in this chapter, statistics of the Arab population living in the country when Zionist aliyah began refute the first assumption. With regards to the issue of immigration from neighboring countries, demographic studies throughout the world teach us that population growth often took place during historical periods when the mortality rate decreased in many countries due to the penetration of medical efforts and means, while the birth rate remained

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**87** A very detailed article lists in chronological order, from Shaftesbury to the Balfour Declaration, authors and personages who repeated this saying. See Diana Muir, "A Land without a People for a People without a Land," *Middle East Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 55–62. The majority were Christian travelers to Palestine who held millenarist views. Her article and bibliography include references to many other articles on this subject.

**88** The major error of the authors is that they adopt a phrase voiced by a certain school of thought and in a specific period – the nineteenth century – and apply it to other times and completely different conditions in the period under discussion. Krämer makes the same mistake when she discusses this saying in the chapter devoted to the British Mandate period; see Gudrun Krämer, *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 164–70.

**89** Many who hold this opinion base themselves on the descriptions by Mark Twain, who toured Palestine in 1867. Nineteenth-century travel literature is replete with many more such descriptions, as I have shown in Chapter Two. However, the authors did not differentiate between an undeveloped and backward land, as I have demonstrated above, and an unpopulated country.

**90** One such example, written by a journalist, is Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab–Jewish Conflict over Palestine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984). Its publication aroused much controversy due to her claim to have discovered new facts, but her insights are faulty because she based her study on inapt sources which she then interpreted incorrectly. The book received highly critical academic reviews.

high, which in turn brought about a quick rate of population growth. The process of growth ceased or decreased when the birth rate decreased. This “demographic revolution” also occurred in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East, and continues to this day in some parts of it. Arab immigration from neighboring countries was relatively small during the period discussed in this chapter. In any case it was not the cause of the increase in the local Arab population.<sup>91</sup> This does not in any way diminish from the important Zionist effort to cultivate the many arid and unsettled areas of Eretz Israel.<sup>92</sup>

With regard to the question I raised at the beginning of the chapter, whether the Holy Land was empty or inhabited, my answer is *both empty and inhabited*. As I discuss Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel in the following chapters, I shall demonstrate that initially, it usually entered the areas unpopulated by Arabs, such as the coastal plain, the Upper Galilee valleys, the Jordan Valley, the Jezreel Valley, and more. Arabs inhabited many villages in the mountainous areas, in Galilee, Samaria, Judea, and also some areas of the coastal plain, subsisting on an underdeveloped agricultural economy. In later chapters, I shall discuss at length how Jewish settlement penetrated the empty and unsettled areas of the country side by side with the increase in Arab settlements in the mountainous areas.

In relation to the Zionist movement, it is important to remember that during the nineteenth century the Holy Land *was not in itself a politically independent geographical unit*, but part of the Ottoman Empire. In the 1870s it was very far from having any independent political standing whatsoever. The Zionist movement and the Jewish settlers in the Holy Land were aware of the many Arab settlements described above, but they did not view them as a separate nation, and hoped and aspired that room would be found for the Jewish people within the great Arab expanse in the Ottoman Empire.

It was only the Jewish settlers and the Zionist movement, after they started operating in the area, that began to call for a special independent status for the region. Following World War I this demand brought about the creation of a separate political entity in the territory of the Holy Land, initially under the British Mandate,

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<sup>91</sup> The most notable migration of Arabs to Palestine was in the 1830s, during the period of Muhammad ‘Ali, with the arrival of Egyptian villagers. Upon the return of Ottoman rule, such immigration was virtually reduced to a low level. Important changes did occur in Palestine during the reign of the last sultan, Abdülhamid II, but they were the result of his special policy, to which I will refer in Chapter Five. During the British Mandate period, developments were entirely different. For migration to the Holy Land, see Grossman, *Rural Arab Demography*, 43–78.

<sup>92</sup> Obviously, one should not underestimate the significance of the wider influence of the Zionist endeavor to turn arid into flowering land in Eretz Israel. This effort also had a positive influence on the Arab population, like in any other country whose residents benefit from its development. However, the increase in the number of Arabs should not be put down solely to this factor.



but with the express recommendation to aid in establishing a Jewish national home in that territory.<sup>93</sup>

I shall return to this issue in later chapters where I discuss the process of Zionist settlement in Eretz Israel. However, at this stage I can already state that the Zionist Jewish settlement of the First Aliyah was the cause of the *real revolution* that began paving the way for the establishment of a Jewish political entity in the Holy Land, although at the time the character, essence, and borders of this entity had not yet been determined.

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<sup>93</sup> The creation of Eretz Israel as a separate political entity will be dealt with in Chapters Seven and Eight.



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## Chapter 4: Nineteenth-century Jewish Jerusalem

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## The Jewish community in Jerusalem at the beginning of the nineteenth century

### The Jewish population of the four holy cities

The Jewish population at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the area designated as western Palestine numbered only 7,000 out of a population estimated at around 250,000 persons. Jews resided mainly in the four holy cities of Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron. There were 2,500 Jews living in Safed, 2,000–2,250 in Jerusalem (of a population of 9,000), 1,000 in Tiberias, and around 500 in Hebron. Individual Jewish families resided in other settlements around the country.<sup>1</sup>

The general population increased to 350,000 by the 1870s. The Jewish population at this stage numbered 18,000, of which 11,000 resided in Jerusalem. A decade later, in 1880, there were 27,000 Jews living in the country, 17,000 of them in Jerusalem. The Jewish population grew by 20,000 persons during the first eighty years of the nineteenth century, 15,000 of them in Jerusalem alone. This increase stemmed mostly from the aliyah of religious Jews who began arriving in the country.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1880 and 1914, the outbreak of World War I, due to Jewish immigration to the city, natural reproduction, and improvement of sanitation and health conditions, the Jewish population of Jerusalem continued to grow. On the eve of World War I, Jerusalem's Jews numbered 45,000 persons out of a general population of 70,000, i.e. two-thirds of the total population. The Jewish community in Jerusalem at the time constituted about 50 percent of the total number of Jews in the country, the highest ratio in the entire modern period. Afterwards, during the Mandate period and later in the State of Israel, the percentage of Jews in Jerusalem out of their total number in Eretz Israel diminished until at present they account for only 10 percent of the total Jewish population.<sup>3</sup>

### The Jewish population of Jerusalem, Sefardim and Ashkenazim, prior to Egyptian rule

Sefardi Jews accounted for the majority of the Jewish community in Jerusalem at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Sefardim began arriving in the country

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<sup>1</sup> For the overall population of Jerusalem, including the Jewish community and its division into Ashkenazim and Sefardim until the establishment of the first neighborhoods outside the walls of the Old City, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:267–79 and the tables on 278–79.

<sup>2</sup> For the total population of the Holy Land and the number of Jews in various cities, see also Chapter Three and the sources cited there.

<sup>3</sup> For the increase in the Jewish population of Jerusalem in these years, and its division between the old and new cities, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:280–96. For a comparison with Jaffa-Tel Aviv, see Chapter Nine and the sources cited there.

from Spain, especially in the wake of the Alhambra Decree expelling Spanish Jews to countries and areas in the Ottoman Empire such as Turkey, the Balkans, and elsewhere. From there they continued to the Holy Land where they joined the Jewish population already residing there who were called *Musta'arabim*. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Jerusalem's Sefardim resided around the complex of four Sefardi synagogues, joined together in one complex and known today as the Yohanan Ben Zakkai Synagogue. Apparently, during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, due to the prohibition on non-Muslims to establish new places of worship, these were the only synagogues with an official status. The Ottoman government at the time acknowledged only Sefardi Jews as representatives of the Jewish people.<sup>4</sup>

The Ashkenazi denomination, later called “the Old Yishuv,” began growing and developing in Jerusalem only at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Members of this community also lived in other cities such as Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron. Their numbers continued to increase over the course of the century, mainly in Jerusalem. A large group of pious hassidic kabbalist Jews arrived in Jerusalem at the beginning of the eighteenth century (1700), under the leadership of Rabbi Judah he-Hasid and established the famous Rabbi Judah he-Hasid Synagogue. As a result of debts to the Muslim residents of Jerusalem, they were forced to abandon it, hence its name “*Hurvav Rabbi Yehudah he-Hasid*” (The Ruins of Rabbi Judah he-Hasid). A group of hassidic Jews returned from Safed to Jerusalem in the second decade of the nineteenth century, led by Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Shklov and Rabbi Abraham Shlomo Zalman Tzoref. Upon their arrival in Jerusalem, the Ashkenazim affiliated themselves with the Sefardi community. They prayed at the same synagogues, buried their dead in the Sefardi cemetery, and their way of life was completely based on the laws and regulations of the Sefardim. They even changed their garb according to Sefardi custom and were indistinguishable as Europeans. It was only after the Ashkenazi community grew that it established a separate framework, and in 1816 founded a synagogue of its own. The Ashkenazim rented the building constructed in the eighteenth century by Hayyim Ben-Attar and named their synagogue “*Or-Hahayyim*.” They also established a number of other small synagogues, yet it is doubtful whether they had any formal status as such. In the second and third decades of the nineteenth century the Jewish community of Jerusalem underwent a recovery of sorts. Jewish sources report the arrival of Ashkenazim, members of the “*Perushim*” denomination and disciples of the Gaon

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<sup>4</sup> A detailed study of the Sefardim in Jerusalem is Nathan Efrati, “The Sefardi Community in Jerusalem, 1840–1917,” in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The Ottoman Period, Part 2*, ed. Israel Kolatt (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2002), 139–230 (Hebrew). See also Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:286–88. The Ashkenazim prayed in the “Middle Synagogue.”

of Vilna. Yet it appears that only a few families and a number of small Jewish groups arrived at the time, and this was not in fact a substantial addition.<sup>5</sup>

### The subsistence of Jerusalem's Jews at the beginning of the nineteenth century

What were the sources of subsistence of the Jews in Jerusalem at the beginning of the nineteenth century? Some made their living from retail trade and crafts, but the majority were dependent on monies arriving from abroad. Until the establishment of the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem, they all lived off the Sefardi funds supported by monies arriving from Turkey, North Africa, and western Europe. Following the establishment of the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem, it apparently received financial support from Shklov, and later from Holy Land support funds in Russia, Lithuania, and Poland, that were coordinated in Vilna. The contributions collected abroad were brought to Jerusalem by *shadarim*, an acronym for *sheluhei de-rabbanan* (rabbinical emissaries) and were divided among the community members living in the city at the time.

The members of the Sefardi community supported themselves by crafts and commerce, and only those engaged in the study of the Torah and the heads of the community lived off monies arriving from abroad. At the beginning of the century the members of the Sefardi community in Jerusalem also maintained a few small synagogues and yeshivas apart from the complex of the four Sefardi synagogues. It should be noted that at the time the term “yeshivah” among Sefardim was not identical to its current meaning. As opposed to the yeshivas of European cities intended to provide wider knowledge of the Torah among youths and children, the Sefardi yeshivas functioned to enable famous rabbinical Torah scholars to engage in study. Since the Sefardi yeshivah had a regular fund intended to support these Torah scholars, its main function was to tender financial aid to the families of the famous Torah scholars. The yeshivas were small and their members few. In the larger yeshivas, such as “Beth El” or “Ferrara,” there were twenty-five members, but the number of learners in the smaller yeshivas was ten or less. The level of financial support differed from one yeshivah to another, based on the amount of funding at their disposal. Often the Torah scholars were affiliated to a number of yeshivas, thus increasing their income. Usually the synagogue beadles courted the famous rabbis in order to enhance the reputation of their yeshivah. During the seventeenth and

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<sup>5</sup> On the Perushim (lit. “seceders”), see below. The common explanation of this name is that they broke away from the Hassidim and opposed them, which is why they were also termed “Mitnagdim.” A more exact explanation is provided by Immanuel Etkes; see Jacob Barnai, *Historiography and Nationalism: Trends in the Research of Palestine and Its Jewish Yishuv (634–1881)* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1995), 160 (Hebrew). For the view that the aliyah of the disciples of Rabbi Elijah (“the Gaon of Vilna”) was motivated by messianic expectations, see Morgenstern, *Hastening Redemption*.



eighteenth centuries, support for the yeshivas came from countries of the Ottoman Empire, mostly from the capital, Istanbul, while in the eighteenth century substantial support also arrived from Italy. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the lead was taken by the countries of North Africa and most of the shadarim were sent there. Beginning in the 1820s, much of the financial support came from western and central European countries through the central organization in Amsterdam called the Pekidim and Amarcalim (Clerks and Officers) of Amsterdam. All in all, the first thirty years of the nineteenth century show the first signs of a new Jewish community in Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

## Development of Jewish Jerusalem during the Egyptian period, 1831–1840

### Changes introduced under Egyptian rule; renovation of synagogues

An important turning point in the status of the Jewish community in the Holy Land and Syria came about in the 1830s when they came under the rule of Muhammad ‘Ali and his stepson Ibrahim Pasha. During this period, Jerusalem was made the administrative capital of the territory west of the Jordan, second only to Damascus, its prestige rising accordingly. Additionally, it is important to note that the Egyptian rulers were more open to change than the previous Ottoman rule. During this period, the Jews of Jerusalem were permitted to renovate and rehabilitate synagogues, which they had been prohibited from doing during the Ottoman period. In addition, they were able to pray more freely near the Western (“Wailing”) Wall without requiring special permission from the authorities. An important development occurred in 1834 when Jews received permission (a firman) to renovate the four Sefardi synagogues that were in dire condition after rainwater seeped in through the weather-beaten roofs. The Jewish community rebuilt the synagogues and added stone roofs topped by domes. Construction was completed in August that same year.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For support from countries of the Ottoman Empire, see Jacob Barnai, *The Jews in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century under the Patronage of the Istanbul Committee of Officials for Palestine* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992). For the sources that provided for the subsistence of the Jewish community in Jerusalem, which in its early stages was primarily Sefardi, the Sefardi *yeshivot*, the “*halukkah*” funds, and the beginning of financial support by the Pekidim and Amarcalim of Amsterdam for the Ashkenazi Community, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:283–84. On this organization, see the indexes in Morgenstern, *Hastening Redemption*; id., *Return to Jerusalem*.

<sup>7</sup> For the renovation of the Sefardi synagogues in 1834, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:298–99 and the sources quoted.

When Jerusalem was ruled by the Egyptian governor Ibrahim Pasha, the first *beit midrash* and synagogue of the Ashkenazi Perushim community was built, the “Menahem Zion” synagogue that was erected in a wing of the Hurvah compound. Since it was inaugurated after the 1837 earthquake it was given the name that translates literally as “Consoler of Zion.” First and foremost among those active in efforts for the return of the Hurvah synagogue to the Ashkenazi community and construction of the synagogue was Rabbi Avraham Shlomo Zalman Tzoref (Salomon). He first obtained a decree from the Jerusalem kadi testifying to the rights of the Ashkenazim in the site of the Hurvah. In order to obtain the permit to build the synagogue, he even travelled to Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

Another leader of the Perushim in Jerusalem at the time, Rabbi Isaiah Bardaki, headed those community members who opposed building the Hurvah and the Menahem Zion synagogue on its site. He maintained that the synagogue should be built elsewhere, and even received the backing of the Lehren brothers from Amsterdam in this matter. The latter purchased another *hatzer* (courtyard) for him where he established the “Sukkat Shalom” *beit midrash*. Thus did the Perushim split into two factions called the “the Hurvah” and the “the Hatzer.” The plan to build a large synagogue on the site of the Hurvah did not bear fruit since in the meantime Egyptian rule came to an end, and only after some time was construction of the large synagogue made possible.<sup>9</sup>

During the 1830s around ten more families, emigrating from Germany and Holland, settled in Jerusalem. They insisted on remaining separate from the Perushim and established an independent “*kollel*” that would care for the members of their community. The main reason was that large sums of money were collected in their countries of origin, and the number of immigrants from these countries was small. By establishing the separate “Kollel HoD” (a contraction of Holland and Deutschland), they hoped to be the recipients of the monies collected in these countries, or at least a substantial part of them.<sup>10</sup>

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**8** About Tzoref, the progenitor of the renowned Salomon family, see Simcha Mandelbaum, “Avraham Shlomo Zalman Tzoref (Salomon): The Man and His Life Work,” in *The Salomons: Three Generations of Pioneers and Leaders*, ed. Israel Bartal and Shimon Shamir (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 2014), 32 (Hebrew).

**9** The first Ashkenazi synagogues in the Old City are described in Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:299–303.

**10** A *kollel* was a group of Jews whose provenance was a certain country or city in the diaspora who settled in the Holy Land and were financially supported by fellow Jews in their city or country of origin. *Kollel HoD* was the first kollel established in Jerusalem. See Mordechai Eliav, *Love of Zion and Men of “Kollel HoD”*: *German Jewry and the Settlement of Eretz Israel in the Nineteenth Century* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University; Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1970) (Hebrew); Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:293–94.

### Growth of the Jewish community and the earthquake of 1837

It is difficult to determine the rate of Jewish population growth in Jerusalem during the Egyptian period. It seems that the period should be divided in two, before and after the 1837 earthquake. Gradual increase began in the 1820s and 1830s, before the earthquake, probably also due to some Jews arriving in the city, among them many of the Kollel HoD members. However, apparently the Jewish population during this period was not yet substantial. As noted, at the beginning of the century there were between 2,000 and 2,250 Jews in the city, and their number increased to about 3,000 until 1836, of which some 500 were Ashkenazim and around 2,500 were Sefardim.<sup>11</sup>

The Jewish communities of Safed and Tiberias were hard hit by the earthquake of 1837, causing a move of survivors to Jerusalem and a turning point in the Jewish population growth in that city, so much so that it led to the prevalent saying that “Jerusalem was built on the ruin of Safed and Tiberias,”<sup>12</sup> It is estimated that around 1,000 to 1,500 survivors arrived in Jerusalem from Safed and Tiberias, so that the number of Jews there increased to about 5,000 in 1840. The earthquake tragedy also affected the composition of Jerusalem’s Jewish community. First and foremost it was responsible for the increase in the number of Perushim, since many of them moved to Jerusalem from Safed and Tiberias. Many hassidic Jews also arrived from those cities. Thus, the years following the earthquake marked the beginning of a hassidic community with the establishment of the Volhyn Hassidic Kollel. During the early stages, this hassidic community continued to receive halukkah monies from the coffers of the Hassidim in Safed and Tiberias.<sup>13</sup>

### Growth of the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem: the Old Yishuv, 1840–1880

#### Renewal of Ottoman rule and changes in the Tanzimat period

The renewal of Ottoman rule in 1840 did not put a stop to the development of the Jewish community in Jerusalem; on the contrary, it brought about its expansion. To a great degree, this growth stemmed from the changes in the political situation in

<sup>11</sup> For the population of Jerusalem to 1870 and its division into communities, see note 1 above.

<sup>12</sup> For how the earthquake of 1837 influenced the Jewish community of Jerusalem, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:268–71 and n. 21 for the popular saying.

<sup>13</sup> An eye-witness report of the earthquake in Safed is Erasmus Scott Calman, *Description of Part of the Scene of the Late Great Earthquake in Syria* (London: J. Darling, 1837). For the difficult situation of the Jewish community in Safed in the nineteenth century, see Menahem Mendel Eilboim, *The Holy Land*, reprint of the 1888 edition, ed. Nurit Arnon (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1982) (Hebrew). See especially the editor’s introduction, appendices, and footnotes.

the country. Its reconquest by the Ottomans was to a great extent made possible by the assistance of European powers, mainly Britain. In return, the Ottomans committed themselves to greater liberalism and in effect continued the liberal policy of the previous Egyptian rule.

The renewed Ottoman administration was very different from the one prior to the invasion of the Holy Land by the Egyptians. The rule of the pashas was not established anew and a centralized government took its place. Jerusalem began to serve as the Ottoman administrative center for the southern Holy Land. In 1839, the Ottoman reforms known as the “Tanzimat” came into effect, including regulations regarding equality for non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. As noted, the status of the foreign consuls had already begun gaining strength during the period of Egyptian rule. It was further consolidated as a result of the new regulations, so much so that they were prepared to receive directions only from their own governments and in effect created a mini-state of their own in the country. This also applied to the foreign consulates in Jerusalem whose status was enhanced during the 1840s. Many of the Jews who arrived in Jerusalem during that period took advantage of the Capitulation Treaty, which had also been renewed, and maintained their foreign citizenship, thus gaining the protection afforded by the status of foreign subjects. The Jews of Jerusalem were thus divided into two types of residents: taxpaying Ottoman subjects (*reaya*), most of them Sefardim, and residents of foreign countries, called “Franks.”<sup>14</sup>

Side by side with the empowerment of the foreign consulates, the importance of the non-Muslim communities began to play a more significant role in the life of the city. The religious attraction of Jerusalem gave rise to missionary activities by groups who engaged in preaching Christianity. They developed educational, medical, and charitable institutions, including schools and clinics. The Jews, too, established similar institutions, with the objective of freeing themselves from dependence on foreign elements and ensuring the physical and spiritual existence of the Jewish community.<sup>15</sup>

### **Growth of the Old Yishuv and its division into various kollels**

The Jewish community in Jerusalem developed at a rapid pace from the beginning of the 1840s, especially the Ashkenazi community which began splitting up into separate sub-groups. I have already mentioned that Kollél HoD was established as early as the period of Egyptian rule. I have also noted that the hasidic community of the Volhyn Kollél, members of the Perushim sect from Safed

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<sup>14</sup> For the improved condition of the Jewish community in the 1840s, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:285–86.

<sup>15</sup> On missionary activity and the Jewish response, see *ibid.*, 1:333–36.

who arrived in the city following the 1837 earthquake, split into the Hurvah and Hatzet factions. The process in which groups broke off from larger kollels reached a peak during the 1850s, so by the mid-1860s the number of kollels was nineteen. Among the first to separate from the Perushim kollel was the “Warsaw Kollel,” established in 1850, which broke away for economic as well as social reasons. Renowned rabbis from Poland also arrived in the city with the increase in aliyah, but were not awarded fitting rabbinical positions. When they complained to their compatriots regarding the actions of the Jerusalem leadership, the decision was taken to break off from the Perushim kollel and establish the Warsaw Kollel whose membership included both Perushim and Hassidim. Many other Perushim kollels were established in Jerusalem during the 1850s and the early 1860s. Among these I will mention the “Grodno Kollel” founded by Russian Poles, and the important “Sons of Ungarn Kollel” established in 1858, also known as the “Guardians of the Walls Kollel,” the “Minsk Kollel” apparently founded in 1856–1857, the “Łomża Kollel” established around 1856–1858, the “Slonim Kollel” established in 1858, and the “Reissin Kollel” apparently founded in the early 1860s. There was also a split into various kollels among the hassidic community. At first, all the Jerusalem Hassidim were part of the Volhyn Kollel led by the Bak family and from which all the hassidic kollels diverged. Another hassidic kollel established in Jerusalem was the “Habad Kollel.” Before arriving in Jerusalem, the Habad hassidim first settled in Hebron in 1821 and founded the first Ashkenazi community in that city. After a few of them moved to Jerusalem in 1856, followed later by many others, their kollel in Jerusalem became one of the important ones in the city. Other hassidic kollels founded in Jerusalem were the “Galicia and Austria Hassidic Kollel” which split off from the Volhyn Kollel around 1853, the “Karlin Kollel” established in 1870, and the “Zhytomyr Kollel” founded in 1872.

The division into separate kollels continued in Jerusalem until after the 1870s. In an attempt to reduce this ever-growing tendency, the “General Board for All Kollels” was established in 1866. The General Board attempted to unite all kollels under one roof, to supervise the needs of the Ashkenazi community and represent it vis-à-vis the authorities. But the unification was not complete. The kollels continued to maintain their independence in many areas such as receipt of halukkah funds, housing construction, and more. There were also kollels that refused to join the General Board, which, however, did function as the representative in relations with the Ottoman administration. In that regard, its role became parallel to that of the Hakham Bashi who headed the Sefardi community and represented it. The establishment of the Ashkenazi General Board and the growth of the Ashkenazi community, which gained semi-independent status towards the end of the 1860s, mark

the development of the Jewish community, which was later also reflected in the process of moving outside the walls of the Old City.<sup>16</sup>

### **Establishment of additional synagogues and yeshivas and of medical institutions**

With the growth of the Jewish community in the Old City and its splitting up into diverse kollels, many public institutions were established, first and foremost diverse synagogues. Their number, magnitude, and splendor were in direct relation to the size and development of the Jewish community in the Old City throughout the nineteenth century. I shall note the most important ones. Mention has already been made of the synagogues of the Ashkenazi Perushim community built in the 1830s under Egyptian rule, the Menahem Zion synagogue in the Hurvah courtyard, and Sukkat Shalom. The Perushim established a second beit midrash in the Hurvah courtyard named “Sha’arei Zion,” also known as “the New Beit Midrash.” In 1854, the leaders of this community unsuccessfully tried to receive a permit from the authorities to build a large synagogue on the Hurvah site. Two years later in 1856, on his fourth journey to the Holy Land, Montefiore passed through Istanbul and received a royal firman permitting the establishment of a large synagogue on the property. Construction continued for a long time. On September 23, 1864 Jerusalem celebrated the inauguration of the synagogue named “Beth Ya’akov” in honor of Baron James de Rothschild. During Montefiore’s sixth visit to the country in 1868, a lavish reception was held for him at the synagogue. Later the Hurvah courtyard became a religious spiritual center and an organizational-communal center for the Old Yishuv in Jerusalem, mainly the Perushim. It housed synagogues, Torah study halls, the “Etz Hayyim” yeshivah, the home of Rabbi Shmuel Salant, a religious court, and public services such as the Hevrah Kadisha burial society, the ritual slaughtering committee, a *mikveh* (ritual bathhouse), and a kollel meeting hall.<sup>17</sup>

The hassidic community also built its own synagogue in the Old City. The success of the Perushim in establishing their magnificent synagogue evoked hassidic envy. They, too, wanted a large synagogue for their community that would be no less splendid than the Beth Ya’akov synagogue. Rabbi Nissan Bak, the devoted public activist of

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**16** On the aliyah of Ashkenazim, see Immanuel Etkes, “On the Motivation for Hasidic Immigration (‘Aliyah’) to the Land of Israel,” *Jewish History* 27 (2013): 337–51. For the numerous kollels established in Jerusalem between 1840 and 1880, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:292–96. On the decline in the status and influence of the Pekidim and Amarcalim of Amsterdam, see Morgenstern, *Return to Jerusalem*, 316–24.

**17** For continued construction of synagogues in the Jewish Quarter, including the Hurvah Synagogue, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:303–6. On the establishment of the Etz Hayyim yeshivah and its fate, see Malachi, *Old Yishuv*, 105–19 and the sources he cites. Malachi was one of the most important researchers of the Old Yishuv. For a collection of his articles on Eretz Israel, see Eliezer Malachi, *View the Land from Afar: Selected Articles on Eretz Israel*, ed. Elchanan Reiner and Haggai Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2001) (Hebrew).

the hassidic Volhyn Kollel, invested great effort in this operation and got to see it through to completion. In 1856 a suitable lot was found. Construction began, but it was only in August 1873 that the “Tiferet Yisrael” synagogue was inaugurated which also bore the name of Nissan Bak. Small synagogues were also founded in addition to the two large ones. I shall note a few: the Habad Synagogue at the southern end of Habad Street, whose first floor was built in 1856 and the second added in 1879; the Rabbi of Kalish synagogue named after Rabbi Meir Auerbach of Kalish who came to the country in 1859. This synagogue was built in 1860 in the southern part of the Jewish Quarter, on the eastern side of the Street of the Jews. The “Warsaw Courtyard” was built next to it, including ten residential units. The Kollel Polin synagogue was founded in 1868 with contributions from Poland, mainly from David Reiss Janover, and built at the north end of the Jewish Quarter, east of the Street of the Jews, while the “Beth Hillel Synagogue” named after Hillel Finkelstein of the Grodno Kollel was built on the top floor of the Habad courtyard on Habad Street. Another synagogue in the same courtyard was the “Ahavat Zion” synagogue of Kollel HoD.<sup>18</sup>

Public health institutions were also established in the Old City. Initially a clinic was established by Dr. Simon Fraenkel, Montefiore’s envoy, who arrived in the city in 1842 and resided there until 1858. The second institution, the “Rothschild Hospital,” was built in 1854, the outcome of Dr. Albert Cohn’s mission on behalf of the Rothschild family. A third establishment built shortly thereafter was the “Bikkur Holim” hospital founded in 1857. These three were the main medical institutions until the exit outside the walls. When the Rothschild Hospital was re-established outside the walls in 1888, the “Misgav Ladakh” hospital replaced it in the Old City.<sup>19</sup>

Welfare institutions, too, were established in the Old City with the financial support of the Rothschild family members and Moses Montefiore. Among these I shall mention a pawnshop for loans, a bread distribution fund for the poor, a poor women’s maternity fund, and other charitable institutions. The various Jewish communities and kollels also established welfare and charity institutions, an Ashkenazi Hevrah Kadisha in 1855, the Bikkur Holim Society to visit the ill, soup kitchens that served hot meals for the elderly who had no families

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**18** On the many synagogues established in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City in the nineteenth century, see in the index of vol. 1 of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*; for a later period, towards the end of the British Mandate, see in the index of id., *The Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem during the Late Mandate Period (1939–1947) until Its Fall: Population, Houses, People* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2015) (Hebrew).

**19** For Albert Cohn and the beginnings of modernization among Jerusalem’s Jews already in 1854–1860, see Morgenstern, *Return to Jerusalem*, 356–71. On the Jewish hospitals established in the Old City, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:336–39. For more details on medical services in Jerusalem, see Norbert Schwake, *Die Entwicklung des Krankenhauswesens der Stadt Jerusalem vom Ende des 18. bis zum Beginn des 19. [i.e. 20.] Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Herzogenrath: Murken-Altrogge, 1983).



and for the poor; first steps were also taken to establish an orphanage and a home for the elderly.<sup>20</sup>

There were no modern institutions of education in Jerusalem until the beginning of the 1850s. Learning was conducted in *hadarim* and in yeshivas, as customary in the diaspora, and only religious studies at that.<sup>21</sup> From the 1860s on, new institutions of education were established in Jerusalem that can be divided into two types: those aimed from the outset to provide vocational training, and others intended to broaden the pupils' education. These schools were the main source of contention within the traditional community. Schools for girls belonged in the vocational training category, since girls did not study in *hadarim* and yeshivas, and a need arose to provide them with suitable instruction in handicrafts, sewing, embroidery, and more. It appears that the first steps to establish Jewish vocational schools in the Old City were taken by Dr. Albert Cohn, the Rothschild family envoy. In the 1850s he unsuccessfully tried to establish a school of crafts in the city. Montefiore, too, tried to develop such an institution in Jerusalem as part of an attempt to establish a weaving workshop in the city and by sending printing presses to Rabbi Israel Bak, one of the hassidic leaders in Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup> Eventually Cohn and Montefiore established two schools for girls, both of which faced many difficulties. While the Montefiore School closed in 1857, the Rothschild school continued to operate, and in 1864, upon the death of Evelina de Rothschild, her three brothers decided to take the support of the school upon themselves and named the school after her. This was the first Jewish institution to move outside the walls.<sup>23</sup>

Modern educational facilities began appearing on the scene in the Old City. The first was the Laemel School established in 1856, despite the opposition of the Jerusalem zealots. The institution was opened under Austrian patronage and entrusted to the management of the Sefardi community and the supervision of the "Rishon Lezion," the Sefardi chief rabbi, following a contract signed between Dr. Fraenkel, Montefiore's envoy, and the leaders of the Sefardi community. Eventually the school moved outside the walls and in 1888 it united with a school established as part of the Ashkenazi orphanage, which instigated a fundamental change that in turn led to constant development from that date onwards. Another educational establishment was the "Beit Midrash Doresh Zion" founded in 1866 by the wealthy Parisian benefactor Joseph Blumenthal following three previous visits to the city.

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**20** On charitable and welfare organizations, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:339–40.

**21** *Hadarim* [sing. *heder*] are elementary schools in which young Jewish boys were taught Hebrew and received religious instruction.

**22** For the weaving workshop established by Montefiore, see Malachi, *Old Yishuv*, 140–67.

**23** On vocational and girls' schools, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:340–42.

Three years later, in 1869, a large courtyard was purchased and a building was specially renovated for the school.<sup>24</sup>

The results of the processes undergone by the Ashkenazi community of Jerusalem during the forty years between 1840 and 1880 are a consequence of the impressive growth of this community during those years. In the next stage, the final thirty-five years of Ottoman rule in the city, the Jewish community continued to grow and expand, but the main development now took place in the area outside the walls, as will be described below. Before that I shall discuss developments in the veteran Jerusalem Sefardi community in the nineteenth century, as well as the Oriental Jewish communities that began arriving in Jerusalem.

## Growth of the Sefardi and Oriental Jewish communities in Jerusalem, 1840–1880

### Growth of the Sefardi community and appointment of a Sefardi chief rabbi

Concurrent with the impressive growth of the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century, there was also a substantial increase in the Sefardi community and a change in its composition.<sup>25</sup> As noted, the Jewish community of Jerusalem at the beginning of the nineteenth century numbered around 2,250 persons, all of whom were Sefardim. Most of the families arrived from the Sefardi communities in the Ottoman Empire: Turkey and the Balkan countries – Greece, Bulgaria, and others. The term “Sefardi” usually refers to people from the Ladino-speaking countries, not those of other Jewish Oriental communities who did not speak the language, with the exception of Moroccan Jews who spoke a unique language of their own – Judeo-Arabic. Oriental Jews arrived and settled in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century.

The return of Ottoman rule to Jerusalem in 1840 coincided with the period of the Tanzimat reforms, bringing with it the appointment of official representatives for the non-Muslim communities in the city. It was then that the directive arrived from Istanbul regarding the appointment of a chief rabbi for the Jews of Jerusalem, bearing the title of Hakham Bashi, to represent the city’s Jewish community. A representative of the Hakham Bashi was a member of the *majlis* (the pasha’s council), and a committee of rabbis was sanctioned that could also serve as a court whose

<sup>24</sup> For the establishment of the Laemel School and the Beit Midrash Doresh Zion in the Old City, see *ibid.*, 1:342–45.

<sup>25</sup> For the arrival of Sefardi Jews to Jerusalem soon after the Ottoman conquest in the sixteenth century, see Alisa Meyuhas Ginio, *Between Sepharad and Jerusalem: History, Identity, and Memory of the Sepharadim* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 67–80 and the sources cited there. On the Sefardi community in Jerusalem, with emphasis on the Meyuhas family, see *ibid.*, 116–205. In greater detail, see Efrati, “Sephardi Community in Jerusalem.”

rulings were recognized as binding by the Ottoman authorities. With the increase in the number of foreign subjects in Jerusalem, especially in the Ashkenazi community, the status of the Hakham Bashi declined, since the Ashkenazi Jews were in effect outside his jurisdiction. However, his status as the Rishon Lezion, the only chief rabbi of Jerusalem, continued until the end of the Ottoman period. During the years 1840–1880, the Sefardi community, too, continued to grow. In part this was the result of natural increase in veteran families, and, as stated, due to the improvement in health and nutrition conditions, all these supplemented by additional Sefardi aliyah from the countries of the Ottoman Empire. However, the most significant development that took place in Jerusalem was the arrival of other Oriental Jewish communities.

### **The arrival of Oriental Jews and establishment of Sefardi yeshivas**

Oriental Jews from countries beyond the territory of the Ottoman Empire began arriving in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century. Initially they came from five ethnic groups: Ma'aravim (North African), Gurjim (Georgian), Bukharan, Kurdish, and Persian Jews. At first they arrived in the Old City where they settled down and from which they also set out to build new neighborhoods outside the walls of the Old City. There were also those who came directly to the new neighborhoods. This was the case with the members of the Yemenite community who arrived in the 1880s directly to neighborhoods outside the walls.

Until the middle of the 1850s, the Oriental Jews were part of the Sefardi community in Jerusalem. However, they, too, began aspiring to form kollels of their own for their community members. First to break away from the Sefardi community were the Ma'aravim. Rabbi David Ben-Shimon, the most prominent of the Ma'aravim, came to Eretz Israel in 1854, and many others followed suit. Due to the conflicts that broke out between the community members and the heads of the Sefardi community, they separated and established their own kollel. During Montefiore's visit to the city in 1856 he already mentions this separate kollel. The Ma'aravim also elected a new committee in 1866.<sup>26</sup>

The second group that separated from the Sefardim was the Georgian community. A large number of Jews from Georgia immigrated to Jerusalem in 1863 and set out to organize itself independently, at first only partially and later in all aspects. The third group was the Bukharans, of whose presence and activities in the city there is evidence from as early as 1868. The Kurdish and Persian Jews arrived later.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For the conflict of the North African Jews with the Sefardi leadership, see also Morgenstern, *Return to Jerusalem*, 335–45.

<sup>27</sup> On these five ethnic communities, see the index in both volumes of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*. For Jews originating in Islamic countries in the late Ottoman period, see Nitza Druyvan and Michal Ben-Yaakov, "Jews from Islamic Countries in Jerusalem at the End of the Ottoman Era,"

As a result of the great increase in the Sefardi population of Jerusalem, many additional Sefardi yeshivas were established. The halukkah emissaries abroad attempted to find rich Jews to establish a yeshivah with the aim of becoming one of its scholars. Over time, many yeshivas closed down, usually because the funds were insufficient, but new ones were also established. Dr. Fraenkel, who visited Jerusalem in 1856, termed these yeshivas “charity institutions” and noted that at the time of his visit he found thirty-six such yeshivas, most of which had been founded with funding from Jews abroad. The proceeds from the funds were distributed to Talmud scholars who prayed for the welfare of the donors. Among the Sefardi yeshivas established in the city I shall mention the “Knesset Yehezkel” yeshivah established in 1858. It was established and maintained with the monies donated by the philanthropist Rabbi Shlomo Yehudah, who moved to Jerusalem from Bagdad in 1857 and brought a large fortune and income from the inheritance of his father in Calcutta. After the death of its founder, it merged with the “Hessed El” yeshivah founded in 1860.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the rapid growth of the Sefardi community and the arrival of additional Oriental Jewish communities between 1840 and 1880, the Ashkenazi community apparently began overshadowing the Sefardi population at the time. The total population of Jerusalem in 1870 was 22,000 persons, half of them Jews, of which 5,500 were Sefardim and a similar number of Ashkenazim. In 1880 the total population of the city numbered 31,000 of which 17,000 were Jews; however, the division at this time was 9,000 Ashkenazim and 8,000 Sefardim. During the remaining years of the Ottoman era, from 1880 until the eve of World War I, a substantial growth occurred in the population of Jerusalem, including its Jewish community. The total population at the time had already reached 70,000, of whom 45,000 were Jews – 25,000 Ashkenazim and 20,000 Sefardim. While the growth of the Ashkenazi community stood out, the Sefardim and the other Oriental communities also grew substantially and were subject to important developments.<sup>29</sup>

## Characteristics of the Old Yishuv and the distribution of halukkah funds

As noted, the Ashkenazi community of Jerusalem grew steadily in the late Ottoman period. With time, it came to be called “the Old Yishuv,” in contrast to “the New

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in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The Ottoman Period, Part 2*, ed. Israel Kolatt (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2002), 211–78 (Hebrew).

<sup>28</sup> For the Sefardi yeshivas and the personalities behind their establishment, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:297–99.

<sup>29</sup> For the increase in the Jewish population of Jerusalem in the last period of Ottoman rule (1870–1917), see *ibid.*, 1:280–96. I shall deal with the development of the entire Jewish community in Jerusalem towards the end of Ottoman rule in Chapter Six.

Yishuv” of Zionist immigrants who began arriving in the country with the First Aliyah in 1882. I will focus on developments in Eretz Israel in the wake of the First Aliyah in the next chapter. However, it is important to clarify at this point that the Old Yishuv, which grew steadily from the outset of the nineteenth century, mainly in Jerusalem, was actually also a relatively new element in the city.<sup>30</sup>

In truth, the term “Old Yishuv” is relevant only in relation to “New Yishuv.” Both terms delineate types of Jewish aliyah and settlement in Eretz Israel, the differentiation between them being more sociological than historical. The intention of the New Yishuv was to establish a new Jewish community in the country, based on modern national and economic principles. In contrast, the members of the Old Yishuv sought a fuller religious life in the Holy Land and made absolute devotion to prayer and Torah study their ideal. Although they did not all live by this ideal, all aspired to it in some degree. Their livelihood was mostly based on the support of traditional Jewry in the diaspora, the halukkah funds. We can thus define the Old Yishuv as a society living on outside support, a definition that also holds true regarding the few who worked for a living. The character of this society also influenced those who wished to join the Old Yishuv. Many of them aspired to free themselves from worldly matters before their death and spend their remaining time studying the Torah and praying in the Holy Land, among them many Torah scholars who presided in the rabbinates of different communities, whose powerful religious emotions brought them to immigrate to the Holy Land in their later years.

In sociological terms, due to differences in lifestyle, language, and even religious customs, the Ashkenazim were a separate group living side by side with the Sefardi community, despite the fact that by Ottoman law they, like all Jews, were politically and legally subject to the Sefardi Hakham Bashi. The Ashkenazim struggled for independence and aspired to release themselves from the dominance of the Hakham Bashi and the Sefardi community. Real and imagined feelings of discrimination bred mutual opposition between the two communities. To this were added powerful economic interests, motivating the Ashkenazim to adopt efforts to become independent. This was related to the distribution of support funds arriving from the Jewish diaspora following the increase in the number of Ashkenazim coming to the country and the augmentation of European support alongside the decrease in financial support from Jews in oriental lands. The issue of how the halukkah funds were distributed also repeatedly arose within the Ashkenazi community and had a crucial effect on the community’s leadership structure.

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<sup>30</sup> For the terms “Old Yishuv” and “New Yishuv,” see Israel Bartal, “‘Old Yishuv’ and ‘New Yishuv’: Image and Reality,” *Jerusalem Cathedra* 1 (1981): 215–31; Yehoshua Kaniel, “The Terms ‘Old Yishuv’ and ‘New Yishuv’: Problems of Definition,” *ibid.*, 232–45. See also Yosef Salmon, Jacob Katz, and Israel Kollat, “Polarization in the Jewish Yishuv in Eretz Israel in the Early 1980s,” *Cathedra* 12 (July 1979): 3–46 (Hebrew).

The Ashkenazim finally achieved their ambition. They were awarded the lion's share of the support from the Ashkenazi communities abroad and their legal and political subordination to the Hakham Bashi and the Sefardi community was revoked. These achievements were gained due to the Capitulation rights granted to the European powers in the Ottoman Empire, as the authority of the Ottoman government over subjects of the European powers now devolved to the consuls. Since most Ashkenazim were subjects of European countries, the Ottoman-appointed Hakham Bashi no longer had authority over them. However, the Ashkenazim failed to establish one single community with an agreed leadership, and thus split up into many sub-groups and kollels.<sup>31</sup>

### The function of the kollels and distribution of halukkah funds

The main function of the kollels was the handling and distribution of the financial support from abroad to the kollel members in the country. To be eligible for membership in a certain kollel, a person had to have lived for at least ten years in the country or region the kollel was named after. Membership in a kollel provided the right to receive support monies no matter what the member's economic status. The kollel organizational structure was as follows: there were customarily three "presidents" of the religious and propertied elite who headed the collection operation in each country or region that had a kollel in the Holy Land. The presidents were the trustees of the money they sent directly to the kollel officers in Jerusalem, who in turn were appointed by the presidents. The officers were the kollel leadership and managed all its affairs, mainly dividing the funds received from abroad among all its members. The support monies were divided in some of the kollels into two types: the first, "the soul stipend," was an equal sum for all and divided according to the number of souls per family; the second, the "advanced stipend," was divided according to the individual's ranking as a religious scholar. The assessment and determination of the advanced stipend was made by the presidents on the basis of personal acquaintance or the recommendation of renowned rabbis and the officers in Jerusalem. The officers received the funds from abroad together with a detailed

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<sup>31</sup> For a sociological analysis of the Old Yishuv, see Menachem Friedman, *Society and Religion: The Non-Zionist Orthodoxy in Eretz Israel, 1918–1936* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1977), 1–31 (Hebrew) and in greater detail, id., "A Society Going through a Crisis of Legitimacy: The Ashkenazi Old Yishuv at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The Ottoman Period, Part 2*, ed. Israel Kolatt (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2002), 1–138 (Hebrew). For halukkah as a reflection of the attitude of diaspora Jewry to the Jewish community in Eretz Israel, see Meir M. Rothschild, *The 'Halukkah' as a Reflection of the Attitude of Diaspora Jewry to the Yishuv in Eretz Israel 1810–1860*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1986) (Hebrew). See also Cecil Bloom, "The Institution of 'Halukkah': A Historical Review," *Jewish Historical Studies* 36 (1999–2001): 1–30.

list of the persons to be supported and the sums they were to receive. The division of the actual power of the Ashkenazi community leadership in Jerusalem between the various kollels and the fact that the kollels drew their power from abroad caused divisiveness in the growing Ashkenazi community and prevented the establishment of a chosen central leadership, as was the norm in Ashkenazi communities in the diaspora. It is important to note that the Old Yishuv could not sustain itself by kollel funds alone. Large sums of money, which apparently were no lesser than those transferred through the kollels, and perhaps even greater, were brought in the following ways: (a) the personal capital that immigrants brought with them for their sustenance; (b) immigrants who made arrangements with their families or friends abroad to send them monies on a regular basis, which arrived directly or through the kollels and were termed “private arrangements”; (c) large sums donated by Jews of the diaspora for the support of yeshivas, *batei midrash*, hospitals, homes for the elderly, and other welfare and charity institutions and which were a financial source of great importance.

To understand the role of these institutions in supporting the Old Yishuv in Jerusalem, it should be borne in mind that the Ashkenazi yeshivas in nineteenth-century Jerusalem differed from other yeshivas in a number of ways. Whereas yeshivas were normally places of study for the young, in Jerusalem they were also a business and a profession. Due to the character of the Old Yishuv, Torah study was an ideal in which many of its members engaged as a main – and often sole – occupation. Accordingly, students of all ages studied at the yeshivah, young and old, single and married. The yeshivah provided its students with a stipend to support them and their families. Other educational institutions, such as *batei midrash*, as well as welfare and charity organizations established in Jerusalem during the period, were also a source of support for members of the Old Yishuv. Furthermore, these organizations needed management, administration, and services, thus providing for the families of numerous clerks and artisans. Indeed, one of the occupations in highest demand in Jerusalem at the time was clerking in educational and welfare establishments. These institutions also filled another financial role of great importance for the sustenance of the Old Yishuv in Jerusalem. The everyday maintenance of these institutions created a need for immediate capital, but donations from abroad did not always arrive at the right time. On the other hand, some members of the Old Yishuv had readily available cash that they sought to invest in gainful businesses. They lent the institutions money for current operations and received bearer securities, which served as cash money, and thus they functioned as a type of bank whose credit activated an important part of the Old Yishuv economy.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> In addition to the references to Friedman in the previous note, see also Yehoshua Kaniel, *Continuity and Change: Old Yishuv and New Yishuv during the First and Second Aliyah* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 7–12, 35–45 (Hebrew).



Despite the great divisiveness of the Old Yishuv there were also attempts to form a unified leadership. The major effort was made in 1866 when the rabbis of the Ashkenazi community, Rabbi Shmuel Salant and Rabbi Meir Auerbach, initiated the establishment of the General Board. Their intention was that the Board would carry out at least some of the functions usually reserved for public leadership. The Board was composed of representatives from most Ashkenazi kollels and its formal functions were as follows: (a) representation of the Ashkenazi community vis-à-vis the Ottoman administration, mainly regarding payment of military service redemption taxes for those Ashkenazim who were Ottoman subjects; (b) payment of the Ashkenazi rabbinical court judges' salaries as well as funding for other court expenses; (c) maintenance of the Ashkenazi community almshouses, such as Hurvat Rabbi Judah he-Hasid; (d) support of persons who did not belong to any kollel, and organization and assistance in emergency situations such as a plague or drought.

The General Board for All Kollels was headed by Rabbi Shmuel Salant until his death. He came to Eretz Israel in 1841 and established the first Ashkenazi rabbinical court upon his arrival, which in time became the "Perushim Court of Justice" located in Hurvat Rabbi Judah he-Hasid. By virtue of his personality he soon became the central rabbinical figure and stood at the helm of the largest and central Ashkenazi community institutions. However, his rabbinical authority was somewhat unique, since he was never ordained as a rabbi. A major source of his authority was his dignified standing in the eyes of diaspora Jewry, and he thus became one of the important rabbis of Jerusalem and served as a trusted address for the transfer of donations to the community. However, the arrival of other rabbis of standing in the world of traditional Jewry, who had served as the rabbis of their various communities around the world for many years, proved to be the undoing of Rabbi Salant and the Perushim community. Prominent among them was Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin, who had served as the rabbi of Brisk in Lithuania, one of the important Jewish communities in Europe, and was renowned as one of the great rabbis of his time. In addition to his rabbinical authority, he also benefitted from extensive monetary support from his disciples abroad, so much so that he was able to maintain a yeshivah, Ohel Moshe, and establish a large orphanage. His past history, financial standing, authority, and more indicated him as a competitor to Rabbi Shmuel Salant. Upon his arrival he also established his own rabbinical court, but it was disbanded after a while. His disciples did not acknowledge Rabbi Salant as the rabbi of Jerusalem.

The hassidic community also established its own rabbinical court in Jerusalem and did not accept the authority of the Perushim community. Other rabbis of renowned rabbinical authority also established themselves in Jerusalem. All these demonstrate the basic weakness of the General Board for All Kollels headed by Rabbi Salant. This weakness was further demonstrated by the withdrawal of the Hungarian kollel, one of the largest and wealthiest, from the General Board and its refusal to accept the Board's authority. These facts clearly

indicate the division of political power between the various Old Yishuv kollels and educational and welfare institutions, which did not enable the establishment of one leadership for the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem. Rabbi Shmuel Salant passed away in 1909 and from that time until World War I the Ashkenazi community failed to choose for itself a rabbi acceptable to all. This was only made possible after the war, during the British Mandate period, when two additional rabbis were designated for the Jewish community of Eretz Israel: a Sefardi chief rabbi who bore the title of “Rishon Lezion,” and an Ashkenazi chief rabbi.<sup>33</sup>

### The beginning of the Hebrew press and of enlightenment in the Old Yishuv

One of the interesting phenomena in Jerusalem of the Old Yishuv was the onset of publication of Hebrew newspapers. The first two were established in 1863: *Halevanon* and *Havatzelet*. Contrary to the previous description of the traditional character of the Old Yishuv, this indicates first signs of *haskalah* (enlightenment) in Jerusalem. In 1860, in Frankfurt on the Oder, Dr. Hayyim Tzvi Luria established the “Society for the Settlement of Eretz Israel” supported by rabbis Kalischer, Alkalai, and Guttmacher.<sup>34</sup>

On the face of it, the Jewish population in Eretz Israel at the time had no real need for newspapers. It seems that the Jerusalem press was initially established to provide information for Hebrew language readers and Yishuv supporters in the diaspora, mainly Russia, as well as to further employment in Jerusalem itself, where numerous printing presses were established. Yet, it very soon became apparent that there was a lively audience in the country, especially among the younger generation, hungry for knowledge and seeking a glimpse of the world outside of walled-in Jerusalem. Accordingly, local journalism began bearing a more comprehensive and responsible role than its older sibling, the Hebrew newspapers in the diaspora. For the Jerusalem community, its Hebrew press served as a link with and a representative vis-à-vis the Jews abroad. In addition, it was a forum for literature in Hebrew, whether Torah writings or both original and translated belles lettres.<sup>35</sup>

After about a year, the two newspapers, *Havatzelet* and *Halevanon*, were forced to close down since they failed to receive the required firmans from Istanbul.

<sup>33</sup> Friedman, *Society and Religion*, 1–31; Kaniel, *Continuity and Change*, 60–101.

<sup>34</sup> The Society for the Settlement of Eretz Israel had a threefold objective: a) as its name suggests, the settlement of Eretz Israel; b) care for the Jewish poor and their livelihood; c) support for rabbinical scholars. On this society, see Yosef Salmon, *Religion and Zionism: First Encounters* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2002), 27–50.

<sup>35</sup> On the early Hebrew newspapers in Eretz Israel, see Galia Yardeni-Agmon, *The Hebrew Press in Eretz Israel, 1863–1904* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1969) (Hebrew), esp. 11–14 in the introduction and 17–19 about the background for the establishment of the first newspapers in Jerusalem.

*Halevanon's* editor Jehiel Brill decided to transfer the newspaper to Paris in 1865. In 1870, during the Prussian–French War, it was transferred to Mainz in Germany where it appeared as a Hebrew supplement to Dr. Marcus Lehmann's *Der Israelit* and became the mouthpiece of extreme Orthodoxy. However, both in Paris and in Mainz, *Halevanon* dealt constantly with Old Yishuv matters and published reports about events in Eretz Israel written by persons living there. Following the pogroms of 1881 in southern Russia, Jehiel Brill became a zealous supporter of Zion and dedicated his newspaper to the concept of the Return to Zion. In 1882 Brill ceased publication of the newspaper and was sent by Baron Rothschild to assist in settlement efforts in Eretz Israel. He passed away in London in 1886.<sup>36</sup>

In contrast to *Halevanon*, *Havatzelet* renewed its activities between 1870 and 1882. This was by virtue of its first editor, Israel Bak, one of the Jerusalem hassidic leaders. He co-opted a number of Jerusalemites to the newspaper's editors, among them his son-in-law, Israel Dov Frumkin, a prominent member of the Jerusalem Jewish community who served as its editor for many years. Frumkin was especially active in the struggle against halukkah and the kollel arrangements and was in favor of reform of the Yishuv, which was also the reason he was persecuted.<sup>37</sup>

Three additional Hebrew newspapers were published in Jerusalem in the 1870s, prior to the First Aliyah. The first was *Ha-Ariel* by Michal Yitzhak Hacohen (1874–1877). Hacohen was one of the founders of the first *Halevanon* in 1863 and Frumkin's partner in editing the renewed *Havatzelet* during its first years (1871–1874), but their ways parted. Frumkin was the son-in-law of a Hassid while Michal Hacohen was a member of the Perushim. There were other differences between them, such as their attitude towards rabbis and leaders of the kollel. Frumkin actively campaigned against them while Hacohen tried to reach a compromise on the subject, albeit unsuccessfully.<sup>38</sup>

Another newspaper that began publication in Jerusalem in the 1870s (1874–1884) was *Sha'arei Zion*, edited by Hayyim Press (father of the renowned Holy Land scholar Isaiah Press). He was a friend of Frumkin and Abraham Moshe Luncz and cooperated with them in additional organizational activities in Jerusalem.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 29. Jehiel Brill was the son-in-law of Ya'akov Halevi Sapir, who was known for his travels to Yemen; see Abraham M. Luncz, *Pathways of Zion and Jerusalem: Selected Essays*, ed. G. Kressel (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1970), 228 (Hebrew).

<sup>37</sup> On *Havatzelet*, its publisher Israel Dov Frumkin, the paper's stance on the national issue and plans for the settlement of Eretz Israel, see Yardeni-Agmon, *Hebrew Press*, 34–81; see also the editor's introduction, "Israel Dov Frumkin, Publisher of *Havatzelet* and Man of Jerusalem," in Israel Dov Frumkin, *Selected Writings*, ed. G. Kressel (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1954), 14–114 (Hebrew).

<sup>38</sup> On *Ha-Ariel*, its contents, the views it supported and the personality of its owner, see Yardeni-Agmon, *Hebrew Press*, 82–86. Michal Hacohen was one of the first residents of the Nahalat Shiv'ah neighborhood outside the Old City walls.

<sup>39</sup> For *Sha'arei Zion*, its founding, policies and the changes it underwent over the years, see *ibid.*, 87–94.

The final newspaper I shall mention is *Yehudah vi-Yerushalayim*. This newspaper was published for only two years, 1876–1878, and was discontinued when its editor, Yoel Moshe Salomon, set off in 1878 in the first attempt to found the colony of Petah Tikvah.<sup>40</sup>

The publication of all these newspapers is testimony to the unrest that arose among the intelligentsia of Jerusalem who did not concur with living on halukkah funds. They began seeking new ways of life for the Jews in Eretz Israel.<sup>41</sup> This trend became more prominent with the heightened distress of the diaspora Jews in Europe. It gradually dawned on the entire Jewish public that all-Jewish institutional decisions and interventions were in order. There were both diverse expectations and disappointments during the 1870s: expectations regarding the leadership of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) and the establishment of the Mikveh Israel agricultural school, and disappointment with the Alliance when it supported Jewish immigration to the United States instead of Eretz Israel. There was also expectation and disappointment regarding Montefiore's leadership, in the struggle of the Yishuv against its self-appointed custodians, and the growing belief that Jewish aliyah could be a vessel for the reform of the Jewish community from within.<sup>42</sup> I shall deal with some of these matters later on, but first I shall focus on one central issue: ideals and plans regarding the purchase of land in Eretz Israel.

## Plans for the purchase of lands; the move outside the walls (1857–1882); the Old Yishuv crisis

### Initial plans: Montefiore, precursors of Zionism, and the Alliance Israélite Universelle

In Chapter One I dealt somewhat at length with the concept of the Return to Zion as it was expressed in Christian millenarist theories beginning in the late eighteenth century, the time of Napoleon Bonaparte, to the early nineteenth century. I also

<sup>40</sup> For *Yehudah vi-Yerushalayim*, its character and its polemics with *Havatzet*, and more, see *ibid.* 95–103. A new edition, in book format, is G. Kressel, ed., *Yehudah vi-Yerushalayim: Yoel Moshe Salomon's Newspaper, 1877–1878* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1955) (Hebrew).

<sup>41</sup> See Yosef Salmon, "The 'New Yishuv' in Jerusalem," in *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period (1800–1917)*, ed. Israel Bartal and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 97–115 (Hebrew) who discusses many personalities in Jerusalem whom he considers as belonging to the New Yishuv. See also Chapter Five, in the section on the first colonies and in the summary.

<sup>42</sup> See Jacob Kellner, *For Zion's Sake: World Jewry's Efforts to Relieve Distress in the Yishuv, 1869–1882* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1976), 9–21 (Hebrew). Five chapters in Kellner's study deal with these issues. For a description of Jerusalem in 1876, see Malachi, *Old Yishuv*, 120–49.

addressed the Damascus Libel Affair of 1840 and the involvement of the British, led by Foreign Minister Palmerston.<sup>43</sup>

Around this time the concept of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land first arose among Jewish personages whom Jewish historiography terms “precursors of Zionism.”<sup>44</sup> One such prominent person was Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795–1874).<sup>45</sup> As early as 1836, Rabbi Kalischer appealed to Amschel Mayer Rothschild to purchase the entire country, or at least Jerusalem – or at the very least the site of the Temple – from Egyptian ruler Muhammad ‘Ali.<sup>46</sup> Rabbi Kalischer believed that the ground should be laid for miraculous redemption through “arousal from below,” and that settlement of the Holy Land was a fundamental condition for the coming of the messiah.<sup>47</sup> Kalischer appealed to Montefiore with a similar request and indeed, following his second visit to the country in July 1839, Montefiore traveled to meet Muhammad ‘Ali in his castle.<sup>48</sup> During this meeting, Montefiore presented the ruler with a number

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**43** See Chapter One in the discussion of the Damascus blood libel. Malachi, *Old Yishuv*, 79–89 deals with blood libels in the Holy Land, but there was limited exploitation of these events, unlike what occurred in Damascus; see ch. 1, n. 72. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, 113, connects Montefiore’s plan of 1839 with the Damascus blood libel of 1840 and the concept of the Restoration of the Jews, believing that all these are part of the vision of Lord Shaftesbury. For the evangelical movement in England, Shaftesbury, and others who were influenced by this movement, including Laurence Oliphant, see Sarah Kochav, “The Evangelical Movement in England and the Restoration of the Jews to Eretz Israel,” *Cathedra* 62 (Dec. 1991): 18–36 (Hebrew). The author attempts to sum up and evaluate the influence of this movement.

**44** Much has been written on the precursors of Zionism. Of special interest is the debate on this subject between Jacob Katz and Shmuel Ettinger; see Yosef Salmon, “The Beginnings of Jewish Nationalism from the Perspective of Historical Research,” *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisrael* 8 (1998): 565–79 (Hebrew).

**45** In recent years scholars, generally religious Zionists, have taken a renewed interest in the thought of Rabbi Kalischer. To mark the 150th anniversary of the publication of his book *Derishat Zion*, an academic conference was held in Kibbutz Tirat Zvi, which bears his name. The lectures were published in Asaf Yedidya, ed., *Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer and the Awakening to Zion* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2014) (Hebrew).

**46** Amschel Mayer Rothschild was the eldest son of the founder of the Rothschild dynasty. We should bear in mind that by 1836, the period of Muhammad ‘Ali’s rule in the Holy Land, many important events had taken place in Jerusalem, such as the renovation of the Sefardi synagogues, the Perushim leadership’s request that Muhammad ‘Ali permit them to rebuild the Hurvah synagogue, and more, as noted above.

**47** Bat-Zion Eraqi-Klorman, “Between Modernism and Messianism in the Writings of Zvi Hirsch Kalischer” [Review], *Cathedra* (Dec. 2007): 165–68 (Hebrew). On Rabbi Kalischer, see Jody Elizabeth Myers, *Seeking Zion: Modernity and Messianic Activism in the Writings of Tsevi Hirsch Kalischer* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2003).

**48** For Kalischer’s appeal to several wealthy Jewish benefactors, see Asaf Yedidya, “From Rothschild to Crémieux: ‘Israel’s Notables’ in the Thought and Activity of Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer,” *Cathedra* 155 (Mar. 2015): 47–72 (Hebrew). See also several articles in Yedidya, ed., *Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer*. For settlement plans during Montefiore’s second visit to the Holy Land, see Israel Bartal, “Settlement Proposals during Montefiore’s Second Visit to Eretz Israel, 1839,”

of requests, among them to lease the land of numerous villages in the Holy Land for a fifty-year period in return for a regular annual cash payment. Muhammad 'Ali rejected the request, claiming he had no leasable land.<sup>49</sup>

During the 1830s and 1840s, the concept of the return of the Jews intensified and was also affected by the surge in visitors and immigrants to the country.<sup>50</sup> Lieutenant Colonel George Gawler, governor of Southern Australia between 1838 and 1841, published a book in 1845 calling for Jewish settlement in the Holy Land. His book includes a detailed plan for the establishment of Jewish agricultural settlements and a proposal to appeal to the sultan to grant extended areas in the country for Jewish colonies.<sup>51</sup> When Montefiore heard of Gawler's proposal, he became more enthusiastic about the idea and invited Gawler to join him on his third visit to the country in 1849.<sup>52</sup> Another interesting British individual, who also raised several notions regarding the settlement of the Holy Land as early as the 1840s, was Charles Henry Churchill.<sup>53</sup>

Apparently, conceptions that were prevalent among Christian millenarists regarding the return of the Jews to the Holy Land began permeating Jewish thinking. Jews, including the Orthodox communities, heard and knew about occurrences in the East and in the Holy Land. Nineteenth-century Western travel literature of the Holy Land came to the knowledge of many in one way or another. All based

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*Shalem* 2 (1976): 231–96 (Hebrew). In the introduction to the article Bartal discusses how Jewish historiography deals with these proposals.

**49** On agricultural land intended for acquisition included in the proposals, see Ruth Kark, "Agricultural Land in Palestine: Letters to Sir Moses Montefiore, 1839," *Jewish Historical Studies* 29 (1988): 207–30. The objective of this article, published after Bartal's (see previous note), was primarily to note the distribution and geographical location of these parcels of land, based on letters from Jews in Safed, Tiberias, Acre, Haifa, Jerusalem, and Hebron sent to Montefiore during his visit in 1839. Kark also mentions the appeal in 1840 by British clergyman Thomas S. Grimshawe to Muhammad 'Ali to consider granting land to the Jews, but it too was refused; see *ibid.*, 218.

**50** Among these visitors one should mention Benjamin Disraeli. His novel *Alroy* was published in 1833, and *Tancred* appeared in 1847, in whose pages one can sense a longing for a renewed Jewish entity in the Holy Land. On Disraeli, see also ch.1, n. 61 and ch. 2, n. 44. For efforts to acquire agricultural land in the 1840s, see also Isaiah Friedman, "British Schemes for the Restoration of Jews to Palestine, 1840–1850," *Cathedra* 56 (June 1990): 42–69 (Hebrew).

**51** For George Gawler's plan of 1845, see Menachem Kedem, "The Endeavors of George Gawler to Establish Jewish Colonies in Eretz Israel," *Cathedra* 33 (Oct. 1984): 93–106 (Hebrew); Israel Bartal, "George Gawler's Plan for Jewish Settlement in the 1840s: The Geographical Perspective," in *Redemption of the Land of Eretz Israel: Ideology and Practice*, ed. Ruth Kark (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1990), 51–63 (Hebrew), with many details about his plan, proposed at such an early date.

**52** For Gawler's visit to the Holy Land in the entourage of Montefiore, see Kedem, "George Gawler," 98–102.

**53** For Churchill's ideas in this context, see also the source cited in n. 4 of Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "A Proposal to Purchase Palestine in the 1870s: A Fleeting Episode or a Sign of the Times?" in *Redemption of the Land of Eretz Israel: Ideology and Practice*, ed. Ruth Kark (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1990), 64–79 (Hebrew).



themselves on what was written in the Bible, but also on descriptions by Western travelers who visited the country, as presented above in Chapter Two.

Following the Crimean War (1853–1856), and after the introduction of further Ottoman reforms and increasing liberalization, the issue of Jewish settlement in the Holy Land resurfaced. In this, too, Montefiore filled an important function. He visited the country seven times.<sup>54</sup> His first visit, in 1827, after his wedding, was as a visitor on a tour of the countries of the Mediterranean and the East, as was customary among the wealthy and privileged in European society at the time. During his second visit in 1839, Montefiore stayed in Safed where he witnessed the difficulties facing the population following the 1837 earthquake. As noted, Gawler accompanied him on his third tour in 1849. During his fourth visit he established a school for girls in the Old City and acquired land for the construction of a hospital in the area where the Mishkenot Sha'ananim neighborhood was later built. Two years later, in 1857 after the end of the Crimean War, on his way to the fifth visit, he passed through Istanbul and received a firman for construction of the Mishkenot Sha'ananim neighborhood. Building of the windmill began that same year, as well as the structures next to it. Construction of the neighborhood was completed in 1860 and that of the Russian Compound and the Schneller Syrian Orphanage were also completed that year.<sup>55</sup> Afterwards he visited the country two more times, in 1866 and 1875, at which time the process of establishing neighborhoods outside the walls was evident, as was the increasing number of Jewish residents there.<sup>56</sup>

Another element that generated important developments in Jerusalem was the presence of British consul James Finn who arrived in the country in 1846 and resided in Jerusalem for seventeen years until 1863. During his period as consul, on September 15, 1857, he sent a memo to the British foreign minister proposing settlement of Jews in the country in order to make the desert arable. Finn was a controversial figure with regards to the question whether or not his assistance to the Jews stemmed from missionary millenarist reasons.<sup>57</sup>

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54 For a comprehensive study of Montefiore and his efforts, see Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

55 On all these, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:62–81. See also note 79 below.

56 Israel Bartal, "Montefiore and Eretz Israel," *Cathedra* 33 (Oct. 1984): 149–60 (Hebrew) attempts to evaluate the whole of Montefiore's enterprise in the Holy Land. He notes that the opinions of scholars and other authors on this subject range between unlimited adoration, hagiographic in character and bereft of any historical criticism, on the one hand, and reserved, almost apologetic, criticism on the other. Moreover, he notes the difficulty involved in creating an overall evaluation of almost fifty years of activity. Kellner, *For Zion's Sake*, 23–41, also devotes the entire second chapter of his book to the disappointment over Montefiore's leadership in the latter years of his activity (1869–1882) during the period of world Jewry's efforts to relieve the distress of the Jewish community in the Holy Land. I shall return to this subject when summing up this chapter.

57 On the activity in Jerusalem of Finn and his wife Elisabeth Anne see the indexes to both volumes of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*. Mordechai Eliav, "The Rise and Fall of Consul James



At the beginning of the 1860s, after the establishment of the “Society for the Settlement of Eretz Israel,” Rabbi Kalischer in his book *Derishat Tzion* (1862) and Rabbi Judah ben Solomon Hai Alkalai (1798–1878) broached the idea of establishing a company that would raise money by selling stocks in order to purchase land in Eretz Israel. The villages and agricultural settlements that would be established were to be managed by the Society for the Settlement of Eretz Israel.<sup>58</sup>

The Alliance Israélite Universelle was established in France in 1860. In 1867, the Jewish dragoman Joseph Krieger petitioned the central committee of the Alliance in Paris to open a school in Jerusalem under his management. The school began operating in 1868, but was closed two years later in 1870 as a result of opposition by the ultra-religious and financial difficulties.<sup>59</sup> That same year the AIU established the Mikveh Israel agricultural school near Jaffa, but its activities were limited in the first ten years. Only more than a decade later, in 1882, was the first vocational school established by the AIU outside the walls in Jerusalem.<sup>60</sup> Charles Netter, the school principle, even cooperated with Baron Rothschild in developing the first colonies in the country, although at the same time he was opposed to increasing immigration to Eretz Israel, as shall be discussed in Chapter Five.<sup>61</sup>

The 1870s were also important years in the development of Jerusalem in general. The Suez Canal was inaugurated in 1869, bringing with it a great increase in maritime transportation in the eastern Mediterranean and consequently many visitors to Jerusalem. Austrian emperor Franz Joseph arrived for a visit in Jerusalem on his way to the inauguration of the Suez Canal and the first paved road between Jaffa and Jerusalem was prepared in his honor. In his wake, carriages of travelers and pilgrims began traveling this road, among them many belonging to the German Templers who had begun establishing their own colonies in the country.<sup>62</sup>

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Finn,” *Cathedra* 65 (Sept. 1992): 37–81 (Hebrew) is an in-depth study of whether or not Finn’s activity stemmed from missionary objectives. For the Finns, see also ch. 1, n. 103 and the primary source, Finn, *Stirring Times*.

**58** For the establishment of the Society for the Settlement of Eretz Israel, see note 34 above. Rabbi Alkalai moved to Eretz Israel in his old age, residing in Mikveh Israel during 1875–1876. He passed away in Jerusalem on October 1, 1878. See Yardeni-Agmon, *Hebrew Press*, 52–54.

**59** On the attempt to establish the school in the Old City, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:341, and in greater detail in Yosef Lang, “Joseph Krieger’s Attempt to Establish a Modern School in Jerusalem,” *Cathedra* 85 (Oct. 1997): 95–122 (Hebrew).

**60** For the founding of the Mikveh Israel agricultural school and the roles of Adolphe Crémieux and Charles Netter in its establishment, see Yosef Shapira, *A Hundred Years of Mikveh Israel, 1870–1970* (Tel Aviv: Mifaeli Tarbut Vehinukh, 1970) (Hebrew).

**61** See Ran Aaronsohn, *Rothschild and Early Jewish Colonization in Palestine* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2000), 53–55.

**62** For the improvement of the road to Jerusalem until the opening of the rail line in 1892, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:82–88.

In 1869, the famous young Eretz Israel scholar Abraham Moses Luncz arrived in Jerusalem. After a short period he began touring the country and writing about it. His anthology *Pathways of Zion and Jerusalem* included an article “Jerusalem in the Last Forty Years” which presents a description of the progress of Jerusalem as well as listing the important persons who arrived in the city, and the Jewish institutions established in the country during these years. In his report about the Jewish year 1881/82 Luncz wrote: “This year was filled with exalted ideas and valuable results for the holy city of Jerusalem and the whole country, and it hereby begins a new period in the history of the land of our forefathers, the period of the New Yishuv.”<sup>63</sup>

### Later plans for purchasing land, the non-Jewish redeemers of Israel

Before moving on to a discussion of the New Yishuv, additional information is required regarding other ideas of the 1870s for the purchase of land in Eretz Israel for Jews. In 1874, John Cox Gawler, son of George Gawler, presented Montefiore with a plan for purchasing lands in the country on which to settle Jews in order to relieve the difficult condition of the Jewish community in Jerusalem.<sup>64</sup> John Gawler based his plan on that of his father from 1845, but took into account the changes that had occurred in the country. As noted, from 1867 foreigners who were not subjects of the Ottoman Empire were permitted by law to purchase land. His plan fell on many ears. Montefiore passed it over to the Board of Deputies of British Jews, proposing that a fund be established to assist in its realization. There were also reactions to the plan within Eretz Israel.<sup>65</sup> Israel Dov Frumkin supported it in an article in his newspaper, *Havatzelet*, and even added ideas of his own. It is interesting to note that in 1874, the very year that John Gawler raised the idea, it was already broached by Moshe Leib Lilienblum in a Russian newspaper. Lilienblum responded to an anti-Semitic booklet and declared that the Jews may justly aspire to acquire the land of their forefathers without bloodshed and with the goodwill of its governors by purchasing it in good faith.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Luncz, *Pathways of Zion and Jerusalem*, 197–262, esp. 247 (Hebrew). The article was published in 1909, but it is likely that Luncz used the term even earlier.

<sup>64</sup> For his proposal, see Yardeni-Agmon, “John Gawler and His Scheme of 1874 for the Settlement of Palestine,” *Hatzionut* 1 (1970): 84–120 (Hebrew; the appendices are documents in the original English).

<sup>65</sup> Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, discusses all together the plans of non-Jews such as George and John Gawler, Charles Henry Churchill, the traveler Eliot Warburton in his book *The Crescent and the Cross*, as well as Elizabeth and James Finn (pp. 140–43); of Jewish organizations and individuals such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Montefiore, and more (pp. 145–52); and in the political sphere: Disraeli and the Suez Canal, the acquisition of Cyprus, and Rothschild’s loan to Disraeli (pp. 161–69).

<sup>66</sup> See the letter of Nov. 3, 1872 in Moshe Leib Lilienblum, *Letters of Moshe Leib Lilienblum to Yehudah Leib Gordon*, ed. Shlomo Breiman (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1968), 137–38 (Hebrew). For Frumkin’s attitude on the plan of John Gawler, see Mordechai Verbin, “Yehiel M. Pines, the

Another idea for the purchase of Eretz Israel was raised in 1876 and accredited to Haim Guedalla, one of the dignitaries of the Jewish Sefardi community in London and a relative of Montefiore.<sup>67</sup> It turns out that the first person to put forward such a proposal was Yehoshua Stampfer, a Jerusalemite, in a letter sent on January 7, 1876 to the *Jewish Chronicle* in London, two years before he became one of the first founders of Petah Tikvah. Apparently, the letter was written after emergency meetings convened in London and other European cities. These were meetings of investors who had made loans to the Ottoman government in 1865, and now, with the deterioration of conditions and notification by the Ottoman government that repayments were to be decreased, had lost large sums of money. Among the participants was Guedalla, who had invested a large part of his capital in such loans and was chosen to stand at the helm of the group of British creditors. Stampfer's letter followed an earlier meeting of the creditors, held in Jerusalem, during which a proposal was raised to petition the Ottoman government to agree to grant the bond holders uncultivated government lands in lieu of the debts. The lands would provide for many families and would serve as a source of income for the Jews of Jerusalem. The request was that the London Jews join in petitioning the Turkish sultan.<sup>68</sup>

At the beginning of August 1876, a report appeared in the Hebrew newspaper *Hamaggid*, edited by Eliezer Lipman Zilberman, mentioning Guedalla's proposal in the *Jewish Chronicle*, and adding details as well as the names of additional Jewish personages trying to move in the same direction. Later, in September 1876, a report was published regarding a letter by the Jewish community in Haifa requesting the assistance of John Gawler to establish agricultural colonies near the city, like the German Templar colonies in the area. The publication of Guedalla's proposal and its wide diffusion also raised vehement objections among some Jews. These were voiced in *Halevanon*, the newspaper edited by Jehiel Brill, who presented the plans as worthless hallucinations with no chance of realization, both by the Ottomans and by the Jews in the diaspora who would not be willing to immigrate to Eretz Israel. The subject turned into a controversy and mutual recriminations were published in the Jewish press.<sup>69</sup>

There are a number of differences between the initial plans for purchasing lands and settling in the Holy Land in the 1840s and those of the 1860s, and mainly the

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Representative of the Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund in Eretz Israel, 1878–1882," *Cathedra* 33 (Oct. 1984): 125–27 (Hebrew).

**67** For Guedalla, his relations with Montefiore, and his status in the British Jewish community, see the index of Kellner, *For Zion's Sake*; see also Israel Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Hassifriya Hatzionit, 1962–1965) (Hebrew), 1:51–59.

**68** On Guedalla's proposal, see Ben-Arieh, "A Proposal to Purchase Palestine" and the sources and references cited there in connection with the debate that his plan aroused.

**69** For details and quotes from newspapers, see *ibid.*, where I also refer to earlier research on this subject and note the fact that in 1875, in a speedy transaction, Disraeli bought the shares of the Egyptian ruler Isma'il in the Suez Canal, an act that undoubtedly served as an example for and influenced such proposals.

1870s. The first and most important was that at the time of the initial plans the Jewish population in Eretz Israel was still small, and the plans were utopian and intrinsically related to the general concept of the return to the ancestral homeland. In the later plans the concepts were given greater impetus by the difficult situation in the country and the system of living on halukkah funds, which many viewed as intolerable. These concepts were further connected to thoughts regarding the need for “productivization” of the Old Yishuv in Eretz Israel and growing understanding that solving problems through philanthropy had failed. To a great degree, Montefiore was instrumental in furthering this way of thinking. There were even those who viewed new Jewish aliyah as a means for reforming the Yishuv and not solely as a utopian vision.<sup>70</sup>

In 1874 the Board of Deputies of British Jews agreed to Montefiore’s request that he be released from his role as president of the Board due to his age and health. Montefiore’s ninetieth birthday celebrations were also intended to take place that year. A demand followed to examine the results of the support given by English Jewry to the Jewish community in Jerusalem.

It was decided to form a committee that would evaluate ways in which, upon his ninetieth birthday, Montefiore’s name and efforts could be commemorated in Jerusalem for generations to come. The two-member committee, comprised of Samuel Montagu and Dr. Asher Asher, was to travel to Jerusalem and would also examine the claims regarding the support provided by London’s Jews to the Jerusalem community. They arrived in Eretz Israel in 1875 and spent two weeks there. Upon their return they submitted a very critical report regarding the organization of halukkah in Jerusalem and the construction of neighborhoods outside the walls, which I shall discuss below.<sup>71</sup>

In the meantime, other ideas were raised regarding the purchase of land and colonization of the Holy Land. In 1879, Laurence Oliphant proposed his plan for settlement of Jews in Gilead, east of the Jordan River. He prepared a detailed plan, which he presented to the Damascus vilayet governor and even managed to arrange an interview with the Turkish sultan, but the latter rejected his plan.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Kellner, *For Zion’s Sake*, described the dire situation of the Jewish community and the intervention of the self-appointed custodians, including the Alliance Israélite Universelle and Montefiore, who failed in their efforts and were responsible for the difficult situation.

<sup>71</sup> On their report and the reactions to it in the Hebrew press, such as *Havatzelet*, see Verbin, “Yehiel M. Pines,” 127–29 and the sources cited there. For the Montagu-Asher report, see also Cecil Bloom, “Samuel Montagu’s and Sir Moses Montefiore’s Visits to Palestine in 1875,” *Journal of Israeli History* 17 (1996): 263–81.

<sup>72</sup> Oliphant’s proposal to settle Jews in Gilead was preceded by other similar suggestions, such as those of Yehoshua Yellin in 1871 and of Charles Warren, a member of the PEF who conducted archaeological research in Jerusalem, in 1875. See Zvi Ilan, “Laurence Oliphant and *The Land of Gilead*,” *Cathedra* 27 (Mar. 1983): 141–62 (Hebrew). For Warren’s activity in Jerusalem, see ch. 2, n. 80. See Laurence Oliphant, *Haifa or Life in Modern Palestine* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1887) for

The date of Oliphant's plan is noteworthy. In 1879, a year had passed since the first attempt to found Petah Tikvah. There are Jewish historians who have included his proposal among the Jewish plans and aspirations, but in truth Oliphant was motivated by Christian millenarist conceptions and should not be counted among the Jewish precursors of Zionism.<sup>73</sup> His actions should be seen as motivated mainly by millenarist ideas. There were responses in England to Oliphant's plan, since already at the time there were many who doubted its feasibility. Colonel Albert Goldsmid determined that security problems could arise, and on May 8, 1882 proposed a plan regarding how to deal with the issue. In time he met with Herzl who tried to draw him to the Zionist vision.<sup>74</sup> Discussions of Oliphant's plan continued until 1892, but nothing came of it, like previous proposals. Oliphant built his home on Mount Carmel in the Druze village of Isfiya and published his book, *Haifa*.<sup>75</sup>

We can summarize and say that despite the importance that may be ascribed to the diverse plans for purchasing land in Palestine, among them efforts by Jewish individuals and organizations such as those of Moses Montefiore, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the establishment of the Mikveh Israel school, and more, inasmuch as they relate to the realistic efforts of Zionism in Eretz Israel theirs was a very small contribution, if at all. I shall now address a number of other significant issues with regard to the move outside the walls of Jerusalem and construction of Jewish neighborhoods there.

### Establishment of Jewish neighborhoods outside the walls, 1857–1877

Much has been written about the exit outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem and the founding of new Jewish neighborhoods there.<sup>76</sup> The question I would like

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details in his own words. On Warren and Oliphant, see also Polowetzky, *Victorian Intellectuals*, 99–117, 119–45, respectively.

<sup>73</sup> For the inclusion of Oliphant's proposal in Jewish historiography among the Jewish plans and aspirations, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:72–77, also with mention of the plan of British industrialist and financier Edward Cazalet. For Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's reaction to the Oliphant proposal, see *ibid.*, 77. Members of the BILU movement also saw in Oliphant a possible source of help to solve their problems; see Yossi Goldstein, *We Will Be the First: A History of Hibbat Zion, 1881–1918* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2015), 58–63 (Hebrew).

<sup>74</sup> For the Goldsmid plan, which evolved after he read Oliphant's book, including his meeting with Herzl and relations with Oliphant, see Elhannan Orren, "Colonel Goldsmid's Scheme for the Defense of Settlement in Transjordan, 1882–1892," *Hatzionut* 3 (1973): 42–55 (Hebrew). Goldsmid claimed that he was the model for the hero of *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot's famous novel. For his support of Jewish immigration to Argentina, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:149–50. See also ch. 6, n. 11.

<sup>75</sup> Oliphant, *Haifa*. Despite its title, Oliphant records many details about other places in the Holy Land.

<sup>76</sup> On the new neighborhoods established outside the walls of the Old City and their development in the late Ottoman period, see Parts Three and Four of the second volume of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in*

to focus on presently is how to assess the first stage of this process, until the First Aliyah period, in relation to all Jewish activity in the country until that period. I will therefore focus on the establishment of the nine neighborhoods founded solely during the first twenty years of construction outside the walls: 1857–1877.

The first Jewish neighborhood built outside the walls was Mishkenot Sha'ananim. In my book, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century: Emergence of the New City*, I have already pointed out that the period of its establishment, 1857–1860, is very much congruent with the construction of two other important compounds outside the walls: the Russian Compound and the beginning of construction of the German Schneller Orphanage. The purchase of the sites and construction of all three occurred after the end of the Crimean War in 1856. Following the enactment of additional Ottoman reforms, purchase of lands in the country was permitted to non-Muslims, but only those who were Ottoman subjects. Other buyers needed a special firman from the sultan to do so. Indeed, that was the case with these three compounds. As noted, Montefiore passed through Istanbul on his way to Jerusalem in order to receive the permit to purchase the land for Mishkenot Sha'ananim. At first he considered building a hospital on the site, but when it turned out that the Jewish inhabitants of the Old City would be afraid to leave the security of the city walls for it, and since Rothschild in the meantime had built a hospital inside the walls, Montefiore decided to erect almshouses for the Jerusalem poor instead. At first, due to the fear of living there, the residents apparently were paid to do so, and there were those among them who returned to the Old City at dusk. With time, the neighborhood gained a more positive reputation. The dwellings that had been built were rented out, and regulations were set for the residents. Two small synagogues were added, one Ashkenazi and one Sefardi, and life in the neighborhood became more firmly established. In sum, the first settlement effort outside the walls indicates that it was in fact not initiated by the Jews of Jerusalem, but by an external factor – Montefiore. However, it paved the way for Jerusalem's Jews to have the option of residing outside the walls.<sup>77</sup>

An attempt to establish a Jewish settlement was made already in 1860 at Motza. Two Jerusalem Jews, Yehoshua Yellin, father of David Yellin, and Shaul Yehudah, purchased land in order to establish an agricultural settlement, but its development was dependent upon the progress of the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem and it was

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*the 19th Century*. Many references in what follows will be to this book. See also Ruth Kark, *Jerusalem Neighborhoods: Planning and By-laws, 1855–1930* (Jerusalem: Mount Scopus Publications, 1991).

<sup>77</sup> For Mishkenot Sha'ananim, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:74–79; Reuven Gafni, *Winds of Hope: Mishkenot Sha'ananim 1860–2015* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2015); on the Schneller Orphanage and the Russian Compound, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:68–74.

turned into a khan, a roadside station, and a café.<sup>78</sup> Another attempt to establish an agricultural settlement, in Emek Refa'im outside Jerusalem, was never realized either. This was according to a (very) early plan by the convert to Judaism Michael Boaz Israel (formerly Warder Cresson) who proposed it in 1854.<sup>79</sup>

The second Jewish neighborhood established outside the walls, Mahaneh Yisrael, was built by another entrepreneur, a Jerusalemite this time, Rabbi David Ben-Shimon, the rabbi of the Moroccan community in the Old City. His aim was to establish a residence for the poor of his community since the price of housing had risen at the time and the poorer members of the congregation could not afford it. Apparently, he was also influenced by Montefiore's construction of Mishkenot Sha'ananim. Rabbi Ben-Shimon purchased the land for the neighborhood between 1866 and 1868. He built an elegant synagogue in the center, later called "Tzuf Dvash" after the title of his book, and dwellings for the community poor beside it. The neighborhood was small, around twenty to thirty households, but was instrumental in furthering residence outside the walls.<sup>80</sup>

The third neighborhood built outside the walls was Nahalat Shiv'ah which presents another type of organization for construction. This time the neighborhood was founded by a group of "enlightened" families living in the Old City who established a cooperative society to build it.<sup>81</sup> However, when the neighborhood was built in 1869, the buyers were still concerned about the status of the purchased land, since they were foreign citizens and not Ottoman subjects, and thus chose one of the founders' wives who was apparently an Ottoman subject, to register the land in the name of the society, and she did so wearing Arab garb. During the first years, the residents were still afraid to live outside the walls and would return to the Old City at night. Nonetheless, Nahalat Shiv'ah became one of the leading neighborhoods in the process of moving outside the walls, also due to its management by a cooperative society.<sup>82</sup>

The fourth Jewish compound built outside the walls was the Beit David endowment established in 1872–1873 by the philanthropist David Reiss Janover who lived out his latter days in the Nahalat Shiv'ah neighborhood. He was influenced by its members and contributed the funds necessary to establish "David houses" intended for the poor

**78** Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:67–68, 93. Today, one of the buildings has been preserved with a detailed written history of the site. See also ch. 5, n. 73.

**79** For this plan, see *ibid.*, 2:68 and the sources cited there. There was also an intention to cooperate with Kollel HoD to establish Tiferet Yisrael, a society for agricultural settlement, but none of these came to fruition.

**80** On Mahaneh Yisrael, see *ibid.*, 2:101–3.

**81** On "enlightened" Jewish families in Jerusalem, including that of Yoel Moshe Salomon, see Yosef Salmon, "Yoel Moshe Salomon: Entrepreneur and Community Activist," in *The Salomons: Three Generations of Pioneers and Leaders*, ed. Israel Bartal and Shimon Shamir (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 2014), 59–74 (Hebrew).

**82** For Nahalat Shiv'ah, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:103–7.



of the Perushim and hassidic kollels, ten dwellings, one next to the other in a rectangular layout, and a synagogue and cistern in the center. According to the endowment deed, the compound was designated for the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem and its new arrivals, and priorities were set for right of residence in the apartments.<sup>83</sup>

The fifth neighborhood built outside the walls was Me'ah She'arim, again with a different concept. The original residents were a group of 140 families from the Old City. Construction began in 1874 and was completed in 1882. The financial condition of most of the society members was limited and they lived off halukkah funds. The large area for the neighborhood was bought from the Arabs of Liftah village. In 1874 it was already possible to register land in the name of foreign subjects following the 1867 reform in Ottoman law, and indeed the land was registered in the name of the merchant Benzion Leon, a British subject. It was planned by architect Conrad Schick in a square layout shut off by the outer wall of the houses and its iron gates were locked every night.

An area for public buildings was designated at the center, a miniature sample of the Old City. The builders, of east European origin, purposely created a small town modeled on the shtetls of Europe. The founders prepared a book of regulations whose main purpose was to maintain the ultra-Orthodox character of the neighborhood. The regulations state that no resident may transfer his property, not only to non-Jews, but also “to one who deviates from the words of the blessed rabbis,” so as to prevent the penetration of modern ideas, mainly those connected with *Haskalah*. It was further determined that the regulations were valid for generations to come and could not be amended. The neighborhood was established not only as a “holy community” (religious society), but also took upon itself the functions of a small town. Its council dealt with all neighborhood issues and needs of the residents, forming a type of ghetto by choice, enclosed and isolated. In order not to be defiled by outside contact, walls were built around the neighborhood to preserve both body and soul of its community.<sup>84</sup>

Two other important neighborhoods built in 1875–1877 in Jerusalem were Even Yisrael and Mishkenot Yisrael, both on Agrippas Street near Jaffa Street, on plots of land adjoining one another. In this case, too, preparations were made by ad hoc associations of Old City residents living on halukkah funds. Behind these associations stood the organization mentioned above, the General Committee for All Kollels Knesset Yisrael, which also included liberals and enlightened people, although they, too, were religious in every way. The most active among them was Rabbi Joseph Rivlin, later known as “the father of the neighborhoods.” There were also Sefardi families and mixed Ashkenazi–Sefardi ones, and others who were

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<sup>83</sup> On the Beit David neighborhood and its deed of endowment, see *ibid.*, 2:107–8. Reiss Janover also bought a courtyard in the Old City and endowed it as well.

<sup>84</sup> For the founding and development of Me'ah She'arim, see *ibid.*, 2:108–12.

earlier involved in the founding of Nahalat Shiv'ah and the Motza settlement and later were among the first settlers to leave for Petah Tikvah in 1878.<sup>85</sup>

The final two neighborhoods founded in Jerusalem in the 1870s, both in 1877, were Beit Ya'akov and Kiryah Ne'emanah. Beit Ya'akov was a small neighborhood on Jaffa Road, farthest from the Old City, and near the site on which the Sha'arei Tzedek hospital was later built. Its neighborhood organized itself as an association, but the distance from the Old City and financial difficulties prevented it from achieving a solid basis. The Grodno Kollel bought the first houses constructed there and the site was transferred to its ownership and use.<sup>86</sup>

The final neighborhood is Kiryah Ne'emanah, built near the Nablus Gate by the hassidic community in Jerusalem led by Nissan Bak and thus came to be known as "the Nissan Bak neighborhood." The purpose of the Hassidim was to perpetuate the name of Moses Montefiore in their neighborhood and call it "Ohalei Moshe ve-Yehudit," hoping thus to gain Montefiore's support, but this was not the case, and they built only a small part of the neighborhood. Over time small new neighborhoods were established there, but I shall not deal with them here.<sup>87</sup>

### The crisis of 1875–1877 and the concept of productivization

Conditions in the first Jewish neighborhoods outside the walls were difficult during the first twenty years of their existence. There are some today who try to present the beginning stages of the departure outside the walls of Jerusalem as the outset of Zionism, and even specify 1860, commonly accepted as the first year of the Mishkenot Sha'ananim neighborhood. However, this is not the case. What motivated the founding of the first neighborhoods outside the walls was the population density in the Old City following the growth of the Old Yishuv, and not any Zionist conceptions. Three of the first nine neighborhoods were built to house the poor, and five were established only towards the end of the period, in 1875–1877. The importance of the new neighborhoods in their early stages was that they indicated a different path that could be followed, the option of establishing Jewish neighborhoods outside the walls. Yet their actual development and progress, like that of many other neighborhoods, came only after the beginning of the First Aliyah when the population of Jerusalem increased manifold.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> On Even Yisrael and Misheknot Yisrael, see *ibid.*, 2:112–16. For societies of *maskilim* (enlightened intellectuals), see *ibid.*, 2:422–26.

<sup>86</sup> For Beit Ya'akov, see *ibid.*, 2:117–21 and the many sources cited there.

<sup>87</sup> On the establishment of the Kiryah Ne'emanah (Nissan Bak) neighborhood, see *ibid.*, 2:117–21 and the sources cited there.

<sup>88</sup> On the continued establishment of many new Jewish neighborhoods, especially in the 1880s, see *ibid.*, Part 3, Chapters 1 and 2.

This becomes perfectly clear from the report submitted by the committee headed by Montagu and Dr. Asher sent in 1875 by the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Upon their return from the Holy Land they published a report regarding the organization and management of the Jewish community in Jerusalem, also expressing their negative opinion of the new neighborhoods. The report states that when Joseph Rivlin took them to see the land purchased for the Mishkenot Yisrael neighborhood, presented to them his plan to purchase other lands, and asked for their support, they replied disparagingly that even if thousands of houses would be built and thousands of families would arrive in Zion and settle in them, it is foreseeable that a large community of idlers and shnorrers would arise to prey at the mercy of Jews abroad. Additionally, the kollel leaders would then have a greater reason to appeal to their fellow diaspora Jews for pity, asking them to send money to save these families from starvation. All of Rivlin's attempts to change their minds came to naught and the two remained adamant in their negative attitude to the construction of Jewish neighborhoods outside the walls and published a most critical report.<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, due to the crisis of 1875–1877 the establishment of additional neighborhoods outside the walls ceased for a period of five years. A number of factors led to this crisis, the first being the difficulty noted above in raising funding for construction. The halukkah funds were insufficient and there was growing opposition among some of the donors from abroad.<sup>90</sup> The second factor was the Russo–Turkish war that erupted in mid-1877, in the wake of which monetary contributions arriving in the country diminished. The deteriorating financial status of the Ottoman Empire caused a drastic decline in the value of the Turkish currency due to the government's excessive issuance of money during the war.<sup>91</sup> The third factor was the difficult economic conditions in Jerusalem itself in the 1860s and 1870s due to the great increase in population, on the one hand, and drought and hunger, on the other. All these reached a peak at the end of the 1870s and increased the demand for productivization of the Old Yishuv in Jerusalem. These factors lent emphasis to plans for agricultural settlements and caused a decrease in the establishment of new Jewish neighborhoods outside the walls.<sup>92</sup>

In the meantime, some opposition arose to the severe report by Montagu and Asher. Montefiore, who also felt uncomfortable with the committee's report, set out to the Holy Land to examine the situation at firsthand. This was his seventh and final

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 2:122–23.

<sup>90</sup> See, in detail, Verbin, "Yehiel M. Pines," 127–29, who also documents the involvement of persons, such as Frumkin and others, who publicly criticized the report of Montagu and Asher, but also pointed to the problems of the Old Yishuv.

<sup>91</sup> The collapse of the Turkish currency also affected efforts in England to implement Haim Guedalla's plan of 1876; see above, p. 191.

<sup>92</sup> On demands for productivization of the Jewish community in Jerusalem, inter alia by establishing agricultural colonies, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:119–26.

journey to the country. Following the visit, and in agreement with the London board, it was decided to change the method of providing support to the Jews of Jerusalem and discontinue transfer of funds from the British Jewish community directly to the Jewish organizations in Jerusalem. Instead, it was decided to establish a special fund, the Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund, to commemorate Montefiore's ninetieth birthday. A special representative would be appointed to manage the fund appropriately and ensure that its monies were used for the promotion of the Jerusalem community. A search was set in motion, and Yehiel Michal Pines was chosen. Pines arrived in the country in September 1878 to begin his role. He and his family quickly struck roots in Jerusalem and Eretz Israel. He built his home in the Even Yisrael neighborhood, his wife Haya-Tzipah was active in welfare institutions in Jerusalem, and his two daughters were married to the sons of prestigious families – one to David Yellin, son of Yehoshua Yellin, and the second to Shmuel Meyuhas.<sup>93</sup>

The establishment of the Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund brought in its wake a renewal in Jerusalem neighborhood construction in 1882. However, this began at the same time as other important developments that I shall discuss in the next chapter. Meanwhile, a number of Jerusalem residents had come to realize that the future of Jewish settlement lies in other parts of the country and began organizing to leave the city, motivated by the concept of productivization. Their plans became increasingly practical and they investigated the options for their realization. Thus, the idea of founding Petah Tikvah was raised by a group of people from the Old Yishuv who had previously been active in the establishment of neighborhoods outside the walls.<sup>94</sup> The interesting blessings recited at the inauguration of the first synagogue in Mishkenot Yisrael during Passover of 1877 are informative regarding the connection between the construction of the new neighborhoods in Jerusalem and the establishment of Petah Tikvah. In his speech at the inauguration of the synagogue, David Gutmann, later one of the first founders of Petah Tikvah, said: “God giveth that we shall be able to bless each other with this blessing at the inauguration of the first Torah study hall . . . in the first colony . . . settled by our brethren the sons of Israel,” and the whole congregation responded with “Amen.”<sup>95</sup> However, a crisis befell Petah Tikvah, and after two years of residence the first settlers were forced to leave. This shall be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>93</sup> For this change in policy, see Verbin, “Yehiel M. Pines,” 129–32. The appointment of Pines came after the death of Rabbi Kalischer in October 1874; see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:45–47. For Pines' ideology and his activities, see Yosef Salmon, *Do Not Provoke Providence: Orthodox in the Grip of Nationalism* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2014), 98–114. See also ch. 5, n. 27. For his home in Jerusalem, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:112–16.

<sup>94</sup> The colonists who established Petah Tikvah (lit. “door of hope”) first planned to settle in another location. To this end they tried to buy land in the vicinity of Jericho, which is why they called their colony Petah Tikvah: “And the cursed valley shall become a door of hope” (based on Hosea 2:17). When that attempt failed, they moved to an area near the Yarkon springs.

<sup>95</sup> Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:125–26.

## Millenarist and German Templar agricultural settlement prior to the First Aliyah

### Millenarist agricultural settlement

The changes in the Ottoman Empire and Christian millenarist conceptions, which became more pronounced in Western countries in the nineteenth century, also brought about agricultural settlement attempts in the Holy Land by Christian believers from these countries.<sup>96</sup> I have already noted the involvement of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, established in 1809, at the end of the first chapter, when discussing the Damascus Blood Libel. The Society sent envoys to Jerusalem who began establishing themselves in the city in the 1830s. One of the first Westerners to arrive in the city and think about assisting its Jews by introducing them to agricultural labor was the second British consul in Jerusalem, James Finn. During the Crimean War Finn established agricultural plantations in Kerem Avraham (Abraham's Vineyard) in Jerusalem, the purpose of which was to employ poor Jews in response to the difficult situation that developed in Jerusalem following the war and the decrease in support funds from Jews abroad.<sup>97</sup>

Consul Finn's agricultural project is connected to a parallel one to which he also lent his assistance, the agricultural farm established by the Jewish convert John Meshullam in the village of Artas, south of Bethlehem. Meshullam was born in London to Jewish parents who came from Greece. When residing in Tunisia he met missionary Ferdinand Christian Ewald, who had visited the Holy Land in 1842–1844. From Tunisia he moved on to Malta where he met the Protestant minister Samuel Gobat who later became an important bishop in Jerusalem. He converted to Christianity in 1840 under Gobat's influence and arrived in Jerusalem in 1841, where he opened a hotel. With the support of Protestant institutions and the British consul in Jerusalem, he established the Artas agricultural farm south of Bethlehem.

Already at the beginning of his enterprise, a group of American Adventists headed by Clorinda S. Minor joined him at the farm. A movement had developed in the United States that was preparing for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The founder of the movement was William Miller, who lived on a farm near New York and had been brought up as a Baptist. In a booklet he published, he presented his evidence that the Second Coming of Christ would take place in 1843. It was distributed in millions of copies and many joined Miller and became known as "Millerites." Since the Redeemer did not appear on the intended date, it was suggested that there had been a miscalculation and the date was advanced by one year. When once again the Second Coming

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<sup>96</sup> On the arrival of persons from the West to Jerusalem and their efforts at agricultural settlement, see *ibid.*, 2:62–68 and the sources cited there. The discussion includes the first houses built outside the walls of Jerusalem by Europeans.

<sup>97</sup> About James Finn, see note 59 above and in the text.

did not materialize, disappointment led to the rise of Clorinda Minor, who began preaching the need to prepare the Holy Land for the return of Christ, which demanded keeping the Jewish Sabbath. She was one of the founders of the Seventh Day Adventist denomination. Eventually she arrived in Jerusalem and resided at Meshullam's hotel. From there she moved with her followers to the farm in Artas in partnership with Meshullam. But, very soon, controversy broke out between the two groups. The Americans left the farm, apparently in the mid-1850s and tried to establish the colony of Mount Hope near Jaffa and the Ayalon Brook. On January 11, 1858, Arabs from the vicinity broke into the colony. They raped, pillaged, and damaged the place, and thus came the end to the first attempt to establish an American colony in the country.<sup>98</sup>

A second American attempt to establish an agricultural colony in the Holy Land took place in the 1860s. This attempt is intrinsically related to preacher George J. Adams who established the Church of the Messiah. He brought a group of people with him and built an American colony near Jaffa, but it came to a quick end, existing only from 1866 to 1868. Following difficulties and a financial crisis, Adams, his wife, and son left the colony and moved to England. Most of the settlers returned to the United States. The colony's houses were sold to a German missionary who in turn sold them to the Templers. Instead of an American colony, a German colony was founded on the site.<sup>99</sup> The third attempt to establish an American outpost in the Holy Land took place in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 1880s, in a neighborhood later known as the American Colony that became a part of Jerusalem and played a role in the development of the city. To this day its central building serves as the American Colony Hotel.<sup>100</sup>

### Establishment of the German Templer colonies

The most significant development related to settlement in the country, even before the founding of the first Jewish settlements, was the establishment of the German

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**98** For Meshullam and Clorinda Minor and their attempt at agricultural settlement in Artas, which went on for about thirteen years, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:66–67; Kark, “Millenarism”; Barbara Krieger, with Shalom Goldman, *Divine Expectations: An American Woman in 19th-Century Palestine* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999), 13–105. See also Yaacov Shavit, “‘Land in the Deep Shadow of Wings’ and the Redemption of Israel: A Millenarian Document from Jerusalem, 1847,” *Cathedra* 50 (Dec. 1988): 98–110 (Hebrew with the English text of the document).

**99** On the Adams colony, see ch. 1, n. 48. I shall discuss below the German Templer colony in Jaffa. See also Yaakov Ariel, “Expecting the Messiah: Christian and Jewish Messianic Expectations in the Late Ottoman Period,” in *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period (1800–1917)*, ed. Israel Bartal and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 83–93 (Hebrew).

**100** Much has been written about the American Colony in Jerusalem. See also in the index of volume 2 of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, under American (-Swedish) Colony.

Templer colonies.<sup>101</sup> The Templers were members of a religious cult who refused to accept the rites of the Lutheran church in southern Germany. While the roots of the movement may be found earlier, its major development dates to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Templer concepts were based on the principles of the Bible and the New Testament. Their charismatic leader Christoph Hoffmann (1815–1885) preached and spread his doctrine, first in southern Germany and later in the Holy Land: in Haifa, Jaffa, and finally in Jerusalem. His ideas were published in the weekly journal *Die Warte* and in a number of books. The movement adopted the name “Tempelgesellschaft” meaning “temple society”: “that building that is not made of wood or stone, but resides with God and is the house of God.”<sup>102</sup>

The Templers composed their own prayers, abolished the clergy, and placed spiritual guidance in the hands of the sect’s leaders. Immigration to the Holy Land was motivated by a desire to escape from religious persecution and a hostile environment in southern Germany in addition to economic factors and, of course, the attraction of the Holy Land. Religious feelings were very strong among the first generation to arrive. They believed they could establish a true Christian society in the Holy Land, a little “Kingdom of God” with Jerusalem at its center. However, they were far removed from any form of missionary activity or a search for souls to convert to Christianity. Most of the settlers were born in small towns in southern Germany. They were chosen meticulously from among the 3,000 members of the sect who gathered around Hoffmann, and it was they who established the German settlements in the Holy Land.<sup>103</sup>

### The first Templer colony in Haifa

Towards the end of 1866, the Templers decided to implement the concept of settlement in the Holy Land. They hoped to receive a firman from the Ottoman sultan to purchase a large plot of land, but having failed to obtain it they decided to be content in the meantime with “stations” in the country. Those would assist in collecting information that could be important for the planned settlement and would also serve as the kernel for their concept of a temple in the Holy Land that could gradually be expanded. Initially, in March 1868, it was agreed that the first station would be established in Nazareth, but this plan was changed in October that same year

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**101** On the areas of provenance of the Templers and what characterized their immigration to the Holy Land, see Yossi Ben-Artzi, *From Germany to the Holy Land: Templer Settlement in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1996), 17–64 (Hebrew). For characteristics of the Templer colonies in the Holy Land, their geographic distribution, and sites, see *ibid.*, ch. 2, including a map on p. 111; see also the two appendices.

**102** See the important pioneering study by Alex Carmel, *Die Siedlungen der württembergischen Templer in Palästina 1868–1918: ihre lokalpolitischen und internationalen Probleme* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973).

**103** For more details about the German Templers in the Holy Land and their ideology, see *ibid.*



and Haifa was designated to replace it. A controversy between the two leaders of the group, Christoph Hoffmann and Georg David Hardegg, caused a split between them. Hoffmann moved to Jaffa to establish his own station there, but later also played an important role in founding the German colony in Haifa. The choice of Haifa was explained by its proximity to the sea. The first houses of the colony were completed in 1870, among them a community hall intended to house the German school and to serve as an assembly hall for the settlers. The inscription over the gate (in German) read: “If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, 1869.” According to the British survey of western Palestine, the German colony in Haifa numbered 311 persons at the end of its settlement stage in 1875. It possessed 2,640 dunams of agricultural land at the time and 440 dunams of vineyards and other groves. In addition, the settlers had a herd of about 250 cattle. The total number of buildings in the colony was 85, including public service buildings. The settlers also owned two flourmills, the only ones in Haifa.<sup>104</sup>

### **The German colony in Jaffa**

Less than three months had passed since the settlement of the Templer leaders in Haifa before the option of establishing a second station in Jaffa was under discussion. In March 1869, they purchased five buildings on a hill inside the city from the merchant Peter Martin Metzler, a member of the Pilgrimage Mission St. Crischona near Basel who had been operating in Jaffa for many years and was now called upon to leave for Russia. There was a unit for producing steam, a sawmill, oil press, hospital, pharmacy, and residential floor in the largest building. The second largest building, three floors in the front and two in the back, was a nineteen-room hotel. This building, together with the remaining three, had belonged to the American colony that had left the city. Metzler had purchased them from the Americans and now passed them on to the Templers, laying the foundations for the German colony planned to be established in Jaffa. In April 1869, Hoffmann, one of the two Templer leaders, moved from Haifa to Jaffa. At this stage the Templers had already purchased other properties in Jaffa and its vicinity, including the American Mount Hope farm. From the very beginning of their activities in Jaffa they devoted efforts to opening a hospital there. Hoffman was appointed its director and Dr. Gottlob Sandel, its doctor, was a well-known figure in the city. The Templers also put much effort into developing the Jaffa hotel that was given the name “Jerusalem Hotel” and began hosting distinguished guests. Just as Dr. Sandel was the first European intellectual in Jaffa, so was the Jerusalem Hotel the first to serve its guests with European standard hospitality and become the quality hotel in the city. Towards the end of 1870 the Jaffa colony

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**104** For details about the German Colony in Haifa, see *ibid.*, 27–37; Ben-Artzi, *From Germany to the Holy Land*, in the index, s.v. Haifa. This colony has been the object of much preservation, and much information about it has been collected.

numbered 170 persons. As in Haifa, many of its members were engaged in transportation, and here, too, it was the Germans who brought Jaffa the first wagons and carriages for use. German wagoners transported oranges from the orchards in the area to Jaffa port for export. Additionally, the Templers often transported passengers arriving in Jaffa port to Jerusalem and even established a tourist transport company used by many, including the Cook travel agency, which signed an agreement with the Templers according to which tours in the country would use the services of the German companies in Sarona and Jaffa. The Templers also assisted in preparing the road laid to Jerusalem. The authorities consigned the work to German engineer Theodor Sandel, son of the colony's doctor, who employed many of its inhabitants on this project.<sup>105</sup>

### The Sarona colony

At the beginning of 1870 the Templers considered a plan to purchase a large tract of land near Jaffa for agricultural cultivation, a proposal supported by the Templer farmers. Their leaders had some doubts about it, but pressure by the farmers did not cease until in August 1871 it was agreed to purchase over 500 dunams of agricultural land near the Yarkon Brook, about an hour's walk from the colony in Jaffa. The society divided the area into eighteen plots, four of which were kept for public needs and the rest sold to the society members. The plots were raffled between the registered members during the ceremony celebrating the acquisition of the land. The surveying and planning of the new colony were done by engineer Theodor Sandel. A name was also set for the colony at this festive event, "Sarona." The first two families settled in the colony at the beginning of 1872, the building of the first seven houses was completed in the summer of that same year, and construction was begun of the community assembly hall. However, a short while afterwards diseases struck the settlers, malaria foremost, with a high rate of illness and death. The death toll was especially high among the children, mainly due to the many swamps nearby. The diseases were contained after a while. The number of Sarona residents reached 80. All the settlers were farmers, mainly vine growers. In addition, they engaged in transportation, primarily on the Jaffa–Jerusalem road in collaboration with the members of the Jaffa colony. Towards the end of 1875, the Germans purchased another plot near Sarona, and their lands in the area now spread over 1,500 dunams. Sarona continued to exist as a

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<sup>105</sup> For details about the German Colony in Jaffa, see Carmel, *Siedlungen*, 37–41; Ben-Artzi, *From Germany to the Holy Land*, in the index s.v. Jaffa; Jakob Eisler, *Der deutsche Beitrag zum Aufstieg Jaffas, 1850–1914: zur Geschichte Palästinas im 19. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997). This colony, too, has undergone much preservation, especially the buildings erected by the Americans.

German colony until the beginning of World War II when the German residents of the country were deported to Australia as enemy nationals.<sup>106</sup>

### The German colony in Jerusalem

The main objective of the Templers stemmed from religious belief and directed at the temple in Jerusalem. Despite that, construction of a German neighborhood in Jerusalem was delayed until the 1870s, after the establishment of the three above-mentioned colonies. Individual Templers, among them artisans, independent merchants, and some in the service of various institutions, began congregating in the city from the very beginning of the Templers' arrival in the country. At first they resided in the Old City until, in the early 1870s, one of them, Matthäus Frank, purchased a number of plots in the valley later named "Emek Refa'im." On April 25, 1873 he laid the cornerstone for a steam power unit and a home on one of them. This building, with the inscription "Eben Ezer" above its entrance, would become the foundation stone for the German colony in Jerusalem. In 1874 two other Templer settlers built houses near Frank's house, and in 1875 there were already seven houses in that street. Templers continued to settle in Jerusalem upon their own initiative, leading the society's leaders to give that city some thought. In June 1873, the society's council in Germany decided that it was time to establish the Templer spiritual center in Jerusalem, yet the leadership in the Holy Land did not succeed in promoting the idea. It was only in the autumn of 1877 that the dramatic announcement was declared in Jaffa that the "stride towards Jerusalem" would take place in the spring. In the spring of 1878, the equipment of the school and the Templer society's directorate was transferred to Jerusalem on the backs of around one hundred camels. Forty people, mostly officials, teachers, and pupils joined the Templer community in Jerusalem which now officially became the fourth Templer colony and the Templer headquarters in the country. Though the decision to transfer to Jerusalem was taken during a difficult period for the country, the years of the war between Russia and Turkey mentioned above, this did not affect it. Life in Palestine returned to normal at the end of the 1870s. The financial situation began to improve and the German colonies developed and thrived. In 1882 construction began on the second building for the Templer high school. The first one, built shortly after the transfer of the headquarters to Jerusalem, was limited due to financial hardship. This time they set about construction of a second

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**106** For additional details about the establishment of Sarona, see Carmel, *Siedlungen*, 41–44; Ben-Artzi, *From Germany to the Holy Land*, in the index s.v. Sarona. Nir Mann, *Sarona in a Decade of Struggle: The End of the Templer Colony, Underground Operations against the British Base, Camp Yehoshua of the Haganah* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2009) (Hebrew) focuses mainly on the period after the deportation of the German Templers, but much can be learned from it about the earlier colony.

building much larger than the first and of a large community assembly hall financed by contributions of members of the society in the Holy Land and abroad. The Jerusalem pasha, foreign consuls, and many other distinguished guests were present at the building's inauguration ceremony.<sup>107</sup>

The German colony in Jerusalem began to flourish as did the other Templer colonies. The younger generation of settlers wished to establish new colonies for their own subsistence. Three other Templer colonies were established at the beginning of the twentieth century: Wilhelma (near Petah Tikvah), Waldheim, and Bethlehem in the Galilee.<sup>108</sup>

Nonetheless, the main problem that emerged and which the Templer community in the Holy Land had to face was the fact that no reinforcements arrived from the mother country and their numbers in the colonies did not increase appreciably. In 1868 the Templer society numbered 3,000 persons of whom 750 had settled in the Holy Land. In 1898 the total number of settlers in the Templer colonies numbered 1,343 persons: 454 in Haifa (140 of which were not Templer members); 320 persons in Jaffa (40 of which were not Templers); 300 persons in Jerusalem (with eight families still living in the Old City); 269 persons in Sarona (with one non-Templer family).<sup>109</sup>

During World War I, following the British conquest of Palestine, all German settlers were forced to leave the country since they were enemy subjects. When the military administration was replaced by the British civilian government in 1920, many of them were permitted to return, but they were not always able to return to their previous homes. The Templer community did not regain its previous status, and when World War II broke out they were again expelled from the country, never to return.

### The importance of the Templer settlements

The first prominent aspect of Templer settlement in the Holy Land was the early date of their arrival in the country, even before the Jewish First Aliyah. The motives for

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**107** On the beginnings of Templer settlement in Jerusalem, see Carmel, *Siedlungen*, 44–51. For public buildings in the Templer colonies, such as community halls and schools, see Ben-Artzi, *From Germany to the Holy Land*, 147–56. On the German Colony in Jerusalem, see also Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:127–32.

**108** For these three colonies see the index in Ben-Artzi, *From Germany to the Holy Land*. For the continued development of the Templer agricultural colonies, see *ibid.*; Carmel, *Siedlungen*. On their influence on Jewish colonies, see Shmuel Leher, “Germans and Jews in Palestine during the Later Periods of Turkish Rule: A Study in Influences and Relations,” PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1988; Naftali Thalmann, “Farming in the Templer Settlements and Its Contribution to the Development of Agriculture in Eretz Israel,” *Cathedra* 78 (Dec. 1995): 65–81 (Hebrew).

**109** For statistical details of the Templer population in the Holy Land, see Carmel, *Siedlungen*, 52–54 and the sources he cites.

their coming were religious and related to the sacredness of the land to the Christian faith. To a great extent, their arrival was made possible following the reforms in the Ottoman constitution, the Capitulation treaty, the facilitation of travel to the county by steamships, and the increase in Western presence, yet behind all these stood a religious Christian yearning for and deep-rooted belief in the Holy Land.

The Templers were well versed in the technologies of the period and thus able to assist both in the establishment of their own colonies and in the economic life of the country, its inhabitants, and institutions. The Jewish settlements established a decade or two later were also able to take advantage of the Templers' agricultural expertise, means of transportation, tools, and work techniques, as well as their tourist, medical, and pharmaceutical services.<sup>110</sup> The Templar colonies also left behind very interesting relics which still constitute architectural and cultural landscape assets that arouse great interest and tell the tale of a unique period in the history of the country.<sup>111</sup>

This short summary regarding the settlement by German Templers was not aimed at presenting all details of this interesting settlement in the Holy Land in the latter days of the Ottoman period. Its sole purpose was to view its initial establishment and development in context of the many and important developments that began occurring in the Holy Land even before the onset of the new Zionist aliyah to the country.

## Summary: plans for Jewish settlement in the Holy Land prior to the First Aliyah: an episode or a sign for the future?

When summing up this chapter, I shall pose one central question. In regard to the central concepts and plans for the purchase of lands in the Holy Land and settlement of Jews that began as early as the 1830s and much longer before the Zionist First Aliyah in 1882, the question is, to what degree were these ideas actual and realistic?

In an article I wrote regarding Haim Guedalla's proposal to the Ottoman sultan, petitioning for the purchase of state-owned lands in the Holy Land for Jews, I asked whether the plan should be viewed as an episode or a harbinger of the future.<sup>112</sup> I now want to ask a much more general question regarding the entire corpus of plans

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**110** For the connections between Templar agricultural colonies and Jewish agriculture, and how the experimental methods of the German colonies aided Jewish settlers in the period of the First Aliyah, see Thalmann, "Farming in the Templar Settlements; *ibid.*, "Fritz Keller, a Pioneer of Modern Agriculture in Eretz Israel: The Man and His Work," in *Studies in Geography and History in Honor of Yehoshua Ben-Arieh*, ed. Yossi Ben-Artzi, Israel Bartal, and Elchanan Reiner (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979), 333–51 (Hebrew).

**111** On the Templar colonies and their geographic, historical, and cultural imprint on the landscape of the Holy Land, see Ben-Artzi, *From Germany to the Holy Land*, 12–17.

**112** For Guedalla's proposal, see notes 67–69 above and in the text. In greater detail, see Ben-Arieh, "A Proposal to Purchase Palestine."

raised during this period and discussed in the present chapter: were these an episode or a sign for the future in the unique history of the Holy Land?

I believe that there were two sub-stages: the first, from the 1830s to the end of the 1850s, and the second, in the 1860s and 1870s. On the face of it, the ideas and plans of the first stage can still be attributed to individuals captivated by a dream, both Jews and non-Jews, which rested on messianic millenarist non-Jewish expectations, or on the hopes and visions of some religious Jews, unaccepted by the great majority of the Jewish people. The majority believed that one should not “anticipate the coming of the Messiah” and therefore should “not ascend against a wall,” i.e. should not immigrate to the Holy Land before the coming of the Messiah. Those religious believers who did decide to immigrate to the Holy Land during this first period established what later became known as the Old Yishuv. Their motivation was born of the traditional Jewish beliefs that to live and study the Torah in the Holy City of Jerusalem, and to die in it, was a very important privilege. Their numbers increased during the nineteenth century, mainly due to the improvement in transportation to the country and changes in the Ottoman constitution that enabled their unique lifestyle in Jerusalem. They did not consider any way to purchase lands. Moreover, it seems that cultural and social changes in European countries served to strengthen their desire to immigrate to Jerusalem, in order to live there and entrench themselves within the unique socio-religious framework of Orthodox Judaism.

The second stage came after the Crimean War, when there were additional improvements in transportation and political changes in the region. The former wave of aliyah increased, stemming from the same motives, but a new situation arose in which the main source of subsistence, the halukkah funds, were now not sufficient for the continuously expanding population. Living conditions in the city became increasingly difficult, marked by much more inequality. The population of the Sefardi communities also grew rapidly and there, too, conditions worsened and with it the need to find a new a source of livelihood increased. Accordingly, ideas evolved regarding departure outside the walls of the Old City, engaging in work, and productivization. At this stage the issue of purchasing land, whether by Montefiore and his associates or by residents of Jerusalem themselves, became an existential goal in its own right in order to provide a livelihood, but it involved no vision for attracting new Jewish aliyah.

Apparently, some division of the Yishuv into two groups already began within the Jewish community in the country at this time. One group, which included the great majority of Old Yishuv members, rejected the idea of purchasing lands and engaging in productive labor, and they continued to believe in the old way of life. The second group, a minority of the Jewish population, but also affected by “enlightened” concepts in the wider Jewish world that began to spread in the country, positively considered land purchase. This group began efforts for its realization, at first in order to provide for its own independent subsistence. Later, with the onset of the First Aliyah, it was

prepared to accept the premise that should land purchase options succeed, these could assist in increasing the number of Jews who would come to live in Eretz Israel.<sup>113</sup>

Returning to the question whether this was an episode or sign for the future, the full answer can only be presented after studying the continuing development of the Yishuv in the Holy Land, after the 1880s, subjects to which I shall return in the next chapters.

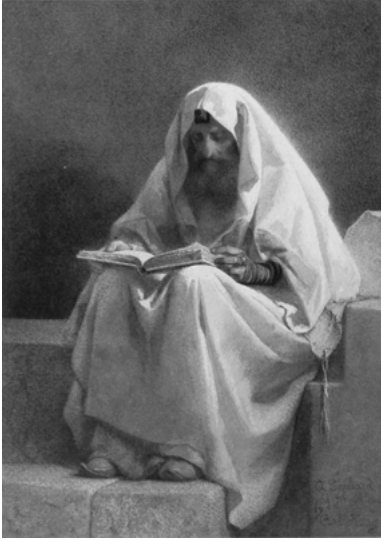
At the same time, even at this stage an initial reflection may already come to mind: that even before the First Aliyah a small group of people emerged from within the Old Yishuv in Jerusalem that was influenced by Zionist ideas which began taking shape among the Jewish people in the diaspora. This group later found common parlance with the “practical Zionism” of the First Aliyah, especially with regard to the purchase of land and Jewish settlement. This tendency is reflected in such colonies as Petah Tikvah and Rosh Pinnah (Gei Oni), but also elsewhere. I shall devote attention to these in the next chapter.

At this stage I would like to make one more point: there was a basic difference between the two groups: those of the First Aliyah who began immigrating to Eretz Israel following the establishment of “Hovevei Zion” (Lovers of Zion) societies, and the second, smaller group already living in the country. The latter did not have to immigrate to Eretz Israel, they were already there. Their objective was mainly to change their way of life from dependence on the halukkah funds to productive agricultural labor. The first group, those of the First Aliyah, faced a much bigger challenge: to leave their homes and immigrate to a foreign far-off land in order to live in it and create a new society.

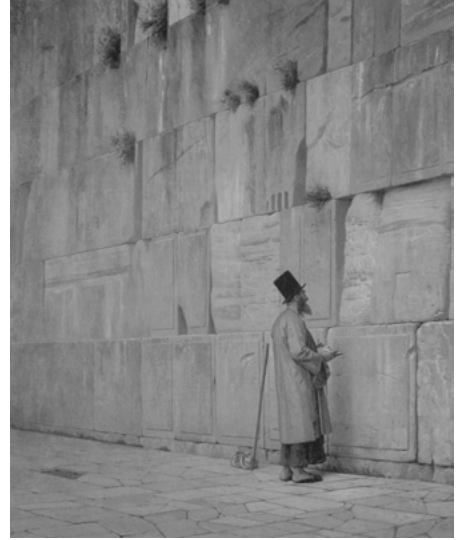
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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., especially my discussion of the positions adopted by the Hebrew newspapers *Halevanon* and *Hamaggid*.





A Jew praying in Jerusalem, 1859.  
Artist: Carl Haag



The Western Wall, 1859(?).  
Artist: Jean Léon Gérôme



Yehosef Schwarz, 1850.  
Author of a descriptive geography of Eretz  
Israel



Rabbi Eliahu Moshe Panigel.  
Chief Sefardi rabbi of Eretz Israel



Rabbi Shmuel Salant.



Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin.



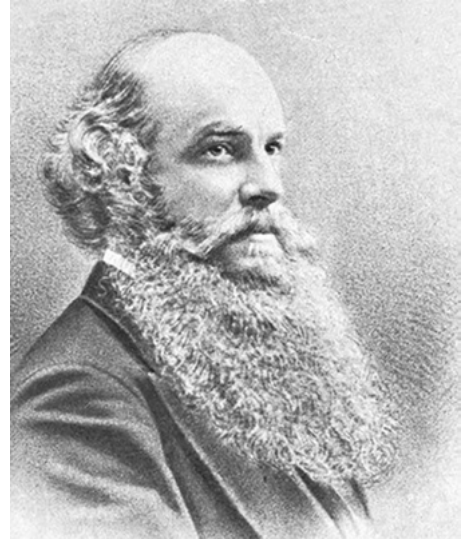
Israel Dov Frumkin.



Rabbi Joseph Rivlin.



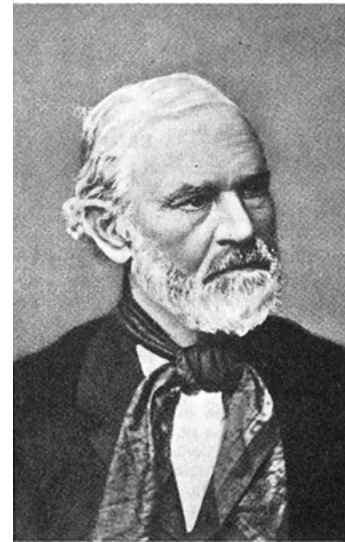
Abraham Moshe Luncz.



Laurence Oliphant.



Christoph Hoffmann.  
A leader of the German Templar colonists.



Georg David Hardegg.  
A leader of the German Templar colonists.

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## Chapter 5: The period of the First Aliyah, 1882–1904

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## Introduction: Hovevei Zion and the first stage of the First Aliyah, 1882–1884

### The historical background and development of the First Aliyah

In this chapter I shall focus on the First Aliyah. The main question under consideration is whether it deserves the name it has been accorded. The previous chapter reviewed the growth in numbers of the Old Yishuv until the period of the First Aliyah. I shall now present and examine the developments that took place in Eretz Israel during that period and their significance.

Zionist histories dealing with the First Aliyah normally begin with an introduction devoted to the historical development of Judaism in the diaspora, mainly in Europe, and the beginning of the “Hibbat Zion” movement.<sup>1</sup> I shall not deal at length with the events that took place abroad, yet it is impossible to understand what happened in Eretz Israel without looking into what happened outside it. This holds true, too, for the First Aliyah. In the first part of his three-volume work *Zionism in Russia*, Israel Klausner deals with the Jews of Russia and Eretz Israel up to the Hibbat Zion period (1777–1880), the yearnings for the Holy Land and plans for settling it by Jews and non-Jews, the controversies between Jewish personae regarding that country, and more.<sup>2</sup> His second volume (1881–1914) begins with the statement: “The efforts of the few societies for the settlement of Eretz Israel as well as the aliyah of individuals would not have borne fruit, and would not have become a mass movement of aliyah and renewal of the national center in Eretz Israel, without the storm that raged over the heads of the Jews in these countries, demonstrating to them that they were foreigners there.”<sup>3</sup> I cannot but agree with that statement.

In Chapter One I dealt with the question of when the modern period began in Eretz Israel as part of the Middle East in general. I noted that some researchers view

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<sup>1</sup> Zionist historiography identifies the first signs of Jewish nationalism in the nineteenth century. These are reflected, inter alia, in the term “Hibbat Zion” (Love of Zion) and in the writings of those considered “precursors of Zionism” who included both rabbinical persona and secular leaders. Their writings were based on traditional Jewish thought, but were also influenced by nationalist ideas emerging in Europe, as well as by dissatisfaction at the way Jewish emancipation was being implemented and the rise of modern antisemitism. They therefore posited the vision of the “Return to Zion” and the establishment of agricultural colonies as a first step towards its realization.

<sup>2</sup> Zionist historiography often uses the term Hibbat Zion, at times referring to the period before the First Aliyah and in relation to the precursors of Zionism, and also even during the First Aliyah when referring to the Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) movement that emerged in Russia, and which I shall discuss below. Hovevei Zion is the name applied to the many societies established in eastern Europe, some of whose members came on aliyah to Eretz Israel and established colonies there. On Hibbat Zion, see Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*. See also Yossi Goldstein, “The Beginnings of Hibbat Zion: A Different Perspective,” *AJS Review* 40 (2016): 33–55.

<sup>3</sup> Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:91.



the beginning of the modern period upon the outset of activities by the Zionist movement in Eretz Israel and the establishment of the first colonies in the country during the First Aliyah. If we accept this view, there is no place to discuss the many important developments that took place in Eretz Israel in the nineteenth century, before this aliyah. These changes include the considerable transformations in the character of Ottoman rule that led to reforms in the Ottoman constitution (Tanzimat) and the Capitulations Treaty, which made it possible for immigrants to the Holy Land to maintain their foreign citizenship. Additional developments were the growing involvement of foreign powers in many matters pertaining to the country, and the establishment of foreign consulates that functioned as a state within a state, as well as the increase in aliyah of traditional-religious Jews who in effect formed the Old Yishuv community, and more. Thus the view that the First Aliyah brought about the onset of the modern period in Eretz Israel is unacceptable. At the same time, there is no doubt that the beginning of the new Zionist aliyah to Eretz Israel, set in motion by the Hovevei Zion movement about eighty years after the beginning of the modern era in the country, was the most important factor that began operating in the country to change its landscape. It affected Eretz Israel more than anything else and laid the foundations for the changes and developments that continue to this very day. Accordingly, the beginning of the First Aliyah should be viewed as the most important sub-period in the history of Eretz Israel in the latter part of the Ottoman period, subsequently justly named “Practical Zionism.”

Zionist historiography denotes the waves of Zionist aliyah to Eretz Israel, from the 1880s onwards, by numbers. The dates of the First Aliyah were set at 1882–1904, and those of the Second Aliyah as 1904–1914/17 (including the period of World War I). I shall adopt this chronology and devote two separate chapters to it – this and the next. However, the sections dealing with political Zionism and Theodor Herzl, although beginning as early as 1896, will be discussed in Chapter Six. Thus, although the present chapter will continue until 1904, it will focus on local developments and not on political Zionism.

Following an introduction concerning the first signs of Zionism and the pogroms of 1881, known as “Storms in the Negev,” and the establishment of the Hovevei Zion movement, I shall elaborate on the establishment of the first Jewish colonies in Eretz Israel. This will be followed by a discussion of the aid provided them by Baron Rothschild and their solidification. I shall also deal with the activities of the baron and his officials, who ruled with an iron fist, and their confrontations with an appreciable number of the colonists and Zionist leaders. This led to the establishment of an internal movement within the Zionist movement known as Cultural Zionism, launched at the beginning of the 1890s and led by Asher Ginsberg, better known by his pen name, Ahad Ha’am. Around that time came another wave of immigrants, following which a difficult crisis developed among them known as the “Panic Crisis,” resulting in a large migration out of the country. Later in the 1890s, colonization continued to develop as Baron Rothschild assisted new and existing colonies, and the



settlement movement kept on expanding. In 1900 the baron decided to cease his direct activities in the country and transferred support of the colonies to a new organization, the Jewish Colonization Association.

### **Storms in the Negev, the Hovevei Zion movement, and the Old Yishuv in the Holy Land**

On March 1, 1881, revolutionaries assassinated Russian Tsar Alexander II. His son Alexander III, who ascended the throne, was the leading opponent of any liberal reform. Plans by Alexander II to grant a constitution were put aside.<sup>4</sup> An autocracy was declared and a campaign to annihilate all rebels was instigated with the aim of attaining a unified Russia in terms of nationality, religion, and language. Accordingly, the suppression of minorities increased. This policy was especially harmful to the Jews for whom a period of great suffering and bloodshed, of expulsions and pogroms, was set in motion. Immediately after the new Tsar ascended the throne, anonymous circles began to organize “outbursts of the people’s fury” against Jews. Following the assassination of Alexander II, one of the newspapers, supported by the government, reported that the murder was a Jewish act. Pogroms aimed at Jews began during the Russian Easter, on April 15, and continued on and off for many months in over a hundred villages and larger cities in southern Russia, in Kiev (on April 26) and Odessa (between May 3–5). These groups began setting fire to Jewish villages and neighborhoods in Lithuania and White Russia as well. On June 21 Jewish wooden buildings were burnt in Minsk, among them twenty synagogues. Over half of the Jewish part of the town was transformed into a pile of ashes, and many families remained without a roof over their heads. These pogroms became known in Jewish historiography as “Storms in the Negev.”<sup>5</sup>

News of the pogroms shocked Russian Jewry. Until then they had lived with the hope that their condition would improve and they would be granted equal rights. The government position also astonished them. The authorities were generally apathetic, and even accused the Jews of arousing hatred by having gained control of all major economic fields. There were also similar statements by the Tsar and the government sponsored press. On May 18, at the trial of the participants in the pogroms, the

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<sup>4</sup> My description is based on *ibid.*, 1:91–92, and see the sources he cites. A documentary history of the Hibbat Zion period is Shmuel Yavne’eli, *The Book of Zionism: The Hibbat Zion Period . . .* 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1961) (Hebrew). See also Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*.

<sup>5</sup> Fearing Russian censorship, the Jews referred to the pogroms of 1881–1884 as “Storms in the Negev”; *negev* in Hebrew means “south,” and by this they were referring particularly to the pogroms in Ukraine. According to David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 51–59, the pogroms continued until the beginning of the summer of 1884 and spread to Ukraine and White Russia.

prosecutor in the Kiev military court stated: “If the eastern border is closed to the Jews, the western border is still open to them, why don’t they use it?” The pogroms caused people to flee, the problem being where to go, whence to emigrate. Many of the refugees aspired to reach America, and the large Jewish organizations supported immigration to America. There were even those who believed it would be possible to establish a Jewish center, a Jewish state so to speak, within the United States of America. At the same time, the Hovevei Zion groups established in Romania and Russia prior to the pogroms gained in strength and Jewish personae began speaking of aliyah to Eretz Israel and productive agricultural settlement there. These were joined by voices from Eretz Israel calling for aliyah, as noted in the previous chapter. In contrast, shortly after the pogroms the “Am Olam” society was formed in Odessa to promote immigration to America. A plow and the tablets of the Ten Commandments were chosen as its symbol, expressing the aspiration that the Jews would be transformed into productive laborers in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

The Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU), too, favored directing the emigrants to America, since its leaders believed the Holy Land was small and would be unable to receive the flow of immigration. Letters and pamphlets were distributed in Russia, allegedly written by the AIU and Moses Montefiore, in which prospective immigrants were promised assistance in the form of free transportation to New York. Supporters of the settlement of Eretz Israel came out strongly against the AIU mindset. The fierce controversy between supporters of immigration to Eretz Israel and those who preferred the United States began spreading throughout the Jewish communities. Of all people, the person who came to the AIU’s defense was precisely Charles Netter, an AIU representative and the founder of the Mikveh Israel agricultural school in Eretz Israel. In a letter he sent the *Jewish Chronicle* in March 1882, Netter presented the reasons for the failure to settle the country and the non-suitability of Eretz Israel for the establishment of agricultural colonies, especially when compared to America.<sup>7</sup>

Jewish groups and societies organized in the cities of Russia, Lithuania, and Poland in January of 1882 with the aim of immigrating to the Holy Land.<sup>8</sup> Among them was the BILU society established by university and high school students from Kharkov in 1882, immediately after the onset of the Russian pogroms. They

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<sup>6</sup> On Am Olam, see Israel Bartal, “Farming the Land on Three Continents: Bilu, Am Oylom, and Yefe-Nahar,” *Jewish History* 21 (2007): 249–61. In 1880 world Jewry numbered 7,682,000 persons, of whom 6,772,000 (84 percent) lived in Europe, with the majority in Russia and eastern Europe. See Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 13–37, esp. the table on p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> On this controversy, including support by the Alliance Israélite Universelle of immigration to the USA, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:94–107. For the position adopted by Netter and the criticism launched against him by Zionist personalities and organizations, see *ibid.*, 1:179–84.

<sup>8</sup> Hovevei Zion societies had been established in eastern Europe even before the “Storms in the Negev” but they lacked a central body and were not very active. For the Hovevei Zion societies established in the spring of 1882 and their later development, see *ibid.*, 1:202–26 and 364–84, respectively.

sought a solution to the problems of the Jewish people by settling in Eretz Israel and saw themselves as pioneers of a Jewish nationalist-socialist community. Initially the group numbered five hundred members, but only few came to Eretz Israel, and over a period of two years around fifty Biluim, in groups or as individuals, arrived in the country.<sup>9</sup>

Even earlier, between January 1–12, 1882, a conference of one hundred representatives from thirty-three Romanian Hovevei Zion societies convened in Focșani, Romania. They chose a central committee for the settlement of Eretz Israel. The committee was established in the city of Galatz (Galați) on the Danube which later served as the port of immigration to Eretz Israel.<sup>10</sup>

In September 1882, an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Auto-emancipation* was published, a “call to his people by a Russian Jew” written by Yehuda Leib Pinsker. Its motto was: “If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when? Hillel [the Elder].”<sup>11</sup> Immediately following the call, a Hovevei Zion society was founded in Odessa, headed by Pinsker himself. The society was established with the assistance of Moshe Leib Lilienblum, one of the advocates of the Zionist movement.<sup>12</sup> It played a central role in providing advice about the establishment of additional Hovevei Zion societies throughout Europe. The Hovevei Zion conference convened in November 1884 in Kattowitz, marking Montefiore’s hundredth birthday.<sup>13</sup> During the conference it was agreed that a union of societies would be established to provide assistance to the first colonies already existing in Eretz Israel.<sup>14</sup>

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**9** Biluim were members of BILU, a group whose name is an acronym from a biblical verse (Isa. 2:5): “Beit Ya’akov lekhu ve-nelkha” (House of Jacob, let us go [up]). For the Biluim, see below in the discussion of the colony of Gederah and nn. 28–29.

**10** On the congress in Focșani, see Yavne’eli, *Hibbat Zion*. 1:31–32; Israel Klausner, “*Hibbat Zion*” in *Romania* (Jerusalem: Hassifriya Hatzionit, 1958), 77–84 (Hebrew); Moshe Schaerf, *The Torch Was Lit in Romania: Samuel Pineles and Early Zionism in Romania with the Pineles–Herzl Correspondence* (Jerusalem: Hassifriya Hatzionit, 1986), 35–39 (Hebrew).

**11** This pamphlet was first published in German in 1882. For an English translation, see Leon Pinsker, *Auto-emancipation* (New York: Federation of American Zionists, 1916) and many other editions.

**12** Until the “Storms in the Negev,” Lilienblum, one of the promoters of the idea of a Zionist movement, was undecided whether Eretz Israel was the only place in which the Jewish problem could be solved. Since the pogroms, he enthusiastically adopted that idea. Pinsker, too, in his pamphlet conceived of Eretz Israel as the sole solution, but later spoke of two alternatives: if possible there, that is preferable, but if not, then somewhere else should be considered. See Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:68–71.

**13** Montefiore turned ninety-nine on Oct. 24, 1884. It was then that proposals were raised to mark his centenary by supporting agricultural colonies in Eretz Israel. See *ibid.*, 1:385–98. On July 28, 1885, about two months before he was to celebrate his hundredth birthday, Montefiore passed away.

**14** On Pinsker, the activity of Hovevei Zion in Odessa under his leadership together with Lilienblum, who were joined by Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever and other religious personalities, and until the Kattowitz conference, see Goldstein, “Beginnings of Hibbat Zion,” 44–54. At that conference it was unanimously decided to name their movement “The Moses Montefiore Testimonial in

Envoys were sent to examine the conditions there.<sup>15</sup> In addition, meetings were held, an actions committee for the entire movement was established, and assistance to the colonies was initiated. Yet, all these were not enough until Baron Rothschild came to the aid of the colonies.<sup>16</sup>

Attempts at agricultural colonization in Eretz Israel by its Jewish inhabitants before the First Aliyah were discussed in the previous chapter. The two most important attempts were in 1878 in Gei Oni near Safed, and in Petah Tikvah, east of Jaffa. The two colonies did not survive, and thus upon the arrival of the first members of the First Aliyah, there was no agricultural colony operating in the country aside from the Mikveh Israel school established by the AIU in 1870.<sup>17</sup>

Nonetheless, it should be noted that at the same time as the onset of the First Aliyah by the Hovevei Zion movement, individual *olim* (lit. those who go up, i.e. come on aliyah) and Jewish personae continued to arrive in Jerusalem upon their own initiative. Such was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (Perelman) who came in 1881 and was very active in the revival of the Hebrew language. After a while he developed close relations with Yehiel Michal Pines, who was appointed to direct the Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund. Together they established the “Tehiat Yisrael” (Renaissance of Israel) society and committed themselves to speak only Hebrew in their homes. Later they also cooperated with those Biluim who came to in Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup>

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the Holy Land.” At first it seemed that the movement was taking shape, but this was followed by dissention. It was decided to convene a second conference in the town of Druskieniki, where the movement’s name was changed to Hibbat Zion and Pinsker’s leadership was reconfirmed; Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 91–127.

**15** One of the first envoys was the merchant and philanthropist Kalonimus Ze’ev Wissotzky who visited Eretz Israel in 1885. See Kalonimus Z. Wissotzky, *Letters Concerning the Settlement of Eretz Israel*, repr. of the 1898 edition with introduction, notes, and index by Israel Klausner (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1980) (Hebrew). The editor’s introduction also notes Wissotzky’s involvement in Hovevei Zion affairs and his ties with various leading members.

**16** For Hovevei Zion’s activity, see Shulamit Laskov, “Hovevei Zion in Russia: Supporters of the Yishuv in Eretz Israel,” in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 1:141–49 (Hebrew). On the beginning of Baron Rothschild’s support of the colonies, see Aaronsohn, *Rothschild*, 53–67 and the references there. On the first colonies, see also Chaim Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement: The Story of Jewish Settlement in the Land of Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1985), 8–26.

**17** Petah Tikvah and Gei Oni shall be discussed in greater detail below. On the beginnings of Mikveh Israel, see Eliahu Krause, “The Birth Pangs of Mikveh Israel (on the Basis of Charles Netter’s Letters),” in *Long before Zionism: Jewish Nationhood and the Palestine Question*, ed. Shmuel Almog (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 1981), 207–11 (Hebrew); Shapira, *Mikveh Yisrael*.

**18** Much has been written about Ben-Yehuda. See the exhaustive biography, Yosef Lang, *Speak Hebrew! The Life of Eliezer Ben Yehuda*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2008) (Hebrew). For the topics mentioned, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:329–39. One of the first biographies in English is Robert St. John, *Tongue of the Prophets: The Life Story of Eliezer Ben Yehuda* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1952). For his relationship with Pines, see Salmon, *Do Not Provoke Providence*, 200–206. In the 1890s, after Ahad Ha’am’s visit to Jerusalem and the establishment of Bnei Moshe,

## The first seven colonies and settlement by individuals

The process of settlement during the First Aliyah can be divided into a number of stages. The first was the establishment of the first seven colonies between the years 1882–1884: Petah Tikvah; four Hovevei Zion colonies – Rishon Lezion, Rosh Pinnah, Zikhron Ya’akov, and Yesud Hama’alah; Gederah – the Biluim colony; and Ekron, the colony established by Baron Rothschild.

### Petah Tikvah

There is an ongoing debate in Israeli historiography between those who view Petah Tikvah as the first colony, based on its initial establishment, and those who believe Rishon Lezion should be conceived as the first colony since in terms of settlement dates it deserves the title, considering that Petah Tikvah was already abandoned when Rishon Lezion was first settled.<sup>19</sup> I believe the debate considering the exact date of establishment is less important than the settlement aims and date of establishment, and thus I shall begin with Petah Tikvah, which I consider to be the first colony.

Petah Tikvah was established in 1878, four years before the beginning of the First Aliyah. Its land, part of the Arab village of Mulabbis near the banks of the Yarkon, was purchased from an Arab resident of Jaffa on July 31, 1878. A shed for residence was built within two months, a well was dug, and large parts of the colony lands were worked during the agricultural season of 1878/79 by seven Jewish settlers hailing from Jerusalem. Another plot of land was then purchased, twice as large as the first, and around thirty-five additional families from Jerusalem joined the colony in 1880. It was then that the disintegration of the colony began. It was ravaged by malaria that caused the deaths of several members of the new group which settled on the banks of the Yarkon, and suffered from conflicts between the first and second groups and their supporters. Most of the settlers left the colony in the winter of 1880, and the remaining colonists abandoned it in the summer of 1881. Several of the initial founders, who returned to Jerusalem, established the “Petah Tikvah Company” in 1882 for the purpose of organizing a new colony on the site. They formulated the “Petah Tikvah Regulations,” intended to maintain social order, which all landowners were obligated to accept. At the same time, sections of the colony’s abandoned lands were offered to a representative of settlement

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relations with Pines cooled. For Ben-Yehuda and Jerusalem, see the autobiography of his son, Ittamar Ben-Avi, *At the Dawn of Our Independence: Memoirs of the First Hebrew Child* ([Tel Aviv]: Public Committee for the Publication of the Writings of Ittamar Ben-Avi, 1961) (Hebrew).

<sup>19</sup> Though Petah Tikvah was an abandoned colony at the time of the establishment of Rishon Lezion, I would designate it as the first colony since the majority of those who resettled there were among the original members, a situation that did not apply in Gei Oni (Rosh Pinnah).

committees abroad, and an envoy was even sent to try and sell them there. Thus was land acquired by a group of Hovevei Zion from Lithuania (part of Tsarist Russia at the time), most of them from Bialystok and its surroundings. A number of Jerusalemites returned to Petah Tikvah on October 8, 1882. A year later a group of olim from Bialystok arrived. In late 1884, the renewed colony numbered thirty-nine families. Although most of them were from Bialystok, the veteran former Jerusalemites controlled the colony committee. Petah Tikvah grew and developed and was awarded the epithet “Em Hamoshavot” (Mother of the Colonies). The colony was unique in its combination of old and new: the veteran settlement of Old Yishuv members, renewed with the help of a group of Hovevei Zion from Russia.<sup>20</sup> I have therefore designated it as the first among the agricultural colonies established in Eretz Israel.<sup>21</sup>

### Rishon Lezion

Rishon Lezion was not established by an organized group of Hovevei Zion, but by immigrants from abroad who arrived in the country individually. Among them were envoys sent from Hovevei Zion societies in Russia and Romania to tour the land and purchase plots for agricultural settlements, and others who arrived on their own initiative and at their own expense. During the sojourn of the olim in Jaffa, they decided to unite to achieve their common goal. On March 19, 1882 the “Yesud Hama’alah Pioneers Committee” was established, an independent local organization that operated according to plans set down in its own regulations.<sup>22</sup> On June 29, 1882, following an eight-week tour (intermittently) to locate lands, the land of Ayūn Qāra was purchased from Arab effendis living in Jaffa, an uninhabited and unworked sandy plot of 3,340 dunams. On July 31, 1882 the settlers moved onto the land. The colony received the symbolic name of Rishon Lezion, literally “First in Zion” derived from Isaiah 41:27. Upon its establishment the Yesud Hama’alah Pioneers Committee ceased to exist.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> On the involvement of Pines in the resettlement and development of Petah Tikvah, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:283–88. For him as the Hovevei Zion representative in matters of the colonies and his activity relating to the settlement of Gederah, see Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> On Petah Tikvah, see Ran Aaronsohn, “Building the Land: Stages in First Aliya Colonization (1882–1904),” *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 3 (1983): 240–41. See also id., *Rothschild*, 183–84; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 8–9; Yehoshua Kaniel, “The Controversy between Petah Tikvah and Rishon Lezion concerning Primacy of Settlement and Its Historical Significance,” *Cathedra* 9 (Oct. 1978): 26–53 (Hebrew).

<sup>22</sup> On the involvement of Zalman David Levontin and Pines in the establishment and activities of the Yesud Hama’alah Pioneers Committee in Jaffa (not to be confused with the colony bearing the same name), see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:191–97.

<sup>23</sup> For the establishment of Rishon Lezion, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 238–39; *ibid.*, *Rothschild*, 61–65; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 12–13; Dan Giladi, “Rishon Lezion under

## Rosh Pinnah

Rosh Pinnah was established by the “Society for the Settlement of Eretz Israel” which was founded in 1881 in the Romanian town of Moinești. The society sent envoys to Eretz Israel to purchase land, most prominent among them being Moshe David Shub. In August 1882, four thousand dunams of the land of the village al-Ja’una near Safed were purchased. This was the area in which Jews from Safed has unsuccessfully attempted to establish the colony of Gei Oni in 1878. Following purchase of the land, a group of settlers set out on their way to Eretz Israel. They numbered twenty-seven families who arrived in the country in August 1882 and initially settled in Safed. The men immediately set to work on the land, and the new colony was named Rosh Pinnah.<sup>24</sup>

## Zikhron Ya’akov

Zikhron Ya’akov was established by the “Central Committee of Societies for the Settlement of Eretz Israel” from Galatz in Romania. After a while, this committee sent a convoy of olim with the intention that they join the Romanian immigrants who had settled in Rosh Pinnah. They were unable to do so and grouped in Haifa, beginning a search for land to purchase and settle. The Central Committee had no choice but to support their aspiration and began sending additional convoys to the country. In the meantime, the settlers bought from a Christian effendi living in Haifa the lands of Zammarin, a small tenant-farmed community on the southern ridge of the Carmel Mountains. The land was purchased on October 10, 1882 and the first group of men settled in Zammarin, later named Zikhron Ya’akov after Baron Rothschild’s father, on December 5, 1882, the first day of Hanukkah.<sup>25</sup>

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the Tutelage of Baron Rothschild (1882–1900),” *Cathedra* 9 (Oct. 1978): 127–52 (Hebrew). See also Israel Belkind, *In the Path of the Biluim: Memoirs of Israel Belkind*, ed. Ran Aaronsohn (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Pub. House, 1983) (Hebrew). Belkind claims that his immigration to Eretz Israel was motivated by Zionism, not by the pogroms.

<sup>24</sup> On Rosh Pinnah, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 239; id., *Rothschild*, 69–71; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 9–10. For more details, see Nakdimon Rogel, “The ‘Deed of Purchase’ of Rosh Pinnah,” *Cathedra* 65 (Sept. 1992): 117–36 (Hebrew); Moshe David Shub, *Memoirs of the House of David [II]: Chapters in the History of Rosh Pinnah*, ed. Meir Hildesheimer (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2009) (Hebrew).

<sup>25</sup> For the establishment of Zikhron Ya’akov, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 239–40; id., *Rothschild*, 73–77; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 10–11.



### Yesud Hama'alah

Yesud Hama'alah was established by twenty-four members of Hovevei Zion, most of them from Mezhirich in Poland and a few from Brisk in Lithuania, both part of Tsarist Russia at the time, who established the Hevrat Nahalat Sadeh Vakerem (Estate of Fields and Vineyards Society). This colony was based on a conception that differed from that of its predecessors. Its aim was to plant orchards and to choose a small number of the landowners to work them with the help of hired hands until they bore fruit, after which the remaining buyers would arrive and settle on their plots. On August 18, 1883 the society's representatives purchased 2,500 dunams in Upper Galilee, near Lake Hula, in a place the Arabs called al-Zubayd. The site also bore a Hebrew name: Mei Merom ("Waters of Merom") since a dozen years earlier it had been bought by the Abu family, an important Jewish family from Safed for whom Arab tenant farmers worked the land under a Jewish supervisor. The pioneers from Mezhirich arrived in Eretz Israel in March 1884 and settled in Safed, from where they went to work the land of the new colony. Since they were solely the vanguard, they did not choose a committee or formulate regulations. All colony business was handled by managers on behalf of the Society. The remaining landowners in Russia did not immigrate to the country or join the colony, a fact that negatively affected its development.<sup>26</sup>

### Gederah – the Biluim colony

Gederah was established at the end of 1884 by Hovevei Zion members who founded and managed it on the basis of decisions adopted at the Kattowitz Conference. The area of the colony was 3,000 dunams of which 1,800 belonged to the Hovevei Zion Society and the remaining 1,200 to individuals. The Hovevei Zion turned to Pines, who arrived in Eretz Israel in 1878 to serve as the Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund manager, to assist the young Biluim in Gederah.<sup>27</sup> They were young, secular, and single, with no personal capital and holding socialist views, and numbered a mere nine.<sup>28</sup> They arrived in Gederah on the first day of Hanukkah, December 14,

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<sup>26</sup> For the establishment of Yesud Hama'alah, see Aaronsohn, "Buiding the Land," 240; id., *Rothschild*, 108–11; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 13–14. See also Moshe David Shub, *Memoirs of the House of David: Seventy Years of Activity in the Fields of National Revival and the Yishuv* (Jerusalem, 1973; facs. ed. of Jerusalem, 1937) (Hebrew).

<sup>27</sup> On Pines, see ch. 4, n. 93; Salmon, *Do Not Provoke Providence*, 98–114, 192–212; id., *Religion and Zionism*, 77–95, who notes that Pines' activity was carried out over a period of fifty years.

<sup>28</sup> On the Biluim, their relations with Charles Netter, settlement in Rishon Lezion, and the establishment of Gederah with the support of Pines, see Shulamit Laskov, "Biluim: Reality and Legend," *Zionism* 3 (1981): 17–69. See also Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 57–62, who notes that at first they hesitated whether to immigrate to the Holy Land or to the USA, and that they looked to Oliphant for help. After their settlement in Gederah they did not receive wholehearted support from Hovevei

1886, where they found two plots of land that had been purchased from a Christian effendi, partially worked by Arabs of the neighboring village of Qatra. Together, they built a small wooden shed with a red tile roof as their first home. They started tilling the land and preparing a rocky area for planting orchards. However the colony's situation was difficult due to the total lack of capital, isolation, and harassment by its Arab neighbors. The settlers received a monthly salary and negligible support in general from Hovevei Zion, and were subject to the authority of a manager-supervisor from outside the colony. Yet, their unique nature and the fact that Pines was their almost permanent manager, made it possible for them to run the colony de facto, and assisted in weathering the difficulties. They chose a committee, convened assemblies, and made decisions regarding the character of the social and religious life of the colony, which differed greatly from the other colonies. The Biluim, as a movement with lofty pretensions and goals, ended with the aliyah to Gederah. The ideals they dreamt of before their aliyah gave birth in reality to only one small colony. Thus, in settlement terms, the BILU movement was only one link, a weak one at that, in the chain of First Aliyah colonies. Yet, their great contribution cannot be underestimated, since with the onset of the Second Aliyah the Biluim of Gederah were to a certain degree considered to be the first pioneers of their society.<sup>29</sup>

### Ekron – the colony of Baron Rothschild

After Hovevei Zion and members of the Old Yishuv, Baron Rothschild was the most involved party in the First Aliyah colonies. His first act was to give his consent, following his meeting with Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever, to establish the new Ekron colony, which in time changed its name to Mazkeret Batyah, named after his mother.<sup>30</sup> The baron agreed to finance a small colony for young strong people who had already

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Zion as they were secular, this due to the conflicts within that movement between the *maskilim* and the Orthodox; see *ibid.*, 104, 128–34. The compromise was the appointment of Pines to assume responsibility for Gederah.

<sup>29</sup> For the establishment of Gederah, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 242–43; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 13; Laskov, “Biluim: Reality and Legend,” 30–31; *id.*, *The Biluim* (Jerusalem: Hassifrya Hatzionit, 1979) (Hebrew); Yosef Salmon, “The BILU Movement,” in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 1:117–40 (Hebrew); Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 2: 364–67; see also Belkind, *In the Path of the Biluim*; Hayyim Hissin, *From the Notes of a Member of Bilu*, ed. Shulamit Laskov (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1990) (Hebrew).

<sup>30</sup> Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, one of the younger members of this distinguished family, was more interested in art than in banking. Nevertheless, for several years he was quietly involved in efforts on behalf of his Jewish brethren. In early 1882 he was among those who established a committee to help victims of the pogroms in Russia. As part of this activity, he met Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever, one of the leaders of Hovevei Zion in Russia, on Sept. 28, 1882.

learnt how to till the land.<sup>31</sup> This was a major decision that served as the first step in his extensive operation during the following decades. In November 1882, ten families from the Jewish village of Pavlovka in Lithuania, experienced in farming, were chosen to come on aliyah to Eretz Israel, and Jehiel Brill, the editor of the Hebrew *Halevanon* newspaper and a former Jerusalemite, was chosen to accompany them. They settled in Mikveh Israel in December 1882. After about a year, on October 21, 1883, a plot of level land of 2,400 dunams was purchased for them from the Arab village of Aqir. During the first stage of their work, the temporarily lived in this village while their families remained in Mikveh Israel. Most of the families settled in the colony on October 21, 1884 and were soon joined by seven additional families from Romania. They lived in four large stone houses built by Joshua Ossowetzky, a former teacher at Mikveh Israel who was appointed administrator of Ekron in March 1884.<sup>32</sup> Each family received a plot of one to two hundred dunams on which wheat and barley were sown. The administrator was in charge of the monthly support the residents received from Baron Rothschild, as well as community services – a synagogue and a school – in two public buildings constructed in the center of the colony.<sup>33</sup>

### Settlement by individuals

A number of settlements by individuals were also established in the early days of the First Aliyah. They are indicative of the unique spirit of agricultural settlement prevalent among Jews living or arriving in the country. I shall mention three of them: Wadi el-Hanin, which later became Nes Zionah, the Felman family orchard, and Shoshanat Hayarden.<sup>34</sup>

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**31** For the activity of Rabbi Mohilever, the positions he adopted, and the roles he filled since the 1870s until his death in 1898, including the opinion that it was he who encouraged Baron Rothschild to become involved with the settlement project, see Salmon, *Religion and Zionism*, 140–76, esp. 146–47.

**32** For Ossowetzky, who later also engaged in land acquisition, see the index of Aaronsohn, *Rothschild*.

**33** On Ekron, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 241–42, including the letter sent by Rabbi Zadoc Kahn in the name of Rothschild. See also Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 14.

**34** For settlement by individuals – Wadi el-Hanin (which later became Nes Zionah), the Felman family orchard, and Shoshanat Hayarden (later Mishmar Hayarden), see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 243–45. For Wadi el-Hanin, as well as other *biaras* (plots of land with a well) in the vicinity of Jaffa that had been acquired even earlier by Jews who did not live on the estates, see *ibid.*, 243–44; see also Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 14–15. For the episode of the Felman family, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 244–45; Barbara E. Mann, *A Place in History: Modernism, Tel Aviv and the Creation of Jewish Urban Space* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 232. Members of Hovevei Zion in Mezhirich were those who also founded Yesud Hama’alah. On Shoshanat Hayarden and the Lubowsky family, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 245 and the sources he cites; see also Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 20.

Apparently, already in 1878 a German Templer had acquired a plot of around 2,000 dunams in Wadi el-Hanin. He moved with his family into an old khan building and established a *biara*, an orchard estate watered from a well, and a large home beside it. After a while, the German settler left the country and was happy to exchange his estate for that of Reuven Lehrer, a Jewish grain merchant from Odessa who owned an agricultural estate there. Lehrer immigrated with his son at the beginning of 1883. After renovating the khan and registering most of the lands to his name at the land registry (1,412 dunams), he brought all seven members of his family and named the place Nahalat Reuven (Reuven's Estate). Orchards and grains were planted, but conditions were difficult. They suffered from isolation, malaria that caused the death of Lehrer's youngest son, poverty, and hunger. It was only the proximity of the site to Rishon Lezion and a loan from Baron Rothschild that helped the settlers endure.

Dov David Felman, a wealthy leather merchant from Mezhirich in Poland, arrived in Eretz Israel on his own with the purpose of acquiring land on which to settle. In 1883 he purchased an orchard area of forty dunams in the village of Summayl with a house and a well on the property. His family of thirteen persons arrived towards the end of 1883 and settled there, tending the orange trees and supplementing their income by selling milk and vegetables at the Jaffa market. Four of the family members died within four years of different diseases, including the father. The mother, Sarah-Ita, insisted on staying. She weathered the difficulties with the help of a loan from Baron Rothschild, and five years later, when the orchard began bearing fruit, had her first taste of success.

Mordechai Lubowsky, a merchant and estate owner from Lithuania who had immigrated to the United States, sought to establish a private estate in Eretz Israel. Under the influence of Ya'akov Hai Abu of Safed, he purchased a plot of 2,800 dunams in 1884 in Upper Galilee, west of the Bnot Ya'akov Bridge, and moved in. His family joined him in 1885 and started working the land. A well was dug and stables for horses and a small house were built. Some of the land was leased to Arab tenant farmers. Later the settlers leased the khan at the nearby Bnot Ya'akov Bridge, thinking of establishing a hotel there. However, their plans failed and they were forced to abandon Shoshanat Hayarden in 1888 and settle in Yesud Hama'alalah. In time, the colony of Mishmar Hayarden was founded on the lands of Shoshanat Hayarden.

In 1885, a large symbolic menorah was lit in Odessa to note the seven Hebrew colonies, which together with three additional settlements by individuals comprised the new agricultural settlement effort in Eretz Israel. Its property was meager, the total land area was around 37,000 dunams, and the population did not exceed 1,500 persons. Yet the importance of the first colonies and the beginning of their operation cannot be measured quantitatively. During that period the seeds were planted which would bring about the development of Jewish agricultural endeavor in Eretz Israel.

It is important to note that of the total number of olim during the First Aliyah, which due to a lack of proper registration is estimated at 50,000, many left the country after a few short years. Those who remained found themselves in the cities, mainly in Jerusalem. In addition, Yemenite Jews arrived in the country in 1882. The three Hovevei Zion colonies of Rishon Lezion, Rosh Pinnah, and Zikhron Ya'akov encountered financial difficulties, and it was only the baron's assistance that enabled their continued existence, which is why they became known as "the baron's colonies." Three other colonies, Petah Tikvah, Yesud Hama'alah, and Gederah, also received much assistance, and Ekron was founded and managed by Baron Rothschild from the start.

## **The second stage of the First Aliyah; the assistance of Baron Rothschild, 1885–1890**

### **The baron's assistance to the first colonies and the Rothschild administrative system**

Baron de Rothschild bore the major part of the financial burden for the existence and establishment of the colonies. As he wanted to remain anonymous, he was initially known as "the Famous Benefactor."<sup>35</sup> He took over the debts of the settlers in his three colonies and fully equipped them for their agricultural needs. He also provided various public services and professional instruction and built beautiful residential houses and large public buildings. When the new synagogue was inaugurated in Zammarin in 1885, the colony was named Zikhron Ya'akov after the baron's father. As noted, a short while later Ekron was named Mazkeret Batyah after his mother. By placing large sums at the disposal of the settlements, he arranged for registration of ownership of the lands and building licenses, as well as security in the colonies and ensured the life and property within them. He later began purchasing thousands of dunams of land in the area around them. Within the first two years (1885–1886) he bought the lands of Nazla near Zikhron Ya'akov, of Ayūn Qāra near Rishon Lezion, of al-Na'ani for Ekron, and other lands for Rosh Pinnah. Baron Rothschild continued to purchase land, viewing this as an important element of his operation in the country. He thus ensured suitable allotments of land for farmers with small plots and for landless residents, making the absorption of new settlers possible. The growth of the population in the three "baron's colonies" of Rishon

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<sup>35</sup> For the administration of the colonies under the patronage of Baron Rothschild's administrators, his views on settlement, and also the revolts that broke out in the colonies against Rothschild's administrators, see Dan Giladi, "Baron Rothschild and the Patronage System of His Administration," in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 1: 179–206 (Hebrew) and the sources he cites. See also Aaronsohn, *Rothschild*, 122–30.

Lezion, Rosh Pinnah, and Zikhron Ya'akov in that period was outstanding and considerable. For example, both the area of the colony and the size of the population were doubled in Rishon Lezion in one year (1885–1886).

The baron transformed the whole agricultural system. In place of diversified traditional agriculture based on grains, he established modern monoculture plantation farming. This was a revolutionary change that transformed the character of the settlements over the course of several years. Beginning in 1885, farming focused on viticulture. Vineyards were planted on tens of thousands of dunams in the baron's colonies. Most of the farmers were paid laborers in the vineyards and other plantations of almonds and olives. The vines were subject to diverse diseases, especially grape phylloxera, which attacks the roots of grapevines. The varieties of the grapes were changed a number of times, but the baron did not despair, continued to invest large sums, and adhered to his decision. It may well be that he was trying to bring to Eretz Israel the types of plantations familiar to him and his administrators from the south of France or Algeria. Simultaneously, the local viticulture was also affected by the crisis in the international wine market. However, the problem faced by the colonies was not the economic system but one of management and execution. The settlers were dependent on the support of Rothschild through his dozens of administrators.<sup>36</sup> As a result, "rebellions" erupted against the administrative system in Rishon Lezion, Ekron, and Zikhron Ya'akov, following which the leaders were banished from the colonies. Despite everything, progress continued in the colonies.<sup>37</sup> The influence of the baron and his administrators was also reflected in the introduction of the French language, culture, and customs.<sup>38</sup>

During the second half of the 1880s, agricultural difficulties also developed in the colonies of Petah Tikvah, Yesud Hama'alalah and Gederah, which were not wholly under the aegis of Baron Rothschild and remained under the sponsorship of

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**36** The chief administrator of Baron Rothschild's colonies was Elie Scheid, whose headquarters were in Paris, but who visited Eretz Israel on several occasions between 1883 and 1899. He wrote memoirs in which he described the colonies and various events in the country; see Elie Scheid, *Memoirs of the Jewish Colonies and Travels in Palestine and Syria, 1883–1899*, tr. [from the French manuscript] Aharon Amir (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi 1983) (Hebrew). Information about Scheid is included in the introduction.

**37** On the rebellion in Rishon Lezion following Ossowetzky's drafting of the "Committee Regulations" in 1886, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:180, 185–95; see also section three of Belkind, *In the Path of the Biluim*, and the notes by the editor. For Rothschild's visit to Eretz Israel in 1886, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:195–201; for the revolts in Zikhron Ya'akov and Ekron, see *ibid.*, 2:314–24. The Biluim in Gederah also rebelled; see Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 128–29.

**38** A comprehensive study of the activity of Baron Rothschild and his administrators is Aaronsohn, *Rothschild*, and see the many sources cited there. On the influence of French culture on the Jewish community in Eretz Israel in the late Ottoman period, see Yaacov Shavit, "L'esprit français et la culture française dans le Yishuv en Eretz-Israël (1882–1914)," *Revue Européenne des Etudes Hébraïques* 6 (2002): 9–39. See also Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine 1870–1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 13–37.

Hovevei Zion. Farming practices continued to be underdeveloped, the grain crops were meager, and large areas stood empty or were worked by Arab tenant farmers. The residents' quality of life was poor, but the main difficulty they faced was registration of the lands and receipt of building permits. Hovevei Zion tried to take action to solve the problem, but to no avail. The colonies struggled over the limited financial support they received. The criticism leveled at the movement leaders in Russia and their envoys to Eretz Israel did not help. The settlers began applying for assistance to various individuals and groups, especially to Baron Rothschild. Initially the baron refused to become involved with the Hovevei Zion colonies, but in 1887 he agreed to support Yesud Hama'alah and Petah Tikvah through a regular monetary grant and assistance in solving their public matters. A year later, with the assistance of the baron's administrators, the ownership titles for all the lands of the two colonies were taken care of, building permits were received, and construction of stone houses began in both. The settlers' independence decreased with the growing involvement of Rothschild and his administrators. Finally, in 1889, he assumed full patronage of Yesud Hama'alah and of twenty-eight families in Petah Tikvah, the majority of the farmers there. From this time on they, too, began to enjoy financial bounty at the baron's expense. Almost all of the colonies thus came under the patronage of the baron.<sup>39</sup>

One colony was the exception – Gederah. In 1887, Gederah was aided by the baron in receiving building permits and funding the digging of a well, but it did not come under his overall patronage. The Biluim colony remained a small one, free of a compulsive regime, supported by the Hovevei Zion, yet subject to economic conditions that did not permit real development.

The activities of the baron and his administrators in the colonies under his patronage reached a peak in the early 1890s. In 1889 construction began of the first winery in Rishon Lezion, completed in 1891. A year later, a second winery was inaugurated in Zikhron Ya'akov. The two purchased the entire grape crop from the colonies at high, subsidized prices, unrelated to the wine market conditions. In addition to the central branch of vineyards, the baron also conducted agricultural experiments with diverse industrial crops such as mulberry trees for silkworms, tobacco, perfume plants, sugar cane, tea, cotton, and more. A large spinning mill for silk fabrics was opened in Rosh Pinnah to process the silkworm cocoons from the mulberry groves. The baron established a factory for distilling perfume from jasmine and geranium plants in Yesud Hama'alah. Money was transferred to these factories to set the wheels in motion, also providing employment for hundreds of laborers. The baron's administrative system expanded, and in addition to the managers and clerks, teachers,

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<sup>39</sup> For Rothschild's help and support of the colonies of Petah Tikvah, Ekron, Yesud Hama'alah and in general, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 2:350–60; see also Aaronsohn, *Rothschild*. His loan to the Felman family was noted above. See also Vital, *Origins of Zionism*, 212–18, who emphasizes that Rothschild was influenced primarily by philanthropic motivations.



doctors, religious functionaries, artisans, and agricultural instructors were added. In effect, the baron can be viewed as a sort of “governmental” authority providing the settlement with all the services that were unavailable to it from other sources, without which it is doubtful if it could have survived.<sup>40</sup>

### The daughter colonies

Towards the end of the 1880s, a demographic problem developed in the colonies as population grew: the offspring of the colony founders reached adulthood and established their own families. In addition there was a growing body of new residents, Jewish laborers who worked in the colonies. In 1887 the Baron even established an agricultural school in Zikhron Ya’akov for sixty students from among the two hundred Jewish laborers there. The second-generation colonists and laborers aspired to build their homes in the colonies in which they worked. The scarcity of land was solved by the purchase of additional lands. In 1887, areas were purchased around Zikhron Ya’akov, forming a large continuous bloc that surrounded the colony. The daughter colonies of Bat Shlomoh and Shfeyah were established there starting in 1889.<sup>41</sup>

*Bat Shlomoh* was founded in 1889 on an area known in Arabic as Umm el-Jamal located an hour’s walk west of Zikhron Ya’akov. Its 2,534 dunams of land were purchased by Rothschild’s administrators in 1887. Initially a number of young farmers and laborers from Zikhron Ya’akov moved there to work the land. Afterwards, it was decided to establish an independent settlement there. The first houses and the synagogue were built in 1889, but due to the absence of public services Bat Shlomoh remained dependent on Zikhron Ya’akov.

*Shfeyah* was established in 1891. The lands of the colony were prepared by a group of ten young people from Zikhron Ya’akov who settled there in 1889, in a two-story building that remained from the small tenant farming village of Shawiye. After the first houses were built, it was decided to name the colony “Meir Shfeyah.” Its initial conditions were positive, as it was situated a mere thirty-minute walk from Zikhron Ya’akov on an area of 8,518 dunams. Vines were planted on 2,000 dunams, almonds on another 1,000, and over 1,000 dunams were devoted to olive and mulberry trees. This extensive planted area was mostly owned by the baron’s

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<sup>40</sup> An interesting issue is the committees that were established in the colonies, some of which laid the groundwork for later regional committees. See Shlomit Langboim, “The Colony Committees and Their Contribution to the Development of the First Aliyah Colonies, 1882–1918,” *Cathedra* 147 (Mar. 2013): 41–80 (Hebrew).

<sup>41</sup> On the scarcity of land for second-generation colonists and workers, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 252–54. See also Moshe Braslavski, *Workers and Their Organizations in the First Aliyah: History and Documents* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1961) (Hebrew).

administrators. A sanatorium for recuperating patients was built in Shfeyah as well as a large dairy that was never operated and served as the main Zikhron Ya'akov stables. Due to their small and insufficient population, the two new colonies, Bat Shlomoh and Shfeyah were unable to support themselves and were dependent on financing by the baron.<sup>42</sup>

### Nes Zionah

As noted, Nes Zionah was first established on land in Wadi el-Hanin that had been bought by Reuven Lehrer as an individual settler. Later, a number of families and laborers from Rishon Lezion purchased lots there, settled on them, while they continued working in Rishon Lezion.

Afterwards, with the the wave of immigration in 1890–1891, the place developed into a small colony. Lehrer was happy to enlarge his settlement and placed a plot at the disposal of around sixty families whose arrival was a result of the Moscow Edict of Expulsion and went to work in the new colony of Rehovoth that was founded then.

Aharon Eisenberg, one of the founders of Rehovoth, also wanted to purchase land in Nahalat Reuven, but did not succeed in doing so. After his attempt, the final plot of land there was bought by Michael Halperin who aspired to realize the concept of a laborers colony and was the one who coined the name Nes Zionah. However, as a result of the great crisis of 1891, only a few families remained there.<sup>43</sup>

### Mishmar Hayarden

Towards the end of 1890 the colony of Mishmar Hayarden was established on the lands of Shoshanat Hayarden (see above). Moshe David Shub, one of the Rosh Pinnah founders, was actively involved in its establishment. In 1890 he purchased the land abandoned by Lubowsky, divided it into eighteen plots of 100 dunams, and sold them to laborers from Safed who received financial support from the Hovevei Zion Committee in Jaffa. The laborers built brick houses, but the houses collapsed during the first winter, the settlers' money ran out, and they moved to reside in Rosh Pinnah and Yesud Hama'alah.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For the establishment of the colonies of Bat Shlomoh and Meir Shfeyah, see Aaronsohn, "Buiding the Land," 254–55; id., *Rothschild*, 99–101.

<sup>43</sup> On the establishment of Nes Zionah, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 255; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 14–15.

<sup>44</sup> On Mishmar Hayarden, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 255–56; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 20–21.

### The move to new areas in the Golan and the south

As noted, members of the Old Yishuv tried to establish colonies even before the First Aliyah, Petah Tikvah being one of them. The establishment of Rosh Pinnah was also preceded by an attempt of members of the Old Yishuv in Safed to found Gei Oni, on the site on which Rosh Pinnah was established later. Another attempt by the members of the Old Yishuv in Safed took place in a new area, the Golan Heights. The “Bnei Yehudah” settlement society was founded in Safed in the summer of 1884. The fifty families in the society, who had been living on halukkah funds, were headed by Shmuel Shulman, a Tiberias resident who came to Safed and was active in forming the settlement society, and Moshe Felixsohn, a citizen of the United States who was involved in the Gei Oni settlement attempt. They were influenced by the colonialization efforts in the country and decided to establish one of their own, hoping to receive support from the Hovevei Zion movement in England. Like their predecessors, the Petah Tikvah settlers, they, too, initially attempted to settle on Ottoman government lands in Jericho with an official firman. However, when the purchase of those lands did not materialize, in the autumn of 1885 they bought around 14,000 dunams near the Circassian village of Rumthaniyya, around ten kilometers south of Kuneitra. They moved onto the land at the beginning of 1886 and named it Golan Babashan. While awaiting the official firman, the settlers worked on the site in shifts and lived in a renovated stone building on the premises. They divided up the plots, began planning the buildings, and plowed and planted the fields with winter grains. However the firman did not arrive and the authorities refused to register the lands in the name of the Jewish settlers. Financial difficulties arose. The call for help to Hovevei Zion in England and Russia and attempts to raise funding in the United States did not bear fruit, so the purchase of the lands was cancelled and the residents returned to Safed at the beginning of 1887. The majority of the Bnei Yehudah members left the society following its failure, but a few of them, headed by Felixsohn, used their own funds in 1888 to purchase 2,200 dunams from the Bir esh-Shkūm village on the southern slopes of the Golan Heights, around three kilometers east of the Sea of Galilee. A number of families moved there and began working the land. The grain crops were meager, the absence of personal capital became more severe, and they too were forced to return to Safed. Two years later, with the help of a loan they received, a few families tried to settle there again. However, a cholera outbreak and a severe quarantine in the area forced them to return to Safed, with the exception of one family. The two Bnei Yehudah attempts to establish a colony in the Golan Heights failed, but since they left Jewish owned lands, this settlement effort was later renewed.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> For Bnei Yehudah and attempts to settle in the Golan, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 250–51; Elhannan Orren, *Hibbat Zion in Britain, 1878–1898* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1974), 50–51 (Hebrew); Mordechai Neustadt, *The Golan* (Tel Aviv: Ma’archot, 1968), 128–32 (Hebrew); Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 2:348–50, 3:178–79; Shaul Sapir, “The ‘Bnei Yehudah’ Colony in the

During the second half of the 1880s, an attempt was also made to establish a colony in Castina (later Be'er Tuvyah), twelve kilometers south of Gederah. This time members of Hovevei Zion settled there, assisted by the baron's administration. Castina was established by a group of Jews from Bessarabia whom the baron agreed to assist in buying the land. They also participated in the purchase, paid a large sum, and immigrated at their own expense. However, as the baron's administrators were late in purchasing the land the families had no choice but to wait in Jaffa. Finally, 6,500 dunams were acquired from the Arab village of Castina. The baron's administrators sought to continue the settlers' dependency and demanded discipline similar to the control they wielded in Ekron. The settlers were presented a contract according to which they would be day laborers of the baron's administration, with no rights in the land or the colony's assets, and were forbidden to form an association. The settlers refused to sign the contract. When their condition deteriorated and money ran out, most of the families returned to Bessarabia. A number of families agreed to sign the contract and became the baron's employees. His administrators brought in twenty Jewish laborers to join them and in September 1888 took possession of the land in Castina. Work began immediately, wooden huts were built, and a tree boulevard was planted. They started digging a well, sowed winter grains, and planted a fruit orchard. The settlers worked as tenants for a daily salary and followed the instructions of a supervisor. The isolation and living conditions were difficult: absolute solitude during the winter, the hardship of extreme physical labor together with malaria, a shortage of water, and dependency on the villagers of the nearby Arab village of Bait Daras. In addition, internal social problems developed between the two groups, the settlers and the laborers. Each group operated on its own, leading to the settlement's failure. A wave of departures set in, both of laborers and settlers, the latter being bitter about their tenant status. Within two years only two families remained in Castina. Intermittently, Jewish laborers were employed in place of those who left, but most of the lands were given over to Arab tenant farmers. Thus, all Jewish settlement attempts in new areas during the second half of the 1880s ended in failure.<sup>46</sup>

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Golan under the Auspices of Hovevei Zion in Britain," in *Studies in Geography and History in Honor of Yehoshua Ben-Arieh*, ed. Yossi Ben-Artzi, Israel Bartal, and Elchanan Reiner (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979), 352–75 (Hebrew).

<sup>46</sup> For the first attempt to found a colony at Castina and its later development as Be'er Tuvyah, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 251–52; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 21–22, and in greater detail, Dan Giladi, "Be'er Tuvia (Kastina): The Failure of a Settlement," *Zionism* 1 (1980): 9–46.

## Ahad Ha'am, Bnei Moshe, the "Panic Aliyah," Rehovoth and Haderah, the "Organizations of the Thousands," Ein Zeitim, 1890–1891

### Continued activity of the Hovevei Zion movement

Hovevei Zion societies in the diaspora continued to exist as the colonies in Eretz Israel developed on a firmer basis.<sup>47</sup> Their initial leaders went on with their efforts. In the summer of 1887, Pinsker even traveled to meet with Baron Rothschild in Paris where they discussed various issues. Pinsker also tried to meet with Baron Maurice de Hirsch who was promoting Jewish settlement in Argentina at the time, but failed to meet him. In late 1888, Baron Rothschild and his wife passed through Odessa and remained there for a few days. Pinsker sought to meet the baron there, but in the end the meeting could not be arranged.<sup>48</sup>

Tension within the Hovevei Zion movement increased at this time between the intellectual faction represented by Lilienblum, Pinsker, and other Zionist personae, and the religious faction headed by Rabbi Mohilever and additional rabbinical figures. As early as the second conference which took place in the seaside town of Druskieniki (where the movement also adopted its name), the struggle between the two factions became more pronounced. Pinsker sought to be relieved of his duties as president due to ailing health, but in the end was elected to another term in office. A little over a year later, in 1889, the issue of observing the commandment of *shemittah* in Eretz Israel created a severe conflict between the two Hovevei Zion factions. The religious faction demanded that *shemittah* be observed at all costs, and work in all the Jewish agricultural settlements be halted, while the colonists and the mainstream members requested permission to continue working the land during the Sabbatical year. The rabbis were divided in their opinions, but in Jerusalem the balance was in favor of the stricter viewpoint. The difference of opinion caused even supporters of colonization in Eretz Israel, such as Pines who was previously supportive of Jewish settlement, to move away somewhat from the Hovevei Zion movement and draw closer to Orthodox circles.<sup>49</sup> It is interesting to note that the religious faction of Hovevei Zion abroad, headed by Rabbi Mohilever, was more lenient in its rabbinical decisions than the religious personae in Eretz Israel.<sup>50</sup> In

<sup>47</sup> On Hovevei Zion associations, including student organizations, in many countries in the years 1885–1889, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 2:228–68; see also note 14 above.

<sup>48</sup> Baron Maurice de Hirsch will be discussed in the next chapter. For Pinsker's meeting with Rothschild and his attempt to meet with Baron Hirsch, see *ibid.*, 2:209–27, 321.

<sup>49</sup> The *shemittah* year is the last year of the seven-year agricultural cycle in which the land is to be left fallow. For the *shemittah* polemic of 1889, see Salmon, *Religion and Zionism*, 123–38.

<sup>50</sup> Yehoshua Kaniel, "The Old Yishuv and the New Settlements," in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 1:269–88 (Hebrew) even claims that the development of

August 1889, at the Hovevei Zion conference in Vilna, Pinsker announced his final resignation from leadership of the movement due to health reasons and the many difficulties facing the movement. Rabbi Mohilever was chosen as the new president. Later, at the Odessa conference, it was decided that a group of Hovevei Zion would set out for a visit to Eretz Israel. During Passover of 1890 the group arrived in the country, and the fact that a rabbi headed the society made it somewhat easier for the Old Yishuv to accept the Hovevei Zion movement.<sup>51</sup>

### The cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha'am, Bnei Moshe, and the "Panic Aliyah"

The First Aliyah went through a severe crisis at the end of the 1880s. The second generation of the colonists, the younger group in the movement, protested against the activities of Baron Rothschild and his administrative system, whose strict discipline left its mark on the entire settlement project. However, it is important to remember that the Hovevei Zion movement throughout the world was undergoing change. In April 1889 Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg published his first article in the Hebrew newspaper *HaMelitz*, "This is Not the Way," and signed it Ahad Ha'am.<sup>52</sup> In 1891 and 1893 he published his article, "A Truth from Eretz Israel," in two installments.<sup>53</sup> These articles gave rise to a stormy debate among Hovevei Zion. Ahad Ha'am ruled out existing practices of Zionist settlement at the

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the New Yishuv in the 1880s caused members of the Old Yishuv to be less willing to engage in agricultural settlement. In another article, "Religion and 'Community' in the Outlook of the Immigrants of the First and Second Aliyah (1882–1914)," *Shalem* 5 (1987): 189–205 (Hebrew), Kaniel dwells on the differences in leadership and public communal life between the settlers and the Old Yishuv, even to the extent that the question arose whether they could coexist.

51 On Pinsker's resignation and the election of Mohilever, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 2: 380–407. Almost to his last years, Pinsker, who passed away in 1891 shortly after his resignation, did not rule out the idea that in the final tally the solution for Eretz Israel would be to establish it as a cultural center; see *ibid.*, 2:175–79. For Mohilever's visit to Eretz Israel together with his entourage, see Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 141–44.

52 For his article "This Is Not the Way" and early reactions to it, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 2: 737–79, where Klausner also notes the establishment of the Bnei Moshe organization announced on the traditional date of the birth of the biblical Moses.

53 The first part of "A Truth from Eretz Israel" was written in 1891 after his second visit to the country for the duration of three months. The second part was written in 1893, when he once again came to Eretz Israel with the intention of settling there. But since he did not receive a permit from the local authorities and did not want to remain in the country illegally, he travelled to London, and then to Paris, finally returning to Odessa. See Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:184–89. See also Steven J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (London: P. Halban, 1993), 56–64; David Vital, "The Zionist as Thinker: Ahad Ha-Am and Hibbat Zion," in *At the Crossroads: Essays on Ahad Ha-am*, ed. Jacques Kornberg (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 87–97.

time of writing, stating that it should not be developed further. There was no choice but to maintain what exists, but first indoctrination and enhancement of nationalism on a spiritual basis should be applied. Other Hovevei Zion members agreed with Ahad Ha'am as early as 1889 and invited him to head a secret society they had previously been established and named "Bnei Moshe."<sup>54</sup> They stated that the source of their inspiration was the biblical Moses who placed his whole being at the service of his people. The society set its principles and regulations, and operated within the general Hovevei Zion movement, arousing objection among many Hovevei Zion members who believed that Zionist settlement, as it had developed until then, should be continued. Additionally, differences of opinion began to form between the new members and the Zionist settlers, resulting in conflicts over leadership.<sup>55</sup>

Simultaneously with these developments among Hovevei Zion, changes were taking place in Ottoman rule in the Holy Land, as well as with the government in Russia. With the beginning of the First Aliyah, the Ottomans began to fear an increase in the number of Jews entering the country. Regulations limiting the sojourn of entrants to the country to only thirty days were published in 1884. In 1887 the period was extended to three months. Since these regulations were unacceptable to the Western powers, they acted to thwart them, yet in practice the regulations were rarely enforced. Towards the end of 1888 pressure on the Ottoman government by foreign ambassadors increased, and entrance of Jews, regardless of their country of origin, was permitted on condition that they did not arrive in great numbers.<sup>56</sup>

At that same time, changes occurred in the policy of the Russian authorities. At the end of 1889, after five years of refusals, Russia granted recognition to the Hovevei

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54 On the establishment of Bnei Moshe which opposed Orthodox control of Hovevei Zion, and the creation of the "Odessa Committee" headed by Pinsker, though its leading personality was Ahad Ha'am, see Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 144–56. On the activity of Bnei Moshe in Jaffa in the 1890s, their conflict with the Old Yishuv, and the increasing polarization within the Jewish community, see Salmon, *Religion and Zionism*, 96–139, 200–234. For the campaign against Ahad Ha'am, see Malachi, *Old Yishuv*, 346–81. It was precisely Pines who joined the Old Yishuv in its struggle against Bnei Moshe; see Salmon, *Do Not Provoke Providence*, 200–208, 213–26.

55 On Ahad Ha'am and Bnei Moshe, see Yosef Salmon, "Ahad Ha-Am and Benei Moshe: an 'Unsuccessful Experiment'?" in *At the Crossroads: Essays on Ahad Ha-Am*, ed. Jacques Kornberg (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 98–105. For Bnei Moshe's involvement in the spheres of education and culture, see Laskov, "Hovevei Zion in Russia," 157–63, and the sources cited there. See also the annotated compilation of Ahad Ha'am's letters about Eretz Israel, Ahad Ha'am, *Letters Concerning Eretz Israel (1891–1926)*, ed. Shulamit Laskov (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2000) (Hebrew).

56 For Ottoman policy on Jewish immigration to Eretz Israel in the 1880s, see Alex Carmel, "The Yishuv, the Ottoman Government, and the Foreign Consulates," in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav, (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 1:97–116 (Hebrew). See also Goldstein, "Beginnings of Hibbat Zion," 50, and the discussion of the period of the last sultan, Abdülhamid II, towards the end of the present chapter.



Zion movement. The “New Odessa Committee” headed by Pinsker was established. The previous Odessa Committee, which included a group of intellectuals from all over Russia, now came out against the new Odessa Hibbat Zion faction and chose Rabbi Mohilever to head them, as noted above. Some of the New Odessa Committee were in contact with the Russian authorities and submitted an application for recognition of their organization and permission to emigrate to Eretz Israel.<sup>57</sup> The exit permit they were awarded gave rise to a wave of emigration. Following edicts of expulsion against Jews in the Moscow area and other places in Russia, the wave of those leaving the country increased and the number of olim to Eretz Israel reached a peak.<sup>58</sup> Ze’ev (Vladimir) Tiomkin, a member of Bnei Moshe, was then sent to head the local Hovevei Zion actions committee in Jaffa. Upon his arrival in November 1890, Tiomkin tried to consolidate land purchase efforts and the establishment of new colonies.<sup>59</sup> He was joined by Yehoshua Hankin, the son of one of the Rishon Lezion founders. At that same time, “The Society for the Support of Jewish Farmers and Artisans in Syria and Eretz Israel” was established in Russia, headed by a leadership connected to the Odessa Committee.<sup>60</sup> Upon its establishment, rumors spread that it was sending Jews there for agricultural colonization, all expenses paid. Despite the denials, and since the gates of the country were open, the “panic aliyah” of Jews began, most of them penniless. Land prices soared and difficulties developed in bringing the purchases to fruition. Many transactions were cancelled with the buyers losing all their money. A great panic ensued in the Jewish community in Eretz Israel.<sup>61</sup>

The increase of aliyah was accompanied by greater Jewish immigration to America, which almost doubled in size. During 1890–1891, over 110,000 Jews arrived in the United States, twice the number of the previous year. Attempts were made by Jewish personae and communities in the world to direct more Jews to Eretz Israel. In

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<sup>57</sup> For the establishment of the New Odessa Committee and its recognition by the Russian authorities, see Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 159–79, who also discusses disagreements between the personalities, including between Lilienblum and Bnei Moshe.

<sup>58</sup> Vital, *Origins of Zionism*, 179–83 stresses that this wave of immigration was not a result of the pogroms but came after a surprise edict issued by the authorities to exile about 20,000 Jews from Moscow, a process that went on for about a year. The edicts also led to increased emigration to Argentina.

<sup>59</sup> On the Hovevei Zion Actions Committee in Jaffa, headed by Tiomkin, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:31–34, 81–84. Klausner provides a more positive evaluation of Tiomkin, including the steps he took to supervise other persons who interfered with him.

<sup>60</sup> On “The Society for the Support of Jewish Farmers and Artisans in Syria and Eretz Israel” and its relationship with the Odessa Committee, see Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 161–62 and the index. See also Laskov, “Hovevei Zion in Russia,” 151–53.

<sup>61</sup> For the 1891 crisis in land acquisition, see Laskov, “Hovevei Zion in Russia,” 153–56; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 17. About the rumors, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:25–31. On the annulment of land acquisitions and the disbandment of various associations, see *ibid.*, 3:120–26. He also notes that following the “panic” Baron Rothschild took responsibility for land acquisition away from Tiomkin and Hankin and into his own hands.

July of 1891, Zionist leaders even met with Baron Hirsch and with the AIU, but they refused to agree to the proposal. In April 1892 immigration to Argentina also increased appreciably.<sup>62</sup>

As conditions in Eretz Israel worsened, the representatives of the different societies who came to the country to purchase lands began leaving, and all turned for help to the Jaffa branch of the Actions Committee headed by Tiomkin. Everything collapsed. The consensual estimate is that over eight thousand persons arrived in the country during the "panic aliyah" from the beginning of 1890 to its peak in 1891. Though immigrants came from all walks of life, among them wealthy persons and representatives of societies, most of them were penniless, and the majority of those who remained became agricultural laborers.<sup>63</sup> Even Tiomkin himself had no choice but to leave the country in July 1891. He declared that his trip abroad was meant to report on the situation, but he never returned. In June 1892 Yehuda Leib Bienstock, also a member of Bnei Moshe, arrived and was appointed to replace Tiomkin as head of the local Hovevei Zion Actions Committee in Jaffa. Bienstock at first met with difficulties in entering the country, but with the help of the Russian and other consulates his entrance was finally permitted. In the meantime the departure of immigrants from the country increased, and members of the Old Yishuv began joining them.<sup>64</sup>

The wave of panic aliyah caused concern with the Ottoman authorities regarding the increased tendency towards nationalism in the Jewish community in Palestine. Arab residents also began demanding that a stop be put to immigration. In July 1891, the Ottomans reinstated the prohibition on Jewish immigration of the 1880s, and also banned Jews, regardless of nationality, from purchasing landed property in Eretz Israel and Syria.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> About the many associations for the acquisition of land that sprang up in Europe, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:47–55. On the increase in emigration to Argentina, and the issue of "Argentina or Eretz Israel," see *ibid.*, 3:84–108, 126–47 respectively.

<sup>63</sup> What induced immigrants to Eretz Israel during the period of the First Aliyah and later were the pogroms and forces that motivated them to leave their former places of residence in Europe, on the one hand, and a desire to live a new life as farmers in the ancestral homeland, on the other. They were not influenced by the spirit of colonialism that was then characteristic of settlement in other countries. See Ran Aaronsohn, "Settlement in Eretz Israel: A Colonialist Enterprise? 'Critical' Scholarship and Historical Geography," *Israel Studies* 1 (1996): 214–29.

<sup>64</sup> On Tiomkin's departure and the changing of the guard in the Actions Committee in Jaffa, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:158–67. On the many who left the country, see *ibid.*, 3:184–89. See also Yossi Goldstein, "The Hibbat Zion Movement and the Collapse of Immigration to Eretz Israel, 1890–1891," *Cathedra* 158 (Dec. 2015): 99–118 (Hebrew), who places the blame squarely on Hovevei Zion officials, including Tiomkin.

<sup>65</sup> For Ottoman action to curb this aliyah in 1891 by closing the gates, and the intervention by foreign consuls, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:110–20. On the prohibition of acquisitions in Syria, too, see *ibid.*, 3:13–15.

Nonetheless, it may be said that despite being a period of crisis in the development of the local Jewish community, the second stage of the First Aliyah was also a peak period in the increase of Jewish aliyah and the purchase of land.

### **The independent colonies: Rehovoth and Haderah, the “Organizations of the Thousands,” and Ein Zeitim, 1890–891**

The second wave of immigration in the early 1890s heightened the aspiration to establish additional agricultural colonies, this time colonies that would not be dependent on Baron Rothschild. Hankin managed to purchase land for two such large colonies established during 1890–1891, Rehovoth and Haderah. In addition, as early as 1890 he began negotiating with the Sursuk family of Beirut regarding the purchase of 120,000 dunams of its land in the Jezreel Valley and Lower Galilee, in addition to land in Wadi al-Hawarith (Hefer Valley), where at first it was planned to establish two Hovevei Zion colonies: Magen David and Tsemah David. Hankin was also involved in efforts to purchase the Zevulun Valley, initiated at the beginning of 1891 by Mordechai ben Hillel Hacohen, the representative of the Hovevei Zion society of Mogilev. Some of these plans did not bear fruit, or many years passed before they were realized, but their beginnings lay in these days.

The independent colony of Rehovoth was founded in February 1890 after Hankin managed to purchase a plot of over 10,000 dunams from a Christian Arab merchant of Jaffa. The latter had acquired the land from the Ottoman government in 1873, and since then employed Bedouin tenant farmers from the Negev to work parts of it. At this time, the Menuhah ve-Nahalal company was established in Warsaw, initiated by Bnei Moshe. Its aim was to establish a new colony by independent means, with no external assistance or support. When its representatives arrived in Eretz Israel, they purchased 3,000 dunams from Hankin with the assistance of Eisenberg, a Bnei Moshe member already in the country. Hankin completed the deal and registered the property in the joint ownership of the settlers. Thus, the company representatives who were in the country settled the land of Duran, which became Rehovoth. Most of the families remained in Warsaw until the vineyards bore fruit, while in the meantime paid laborers were employed.<sup>66</sup>

A short while after the establishment of Rehovoth, the second colony, Haderah, was founded in the northern Sharon plain. In November 1890 Hankin purchased an

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<sup>66</sup> On the founding of Rehovot, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 257–58; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 17–19. See also Yaacov Ro'i, “Jewish-Arab Relations in the First Aliyah Settlements,” in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 245–68 (Hebrew); id., “The Relations between Rehovot and Its Arab Neighbours, 1890–1914,” in *Zionism: Studies in the History of the Zionist Movement and of the Jewish Community in Palestine*, ed. Daniel Carpi and Gedalia Yogev (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and Massada, 1975), 337–82.

area from an Arab effendi for settlement associations from Russia and private settlers, mainly from cities in Ukraine. The 30,000 dunams plot was known as el-Hudeira at the time, and was the largest acquired until then. A large part of it was swampy lowlands, covered by water the year round. Wild plants that grew in the water were a source of livelihood for the local Bedouins and shepherds who arrived from Samaria in the summer, but the swamp was also an incubation site for the *Anopheles* mosquito, the bearer of malaria. The danger of malaria was known to the purchasers, but Hankin promised to drain the swamp within a year and complete registration and receipt of building permits from the authorities. In 1891, the first settlers and laborers arrived at the site.<sup>67</sup>

It is usually the custom to relate to Rehovoth and Haderah together as independent colonies, since both were established with the settlers' funds, without the assistance of Baron Rothschild, the Odessa Committee, or any other organization. Similarities are also evident in their initial development. Both colonies planted hundreds of dunams of orchards – hundreds of thousands of grapevines, tens of thousands of almond, fig, and olive trees – in the first year following their establishment. Preparing the land for cultivation and the planting itself were executed in both colonies by hundreds of laborers, both Jews and Arabs. From the very beginning of work on the sites, the settlement of both colonies was accompanied by clashes with Arab neighbors due to local conflicts that developed into attacks on the colonies. In both of them the settlers and laborers suffered from an extreme shortage of housing as a result of delays in receiving building permits. Living quarters were improvised in both in old buildings, tents, unlicensed houses, and residence in nearby villages.

Yet, there were also major differences between them. Haderah suffered from the swamps in addition to the regular problems. Their drainage was slow, ending only in 1900. The swamps bred malaria, which ravaged all residents every summer and caused the death of laborers, children, and adult settlers. While the population of Rehovoth increased and its economy developed, some settlers and laborers left Haderah and its development was slowed down. Although some of those who left returned, Haderah became known as a place that devours its inhabitants. Furthermore, Rehovoth managed to raise funds to cover its expenses. An energetic public committee ran the colony, representing the settlers and hired laborers. The committee was responsible for the physical planning of the colony, diligently provided medical services, and operated the school. There was no such public representation in Haderah, and its financial problems were acute. As a result, Haderah abandoned the concept of independence. In 1893, two years after its foundation, when Baron Rothschild agreed to take the swamplands under his aegis and drain them, began the period of Haderah's dependency on the baron. In contrast,

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<sup>67</sup> On the founding and early years of Haderah, see Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 19–20.

Rehovoth successfully maintained its independence. Putting its economy on a firm basis was also made possible by the baron's winery in Rishon Lezion that bought the grapes raised by Rehovoth's farmers at a highly subsidized price. Thus vineyards became the profitable field of agriculture in Rehovoth.<sup>68</sup>

The concept of the "Organizations of Thousands" was also born in the early 1890s, with the purpose of settling Jews of limited means in colonies based on viticulture without outside help. The first such organization, "Dorshei Zion," was established in Minsk, Lithuania, at the beginning of 1890. The plan was that the members would make small annual payments, and the sums accruing would enable purchase of land to establish a colony in Eretz Israel, its preparation, and planting vineyards, on the assumption that in ten years' time all the members could come and settle there. News of the plan spread and many such associations were established in its wake. Within less than a year, the Minsk group had a thousand members, most of them lacking capital, and its regulations and budget were published. The Dorshei Zion organization and Yehoshua Syrkin, who was chosen to head it, worked in close cooperation with Baron Rothschild and his administrators. In September 1891 around 15,000 dunams in Ein Zeitim, near Safed, were purchased by the organization's representatives from Baron Rothschild, whose officials had acquired them a year earlier. Many Jewish laborers began working in the new colony together with Safed residents and olim from Russia who had previously worked in the Judean colonies. Four houses were built, and within three years vineyards were planted on an area of over one thousand dunams, in addition to various types of orchards. It was only then that the troubles began. Expenses were higher than planned and the members began to lag in their payments. It also became clear that planting vineyards was a grave mistake. The land was unfit for planting in general and vines in particular. It then also became known that Rothschild would not be building a winery in Rosh Pinnah, contrary to previous expectations. In 1895, the organization almost came to an end and around half of its members left it. The remaining members applied to Baron Rothschild for a loan and to be taken under his administration, and thus this colony, too, lost its independence.<sup>69</sup>

To sum up Zionist settlement in the 1890s, one may say that while Hovevei Zion continued their activities for settling Eretz Israel, they were significantly

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<sup>68</sup> The comparison between Rehovot and Haderah is based on Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 257–58. See also Hillel Yaffe, *Daring Generation* (Tel Aviv: Davar, 1939) (Hebrew).

<sup>69</sup> For the concept behind *agudot ha-elef* ("organizations of the thousands") and the founding of Ein Zeitim by the Dorshei Zion organization of Minsk, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 260; see also Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 2:123–24, 276–77, 3:55–57 where he lists such organizations that were established in Bialystok, Warsaw, Vilna, Pinsk, and elsewhere. For further plans by Hovevei Zion, such as the establishment of an aliyah headquarters, a central committee, an agrarian bank, etc., see *ibid.*, 3:247–64.

weakened.<sup>70</sup> The person who continued bearing the cost of development of the country and even expanded his activities was Baron Rothschild.

## Continued spread of Jewish settlement, 1892–1904

### Renewed establishment of colonies in the 1890s: Motza, Hartuv, Gan Shmuel, Mahanaim

Following the crisis of the “panic aliyah,” the emigration from Eretz Israel, and Tiomkin’s departure, Baron Rothschild made his second visit to the country in 1893. It lasted for four days during which he met with leading Jewish persons, including Meir Dizengoff whom he chose to direct a glass factory he established in Tantura (present-day Dor).<sup>71</sup>

In April 1894, a conference was held, attended by members of the New Yishuv that marked a turning point in the country. Within five years, attempts were made to found settlements and new colonies in numerous locations. I shall detail a few of them. Motza and Hartuv were both established during 1894–1895, as independent colonies founded without the help of Baron Rothschild or the support of the central Hovevei Zion Committee in Russia. The two colonies were established near Jerusalem, and were connected to that city in one way or another.

In 1892, the Jerusalem branch of the Order of B’nai Brith decided, upon the initiative of Pines and Ze’ev Yavetz, to establish a colony in Motza, on lands purchased in 1860 from the Arab village of Qaluniya by Yehoshua Yellin and Shaul Yehudah. During the thirty years that had passed since then, only two buildings were built in Motza: the khan on the road to Jerusalem (built over the ruins of a large Roman building) and a small residential house nearby. During all that time, Arab residents continued to farm the land, and no Jew resided there permanently.<sup>72</sup> In 1894, five worker families took to the land, assisted by the Odessa Committee. These few settlers who struck roots in that mountainous area lived under rough conditions, diversified their farm economy by raising vegetables and livestock (cows and goats), and sold their dairy products in Jerusalem. Only in 1898 did their vineyards begin to give fruit from which they produced wine that sold well in Jerusalem. In addition, construction began on a convalescent home nearby and the first public building, a

<sup>70</sup> On the continued operation of Bnei Moshe and student societies, see *ibid.*, 3:219–38.

<sup>71</sup> For Rothschild’s second visit in Eretz Israel, see *ibid.*, 3:272–74.

<sup>72</sup> The brothers-in-law Pines and Yavetz were both Zionists who were closely allied with the Old Yishuv but were much involved in the establishment of colonies. On Pines see Malachi, *Old Yishuv*, 299–335.

synagogue, was erected. Nonetheless, this small colony developed very slowly, and in 1922 numbered only twenty-two residents.<sup>73</sup>

The founding of Hartuv was very similar to that of the first colonies established at the beginning of the 1880s. In September 1895 a delegation of three members was sent by the central Hovevei Zion association in Bulgaria in order to establish a colony for fifty families. The representatives, who lacked agricultural knowledge and understanding, rejected sound proposals to purchase lands on the coastal plain and decided to buy around 5,500 dunams in the Jerusalem foothills near the Arab village of ‘Artuf. The property was purchased from a missionary society in London, which between 1883 and 1885 had tried to establish a colony for poor Jews on the site.<sup>74</sup> However, the number of families who arrived from Bulgaria was small; in 1898, three years after its establishment, only nine families resided there. The settlers’ capital began running out and the colony remained without physical or financial support. The fact that this was the only Sefardi colony in the country at the time, together with the distance from other Jewish settlements, added to their sense of isolation. The colony failed to receive any outside assistance and remained small and financially underdeveloped, but managed to survive for many years.<sup>75</sup>

Another small settlement was established in 1894 near Haderah, Gan Shmuel, named after Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever, one of the first leaders of the Hovevei Zion movement as previously stated. *Ethrog* (citron) trees were planted in Gan Shmuel, a large shed was built for the Jewish laborers who maintained the place, and an *ethrog* garden was developed.<sup>76</sup>

An additional colony established at the time was Mahanaim. In September 1897, the major Hovevei Zion association in Galicia, the “Ahavat Zion” Association of Tarnow, purchased a large parcel of the Qabba‘a, Ein al-Zeitun, and Dahariyya lands near Rosh Pinnah from the Commission Palestinienne in Paris. The founders of

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73 For the beginnings of Motza, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 264–65; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 29.

74 On the efforts of the British missionary society to establish a colony at ‘Artuf to help poor immigrants, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:307–21; see also Marcia Kunstel and Joseph Albright, *Their Promised Land: Arab versus Jew in History’s Cauldron: One Valley in the Jerusalem Hills* (New York: Crown, 1990), 41–44.

75 For the establishment of the Jewish colony of Hartuv, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 265; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 29; Yehuda Ben-Bassat, *Hartuv: An Isolated Colony in the Judean Hills* (Rehovot: [the author], 2008) (Hebrew); Yuval Ben-Bassat, “The Challenges Facing the ‘First Aliyah’ Sephardic Ottoman Colonists,” *Journal of Israeli History* 35 (2016): 3–15.

76 On the initiative of religious Hovevei Zion members in 1893, headed by Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever, to establish a Mizrahi society (derived from *merkaz ruhani* [spiritual center]) and the establishment of Gan Shmuel, see Laskov, “Hovevei Zion in Russia,” 163; Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 1:48–50, 2:238–47; 3:398–402; Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 261, and the sources cited there. For *ethrog* (citron) growing and its importance as a source of income, see Salmon, *Do Not Provoke Providence*, 115–59.



Mahanaim emigrated from Galicia to Rosh Pinnah at the end of 1898, and began working the land. In 1899, fifteen families settled on the site of Mahanaim. Quite soon, the colony went through a social crisis and financial hardships, its condition deteriorated, and the colonists abandoned it in 1902–1903. Its lands were already annexed to Rosh Pinnah at that early stage.<sup>77</sup>

### Settlements in the Golan and the Hauran

As noted, the Bnei Yehudah settlement association twice tried to establish a Jewish colony in the Golan during the 1880s. These attempts failed, but the lands, which remained in Jewish ownership, made possible a third attempt between 1898 and 1902. News of the planned construction of the Haifa–Damascus railway line gave rise to interest in the Golan area and attracted Hovevei Zion associations to renew the colony. Around ten families and a number of laborers even settled there, but following many hardships as well as difficulties in raising financial support, most of the families left. The remaining few continued living nearby for ten more years while working the land, but finally they, too, gave up and the colonialization attempt failed.

Even before the third attempt to settle in Bnei Yehuda in early 1891, Hovevei Zion associations from Russia and America purchased tens of thousands of dunams in the Hauran. When financial difficulties arose, Baron Rothschild came to their aid in organizing and registering the lands in the name of the Commission Palestinienne in Paris. The Djillan agricultural farm was established on a small part of the land in 1895, and a stone house, wooden sheds, and stables were built. Around twenty laborers and the baron's administrators resided there. The farm was also intended to serve as an agricultural experimental station in the Hauran. At the time there was also an attempt to establish the Tiferet Binyamin colony – named after Baron Rothschild, whose second name was Benjamin – in the Hauran, near Saham al-Jawlan. A number of families settled there, but the objections of the Ottoman authorities as well as other difficulties led to its abandonment a year later. Two other settlement attempts in the Hauran met a similar fate. The first was by a Romanian Hovevei Zion association in 'Amidun. Ten families settled there too. At the same time, one family from the Bialystok "Agudat Ahim" association settled in the nearby village of Nafaa, but the objection of the authorities who issued a deportation order against them forced them to abandon it. The

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<sup>77</sup> The Commission Palestinienne in Paris bought parcels of land, among others those in the Golan and Bashan which were later under the aegis of Baron Rothschild; see Theodore Norman, *An Outstretched Arm: A History of the Jewish Colonization Association* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 61–62. On Mahanaim, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 262–62; Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 23; Shimshon Stein, *Mahanaim: A Short-lived Colony* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1978) (Hebrew). See also Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:64, 125, who notes the earlier acquisition of land for Mahanaim in 1891.

baron succeeded in registering these lands, too, in the name of an organization under his management. Thus, a situation emerged in which only the baron's administrators and a number of laborers at the Djillan farm remained in the Haurun until the beginning of World War I.<sup>78</sup>

### The model colonies: Metullah and Be'er Tuvyah

The final two colonies I shall discuss at present are Metullah and Be'er Tuvyah.<sup>79</sup> Both were established only in the second half of the 1890s, almost simultaneously, in the summer of 1896, but in two opposite parts of the country. The principles underlying their planning were also similar, although Metullah was established by the baron's administration while Be'er Tuvyah was founded by Hovevei Zion. In both colonies, prospective settlers were subject to a preliminary check in order to accept only skilled laborers. In both it was decided to base the colony on field crops, not orchards, and in both it was decided to provide the settlers with full farming equipment, including livestock, as well as financial support in the form of a loan for the first seasons in the hope that they would attain financial independence within a year or two and start repaying their loans in the third year. Trained agronomists served as agricultural instructors to the colonies. The expectation was that the two colonies would indeed function as model colonies.

However, grave setbacks quickly occurred in both colonies, both in agricultural and in security terms. In Metullah, the dry farming crops were meager and the settlers barely managed to sell them cheaply in an area that raised plentiful crops. The thought of planting groves and switching to a mixed agriculture economy was rejected, and the settlers lived in poverty. The colony was unable to extricate itself from its paltry existence and achieve financial independence. Security conditions were also difficult. The Druze, residents of the village on whose lands Metullah was established, believed they had been dispossessed of their land and constantly harassed the settlers. After they received monetary compensation following negotiations with the baron's officials, a peace compact was signed between the Druze and the Metullah settlers and the area then quieted. However, Metullah's financial situation

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<sup>78</sup> For attempts to promote Jewish settlement in the Golan and the Hauran in the 1890s, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 265–66; additional details in Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3: 278–79 who also notes an unsuccessful attempt by Rothschild to buy land in the Golan in 1892. For the transfer of the Jewish settlements, first to Baron Rothschild and later to the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), which became the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association (PICA) in 1924, see Yair Seltenreich, "Efforts by the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association to Retain Its Lands in Syria and Lebanon," *Cathedra*, 127 (Apr. 2008): 65–88 (Hebrew).

<sup>79</sup> For these two model colonies, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 266–68. On Metullah, see also Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 22.

continued to be difficult, and the transfer of the colony under the aegis of the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) in 1900 did not solve the problems either. In 1902, it was decided to transfer a third of the colony's population – about twenty families – to a new settlement in Lower Galilee. This brought a certain degree of relief and the remaining settlers started moving into new houses built in the colony.<sup>80</sup>

As noted, a settlement attempt was first made in the 1880s on the baron's land in Castina. This time the colony was founded by Hovevei Zion who named it Be'er Tuvyah. The settlers were carefully chosen and Hovevei Zion assisted with money, equipment, and agricultural instruction. The work began with optimism, and during the first year the field crops were very successful. But then Hovevei Zion decided to cancel the monthly rations and financial support per family. The colony committee unsuccessfully tried to deal with the new situation. Financial and social problems, shortage of agricultural land, and conflicts with the residents of the nearby villages as well as Bedouin tribes who arrived in the area due to famine, negatively affected the development of the colony. As Be'er Tuvyah underwent a grave crisis in 1904, forty of its settlers left.<sup>81</sup>

However, it should be noted that the establishment of the Metullah and Be'er Tuvyah colonies greatly affected the borders within which Jewish settlements developed. No Jewish settlement was ever built north of Metullah, and until 1939 no new Jewish settlement was established south of Be'er Tuvyah.<sup>82</sup>

### Transfer of the colonies to the JCA, its activities in Lower Galilee, 1900–1904

On January 1, 1900, Baron Rothschild transferred all his property in the country as well as the administration of the colonies to the JCA.<sup>83</sup> He also added a sum of 15,000,000 francs to place the colonies on a firm financial basis. Though the reason for the timing of the decision is unclear, it was clearly related to the dire financial situation of the colonies. After eighteen years of efforts, during which it is estimated that the baron invested around £1,600,000 – almost twenty times as much as the sums invested by all Hovevei Zion associations together – the colonies failed to

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**80** On the founding of Metullah in 1896, see also Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:280–81.

**81** See note 46 above.

**82** For a summing up of the First Aliyah colonies as the foundation stone of the Zionist enterprise in Eretz Israel, including a listing of the twenty-eight colonies with details relating to the early 1890s such as number of residents and total area, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 272–74. See also Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 17–26.

**83** For the transfer of the colonies under Baron Rothschild's patronage to the JCA, see Norman, *An Outstretched Arm*, 58–66; Laskov, "Hovevei Zion in Russia," 165–68. See also Yoram Mayorek, "Emile Meyerson and the Initial Involvement of the Jewish Colonization Association in Eretz Israel," *Cathedra* 62 (Dec. 1991): 67–79 (Hebrew).

advance towards financial independence.<sup>84</sup> The baron's contribution to the development of the colonies during the First Aliyah was crucial, and it is doubtful whether they would have managed to survive, no less develop, as they did. Hovevei Zion was the moving force behind the First Aliyah, not Baron Rothschild. However, it was the baron who supported the colonies, and the fact that he decided at a certain point in time to transfer them to the JCA is cutting proof of this.<sup>85</sup>

The JCA was established in London by Baron Hirsch in 1891. Its main objective was to assist in the emigration of Jews from the afflicted countries of Europe to the West, mainly to Argentina. Herzl, as well as other Zionist personae, failed to convince Baron Hirsch, until his death in April 1896, to also assist the Jewish colonies in Eretz Israel. Already in 1896 there was a change in JCA policy, and between that year and 1899 a number of colonies not wholly under the baron's sponsorship received its assistance. In 1899, following negotiations between Baron Rothschild and the JCA directors, the latter agreed to take on the baron's entire undertaking in the country. It was agreed that Baron Rothschild would remain involved, that most of his administration would join the JCA teams, and there would be joint management and agricultural instruction.<sup>86</sup>

The colonists reacted sharply. They expressed indignation at being passed from hand to hand like an object and feared for the future. In 1900, with the beginning of the JCA's administration, the flow of funds to individual farmers was reduced, the system of regular subsidized payments was canceled, public services in the colonies were lessened, vine planting ceased and old vineyards were uprooted, and financial activity was restricted. Many Jewish farm laborers remained unemployed. Not a few of them received travel tickets from the JCA and left the country, some of them for Australia where they settled in Perth and other places. The crisis continued until the end of the First Aliyah period, with the colonies showing first signs of emerging from it during the Second Aliyah period. Nonetheless, within the first four years of the twentieth century, the JCA took steps for the financial and social recovery of the colonies by introducing new agricultural crops to replace the uprooted vines and allotting larger plots of land to farmers. In addition, the JCA initiated the establishment of agricultural farms and new colonies in order to provide for laborers and second-generation colonists. These initiatives were based on new

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**84** On relations and confrontation between "The Society for the Support of Jewish Farmers and Artisans in Syria and Eretz Israel" and Rothschild, see Laskov, "Hovevei Zion in Russia," 168–72. Criticism of Rothschild's enterprise and the transfer to the JCA is expressed in the epilogue to Giladi, "Rothschild and the Patronage System," 202–6.

**85** See Shulamith Laskov, "Rothschild – Pro and Con," *Cathedra* 101 (Oct. 2001): 191–94 (Hebrew).

**86** On the beginning of JCA activity in Eretz Israel and its continuation during the British Mandate period after receiving special status in 1924, also reflected in the change of its name to PICA, see Yaacov Goldstein and Bat-Sheva Stern, "The Organization and Purpose of PICA," *Cathedra* 59 (Mar. 1991): 103–25 (Hebrew), who also note that James de Rothschild, the son of Baron Rothschild, became its director.

principles: creation of a central administrative body, social planning, priority for grain crops, setting up larger plots for each colonist, and providing suitable loans until they could become independent.

To some degree, from the very start of operations in the country the JCA also changed the former character of Jewish settlement. It prioritized purchase of large plots of land instead of individual settlements in order to establish groups of settlements on them. During 1900–1904 it purchased around 70,000 dunams in the eastern Lower Galilee bordering on the central Jordan Valley. There were not many permanent Arab villages in the area due to its hard to till basalt soil, and relatively low precipitation.<sup>87</sup> The owners from whom the lands were purchased were Arab effendis and dignitaries. The JCA established an agricultural farm and five colonies in the area: the Sejerah agricultural farm, the colonies of Sejerah, Kfar Tavor, Yavne'el, Menahemiah (formerly Milhamiah), and Beit Gan.<sup>88</sup>

The same conception that guided the acquisition of large plots of land in the Lower Galilee between 1900 and 1904 also guided them in the purchase of land in the coastal plain from 'Atlit to Haderah. The two veteran colonies, Zikhron Ya'akov (including Bat Shlomoh and Shfeyah) in the northeast and Haderah in the south, were the cornerstones for forming such a bloc. The intention was for it to stretch from 'Atlit on the northern coast, turn east to colonies in the hill country, and continue through the coastal plain to Haderah in the south. Some of the lands were close to the coast (which was government property) and suffered from drainage and flooding problems. There were marshlands in the area that required drainage and were known as the Kabara swamps. A permit was required to drain them, a process that continued

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**87** The eastern Lower Galilee was less attractive from the standpoint of its soil and rainfall; moreover, the lands in its southern area were *jiftlik* (i.e. private land belonging to the sultan) while those in the northern section were owned by effendis living in cities to the north; see Arieh Bitan, *Changes in Settlement in the Eastern Lower Galilee, 1800–1978* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1982), 67–70 (Hebrew). For acquisition of these lands, see also Michael Assaf, *Relations between Arabs and Jews in Eretz Israel, 1860–1948* (Tel Aviv: Tarbut Vekinukh, 1970), 39–56 (Hebrew); Arieh L. Avneri, *The Claim of Dispossession: Jewish Land-settlement and the Arabs 1878–1948* (Efal: Yad Tabenkin, 1982), 99–110.

**88** On the training farm at Sejerah, see Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 27; Estie Yankelevitch, "Sharecropping in Sejerah as a Model for Jewish Agricultural Settlement in Eretz Israel at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Cathedra* 120 (June 2006): 79–106 (Hebrew). See also id., "The 'Forgotten Administrator': David Haim and the Founding of the Sejerah Farm," *Cathedra* 98 (Dec. 2000): 97–122 (Hebrew), including the involvement of Hayyim Margalio Kalvarisky and Eliahu Krause with the training farm at Sejerah and the activity of the JCA as early as 1896. On the colony of Sejerah, see Ben-Zion Michaeli, *Sejera, Its History and Personalities: The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of Its Establishment, 1899–1973* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1973) (Hebrew). For details of the settlements established in the eastern Lower Galilee, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 269–70, and the sources cited there. See also Yair Seltenreich, "Cultural Encounters?: Conception of the Lower Galilee Colonies by Officials of the JCA and PICA," *Cathedra* 120 (June 2006): 107–34 (Hebrew).

into the British Mandate period. During the years 1900–1904, the JCA also established settlements in the Carmel and coastal regions: ‘Atlit, Givat ‘Adah, and Kfar Sava. Later, other settlements were added: Binyaminah, Pardes Hannah, Karkur, and more. The land purchases by Baron Rothschild and the JCA indicate that the main effort during the period was directed at two areas: the eastern Lower Galilee and the coastal plain from ‘Atlit to Haderah, including the Carmel and coastal regions.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the JCA activities, it is important to bear in mind that in essence this was a Jewish philanthropic organization that established Jewish agricultural colonies in other places around the world as well, Argentina for example. While it aided in the establishment of Jewish colonies in Eretz Israel, the JCA also assisted families to leave the country so they could make their living elsewhere in other countries. The Zionist conception of *binyan ha'aretz* (building up the land) was in need of other ideologies to promote it, different from that of the JCA. This would come about with the arrival on the scene of Theodor Herzl in 1896, a subject I shall discuss in the next chapter.<sup>90</sup>

### Purchase of lands from Arabs during the First Aliyah period

The purchase of lands from Arabs was one of the problems that gradually intensified with the increase in the Jewish population in Eretz Israel. The Old Yishuv in Jerusalem, which began building new neighborhoods outside the walls, did not face such a problem since the neighborhoods were meant solely for residential purposes. The problems arose with the establishment of agricultural colonies, since those needed large parcels of land to sustain their residents. Common to all land purchases until 1890 was their limited area, since the settlements were small and had minor needs. They were not part of a master plan, certainly in no way similar to plans set forth by those – Jews and non-Jews alike – who professed the Restoration of the Jews and proposed acquiring large plots of land and put forward a broad settlement vision.

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<sup>89</sup> On the settlements established in the Mount Carmel region and the coastal plain, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 271–72 and the sources cited there. For Kfar Sava, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:279–80. For the acquisition of lands in the coastal plain between ‘Atlit and Haderah, including drainage of swamps, receiving concessions from the Ottoman authorities, and the distribution of land also to Arabs residing in the area, see Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 107–10.

<sup>90</sup> One of the persons Herzl contacted was Baron Rothschild, who at first did not support Herzl’s ideas, maintaining that his plan could not be achieved and might even be detrimental. Herzl was angered and for some time was critical of Rothschild’s activity in Eretz Israel, though in time their relations improved and they even cooperated one with the other. See “Rothschild, Edmond de” in the index to Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, ed. Raphael Patai; tr. Harry Zohn, 5 vols. (New York: Herzl Press, 1960).

This first changed when Baron Rothschild began acquiring land in the country. There was a further impetus following the “panic aliyah” of 1890, when Tiomkin, the director of the Zionist Actions Committee in Jaffa, joined Hankin and together they began buying up lands. The baron’s administrators joined in the effort, both to assist existing colonies and to establish new ones. However, it was still not an overall national objective, but born of philanthropic intentions to help Jews develop agricultural areas with orchards and other branches of farming. This began to pose a threat to the Arabs and caused conflicts, which at times turned into violent struggles between the sides. While the baron’s efforts did increase tension between the two sides, yet one may say that these were still essentially local conflicts.<sup>91</sup>

Fifteen major Jewish agricultural settlements for which lands were purchased from Arabs were established in Eretz Israel during the years 1882–1900. I shall name them and give in parentheses the year in which the land for them was purchased.<sup>92</sup> I shall begin with the settlements established during the first wave of the First Aliyah in the 1880s, and two even earlier ones: Motza (1860), Mikveh Israel (1866),<sup>93</sup> Petah Tikvah (1878),<sup>94</sup> Rishon Lezion (1882), Nes Zionah (Wadi el-Hanin). During 1882–1884 the following colonies were founded: Ekron (Mazkeret Batyah), Rosh Pinnah, Yesud Hama’alah, Mishmar Hayarden, Zikhron Ya’akov, and Gederah.<sup>95</sup> Rehovoth (1891), Haderah (1891), Kfar Sava (1892),<sup>96</sup> Metullah (1896), Hartuv (1896), and Be’er Tuvyah (Castina) (1896) were founded during the second wave of the First Aliyah.<sup>97</sup> The

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**91** On Jewish–Arab relations in the colonies, see Ro’i, “Jewish–Arab Relations”; Assaf, *Relations*, 9–39, who lists thirteen cases in which Jewish settlers were killed by Arabs between 1882 and 1908. See also *History of the Haganah*, vol. 1, part 1, ed. Shaul Avigur, Yehuda Slusky, et al. (Tel Aviv: Ma’arachot, 1972), 19–130 (Hebrew).

**92** For details of the acquisition of land for settlements for which there is no information here, see above where they are discussed. The listing here is based on Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, and Aaronsohn, “Building the Land.”

**93** It is doubtful whether Motza and Mikveh Israel should be included in the list presented here, for their lands were bought prior to the First Aliyah, and the reasons for their establishment were different from those of the colonies. For the acquisition of their lands, see Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 79–80.

**94** On Arab–Jewish conflicts in Petah Tikvah, see *ibid.*, 80–83; for the attack on the colony in 1886, see Eliezer Be’eri, *The Beginning of the Arab–Israeli Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1985), 64 (Hebrew).

**95** The two prominent colonies in which there was contention about lands during the first decade of Jewish settlement were Petah Tikvah and Gederah, but in both cases these were local disputes.

**96** While the land for Kfar Sava was acquired already in 1892, the colony was established later. See Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 272; Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 95–96.

**97** Importance was attributed to a dispute that broke out at Metullah concerning local Arab tenant farmers that was considered an event that added to the fear of Jews; see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 267; Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 96–98. On Hartuv and Castina, see above, and also Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 98–99.



situation began changing upon the start of involvement by the JCA between 1900 and 1904.<sup>98</sup>

## The revival of Hebrew, national education, a new culture, and the teachers association

Another matter of great significance in the Yishuv during the First and Second Aliyah periods was the revival of the Hebrew language. In the diaspora, as well as in the Old Yishuv, which greatly increased in numbers during the nineteenth century, Hebrew customarily served as “the holy language”: in prayers, in the yeshivas, in Torah study, and for special events, mixed with Yiddish and the language of their former place of residence. Among the Sefardi Jews and the other Oriental communities, the situation was similar: Hebrew served as the holy language while daily intercourse was carried out in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) or other languages. Publication of the first Hebrew newspapers in Jerusalem, even before the arrival of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, was parallel to the phenomenon taking place in the *haskalah* movement abroad.<sup>99</sup>

The signal for the revival of Hebrew was given by Ben-Yehuda who arrived in Jerusalem in 1881. By personal example, Ben-Yehuda tried to realize his vision of Hebrew as the sole living spoken language. He initiated a number of activities to that end, such as the establishment of associations and organizations for the use and introduction of Hebrew in schools. Despite his efforts and those of his supporters, the revival of Hebrew in Jerusalem was a slow process. In contrast, his vision was adopted by the early Jewish colonies, although there, too, the first teachers were forced to wage a battle to shape the character of the schools. Their struggle was waged against two groups: on the one hand, conservative parents who sided with traditional religious education, and on the other the baron’s administrators and some parents whose objective was a general education, including foreign languages, to ensure the future of their children. The tenacity of the small group of teachers paid off, and the young people, the next generation of the first Jewish colonies, began to carry out their studies in the renewing Hebrew language. The concept of the revival of Hebrew also began taking root among many *Hovevei Zion* associations in the diaspora. Young people spoke Hebrew among themselves and tried to promote the

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<sup>98</sup> On the acquisition of lands by Zionist societies in the years 1897–1914, see Leah Doukhan-Landau, *The Zionist Companies for Land Purchase in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979) (Hebrew).

<sup>99</sup> Hebrew served as a sort of *lingua franca* in Jerusalem even before the beginnings of the Zionist movement; see Shlomo Haramati, “The Revival of Hebrew as a Spoken Language in the Settlements,” in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981) 1: 427–30 (Hebrew) and the sources he cites.

language among adolescents.<sup>100</sup> The revival of Hebrew became a national goal for Jewish pioneers, among them the Biluim who included it in their regulations. Small groups of Hebrew speakers, from among adolescents as well as adults, also sprang up in the cities and colonies of Eretz Israel.<sup>101</sup>

National Jewish schools were established and took shape in the first Jewish colonies, not in Jerusalem. The infrastructure for Jewish national education was established thanks to the educators and teachers in the colonies who expended great efforts for the realization of these ideals and acted with devotion and perseverance to develop these educational facilities. The first Hebrew school in the country, and in fact in the world, was established in Rishon Lezion in 1887. The rest of the colonies followed in its footsteps. Within one decade Hebrew schools were founded in most of the colonies, while the young teachers tried to instill in them national content and introduce Hebrew as the language of teaching and daily speech.

In 1898, around a decade after the first Hebrew school was opened in Rishon Lezion, the first Hebrew kindergarten was inaugurated there as well. Within a few years, Hebrew kindergartens appeared in the other colonies as well as in the cities of Eretz Israel. Hebrew as the spoken language was taught in schools and kindergartens and much was done to instill it among parents and other adults. Most of the schoolteachers also engaged in adult education and other cultural and social activities.<sup>102</sup>

The efforts of the Zionist teachers also received assistance from Baron Rothschild who instructed his administrators to cover all costs of the new Hebrew education. He extended very valuable support by constructing spacious school buildings, providing equipment, and even paying the teachers' salaries and other costs of education. However, the establishment of the schools was also marked by conflict with the baron's administration, and only the perseverance of the teachers and their persistent battle to determine the nature of the new education ended in its victory. Accordingly, a new type of educational institution was established during the period of the First

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**100** See *ibid.*, 429–30. Peretz Smolenskin, one of the first to promote nationalist values in Jewish education, often pointed to Hebrew as the national language of the Jews that distinguishes them from other nations; see Ze'ev Walk, "The Development of National Education in the Settlements," in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 408–9 (Hebrew). For Ben-Yehuda, see note 18 above.

**101** Haramati, "Revival of Hebrew," 428–29. Immediately upon his arrival in Eretz Israel, Ben-Yehuda took the initiative to "revive Eretz Israel." In 1882, together with Pines and Israel Dov Frumkin, he founded the Tehiat Yisrael (Renaissance of Israel) Society which maintained ties with the Alliance Israélite Universelle; see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:423–44, and in greater detail, Yosef Lang, "The 'Tehiat Yisrael' Society, 1881–1886," *Cathedra* 112 (June 2004): 55–90 (Hebrew). See also Lang, "Joseph Krieger's Attempt."

**102** For details, see Haramati, "Revival of Hebrew," 431–35. Various societies established in the colonies also recorded the proceedings of their meetings in Hebrew.

Aliyah, schools that raised the banner of loyalty to the Hebrew language and of identification with national aspirations.<sup>103</sup>

A number of conceptual principles were at the basis of the new national education that developed in Eretz Israel: a fundamental assertion that Hebrew, as the national language, both unifies and differentiates the Jewish people; Hebrew is a central motif in the ideology of national education; general secular subjects should be an essential part of the study program. Nationalist-minded religious persons such as Pines and Yavetz also perceived of secular subjects as an inseparable part of the curriculum and aspired that they be taught in Hebrew despite the difficulties due to the absence of textbooks, lack of Hebrew terminology, and no experience in teaching any subject in Hebrew. Since the settlement of Eretz Israel and taking root in the country were a central aspect of the Hibbat Zion conception, the Zionist educators came to the conclusion that in order to familiarize the children with their surroundings, the geography and natural history of the country should receive special attention. Hovevei Zion members in the diaspora also started teaching the geography of Eretz Israel to prospective olim even before they came on aliyah. In Eretz Israel, these topics were realistically impressed upon the pupils through hikes and trips in the vicinity of the colony and around the country that also increased their awareness of Jewish history. Teaching children to till the soil was also connected to subjects relating to the wellbeing of body and soul. Teaching of agriculture and nature were adopted by philosophers and educators whose theories were the cornerstone of modern European education. Such educational practices served as the guiding light for the educators of the First Aliyah, mainly for those in the colonies.

Since Zionist educators ascribed a central role to the history of the Jewish people, the first schoolbooks composed were about that subject. Literature dealing with Eretz Israel filled a similar role. This was the case with the Bible, which emphasizes the relationship of the Jewish people to its homeland from the dawn of time, as well as the new national literature. What was unique about Zionist education was mainly its revolutionary character. It did not aim to maintain the existing situation, but to fundamentally change it. During the period of the First Aliyah it still did not aspire to do away with what was old, as in many ways was later the case during the Second Aliyah period, but without doubt its aim was to revitalize the ailing body of the nation.<sup>104</sup>

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**103** Walk, “National Education,” 407. That Rothschild was personally in favor of teaching Hebrew is reflected in the fact that he funded the publication of the first textbooks in Hebrew.

**104** The discussion of the ideas that served as a basis for Zionist national education is based on *ibid.*, 408–14. For the strong hold of the new Zionist national ideal on the settlers in the First Aliyah colonies, to the extent that they rarely visited Jerusalem which was identified with the Old Yishuv, see Ran Aaronsohn, “Jerusalem in the Eyes of Members of the First Aliyah,” in *Jerusalem in Zionist Vision and Realization: Collected Essays*, ed. Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 1989), 47–65 (Hebrew).

In both these processes – nationalist Jewish education and the revival of Hebrew – there were ups and downs throughout the period of the First Aliyah. As stated, the temporary declines were the result of difficulties that accompanied the establishment of nationalist Hebrew schools and their development, in addition to the professional difficulties involved in teaching Hebrew as a living language and teaching other professions in that language. However, the teachers overcame all of these. They endeavored to speak only Hebrew with their pupils in school, and there were teachers who did the same after school hours as well. They tried to overcome all the difficulties, each in his own place of residence as well as in the context of new organizations that began forming in the country.

To overcome the lack of terminology for diverse names, terms, and subjects in Hebrew, there was a need to create many new words. This problem was the catalyst for the establishment of the Hebrew Language Committee in 1890, which began actual operation only a few years later. In the meantime, teachers tried to act on their own initiative. It is difficult to determine to what degree Hebrew seeped in to the Jewish community during the First Aliyah period. The consensus is that teachers revived Hebrew in the schools at the time by teaching school subjects in Hebrew, as noted, and conversing with the children in that language. Moshe Smilansky, one of the authors who recorded the history of Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel, claimed that the First Aliyah won the day for Hebrew mainly among the young, while the Second Aliyah gained victory for Hebrew in the street. Nevertheless, it is important once again to emphasize that the seeds of both Hebrew nationalist education and the revival of the Hebrew language were sown during the period of the First Aliyah.<sup>105</sup>

The First Aliyah period also witnessed the beginnings of the formation of a new Eretz Israel culture. Two holidays that were considered marginal in the diaspora – Tu Bishvat and Tu Be'av – were revived and received new meaning in the First Aliyah colonies. Although Tu Bishvat was celebrated among the Jews in Europe, it took on a new significance in the landscape and expanses of the old-new country. Tu Be'av was also transformed into a holiday by the young people in the colonies, celebrated with dancing and music. Contemporary sources describe the events as they were celebrated in the colonies of the First Aliyah. In addition, national symbols gradually took shape in the new colonies, including the blue-and-white flags of the colonies, national symbols such as the six-pointed Magen David, the national anthem, and more.<sup>106</sup>

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**105** See Haramati, "Revival of Hebrew," 443–46; on the historic contribution made by national education in the colonies, see Walk, "National Education," 423–25. For an analysis and listing of teachers in First Aliyah colonies, see also Yaffa Szekely, "The Character of the Teachers in the First Aliyah Colonies, 1881–1904," *Cathedra* 84 (July 1997): 143–74 (Hebrew); id., "Reply to Yosef Lang [and Supplement to 'Teachers in the First Aliyah Colonies']," *Cathedra* 90 (Dec. 1998): 183–86 (Hebrew).

**106** On these holidays and national symbols, see Yafah Berlowitz, "The Hebrew Colony: The Beginnings of Eretz Israeli Culture," in *Talking Culture: The First Aliyah and Interperiod Discourse*,

In 1892, around a decade following the establishment of the first new Jewish colonies in Eretz Israel, the pioneer teachers began organizing, and the first “Teachers Assembly” was convened. Its objective was to seek solutions relating to teaching Hebrew as a living language and instruction in other subjects in Hebrew. This organization discussed the fundamental questions of Hebrew national education. At the Teachers Conference that convened in Zikhron Ya’akov on August 23, 1903, the “Hebrew Teachers Union” was established.<sup>107</sup>

## Ottoman rule during the period of Abdülhamid II, 1876–1909

Throughout the period of the First Aliyah, Palestine was under the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II who reigned over the Ottoman Empire for over thirty years. The period of his rule, which came after the two stages of the Tanzimat reforms (1839–1856, 1856–1876) differed in nature from those that preceded it. It was marked by loss of territories to the European powers and the unrest of minorities within the Empire whose demands caused instability. It was then that the “Young Turks” began developing a protest movement calling for modern changes in the Islamic Ottoman system of government, and raised the banner of a unique Ottoman nationalism. The sultan’s response was a dictatorship, which, at least in his eyes, would guarantee maintaining the existence of the Empire. He dissolved the parliament and established an autocratic regime based on cruel repression of any expression of opposition and rebellion. He employed means characteristic of dictatorships such as censorship, espionage, informants, and arbitrary punishment.<sup>108</sup>

One of the main changes during the reign of Abdülhamid II was in the relations between the Empire and the great European powers. In the thirty years following the death of Muhammad ‘Ali in 1849, there was a steady increase in the importance of Egypt through which passed the major and most direct route to India and the eastern territories of the British Empire. Improvement of the overland route between Alexandria and Suez, construction of railways, and mainly the opening of the Suez Canal that was completed in 1869, turned Egypt into an essential thoroughfare on these imperial routes. While British statesmen at the time did not yet view Egypt as a

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ed. Yafah Berlowitz and Yosef Lang (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2010), 76–80, 84–88 (Hebrew), respectively. For more on the development of a new Hebrew national culture, see Chapter Six where a comparison shall be made between the First and Second *aliyah*.

**107** On the establishment of the Hebrew Teachers Union in Zikhron Ya’akov in 1903 and the support of educational activity in Eretz Israel by the Odessa Committee, see Laskov, “Hovevei Zion,” 174–76; see also Moshe Attias, ed., *Documents of the National Committee of Knesset Yisrael in Eretz Israel, 1918–1948*, 2nd rev. ed. (Jerusalem; [n.p.], 1963), 1–5 (Hebrew).

**108** This sub-chapter is based mainly on Haggai Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction to the Modern History of the Middle East* (Tel Aviv: The Open University, 1987–1991), 6 vols. (Hebrew). For the reign of Abdülhamid II, see Shaw, *History*, 2:171–272.

possible objective for colonialism, they did ascribe importance to its security and keeping open its routes. Ever since the Crimean War, Russia became Britain's rival and the major threat to its territories in the East. Russia's colonialist aspirations, south towards the Mediterranean and east towards India and China, were a permanent source of concern for Britain. As opposed to Russia, France gradually became entrenched as Britain's ally and partner. Since the Franco–Prussian war of 1871, this partnership took the form of a common policy by both countries towards Egypt and the Ottoman Empire that, during the period in office of Prime Ministers Palmerston and Disraeli, was based on four principles: a strong and efficient British fleet; the status of preferred power in Istanbul; agreement with France; and cooperation between the two with regards to Egypt.<sup>109</sup>

With this in mind, the purchase of the Suez Canal shares by the Disraeli government in 1875 is understandable. Possession of the Suez Canal also enhanced British interest in Cyprus. Thus, during the war between the Russians and the Ottomans in the Balkans in 1877–1878, after the Ottomans lost most of the area, the British made their support conditional on receiving Cyprus. Turkey was forced to agree, and a secret agreement was signed between the parties that also included the transfer of Cyprus to the British. In 1878, the Russians also agreed to sign the Treaty of San Stefano with the Ottomans.<sup>110</sup>

In the meantime, in Egypt, too, things were not at a standstill. During the 1870s, the British were not yet thinking of conquering Egypt. Maintaining its security was part of their effort to curb the Russians. This was also the reason for their objections to attempts to dismember the Ottoman Empire. Thus, for example, they refused the proposal by Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck, at the Berlin Congress in 1878, to receive Egypt as part of the division of Ottoman territories. However, towards the end of the 1870s these principles were no longer viable. Isma'il Pasha, the khedive of Egypt, was deposed and internal rebellions erupted. In Britain the Liberal Party headed by William Ewart Gladstone came into power, and British influence in Istanbul declined as Prussian influence increased. All these, together with the need to coordinate their stance with France, made it clear to the British that their moderate strategy was not working and in order to maintain their imperial policy there was no substitute for actual control of territories.

The agreement with France was thus put to the test. As early as 1830 France had conquered Algeria and in 1881 also gained control of Tunisia. France aspired to put

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**109** On British imperial policy and the conquest of Egypt, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 4:209–11.

**110** For the ceding of Cyprus to Great Britain, see *ibid.*, 3:279; on the Russian defeat of the Ottomans in the Balkans in 1877–1878, see *ibid.*, 4:339–41. It should be noted that the Ottomans continued to be involved in Cyprus for many years, despite its being handed over to the British. On the Russo–Turkish war of 1877–1878 and the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano, see Shaw, *History*, 2:182–89.

down Colonel Ahmad ‘Urabi’s rebellion in Egypt. All these and more goaded Britain into taking steps in collaboration with France. Finally, in August–September of 1882, Britain conquered Egypt. After the invasion it was decided that the British consul in Egypt at the time would in effect govern the territory, but that Egypt would remain an Ottoman vilayet with a special status under the rule of the Muhammad ‘Ali dynasty, the Taufiq dynasty (1879–1892) and Abbas Hilmi II (1892–1914). On October 29, 1888 the Convention of Constantinople was signed, which also determined the conditions for maintenance of and freedom of passage through the Suez Canal.<sup>111</sup>

A new factor in the area was Germany. After the victory over France in 1871 and Bismarck’s unification of Germany, the idea was broached of introducing German military supremacy in Istanbul. As early as 1883, German military delegations began training the Turkish forces. Germany’s entrance into the colonialist competition between the powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries strengthened the relations between Britain and France. During 1903 Britain and France conducted diplomatic negotiations for the signing of an agreement of cooperation that ended in a document signed on April 8, 1904. In the agreement, later known as the “Entente Cordiale,” France acknowledged Britain’s right to rule Egypt, while French rights of passage through the Suez Canal and to collect debts from the Egyptian government were ensured. Britain acknowledged French interests in Morocco and committed itself to support their realization. The agreement also settled other territorial disagreements. This British–French cooperation is what later led the two countries to be allies when World War I broke out.<sup>112</sup>

During the period of British rule in Egypt for more than thirty-five years from 1882 until World War I, there emerged an Egyptian national consciousness, to a great degree as a response to the British invasion and grounded in the perception of Egypt as having a unique history. At the same time there was also a national, social, and religious Islamic awakening.<sup>113</sup>

One of the major issues in the creation of the new modern Egypt was determining its borders, especially the border with the Ottoman Empire. Britain wanted as much of the Sinai Peninsula as possible to be part of Egypt, and it pushed the border with the empire towards the north. A border dispute thus arose between Britain and the Ottoman Empire. Following British pressure, a demarcation line was drawn

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**111** For a general summary of these developments, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 4:1–10. For the Convention of Constantinople, see *ibid.*, 3:157. On the Congress of Berlin (1878), the French conquest of Tunisia and the British conquest of Egypt, see Shaw, *History*, 2:190–95.

**112** On German strategy vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 5:195–99. Later German involvement with the Ottoman Empire will be discussed in Chapter Six.

**113** For details of the beginnings of Egyptian national consciousness, Islamic modernism as preparing the ground for the emergence of modern Egyptian nationalism, and more, see *ibid.*, 4:11–70.



in 1906 from Rafah to Taba, which serves as the current border between Israel and Egypt.<sup>114</sup>

This policy did not bring an end to the employment of military power. In 1911, Italy took over Tripolitania (current day Libya), yet the territorial losses of the Ottoman Empire were only on its frontiers. Nonetheless, in August 1914 it became clear that an all-European war was unavoidable.<sup>115</sup>

For the remainder of the period of Ottoman rule until World War I, there were no internal military conflicts within the Empire. The efforts of the European powers focused on the economy and transportation. At first, Ottoman postal services lagged far behind those operated by the foreign consulates, so the Ottomans used the foreign services and Ottoman postal services began operating regularly only in 1873. During the period of Abdülhamid II, Western involvement increased as European companies and entrepreneurs competed to receive concessions to build railways, exploit natural resources, and establish various services.<sup>116</sup>

In contrast to the quiet vis-à-vis foreign countries, there was growing unrest within the Ottoman state that took the form of violent rebellions in different places. Due to these developments and the spread of protest and separationist movements also among Islamic non-Turks, Abdülhamid II adopted a pan-Islamic policy aimed at increasing Muslim identification with the state. To that end he made use of his religious status as Khalifa al-Islam, brought religious functionaries into his government, cultivated Islamic institutions, and built the Hejaz Railway to ease the journey of those making the pilgrimage to Mecca. In addition, he began to adopt an imperial settlement policy. Since he placed emphasis on Asia, he began implementing it in Kurdistan, Mesopotamia, and Syria. He settled minorities on the fringes of the desert, mainly Circassians and Turkomans who were settled east of the Jordan River. Bedouins in the Syrian desert and the trans-Jordan lands were given incentives to take up permanent residence. Thus, in 1900 an urban administrative center was established in Be'er Sheva. The Ottoman authorities settled the ruins of Jerash, Amman, Beit She'an, and Caesarea with Muslim Bosnians. The Circassians founded Kafr Kama in Lower Galilee and Rehaniyah in Upper Galilee. Public buildings and mosques were erected in the cities, symbols of imperial authority. Thus a clock tower was erected near Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem and similar clock towers were built in Jaffa and in Acre.

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**114** On the 1906 controversy over the demarcation of this border and its influence on Egyptian nationalism, see *ibid.*, 4:287–90. See also Uriel Heyd, “The Gulf of Elath Crisis of 1906,” in *Elath: The Eighteenth Archaeological Convention, October 1962* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1963), 194–206 (Hebrew). I shall return to this topic in Chapter Eight, in the discussion of the borders set by Herbert Samuel.

**115** Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 5:12–13 and the references cited there.

**116** For the development of postal and telegraph services and railways, including the Hedjaz Railway, during the reign of Abdülhamid II, see *ibid.*, 3:353–56.

The main concern of the Ottomans in Palestine during the last period of their rule was focused on securing their rule in the face of the many dangers lurking both from within and without. Beyond the perils constituted by the Western powers who wanted to gain control of the country, there were also dangers from within, separatist demands by Arabs in Syria and Palestine who were angered by the actions and misdeeds of the Ottoman rulers and had come under the influence of nationalist ideas. During the period of Abdülhamid II, these feelings rarely came to the fore due to his harsh rule on the one hand, and his pan-Islamic policy on the other, which helped preserve the loyalty of most of the Muslim population.<sup>117</sup>

The new Zionist community that was emerging in Eretz Israel and the Jewish national revival that accompanied it posed a new problem for the Ottoman authorities. Until the beginning of the First Aliyah, they were aware mainly of two types of Jews: the Sefardi community (in addition to a number of other Oriental Jewish communities) and the Ashkenazi Old Yishuv. The majority of the Sefardi Jews were Ottoman citizens, subject to the laws of the state and enjoying equal rights granted to non-Muslims in the Empire. The Sefardi community was part of the official Jewish millet and established its institutions, among them that of the chief rabbi (Hakham Bashi) in a manner similar to other ethnic groups in the Empire. The Sefardi community represented the entire Jewish community vis-à-vis the authorities, while many of the members of the Ashkenazi Old Yishuv were also foreign subjects, under the aegis of this or that European power. While the Ashkenazi communities had no official acknowledged status, in reality they enjoyed much autonomy and conducted their own relations with the authorities. The government did not view foreign citizenship kindly, but accepted the fact that the main interest of the Ashkenazi community was observance of a religious lifestyle. Neither the Ashkenazim nor the Sefardim harbored any prominent political aspirations, and therefore the authorities did not consider them a realistic threat.<sup>118</sup>

Zionism, on the other hand, was suspect. Ottoman restrictions on immigration were first applied during the First Aliyah period.<sup>119</sup> The Ottoman government, through its representatives in the various European capitals, was aware of the plans and actions of Zionist personae and organizations and perceived the idea of a

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**117** On the image of Sultan Abdülhamid II in Western and Turkish historical writing, see *ibid.*, 4: 296–98 where it is noted that there is a growing inclination to view his acts more positively since many of them were the result of necessary pragmatic decisions during his reign.

**118** For the growth of the Old Yishuv and how it differed from the First Aliyah settlements, see Chapter Four.

**119** On the first restriction of Jewish aliyah to Eretz Israel in 1882, with the beginning of the First Aliyah, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 2:198–201. See also Be'eri, *Beginning of the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 14–26, who maintains that only from the First Aliyah can this be considered immigration with Zionist motivation; he even also notes that the term “Zionism” was coined by Nathan Birnbaum only in 1890.

Jewish national revival as posing a grave threat to its interests. While bitterly combating national separatist movements throughout the Empire, it had no intention to assist in the creation of another problem. Another factor contributing to government hostility towards Zionism was the fear of strengthening foreign interests. The fact that most of the immigrants arrived from Russia, the traditional rival of the Ottoman Empire, only served to enhance this feeling.

Rauf Pasha, the local ruler of Jerusalem, began taking steps against Jewish immigration already between 1884 and 1888.<sup>120</sup> It is generally accepted that the Jewish–Arab conflict became evident during the first wave of colony establishment in 1882–1890, and that it focused mainly on issues such as the purchase of land, Arab labor in the new Jewish colonies, and attacks on Jews, mostly for the purpose of robbery and thieving. During the second wave of the “panic aliyah” of 1890–1891, Ottoman fear of Jewish immigration increased, leading to the issuing, in June 1891, of an Ottoman government decree forbidding it. Yet, it appears that Ottoman fears at this time were still minor. Arab fears increased with the appearance on the scene of Herzl and political Zionism and the attempts to receive a charter for a Jewish state.<sup>121</sup>

From the very onset of his political activities in 1896, Herzl did not conceal his objection to the Jewish policy of “infiltration” and claimed that a Jewish state could only be established in agreement with the Ottoman government. His continuous efforts to achieve this were doomed to failure. In fact, his words and actions – the vision of a Jewish state, publication of his famous books, the establishment of the Zionist Organization, convocation of the Zionist Congresses, his visit to Eretz Israel, his meetings with European politicians and his endeavors to receive a charter and Jewish settlement in the country by international agreement – all these only served to reinforce Ottoman suspicions. Moreover, the relations created between Zionist leaders and the European countries and the support lent the Zionist vision by a wide audience of personages and groups, increased Ottoman suspicion that a foreign power was hiding behind the Zionist movement. All of Herzl’s monetary proposals were not enough to overcome what seemed to Sultan Abdülhamid II as the fundamental interests of a European power. The Sultan was willing to sanction unlimited Jewish immigration to other parts of the Empire, excluding Palestine. This attitude remained consistent until the termination of Ottoman rule in the country

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**120** On the anti-immigration policy of Rauf Pasha and the involvement of consuls and other foreign representatives in attempts to thwart it in accordance with the Capitulations, including bribing him and his officials, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:297–314, 339–52, where he also notes the visit to Jerusalem by Oscar Strauss, the US Ambassador to Turkey, to deal with this issue. On Rauf Pasha, see also Kushner, “Ottoman Governors,” 276–78.

**121** The two major issues that aroused the Arabs in connection with Zionist endeavors were Jewish immigration and the acquisition of land by Jews. The latter subject is treated in several chapters of this book in relation to developments in the Holy Land.

and stood at the basis of the restrictions and prohibitions on the immigration and settlement of Jews.<sup>122</sup> Appeals by David Wolffsohn, Nahum Sokolow, and Max Nordau after Herzl's death did not change the Ottoman stance on this matter.<sup>123</sup>

Ottoman objections to Zionism and Jewish settlement, which began during the period of Abdülhamid II, were widely voiced by Ottoman spokesmen after the “Young Turk” revolution. In terms of the Jewish–Arab conflict, there are those who divide the period of the First and Second Aliyah into three sub-periods: (a) the major period of the First Aliyah, 1882–1896; (b) from the Zionism of Herzl (1896) until the Young Turk revolution (1908); (c) the period of the Young Turks until the British invasion of the country (1908–1917/18).<sup>124</sup>

To sum up, we may say that throughout the entire rule of Abdülhamid II, the Ottoman government continued to restrict Jews from disembarking in the country's ports. These steps were accompanied from time to time by prohibitions on land purchase and various obstacles to settlement attempts. The foreign governments and the consuls who represented them in the country vehemently protested against the restrictions and prohibitions, claiming they were opposed to the Capitulation Treaty. The Ottoman government was forced to change the regulations a number of times, as was the case in the late 1880s and early 1890s. In 1900, following heavy pressure by the powers, an arrangement was reached which brought some relief. Jews who were subjects of foreign powers were permitted to remain in the country for three months (instead of the previous thirty-day limitation). In order to ensure their departure from the country at the end of that period, they had to leave their passport at the port and receive a temporary permit, which the immigrants called the “red ticket.” However, enforcement of this arrangement, like others before it, was slack and did not prevent Jews who wished to settle in the Eretz Israel from doing so. Inefficiency and bribe taking were widespread, and the immigrants received efficient assistance in bypassing the regulations from the diplomatic representatives of their countries. The attitude of this or that governor could ease the process, and the Ottoman authorities were not always meticulous in implementing the restrictions.<sup>125</sup>

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**122** For the Ottomans and Zionism during the period of Abdülhamid II and the Young Ottomans, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 4:290–96. On first attempts to exploit the presence of Victor Jacobson in Istanbul as the representative of the Zionist Organization for contact with Arabs, see Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1970), 85–88, who also notes the testimony of Asher Saphir, who was Jacobson's assistant in Istanbul, to the 1937 Palestine Royal Commission (“the Peel Commission”).

**123** See in Chapter Six, in the discussion on Herzl and other Zionist leaders.

**124** This division into periods is suggested by Assaf, *Relations*, 9–120, and also by Be'eri, *Beginning of the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 72–83. There are other suggested divisions: 1) until 1908; 2) from the beginning of the Young Turk revolution until the end of 1909; 3) from 1910 to the outbreak of World War I.

**125** See David Kushner, *A Governor in Jerusalem: The City and Province in the Eyes of Ali Ekrem Bey, 1906–1908* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1995) (Hebrew). This book includes the texts of original

Thus, despite Ottoman policy regarding the Zionist movement and the restrictions on immigration, settlement, and land purchase, many Jews managed to settle in Eretz Israel. The Yishuv and the Zionist movement continued in their endeavors: purchasing land, establishing new colonies, strengthening existing settlements, founding independent institutions and organizations, developing a new culture, and conducting a vibrant political life.

This raises another question: is there congruence between the policy of the Ottomans and the restrictions they placed on the Zionist movement and Jewish immigration, and the Jewish–Palestinian Arab conflict that developed later? I have already mentioned that throughout the Ottoman period, the Holy Land/Eretz Israel, for better or worse, was not a geographical unit unto itself. Towards the end of the period of Ottoman rule, nationalist Ottoman ideas were raised that came out against the dictatorship of the government, and an overall Arab national movement did begin to develop. Most scholars agree this was not a national movement of Arabs in Palestine. Such a movement only began taking shape during the British Mandate period, and I shall discuss it in the second half of this book.

## Summary: The revolution of the First Aliyah and the beginnings of practical Zionism

Five factors lay at the root of the revolutionary Jewish developments in Eretz Israel during the First Aliyah period: (a) people in the country who were stirred by conceptions of productivization; (b) Hovevei Zion associations in Romania and Russia and the “Storms in the Negev” pogroms; (c) Baron Rothschild; (d) establishment of twenty-eight Jewish settlements; (e) formation of a new Zionist nationalism.<sup>126</sup>

The first factor was the emergence of a new group within the Jewish religious community in the nineteenth century, mainly in Jerusalem, which began adopting ideas regarding the need for productivization of the Jewish community, mostly in response to the degeneration caused by halukkah funds. When olim of the First Aliyah began arriving, members of the Old Yishuv joined them with the objective of

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documents together with annotations and introductions that illuminate events of this governor's term in office. Unfortunately, these additions are often restricted only to the period of Ekrem Bey, while a wider discussion would have been desirable.

**126** David Vital ends his three-volume history of the first forty years of Zionism (see bibliography) with the Balfour Declaration that was included in the mandate for Palestine. He also distinguishes between three types of immigrants to Eretz Israel already in the years 1882–1884: 1) Groups of Zionist immigrants from Russia, members of Hovevei Zion, including the Biluim; 2) Groups of immigrants from Romania; 3) Immigrants from Yemen in 1882. For the Yemenite aliyah, see Nitza Druyan, “The Immigration and Integration of Yemenite Jews in the First Aliya,” *Jerusalem Cathedra* 3 (1983): 193–211; Yehuda Nini, *The Jews of the Yemen, 1800–1914* (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991), 173–233.

changing the character of the Jewish community in the country and establishing new agricultural colonies. They were also joined by members of the Sefardi community and other Oriental Jews living in the country.<sup>127</sup>

The second factor was the Hovevei Zion associations in Romania and Russia and the “Storms in the Negev” pogroms, which made European Jewry aware of the dangers surrounding them. The wave of flight emigration from Europe was directed mainly at North and South America, but a small part also turned towards Eretz Israel. As the number of Hovevei Zion associations grew in Europe, a committee was established to stand at their head. Outstanding personalities were positioned there to further the concept of Hibbat Zion. The “Storms in the Negev” pogroms brought those who professed Jewish emancipation to Eretz Israel, some of whom were still deliberating whether the solution for the Jewish people must be found there or was also possible in another country. However the Hovevei Zion movement was as yet not strong enough, mainly in terms of finances, and it suffered from extreme internal disagreements.

The third factor was Baron Rothschild who came to the aid of the first Hovevei Zion colonies established in Eretz Israel. At first the baron was not party to Zionist ideology, and his willingness to help the troubled colonies arose solely from philanthropic motives. In 1896, when Herzl appealed to him to join him in the Zionist program, the baron refrained from doing so and replied that he did not believe the program was realistic or feasible.<sup>128</sup> In contrast, when he met with Chaim Weizmann before the beginning of World War I, his reply was different. According to Weizmann, he said: “Without me the Zionists could have done nothing, but without the Zionists my work would have been dead.”<sup>129</sup> There is no doubt that despite the shortcomings, the baron’s contribution to the development of the colonies was crucial. He in effect became partner to what would later be termed “Practical Zionism,” and in his actions validated the overall Zionist ideology as well.

The fourth factor was the establishment of twenty-eight Jewish colonies during the First Aliyah period.<sup>130</sup> Prior to the beginning of this Aliyah, the entire Jewish population in the country was mainly concentrated in the four holy cities of Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron. Now a true change in the landscape occurred: the addition of dozens of new agricultural colonies that were established, grew, and expanded and were important in their own right, but also greatly influenced the entire Jewish population in the country which continued to develop and undergo change. The Jewish community in Jerusalem increased significantly. The

<sup>127</sup> See Salmon, “The ‘New Yishuv’ in Jerusalem.”

<sup>128</sup> Alex Bein, *Theodor Herzl: A Biography* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1940), 195, 202–9

<sup>129</sup> Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (London: East and West Library, 1950), 165, 176–77. See also in the index to Simon Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel* (London: Collins, 1978).

<sup>130</sup> See note 82 above.

progressive element within it found ways to cooperate with the agricultural colonies. Jaffa turned into a center of contact for services and commerce for the First Aliyah colonies. The change also influenced Haifa, Tiberias, and other cities. At the same time, an ideological gap opened between the New Yishuv which gradually gained in strength in the colonies and to a certain extent also in the cities, and the Old Yishuv that continued to maintain its previous traditional religious attitudes and entrenched itself, mainly in Jerusalem.

The fifth factor is perhaps the most important, and it is the beginning of the formation of a new Zionist nationalism. The mere fact that the First Aliyah continued over twenty years created a new generation of colonists raised in Eretz Israel. The education of this first generation was based on the principles of the new Zionist ideology: exclusive use of the Hebrew language, renewal and development of new Jewish national holidays, symbols, and ceremonies; establishment of a Zionist national culture, and more. Persons and organizations of the "Old-New" Yishuv, such as Ben-Yehuda, David Yellin, and others, were partner to all these. Hebrew public libraries, schools, and kindergartens began opening throughout the land. The Hebrew-speaking teachers established the Teachers Union, and set out with their pupils to tour and study the country. All these were added to the Zionist-Jewish cultural life whose beginnings lie in the revolution of the First Aliyah.





Yehuda Leib Pinsker.



Moshe Leib Lilienblum.



Eliezer Ben-Yehuda.



Yehiel Michal Pines.



Yehoshua Stampfer.  
A founder of Petah Tikvah



Yoel Moshe Salomon.  
A founder of Petah Tikvah



Baron Edmond de Rothschild.



Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginsberg).



Ze'ev Tiomkin.



Yehoshua Hankin.



Zalman David Levontin.  
A founder of Rishon Lezion



Moshe David Shub.  
A founder of Rosh Pinnah

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## Chapter 6: Herzl and political Zionism, the Second Aliyah, and World War I

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## Herzl and political Zionism, 1896–1904

The previous chapter dealt with the period of the First Aliyah and focused on the revolution in Jewish settlement when Hovevei Zion began furthering settlement in Eretz Israel, with the assistance of Baron Rothschild and the JCA. Zionist activity during the period was later termed “practical Zionism” (in contrast with “political Zionism”). During the period of its evolution, many doubted whether practical Zionism would progress and succeed. As noted, even Ahad Ha’am, one of the leading Zionist thinkers of the time, considered whether the path followed by Jewish settlement should not be changed to “cultural Zionism,” wherein the country would serve as a cultural-spiritual center for the Jewish people, since it certainly would be unable to receive the large number of Jews fleeing Europe. Indeed, other leading Jewish personages did not view the solution to the Jewish question to be in the Holy Land. In the first part of this chapter, I shall discuss another major development for the Jewish people that occurred in the 1890s, still during the First Aliyah period, the movement initiated and led by Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism.<sup>1</sup>

Herzl was born in 1860 in Budapest, Hungary. The local liberal Jewish synagogue stood next door to his home. In the fall of 1870 his parents sent him to study at the Technical School where he first encountered an antisemitic environment. On May 3, 1873 he celebrated his Bar-Mitzvah with his family and friends. The young lad developed an inclination for the study of literature, and on February 7, 1874 he left the Technical School and enrolled in a regular high school. In 1878 he moved to Vienna and registered for law school, while at the same time continued to take an avid interest in books and even began writing articles and keeping a diary. Herzl was an avid reader of antisemitic literature and began contending with it. He was an active member of the students’ union, wrote comedies and feuilletons, and traveled to neighboring countries. On July 30, 1884 he received a license to practice law, but also continued writing, mainly plays. Later he totally abandoned the legal practice and changed his profession to journalism. Herzl continued his travels, going to Paris, Berlin, and London where he visited the museums and the cultural and journalistic centers. His works were accepted for publication and enacted in theaters, while his articles were published in the newspapers of the time; he was considered a talented journalist. On June 25, 1889 Herzl was married in Vienna. The couple had three children, Paulina, Hans, and Margaritha, known as Trude.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning

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<sup>1</sup> Herzl has been the subject of very many publications. The historical facts in the first section of this chapter are based primarily on Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, without reference to the author’s extensive interpretations and analysis, and Herzl, *Complete Diaries*.

<sup>2</sup> For Herzl’s biography, including the birth of his children, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 3–71.

of October 1891, Herzl moved to Paris where he served as the local correspondent for the *Neue Freie Presse*.<sup>3</sup>

### **Antisemitism in Paris and the Dreyfus trial; Baron Hirsch; *Der Judenstaat*, 1896**

The *Neue Freie Presse* was the most widely read newspaper throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Herzl's task was to report to the newspaper, from Paris, on everything he deemed of interest, one he filled to the utmost satisfaction of the editors. During his stay in Paris, a change occurred in Herzl's thinking, and he began pondering the Jewish question. In France, hatred of Jews began manifesting itself and as early as the 1770s received its new name, "antisemitism." Herzl was acquainted with antisemitism since his early days in school, at the university, and as a writer. He now began reacting to it in his articles for the Austrian newspaper. On August 31, 1892 Herzl summarized antisemitic events in France in an article titled "French Antisemites," the first in which he expressed his views on the Jewish problem. He continued to write on the subject and became increasingly involved with it. He also wrote feuilletons and plays dealing with the Jewish question and broached ideas for solutions to the problem, although he was still far from the Zionist solution. From October 21 until November 8, 1894 Herzl wrote his play *The New Ghetto*.<sup>4</sup>

On December 19, 1894, the famous trial of Jewish officer Alfred Dreyfus began in Paris. With no evidential basis and as part of an internal plot, Dreyfus was accused of espionage against France. Herzl was present in the courtroom as the correspondent of his newspaper. On December 22, when the court's verdict was made public, Herzl reported on the event. There is no doubt that the trial shocked him, and mostly he was disturbed by the responses of the French public towards the innocent Jew.<sup>5</sup> Scholars are divided regarding how much the event influenced the

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<sup>3</sup> On Herzl's years in Paris, see *ibid.*, 72–180. See also Haya Harel, "From the Palais Bourbon to *Der Judenstaat*," in *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State*, ed. Gideon Shimoni and Robert S. Wistrich (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999), 126–44.

<sup>4</sup> The play is about a young and successful Jewish lawyer who is rejected by antisemitic society in the West; see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 100–108. See also Ritchie Robertson, "The New Ghetto and the Perplexities of Assimilation," in *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State*, ed. Gideon Shimoni and Robert S. Wistrich (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999), 39–51.

<sup>5</sup> For Herzl and the Dreyfus trial, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 108–20. Bein maintains that the trial was the final impetus for the beginning of Herzl's political involvement and what led him to turn to Baron Hirsch. See also Julius S. Schoops, "The Role of the Dreyfus Affair," in *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State*, ed. Gideon Shimoni and Robert S. Wistrich (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999), 112–25.



writing of *Der Judenstaat*, or whether Herzl had thought of it previously.<sup>6</sup> Be that as it may, during the first days of May 1895 Herzl wrote his first letter to Baron Maurice de Hirsch in which he requested a meeting with him. Following their meeting on June 3, Herzl hastened his writing. He continued writing additional letters until he penned a diary under the title *The Jewish Question* (not to be confused with his later diaries) in which he put his thoughts down in writing and incorporated the “Address to the Rothschilds.” This diary was the basis for *Der Judenstaat*.<sup>7</sup> Herzl attempted to send his message to the Rothschilds and asked to meet with them. He also appealed to other personages, Jews and non-Jews, such as former German chancellor Bismarck. After a while Herzl left Paris and returned to Vienna. Enroute he met Max Nordau and recruited him to his ideas (Nordau was later to become Herzl’s primary assistant in the Zionist movement). Herzl soon realized that meetings would not achieve the goal he was aiming for and therefore decided to publish his plan in a booklet. Thus was the book *Der Judenstaat* born, “an attempt at a modern solution of the Jewish question,” to quote its subtitle. The book was published in Vienna on February 14, 1896 in 3,000 copies. Herzl’s fundamental Zionist conception was that the problem of antisemitism and the adversity of the Jewish people scattered throughout the world would only be remedied by a political-economic-social solution, by concentration in a territory of its own as a sovereign state or an autonomous body politic in a transitional stage, with guarantees by “a council of civilized countries.” Reading the booklet, in whose title the political solution to the Jewish question – a Jewish state – is inherent, attracted many Jews throughout the world.<sup>8</sup>

### **Reactions to *Der Judenstaat*; Herzl’s efforts to obtain a charter; the First Zionist Congress, 1897**

*Der Judenstaat* was immediately translated into several languages: Hebrew, Yiddish, English, French, Russian, and Romanian. It aroused much interest, but responses were varied. Antisemites were disparaging of the idea as a whole. Among Jews, there were those who claimed there was nothing new in the concept and it had already

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<sup>6</sup> On the writing of *Der Judenstaat*, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 123–70; Shlomo Avineri, *Herzl’s Vision: Theodor Herzl and the Foundation of the Jewish State* (Katonah, NY: BlueBridge, 2014), 83–140.

<sup>7</sup> On Baron Hirsch, his previous efforts on behalf of Jews, his meeting with Herzl and Herzl’s letters to him following that meeting, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 123–34. See also Hirsch in the index to Herzl, *Complete Diaries*; Avineri, *Herzl’s Vision*, 104–8; Kurt Grunwald, “Baron de Hirsch and Zionism,” *Herzl Yearbook* 7 (1971): 37–50. For Baron Hirsch’s settlement project in Argentina, see Norman, *An Outstretched Arm*.

<sup>8</sup> For all these and more, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 143–70.

been raised by the harbingers of Zionism and personages from the Hovevei Zion period, such as Moses Hess in his book *Rome and Jerusalem* and Judah Leib Pinsker in his work *Auto-Emancipation*. It later became clear that Herzl had not been acquainted with these works and his ideas were not derived from them. Many Jews reacted enthusiastically to Herzl's pamphlet. Others opposed the idea and viewed it as a blow at their loyalty to the country of their birth, in which they had been trying so hard to become assimilated.<sup>9</sup>

Initially, Herzl had hoped the book would be enough, but he quickly discovered that in order to realize his ideas he had to achieve two goals: territory and a representative body. A territory could only be obtained from the rulers who possessed it through a charter by which the Jewish state would be established. To that purpose a representative body should be formed which would represent the Jewish people and work towards achieving this goal. In order to secure the territory, Herzl believed he had to meet with the ruler of the land, the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul, and propose a plan with which it would be possible to receive territory for the establishment of the Jewish state. To get to the sultan, Herzl began seeking intermediaries. At the time, German Emperor Wilhelm II was taking steps to strengthen relations with the Ottoman government, and Herzl believed he could help him. With that objective in mind, Herzl found two loyal aids: the Christian man of cloth, William Henry Hechler, who began opening doors for him with German personages, and Philip Michael Newlinski, the offspring of an aristocratic Polish family with ties to the heads of state in Istanbul. In April 1896, Hechler managed to arrange a meeting for Herzl in Vienna with Frederick I, the Grand Duke of Baden (1826–1907), Emperor Wilhelm II's uncle. Herzl hoped to be able to get to the emperor through him.<sup>10</sup> Herzl's first meeting with Frederick I was successful and paved the way for further meetings. He traveled to Istanbul and stayed there from June 17 to 28, 1896. He met with the sultan's counselors and presented his ideas to them, including monetary options that would assist the Ottoman Empire to alleviate its financial difficulties. The sultan's counselors ruled out any option of selling Ottoman territories, and no meeting was set with the sultan. From Istanbul, Herzl traveled to London, where he tried to meet with leading Jews, but many of them refused to see him, even those who were connected to the Hovevei Zion movement. Nonetheless, Herzl's efforts in Istanbul had wide repercussions.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For the interest aroused by and the reaction to *Der Judenstaat*, see *ibid.*, 171–87.

<sup>10</sup> Hechler was the tutor of the children of the Duke of Baden. He arranged Herzl's meetings with him. On Hechler, the Duke of Baden, and Bismarck, see in the index to Herzl, *Complete Diaries*. See also Herzl, *Hechler, the Grand Duke of Baden and the German Emperor, 1896–1904: Documents Found by Hermann and Bessi Ellern* (Tel Aviv: Ellern's Bank, 1961). See also note 16 below.

<sup>11</sup> In England, Herzl met with Colonel Albert Goldsmid; see Herzl, *Complete Diaries*, esp. 1:281–83 where Herzl records Goldsmid's claim that he was the model for the hero of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*. For Goldsmid in relation to Oliphant's plan to acquire land in Gilead, see ch. 4, n. 76. On Goldsmid's activity in Argentina, see Haim Avni, *Argentine, the Promised Land: Baron de Hirsch's Colonization Project in the Argentine Republic* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), 122–34 (Hebrew). In

Earlier, on April 20, 1896, Herzl tried again, through Nordau, to make contact with Baron Hirsch with whom he had already met; however just then word of the baron's death reached him. Now, while in London, and after a tense meeting with Hovevei Zion members at which his intense criticism of Baron Rothschild's philanthropic activities was discussed, Herzl tried to set up a meeting with Baron Rothschild. The baron agreed to receive him, but all of Herzl's attempts to convince him during the meeting and following it were rejected with the baron's reply that Herzl was unacquainted with conditions in the country, and that his plan was unrealistic.<sup>12</sup> Following Herzl's inability to convince the baron and others in London and Paris, he came to the conclusion that he had to turn to the "masses" in order to convene a "conference of Zionists" from among the Jewish people. This led to the convocation of the first congress, later known as the First Zionist Congress. Herzl traveled from town to town, recruiting and activating people for the organization of such a conference in Europe. Along the way he came across objections, but also much support. In May 1897 he decided to establish, at his own expense, a German-language weekly for the dissemination of the national idea, which he named *Die Welt*. A drawing of a Star of David enclosing the country located along the east Mediterranean coastline appeared between the two words of the territory's Hebrew name. The first issue was published on June 4, 1897. Herzl continued his efforts to convene the congress, again at his own expense, and appealed to the masses to join him.<sup>13</sup>

The First Zionist Congress was ceremoniously convened in Basel on August 29, 1897. The gathering evoked excited responses among Jews throughout the world. In time, the congresses set the official policy of the Zionist movement in general and its policy regarding Palestine in particular. As Herzl wrote, "In Basel I founded the Jewish state."<sup>14</sup> In the meantime, he learned that Emperor Wilhelm II was planning to travel to Jerusalem for the inauguration of the German Church of the Redeemer built in the Christian Quarter of the Old City.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, Herzl decided to appeal again to his friend, Reverend Hechler, to request his assistance in arranging

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n. 15 Avni also brings sources for Goldsmid's claim to be the hero of *Daniel Deronda*. See also ch. 4, n. 74.

<sup>12</sup> On Hirsch's death, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 195; for the other matters, see *ibid.*, 202–10.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 210–26.

<sup>14</sup> The Basel Program, as it came to be known, called for efforts to increase immigration to Eretz Israel and for the acquisition of land and settlement in the country. The first article declared that the intention is to seek a publicly recognized and legally secured home for the Jews in Palestine. On the First Zionist Congress, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 226–42; Herzl, *Complete Diaries*, 2:580–90; Avineri, *Herzl's Vision*, 141–64, esp. 147–48 where he discusses Herzl's decision to establish *Die Welt* a few months before the Congress met, which turned out to be a daring and very successful move.

<sup>15</sup> For construction of the Church of the Redeemer and its inauguration on October 31, 1898 in the presence of Emperor Wilhelm and his wife, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:235–37.

a second meeting with Frederick I, Grand Duke of Baden.<sup>16</sup> His objective was to receive the Duke's assistance in setting up a meeting with Emperor Wilhelm II, to convince him about the charter idea and ask for his help in arranging a meeting with the Ottoman sultan.<sup>17</sup> On September 2, 1898 Herzl met with the Grand Duke and other German personages, until the emperor finally agreed to meet with him in Istanbul, on his way to Jerusalem. Herzl arrived in Istanbul on October 18 and met with the emperor there. The emperor suggested that they continue their discussion during his sojourn in Jerusalem, and indeed, Herzl set out for Palestine the next day.<sup>18</sup>

### **Herzl's visit to Eretz Israel, his views on Jewish settlement, and *Altneuland***

Herzl arrived in Eretz Israel on October 26, 1898. The purpose of his visit was kept highly confidential, the declared objective being a meeting with Emperor Wilhelm II. Herzl tried to meet the emperor enroute to Jerusalem and in the city itself to continue the discussion of the charter idea with the aim of influencing the sultan. Researchers vary in their opinions whether Herzl actually succeeded in discussing the subject with the German emperor while in Jerusalem, or whether the conversation remained only a courtesy.<sup>19</sup>

It later became clear that the most important result of Herzl's visit was his acquaintance with the country and its Jewish inhabitants. Those made a strong impression upon him, as did he on the many residents he saw and met. Herzl, the charismatic leader, left an unforgettable impression in every place he visited, and there was a feeling that a leader had arisen for the Jewish people. It is important to remember that a Zionist infrastructure was already existent in the country at the time, and there had been a comprehensive exchange of letters between Herzl and leading personalities in the community. An interesting result of Herzl's visit was his utopian novel *Altneuland*, the inspiration for which he got during his voyage there

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**16** Frederick I was married to the daughter of the first German emperor, Wilhelm I, and on close terms with his nephew, Emperor Wilhelm II. See Vital, *Zionism, the Crucial Phase*, 75–77. See also note 10 above.

**17** Germany began developing a special relationship with Turkey during the period of Bismarck's chancellorship, when the first German military delegation set out for Turkey in 1882. For its part, Turkey evinced greater interest in closer relations with Germany after its defeat in the war with Russia in 1887–1888. Relations became even stronger after Wilhelm II became emperor in 1888. See *ibid.*, 77–78.

**18** For the meetings Herzl conducted in Germany, and later with the emperor, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 276–97.

**19** Vital maintains that it was doubtful whether Herzl's meetings with the emperor were of any importance or only polite conversation; see Vital, *Zionism, the Crucial Phase*, 79–94. Assaf, *Awakening and Flight*, 26, notes that Abraham Galanté, the historian of Turkish Jewry, claims that the emperor did not even raise the issue of Zionism with the sultan.

and whose initial outline he set down on July 2, 1899 on his way back from London to Paris and from there by train to Frankfurt. In the novel, Herzl describes Eretz Israel as it would look after his plan was realized and Jews would arrive there and found their own nation. At first he planned to call the book “The New Zion,” but on August 30, 1899, two weeks after the Third Zionist Congress, Herzl decided to name it *Altneuland*, an old-new country, similar to the “Altneuschul” synagogue in Prague.<sup>20</sup> This is not the place to discuss the literary work; suffice to say that it is the fruit of his visit to the country.<sup>21</sup>

Herzl’s attitude to the issue of settling the land went hand in hand with his attitude to the aims of the Zionist movement. The first condition was the creation of the political and legal conditions for the establishment of a strong Jewish entity in the country; therefore, he objected to the “infiltration” of settlers until the legal guarantees were obtained. At the same time, he believed that the Jewish community in Eretz Israel should be improved and strengthened. His attitude to the colonies was ambivalent. On the one hand, he expressed his objection to the philanthropy and sponsorship on which they were based, criticism leveled at both the “practical” Hovevei Zion and Baron Rothschild. On the other hand, he perceived of the existing colonies as experimental stations of a sort, in the attempt to comprehend the Jewish settler’s capability as a farmer and the possibilities inherent in the country.<sup>22</sup>

However, Herzl did not remain with criticism. He prepared a detailed plan for immigration and settlement that would come after the country was obtained, a plan for organized mass immigration and methodical upbuilding of the land according to a pre-determined program based on knowledge of the country and its conditions and creation of the infrastructure to precede the superstructure. Interestingly, at the time Herzl did not yet view the problem of the Jewish–Arab conflict as a central

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<sup>20</sup> An interesting fact is that in those years the Holy Land was not yet called by its Hebrew name, “Eretz Israel.” According to Kaniel, the accepted name among members of the Old Yishuv was “Eretz Hakodesh” (Holy Land) and that “Eretz Israel” was adopted primarily by members of the New Yishuv, and to some degree even reflected ideological differences of opinion relating to Eretz Israel between these two social groups. See Yehoshua Kaniel, “The Holy Land or the Land of Israel? The Process of Secularization of the Land at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries,” in *Jews in a Changing World*, ed. Herman Branover and Ruvin Ferber (Riga: M. Dubin Foundation “Shamir,” 1997), 97–104. For the final fixing of the name “Eretz Israel,” in relation to the Balfour Declaration and the period of Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner, see ch. 8, n. 63.

<sup>21</sup> On Herzl’s writing of *Altneuland* and some details of the content, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 395–410, with only brief mention of the Arab–Jewish conflict, which Bein explains due to the early date of Herzl’s visit. For a view that sees *Altneuland* as a plan for action and not a fantasy, see Avineri, *Herzl’s Vision*, 165–200.

<sup>22</sup> Herzl was not positively impressed by the condition of the colonies he visited. It is of interest that Abraham Shmuel Hirschberg visited Eretz Israel at about the same time and he, too, came away with a negative impression of the colonies. See the introduction to his book, written after his visit, Avraham Shmuel Hirschberg, *In Oriental Lands: Photocopy of the Vilna Edition, 1910, with Indices* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1977) (Hebrew).

issue in planning the future of Jewish Eretz Israel.<sup>23</sup> Many of the second-generation colonists and city dwellers in the country found relevant ideas in Herzl's perceptions. Not a few accepted his view that the solution to the problems associated with settlement would lie in a political charter, and that there was no point in further immigration under existing conditions. Herzl's objection to Baron Rothschild's method of settlement also engendered much agreement. Objection to the baron's philanthropy and the inclination to have members of the Old Yishuv, the halukkah recipients, engage in work attracted many, especially the young people who aspired to productivization. Herzl's social perceptions and his desire to create a new, healthy, and proud society – an exemplary society – attracted many supporters.<sup>24</sup> The hopes associated by Jews with Herzl's visit were shared by many of the country's Jewish inhabitants. Many viewed this as the victory of the political Zionist movement over the previous methods adopted by benefactors such as Hovevei Zion and Baron Rothschild. The reverberations of the crisis in Eretz Israel following the transfer of the colonies' management from Baron Rothschild to the JCA and the dismissal of hundreds of laborers in the colonies intensified these feelings. As a result, many Zionist societies began springing up in the country.

On March 21, 1902 the first core group of the Committee of Zionist Societies was established in Rishon Lezion comprising the seven societies that existed in the country at the time.<sup>25</sup> The representatives of 550 persons who paid the "shekel," the membership fee to the Zionist Organization, gathered in the founding assembly, while by 1904 their numbers reached 3,000 members.<sup>26</sup>

The main goal of the Eretz Israel Zionist movement was to participate in the Jewish national revival. From the very beginning, two opposing and contrasting

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**23** There are many who maintain that Herzl did not see the conflict between Arabs and Jews as a central issue, but was preoccupied primarily with the Ottomans; see Be'eri, *Beginning of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 85–104. For Herzl's exchange of letters with Yusuf al-Khalidi, a Jerusalem Arab who was a member of the Ottoman parliament, and the image of Arabs included in his books, see Assaf, *Relations*, 39–56.

**24** It is only natural that there were those, both in Eretz Israel and at the Zionist congresses, who opposed Herzl's ideas. Outstanding among them was Ahad Ha'am who already during the First Zionist Congress spoke out against the "Basel Program" and later criticized it in writing. See Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 256–64; for negative reviews of *Altneuland*, see *ibid.*, 405–9. See also Yossi Goldstein, "Eastern Jews vs. Western Jews: The Ahad Ha'am–Herzl Dispute and Its Cultural and Social Implications," *Jewish History* 24 (2010): 355–77.

**25** On Zionist organizing in Eretz Israel between 1897 and 1901, and from the end of 1901 until the founding of the Committee of Zionist Societies in 1902, see Haya Harel, "The Mutual Relationship between Herzl and the Zionists in Eretz Israel, 1899–1904," M.A. thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1979, 7–32 (Hebrew). For the establishment of the first Zionist societies and a listing of all the early ones in Eretz Israel, see *ibid.*, 40–116.

**26** For Herzl's relationship with the Jewish community in Eretz Israel, see Haya Harel, "The Zionist Movement and the Yishuv at the End of the First Aliyah," in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 1:383–406 (Hebrew).

approaches marked the Zionist movement headed by Herzl: on the one hand, practical Zionism that called for the immediate involvement of the Zionist movement in matters relating to settlement. On the other hand, political Zionism, which demanded that the Zionist movement do nothing in the country until conditions were ripe, since otherwise the great project they were dreaming of would turn into small acts with no impact, neither negative nor positive.<sup>27</sup>

### **Continuation of the Zionist congresses, efforts to receive a charter, Zionist activities in Eretz Israel**

As noted, Herzl arrived in Eretz Israel on October 26, 1898. Earlier, between August 28 and 31, the Second Zionist Congress was convened in Basel, in the course of which it was decided to establish the Jewish Colonial Trust. The reasoning behind that move was that without a central financial organization to back the movement it would not be possible to promote the intention to obtain a charter and develop an extensive Jewish community in Palestine. The Trust's objective was to do away with philanthropy for settlement and to create an impersonal bank which, through financial politics and loan mediation, would secure legal collateral for future settlement. It was decided that the Trust's headquarters would be in London, as Herzl had written in *Der Judenstaat*, and the company's share capital would be two million pounds, each share bearing the value of £1.<sup>28</sup>

The Trust became operative in October 1901 and declared its intention of opening a branch in Jaffa. This announcement led to all Zionist groups in the country to join together so as to put their long-term experience in all fields of work and knowledge of the country and its people at the disposal of the Trust. While there were not many discussions regarding settlement during the first congresses, the "settlement committees" chosen by the congresses, to be discussed below, raised diverse proposals in all of them. In addition, reports were submitted on the settlement situation by representatives appointed by the Zionist Actions Committee. Herzl's interest in developments in Eretz Israel is also reflected in his extensive correspondence with many persons there. Though representatives from Eretz Israel attended the congresses, most delegates represented the Zionist societies of the diaspora.

In July 1903 the offices of the long-awaited Anglo-Palestine Company were opened in Jaffa. Zalman David Levontin, who served as the official representative

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<sup>27</sup> Herzl did not ascribe much importance to the Zionist movement in Russia; see Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 233–52.

<sup>28</sup> Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 266–71; Nachum T. Gross, "The Anglo-Palestine Company: The Formative Years, 1903–1914," in *Ottoman Palestine 1800–1914: Studies in Economic and Social History*, ed. Gad G. Gilbar (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 219–53.



of the Actions Committee in Vienna, was chosen to head it. In addition to the practical importance of the establishment of the Trust, it also had symbolic significance since this was the actual beginning of the Zionist movement's operation in the country.

In his opening address to the Third Zionist Congress in August 1899, Herzl once again raised the idea of a charter that should be obtained from the Ottoman government. However, he also continued to deal with matters of the Trust and other issues. During the Fourth Zionist Congress in London, in August 1900, discussions of previous issues continued, mainly regarding the Trust and the effort to obtain the support of the British people for Zionist ideas.<sup>29</sup>

The Fifth Zionist Congress opened in Basel on December 26, 1901. A major issue debated was the idea of establishing the "Jewish National Fund," a proposal initially raised at the First Zionist Congress in 1897, the objective of which was to solve issues of land acquisition similarly to the way the Trust was intended to overcome the problem of philanthropy. The final decision to establish the Fund was taken at this congress.<sup>30</sup> Even before the congress convened, Herzl had succeeded in arranging a meeting with the Ottoman sultan on May 17, 1901. The meeting aroused anticipations among Zionists everywhere, but they were soon to be disappointed. In advance meetings with the sultan's representatives, Herzl had already been told that the emigration of Jews to other areas of the Ottoman Empire would be welcomed, subject to the Jews taking on Ottoman citizenship with all that it entails, including waiver of their previous citizenship and Capitulation Treaty rights, acceptance of the Islamic millet system for minorities, and dispersed settlement throughout the empire without concentrating in one place. In return the sultan demanded the establishment of a syndicate to solve the problem of Ottoman debts and the development and exploitation of all mines, based on a charter beneficial to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>31</sup>

When Herzl personally met with the sultan in May 1901, the sultan repeated his declaration that he would not permit unlimited Jewish immigration to Palestine organized by a settlement company, due to the overall objection of his government and people to such a charter, and would only agree to Jewish

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<sup>29</sup> On the Third and Fourth congresses, see, Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 324–29, 344–47 respectively.

<sup>30</sup> On the Jewish National Fund, see *ibid.*, 345–46; Doukhan-Landau, *Zionist Companies for Land Purchase*, 53–97; Zvi Shilony, *Ideology and Settlement: the Jewish National Fund, 1897–1914* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> Bein notes that the idea of a charter was not new, that chartered companies had been widespread since the seventeenth century, and many countries had been colonized in this fashion. Charles Warren, the archaeologist and researcher of Jerusalem and Palestine, had already suggested such a proposal in 1875; see Chapter Two, at n. 80 in the text. It was clear that the sultan would not sell sacred land under any circumstances, but there were some who believed he would be prepared to grant a charter for settlement, whether by purchase or lease, to a large company; see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 323–24.

settlement elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, and even that not concentrated in one location.<sup>32</sup>

### **Plans for other territories, disagreements within the Zionist movement, and Herzl's death in 1904**

Following the failure of his discussions with the sultan, Herzl considered transferring the vision of a Jewish state to other territories. One of the first places he considered was close by – Cyprus.<sup>33</sup> The person who first raised the idea, in late 1897, was Davis Trietsch, who resided in New York at the time but knew Cyprus well. He proposed to Herzl that he consider the island of Cyprus, which is near the Holy Land, as a place of settlement for Jews.<sup>34</sup>

Cyprus, that had previously been part of the Ottoman Empire, was under the aegis of the British since 1878. After his failure in Istanbul, Herzl considered the option of settling in Cyprus, with the hope that the British would agree. On October 22, 1902, with the help of journalist Leopold Jacob Greenberg, Herzl met with British Secretary of State for the Colonies Joseph Chamberlain and presented him his ideas.<sup>35</sup> Chamberlain rejected the plan, claiming that the inhabitants, Greeks and Turks, would not agree to Jewish settlement in Cyprus. The idea of Jewish settlement in El-Arish, in northern Sinai, that part of the peninsula that belonged to Egypt under British rule, came up at the meeting. It was decided to apply to the Foreign Ministry to ask for the opinion of Lord Cromer, the British governor of Egypt.<sup>36</sup> Initially Cromer proposed that a committee be sent to check out the area

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**32** On Herzl's meeting with the sultan and his courtiers, and his efforts to raise money to implement his plan, see *ibid.*, 353–70, 378–80. Herzl would later claim that he was unable to achieve his objective because he failed to raise the necessary funds in London.

**33** For an attempt to settle Jews in Cyprus in 1883, a project based on millenarist ideas, see Yossi Ben-Artzi, *Rural Jewish Settlement in Cyprus, 1883–1939* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2015), 34–55 (Hebrew). For a second attempt, basically Zionist-oriented, in the early 1890s, see *ibid.*, 56–81.

**34** On Trietsch, whose relations with Herzl later took a turn for the worse, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 373, 412–14; Mordechai Eliav, “The Rafah Approaches in the History of Jewish Settlement.” *Cathedra* 3 (Feb. 1977): 117–62; supplemented by 45 documents, pp. 163–200 (Hebrew). Otto Warburg, the third president of the Zionist Organization, also supported proposals for settlement of Jews in territories not far from Eretz Israel; see also note 57 below.

**35** Greenberg, a leading figure in British Jewry, was later the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* and one of the opponents of Chaim Weizmann. On Greenberg see the indexes of Bein, *Theodor Herzl* and Herzl, *Complete Diaries*. For the reinterment of Greenberg and Otto Warburg in Israel, see Doron Bar, *Ideology and Landscape: Reinterment of Renowned Jews in the Land of Israel (1904–1967)* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016), 94–98.

**36** For ideas concerning possible settlement in Cyprus and El-Arish and the meeting with Chamberlain, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 411–38. At the time Arthur James Balfour was prime

and Herzl set out for Egypt at the head of a delegation. However early in May 1903 Cromer rejected the idea.<sup>37</sup> It is important to note that as early as 1902–1903, with the help of persons in Eretz Israel, Herzl also raised the idea of establishing a basis for autonomous Jewish settlement in the Acre sancak.<sup>38</sup>

The pogrom that erupted in Kishinev, in Russia, during Easter of 1903 was also accompanied by blood libel accusations and shocked Jews throughout the world. It continued for three days, fifty Jews were killed and around a hundred were badly injured.<sup>39</sup> The tragedy, and the fact that until that time Herzl had failed in promoting his charter plans, led him to examine the idea proposed by Chamberlain in their previous meeting, to receive a territory in East Africa for establishing a Jewish colony there. There was talk of a delegation that would set out to that area to examine the option. Herzl decided to approach Chamberlain through Greenberg and request the wording of such a charter to bring before the Sixth Zionist Congress on August 23, 1903. Greenberg contacted the law offices of Lloyd George, Roberts and Co., in order for them to draft the wording of the charter.<sup>40</sup>

The proposed name for the colony planned in East Africa was “New Palestine.” It was decided that the holder of the charter would be the Jewish Colonial Trust, and that operations under the charter could in the future be transferred to another company. The plan became known as the “Uganda scheme,” even though the proposed area was not in Uganda but in neighboring Kenya, but it was most commonly referred to as the “East Africa Plan.” Herzl informed Nordau of the plan only at the beginning of July 1903. Nordau was initially opposed to the plan and correct in his

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minister, having been elected in July 1902, *ibid.*, 417. On Balfour, see also Chapter Seven. For Chamberlain in this connection, see the index to Herzl, *Complete Diaries*.

**37** For the proposal to settle Jews in El-Arish, see Eliav, “The Rafah Approaches.” At this time the area was no longer under Ottoman rule but under British control. See also Avineri, *Herzl’s Vision*, 205–9. Lord Cromer (1841–1917) governed Egypt for about twenty years. For a discussion of Cromer and the El-Arish plan, see Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, 179–97. See also “El-Arish” and “Sinai Peninsula” in the index to Herzl, *Complete Diaries*.

**38** On the sancak of Acre, see Chapter Three. Since it had an autonomous status, Hayyim Margalioth-Kalvarisky, who was responsible for lands acquired by the Jewish Colonization Association in the vicinity of Sejerah, broached the idea that perhaps the Ottomans would be prepared to sanction the establishment of an autonomous Jewish area there. He contacted Herzl on this matter and also tried to raise the possibility with the Ottomans; see Irit Amit, “Projects for the Settlement of Jews in the Sanjak of Acre (1902–1903),” *Cathedra* 49 (Sept. 1988): 103–16 (Hebrew). On Kalvarisky, see also note 60 below.

**39** Avineri calls the eighth chapter “El-Arish–Kishinev–Uganda: From Desert Mirage to Harsh Realities.” When discussing the El-Arish plan, he writes that the Kishinev pogrom was an event that influenced Herzl to engage in political negotiations in Russia. Once the El-Arish plan fell, he turned his attention to Uganda.

**40** David Lloyd George, then a practicing lawyer, was appointed prime minister in December 1916 and became one of the proponents of the Balfour Declaration, which shall be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

assessment of the many objections it would raise at the Zionist Congress. However, Herzl managed to moderate his objections and even receive his assistance.

The formal response of the British government confirming the proposed charter for the Jewish people in East Africa was received by Herzl on April 23, 1903. Herzl decided to bring it to the approval of the Greater Actions Committee which was about to meet on August 21, 1903, in advance of the Zionist Congress planned to convene two days later. Herzl succeeded in persuading the members of the committee that the plan did not conflict with the Zionist concept and that until Eretz Israel could be obtained, it would be wise to accept the British government's proposal and have the place function as a temporary "night asylum" for the Jews of eastern Europe suffering badly from the pogroms. The proposal passed quite smoothly in the Actions Committee but generated a storm at the Zionist Congress. Finally, a compromise solution was proposed: the Congress would appoint a committee to continue examining the proposal, while a delegation would travel to examine the territory. Many objected to this compromise as well. In the final vote there was a majority in favor, but the number of those who voted against it or abstained was almost equal to that of the supporters. A large group of those opposed left the hall in which the vote was taken and assembled nearby. There was fear of a rift in the movement. Herzl went to where they were assembled, fervidly addressed them, and succeeded in persuading them to return to the main hall. Messages of unity were voiced at the final session and the Congress dispersed while upholding the previous decisions.<sup>41</sup>

It is interesting that among the supporters of the Uganda scheme were also some delegates from Eretz Israel. Among them was the Committee of Zionist Societies, working in cooperation with the Zionist movement. The supporters believed that Eretz Israel would not be able to provide immediate solutions for thousands of Jews currently in distress, and the arrival of these Jews would only destroy its chances of becoming the homeland of the Jewish people in the future. Others maintained that Uganda should not be seen as a substitute, but as a training site for the masses, also based on a healthy and productive society, en route to a new Zion. To this was added belief in Herzl's diplomatic considerations and considering Uganda as a tactical step in the negotiations with the sultan.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Many books and articles have been written on the Uganda scheme: what prompted it, the discussions and debates in the Greater Actions Committee and the Zionist Congress, the vote, and more. In the framework of this chapter, I am only placing the scheme in the chronology of developments in that period, especially in their relation to Eretz Israel. For a summary of the Uganda scheme, see Shmuel Almog, *Zionism and History: The Rise of a New Jewish Consciousness* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 238–304. For a more extensive study, see Robert G. Weisbord, *African Zion: The Attempt to Establish a Jewish Colony in the East Africa Protectorate, 1903–1905* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968).

<sup>42</sup> Eliezer Ben-Yehuda stood out among inhabitants of Eretz Israel who supported the Uganda scheme, even in writing. For the attitude of the Committee of Zionist Societies on Uganda and the establishment of the General Assembly of Jews in Eretz Israel by Ussishkin and more, see also the next note.

As noted, the Sixth Zionist Congress convened in Basel on August 23, 1903. That same day, the General Assembly of Jews in Eretz Israel convened in Zikhron Ya'akov, upon the initiative of Menahem Ussishkin, and decided to establish a Zionist society in Eretz Israel in addition to the Committee of Zionist Societies previously established. However, while Herzl had agreed to the establishment of the Committee of Zionist Societies, subject to its operation in full cooperation with the leadership of the Zionist movement, he and his colleagues in the leadership vehemently objected to the new organization.<sup>43</sup>

Following the Sixth Congress, under Ussishkin's leadership groups of Zionists emerged, mainly in Eretz Israel and Russia, who forcefully opposed Herzl's Uganda scheme and called themselves *Zionei Zion* (Zionists for Zion).<sup>44</sup> On November 11–14, 1903, the *Zionei Zion* met for an emergency conference in Kharkov, in the Ukraine, and statements made at this conference raised fear of a rift in the Zionist movement.<sup>45</sup>

In Britain, too, other winds were blowing, and agreement to the Uganda scheme was decreasing. At a rally in favor of the plan there was even an attempt to assassinate Max Nordau, and although it was later confirmed that the attempt was made by a deranged person, understanding dawned that the Uganda controversy could well destroy the Zionist movement a short while after its inception.<sup>46</sup> Finally, with the agreement of all, it was decided that the members of the two groups would reconvene for a meeting of the Zionist Action Committee to further discuss the matter. On April 11–14, 1904, the

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**43** Ussishkin set out for Eretz Israel in 1903 to lend an impetus to what he considered, all his life, as the embodiment of the entire Zionist endeavor: settlement in Eretz Israel. While the Sixth Zionist Congress was in session in Basel, he convened the General Assembly of Jews in Eretz Israel which met in Zikhron Ya'akov on August 23–27. Two days later he arranged for a meeting of teachers who founded the Teachers Union. See Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 267–70; Laskov, “Hovevei Zion,” 172–74. For a letter from the Committee of Zionist Societies to Herzl in 1904, see Harel, “Zionist Movement and the Yishuv,” 397. For the establishment of the Teachers Union, see ch. 5, n. 107.

**44** For opposition to Herzl and the Uganda scheme among Zionists in Eretz Israel and Russia, the letter of protest sent by Ussishkin, and Herzl's sharp response in *Die Welt*, October 30, 1903, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 470–78. After the Uganda affair, Ussishkin's standing among Russian Zionists was much stronger and he was even chosen to head the Odessa Committee in 1905–1906; see Yossi Goldstein, “Between Practical and Political Zionism: Menahem Ussishkin as Chairman of the Odessa Committee, 1906–1918,” *Shvut* 5 (1997): 1–31. For the Uganda scheme, see also Isaiah Friedman, “Herzl and the Uganda Controversy,” in *Theodor Herzl and the Origins of Zionism*, ed. Ritchie Robinson and Edward Timms (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 39–53.

**45** For the conference in Kharkov which decided to send a three-man delegation to Herzl in Vienna, and Herzl's reaction, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 478–83.

**46** On the attempted assassination of Nordau and the meeting of the Greater Actions Committee that began in Vienna on April 11 which was opened with an emotional address by Herzl and marked the beginning of some reconciliation between the opposing sides, see *ibid.*, 485–98. See also Michael Heymann, “Max Nordau at the Early Zionist Congresses, 1897–1905,” *Journal of Israeli History* 16 (1995): 245–56.

Committee, later known as the “Reconciliation Conference,” convened. The two sides understood that the plan could not be implemented and agreed to send an exploratory committee, according to whose report a final decision would be taken.<sup>47</sup>

Three months later, on July 4, 1904, Theodor Herzl passed away suddenly of an illness from which he had previously suffered. Despite his death, an exploratory delegation set out to East Africa in January 1905. On May 16, 1905, it submitted its conclusions, determining that the area was not suitable for Jewish settlement. It was decided that these conclusions would be presented to the Seventh Zionist Congress convening that year, for the first time without Herzl, its founder.<sup>48</sup>

Herzl’s death sent a shockwave throughout the Zionist movement. Mourning for the death of their leader was intensive throughout the Jewish world. Herzl had invested his every effort to achieve the charter that would enable the realization of his vision – the establishment of a Jewish state. His plan had initially been aimed at the Ottoman rulers but met with total opposition from the Ottoman government which did not perceive the Zionist goals to be beneficial for the Ottoman Empire, and also objected to the immigration of Jews bearing nationalist ideas.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast to Herzl’s failure to obtain a charter even outside of Palestine, apparently his greatest achievement was the spread of the Zionist ideal throughout the Jewish world, and the establishment of the Zionist movement, one that gave rise to hope and the opportunity for the fulfillment of that ideal. Herzl organized the first Zionist congresses and established the Zionist Actions Committee that directed the movement. Herzl and the Actions Committee tried to promote and advance the Jewish community in Eretz Israel on several fronts: (a) by establishing Zionist financial institutions; (b) by studying the conditions for settlement there as a means for the realization of the Zionist movement’s plans; (c) by providing a special status for the Eretz Israel Zionist members within the global Zionist movement. Thus, it appears that Herzl’s policy of refraining from action as long as political approval had not been received had already begun to change during his lifetime.

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**47** At the Sixth Zionist Congress which convened in Basel on August 23–28, 1903, it had already been decided that for the time being the Uganda scheme would be explored by a delegation sent to study the area, a decision that was a victory for Herzl. See Vital, *Zionism, the Crucial Phase*, 277–304.

**48** On the study mission, see the diary and memoirs of one of its members, Nahum Wilbush, *The Journey to Uganda* (Jerusalem: Hassifriya Hatzionit, 1963) (Hebrew). In the introduction, Alex Bein maintains that Herzl considered the British proposal as only a first step towards achieving the Zionist vision, i.e. as recognition of the need for a state for the Jews. Though from the outset the plan was not meant to materialize, in Bein’s opinion it led directly to the Balfour Declaration.

**49** For a summary of Ottoman negative reaction to Herzl’s ideas, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 4: 290–96, including quotes from Hebrew newspapers and other sources.

## Activities of the Zionist Organization, 1904–1914

### The second president, David Wolffsohn, 1904–1911; the third president, Otto Warburg, 1911–1920

During the years Herzl served as president of the Zionist Organization, the leaders of the Russian Zionist movement opposed his political agenda. For a variety of reasons, during his six years as president (1897–1903), he was not presented with an ultimatum demanding change. However, from the Sixth Zionist Congress (1903) on, especially in the wake of the Uganda scheme, the leaders of the Russian Zionist movement changed their approach and became a vociferous opposition demanding change of the movement's policy.<sup>50</sup> During this Congress, that preceded Herzl's death, two important decisions were taken that led to the beginning of the Zionist Organization's operation in Eretz Israel: (a) the decision by the Jewish National Fund to begin purchasing land immediately, and allotting a small budget to the "Palestine Commission" for it to begin its research activities; (b) appointing the first branch of the Anglo Palestine Company, established in Jaffa a month before the Congress convened, to serve as the first representative of the Zionist Organization in the country.<sup>51</sup>

During the meeting of the Greater Actions Committee, three months before Herzl's death, it seemed as though the "Russian Zionists" had gained sufficient strength to be able to change Herzl's policy. Indeed, the change in his attitude indicated that their pressure was working. This Actions Committee meeting was also the initiator of the Reconciliation Conference regarding the Uganda scheme, but Herzl's death delayed the decision.<sup>52</sup>

The Seventh Zionist Congress (1905) was declared an irregular one in the wake of Herzl's death. The plenum had to deal with two major issues: the fate of the East Africa plan (the Uganda scheme), and the choice of Herzl's successor. The first issue was won by the "practical" faction headed by Ussishkin and his associates. Around six hundred of the delegates from twenty-two countries approved the proposal of the Actions Committee by a great majority, declaring that the Zionist ideal could only be realized in Eretz Israel and the surrounding territories. Accordingly, practical work became the focal point of the Zionist movement.

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<sup>50</sup> For changes in the relationship of the Zionist movement in Russia with Herzl from the beginning of the twentieth century, see Yossi Goldstein, "Policy of the Zionist Organization, 1904–1914," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997), 75–87 (Hebrew).

<sup>51</sup> On the decision of the Actions Committee to purchase land and the persons involved, see Harel, "Zionist Movement and the Yishuv," 402–6.

<sup>52</sup> For the conciliation between the two opposing factions over the Uganda issue, see also Vital, *Zionism, the Crucial Phase*, 341–46.



The second political test, the appointment of a new leader for the Zionist Organization, caused an uproar regarding whether the chosen successor would come from the political or the practical factions. Tension between the groups comprising the Zionist organization in eastern and western Europe could potentially have divided the active members into Herzl's followers, who aspired to continue his political agenda, and his opponents from eastern Europe who believed in practical Zionism. In the end, the political Zionists won a great victory when David Wolffsohn was chosen as the new president of the Zionist Organization.<sup>53</sup>

Like Herzl, Wolffsohn attempted to create contacts within the Ottoman government in an effort to obtain a charter for Eretz Israel, and even traveled to Istanbul for that purpose. Nordau and Nahum Sokolow also came to Istanbul for the same reason, but all these efforts were in vain.<sup>54</sup>

Despite being a political Zionist, Wolffsohn decided to make every effort to bridge the gap and achieve a compromise with the practical Zionists, and indeed he was recognized by all as the leader of the Zionist movement. At the beginning of 1907, after he returned from a trip to South Africa, he set out for a visit to Eretz Israel. The conclusion he gained from his visit was to create a special department for Eretz Israel affairs and the establishment there of a branch of the Zionist Organization, a function filled until then by the Anglo Palestine Company bank in Jaffa.<sup>55</sup>

The Eighth Zionist Congress convened in The Hague in 1907. It approved Wolffsohn's decision and sent Arthur Ruppin to review the situation in Eretz Israel.<sup>56</sup> After his tour of the country, Ruppin submitted a detailed memorandum to the Actions Committee, following which it was decided to establish a special department for Eretz Israel affairs situated in Berlin and headed by Otto Warburg. In addition, it was decided to establish a Palestine Office in Eretz Israel.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Wolffsohn was one of the Zionists closest to Herzl, having met with him when Herzl set out on his political activity. He was also in close contact with Herzl's family; in his will, Herzl appointed Wolffsohn to look after the family's interests. On their early acquaintance one with the other, see Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 187–89. On the choice of Wolffsohn to head the Zionist Organization, see Goldstein, "Policy of the Zionist Organization," 78–80. For a detailed biography, see Mordechai Eliav, *David Wolffsohn, the Man and His Times: The Zionist Movement 1905–1914* (Jerusalem: Hassifriya Hatzionit, 1977) (Hebrew); Emil Bernhard Cohn, *David Wolffsohn: Herzl's Successor* (New York: The Zionist Organization of America, 1944).

<sup>54</sup> Isaiah Friedman, "The Question of Palestine during World War I," in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The British Mandate Period, Part 1*, ed. Moshe Lissak (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 1993), 1–5 (Hebrew).

<sup>55</sup> For Wolffsohn's visit to Eretz Israel, the Eighth Zionist Congress, and the establishment of the Palestine Office, see Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 295–96; id., "Policy of the Zionist Organization," 81–84.

<sup>56</sup> Ruppin conducted his study tour in Eretz Israel in May 1907.

<sup>57</sup> On Otto Warburg, see Jacob Thon, "Otto Warburg, the Third President of the Zionist Organization," in *The Warburg Volume: His Life, Statements of Appreciation, Letters, Speeches, and Articles* ([Tel Aviv]: Massada Press, 1948), 7–74, esp. 35–56 (Hebrew); Margalit Shilo, "The Role of

At the ensuing congresses, the delegates who advocated practical and political Zionism continued to clash. During the Ninth Congress in Hamburg, a fervent dispute was conducted between leading persons regarding the appropriate ways of implementing the principles of practical Zionism.

During the Tenth Zionist Congress in Basel, in August 1911, Wolffsohn announced his resignation as president. Practical Zionists celebrated their victory. The Congress decided to expand its practical operations and place Otto Warburg, one of the leaders of practical Zionism and partner in his views to the east European Zionist leaders, at the head of the movement as president of the Zionist Organization. In addition, it was decided to transfer the movement's head office from Cologne in Germany, Wolffsohn's city, to Berlin, the city in which Warburg resided.<sup>58</sup>

### Establishment of the Palestine Office under Arthur Ruppin

In 1908 the Zionist Organization appointed Ruppin to direct the Palestine Office, following his previous tour of the country and memorandum concerning options for its development. When appointed, Ruppin was thirty-one years old, with a university education in economics, sociology, and law. He set out to develop operations of the Zionist Organization in the country. Prior to the establishment of the Palestine Office, Zionist Organization priorities regarding agricultural colonies had not been totally clear. However, within six years of his activity (1908–1914), agricultural settlement became the major aspect of Zionist efforts and the standard bearer of the new Jewish society. Agriculture was the primary means for spreading out the Jewish community over wide areas and for the actual ownership of lands. Ruppin frequently repeated his opinion that agricultural labor is not just a livelihood but the cornerstone for building the Jewish national home, a source of life in which the Jewish people can renew its physical and spiritual existence.

During the Eleventh Zionist Congress which convened in Vienna in September 1913, signs of the turnover in the power struggle within the Zionist movement were evident. Practical work became an inseparable part of the movement's policy and a central focal point of its activity. Later in this chapter I shall detail the vigorous activities of the Palestine Office in collaboration with members of the Second Aliyah who

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the Zionist Organization in Eretz Israel during the Second Aliyah Period," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997), 88–103 (Hebrew) and the sources cited there; id., *Experiments in Settlement: The Palestine Office 1908–1914* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1988) (Hebrew).

<sup>58</sup> For the discussions at the Eighth (1907), Ninth (1909), Tenth (1911), and Eleventh (1913) Zionist Congresses, and the differences of opinion between "political" and "practical" Zionists, see Goldstein, "Policy of the Zionist Organization," 81–87. Ideas about "synthetic Zionism" were also broached at these sessions. One of its leading proponents was Chaim Weizmann.

arrived in the country, as well as other settlement organizations in Eretz Israel and abroad who joined in the efforts to develop the homeland.

Ruppín also had political plans for the Jewish community in Eretz Israel. As early as 1907 he published his conception of the future of Jewish settlement in the country as “a Jewish autonomy in Eretz Israel.” He proposed that settlement would be focused in two areas: in the Sea of Galilee area (from Milhamiah in the south to around Safed in the north), and in Judea, in the southern part of the country, and that the connection between them would be formed by “buying sufficient lands from Jaffa through Petah Tikvah, Kfar Sava, Haderah, Zikhron Ya‘akov, and Shfeyah to Rosh Pinnah, thus forming a narrow strip held entirely by Jews, enabling construction of a road on Jewish soil from the Sea of Galilee to Judea.”<sup>59</sup>

Ruppín’s basic assumption was that if the Jews would become a significant element in parts of the country, the Zionist plan would be realized almost of itself. In his opinion, the goal of Zionism was not just the establishment of a political asylum in Eretz Israel, or alternately a spiritual center for the Jews of the world, but a place where the Jewish people would continue to gather and create its own existential lifestyle. Ruppín’s creativity was expressed in the design of a settlement plan that had a good chance of being realized within twenty years. In contrast to the popular conception at the time, that the country was not big enough for the Jewish people, Ruppín aspired to expand settlement around existing Jewish concentrations in Judea and the Galilee so that they number 200,000 people within twenty years (10,000 people per annum) and form settlement clusters separate from the Arab population. His plan was for the new Jewish settlements to be established around the existing colonies and the concentrations of the Old Yishuv. He also recommended the establishment of a Zionist representation in Istanbul which would serve both as an operative branch and for relations with the government there.

The idea of an autonomous area in the Acre region was already raised by Herzl in 1902, but at the time there was no chance of its realization. Hayyim Margalíot-Kalvarisky, who was partner to Herzl’s proposal and dealt with the purchase of JCA lands in the lower eastern Galilee, also always stressed that land should be purchased in large clusters in which a number of settlements would be established which would perhaps later be joined one to the other. In contrast, as noted, Ruppín formulated a preconceived general plan based on the Jewish settlements that existed at the time. In Chapter Ten I shall pay special attention to the “N-shaped” Jewish settlement model in Eretz Israel, of which Ruppín was the first advocate. This model developed during the British Mandate period and constituted the basis for the continued effort to establish a Jewish state.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Arthur Ruppín, *Thirty Years of Upbuilding in Eretz Israel* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1937), 4 (Hebrew).

<sup>60</sup> On Ruppín and his plans, see *ibid.*, 1–8. For Kalvarisky, who thought along similar lines, see below. For Herzl’s petitioning of the Ottoman sultan that a charter be granted solely for an area in the sancak of Acre, see note 38 above.

## The transition resulting from the Second Aliyah and settlement activity, 1904–1914

### Beginning of the Second Aliyah and the change in Zionist social thinking

The name “the Second Aliyah” was given to the wave of olim that arrived in Eretz Israel from late 1903, following the Kishinev pogroms, until the summer of 1914, and disrupted by World War I.<sup>61</sup> It is estimated that around 30,000 Jews arrived during that period, of whom only 2,000 were Zionist socialists who brought with them a new social ideology.<sup>62</sup> Around 50 percent of the olim joined the Old Yishuv and the organizations and social groups in the country at the time, while only a minority refused to become part of these and established new settlements that left a significant mark on the history of the Yishuv.<sup>63</sup>

This section focuses mainly on this group of people who left their mark on the country and are known as “the working-class Second Aliyah.” This small yet important group had three distinguishing factors. The first was their social origin: most of them were young people who arrived from small towns and villages in eastern Europe without families, without a profession, and without means. The second factor was their ideological background. While most of them came from religiously traditional Jewish homes, they had undergone processes of secularization prior to their aliyah. They brought with them fervent Zionist beliefs and a yearning to create a new society. The third factor was their perception of agricultural labor as the ideal that would point the way for realization of their national and social aspirations.<sup>64</sup>

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**61** Vital maintains that the pogrom in Kishinev was similar to the earlier ones of 1881–1884 known as “Storms in the Negev.” The “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” first published in Russia in 1903, the year of the pogrom, were a forgery prepared by the Russian secret police; see Vital, *Zionism, the Crucial Phase*, 239–43 and the sources he cites.

**62** Many studies and documents have been published on the Second Aliyah, too numerous to even survey here. I shall refer to articles in the three-volume *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997) (Hebrew). Much has also been written about the number of members of the Second Aliyah who left the country, but these studies seem to be exaggerations; see Yehoshua Kaniel, “Jewish Emigration from Eretz Israel during the Period of the First and Second Aliyot (1882–1914),” *Cathedra* 73 (Sept. 1994): 115–38 (Hebrew).

**63** Vital points out that socialist Zionists were of the same frame of mind as the political Zionists, as they aspired to a revolution in their own lives and in the condition of Jews. However, their revolution was to be an internalized one, the creation of a new Jewish society in Eretz Israel and not an attempt to influence the entire Jewish nation or European Jewry; see Vital, *Zionism, the Crucial Phase*, 410–11.

**64** On this group of pioneers, see Shmuel Ettinger, “The Ideology of the Second Aliyah and the Socio-Political Ideology of Eastern European Jewry,” in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 1997), 3–10 (Hebrew).

As early as the 1890s, Marxist ideas began influencing European populations. These notions placed the major blame for social problems on economics. The main premise was that a change in the political order would not substantially change society. Justice meant not only political equality or civil rights, but also social justice: fairer division of land, care for the weak, and such. These ideas reverberated among Zionist circles as well, accounting for the large number of societies called Po'alei Zion (Workers of Zion), which within a number of years became the major element of the Zionist movement in eastern Europe that gave precedence to economic problems. According to them, the Jewish people was not a normative nation, not only in terms of politics, but also in the sphere of economics, since its economic structure was faulty. The agricultural class, one that was fundamental for every nation and state, was a small insignificant minority; thus, too, the working class – the factory laborers, the proletariat. In contrast, all the other groups – craftsmen, merchants, teachers, managers, middlemen, religious ministrants, etc. – were located at center stage. This upside-down pyramid prevented the Jewish people from achieving the political goals of Herzl and Pinsker. Thus, social-economic analysis should be the instigating factor leading to the Zionist solution. In 1905 and 1906 over 150,000 Jews traveled the seas, but there, too, the solution for the economic structure of the Jewish people was not found. A territory must be found where Jews would be able to establish an independent economy. In theory, Herzl and Pinsker spoke of a country, a state, and a majority “of our own,” yet their understanding of “our own” was different. According to these Po'alei Zion groups, the new society should be built according to a new economic ideal. Thus, small groups of Po'alei Zion members began emerging who aspired to come to Eretz Israel and establish a new social economy there.<sup>65</sup>

The Kishinev pogroms erupted in 1903, clearly demonstrating the attitude of east European society towards the Jews. The safety and security of Jews was jeopardized and their possessions were seized; even when the authorities sought to protect the Jews, they did not always succeed. Thus, Jewish self-defense was organized. The existential and ideological issues led groups of Jews to aspire to establish the infrastructure for a new Jewish society in which not only the legal and political status of Jews would be reformed, but also their socio-economic structure. These groups set out to a country of their own and were the unique basis for the Second Aliyah. The Russo–Japanese War of 1904–1905 also added to the desire of Jews to escape recruitment into the Tsar's military forces and immigrate to Eretz Israel. During 1904–1907, hundreds of olim arrived in the country every year imbued with that unique ideological motivation, while thousands of others came with an ideological motivation similar to those of the First Aliyah.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 4–6.

<sup>66</sup> According to Vital, between 1904 and 1914 about 30,000–40,000 immigrated to Eretz Israel, but only some 2,000 of them were motivated by socialist ideology; see Vital, *Zionism, the Crucial Phase*,

Two political parties were established by the working-class Second Aliyah: Po'alei Zion and Hapo'el Hatza'ir (The Young Worker). Until then there had been no organized political parties in the Yishuv. Po'alei Zion was affiliated with the Po'alei Zion movement established abroad. Although its members brought the movement's ideas with them, these now took on a shape of their own. For instance, the party decided to participate in the Zionist Congress of 1909, in direct opposition to the decision of the Po'alei Zion movement in Russia. The Po'alei Zion party also published the Hebrew language journal *He-Ahdut* (Unity). In contrast, Hapo'el Hatza'ir was the first organization to be established as a democratic national party. It was open to new members, adopted an ideological platform, and suggested ways of action, thus being the first real political party in the country. The Hapo'el Hatza'ir group was very diverse, with a membership that included Marxists and religious persons, "Borochovists" (supporters of Dov Ber Borochov, one of the forefathers of socialist Zionism), anarchists, zealots in favor of the concept of self-work, administrators in settlements, and others. The ideological pluralism of the party was reflected in its journal *Hapo'el Hatza'ir*.<sup>67</sup>

During the Second Aliyah, some of the future leaders of the Yishuv arrived in the country, the leadership of the "state-in-the making" and of the State of Israel during its initial years. First and foremost I shall mention David Ben-Gurion, born in 1886, who joined the Po'alei Zion movement in 1905 and immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1906, following the Seventh Zionist Congress.<sup>68</sup> Ben-Gurion, one of the active members of the Po'alei Zion group, worked in the Petah Tikvah orchards, moved to the Galilee where he stayed for some time in Sejerah, and then moved on to Jerusalem from whence he and Itzhak Ben-Zvi set out in 1911 to study in Istanbul. Ben-Zvi, later the second president of the State of Israel, was also one of the first olim of the Second Aliyah. During their sojourn in Istanbul, the Balkan Wars broke out. They both returned on the eve of World War I and were among the avid supporters of the demand for Ottomanization.<sup>69</sup>

Another important issue that deserves notice is the fact that during the Second Aliyah the status of the "working woman" was also shaped. In the Jewish traditional-

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384–85. See also Margalit Shilo, "The Immigration Policy of the Zionist Institutions, 1882–1914," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30 (1994): 597–617.

<sup>67</sup> On Po'alei Zion and Hapo'el Hatza'ir, see Zeev Tsahor, "The Growth of Political Factions and Workers Organizations," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997), 215–34 (Hebrew).

<sup>68</sup> On the young Ben-Gurion, his joining Po'alei Zion, and his immigration to Eretz Israel, see Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion: The Burning Ground* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 1–68. For the immigration of his friend Shlomo Zemah, already in 1904, see *ibid.*, 21–23. Biographies of about eighty members of the Second Aliyah are included in vol. 2 of *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997) (Hebrew).

<sup>69</sup> For the Ottoman-oriented policy and the stand adopted by Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi about serving in the Ottoman army, see Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Rethinking the Concept of Ottomanization: The 'Yishuv' in the Aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45 (2009): 461–75.

religious convention, women were awarded a respected place in the home, managing the household and even the livelihood of the family, but their status was “internal” and their legal standing was inferior to that of men. Another global innovation that seeped into the Zionist movement towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was the concept of female equality. Herzl instituted equal rights for women members of the movement as early as the Second Zionist Congress in 1898, during the period of the First Aliyah. Hebrew schools began to open their doors to girls, contrary to Jewish religious schools. Female workers of the Second Aliyah, who raised the dual flag of socialism and Zionism, realized their vision in the Kinneret workers farm (1911–1917) that trained women to engage in agriculture. Another important step occurred at the “Herzliyah” high school, the first in the country to have mixed classes for boys and girls. In Jewish historiography, the decade of the Second Aliyah is considered a revolutionary one with regards to the concept of women’s equality.<sup>70</sup>

### **The Second Aliyah: economic livelihood, Hashomer, “Conquest of Labor”**

Upon arriving in Eretz Israel, members of the Second Aliyah had to face many problems. It was very hard to compete with the Arab laborer who was accustomed to local conditions and whose needs were few. At the time, the option of an alternative territory was also being discussed in general, in addition to the Uganda scheme. There were some in the country who believed that it was not suitable for Jewish settlement and many left for America or Australia. Another difficulty faced by the members of the Second Aliyah was the pattern of Jewish settlement, whether neighborhoods in the cities or the Jewish colonies. This led them to establish new settlements for themselves, in which guarding by Jews was initiated. The ideology of self-defense that had developed among some east European Jews was adapted to the conditions of Eretz Israel together with strong motivation for preferring a Jewish guard over an Arab guard suspected of collaborating with Arab thieves. Guarding thus became one of the important aspects of the independent communities and gave birth to the aspiration for establishment of a Jewish defense force.<sup>71</sup>

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**70** The status of women in Eretz Israel and gender studies has received much attention in the historical writing of recent decades. This wide topic is beyond the scope of this chapter except for its manifestation in the Second Aliyah period. See the section on the Second Aliyah in Margalit Shilo, *The Challenge of Gender: Women in the Early Yishuv* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1997), 135–216 (Hebrew). I thank Prof. Margalit Shilo for her help in writing about the attitude towards women in this period. For the Kinneret farm, see id., “The Women’s Farm at Kinneret, 1911–1917: A Solution to the Problem of the Working Woman in the Second Aliyah,” *Jerusalem Cathedra* 1 (1981): 246–83.

**71** See Ettinger, “Ideology of the Second Aliyah,” 9. For Hashomer, see also Gur Alroey, “In the Service of the Colony or Arrogant Tyrants? The Centennial of Hashomer – Historical Perspective,” *Cathedra* 133 (Sept. 2009): 77–104 (Hebrew).



Just as during the First Aliyah period, the need to establish a defense force resulted from the practical necessity to protect the colonies. Safeguarding the colony's lands and property was usually related to protecting lives, leading to the establishment of Jewish security organizations.<sup>72</sup> On September 28, 1907 the Bar-Giora organization was founded in Jaffa. As a secret order, its members were obligated to take an oath of loyalty to the homeland and were committed to absolute discipline, devotion, willingness for self-sacrifice, and comradeship.<sup>73</sup> After the establishment of Bar Giora, a need arose to form a base for the organization's operation, with Sejerah finally chosen as the location. "Conquest of guarding" began at the Sejerah farm by gaining control of guarding efforts, and from there spread to other places. In the wake of the group's success, its members decided that it was time to establish a powerful guard organization. "Hashomer" (The Guard) was founded in Kfar Tavor in April 1909. It continued Bar Giora in many ways but waived the secrecy practiced by its predecessor and operated openly. In time Hashomer became an important factor in the process of national revival. It continued to develop until 1913, by which time it had assumed responsibility for the security of most settlements in the Galilee and moved on to other areas in the country. Bar Giora and Hashomer were among the major organizational creations of the Second Aliyah and made a real contribution to the development of the Yishuv.<sup>74</sup> Two other areas in which members of the working-class Second Aliyah played an increasingly larger role were the concepts of "conquering labor" and "conquering livestock farming." Conquest of labor meant taking over the agricultural work in the Jewish colonies, which until then had been mostly in non-Jewish hands. Conquest of livestock farming had first been raised at the Bar Giora founding meeting; now it complemented the aspiration to gain control of the spheres of security and agricultural labor.<sup>75</sup>

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72 On defense and guarding during the First Aliyah, see Yaacov N. Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers: How the Israeli Defense Forces Began* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1998), 7–15.

73 For the establishment of Bar-Giora and its founding members, and the decision to establish it passed by the Eighth Zionist Congress, see *ibid.*, 16–26; see also Shmuel Almog, "The Second Aliyah: Self-Image and Modern Interpretation," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997), 52–56 (Hebrew).

74 On Bar-Giora and Hashomer, see the previous note. See also Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers*, 21–44.

75 On Jewish livestock farming and shepherding, see Yaacov Goldstein, "Self-Defense and Guarding: 'Bar-Giora' and 'Hashomer' in the Second Aliyah," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1977), 473–74 (Hebrew); Israel Bartal, "Cossack and Beduin: A New National Imagery," in *ibid.*, 482–93 (Hebrew); Moti Zeira, "From 'Hevreh Trask' to a Group of Shepherds," *Cathedra* 131 (Mar. 2009): 65–90 (Hebrew). Though Zeira deals with the years 1927–1928, his article is a good representation of the Hebrew shepherds. See also Michal Sadan, *The Hebrew Shepherd: Transformation of Image and Symbol from the Hebrew Enlightenment Literature to the New Hebrew Culture in Israel* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2011) (Hebrew).

However, the ideological theories imported from abroad by the members of the Second Aliyah collided with the reality of the country. The issue was further aggravated when members of the Second Aliyah began claiming that Jewish laborers could not hold out in the colonies since it was impossible to continue living in them for much time under the conditions of a paid laborer and to establish families there. Thus, it was proposed that Jewish laborers establish their own colonies. Among those who supported this claim were also a number of the leaders of Po'alei Zion in the country, who were part of the Zionist Organization. In contrast, the leaders of Hapo'el Hatza'ir, the labor movement established in Eretz Israel, were set against it, claiming that the objective of the olim was to be laborers, not to establish new settlements. One may say that the young members of the Second Aliyah returned to the outlook of the non-Herzlian Zionists, mainly the Russian Hovevei Zion, who all this time continued to operate through the Odessa Committee and its office in Jaffa to assist Jewish agricultural settlements in the country. As noted, in 1900 Jewish settlement activity was in dire straits. Upon ceasing operation in the country, Baron Rothschild did not hand the settlements over to the settlers themselves but placed them under the new JCA administration. While the JCA's cutback policy in the colonies could be understood by Hovevei Zion in terms of its contribution to making the farms profitable, it also brought on a reduction in the number of Jewish agricultural laborers, so much so that the JCA started offering the laborers assistance to emigrate from the country.<sup>76</sup>

These years of crisis continued throughout the first wave of the Second Aliyah, until 1907. During these years the veteran colonies did begin to rapidly develop their farming initiatives and structure, and after 1908 their success was evident. However this development took an unforeseeable toll: there was almost no room for Jewish laborers in the private farming colonies. The colonists continued to employ many Arab laborers, and even Hovevei Zion began fearing for the future of the Yishuv that would develop based on such elements. In addition, the French lifestyle increasingly adopted by the colony farmers led their children to leave the country. As a result, the Hovevei Zion movement in eastern Europe concluded that it was necessary to bring additional olim and to introduce new settlement patterns to achieve the goal of establishing agricultural settlements whose inhabitants would be laborers and farmers. In addition, ideas were raised regarding the development of a new type of intensive mixed farming on small plots of land that would be tilled by Jewish families trained in advance. Young diaspora Jews were presented the opportunity to come to Zion and work in the colonies for three years so that later they would be able to settle on a plot of land of their own.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> On these topics, see Aaronsohn, "Building the Land," 268–72. For Jewish settlement from the beginning of the twentieth century to the outbreak of World War I, see also Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 17–31.

<sup>77</sup> Already in 1902, a member of Hovevei Zion in Russia began to establish the "Geulah" Company to purchase land in Eretz Israel. See Goldstein, *We Will Be the First*, 266–68; Zvi Shilony, "Stages in

Apparently, members of the Second Aliyah, whose first wave arrived in 1904–1905, responded positively to such offers since they aspired to serve as hired labor in the colonies for their training period and also to maintain the colonies as part of the Zionist enterprise. At first it seemed that there would be a degree of cooperation between members of the Second Aliyah and the colonists, but due to social differences and conflicting outlooks they went different ways and formed competing organizations. Their strong socialist ideology caused a division between the two groups, a phenomenon that had a significant influence on political developments in the country as well.<sup>78</sup>

### **Jewish settlement activity in Eretz Israel, 1908–1914**

After the establishment of the Palestine Office in 1908, vigorous settlement activity began. The brunt of agricultural settlement was borne by workers of the Second Aliyah, the most active element in the Yishuv at the time. To Ruppin's credit, it should be said that he acknowledged the great contribution of these young people to the upbuilding of the country and cooperated with them in an impressive manner. Their common effort began two months after Ruppin's arrival with the establishment of the Kinneret agricultural training farm in June 1908 on the lands of Deleika-Umm Junieh that previously had been acquired by the Jewish National Fund. Around that time, the Zionist Organization also established the Palestine Land Development Company (PLDC), one of whose objectives was to deal with financing the first phase of land purchase. Ruppin hoped that the young workers would be given agricultural training by an experienced agronomist at the Kinneret farm, which would assist them in developing future agricultural settlements. Indeed, the young workers did gain experience, but relations at the farm, including with the agronomist, were extremely problematic.<sup>79</sup>

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the Development of Jewish Settlement in Eretz Israel during the Second Aliyah Period," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997), 109 (Hebrew); "Geulah Company" in the index to Yossi Katz, *The "Business" of Settlement: Private Entrepreneurship in the Jewish Settlement of Palestine, 1900–1914* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994).

<sup>78</sup> Yossi Ben-Artzi, "Development of the First Aliyah Colonies and the Establishment of New Colonies during the Second Aliyah Period," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997), 167–67 (Hebrew); id., "Jewish Settlement in Palestine 1900–1917: Geographic-Settlement Characteristics," in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The Ottoman Period, Part 2*, ed. Israel Kolatt (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2002), 379–400 (Hebrew).

<sup>79</sup> On Ruppin, the key person in settlement matters, see Henry Near, *The Kibbutz Movement: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1992–1997),

These young people proposed that another plot of land would be their exclusive responsibility, on which they would operate a separate and independent farm. After some hesitation, the JNF agreed to lease the plot in Umm-Junieh for a trial period, and to place a modest budget at their disposal so that they would be able to cultivate the land.<sup>80</sup> The first year of the trial period, December 1909 to September 1910, was a success. In 1910–1911, another group of laborers arrived on the site to establish a permanent colony there, which they called Deganiah. This was the first Zionist *kevtzah* (lit. “group”) and the principles of cooperative agricultural settlement were established there: lease of the nation’s land by a group of workers and cooperative and democratic management of an agricultural enterprise.<sup>81</sup> Two additional settlement attempts were made in the Kinneret farm itself.

In the spring of 1911, Hannah Meisel founded the “young women’s farm” there with the intention of training the young women of the Second Aliyah in “feminine” agricultural tasks: raising vegetables, chickens, and plants. The Palestine Office supported the desire of the young women to be full partners in the establishment of the new agricultural society, since its goal was to base the rural farm on mixed agriculture. In 1912–1913, a group named Ha-Ikar Ha-Tzair (The Young Farmer) also worked at the Kinneret farm. After a year of operation as a cooperative, its members proposed establishing a settlement that would be based on private farms on land leased from the JNF. The Palestine Office, which was pleased with the developing farm community in Deganiah, refused to undertake another trial. The farm was transferred to another group of workers, which later moved to a nearby area and founded Kevutzat Kinneret. In time Ha-Ikar Ha-Tzair established the first *moshav* (a cooperative agricultural village of family homesteads) of Nahalal.<sup>82</sup> In 1910, the PLDC purchased 10,000 dunams of land in the Jezreel Valley from the Sursuk family. Earlier, the JCA had rejected the purchase due to its high price, and the headquarters of the Jewish National Fund in Germany was also deterred by the proposal. Ruppin decided, all by himself, to purchase the land, and the JNF agreed to participate in the transaction only post factum. The immediate need to work the land and the experience gained at Kinneret created a settlement form with a defined and

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1:26–28. See also, Alex Bein, “Arthur Ruppin: The Man and His Work,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 17 (1972): 117–41. For the Palestine Land Development Company, see Doukhan-Landau, *Zionist Companies for Land Purchase*, 98–171.

<sup>80</sup> Near, *Kibbutz Movement*, 1:18–41.

<sup>81</sup> On the communes, see *ibid.*, 1:18–36; for Deganiah, see *ibid.*, 1:37–41; Shilo, “Role of the Zionist Organization,” 93–95; Muki Tsur, ed., *The First Hundred Years of Deganiah* (Bene Brak: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2010) (Hebrew).

<sup>82</sup> For the establishment of the young women’s farm by Hannah Meisel and Ha-Ikar Ha-Tzair, see Shilo “The Woman’s Farm at Kinneret.” For workers’ settlements during the Second Aliyah, Franz Oppenheimer’s cooperative scheme, and the principles of the *moshav ‘ovdim* (workers’ settlement), see Yishai Geva, “The Beginning of ‘Moshav Ha’ovdim,’” *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisrael* 1 (1991): 462–80 (Hebrew).

limited design – a “conquest group.”<sup>83</sup> Intended to only temporarily occupy a site, the group included a small number of Hashomer members, manifested Jewish presence, and started initial tilling of the land. Additional conquest groups were later sent to other locations around the country to place a stake, for example in Hittin and Kalandia (present-day Atarot).<sup>84</sup>

The agreement of the JNF to participate in the redemption of land in the Jezreel Valley was also a response to the decision to deal with Franz Oppenheimer’s cooperative scheme, which was based on nationalization of the land, agricultural training, and cooperative settlement and was in keeping with the principles of the Second Aliyah young people. The Cooperative in Merhaviah was founded in March 1911, a settlement of thirty young people with agronomist Solomon Dieck at their head. Many hopes were pinned to the attempt, but it failed, and the cooperative was disbanded following World War I.<sup>85</sup> Additional settlement and forestation attempts were made on JNF lands, among them in the area of Bait ‘Arif, Ben Shemen, and Huldah, including planting the Herzl Forest, an agricultural farm, and an industrial village.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to all the developments in socialist-oriented settlement activity during the Second Aliyah period, there were also important private agricultural settlement efforts at the time. The pioneer of private settlement was Agudat Neta‘im (Plantation Association). Agudat Neta‘im was established in the summer of 1905 upon the initiative of Aaron Eisenberg of Rehovoth, with the aim of expanding the area and population of existing colonies and establishing new ones based on funding by private capital. Its plan was to establish a corporate share company with seed capital of one million francs which would serve to purchase land and establish plantations on the fringes of existing colonies or some distance away from them. The association would be responsible for preparation of the land, planting dry farming crops and orchards, and tending them until the colonies could support themselves. In locations that were distant from existing colonies, all the necessary preparations would be made for the establishment of new settlements.

Between 1905 and 1914 Agudat Neta‘im established five plantations. The first was inaugurated in the summer of 1905 in Hefzibah, in the northwestern area of Haderah, the second in late 1905 in Birket ‘Ata south of Haderah, the third in 1906 near Rehovoth, the fourth in 1913 on land purchased from the JCA at the Sejerah farm, and the fifth that same year in Zeita, east of Haderah. On the eve of World War I 18,134 dunams were owned by Agudat Neta‘im, of which 5,843 were

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<sup>83</sup> According to the definition of Henry Near, “conquest here referring to the first cultivation, or conquest, of unworked or neglected land.” See Near, *Kibbutz Movement*, 1:26.

<sup>84</sup> Prior to World War I, the only *kevtzot* were Deganiah and Merhaviah. All the other *kevtzot* and *kibbutzim* were established after the war.

<sup>85</sup> On the establishment of the Cooperative in Merhaviah, see Near, *Kibbutz Movement*, 1:30–31.

<sup>86</sup> On all these and more, see Shilony, “Stages,” 111–21. For private Zionist land acquisition companies, see also Doukhan-Landau, *Zionist Companies for Land Purchase*, 172–213.

planted. Both Jewish and Arab laborers worked at the plantations, most of the Jewish laborers being members of the Second Aliyah. Despite that diverse difficulties such as disputes over where the borderline ran between plots, machine malfunctions, and conflicts between laborers and the local administrators delayed the development of the centers at times, they continued to grow and develop. Agudat Neta'im was considered a success and the best method for private capital settlement. Its success was one of the deciding factors leading to the establishment of the Achooza societies.<sup>87</sup>

Contrary to Agudat Neta'im, which was a private settlement initiative by persons in Eretz Israel, the Achooza societies originated with private entrepreneurs abroad. Until the beginning of World War I, dozens of Achooza societies were founded in cities abroad with the aim of increasing settlement by establishing new colonies on the basis of middle class capital funding. Establishment of these societies was preceded by an intensive publicity campaign on the part of the Zionist institutions. In broad detail, the program of the Achooza societies was that the members would pay the societies a fixed sum, in installments over eight to ten years, and the society representatives would use the money to purchase land in Eretz Israel. Almond and olive groves would be planted on these lands until they bore fruit and could provide their owners with a livelihood. At the end of the preparatory period, the members would come and settle in the Achooza colonies. Apparently, the Achooza concept appealed to many in the Jewish communities in the diaspora; however only ten societies managed to acquire land. These societies purchased a total of 47,000 dunams in Poriyah, Saronah (in Lower Galilee), Kfar Uriah, Jammama (Ruhamah), Merhaviah, Mount Canaan, and around Rosh Pinnah and Metullah. In four sites work was begun to establish the colonies before the war: Poriyah, Saronah, Kfar Uriah, and Ruhamah. The lands purchased by the Achooza societies increased areas owned by Jews. While additional Achooza colonies did not develop on these lands, they served as the infrastructure for other forms of settlement after World War I. The societies' activities and the money they accrued were also instrumental for settlement efforts during the Mandate period.<sup>88</sup>

A unique type of private agricultural settlement was formed at the Migdal colony in Lower Galilee. The initiative came from the "Tiberias Land and Plantation

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<sup>87</sup> For Agudat Neta'im and its plantations, see Yossi Katz, "Private Settlement during the Second Aliyah Period," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1977), 171–75 (Hebrew). On the Palestine Plantation Company and other settlement organizations, see Thon, "Otto Warburg," 59–67, with emphasis on developments during Warburg's tenure as president of the Zionist Organization.

<sup>88</sup> For the idea behind the *achoozot*, see Yossi Katz, "The Achooza Projects in Eretz-Israel, 1908–1917," *Cathedra* 22 (Jan. 1982): 119–44 (Hebrew); id., "Private Settlement," 175–77. On Poriyah, Saronah, the Achooza movement in the United States, and the American Zion Commonwealth, see Bernard I. Sandler, "Hoachoozo: Zionism in America and the Colonization of Palestine," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 64 (1974/75): 137–48.

Company” established by Warburg and a group of wealthy Zionists from Moscow.<sup>89</sup> Towards the end of 1908, another group of Zionist capitalists from Moscow established the “Geulat Ha-Aretz” company in order to take advantage of the new opportunities available for broad settlement activities in Eretz Israel. That company accepted Warburg’s proposal to buy the Migdal lands in the Ginosar Valley, 5,500 dunams put up for sale by German Catholics in April 1909 that had been purchased a few years earlier from wealthy Arabs. The company began establishing a colony on that property according to a plan prepared in advance that was intended to begin covering its costs within four to five years. Moshe Glikin was named manager of the colony. Almost all the work was carried out by Jewish laborers, most of them members of the Second Aliyah. They faced many difficulties and Migdal was far from able to support itself on the eve of World War I. Nevertheless, it is well apparent that the establishment of the colony strengthened the Lower Galilee which at the time was already an important center of Jewish settlement in the country.<sup>90</sup>

The developments I have noted above convey the widespread settlement activities undertaken during the last six years of Ottoman rule prior to the beginning of World War I. However, the outbreak of war totally changed the situation in the country and the nature of Zionist activity there. Towards the end of 1913, during the Sukkoth holiday, the “Gideonite” association was established in Zikhron Ya’akov, a nation-wide organization of members of colonies. It was led by the Aaronsohn family, which excelled in leadership qualities and the ability to develop international connections. Avshalom Feinberg also joined the Gideonites, the group that served as the basis for the recruitment and establishment of the NILI underground that operated during the period of World War I.<sup>91</sup>

## Urban development until World War I

### The growth of Jewish Jerusalem until World War I

In Chapter Four I went into great detail about the growth of the Jewish community in Jerusalem until the beginning of the 1880s and the founding of the first Jewish neighborhoods outside the walls of the Old City. The increase in Jewish population

<sup>89</sup> On Warburg’s involvement in furthering agricultural settlement in Eretz Israel, see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 77–79; see also note 57 above.

<sup>90</sup> On the Geulat Ha-Aretz Company and the large farm in the colony of Migdal, see Katz, *The “Business” of Settlement*, 254–74.

<sup>91</sup> Rachel Elboim-Dror, “The Gideonites,” *Cathedra* 46 (Dec. 1987): 147–68 (Hebrew). NILI is an acronym for the Hebrew phrase “*netzah Yisrael lo yeshaker*” (the Glory of Israel does not deceive – 1 Sam 15:29) which served as its slogan. I shall return to NILI and its leader, Aaron Aaronsohn, in the next chapter.



continued until the beginning of World War I. Since 1880, Jews were the majority in the city, around 18,000 of the 30,000 inhabitants. On the eve of the war they numbered around 45,000 of Jerusalem's total population of 70,000.<sup>92</sup> As noted, a major change that occurred in the city was the development of new Jewish neighborhoods outside the walls. The nine such neighborhoods established in the early 1880s had become seventy neighborhoods by the eve of World War I.<sup>93</sup> The social structure and character of the Old Yishuv, and also of the Sefardi and Oriental communities, which had existed even before the 1880s, continued to grow. Alongside them, a Zionist community also began taking shape in the city. It influenced the use of Hebrew and established a Hebrew-language library, modern schools, kindergartens, a teacher's academy, the Bezalel Art School, and the Hebrew Gymnasium (high school) established in 1909 (the second in the country after the Herzliyah High School established in Jaffa in September 1905), in which much Hebrew and Zionist activity was conducted.<sup>94</sup>

There were also changes on the economic front. The concept of productivization and the growing existential hardships forced the Jewish population to change the manner in which they earned a living and the trades in which they engaged. Jewish businesses were established that engaged in publishing, weaving, light industry, construction, provision of services, shops and commerce, and even providing accommodation and tourist services following the increase in the number of Jewish and other tourists in the city.<sup>95</sup> The working class began establishing its own organizations.

However the economic situation remained difficult and most of the city's residents still needed the financial support which was sent from abroad to yeshivas, charity organizations, kollels, and the leadership of the various communities. To a great extent the halukkah system continued to operate in Jerusalem. As noted, on the eve of World War I the number of Jews in the city numbered around 45,000, constituting 50 percent of the entire Jewish population in the country. Throughout the history of Eretz Israel in the modern era, there was no other period when such a high

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<sup>92</sup> For details of the total population in the country and the number of Jews, with specific mention of Jerusalem in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:466–67; see also ch. 4, n. 29.

<sup>93</sup> For a detailed survey of all the neighborhoods established outside the walls in these years, see *ibid.*, 2:152–246. On Jewish medical, charitable, and modern educational institutions outside the walls, see *ibid.*, 2:247–74.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:418–36. On the impact of modernization on Jerusalem, see *ibid.*, 2:368–90. An important segment of the enlightened Zionist Jewish population of Jerusalem were Sefardim; see Yitzhak Bezalel, *You Were Born Zionists: The Sefardim in Eretz Israel in Zionism and the Hebrew Revival during the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2007) (Hebrew).

<sup>95</sup> For groups of Jewish tourists who began visiting Eretz Israel, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:411–13. On the “pilgrimage” of the Ancient Order of Maccabaeans, led by Herbert Bentwich which arrived from London in 1896, see Philip Goodman and Avi Goodman, *Maccabaeans, Ancient Maccabaeans and the Jerusalem Maccabaeans* (Jerusalem: [no publisher noted], 1991).

percentage of the country's Jewish population lived in Jerusalem, but it rested on weak and unstable foundations. It was clear that when difficult times would come, Jerusalem's Jewish community would not hold out. Indeed, that is in large part what occurred when World War I began, as shall be described below. Towards the end of the Ottoman period, it became apparent that the New Yishuv that was establishing itself in the country chose Jaffa as its center and would move there also from Jerusalem, turning it in the future into the city with the largest Jewish population in the country.<sup>96</sup>

### **Jaffa – the center of the New Yishuv**

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Jaffa was still a very small city. It had grown and developed already during the first eighty years of the century, mainly since it was the port of entry for pilgrims, Jewish olim, and the increase in the number of tourists that came to visit Jerusalem. As Jerusalem grew, so did Jaffa. Its Jewish community, which apparently was renewed only in the 1830s, also began to increase. The Jewish population of Jaffa at the beginning of the 1880s was estimated at around 500 persons: 250 Sefardim, 150 North Africans, and around 100 Ashkenazim. By the beginning of the 1890s it had increased to 3,000 persons. The reasons for this growth were the continued expansion of Jerusalem, for which Jaffa served as the port of entry, as well as economic developments in the country at the time, in which Jaffa port also played a central role. Not only was Jaffa the gateway into the country, it also served as the center for the settlers in the first colonies, mainly those established in Judea. Thus, a heterogeneous Jewish population began taking shape there. As early as 1885, the *Ezrat Yisrael* (Help of Israel) organization was established, which dealt with such services as putting up guests, visiting the sick, and the foundation of a library open to all, not just the residents of Jaffa. In addition, religious and other organizations were established, until in 1891 a joint council was established for all Jewish residents of Jaffa, Ashkenazim and Sefardim.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> On the organization of the Yishuv prior to World War I, see Israel Kolatt, "The Organization of the Jewish Population of Palestine and the Development of Its Political Consciousness before World War I," in *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, ed. Moshe Ma'oz (Jerusalem: Magnes Press; Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1975), 211–45. See also Israel Bartal, "A Center in the Margins: Changing Jewish Attitudes towards Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century," in *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period (1800–1917)*, ed. Israel Bartal and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 63–72 (Hebrew).

<sup>97</sup> Israel Bartal, "On the Beginnings of the Ashkenazi Community in Jaffa," *Shalem* 3 (1981): 351–61 (Hebrew). For the development of Jaffa in the late 1880s and early 1890s, see Klausner, *Zionism in Russia*, 3:41–44 who describes the activity of Ze'ev Tiomkin and the establishment of a Bnai Brith lodge in the city. He also notes that the number of Jews in Jaffa in 1888 was no more than 1,500. On the aid tendered to the development of Jaffa by the Odessa Committee, see

In relation to Zionist efforts, Jaffa became the focus of Hovevei Zion activity. As early as 1885, during the visit by Kalonimus Ze'ev Wissotsky on behalf of the general leadership of the Hovevei Zion movement, he was entrusted with establishing an Actions Committee which would supervise the colonies throughout the county so as to improve their material and spiritual condition, advise the olim arriving in the country, and report to the leadership abroad. Upon Wissotsky's recommendation, the leadership supported the choice of Jaffa as the seat of the committee. With the start of the second wave of olim of the First Aliyah, a Hovevei Zion committee was located in Jaffa, a clear sign that this Zionist organization preferred Jaffa over Jerusalem.<sup>98</sup>

Jaffa also became the center for other Jewish organizations such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) and the main office of the JCA that moved there from Beirut in 1905. Jaffa was frequented by members of the First Aliyah and their families who were beginning to settle in the country while some Jews took up residence in the city itself. In 1904, at the onset of the Second Aliyah, the Jewish population of the city numbered around 5,000 persons, and on the eve of World War I it accounted for 10,000 of the 42,500 residents of Jaffa.<sup>99</sup>

As the Jewish population of Jaffa grew it began establishing new neighborhoods, from Neve Tzedek in 1887 to Mahaneh Yisrael sometime before 1916. The most important neighborhood was Tel Aviv.

### The beginnings of Tel Aviv and its development until World War I

Prior to World War I, both Hovevei Zion and the Zionist Organization, which led the New Yishuv in Eretz Israel, believed that the country should be developed with a combination of agricultural and urban settlement. It was clear to the leadership of the Zionist movement that it was impossible to base settlement of the country only on agricultural colonies, and that industry and commerce should also be developed.

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ibid., 3:197–99. For the transformation of Jaffa into the center of the New Yishuv during the First Aliyah period, see Kark, *Jaffa*, 193–98. On the struggle for hegemony between Jaffa and Jerusalem in the period 1882–1914, see Yehoshua Kaniel, “The Conflict between Jerusalem and Jaffa over Leadership of the Yishuv in Late Ottoman Times (1882–1914),” *Shalem* 3 (1981): 185–212 (Hebrew).

<sup>98</sup> For Wissotsky's visit to Eretz Israel on behalf of Hovevei Zion, see Kalonimus Z. Wissotsky, *Letters*. On the educational and cultural activity of Ahad Ha'am and Bnei Moshe in Jaffa, see Laskov, “Hovevei Zion,” 157–62. For Ahad Ha'am's conflict with the Old Yishuv, see ch. 5, n. 55.

<sup>99</sup> On the development of Jaffa as the center of the New Yishuv during the period of the Second Aliyah, see Kark, *Jaffa*, 198–99. On the attitude of the Zionist Organization to Jerusalem in this period, see Margalit Shilo, “From Jaffa to Jerusalem: The Attitude of the Zionist Organization to Jerusalem during the Second Aliyah,” in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997), 91–106 (Hebrew).

However, while the Zionist movement's attitude to agricultural settlement also received practical expression, there was no organized Zionist effort with regards to urban settlement almost until the end of the nineteenth century, even though most Zionist olim took up residence in the cities, mostly in Jaffa. Recognition of this tendency is what finally led to the first practical step by the Zionist movement in the Jaffa area: the private initiative to establish the garden suburb of Tel Aviv, the kernel from which sprouted the first all-Jewish city. The initiative came from a group of Zionists living in Jaffa, most of whom had arrived at the beginning of the Second Aliyah or a short while earlier. The Ahuzat Bayit (literally "homestead") society was established in 1906 with sixty members led by Akiva Arie Weiss. There were over 6,000 Jews living in Jaffa at the time. Living conditions were harsh and the supply of rental apartments, the majority of which were Arab owned, did not meet the demand. All these led some to aspire to develop a national-Zionist urban society and were the background for the creation of a Jewish garden suburb, following the tendency to establish such garden suburbs in Europe during that period.<sup>100</sup>

The location of the neighborhood was determined by an understanding that the goal of creating an urban Jewish society would only be realized if the neighborhood was established outside of Jaffa, some distance away from it, as an autonomous Jewish entity. In 1907, the Ahuzat Bayit society applied to the Zionist Congress with a request for a 300,000 franc commercial loan from the JNF to build the neighborhood. With Ruppin's support, the Zionist Congress and the JNF agreed to the request; construction began in the spring of 1909 and went on rapidly. Fifty houses were built by the end of 1909 and were inhabited by 500 persons. By the eve of World War I, there were already 204 houses in Tel Aviv in which 2,000 people lived. Due to the success of the Ahuzat Bayit society and the great demand for its houses, similar companies were established to found additional Jewish neighborhoods whose planning and building regulations closely followed those of Tel Aviv. These neighborhoods were quite quickly united with Tel Aviv and became one unit. The great increase in the population of Tel Aviv did not result only from the tendency of olim to prefer urban over agricultural settlement. Two factors strongly attracted to Tel Aviv not only the new immigrants, but also the veteran residents living in other cities and in the colonies. Tel Aviv was a modern neighborhood with a high level of hygiene and security of property and life, and it was an autonomous Jewish national suburb, managing its affairs independently with no outside interference. Later it also became the Jewish national cultural center. Yet Tel Aviv was not yet really a city at the time: it still had no industry and the extent of its

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**100** On the beginnings of Tel Aviv, see Yossi Katz, "The Summer of 1906: The Date for the Establishment of Tel Aviv," in *Tel Aviv-Yafo: From a Garden Suburb to a World City: The First Hundred Years*, ed. Baruch A. Kipnis (Haifa: Pardes, 2009), 37–61 (Hebrew); id., "Private Settlement," 180–82.

commerce was not great. It was as yet a city-in-the-making, and the war delayed its establishment as a full-fledged city.

### The growth of Jewish communities in other cities until World War I

The success of Tel Aviv led to a desire to establish similar modern urban suburbs in other locations around the country. Private companies were founded to this end in Haifa, Tiberias, Safed, Jerusalem, Gaza, Hebron, and Ramleh. However, prior to World War I these plans were realized only in Haifa. The first initiative for founding a Jewish urban suburb in Haifa was made by “Agudat Ahim,” a society established in that city towards the end of 1906. The construction of a branch of the Hejaz Railway and the Turkish plans to build a port in the city aroused the interest of business people, veteran settlers, and new immigrants who realized the economic potential of the city.<sup>101</sup> The city as a whole developed greatly towards the end of the Ottoman period, the colony established there by the German Templars adding an impetus to this process. In his utopian novel *Altneuland*, Herzl predicted that Haifa would be the city of the future. Between 1905 and 1907 many businesses were established in the city: stores, agencies, and even the Atid factory for the production of oil and soap (1906). All these attracted large numbers of administrators, workers, and artisans to Haifa and were a central factor in the growth of the New Yishuv in the city. A great demand for living quarters led to a rise in rental prices. A move of population from Acre to Haifa also began at the time, and many workers arrived for construction of the port. One of the objectives of the establishment of the new neighborhood was aimed at providing a partial solution to the housing problem. Agudat Ahim was founded upon the initiative of Shabtai Levi, director of the JCA’s Lands Department and later the mayor of Haifa, together with the merchant Moshe Levin. They saw the neighborhood as the basis for a Zionist environment in which Jews could live a national life. Agudat Ahim purchased twelve dunams at the beginning of 1907 on the road leading from the lower city to Mount Carmel with a loan received from the JNF. In 1909, the cornerstone for the Herzliah neighborhood was laid, the first modern neighborhood to be constructed in Haifa after the German Colony. At the end of 1912 it contained twelve houses, and this was also the situation when the war broke out. Construction of the neighborhood engendered plans for the establishment of additional neighborhoods in the city by the “Ahuzat Bayit Haifa” group and the “Nahalal” group. In some areas they even completed parceling out of the lots, some of which were sold before the war broke out and whose owners were about to begin building their houses. The neighborhoods were

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**101** On the construction of the Hejaz Railway’s Haifa–Dera’a line by the Ottoman authorities between 1903 and 1905, see Richard Turret, *The Hedjaz Railway* (Abingdon: Turret, 1989), 29–41.

established only after the war ended, and some of them were integrated into the large Hadar Carmel neighborhood built during the British Mandate period.<sup>102</sup>

As for other cities, only in Tiberias was there any consequential development of the Jewish community. In Safed and Hebron, the Jewish communities maintained their traditional character. Acre, Gaza, and Nablus continued to be Muslim cities, while Nazareth and Bethlehem preserved their Arab-Christian nature. Lydda and Ramleh remained small towns. Some Jewish families did move into some of those cities, such as Acre, Gaza, and Ramleh, but their presence there did not exert any influence of the development of these cities.

## The creation of a national educational-cultural center

### Strengthening the Hebrew language and Jewish-national education

The Second Aliyah period was a central stage and turning point in the creation and institutionalization of Hebrew education. In the previous chapter I discussed the groundwork laid by the First Aliyah teachers. This was now continued during the Second Aliyah period. Though the majority of members of the Second Aliyah were young and hadn't yet established families, and so were not directly involved in school education, they greatly influenced the younger generation and the formation of the educational center in Eretz Israel. The fact that there was no official national language, neither during the First or Second Aliyah periods, created a vacuum in which Hebrew could be used as the spoken language for all Jews in the country, regardless of the ethnic community to which they belonged. Hebrew was indeed derived from a shared cultural and sacred tradition, but in order for it to become a living everyday language it had to also serve as a daily means of communication in places of commerce, offices, markets, and more. Before the First Aliyah period, Hebrew served mainly as the language of religion. The desire to extend its use to everyday life was dependent on the human factor. The people of the Second Aliyah, the working-class aliyah, were a minority among the veteran Jewish inhabitants of the country, but their enthusiasm was infectious, and they succeeded. Their determination to speak Hebrew and their persistence in battling for their principles and ideals was reflected, among other things, in the revival of the Hebrew language.<sup>103</sup>

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**102** On the establishment of the first modern Jewish neighborhood in Haifa, the pioneering steps in the city's industrial and commercial development, and the role played by the Zionist Organization in all these, see Katz, *The "Business" of Settlement*, 293–98 and "Haifa" in the index; Carmel, *Ottoman Haifa*, 113–21.

**103** Rachel Elboim-Dror, "Creating the Educational Center in Eretz Israel," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 1997), 386 (Hebrew); Michael Grünzweig, "Hebrew in the Second Aliyah Period," in *ibid.*, 189 (Hebrew).

The major role in promoting the renewal of Hebrew was played by a group of teachers who worked diligently at realizing the vision. There were two centers of influence among this group of teachers during the period of the First Aliyah, one in Jerusalem and the other in Jaffa and the colonies. In Jerusalem, the majority of the Jewish population continued educating its children in the traditional institutions: the *heder* and the Torah study halls. Around five thousand children studied in the educational facilities of the philanthropic organizations: the AIU, the German Ezrah society, and the British Anglo-Jewish Association. In Jerusalem the teachers included persons from among the intellectuals of the Old Yishuv, most of them traditional Jews, who served as a bridge between the philanthropic organizations and the New Yishuv, while in Jaffa and the colonies the teachers included members of the First Aliyah, of BILU, and of the Bnei Moshe organization, most of them secular Jews. The ideological and geographical distinction was not unequivocal. Teachers such as Ze'ev Yavetz, later one of the founders of the "Hamizrahi" religious movement, taught in the colonies, while secular teachers went up to Jerusalem and taught in the schools of the AIU and other organizations. Despite that, tension between the two groups continued for dozens of years, so the main ideological center for the concept of national education moved to the first Jewish colonies and the city of Jaffa.<sup>104</sup>

On the eve of the Second Aliyah, the Zionist-oriented education system numbered seventeen schools, sixteen in the colonies and one in Jaffa (for girls). Towards the end of the Second Aliyah period, it included sixty institutions: twenty kindergartens, twenty-eight schools in the colonies, six primary schools in the cities, two high schools, two teacher's seminaries, an agricultural high school, and the Bezalel School of Art. The number of students in the Jewish educational system was 2,600, while the ranks of the Teachers Association rose from the fifty-nine founders to 350 members in 1913.<sup>105</sup>

With the onset of the Second Aliyah, Jewish teachers began arriving in the country, graduates of the Jewish teacher seminaries in eastern Europe and university graduates with radical nationalist leanings who joined the Jaffa center and changed the balance of power in the Teachers Association. The members of the Second Aliyah intensified the differences between religious and secular persons, between veteran settlers and new immigrants, between traditionalists and modernists. They lent their support to those in favor of expanding the role of the teacher and the Teachers Association. In 1907 the general assembly of the Teachers Association decided to move its headquarters from Jerusalem to Jaffa, to the center of the New Yishuv. Leadership was transferred from David Yellin to Yosef Azaryahu, and later to

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**104** On the revival of Hebrew and the beginnings of Hebrew national education in the First Aliyah colonies, see ch. 5, pp. 252–56.

**105** Elboim-Dror, "Creating the Educational Center," 387; Moshe Rinott, "The Struggle between the Teachers Association and the Zionist Organization for Hegemony in Hebrew Education in Palestine," *Hatzionut* 4 (1975): 114–45 (Hebrew).



Yosef Luria. With the move to Jaffa and the association's affiliation with the organizations of the New Yishuv, cooperation between its members and the workers organizations increased. Changes were made in the educational curriculum, and now the Teachers Association controlled the educational system of the Yishuv. However, at the same time there was competition between the workers organizations and the teachers regarding the direction that educational development should take.<sup>106</sup>

Two major events mark the end of the Second Aliyah period in relation to education: the establishment of the Teachers Association in 1903 and "the language controversy," also known as "the language war," in 1913. These events hastened the shaping of the Eretz Israel educational center. The Second Aliyah members' deep interest in matters of education and the activism that was characteristic of everything they did, led to their involvement with the issues of education under discussion at the time, such as what direction high school education should take, and the language controversy. They fought for the status of the Hebrew language and served as a catalyst that spurred and motivated both the Teachers Association and the students, in the colonies and in the cities, to mount a battle for a national culture. This struggle emphasized the centrality of Eretz Israel in determining Zionist educational policy. Accordingly, even before the Zionist revolution achieved its final political aims it had already determined the nature of national culture. Zionist education played a central role in this revolution, and the Zionist school functioned as the first of its institutions called upon to translate national values into practical operational goals. The consequences of these actions contributed much more than enrichment of the curriculum; in effect they served to provide a new interpretation of the history and culture of the Jewish nation, and to the self-image of the "New Jew" emerging in Eretz Israel.<sup>107</sup>

### **Establishment of the first Zionist high school and emergence of the new Zionist culture**

An important stage in raising issues of Zionist education and culture began with the establishment of the first Zionist high school in Jaffa in September 1905. That event generated much discourse concerning national educational goals and the

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**106** On the transfer of the offices of the Teachers Association to Jaffa and the influence exerted by teachers of the Second Aliyah on educational practices, see Elboim-Dror, "Creating the Educational Center," 390–95.

**107** *Ibid.*, 386–88. On the role played by Hebrew language and literature in creating a new Hebrew culture in Eretz Israel, see Yaacov Shavit, "Culture and Cultural Status: Basic Developments in Hebrew Culture during the Second Aliyah Period," in *The Second Aliyah: Studies*, ed. Israel Bartal, Zeev Tsahor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997), 343–66, esp. 357–59 (Hebrew), and several additional topics discussed in the article.

culture and society developing in Eretz Israel. The high school, which was intended to achieve and meet several goals and needs, was caught in the middle of the conflict between religious and secular persons, between parents who wanted to attune it to the marketplace and prepare the students to enter universities abroad and the founders who wanted to turn it into “the home base” of national education. The labor organizations perceived of the debate over the high schools as a new danger that would introduce the diaspora into the country, since the new cultural milieu was intended to create a new society based on hoe and shovel, not on books. Internal contradictions within the new Zionist education had begun even earlier. There was agreement with regards to the need for productivization, and education was meant to change values and the types of Jewish occupations, to make Judaism more down-to-earth, work-oriented, and rural – and less intellectual; thus the emphasis on agricultural work and manual labor. “That is the main thing and without it all is futile,” declared Ussishkin at the founding assembly of the Teachers Association in 1903. The anti-intellectual tendencies gained strength during the Second Aliyah period, which arose from objection to Jewish life in the diaspora and aspiration for a unique spirit, together with the social ideologies of the workers organizations. It should be noted that there were those among the latter who opposed this perception, such as Aharon David Gordon who claimed there was no conflict between “spirit” and “matter,” but the viewpoint of the majority of the workers conceived of the world of the spirit as something that should be fought against.<sup>108</sup> The strengthened status of practical Zionism after the establishment of the Palestine Office also enhanced the agricultural-settlement approach. The high schools stood out in opposition to this view, as well as other views held by the urban society of the New Yishuv, which called for the development of the curriculum in relation to the new culture of Eretz Israel.<sup>109</sup>

The schools were also the first institutions to set national secular patterns for the traditional holidays taking shape in the country. The holidays were gradually being transformed into ritualistic celebrations of land and nationality. The teachers created programs for holidays and ceremonies which reflected the values they wanted to inculcate, such as raising the national flag, torch parades for Hanukkah, bonfires on Lag Ba’omer, bringing first fruit on Shavuot, planting on Tu Bishvat, hiking to get to know the country, public singing of Hebrew songs, bands and choirs, sport races, literary evenings, and more. Literature, poetry, publishing houses, and theater productions served as focal points in the new cultural life. The teachers, by virtue of their roles, shaped new patterns for the public life of the New Yishuv. The

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**108** Many books and articles have been published about Gordon’s philosophy, including the expression “religion of labor.” For example, see Herbert H. Rose, *The Life and Thought of A.D. Gordon: Pioneer, Philosopher, and Prophet of Modern Israel* (New York: Bloch, 1964).

**109** Elboim-Dror, “Creating the Educational Center,” 400–5. On Jewish neighborhoods and educational institutions, see Shilony, “Stages,” 121–24.

performance of Hebrew language plays in the schools to an audience of parents and the public at large on holidays and special occasions provided the new Jewish identity with a visual and symbolic expression and assisted in developing a new mythology, the Zionist mythology. The message that began in the school with this small group of educators turned into the determining norm of the new society.<sup>110</sup>

While the beginnings of national culture were already evident in the schools of the First Aliyah colonies, this was much more pronounced during the Second Aliyah. The workers of the Second Aliyah were an attractive, stimulating, and confusing element for the children in the colonies. On the one hand, these two groups – the second generation in the country and the pioneers of the Second Aliyah – held common values, norms, and interests. On the other hand, they were on different sides of the fence. The second-generation colonists identified with their parents and represented the veteran established property owners, in contrast with the new opinionated foreigners who wanted to gain control of Jewish society in the country and reshape it to fit their views. While the youngsters in the colonies admired the workers of the Second Aliyah, they also envied them for having come from the wide world out there.

These contrasts opened an abyss and created polarization between the two groups. This cultural struggle also prevented the political center of the Zionist movement, which sought to unite both religious and secular Zionists, from accepting total responsibility for education in the country – until the language controversy forced them to join ranks. This controversy was the borderline in the relations between the educational institutions of the Yishuv and the philanthropic organizations which had founded schools and educational facilities, but also wanted to preserve the culture and language of their country of origin. The most prominent of these was the German Ezra society that began its educational efforts in 1904 and competed with the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) which had arrived earlier and began diffusing the French language and culture. Though Hebrew was taught in the Ezra institutions at the demand of the parents, the language of instruction was German. Within a short while, the Ezra society had a developed educational system; in 1912 it operated eighteen institutions that included a teacher's seminary, kindergartens, and schools. Opposition to the neglect of Hebrew in these institutions began as early as 1907–1908 and created tension between the students of the teacher's seminary and the directors.

In November 1913, following the decision of the Technion's board of governors that teaching in the Haifa Technion would not be conducted solely in Hebrew, the representatives of the Zionist Organization resigned from the board of governors. The majority of teachers and students in the Ezra institutions and the Technion

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**110** For the rise of a new Hebrew culture, especially during the Second Aliyah period, including what can be termed “homeland culture,” see Shavit, “Culture and Cultural Status.”

participated in turbulent demonstrations, and the Teachers Association joined in the struggle. The language controversy caused a dramatic change in many areas. The Zionist schools, which until that event had been supported by small groups and organizations, became a national educational system under the responsibility of the Zionist Organization. Diverse social frameworks and groups began operating in Hebrew. By the last days of World War I, 40 percent of the Jews in Eretz Israel spoke Hebrew on a day-to-day basis as a living language. The process of transferring to speaking Hebrew continued during the Mandate period and later in the State of Israel, when hundreds of thousands of immigrants arrived who knew no Hebrew. The process was irreversible by the end of the Second Aliyah period. When the British Mandate began, Hebrew was declared one of the three official languages of the country, and upon the establishment of the State of Israel, as one of its two official languages.<sup>111</sup>

### **The Jewish community on the eve of World War I – four points of contention**

When summing up the state of the Jewish community in Eretz Israel on the eve of World War I, one may say that it faced four points of contention: (a) the Old Yishuv vs. the New Yishuv; (b) farmers vs. workers – the Jewish farmer, a product of the First Aliyah, as opposed to the Jewish pioneer laborer, a product of the Second Aliyah; (c) the city vs. the village – the great majority of the country’s Jewish inhabitants lived in the cities with a lifestyle very different from that of those residing in rural areas; (d) Zionist national sentiment opposite the onset of Arab nationalism which arose during the First Aliyah due to the purchase of Arab lands by Jews, and continued with the issue of “Arab labor” vs. “Hebrew labor” until it developed into the first buds of a national conflict between the two peoples. To gain an understanding of the enmity between these two peoples, which increased during the Mandate period and continues to this very day, I shall discuss what led to its development,

## **The Young Turk revolution in 1908 and World War I in the Middle East, 1914–1918**

### **From the Young Turk revolution to the beginning of World War I**

In the previous chapter, I described the character of Ottoman rule throughout the reign of Abdülhamid II (1876–1908). Therefore, I shall now focus only on the last

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<sup>111</sup> For the language controversy, see Elboim-Dror, “Creating the Educational Center,” 390–404.

period of his rule and the Young Turk revolution until Ottoman rule came to an end as World War I drew to a close (1917–1918).<sup>112</sup>

During the final years of the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II, a revolutionary movement developed among those opposing it, which became known as “the Young Turks.” Despite that its participants were not of one cloth, the movement was united in its opposition to the autocratic rule of the sultan and aspired to bring the previously legislated constitution into effect.<sup>113</sup> The revolt also spread among Ottoman officers. In July 1908, army officers in Macedonia forced the sultan to accede to an ultimatum and demanded that he declare the renewed application of the constitution and order the reconvention of the parliament and the return of constitutional rule. This declaration marked the end of the sultan’s autocratic regime and the beginning of rule by the Young Turks.<sup>114</sup> In April 1909, after the Sultan was found to be involved in an attempted coup, he was deposed and his half-brother, Mehmet V Reşat, was appointed to replace him. Though Reşat was stripped of most of his authority, he nevertheless cooperated with the Young Turks until his death in 1918.<sup>115</sup>

On the face of it, the Young Turk revolution pumped new life into the empire and was the harbinger of equality and fraternity among its peoples. However, the truth of the matter is that the revolution gave the sign for an overall collapse. Already at the beginning of the revolution the Ottoman Empire lost additional areas. Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria declared its independence, and Crete united with Greece. In a war initiated by Italy, the empire lost Tripolitania (Libya) and the Dodecanese Islands (1912). In another war with its Balkan neighbors, the empire lost Macedonia and Thracia (1912). Following a national uprising, Albania declared its independence as well that same year.<sup>116</sup> From the end of the nineteenth century until 1914, the area of the Ottoman Empire which had been spread over three continents was reduced to

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**112** This sub-section is based on Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*. The “Young Turks” are not to be confused with the “Young Ottomans,” a movement established many years earlier. For the latter, see ch. 5, n. 122.

**113** On the groups that formed the “Young Turks” movement, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 4: 161–63.

**114** For the outbreak of the rebellion by members of the military in the Balkans and its spread, until Sultan Abdülhamid acceded to their demands on July 23, 1908, the end of the sultan’s autocratic rule, and the first stage of the Young Turk revolution in 1908–1909, see Shaw, *History*, 2: 266–67, 273–82.

**115** On Mehmet V Reşat and his death after the end of World War I, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 4:236–37.

**116** For the Balkan wars of 1912–1913, see Shaw, *History*, 2:293–98. To some extent they were a continuation of the war in the Balkans that ended in 1878 with the signing of the Treaty of St. Stefano; see ch. 5, n. 110.

solely an Asian empire, and in effect from a supranational Islamic empire to a Turkish-Arab Islamic empire.<sup>117</sup>

National unrest was also felt among peoples in the Ottoman Empire who had not achieved national independence, among them Armenians, Arabs, and Kurds. The Armenians were the first to struggle for independence as early as 1894–1896, following the independence of Bulgaria and Serbia and the achievements of other national movements in the Balkans in the 1870s. However, the Ottomans suppressed them cruelly and the hatred between the two sides increased. These reached new horrific heights in 1915.<sup>118</sup>

Following other secondary developments in the Young Turk revolution, the leadership of a triumvirate of generals was finally established: Enver, Talaat, and Djemal, who were all later awarded the title of “Pasha.” Under their leadership the government crushed the opposition with a strong hand and dealt similarly with any manifestation of national separatism. Upon assuming power, the Young Turks declared that they would improve economic conditions in the empire, but the situation only deteriorated more and more. In May 1913 their policy regarding the Capitulations became more negative. At the outbreak of the war in August 1914 they initiated negotiations on the subject with the Western powers, but already as of September 1914 the sultan issued a firman that unilaterally declared the annulment of all capitulation agreements. The objections of the British, French, and Russian governments only aggravated the situation. A mere month later Turkey joined Germany in its war against these governments, who jointly formed the Triple Entente.<sup>119</sup>

When the Young Turks came to power in 1908, the Zionist movement made a renewed effort to influence them regarding Zionism and Jewish settlement.<sup>120</sup> But there was no real change in Ottoman policy. Despite some short-lived changes, the

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**117** For a map of the Ottoman Empire, see *ibid.*, vol. 2, front matter.

**118** On the first mass killing of Armenians in 1894–1896, see Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference: Zionism and the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 2000), 37–38; on their massacre during World War I, see *ibid.*, 41–45. For the Armenian issue, see also Shaw, *History*, 2:200–205. For the possible influence of news of the massacre on persons in the Yishuv, including members of the NILI underground, see ch. 7, n. 7.

**119** On economic conditions in Turkey and the annulment of the Capitulations during the period of the Young Turks, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 4:199–207.

**120** Michael Assaf, *The Awakening and Flight of the Arabs in Eretz Israel* (Tel Aviv: Tarbut Vehinukh, 1967), 32–41 (Hebrew), deals with the early stages of the Arab national movement. On the Young Turks in the context of Zionist developments in Eretz Israel, see *ibid.*, 42–66, where he relies on diverse sources, including Hebrew ones, concerning attempts for Jewish–Arab negotiations in 1913 and the convocation of the Arab Congress in Paris. See also Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 90–98, 102–11 on the report by Samuel Hochberg, who was active in Young Turk circles, about attempted Jewish–Arab negotiations in 1914. On similar attempts by Asher Saphir and Victor Jacobson in Istanbul, see ch. 5, n. 122. See also Yaacov Ro'i, “The Zionist Attitude to the Arabs, 1908–1914,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 4 (1968): 198–242. On the period of the Young Turks in

severe Ottoman policy remained in force until the beginning of World War I, and all attempts by Zionist organizations to get the Ottomans to acknowledge their enterprise, or at least to abrogate the restrictions, were in vain.<sup>121</sup> The coming to power of the Young Turks simultaneously gave rise to an Arab nationalist revival.<sup>122</sup> Arab nationalism was manifested in the establishment of nationalist societies and the publication of newspapers and journals. The aims of Arabs in Palestine were similar to those voiced by all Syrians and Arabs everywhere.<sup>123</sup> The Ottomans kept abreast of the state of mind of the Arab public in Palestine and elsewhere and tried to ease resistance to their absolute rule. However, until the beginning of World War I they were not required to take oppressive measures.

Towards the end of 1914, the Ottoman Empire, under the rule of the triumvirate, found itself involved in another war, World War I, as an ally of the Central Powers headed by Germany. The war did not achieve the triumvirate's goals. When it ended in 1918, all the empire's non-Turkish territories were under foreign occupation and the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist.

### The beginning of the war and the Ottoman Empire as an ally of Germany

The first question that comes to mind is why the Ottoman Empire participated so quickly in World War I on the side of the Central Powers – Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. To answer that question, we have to go back to the political developments between the European states and the Ottoman Empire. In the nineteenth

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Palestine, see the thirteen articles in *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*, ed. Yuval Ben-Bassat and Eyal Ginio (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011).

**121** Assaf, *Relations*, 56–83, notes that during the period of the Young Turks the conflict between Jews and Arabs still focused on the location of settlements, acquisition of land, and the arrival of foreigners. Only later did the Arabs begin to fear concepts such as Jewish labor and guarding, and cultural aspects such as the use of Hebrew, and more. During those years, there was as yet no separate Palestinian national movement.

**122** On the beginnings of Arab nationalism in response to Ottoman nationalism, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 4:120–58, who notes the opinion of George Antonius that at first Arab nationalism was more the province of Christian rather than Muslim Arabs, and that until World War I it was more prevalent in Palestine than in other parts of Greater Syria, as a reaction to Zionism. On Naguib Azoury (1873?–1916), who was born in Syria, one of the earliest spokesmen for Arab nationalism, see *ibid.*, 4:272–74 and the sources cited there.

**123** The first basic book on the origins of Arab nationalism is Antonius, *Arab Awakening*. After an introductory background, he begins his survey with the period of Muhammad 'Ali, which he views as a failure. He then discusses the beginnings of Arab nationalism in 1847–1868, followed by the period of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1908) that in his view is a period of decline for Arab nationalism. He then discusses 1908–1914, the period of the Young Turks, and devotes most of the book to World War I and the postwar arrangements. On Antonius, see also Kaufman, "George Antonius."



century, the European powers abstained from exerting their military superiority over the Ottoman Empire, each for its own reasons. Russia aspired to see the empire come apart in order to gain an outlet to the Mediterranean. Britain and France opposed Russia's aim so as to prevent long-term detriment to their own imperialist interests. The compromise reached became known as "the Oriental Question" and entailed a cautious moderate policy.<sup>124</sup>

As noted, in October 1914, three months after the beginning of hostilities, the Ottoman Empire joined the war on the side of the Central Powers and fought against Britain, France, Russia, and later also Italy – the Entente Powers. One reason that Turkey was dragged into the war was the basic change due to the transfer of power from Abdülhamid II to the Young Turks. The rise in nationalist sentiment at home together with the loss of additional territories to the Russians, British, and French increased the sense of humiliation in Istanbul. The ambition of Enver and Talaat was to renew Turkish sovereignty by means of a military alliance with Germany. During the year preceding the outbreak of the war, Germany already exerted much influence over the Ottoman army. A delegation of forty-two German officers headed by General Liman von Sanders trained it, and German diplomats operated in Istanbul to achieve cooperation with Germany in its plan to gain control of India. The Germans hoped that Turkey would occupy the Russian forces on the Asian Caucasus front and British forces in Egypt, while they attacked the Suez Canal in their efforts to cut the British off from India. The Ottomans for their part hoped that in a joint victory they would regain Ottoman territories they had lost over the years.<sup>125</sup>

### The Jewish community in Eretz Israel during World War I

World War I was one of the most difficult periods for the Jewish community in Eretz Israel since the onset of modern Zionism. Many studies have been published on the grave conditions in the country at the time.<sup>126</sup> Several scholars have written about

<sup>124</sup> For the period of Abdülhamid II, see ch. 5, pp. 256–63.

<sup>125</sup> Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 5:16–17. For Turkey's relations with Germany, see *ibid.*, 5:195–99, including German strategy in relation to Turkey, the Turkish attack against the Suez Canal and German plans to advance as far as Persia and Afghanistan. For the role of Jerusalem in Turkish military policy, see Yigal Sheffy, "Jerusalem in the First World War: The Military Dimension," in *The History of Jerusalem: The Late Ottoman Period (1800–1917)*, ed. Israel Bartal and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 35–38 (Hebrew).

<sup>126</sup> The unique situation of the Jewish community in Eretz Israel during World War I and the problems it faced are discussed in Nathan Efrati, *The Jewish Community in Eretz Israel during World War I (1914–1918)* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1991) (Hebrew), including the important aid given the Yishuv by the American Embassy in Istanbul, especially by Ambassador Henry Morgenthau and his son-in-law Maurice Wertheim. See ch. 7, n. 76.

these difficulties, the great decrease in the size of the population, and the attempts by external powers such as the United States, Germany, and Austria to assist the Jewish community, while maps of the campaigns to conquer the country have been published.<sup>127</sup> For the Jews during that period, the German presence in the country also had a positive side. German representatives, together with diplomats of the United States which only joined the war on the side of the Entente Powers in 1917, and even then did not declare war on the Ottoman Empire, could assist and defend the Jewish population under the harsh Ottoman rule of the country, mainly that of Djemal Pasha.<sup>128</sup> The Germans also assisted during the eviction of the Jews from Jaffa and prevented further expulsions.<sup>129</sup>

### Summary: World War I – three historical consequences

World War I had three historical decisive results for Palestine/Eretz Israel. During the war itself, the Ottoman government did not operate alone in the country. German forces, Turkey's major ally of the Central Powers, were present in Palestine during the first three years of the war and also in the final year, during the conquest of the country by Britain and its allies. I shall divide discussion of the war chronologically. In the present chapter I will mainly discuss the three major changes that occurred in the country with the outbreak of the war, and will deal in the next chapter with the British conquest of Palestine and its results.

#### The end of Ottoman rule

During World War I 400 years of Ottoman rule in Palestine/Eretz Israel came to an end. Ever since the Crusader period, the country had not been an autonomous

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**127** See articles on these subjects, and many more relating to the Jewish community in Eretz Israel during World War I, in Mordechai Eliav, ed., *Siege and Distress: Eretz Israel during the First World War* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1991) (Hebrew).

**128** Friedman, "The Question of Palestine during World War I," 5–21, 56–57; id., *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism 1897–1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 345–73. Friedman also notes the efforts of Richard Lichtheim, a German-Jewish lawyer who represented the Zionist Organization in Istanbul in 1913–1917, to get the help that was promised them by the Germans; see *ibid.*, "Lichtheim, Richard," in the index.

**129** On the journey by Hayyim Margalioth-Kalvarisky to Damascus to meet with Djemal Pasha and their conversation after the uncovering of the NILI underground, see Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 130–31. As the Turks suspected that members of Hashomer were cooperating with the British, the Yishuv feared that their fate would be like that of the Armenians. For NILI, its actions and the end to which it came, see ch. 7, nn. 73–74.

territory, but rather a small and unimportant area within a large empire. Towards the end of the Ottoman period, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Middle East was the scene of important events, since the invasion of Napoleon in 1799 and European penetration, beginning with France and later Britain and Russia, and finally also Germany. The Ottoman Empire and its ally, Germany, suffered defeat in the war. Rule of the country was transferred to the British in the form of the British Mandate supported by France and the League of Nations that was established after the war.

### The decline of the Old Yishuv and the rise of the New Yishuv

The second important change that occurred during World War I was the final outcome of the struggle between the Old Yishuv and the New Yishuv. The Old Yishuv accounted for the majority of the Jewish population in Eretz Israel. During the war it found itself in dire straits. Of the Jews who were faced with a demand for Ottomanization, most were of the Old Yishuv, and it was this group that also suffered most from the cessation of halukkah funds from abroad. Its members were also hard hit by the hunger that plagued the country during the war. The Jewish population of Jerusalem, which was the main location of the Old Yishuv, diminished to a third of what it was before the war.<sup>130</sup> The Jewish population of Safed, too, suffered much, and some estimate that over half of its Jewish community died during the war from plague and hunger. There are those who claim that the period of World War I was the most difficult ever in the history of the Jewish community in Eretz Israel in modern times.<sup>131</sup>

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**130** For Jerusalem during World War I, see many of the articles in Eliav, ed., *Siege and Distress*, esp. Uziel O. Schmelz, "The Decline in the Population of Palestine during World War I," in *Siege and Distress: Eretz Israel during the First World War*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1991), 17–47 (Hebrew); Efrati, *Jewish Community*. See also Zvi Shilony, "The Decline in the Jewish Population of Jerusalem during World War I," in *Historical-Geographical Studies in the Settlement of Eretz Israel*, ed. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, Yossi Ben-Artzi, and Haim Goren (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1987), 1:128–51 (Hebrew); id., "Changes in the Jewish Leadership of Jerusalem during World War I," *Cathedra* 35 (Apr. 1985): 58–90 (Hebrew); Hagit Lavsky, "The Zionist Commission to Palestine in Jerusalem," in *Jerusalem in Zionist Vision and Realization: Collected Essays*, ed. Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 1989), 167–82 (Hebrew).

**131** For the Jewish community in Eretz Israel during World War I and about its members who served in the Turkish armed forces, see *History of the Haganah*, ed. Shaul Avigur, Yehuda Slutzky, et al. (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1972), 1,3:315–44 (Hebrew). On many topics relating to the war period, including Ottomanization and expulsion to Egypt, the organization of the Yishuv and the aid it received from abroad, see Dan Giladi and Mordecai Naor, "The Yishuv during World War I," in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The Ottoman Period, Part 2*, ed. Israel Kolatt (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2002), 458–79 (Hebrew).

In contrast with the severe damage to the Old Yishuv, the New Yishuv suffered much less, especially in the colonies. The hardships of the Jewish population of Jaffa-Tel Aviv were minor, although Tel Aviv, too, experienced grave events, including the eviction of Jaffa and Tel Aviv's Jews by Turkish governor Djemal Pasha in April 1917. However, with the British conquest of the country most Jewish residents returned to their previous homes and Tel Aviv once again developed at its previous rate.<sup>132</sup> The New Yishuv, which was also in the forefront of the important assistance requested from abroad during the war, became the central force after the war and led the Jewish community of Eretz Israel in the effort to achieve its next objectives.

### The conquest of Palestine and the beginning of British rule

The British began taking an interest in the Holy Land as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, after the Napoleonic retreat from the region. At first, Britain was motivated by political considerations and interests in the Middle East: the connection to India, the pearl of the British Empire, its ambition to control the Suez Canal which was the gateway to India, and involvement in Egypt and the Arab Middle East. To all these were added Christian Anglican millenarist conceptions about the Holy Land that were also reflected in a growing interest in its historical biblical past. However, the political cooperation between the Entente Powers – Britain, France, Russia, and Italy – and the United States which later joined in the war against Germany, created a new reality throughout the Middle East and especially in Palestine.

The British, by virtue of their control of Egypt, were forced to bear the greatest burden in the Asian arena. Their actions and decisions were what shaped the diplomatic and military moves in the region and would eventually determine the political structure of the Middle East. There is absolutely no comparing the development of Eretz Israel during the period of the British Mandate, sanctioned by the League of Nations, with the period of Ottoman imperial rule in the country before World War I.

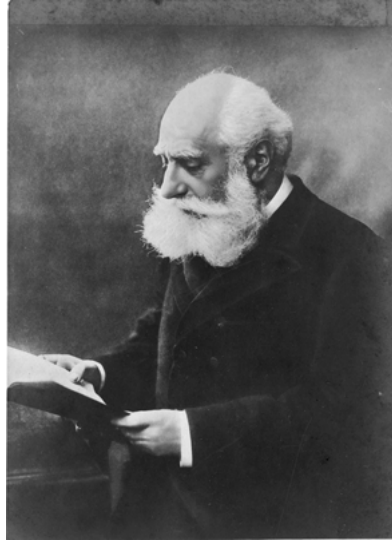
The conquest of Palestine by Britain during World War I was the most significant turning point in the history of that country in the modern era, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. The British Mandate period shall thus constitute the central theme of the second part of this book.

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**132** On the expulsion of the Jewish residents of Tel Aviv, see Ilan Shchori, *The Dream Became a Metropolis: The Founding and Growth of Tel Aviv, the First Hebrew City in the World* (Tel Aviv: Avivim, 1990), 93–112 (Hebrew); Gur Alroey, “Exiles in Their Own Land? The Expelled from Tel Aviv and Jaffa in Lower Galilee, 1917–1918,” *Cathedra* 120 (June 2006): 135–60 (Hebrew). For the evacuation of Jews from Tel Aviv and Jaffa as part of Ottoman-German strategy, including a listing of the places to which they were expelled – especially in Galilee, see Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 345–73.



Theodor Herzl.



Max Nordau.



Otto Warburg.  
Third president of the Zionist Organization



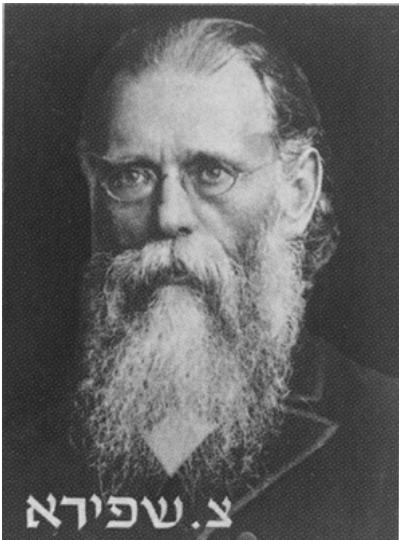
David Wolffsohn.  
Second president of the Zionist Organization



Arthur Ruppin.



Menahem Ussishkin.



Zvi Hermann Schapira.  
One of the founders of the Jewish National  
Fund



Franz Oppenheimer.  
Founder of the Cooperative in Merhaviah





Itzhak Ben-Zvi and Rahel Yanait, 1908.



Cartoon depicting Emperor Wilhelm II in the Holy Land.



Sultan Abdülhamid II.



Djemal Pasha.  
Ottoman governor of Palestine





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**Part Two: The British Mandate period  
1917/18–1947/48**



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## Chapter 7: The Balfour Declaration, the British conquest of Eretz Israel, and military rule, 1917–1920

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## Thirty years of British rule: division into three sub-periods

### The Balfour Declaration and the three main issues

To this day, just over hundred years after the “Balfour Declaration” was sent to Lord Rothschild, it is still a much-debated subject. Why was the declaration issued? Why by Britain? How just was it? How significant and important was it during and after the British Mandate period? And how important and influential is it to this day?

The Balfour Declaration was issued during World War I, preceding the conquest of Palestine by the British army. I discussed the war in the previous chapter, mainly the reasons for its outbreak, the condition of the country under Ottoman rule, the effects of the war on the Jewish population of Eretz Israel at the time, and a few other topics. In this chapter, I shall deal with the military campaigns in the country and the Middle East, political developments during the war until the Balfour Declaration, the declaration itself, the ensuing conquest by the British, military rule of the country, the postwar peace conferences, until the beginnings of civilian government under the British Mandate.

Before I begin addressing these questions, there are a number of important points that should be raised regarding the thirty years of British rule in Palestine. Today, when one discusses that period, three main issues immediately come to mind: the change in British policy with regards to Zionism, the development of the Jewish–Arab national conflict, and the termination of the British Mandate over Palestine.

The first addresses the British attitude regarding Zionism following the Balfour Declaration, which affirmed British support for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Eretz Israel, a declaration that was reiterated and confirmed in the Mandate granted to the British by the League of Nations. This was followed by changes in the pro-Zionist British policy, which in the middle of the Mandate period led to a more neutral stance and dual obligations towards both Jews and Arabs. This policy changed again towards the end of the Mandate period, turning pro-Arab and anti-Zionist as exemplified in the “White Paper” of 1939 that set a limited quota of 75,000 certificates (immigration licenses) for a period of five years, after which additional Jewish immigration would not be permitted, and prohibited land purchase by Jews in most parts of the country. Finally, there was the decision to establish a single state in Palestine/Eretz Israel, which meant establishing a state in which two-thirds of the population would be Arab and a third Jewish, according to the demographic composition at the time. There is no doubt that these changes in British policy are an important aspect in understanding the Mandate period.

The second is the development of the Jewish–Arab conflict. In the Mandate period it began during the Arab riots of April 1920 in Jerusalem and continued with the events of May 1921 throughout the country, the Western Wall conflict in September 1928, once more in Jerusalem, followed by the riots of summer 1929 throughout the country, and up to the riots of 1936–1939 known as the Arab Revolt.

The conflict reached a peak in the Israeli War of Independence during 1947–1949, before and after the establishment of the State of Israel.

The third is how British rule under the Mandate came to an end in Eretz Israel, following a struggle between the Yishuv and the British government, including Jewish underground activities such as the bombing of the King David Hotel, at the time the seat of the British government secretariat in Jerusalem. The British retaliation included a curfew on Jewish cities, searches for weapons in Jewish settlements, prevention of the arrival of illegal Jewish immigrants, including after World War II and the Holocaust. The conflict in Palestine then turned into a struggle between the Jews and the country that issued the Balfour Declaration, which now began resisting and objecting to the Jewish aspirations which the Zionist movement aimed to achieve.

I shall deal with these three questions in the coming chapters. Today, over seventy years since the British Mandate period came to an end and around a hundred years after it began, it is possible to examine this important period from the perspective of time, assess it in an objective scientific manner, and determine the contribution of the Mandate period to the development of the country and what followed it.<sup>1</sup>

### **The three sub-periods: 1917–1925, 1925–1935, 1936–1948**

The Mandate period should not be viewed as one unit. My discussion of it will be divided into three sub-periods: the beginning, the interim period, and the end.

British rule began immediately after the British conquest of Palestine in 1917–1918 and culminated with the end of the Mandate period on May 14, 1948, the date of the establishment of the State of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

The British ruled the country for about thirty years. The turning point was sharp and decisive: transition from backward Eastern-Ottoman rule to government by a European power, one of the most advanced in the world, and the changeover from a small region, formally undefined and insignificant within a great empire, to

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**1** Many books and articles have been written about the Mandate period, most of them dealing with specific issues. For two authors who intended to provide an overview of the period, see Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (New York: H. Holt, 2001), who focuses mainly on specific events involving Jews, Arabs, and Britons; Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine 1917–1948* (London: John Murray, 1999), who deals primarily with why the British were unsuccessful in bringing the Mandate to fruition, her argument being that it was doomed to failure from the start.

**2** For a detailed analysis of the Mandate on Palestine and its implementation, see Bernard Joseph, *British Rule in Palestine* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1948). For a book with an emphasis on Britain's role in the events during the Mandate period, see Michael J. Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine: Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917–1948* (New York: Routledge, 2014). A listing of archival materials relating to the Mandate period is Philip Jones, *Britain and Palestine 1914–1948: Archival Sources for the History of the British Mandate* (Oxford: The British Academy, 1979).



a geographically defined area with a unique political status. Another great change occurred at the end of the period – a war at the culmination of which the State of Israel was established and the remaining area of Western Palestine was divided between the states of Jordan (the West Bank) and Egypt (the Gaza Strip).

The years 1917–1925 are the first clear sub-period of British rule in the country. The two most active elements that determined the development of Eretz Israel at this time were the British administration and the Jews.<sup>3</sup>

The second discernable sub-period, the intermediate one, was during 1926–1935. This was a period of building and activity in terms of the development of the Yishuv, which, on the whole, was done in cooperation with the British government, yet was at times marked by struggle between Arabs, Jews, and the British rulers.<sup>4</sup> The Arab riots of the summer of 1929 were a significant turning point during this sub-period.

The third sub-period, the final stage of the Mandate, began with the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939 and ended in 1948 with the termination of British rule in Palestine, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the end of the Israeli War of Independence. This period is characterized by issues of security and politics that overshadowed everything else.<sup>5</sup>

Discussion of the first sub-period will be divided between chapters Seven and Eight. In the present chapter I shall focus on the period of World War I, the Balfour Declaration, the British conquest of the country and military rule until the arrival of Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner. In it I shall also consider the peace conferences convened after the war. Chapter Eight will be devoted to the beginning of the Mandate period, the years during which Herbert Samuel served as High Commissioner from July 1920 until July 1925.

The second sub-period, too, will be dealt with in two chapters: Nine and Ten. Chapter Nine will focus on the period of High Commissioners Herbert C.O. Plumer and John Robert Chancellor, and the events of summer 1929. In the tenth chapter I

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<sup>3</sup> On the first sub-period of the Mandate, especially in regard to Jerusalem, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, “Major Changes in the Development of Jerusalem at the Beginning of British Rule, 1917–1926,” in *A Land Reflected in Its Past: Studies in Historical Geography of Israel*, ed. Ran Aaronsohn and Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem: Magnes Press; Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2001), 377–79 (Hebrew); id., “Efforts for Preservation and Planning of Jerusalem at the Beginning of British Rule, 1917–1926,” in *ibid.*, 441–42 (Hebrew).

<sup>4</sup> A study that surveys the contribution of the British to the development of Palestine during the Mandate period is Gideon Biger, *An Empire in the Holy Land: Historical Geography of the British Administration in Palestine 1917–1929* (New York: St. Martin’s Press; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Nathaniel Katzburg, *From Partition to White Paper: British Policy in Palestine 1936–1940* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1974) (Hebrew); id., *The Palestine Problem in British Policy 1940–1945* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1977) (Hebrew); Joseph Heller, ed., *The Struggle for the Jewish State: Zionist Politics 1936–1948* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1984) (Hebrew); Elhannan Orren, *Settlement and Struggles: The Pre-State Strategy of Settlement, 1936–1947* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1978) (Hebrew).

shall discuss the first half of the 1930s: the first part of Arthur Wauchope's term as High Commissioner (1931–1935).

The third sub-period, the final years of the Mandate, will also be divided in two: Chapter Eleven will deal with the Arab Revolt (1936–1939), World War II (1939–1945), and the Jewish–British struggle (1945–1947). The twelfth and final chapter will be devoted in its entirety to the Israeli War of Independence and the establishment of the State of Israel. I will end the book by providing a general summary of the creation of the geographical unit “Eretz Israel,” the fruit of a 150-year process.

## World War I in the Middle East – an overview

World War I broke out in August 1914. Three months later, in October, the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers, led by Germany and Austria-Hungary, in the war against the Triple Entente – Britain, France, and Russia, who were joined by Italy in 1915. The development of World War I on the Ottoman Empire front is customarily divided into three stages: the first, characterized by attacks and failures (1914–mid-1915), the interim period, characterized by deadlock and reorganization (mid-1915–1916), and the final stage leading to victory (1917–1918).

### The first stage: 1914–1915

Already on November 7, 1914 Turkey declared war against the Entente Powers. On December 19 the British declared Egypt a protectorate and appointed Henry McMahon as High Commissioner of Egypt.<sup>6</sup> In November 1914, after the Ottoman Empire joined in the war, the Russians attacked in the Caucasus. Initially, they conquered much of the region, but in a counterattack were pushed back to the previous lines, in all likelihood with the help of the Muslim inhabitants. At the beginning of 1915 the Russians successfully re-conquered those areas. Frustrated by their failure, the Ottomans unleashed their rage upon the Armenians, assuming that as Christians they had assisted the Russians.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Britain began an invasion of

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<sup>6</sup> In this sub-section I will survey in short the three stages of World War I in the Middle East. This will be followed by a discussion of additional issues relating to these developments.

<sup>7</sup> On the massacre of the Armenians, see ch. 6, n. 118. Yair Auron has published several books on the attitude of the Yishuv and the Zionist movement to the Armenian nation. One of them includes much documentation relevant to the period covered by the present book; see Auron, *Banality of Indifference*. For the possible influence of the Armenian massacre on the Yishuv, see Martina Berli, “The Zionist Leaders’ Fear: Perception of, Comparison with, and Reactions to the Armenian Genocide,” *Journal of Levantine Studies* 5 (2015): 87–111.

Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq). After a series of initial victories, they suffered a bitter defeat at Kut el-Amara.<sup>8</sup>

On February 3, 1915, assisted by German commanders and equipment, the Ottoman army set out to conquer the Sinai Peninsula and launched an attack on the Suez Canal, but failed to cross the channel.<sup>9</sup> A fortnight later, the British imperial forces (including the Zion Mule Corps) launched their attack on the Dardanelles, in the Gallipoli campaign. The British suffered a resounding defeat in the attack as battles were waged between March 18 and December 20, 1915. On May 19, 1915 the Conservative party joined the government. Winston Churchill, who was one of the initiators of the Gallipoli campaign, was removed from office as First Lord of the Admiralty. Secretary of War Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener turned out to be a disappointment, and David Lloyd George, who later became prime minister, overtly came out against him.<sup>10</sup>

### The intermediate stage: 1915–1916

Upon the outbreak of World War I, Britain and France decided to join forces with Russia, the third country competing with them for the territories of the “Sick Man on the Bosphorus,” and to cease refusing to cooperate with Russia.<sup>11</sup> On March 18, 1915 the three countries signed an agreement of cooperation, known as the Constantinople Agreement, for the war against the Central Powers, in which Russia was promised a grand prize – Istanbul and the Dardanelles.<sup>12</sup> On April 26, 1915 the

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**8** For the fighting in Mesopotamia and the defeat at Kut el-Amara, see David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Avon Books, 1990), 200–203.

**9** The first attack against the Suez Canal was on Feb. 19, 1915 and the second in July and August of that year; see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 5:28; Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 121–22. See also Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, *Mit den Türken zum Suezkanal* (Berlin: O. Schlegel, 1938) and the editor’s introduction to the Hebrew edition: id., *With the Turks to the Suez Canal*, ed. and annot. by Yigal Sheffy (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Pub. House, 2002) (Hebrew). For the war in the Middle Eastern theater, see Roger Ford, *Eden to Armageddon: The First World War in the Middle East* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009).

**10** On the Gallipoli campaign, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 156–60, 164–66; Ford, *Eden to Armageddon*, 215–44. Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) served in this campaign as an officer and was praised for his part in it. On the fighting for the Dardanelles and the British defeat, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 124–29, 137–45, 150–62, including the roles of Kitchener and Churchill and criticism that the attack was planned only from the sea.

**11** On the second stage, noted as being one of deadlock, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 5:30–33.

**12** For the Constantinople Agreement, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 4:209 and the marginal comment that calls it “the white agreement.” See also *ibid.*, 5:18–22; for the first political reaction of Britain, France, and Russia and the agreement between Sergei Sazonov, the Russian foreign minister, and the French ambassador in Russia Maurice Paléologue, see *ibid.*, 5:43–44.

Triple Entente Powers signed another secret agreement, this time with Italy, guaranteeing almost all the southern Turkish border to Italy. On May 23 Italy joined in the war. On April 8, following the collapse of its Eastern strategy, the Asquith government in London formed the De Bunsen committee to determine British strategic goals in the Middle East. This was the first step in British considerations regarding division of the Middle East after the war.<sup>13</sup>

The final report by the De Bunsen committee was written on June 30, 1915. Mark Sykes, an expert on the Ottoman Empire, was an active member of the committee. It proposed to divide the Ottoman Empire into five autonomous provinces: Syria, Palestine including the southern part of Syria, Armenia, Anatolia, and Jazirah-Iraq (the southern regions of Mesopotamia).<sup>14</sup> It was also decided what territories Russia and Italy would receive after the victory.<sup>15</sup> France continued to fear that Britain would try to push it out of the region and began pressuring the British to reach an agreement regarding the division of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, two statesmen, the British Sykes and the French Charles François Georges-Picot, were appointed to come to an agreement regarding the final division of the empire.<sup>16</sup>

In the spring of 1916 the two traveled to St. Petersburg to conclude an agreement with the Russians regarding the future of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>17</sup> It was made in two

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**13** The De Bunsen committee also discussed what would be the prizes awarded to Russia and Italy after the war. The agreement, which was signed on Apr. 26, 1915, preceded the Sykes–Picot Agreement. On the latter, see below notes 16, 18, 133. For Russia’s plans for the future of the Middle East, until it withdrew from the war following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, see in detail in Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 5:377–79, and also about the fact that it was now unnecessary to honor agreements with Russia; *ibid.*, 5:43–46.

**14** Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 146–49. Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A Political Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 211, notes that the De Bunsen report made no mention of the Zionist movement. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, 214–17, also maintains that no mention of the Jewish connection to Palestine appeared in all correspondence or in the De Bunsen report prior to the Balfour Declaration.

**15** For the arguments with the Russians and the promises they received, negotiations with the French, and the Sykes–Picot Agreement, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 240–69. To this day research about what happened during the Sykes–Picot negotiations continues to be published, generally without providing new information or insight.

**16** Sir Mark Sykes, the son of a leading British family, was a member of the Conservative Party. In 1916 he became a member of the cabinet with responsibility for Arab affairs. In that context he negotiated the division of the Ottoman Empire after the defeat of Turkey with the French representative, François Georges-Picot.

**17** For the Constantinople Agreement, see note 12 above. Since there were two stages to the Sykes–Picot Agreement, there are also different maps that represent it. On Georges-Picot and Sykes and their efforts, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 188–99. Fromkin notes that though the agreement was confirmed by the British and French governments early in February, its conditions – and even its very existence – were kept secret. The details became public knowledge only about two years later, towards the end of the war. Sykes played an important role leading up to the Balfour Declaration; for many details, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 233–84.

stages: at first, it was agreed that Russia would receive a very large part of Turkey. This continued what had been assented to in the Constantinople Agreement of March 18, 1915 and was now called the Sykes–Picot Agreement that was signed on May 16, 1916. Russia was a full partner and was intended to be awarded large areas of Anatolia. Italy was to receive islands in the Aegean Sea and part of Anatolia. It was further agreed that the empire’s “Fertile Crescent” region would be divided by Britain and France into three main sections: (a) areas that would come under direct rule of France and Britain; (b) areas of Arab independence; (c) areas that would be afforded international status.

In the areas transferred to direct control by France and Britain, the French would receive a strip of land along the Levant shoreline from the Akhziv area and northward, and the area between Damascus and Aleppo to the east of the sea, as well as the Anatolian Adana vilayet. Britain was to receive the Basra and Baghdad vilayets, the eastern shore of the Arabian Peninsula, and Haifa Bay, including Acre.

Both powers recognized the necessity for Arab independence and it was decided that two independent Arab states would be established, one in the north as a French protectorate and one in the south as a British protectorate. The region that would receive international status ranged from Rosh Hanikrah to the Sea of Galilee, then along the Jordan River to the southern end of the Dead Sea and from there towards Rafah. This area would be under joint control by Britain, France, Russia, Italy, and a representative of Hussein ibn ‘Ali, the Sharif of Mecca.<sup>18</sup>

On December 7, 1916 there was a change of government in Britain. Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith and Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, who were its leaders during the first two years of the war, were replaced. A government headed by David Lloyd George came into power which would govern Britain until the end of the war and lead it to victory. Upon assuming office, Lloyd George decided to open a military front in the Levant, including Palestine, to which I shall return below.

Another important development in the Middle East was the initial shaping of an Arab revolt under the Hashemite clan. Sharif Hussein, head of the clan, was appointed the Emir of Mecca as early as 1908. At first, he was very loyal to the Ottoman government in Istanbul. His second son, Abdullah ibn Hussein (1882–1951), was educated in that city until his father received that appointment. In 1912 Abdullah returned to Istanbul as the representative of Mecca in parliament and later even

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**18** For the Sykes–Picot agreement, see the previous note. For one reconstructed map of the agreement, see James Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle for Mastery of the Middle East* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2012), p. v. After the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine, and especially due to the withdrawal of Russia when it signed a separate peace treaty with Germany, the Sykes–Picot agreement was in effect no longer viable. However, the concept included in its international section helped Mark Sykes to advance towards the idea of a Jewish national home. Further developments in the dividing up of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the “Fertile Crescent,” will be dealt with in the next chapter, since it includes both Zionist and Arab interests that played an important role in this division, especially with relation to Eretz Israel.

became its vice president. In 1914 he returned to Mecca after a visit to Egypt where he had discussed the option of receiving British assistance in an Arab revolt against the Ottomans.<sup>19</sup> Hussein's third son, Feisal, was also educated privately in Istanbul and returned to the Hejaz when his father was appointed Emir of Mecca in 1908. In 1913 he returned to Istanbul as the representative of Jeddah in the Ottoman parliament. In 1914 he returned to Mecca to assist his father. On June 5, 1916, Hussein and his sons succeeded in gaining control of the Hejaz and next day, June 6, declared the beginning of the Arab revolt.<sup>20</sup>

### The final stage and victory, 1917–1918

The British attacked on two fronts: in the Sinai, advancing towards Palestine, and in the Persian Gulf, in the area which today is Iraq, moving in the direction of Baghdad.<sup>21</sup> The British attacked simultaneously in both the Levant and Mesopotamia. Baghdad was conquered in March 1917. In the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution of November in Russia, on March 3, 1918 Russia signed a separate cease-fire agreement with Germany and the Central Powers, putting an end to its involvement in the war. At the same time, the British conquered the Fertile Crescent region. The Ottoman Empire requested an armistice. The first cease-fire agreement with Turkey was signed at Mudros on October 30, and Turkey, too, left the war. When the Entente forces entered Istanbul in November 1918, victory was complete.<sup>22</sup>

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**19** For Hussein ibn 'Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, see "Hussein ibn 'Ali" in the index to Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*. On the Hashemites and their later disputes with the British, see also Elie Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: The McMahon-Husayn Correspondence and Its Interpretations, 1914–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), and note 128 below.

**20** On Abdullah and Feisal, see "Abdullah, son of Hussein of Mecca" and "Feisal, son of Hussein of Mecca" in the index to Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*. For Abdullah, his father Hussein, and the entire Hashemite family, see also Haim Na'aman, *Abdullah: The Emir of Transjordan* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1942) (Hebrew). Though this book cites no references, it is based on first-hand information, especially concerning Emir Abdullah and the formation of the emirate (later kingdom) of Transjordan. See also the first two chapters, about the importance of Mecca and Istanbul for the Hashemites.

**21** For the third stage, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 5:23–25, where it is termed "the decisive stage." See also *ibid.*, 5:34–37 for details of the Arab revolt and Feisal's entrance into Damascus at the head of his troops. The advance into Palestine will be discussed below.

**22** On Turkey's surrender and the armistice negotiations at Mudros, on the Greek island of Lemnos, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 371–79, who notes that the French premier, Georges Clemenceau, accused Britain of excluding France from the armistice negotiations. As a result, Clemenceau and Lloyd George met in London on Dec. 1, 1918 where they agreed that Mosul and Palestine would be ceded to Britain, and Syria to France. Their intent was also to forestall American intervention in the Middle East. Thus was created an alliance between Lloyd George and Clemenceau, the former promising to support France in its peace negotiations with Germany.

## The Zionist movement and Weizmann; persons who assisted in obtaining the declaration; America joins and Russia leaves the war

### Reorganization of the Zionist movement; Weizmann's efforts for the Balfour Declaration

At the outbreak of World War I the central office of the Zionist movement was located in Berlin. This is where the third president of the movement, Otto Warburg, resided, as well as some members of its Actions Committee. Additional members resided in other countries and a decision had to be made regarding the future operation of the movement. A compromise was reached at a meeting in Berlin: the central office would remain in Berlin, a Zionist Bureau acting as a liaison for members would be established in Copenhagen, the movement would renew its activity in Istanbul, and contact would be maintained with the Zionists in the United States, while certain persons would serve as secondary representatives in various countries.<sup>23</sup>

Warburg and Arthur Hantke, also a member of the Actions Committee, remained in Germany. Max Nordau moved to Paris and later to Spain. In a meeting in Copenhagen on December 3–6, 1914, it was decided to send Yehiel Tschlenow and Nahum Sokolow to London to meet with Weizmann and coordinate continuation of the Zionist activity he had begun by himself in Britain, and from there to proceed to the United States to coordinate with the American Zionists, where Shmarya Levin would operate.<sup>24</sup> Victor Jacobson was to return to Istanbul to coordinate activities there.

Tschlenow and Sokolow arrived in London in December 1914 but did not continue to the United States. Tschlenow had to return to Russia and came back to London only in the autumn of 1917, where he died a few months later.<sup>25</sup> Sokolow remained in

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**23** On the leadership of the Zionist movement after the Tenth Zionist Congress in 1911 and the presidency of Otto Warburg, including the wartime period until his resignation in 1920, see Thon, "Otto Warburg," 67–74. On the composition of the leadership, the move of the headquarters from Cologne to Berlin, and the decision taken on Dec. 6, 1914 to share authority with other centers, see Evyatar Friesel, *Zionist Policy after the Balfour Declaration* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1977), 15–17 (Hebrew). See also Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 97–102; Norman A. Rose, *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 136–37.

**24** For the organization of the Zionist movement in England already in 1895, before Weizmann arrived there, see Stuart A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895–1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). That Weizmann began taking independent political steps in Britain without the approval of the Zionist head office in Germany, see Friedman, "The Question of Palestine during World War I," 16–22 and additional sources.

**25** The fact that Weizmann was joined in London by Tschlenow and Sokolow, members of the Inner Actions Committee, provided him with the authority he lacked. Shmuel Tolkowsky, of Eretz



England and began Zionist activities in cooperation with Weizmann, who in 1915 moved from Manchester to London. Zionist activities in London were independent of Berlin. Sokolow was very much involved in the efforts in London and set out on trips to Paris and Rome, becoming their Zionist movement contact person.<sup>26</sup>

In the meantime, Weizmann continued his extensive personal activities to obtain a guarantee that Britain would assist the Zionist movement to realize its vision. This was later manifested in the Balfour Declaration. In many ways, this was the “charter” that Herzl had aspired to receive from the Ottoman sultan.<sup>27</sup> Thus, what Herzl failed to get was obtained by Weizmann, later the fourth president of the Zionist Organization and the first president of the State of Israel. Weizmann received the “charter” from Great Britain which at the time was one of the leading countries in the world and was actively involved after the war in establishing the League of Nations, the forum in which most countries of the world were represented and that approved the British Mandate for Palestine, which included the spirit of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>28</sup>

The importance of the Balfour Declaration is not just that it was issued by Britain, but that it was later included in the Mandate for Palestine.<sup>29</sup> The Mandate

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Israel, who was “stuck” in London during the war years, hosted the two in his home; see Shmuel Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary, London 1915–1919: On the Making of the Balfour Declaration* (Jerusalem: Hassifriya Hazionit, 1981), 4–5 (Hebrew). On Zionist political activity begun by Sokolow in partnership with Weizmann, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 166–73.

**26** In 1919, immediately following World War I, journalist and author Nahum Sokolow, who was later to be the fifth president of the Zionist Organization, published a two-volume history of Zionism. The first volume includes a letter to the author from Mark Sykes, written only shortly before his passing. Sokolow included many important documents, alongside his evaluations and interpretations, and though they were not always exact many later authors based their studies on this book. On Zionist political activity begun by Sokolow in partnership with Weizmann, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 166–73; for Sokolow in Paris and Rome, see *ibid.*, 394–421. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 284–301, notes Sokolow’s specific involvement in negotiations with France, particularly with Georges-Picot. In his diary, Tolkowsky recorded Sokolow’s frequent visits to France and Italy. He also notes that from talking with Sokolow he learned how unfamiliar he was with the geography of Eretz Israel; see Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, 379.

**27** Norman Rose calls the seventh chapter in his biography of Weizmann “Toward the Charter” because Weizmann had made some progress in Britain concerning the idea of a charter even before Lloyd George became prime minister and saw his efforts bear fruit; Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 136–87.

**28** The significance of the Balfour Declaration is emphasized in Abba Eban’s opening remarks to a memorial lecture delivered by Leonard Stein at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot on Oct. 15, 1961 on the tenth anniversary of the passing of Weizmann. Stein ended his lecture with the claim that “1917 and not 1947 marks the authentic turning-point” in the history of Zionism and the establishment of Israel; Stein, *Weizmann and the Balfour Declaration*, 10–12, 34 respectively. See also note 82 below.

**29** Much has been published on the Balfour Declaration. In what follows I shall limit myself only to aspects that are important for my presentation in this book. For the various earlier drafts of the

was the document received by Britain confirming that it would administer Palestine for a certain period of time. It included the instruction that Britain would assist in the establishment of a “national home” for the Jewish people in the country. The document was addressed to Jews throughout the world, not just the Jewish population of Eretz Israel at the time. It was also determined that an agency on behalf of the Jewish people would represent them in dealing with the holder of the Mandate.<sup>30</sup>

Weizmann, one of the young leaders of the Zionist movement in Russia, was already active in the early Zionist congresses. On July 3, 1904, the date of Herzl’s death, Weizmann was thirty years old, and when World War I broke out he was only forty years old.<sup>31</sup> It was then that he moved to England, to Manchester, where he served as a chemist at its university.<sup>32</sup> Weizmann became friendly there with C.P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, a personal and political friend of Lloyd George. Scott was supportive of the Zionist idea and became Weizmann’s consultant and confidante.<sup>33</sup> In January 1906 Weizmann first met with Arthur James Balfour, then leader of the Conservative Party. In their meeting Balfour asked why the Jews had refused the offer of Uganda proposed by Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain. Weizmann explained the long-lasting connection between the Jewish people and Eretz Israel, summarizing with the sentence “But we had Jerusalem when London was a marsh.”<sup>34</sup> Thus, there are those who perceive of the Balfour Declaration as an unexpected result of the Uganda Plan of 1903, which strengthened the status of Zionism

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declaration until the final version, which was also confirmed by the League of Nations, see Isaiah Friedman, ed., *Britain Enters into a Compact with Zionism 1917, Part III, Rise of Israel*, 8 (New York: Garland, 1987), 140–43.

**30** For the text of the Mandate for Palestine, see *Mandate for Palestine, together with a Note by the Secretary-General [of the League of Nations]* . . . (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1922).

**31** Weizmann has been the subject of many books and articles. In 1968 publication began of a 25-volume series of *Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, culminating in 1984. The volumes were co-published by several British and American publishers in conjunction with the Israel Universities Press of Jerusalem. Several biographies, including his autobiography, will be referred to in the notes.

**32** On Weizmann’s move to England where he worked as a chemist, see Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 211–32.

**33** On C.P. Scott and the Balfour Declaration, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 131–36, and in the index. For his relations with Weizmann and support of Zionism, see Charles P. Scott, *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott, 1911–1928*, ed. with an introduction and commentary by Trevor Wilson (London: Collins, 1970); see the index under the entries for Weizmann and Zionism.

**34** Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 123, 143–44. On this meeting and differences of opinion among scholars whether this is the true course of the conversation, see Benjamin Z. Kedar, “The Description of Weizmann’s First Encounter with Balfour: Legendary or Authentic?” in *Chaim Weizmann: Scientist, Statesman, and Architect of Science Policy*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2015), 127–42 (Hebrew). Reinharz, *The Making of a Zionist Leader*, 271–77, also casts doubt on the veracity of the conversation as it was published.

in Britain so that the concept of settling the Jews in their ancient homeland was accepted in certain circles. British publicists even emphasized that by promoting Zionism, Britain was fulfilling a historic mission.<sup>35</sup>

From the time Weizmann arrived in Britain, pogroms in Russia were ceaseless and greatly influenced the Zionist movement and aliyah to Eretz Israel. In 1907, Weizmann decided to visit that country to get to know the developing Jewish community there. During his visit he was accompanied by Yehoshua Hankin. Weizmann witnessed the difficult condition of the colonies and of the Old Yishuv in Jerusalem.<sup>36</sup> He saw hope for the future in the first activities of the Zionist Organization in the country, which began introducing changes in the character of settlement. Weizmann returned to London on October 10, 1907.<sup>37</sup>

Shortly before the outbreak of war, Weizmann met with Baron Rothschild to promote the establishment of the Hebrew University. The two discussed the condition of the Jewish colonies and, according to Weizmann, the baron told him the following: “Without me the Zionists could have done nothing, but without the Zionists my work would have been dead.”<sup>38</sup>

Wolffsohn’s presidency of the Zionist Organization continued until 1909. After his resignation, Warburg was chosen as president, his main interest being the development of the country.<sup>39</sup> Weizmann was not active in the Zionist congresses and devoted his time to the establishment of the university. In May 1908 Ahad Ha’am (Asher Zvi Ginsberg) arrived in London and made his home there. Weizmann, who had previously made his acquaintance, developed a close relationship with Ahad Ha’am and viewed him as a spiritual mentor.<sup>40</sup>

In 1911 Weizmann began to advocate that the Zionist movement turn to the British government for help in realizing its goals, a stance that gained strength with the beginning of World War I and upon Turkey’s joining it on the side of the Central Powers on November 7, 1914. On November 9, Prime Minister Asquith declared that

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35 Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 78–79, referring there to the writings of British personalities who were imbued with the concept of the “Return of the Jews,” such as Lord Shaftesbury (then Anthony Ashley Cooper), Palmerston, Disraeli’s novels *Tancred* and *Alroy*, and *Daniel Deronda* by George Eliot. On all these, see above in Chapter Two. See also Polowetzky, *Victorian Intellectuals*.

36 Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 160–63. For Yehoshua Hankin, who acquired land for several colonies, see ch. 5, p. 240 and in coming chapters. Weizmann related that during this trip to Eretz Israel he heard for the first time about the beginnings of the Arab national movement from Victor Jacobson, then director of the Beirut branch of the Anglo-Palestine Company.

37 Weizmann has been earmarked as the initiator of “synthetic Zionism,” a combination of practical and political Zionism. Reinhartz, *The Making of a Zionist Leader*, 311–17, maintains that Weizmann’s Zionism was primarily “practical.”

38 See ch. 5, n. 129 and the references cited there.

39 See note 23 above, and ch. 6, notes 34, 57, 87.

40 Reinhartz, *The Making of a Zionist Leader*, 402–7. On Ahad Ha’am, see also ch. 5, nn. 52–55, and additional sources cited there.

this was the beginning of the end of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, Weizmann reached his own conclusions and wrote to Ahad Ha'am saying that the Zionist movement had to begin operating in that direction, and even received Ahad Ha'am's agreement.<sup>41</sup> It was then that Weizmann began his vigorous political activity in England, without holding any formal status of behalf of the Zionist Organization.<sup>42</sup> Upon Balfour's joining the War Cabinet, Weizmann contacted him in December 1914 and arranged a meeting in which he once again raised the Zionist idea. According to him, Balfour remembered their previous meeting eight years earlier.<sup>43</sup>

### **Balfour, Lloyd George, the Rothschilds, Herbert Samuel, Edwin Montagu**

A number of British personalities joined Weizmann in his efforts to obtain a British declaration in favor of Zionist aims. I shall begin with Arthur James Balfour (July 25, 1848–March 19, 1930), a member of the Conservative Party, British prime minister (July 11, 1902–December 5, 1905), and later the longtime leader of the opposition. The Uganda Plan came up during his period as prime minister, proposed, as noted, by incumbent Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain.<sup>44</sup> When World War I began, Balfour joined the Liberal government headed by Asquith. When the Lloyd George government took office on December 10, 1916, Balfour was appointed foreign secretary, serving in that capacity until the Paris Peace Conference. In 1919 he left that post when Lord Curzon was appointed foreign secretary, but continued to represent Britain at the peace conferences. He ceased all his involvement in the Lloyd George government in 1922, together with his Conservative colleagues. Throughout his life, Balfour maintained close ties with Weizmann, also through his niece Blanche (“Baffy”) Dugdale.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> For Asquith's statement and a reference to Weizmann's letter to Ahad Ha'am, see Danny Gutwein, “The Politics of the Balfour Declaration: Nationalism, Imperialism and the Limits of Zionist-British Cooperation,” *Journal of Israeli History* 35 (2016): 121.

<sup>42</sup> On Weizmann's rise in the Zionist hierarchy and his enhanced status, both in England and abroad, see Friesel, *Zionist Policy after the Balfour Declaration*, 21–35.

<sup>43</sup> Reinhartz, *The Making of a Zionist Leader*, 13–14. There are those who stress that what primarily motivated Balfour, who was more inclined to Zionism than Lloyd George, to support the “Declaration” were not millenarist ideas or the Bible, but rather the obligation to undo an injustice to the Jewish people. This explains his cooperation with Weizmann and Herbert Samuel, both of whom viewed the “Declaration” in this light; see Friedman, “The Question of Palestine during World War I,” 21–30.

<sup>44</sup> Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, 198–203, dwells upon some personal traits of Balfour and mentions his special attachment to the Bible, noting that at one of the meetings with him, his visitors found him reading a chapter from Isaiah. She also notes that his first meeting with Weizmann in 1906 left a strong impression upon him and their personal relations continued until Balfour's passing, when Weizmann was the last personage to visit him.

<sup>45</sup> Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 101–2. Balfour never married and had no children. His niece, Blanche Dugdale, was very close to him and continued to aid the Zionist movement after her uncle's death. See Blanche Dugdale, *Baffy: The Diaries of Blanche Dugdale, 1936–1947*, ed. Norman A. Rose, with

In 1925, Balfour participated in the inauguration ceremony of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem at which he was one of the main speakers. In his later years he stated that he viewed the declaration as the most important deed of his life. Balfour passed away in 1930 aged 81, during the days of the Shaw Commission that made recommendations opposed to the declaration that bears his name.<sup>46</sup>

David Lloyd George (January 17, 1863–March 26, 1945), a member of the British Liberal Party, served in Parliament consecutively for fifty-five years. During World War I the Liberal Party split into two factions, one headed by Asquith and the second by Lloyd George. In 1916 he and his followers joined with the Conservatives to form a coalition government under his leadership. In December of that year, Lloyd George became prime minister.<sup>47</sup> Lloyd George played a decisive role in the Balfour Declaration; one may say that his contribution was even greater than that of Balfour since he was the prime minister and the decision was his. Notwithstanding, Lloyd George and Balfour were of one mind on this matter. Some view Lloyd George's pro-Zionist viewpoint as part of the millenarist conceptions prevalent in nineteenth-century England regarding the return of the Jews to Eretz Israel, yet it appears that his decisions were primarily derived from his political views.<sup>48</sup> In his opinion, British interests were served by Zionism, in which he believed, and he was very decisive regarding Britain's commitment to fulfill its obligations.

Any discussion of the Rothschild family members with regards to the Zionist movement should focus mainly on three individuals. The Rothschilds were a large wealthy family with branches in several countries; however, this is not the place to go into its history. The French Baron Edmond de Rothschild was extensively discussed in the chapter dealing with the First Aliyah. The second British Lord Rothschild, Lionel Walter Rothschild (February 8, 1868–August 27, 1937), deserves mention here. The Balfour Declaration was sent to him when he was a member of Parliament.<sup>49</sup> Lord Rothschild represented the Zionist Organization in England and

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a foreword by Meyer Weisgal (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1973). She is often mentioned in Moshe Sharett, *The Political Diary*, 5 vols. (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1968–1979 (Hebrew)); see the indexes to the first four volumes.

**46** On Balfour, see Chapter Eight in the discussion of the peace conferences. For his address at the inauguration of the Hebrew University on April 1, 1925, see Arthur James Balfour, "The Hebrew University," in *Speeches on Zionism*, ed. Israel Cohen (London: Arrowsmith, 1928), 74–91.

**47** Lloyd George's relationship with the Zionist movement apparently began in 1903 when he was consulted, as a lawyer, about the British government's proposal to settle Jews in East Africa, the so-called "Uganda proposal." See Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 137–46; see also ch. 6, n. 40.

**48** For Barbara Tuchman's views on this matter, see ch. 1, nn. 104–5.

**49** On Baron Edmond de Rothschild and the British members of the family in relation to their Zionist activity, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 182–87. Schama, *Two Rothschilds*, 190–92, is not the first to ask why the Declaration was sent to Lionel Walter Rothschild. He believes that the reason was probably Rothschild's friendship with Weizmann and his own involvement in the Zionist movement in England, providing the government with a convenient solution. Gutwein, "Politics of the

was a close friend of Weizmann.<sup>50</sup> James Edmond de Rothschild (1878–1957), son of the French Baron Rothschild, moved to England and made a name for himself in politics. In 1919 he became a British citizen, served in the Jewish Legion, and accompanied Weizmann in Eretz Israel as part of the Zionist Commission to be discussed below. He was friendly with High Commissioner Herbert Samuel and was also present at the San Remo conference to ensure that the Balfour Declaration would be included in the Mandate document. His father later placed him at the head of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association. James de Rothschild joined the Liberal Party and was a member of Parliament during the years 1929–1945.<sup>51</sup> He and his wife Dorothy established contacts between Weizmann and other Rothschild family members, leading British personalities, and diverse social circles and remained avid supporters of the Zionist movement.<sup>52</sup>

At the beginning of 1915, Weizmann met Herbert Samuel. Even then, Weizmann was surprised by Samuel's broad knowledge of the Zionist movement and found him very enthusiastic regarding Zionist aspirations. Samuel summed up the ideas raised during their meeting in a memorandum titled "The Future of Palestine." Its message was that Palestine should be annexed to Britain at the end of the war. Apparently, the memorandum was submitted to the British cabinet, of which Samuel was a member, as early as January 1915.<sup>53</sup> On April 14, 1915, a change began to be felt in the attitude of the Jewish community in England when an informal Zionist committee of English Jews convened and decided to join in Weizmann's activity.<sup>54</sup>

In contrast with this group of British Jews who supported the Zionist idea, there were many who opposed it. The most prominent among them was Edwin Montagu, a liberal politician and Samuel's cousin. Both were members of the Montagu family,

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Balfour Declaration," 120–24, places much emphasis on the role of all the Rothschilds, including the French Baron Edmond, in Weizmann's efforts to achieve the Balfour Declaration.

**50** In time, Lionel Walter Rothschild decided to forego politics and became an ornithologist, creating an impressive collection. He passed away at the age of 69. See Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 224–25. See also the book written by his niece, Miriam Rothschild, *Walter Rothschild: The Man, the Museum and the Menagerie* (London: Natural History Museum, 2008).

**51** For the establishment of PICA and its direction under James de Rothschild, see ch. 5, nn. 83, 86.

**52** On James de Rothschild and his wife Dorothy, see in the index to Schama, *Two Rothschilds*. See also the moving correspondence between Dorothy and David Ben-Gurion in July 1957, when she informed him of her husband's death, *ibid.*, 327–29.

**53** On Samuel and his memorandum, see Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 198–229. See also Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 103–16. His continued efforts on behalf of Zionism and his term as the first British High Commissioner for Palestine will be discussed in Chapter 8.

**54** Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 191–97; Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 140–58; Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 20–39. The year 1915 can be seen as the beginning of Samuel's interest in the issue of Eretz Israel; see also the introduction by Nathaniel Katzburg in Rachela Makover, *Government and Administration of Palestine 1917–1925* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1988) (Hebrew).



an important Jewish family in England, perhaps second only to the Rothschilds. Montagu served as a member of Parliament between 1906 and 1918. He was the secretary of state for India during 1910–1914 and financial secretary to the Treasury in 1914–1916. He wrote letters to British personages explaining that Zionism contradicted the history of the Jewish people. He believed that the Jews were a religious entity, and that Zionism could cause damage to Jews abroad, including the Jewish community in England. The outcome of his arguments and efforts was the addition of a restriction to the Balfour Declaration: “that nothing shall be done which may prejudice . . . the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.” Relations between Samuel and Montagu were tense. However, when Samuel moderated his views after publication of the first White Paper, Montagu congratulated him on his change of mind. Edwin Montagu did not live long; he died at the age of forty-five.<sup>55</sup>

### **Changes in the attitude of the British Jewish community and the British government to the concept of the Balfour Declaration**

In 1916, even before Lloyd George became prime minister, the leadership of British Jewry continued its efforts to gain support for Zionism. On May 16, 1916 Nahum Sokolow, on behalf of the Zionist movement and with Balfour’s support, presented the draft of a plan under the title “Outline of Programme for the Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in Accordance with the Aspirations of the Zionist Movement.”<sup>56</sup> On January 19, 1917 this document was presented to Samuel. Copies were sent to Lord Lionel Rothschild, to Sykes, and to others. Sykes was impressed by the document and even began efforts to implement it.<sup>57</sup> Already in the summer of 1916, the Zionist movement in Britain had published a collection of articles titled *Zionism and the*

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<sup>55</sup> On many British Jews, both Zionists and anti-Zionists, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 166–81, 442–61, 496–501; Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews*. On Montagu, see Eugene C. Black, “Edwin Montagu,” *Jewish Historical Studies* 30 (1987/1988): 199–218; see also Gutwein, “Politics of the Balfour Declaration,” 139–44.

<sup>56</sup> Reinharz, *The Making of a Statesman*, 105–6. For Sokolow’s activity in relation to the Balfour Declaration, his arrival in London and his travels to Paris and Rome on Zionist missions, see note 26 above.

<sup>57</sup> Sykes was to emerge as one of those most actively engaged in seeking solutions for the Middle East; see Reinharz, *The Making of a Statesman*, 105–7; Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 294–355. His son, Christopher Sykes, published *Two Studies in Virtue* (New York: Knopf, 1953), in which the second essay deals with the reasons that led to the Balfour Declaration. I shall refer to his study again in ch. 9, n. 22. Twelve years later he published another book in which he attempts to reconstruct the changes and developments in the British attitude towards the Balfour Declaration during the Mandate period, while expressing his own feelings on the matter; see id., *Crossroads to Israel* (London: Collins, 1965).



*Jewish Future*, to present Zionism to the British. Towards the end of that year the British Palestine Committee was established, and leading British Jews joined in its activities, including Harry Sacher, Israel Sieff, Simon Marx, Rabbi Moses Gaster, Joseph Cowen, and others.<sup>58</sup> Contact was also made with Herbert Sidebotham, a British journalist and military author who published articles in favor of Zionism. In January 1917, the weekly journal *Palestine* began publication, declaring its policy in the masthead of each edition: “The British Palestine Committee seeks to reset the ancient glories of the Jewish nation in the freedom of a new British dominion in Palestine.”<sup>59</sup>

However, it seems that the decisive change in the British attitude towards Zionism came about on December 6, 1916, with the appointment of Lloyd George as prime minister. During the period of his predecessor, the Liberal Asquith, considerations regarding Eretz Israel were mainly with regards to the holy sites, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the agnostic and atheist French. In contrast to Asquith, Lloyd George wanted to have the Holy Land come under British influence. Thus, immediately after he became prime minister, he demanded a change in the military strategy of the war and that resources be forwarded to secondary fronts, especially against the Ottoman Empire, as part of an indirect strategy to overpower Germany.<sup>60</sup> In addition, he bore a grudge against the Ottomans for betraying Britain by allying with Germany.<sup>61</sup> Lloyd George was brought up on the Bible and

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**58** The Sacher, Sieff, and Marx families were related by marriage. Sacher and Sieff married Miriam and Rebecca, Marx's sisters, while he married Sieff's sister Miriam. They were known as the three brothers-in-law of Manchester. Rabbi Gaster was the head of Britain's Sefardi community and a supporter of Zionism, though in his own individual manner. Joseph Cowen was a veteran Zionist who filled important positions in the Zionist Organization and served as treasurer of the English Zionist Federation. He was one of the trustees of Herzl's estate and guardian of Herzl's son, Hans. See Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, 21, n. 1. On the Zionist movement in Britain, see Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews*.

**59** Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 296–305. It should be noted that World War I, with the Russian Revolution, on the one hand, and the Balfour Declaration, on the other, led to actualization of messianic concepts; see Israel Kolatt, “Zionism and Messianism,” in *Zionism and Israel: A Historian's View: Selected Articles* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2008), 97–108 (Hebrew), who concludes by noting that use is made of the many aspects of messianism in various periods and circumstances.

**60** For Lloyd George's Middle East strategy, which proved itself when Basra fell to the British in March and Jerusalem in December 1917, see Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 5:287–88; Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 235–36, 266–67. Thus, when he opened negotiations with Germany he had in hand many strategic territories. On the changing by Lloyd George of Britain's war strategy and the central role of Jerusalem in it, see Sheffy, “Jerusalem in the First World War,” 38–45.

**61** Lloyd George was apparently a man of strong character but also easily offended. One example is his relationship with Herbert Samuel. At first their relations were very cordial, but much later, after Lloyd George was offended by Samuel, he came out harshly against him. See ch. 8, n. 156.

respected the Jewish people. It appears that while this, too, influenced his decision to promote the Balfour Declaration, the major consideration remained his political views.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps he hoped that the Balfour Declaration would gain him the support of Russia, since many of its Jews played an active role in the Bolshevik revolution that had begun there, as well as the sympathies of the growing Jewish community in the United States and those of the Zionists in Germany, the country against which he was fighting.<sup>63</sup>

In December 1916, after Lloyd George was appointed prime minister and initiated a new order of things, major policy decisions were to be made by a small war cabinet headed by the prime minister. Lord Alfred Milner, who at the time was indifferent to Zionism but later supported the pro-Zionist policy, was made a member of this cabinet.<sup>64</sup> Foreign Secretary Balfour was not an official cabinet member but was usually present at the meetings and maintained a close relationship with the prime minister. Balfour was assisted by the under-secretary for foreign affairs, Lord Robert Cecil, who was also an enthusiastic Zionist. The cabinet had a group of consultants some of whom were pro-Zionist, among them Sykes, Leopold Amery, and William Ormsby-Gore, who later played an important role in the British government, and Jan Smuts of South Africa.<sup>65</sup>

### **Jabotinsky and the Jewish Legion; Aaronsohn; Sykes; America; the Morgenthau Plan**

Another matter that engaged the attention of the Jewish community in England, as well as the population at large, during the war was the stream of Jewish refugees that began arriving from Russia and eastern Europe. This leads us to the subject of the Jewish Legion, established between 1915 and 1918. The Zion Mule Corps, as the British called it, was first established in Egypt in the spring of 1915. Yosef Trumpeldor and Ze'ev Jabotinsky organized it and the Irish Colonel John Henry Patterson was

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<sup>62</sup> For Lloyd George and his unique attitude to the Bible, expressed at his meeting with Weizmann on the day of Germany's surrender, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 143. See also ch. 8, n. 36.

<sup>63</sup> For his hope to gain sympathy among Jews in Russia, the United States, and even among Zionist Jews in Germany, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 188–205, 339–49, 535–42. See also Friedman, "The Question of Palestine during World War I," 21–30, 47–48.

<sup>64</sup> Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 309–18, discusses Lord Milner's positive attitude and great support after the Balfour Declaration.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 320–21, and in the index under these names; Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 276–83. Before Gen. Allenby was appointed commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in preparation for the invasion of Palestine, the command was offered to Gen. Smuts. Later, he strongly supported Zionism during the Mandate period and criticized the first and second "White Papers," Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 473–83.

placed in command.<sup>66</sup> Most of its members were residents of Eretz Israel who were deported to Egypt as enemy aliens. The Mule Corps participated in the Gallipoli campaign. Unlike the other three battalions that later made up the Jewish Legion, they carried no special Jewish insignia.<sup>67</sup>

The three battalions that comprised the Jewish Legion were mobilized in 1917 and 1918. The first, the 38th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, was established in England upon the initiative of Jabotinsky, who served in it as an officer. The battalion included some members of the Zion Mule Corps which had disbanded after the Gallipoli campaign, but mainly Jewish refugees who arrived in Britain from Russia and eastern Europe. That Jewish refugees joined in the war effort was positively viewed in England. However, it aroused controversy among British Jews who wanted no connection to the Jewish refugees and to Jewish communities elsewhere, and viewed serving in the Legion as total identification with Britain. Weizmann was very supportive of Jabotinsky on this issue and saw it as Jewish willingness to participate in the war at Britain's side. Relations between the two were close during these years. The position of the Zionist leadership was that participation in the war on the side of the victorious party would grant them the right to take part in the peace conference after the war.<sup>68</sup>

Another battalion, the 39th, was established in the United States. Its ranks were filled by Jewish volunteers from the United States, Canada, and several South American countries, as well as a few deported persons from Eretz Israel, including Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi. The two first traveled to Egypt and from there to the United States where they began activities in the Hehalutz organization, holding meetings with American Jews, the publication of *Yizkor* – a memorial book for the fallen members of Hashomer, and preparations for a comprehensive book about

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**66** The Zion Mule Corps was created in Alexandria in Egypt by Jabotinsky and Trumpeldor, with the cooperation of Pinchas Rutenberg, after the expulsion from Eretz Israel of Jews holding alien foreign citizenship. See Martin Watts, *The Jewish Legion and the First World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 20–47; Matityahu Mintz, “Pinchas Rutenberg and the Establishment of the Jewish Legion in 1914,” *Studies in Zionism* 6 (1985): 15–26. On the Zion Mule Corps, see also John Henry Patterson, *With the Zionists in Gallipoli* (London: Hutchinson, 1916).

**67** On Jews from Eretz Israel in Egypt, see Efrati, *Jewish Community*, 274–83. On the Jewish Legion, see also Shmuel Katz, “Jabotinsky in the Jewish Legion and the Beginnings of Haganah,” in *In the Eye of the Storm: Essays on Ze'ev Jabotinsky*, ed. Avi Bareli and Pinhas Ginossar (Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2004), 493–548 (Hebrew).

**68** For differences of opinion regarding the establishment of the battalion in England with the objective of participating in Britain's war effort, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 484–501. On Jabotinsky, the London battalion, and Col. Patterson, the commander of the three battalions that formed the Jewish Legion, see Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, with a foreword by John Henry Patterson (New York: B. Ackerman, 1945); John Henry Patterson, *With the Judeans in the Palestine Campaign* (London: Hutchinson, 1922). On Weizmann's support of Jabotinsky and the warm relations that developed between them, see Reinhartz, *The Making of a Statesman*, 82.

Eretz Israel.<sup>69</sup> The Balfour Declaration changed the attitude of Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi. They began supporting England, not Turkey, and recruiting members for the American battalion of the Jewish Legion. Not only did they participate in its establishment, they served in it and came with it to England, continuing from there to Egypt. On September 1, 1918, they returned to Eretz Israel.<sup>70</sup> The two battalions arrived in Palestine, and participated in some of the battles in the final stages of the war. After the conquest of the southern part of the country, the 40th Battalion was mobilized there, comprised of local residents, among them leaders of the labor movement such as Berl Katznelson, Eliyahu Golomb, Dov Hos, Levi Eshkol, and others.<sup>71</sup> After the war, the British disbanded the three battalions and turned them into one unit symbolically named “The First Judeans.” Its symbol was a seven-branched menorah, and beneath it the Hebrew word “Kadimah” (forward).<sup>72</sup>

Other Jewish personages began operating in England during the period to promote Zionist ideas. It would seem that one key figure in this effort was Aaron Aaronsohn, the leader of the NILI underground which operated against the Turks and supplied intelligence to the British headquarters in Cairo since 1916.<sup>73</sup> Aaronsohn met Sykes in Cairo and they became close friends. Sykes was the British statesman who signed the May 1916 agreement with France named after him. He became influenced by Zionist ideas and turned into an avid supporter; probably, this was partly Aaronsohn’s doing. There Aaronsohn also made the acquaintance of Ormsby-Gore who began his career, too, at the Cairo headquarters and replaced Sykes following the latter’s sudden death. Ormsby-Gore remained an active supporter of the Eretz Israel issue for many years.<sup>74</sup>

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**69** See introduction to David Ben-Gurion and Izhak Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel in the Past and Present*, ed. Mordechai Eliav and Yehoshua Ben-Arieh (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979) (Hebrew). Hehalutz was a youth movement that trained young people for agricultural settlement in Eretz Israel.

**70** On the volunteers who enlisted in the United States, see Watts, *Jewish Legion*, 138–59. For Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi in the battalion, see Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 124–38.

**71** For the volunteers in Eretz Israel, the creation of the 40th Battalion, the occupation of the country, and later developments until the disbandment of the battalions, see *History of the Haganah*, 1,2:497–532.

**72** For the Jewish Legion in World War I, see Watts, *Jewish Legion*, 201–38; Yigal Elam, *The Jewish Legion in World War I* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Pub. House, 1973) (Hebrew).

**73** Aaronsohn was killed in a plane crash on his way from London to Paris on May 15, 1919; see Eliezer Livneh, *Aaron Aaronsohn: His Life and Times* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1969), 349 (Hebrew). On Aaronsohn and the NILI underground, see in the index of Auron, *Banality of Indifference*; Shmuel Katz, *The Aaronsohn Saga* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2007); Anthony Verrier, ed., *Agents of Empire: Anglo-Zionist Intelligence Operations, 1915–1919: Brigadier Walter Gribbon, Aaron Aaronsohn and the Nili Ring* (London: Brassey’s, 1995).

**74** On Aaronsohn’s role in furthering relations with the British that culminated in the Balfour Declaration, his contacts with Mark Sykes and other persons in the Arab Bureau of the Cairo Intelligence Department whom he met due to their cooperation with the NILI underground, and his many visits to London, see in the index to Tolokowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*. Tolokowsky records

Sykes maintained that the Sykes–Picot Agreement did not contradict Zionism since it, too, marked out an area in western Palestine that would become an international zone which could be developed into a Jewish national home under Britain’s aegis, and the French should be persuaded to cooperate. Since then, Sykes stood at the helm of British persons who promoted the ideas included in the Balfour Declaration. It was he who organized the impressive ceremony for General Edmund Allenby’s entry into Jerusalem and his proclamation from the platform at the entrance to the Citadel of David. Sykes passed away in Paris on February 16, 1919, from Spanish Influenza that caused millions of deaths in 1919, and did not live to see the developments in the promotion of the Zionist movement.<sup>75</sup>

Today, less importance is attributed to Weizmann’s influence as a chemist producing acetone and his assistance to the British war effort. Public knowledge of his contribution apparently came from Lloyd George’s *War Memoirs*. Though Weizmann himself made light of its importance, it seems that the matter assisted in his efforts for realization of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>76</sup> In the meantime, Weizmann’s special status was acknowledged. On February 11, 1917 he was formally appointed president of the British Zionist Federation. At this dignified event, he stated that he was at a crossroads with regards to ways to promote Zionism. Apparently, he had no knowledge of the Sykes–Picot Agreement until April 1917.<sup>77</sup>

In April 1917, the United States entered the war against the Central Powers but refrained from declaring war on Turkey. Henry Morgenthau, the United States ambassador in Turkey, was one of those trying to influence Turkey to abandon Germany and sign a separate peace treaty with the Entente Powers. This was in complete contrast with the British interests of the Lloyd George government that aspired to defeat Turkey, as well as of the Zionists who had already envisaged an opportunity for realization of Zionist aspirations which could only be achieved upon

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Aaronsohn’s difficult behavior, perhaps to forestall being accepted only as a spy, but notes that there is no one who is as familiar with Eretz Israel as him; see *ibid.*, 456. That Aaronsohn also earned the respect of Weizmann, see Friesel, *Zionist Policy after the Balfour Declaration*, 36–45. For his relations with Ormsby-Gore, who was later to become secretary of state for the colonies, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 320; Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 278–79; Katz, “Jabotinsky in the Jewish Legion,” 506, there also for Aaronsohn’s relationship with Sykes.

<sup>75</sup> On Mark Sykes, see also note 90 below.

<sup>76</sup> Reinharz, *The Making of a Statesman*, 40–72; Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, 203–17, calls this section of her book “Acetone or Conscience?” and notes that the source of the story is Lloyd George’s book. Barbara Tuchman, the author of *The Bible and the Sword*, is the granddaughter of Henry Morgenthau who came to the aid of the Yishuv during World War I and sent his son-in-law, Maurice Wertheim, on missions to intervene on its behalf. She dedicated her book to the memory of her parents. On the efforts by Morgenthau and Wertheim to help the Jewish community in Eretz Israel during the war, see Efrati, *Jewish Community*, 88–158.

<sup>77</sup> Reinharz, *The Making of a Statesman*, 114–52.

Turkey's defeat.<sup>78</sup> In June 1917 Weizmann set off on a special mission to Gibraltar to meet with Morgenthau and persuade him to give up the idea. Jabotinsky, who was active in recruiting Jews to the British army, and Aaronsohn, who enjoyed a special status in the United States, also intervened on this matter. Leading American Jews, first and foremost Louis D. Brandeis, also operated against the Morgenthau plan, which was stricken off the agenda.<sup>79</sup>

### **The Balfour Declaration, the Bolshevik revolution, and Russia's withdrawal from the war, 1917**

The Balfour Declaration, signed on November 2, 1917, was finally made public five or six days later. The declaration was preceded by several drafts until the final version was approved.<sup>80</sup> On December 2, 1917 the Zionist movement in Britain held a thanksgiving meeting at the London Opera House, presided over by Lord Rothschild. Among those present were Weizmann, Sokolow, Samuel, Israel Zangwill, Rabbi Moses Gaster the Sefardi Chief Rabbi of England, Lord Robert Cecil, Mark Sykes, William Ormsby-Gore, and others. The British government representative made the following statement: "Our wish is that Arabian countries shall be for the Arabs, Armenia for the Armenians, and Judaea for the Jews." There were enthusiastic Jewish responses in other places around the world, yet there were also reservations voiced in Britain and among its Jews.<sup>81</sup>

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**78** The claim has been made that it was Henry Morgenthau, the American ambassador in Istanbul, who came up with the idea that Turkey should withdraw from the war and sign a separate peace. See Richard N. Lebow, "The Morgenthau Peace Mission of 1917," *Jewish Social Studies* 32 (1970): 267–85, who goes into great detail about Morgenthau's efforts in this matter, including his later meeting with Weizmann in Gibraltar in the presence of additional Americans. However, it is reasonable to assume that President Wilson at least knew about Morgenthau's mission. For a critical view of the Morgenthau mission, see Felix Frankfurter, *Felix Frankfurter Reminisces* (New York: Reynal, 1960), 145–58.

**79** On thoughts about the possibility of a separate peace with Turkey, Morgenthau's involvement and his meeting with Weizmann in Gibraltar, see also Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 350–60, who also notes that Morgenthau's feelings were hurt because his initiative was thwarted; *ibid.*, 188–205. See also Reinharz, *The Making of a Statesman*, 153–71; Gutwein, "Politics of the Balfour Declaration," 131–33.

**80** For earlier drafts of the Balfour Declaration, see note 29 above. The major problem in drafting the text of the declaration was about the term "national home"; see in detail Dvorah Barzilay-Yegar, *A National Home for the Jewish People: The Concept in British Political Thinking and Policy Making, 1917–1923* (Jerusalem: Hassifriya Hatzionit, 2003), 13–141 (Hebrew), esp. 125–28 for earlier drafts. For the Balfour Declaration in a more general context, see also Kolatt, *Zionism and Israel*, 3–15.

**81** *Great Britain, Palestine and the Jews: Jewry's Celebration of Its National Charter* (London: The Zionist Organisation, 1918), 15–35. The text of the Balfour Declaration is reproduced in the introduction. In the simultaneously published Hebrew version of this pamphlet, "Palestine" is translated as "Eretz Israel." The statement by the representative of the British government is also quoted in

In October 1961, ten years after Weizmann's death, a memorial lecture was held at the Weizmann Institute of Science. The main address was delivered by Leonard Stein, author of the very comprehensive study of the Balfour Declaration, who during 1920–1929 served as the political secretary of the Zionist Organization. The chairman was Abba Eban, the renowned Israeli foreign minister. In his opening remarks, Eban said:

The Balfour Declaration marked the triumph of a visionary ideal over the normal routines of political thought. It spoke of British recognition of the right of the Jewish people to reconstitute a National Home in Palestine. But in legal terms there was no such thing in 1917 as a “national home,” no such country as “Palestine” . . . and no unit juridically identifiable as “the Jewish people.”

Meyer M. Weisgal, chairman of the Executive Council of Yad Chaim Weizmann, in his introduction to the published version of the lecture, repeated and emphasized Stein's concluding sentence, that the year 1917, and not 1947, was the true turning point in laying the foundations for the State of Israel.<sup>82</sup>

The Balfour Declaration dates near in time to the launching of the British military advance in Palestine. There was a clear connection between the political and the military initiatives. Lloyd George's decision to open an eastern front, months before the Balfour Declaration, hastened the issuing of the declaration, and vice versa: the Balfour Declaration was sent a month before the taking of Jerusalem and following the invasion of Beersheba on October 31, 1917. Gaza was conquered on November 7, 1917, a mere five days after the decision regarding the Balfour Declaration. The British forces were advancing towards Jerusalem, but then the order came to delay them so that Jerusalem would be presented as a gift to the British Parliament for Christmas. The city was conquered on December 9–11, 1917.<sup>83</sup>

At the time the Balfour Declaration was issued, a revolution was taking place in Russia. On November 8, the Bolsheviks invaded the city of Petrograd (later named Leningrad, currently St. Petersburg). In its wake, Russia withdrew from the war and on March 3, 1918 signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Germany and the Central Powers.<sup>84</sup>

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Auron, *Banality of Indifference*, 251. For the Zionist movement in Britain and the deliberations of the War Cabinet, see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 327–38 and the sources cited.

**82** Stein, *Weizmann and the Balfour Declaration*. See note 28 above.

**83** Fromkin calls Chapter 35 “Jerusalem for Christmas,” Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 305–14. He notes Lloyd-George's relating to Palestine as the land of the Bible and that he was acquainted with all its biblical sites.

**84** Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 339–49, writes that the Russian Revolution was very helpful in furthering Zionist ideals because the Entente powers were no longer committed to Russia after it withdrew from the war. He also notes that hopes of Russian support for Zionism, due to the fact that many of the revolutionaries were Jewish, did not materialize.



The changed situation in Russia also brought about a change in the attitude to the organization of Jabotinsky's London battalion. Earlier, a Zionist delegation had been sent to the United States to gain American support for the Balfour Declaration. On November 17, 1917 Aaronsohn set out for America to coordinate between the British government and the Zionist leaderships in London and America. It was decided to send a delegation of Zionist representatives to Eretz Israel. Under the name "the Zionist Commission" it set off in March 1918. There were no Russian Zionist members on the commission, since they couldn't participate because of the revolution, nor were there any American members. Aaronsohn participated as an observer, but after a while returned to the United States to continue his efforts there. The British liaison officer was Ormsby-Gore, later the British colonial secretary. I shall deal in greater depth with the Zionist Commission and its roles in Eretz Israel in the next chapter.

In February 1918, the London Jewish battalion (the 38th) also set out for Eretz Israel. A month earlier, in January, Allenby's offensive was halted for nine months. In August 1918, the British began the second stage of the conquest of Palestine and the defeat of the Turks. On October 30, the armistice treaty with Turkey was signed at Mudros.<sup>85</sup> In November 1918, a year after the Balfour Declaration, the whole Fertile Crescent area was conquered and the Entente powers entered Istanbul.

## **Two stages in the conquest of Palestine; first stage, military rule; the status quo; restoration and preservation of Jerusalem, 1917–1920**

### **Conquest of southern Palestine; Allenby enters Jerusalem**

As noted, in December 1916, only a short while after assuming office, British Prime Minister Lloyd George made a strategic decision to change British war policy and open a front against the Ottoman forces in the East.<sup>86</sup> That same month, British forces in Egypt began an advance towards Sinai and Palestine. El-Arish was taken in December 1916, followed by an operation against Rafah on January 11, 1917. The first attack on Gaza was launched on March 20 and the second on April 19, both of

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<sup>85</sup> See note 22 above. The chronology of these military events and of those described below is based on the appendix to Archibald P. Wavell, *The Palestine Campaigns* (London: Constable, 1928).

<sup>86</sup> For the stages in the campaign to conquer Palestine, see George MacMunn and Cyril Falls, *Military Operations, Egypt and Palestine . . .* (London: HMSO, 1928–1930). This three-volume history of the operations is compiled from official documents and accompanied by maps. See also the collection of articles on various aspects of World War I in Palestine: Eran Dolev, Yigal Sheffy, and Haim Goren, ed., *Palestine and World War I: Grand Strategy, Military Tactics, and Culture in War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

which failed. On June 28, 1917 General Allenby replaced General Archibald James Murray as commander of the British forces. Beersheba was conquered on October 31, Gaza on November 7, Jaffa (and Tel Aviv) was invaded on November 18, and Jerusalem fell on December 9.<sup>87</sup> By mid-January 1918 the two forces dug in along the “two-‘Auja line.”<sup>88</sup>

Following a directive of the British Foreign Office, during the victory parade in Jerusalem General Allenby dismounted from his horse and entered the Old City on foot, well aware of German Emperor Wilhelm II’s presumptuous entrance into the city in 1898. This was a well-ordered parade which began at the entrance near Jaffa Gate and continued up to the balcony of the staircase at the entrance to the Citadel of David, where the Muslim mayor was waiting.<sup>89</sup>

In the formal ceremony, Allenby addressed the residents of the city and read out a proclamation that was later published in seven languages: English, French, Italian, Greek, Russian, Arabic, and Hebrew. The proclamation declared that the city was entering upon a period of military rule, and that due to its sanctity to the three major religions of mankind, the security of all places of prayer, holy sites, and historical monuments would be meticulously maintained. Participating in the entrance parade were Allenby’s headquarters staff and representatives of the allies, England, France, and Italy, among them Sir Mark Sykes and Francois Georges-Picot. In a book of his, Thomas E. Lawrence (“Lawrence of Arabia”) noted that for him this was the most impressive moment of the entire war. Ronald Storrs wrote that he was sorry to have missed the ceremony, but shortly afterwards, on December 28, he was appointed military governor of the city.<sup>90</sup>

At this time the country was divided in two. The British controlled the area south of the “two-‘Auja line,” while the area north of it continued to be held by the Turks

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**87** For the great emotion that seized the Jewish community with the British advance in Palestine and especially the conquest of Jerusalem, and throughout the following year, which Jews saw as a year of redemption, see Yaakov Gross, *Jerusalem 1917/8: Destruction, Miracle, Redemption* (Jerusalem: Coresh, 1993) (Hebrew). For the Jerusalem campaign, see MacMunn and Falls, *Military Operations*, 2:184–264.

**88** The ‘Auja Line was the frontline between the Turkish and British forces after the Turkish retreat from Jerusalem. It ran from one ‘Auja in the west (the Yarkon River) to another in the east, in the Jordan Valley.

**89** For the conquest of Jerusalem and Allenby’s triumphal entry ceremony, see William T. Massey, *How Jerusalem Was Won: Being the Record of Allenby’s Campaign in Palestine* (London: Constable, 1919), 175–210. On reactions in Britain and the many books that were published on the campaign in Palestine, see Sheffy, “Jerusalem in the First World War,” 33–35, 57–60.

**90** Ronald Storrs, *The Memoirs of Sir Ronald Storrs* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1937), 287, who further notes that Allenby’s proclamation was drafted by Sykes, who also organized the impressive ceremony, see *ibid.*, 311. Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, 446–48, also mentions Sykes’s letter to Sokolow published in the latter’s two-volume *History of Zionism*. On Sykes, see also Cecil Bloom, “Sir Mark Sykes: British Diplomat and a Convert to Zionism,” *Jewish Historical Studies* 43 (2011): 141–57.

for another nine months. In the meantime, battles waged in the Jordan Valley, and the British took Jericho. In August 1918 the second stage of the conquest of Palestine and defeat of the Ottoman Empire got underway. On September 19, 1918, in the famous battle of Megiddo, the Ottoman army collapsed for good and fled the country. In September and October Haifa, Damascus, and Beirut were conquered.<sup>91</sup>

Jerusalem was under military rule for a period of thirty months until the arrival of High Commissioner Samuel on July 1, 1920.<sup>92</sup> During this period, an effort was made to preserve the status quo ante bellum. The Hague Convention of 1907 determined that no changes were to be made in conquered military zones as long as they were under military rule. General Allenby adhered to this policy in Jerusalem. Due to the tensions between the different factions in the city, this was doubly important.<sup>93</sup>

On October 30, 1918, when hostilities in the Middle East came to an end, General Allenby divided the Occupied Enemy Territory into three areas. A French officer was placed in charge of the northern part, an Arab officer of the eastern region, while the third, that included most of Palestine from the south up to the line in the north running from Rosh Hanikrah to Lake Huleh, was governed by British officers. These governors filled the post for short periods of time. The first was Gen. Gilbert Clayton until April 5, 1918, followed by Col. Richard Meinertzhagen for a short period, General Arthur Wigram Money until July 1919, General C.F. Watson until November 26, 1919, and General Louis Jean Bols until Samuel's arrival in the country on July 1, 1920.<sup>94</sup> The authority of the military governors included

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**91** For the two stages in the conquest of Palestine, see the second volume of MacMunn and Falls, *Military Operations*. The British suffered heavy casualties who were buried where they fell, according to traditional British practice. On the military cemeteries and memorials commemorating the fallen, see Ron Fuchs, "The Planning of the British War Cemeteries in Mandatory Palestine," *Cathedra* 79 (Mar. 1996): 114–39 (Hebrew).

**92** On the period of military rule by the OETA (Occupied Enemy Territory Administration), the policies of the government in London and the General Staff in Egypt, see John Marlowe, *The Seat of Pilate: An Account of the Palestine Mandate* (London: The Cresset Press, 1959), 66–84.

**93** On the period of military rule and its administrative organization, see Makover, *Government and Administration*, 23–75. See also Gideon Biger, "The Spatial Organization of the British Military Regime," in *Siege and Distress: Eretz Israel during the First World War*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1991), 248–57 (Hebrew).

**94** Clayton was one of the central figures in the Arab Bureau established by the British in Cairo during World War I. From 1922 to 1925 he was the second Civil Secretary to the Government of Palestine. For details about him, see Makover, *Government and Administration*, 117 and in the index. See also ch. 9, n. 2. Meinertzhagen replaced Clayton. Apparently due to his problematical relationship with Gen. Allenby, he was not given additional influential positions in Palestine. While he is known for his support of Zionism, there is no consensus about him among scholars. His diary, Richard H. Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary 1917–1956* (New York: Yoseloff, 1960), is an important source for his relationship and many meetings with Weizmann. On Money, see Makover, *Government and Administration*, 52–54 and in the index. For the military administration and the anti-Zionist activity of some of the British, to an extent that they were accused of sabotaging Arab–Jewish negotiations, see Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 184–90. For an appreciation of

legislative and administrative responsibility for all parts of Palestine. A separate governor was appointed for the Jerusalem region, including the city, and similarly one for Jaffa and its surroundings.

**Ronald Storrs, governor of Jerusalem; the status quo; rehabilitation of the city, renewal and expansion of its services**

A military governor was appointed immediately upon the conquest of Jerusalem.<sup>95</sup> After serving as governor for two weeks, Col. Borton Pasha requested to be relieved.<sup>96</sup> Ronald Storrs was appointed as his replacement on December 28, 1917 and served in the city for eight years. Upon the termination of military rule, Storrs continued to serve as governor of the Jerusalem region throughout Samuel's term as High Commissioner and even a year later, until August 1926.

Storrs was raised in an Anglican family. His father and grandfather served in the church and he was well versed in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. His academic education was at Pembroke College in Cambridge where his father had also studied. This was where he developed his love of Greek and Latin, which he quoted extensively in his book. He was fluent in French, German, and Italian, and also spoke Arabic. He arrived in Cairo in 1904 to serve in several roles on behalf of the British government there, at first in the British Ministry of Finance in Cairo and later as secretary for Middle East affairs during fourteen years until his appointment as governor of Jerusalem.

Storrs was a key figure in the development of ties between Britain and the Arab world. In Cairo he was appointed a member of a small committee of Muslims and Europeans established to protect important Muslim buildings in the city. The committee convened once a month, and through it he learned to love medieval Muslim Cairo. Though the committee was intended only to provide advice to the Muslim waqf, and had nothing to do with Coptic art, Storrs developed a special regard for this art as well. In addition, he wrote that his great interest in Islamic buildings in Cairo turned him into a tour guide throughout Old Cairo for hundreds of friends and visitors to the city. There is no doubt that old medieval Jerusalem within the walls reminded Storrs of his beloved Cairo. Thus, when he was offered the role of Jerusalem's governor, he was very pleased. A mere few weeks after the conquest of

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Clayton, Meinertzhagen, and Money by an eyewitness, see Norman Bentwich and Helen Bentwich, *Mandate Memories, 1918–1948* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 33–36. On Watson, see Makover, *Government and Administration*, 8, 52–53, where the author refers to comments by Norman Bentwich about him. For Bols, see *ibid.*, in the index.

<sup>95</sup> This section is based primarily on Ben-Arieh, "Major Changes" and *id.*, "Efforts for Preservation and Planning."

<sup>96</sup> On Borton Pasha, see Makover, *Government and Administration*, 46, 69.

the city, he began to work on its preservation and prevention of damage to its antiquities. To that end he decided, as early as the beginning of March 1918, to contact William McLean, the Alexandria city engineer, requesting that he join him in Jerusalem and assist in planning the preservation of the city and its development. He also began thinking of establishing an organization which he called the Pro-Jerusalem Society. Norman Bentwich, a member of the British administration who knew well those who served in it, stated that Jerusalem was lucky to have Storrs as its first governor, “an artist administrator, who, having a deep regard for the beauty and history of the city, founded a pro-Jerusalem society.”<sup>97</sup>

Military rule of Jerusalem began immediately with its conquest, while the front-line remained just to the north of the city. This situation lasted for nine months, during which Jerusalem served as a rear base for the British troops facing the Turks. Following the second stage of the conquest of the country, in October 1918 Jerusalem became the capital of the southern region of British military rule in the Levant, O.E.T.A. (South), with the status of a ruling and administrative city, a status it had not filled since 1187 with the fall of the first Crusader kingdom.<sup>98</sup>

Already during the first months after his appointment, Storrs began working to alleviate the difficult situation of the city caused by the war. Upon entering the city, the British found Jerusalem in a state of general disarray.<sup>99</sup> The military government faced a number of major problems. The most critical was the lack of sufficient food. During the war, food supplies became limited and the routes leading to the city had been damaged. The little that did arrive now had to feed the two British divisions stationed there and residents of the city and its surroundings. The governor acted quickly to bring supplies to the city and to supervise proper distribution of food. However, as long as the war continued, and the frontline was still just north of the city, the situation remained difficult. Another problem that needed to be addressed was health, hygiene, and sanitation. The British soldiers who conquered the city found it infected with diseases and plagues such as typhus and malaria which endangered the lives of the residents. The government opened hospitals, established

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<sup>97</sup> For the appraisal of Storrs, see Norman Bentwich, *Fulfillment in the Promised Land, 1917–1937* (London: The Soncino Press, 1938), 64. Bentwich, a member of a prestigious Jewish British family, began working in the ministry of justice in Cairo in 1912. In 1915 he enlisted in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. During the period of military rule in Palestine he was appointed a senior military judge, and in the civilian administration that followed first as its legal secretary and then as attorney general. During the 1929 riots he was wounded by an Arab attacker. He left the administration in Palestine in 1930. For several years he served as Professor of International Relations at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He described Storrs as “one of the greatest English proconsuls of our time in the Middle East”; see Norman Bentwich, “Sir Ronald Storrs,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 87 (1955): 107.

<sup>98</sup> For the British decision to designate Jerusalem as the capital, and the uncertainty as to the future of Palestine during the period of military rule, see Biger, *Empire in the Holy Land*, 210–12.

<sup>99</sup> On the difficult state of Jerusalem during the war, see Shilony, “Decline.”

pharmacies and public clinics, cleaned the streets, collected garbage from the houses, and systematically cleaned and disinfected water cisterns which were a health hazard.

The third problem was the water supply to the city. There was a grave shortage of water in Jerusalem, and the addition of the two divisions of soldiers greatly exacerbated the problem. Temporary measures were put in motion. At the beginning of 1918 it was decided to lay a twenty-four kilometer long pipeline of steel pipes, instead of the ceramic ones that were customary then, to bring water from the 'Ain 'Aroub springs on the way to Hebron. By June, two hundred and fifty thousand gallons of water flowed into the city every day. Using pumps, the water was directed to a water reserve at the highest point in the city, near the present-day Romema neighborhood. From there, for the first time in the history of Jerusalem, by gravitation the water flowed through a system of pipes to all parts of the city. Faucets were installed on street sides to supply water to neighborhoods and a water system was established which brought water to houses that were connected to it. Though the immediate goal of water supply was achieved, the problem continued. The basic solution was implemented only in 1934 when a water pipeline was laid from the Yarkon River to Jerusalem. Despite all this, the population continued to draw water from wells throughout the Mandate period.

Together with the need for food, water, and health services, the military administration also took care of the housing problems facing the residents of Jerusalem. Population density, coupled with the cessation of construction during the war and after it, led to a shortage of dwellings and exorbitant prices. Homeowners were prohibited from raising rent without government approval, and everything was placed under supervision. Government officials dealt with solving day-to-day matters, and ordinances were issued with the intention of preserving the unique character of the city. Within a short while, all brothels that had previously been concentrated in special quarters were eliminated. It was forbidden to open bars, saloons, cabarets, and night clubs. Dancing was prohibited in hotels within the Old City and the sale of alcohol was limited to daytime alone. The military administration established a bureau of commerce, whose members were merchants representing all ethnic communities, as well as financial advisors and government officials.<sup>100</sup>

Important steps were also taken to introduce electricity in Jerusalem. During the period of Ottoman rule, Jerusalem was lit by kerosene street lamps, as only few buildings had generators of their own to produce electric power. In January 1914 the Turkish government granted a concession for lighting Jerusalem by electric power to a Greek engineer, Euripides Mavromatis, but he was unable to implement

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**100** For all these matters, see Gideon Biger, "Early British Contributions to the Development of Jerusalem 1918–1925," *Mehkarim Begeografiyah shel Eretz Yisrael* 9 (1976): 178–90 (Hebrew); id., *Empire in the Holy Land*, 213–15.

it due to the war. After the war, Pinchas Rutenberg's attempt to receive a concession to supply electric power to Jerusalem came up against the concession awarded to Mavromatis. The British authorities were called upon to intervene in the matter and debated it for a few years. Finally, it was transferred to the International Court in The Hague, which in 1925 ruled in favor of Mavromatis. The ruling led to the establishment of a different company in Jerusalem.<sup>101</sup> Mavromatis sold his concession to a British company, Balfour, Beatty & Co., which was registered in Palestine as the Jerusalem Electric and Public Service Corporation. Electric lighting was introduced in Jerusalem only in 1928. This delay hindered the development of industry in the city since the use of private generators at individual sites was very expensive. It should be noted that no real industry developed in Jerusalem during the Mandate period.<sup>102</sup>

There were also important changes relating to postal services. During Ottoman rule, Turkish and foreign post offices operated in the country. The military administration shut down all of them and began operating a unified British military postal system. Residents of the country were permitted to use the postal service immediately after the conquest, and already by February 1918 letters, telegrams, and postal checks could be sent between Palestine, Egypt, and Britain. By October 1919, post offices were operating in all the major cities of the country. At first they were operated by military personnel but by early 1920 their transfer to civilians had begun. By the end of the period of military rule there were already twenty post offices operating in the country.

During the war, the British military established a new telegraph system to replace the Turkish service destroyed in the war. In December 1918 telegraph services were opened to the public, enabling sending messages between the major cities in the country as well as to Egypt and the Sudan. In August 1919, telegraph stations serving the public were added in other settlements. In December 1921, telegraph services in Jerusalem began operating on a twenty-four hour basis. When civilian post offices began operation, the telegraph service was transferred to them. Palestine was also connected by telegraph to Europe.

As the use of telephones increased, that of the telegraph decreased. Before the war there were no telephones in the country available to the public. During the first decade of British rule, the telephone system was developed more than all other communications systems. New telephone exchanges arrived in the country and establishment of municipal telephone systems was begun in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa. Requests for telephone installations gradually increased. By 1925, the demand for telephone lines exceeded the supply. The Jerusalem exchange was at full capacity, and over a hundred requests were pending. The plan was to add a thousand lines annually in Jerusalem and to develop new lines between Jerusalem, Jaffa, Lydda, and Haifa.

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**101** I shall discuss Rutenberg's efforts to introduce electric power into Palestine in Chapter Nine.

**102** For the Mavromatis concessions to supply electricity and water, see Ronen Shamir, *Current Flow: The Electrification of Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 15–16.



During the Ottoman period, motor vehicles rarely arrived in the city. Transportation was by horse carriages that traveled to Jerusalem along the road laid from the coastal plains, and also carried persons within the city. The railway line from Jaffa to Jerusalem began operating in 1892.<sup>103</sup>

After the conquest of southern Palestine, the British military administration began developing the railway system on the infrastructure of the system built towards the end of the Ottoman period. As they advanced, the British laid down standard gauge railway lines across the coastal plains that connected to the Jerusalem railway line through a new junction station in Lydda. On December 27, a mere eighteen days after taking the city, the first British train entered Jerusalem. Since the Jerusalem tracks were narrow (100 cm.), while the British tracks from Egypt were wide (143 cm.), they laid new international standard tracks connecting Jerusalem to Lydda and from there to Haifa and the north, to Gaza and to Egypt in the south. By June 1918, it was already possible to travel directly from El Qantara in Egypt to Jerusalem. The speedy repair of the railway lines assisted in bringing food and supplies to Jerusalem immediately after the war, when the city was in a dire condition. During the war, the railway to Jerusalem was also used to meet the requirements of the military units in their positions north of the city. Therefore, it was decided to lay a branch line towards the northern part of the city, to Tel-el-Ful, for the transfer of supplies to the army. During the period of military rule, the railway was used mainly by the military, and throughout that entire period, even until October 1, 1920, three months after military rule came to an end, responsibility for the railway remained with the military. This did not prevent civilian transportation services; however, they were relatively limited at first. Additionally, political problems developed concerning the Jerusalem–Jaffa line which had previously been owned by a French company. Among other things, the Zionist leadership also demanded possession of this line. Finally, in October 1922, after five years of negotiations, it was agreed that the British government would pay the French concession owner £565,000, and the tracks and installations were transferred to its possession.<sup>104</sup>

### **The Pro-Jerusalem Society; Ashbee; Schatz and the Bezalel Art School**

One characteristic of the British military administration was a desire to preserve the remnants of the country's historical past.<sup>105</sup> The British were highly conscious of

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**103** On the roads leading to Jerusalem during the late Ottoman period, see the index of vol. 2 of Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*.

**104** For railways, road transportation, and other related topics, see Biger, *Empire in the Holy Land*, 33–37, 118–27, 152–57.

**105** This section, too, is based primarily on Ben-Arieh, "Efforts for Preservation and Planning."

the need to take immediate action to preserve the ancient sites and monuments to prevent pillaging by transgressors. Already when the British began their military advance in Palestine, influential persons in England exploited their connections at the British War Office to demand preservation of Jerusalem's antiquities. As a result, it was decided that the military advance would be accompanied by a special officer responsible for antiquities. The first officer to fill that role was Keppel Archibald Creswell, an expert on Islamic structures, who later also cooperated with Storrs in preserving the Muslim monuments in the city.<sup>106</sup>

At the end of the first year of military rule in the southern occupied territory, General Money, the military governor of the region, published the Antiquities Ordinance intended to supplement the previous Ottoman antiquities law. The Ordinance emphasized the strict need not to harm the antiquities or to change them in any way, and Captain Ernest J.H. Mackay was appointed to ensure that the Antiquities Ordinance would be observed. While the Antiquities Ordinance reinforced the status quo principle, it did not as yet further archaeological initiatives. Only later, after the establishment of the civilian administration and with Samuel's arrival, a decision was taken to establish the Department of Antiquities, issue a new Antiquities Law, and begin initiatives for the promotion of the archaeological research of Eretz Israel.<sup>107</sup>

As noted, already at the beginning of the period of military rule, Storrs, with the support of General Allenby, decided on a plan for the preservation of the Old City and planning of the new city outside the walls. To that end, he invited British architect McLean to Jerusalem and requested that he submit a plan for its preservation and planning. McLean arrived at the beginning of March 1918. After a one-month stay, on March 30 he submitted an initial report to Storrs and a proposal for a general master plan for Jerusalem. McLean signed the final draft of the plan in Alexandria in July 1918, and the Jerusalem city council approved it on July 20. General Allenby gave it his approval on July 22.<sup>108</sup>

As for the Old City, McLean recommended to meticulously preserve it in its existing medieval form and also maintain the open landscape around it, as much as possible, in its natural state. A mere week after Storrs received McLean's recommendations he published Public Notice No. 34 regarding the preservation of the

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**106** Years later Creswell was an important scholar of Muslim art and architecture and a professor at Oxford University.

**107** For the establishment of the Department of Antiquities, see Ben-Arieh, "Non-Jewish Institutions," Part 1, 146–59.

**108** McLean was a railway engineer in Scotland. In 1906 he was appointed municipal engineer for Khartoum, in the Sudan, and in 1910–1912 prepared a plan for the expansion of that city. In 1912 Lord Kitchener appointed him as the chief engineer for all of Egypt. During the war he served as the city engineer of Alexandria and prepared a plan for its development.

medieval character of the city and its surroundings within a radius of 2,500 meters outside of Damascus Gate.<sup>109</sup>

At the same time, Storrs decided to consult with another famous architect, Charles Robert Ashbee. Storrs wrote that he decided to bring in Ashbee since he sought a consultant who was more than just an architect or city planner. He remembered a lecture Ashbee had delivered which greatly impressed him since it included ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement, of which Ashbee was an active member. Accordingly, he decided to invite him to see if his ideas could be implemented in Jerusalem.<sup>110</sup>

Ashbee was influenced by British philosophers John Ruskin, especially William Morris. At the end of the nineteenth century, and in response to industrial urbanization, Ruskin and Morris founded a movement in England that preached for a return to a simpler lifestyle, emphasizing the importance of creativity in a man's life and which viewed manual labor as a major source of his happiness.<sup>111</sup>

Ashbee was influenced by Morris in another area as well. In 1877, Morris founded a society to protect ancient buildings in England. The society strove for legislation of an ancient building preservation law in Britain. Following its efforts, the first law to protect ancient monuments was passed in 1882. The law was amended several times until, in 1913, it was adapted and promulgated again under the title: Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act [1913].

These two principles, arts and crafts on the one hand and preservation of ancient monuments on the other, played a major role in the Pro-Jerusalem Society established in Jerusalem by Storrs and Ashbee. These principles were laid down in an impressive philosophical work Ashbee published in London back in 1917, *Where the Great City Stands*, in which he presented his ideas. The book was a central factor in Storrs' decision to choose him as the Jerusalem city consultant. Ashbee's book is filled with concepts and thoughts that are of much interest to this day. It is thus no wonder that Storrs was impressed, for those are issues that he had at heart. He hoped that in Ashbee he would find the man who would fulfill the mission of adding content to plans for preservation of Jerusalem and would correctly plan its future.

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**109** For additional details about McLean's plan, see Ben-Arieh, "Efforts for Preservation and Planning," with references to many sources. For the Notice, issued in four languages on Apr. 8, 1918, see Storrs, *Memoirs*, facing p. 326. This was followed by an order prohibiting the cutting down of olive trees in the entire area surrounding the Old City.

**110** Storrs, *Memoirs*, 328.

**111** William Morris (1834–1896), a renowned artist and Romanticist active during the Industrial Revolution, was a source of inspiration for Ashbee in his activity. In 1888 Ashbee founded a guild of craftsmen. In late 1998, an exhibition of furniture and artifacts produced by Ashbee's guild was held in the Geffrye Museum of the Home in East London. They were very similar to furniture and artifacts produced by the Bezalel School of Art in Jerusalem. I shall discuss this similarity below. On Ashbee see also note 114 below.

Ashbee decided to accept Storrs' invitation, and arrived in Jerusalem on June 21. Very quickly, Storrs asked him to prepare a plan specifying how his ideas could be incorporated in Jerusalem. After tours in the city and elsewhere in the country, in August 1918 Ashbee presented Storrs with a detailed report on arts and crafts in Jerusalem and its vicinity. Following the report, Storrs made the final decision regarding the establishment of the Pro-Jerusalem Society; the report served as the basis for many of the Society's activities. The idea of establishing a society in Jerusalem that would act for the promotion and development of the city came to Storrs immediately upon his appointment as governor of Jerusalem. At the 1918 New Year reception, he spoke of the powerful effect on Jerusalem if members of the different denominations would agree to cooperate in its development. In a letter to Sykes he wrote that he does not despair of establishing a committee of sorts with members of the three faiths that would act for the promotion of Jerusalem. It is very likely that the Committee for Preservation of Ancient Monuments in Cairo was the inspiration for the Jerusalem committee. Storrs was a member of the Cairo committee during his sojourn in that city, in which Muslims and Europeans worked together. Storrs took the final decision regarding the Pro-Jerusalem Society only after reading Ashbee's report, and after Ashbee agreed to serve as secretary of the proposed society, in addition to his position as municipal affairs consultant for the military administration in the city.<sup>112</sup>

In 1921, the first volume summarizing the activities of the Pro-Jerusalem Society during the period of British military rule (1918–1920) was published, edited by Ashbee. In his preface to the book, Storrs detailed the society's objectives. I shall list five of them here:

1. The protection of and the addition to the amenities of Jerusalem and its districts;
2. The provision and maintenance of parks, gardens, and open spaces in Jerusalem and its districts;
3. The establishment in the district of Jerusalem of Museums, Libraries, Art Galleries, Exhibitions, Musical and Dramatic Centres, or other institutions of a similar nature for the benefit of the public;
4. The protection and preservation, with the consent of the Government, of the Antiquities in the district of Jerusalem;
5. The encouragement in the district of Jerusalem of arts, handicrafts, and industries in consonance with the general objects of the Society.<sup>113</sup>

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**112** Ashbee's report is in the Jerusalem Municipal Archives.

**113** A few files of the Pro-Jerusalem Society are today in the archives of the Israel Antiquities Authority, including the minutes of some of the meetings. They were probably deposited there when Storrs closed down the society in 1926, when he left Jerusalem. Much can be learned about the society from Charles Robert Ashbee, ed., *Jerusalem, [1918–1922]: Being the Records of the Pro-Jerusalem Council during the Period of the British Military Administration*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1921–1924). For the society's objectives, see *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. vii. For a list of the members, see *ibid.*, p. xv.

One of the important aspects of the Pro-Jerusalem Society activities in the city, as noted above, was the creation of a system of parks and gardens around and near the Old City walls. The Rampart Walk served as the basis for the system. The areas around the gates were developed, especially that around the Citadel of David and Jaffa Gate. Later Turkish additions and unsuitable buildings built near the walls and gates were removed. Trees were planted to supplement the natural vegetation that underwent rehabilitation. Ashbee emphasizes that the Rampart Walk, the parks, and the open spaces, some of which spread into the new city, created a system focusing on the walls that was no less impressive than those of famous European medieval cities and even surpassed them, since it exposed the beauty and majesty of the historical city within the walls as well as the mountainous region surrounding it.<sup>114</sup>

Another subject that received attention was sanitary conditions, construction, and renovation of the city's markets. A report was prepared in cooperation with the municipality and the government Health Department regarding the state of the city's markets and their requirements, and principles were set for the improvement of conditions and development of six central markets, among them the David Street Market within the Old City and Mahaneh Yehudah in the new city. A special chapter in the report was devoted to the development of new industries and crafts according to the principles presented above: weaving, ceramics and production of roof tiles, preparations for glass production, improvement of construction materials and methods, and the development of planting and gardening. With regards to weaving, the renewal of the cotton market was mentioned, and in relation to the ceramics industry, special attention was given to the renovation of the Dome of the Rock.

With regards to repair of the Dome of the Rock and the restoration of other Muslim structures, note should be taken of another architect active in Jerusalem at the time, Ernest T. Richmond, who was also friendly with Storrs. Richmond was educated as an architect and was a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Between 1900 and 1914 he served as the public works architect in Egypt. During the war he was employed in various roles on behalf the British administration. It was then that he met Storrs and they became close friends. When Storrs was appointed governor of Jerusalem, he advised the Muslim waqf in Jerusalem to appoint Richmond as a consulting architect for the Temple Mount buildings, especially repair of the Dome of the Rock. Richmond filled that position between 1918 and 1920. In 1924, he published a book in which he wrote about the preservation and

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<sup>114</sup> Ashbee has been the subject of a comprehensive biography, Alan Crawford, *C.R. Ashbee: Architect, Designer & Romantic Socialist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Crawford claims that the restoration and preservation of the Old City walls and the area immediately outside them by the Jerusalem Municipality after the 1967 war to a great extent followed Ashbee's plans.

rehabilitation of the Dome of the Rock ceramic tiles and the preservation of other Muslim monuments in Jerusalem.<sup>115</sup>

The two volumes that sum up the activities of the Pro-Jerusalem Society, edited by Ashbee, include an English translation of a press release by the Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini regarding the restoration of the Dome of the Rock. The Mufti extended his thanks to Storrs and Richmond for assisting in the restoration. Later, upon termination of military rule in Jerusalem with the arrival of Herbert Samuel, at Storrs' recommendation Richmond was appointed political assistant to the chief secretary of the Mandate government. Afterwards he directed the Mandate government's Department of Antiquities from 1927 to 1937. In every position he filled he was known for his pro-Arab and anti-Zionist opinions.<sup>116</sup>

Storrs, too, was accused by Jews of being anti-Zionist, although he, as a British gentleman, always rejected the claims and stated that he maintained neutrality and even tried to prove it on several occasions. It appears that for him, love of Jerusalem took precedence over everything else. The chapter on Jerusalem in his autobiography ends with the words "there is no promotion over Jerusalem." Storrs perceived of his service as governor of Jerusalem as the climax of his life's work.<sup>117</sup>

Interestingly, despite that the ideas of Storrs and Ashbee regarding the development of arts and crafts in Jerusalem, as stated in the Pro-Jerusalem Society manifest, were quite similar to those of Boris Schatz when he established the Bezalel Art School and developed them in his institution, no cooperation was formed between the two organizations.<sup>118</sup> Schatz, too, admired British philosopher

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**115** Ernest Tatham Richmond, *The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem: A Description of Its Structure & Decoration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924). In 1918 Richmond and the Pro-Jerusalem Society invited the Armenian artist David Ohannessian to come to Jerusalem and renovate the tiles of the Dome of the Rock. On Richmond, see also Frederick H. Kisch, *Palestine Diary* (London: Gollancz, 1938), 41, who notes that Richmond was openly pro-Arab and anti-Zionist.

**116** As director of the Department of Antiquities, Richmond gave the Muslim waqf permission to repair some buildings near the Western Wall, adding to the existing Jewish–Arab tension. For his relations with Ashbee who, like him, held anti-Zionist opinions, as the latter wrote in his autobiography, see note 118 below. Meinertzhagen was sharply critical of Richmond, whom he considered one of the foremost anti-Zionists in the British administration; for more on this, see ch. 8, n. 72. Khalil al-Sakakini notes that Richmond was one of his closest friends and a supporter of the Arabs; see Khalil al-Sakakini, *"Such Am I, O World!": Diaries of Khalil al-Sakakini*, tr. Gideon Shilo (Jerusalem: Keter, 1990) (Hebrew).

**117** Storrs, *Memoirs*, 465. In his memoirs Storrs claims that though Jews accused him of being an anti-Zionist this was not true and everything he did was for the good of Jerusalem and its diverse populations. Years later, in 1935, he was invited to attend an event of the Jewish Historical Society of England in honor of Herbert Samuel at which he spoke and was warmly received by the organizers. For more on this event, see ch. 8, n. 157.

**118** Ashbee left Jerusalem and his involvement in the Pro-Jerusalem Society in 1923 due to a dispute with Storrs. He claimed that Storrs was not concerned enough about the welfare of the Arabs of the Wadi Joz neighborhood and their sewage problems. His pro-Arab and anti-Jewish stances are

Ruskin and aspired to be the “Hebrew Ruskin.” He was also enthusiastic about the ideas of William Morris and his student Walter Crane, which are much reflected in Schatz’s utopian book *Jerusalem Rebuilt*. Following the concepts of the Arts and Crafts movement, Schatz set off to establish an artist neighborhood in Jerusalem. In his utopia, the neighborhood is called Neveh Sha’ananim, while in reality he tried to found the Neveh Bezalel neighborhood near Rehavia as an artist quarter.

While Storrs and Ashbee sought to focus their plans and activities mainly on the historical Jerusalem and its Oriental culture, aspiring to draw nearer to the traditional Arab world and expressing admiration for it, they developed hostile – or neutral, in the case of Storrs – attitudes towards the Zionist movement, and made no effort to assist or support the artistic activity at Bezalel. Unlike them, Schatz was motivated by Zionist ideals and tried to employ the social concepts he studied and admired to strengthen the Zionist movement, without relating to the culture of the East or the Arab society in the country at the time. Schatz aspired to return to the Jewish biblical world and its ancient culture, and perceived of his school as a Jewish-Eretz Israeli project of renewal in the land of the forefathers.<sup>119</sup>

## **The Arab revolt; the second stage of the war: Feisal’s entry into Damascus; America’s involvement; confirmation of the mandate for Palestine**

### **The Arab revolt and the Arab Bureau in Cairo; Arab reactions to the Balfour Declaration**

At the beginning of this chapter, when providing an overview of the three stages of World War I in the Middle East, I pointed out that the Hashemite Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire began during the intermediate stage, when Sharif Hussein and his sons took initial exploratory steps to enable them to cross the lines to the British side. On June 5, 1916 Hussein and his sons gained control of the Hejaz and declared the beginning of the revolt. Their contact was the Arab Bureau in Cairo, established by the British in February 1916. Cooperation with the British made it possible for the revolt’s leaders to participate in the war. Four distinct groups can be discerned

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clearly reflected in his book, Charles Robert Ashbee, *A Palestine Notebook, 1918–1923* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, 1923).

<sup>119</sup> On the Pro-Jerusalem Society and Bezalel, see Ben-Arieh, “Efforts for Preservation and Planning,” 462, 466, 482 and the sources cited there. On Jerusalem during the Mandate period, see id., “Jerusalem in the British Mandate Period: Historical Survey,” in *Jerusalem and the British Mandate: Interaction and Legacy*, ed. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh (Jerusalem: Mishkenot Sha’ananim; Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2003), 3–24 (Hebrew).



among its leadership: (a) Sharif Hussein, the Emir of Mecca, head of the Hashemite family; (b) Hussein's sons, Abdullah and Feisal; (c) the leaders of secret Arab societies and Ottoman military personnel captured by the British during the war; (d) British advisors operating out of the Arab Bureau.<sup>120</sup>

The person responsible for the establishment of the Arab Bureau was Lord Kitchener (June 24, 1850–June 5, 1916) who served as the British consul-general in Egypt from 1911. He began his activities in the Middle East as a young lieutenant in 1874 at the age of twenty-five, in mapping expeditions in Palestine and Sinai.<sup>121</sup> Later, he fought in the war in Sudan where he was considered a war hero and awarded the title Lord Kitchener of Khartoum. He supported the creation of a large Arab state in the Middle East and was the leading exponent of this idea among the British, in contrast to another British view that believed British interests to be mainly in India, one supported by British rulers in India and other personages.<sup>122</sup> During the first years of the war, the consensus in Britain was that it should concentrate its war effort in Europe and not open additional fronts in the Middle East. Lord Kitchener was of the same mind. Later he was appointed secretary of state for war and returned to Britain. He died when his ship was sunk in the Northern Sea.<sup>123</sup>

Contact between the leaders of the Arab revolt and the British in Egypt began as early as 1915 during the term of British High Commissioner McMahon who was appointed by Kitchener in late 1914.<sup>124</sup> Later contacts were the responsibility of the Arab Bureau headed by British geographer David G. Hogarth, who gained fame for his book *Arabia* (Oxford 1922). Members of the Bureau were Clayton, Lawrence of Arabia, Storrs, Sykes, Ormsby-Gore, and other officers.<sup>125</sup> The Bureau continued implementing Kitchener's policy in support of the establishment of a large Arab state in the Middle East.<sup>126</sup>

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**120** See Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 85–86. On the Hashemite Sharif Hussein and his sons Abdullah and Feisal, see above. For the outbreak of the Arab revolt, not to be confused with the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, see Na'aman, *Abdullah*, 30–41.

**121** On Kitchener as a member of the survey team of the Palestine Exploration Fund, see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 210, 212.

**122** On Kitchener, see also Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 79–87. For the contacts of Kitchener and his secretary, Storrs, with Arab Islamic elements, see *ibid.*, 96–115.

**123** When Lloyd George was appointed prime minister, he changed Kitchener's policy. See in the text at note 10 above.

**124** On the appointment of McMahon as proconsul in Egypt, under the new title of High Commissioner, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 89; Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth*, 34–38. For his correspondence with Hussein, Emir of Hejaz, see *ibid.*; see also notes 130 and 131 below.

**125** Aaronsohn arrived in Cairo towards the end of 1916 and joined in the activities of the Arab Bureau. See Katz, *The Aaronsohn Saga*, 128, 132–42.

**126** For the establishment of the Arab Bureau and its staff, their conflicts of opinion with the British in India, and the development of ties with Hussein, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 167–87. For the significance of the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, see also Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth*. On the question of Palestine in the negotiations with Hussein, see Pinhas

The most famous member of the Arab Bureau was Lawrence of Arabia (1888–1935). At the beginning of the war, when he was twenty-six, he was employed by the Ministry of War and prepared a survey of the Sinai Desert.<sup>127</sup> Upon the Ottoman entry into the war, he was sent to Cairo and attached to Arab affairs military intelligence (later the Arab Bureau). In October 1916, Storrs accompanied Lawrence on a mission to Sharif Hussein, the head of the Hashemite family in Mecca who had earlier launched the Arab revolt. In November 1916 Lawrence was appointed liaison officer to Feisal, Hussein's son, commander of the revolt's army.<sup>128</sup>

In December 1916, after Lloyd George became prime minister, the first series of British attacks was mounted in Sinai in the direction of Palestine, but it failed. Following the transfer of command to General Allenby in June 1917 the main British attack got underway. On November 2, 1917 the Balfour Declaration regarding the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people was issued. Sharif Hussein immediately requested clarification of the meaning of the declaration. Two months later, in January 1918, Lieutenant-Commander Hogarth, a senior member of the Arab Bureau, sent a message to Hussein. The message contained three points: (a) a declaration by Britain that the Allies were determined to provide the Arabs with every opportunity to realize their national aspirations, which would be possible only by their unification; (b) a special body would be established to administer the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish sites in the Holy Land; (c) the Jews desired to return to Palestine, and as long as this did not conflict with the rights of the other populations, the British did not see any impediment in the matter.<sup>129</sup>

At that time the Arabs raised three objections to the Balfour Declaration. The first was based on McMahon's letters to Hussein in which the Arabs understood that they were promised a large Arab state in the Fertile Crescent, a promise contradicted by the Balfour Declaration. The supporters of the declaration, for their part, maintained that the extent of the promised state had not been determined, and the letters also

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Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System and Laying the Foundations of a Jewish National Home," in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The British Mandate Period, Part 1*, ed. Moshe Lissak (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 1993), 237–41 (Hebrew).

**127** Several years earlier, in 1909, Lawrence visited Palestine doing research on Crusader castles for a thesis he was writing at Oxford University, published as a book in 1910. For his interest in the history of the Crusades and the archaeology of Palestine and the East, see Richard Aldington, *Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical Inquiry* (London: Collins, 1955), 61–64.

**128** On the journey of Storrs and Lawrence by boat to Mecca in October 1916, after Kitchener's death, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 216–28. On Arabism and the Syrian struggle, Storrs as the governor of Jerusalem for eight years and his relations with Lawrence, see above.

**129** For Hogarth's message to Hussein, see Joseph, *British Rule in Palestine*, 146–49, on what the British explained to Hussein and their promises to the Arabs towards the end of the war that would be honored only if there was a united policy of the Powers, probably hinting at France which did not support the creation of one large Arab kingdom.

included a sentence indicating that those parts of Syria west of a line from Damascus through Homs, Hama, and Aleppo would not be included within it.<sup>130</sup> The Lloyd George government claimed that this reservation excluded the Holy Land from it. McMahon himself also stated later that he had not planned to include the territory of Palestine in his promises.<sup>131</sup>

The second objection was that the contents of the Sykes–Picot Agreement were also in contradiction with the Balfour Declaration.<sup>132</sup> This was refuted by Sykes' personal testimony who maintained that the agreement explicitly stated that a certain area, which included most of Palestine, would receive international status. Furthermore, since Russia had withdrawn from the war, the entire agreement was no longer valid since it was drawn up mainly to satisfy Russian demands.

The third Arab objection against the Balfour Declaration was that the British were renouncing their previous cooperation with the Hashemite family, who, under the command of Feisal, had participated in the first stage of the British attack towards Palestine by advancing on the eastern side of the attack with his own force, accompanied by Lawrence of Arabia with whom he reached Amman in southern Transjordan, where he established his headquarters. Apparently, this was when General Allenby came up with the idea that Weizmann should set out to meet with Feisal at his headquarters, and perhaps thus they would come to an agreement between them.

### **The Weizmann–Feisal meetings; second stage of the war; Feisal's entry into Damascus**

In June 1918, three months after Weizmann arrived in Eretz Israel with the Zionist Commission, he set out for his first meeting with Feisal, commander of the Arab

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**130** For the text of the correspondence, the eight notes exchanged between McMahon and Hussein, see Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, Appendix A, 413–27.

**131** In a letter to the editor of the London *Times*, July 23, 1937, Sir Henry McMahon maintained that in his correspondence with Hussein he did not promise to include Palestine in the area that would become an independent Arab state; see Herbert Samuel, *Memoirs* (London: The Cresset Press, 1945), 173. Note also Herbert Samuel's unequivocal opinion that McMahon's letters to Hussein did not refer to western Palestine. In a lecture delivered in 1935, Samuel noted that this was already reflected in the first White Paper of 1922 and told the audience about an interview with Feisal published in the *Jewish Chronicle* to which he, Samuel, responded, and of a personal letter to him from Feisal dated Dec. 12, 1919. See Herbert Samuel, *Great Britain and Palestine* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1935).

**132** The appendixes to Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, also include the texts of the Sykes–Picot Agreement, the Declaration to the Seven (June 16, 1918), the Anglo-French Declaration (Nov. 7, 1918), the Feisal–Weizmann Agreement (Jan. 3, 1919), Resolutions of the General Syrian Congress (July 2, 1919), and the recommendations of the King-Crane Commission (Aug. 28, 1919). On the meetings of Antonius with Ben-Gurion, see ch. 10, n. 106.

revolt. With the concurrence of General Allenby, Ormsby-Gore, the liaison officer to the Zionist Commission, accompanied him on the journey.<sup>133</sup> They sailed around the Sinai Peninsula to 'Aqaba from where they went up to Feisal's camp in Ma'an. The discussions were conducted in a friendly spirit and it was agreed that they would be continued.<sup>134</sup>

Meanwhile, the Arabs continued their attempts to persuade the British to revoke the Balfour Declaration. One such attempt became known as "the Declaration to the Seven." In the spring of 1918, the Arab Bureau in Cairo sent the government in London a memorandum regarding the violation of assurances given to seven Arab dignitaries, residents of Syria, who were currently residing in the Egyptian capital and wished to remain anonymous. On June 16 these Arab dignitaries were invited to the Arab Bureau where the response of the British Foreign Office was read out to them. A copy was also sent to Hussein.<sup>135</sup> On November 7, 1918, a few days before the ceasefire and the end of the war, the British High Command in the Middle East issued the Anglo-French Declaration stating that the two countries wish to see the establishment of national governments chosen by the people themselves.<sup>136</sup>

Already in August-September 1918, the second stage in the conquest of northern Palestine and all of Syria was begun. In this stage, too, Lawrence accompanied Feisal and his army, this time in their advance towards Damascus.<sup>137</sup> Upon

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**133** On Major Ormsby-Gore, later Lord Harlech, see in the index to Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, who notes that Ormsby-Gore was impressed by what he heard about Zionism from Aaronsohn, *ibid.*, 320. See his evaluation of Sykes when he was a personal assistant to Lord Milner and filled in for Sykes in the War Cabinet, *ibid.*, 272. When Stein was writing his book, Ormsby-Gore supplied him with personal testimonies. On him as secretary of state for the colonies, see in the next chapters.

**134** For Weizmann's description of his meeting with Feisal, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 290–95. On the journey and the meeting with Feisal, see also Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 194; Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 332–47; Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 137–64. On attempts to meet with other Arab leaders, see the reports of Clayton and Weizmann in 1916 in Neil Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy, 1: Early Arab-Zionist Negotiation Attempts, 1913–1931* (London: Frank Cass, 1983), 138–45 (nos. 5–7).

**135** On the Declaration to the Seven, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 331, 340; for the text of the declaration, see Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, 433–34.

**136** Antonius claimed that the reply of Hogarth (see note 129 above), "one of the heads of the Arab Bureau in Cairo," in effect emptied the Balfour Declaration of its content; Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, 267–68. He maintained that the statement by the British Foreign Office concerning the Declaration to the Seven was the most important promise received by the Arabs from the British, since it included the concept of self-determination; *ibid.*, 271–74.

**137** In 1915 Hussein sent Feisal to Damascus to contact Arab secret societies; see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 174. On his entry into Damascus at the head of his troops in 1918, see in the books written by T.E. Lawrence, *Revolt in the Desert* and *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*; see also Robert Graves, *Lawrence and the Arabs* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1934). On the claim that Lawrence himself created the legend that surrounds his name, see Michael Assaf, *Lawrence in True Life and Myth* (Tel Aviv: Davar, 1936), 171–87 (Hebrew).

the Turkish collapse on the front, the British permitted them to enter the city.<sup>138</sup> On October 3, 1918 Feisal led his army into Damascus and Allenby appointed him governor of the city.<sup>139</sup> Eight months later he founded the “Syrian General Congress” that began demanding the establishment of a Greater Syria headed by Feisal and rejected all forms of French control in Syria and Lebanon and British control of Palestine.<sup>140</sup> In the meantime, on October 30, 1918 the Mudros Treaty, the first armistice agreement with Turkey, was signed and it ended the war.<sup>141</sup>

Germany surrendered on November 11, 1918. The Paris Peace Conference convened between November 29, 1918 and March 13, 1919. A few months later, on June 28, 1919, the Versailles Peace Agreement was signed with Germany. It was then that deliberations began regarding the future of the Ottoman Empire.

Earlier, on December 11, 1918, Weizmann met again with Feisal in London. Apparently, this time the meeting was proposed by Balfour.<sup>142</sup> On January 3, 1919 an agreement was signed between Weizmann and Feisal, and it was agreed that the two parties would continue to meet.<sup>143</sup>

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**138** The truth of the matter is that it was an Australian cavalry brigade that first entered Damascus, on October 1, despite the decision by Allenby’s headquarters that Feisal’s troops would be the only ones to enter and occupy the city. Apparently, the British intended to put the Sykes–Picot Agreement to the test.

**139** On Feisal’s entry into Damascus, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 338–41.

**140** For the Syrian General Congress, see *ibid.*, 435–38; Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origin of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 125–29. At that time, Feisal also attended the peace conferences in France and England in order to try to influence them to reject a French mandate over Syria and recognize his rule in Damascus. To this end he was in all likelihood prepared to adopt a more flexible position on Zionist objectives if his demands concerning Syria would be accepted. This might explain why he was willing to meet with Weizmann, but France’s resolute position remained unchanged. I shall relate to this matter, and to Felix Frankfurter’s hopes that the agreement with Feisal would be implemented, in ch. 8, n. 4.

**141** See note 22 above.

**142** Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 621–51. Balfour advised Weizmann to meet with Feisal, and he did so, both in London and in Paris; see *ibid.*, 638–51.

**143** For the text of the Weizmann–Feisal Agreement, see Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, 437–39. On the agreement, see Yaacov Shimoni, *The Arabs in Palestine* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1947), 266–68 (Hebrew). Shimoni is of the opinion that at first the Arabs accepted the agreement, and only after it did not succeed did they develop their own separate Arab nationalism with the help of British officials and statesmen; see *ibid.*, 269–76. For the meetings of Weizmann with Feisal and the signing of the agreement, see Reinharz, *The Making of a Zionist Statesman*, 266–319, esp. 272–75. On the Arab question, see also Friesel, *Zionist Policy after the Balfour Declaration*.

### American involvement, the King-Crane Commission; the French mandate for Syria and the British Mandate for Palestine and Iraq; Feisal's expulsion from Syria, 1917–1920

The United States had entered World War I in April 1917 on the side of the Entente Powers, but without declaring war on Turkey. At war's end, when the idea of forming a League of Nations was raised, the United States was much involved in drafting its covenant. As early as January 8, 1918, in an address to the United States Congress, President Woodrow Wilson presented his ideas concerning the peace that should be established after the war. Towards the end of 1918, at the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson presented his fourteen-point plan, the basis for his idea to establish the League of Nations whose covenant was approved on April 28, 1919.

During the first stages of the conference, Wilson and his advisors were actively involved also with the Middle East peace arrangements.<sup>144</sup> It was then that other proposals were raised. For example, that the United States would participate in the political reshaping of the region and would agree to receive a mandate for certain areas in Armenia and the Kurdish populated territory that were previously part of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>145</sup> Wilson proposed sending a delegation to investigate the situation in the region and to ascertain the wishes of the populations with regard to their political future. Since the British and French objected to the proposal, in the summer of 1919 a decision was taken to send a commission comprised of American representatives alone, the King-Crane Commission. Its recommendations were very pro-Arab, among them to establish one large Arab state in the Middle East supervised by the British or the Americans, but definitely not under French supervision.<sup>146</sup> The idea was derived from Wilson's fourteen points which he also tried to have the League of Nations adopt. But Wilson was forced to leave the League of

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**144** For American involvement in the drafting of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and the discussions of Lloyd George and Clemenceau on the distribution of the mandates, see note 22 above. On the role of Smuts in drafting a formula for the mandates, especially the Palestine Mandate, see Joseph, *British Rule in Palestine*, 57–59.

**145** Stein notes that at first the idea of an American mandate did not come up at all, since the US did not participate in the war against Turkey. But when it was broached, it was deemed preferable to a French mandate, and the Americans considered the possibility of a joint mandate. However, Lloyd George and Balfour firmly maintained that the area would be only under British control and realized the advantage of ties with the Zionists so that Britain would not appear to be the sole ruler; Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 605–20.

**146** George Antonius (1892–1942), the author of *The Arab Awakening*, worked for the American millionaire Charles Crane, a member of the inquiry commission, and even dedicated his book to him. On Antonius, his views, book, and relationship with Crane, see Kaufman, "George Antonius."

Nations meetings due to ill health and returned to the United States. Thus came to an end American involvement with matters of the Middle East.<sup>147</sup>

Meanwhile, the concept of a Greater Syria headed by Feisal began gaining ground also among the Arabs in Palestine, the idea being that Palestine would become “Southern Syria.” On November 18, 1918, about a year after the Balfour Declaration, the Muslim-Christian Association was established in Palestine, apparently due also to fear of Zionism, but what lay behind its establishment was the concept of Greater Syria.<sup>148</sup> The younger generation of some of the leading Arab families in the country also supported the idea of Greater Syria. In fact, during 1919 and until mid-1920, this concept was accepted by the majority of Palestinian Arabs. At the First Palestinian Congress, convened in Jerusalem in January 1919, this line of thinking was introduced. It was also clearly presented in Arab testimonies before the King-Crane Commission in the summer of 1919. On March 7, 1920 the Syrian General Congress established by Feisal reconvened, and Feisal was declared king of Greater Syria.<sup>149</sup> The Arab world, including the Arab inhabitants of Palestine, celebrated the event. All the representatives from Palestine at the congress called for Syrian independence and for Palestine to be recognized as Southern Syria. Until the Nabi Musa procession of April 4, 1920, Palestinian Arab leaders hoped that a general revolt beginning in their country would bring about the annexation of Palestine to Syria.<sup>150</sup>

The French viewed Feisal’s actions as detrimental to their interests, as well as the British support of Feisal. They feared they would be pushed out of the Levant, despite the understandings between the two countries in the Sykes–Picot Agreement, and waited impatiently to receive the mandate for the territories designated in that

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**147** For Wilson’s role in the establishment of the King-Crane Commission, see Harry N. Howard, *The King-Crane Commission: An American Inquiry into the Middle East* (Beirut: Khayats, 1963), 31–34; Selig Adler, “The Palestine Question in the Wilson Era,” *Jewish Social Studies* 10 (1948): 324–27. See also Eliezer Tauber, “The King-Crane Commission in Palestine: A Syrian Memorandum,” *Cathedra* 69 (Sept. 1993): 122–32 (Hebrew). On America’s dwindling interest in and withdrawal from involvement in the Middle East, see John A. DeNovo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East, 1900–1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), 121–27.

**148** On the establishment of the Muslim-Christian Association in opposition to Zionism and as a reaction to the Balfour Declaration, see Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918–1929* (London: Clarke, Doble, 1974), 32–34. On the beginnings of Arab nationalism, see also Mustafa Kabha, *The Palestinians: A People Dispersed* (Ra’anana: Open University, 2010) (Hebrew). For a conversation between Musa Kazim al-Husseini and Menahem Ussishkin, see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 157–59.

**149** On the agreement of March 26, 1920 between the Syrian National Party (“the Nationalist Group in Syria and Lebanon”) and the Zionist movement, see Eliezer Tauber, “Agreement between the Syrian National Party and the Zionist Movement, March 1920,” *Cathedra* 97 (Sept. 2000): 149–56 (Hebrew); for the text of the agreement, see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 162–63.

**150** For the concept of “Southern Syria,” see Porath, *Emergence*, 79–85. On demonstrations and rioting in Palestine from February to April 1920, see *ibid.*, 96–98.



agreement from the League of Nations.<sup>151</sup> In the meantime, the Paris Peace Conference ended, during which agreements were signed between the victorious and defeated powers, including the Treaty of Versailles. The three prominent leaders at the conference were Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Wilson. It was there that the mandate system was adopted. In August 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed with the Ottoman Empire.<sup>152</sup> Thus, the path was set to the San Remo Conference, where it was planned that decisions would be made regarding the mandates in Africa and the Middle East, including Palestine.<sup>153</sup>

The Arabs, who objected to the agreement that began to take shape between the British and the French and their plan for mandates, wanted to send a delegation of their own from Damascus to try to change the decision, but the French refused to allow the delegation to leave. On April 25, 1920, even before the end of the overall peace conference, the meeting of the powers at San Remo approved the French mandate for all of Syria and the British mandate for Palestine and Iraq.<sup>154</sup> On July 14, 1920 French General Henri Gouraud presented Feisal with an ultimatum, demanding that he leave Damascus and vacate the city. Feisal obeyed the ultimatum. Simultaneously, the French launched an attack on his army and defeated it at Maysaloun. On July 28, 1920 Feisal left Syria altogether and moved into British territory. The pan-Arab vision of a greater Arab nation came to an end, and division of the Arab world into separate states began.<sup>155</sup>

Feisal later received a proposal to rule the kingdom of Iraq. There are those who attribute the proposal to Lawrence and the members of the Arab Bureau, while others doubt it.<sup>156</sup> Actually, this was a decision adopted only in March 1921 at the

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**151** The French were offended when Allenby appointed Feisal governor of Damascus. They knew that many British officers had connections with the Arab Bureau in Cairo and were committed to the Arabs; see Ehrlich, *Introduction*, 5:127–34.

**152** The Treaty of Sèvres was signed on Aug. 10, 1920. However, due to the Ataturk revolution, it was not ratified until the ceasefire agreement was concluded between the allied powers and Turkey at Mudania, near Bursa, in October 1922, to which Greece also became a partner. The agreement was finally ratified in Lausanne on July 24, 1923.

**153** For the Paris Peace Conference, its participants and major discussions, see Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (London: John Murray, 2002); Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 390–97.

**154** For the Arab struggle for Syria, see Ehrlich, *Introduction*, 5:87–92; on the Syrian government during the reign of Feisal, see Muslih, *Origin of Palestinian Nationalism*, 115–29.

**155** For the French reaction and the creation of Great Lebanon and Syria, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 438–39.

**156** After the war, Lawrence wrote much about the Arab revolt, thus contributing greatly to making the revolt part of the Arab national ethos; see Ehrlich, *Introduction*, 5:113–22. While Lawrence's books immortalized the Arab revolt, historians have reservations about the role that Feisal and the Arabs played in the Allied victory, as well as about the fame achieved by Lawrence, especially through the literary efforts of Lowell Thomas, an American writer and journalist; see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 497–98.

Cairo Conference headed by Churchill, then secretary of state for the colonies. In August 1921 a referendum was conducted in Iraq resulting in the appointment of Feisal to head the kingdom of Iraq. In 1925 Feisal promulgated an Iraqi constitution, and in 1930 an agreement was signed between Iraq and Britain, granting Iraq independence. In October 1932, a year before Feisal's death, Iraq was accepted as a member of the League of Nations.<sup>157</sup> Upon Feisal's expulsion from Damascus, his brother Abdullah organized a force to advance on Damascus. He arrived in Ma'an in Transjordan in November 1920, but then other developments occurred, which shall be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Exclusive British rule in Eretz Israel in the Mandate period and the disappearance of the other powers**

It is noteworthy that already at the beginning of the British Mandate period, the involvement in the country of the Christian churches and the Western powers greatly declined, and at times even completely disappeared. By contrast, during the period of Ottoman rule tsarist Russia had been much involved in the development of Jerusalem and Palestine. With the establishment of the Soviet Union, its contact with the Holy Land terminated. Russian pilgrims stopped coming and the Russian Orthodox Church ceased its building activity in the country. The Greek Orthodox Church, too, suffered greatly due to the war when Russia disappeared from the scene. The Church's financial crisis forced it to sell many plots it owned and to stop building.<sup>158</sup>

Germany, too, which had been one of the more active powers in the Holy Land before the war, greatly reduced its involvement, as did its protégé, the Lutheran Church. The main process it underwent was Arabization of its institutions.<sup>159</sup> France also avoided any special activity in Jerusalem and in the country during the Mandate

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**157** Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 507–10. One of Feisal's closest supporters was Nuri al-Sa'id (1888–1958) who came to Iraq with him, became prime minister, and was one of the founders of the Arab League. He was assassinated in July 1958 during the revolution in Iraq. On Feisal in Iraq, his initiatives as ruler, and Iraq in general until his death in 1933, see Yehoshua Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity, 1930–1945* (London: F. Cass, 1986), 1–22.

**158** On the financial crisis of the Greek Orthodox Church and the land of the Rehavia neighborhood, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The New Jewish Jerusalem during the Mandate Period: Neighborhoods, Houses, People* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2011), 1:223 (Hebrew) and the sources cited there.

**159** Loffer shows that the major process undergone by the German Protestant community during the Mandate period was one of Arabization, which later was also the lot of the Anglican Church in Palestine; see R. Loffer, "Religion and Nationalism in Mandatory Palestine: The Example of the German Protestant Diaspora and the Arab Protestant Missionary Congregations," manuscript, Marburg University.

period, and the only building it constructed was its consulate. After the war, when the Levant was divided between France and Britain, France concentrated its efforts within its mandated territories in Syria and Lebanon. It did, however, continue to look after the interests of its institutions in Palestine, mainly in Jerusalem.<sup>160</sup>

The Catholic Church was the major Christian body that continued operating in the country during the British Mandate. At the beginning of the period it was busy with impressive building operations. Towards the end of the Ottoman period, France functioned as the main patron of the Church and its activities were often related to French interests. When France was no longer active in Jerusalem, its place was taken by joint activity of the various Catholic factions, supported by the Holy See and Italy.

Italy's status was enhanced during the British Mandate period due to its having been Britain's ally and partner in World War I, and as a result of Mussolini's policy of colonialism in Africa and the East. The Italian Franciscan architect Antonio Barluzzi completed construction of the Italian hospital in Jerusalem that had begun before the war, while the Catholic Church of All Nations was consecrated in 1924 in Gethsemane and financed by Catholics from all over the world. Barluzzi also built the Franciscan Terra Santa College in Jerusalem and several other Franciscan structures.<sup>161</sup> The Italian De Farro Company was active in building the Rockefeller Museum, the Generali Building, and Government House in Jerusalem. Banco di Roma also established a branch in Jerusalem. However, all formal Italian activity in the city ceased during World War II. In June 1940 Italy joined the war against the Allies, thus becoming an enemy country, and all its assets in the country were confiscated by the British.

The policy of the Anglican Church also underwent change during the Mandate period. It had been very active in Jerusalem during the nineteenth century, at first in cooperation with the German Lutheran Church, but very much reduced its involvement during the Mandate period. Three English missionary societies operated in the city in the late Ottoman period, assisting the city's population by establishing clinics and hospitals, as well as educational and charity institutions. During the Mandate period, responsibility for these functions was transferred to the British Mandate government. In addition, British policy itself underwent a change. If

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**160** On France in late Mandate period Palestine, see Tsilla Hershco, *Entre Paris et Jérusalem: la France, le sionisme et la création de l'État d'Israël 1945–1949* (Paris: H. Champion, 2003). At the time there were some seventy French institutions in the country, about forty of them in Jerusalem, most of which had been established during the Ottoman period.

**161** On the architect Barluzzi and the buildings he designed in Palestine, see Masha Halevi, "The Terra Santa Building in Jerusalem: From Arab-Catholic University to a Franciscan College," in *Study of Jerusalem through the Ages*, ed. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh et al. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2015), 245–69 (Hebrew).

during the Ottoman period, British involvement stemmed from aspirations to penetrate into the East, now Britain ruled the entire country, including Jerusalem.<sup>162</sup>

Thus, the Western powers and the Christian churches to a great degree limited their activities in the country during the Mandate period. The Holy Land was now under the aegis of a European power, under a mandate awarded it by the League of Nations. The European political and military involvement that was characteristic of the Ottoman period had come to an end. The exclusivity of British control over the country was one of the characteristics of the period.

### **Summary: The Balfour Declaration, why it was issued and its importance**

Much has been written about the importance and significance of the Balfour Declaration. Nevertheless, when summing up this chapter, that addresses the beginning of the period of British rule in Eretz Israel, I also cannot refrain from focusing on the Balfour Declaration. I shall do so within the overall thesis of this book and discuss the six major factors related to events in the Middle East at the end of the Ottoman period and during World War I, factors which explain why the Balfour Declaration was issued and what were its consequences.

The first factor is the fact that the declaration was a result of the outbreak of World War I between the Central Powers, led by Germany, and the Entente powers, led by Britain, France, and Russia. Turkey joined the Central Powers three months after the war began. It is doubtful if the Balfour Declaration would have even been considered had there been no war. Ever since 1799 and the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt and Palestine, a real threat was posed to the continued existence of the Ottoman Empire. It was only due to the struggles between the Western powers, all of which aspired to gain control of the empire, that it was transformed into the “Sick Man on the Bosphorus.” To a great degree, most of the time it was the power of Great Britain that ensured the continued existence of the Ottoman Empire.

The establishment of a united Germany in 1870, headed by Chancellor Bismarck, and the war he initiated against France in 1871, instigated the beginnings of cooperation between France and Britain. In 1875, British Prime Minister Disraeli even succeeded in purchasing shares in the Suez Canal in full agreement with the French, and relations between France and Britain continued to grow close. A war broke out

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**162** Among the Anglican institutions in Jerusalem, an important role was played by St. George’s Cathedral, the central location of the British authorities and the local Anglican community for prayer and ceremonial occasions. See John H. Melkon Rose, *Armenians of Jerusalem: Memories of Life in Palestine* (London: Radcliffe, 1993), 65–66. The author’s father was a British soldier who arrived in Palestine during World War I, married a Jerusalem Armenian nurse, and lived there throughout the entire Mandate period.

in 1877–1878 between the Russians and the Ottomans over control of the Balkans. The Ottomans turned to the British who agreed to help, provided that the Turks cede the island of Cyprus to Britain. A secret agreement was signed between the two sides. In 1878 Bismarck proposed that Britain receive Egypt as part of a general dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, but the British rejected the offer.

In 1882 Britain, with the consent of France, decided to take over Egypt. It was decided that a British high commissioner would be stationed in Egypt and rule it, although Egypt would formally remain an Ottoman vilayet with a special status, ruled by the Muhammad 'Ali dynasty. On October 8, 1904 a treaty was signed between France and Britain stipulating that North Africa would remain under French rule and Britain would receive full control of Egypt.

During those years, Germany began strengthening its standing in the Ottoman Empire by providing financial assistance, building railway lines to Hejaz (to Mecca and Medina) and to Baghdad in Iraq, and by training the Ottoman military forces. As a result, three months after the war broke out Turkey joined the Central Powers. To the British, Turkish cooperation with the Central Powers was an act of betrayal after the great assistance they had provided Turkey throughout the nineteenth century. Prime Minister Asquith even declared in Parliament that the Ottoman Empire would live to regret its action. Great Britain set as an objective to bring about the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, even when the future of the empire was still unclear.

The second factor was the outbreak of the war which created the Triple Entente of Britain, France, and Russia. As early as March 18, 1915 Britain and France signed a joint agreement with Russia known as the "Constantinople Agreement." Russia was assured that after the Ottomans were defeated it would receive the greatest prizes of the war – Istanbul and the Dardanelles. During the first years of the war it was still unclear which side would gain the upper hand. On April 29, 1915 Italy joined the Entente powers and was promised the whole southern coast of Anatolia.

At the same time the British set up the De Bunsen Committee to deliberate and decide on the continuation of the fighting in the East and to plan the division of the Ottoman Empire after its defeat. On June 30, 1915 the report of the De Bunsen Committee was finalized; it included a detailed plan for division of the Ottoman Empire into seven provinces.

Around a year later, the Sykes–Picot committee, named after the two negotiators who headed it, began its deliberations. On May 16, 1916, they even signed an agreement which included the division of Turkey, confirmation of the Constantinople Agreement, and a proposal for the division of the Fertile Crescent between Britain and France. It should be noted that in all these agreements the idea or content of the Balfour Declaration was not mentioned at all. In December 1916 Lloyd George was appointed prime minister. He strongly believed that the Middle East should again be assigned a central role in British operations and that the Ottoman Empire should be defeated. However, important changes occurred in Russia and the United States in 1917 which led to other significant developments in the Middle East.

The third factor began in February 1917, when the “liberal revolution” broke out in Russia and began to affect the entire country. This was followed by the Bolshevik Revolution in October. By the beginning of November 1917, in the same week that the Balfour Declaration was issued, the Russian state collapsed. The Communists gained control of Petrograd (St. Petersburg). Negotiations then began between Russia and Germany which led to Russia’s withdrawal from the war and the signing of a separate peace treaty. Britain’s important ally had abandoned it; the entire Russian military force ceased to exist. All plans made with Russia were no longer valid and new plans were called for.

The fourth factor began taking shape even before the Bolshevik Revolution. In April 1917 the United States entered the war against the Central Powers in Europe but refrained from declaring war against Turkey. Morgenthau, the United States ambassador in Turkey, even raised the idea that Turkey should desert Germany and sign a separate peace treaty with the Entente Powers. American President Woodrow Wilson apparently gave Morgenthau his silent consent. Wilson also later supported independence for the local populations in the Middle East (see the discussion of the King-Crane Commission above). This totally conflicted with British interests, especially those of Lloyd George who aspired to defeat Turkey, and also those of the Zionist movement that had already foreseen what could result from the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The British even approached representatives of the Zionist movement with the request that they, too, should try to influence the Americans to give up the idea. In June 1917 Weizmann set out on a special mission to Gibraltar to meet with Morgenthau and persuade him to change his plan. Jabotinsky, who was active in recruiting Jews to serve in the British military forces, and Aaron Ahronsohn, who had a special standing in the United States, also intervened in this matter. Other Jewish American leaders, among them Louis Brandeis, came out against the idea, which was finally abandoned.

The fifth factor was the growing influence of Protestant Anglican millenarism in nineteenth-century Britain. Many scholars who wrote about the motives that led to the issuing of the Balfour Declaration connect it with the millenarist views held by leading British personages since the nineteenth century. Barbara Tuchman, in her book *The Bible and the Sword*, is a leading exponent of this opinion. These authors also ascribe millenarist views to some British wartime leaders. Quite clearly, this view is unacceptable. British and world leaders who supported the Balfour Declaration were not millenarists and their action was not the result of such theories. There is no doubt that they perceived the bond between the Jewish people and the land of their forefathers, for the Hebrew Bible – the Old Testament – was present in the homes of many of them. Churchgoing on Sundays, reading and studying the Bible, and the study of the unique historical geography of the Holy Land were a prominent part of life and education in Britain, and those made it easier to accept the view that the Zionist vision of the return of the Jews to their ancestral homeland was legitimate. Accordingly, the British were willing to assist the Jews more than were other nations, but no more than that.

The sixth factor is the growing strength of the Zionist movement in Britain, under the leadership of Weizmann, from the time World War I began. Perhaps this should have been the first on the list of factors, but it is also fitting to end with it. Though the Balfour Declaration was issued only in 1917, Weizmann had begun efforts towards that end a short while after the outbreak of the war, and many aided him in his extensive activity to obtain Britain's support for Zionist aspirations. In this chapter, I have presented his activities in detail and noted that apparently what Herzl failed to get from the Turkish sultan, a charter for Eretz Israel where the vision of a Jewish state would be realized, Weizmann succeeded in getting from Britain in the Balfour Declaration. I shall not trace once again the Zionist efforts, but it is important to note that in all previous British plans, in collaboration with Russia and France, the concept of a Jewish national home was not mentioned. It seems that the idea began to seem possible to a growing number of people in Britain only during the war, when all the other developments I noted had already taken place and a majority of Britain's leaders began to believe that the Zionist idea was deserving of realization.

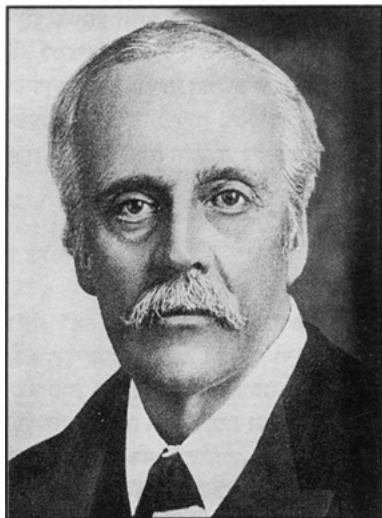
It would seem that the fact that until World War I and the Balfour Declaration Eretz Israel was not a political unit unto itself, but only a small part of the Ottoman Empire, helped the British and the supporters of the declaration to accept the fact that it would be possible, at least in small part, to restore the glory of the past and establish a national home for the Jewish people on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. At the time this was not considered to be in contradiction with thoughts of establishing one large pan-Arab state in the area of the Ottoman Empire. A separate Palestinian Arab entity did not yet exist. There was, however, a general Arab national entity at the time towards which the British had a commitment it intended to keep, but it firmly believed that this did not conflict with the idea that to the west of it would be a national home for the Jewish people, just as later Lebanon was established under the aegis of France as a state with a Christian majority to the west of Muslim Syria.

The great importance of the Balfour Declaration was its acceptance by the League of Nations, its incorporation in the Mandate for Palestine, and its ratification by all the global peace conferences, as will be discussed in the next chapter. The declaration was not created in haste. The debate regarding its inclusion in the British Mandate for Palestine went on for a decade. Immediately after the outbreak of World War I, members of the Zionist movement raised the possibility in discussions with British politicians. Discussions about the declaration continued even in the peace talks after the war and until the period of Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner, when it was confirmed in the first British White Paper (1922) – and later by the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Committee – but limited to the boundaries of western Palestine as determined during Herbert Samuel's tenure.

The important element in all these was the acceptance of the view that due to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Eretz Israel it was legitimate that the British Mandate there would be different from all other mandates approved



by the League of Nations, that it would enable providing a solution to the problem of the homeless and stateless Jewish people, and that it would be fitting and just for it to be created in its ancient historical homeland. The Arabs were unwilling to accept this view, and thus began the struggle for and against its implementation, which continued throughout the British Mandate period. From this perspective, the Balfour Declaration was the starting point of the Jewish–Arab struggle regarding its realization, and the Israeli War of Independence was the end point of that struggle, since its conclusion marked the final realization of the Balfour Declaration.



Arthur James Balfour.



Prime Minister David Lloyd George.



Chaim Weizmann.



Nahum Sokolow.



Ze'ev Jabotinsky.



Aaron Aaronsohn.



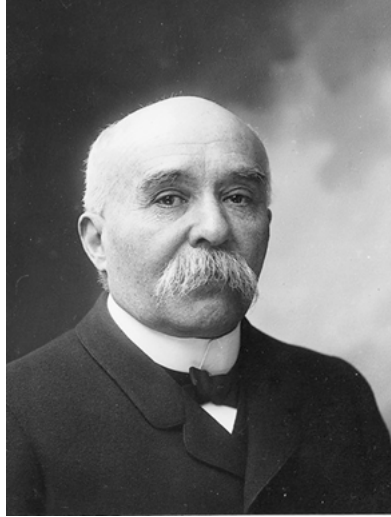
Mark Sykes.  
British statesman.



General Edmund Allenby.



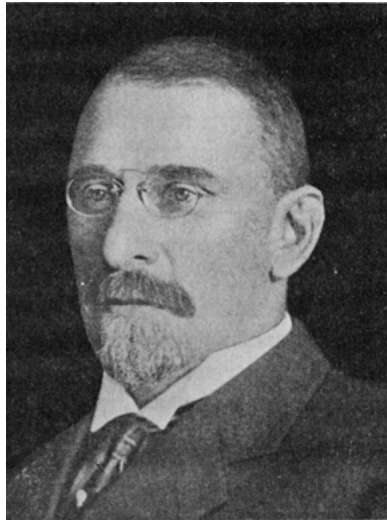
Woodrow Wilson.  
President of the United States.



Georges Clemenceau.  
French prime minister.



Louis Dembitz Brandeis.  
US Supreme Court justice.



Henry Morgenthau.  
US ambassador in Istanbul.



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Chapter 8: The peace conferences; developments  
in Eretz Israel under High Commissioner  
Herbert Samuel

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## Zionist activities at the peace conferences: Paris, London, and San Remo; confirmation of the Mandate

### The Paris conference, January 1919 to January 1920

At the end of World War I, it was still unclear what would happen in Eretz Israel and how firm was the basis upon which the Balfour Declaration rested. The British took advantage of the Declaration for propaganda purposes, but met with growing Arab opposition. In the local arena the Arabs were a more weighty factor than the Jews, especially in the eyes of the British intelligence and liaison officers charged with furthering relations with the Arab world. The military government, which was based on the principle of maintaining the status quo, took advantage of that principle to make no changes in the situation in the country.

Following the surrender of Germany, the first peace conference was convened in Paris to debate the future of the postwar world.<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, the first peace agreement between the Central powers (led by Germany) and the Entente Powers (Britain, France, Italy, and the United States). In preparation for the first peace conference, the Zionist movement was requested to submit its proposals. A “consulting committee” was established in October 1918, headed by Herbert Samuel, to assist the Zionist leadership. The committee also included non-Zionists from among supporters of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>2</sup> Samuel was the committee’s driving force and the central figure in providing ideas for the implementation of the Declaration. He sought to form a legal framework for Zionist action and to create a special body that would represent the Jewish people (“the Jewish Council”), which would replace the Zionist Commission that had been established by the British government and was already in the country. Finally, the “Jewish Agency” was established and later included in paragraph 4 of the Mandate for Palestine. On December 4, 1918 Weizmann met with Lord Balfour and came to an agreement with him regarding the points that would be raised by the Jewish representatives at the

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<sup>1</sup> An interesting description of Nov. 11, 1918, the day on which the armistice agreement with Germany was signed, is provided by Tolkowsky: “The armistice was signed today at 5 AM. London was much excited. Enthusiasm in Paris was even greater. Today Weizmann dined with Lloyd George in the company of C.P. Scott. Lloyd George said that he was convinced, more than ever before, that Palestine must be in British hands . . . Luckily, Clemenceau takes no interest in Palestine.” Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*, 381–82. For more about Lloyd George on Armistice Day, see note 36 below.

<sup>2</sup> Cooperation with non-Zionist Jews, an idea with which Herbert Samuel was much involved, was most important, for the Balfour Declaration was addressed to the Jewish people. This understanding is what led, in 1929, to the establishment of the “enlarged Jewish Agency,” a step that Weizmann greatly supported but which Jabotinsky and his followers vehemently opposed. See Menahem Kaufman, *An Ambiguous Partnership: Non-Zionists and Zionists in America 1939–1948* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991), 27–28. See also ch. 9, nn. 68, 71.

peace conference. On January 19, 1919 a group representing other Zionists convened and drafted more extreme proposals that the British were unwilling to accept, after which Samuel took upon himself preparation of a new draft. On February 3, 1919 a Zionist document was submitted to the peace conference, which the British agreed would serve as the basis for formulation of the text of the Mandate. During 1919 and 1920, a memo on the Mandate was drafted after lengthy negotiations and titled “Statement of the Zionist Organization Regarding Palestine.” The memo had two parts: the first included proposals to the peace conference; i.e., fundamental acknowledgement of the historical right of the Jewish people to Eretz Israel, its preferred borders, and a demand to place the Mandate in British hands to guarantee the foundation of the Jewish national home. Part two was designated for the Mandate power and specified terms for rule by the Mandate government.

In the meantime, in February 1919 the first postwar Zionist conference was also convened. The Zionist Actions Committee approved the transfer of Zionist headquarters from Berlin to London. It was then that Weizmann acquired the status of leader of the Zionist movement, although he still had opponents among the Russian Zionists, as well as American Zionists. The main issues debated by the Zionist Actions Committee were the essence of relations with the British, the Arabs, and the Jewish people in the diaspora, especially the Jewish non-Zionists. All these were discussed bearing in mind the Mandate that was about to be established.<sup>3</sup>

The Actions Committee had to approve the proposals submitted to the peace conference. A Jewish delegation was required to appear at the conference before the “Big Five,” the victorious powers: Britain, France, Italy, the United States, and Japan. Weizmann explained the term “national home,” saying that Jewish immigration would bring with it a Jewish culture which would shape a clearly Jewish Eretz Israel, just as England was English and France was French. This definition reflected Zionist propaganda throughout the period. In the “White Paper” of 1922, the British declared this to be unacceptable; however the Zionists continued to espouse it throughout the entire Mandate period. The Jewish delegation was pleased by the result of the conference. Felix Frankfurter, the Jewish American representative, even foresaw the prospects for an agreement with the Arabs following the agreement signed between Weizmann and Emir Feisal on January 1, 1919, mediated by T.E. Lawrence who accompanied the Arab delegation to the Paris peace conference.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion of these matters, see Yigal Elam, “Political History, 1918–1922,” in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The British Mandate Period, Part 1*, ed. Moshe Lissak (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 1993), 139–64 (Hebrew).

<sup>4</sup> Felix Frankfurter (1882–1965), who was later to serve as a Supreme Court justice in the US, was drawn to Zionism by Louis D. Brandeis. For his strong opposition to Morgenthau’s proposal for a separate peace treaty between the US and Turkey, see ch. 7, n. 78. In 1919 he represented American Zionists at the Paris peace conference and was a member of the Zionist delegation that appeared

The Paris peace conference, whose representatives began to assemble at the end of November 1918, was formally opened in January 1919. The conference continued for a whole year and was officially concluded in January 1920. The delay in reaching its decisions was a result of the peace agreement negotiated with Turkey. During the first six months of 1919 it became clear that the peace issues with Turkey were complex, due to fundamental differences of opinion between Britain and France, as well as American President Woodrow Wilson's hesitancy regarding the mandate system. However, at the end of April 1919 the Covenant of the League of Nations was confirmed, its clause 22 establishing the mandate system on which the Arabs later based themselves in their objections to the Balfour Declaration. There were also British personages who began to raise doubts regarding the justice of the Balfour Declaration, mainly members of the military serving in Palestine. With the support of Lord Balfour and others, it was decided to delay the final decision regarding Palestine until the peace treaty with Turkey was finally formulated. Britain repeatedly emphasized its strong commitment to the Balfour Declaration and its contents. Balfour even issued a special memorandum on August 11, 1919 explaining the doubt that had arisen and calling for advancement of the obligations towards Zionism. It was then decided that the British representatives at the conference would negotiate with their Zionist counterparts to agree on the text of the Mandate document. American Zionists tried to present a proposal of their own for the draft, but the more veteran Zionists rejected it. It was decided that the organization representing the Jewish people would be named the Jewish Agency, and not the Jewish Council.<sup>5</sup>

During the first half of 1919 President Wilson was very much involved at the peace conference, including on the subject of the Middle East, and he even sent a committee of his own to check the situation there – the King-Crane Commission, but in the end its conclusions were ignored. American public opinion began opposing President Wilson's conception of the role America should play in the new world order. Towards the end of 1919 it was already clear to the powers involved that America intended to cease its involvement with the peace treaty with Turkey, and that there was no prospect of its cooperation on the issue. In 1919–1920 Wilson suffered a stroke and gradually withdrew from political activities until his death in

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before the Council of Ten at the Versailles conference on Feb. 23, 1919; see Frankfurter, *Felix Frankfurter Reminisces*, 154–64. Shortly after that he received a letter from Feisal. For the Feisal–Weizmann agreement of Jan. 3, 1919, see ch. 7, n. 143; for the text of the correspondence between Feisal and Frankfurter, see Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 144–45; Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 149–51 (docs. 10, 11). For selections from an interview on Palestine and the Jews by Feisal to the *Jewish Chronicle*, Oct. 3, 1919, see *ibid.*, 153–57 (doc. 13); see also ch. 7, n. 131. For an interview with Feisal and 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi in the Carlton Hotel in London on Oct. 19, 1919, see *ibid.*, 159–62 (doc. 15).

<sup>5</sup> Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 652–56; *id.*, *Weizmann and the Balfour Declaration*.

1924. At the beginning of 1920 it was decided to hold a peace conference with Turkey in London, without American participation.<sup>6</sup>

### **The San Remo Peace Conference; confirmation of the Mandate, April 24, 1920**

A positive change in the British position was felt during the final months of 1919. On October 8, 1919 Weizmann again traveled to Eretz Israel and a new Zionist Commission was established there, headed by Ussishkin. The tension between members of the New Yishuv and the Old Yishuv continued, as did the need to collect monies for the Jewish community in Eretz Israel. Weizmann proposed that the British send a commission to the country, headed by Samuel, to determine the guidelines for the future civilian administration. Samuel arrived in January 1920, after Weizmann had already returned to London. In the meantime, the situation in the country began to deteriorate, including the fall of Yosef Trumpeldor and his fellow defenders in Tel Hai in the Galilee.<sup>7</sup> Changes also occurred in the composition of the British committee dealing with the peace treaties. Though Lord Balfour had resigned from the government, he continued to participate in the London and the San Remo conferences. On October 24, 1919 he was replaced as foreign secretary by Lord Curzon, who had previously served as the Viceroy of India and had not been supportive of Zionism. Yet, upon his appointment as foreign secretary he saw it his duty to stand forthrightly behind official British government policy. Great Britain demanded to receive the Mandate for Palestine in order to implement the Balfour Declaration, and continued to apply pressure for such formal confirmation by its main allies in the wording of the peace treaty with Turkey. After Samuel returned from his visit to Palestine, he wrote a memorandum regarding British administration of the country after confirmation of the Mandate. To some degree, this memorandum served as the basis for the first “White Paper” of 1922.<sup>8</sup> Yet, it is important to bear in mind that the central figure in all the peace conferences was Prime Minister Lloyd George, who led the great

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<sup>6</sup> The very fact that President Wilson endorsed sending the King-Crane Commission is further proof that Morgenthau’s mission to sign a separate peace treaty with Turkey was with his knowledge. As for the King-Crane Commission, two assistants to the commission wrote separate reports that disagreed with its conclusions. See ch. 7, nn. 146–47, esp. the article by Selig Adler.

<sup>7</sup> Elam, “Political History,” 181–93. Much has been written about the Tel Hai incident of Mar. 1, 1920. For a detailed study, see Nakdimon Rogel, *Tel-Hai: Frontline without a Rear* (Tel Aviv: Hadar, 1979) (Hebrew). For a short description, see Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*, 122–26; Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 177–78. See also *History of the Haganah*, 1,2:558–65 which also refers to the controversy that arose over holding on to Tel Hai, to which Jabotinsky was opposed in contrast to the positive stand of members of Gedud Ha’avodah (Labor Battalion). Some historians are critical of such an interpretation.

<sup>8</sup> Elam, “Political History,” 165–80. On Curzon, see note 10 below.

victory in World War I. His personal traits, his views on Zionism, and his deeds as prime minister of Great Britain from the time of his appointment in 1916 and onwards have been discussed in the previous chapter.

Disagreements arose during the Versailles peace conference between Clemenceau, Wilson, and Lloyd George regarding the peace terms to be dictated to Germany. Clemenceau was the most extreme since France had suffered greatly in the war against Germany and was now presented with unacceptable conditions for the peace treaty. Woodrow Wilson stood on the other side of the fence. Lloyd George tried to mediate between them, hoping that when the discussion moved on to British interests, France would join with him. Indeed, later an agreement emerged for cooperation between Lloyd George and Clemenceau.<sup>9</sup>

However, in December 1918 there was a change of government in France. The incoming government raised new demands, including in the Levant, mainly in preparation for the London conference planned for February 1920. The French renewed their readiness to support a British Mandate in Palestine and Iraq on condition that Britain would support their Mandate in Syria and Lebanon. It was finally agreed, as Lord Curzon had decided, that France would receive a Mandate for Syria and Britain for Palestine and Mesopotamia.<sup>10</sup>

With regards to Syria, the French succeeded in realizing their demands even though they had hoped for more. As for Palestine, they continued to explore the option of shared control of Jerusalem, mainly the holy sites, claiming that the issue of the holy sites should be left for separate negotiations, not as part of the peace treaty with Turkey. They also tried to enlist the help of the Vatican and its unique historical and religious connection to these sites. When Lloyd George declared that there was no place for an empire within an empire, the French decided to leave the issue for the next conference. However, agreement that the mandate for Palestine would be given to the British was already reached in London, although the Balfour Declaration, confirmation of the mandate, and other details of the final peace treaty with Turkey were not discussed. It was decided to defer these issues to another conference planned to be held in Italy. San Remo was chosen as the location. On April 18, 1920 the plenary session of the “High Contracting Parties” convened. As the San Remo Conference also dealt with issues unrelated to the question of Palestine, that subject was addressed only on April 24. Again, a battle was waged regarding the French demand for a special authority to govern the holy sites and protect the rights of the various religious factions, with the understanding that France would not

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<sup>9</sup> Like Lloyd George in England, Clemenceau was chosen to head the government of France during the war, in November 1917; see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 231–38, with a short summary of America’s entry into the war. On Wilson and his personal style of writing, see *ibid.*, 253–62.

<sup>10</sup> Curzon served as Viceroy of India for seven years since 1898, and was opposed to the ideas raised by the Zionist movement. He returned to England in 1905. In 1919 he replaced Balfour as foreign secretary, holding that office until 1924; see Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 655–56.

demand any such rights for itself. The negotiations ended in compromise. Lloyd George agreed that the Mandate administration, not the League of Nations, would appoint a special commission, whose chairperson would be appointed with the assistance of the League, to deal with issues and demands related to the religious communities. In return, the French agreed to Lloyd George's demand that the peace treaty with Turkey would include the Balfour Declaration. On April 24, 1920 the San Remo Conference confirmed the British Mandate for Palestine.<sup>11</sup>

On July 7, 1920, after Samuel set out for Eretz Israel to serve as its first British High Commissioner, the first large Zionist conference with the participation of American Zionists was convened in London. A large delegation of American Zionists was headed by Louis Brandeis. There was much sharp debate at the conference. Brandeis was offered and turned down the post of president of the World Zionist Organization, and thus Weizmann's candidacy received full support.<sup>12</sup>

## **Jewish activity: the Zionist Commission, Yishuv institutions, Zionist leadership**

### **Organization of the Yishuv in the southern part of the country; arrival of the Zionist Commission**

In the late Ottoman period there was no organized Zionist activity sanctioned by the government, and the rift between the Old Yishuv and the New Yishuv was deep. With the advent of British rule in the southern part of Palestine, the Zionist movement began operating in the country. The activity of the Old Yishuv population decreased in Jerusalem while that of the Zionist movement increased. This was the result of two central elements: the first, the crisis experienced by the Old Yishuv during the war, especially in Jerusalem, and the second, the growing strength of the Zionist movement.<sup>13</sup>

After the eviction of the Jews of Jaffa-Tel Aviv in April 1917, Dr. Jacob Thon, the acting head of the Zionist Palestine Office, and Eliezer Siegfried Hoofien, the acting director of the Anglo-Palestine Bank, moved to Jerusalem. Hoofien cooperated with

<sup>11</sup> On all these, see *ibid.*, 657–63 and the sources cited there.

<sup>12</sup> Relations between Brandeis and Weizmann were very complex. During the early stage of his diplomatic efforts, Weizmann traveled to America to gain Brandeis' support for the proposed British declaration so that he would use his influence with President Wilson, with whom he was in close touch. For the Brandeis–Weizmann controversy, see George L. Berlin, “The Brandeis–Weizmann Dispute,” in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 337–68; Ben Halpern, *A Clash of Heroes: Brandeis, Weizmann, and American Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>13</sup> Ben-Arieh, “Major Changes” and the sources cited there, see esp. 436–37 in the conclusion.

the Spanish consul, who served as the head of a committee to assist the Jews in Eretz Israel and represented the United States and other European powers in Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> Following the Balfour Declaration, the Zionist movement speedily organized in Jerusalem.

Immediately after the British conquest of southern Palestine, the Zionist movement set out to organize self-leadership bodies within the Jewish community in that part of the country, including Jerusalem. Organization of the Jerusalem community was of the utmost importance for two main reasons: the importance of Jerusalem, and the size of its community, accounting for over half the Jewish population in the country at the time.<sup>15</sup>

On February 24, 1918, even before the arrival of the Zionist Commission from London, a group of leading Jewish residents of Jerusalem took first steps to establish the Municipal Council of Jerusalem Jews. After a month of preparations, in March 1918 elections were held for the council. Around 3,000 male Jewish residents participated in the elections out of the 28,000 Jews living in the city. In reaction to the Council of Jerusalem Jews, a United Rabbinical Council was also founded, which mainly included representatives of the Ashkenazi Orthodox community in Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup>

On January 2–3, 1918 the First Constituent Assembly of the Jews in Eretz Israel convened in Jaffa. Since personages from the Jerusalem Jewish community did not attend the assembly, Jerusalem was represented solely by Thon and Dr. Nissan Turov, representatives of the Zionist movement who resided in Jerusalem. A “Temporary Committee of the Jews of Eretz Israel in the Occupied Territory” comprised of thirty-six members was chosen at this assembly. The Temporary Committee was charged with

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**14** Thon was Arthur Ruppin’s deputy in the Palestine Office. After Ruppin was exiled to Istanbul in 1916 and was out of the country until the spring of 1920, Thon filled in for him and was very active in Yishuv institutions. For the beginnings of the Yishuv’s organizational structure immediately after the war, see Anita Shapira, “The Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine, 1918–1939,” in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The British Mandate Period, Part 2*, ed. Moshe Lissak, Anita Shapira, and Gavriel Cohen (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 1994), 2–15 (Hebrew). See also Eliezer Siegfried Hoofien, *Report of Mr. S. Hoofien to the Joint Distribution Committee of the American Funds for Jewish War Sufferers . . .* (New York, [1918]; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1977).

**15** For population statistics of Jews in Jerusalem and Eretz Israel, see previous chapters. On the establishment of the Municipal Committee of the Jews of Jerusalem in 1918, which in time was called Va’ad Hakehillah (the Communal Committee), see Kobi Cohen-Hattab, “Jerusalem’s Va’ad Hakehila during the British Rule in Palestine, 1917–1948,” *Journal of Israeli History* 17 (1996): 301–15. See also Moshe Burstein, *Self-government of the Jews in Palestine since 1900* (Tel Aviv, 1934), 190.

**16** On the steps taken to organize the traditional Orthodox community in Jerusalem, see Menachem Friedman, “The First Confrontation between the Zionist Movement and Jerusalem Orthodoxy after the British Occupation (1918),” in *Zionism: Studies in the History of the Zionist Movement and of the Jewish Community in Palestine*, ed. Daniel Carpi and Gedalia Yogev (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and Massada, 1975), 103–26.



arranging general elections in the Yishuv in order to establish a constituent assembly, which would choose the administrative institutions of the Yishuv.<sup>17</sup>

Simultaneously with the steps taken by the Jews of Eretz Israel and Jerusalem, important activity by the Zionist Organization was also initiated in London. As noted, on November 6, 1917, immediately following the Balfour Declaration, Weizmann proposed sending a Zionist delegation to Eretz Israel. On January 19, 1918 the idea was approved by the British government which, together with leading Zionists in London, established the Zionist Commission to Eretz Israel. The Commission was to serve as the representative of the Zionist Organization in the country and advise the military administration on all matters pertaining to the Jewish community, and thus could influence the establishment of the national home promised in the Balfour Declaration. After disagreements regarding the aims of the delegation, its composition and activities in Eretz Israel, it finally set out in March 1918.<sup>18</sup> Before it left, Weizmann met with King George V to receive his approval. Among the members of the delegation were a political liaison officer to the British government, Major William George Ormsby-Gore, later the secretary of state for the colonies, and Major James de Rothschild, son of Edmond de Rothschild.<sup>19</sup>

Upon its arrival in Egypt, the delegation met with General Allenby, Wyndham Deedes – one of the heads of the British administration in Egypt, and others, among them leading Arabs.<sup>20</sup> James de Rothschild remained in Egypt for a time, while the rest of the delegation set out for Eretz Israel, arriving there at the beginning of April.<sup>21</sup>

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**17** For the preparatory assembly of the Jews in Eretz Israel and the Constituent Assembly, see Burstein, *Self-government*, 89–91; Eliakim Rubinstein, “From Yishuv to State: Institutions and Political Parties,” in *The Jewish National Home from the Balfour Declaration to Independence*, ed. Binyamin Eliav (Jerusalem: Keter, 1976), 152–53 (Hebrew).

**18** On the journey of the Zionist Commission on its way to Eretz Israel, see Chapter Seven, after n. 84 in the text; see also Reinharz, *The Making of a Statesman*, 213–65; Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 188–205. For the period of the Zionist Commission’s activity (Mar. 6–Nov. 25, 1918), see also in the index to Tolkowsky, *Zionist Political Diary*. Tolkowsky himself was not a member of the Commission and remained in London until his return to Eretz Israel on Oct. 31, 1919.

**19** On Ormsby-Gore, see ch. 7, n. 133. See also Bentwich, *Mandate Memories*, 29. In the early Mandate years he was also active in the Palestine Exploration Fund and participated in its meetings in London; see Ben-Arieh, “Non-Jewish Institutions – Part 1,” 139. On James de Rothschild see ch. 7, n. 52. During the sojourn of the Zionist Commission, relations between him and Weizmann took a turn for the worse, probably over questions of authority. These were later rectified and James and his wife Dorothy became important supporters of Israel in Great Britain.

**20** Deedes later served as chief secretary of the Government of Palestine when Herbert Samuel was High Commissioner, and held pro-Zionist views. On Deedes, see Bernard Wasserstein, *Wyndham Deedes in Palestine* (London: The Anglo-Israel Association, 1973).

**21** On the Zionist Commission, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 265–99; Rubinstein, “From Yishuv to State,” 137–40; Elam, “Political History,” 142–52; Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 2–15; Alex Bein, *The Return to the Soil: A History of Jewish Settlement in Israel* (Jerusalem: Youth and Hechalutz Department of the Zionist Organization, 1952), 179–89. For the activity of the Commission in Jerusalem, see Lavsky, “Zionist Commission.” Documents relating to

A week after their arrival they traveled to Jerusalem. The arrival of the Zionist Commission headed by Weizmann was an impressive event in Jerusalem, viewed by some as the arrival of the “president of the Jews” to the capital city of Eretz Israel. In Jerusalem, Weizmann delivered important political speeches and even presided over momentous public gatherings, the aim of which was to strengthen the status of the Zionist movement in the country and throughout the world.<sup>22</sup>

In Jerusalem, the Zionist Commission also met with Ronald Storrs, the military governor of the city, and with Arab personalities.<sup>23</sup> Weizmann turned to the military administration with many requests. He asked that the Zionist leadership receive the Auguste Victoria hospice on Mount Scopus to serve as the Zionist headquarters. He also asked that his movement receive the railway line from Jaffa to Jerusalem as a means to bring Jewish immigrants to the city, and Jerusalem’s German Colony as a residential area for Jews.<sup>24</sup> However, the military administration rejected his requests, claiming that enemy properties cannot be discussed before the final status of Palestine was determined.<sup>25</sup>

Another of Weizmann’s aspirations was the purchase of the Wailing Wall in order to turn it into a Jewish national asset. His attempt failed, as did its predecessors.<sup>26</sup> Later, the Zionist Commission was active in restoration of other historical-religious sites in Jerusalem, such as the Tomb of Simeon the Righteous and the Tombs of the Sanhedrin. It was also involved in assistance to educational institutions in the city, the development of general cultural institutions, allocation of funds for a town hall, the opening of a school of music, organization of the Maccabi sport group, and the Bezalel School of Art.<sup>27</sup>

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the Zionist Commission are reproduced in Isaiah Friedman, ed., *The Zionist Commission in Palestine, 1918*, Rise of Israel, 9 (New York: Garland, 1987). On Weizmann’s expectations concerning the status of the Commission, see Friesel, *Zionist Policy after the Balfour Declaration*, 38–56, 97–114. **22** For details, see Lavsky, “Zionist Commission” and the sources cited there.

**23** On meetings of Weizmann and the Zionist Commission with Arab personalities in Cairo, and later in Jerusalem, see Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 130–39.

**24** Elam notes that Weizmann thought that the Zionist Commission would be able to lead the military authorities to acquiesce in his plans, but all his requests were refused; see Elam, “Political History,” 142–44.

**25** On the Zionist Commission, see also Gideon Biger, “British and Jewish Policies and Activity in the Development of Jerusalem, 1918–1925” (MA thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1974), 42 (Hebrew); Lavsky, “Zionist Commission,” 181–82. It is interesting that in the certificate of authorization issued by the British to the Commission no mention is made of aliyah and additional issues. More than likely, this was due to the fact that Palestine was then under military rule and the status quo must be maintained.

**26** Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1:374–75; Lavsky, “Zionist Commission,” 178–79. For more details, see Ben-Arieh, “Efforts for Preservation and Planning.”

**27** Lavsky, “Zionist Commission,” 179–80. There is an interesting correlation between the development of cultural institutions by the Zionist Commission and the Pro-Jerusalem Society; for the latter, see ch. 7, n. 113.

At first, the members of the Zionist Commission did not want to reside in Jerusalem, preferring Jaffa-Tel Aviv, where the Palestine Office had previously been located. But in May 1919 it was decided to move to Jerusalem, where the Zionist Commission set up offices in a building on Jaffa Street opposite the present-day Municipal Garden. With this step the Commission decided in effect that Jerusalem would be the capital city of the Zionist Executive in Eretz Israel.<sup>28</sup>

Other Zionist institutions established in the country made Jerusalem their home, at first in temporary quarters whose rent was mostly paid to non-Jewish property owners, causing much rancor among the city's Jews. In 1924 these institutions were temporarily housed in the German Colony and elsewhere, and in 1925 moved to the new Ben-Yehuda Street, where this time rent was paid to Jewish landlords.<sup>29</sup>

One of the main initial activities of the Zionist Commission was the organization of a general election for authorized representation of the Yishuv that would cooperate with the British administration towards realization of the British Mandate for Palestine. Meanwhile, the "Temporary Committee" chosen by the First Constituent Assembly in Jaffa in December 1917 continued to operate. During this assembly, it had been decided that a Second Constituent Assembly would be convened in the summer of 1918. The Zionist Commission joined in organizing that assembly with the objective of setting the procedures for election of a third constituent assembly which would then constitute the parliament of Eretz Israel's Jews that would choose a permanent leadership for the Yishuv. Two local organizations from Jerusalem were invited to participate in the Second Constituent Assembly, the Council of Jerusalem Jews and the United Rabbinical Council, but only representatives of the first arrived, while the United Rabbinical Council was content with sending a letter.<sup>30</sup>

A central issue raised in the Assembly was the franchise for women. The Orthodox community and some secular representatives were averse to the issue and were vehemently criticized by Weizmann. The Orthodox faction was especially opposed. Another question in dispute was the future seat of the elected Yishuv institutions. The Jerusalemites proposed their city due to its historical past and importance for the Jewish people, while those from Jaffa-Tel Aviv proposed Jaffa, the center of the new Yishuv, as a temporary location. In the end, Jerusalem won out.<sup>31</sup>

On December 20, 1918 the Third Constituent Assembly convened in Jaffa under the name "the Jewish Eretz Israel Council." At this assembly, it was conclusively decided to grant voting rights to women. In addition, it was resolved to conduct

<sup>28</sup> Lavsky, "Zionist Commission," 182; Rubinstein, "From Yishuv to State," 137–40.

<sup>29</sup> *Do'ar Hayom*, July 1, 1924, Oct. 27, 1924, Mar. 18, 1925, noted in Biger, "British and Jewish Policies," 42.

<sup>30</sup> For the Second Constituent Assembly, see Burstein, *Self-government*, 92–95; Rubinstein, "From Yishuv to State," 153.

<sup>31</sup> Attias, ed., *Documents of the National Committee*. On women's suffrage, see Burstein, *Self-government*, 85–87, 91–92, 234–35; Shapira, "Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine," 3–7.

general elections in the Yishuv for the establishment of “Knesset Yisrael” that would operate in the country in collaboration with the Zionist Commission and with its assistance.<sup>32</sup>

In the meantime, the Zionist Commission continued aiding the Jewish population in Jerusalem. It took the General City Council under its wing and helped finance its activities. In agreement with the local council, it took care of education and employment, and these matters were removed from the responsibility of the city council.<sup>33</sup> The Zionist Commission collected all contributions for Jerusalem’s Jews and handled the continued distribution of the funds, mainly arriving from America through the Zionist movement. Though most of the money was distributed to the poor, there were also attempts to use it to create productive sources of livelihood. In addition, the Zionist Commission dealt with day-to-day matters, and together with the British administration initiated a water sewage system for the northern neighborhoods of Me’ah She’arim and Beit Yisrael. The Council, for its part, looked after tree planting in the city, mainly in the neighborhoods where greenery was lacking.<sup>34</sup>

### **Laying the foundations for the Hebrew University; unification of the Palestine Office with the Zionist Commission; from Zionist Commission to Zionist Executive**

An important project of the Zionist movement, in which the Zionist Commission was very much involved, was laying the foundations for the Hebrew University. The British administration believed in the principle of maintaining the status quo ante bellum, and the frontline at this time was only ten kilometers north of Jerusalem along the two-‘Auja line. Despite all this, on July 24, 1918 the cornerstone laying ceremony for the Hebrew University was conducted on Mount Scopus, on plots purchased by Zionist Organization representatives before the war. Weizmann managed to return from his meeting with Feisal in Ma’an, today in southern Jordan, in time to participate in the ceremony.<sup>35</sup>

A month later, in August 1918, the attack by the British Egyptian Expeditionary Force in northern Palestine was renewed. The Ottoman Empire began its final collapse; on October 30, 1918 it requested a cease-fire, and in effect surrendered. Weizmann returned to London in October. On November 11, 1918, the day the war

<sup>32</sup> On the Third Constituent Assembly, see Attias, ed., *Documents of the National Committee*, 15–19; Friedman, *Society and Religion*, 80–81.

<sup>33</sup> For details, see Lavsky, “Zionist Commission,” 170–76; Cohen-Hattab, “Jerusalem’s Va’ad Hakehila,” 307.

<sup>34</sup> Ben-Arieh, “Efforts for Preservation and Planning”; *Do’ar Hayom*, Dec. 3, 1919, noted in Biger, “British and Jewish Policies,” 45.

<sup>35</sup> Lavsky, “Zionist Commission,” 180–81; Elam, “Political History.” For the cornerstone laying ceremony, see Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 233–34.

with Germany ended, a meeting was set for Weizmann with Lloyd George in his office at 10 Downing Street in London. Arriving there, Weizmann found Lloyd George reading Psalms of thanksgiving for the victory.<sup>36</sup>

In 1919, world famous urban architect Professor Patrick Geddes arrived in Jerusalem, at the invitation of the Zionist Organization, to plan the Hebrew University compound. His plan envisaged it as the “spiritual temple” of the Jewish people rising anew in the land of its forefathers, facing the Old City, affected by it and reflecting upon it. As a result of funding issues and other problems, construction of the university was delayed. It was inaugurated only on April 1, 1925 in a festive ceremony to be discussed below. However, the cornerstone had been laid, and Geddes’ plans were already completed in 1919–1920.<sup>37</sup>

Towards the end of 1919, upon Ussishkin’s appointment as head of the Zionist Commission and Ruppin’s return to the country after a few years of forced exile abroad, the Zionist Commission and the Palestine Office of the Zionist Organization, established in 1908, were united and became one.<sup>38</sup> The Zionist Commission operated in the country for three years, but its membership changed. In addition to Ussishkin, also active were David Eder, who was responsible for the political department and also served as a sort of personal representative of Weizmann, and Ruppin, who returned to the country from his exile in the spring of 1920.<sup>39</sup>

The Zionist Commission also initiated the establishment of the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem after the office of Hakham Bashi ceased to exist with the end of Ottoman rule in the country. In 1919, upon the initiative of the Zionist Commission, the “Chief Rabbinate for the People of Israel in Jerusalem” was established, comprised of eight rabbis, half of them Sefardi and half of them Ashkenazi, headed by Rabbi Hayyim Moshe Eliachar. The Rabbinate budget was funded by the Zionist Commission. The British military administration recognized the new organization,

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**36** Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 298; Friedman, “The Question of Palestine during World War I,” 21–30, who reports that Lloyd George also told Weizmann that he was brought up on the Bible and on George Adam Smith’s book and atlas on the geographical history of Palestine, and that he is more familiar with the place names mentioned in the Bible than with those in Wales, the country of his birth. On Smith’s book and atlas, see ch. 2, nn. 70 and 111. I noted there, in the text preceding n. 111, that General Allenby had two books in his knapsack as his troops advanced on Jerusalem: the Bible and the work by Smith.

**37** On the establishment of the university and its inauguration ceremony, see Norman Bentwich, *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 1918–60* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), 11–26.

**38** Ussishkin arrived in the country in late 1919. For a few years his relations with Weizmann were excellent, but later he was one of the sharpest critics of Weizmann’s moderate policy. For a biography of Ussishkin, see Goldstein, *Ussishkin*.

**39** Eder was a British psychoanalyst. Previously, he had supported Israel Zangwill’s Territorialist movement. Influenced by Weizmann, he became an active member of the Zionist movement. Ruppin was exiled by Djemal Pasha early in 1916.

but the Orthodox community did not. As noted, they established their own United Rabbinical Council.<sup>40</sup>

After Herbert Samuel's arrival, upon his own initiative he appointed a council to elect the chief rabbis. In February 1921, two chief rabbis were chosen: a Sefardi Chief Rabbi who preserved the title of "Rishon Lezion" borne by the Hakham Bashi in the Ottoman period, an Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, and a Rabbinat Council. The status of the Chief Rabbinat was enhanced after Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hacoheh Kook, the rabbi of Jaffa and an important Torah scholar, agreed to serve as the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Eretz Israel. In 1921 he was chosen unanimously by the elective council. Jerusalem was designated as the seat of the Chief Rabbinat. At the end of 1934, after the death of Rabbi Kook, Rabbi Isaac Halevi Herzog was chosen to replace him. The first Sefardi Chief Rabbi was Rabbi Ya'akov Meir, succeeded by Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel. In 1922, the "King's Order in Council for Palestine" granted the rabbinical courts judicial authority in matters pertaining to personal status. Local rabbinates and rabbinical councils for the provision of religious services were established alongside the Chief Rabbinat.<sup>41</sup>

The main role of the Zionist Commission was to represent the Zionist movement in contacts with the British authorities. Immediately after its arrival, it operated as a semi-official body, recognized by the military administration. Its operation was facilitated through its members' use of the rail services to Jerusalem and in the supply of telephone lines to its offices in the city. The Commission presented various requests to the military governors and used its influence in the country and in London to overturn decisions it did not approve of.

Military officials agreed to assign to the Hebrew language a status equal to that of Arabic and to employ Jews in government staff positions. Since the salaries paid by the British to local clerks were low, and to encourage Jews to enter into government service, with the approval of General Money the Zionist Commission added to their salaries. The activities of the Zionist Commission reinforced Arab suspicions regarding the Zionist movement, and they complained to the administration with claims of discrimination. There are those who conceive of the Commission's activities as one of the reasons for the intensification of Arab objections to the Zionist movement and the outbreak of the riots on Passover 1920 in Jerusalem.<sup>42</sup>

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**40** On the Zionist Commission in general, see Rubinstein, "From Yishuv to State," 138–40, 196; Attias, *Knesset Yisrael in Eretz Israel*, 87–96.

**41** Rubinstein, "From Yishuv to State," 195–202; on the establishment of the Chief Rabbinat and rabbinical councils, see Burstein, *Self-government*, 173–81, including the election of Chief Rabbis Kook and Meir.

**42** Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 445–48. Assaf, *Awakening and Flight*, 80–82 stresses that the rioting broke out while the Zionist Commission was still active. See also Porath, *Emergence*, 37 and the sources cited there.

### **Establishment of Jewish institutions: Knesset Yisrael, the National Council, the Rabbinate and the Orthodox community**

In 1921, the Zionist Commission became the Palestine Zionist Executive (PZE) and under this title continued its activity alongside the newly created Jewish self-government institutions. During the 1920s, its executive included a limited number of persons, the most prominent of whom were Ussishkin, the senior Zionist leader from Russia, Eder, who since 1922 filled a senior role in the Zionist leadership, and Lieutenant Colonel Fredrick Hermann Kisch, whom Weizmann sent to Eretz Israel.<sup>43</sup> Kisch served as the head of the Political Department in Eretz Israel between 1923 and 1931 and chaired meetings of the Palestine Zionist Executive in Jerusalem, although he was not formally appointed its chairperson. During Kisch's tenure, the prominent members of the Palestine Zionist Executive were Ruppin, who served on the Executive since its very beginning, Harry Sacher, a jurist from Weizmann's circle in England who arrived with the Zionist Commission, and Henrietta Szold, who immigrated from the United States and dealt mainly with matters of education and welfare. Those were active Zionists who held no personal ideology. The Palestine Zionist Executive headed by Kisch was not the leadership of the Yishuv but an executive body implementing the policy set in London.<sup>44</sup>

At the same time, the process continued of establishing the institutions of the Yishuv. I have already mentioned that during the Third Constituent Assembly, in December 1918, it was decided to hold elections for Knesset Yisrael. The first elections for the Elected Assembly took place in April 1920, but the British delayed its convocation until October. The anti-Zionist Orthodox factions did not participate in the elections, and the British administration recognized them as a separate and independent community entitled to provide its members with religious services.

The first session of the Elected Assembly lasted for three days. During its discussions, the foundations were laid for its organization as a parliament for deliberations of a general nature. The Assembly was elected for a four-year term and chose a National Council (Va'ad Leumi) of a few dozen members. The National Council, whose term was set for one year, set the ongoing policy and convened frequently. The

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<sup>43</sup> Kisch (1882–1943) published his diary; see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*. Inter alia he recorded his joining the Zionist movement under the influence of Weizmann and his activity in Eretz Israel (with the exception of spring 1925 to September 1929, during which he did not note anything in his diary). His book, which records many interesting details about topics with which Kisch was involved, includes a short preface by Lloyd George.

<sup>44</sup> In October 1924, Weizmann arrived in the country and traveled with Kisch to Egypt; see *ibid.*, 145–46. Kisch ended his term in office and was replaced by Chaim Arlosoroff in 1931, the very year in which Weizmann ceased to be the president of the World Zionist Organization. For Kisch's activity in Eretz Israel, see also Rubinstein, "From Yishuv to State," 142–43.



National Council chose its executive which numbered eight to seventeen members and functioned as the executive body that managed all its matters.<sup>45</sup> Prominent among the executive members were three persons: David Yellin, later chosen president of the National Council who at the time he was almost sixty, a representative figure, equally at ease with the Old Yishuv and the New Yishuv and with both Sefardi and Ashkenazi Jews; Thon, who was then forty years old, a veteran of the Second Aliyah and associated with the Palestine Land Development Company and the Palestine Office; and Itzhak Ben-Zvi, then forty-six years old, a prominent representative of the labor movement on the National Council throughout its entire existence. As early as the 1920s he was a member of its praesidium; however at the time he did not devote all his time to this organization and was active mainly in the Histadrut labor union.<sup>46</sup>

While the Elected Assembly and the National Council reflected the structure and political nature of the Yishuv, for several reasons during the 1920s they were still not a central element in shaping the character and organizing the life of the Yishuv. The British limited the authority of the Elected Assembly and the National Council, recognizing them as representatives of the Yishuv only in internal matters, and even then to a limited degree. In addition, the National Council lacked sufficient monetary resources. However, it appears that its major weakness was a result of the power of the Palestine Zionist Executive, and later the Jewish Agency Executive, that worked alongside the British authorities in most areas, also as representatives of the Yishuv, and in effect expropriated the authority of the National Council.

In fact, the Jewish Agency Executive served as a government of sorts for the Yishuv. It was its representative vis-à-vis external bodies. In many areas it set the policy, agenda, and development of the Yishuv. Its political power stemmed from the fact that its authority was anchored in the text of the Mandate and recognized by the British authorities. It represented the Zionist movement throughout the world and had the means and tools to raise the national funds and could set the

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<sup>45</sup> Elections to the Elected Assembly were held four times during the Mandate period: in April 1920, December 1925, January 1931, and August 1944. The election results reflected the balance of power of the political parties in the Yishuv; see Rubinstein, "From Yishuv to State"; Attias, *Knesset Yisrael in Eretz Israel*, 19–86; Burstein, *Self-government*, 99, 110–11, 120 (for elections to the first three assemblies).

<sup>46</sup> Much has been written about both Yellin and Ben-Zvi. Yellin has recently been the subject of a biography, see Ofra Meitlis, *On the Middle Path: David Yellin – A Life Story* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2015) (Hebrew). On his involvement in the research of Eretz Israel, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "Developments in the Study of 'Yedi'at Ha'aretz' (Knowledge of Eretz Israel) at the Hebrew University, 1925–1948," in *The History of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: A Period of Consolidation and Growth*, ed. Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005), 347–410 (Hebrew). For Ben-Zvi's contribution to the study of Eretz Israel, see *ibid.* On the Histadrut, see Zeev Tsahor, "The Histadrut: From Marginal Organization to 'State-in-the-Making'," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 473–508.

priorities for Zionist settlement and the development of the Jewish society and economy in Eretz Israel.<sup>47</sup> The institutions of the Yishuv and the Palestine Zionist Executive, and later also the Jewish Agency, were situated in Jerusalem. The final decision to start building the national institutions compound in the city was taken only in 1927. And though construction was carried out between 1928 and 1936, the decision regarding their location in Jerusalem was made at the beginning of the British Mandate period, the subject of this chapter.<sup>48</sup>

## **Arab activity: Leading families; associations and clubs in Jerusalem; the events of 1920**

### **The rising status of Jerusalem and its leading families; establishment of Arab national associations and clubs**

Towards the end of the Ottoman period, Muslims began attributing greater importance to Jerusalem, despite the comparatively small Muslim population in the city at the time. The Nablus sancak was combined with the Jerusalem sancak for a while, after which this arrangement was cancelled and until the end of the Ottoman period the Gaza sancak became part of the Jerusalem sancak. These administrative decisions contributed to the special status of the Jerusalem mutasarriflik which was directly subordinate to the Sublime Porte in Istanbul.<sup>49</sup> In addition, the status of several leading urban families was rising, and they began establishing their senior standing among the Jerusalem Arabs and the general Arab population of the country. From these families emerged a leadership of high social standing and growing experience in self-government. The prominent families (*a'yān*) at the time were the Husseini, Nashashibi, and Khalidi families, and some others. The British conquest contributed to enhancement of the status of the Husseini family whose members served as mayor of Jerusalem and filled other official posts. The second family in importance was the Nashashibis who filled several key positions in the Ottoman administration. It should be emphasized that to a great degree the status of these

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<sup>47</sup> Yaacov Shavit, "Political and Public Organization of the Jewish Yishuv: From Yishuv to State-in-the-making," in *The History of Eretz Israel, 9: The British Mandate and the Jewish National Home*, ed. Yehoshua Porath and Yaacov Shavit (Jerusalem: Keter and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1984), 177–80 (Hebrew).

<sup>48</sup> For the development of Jewish Jerusalem, in general, see Ben-Arieh, "Major Changes," 391 and the sources cited there.

<sup>49</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Chapter Three. It is interesting that the nahiye of Jaffa, which also included the towns of Lydda and Ramle and all the villages around them, also became part of the mutasarriflik of Jerusalem; see Ben-Arieh, "Sancak of Jerusalem"; id., "Sancak of Gaza" and the maps in Chapter Three.

leading families was strengthened since the Arabs had no elected bodies that represented all Arabs in the country.<sup>50</sup>

During the initial period after the end of the war and until the beginning of 1920, Jerusalem was relatively quiet. In the wake of events related to Zionism – the Balfour Declaration, the arrival and activity of the Zionist Commission in the Jerusalem, and more, national Arab sentiment began to grow. One of the first results was the establishment of Muslim-Christian Associations which stressed that Palestine was part of Syria, and since Syria was in the process of receiving its independence, this must also apply to the Arabs of Palestine.<sup>51</sup> Following the changes that occurred in Syria and the failure to crown Feisal as king in Damascus, Palestinian Arabs began seeking a unique national status closer to home. Simultaneously, Jerusalem developed into the social and cultural center of the Palestinian Arab leadership. As early as 1918 clubs were founded in Jerusalem: the “Arab Literary Club” and the “Arab Club.” In 1919, the president of the Arab Club became the president of all such clubs in the country. The Jerusalem chapter objected to the call for a united Syria and preferred the establishment of a separate administration in Palestine in which leading Jerusalem families would fill the most important functions.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Nabi Musa festivities and the riots of Passover 1920; involvement of the Jewish Legion; changes in the Jerusalem municipality**

On February 27, 1920 the Syrian General Congress reconvened in Damascus and renewed the demand for a united Syrian state governed by Feisal, of which Palestine would be part (Southern Syria). On March 7, 1920 Feisal was declared king of Damascus, and the atmosphere in Jerusalem became tense. The next day, cries of “Down with Zionism” and “Death to the Jews” were heard. Jewish passersby were attacked. At that very time the annual festivities were being held at Nabi Musa, on the road to Jericho. The British sent forces from Jerusalem to protect the festivities, and it was then that riots broke out in the city, the riots of Passover 1920. Arab celebrators from Hebron came into Jerusalem. Arab rioters attacked Jews and broke into shops on Jaffa Street. On April 4–6 five Jews were killed and over two hundred

<sup>50</sup> Ehrlich, ed., *Introduction*, 5:315–20; Porath, *Emergence*, 12–14.

<sup>51</sup> Eliahu Elath, *Haj Mohammed Amin el-Husseini, Ex-Mufti of Jerusalem: The Man and His Rise to Power* (Tel Aviv: Reshafim, 1968), 22–24 (Hebrew). Elath discusses *Suriya al-Janūbiyyah* (Southern Syria), a newspaper published in Jerusalem with a pan-Arab and anti-Zionist bias that was connected to the Muslim-Christian Association. He also quotes from the paper. See also *History of the Haganah*, 1,2:543–45, 556–61.

<sup>52</sup> Porath, *Emergence*, 70–108; Yaacov Shimoni, “The Political Organization of the Arabs in Mandatory Palestine,” in *The History of Eretz Israel, 9: The British Mandate and the Jewish National Home*, ed. Yehoshua Porath and Yaacov Shavit (Jerusalem: Keter and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1984), 276–77 (Hebrew).

injured. The British opened fire, four Arabs were killed and twenty-one wounded. The next day the British prohibited possession of unlicensed weapons and participation in riots.<sup>53</sup> In the wake of the riots, and the attempts by Jewish Legion soldiers to intervene, Arab nationalist organizations demanded that the British administration disband the Jewish Legion and expel the Zionist Commission. General Bols, then the Chief Administrator of the occupied territories, confidentially wrote to his superiors in Cairo that the Zionist Commission and the Legion were the causes of unrest in the country. The British government could not put an end to the Zionist Commission, but the Legion was disbanded. Jabotinsky was arrested for carrying a weapon and sentenced to fifteen years at hard labor followed by expulsion from the country. Another nineteen young Jews were sentenced to three years at hard labor. As for the Arabs, Mayor Musa Kazim al-Husseini was deposed by order of Storrs, the military governor of Jerusalem, and Haj Amin al-Husseini was sentenced, in absentia, to ten years imprisonment.<sup>54</sup>

Mid-1920 was a turning point among the Arabs, due to a number of factors. Among these was the failure of the efforts by nationalist associations to have Palestine united with Syria and the flight of some of their leaders; an understanding that the dream of a general rebellion that would lead to Palestine becoming part of Syria was unrealistic; confirmation of the British Mandate for Palestine at San Remo on April 24, 1920, and its formal declaration by General Bols on April 28, 1920; the transfer to a civilian government on July 1, 1920; and – above all – the collapse of Feisal's government in Damascus on July 24, 1920, which put an end to the concept of unification with Syria and opened a new stage in the Arab national movement. It was then that the pan-Syrian tendency was abandoned, to be replaced by one focusing on Palestine, whose core leadership was located in Jerusalem.<sup>55</sup>

In the meantime, changes occurred in the Jerusalem municipality. When the British conquered Jerusalem in December 1917 they found a municipal council of ten members: seven Muslims, two Christians, and one Jew. The council was headed

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53 On the Passover riots in Jerusalem, see *History of the Haganah*, 1,2:601–25. See also Yosef Avidar, “The Haganah in Jerusalem during the Mandate,” in *Jerusalem in Zionist Vision and Realization: Collected Essays*, ed. Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 1989), 322–23 (Hebrew); Attias, ed., *Documents of the National Committee*, 19–29; Elath, *Haj Mohammed Amin el-Husseini*, 22–25.

54 See the sources cited in the previous note. For involvement of members of the Jewish Legion and Jabotinsky in defense in Jerusalem during the riots, see Watts, *Jewish Legion*, 235–37; Katz, “Jabotinsky in the Jewish Legion,” 543–47, on the arrest, imprisonment, and pardon of Jabotinsky. See also Amitzur Ilan, “The Political and National Struggle for Eretz Israel, 1917–1948,” in *The History of Eretz Israel, 9: The British Mandate and the Jewish National Home*, ed. Yehoshua Porath and Yaacov Shavit (Jerusalem: Keter and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1984), 26 (Hebrew), where he quotes Eliahu Golomb. For the disbandment of the Jewish Legion, see Elam, “Political History,” 178–79.

55 Porath, *Emergence*, 100–101; Elam, “Political History,” 185–88.

by Hussein Effendi al-Husseini.<sup>56</sup> The first Chief Administrator, General Neville T. Borton, immediately appointed a new six-member council of two Muslims, two Christians, and two Jews (one Ashkenazi and one Sefardi).<sup>57</sup> The British justified this arrangement by maintaining that the composition of the municipality should not be determined by the Jewish majority in the population but rather by the sanctity of the city to the three religions; therefore members of the three faiths were equally represented on the municipal council.

Former mayor Hussein Effendi al-Husseini was reappointed, but he passed away in May 1918 and was replaced by his brother Musa Kazim al-Husseini, who was active in political life. During the demonstrations of March 1920, which demanded inclusion of Palestine in Feisal's kingdom, Kazim Pasha addressed an audience protesting against British rule in Southern Syria and the Balfour Declaration. The Council of Jerusalem Jews in turn protested to Storrs regarding the extreme anti-Jewish message of the mayor and informed him that the Jews of Jerusalem now refused to view Musa Kazim as their mayor. A month later, during the Nabi Musa festivities, Musa Kazim delivered another address to a crowd assembled before Jerusalem's city hall. Storrs decided to dismiss him and appoint a new city council. In his memoirs, he recounts that the British administration considered appointing an Englishman as mayor. In the end, however, it was Ragheb Nashashibi, a member of the rival family to the Husseinis, an engineer by profession and a former delegate in the Turkish parliament, who was appointed. Storrs records that he invited Ragheb Nashashibi to come to see him and asked him if he would agree to accept the appointment, since he feared that no Arab would take the role if he dismissed Hussein. Only after Nashashibi signed a letter of agreement did Storrs announce Kazim's dismissal and appoint Nashashibi in his place.<sup>58</sup> The new municipal council's composition continued to equally represent the three religions.

After the establishment of the civilian government, Samuel appointed a committee to examine the Jerusalem municipality's sources of income and how they were collected. The committee submitted its report and recommendations, some of which the High Commissioner accepted and others which he rejected. Six

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<sup>56</sup> Paul A. Alsberg, "The Conflict over the Mayoralty of Jerusalem during the Mandatory Period," in *Jerusalem in the Modern Period: Yaacov Herzog Memorial Volume*, ed. Eli Shaltiel, 304 (Hebrew). For the composition and activities of the Jerusalem municipal council during the Ottoman period, see Ruth Kark, "The Jerusalem Municipality at the End of Ottoman Rule," *Asian and African Studies* 14 (1980): 117–41.

<sup>57</sup> This was the minimal number of municipal councilmen according to the Ottoman municipal code of 1877. The notice about their appointment was published on Dec. 13, 1917. The two Jewish members were Yitzhak Eliachar, representing the Sefardi community, and Yitzhak Shirion, on behalf of the Ashkenazim; see Yitzhak Shirion, *Memoirs* (Jerusalem: the author's son, 1943), 197 (Hebrew). They were later replaced by David Yellin, who also served as deputy mayor, and Yitzhak Levi, director of the Jerusalem branch of the Anglo-Palestine Bank.

<sup>58</sup> Storrs, *Memoirs*, 351; Alsberg, "Mayorality of Jerusalem," 304.

months after the beginning of civilian government, Samuel proposed to the Colonial Office in London to return to an elected municipal council, as demanded by the city's residents and was the norm during the Ottoman period. The elections were to replace appointment by the British, with some changes to the Ottoman election law that gave voting rights only to Ottoman citizens and property tax payers. Samuel even submitted a proposed text for this ordinance to the Advisory Council that convened in July 1921. Upon its recommendation, it was decided to defer confirmation of the ordinance until the issue of Palestinian citizenship was resolved, a decision with which Churchill, the British colonial secretary at the time, was in agreement. Accordingly, the ordinance was put aside for five years, and the Jerusalem municipal council that had been appointed for two years, until an election could be held, continued in office for seven years when elections took place in 1927.<sup>59</sup>

According to Ottoman law, which was the basis for the operation of the municipality, its roles were very limited. This was also the situation at the beginning of British rule. During the period of military administration, the municipality participated in the supply and distribution of provisions to the residents and the renewal of commerce in the city, yet its other functions were limited. Municipal decisions usually required the approval of the district governor. After Storrs established the Pro-Jerusalem Society, it began taking over many of the municipality's roles. At the Society's first meeting, Storrs declared that it would not compete with the municipality, yet the roles it took upon itself were of a municipal character, such as building supervision, naming streets, and even cleaning streets and courtyards.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, despite the limited authority of the municipal council, it apparently afforded great public prestige to its members, especially the mayor, and its decisions had important economic influence, since it also dealt with the allocation of funds, appointed staff members, and supplied work to contractors.

## **Samuel as High Commissioner, 1920–1925; Hajj Amin al-Husseini's appointment as Mufti; the Cairo conference; riots of May 1921; the 1922 White Paper**

### **Samuel's appointment as the first High Commissioner and his arrival**

A short while after the San Remo Conference, Lloyd George appointed Herbert Samuel as the first High Commissioner for Palestine. Samuel (November 6, 1870–February 5,

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<sup>59</sup> Alsberg, "Mayoralty of Jerusalem," 305–7 and the archival sources cited. I shall return to elections to the Jerusalem municipality in the next chapter.

<sup>60</sup> On the Pro-Jerusalem Society, see ch. 7, nn. 113–14.

1963), a Jew, was also a philosopher and served as the president of the British Institute for Philosophic Studies.<sup>61</sup> A member of the Liberal Party, in 1910 he was appointed a member of the British cabinet by Liberal Prime Minister Asquith. In 1915, Samuel recommended that the British government act towards the establishment of a Jewish political entity in Palestine, and thus assisted in laying the foundations for the Balfour Declaration issued on November 2, 1917. When the Liberal party split into two factions, that of Asquith and that of Lloyd George, and Lloyd George formed a new government, Samuel chose to remain loyal to Asquith and did not join it. He even lost his seat in Parliament in 1917. A year later, in 1918, following the British conquest of Jerusalem, Lloyd George approached Samuel regarding the option of his appointment as the governor of Palestine. After the riots of Passover 1920, the prime minister decided it was time to end the military administration in the country and appointed Samuel as the first High Commissioner for Palestine. Objections to this appointment were raised by General Allenby and Lord Curzon, the foreign secretary at the time, but Lloyd George dismissed them. Samuel set out and arrived in Palestine on July 1, 1920.<sup>62</sup>

On July 3, 1920, two days after Samuel's arrival in Jerusalem, a reception was held to mark a year since the opening of the courts in the country. An incident relating to the Hebrew name of Palestine is connected with that event. Justice Gad Frumkin provides an interesting explanation for the addition of the Hebrew letters *alef* and *yod* (an abbreviation of Eretz Israel) to the Hebrew name of the country. "When the Hebrew translator of Legal Secretary Norman Bentwich, Mr. Ya'acov Yehudah, consulted with him how to translate the name 'Palestine' into Hebrew, he replied that the common name was already 'Eretz Israel'." When the issue was brought before the High Commissioner, he decided to put the abbreviation within parentheses.<sup>63</sup>

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**61** On the important role played by Samuel in the events leading up to the Balfour Declaration, see Chapter Seven. See also Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, also for his family and the contemporary British personages and politicians with whom he maintained relations.

**62** For Samuel's appointment as the first High Commissioner for Palestine, see in detail Samuel, *Memoirs*, 149–52. See also Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 244–45, who notes that Allenby and Curzon were opposed to his appointment because he was a Jew. At first, Samuel, too, was reluctant to accept the position, for the same reason, but Lloyd George remained firm in his decision.

**63** Gad Frumkin, *A Judge in Jerusalem* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1956), 233–38 (Hebrew); Bentwich, *Mandate Memories*, 63–64. Frumkin also records Samuel's participation a few days later in a reception for public figures on the premises of the Auguste Victoria Hospice on Mt. Scopus at which a message from King George V to the residents of Palestine was read out in three languages, and Samuel delivered an address; see also Samuel, *Memoirs*, 156–57. For a facsimile of the full text of the message in the three official languages, see Frumkin, *A Judge*, 235. The title of the Hebrew version reads: "To the residents of Eretz Israel." As noted in ch. 7, n. 81, in one of the first Hebrew translations of the Balfour Declaration, done shortly after it was made public, "Palestine" was translated as "Eretz Israel." On the name "Eretz Israel," see also ch. 6, n. 20.



### **Establishment of the Arab Executive Committee and the Supreme Muslim Council; Hajj Amin al-Husseini's appointment as Grand Mufti; the Cairo conference; Churchill in Jerusalem, March 1921**

On February 27, 1920, even before Samuel's arrival, General Bols, the Chief Administrator in Palestine, issued a notification regarding British government plans to establish civilian rule in the country which would, among other things, act to carry out the Balfour Declaration. At the time there was still hope that Feisal would successfully establish his rule in Damascus and that in its wake an agreement would be reached between Jews and Arabs. However, after the riots of April 4, 1920 the British decided to hasten their plans for replacing the military administration by a civilian government headed by Herbert Samuel. Already during his first visit to the country at the beginning of 1920, mentioned above, Samuel first became acquainted with the Arab problem. This tour affected him deeply and since then he began seeing the problems in the country through the lens of the Jewish–Arab conflict.<sup>64</sup> Thus, early in July 1920, a short while after his arrival, Samuel decided to declare a general amnesty for Jews and Arabs who participated in the riots and were sentenced to prison terms. The harsh steps taken by Storrs against the Arab leaders who were involved in the riots of 1920 were repealed, and Hajj Amin al-Husseini and the Arab leader Aref al-Aref, who had fled the country, could return.<sup>65</sup>

In December 1920, the Third Palestinian Congress convened in Haifa and chose an Arab Executive Committee (AEC) of nine members to represent the Arabs in negotiations with the British. The committee was headed by Musa Kazim al-Husseini, the Arab mayor previously deposed by Storrs.<sup>66</sup> A series of decisions were taken at the Congress, among them two major ones: calls for annulment of the Balfour Declaration and the status of Zionism and for the establishment of Arab self-rule. Samuel tried to convince the Arab leadership to accept the Mandate for Palestine, including the commitment to establish a Jewish national home, and to become part of the Advisory Council which he established in October 1920. There were twenty members on the council, half of them administration officials and half of them

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<sup>64</sup> See Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab–Jewish Conflict, 1917–1929* (London: Blackwell, 1991), 78–84, 96–98, and more.

<sup>65</sup> For the amnesty Samuel granted to Musa Kazim al-Husseini and Aref al-Aref on Aug. 21 during a visit east of the Jordan, see Frumkin, *A Judge*, 283–85; Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, 92; Ilan, “Political and National Struggle,” 28–30. On Aref al-Aref, see Elath, *Haj Mohammed Amin el-Husseini*, 22, 25, 26, 34, including a personal note about him by Elath. See also in Chapter Eleven. Samuel simultaneously pardoned Jabotinsky.

<sup>66</sup> On the congress, see Porath, *Emergence*, 108–10. This was the first such congress that convened in Palestine, in Haifa. Musa Kazim al-Husseini was elected chairman of its Executive Committee, a post he filled until his death in 1934. The committee was the sole authorized body recognized by all Palestinian Arabs until it declined in the years 1933–1935 as a result of political competition; see Shimoni, *The Arabs in Palestine*, 278.

representatives of the population: four Muslims, three Christians, and three Jews. The Arab Executive Committee (AEC) was not recognized by the government and tried to petition Churchill, then secretary of state for the colonies, but he refused to receive them. The offices of the AEC were in Jerusalem. The custom that had taken shape at Arab congresses, by which Jerusalemites were appointed to represent other areas, lent greater weight to the Jerusalem representation.<sup>67</sup>

Less than two months after his arrival, Herbert Samuel himself took the first step for realization of the plan to create a separate entity in Transjordan. He arrived in the country only one month before Feisal was expelled from Damascus on July 28, 1920 and his brother Abdullah came to Transjordan where the British persuaded him to stay as the temporary ruler of that area which was under their aegis. On August 21, 1920 Samuel appeared before a gathering of distinguished sheiks in the city of as-Salt in Transjordan where he announced the plan to establish that country as a separate unit and spoke of the special status it would be granted.<sup>68</sup> Another person who played a central role in the establishment of Transjordan was Lord George Nathaniel Curzon, the British foreign secretary at the time. Curzon sent British officers to organize the Arab forces there, among them Colonel Fredrick Gerard Peake, one of T.E. Lawrence's people, and founder of the Arab Legion.<sup>69</sup>

In January 1921 Winston Churchill was appointed colonial secretary. A short while later, with the assistance of members of the Arab Bureau in Cairo such as T.E. Lawrence and others and in collaboration with Samuel, he began delving into the problems of the Middle East, including Palestine. It was then decided to hold a conference in Cairo on the Middle East, later known as the Cairo Conference. On March 12, 1921 Churchill arrived in Cairo to deliberate the principles that would shape British rule in the Middle East. On March 19–20, 1921 the conference convened. Among other things, it was intended to prepare Arab rule in Transjordan under British sponsorship as one of the important milestones in the redesign of the Middle East.<sup>70</sup>

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**67** On the choice of the Arab Executive Committee as representative and negotiator of the Arabs, see Shimoni, "Political Organization of the Arabs," 277. For the committee, including its delegations to Britain, see in detail Porath, *Emergence*, 125–28, 137–47, 166–69.

**68** For Samuel's understanding, already at this stage, that Britain's undertaking to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine made it necessary to detach the area east of the Jordan from western Palestine, see Samuel, *Great Britain and Palestine*, 17–18, where he goes into great detail to explain how he reached this decision. For the establishment of Transjordan, see Assaf, *Relations*, 327–37; he also quotes a section of Samuel's address on this occasion (p. 389), quoted from Na'aman, *Abdullah*, 43–44.

**69** Curzon replaced Balfour as foreign secretary in 1919 and obligated himself to continue the policy and carry out the decisions of the previous government. This was also the case with his attitude towards Palestine and the Zionist movement; see Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 242–39; Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 653. See also note 10 above.

**70** For the Cairo Conference of March 1921, see Aaron S. Klieman, *Foundations of British Policy in the Arab World: The Cairo Conference of 1921* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1970). This book is a

On March 24, 1921, after the Cairo Conference had ended, Churchill arrived in Jerusalem to promote negotiations with Abdullah. During his stay there, the general outline of the first White Paper was drafted. On March 29 Churchill gave a speech at the reception the High Commissioner arranged in his honor. He expressed his clear support of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate and the commitments to the Zionist movement, and his confidence in Samuel who was charged with their implementation. However, less than two months later, on May 1, 1921, rioting broke out again, even before the final confirmation of the Mandate.<sup>71</sup>

The British conquest of Palestine and the detachment of Jerusalem from the Ottoman Empire also enhanced the status of the Jerusalem mufti. During the Ottoman period the mufti had been subordinate to the Shaykh ul-Islam whose seat was the imperial capital. With the onset of British rule, the mufti was given greater authority and the title of “al-Mufti al-Akhbar” (the Grand Mufti). That Jerusalem became the capital of the British administration and the seat of the High Commissioner, together with the enhanced status granted the mufti, greatly added to his prestige. Early in May 1921, Hajj Amin al-Husseini was appointed mufti of Jerusalem. Apparently, by appointing him the British hoped to obtain quiet in the country and to compensate the Husseini family for having taken the mayoralty away from them. Hajj Amin al-Husseini was invested with all the authority the British awarded his predecessor, including supervision of the waqfs throughout the country. Due to his special status he was paid a high government salary, and later also headed the Supreme Muslim Council.<sup>72</sup>

It is important to remember that with the end of Ottoman rule in the country, it ceased being a Muslim state. Accordingly, the need arose to decide about the legal

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comprehensive study of the basis of British policy towards the Arabs during World War I and until the Cairo Conference. Three chapters are most relevant to our discussion: ch. 6 deals with the Cairo Conference itself; ch. 8 with western Palestine; and ch. 9 with Transjordan. There is also a chapter devoted to Iraq. The appendixes include maps of the De Bunsen committee and six additional appendixes relating to Eretz Israel.

<sup>71</sup> While in Jerusalem, Churchill expressed his support in principle for Zionism to a delegation of representatives of Jews of Eretz Israel. See details of his speech in Frumkin, *A Judge*, 266–70. At the Cairo Conference he was mostly occupied with the establishment of Transjordan. For the creation of Transjordan, see Uriel Dann, “The Emirate of Transjordan, 1921–1946,” in *The History of Eretz Israel, 9: The British Mandate and the Jewish National Home*, ed. Yehoshua Porath and Yaacov Shavit (Jerusalem: Keter and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1984), 316–27 (Hebrew).

<sup>72</sup> Kedourie maintains that conferring the title of “Grand Mufti” on the mufti of Jerusalem was a British innovation and did not exist previously. He even surmises that it was characteristic of Storrs, who always sought unique titles; see Elie Kedourie, “Sir Herbert Samuel and the Government of Palestine,” in id., *The Chatham House Version and other Middle Eastern Studies* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 52–81, esp. 67–68. Fromkin maintains that the moving spirit behind the idea to appoint Hajj Amin al-Husseini as the mufti of Jerusalem was Storrs’s friend, Ernest T. Richmond; Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 517–18; see also Porath, *Emergence*, 184–94. For the life and activity of the mufti, see Zvi Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin al-Hussaini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement* (London: Frank Cass, 1993). On the

status of its Muslim residents, like that of the other religious communities, and to establish the bodies that would look after the affairs of the Muslim community. This related to two main areas: Muslim religious courts – the Shari’a courts, and the waqf and Muslim religious endowments and charity institutions. Until the end of the Ottoman period, the waqf assets in the country were managed by a *mudir awqaf* stationed in Jerusalem with *ma’murs* (directors of waqfs) in Jaffa, Hebron, and Gaza, all of whom were included in the Jerusalem administrative unit. Nablus and Acre were subordinate to the *mudir awqaf* of the Beirut vilayet. Upon the conquest of southern Palestine, which ended, as noted, with the taking of Jerusalem in December 1917, the military administration began handling the waqf assets and communications were cut off between the waqf in the country and its center in Istanbul. The local Jerusalem waqf committee was invested with the authority of the General Waqf Council. Following the conquest of the northern parts of the country, the Nablus and Acre waqfs were made part of this waqf. At first, a British supervisor participated in the Jerusalem waqf committee meetings. Later British supervision came to an end, beginning in 1920, the waqf’s director received a salary from the government.<sup>73</sup>

An opposition faction led by the Nashashibi family began developing against the Husseinis and their supporters who answered to the title Majlissiyyun (members of the Supreme Muslim Council, the Majlis). In November 1923 the Nashashibis even convened a convention to launch their party which they called the Mu’aridun. The conflict between the two groups continued throughout the Mandate period and opposition to the hegemony of Jerusalem also arose in the north, demanding that the British strip the Hussein family of its functions and authority.<sup>74</sup>

We may sum up by saying that in terms of Arab efforts, too, the first years of British rule were crucial. It was then that Arab and Palestinian nationalist feelings began to develop, as well as struggles for control of the Arab population and its leadership. Jerusalem became a focal point for the activities of the supreme Muslim institutions of Arab society, and it was from there that Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini operated.

### The 1921 riots; changes in Samuel’s policy

Samuel tried to get to the bottom of the Jewish–Arab conflict and find solutions for peace between the two peoples from the moment he was appointed High

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Supreme Muslim Council, see Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam under the British Mandate for Palestine* (Leiden: Brill, 1987).

<sup>73</sup> For details of the waqf, its roles, budget, and more, see Assaf, *Relations*, 313–16. For the waqf during the Mandate period, see Kupferschmidt, *Supreme Muslim Council*, 146–50.

<sup>74</sup> For the Majlissiyyun and the Mu’aridun and the conflict between them, see Kupferschmidt, *Supreme Muslim Council*, 28, 33, 67, and more. In greater detail, see Porath, *Emergence*, 208–40.

Commissioner, and even more so after the riots of 1921 which spread throughout the country, this time excluding Jerusalem. The extent of the riots was great: attacks occurred in Jewish neighborhoods, cities, and settlements – in Jaffa, Petah Tikvah, Kfar Sava, Haderah, Rehovoth, and other places.<sup>75</sup> Scholars differ in their opinions whether the riots were initiated by the Arab Executive Committee or were a result of the response of extremists to May Day parades. The “Haganah,” a recently created Jewish self-defense group, was not yet ready for its role and only later began to operate in an organized manner.<sup>76</sup> Samuel chose to respond to the events by appointing a commission of inquiry headed by Chief Justice of Palestine Thomas Haycraft. Until the committee submitted its conclusions, Samuel created a precedent himself by temporarily halting Jewish immigration to the country. Indeed, the report submitted by the Haycraft committee pointed to a connection between immigration and the Arab uprising.<sup>77</sup>

The change in Samuel’s attitude was made fully clear in a conciliatory speech to the Arabs which he delivered on June 3, 1921 at the celebration marking the birthday of King George V. In his address, Samuel also based himself on the conclusions of the Haycraft Commission. It appears that his views were greatly affected by the rioting of May 1921, from which he concluded that Jewish immigration to the country should be limited and made dependent on the economic absorptive capacity of the country and the monetary means that the Jews brought in, and that care should be taken that nothing should be to the detriment of the non-Jewish population, the Muslims and Christians. The immigration limit would be set by the British administration in the country. The basics of the White Paper of 1922 can be discerned in his speech.<sup>78</sup>

During the first years of British rule, until May 1921, the British were even more lenient than the Zionist Organization regarding the freedom of immigration by Jews to Eretz Israel, since the Zionists feared that the olim would not successfully be absorbed into the Yishuv.<sup>79</sup> Following the May 1921 riots, Samuel temporarily halted

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<sup>75</sup> Storrs, *Memoirs*, 349, writes that it was Hajj Amin al-Husseini who instigated all the rioting.

<sup>76</sup> On the 1921 riots, which later spread to the Sharon Plain, and the beginnings of the Haganah defense organization at this time, see Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, 89–107. For the murder of author Yosef Hayyim Brenner and his neighbors in the Abu Kabir neighborhood near Jaffa, see Nurit Govrin, *Brenner: A Person “at a Loss” and a Mentor* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Pub. House, 1991), 163–76 (Hebrew).

<sup>77</sup> Shimoni, *The Arabs in Palestine*, 279; Assaf, *Awakening and Flight*, 98–102; for the commission’s report, see *Palestine: Disturbances in May 1921: Reports of the Commission of Inquiry with Correspondence Relating Thereto* (London: HMSO, 1921). Harry Luke, one of the members of the Haycraft Commission, later was to play a role in the controversy over the Western Wall in 1929. See in Chapter Nine.

<sup>78</sup> Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 230–70, esp. 257–58. See also id, *British in Palestine*, 100–106; Assaf, *Awakening and Flight*, 98–102.

<sup>79</sup> Moshe Lissak, “Immigration, Absorption, and Society Building in the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel, 1918–1930,” in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The*

Jewish immigration and agreed to its renewal only subject to the transfer of immigration regulation from the Zionist leadership to the Department of Immigration and Travel of the Palestine Government and British consuls around the world. He further stipulated that immigration regulation and permits would be set according to the country's economic absorptive capacity, particularly employment options. Supervision would mainly be directed at craftsmen lacking capital and pioneers with wives and children. This policy was reflected in the Immigration Ordinances of August 1 and December 19, 1921. The principle of economic absorptive capacity was first formulated in the White Paper of June 3, 1922 and continued to be applied until the Peel Commission of 1936–1937. Until then it was a constant bone of contention between the Zionist Organization and the British authorities. Members of the Zionist movement did not object to the principle of economic absorptive capacity, but only claimed that its application should be determined in collaboration with them.<sup>80</sup>

Samuel's speech enraged the Jews, so much so that there were those who demanded his dismissal and total breaking off of contact with him and his staff, and even declared his speech to be a betrayal of the Balfour Declaration. Notwithstanding, Samuel continued to enable the Arabs to go on with their activity and even began thinking of establishing an elected legislative council that would replace the Advisory Council, as well as of an "Arab Agency" parallel to the Jewish Agency. Samuel apparently also came to the conclusion that only by limiting the scope of Jewish immigration was there any chance of bringing about a change in the Arab stance, and even thought of delaying immigrant ships and having the olim disembark at ports along the way, or even sending back to their home ports. Samuel's attitude continued to arouse the Zionist movement against him.<sup>81</sup>

In the meantime, in June–July 1921 the Fourth Palestinian Congress convened in Jerusalem. This congress decided to send a delegation representing the Arab Executive Committee to Europe – to Geneva and especially to London. The delegation visited several European capitals and spent many months in London in

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*British Mandate Period, Part 2*, ed. Moshe Lissak, Anita Shapira, and Gavriel Cohen (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 1994), 213–19 (Hebrew), notes that already in 1919 the Zionist Organization published material, over the signatures of Weizmann and Sokolow, which expressed apprehension concerning the absorption of immigrants in Eretz Israel.

<sup>80</sup> Aviva Halamish, "Immigration according to Economic Absorptive Capacity: The Guiding Principles, Implementation, and Demographic Ramifications of the British and Zionist Immigration Policy in Palestine between the World Wars," in *Economy and Society in Mandatory Palestine, 1918–1948*, ed. Avi Bareli and Nahum Karlinsky (Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2003), 179–216 (Hebrew). For unlimited aliyah prior to the restrictions, see S. Ilan Troen, "Calculating the 'Economic Absorptive Capacity' of Palestine: A Study of the Political Uses of Scientific Research," *Contemporary Jewry* 10 (1989): 19–38.

<sup>81</sup> Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, 104–14; Friesel, *Zionist Policy after the Balfour Declaration*, 258–67. On the proposal to establish an Arab Agency, see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 73–74.

negotiations with the Colonial Office, submitting memorandums, comments, and protests. However, all its efforts to cancel the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate for Palestine were in vain.<sup>82</sup>

In December 1921 Samuel found another way to placate the Arabs. He issued an ordinance for the establishment of a Muslim council to manage the waqf institutions and shari'a matters in Palestine. In keeping with this decree, it was necessary to choose members and a council president. In January 1922, Hajj Amin al-Husseini was appointed president for life, and four of his supporters were chosen to serve as members of the Supreme Muslim Council.<sup>83</sup> Following these appointments, sharp accusations were raised by opposers of the Husseinis regarding the method of choice, appointments marked by nepotism, and more. As an organization in charge of managing the religious endowments, this was an extremely powerful body, which also appointed judges (kadis) in the shari'a courts and muftis. Although both its opponents and supporters believed the Supreme Muslim Council to be a religious organization, it was considered the leading body of the Palestinian Arab national movement. Many of the senior officials in the British administration perceived of Hajj Amin al-Husseini as the authorized representative of the Arab population also in matters that were not formally under his jurisdiction. The council established its headquarters near one of the Temple Mount gates, the Majlis gate. Thus did the Supreme Muslim Council, under the leadership of the mufti, turn the Temple Mount into a religious-political center for all Arabs in the country.<sup>84</sup>

### **The Zionist response to Samuel's changed policy, the outlooks of Weizmann and Jabotinsky and attempts at a compromise**

The Twelfth Zionist Congress convened in London at the end of 1921, the first to meet after the war. It decided to divide the executive bodies between London and Jerusalem. The political center would remain in London, but departments dealing with immigration, settlement, and labor would transfer to Eretz Israel. Ussishkin

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**82** On the Fourth Palestinian Congress and the delegation it sent to London, see Klieman, *Cairo Conference*, 190–97; Porath, *Emergence*, 110. Caplan records three documents about the delegation's meetings in London: one in the home of James de Rothschild on Nov. 7, 1921, a meeting of Jewish and Arab representatives in the Colonial Office that month, and Weizmann's letter to the colonial under-secretary on Dec. 1; see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 163–90 (nos. 17, 18, 19).

**83** For the establishment of the Supreme Muslim Council and the General Waqf Committee, as well as the choice of Hajj Amin al-Husseini to head this committee, see Kupferschmidt, *Supreme Muslim Council*, 17–19, who also notes (p. 4) that the General Waqf Committee was overshadowed by the Supreme Muslim Council because its president – Hajj Amin al-Husseini – had emerged as the most powerful Palestinian personality. See also Elath, *Hajj Mohammed Amin el-Husseini*, 37–49.

**84** Porath, *Emergence*, 194–207; Assaf, *Relations*, 317–22; Shimoni, *The Arabs in Palestine*, 279–81.



was chosen to head the Palestine Zionist Executive which, as noted, replaced the Zionist Commission. During 1920 it was decided to establish the “Foundation Fund” (Keren Hayesod). Weizmann urged that the congress refrain from attacking Samuel for his policy in Eretz Israel and declare the peaceful objectives of the Zionist movement and its willingness to coexist with the Arabs of Palestine and other countries. However, not everyone agreed with him: his most prominent opponents were Jabotinsky and Ussishkin. After Jabotinsky returned to America he openly criticized Weizmann and began manifesting his oppositionist Revisionist ideology.<sup>85</sup> Jabotinsky believed that the Zionist leadership should come out strongly against Samuel’s policy, denounce the violation of British commitments, call for the realization of the Zionist clauses in the Mandate, and demand the replacement of anti-Zionist British officials in the Palestine administration.<sup>86</sup> He believed that political efforts could lead British politicians to uphold the Mandate commitments, while Weizmann was convinced that under present political circumstances in Eretz Israel and Britain, the most that could be gotten from the authorities was no resistance to immigration and settlement in Eretz Israel. By his pessimistic assessment, Weizmann concluded that the national home would be built gradually and solely with the financial means of the Jewish people.<sup>87</sup> All this notwithstanding, he approached Samuel and made every effort to influence him not to take harsh steps to limit immigration.

Nevertheless, their previous good relations gradually deteriorated. The Zionist dilemma was double edged: the leadership in London did not want to lose Samuel, yet he was not prepared to force anything on the Arabs. Fortunately for Zionism, at this time there were still leading members of the British cabinet, such as Lloyd George and Balfour, who influenced Samuel not to change positions, and during clarification talks conducted in London in July–August 1921 with the participation of Weizmann, they repeated and confirmed Britain’s commitment to Zionism.<sup>88</sup>

Samuel for his part continued to try to reconcile Jews and Arabs. In August 1921, he invited a large group of Muslim and Christian Arabs to his home to discuss various

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**85** Though both Ussishkin and Jabotinsky held right-wing opinions and were strongly opposed to the British, relations between them were very strained. See Moshe Smilansky, *Revival and Holocaust: a Story* (Tel Aviv: Masada, 1953), 11–13 (Hebrew), where he expresses his positive evaluation of the two, despite that he himself held different political opinions, and his efforts to bring about reconciliation between them.

**86** Jabotinsky enjoyed a unique status in England, since he was the moving spirit behind the establishment of the 38th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers in London, which paved the way for the other two Jewish battalions whose members enlisted in America and in Eretz Israel; see Chapter Seven at nn. 66–72 in the text.

**87** Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 62–69. On Jabotinsky’s views about Britain’s commitment to the Jewish people in the Balfour Declaration, see ch. 9, n. 59.

**88** Elam, “Political History,” 206–16. On the Twelfth Zionist Congress see also Friesel, *Zionist Policy after the Balfour Declaration*, 277–85.

issues, and even attempted to set a second meeting, but his efforts were in vain.<sup>89</sup> As we have seen, Samuel was greatly affected by the riots of 1921, during his first year as High Commissioner, and feared the eruption of additional acts of violence. In talks with Weizmann and other Zionist leaders, he tried to convince them to declare that there was no intention of founding a Jewish state in Palestine that would rule over the Arabs, solely a national home, but his requests met with outright rejection.<sup>90</sup>

Attempts were also made in England to bridge the gap between the demands of the Zionist movement and the emerging national sentiments of Palestinian Arabs. In November 1921 the three parties met in Balfour's London home. Churchill did not attend the meeting. The Zionist delegation presented its customary stance, and the Arabs rejected it. In March 1922, in an attempt to circumvent the British, and with Weizmann's knowledge, Hayyim Margalioth-Kalvarisky and Asher Saphir held meetings with exiled representatives of the Syrian national movement. In addition, Eder participated as an observer at an Arab-Syrian conference in Cairo. The Arabs gained a vote in their favor in the House of Lords, but a majority, led by Balfour, supported British government policy in the House of Commons.<sup>91</sup>

### The 1922 White Paper; Churchill and Samuel; final confirmation of the Mandate

After Samuel despaired of a compromise and realized that the Arabs refused to accept the claim that the Balfour Declaration would not lead to the establishment of a Jewish state, he decided to act on his own. In May 1922 he traveled to London and put forward his ideas there. At the end of May his "White Paper" was presented to the Zionist leadership, and by June he possessed a document approved by Colonial

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<sup>89</sup> On Samuel's efforts to reconcile the Arabs soon after his arrival in the country, see note 68 above. For his meeting with Muslim and Christian notables in Government House in August 1921, see Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, 114.

<sup>90</sup> Smilansky, *Revival and Holocaust*, 61–63, describes an interesting episode. He records a meeting with Herbert Samuel and his son, Edwin, aboard a ship sailing for England after 1921. The High Commissioner was very frank in his conversation, and told him that he was aware of the anger he aroused in the Yishuv. He tried to explain his policy, pointing to the difficult situation faced by Arab sharecroppers. Samuel complained that the Jews are not doing enough to reconcile the Arabs.

<sup>91</sup> Elam, "Political History," 215–16; Porath, *Emergence*, 112–14, also noting the efforts by Asher Saphir who later published his evidence before the Peel Commission in 1937 in a Hebrew pamphlet entitled *Unity or Partition*. On Saphir, see Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 85, starred note; see also ch. 5, n. 122. On Kalvarisky, who went to Damascus to meet Feisal on June 22, 1920, see Assaf, *Awakening and Flight*, 79–92. For his proposed plan of May–June 1919, see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 152–53 (no. 12). See also his letter to Weizmann, Sept. 21, 1922, in *ibid.*, 303–4 (no. 25). I shall return to Kalvarisky's activity in ch. 10, nn. 130–32. For meetings between a Zionist delegation and Arab representatives in Cairo in March–April 1922, see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 191–200 (nos. 20–23).

Secretary Churchill and the British cabinet. It stated that neither a Jewish nor an Arab state had ever been promised. The Jews would be allowed to develop their national home and increase the Jewish population in Palestine, but the status and rights of the country's other residents would be maintained. Arab and Jewish representatives were asked to respond to the document but were informed in advance that this was British policy. The Arab delegation in London rejected the White Paper, claiming that its inherent meaning was that Palestine would become independent when there was a Jewish majority there.<sup>92</sup>

The Zionist leadership treated the White Paper as a bitter pill that had to be swallowed, although some of its leaders were vehemently opposed. Towards the end of June 1922 Britain made the White Paper public, specifying its proposals and the parties' responses. On July 6 the White Paper was approved by Parliament, an act that was sufficient for the League of Nations institutions, which confirmed the Mandate for Palestine on July 24. On August 10, 1922, the "King's Order-in-Council for Palestine" was issued and the Mandate formally came into effect on September 29, 1923.<sup>93</sup>

In short, it may be said that the main element in the White Paper was an attempt to placate both sides. The British commitment and that of the League of Nations to assist in the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Eretz Israel remained valid, but the definition of the term "national home" was not determined, and whether or not it meant a Jewish state. In addition, it was declared that under no circumstances should the Jewish national home impair the rights of the Arabs living in the country. It seems that British confirmation of the White Paper led them to start acting in accordance with its principles and put an end to the hesitations they had during the period of military rule and the beginning of Samuel's term as High Commissioner, both in conferences abroad and in the operation of the government in the country.<sup>94</sup>

Bernard Wasserstein, Samuel's biographer, claims that Samuel had already contemplated the concept and contents of the 1922 White Paper during his first visit

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**92** For Samuel's version of the events and his interpretation of the White Paper, see Samuel, *Memoirs*, 169–70. See also Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, 118–19; Elam, "Political History," 211–15. The Order-in-Council for a Palestine Constitution was promulgated on Aug. 10, 1922. It called for the establishment of a legislative council, but the Arabs rejected it; see Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 223–24, 244–52, who also describes the continued deliberations of the Mandates Committee of the League of Nations, to whose discussions the Zionists sent a delegation headed by Victor Jacobson.

**93** Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, 115–18; Assaf, *Awakening and Flight*, 102–3, who notes that the British government demanded that the Zionist Executive confirm its acceptance of the White Paper. This was done because all members of the executive, from Weizmann to Jabotinsky, considered its terms as an adequate framework for the future establishment of a Jewish state. For the events leading up to the confirmation of the Mandate, including Samuel's involvement, see also *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:110–18.

**94** Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*, 119–20, 130–31.

to the country in 1920, even before he became High Commissioner. The memorandum he wrote then included the basic elements of his outlook on how the British Mandate should be implemented, first and foremost the idea of limiting Jewish immigration. Perhaps Samuel hoped that time would have its effect, but he believed small steps were in order. He discussed the matter with Churchill who had been appointed colonial secretary and was given authority to deal with the matter on behalf of the government. At first Churchill opposed the spirit of the White Paper, but later concurred with Samuel. Though the 1922 White Paper bears Churchill's name, the person behind it was, in fact, Samuel.<sup>95</sup>

On October 19, 1922, a short while after the 1922 White Paper was published, Lloyd George's government fell, and a Conservative government replaced it. The new cabinet began to discuss the issue of Palestine and changes that should be made. However, Samuel was able to convince the new government not to introduce any changes.<sup>96</sup>

### **The 1922 White Paper: limiting immigration, removal of Transjordan, determination of the borders of Palestine, legislative council**

Four basic decisions can be discerned in the first White Paper: (a) limitation of Jewish immigration according to the economic absorptive capacity of the country and the approval of the British administration; (b) removal of the area east of the Jordan; (c) definition of the borders of Palestine; (d) the concept of a legislative council. The subject of Jewish immigration has already been discussed at length in the present chapter. While the idea and decision to cut off the area east of the Jordan from western Palestine have also been described above, a few comments are in order relating to this issue.

The parameters of the Mandate that were confirmed in July 1922 in the first White Paper were in effect agreed upon at meetings in the Auguste Victoria compound on Mount Scopus that served as the headquarters of High Commissioner Samuel. This was where it was decided to establish Transjordan as a separate entity, later formally declared in Amman and confirmed by the British government in 1922, after Abdullah's visit to London.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> For Churchill's attempts to shield Samuel from the anger of the Zionists, see *ibid.*, 97–98. On Churchill's involvement at this stage, see Friesel, *Zionist Policy after the Balfour Declaration*, 273–76. See also Samuel, *Memoirs*, 171.

<sup>96</sup> Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 234–37. For the text of the White Paper, see *Palestine: Correspondence with the Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organisation Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty, June 1922* (Cmd. 1700) (London: HMSO, 1922).

<sup>97</sup> Assaf, *Relations*, 389–92; in a footnote the author lists the persons who participated in the meeting in Jerusalem. In addition to Churchill and Samuel, those present included T.E. Lawrence,

The border between western Palestine and Transjordan was also set: from the meeting point of the Yarmuk River with the Jordan River in the north southwards following its course to the Dead Sea, and through the Arava Valley southwards. It was also determined that the Balfour Declaration would not apply to the area of Transjordan which would remain under British Mandate rule and the authority of the High Commissioner in Jerusalem.<sup>98</sup>

In April 1923, in Amman, the High Commissioner declared that subject to confirmation by the League of Nations, the Mandate administration would recognize an independent government in Transjordan. According to this policy, a Supplement to the Mandate on Palestine was submitted to the League of Nations Council on September 23, 1923 and was ratified. It was expressly stated that the clauses regarding the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine did not apply to Transjordan. On May 15, 1923, the High Commissioner had declared the establishment of Transjordan as a separate mandatory region where the High Commissioner for Palestine would continue to serve in that role through a British representative, his subordinate.<sup>99</sup>

At the end of 1923, Hussein, the king of Hejaz and father of Abdullah, even transferred 'Aqaba and Ma'an to the area of Transjordan.<sup>100</sup> During this period, uprisings were taking place in Ankara and Istanbul, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. On March 3, 1924, the Turkish caliphate was dissolved.<sup>101</sup> A few days later, Hashemite King Hussein ibn 'Ali declared himself the caliph of all Muslims. This was probably

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Gertrude Bell – the well-known Orientalist and archaeologist of Mesopotamia who passed away in 1926, and others. For Bell's visit to Palestine, see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 55–56. For her opinions on Palestine, see Friedman, "The Question of Palestine during World War I," 79, n. 340 and the source cited there.

**98** On the severance of the territory east of the Jordan from the Mandate for Palestine and the development of the Emirate of Transjordan, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 504–6, 510–14; Na'aman, *Abdullah*, 42–64. See also note 71 above.

**99** Assaf, *Relations*, 393–95; Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 190–96, who maintains that the British did not allow Weizmann to meet with Abdullah and were opposed to Jews settling in Transjordan. He seems to believe that it was possible to build a bridge between Jews and Arabs, and blame for its failure should be placed on the British. See also Kisch to the Zionist Executive in London, Dec. 12, 1922, in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 204–5 (no. 26) and his note of a conversation with Musa Kazim al-Husseini in Jerusalem on Oct. 23, 1923, in *ibid.*, 205–8 (no. 27).

**100** On the border in the southern part of Transjordan, after its severance from eastern Palestine in the vicinity of 'Aqaba, see Paul A. Alsberg, "Delimitation of the Eastern Border of Palestine," *Zionism* 3 (1981): 87–98; Gideon Biger, *Land of Many Boundaries: The First Hundred Years of the Delimitation of the New Boundaries of Palestine-Eretz Israel, 1840–1947* (Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Research Center, 2001), 179–80 (Hebrew). In his diary, Kisch records his trip to Amman to meet with Hussein already on July 23, 1923, his meeting with Abdullah on Feb. 28, 1924 at Government House in Jerusalem, and his journey to Egypt where he met with Arab leaders; see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 93, 105, 108–10 respectively.

**101** The Turkish victory against the Greeks in Anatolia, under the command of Atatürk, at first raised hopes among the Arabs that the Turks would come to their aid, but they were disappointed

done in consultation with the president of the Supreme Muslim Council in Palestine, Hajj Amin al-Husseini. Caliph Hussein then returned to his capital, Mecca, but in October he reappeared as a refugee in 'Aqaba since his hasty caliphate declaration aroused most of the Muslim world against him. This was also an opportunity for the Wahabi Saudi ruler from the Arabian Peninsula to advance towards Mecca and Hejaz where he defeated Hussein and his men. In 1925, the whole area was annexed by the Saudi Wahabis, who still hold it today.<sup>102</sup>

The downfall of King Hussein (1924) and his son and heir 'Ali (early 1926) also influenced Transjordan. Saudi Arabia aspired to gain control of Transjordan as well as Iraq, but these countries were saved mainly due to their relations with Britain. The Saudis also demanded the return of 'Aqaba and Ma'an that had been annexed to Transjordan, but the British supported Transjordan and these regions remained within its territory.<sup>103</sup> The issue of the border between Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Jordan was only settled in 1965 in a formal agreement between the two countries. The agreement included bilateral territorial exchanges to stabilize a border line acceptable to all.

In 1946 Transjordan received its independence and Emir Abdullah was crowned king of the independent state of Transjordan. After the end of the Israeli War of Independence and the signing of the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Transjordan, the West Bank remained in Transjordan, since according to the United Nations resolution of November 1947 it was intended to be part of the Arab state that was to have been established in Palestine. In 1950, Abdullah formally annexed the West Bank to his kingdom, without international support. No Arab state, nor most other countries, agreed to this unilateral act, and only Britain and Pakistan recognized the annexation. In July 1951 Abdullah was assassinated by a Palestinian during a visit to al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Abdullah's monarchy in Transjordan (now the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan), the country established by the British almost a hundred years ago, continues to this day under the rule of the Hashemite dynasty.

The third decision in the White Paper of 1922 was the conclusive delineation of the eastern and northern borders of Palestine, which remained in force until the end of the Mandate period. The southern border, as noted, was determined as early

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because the Turks preferred to no longer be involved with issues relating to Arabs in the Middle East; see Porath, *Emergence*, 158–66.

**102** For the struggle and fighting between the Hashemites and Ibn Sa'ud, including the transfer of 'Aqaba and Ma'an to Transjordan and over the boundary between Transjordan and Iraq, see Na'aman, *Abdullah*, 65–77, who bases his description on the sources listed in his bibliography, which include some in Arabic.

**103** Assaf, *Relations*, 395–96, who records the history of Transjordan throughout the period of the British Mandate, including World War II, including the Arab Legion which operated under British command.

as 1906, and the British government adopted it as the southwestern border of Palestine in 1919.<sup>104</sup>

With regards to the eastern border, this was still a matter of contention at the beginning of British rule.<sup>105</sup> The eastern border, as determined after the removal of Transjordan from Palestine, was defined as follows: “The territory lying east of a line drawing from a point two miles west of the town of Aqaba, in the Gulf of ‘Aqaba up to the center of Wadi el-Araba, the Dead Sea and the River Jordan to the junction of the latter with Yarmuk, thence up the center of the River Yarmuk to the Syrian frontier.”<sup>106</sup>

The final border in dispute was in the north, between the territories of the British Mandate and those of the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon. The borders of the Holy Land, as perceived by the British and especially Prime Minister Lloyd George, were the words of the Bible: “from Dan to Beersheba.” The French, too, were willing to accept the data included in George Adam Smith’s historical atlas of the Holy Land published in 1915 as the basis for determining the northern border.<sup>107</sup> This was done in three stages. The first, in 1918 at the end of the war, was the temporary borderline drawn between the areas held by the British and French military forces. The second stage came at the end of 1920, after it was conclusively determined that Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon would remain under British and French rule. The decisions regarding the future of these territories as determined by the Sykes–Picot agreement were finally abandoned. The third stage was when a British-French border committee was established, the Paulet-Newcombe Committee, named after the two military officers who headed it. The committee had begun its work already in 1921, but only completed it in 1923. Later some areas in northern Upper Galilee, previously included in the French territory of Lebanon, were included in the British territory, together with their twenty villages and 9,000 residents. The Treaty of Lausanne,

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**104** For the delineation of this border in 1906, see ch. 5, n. 114. See in detail Biger, *Land of Many Boundaries*, 32–44; Moshe Brawer, *Israel’s Boundaries, Past, Present, and Future: A Study in Political Geography* (Tel Aviv: Yavneh, 1988), 60–79, 83–84 (Hebrew) and the sources cited in both books.

**105** Until the final delineation of the border in the 1922 White Paper, there were several proposals for the eastern border of Palestine. See details in Biger, *Land of Many Boundaries*, 55–81, 160–76; Alsberg, “Eastern Border of Palestine.” See also Gideon Biger, “Zionist Considerations for Determining the Borders of Eretz Israel at the Beginning of the British Mandate,” *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisrael* 10 (2000): 89–101 (Hebrew).

**106** Biger, *Land of Many Boundaries*, 181–86, esp. 185. For the text that defined the border line, published in the *Official Gazette* of the Government of Palestine on Sept. 1, 1922, see Alsberg, “Eastern Border of Palestine,” 97; Yitzhak Gil-Har, “Boundaries Delimitation: Palestine and Trans-Jordan,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 36 (2000), 70–71. The controversy also related to the issue of water; see the appendixes in Brawer, *Israel’s Boundaries*, 80–102.

**107** For the fact that the British often consulted Smith’s book and atlas, see note 36 above. See also Biger, *Land of Many Boundaries*, 121, 127, 128, 176.



ratified on August 6, 1924, finalized the severance of Palestine from Turkey and its transfer under British administration. That was the beginning of Palestinian citizenship, its legal validity declared on August 1, 1925.<sup>108</sup>

The fourth decision the British wished to implement by means of the White Paper was the establishment of a legislative council that would assist the British administration in governing western Palestine. They considered using the 1922 census, the first census of the population of the country, to establish the council. Upon completion of the census, they thought of conducting local elections in the country, and even announced this intention in February 1923, but the Arabs rejected a priori every proposal for the establishment of a legislative council.<sup>109</sup>

From the onset of the British civilian administration and the establishment of the Arab Executive Committee and the Supreme Muslim Council, Palestinian Arab congresses convened in Palestine, such as those previously mentioned: the third in December 1920 and the fourth in June–July 1921. They demanded cancellation of the Balfour Declaration and the status of the Zionist movement and the creation of an independent Arab political entity in the country. Initially they also hoped it would assist them in bringing about nullification of the Treaty of Sèvres of August 1920 signed by the Entente Powers with Turkey following the victory of the national movement in Turkey under the leadership of Atatürk. Political developments in Britain, after the collapse of the Lloyd George coalition government on October 19, 1922, also aroused hope that this would create a change in the British pro-Zionist policy. All these Arab aspirations did not materialize.<sup>110</sup>

On August 22, 1922 the fifth Arab Palestinian Congress convened in Nablus and decided not to cooperate with the British administration until the Mandate was abolished, and the Arab population followed suit. Following this congress, a second Arab delegation set off to the Lausanne Conference and to London to influence the British to change their policy. In June 1923, the sixth Arab Palestinian Congress was held in Jaffa, and there too it was decided to reject the British proposals for the establishment of a legislative council and to refrain from cooperating with the British administration until the text of the Mandate was amended. This congress, too, decided to send an

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**108** On the stages in delineation of the northern border, see also Brawer, *Israel's Boundaries*, 103–24. A point of contention was the issue of lands in the Hula Valley which were designated as *jiftlik* lands that belonged to the sultan, and were therefore now government property; see Yitzhak Cytrin, “Ownership of Land in Israel’s Northern Triangle: Reality, Propaganda, and National Struggle,” *Cathedra* 137 (Sept. 2010): 87–116 (Hebrew). On Stewart Francis Newcombe, who participated in the mapping of Sinai before the war and was later partner to the Hyamson-Newcombe plan presented to Weizmann in 1937, see ch. 10, n. 123.

**109** This despite that the census clearly indicated a vast majority of Arabs over Jews. See Barron, *Palestine* [census 1922].

**110** On these two congresses and the delegation sent by the Arab Executive Committee, first to Geneva and then to London, to demand the annulment of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine, see notes 66 and 82 above.

Arab delegation to London, but once again it failed to affect a change. This was the last congress for a period of five years; the seventh Arab Palestinian Congress was convened only in 1928.<sup>111</sup>

The Jews, too, initially objected to the establishment of a legislative council, yet later, at Weizmann's urging, were willing to consider the formation of the council depending on its composition and what authority it would be awarded. As noted above, at the time the British were considering the creation of an "Arab Agency" which would, to a great extent, parallel the Jewish Agency. On October 4, 1923 the colonial secretary even wrote about it to the High Commissioner. The Jews were affronted, since the Jewish Agency was intended to serve the Jewish people throughout the world, while the Arab Agency was solely for the Arab residents of the country. However, the Arabs turned down this proposal too. The High Commissioner also tried to appoint consultants to the Mandate administration from both parties, but failed in this as well.<sup>112</sup>

Of interest is the unique response to the notion of the legislative council by Shlomo Kaplansky at the Ahdut Ha'avodah movement conference in Ein Harod in May 1924. Kaplansky was of the opinion that perhaps the legislative council might satisfy the Arab aspirations for self-government and should be considered. But the conference rejected Samuel's proposal, claiming that it reflected the existing status quo in the country, while the political commitment regarding a national home was intended to change the situation. The national home was not only for the Jewish population of Eretz Israel, which potentially could be augmented by Jews throughout the world. When his proposal was rejected by both parties, Samuel suggested that a legislative council be established based on the majority principle, while a senate would have equal representation of both peoples. The Arabs rejected this proposal as well.<sup>113</sup> Thus, the idea of creating a joint Jewish-Arab legislative or consultive council was stricken off the agenda. The proposal resurfaced during the period of High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope, which I shall discuss in the next chapter.

In sum, therefore, 1920–1923 were years of attempts by the British to create a constitution and of efforts by the Arab national movement to annul the Balfour Declaration and its confirmation in the text of the Mandate. In contrast, the major faction of the Zionist movement, led by Weizmann, continued to try and preserve relations with Samuel, although it did not always agree with his proposals. With this in mind, in 1922 Weizmann appointed Kisch to represent him in Eretz Israel as director of the Political Department of the Palestine Zionist Executive. Thus he

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**111** For the Seventh Palestinian Congress, see Porath, *Emergence*, 114–15. On the Arab opposition to the Mandate for Palestine and the delegations they sent to London, see Shimoni, *Arabs in Palestine*, 280–82.

**112** For thoughts about the creation of an Arab Agency, see note 81 above.

**113** Shapira, "Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine," 76–77.

hoped to maintain the connection with Samuel for the interests of the Zionist movement.<sup>114</sup>

### **The Third Aliyah, its character and influence on the development of Eretz Israel, 1919–1923**

While World War I raged in Europe, the Jewish people received the Balfour Declaration and the British army began, and then completed, the conquest of Palestine until the Turks surrendered. During these years there was no actual Jewish immigration to the country. Only after the war ended, in 1919, was organized aliyah renewed. It received the name the “Third Aliyah,” continuing the two previous ones, the first and the second.<sup>115</sup>

One of the surprising elements in the activity of the Zionist Organization was an oversight immediately following the Balfour Declaration and the conquest of Palestine: it was unprepared to exploit the option created for immigration of a large number of Jews to Eretz Israel. True, the country was under military rule based on the principle of status quo ante bellum, and the Mandate for Palestine had not yet been confirmed. Moreover, postwar conditions throughout the world were difficult. Despite all this, it seems that the major blame lies with the Zionist Organization which feared that unemployment and difficult economic conditions might emerge as a result of aliyah by Jews without means. At the end of the war, the Zionist Organization sent out letters and circulars to the effect that it was still impossible to travel to the country and that the routes were blocked, adding unequivocal warnings not to take any hasty step towards aliyah. At the first meeting of the Zionist Actions Committee after the war, in February–March 1919, it was decided to warn potential immigrants not to travel to Eretz Israel without the approval of the Zionist Organization. There were also Zionist leaders who spoke of the need to select the candidates for aliyah, so that only those would come whose education, profession, and character would suit the goals to which the Zionist movement was aspiring. This view was also made clear in a circular by the Zionist Actions Committee in August 1919, which demanded that prospective immigrants abide meanwhile in their countries of origin. The only person to come out strongly against this moderate and careful policy was Max Nordau. During 1919–1920, he delivered a series of speeches around the slogan: mass aliyah to Eretz Israel, immediately, and without delay. In summer 1919 he wrote: “we should act on a broad scale . . . not in fifty years, not tomorrow, but today.” At the London Conference that convened in the

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**114** For a summing up of the years 1918–1922, see Elam, “Political History”; Friesel, *Zionist Policy after the Balfour Declaration*.

**115** On the Third Aliyah, see Near, *Kibbutz Movement*, 1:58–69.

summer of 1920 he proposed bringing half a million olim to Eretz Israel immediately, saying that “either we become the overwhelming majority in Eretz Israel now, or the country will be lost to us forever.” His opinion was ignored, or simply could not be implemented.<sup>116</sup>

In the meantime, pressure in Europe increased. The great desire for emigration from Russia and Poland that began after the war, the Bolshevik Revolution (1917), the civil war in Russia (1918–1920), and the war between Russia and Poland (1919–1920) all caused the lower class and lower middle-class intelligentsia to leave these countries. Among them were also many Jews who wanted to immigrate to Eretz Israel, whether because they were imbued with pioneering Zionist feelings or since they sensed that the British conquest opened up a new era. Even the attacks and riots that occurred in Eretz Israel, the news of which reached Europe, such as the death of Trumpeldor and his compatriots in Tel Hai in March 1920, attacks on other settlements in the Galilee in the spring of 1920, the Passover 1920 riots in Jerusalem followed by Jabotinsky’s arrest, did not deter those aspiring to immigrate but strengthened their will.<sup>117</sup> This was the background against which Zionist associations began forming, first and foremost “Hehalutz” (the Pioneer), as well as middle class private companies. Already in 1918, offices for aliyah to Eretz Israel were opened in cities such as Warsaw, Vienna, Istanbul, and elsewhere. Around 230,000 Jews emigrated from eastern Europe, of whom between 25,000 and 35,000 came to Eretz Israel during the Third Aliyah (by comparison, 20,000–30,000 arrived in the First Aliyah, and 35,000 during the Second Aliyah). The heroic odyssey of this aliyah, in which many of its members made their way to Eretz Israel against all odds, gave it its unique character and forged the nature of its encounter with and absorption in Eretz Israel.<sup>118</sup>

The Third Aliyah began in 1919. The number of immigrants that year was still small, less than two thousand people. Until the beginning of the civilian administration on July 1, 1920, there were limitations on Jewish immigration; formally, only those who had left the country during the war were allowed to return in order to maintain the status quo before the war.<sup>119</sup> It is hard to pinpoint exactly when the Third Aliyah

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**116** Aviva Halamish, *A Dual Race against Time: Zionist Immigration Policy in the 1930s* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2005), 15–18 (Hebrew), and the sources cited there.

**117** On Arab attacks against Jewish settlements in Upper Galilee, Lower Galilee, the Jezreel Valley, and on Zemar, see *History of the Haganah*, 1,2:586–602.

**118** Different figures are given for the number of immigrants during the Third Aliyah: 25,000 by Dan Giladi, “From Aliyah to Aliyah and between Boom and Bust: The Development of the Jewish National Home in Eretz Israel,” in *The History of Eretz Israel, 9: The British Mandate and the Jewish National Home*, ed. Yehoshua Porath and Yaacov Shavit (Jerusalem: Keter and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1984), 162 (Hebrew); 35,000 by Yehuda Erez, *The Third Aliyah*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1964), 1:6 (Hebrew).

**119** The S.S. *Ruslan* is generally considered as the beginning of the Third Aliyah. It sailed from Odessa on Dec. 12, 1919 and arrived in Jaffa with 500 olim aboard. There are those who question

ended, since it was almost immediately followed by the “Fourth Aliyah” in 1924. The change of name was mainly due to the different character of the olim. Thus, the accepted view is that the end of 1923 also marked the end of the Third Aliyah.

Like the First Aliyah and Second Aliyah, the Third Aliyah is also the subject of a comprehensive book. However, it was not the result of a preconceived outline by subject matter or biographies of leading personalities, but rather a collection of random articles. It also includes a special section entitled “On the Threshold of the Period” written by various persons with knowledge about the background of the Third Aliyah.<sup>120</sup>

This book focuses mainly on agricultural settlement in kibbutzim and moshavim. In fact, the term “Third Aliyah” refers to that part of the labor movement which made this wave of aliyah unique and justified its name. In many ways, the Third Aliyah continued the socialist ideology of the Second Aliyah and even added to it. This is also embodied in the publisher’s note that the book deals with “the glorious period of the Third Aliyah in all its aspects and manifestations.”<sup>121</sup>

Among the topics included in the book are the organization of its members in Hehalutz cells abroad and their immigration to Eretz Israel, conquest of labor, establishment of agricultural settlements and the first large industrial enterprises, the role they played in defense and in the establishment of the Histadrut, and more.<sup>122</sup>

The Third Aliyah received its pioneering and heroic character from the diverse agricultural settlement movements and the members of Gedud Ha’avodah (named after Yosef Trumpeldor), all of whom aspired to combine the Zionist vision with that of forming innovative social frameworks. During this period, the socialist agricultural settlements began functioning as an organized movement, continuing the vision of labor of their predecessors, the members of the Second Aliyah. Thus were established Gedud Ha’avodah whose members were Trumpeldor’s disciples in the Hehalutz movement in Russia, Hashomer Hatzair, and the group that founded Kibbutz Ein Harod.<sup>123</sup>

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this ship’s status; see Gur Alroey, “Was the S.S. *Ruslan* Really the Harbinger of the Third Aliyah?” *Cathedra* 107 (Apr. 2003): 63–80 (Hebrew), esp. the appendix listing ships and trains that reached Eretz Israel earlier during 1919.

**120** Erez, *The Third Aliyah*. On Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel during the transitional period (1918–1921) and that of the Third Aliyah (1921–1923), see also Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 65–77.

**121** On Hehalutz, see Erez, *The Third Aliyah*, 1:11–15 and in the index.

**122** For the kibbutzim and the connections between Hashomer and the bodies that were created during the early Mandate period, see Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers*, 123–72. On the Histadrut, see Tsahor, “The Histadrut.”

**123** On Gedud Ha’avodah, see Near, *Kibbutz Movement*, 1:69–74; Elkana Margalit, “Gedud Ha’avodah—The Labor Brigade: From Communal Concept to Practice,” *Cathedra* 7 (Apr. 1978): 49–97 (Hebrew). See also Anita Shapira, “Gedud Ha-avodah: A Dream that Failed,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 30 (1984): 62–76. On Hashomer Hatzair, see Yael Weiler, “The Camaraderie of Hashomer Hatzair, 1919–1923,” *Cathedra* 102 (Dec. 2001): 63–96 (Hebrew); Aviva Halamish, “The Dialectic Influence of

Most of the olim were youths, eighteen to twenty years old, motivated by the ideology of the Bolshevik Revolution, on the one hand, and the Balfour Declaration on the other, confident that they were intended to bring about the greatest revolution in Jewish history: to create a new people in an old-new country.<sup>124</sup>

The period of the Third Aliyah also marked the beginning of the rising leadership of Ben-Gurion, the leader of the labor movement, following his return to the country from the United States via England towards the end of 1918. In June 1920, Ben-Gurion went to London for the Zionist Conference scheduled for July 4, 1920. At this conference he spoke out for the first time against Weizmann's policy and drew attention to his own policy. Upon his return to Eretz Israel in December he assisted the two labor movements, Ahdut Ha'avodah and Hapo'el Hatza'ir, to establish the Histadrut, the General Organization of Jewish Workers in Eretz Israel. At this time the idea for the "large commune" was also brought up. Now bigger types of rural settlements – mo-shavim, kibbutzim, and communes – were established, as well as labor battalions to carry out public works such as road construction and other cooperative ventures.<sup>125</sup>

It is important to note that most of the Third Aliyah members did not settle in the rural settlements but in the cities, mainly Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa as a lower middle class and wage-earning population. In the cities they contributed to urban development, a matter to which I shall give greater attention in the next chapter when discussing the Fourth Aliyah. It was then that the character of Tel Aviv also began to take shape as the "first Hebrew city," a service-providing center with small businesses and light industry. Urban development accelerated land acquisition and construction and many of the workers found employment in construction. Yet, these beginnings could not provide work for all those seeking employment. In 1921, the public works policy initiated by Samuel's administration saved the Third Aliyah members from grave unemployment. Around 3,000 were

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A.D. Gordon on Hashomer Hatzair," *Cathedra* 114 (Dec. 2004): 99–120 (Hebrew). For biographies of two important leaders of Hashomer Hatzair, see Zeev Tsahor, *Ya'akov Hazan: A Biography* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997) (Hebrew); Aviva Halamish, *Kibbutz, Utopia and Politics: The Life and Times of Meir Yaari, 1897–1987* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2017). For Ein Harod, see Erez, *The Third Aliyah*, 1:36–37 and in the index. On Hashomer Hatzair in the Third Aliyah, see Shapira, "Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine," 56–58. See also Bein, *Return to the Soil*, 175–329.

**124** A unique collection, representative of the zeitgeist, is *Kehilyatenu [Our Commune]: A 1922 Collection of Reflections, Hesitations, and Aspirations of Pioneers*, ed. and annot. Muki Tsur (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1988) (Hebrew). The volume consists of group confessions by members of a commune called Bitania Ilit, who soon founded Kibbutz Beit Alfa. On this collection, see also Ofer N. Nur, "Can There Be a Collective Egodocument?: The Case of the Hashomer Hatzair 'Kehilyatenu' Collection in Palestine, 1922," in *Controlling Time and Shaping the Self*, ed. Arianne Baggerman, Rudolf Dekker, and Michael Mascuch (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 215–27.

**125** Near, *Kibbutz Movement*, 1:58–79. For Ben-Gurion during this period, see Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 158–86, 200–257.

employed in the construction of military camps (Sarafand and others) and roads. Indeed, the roads became the breeding grounds for members of the Third Aliyah and it was there that the organizations mentioned above took shape.<sup>126</sup>

The Third Aliyah also began a new chapter in the history of settlement in Eretz Israel. The highlight was the redemption of the Jezreel Valley. The idea to develop this area had come up earlier, but Hankin only succeeded in completing a large land purchase deal with the Sursuk family after World War I, acquiring tens of thousands of dunams from them in the Jezreel Valley. Other land purchases there were carried out by private parties, and Jewish property in the valley totaled around 200,000 dunams. The settlement activity that began then became one of the symbols of Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel.<sup>127</sup>

An economic crisis hit the country in 1923. It continued for eleven months and put an end to the boom of the Third Aliyah period. The crisis resulted from a combination of several elements: (a) a decrease in the import of private capital from abroad; (b) the termination in October 1922 of the public works initiated by the British administration to provide work for the unemployed among the new immigrants; (c) a decrease in the Zionist budget. All these caused a slowdown in the rate of construction and increased unemployment. The Solel Boneh construction company collapsed. The crisis caused many to leave the country. Most severe was the blow at morale resulting from the fall from high expectations to dealing with day to day matters related to the realization of Zionist endeavors. Desperation was most prominently reflected by the growing attraction of the Palestine Communist Party which received 6 percent of the vote in the elections for the second Elected Assembly in 1923. Another result of the crisis was the waning of faith in the path followed by the country's socialist society. In 1926 Gedud Ha'avodah split into left and right wings, and there were even those among the left who chose to quit and return to Russia.<sup>128</sup>

The status of Jewish Jerusalem, too, underwent a dramatic change during the Third Aliyah period. At its onset there were high hopes and visions for the future of the Jewish city, such as the laying of the cornerstone for the Hebrew University and the location there of the offices of the Zionist Commission, the Palestine Zionist Executive, and the chief secretariat of the executive of the Histadrut. Personages

<sup>126</sup> Giladi, "From Aliyah to Aliyah," 163; Near, *Kibbutz Movement*, 1:65.

<sup>127</sup> On the acquisition of land in the Jezreel Valley, see Chapter Five in the text before n. 66, Chapter Six in the text after n. 82, and esp. ch. 9, nn. 13–14, 16–17.

<sup>128</sup> Shapira, "Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine," 59–60; id., "The Left in Gdud Ha'avodah (Labour Brigade) and the Palestine Communist Party until 1928," in *Zionism: Studies in the History of the Zionist Movement and of the Jewish Community in Palestine*, ed. Daniel Carpi and Gedalia Yogev (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and Massada, 1975), 127–55. On the split in Gedud Ha'avodah, Ein Harod, and Tel Yosef, see Henry Near, "Worker's Settlement, 1919–1948," in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The British Mandate Period, Part 3*, ed. Moshe Lissak (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2007), 428–33 (Hebrew).



such as Ben-Gurion, Ben-Zvi, and others resided in Jerusalem. However, most of these did not really take root there. Cultural institutions and organizations of the Yishuv that were initially located in Jerusalem began to move to Tel Aviv, the emerging new Jewish center. In 1925, the Executive Committee of the Histadrut returned to Tel Aviv, and many leading figures began leaving Jerusalem.<sup>129</sup> The growth of Tel Aviv cast a shadow over the development and growth of Jewish Jerusalem, which now lagged behind the development of the Yishuv in the rest of the country. Jerusalem lost the preeminence it had gained in the nineteenth century.<sup>130</sup>

## The centrality of Jerusalem at the beginning of British rule

In the previous chapter I dealt with the special attitude of the British to Jerusalem. This was manifested in the impressive ceremony of General Allenby's entrance into the Old City, his declaration regarding the unique status of the city holy to three religions, the immediate steps for rehabilitation of the city following the difficult period of World War I and the similar action taken by the military administration to develop and preserve its history and the establishment of the Pro-Jerusalem Society headed by Jerusalem's military governor Storrs, in collaboration with representatives of the three religions. All these clearly indicate the special attitude of the British to Jerusalem immediately following its conquest.

The British sense of commitment to Jerusalem increased with the arrival of the first High Commissioner Samuel, and the beginning of the civilian administration of the country. The British made three notable contributions to Eretz Israel and Jerusalem: (a) the formation of a new political entity named "Palestine"; (b) giving Jerusalem the status of a capital city; (c) the establishment of various government departments.<sup>131</sup>

It should be added that in many ways the status the British gave Jerusalem led the Zionist movement and the Yishuv to make Jerusalem its political capital, especially since according to the Mandate a body affiliated with the Zionist Organization was to represent the interests of the Yishuv vis-à-vis the British. At first this was the Zionist Commission, then the Palestine Zionist Executive, and later the national institutions: the Jewish Agency and its institutions, Keren Kayemet and Keren Hayesod, together

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**129** During the early Mandate years, many leading personalities lived in Jerusalem, in the Bukharian Quarter; see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The New Jewish Jerusalem during the Mandate Period: Neighborhoods, Houses, People*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2011), 3:1400–1401 (Hebrew). For the transfer of the Executive Committee of the Histadrut to Jerusalem by Ben-Gurion and its return to Tel Aviv, see Tsahor, "The Histadrut," 489–91.

**130** For details, see Michael Romann, "The Shift of the Demographic and Economic Center from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv during the Mandate Period," in *Jerusalem in Zionist Vision and Realization: Collected Essays*, ed. Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 1989), 217–34 (Hebrew).

**131** Biger, *Empire in the Holy Land*, 210–12.

with the National Council. Other Jewish administrative bodies were also located in Jerusalem, such as the Chief Rabbinate. British determination of Jerusalem as the capital city of Palestine enhanced the status of Jerusalem for Jews and Arabs alike.<sup>132</sup>

Their decision was not only a matter of principle but also had many de facto consequences. In contrast with the previous Oriental, relatively backward, government in the country and in Jerusalem, the British brought progressive Western rule and laid the foundations for the establishment of an administration that also served as the basis for that of the State of Israel that came in its wake.<sup>133</sup> All this began during the period of the first High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel.

Under Samuel, the British began establishing various government departments. One of the first founded in Jerusalem was the Department of Antiquities, due to the special attitude noted above of the British, and Samuel, to the preservation of the antiquities of the Holy Land and bringing them to the attention of the public.<sup>134</sup> Another important act of the British administration, executed immediately after Samuel's arrival, was the opening of the Land Registry offices to serve the Jerusalem public. These offices had been closed since the conquest, and were only reopened at the beginning of 1921, enabling orderly land acquisition and a building surge throughout the country, as well as in Jerusalem.<sup>135</sup>

Additionally, the Town Planning Ordinance of 1921 was issued at the time, authorizing the High Commissioner to declare any area or county as an urban building area, within the limits set and published in the *Official Gazette*. Accordingly, a new authority was established for the advancement and development of towns and built-up areas, one that had not existed during the Ottoman period. In September 1921, a detailed ordinance for Jerusalem was issued, defining the city as an urban planning zone and setting the boundaries for town planning and the limitations on building within them.<sup>136</sup> Publication of the ordinance laid the legal foundations for the approval of many Jerusalem neighborhoods. The area under the authority of the Jerusalem municipality was around thirteen square kilometers. However, the municipal authorities were aware of the option to develop the area around the city and demanded that the town planning zone also be extended to areas outside its municipal boundaries.<sup>137</sup>

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**132** For the taking root of Jewish institutions in Jerusalem, see Ben-Arieh, "Major Changes," 389–403; for those of the Arabs, see *ibid.*, 397–98, 401–3.

**133** See the papers presented at an academic conference in Jerusalem in 2001: Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, ed., *Jerusalem and the British Mandate: Interaction and Legacy* (Jerusalem: Mishkenot Sha'ananim; Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2003 (Hebrew)).

**134** Ben-Arieh, "Non-Jewish Institutions" – Part 1, 146–59.

**135** Biger, "Early British Contributions."

**136** The ordinance was published in the *Official Gazette*, Sept. 15, 1921.

**137** Architect Richard Kaufmann brought the European garden city ideal to Jerusalem; see Yossi Katz and Liora Bigon, "Urban Development and the 'Garden City': Examples from Late Ottoman-era Palestine in the Late British Mandate," in *Garden Cities and Colonial Planning: Transnationality and*

Nevertheless, the most important British contribution to Jerusalem was the location within its bounds of the administrative center for the entire country. During 1920–1927 the High Commissioner resided in the Auguste Victoria Hospice on Mount Scopus, a building constructed by the Germans towards the end of the Ottoman period. During World War I the Turks turned it into their main military headquarters in Palestine. After the British conquest, the compound served initially as the headquarters of the 20th Corps, and then as the official residence and offices of the British Chief Administrator.<sup>138</sup> In addition to the High Commissioner's residence, it also housed the offices of the Chief Secretariat, the Chief Prosecutor, and the Treasury. But due to the inconvenience caused by the distance of these offices from the city center, they were moved in 1924 to the German St. Paul Hostel near the Nablus Gate, which until then had served as the offices of the city's governor. All these offices moved to the King David Hotel only in the late 1930s. After the 1927 earthquake, the High Commissioner temporarily moved to the "Mahanaim" building, which had previously housed the Evelina de Rothschild School. He entered the High Commissioner's Residence (referred to in Hebrew as Armon Hanatziv, the Commissioner's Palace) in present-day East Talpiot only at the beginning of the 1930s. That building is currently the headquarters of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.<sup>139</sup>

The main administrative body of the Government of Palestine was the Chief Secretariat. It was located in Jerusalem and filled many functions. The *Official Gazette of the Government of Palestine* was its responsibility. The chief secretary normally stood in for the High Commissioner when the latter was out of the country.<sup>140</sup> The first two chief secretaries were persons of senior status among British officials in the Orient. Wyndham Deedes served in this capacity from September 1920 till April 1923 and was replaced by Gilbert Clayton until June 1925. The High Commissioner and the chief secretary were aided by an advisory council comprised of government department heads, and a legislative council of British officials charged with approving all proposed

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*Urban Ideas in Africa and Palestine*, ed. Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 153–57; Biger, "Early British Contributions," 186; Ruth Kark and Michal Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs: Quarters, Neighborhoods, Villages 1800–1948* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001), 169.

**138** After the British forces conquered Jerusalem, they confiscated German structures that were considered enemy property, including the Auguste Victoria Hospice on Mt. Scopus and houses in the German Colony. Property belonging to the German Catholic Church was not confiscated due to Britain's relations with the Vatican; see Kark and Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs*, 138.

**139** On Mahanaim, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 2:265–67. See also Makover, *Government and Administration*, 93, and in general, on the office of the High Commissioner and its functionaries, see *ibid.*, 87–107.

**140** For the Chief Secretariat, its authority, operation, and more, see Makover, *Government and Administration*, 108–35; see also Jacob Reuveny, *The Administration of Palestine under the British Mandate, 1920–1948: An Institutional Analysis* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1993), 37–48 (Hebrew).

legislation that was then submitted to the Colonial Office in London for approval. The location of the offices of the High Commissioner and the chief secretary in Jerusalem, and their activity, greatly affected the city's development.<sup>141</sup>

Most of the British government departments were located in Jerusalem. These included the District Commissioner's Office, the Legal System, the Health and Education departments, others engaging in the development of agriculture, forestry, and veterinary services, Internal Security, and more. All these were housed in buildings rented from the city's residents. Police headquarters, law courts, the prison, and the government hospital were all located in the Russian Compound.<sup>142</sup>

Thus, a new element was introduced into Jerusalem: first officers and officials of the military administration and afterwards those of the civilian government who began residing in the city. British officials and personages created a colony of their own in Jerusalem, residing in the city with their families.<sup>143</sup> Many of them took up residence in the German Colony from which the Templar residents were exiled in 1918 as enemy subjects. While many of those returned to the country in 1922, only a few came back to Jerusalem and repossessed their property. Thus, the British continued living in the German Colony and created a small island of their own, including a sports club, and from there developed activities throughout the city. One may say that generally the British did not commingle with local society, neither Jewish nor Arab, even though there were still no security problems in the city at the time. Despite social events and encounters at which they met other intellectuals in the city, the relations were in effect only formal.<sup>144</sup> The great majority of British institutions in Jerusalem were established during Samuel's tenure as High Commissioner. Today, with hindsight, it seems that one of Samuel's greatest contributions was the establishment of a modern, European, orderly government in Eretz Israel which served as the basis for its administration throughout the Mandate period and to a great extent also for the Israeli government that followed.<sup>145</sup>

Another matter worthy of mention is the British objection to the development of Jerusalem as an industrial city, encouraging only light industry and crafts.<sup>146</sup>

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**141** On Deedes, see note 20 above. For Clayton, see the index to Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, who often mentions and praises him. See also ch. 9, nn. 2, 70.

**142** On the British Mandate administrative units, see Reuveny, *Administration of Palestine*.

**143** On the lives of British soldiers, police, and notables in Jerusalem, see Ari J. Sherman, *British Lives in Palestine, 1918–1948* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997); Hadara Lazar, *Out of Palestine: The Making of Modern Israel* (New York: Atlas & Co., 2011).

**144** On relations between British and Jews in Jerusalem, see Edwin H. Samuel, *A Lifetime in Jerusalem: The Memoirs of the Second Viscount Samuel* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1970), 55; Isaac A. Abbady, *Between Us and the English: An Attempt to Analyze Relations between the English and the Jews and between Jews and the English* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1947) (Hebrew).

**145** Elam, "Political History," 194–95. On Herbert Samuel's term as High Commissioner, see also Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 2–15.

**146** Ben-Arieh, "Major Changes," 438; Biger, *Empire in the Holy Land*, 215.

Their outlook was that Jerusalem should preserve its historical status as a city important to the three monotheistic religions. They gave this consideration more weight than the fact that most of the city's population was Jewish. Thus, they found diverse ways to give equal representation on the municipal council to members of the three faiths, while they remained the rulers.<sup>147</sup>

A pertinent question is, what led the British to become so greatly involved in the development of Jerusalem? It seems that one can point to three main reasons, none of which indicated willingness to carry out their commitment in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine to assist in the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Eretz Israel. The first was their special sentiment towards Jerusalem as the city holy to the three religions, its historical structures, and its impressive medieval heritage.<sup>148</sup> The second reason was the British understanding that as a progressive Western ruler, they had to establish a modern system of government for the country that would enable control and supervision. British political interests in Palestine, best reflected in Jerusalem, was the third reason. According to the British imperialist policy of the time, the conquest and possession of Palestine constituted defense of northeastern Egypt and the Suez Canal. Caring for Jerusalem fitted in well with these interests.

### **Summary: High Commissioner Herbert Samuel, 1920–1925: a crucial period in the history of Eretz Israel**

Herbert Samuel was one of the persons most involved in Britain with Zionism in the context of Eretz Israel. In many ways, he was third only to Lloyd George and Balfour in influencing the development of British policy regarding Zionism in Eretz Israel during 1915–1925. Samuel formed a relationship with Weizmann as early as 1915 and played an important role in the efforts to promote the ideas included in the Balfour Declaration. He was active at the postwar peace conferences as an intermediary to assure inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine. As the first British High Commissioner in Palestine, he greatly influenced the shaping and character of the new Eretz Israel that emerged. His five years in office were crucial for the future of the country. I have demonstrated all these above. In the following chapters, too, when I discuss the

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**147** On the Jerusalem Municipal Council during the Mandate period, see Alsberg, "Mayoralty of Jerusalem"; Eliakim Rubinstein, "Jews and Arabs in the Palestine Municipalities, 1926–1933, with Special Reference to Jerusalem," *Cathedra* 51 (Apr. 1989): 122–47 (Hebrew).

**148** See Chapter Seven, in the sub-section on Storrs and the Pro-Jerusalem Society; see also Henry Kendall, *Jerusalem, the City Plan: Preservation and Development during the British Mandate, 1918–1948* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1948).

development of the country such as electric works, water supply, the potash industry, and more, Samuel's initial involvement will always stand out.

In this summing up, I have chosen not to repeat his role in and contribution to the topics mentioned, but to focus on the controversial issue of his political outlook during his tenure. Awareness of his close ties with Zionist circles, together with the fact that he was a committed Jew, led several British personages who took part in the conquest of Palestine to object at first to his appointment as High Commissioner. However, incumbent Prime Minister Lloyd George, who knew Samuel's character and commitment to whatever he was called upon to do, as well as to the Palestine issue, was adamant that Samuel was the right man to fill the role he had in mind for him, in the hope that due to his moderation he would be able to govern the new country.

In 1920, even before he assumed office, Samuel set out on a preliminary tour of Palestine to acquaint himself with its problems. It was then that he became aware of the central problem emerging in the region now under British military administration: the tension between the Jewish and Arab populations, which increased following the Balfour Declaration that the Jews celebrated openly and joyously, but only served to boost Arab apprehension of Zionism. Still, when offered the post of High Commissioner he accepted it, although he was aware of the objections to his appointment, yet hoped he would succeed in mediating between the two sides.

At the beginning of his tenure he was received in the country with great enthusiasm. There are many descriptions of this welcoming reception, the most famous part of which was his visit, on the Sabbath after his arrival, to the Hurvah Synagogue in the Old City. There he read the prayer for the Ninth of Av, the day of the Temple's destruction. The congregation stood up at the end of the prayer and called out to him "You are our brother, you are our brother."<sup>149</sup>

It would seem that the enthusiastic reception by the Jews of Eretz Israel to the appointment of Samuel, a Jew and one of the initiators of the Balfour Declaration, was also born of the the majority of the Jewish population's response to the Declaration. They perceived it as a messianic declaration of sorts, intended to realize the vision of the Jewish nation's return to its ancestral homeland. They saw Samuel's appointment as High Commissioner as a direct continuation of that great declaration and did not pay attention to the details, especially that the borders of the national home had not been defined. When Samuel arrived in Eretz Israel, he had to set its borders and bring stability to the country. Accordingly, he sought to reach a compromise between Jews and Arabs, the extremity of whose conflict he came to know better and better. He

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<sup>149</sup> "You are our brother, you are our brother" was the cry directed by the people to Herod Agrippa, king of Judea, whose family was of Edomite provenance. In the case of Samuel, it signified the great expectations of Jews in Eretz Israel, following the Balfour Declaration and the British conquest of Jerusalem, from the appointment of a Jew as High Commissioner. For many of them the expectations soon turned into deep disappointment. For Samuel's recollection of this event, see Samuel, *Memoirs*, 176.

apparently hoped that by cutting off the area east of the Jordan River from western Palestine and not having the reference to the Balfour Declaration in the Mandate for Palestine apply there, in addition to the appointment of the Hashemite Abdullah as the Emir of Transjordan, would placate the Arabs of the region. Feisal's crowning as King of Iraq after his exile from Damascus was also part of the same plan.

Samuel came to the conclusion that the Zionists needed to make an effort to come to an agreement with the Arabs on various issues and to placate them, so they would not fear them. It was he, too, who paved the way for the first White Paper, believing that the limitations placed on the Jews would appease the Arabs. At the same time, he continued to believe in the historical right of the Jews to a national home in Eretz Israel. As for the White Paper, in the drafting of which, as shown, Samuel was much involved and which was confirmed by the League of Nations, Samuel strongly insisted that what was agreed upon, confirmed, and recorded in it were only an addition to the initial Mandate for Palestine. The Balfour Declaration with its commitment to aid in the establishment of a Jewish national home in Eretz Israel remained an integral part of the Mandate, although guidelines and limitations were added to it.

However, all these did not work in his favor with the Jewish community in Eretz Israel, and Jews began criticizing him sharply. His change in outlook was unacceptable to many of those active in the Zionist movement, and there were even some who viewed him a traitor. Jabotinsky, who during World War I was in England and dealt with the establishment of the British battalion of the Jewish Legion, was a close friend of Samuel. At first, he even agreed to some of his proposals, probably also due to the deep respect he felt for him. But eventually he, too, began to attack him vehemently. The Revisionist movement and its Beitar youth movement founded by Jabotinsky, raised the banner of "Two banks has the River Jordan, this one is ours and that one too," which to a great degree was also directed against Samuel who initiated the separation between the two banks.

Samuel tried to find new ways for cooperation between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, for example by establishing a legislative council alongside the British administration, but failed in this too. Apparently, later during his tenure he ceased trying to solve all the country's problems. He began focusing less on political aspects and paid more attention to the continued development of the country.

While still in Eretz Israel, he tried again to assist the Zionist movement. After Lloyd George was forced to resign as prime minister in October 1922, and Lord Balfour, too, became less involved due to old age, Samuel remained the figure who continued to defend the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine that included it, fending off every attack upon them. In 1924, when the first Labour government came into office, and Samuel was still High Commissioner, he tried to raise anew ideas that, this time, were in keeping with Zionist leadership demands. Thus, he proposed basing the policy concerning Jewish immigration on three principles: (a) preference of Jews over others; (b) recognition of the Zionist Organization as the representative body that deals with Jewish immigration; (c) authorization of the



Zionist Organization to immediately bring in any Jew who had economic means or a chance to find employment.<sup>150</sup>

Towards the end of his term as High Commissioner, he apparently was filled with much satisfaction from his period of service in the country. This was especially evident at the inauguration ceremony of the Hebrew University in April 1925. This was the most impressive event of the early Mandate period. A gathering of personages from all over the country and from abroad, with many delegations from various states, even from Arab countries, the address delivered by Lord Balfour at the ceremony and his tour of the country, and Samuel's speech at this outstanding ceremony in this unique location, with General Allenby, the conqueror of Jerusalem among the guests – all these related to an endeavor that was in essence indicative of cultural and spiritual Judaism.<sup>151</sup> Samuel was entitled to see this as his own achievement. Five governments had changed in England since he became active in matters relating to Palestine and until the end of his term as High Commissioner.<sup>152</sup>

After he left his post, the Fourteenth Zionist Congress that convened in Vienna in the summer of 1925, by a unanimous vote, sent Sir Herbert Samuel a warm message of thanks expressing the utmost respect of the Zionist movement.<sup>153</sup> When summing up his five years in office, Samuel notes that the establishment of a Jewish national home was not an arrogant act by some government, and no support was ever given by the British Treasury to the civilian government of Palestine/Eretz Israel. The Jewish national home was solely the fruit of the vigor and action of the Jewish people.<sup>154</sup>

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**150** Lissak, "Immigration, Absorption, and Society Building," 218–19.

**151** On the inauguration ceremony of the Hebrew University, see note 37 above. For the addresses delivered and commentary upon them, see Shaul Katz and Michael Heyd, ed., *The History of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Origins and Beginnings* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997), 320–49 (Hebrew); for the speech delivered by Lord Balfour, see ch. 7, n. 46. For the ceremony, including the participation of Balfour and his tour of the country, see also Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 390–402; Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 167–74. Frumkin, *A Judge*, 288, relates that he hosted in his home Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, an Egyptian scholar and lawyer who later served as minister of justice, and Mahmud Azmi, who in time was the Egyptian ambassador to the UN, when they came to participate in the inauguration ceremony of the university. Another visit by Azmi, together with Abbas Hilmi Pasha, to the university, the colony of Motza, and Kibbutz Kiryat Anavim on Jan. 1, 1932, is recorded in Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary*, 166. For Azmi, see also Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 117–19.

**152** Samuel, as noted, also spoke at the inauguration ceremony and delivered a warm and enthusiastic address. For his description of the ceremony – without any mention of his speech, see Samuel, *Memoirs*, 175.

**153** For the resolutions passed by the Zionist Congress in Vienna and the Convention of the Zionist Organization of America, in addition to a personal letter from Weizmann, see *ibid.*, 178–79. Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 254–58, notes that Samuel even considered to continue residing in the country, probably in Haifa, but the idea was vetoed by Lord Plumer, the new High Commissioner. Samuel passed away at the age of ninety-two.

**154** For a summing up by others of Samuel's term as High Commissioner, see Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System"; Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*; Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 190–91.

After Samuel left Palestine, he filled several roles. In 1929 he returned to Parliament. Afterwards he was the leader of the Liberal Party, served as home secretary in Ramsay MacDonald's Labour government (1931–1932), and resigned from it together with his party in 1932. In 1935 he lost his seat in Parliament. He was home secretary twice, in 1916 and in 1931–1932.<sup>155</sup> During this period, a rupture began to appear in his personal relations with Lloyd George. Even though Lloyd George was the one who appointed him High Commissioner for Palestine and did so with determination despite objections by British personages, he now attacked Herbert Samuel harshly. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Lloyd George from continuing to believe in the Balfour Declaration. In 1930, when the MacDonald government decided to adopt the “Shaw Commission” report and published the second White Paper, that bears the name of Lord Passfield (Sydney Webb), Lloyd George spoke out against it in a long speech in Parliament in which he defined the White Paper as a British betrayal of trust while commending the Zionist movement for making the country's deserts bloom.<sup>156</sup>

In 1935, after Samuel was not re-elected to continue leading the Liberal Party, he participated in a meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of England in London at which he was the keynote speaker. In his lecture, he presented how he viewed all his previous endeavors and his service as the first British High Commissioner for Palestine. Among other things, he maintained that the British paid a high price for their conquest of Palestine: “The bones of twelve thousand soldiers of the British Empire lay in the War Cemeteries at Jerusalem, at Gaza, and elsewhere.” He also spoke of his first visit to the country at the beginning of 1920, his appointment as High Commissioner, his share in turning Eretz Israel into an advanced modern country, and also referred to the Jewish–Arab conflict to which he was exposed then and for which he always sought and aspired to find solutions.<sup>157</sup>

In 1936–1937, on several occasions Samuel tried to influence events in Eretz Israel, and even to offer ideas for peace with the Arabs. He continued to follow his own path, believing that the Zionist national home had to seek a solution as an entity having a special status within a federation of Arab countries, and therefore objected to the Peel Commission's partition plan. He did not believe in the success of a small Jewish state in a small area such as Palestine, as was proposed by the Peel Commission, and even put forward several ideas and plans of his own to solve the issue of Eretz Israel, to which I shall refer in later chapters.<sup>158</sup> For the same reasons,

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**155** In later chapters I shall refer to Samuel's continued interest in developments and events in Eretz Israel.

**156** The differences of opinion between Lloyd George and Samuel were over internal British matters, not Eretz Israel; see Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 295–96, 301–2.

**157** Samuel, *Great Britain and Palestine*. For his lecture in 1935, see note 68 above and ch. 7, n. 117.

**158** Samuel's objection to the Peel Commission's proposal for the partition of Palestine, and his attempt together with Lord Winterton to present a peace plan of their own, will be discussed in Chapters Nine and Ten.

he later also objected to additional plans for partition. Nevertheless, he was always careful to maintain relations with Weizmann and to present his ideas to the Zionist movement in an effort to protect and assist it.

After the State of Israel was established, and Weizmann became its president, Samuel came to visit him in Israel. They had a warm reunion. Samuel admitted then that he had been mistaken in objecting to the Eretz Israel partition plans and in some of his other ideas. The two men were fully reconciled.<sup>159</sup>

Samuel sometimes erred in his plans regarding Eretz Israel, but there is no doubt that he made a great contribution to the development of the country and the establishment of the State of Israel, and that the people of Israel owe him a debt of honor.

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<sup>159</sup> For Samuel's visit to Weizmann, after the latter was elected president of the State of Israel, see Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 209 and a photo of the two on the opposite page.



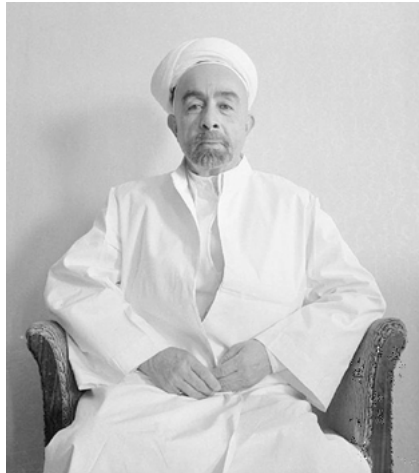
Herbert Samuel.  
First British High Commissioner



Prime Minister Winston Churchill.



King Feisal I of Iraq.



Emir Abdullah of Transjordan.



Musa Kazim al-Husseini.



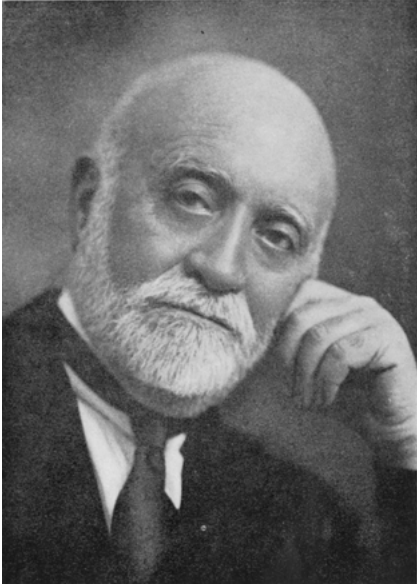
Ragheb Nashashibi.



James de Rothschild.



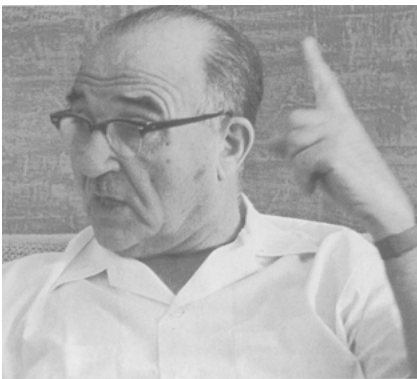
Harry Sacher.



David Yellin.



Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hacoheh Kook.



Levi Eshkol (Shkolnik).



Golda Meir (Meyerson).





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Chapter 9: High Commissioners Herbert Plumer  
(1925–1928) and John Chancellor  
(1929–1931); the riots of 1928–1929

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## High Commissioner Plumer and his policy

### Plumer's first year as High Commissioner and the change of Governors in Jerusalem, 1926

I termed the first two chapters dealing with the British Mandate period as “the first sub-period: the beginning.” In them I included a number of events: World War I, the efforts to obtain the Balfour Declaration (which began even before the start of the British conquest of Palestine in 1917); the period of British military rule (1917–1920); and the onset of British civilian rule in Palestine – the five years of Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner (1920–1925). Despite the changes and obstacles along the way, throughout this period the British adhered to their basic conception regarding their commitment to the Balfour Declaration granted to the Jewish people and approved by the League of Nations.

The next two chapters deal with the intermediate stage of the British Mandate. Changes began to appear in British policy during this sub-period. Under High Commissioner Herbert Plumer (1925–1928), the policy set by Samuel continued, but during High Commissioner John Chancellor's time there was a fundamental change in British policy, and the second White Paper, issued in 1930, in effect annulled the British commitment to the Balfour Declaration. Only sharp Zionist objections, supported by many influential British personages, brought about a revision of this new policy and a return to the basic British commitment, as reflected in policy during the term of the fourth High Commissioner, Arthur Wauchope (1931–1938).

This chapter will deal with the periods of High Commissioners Plumer and Chancellor, and will also include the Fourth Aliyah and the crisis that marked its end, as well as the grave events of the Western Wall conflict of Yom Kippur 1928, followed by the riots beginning on the Ninth of Av 1929. I shall also discuss the Royal Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of 1929 (commonly known as the Shaw Commission), the Western Wall Commission, and the reports of British experts appointed to investigate the situation in the country until the publication of the White Paper of 1930 and the letter of Ramsay MacDonald that returned British policy to its previous position, with which Chancellor's period as High Commissioner came to an end.

In the tenth chapter, I shall deal with the first years of High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope (1931–1935), developments as a result of changed political and financial policies which made possible the Fifth Aliyah, internal changes in the Jewish community in Eretz Israel, such as the establishment of Mapai (the Workers Party of Eretz Israel) and the intensification of its struggle with the Revisionist movement.

The present chapter will begin with the city of Jerusalem. The rule of Ronald Storrs, who had been the military and civilian governor of Jerusalem for over eight years (December 1917–November 1926), came to an end about a year after the arrival of High Commissioner Plumer. With the onset of British civilian rule in the country, Storrs

agreed to remain in his post as governor of Jerusalem and continue his activities in the Pro-Jerusalem Society, which he had established, and did so in full cooperation with Herbert Samuel. Upon Storrs' departure from Jerusalem, Edward Keith-Roach replaced him as the Jerusalem district commissioner; however his authority was greatly narrowed and his role limited.<sup>1</sup> After Storrs left Jerusalem, the Pro-Jerusalem Society ceased operation. The great dreams and ideas about a fellowship of the three monotheistic religions and cooperation between them nurtured by Storrs, Ashbee, and others gradually dissipated. Plumer did not continue them. He viewed the focus of his role as enforcing the law and developing the country, not in visions of the historical past or the global-cultural future of the holy city of Jerusalem.

Prior to the appointment of Plumer as the second High Commissioner, the British considered filling this post with someone from among the veteran leadership that had been active in the Middle East since the time of the Arab Office in Cairo and the conquest of Palestine, i.e. someone similar to Storrs. One person considered was Gilbert Clayton, who had been active in the Arab Office in Cairo and later served in a number of senior positions in Palestine, including as chief secretary, the second most important role in the government hierarchy in the country. Towards the end of Samuel's period, Clayton even moderated his attitude towards Zionism and it seemed that the Zionist movement would accept the appointment. However, surprisingly, the British chose Field Marshall Lord Plumer, an older man, a British war hero who fought in the major battles of World War I and later served as the governor of Malta. Until his appointment, Plumer had no connection whatsoever to Palestine. The decision was made without consulting with the representatives of the Zionist movement, who were surprised by the appointment. Weizmann immediately set out to meet with Plumer and was impressed by his unique personality.<sup>2</sup> Lord Plumer arrived in Jerusalem in June 1925 and served as High Commissioner for three years, a period characterized by peace and stability.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Like his predecessor Storrs, Keith-Roach published memoirs based on his private diary years after leaving Palestine; see Edward Keith-Roach, *Pasha of Jerusalem: Memoirs of a District Commissioner under the British Mandate* (London: The Radcliffe Press, 1994). However, there is no comparison between his memoirs and those of Storrs, neither in style nor in content.

<sup>2</sup> Pinhas Ofer, "The Role of the High Commissioner in British Policy in Palestine: Sir John Chancellor, 1928–1931," PhD diss., University of London, SOAS, 1971, 19–24 and the sources cited; id., "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 258–59. See also Kisch's comment about Clayton, Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 143; and ch. 8, n. 141.

<sup>3</sup> Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel*, 108–9, records the well known story that when Arab notables complained to Plumer about the ceremony to install the flag of the Jewish Legion in the Hurvah Synagogue and maintained that they could not guarantee that there would be no rioting, he told them that "he did not wish them to be responsible for order as he planned to be responsible himself." See also Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 406–7. Installation of the flag of the Jewish Legion in the Hurvah Synagogue is also recorded in Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 225–27.

As noted, Herbert Samuel, who preceded Plumer, was a renowned political figure in Britain for many years prior to his appointment, one of the initiators of the Balfour Declaration and very active in obtaining the British Mandate for Palestine during the peace conferences following the war. In contrast, Plumer was in no way involved with the Zionist issue.

An average resident [of England], the type of Law-abiding, God-fearing, church-going perfect old gentleman . . . He was a man of exact and self-confident mind, precisely aware of his abilities and his limitations, of active imagination and no prejudice that went beneath the skin . . . Throughout his term of office he was strongly averse to any needless official pomp because he found it distasteful . . . His dislike of pomp did not mean that he was in the least inclined to dispense with formality in the conduct of his mission; . . . He was the most methodical of men. As the High Commissioner on duty he was a commanding officer on parade . . . at a first official interview a Zionist asked him “What is your policy?” to which he immediately replied that he had not got one. His duty as High Commissioner, he said, was to receive the instructions of His Majesty’s Government and carry them out with what exactness he could.<sup>4</sup>

#### Four issues that Plumer “inherited” from Samuel

Four issues awaited Plumer as an inheritance from Samuel: Jewish immigration, land acquisition, development of the country, and the future of Palestine.

Plumer did not have much to do regarding *Jewish immigration* since British policy on the subject had already been determined during Samuel’s tenure. When he arrived, the Fourth Aliyah was already underway and the policy regarding it was in keeping with the previously set limitations on immigration based on the economic absorptive capacity of the country. Afterwards, Jewish immigration even decreased to a crisis level, so there was no need to make any changes. The importance of the Fourth Aliyah was mainly in its influence and effect on the Yishuv, to be discussed below.<sup>5</sup>

The subject of *land acquisition* from Arabs and the problem of displaced tenant farmers was one of the central issues in Eretz Israel from the very first days of the Zionist movement. I have dealt with developments in this matter towards the end of the Ottoman period in Chapters Five and Six, and shall also discuss them below. The summary there will serve to understand what happened following the Arab riots of 1929, as reflected in the reports by experts sent to investigate the problem.

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<sup>4</sup> Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel*, 105–7. That Christopher Sykes was personally acquainted with Plumer is clear from a passage in *ibid.*, 124. For evaluations of Plumer, see Frumkin, *A Judge*, 272–76; Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 195–99.

<sup>5</sup> For the limitations imposed on aliyah during Samuel’s term as High Commissioner, see ch. 8, nn. 79–81, 95.

*Development of the country* stood out during Plumer's period. He contributed greatly to such important matters as local government, transportation, communication, electricity, ports, and military and police forces which operated prior to his period and after it but were greatly developed during his time.

*The Jewish–Arab conflict*, the idea of establishing a legislative council, and the future of Palestine were major problems during Plumer's time too, but he did not consider it part of his role to deal with these matters and maintained that he had no authority to implement a policy of his own. As stated, he viewed himself as a soldier doing his duty by enforcing the law, maintaining peace and quiet, and developing the country according to the instructions received from London. Thus, Plumer avoided dealing with other issues and focused on matters pertaining to the development and progress of Palestine.

## **The Fourth Aliyah; ideological struggle within the Jewish community; the immigration crisis and emigration**

### **The beginning of the Fourth Aliyah, the economic boom, and ideological struggle within the Yishuv**

It is customary to view 1924 as the beginning of the Fourth Aliyah. In terms of periodization it is difficult to discern between the Third and Fourth Aliyah since they formed one time sequence. Nevertheless, it is the norm to see the end of the Third Aliyah in 1923, and the beginning of the Fourth in 1924. The difference between the two is in the essential change in the type of immigrants who arrived in the country during that period.<sup>6</sup>

While the Third Aliyah prided itself for its pioneering spirit and social-Zionist vision, the Fourth Aliyah (1924–1929) had a totally different image. This wave of immigration was considered the first mass aliyah, which began due to the economic policy of Władysław Grabski, prime minister and minister of finance of Poland in 1924–1925, who took steps to stabilize the Polish currency, balance the budget, and bring the service, industrial, and banking fields under government control. Grabski's policy and the inflation in Poland at the time displaced from economic activity a large number of merchants, artisans, owners of small industries, and brokers who aspired to emigrate from Poland. The United States immigration laws of 1924 greatly reduced the number of Jews coming there, so many Jews turned towards Eretz Israel. Thus, the Fourth Aliyah was also known as the "Grabski Aliyah." Between June 1924 and June 1926 55,000 persons arrived in the country. In

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<sup>6</sup> Erez, *The Third Aliyah*, 3–4; for statistics and the demographic composition of the Third Aliyah, see *ibid.*, 6–7.

1925 alone, the peak year of the Fourth Aliyah, 34,000 Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine.<sup>7</sup>

The economic crisis that hit the country towards the end of the Third Aliyah came to an end, and the first period of economic boom in the history of the Yishuv began. During the first two years, 40 percent of the olim were middle class, who arrived by means of certificates issued to holders of capital. The influx of olim, some of whom were of the lower middle class, created the impression that this was a wave of persons in distress for whom Eretz Israel was the only refuge, but in truth this aliyah changed the character of Jewish society and the nature of its economic activity, and increased the pace at which Zionist aims were achieved in the country. The Fourth Aliyah brought with it £10 million of private capital, while the national funds invested in the country at the time amounted to only £2 million.

Beginning in 1926, a change occurred in the composition of the olim. It was forbidden to take assets in cash out of Poland, and the British government's Immigration Ordinance of June 1925 set new criteria for the immigration of capital owners. The number of olim decreased, but was still comparatively great. In essence, the Grabski Aliyah was characterized by the immigration of entire families. Members of the Fourth Aliyah arrived independently, without a directing or assisting institutional hand, and lacking an idealistic urge and the desire to change their lifestyle in order to create a new society. They sought to look after their own interests and, indeed, they left their mark mainly on urban development, 83 percent of them settling in Tel Aviv. Within six months, the population of Tel Aviv doubled in size, at the end of 1925 numbering 40,000 people. The economic basis of the Fourth Aliyah continued to be commerce, services, and light industry. The industrial entrepreneurship of the Fourth Aliyah members was concentrated in a large number of small industries mainly producing goods for consumption. These factories were the basis for industrial development and created employment opportunities for the working class aliyah at a time when Zionist capital was unable to create them. In 1929 there were 2,475 industrial and craft establishments operating in the country employing over 10,000 workers, in which £2.2 million were invested.<sup>8</sup>

The growing urban population began to develop a lifestyle different from that of the agricultural colonies. They dressed in European-style clothes, ate Western food and special Oriental food, and followed a Western urban lifestyle. Members of the workers movement adopted a negative view of the new developments and the formation of "Jewish capitalism," on the one hand, and the status of urban workers, on the other hand. Their criticism described the "bourgeois" principles of these

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<sup>7</sup> Dan Giladi, *The Jewish Community in Palestine during the Fourth Aliyah Period (1924–1929): Economic and Social Aspects* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1973), 36–44 (Hebrew); id., "From Aliyah to Aliyah," 164–69.

<sup>8</sup> For developments and changes in agricultural settlement during the Fourth Aliyah, see Near, "Worker's Settlement, 1919–1948," 428–45; see also id., *Kibbutz Movement*, 1:131–65.



immigrants as lacking in Zionist vision, bringing the diaspora and its ambience to the Promised Land, while seeking only to improve their personal financial condition. They saw them as middlemen pursuing easy money from the surge in the land and building markets, thus creating a price rise and an artificial economic boom built on quicksand. Accordingly, two Jewish factions began developing in the country: the socialists who had become much stronger during the Third Aliyah, and the middle class that was reinforced by the Fourth Aliyah, and a class war of sorts began developing between them.<sup>9</sup>

### Urban settlement and the development of citriculture

In the sphere of urban settlement, there was one failure during the Fourth Aliyah: the attempt to establish Afulah, a city that would be based on industry and commerce and serve as a cultural center for the settlements in the Jezreel Valley. At the same time, the expansion of citriculture continued at an increased pace. The citrus orchards owned by Jews at the end of 1928 extended over 31,000 dunams and in 1931 accounted for 120,000 dunams. In 1927 around 6,000 laborers worked in the settlements and the struggle for “Hebrew labor,” especially during periods of unemployment in the cities, reached a peak previously unknown. Workers in the settlements were poorly paid, lived under harsh conditions in an atmosphere of transience and bitterness, in expectation of the time when they would be able to settle on their own, an option for which there were almost no prospects in the foreseeable future. The Zionist bodies tried to deal with the problem of immigrant absorption, and frameworks were set up to control and regulate aliyah and its scope.<sup>10</sup>

Zionist rural settlement was limited during the period of the Fourth Aliyah due to insufficient financial resources. Since it was mainly based on JNF lands and funding by Keren Hayesod, it continued mainly in the western Jezreel Valley (Kishon bloc), where eight new settlements were established. In contrast, private agricultural settlement flourished on lands purchased by companies such as Geulah or the American Zion Commonwealth. There were those among the middle class who chose the limited economic livelihood assured to them if they tilled their own land and settled at their own expense or with assistance from the private companies founded for that purpose in the diaspora. This type of settlement preferred areas in proximity to the large cities and developed small farms or rural homes supplemented by small plots for raising crops or livestock. The greatest contribution of middle class settlement

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<sup>9</sup> Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 59–60. For the influence exerted by the Fourth Aliyah on Chaim Arlosoroff, see Shlomo Avineri, *Arlosoroff* (London: P. Halban, 1989), 38–59.

<sup>10</sup> For many details on the Fourth Aliyah, see Giladi, *Fourth Aliyah*.

was the formation of a continuous settled area in the Sharon Plain, between Petah Tikvah and Haderah, and south of Tel Aviv. It was thus that formation began of the Greater Tel Aviv Area.

The financial boom resulting from the import of private capital caused a reshuffling of priorities in the Yishuv. Representatives of the private sector demanded assistance from the national institutions and an end to the preference for working class agricultural settlements. It seemed to the leaders of the labor movements that the emerging bourgeois society might result in a change of social values, a decrease in the prestige and influence of the pioneering laborer as a symbol of national revival, and a simultaneous rise in the status of the bourgeoisie. Thus were the conditions formed for a real struggle between organized laborers and private employers.<sup>11</sup>

### The economic crisis and emigration from the country, 1926–1927

As early as the summer of 1925, there were advance signs of an economic crisis stemming from the fact that investments lagged behind the rate of immigration, and mainly due to the focus of investment in the construction industry, which was sensitive to every fluctuation. The economic crisis became more severe in 1926, until it changed the whole picture of aliyah. This crisis was a result of the reduction in capital flow from Polish Jewry and the devaluation of Polish currency. Businesses began to fail due to the collapse of their financial infrastructure. Construction ceased since the import of capital that was financing it came to a stop. The building industry, a central branch of the economy, totally collapsed. Landowners tried to get rid of their property, and businesses went bankrupt. In August 1927 the number of unemployed in the Yishuv reached a peak of 8,400 persons. In 1926, 2,151 people left the country (54 percent of the number of immigrants that year). In 1927, 5,001 persons emigrated from the country (188 percent, or almost twice the number of arriving immigrants). In 1928, 2,186 persons left the country (equal to the number of immigrants). Laborers, whose immigration was Zionist-oriented, stood in line to receive slips that assured them a hot daily meal financed by the Zionist Organization. In Tel Aviv it was possible to begin stopping such assistance only in 1928. The bankruptcy of the Zionist Organization's big construction

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<sup>11</sup> Giladi, "From Aliyah to Aliyah," 164–69. For details about the development of the Sharon area and the central part of the country, see Amiram Gonen, "The Emergence of a Geographical Heartland in Israel," in *Economy and Society in Mandatory Palestine, 1918–1948*, ed. Avi Bareli and Nahum Karlinsky (Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2003), 439–88 (Hebrew); id., "How Tel Aviv-Jaffa Became the Major Urban Center in Eretz Israel," in *Tel Aviv-Yafo: From a Garden Suburb to a World City: The First Hundred Years*, ed. Baruch A. Kipnis (Haifa: Pardes, 2009), 154–73 (Hebrew); id. "Urbanization of the 'Moshavot' on Israel's Coastal Plain: Factors and Stages," in *Studies in Geography and History in Honor of Yehoshua Ben-Arieh*, ed. Yossi Ben-Artzi, Israel Bartal, and Elchanan Reiner (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979), 461–77 (Hebrew). On settlement during the Fourth Aliyah, see also Gvati, *A Hundred Years of Settlement*, 78–90.

company, Solel Boneh, had especially strong repercussions. Horrendous sights of hunger and deprivation could be seen in the cities, mainly in Tel Aviv. Representatives of private initiative claimed that the reason for the crisis was because the Yishuv institutions ignored the needs of the middle class. In contrast, Arthur Ruppin thought the crisis was a lesson regarding the illusionary aspects of the concept according to which the Yishuv could be built by private initiative alone. Yet this time, too, as in 1923, the main effect of the crisis was on morale: precisely due to the previous boom, there was now a sense of total collapse and despair. Due to the limited number of immigrants in 1927, the large number of those who left the country was considered as flight from an afflicted land.<sup>12</sup>

However, things changed quite speedily. In 1929, unemployment disappeared and the gross national product per capita began rising again. Even the global depression of summer 1929 did not actually affect the Jewish economy in Eretz Israel. A proto-modern industry developed. In 1930, industry employed 7,582 workers, including the owners and their families. The establishment of power stations supplied employment opportunities and brought about the “electrification” of the country, and with it the beginnings of modern industry. A large part of the earlier capital investments was not lost during the depression period and created permanent assets.

## Land acquisition from Arabs, 1918–1928

### Land acquisition in the Jezreel and Hefer Valleys and intensification of the tenant farmer problem

In previous chapters, I dealt with the subject of land acquisition from Arabs that had already begun towards the end of the Ottoman period. At the time, the issue was mainly the purchase of land for new colonies. During that period, Baron Rothschild acquired large plots of land also in areas other than those adjacent to his colonies. The Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), too, which also engaged in land acquisition, adopted the policy of purchasing large plots of land. When the Palestine Office of the Zionist Organization, headed by Ruppin, began operating in 1908, land acquisition increased. The Ottoman authorities began making things difficult for Jewish agents, and various plans were cancelled without coming to fruition. Apparently, the immigration of members of Jewish organizations during the Second Aliyah imbued with a socialist ideology that espoused “Jewish labor”

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<sup>12</sup> Dan Giladi, “The Economic Crisis during the Fourth Aliya (1926–1927),” in *Zionism: Studies in the History of the Zionist Movement and of the Jewish Community in Palestine*, ed. Daniel Carpi and Gedalia Yosev (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and Massada, 1975), 157–92.

and “Jewish guarding” intensified local Arab resistance to selling lands to the Zionist movement. Ottoman government objection to land sales also increased, and there were first signs of Arab nationalism.<sup>13</sup>

A prominent figure involved in land acquisition from Arabs was Yehoshua Hankin. As early as 1890–1891, the years of the “panic immigration,” Hankin cooperated with Ze’ev Tiomkin in purchasing lands for the Rehovoth and Haderah colonies. He also initiated efforts for the purchase of 160,000 dunams in the Jezreel Valley and the Acre Valley, as well as the lands of Wadi al-Hawarith (Hefer Valley). However the Ottoman government blocked his activity and he failed to realize some of his plans. In 1910, Hankin succeeded in executing a first purchase of 9,500 dunams of Merhaviah lands. In 1913, he acquired 18,000 dunams of the Tel Adas lands for the Hachsharat Hayishuv Company, also known as the Palestine Land Development Company. In 1914, he signed a preliminary agreement with the members of the Sursuk family, absentee landowners living in Alexandria, Egypt, for the acquisition of a large area in the Jezreel Valley. However, the war broke out and the transaction could not be completed. Towards the end of the Ottoman period, the lands of the Jezreel Valley were in large part owned by absentee landowners and tilled by tenant farmers. Later the area became known for claims of dispossession of its tenant farmers.<sup>14</sup>

During World War I, and also during the period of British military rule, no land acquisition transactions were conducted in Palestine. The British military administration that entered Jerusalem found total chaos in the Land Registry Offices. Only after civil administration began were they reopened, and land purchasing could be renewed.<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that despite the limitations, several of the largest land acquisitions began during this period. These awakened harsh responses from the Arabs, especially on the subject of tenant farmers.

In the second half of 1920, Hankin renewed contacts for purchasing lands. On August 27, 1920 he signed a contract with the Sursuk family in Alexandria with whom he had been in contact previously, reinstating the agreement of December 18, 1918

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**13** For state lands as defined by Ottoman law, their origin and extent, see Doukhan-Landau, *Zionist Companies for Land Purchase*, 7–50; Avraham Granovsky, *The Land System in Eretz Israel* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1949), 80–101 (Hebrew). For an overview of land classification and ownership during the late Ottoman and Mandatory periods, see Kenneth W. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 3–34. On the acquisition of land during the late Ottoman period, see Chapter Five, in the subsection on buying land from the Arabs, and in Chapter Six, in the discussion of Jewish activity in the years 1908–1914.

**14** For Hankin’s efforts to acquire the land for the colonies of Rehovoth and Haderah, and early acquisitions in the Jezreel Valley, see Chapter Five, at nn. 66–68 in the text; see also ch. 10, n. 59. Late in 1907, he also accompanied Weizmann during his first visit in Eretz Israel. The issue of the Arab tenant farmers shall be discussed below.

**15** On the opening of the Land Registry Offices and the beginning of construction in Jerusalem, see Chapter Eight, at nn. 135–36 in the text.

regarding the purchase of 70,000 dunams in the Jezreel Valley. Other Jewish organizations joined in, among them the Zionist Commission already in the country at the time, the JCA, the JNF, Hachsharat Hayishuv, Keren Hayesod, and the Zionist Organization. There were disagreements regarding the purchase of which lands should be given priority in relation to the funds that could be recruited. A reorganization committee, established to examine the issue, submitted its report to the Twelfth Zionist Congress convened in September 1921 in Carlsbad. Acquisition of land in the Jezreel Valley was approved at that congress. The purchase of these lands enabled extensive Jewish settlement in the area, in two separate blocs, the Nahalal bloc to the west, in an area of 18,600 dunams, and the eastern area, the Nuris bloc, on an area of 29,400 dunams. Many kibbutzim were founded in these two blocs.<sup>16</sup>

Hankin's practice was to sign a contract before he had raised the funds for the purchase, in order to later be able to persuade the Zionist organizations to find the financing for the transaction. He acquired many other plots in the Jezreel and Zevulun Valleys in this manner for the Palestine Land Development Company, the JNF, the American Zionist Commonwealth, and other companies that raised funds to cover purchasing costs. Ruppin recounts his financial difficulties and the need to involve the Zionist leadership and Weizmann himself to enable acquisition of land.<sup>17</sup>

Later in the 1920s, other settlement areas were founded on the outskirts of the Jezreel Valley, on sites in which land was successfully purchased. Thus was the eastern Kishon bloc created in which the following settlements were established: Sarid, Ramat David, Kfar Yehoshua, and Mishmar Ha'emek. Additionally, the members of Histadrut Hamizrahi and Hapoel Hamizrahi established the moshav Sdeh Ya'akov named after Rabbi Yitzhak Ya'akov Reines, one of the founders of the movement. In 1924, the American Zionist Commonwealth purchased a large tract of land in the southern part of the Balfouriah colony in order to build a central city in the Jezreel Valley, the city of Afulah. Acquisition was also begun of a bloc of lands in the Acre Bay area, later called the Zevulun Valley. Here the goal was mainly urban: expansion of the developing city of Haifa, which, due to construction of the port and the oil pipeline from Mosul in Iraq, was expected to become a large city.

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**16** For settlement in the Jezreel Valley, see also Bein, *Return to the Soil*, 273–91. For early cooperation, and then the parting of the ways, between the Jewish National Fund and the Palestine Land Development Co. during the Mandate period, see Yossi Katz, “The Jewish National Fund and the Palestine Land Development Company, from Cooperation to Separation: The Establishment of the JNF’s Independent Land Purchasing Office during the Mandate,” in *Economy and Society in Mandatory Palestine, 1918–1948*, ed. Avi Bareli and Nahum Karlinsky (Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2003), 489–527 (Hebrew).

**17** On the acquisition of land in the Jezreel Valley during the early Mandate period, and that this area was given priority because it enabled the establishment of many settlements and also due to its proximity to Haifa, see Arthur Ruppin, *Three Decades of Palestine: Speeches and Papers on the Upbuilding of the Jewish National Home* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1936), 90–187.

The Jezreel Valley and its offshoots underwent extensive preparations to have them meet the needs of settlement: drainage of excess water in some areas, soil improvement, laying out roads to the settlements, and more. Thus did the Jezreel Valley become one of the most flourishing regions in the country and serve to connect between the western Jewish area of settlement on the coastal plain and that of the valleys, in both of which some of the first Jewish colonies had been established.<sup>18</sup>

Another famous land purchase, the idea for which was raised as early as 1891, was the acquisition of Wadi al-Hawarith (Hefer Valley) located in the center of the Sharon plain, but that attempt ended in failure. In 1910, another effort was made to purchase the land which, similarly to the area in the Jezreel Valley, was owned by absentee landlords and partially tilled by tenant farmers. In time this area, too, was the scene of claims of dispossession of tenants. Acquisition of the Hefer Valley was completed only in the 1920s, during Plumer's term as High Commissioner, and its settlements were founded only at the beginning of the 1930s.<sup>19</sup>

During the Mandate period, the problem of land acquisition was second in importance only to the issue of Jewish immigration. Both were central to the Jewish–Arab conflict, for in the final tally both sides understood that these issues would determine the future of the country. The Jews hoped that aliyah would increase the Jewish population until it became a majority and the Arabs did everything in their power to prevent this. With regards to land acquisition, the situation was similar. Here, too, the Arabs feared that the Jews would gain control of vast areas, thus strengthening their control of the country. Land acquisition was dependent on Arab willingness to sell, and many of them did want to sell their excess lands. Yet, there was also another matter that was not to be measured by the quantity and size of the purchased lands, but had a social effect; the socio-economic blow dealt to the Arab population by the stronger side to the weaker, particularly the poor Arab family. This issue also aroused sympathy among those who were not directly in charge of land acquisition but observed the Jewish–Arab conflict from outside. For their part, the Jews living in the country understood that without lands they could not realize the vision of a national home, i.e. a Jewish state in Eretz Israel.<sup>20</sup>

Land acquisition intensified the objections of the political national Arab leadership to Zionist activities. They claimed that even Article 6 of the Mandate for Palestine contained a clear directive that encouragement of dense Jewish population on barren

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**18** On the eastern Kishon Bloc and the Zevulun Valley, see Bein, *Return to the Soil*, 292–329.

**19** For land acquisition in Wadi al-Hawarith, see the details in Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 135–59 and the sources he cites. On the many settlements established there, see also ch. 10, n. 59.

**20** Since I will not be able to deal here with all the details of land acquisition by Jews during the Mandate period until the establishment of Israel, the subject will be discussed in several of the chapters according to their time frame. Below, the issue will be given much attention in relation to the second White Paper (1930) that is associated with Lord Passfield, and the later White Paper of 1939.

soil and government lands would be conditional on it not being detrimental to the interests of the local population. The Arabs emphasized the problem of the tenant farmers evicted from the purchased lands. By doing so, the Arab leadership added a human and real-time dimension to its demands, claiming that land sales brought about the dispossession of Arab farmers, and that their displacement was conducted under the aegis of the British.<sup>21</sup>

Arab national activists began organizing visits to lands from which tenant farmers were being evicted, where they would deliver fiery speeches directing attention to the shabby huts destroyed to make way for wealthy Jewish settlers. They claimed that Jews who destroyed huts would do the same to any Muslim building, including the mosques in Jerusalem, “out of hatred for the sons of the Faith.”<sup>22</sup>

After his arrival in the country, Herbert Samuel, who was very sensitive to the Arab issue and mainly to that of the tenant farmers, issued an ordinance already in 1920 to the effect that transfer of land ownership was prohibited unless the rights of the tenant farmer were ensured and he was left with sufficient land for himself and his family. However, both buyers and sellers had interests that were in contradiction to the ordinance. The buyers were willing to pay a high price, above the declared value, but demanded land vacant for settlement, while the sellers were not concerned about their tenants, wanted to sell the land at the highest price, and sought ways to circumvent the regulations regarding tenant farmers, also through money lenders as middlemen.<sup>23</sup>

### Cessation of land acquisition during the continuation of Plumer’s term

Plumer, who inherited from Samuel the land acquisition problem, including the issue of the tenant farmers, tried to deal with it by establishing a committee headed by Attorney General Norman Bentwich. Plumer appointed the committee following

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<sup>21</sup> On the extent of the effect which the issue of Jewish purchase of land from Arabs had on Arab society, including data by years and areas, see Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement 1929–1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), 80–90.

<sup>22</sup> Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel*, 115, based on a description in Douglas V. Duff, *Sword for Hire: The Saga of a Modern Free-Companion* (London: John Murray, 1934). Christopher Sykes was the son of Mark Sykes. In an earlier book, *Two Studies in Virtue*, he published two lengthy essays. The first, sub-titled “A Study of the Religious Movements of the Nineteenth Century,” focuses on leading clergymen in nineteenth-century Britain and their views, while the second deals with the reasons leading to the Balfour Declaration. The author’s identification with the two topics stands out, and is also evident in *Crossroads to Israel* in which he expresses support for the Zionist movement, but with some reservations.

<sup>23</sup> For Herbert Samuel’s policy towards the issue of tenant farmers, see ch. 8, n. 89. For a review of how and why tenant farming emerged in Palestine, see Granovsky, *Land System in Eretz Israel*, 242–304. On the acquisition of land in the Jezreel and Zevulun Valleys and the eviction of tenant farmers there, see Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 110–20.



claims that Samuel's ordinance of 1920 was not being observed. Its purpose was to improve the regulations protecting tenants, especially those tilling agricultural lands. It was common belief at the time that this was one of the important issues with which the British administration had to deal. Since the Bentwich committee failed to come up with a proposal for a solution, the matter was passed on to the next High Commissioner, John Chancellor. The explanation was that the origins of the problem lay in the late Ottoman period when the government tried, unsuccessfully, to modernize land registration. Until then, there had not been any documentation confirming legal ownership of property throughout the Ottoman Empire. When the government in Istanbul made such documentation mandatory, the reform had been difficult to implement for two reasons: the decision was not preceded by a cadastral survey and measurements, and the local inhabitants objected to the reform since they could provide no proof of land ownership. Moreover, they were concerned that land registration would lead to additional taxation and even military recruitment. Following is a description of the state of land registration in the country from a non-Jewish source:

Few cultivators registered their lands. The officials of the Lands Department, however, found in the new procedure a fruitful source of personal profit. In return for a bribe, many of them were willing to register any land in the name of anybody who asked for it. A number of enterprising persons "bought" land from the Turkish government in this manner. A few perhaps already had some connection with the district, had lent money to the farmers or had been in business relations with them. Others had no connection whatever with the land . . . In most cases, the original farmers continued to cultivate as in the past, except now they had to pay rent to a city dweller, whom they had rarely, or perhaps never, seen.<sup>24</sup>

To summarize, it may be said that during the Plumer period not much was done to overcome the claims against the Jews regarding land purchase from Arabs, and avoiding dealing with it became a much more serious problem during Chancellor's period as High Commissioner.

## **Development of the country under Plumer and reinforcement of Transjordan**

### **Bolstering the administration, municipalities, and autonomous institutions; development of rail and motor transportation**

It appears that the most important aspect of Lord Plumer's term was the relative quiet that prevailed in the country, which made it possible to continue the development

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<sup>24</sup> Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel*, 117–18, quoting Sir John Glubb (later known as Glubb Pasha, commander of the Arab Legion).

begun under Herbert Samuel. Plumer's period left its mark in a number of different areas: the establishment and improvement of internal communal rule, promoting development of the country, including technological aspects, and physical security.<sup>25</sup>

Plumer viewed the enhancement of local government as his primary objective. To that end, on December 1, 1926 he issued a new Municipal Ordinance setting the regulations for municipal elections.<sup>26</sup> The franchise was given to men over twenty-five years of age, Palestinian subjects, owners of property and government or municipal tax payers of a certain sum and upwards. In Jerusalem, however, Old City residents were entitled to vote even if they did not pay municipal taxes. The ordinance was problematic for the Jewish community as it limited the number of those entitled to vote, since persons living in rented quarters could not participate. Another aspect detrimental to the Jews was payment of government taxes as a condition for voting.

In Jerusalem, composition of the municipal council was set a priori to include twelve members: five Muslims, three Christians, and four Jews, i.e. eight Arabs, even though the majority of the population was Jewish. There were those who explained Plumer's policy as stemming from his aspiration to implement the objective of holding municipal elections, which he perceived as a first step towards self-government in the country according to the principles included in the Mandate, and thus he was prepared to waive full equality and gave preference to the Arabs so that they would participate in the elections. At the beginning of April 1927 the first municipal elections were held throughout the country under the regulations of the Municipal Ordinance. The elections were of major importance in Jerusalem, and the voting percentage was high.<sup>27</sup> According to an agreement made before the elections, the Jews voted for the incumbent mayor, Ragheb Nashashibi, who was re-elected. Following the riots of 1929, the Jews were greatly disappointed in him, since he joined the Arab delegation to London (in March 1930) to voice anti-Jewish opinions.<sup>28</sup>

On October 30, 1927 Plumer issued a new Regulation for the Organisation of the Jewish Community. By doing so he afforded the institutions of the Jewish community a governing status and legal recognition. The main organizations acknowledged were: (a) the Elected Assembly; (b) the National Council; (c) the local communities; and (d) the Rabbinical Council. The granting of recognition included, among other

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<sup>25</sup> It is not my intention to survey all activity during Plumer's years as High Commissioner, but only to note major efforts that brought about a change in the country. More general overviews of his period can be found in books dealing with the British Mandate, such as Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*. Charles Harington, *Plumer of Messines* (London: John Murray, 1935), is a biography that includes a chapter on Palestine and Jerusalem, see *ibid.*, 249–87.

<sup>26</sup> ESCO Foundation for Palestine, *Palestine: A Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), 1:304.

<sup>27</sup> Norman Bentwich, *England in Palestine* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932), 160–61. On the municipal elections of 1927, see Alsberg, "Mayoralty of Jerusalem," 308–9.

<sup>28</sup> For the municipal elections in Jerusalem, see also Ben-Arieh, *New Jewish Jerusalem, 1795–96* and the sources cited there.

things, permission to collect taxes. On the whole, these organizations continued the organizational structure previously established by the Yishuv, but now they were granted recognition by the British authorities. The Jews viewed this as an important step forward in the establishment of a Jewish national home in Eretz Israel and Jewish self-government.<sup>29</sup> With the publication of the Regulation, Plumer noted that by this recognition he was granting the Jewish community a gift in celebration of the Jewish New Year.<sup>30</sup>

On November 1, 1927 a special currency was instated, the Palestine Pound, replacing the Egyptian currency that was legal tender in the country since the British conquest.<sup>31</sup> Another area in which there were important developments was the process of modernization that began in Jerusalem immediately after the British conquest, during the period of military rule, and continued at a speedy pace with the beginning of the civil administration under Samuel and even more so during Plumer's commissionership.<sup>32</sup>

Transportation was a field in which there were important developments. It was under the civil administration that the decision was first taken to develop a nationwide railway system. Trains were the first modern means of transportation introduced into the country, as early as the end of the Ottoman period, and the system was developed and expanded during the war. Upon the establishment of the civil administration, a railway system began operating as a government department on a commercial basis. Since its main goal was to yield a profit, non-profitable lines were shut down and new plans were laid for developing the system. For example, when Rutenberg's plan to utilize the Jordan River to produce electric power was deliberated, he proposed "electrifying" the Jerusalem–Jaffa railway line. At the beginning of 1924, during deliberations regarding a concession to exploit the natural resources of the Dead Sea, a proposal was raised to lay a railway track between the Dead Sea and Beit She'an, but this plan and others were not implemented due to financial difficulties. In the meantime, roads were being built and motor vehicles began competing with trains with great success. Accordingly, the railway system lost some of its importance.<sup>33</sup>

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**29** Bentwich, *England in Palestine*, 155–56; *A Survey of Palestine: Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Government Printer, 1946–1947), 2:215–221; ESCO Foundation, *Palestine*, 1:408–14.

**30** Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 240. On the Religious Communities Organisation Ordinance, 1926, and the Regulation for the Organisation of the Jewish Community, of 1927, see also Burstein, *Self-government of the Jews in Palestine*, 164–70.

**31** Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 239, who also reports that the Jews were disappointed that the new currency was not given a Hebrew name.

**32** See Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 258–76. Among the noteworthy improvements of the period was the detailed mapping survey of the country, see Dov Gavish, *The Survey of Palestine under the British Mandate, 1920–1948* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).

**33** For additional details about the development of the railway system, see Biger, *Empire in the Holy Land*, 118–31.

An outstanding case in hand is Jerusalem. At the beginning of British rule, high hopes were set on the railway line leading to the city. The train station was given prominence in all initial master plans for the city. Roads constructed in Jerusalem were planned to lead travelers to the station, while in new residential neighborhoods the distance from and route to the train station was noted. However, in Jerusalem, too, the importance of the railway declined with the development of motor transportation. Thus, what seems to be the most important aspect in Jerusalem's development in the early period of British administration was preparation of existing roads for motor vehicle transportation and the construction of new ones connecting the different parts of the city. Development of the roadways is also reflected in contemporary maps of Jerusalem.<sup>34</sup>

### **Rutenberg and electrification of Palestine: The Jordan River hydroelectric power station**

The most important aspect of modernization during the Mandate period was the introduction of electricity. There was almost no electric power in the country during the Ottoman period; its development truly began only with the beginning of British rule. Nonetheless, electrification of the country was inextricably connected to the Jewish-Zionist personality of Pinchas Rutenberg. I have chosen to describe all the main developments in the electrification process of Palestine in this chapter, which is devoted to Plumer's period as High Commissioner, since Plumer invested most of his efforts in the development of the country, and electricity was one of the major aspects of this development.<sup>35</sup>

Rutenberg, an electrical engineer by profession and an expert in hydroelectric power, arrived in Eretz Israel at the end of the war. He was among the founders of the Jewish Legion in cooperation with Ze'ev Jabotinsky.<sup>36</sup> He even traveled to Britain where he met with Weizmann and encouraged him to abandon the neutral position of the Zionist movement and tie its fate to Great Britain. In Eretz Israel he began expounding the idea of electrifying the country as a means of promoting and developing the desolate and underdeveloped country.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ben-Arieh, "Major Changes," 430–34.

<sup>35</sup> For an extensive biography of Rutenberg, his involvement in political and economic affairs in Eretz Israel and in the Zionist movement, including his relationships with its leadership, see Eli Shaltiel, *Pinchas Rutenberg, 1879–1942: Life and Times*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990) (Hebrew). I shall focus on his electrification enterprise, which is most relevant to this chapter.

<sup>36</sup> See ch. 7, n. 66.

<sup>37</sup> Moshe Smilansky, who served in the Jewish Legion, presents a most positive evaluation of Rutenberg; see Smilansky, *Revival and Holocaust*, 12–13. Some years later, the two cooperated in an attempt to achieve peace with the Arabs, an effort that will be discussed in Chapter Ten.

It should be noted that Rutenberg was not the first to raise ideas regarding electrification of Palestine. Even while the Mandate was being formulated, faith in the power of science and technology to generate a speedy change in development of the country spread throughout Palestine, including ideas for exploiting its natural resources. On June 18, 1919 Weizmann sent a detailed memorandum to the British authorities. Four weeks later, leaders of the Zionist movement, together with James Rothschild and Lord Alfred Mond, met with General Gilbert Clayton, one of the heads of the British military administration in the country, and proposed plans for its development. They warned him not to let foreign investors enter the country. At the end of the war, the Zionist Organization in London had established an advisory committee for the Palestine Office, headed by Herbert Samuel. At a committee meeting in May 1919, the need to establish hydroelectric power stations on the Jordan River and the 'Auja (Yarkon) River was expressly stated. Weizmann enlisted Samuel's help, who accepted the challenge and was among the first formulators of the vision for electrification of Palestine. In September 1919 Rutenberg arrived in the country, began his involvement with this project and tried to influence the Zionist Commission. Rutenberg set up his own office and met with various personages in the country, including Ussishkin. At the beginning of 1920, when Samuel was on his way for his first visit to Palestine, a few members of the Zionist Commission set out to meet him in Cairo. Among them was Israel Sieff, who later reported to Weizmann regarding the meeting. Samuel agreed that the electricity project should be given an important place among the other enterprises in the country. Therefore, it was important that it be carried out by the Zionist Organization, and for that purpose all prior commitments from the Ottoman period should be annulled. It later became clear that it was not simple to implement this decision.<sup>38</sup>

General Allenby believed that nothing should be done before the Mandate was ratified, but Rutenberg did not wait, and began preparing plans for the electric power stations. In the meantime, however, the riots of Passover 1920 broke out, and Rutenberg found himself, together with Jabotinsky with whom he was friendly at the time, busy organizing a defense force in Jerusalem. Later, in June 1920, Rutenberg submitted a detailed proposal to the Zionist Commission for a broad project to electrify and irrigate Eretz Israel. During the deliberations regarding the northern border of Palestine, one of the issues discussed was the Litani River. It was initially hoped that the river would constitute the northern border of the country and its waters could be used for the hydroelectric stations, among other things. After the border was set south of the river, it became clear that only the Jordan

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**38** They feared a recurrence of the legal problems encountered in connection with the electrification of Jerusalem at the beginning of the Mandate period; see ch. 7, n. 102.

River and the Yarmuk River, which flowed within the borders of Palestine, could be used for this purpose.<sup>39</sup>

In May 1921, following the rioting in Tel Aviv and throughout the country, Samuel, who in the meantime had been appointed the first British High Commissioner for Palestine, changed his mind about this project. That was the year in which Rutenberg's electricity project was to be studied and approved by the British administration, and in effect a crucial period in the shaping of the British attitude to the issue of Palestine. Until May 1921, Rutenberg had received much support from Samuel, who viewed the electrification project as a Zionist enterprise, as did Winston Churchill. However, the riots of May 1921, in which Rutenberg commanded the defense forces in Tel Aviv, caused Samuel to change his views, and he began viewing the electricity project as a means of developing the country in general, also for the benefit of the Arab population and not just as a Zionist enterprise.

During that same year, the complex special relationship between the electricity company and the Zionist Organization began to take shape. While Samuel and the British viewed Rutenberg as a moderate man who considered development of the country to be the main priority, Rutenberg himself also began treating the electrification enterprise as his major project, and did not always act according to the views of the Zionist leadership at the time. The tension between him and the Zionist leadership, especially with Weizmann, gradually intensified. After 1921, Rutenberg began emphasizing that he was an independent entrepreneur not connected to the Zionist Organization.<sup>40</sup>

Rutenberg's financial condition gradually deteriorated. Plans for electrification of the railways, mainly from Jaffa-Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which could have assisted his finances, were scrapped, and he needed other funding. The British came to his aid with a commitment to buy a set quantity of energy from his plants. On September 23, 1921 they even approved granting him concessions to establish two electric power stations. Under one concession, Rutenberg committed himself to establish a company within two years that would exploit the water of the Yarkon River to supply energy to the Sharon area, and would also begin preparations to utilize the river for irrigation purposes. The second concession, the larger one, was for the establishment of a hydroelectric station on the Jordan River. Rutenberg undertook to establish an installation there within two years that would provide electricity and water for irrigation throughout the country and also to Transjordan, though excluding the Jerusalem area.

Establishment of the hydroelectric plant on the Yarkon River was delayed since the Arabs of Jaffa and landowners along its banks refused to cooperate. Later,

<sup>39</sup> For aspects of Rutenberg's electrification project, see Shaltiel, *Pinchas Rutenberg*, 37–64.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 64–88. On the construction of the power station at Naharaim, on the Jordan River, see Sara Reguer, "Rutenberg and the Jordan River: A Revolution in Hydro-electricity," *Middle Eastern Studies* 31 (1995): 691–729; see also Ben-Arieh, *The Central Jordan Valley: A Regional Geography* (Merhaviah: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1965), 189–91 (Hebrew).

Rutenberg would claim that the attitude of the Jaffa Arabs towards him and their refusal to sell him land needed for the power station prevented its establishment. He received an extension from the British, and in the meantime began supplying electricity from the stations powered by diesel fuel that he built. He then asked to be released from his commitment to build the power station, and in return he would forego his company's ownership of the Yarkon waters and would not prevent their use by others. At first this ruined his relationship with the British. However, a compromise was reached, its main point being Rutenberg's waiver of his rights to a large part of the Yarkon River waters. Later, he tried to get British companies to cooperate with him in building an electric power station in Tel Aviv. When this failed, as did his attempt to enlist Baron Rothschild's cooperation, Rutenberg managed to recruit American companies to join him. A joint plant for the production of electricity by diesel engines was built in Tel Aviv. On June 10, 1923 the "great miracle" of lighting up Allenby Street in Tel Aviv occurred as the diesel station began supplying electricity to Tel Aviv and many other areas.<sup>41</sup>

As for the Jordan River plant, another matter complicated its development: the decision taken by the British in 1922 to sever Transjordan from the area of western Palestine with regards to the British commitment to establish a Jewish national home. Rutenberg refused to yield his right to supply electricity to Transjordan, but he had no investment partners. He began contacting people on the capital market, British millionaires and British companies, and managed to recruit some of them, among them the Jewish millionaire Bernhard Baron, the General Electric Company (G.E.C.) and an additional company, as well as the assistance of Lord Mond, and finally that of Lord Reading (Rufus Isaacs) who agreed to head the company's directorate. In the meantime the situation changed. Samuel left the country and was replaced by Lord Plumer who believed that he should not intervene in matters decided before his time and allowed Rutenberg to continue with his plans.

In 1926, the electricity company holding the concession to exploit the Jordan River waters was registered by law, even though for three years supply of electricity produced by diesel plants had already spread throughout the country. The company continued to establish power stations in different parts of the country, including impressive structures in Tiberias and Haifa. The stations supplied electricity to a growing number of consumers, both to private homes and for the operation of industries that began to develop. After the idea to electrify the railways was ruled out, doubts arose whether a hydroelectric plant on the Jordan River was necessary, but the vision was great and the urge to realize it strong.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> For the proposed power station on the Yarkon, see Shaltiel, *Pinchas Rutenberg*, 164–67.

<sup>42</sup> It is important to note that the final decision to establish the hydroelectric company was taken during the period of Lord Plumer, and that Rutenberg also decided to cooperate with the British administration and British companies to achieve his plans for electrification of the country with their support. In effect, he almost completely pushed aside the Zionist Organization.



Rutenberg decided to continue pursuing the idea of a hydroelectric station on the Jordan River. However, two central problems arose: would it continue to be a Zionist enterprise or a private business, and how much Britain would be involved in its establishment and in determining its importance and character. The two conflicted with each other. The British aspired that it should serve the areas of Palestine and Transjordan as well, both Arabs and Jews, and to have British companies involved in its establishment and determining its management and operation. That was what Rutenberg wanted too, hoping it would bring him greater financial support and add to the prestige of his company. For their part, the Zionist movement and its leaders were aggrieved. They aspired that the hydroelectric plant be a Jewish-Zionist enterprise, part of the national vision of developing a new Jewish country. Naturally, these conflicting attitudes caused a rift between Rutenberg and the Zionist leadership. Tension reached a peak at the inauguration of the station on June 9, 1932. British High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope, Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, and Colonel Cocks, the British representative in Transjordan, were invited to the ceremony, and not one Zionist representative. Weizmann was so angry that he claimed that Rutenberg had turned the Naharaim station into his own private business and it was not a Zionist enterprise.<sup>43</sup>

Even before construction of the station was completed, Rutenberg, who was considered in the Zionist movement as one of its leading members, was asked to serve as chairman of the National Council in 1929–1930. When rioting broke out on the Ninth of Av 1929 (August 15, 1929), Rutenberg was out of the country, like many of the Yishuv leaders who were absent due to their participation in the Sixteenth Zionist Congress in Zurich. He returned on September 18, 1929 and six days later, at a special meeting of the National Council, was chosen its chairman. The Labor movement representatives voted for him since they remembered his past as a laborer, and the right wing members chose him since they viewed him as representing private entrepreneurship. All of them together chose him to mark their objection to Weizmann's policy, and as a strong personage who could perhaps extract them from the troubles caused by the 1929 riots. Rutenberg did not succeed in the task thrust upon him; after two years he resigned as chairman and left the Elected Assembly altogether.<sup>44</sup>

From this point on, Rutenberg was a private individual who was devoted to Eretz Israel, participating from time to time in delegations and initiatives to solve

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<sup>43</sup> These developments and issues are described in great detail in Shaltiel, *Pinchas Rutenberg*, chs. 2–3. See also the comment on Rutenberg's stand in Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 133. Rutenberg justified his step by claiming that the Zionist movement did not provide any economic backing for his enterprise and that all the money was raised from private funds on the London stock exchange. We may still ask whether it was not possible to achieve a compromise and not strike such a blow at Weizmann and the Zionist Organization. This case seems to be indicative of Rutenberg's unique personality and character.

<sup>44</sup> For his period as chairman of the National Council, see Shaltiel, *Pinchas Rutenberg*, 183–294.

the Arab–Jewish conflict, but his standing as a Zionist leader gradually decreased.<sup>45</sup> After the outbreak of World War II, Rutenberg returned to active participation in the National Council until his death on January 3, 1942. His relationship with the British remained close throughout the years, perhaps mainly because of his power plant in Naharaim and his relations with Transjordan and Abdullah.<sup>46</sup>

In the history of Eretz Israel, Rutenberg will be remembered as “the Old Man from Naharaim,” the founder of the hydroelectric station. Although there were some among the Zionist leadership who claimed that it was due to Naharaim that Rutenberg abandoned Zionism, the station was an important part of the Zionist enterprise. During the economic crisis of 1926–1927, and throughout its existence until the Israeli War of Independence, the plant in Naharaim provided employment for many Jews who arrived in the country, and was a symbol of the Jewish-Zionist vision of building up a new country in which the Jewish people tried not to do anything detrimental to the Arab inhabitants of the country and served as a source of livelihood for them too, as Rutenberg predicted and wanted.

### **Novomeysky, the Dead Sea, and the Palestine Potash Company**

Another Jewish entrepreneur who began operating in Palestine at the beginning of the Mandate period was mining engineer Moshe Novomeysky. He arrived in October 1920 after leaving his home in Siberia in May of that year. His aim was to receive a concession to establish a national Jewish enterprise, the Dead Sea potash project. In Palestine Novomeysky was assisted by Harry Sacher, one of the British Zionist leaders instrumental in obtaining the Balfour Declaration. A short while after the beginning of British rule, Sacher took up residence in the country and became one of its leading lawyers. Novomeysky presented his proposal for the potash plant to Sacher who later became one of its directors. Sacher introduced Novomeysky to Wyndham Deedes, Samuel’s chief secretary, and to Herbert Samuel himself. Thus were British gates opened to him.<sup>47</sup> Like Rutenberg, Novomeysky began his efforts for the establishment

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<sup>45</sup> The change in Rutenberg’s political stance, his friendship with Judah L. Magnes, and his role in the “Committee of Five” for peace with the Arabs will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>46</sup> For example, in the early stages of World War II, when Ben-Gurion was all for opposing the British by continuing illegal immigration, Rutenberg disagreed with him. He considered the incumbent High Commissioner, MacMichael to be a personal friend, in contrast to Ben-Gurion, who declared: “The Jewish people have three enemies . . . the first is Hitler, the second MacDonal[d], and the third MacMichael,” quoted in Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 734.

<sup>47</sup> For an appreciation of Harry Sacher as a Zionist, delivered at the Hebrew University in December 1972, see Eliahu Elath, *Through the Mist of Time: Reminiscences* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1969), 76–87 (Hebrew). After several years in Palestine, Sacher returned to England but maintained an interest in the country, especially through the Hebrew University. He passed away during a session of its Senate in 1971.

of the Dead Sea potash works at the outset of British rule in Palestine, but since his vision and plan, too, were only realized during Plumer's period, I will discuss them in this chapter.

After Novomeysky applied to Samuel regarding his plan for the potash works, the High Commissioner told him that in order to grant such a concession they needed to wait for the final confirmation of the Mandate. He also informed him that there was another entrepreneur, British Major Thomas G. Tulloch, who took an interest in the project. With Sacher's help, Novomeysky contacted Tulloch and they agreed to cooperate in establishing the potash company. Their cooperation continued until 1938, when Tulloch passed away. Even before confirmation of the British Mandate, Novomeysky and the merchant Yitzhak Cohen, owner of a large commercial business in the Mamillah neighborhood in Jerusalem, succeeded in purchasing from a Christian Arab, Ibrahim Hazboun, his company for sea transport on the Dead Sea, a concession for salt mining on Mount Sodom, and a plot of land north of the Dead Sea. When Novomeysky wrote the High Commissioner about it, Samuel informed him that the matter was now in the hands of Ernest T. Richmond, who was known to be one of the anti-Jewish British officials. As a result, Novomeysky decided to travel to Britain to promote his plan. On board the ship, Novomeysky met Emir Abdullah, the ruler of Transjordan, and from that time friendly relations continued between the two. Novomeysky considered Abdullah to be the only Arab leader willing to make peace with Israel, until his assassination in 1951.<sup>48</sup>

On July 24, 1922, after the League of Nations ratified the Mandate for Palestine, Novomeysky started working vigorously to complete the deal for construction of the Dead Sea potash plant, but met with many obstacles along the way. Anti-Zionists tried to waylay it in Britain, giant American corporations attempted to gain control of the plant, and the British High Commissioner in Australia raised the issue of previous concessions dating from the Ottoman period so that the enterprise would not end up like the Jerusalem electricity concession granted to Greek engineer Mavromatis. Novomeysky was aided by many friends, among them Sacher, Weizmann, and James Rothschild, by financial bodies connected to the Zionist movement, especially those in the United States such as the Palestine Economic Corporation and Bernard Flexner, its founder and first president, the Palestine Development Company from New York, whose honorary chairman was Louis Brandeis, and other American Jews. In October 1925 Novomeysky submitted his plan for the Dead Sea potash concession and presented it once again on September 23, 1926. Four companies competed for the

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<sup>48</sup> For details see Moshe A. Novomeysky, *Given to Salt: The Struggle for the Dead Sea Concession* (London: M. Parrish, 1958), 11–31. See also Hila Tal, *Revolution in Sodom: The Influence of the Palestine Potash Company on the Development of the Dead Sea Region and Palestine, 1930–1948* (Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Institute, 2010) (Hebrew).

concession. On April 9, 1927, after the final decision was made, Novomeysky received a letter from the Colonial Office, stating: “I am directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to inform you that he has been in communication with the High Commissioner for Palestine, and that Lord Plumer agrees in principle to grant a Concession to yourself and Major Tulloch provided suitable terms and conditions can be agreed upon and subject to your giving satisfactory financial guarantees.” The first campaign had come to an end, but two additional ones remained: raising sufficient funding so that the British government would agree to sign the contract, and fending off attacks by the opposition in the British Parliament set in motion by opponents of Zionism.<sup>49</sup>

Novomeysky acted vigorously, with assistance from friends, to curb attacks in Parliament regarding the Dead Sea potash concession. These included personal accusations against him, for example that he was a Zionist agent and a Russian agent. He worked tirelessly to recruit the necessary funds so that he could meet the criteria set by the British. The concession was signed on January 1, 1930, the company was named The Palestine Potash Co., and its directorate was set in London. A work camp was set up in the northern Dead Sea area. In February 1931, a year after work began, the plant produced its first output. During World War II it already operated at full capacity and greatly assisted the allied forces.<sup>50</sup>

### Haifa port

Establishment of Haifa port as the main modern seaport of the country began during the British Mandate period. In July 1919 General Allenby wrote to the British government that should Britain receive the Mandate for Palestine, the need would arise to establish a deep water port in Haifa. He therefore recommended conducting a preliminary study immediately. In 1920, the British began trial drilling. Two years later, at the request of the authorities, civil engineer Sir Fredrick Palmer surveyed all the country’s coasts and confirmed that Haifa was the most suitable location for a deep-water port in Palestine.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Novomeysky, *Given to Salt*, 55–146, esp. 146 for the passage from the letter of the Colonial Office.

<sup>50</sup> For the activity of the company after the signing of the concession, see *ibid.*, 173–282. See also Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 152–63.

<sup>51</sup> On the building of the port of Haifa during the Mandate period, see Shimon Stern, “The Dispute Concerning the Construction of Haifa Port during the British Mandate,” *Cathedra* 21 (Oct. 1981): 171–86 (Hebrew). See also *id.*, “The Development of the Urban Pattern of Haifa 1918–1947,” PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1974 (Hebrew).

In 1924 Samuel proposed that a public committee be charged with constructing the port, and that its financing would come from Zionist sources, with the government and municipality filling only secondary roles. The Arab population would be represented by their representatives in city hall. In his reasoning, Samuel noted that in political terms it would be preferable if the funding was supplied by the British government, but if the government could not bear the expense it was better to build the port with Jewish money than not build it at all. The High Commissioner also made note of the terms of the Mandate and British policy – to further the development of Palestine with Jewish capital.<sup>52</sup>

However, it appears that due to lack of funding, as well as political considerations, work on the port was delayed until the Plumer period. In August 1926, after receipt of a loan guaranteed by the British government, a tender was issued for construction of the port. It was decided that the government would implement the work through the engineering firm of Rendel, Palmer & Tritton. After a few years of construction, the port was officially inaugurated on October 31, 1931.<sup>53</sup> Novomeysky notes that in the early 1930s “the words of Lord Templetown in the House of Lords, about Haifa, Rutenberg’s electrification, and the Dead Sea resources being the pillars of new strength in the Middle East, began to come true.”<sup>54</sup>

The construction in Haifa Port turned it into the country’s main seaport. An oil terminal was built in the port, and not far from it a tanker farm. The oil refineries in the Zevulun Valley began operation in the late 1930s. The port filled a variety of roles: it was a passenger terminal, handled export of citrus fruit and potash brought from Jerusalem to Haifa by train and the import of food products and industrial goods, and also served as a military port. Economic activity increased in Haifa, which during the Mandate period became the third largest city in the country and its most important economic center, due to its port, military camps, railway workshops, and more. Haifa attracted both Jewish and Arab migrants who changed the human landscape of the city. It also received part of 340 dunams that were reclaimed from the sea during construction of the port on which roads, offices, stores and warehouses, apartments, and the Haifa Central train station were established, the latter on Plumer Square.<sup>55</sup> All these were indeed established after High Commissioner Plumer’s period, but the main effort for their establishment was begun during his time in office.

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<sup>52</sup> Stern, “Haifa Port,” 183. As his term as High Commissioner came to an end, Samuel took pride in the fact that he did not expend any British government funds in Palestine.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, including the continuous development of the port during the Mandate period.

<sup>54</sup> Novomeysky, *Given to Salt*, 276.

<sup>55</sup> After a large loan from Britain, the British Treasury received sums from the British administration in Palestine, thus helping to finance the building of Haifa Port; see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 239–40.

### Reinforcements for Transjordan and reduction of the military force in Palestine

The final subject I shall note regarding Plumer's term as High Commissioner, in which his personal viewpoint was prominent, was the reorganization of the defense forces by creating a Palestine Gendarmerie comprised primarily of Arabs, Jews, and other minorities, and another one of British nationality, to supplement the British military garrisons in Palestine and Transjordan.<sup>56</sup>

Plumer's resolute rule was one of the reasons for the peace and quiet that prevailed in the country during his time. He believed that the small territory of Palestine was overcrowded with security forces and their reduction would bring about a great saving in expenditures.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, departure of the forces would provide a sense of "normalcy." The gendarmeries, both the local and the British, were established after the riots of 1921 and were comprised of a police force and a separate British gendarmerie, the nature of which was part military and part police, its members mainly recruited from among former Irish policemen, an armored vehicle company, and the Royal Air Force squadrons stationed in the country. As a result of their evacuation from the country, the British garrison in Jerusalem was reduced to only one company, so much so that not one piece of artillery remained in the city. This was in contrast with the military garrison which in 1921 numbered 4,000 men. Plumer simultaneously took steps to reinforce the British forces in Transjordan, which in Samuel's time was separated from western Palestine. There are those who consider the limited presence of British security forces in the country to be one of the causes enabling the Western Wall conflict of 1928 and the riots of 1929.<sup>58</sup>

Towards the end of his commissionership, Plumer's health deteriorated and he requested to advance the end of his service in the country. He was seventy-one when it came to an end.

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<sup>56</sup> Bentwich, *England in Palestine*, 148–50; *A Survey of Palestine: Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Government Printer, 1946–1947), 1:22. On the two gendarmeries, see Edward Horne, *A Job Well Done: Being a History of the Palestine Police Force 1920–1948* (Eastwood, Essex: The Palestine Police Old Comrades Benevolent Association, 1982), 65–100.

<sup>57</sup> The administration in Palestine aspired to reduce expenditures; see Albert M. Hyamson, *Palestine under the Mandate, 1920–1948* (London: Methuen, 1950), 118; Ofer, "Role of the High Commissioner," 45–46 and the sources cited.

<sup>58</sup> Harry Luke is one of those who are of that opinion; see Harry C. Luke, *Cities and Men: An Autobiography*, 3 vols. (London: Bles, 1953–1957), 3:14–16. For what happened in Jerusalem after Plumer's departure and the outbreak of the 1929 riots in the city, see below in the text, beginning with n. 80.

## Conflict in the Zionist movement; the enlarged Jewish Agency; Brit Shalom; the labor movement

### Zionist politics: Weizmann and Jabotinsky; establishment of the Revisionist movement

In the previous chapters I have already presented Weizmann's central role in obtaining the Balfour Declaration and his election as president of the Zionist Organization in 1921 at the Twelfth Zionist Congress, the first after the war. I also noted that Weizmann and Jabotinsky were of one mind and there was friendship between them at the time the Jewish Legion was established during the war, since the Zionism of both was oriented towards Britain. Their friendship continued during the congress and even later. During the April 1920 riots in Jerusalem, Jabotinsky gained fame for organizing Jewish defense in the city and due to his imprisonment in Acre by the British. After his release, Jabotinsky supported Weizmann in his struggles within the Zionist leadership.

Apparently, their differences of opinion arose when Herbert Samuel, who was on friendly terms with both, changed his policy following the riots of 1921, as described in the previous chapter. Initially, Jabotinsky agreed to set off to the United States to direct efforts on behalf of Keren Hayesod, that had been established at the Twelfth Congress, and in 1922 even expressed his support of the first White Paper, that of Samuel and Churchill, although he later claimed this was because he had no alternative and due to the fact that it repeated British support of and commitment to the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. Weizmann, for his part, continued attempts to influence Samuel to support Zionist aspirations while he himself became more moderate in his Zionist viewpoints. Jabotinsky went off in the opposite direction; he regretted having been influenced by Weizmann and somewhat supportive of Samuel's ideas. His stay in the United States on Keren Hayesod matters delayed his response. He left the United States on June 16 and arrived for a visit to Eretz Israel in the fall. He met with the High Commissioner on October 17, 1922 and presented his objections to Samuel's policies, but was unable to get him to agree to recant his new stand. Upon his return to London on November 5, Jabotinsky submitted a memorandum to the Zionist leadership in which he detailed his disagreement with its policy, but as yet did not tender his resignation. On January 18, 1923 he sent his letter of resignation from the Zionist leadership in which he forcefully castigated its moderate policy towards British government actions. He insisted that they come out openly against Samuel and demand the replacement of the British officials who were undermining the commitments included in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> For details, see Joseph B. Schechtman, *Fighter and Prophet: The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story*, 2 vols. (New York: Yoseloff, 1956–1961), 2:29–43; Arye Naor, "The Purifying Effect of Truth:



Jabotinsky did not participate in the Thirteenth Zionist Congress in Carlsbad, in August 1923, and began to plan his strategy. His protest against the inclusion of non-Zionists in the Jewish Agency stood out even then. In October 1924 he decided to found a new Zionist movement. On April 25, 1925 the first conference of his movement convened in Paris and adopted the name Union of Zionist Revisionists, also known by the contraction of its Hebrew name as “Hatzohar.”

During the Fourteenth Zionist Congress in Vienna, in 1925, representatives of Hatzohar conveyed their harsh criticism of the moderate policy of the Zionist leadership headed by Weizmann. At that same congress, Weizmann delivered a speech in which he outlined his principles. There were those who viewed it as a follow-up to a speech he made in 1923, during his stay in the United States. In both, he spoke of the aspiration to live in peace with the Arabs. His words were quoted as following:

Palestine must be built without violating the legitimate interests of the Arabs – not a hair of their heads shall be touched. The Zionist Congress must not confine itself to Platonic formulæ. It has to learn the truth that Palestine is not Rhodesia and that 600,000 Arabs live there, who before the sense of justice of the world have exactly the same right to their homes as we have to our National Home. As long as this thought has not penetrated into our flesh and blood, you will always have to look for artificial narcotics, but you will see the future in a false perspective.<sup>60</sup>

In April 1926 Weizmann arrived in Palestine. From there he set out, accompanied by Fredrick Kisch, to visit Abdullah in Transjordan, who received the president of the Zionist Organization with his usual cordiality and famous hospitality. Weizmann also traveled to Syria where he met a few local personages.<sup>61</sup>

Mention should be made of a number of other visits by Kisch and other Jewish personages to Abdullah during the 1920s and the early 1930s. Before accompanying Weizmann, Kisch set out on a first visit together with Rabbi Ya‘akov Meir Hassoun, David Yellin, and Avinoam Yellin. Abdullah’s father, King Hussein, who still ruled

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Jabotinsky’s Interpretation of the Balfour Declaration,” *Israel Studies* 22, no. 3 (2017): 31–47. In his discussion of Jabotinsky and the Balfour Declaration, Naor maintains that Jabotinsky believed that the British obligated themselves to the establishment of an independent Jewish state, or a dominion as part of the British Commonwealth. He states that the split in the Zionist movement over this issue came only with the White Paper of 1930 and that the blame lay with the British administration in Palestine, not with the government in London.

**60** Quoted, together with a passage from Weizmann’s 1923 Baltimore speech, in Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel*, 121. For the interesting discussion between Weizmann and Feisal, by then king of Iraq, on Oct. 6, 1925, in which the latter offered to mediate between the Arabs of Palestine and the Zionists on condition that Jewish immigration be limited, see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1:208–9 (no. 28). In December 1929 Feisal made suggestions for solving the Palestine problem; *ibid.*, 1:221–24 (no. 33). On Feisal as king of Iraq, see ch. 7, n. 157.

**61** The visit in 1926 to Abdullah and Hussein, in which the British Arabist Harry St. John Philby also participated, is recorded in Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 236–37. Philby’s involvement in additional attempts to mediate between Arabs and Jews shall be noted in chs. 10 and 11.

the Hejaz, was also present and the meeting was successful.<sup>62</sup> On February 19, 1931 Kisch traveled to Amman again, this time accompanied only by David Yellin, for a courtesy call on the aged King Hussein who had returned from his exile in Cyprus, and also met with Abdullah.<sup>63</sup> However, at the end of March 1931, while Weizmann was visiting the country and wished to visit Abdullah and King Hussein again, Abdullah initially agreed but later cancelled the visit, perhaps due to pressure by the British High Commissioner, or the Mufti, or both.<sup>64</sup> On June 19, 1931 Kisch received a warm response from Abdullah to the missive of condolences that he and Rabbi Ya'akov Meir sent him after participating in the funeral of the aged King Hussein, father of the Hashemite clan.<sup>65</sup>

In 1926 Jabotinsky, then in the United States, decided to visit Eretz Israel again for the first time since 1922. His previous relatively lengthy stay in the country had lasted from August 1918 to August 1920. This time he stayed for only five weeks. He paid a pleasant visit to Ahad Ha'am with whom he had maintained friendly relations since their shared residence in London during World War I. Jabotinsky wrote that Ahad Ha'am complained that he was misunderstood, and he too supported the notion of a Jewish state; however his demand was that it would also be the cultural-spiritual center of the Jewish people and not a country like that of all other nations. Later, Jabotinsky became ever more active in Hatzohar. He toured all over Europe, mainly in Poland, and with fiery speeches recruited members for his movement.<sup>66</sup>

On December 25–27, 1927 Jabotinsky participated in the “Tarbut” conference in Poland. On September 29, 1928 he set sail for Eretz Israel, but by mid-December was back in Europe for the third conference of Hatzohar in Vienna, returning to Eretz Israel at the end of January 1929. Throughout the period he was also very active in establishing the Revisionist youth movement, Beitar.<sup>67</sup>

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**62** For the visit to Abdullah by Kisch and Weizmann in 1924, see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 93–98. On Sept. 1, 1930, Kisch attended a dinner at Government House in Jerusalem in honor of Abdullah, who invited him to visit Amman; *ibid.*, 338.

**63** *Ibid.*, 386–87. It should be borne in mind that Kisch was the representative of the Zionist Executive in Eretz Israel, i.e. Weizmann's man in the country.

**64** On the cancellation of Weizmann's visit, see *ibid.*, 396.

**65** *Ibid.*, 431. Hussein was buried on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. His three sons, the Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini, and other Palestinian notables attended the funeral. I thank Prof. Avraham Sela for bringing this to my attention.

**66** Schechtman, *Fighter and Prophet*, 2:67–68. “Hatzohar” is an acronym for Hatzionim Harevzionistim (Revisionist Zionists). As noted in Chapter Seven, Ahad Ha'am was also Weizmann's “mentor,” especially when he was in England. Moshe Smilansky, who was known for his moderate views vis-à-vis the Arabs, also considered Ahad Ha'am and his vision of Eretz Israel as the cultural center of the Jewish people to be his spiritual mentor; see Smilansky, *Revival and Holocaust*, 79–92, where he also records his admiration for Ahad Ha'am and meetings with him after the latter settled in Tel Aviv.

**67** Schechtman, *Fighter and Prophet*, 2:105. For Jabotinsky as the founder of the Beitar youth movement, see also *ibid.*, 2:405–20, a chapter contributed by Mordechai Katz, secretary-general of Beitar

### The enlarged Jewish Agency; Brit Shalom; the beginning of political activity in the labor movement

Among the subjects on which Jabotinsky and Weizmann did not see eye to eye was the matter of establishing the enlarged Jewish Agency, which would enable participation of non-Zionist Jews. It had already been decided at the peace conferences in which Herbert Samuel had also been involved. During the Thirteenth Zionist Congress in Carlsbad in August 1923, a congress presided over by Weizmann at which Jabotinsky was also present, Weizmann began working to achieve that objective.<sup>68</sup> At the end of December 1924 Kisch traveled to the United States to prepare the groundwork for Weizmann's visit with the objective of urging American Jewry to participate in the enlarged Jewish Agency. To that end Kisch met with Louis Marshall, a leader of American Jewry, and Felix Warburg, Marshall's friend.<sup>69</sup>

During the Fifteenth Zionist Congress convened in Basel in August–September 1927, Weizmann was re-elected as president of the Zionist Organization. The congress approved the expansion of the Jewish Agency by adding non-Zionists and announced the following principles: (a) A continuous increase in the extent of Jewish immigration; (b) The redemption of the land as Jewish public property; (c) Agricultural colonization based on Jewish labor; (d) Furtherance of the Hebrew language and Hebrew culture. At the congress, a ceremony took place on September 1 commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the First Zionist Congress in Basel. During 1927 and 1928 the members of the Joint Palestine Survey Commission appointed by Marshall and Weizmann visited Palestine to conduct a financial examination of the Palestine Zionist Executive. The commission submitted its report in June 1928. Afterwards Kisch traveled once more to the United States to finalize the details for including leading American non-Zionists in the Jewish Agency. It was agreed that the enlarged Jewish Agency would be formally established at the Sixteenth Zionist Congress to be convened in Zurich on July 28, 1929.<sup>70</sup>

After the Revisionist movement came into being, the "Brit Shalom" society was also formed. Basically, it was a small group of Jewish intellectuals which sought to

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from 1936 to Jabotinsky's death in 1940. "Tarbut" was an association dating from the early years of the twentieth century that operated secular Hebrew educational institutions, from kindergartens to high schools, in eastern Europe.

**68** On the enlarged Jewish Agency, see ch. 8, n. 2, esp. Kaufman, *An Ambiguous Partnership*, 23–28, who adds fifteen appendixes, but these relate to the years 1942–1948; see also ch. 12, n. 14.

**69** Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 158–66. In addition, his visit was intended to help Weizmann in fundraising efforts for Keren Hayesod and the Hebrew University. When in Washington he also met with Henry Morgenthau who reminded him of his past quarrel with the Zionists, but said that he was prepared to help out, and Judge Julian W. Mack who, in the split within American Zionist ranks at Cleveland in 1921, sided with Brandeis and also in the Brandeis–Weizmann controversy; see ch. 8, n. 12.

**70** Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 238–39; 246–47. On Sept. 12, 1929, Kisch noted in his diary the death of Marshall and of Gilbert Clayton, both of whom had passed away the previous day; *ibid.*, 240.

adopt a binational solution for the two peoples in the country: Jews and Arabs. Its beginnings lay in the initiative of a few Zionist personalities in Germany and Czechoslovakia.<sup>71</sup> Persons who believed there was a danger in granting Palestine solely to the Jews without taking the Arab presence into account joined the society.<sup>72</sup> It is commonly believed that the initial establishment of the society was at a meeting in Ruppin's house in the Jerusalem Rehavia neighborhood on June 10, 1925. With the participation of intellectuals from both groups, as well as others, it was decided to establish Brit Shalom. On May 9, 1926 the number of members reached 73, and the number of supporters was 66. A year later in 1927, the organization presented its ideological platform in a pamphlet entitled *She'ifoteinu* (Our Aspirations).<sup>73</sup>

Ruppin's joining the Brit Shalom founders came as a complete surprise. He had been known as "the father of Zionist settlement" since he was first appointed to head the Palestine Office in 1908, and was very active in the development of the Yishuv. However, apparently Ruppin came to the conclusion that there was an urgent need to solve the continuously intensifying Jewish–Arab conflict. Brit Shalom often gave much thought to the issue of a legislative council which, as we saw, the

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71 On the establishment of Brit Shalom and the Fourteenth Zionist Congress, see Hagit Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe: The Distinctive Path of German Zionism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996), 162–80, who maintains that the rise of the Revisionist party is what motivated the establishment of Brit Shalom. She also states that the plan for an enlarged Jewish Agency was one of the ideas strongly opposed by Jabotinsky, who tried to induce German Jews to join his party. See also id., "German Zionists and the Emergence of Brit Shalom," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 648–70.

72 For the founding of Brit Shalom, its members and ideology, see Joseph Heller, *From "Brit Shalom" to "Ihud": Judah Leib Magnes and the Struggle for a Binational State in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2003), 1–12 (Hebrew); the introduction to Shalom Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism: The Radical Circle in Brith Shalom, 1925–1933* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. ix–xiii. See also a passage from Ruppin's address at the Fourteenth Zionist Congress: "to establish in Palestine a community where both nations, with no ruling advantage to the one, nor oppression of the other, shall work shoulder to shoulder," quoted and translated by Lavsky, "German Zionists," 664. Yaacov N. Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony: The Development of Mapai's Policy, 1930–1963* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1980), 25–31 (Hebrew) maintains that the idea to establish Brit Shalom was raised by the German-Jewish Orientalist Prof. Joseph Horowitz when he came to participate in the inauguration of the Hebrew University. On Apr. 1, 1925 Horowitz met with Ruppin and convinced him in this matter, on the basis of his visit to other countries in the region. See also the diary notation for Apr. 26, 1925 in Arthur Ruppin, *Memoirs, Diaries, Letters*, ed. with an introduction by Alex Bein (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 217.

73 For an English version of the statutes of Brit Shalom, published in Hebrew in the first issue of *She'ifoteinu*, see *Jewish-Arab Affairs: Occasional Papers Published by the "Brit-Shalom" Society* (Jerusalem, 1931), 59–60. One of the active members of Brit Shalom, who also published several articles about the Arab issue in its journal, was Hayyim Margalioth-Kalvarisky. More details about his initiatives are in Chapter Ten.

British tried to establish during Samuel's period as High Commissioner.<sup>74</sup> After the riots of 1929, Ruppin realized that a solution to the Jewish–Arab conflict would not be achieved in the manner proposed by Brit Shalom. He left the society and joined the central faction of Mapai led by Ben-Gurion. Later he also supported the partition proposal of the Royal Commission, known as the Peel Commission.<sup>75</sup> After the riots of 1929, Brit Shalom stopped its activities and in 1933 ceased to exist altogether. The aspiration to achieve peace with the Arabs of Palestine led to the establishment of other movements, which I shall address in the next chapters.<sup>76</sup>

In addition, winds of change began blowing in the two labor movements established during the Second Aliyah, Hapo'el Hatza'ir and Po'alei Zion. In 1919, after World War I, the Ahdut Ha'avodah party was established as a union between Po'alei Zion and those called “non-party members.” Hapo'el Hatza'ir continued with its independent existence and views. Throughout the 1920s the two parties operated separately, until they were united in 1930 and became Mapai, an acronym for Mifleget Po'alei Eretz Israel. Hapo'el Hatza'ir had begun operating in the first decade of the Mandate period, and was among the main supporters of Weizmann's policy. Ahdut Ha'avodah joined it in the second half of the 1920s, and it too supported the proposal for an enlarged Jewish Agency, objected to the Revisionists, and shared common interests in opposition to the non-socialist parties.<sup>77</sup>

It is interesting to note that as early as the fourth convention of Ahdut Ha'avodah at Ein Harod in the spring of 1924, the concept of political parity was first raised as an option to promote peace between Jews and Arabs. By this they meant the formation of a parliament that would represent the people through elected delegates, with an “upper house” in which Jews and Arabs would be equally represented in such a way that the majority could not wield its power to the detriment of the minority.<sup>78</sup> The idea was raised by Shlomo Kaplansky (1884–1950), a representative of the world office of

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<sup>74</sup> On the idea to establish a legislative council, see Chapter Eight, at nn. 112–14 in the text.

<sup>75</sup> See Ruppin's letter to Victor Jacobson, Dec. 3, 1931, in Ruppin, *Memoirs, Diaries, Letters*, 258. The best-known sentence from the letter reads: “The situation is paradoxical, what we can get (from the Arabs) is of no use to us, and what we need we cannot get from them.” Therefore, in later years Ruppin even supported the partition plan proposed by the Peel Commission; see also Heller, *From “Brit Shalom” to “Ihud”*, 81–89.

<sup>76</sup> Heller, *From “Brit Shalom” to “Ihud”*, 81–89 notes that Magnes did not join Brit Shalom because he disagreed with some of Ruppin's earlier views, and therefore furthered a policy of his own. See also the entry for June 18, 1931 in Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 429–30, where he mentions a strongly worded letter he sent to Dr. Lurie, chairman of Brit Shalom, about the damage they are doing to efforts to attain Jewish–Arab cooperation.

<sup>77</sup> On Hapo'el Hatza'ir and Po'alei Zion, see Chapter Six, at n. 67 in the text. For an introductory survey of the parties that created Mapai, see Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 14–19; Peter Y. Medding, *Mapai in Israel: Political Organisation and Government in a New Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 8–10.

<sup>78</sup> For discussions at the 1924 conference about political parity, see Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 257–58. More details about the idea of parity will be presented in Chapter Ten.

Po'alei Zion in Britain (now Ahdut Ha'avodah.) In 1924 he was chosen as a member of the Zionist Executive in London.<sup>79</sup> Ben-Gurion and Berl Katznelson spoke out against him, totally negating his proposal, but after the 1929 riots Mapai once again debated the concept. At the same time, a struggle began between the labor parties and the Revisionists over Zionist hegemony (1925–1933), all to be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Plumer's departure, acting High Commissioner Luke and Governor of Jerusalem Keith-Roach; the Western Wall conflict (Yom Kippur 1928)**

At the end of July 1928, Lord Plumer set sail for Britain. Two weeks earlier, on July 12, Harry Luke returned to Palestine to serve in the capacity of chief secretary of the Mandate government.<sup>80</sup> Between 1920 and 1924, when Ronald Storrs was the governor of Jerusalem, Luke had served as his deputy for a while and then as chief secretary of the British administration in Sierra Leone, where he had been residing before he arrived in Palestine for the first time. Luke held the view that the condition of the local residents, the natives, should be improved, and was a member of the committee headed by Chief Justice Haycraft that investigated the riots of 1921.<sup>81</sup> More than likely, he was chosen to serve as chief secretary due to his colonial experience and his previous acquaintance with conditions in Palestine. However, as soon as he was appointed there were many who doubted his suitability for the role.<sup>82</sup> Luke was the acting High Commissioner for four months, until December 1928 when the third British High Commissioner John Chancellor assumed office. To his misfortune, the first Wailing (Western) Wall conflict broke out during that interim period. Apparently, he was unable to control the situation, and there are many who blame him for the deterioration of events at the Wailing Wall and their grave results.<sup>83</sup>

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**79** Years later, in 1942, Kaplansky supported the idea of a binational state. See Elkana Margalit, "The Debate in the Labor Movement on Binationalism," *Hatzionut* 4 (1975): 225–26 (Hebrew). See also id., "Binationalism: An Interpretation of Zionism, 1941–1947," *Studies in Zionism* 4 (1981): 275–312. In later years, Kaplansky became one of the important directors of the Technion in Haifa.

**80** On Plumer's departure and Luke's arrival in Jerusalem, see Ofer, "Role of the High Commissioner," 49–51.

**81** Luke, *Cities and Men* is a three-volume autobiography. His first period of service in Palestine is described in volume 2, and the second period in volume 3.

**82** Many attributed pro-Arab opinions to Luke; see his description of Jewish protests against him in Luke, *Cities and Men*, 3:20–21. One of the secretaries in the office of the chief secretary at the time was George Antonius, and apparently it was through him that Luke had contacts with Arabs; see Bentwich, *Mandate Memories*, 130.

**83** On the Western Wall conflict of 1928 and the riots of 1929, see Ofer, "Role of the High Commissioner," 52–107 and the sources cited there. See also Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 244–46.



The holy sites, mainly in Jerusalem, were always a sensitive political issue. Upon his entrance into Jerusalem, Allenby declared that Britain undertook responsibility to preserve Jerusalem as the city holy to the three world religions. The Mandate for Palestine included many paragraphs pertaining to the holy sites. Among them, mention was made of the Western Wall.<sup>84</sup>

I shall refer to only a few central facts regarding the Western Wall. As early as the nineteenth century, as the Jewish community in Jerusalem grew, the number of Jews praying at this holy site increased. Ideas regarding its purchase were raised at the time, but nothing came of them. After the British conquest, such ideas were raised again, but they, too, failed to materialize.<sup>85</sup> While both the British and the Arabs claimed that the status quo should be maintained, arguments were conducted regarding the definition of this status quo.<sup>86</sup>

In 1928 the Grand Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, completed the project he had initiated to renovate structures on the Temple Mount, including installation of the new golden dome of the Dome of the Rock. The high point of his efforts was enhancing the Islamic religious status of Jerusalem.<sup>87</sup> As part of the struggle for control of the sacred

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**84** Following the 1929 riots and the conflict over the Western Wall, an international committee was appointed in 1930 by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. It studied the issue, gathered testimonies, including those in the memorandum presented to Parliament by the Secretary for the Colonies after the 1928 incident. See *Report of the Commission Appointed by His Majesty's Government . . . with the Approval of the Council of the League of Nations . . . in Connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1931). The commission was also presented with a memorandum by the Jewish Agency; see Cyrus Adler, et al., *Memorandum on the Western Wall: Prepared for the Special Commission of the League of Nations on Behalf of the Jewish Agency for Palestine* (Philadelphia, 1930). On these, and the Western Wall incidents, see Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1929* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2015), who details many clashes between Jews and Arabs throughout the country, but deals only slightly with developments that led to the events of 1929.

**85** For the Western Wall in the nineteenth century, see Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 1: 371–75. On Weizmann's thoughts about purchasing the Western Wall, see Albert M. Hyamson, *Palestine, a Policy* (London: Methuen, 1942), 117; Storrs, *Memoirs*, 365; Frumkin, *A Judge*, 276–79.

**86** On maintaining the status quo in the holy sites, see Storrs, *Memoirs*, 313–14; Hyamson, *Palestine, a Policy*, 196, who refers to Article 13 of the Mandate.

**87** For the Mufti's involvement in restoration of the structures on the Temple Mount, see Kupferschmidt, *Supreme Muslim Council*, 129–33; Elpeleg, *Grand Mufti*, 15–16. On the founding of a fund for the restoration of the holy mosques in Jerusalem and the delegations sent to Muslim countries, which were an important factor in strengthening his status in Jerusalem, and the help he received once again from Richmond, see Elath, *Haj Mohammed Amin el-Husseini*, 50–53. For an article that sees the events surrounding the Western Wall as a watershed in enhancing the importance of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount in the minds of Arabs in Palestine and elsewhere, see Avraham Sela, "The 'Wailing Wall' Riots (1929) as a Watershed in the Palestine Conflict," *Muslim World* 84 (1994): 60–94.



sites in the city, the Muslims claimed that the paved courtyard in front of the Western Wall was the property of the Muslim waqf.<sup>88</sup>

Tension between Jews and Arabs led to the breakout of the riots of 1928–1929. The gravest of confrontations occurred on the eve of Yom Kippur, September 24, 1928. That day, Governor of Jerusalem Edward Keith-Roach passed by the Western Wall and observed the Jews praying.<sup>89</sup> He noticed the mobile dividing screen of cloth separating men from women and claimed it had never been there before and that its placement violated the status quo. Keith-Roach ordered it be removed immediately on that same holy day and day of fasting, thus arousing the Arabs, too, to demand it, apparently also with the support of Luke.<sup>90</sup>

The incident aroused protests by Jews in Eretz Israel and throughout the world, and greatly intensified the tension between Jews and Arabs. In addition, the Arabs wanted to make repairs in the houses near the Western Wall so as to prove their ownership of the site. In order to do so they needed the approval of the government Department of Antiquities. Ernest Richmond, director of the Department of Antiquities, approved their request.

As their anger increased, the Jewish response was the establishment of Western Wall “committees.” Zionists figures such as Professor Joseph Klausner and Ittamar Ben-Avi led the protest. One of the societies established was the “Pro-Kotel Society” headed by Professor Klausner.<sup>91</sup>

In the meantime, in June 1929 the Labour Party won the elections in Britain and a new government was established headed by James Ramsay MacDonald. Lord Passfield (Sydney Webb) was appointed colonial secretary. The government in Palestine was

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**88** On the Western Wall issue, see also Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 6–13 who notes Arab opposition to the establishment of the international committee and relates to attempts to turn the Aqsa Mosque into an all-Islamic pantheon in which leading Arab personalities would be laid to rest. On this matter see also Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 373–77, reporting about the Indian Muslim leader Mohammed Ali who passed away in London and was buried on the Temple Mount in January 1931.

**89** Keith-Roach has been accused that his harsh and inflexible behavior was one of the factors leading to the Western Wall conflict. There are those who see in it a reflection of his anti-Zionist leanings; see *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:301–6. See his own testimony in Keith-Roach, *Pasha of Jerusalem*, 117–20. See also the testimony of the British officer who was ordered to remove the screen at the Western Wall, Duff, *Sword for Hire*, 248–54.

**90** Keith-Roach and Luke knew each other from the latter’s first period of service in Palestine, when Keith-Roach was an aide to the chief secretary of the Mandate administration. Both were involved in the activities of the Pro-Jerusalem Society founded by Storrs. They jointly published the official *The Handbook of Palestine* (London: Macmillan, 1922), issued under the authority of the Government of Palestine.

**91** Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 196–203 accuses the British of encouraging Arab opposition, one of his examples being the riots of 1929. In the summing up of the present chapter, I will note that there are historians, such as Aaron Cohen, who place the major part of the blame on the British.

still headed by an acting High Commissioner, and there was much tension in Jerusalem. Several months passed between the Western Wall conflict of September 24, 1928 and the widespread riots of 1929 throughout the country. A few months later, in August 1929, a major change began to occur in British policy regarding Palestine. John Chancellor, the new British High Commissioner played a central role in it.

## **High Commissioner Chancellor, 1929–1931; the riots of 1929; the MacDonald letter and the end of Chancellor’s period**

### **John Chancellor’s arrival; riots in Jerusalem, Hebron, and throughout the country; the Chancellor memorandum**

Before his arrival in Palestine, John Chancellor (1870–1952) served in the Sudan and India in several administrative positions, gaining much administrative and colonial experience. His first experience as a colonial governor was in Mauritius, then in Trinidad and Tobago, and before arriving in Palestine he also served as the governor of Southern Rhodesia. His term as High Commissioner for Palestine lasted almost three years, from December 6, 1928 to September 2, 1931, and was his last position in the British colonial service.<sup>92</sup>

A few months after his arrival, while tension was still high following the Western Wall conflict, Chancellor set out to attend the meeting of the Permanent Mandates Commission which convened in Geneva on July 1–19, 1929, from where he continued to Britain for a vacation. Luke was again acting High Commissioner.<sup>93</sup>

Tension between Jews and Arabs escalated in mid-August. On August 15, 1929, the day after the eve of the Ninth of Av, protest groups were organized by the Revisionists and the Beitar movement. The central protest rally, with around 300 participants, was held in the Laemel School yard, which at this time was already situated outside the walls of the Old City. From there, the protestors began marching towards the Western Wall, crossing the Muslim Quarter, and upon arrival waved the Zionist flag, calling out “the Western Wall is ours” and singing the Zionist anthem, “Hatikvah.”<sup>94</sup>

The next day, Friday, August 16, 1929, the British authorities permitted the Muslims to conduct a demonstration of their own in the Western Wall courtyard. When prayer ended in al-Aqsa Mosque, the masses went out to the Western Wall

<sup>92</sup> For personal details about Chancellor, see Ofer, “Role of the High Commissioner,” 12–18.

<sup>93</sup> *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:305–11, with a detailed listing of Arab acts of provocation against Jews at this time in relation to the Western Wall.

<sup>94</sup> On the Western Wall incident, see also Ehrlich, ed., *Middle East*, 2:384–90. For Ben-Gurion’s reaction, see Shabtai Teveth, *David’s Zealotry*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1976–2005), 2:550–53 (Hebrew). See also Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 248–52.

area, destroyed or damaged whatever they found there and beat the Jewish guard. Permission to demonstrate in the Western Wall courtyard was disastrous. A fight broke out in Jerusalem on Saturday in which a young Jew was injured and died of his wounds a few days later. His funeral took place the following day.

On August 22 Luke invited personages from both groups to his home. The next day, August 23, Arabs set out from the Old City and began rioting against the Jews. The riots that began in Jerusalem spread to other cities and settlements. Jews were massacred in Hebron, Motza, Safed, and elsewhere. The number of Jewish casualties in the 1929 riots was 133, with another 333 people injured. Among the Arabs the dead numbered 116 and 232 were injured.<sup>95</sup>

Luke served as the acting High Commissioner during these riots as well since Chancellor was out of the country. The grave results lent credibility to the claims that he was unfit for the role and emphasized the mistakes he made. Luke was summoned to London. He never returned to Palestine and received another position in the British Empire as governor of Malta.<sup>96</sup>

Chancellor was immediately called back to the country, arriving only on August 29, 1929, the final day of the riots. Prior to his appointment as High Commissioner, Chancellor knew very little about Jews and Arabs, and next to nothing about the conflict between them. He learnt about it during his service in the country. Upon his return he proposed the establishment of two commissions, one to investigate the riots of 1929, and the other to investigate the earlier Western Wall conflict of 1928 and the right of Jews to pray at the wall.

Apparently, the fact that a new government had been established in Britain only two months earlier, in June 1929, afforded the new High Commissioner the option of acting on local issues. He quickly developed an anti-Zionist and pro-Arab approach regarding the events, and began making his views known to the government in London even before the first appointed inquiry commission came to the country.

That commission arrived on September 3, 1929 and began its deliberations in October. It was a British commission, headed by Sir Walter Shaw. On January 17, 1930 Chancellor sent a detailed confidential memorandum to the secretary of state for the colonies in which he detailed his views and anti-Zionist recommendations

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<sup>95</sup> On the 1929 riots, see Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 277–82 and the sources cited there; id., "Role of the High Commissioner," 108–37. See also the first-hand description in Keith-Roach, *Pasha of Jerusalem*, 121–26. The greatest number of persons killed was in Hebron. Kisch notes that some Arabs from Hebron who went on pilgrimage to Mecca were severely blamed by Ibn Sa'ud for the Hebron massacre; see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 421. For a detailed survey of the massacres in Hebron and elsewhere in the country, with a listing of them, see *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:312–40.

<sup>96</sup> On the Wailing Wall incidents in 1928 and 1929 from his viewpoint, see Luke, *Cities and Men*, 3: 13–41. He claims that he arrived only twelve days before Plumer's departure on July 31, 1928, that there were not sufficient security forces, and records the accusations which the Jews leveled against him.

for solving the problems in Palestine. The document noted that the commitments given to the Arabs during World War I had not been honored, and that British policy discriminated against the Arabs and gave clear preference to the Jews. He believed this was the root cause of the 1929 riots.<sup>97</sup>

Chancellor went on to propose that the government put an end to “the specially privileged position” the Mandate had granted the Jews, that Jewish immigration be limited, and that sale of Arab agricultural lands to Jews cease since there was not enough agricultural land for proper Arab existence. Finally he proposed that steps would be taken “to grant the people of Palestine a measure of self-government.”<sup>98</sup> Chancellor’s view was that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate should be considered a dual commitment of equal weight to both Jews and Arabs, in direct contrast, of course, to previous British policy which gave prevalence to the establishment of a Jewish national home. Chancellor further recommended that the Mandate for Palestine be returned to the League of Nations to amend those paragraphs in which preference for the Jews was implicit. In truth, this document was aimed at freezing the Zionist operation in Palestine. Chancellor’s memorandum was well received in London.<sup>99</sup>

The notion that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate included dual commitments was later repeated by many of the British personalities opposed to Zionism. On the one hand, they did not want to assist the Zionist movement, while on the other hand they also did not want to relinquish the legal basis for British rule in Palestine by force of the Mandate. Thus they stood behind the Mandate, but maintained that it included a dual commitment equally applicable to both sides.<sup>100</sup>

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**97** For an analysis of this document, see Ofer, “Role of the High Commissioner,” 138–82, who believes that Chancellor’s memorandum and personal involvement were what influenced the conclusions of two inquiry commissions – those of Shaw and of Hope Simpson which followed it. See also Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 27–31. Even the former High Commissioner, Lord Plumer, was critical of “the attitude of the present High Commissioner” in a letter to Kisch; see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 379.

**98** Ofer, “Role of the High Commissioner,” 143–44. In this Chancellor tried to base himself on the 1922 White Paper which reflected British intentions to encourage self-government in Palestine.

**99** The Articles of the Mandate for Palestine to which Chancellor referred are 2, 4, 6, and 11, which deal with aiding the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine; creation of a Jewish Agency; easing the immigration of Jews to and settlement in Palestine; and cooperation with the Jewish Agency to develop the country, respectively. For the fact that the memorandum was well received in London, despite some first reservations, see *ibid.*, 151–52.

**100** This viewpoint would later be reflected in the White Paper of 1930, and there are some who believe that the concept of “duality” also influenced the recommendations of the Peel Commission in 1936 to partition Palestine.

### The Shaw and Western Wall commissions; Sir John Hope Simpson and the issue of land acquisition

In addition to the chairman, there were three other members in the Shaw Commission, representing the three British political parties: Conservative, Liberal, and Labour. It quickly became obvious that the chairman, Judge Sir Walter Shaw, was not the most active member of the commission.<sup>101</sup> Two of the members began to meet frequently with High Commissioner Chancellor and were greatly affected by his views. In May 1930, the Shaw Commission submitted its report. Apart from reservations by one of the members, it was very similar to Chancellor's confidential memorandum.<sup>102</sup>

The commission also placed emphasis on the issue of land acquisition by Jews from Arabs and claims of Arab tenant farmers being dispossessed. The Zionist institutions were unprepared for this turn of events. On November 10, 1929, while the commission was still deliberating, Ruppin wrote in his journal: "The Commission of Enquiry has considerably widened its scope. The Arab witnesses bring all sorts of (mainly false) accusations against the programme of Jewish settlement, and I must prepare the material to refute them." The Jewish Agency's Political Department and Settlement Department requested the institutions dealing with land acquisition, the Jewish National Fund and Hachsharat Hayishuv, to conduct a precise survey of the number of tenant farmers dispossessed of the lands purchased, how much they were paid as compensation, and what was their fate. But the Shaw Commission worked speedily, completing its inquiry within less than three months, and already submitted its report after four months. The Jewish representatives appearing before the commission did not have enough time to submit their investigation summaries in writing. Ruppin testified before the committee at a closed session and presented data that refuted the Arab claims, but a written document accompanied by precise statistics was only submitted in a memorandum from the Jewish Agency to the British government in May 1930, in anticipation of the arrival of Sir John Hope Simpson.<sup>103</sup>

Following submission of the Shaw Commission report, on April 2, 1930 the British cabinet asked the colonial secretary to appoint an expert who would visit the country, meet with the High Commissioner, and report to the cabinet as an

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**101** Some authors describe Shaw as an elderly retired person, hard of hearing, who tends to agree with whoever is present.

**102** On the Shaw Commission, see Ofer, "Role of the High Commissioner," 163–89; for his meetings with two of the members, see *ibid.*, 174–78. See also Great Britain. Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929, *Report . . . Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament . . .* Cmd. 3530 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930). For the Zionist reaction to the report, see Leonard Stein, *Memorandum on the "Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929"* (London: The Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1930).

**103** Ruppin, *Memoirs, Diaries, Letters*, 249; Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 125. On acquisition of land, see also above in the section on Plumer's period as High Commissioner.

expert witness regarding economic questions related to settlement, immigration, and development of the country. The person chosen was Sir John Hope Simpson, a British colonial official who had served in India and as vice-chairman of the League of Nations Committee on Refugees, which monitored population exchange at the end of the Turkish–Greek war in 1923. His letter of appointment was issued on May 6, 1930.<sup>104</sup>

Hope Simpson developed a friendly relationship with Chancellor and was highly influenced by him. When he submitted his report in the summer of 1930, his total agreement with the views and opinions expressed in the Shaw Commission report was clearly evident. As an economic expert, he placed the emphasis on economic aspects, trying, with the aid of statistics, to prove the inability to absorb additional agricultural settlement in the country and the need to stop Jewish immigration. He proposed that a permanent development committee be appointed to deal with the ongoing economic development of the country. With regards to continued Jewish settlement, Hope Simpson declared there was not an inch of land available for new settlers. In the campaign to influence government policy, a lengthy debate ensued between government representatives and Zionist experts regarding the extent of available land suitable for cultivation. The government experts accepted the existing situation as a *fait accompli*, while the Zionists proved that many uncultivated areas could become suitable following drainage of swamps, improving the soil, clearing of stones, exposure of fertile land under layers of sand, and more. Hope Simpson determined that there should be strict supervision of the transfer of lands to Jews.<sup>105</sup>

In some aspects, the expert's report was much harsher than the two previous documents, the Chancellor memorandum and the Shaw Commission report. Even Judah Magnes, who was known for his moderation in his attitude to the Jewish–Arab conflict, spoke out against the report and called it “a political document in economic disguise.”<sup>106</sup>

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**104** On Hope Simpson's mission, see Ofer, “Role of the High Commissioner,” 237–87; on his connections with British officials, see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 298. For a reaction to the report and the statistics included in it, see Ruppin, *Three Decades*, 205–28. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, 80–114, in a chapter he calls “The British Threat to the Jewish National Home, 1930,” deals with Chancellor, the Shaw Commission, and Hope Simpson's study mission. See also *ibid.*, 115–41 on the 1930 White Paper and MacDonald's letter to Weizmann to be discussed below.

**105** On British policy in the 1930s, including British personalities involved in Palestine affairs, see in detail Gabriel Sheffer, “The Images of Arabs and Jews as a Factor in British Policy towards Palestine,” in *Arab-Israeli Relations: Historical Background and Origins*, ed. Ian S. Lustick (New York: Garland, 1994), 105–28. For the issue of land, see Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 131–32.

**106** Norman Bentwich, *For Zion's Sake: A Biography of Judah L. Magnes, First Chancellor and First President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1954), 186. For the end of Hope Simpson's involvement in Palestine affairs, see Ofer, “Role of the High Commissioner,” 288–91.

Hope Simpson feared that his report would not be implemented if a person who did not agree with his conclusions would head the economic development committee he proposed, and thus suggested himself for the job, but was rejected. Lewis French was chosen to head the development department and began to operate after the arrival of the next High Commissioner.<sup>107</sup> Hope Simpson also feared that after Chancellor's term was concluded, a High Commissioner would be appointed who would not continue to follow their joint approach, so he also proposed himself as High Commissioner, but this too was turned down.<sup>108</sup>

Another important commission of inquiry established following the Western Wall dispute was the International Commission on the Western Wall, popularly called "the Western Wall Commission." It was appointed on May 15, 1930, after the Shaw Commission recommended its establishment to the League of Nations. Its three members were from Sweden, Switzerland, and Denmark. They arrived in Jerusalem on June 19, stayed in the country for a month, interviewed persons and heard testimonies, and then returned abroad. On December 16, 1930, after lengthy deliberations, they submitted their report and recommendations. Its publication was delayed for various reasons and was only finally made public on June 8, 1931.<sup>109</sup>

The conclusions of the commission were that the status quo at the Western Wall should be maintained. The Western Wall area was Muslim property, but Jews had the right of prayer at the site, with certain limitations. Both the Jews and the Muslims were unsatisfied with the commission's conclusions, but its recommendations were upheld until the end of the Mandate period, and both sides generally abided by them.<sup>110</sup>

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**107** On Lewis French and the survey he conducted, see Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 319–24; Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 201, †-marked footnote; Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, 142–72. See also Chapter Ten, at nn. 62–63 in the text.

**108** Some are of the opinion that Hope Simpson was imbued with the Romantic view held by British in the East against the penetration of Western Jews, which would be detrimental to the traditional character of the Orient. In his report, he wrote that "motor-transport, largely in the hands of the Jews, is driving the camel and the donkey off the roads . . . . The increased use of cement, reinforced concrete and silicate brick, all manufactured by Jews, is replacing dressed stone for constructional purposes and so displacing a large number of . . . Arabs. The Arab quarrymen are also being displaced," quoted by Ofer, "Role of the High Commissioner," 260, n. 60. Moreover, Chancellor and Hope Simpson often described the Arabs as the indigenous residents of the country, the Aborigines, as compared to the foreign Jews.

**109** The Mandate stipulated that should committees be established in relation to the holy sites, their composition would be determined by the holder of the Mandate and confirmed by the League of Nations. For the commission's report, see note 84 above. On this commission, see also Assaf, *Relations*, 322–27, who maintains that it tried to find a compromise between the two sides to the conflict.

**110** On the Western Wall dispute, the commission and its recommendations, and the ordinances issued by the High Commissioner to solve the issue of the Western Wall, see Ofer, "Role of the High Commissioner," 52–107 and the sources cited there. See also Martin Kolinsky, *Law, Order and Riots in Mandatory Palestine 1928–1935* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 31–83. Kisch records his



## The White Paper of 1930, the MacDonald letter, and the end of Chancellor's commissionership

On October 20, 1930, Lord Passfield, the colonial secretary in Ramsay MacDonald's government, published the second White Paper on Palestine. The major events in that country since the beginning of the Mandate administration were presented in this document under three main headings: security, legislative development, and socio-economic development. In terms of British policy for the country, Lord Passfield adopted most of the extreme recommendations and conclusions of the previous reports: those of Chancellor, the Shaw Commission, and Hope Simpson.<sup>111</sup>

The White Paper of 1930 emphasized Britain's dual commitment, a fundamental change in the British approach to Zionism. The statement of policy declared this to be a continuation of the White Paper of 1922, yet in truth the gist of it was completely opposite.<sup>112</sup> The fundamental concept of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine, the establishment of a Jewish National Home, absolutely disappeared.<sup>113</sup> The 1930 White Paper was an extreme anti-Zionist document. It aroused a public uproar by Jews and among the British personages who supported the Zionist movement.<sup>114</sup> Weizmann resigned as president of the World Zionist Organization and an acute crisis developed between the Zionist movement and the British government.<sup>115</sup>

Following the public uproar, Prime Minister MacDonald decided to invite the Jewish leaders for a meeting to clarify matters. On February 13, 1931, after these talks,

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thoughts about the commission and its recommendations, and also about the published report; see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 306–17, 423–25, respectively.

**111** On the reports by the Shaw Commission and Hope Simpson, and the unsuccessful effort by Weizmann to influence Lord Passfield to change his mind, see Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 344–55. On the 1929 riots, the 1930 White Paper, and the letter of Ramsay MacDonald, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 409–26.

**112** Passfield was on friendly terms with Chancellor and thought very highly of him. Many claim that if Leopold Amery and Ormsby-Gore, both supporters of Zionism, had continued to be the influential office holders in the Colonial Office, these developments would have been avoided. It was the silent support that Chancellor received from Passfield that enabled them.

**113** One case in hand is the reaction of Prime Minister Lloyd George during the period which led up to the Balfour Declaration; see Chapter Eight, at n. 156 in the text.

**114** For Ben-Gurion's reaction to the 1930 White Paper, see Meir Chazan, "Mapai in Shock: Ben-Gurion against His Party in Crises of the 1930s," *Cathedra* 137 (Sept. 2010): 117–27 (Hebrew). Even Arthur Ruppin, the founder of Brit Shalom, now supported Weizmann. On Ruppin vs. Magnes and the decline of Brit Shalom, see Heller, *From "Brit Shalom" to "Ihud"*, 58–63, 81, and above in the text at nn. 71–76. See also Norman A. Rose, *The Gentile Zionists: A Study in Anglo-Zionist Diplomacy, 1929–1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), 1–37 and the accompanying notes, for reactions within the Labour Party itself. He begins his study with the crisis of 1929–1931, since he believes it is important to note how much these non-Jews continued to support Zionism at a time when their government's policy was changing.

**115** On the change in policy indicated by the 1930 White Paper, see Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 310–14. For Passfield's stance on Palestine, including in his letters to his wife

he wrote Weizmann a letter the Arabs called “The Black Letter” and the Jews called “The White Letter” which later gained the neutral title of “The MacDonald Letter.” In the letter, MacDonald tried to reconcile the Zionists and their British supporters, and to a great degree returned to the previous British policy regarding the British commitment to the Zionists and their aspirations.<sup>116</sup>

The Palestinian Arab leadership cooperated with the Shaw Commission. A delegation on its behalf set out to London for talks with the British government. Even before the Shaw Commission’s conclusions were published, this delegation forcefully demanded the establishment of Arab representative institutions, which was rejected by the British. The Arab position with regards to the White Paper of 1930 was sympathetic, especially their attitude towards the Hope Simpson report published later. They believed that this White Paper “revealed the extent of the danger the Arabs were facing,” and viewed it as a sign that the British were returning to a more just policy and recognition of the fact that the Arabs had been in immediate risk due to the overflow of Jewish immigrants and land sales. Yet there were also those among them who rejected the White Paper. For example, the Arab newspaper that served as the mouthpiece for Hajj Amin al-Husseini attacked the White Paper and continued to denigrate the British regarding some of its sections. However, in the meantime, the British government itself backed off from the document and made the MacDonald letter public. This led Arab organizations to gather and express extreme responses against the change in the British position. A change came over Arab society, its institutions, and various organizations, with which I shall deal in the next chapter.<sup>117</sup>

Thus, during the interim period of the British Mandate, its administration continued to waver between the commitment included in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate document to assist in the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, while trying to placate the Arab population of the country, whose objections to the Jewish national home only increased. All this they did in an attempt to maintain British interests in the area and in the entire Arab East.

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Beatrice Webb, see id., “Role of the High Commissioner,” 292–322. On Weizmann’s resignation, the positions of Lord Melchett and Felix Warburg, the debate in the House of Commons, and more, see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 355–61.

**116** On the Zionist reaction to the White Paper and MacDonald’s letter, see Ofer, “Consolidation of the Mandatory System,” 314–17; for the full text of the letter see Aaron Klieman, ed., *The Intensification of Violence 1929–1936, Rise of Israel*, 20 (New York: Garland, 1987), 253–56. There is no doubt that the dependence of MacDonald’s minority government on support from the Conservatives and Liberals influenced his decision to send Weizmann the conciliatory letter. For a summary of five points included in the letter which were in contrast to the White Paper, see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 384. Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 22–25 discusses Weizmann’s resignation, his talks with Prime Minister MacDonald and his son, Malcolm, and the committee established by MacDonald, headed by Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson, which led to the writing of the letter.

**117** For Arab reactions to the White Paper and MacDonald’s letter, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 30–37.

The 1929 riots and the negative policy regarding the Jewish National Home reflected in the 1930 White Paper caused an internal crisis within the Zionist movement and a rupture in its relations with the British government, and even raised doubts regarding continuing the partnership. MacDonald's letter somewhat improved the relations, but did not put a stop to the doubts regarding the British–Zionist partnership. In 1930–1931, a major change also occurred within the Zionist movement, which shall also be dealt with in the next chapter.<sup>118</sup>

The results of the 1929 riots increased the tension and division between Jews and Arabs. Realizing that they had to rely on themselves and not on the British forces, the Jews began reorganizing the Haganah defense organization to prepare for future confrontations. This was reflected both in daily life and in the geographical dispersion of Jewish settlements. Small Jewish communities residing in Arab cities such as Nablus, Acre, Gaza, Ramleh, Lydda, and more were evacuated even prior to the events of 1929 for fear for their lives.

The end of Chancellor's term as High Commissioner also drew near. Major changes occurred between July and November 1931. In Britain, MacDonald's Labour government fell and a new National Government was formed to replace it. On August 31, notice was given regarding the appointment of General Wauchope as the next High Commissioner for Palestine. Chancellor returned to Britain. Wauchope arrived in October 1931 and served there until 1938.<sup>119</sup>

## Summary: 1928–1929 as a turning point, its causes, and results

In my summation of the periods of High Commissioners Plumer and Chancellor, I would like to focus on the central events that occurred then: the riots of 1929. The question that immediately arises is what led to them.

First of all, it should be clarified that “the riots of 1929” include two separate events. The first is the Western Wall incident on Yom Kippur, September 24, 1928, and the second is the rioting that broke out in Jerusalem, Hebron, and throughout the country on August 15, 1929 and continued in the following days. Though the time difference between the two is around eleven months, they cannot be separated. Since

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**118** MacDonald's letter, that in effect counteracted the 1930 White Paper, enabled the Zionist movement to recover from the trauma of the 1929 riots and their serious results. By 1931 it was able to once again undertake vigorous activity in Eretz Israel; see Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 15.

**119** Ofer, “Consolidation of the Mandatory System,” 324–26. In a diary entry concerning a meeting with Chancellor about two months before he ended his term as High Commissioner, Kisch wrote that he expressed his anger at how he had related to the Jewish community during his tenure; see Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 433–34. When World War II broke out in 1939, Kisch was recalled to service, promoted to the rank of Brigadier, and commanded the Royal Engineers in the North Africa campaign. He was killed in Tunisia on Apr. 7, 1943 and buried in the British military cemetery there.

there was no loss of lives in the first incident, some researchers of the period deal mostly with the second event, in which many Jews were brutally killed. I believe this to be a mistake. Scholars of this period note that there had been a period of tranquility in the country for over eight years, from the riots of 1921 to those of 1929, but that is true only if we overlook the Western Wall incident of 1928. If we do take it into account, the tranquil period lasted around seven and a half years, although such a peaceful period also requires an explanation as to why it occurred and why it was disrupted. In the past, three explanations were provided, all related to the three groups active in the country at the time: British, Jews, and Arabs.

There are those who blame the British for the breakout of the 1928–1929 riots. After the lengthy peaceful period since 1921, the British reduced their forces in Jerusalem and reinforced those in Transjordan. This is what made the breakout of rioting possible.<sup>120</sup> There are those who blame the British, or at least some of them, for having encouraged Arab national aspirations and continuing to do so during the Western Wall conflict and its aftermaths. Several of them encouraged the Arabs to stand up for their rights, especially on the Temple Mount and al-Aqsa mosque, and in the Western Wall area, which they considered part of an area belonging to the Muslim waqf. The British believe the opposite to be true: that the placating attitude towards the Arabs is what brought about the seven to eight years of tranquility. Some add that perhaps the British government can be blamed for the rioting of 1928–1929 since, during the interim period between Plumer and the arrival of Chancellor, administration of the country was put in the hands of the wrong persons. The choice of Luke, who was unfit to fill that role, led to a mistaken way of handling the events.<sup>121</sup>

There are those who blame the Jews for everything that occurred, for a variety of reasons: the growth of the Jewish community in Jerusalem during the nineteenth century intensified the Jewish connection to the Western Wall, as many went to pray or visit there; the establishment of the Zionist movement, the Balfour Declaration and all that was related to it; news about the Jewish desire to acquire the Western Wall area and the efforts of Weizmann and the Zionist Commission in Jerusalem in this and other matters; and the activities of the Jewish community in Jerusalem. All these aroused fear among the Arabs that the Jews intended to gain control of the whole of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount area, which was sacred to them too, the loss of which they feared.

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**120** About the reinforcement of British troops in Transjordan and reduction of their numbers in Jerusalem, see above in the text at note 58; Yigal Eyal, “The 1929 ‘Disturbances’ as a Turning Point in the British Mandatory Government’s Internal Security Policy,” *Cathedra* 83 (Apr. 1997): 125–42 (Hebrew).

**121** See *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:404–15 for a discussion of the Mandate government and the lessons to be learned from the 1929 riots. For the seven “quiet” years, see *ibid.*, 168–84.

These feelings were intensified in the period between the Western Wall conflict of 1928 and the countrywide 1929 riots, since in the interim there were some Jewish groups that called for the Jews to take possession of the Western Wall, a call that became a Jewish slogan. Thus did the Jewish–Arab conflict overflow into the Western Wall courtyard, as Jews began proclaiming its holiness to Judaism. The religious Jewish symbol, the Western Wall, became a national Jewish symbol for many in the Yishuv. This was not the case with the Temple Mount area, since at that time it was still the norm in the Orthodox religious community in Jerusalem that entering the Temple Mount area was forbidden by *halakhah*, Jewish religious law.

The Shaw Commission noted another Jewish act as a reason for the riots: the establishment of the enlarged Jewish Agency. That step was discussed at the Sixteenth Zionist Congress in Zurich in July–August 1929. News of the massacres in Hebron, Motza, Safed, Huldah, Be’er Tuviah, and Hartuv and the powerlessness of the British authorities lent impetus to the decision to establish the enlarged Jewish Agency. The decision was accompanied by application to the British to recognize this organization as that responsible for implementation of the commitment to establish the Jewish national home. Accordingly, there are those who claim this was what brought on the widespread rioting in August 1929.<sup>122</sup>

Contrary to that argument, some claim that Jewish weakness, including the fact that the Haganah was unprepared for the events, neither in Jerusalem nor throughout the country, was the cause for the escalation and force of these riots, and in this regard the blame lies with the Jews.<sup>123</sup>

As noted, there are those who blame the Arabs. Here the main claim is that the outbreak of the Western Wall conflict in 1928 and later the 1929 riots were mainly due to increased Arab radicalism, led by the Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini. By this reasoning, the period of tranquility derived from political struggle within Arab society between the two rival Palestinian factions: the Husseinis and the Nashashibis. There was a halt of five years in convening Palestinian Arab congresses, between the sixth congress in 1923 and the seventh in 1928. Thus, too, in 1926, when it was

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**122** On the establishment of the enlarged Jewish Agency, see Ofer, “Consolidation of the Mandatory System,” 299–303. See also Samuel, *A Lifetime in Jerusalem*, 103–4.

**123** Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 91–94, believes that the weakness of the Haganah was apparent before and during the 1929 riots. One reason, she maintains, was the decision adopted on June 12, 1920, with the establishment of the Histadrut, to bring Hashomer under its aegis, a situation that was not compatible with the state of the conflict between Arabs and Jews. For a similar opinion, see Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers*, 125–28. On the establishment of the Haganah in Jerusalem in 1920, see *History of the Haganah*, 1,2:626–70; that the 1929 riots were a catalyst for strengthening the Haganah in Jerusalem, see *ibid.*, 2,1:341. See Avidar, “The Haganah in Jerusalem during the Mandate.” A history of the Haganah in Jerusalem is Rahel Yanait Ben-Zvi, Yitzhak Avrahami, and Yerah Etzion, ed., *The Haganah in Jerusalem: Testimonies and Memories of Members*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1973) (Hebrew).

necessary to elect new representatives to the Supreme Muslim Council, there was an atmosphere of loathing and suspicion between the two factions. By law, the British High Commissioner could appoint council members himself until such a time when suitable elections took place, but Plumer avoided doing so. New elections were not conducted, and the council was almost completely paralyzed. The animosity between the two rival factions also escalated around the elections to the Jerusalem municipality that were scheduled to be held around then.<sup>124</sup>

During the Seventh Palestinian Arab Congress that convened in September 1928, shortly before the Western Wall incident, some measure of unity was formed between the Arab factions. During the congress, a demand was raised for the establishment of a legislative council, that already earlier had been proposed by Herbert Samuel, but vehemently rejected by the Arabs. Now they hoped Lord Plumer would be willing to re-address the issue and even sent him a memorandum on the subject. However, Plumer, who avoided political issues and already saw the end of his commissionership on the horizon, only replied that he was passing it on.<sup>125</sup>

It appears that the developments in Palestine and the Arab Middle East during the 1920s, especially the severance in the White Paper of 1922 of the area east of the Jordan River from western Palestine and transfer of the area to the rule of Abdullah, who maintained relations with Zionist leaders, heightened the aspirations of Palestinian Arabs for independence. The Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini began exploiting these feelings, and even before the Western Wall conflict began efforts to enhance the status of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount as important historical-religious sites for the Muslim world.

The 1929 riots did strengthen the status of Jerusalem for Muslims. Hajj Amin al-Husseini labored unceasingly to aggrandize the importance and holiness of the Temple Mount as a global Islamic center. He also took advantage of the sanctity of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount to turn himself into the sole leader of the Palestinian national movement. The Mufti's involvement the riots of 1928 and 1929 marks the beginning of his campaign for separate independence of western Palestine under the flag of Jerusalem.<sup>126</sup> Apparently, more than Jerusalem was in need of a separate Arab

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**124** Porath, *Emergence*, 236–40. On elections to the Jerusalem Municipality, see in the text at notes 26–28 above. For the Palestinian Congresses convened before 1928, see ch. 8, nn. 66, 82, 110–11.

**125** Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel*, 124.

**126** An opposite view is adopted by Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). In his detailed biography of the Mufti, Mattar maintains that there were two distinct periods of activity by Hajj Amin al-Husseini. The first was from the beginning of the Mandate until the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939 in which he became a national leader of the Arabs, but not an extremist. During the second, later, period he was a bitter man who made great mistakes. Mattar does not conceal the Mufti's hatred of Zionist Jews and Hashemite Arabs; see especially in the opening and closing chapters of his book.

Palestine of its own, the Palestinian national movement under Hajj Amin al-Husseini needed the holy city of Jerusalem to justify its uniqueness.

The conclusion that Jerusalem stands at the focal point of the 1929 riots brings us back to the view that there is a clear connection between the events of the Western Wall conflict of Yom Kippur 1928 and those of the 1929 riots during the days following the Ninth of Av, in August 1929. Even though there were no casualties in the Western Wall incident and many casualties in Hebron and other places during the 1929 riots, Jerusalem should be seen as the focal point of the riots. True, the victims in Hebron and Safed were caught by surprise, and there were no Jewish defense forces there, but the conflagration was ignited in Jerusalem through religious and nationalist exploitation of the holy city by both peoples. From that point of view, the riots of 1928 and 1929 point to an important turning point that has repercussions to this very day.<sup>127</sup>

At the same time, these riots should not be considered the starting point of the Jewish–Arab conflict. Many would predate it to the beginnings of the Zionist movement, the First Aliyah, and Herzl’s appearance on the stage of Jewish history. The majority of scholars certainly agree that the Balfour Declaration was a much more significant event in this context than the riots of 1929.<sup>128</sup>

It is also important not to ignore the political change that began among the British in 1929, not among the officials in Palestine, some of whom had not been supportive of Zionism even earlier, but among the British leadership in London, which found its expression in the 1930 White Paper. However, this tendency was not yet conclusive. Public opinion in Great Britain was still not ready for such a turn, and British interests in the Middle East were as yet not wholly identified with the Arabs. This explains the return to support of Zionism in the MacDonald letter. Yet this lasted for only a few more years, until the decision of the Royal (Peel) Commission to recommend the partition of Palestine, which was also later rejected by the British. As I shall show in the next chapters, it then became clear that the British pro-Arab policy gained the upper hand over the earlier pro-Zionist policy.

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**127** For the Western Wall incident in 1928 as a turning point in relations between Jews and Arabs, see Sela, “The ‘Wailing Wall’ Riots.”

**128** On the Balfour Declaration as the zero hour of the Arab-Jewish conflict, see Chapter Seven.





Herbert Plumer.  
Second British High Commissioner



John Chancellor.  
Third British High Commissioner



Ronald Storrs.  
First British governor of Jerusalem



Edward Keith-Roach.  
Second British governor of Jerusalem



Pinchas Rutenberg.



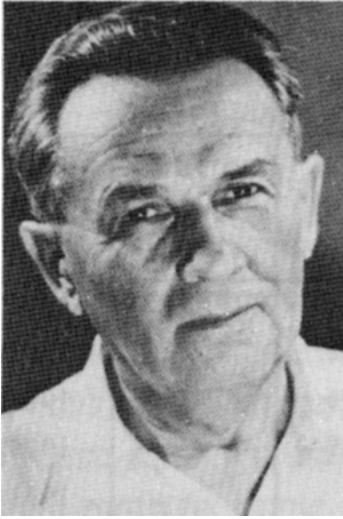
Moshe Novomeysky.



Meir Dizengoff.  
Mayor of Tel Aviv



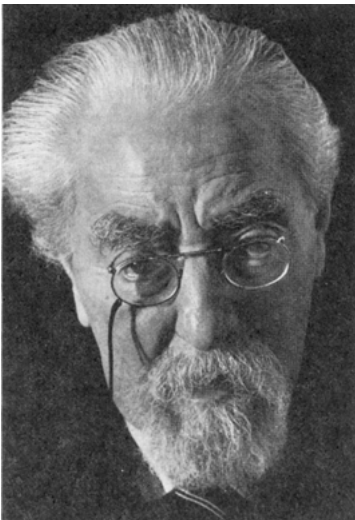
Israel Rokah.  
Mayor of Tel Aviv



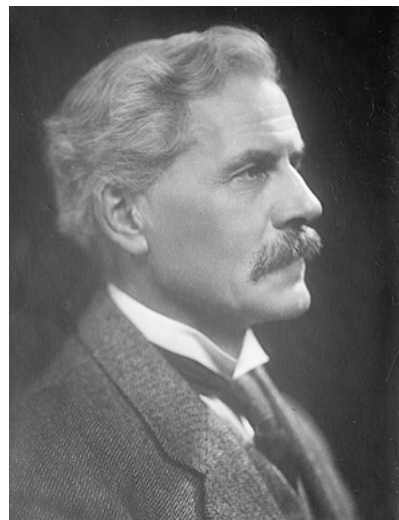
Abba Hushi.  
Mayor of Haifa



Hajj Amin al-Husseini.  
The Grand Mufti



Lord Passfield (Sidney Webb).  
British colonial secretary



Ramsay MacDonald.  
British prime minister

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## Chapter 10: High Commissioner Wauchope: the first years, 1931–1935

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The previous chapter concluded with the changes in the British government between July and November 1931: the fall of the Labour government headed by James Ramsay MacDonald and establishment of a new national government, also led by him. In November 1931 MacDonald appointed Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister as colonial secretary and General Sir Arthur Wauchope as the new High Commissioner for Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

Wauchope's appointment was made in consultation with Weizmann. Wauchope firmly established himself and greatly influenced British policy in the country. One of his first achievements was restoration of a working relationship between Britain and the Jewish Agency Executive. He looked with favor upon the British commitment to assist in establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine. At the same time, he nurtured good relations with both sides, and even strengthened the status of the mufti of Jerusalem and the Supreme Muslim Council. Politically, he focused on the three fundamental problems of the Jewish–Arab conflict: (a) Jewish immigration; (b) land acquisition from Arabs; (c) the question of the future form of government in Palestine.<sup>2</sup>

Wauchope's period as High Commissioner (November 1931–February 1938) may be divided into two parts: from October 1931 until April 1936 – the outbreak of the Arab Revolt, and the period of the revolt itself, until his departure in February 1938. The first period was marked by economic prosperity, a result of extensive Jewish immigration, partly due to the persecution of Jews in Germany. Wauchope exhibited sympathy towards the persecuted Jews of Europe. Due to the relative quiet in the country from the beginning of his tenure, and with the support of Colonial Secretary Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, who believed in the new theories regarding economic growth, Wauchope was inclined to increase Jewish immigration quotas. To this one may add the expertise of the Jewish Agency in bringing in olim and the economic boom in the country.<sup>3</sup> The gates of Palestine were opened to refugees with financial means and to working-class immigrants, without whom the capital arriving in

<sup>1</sup> Ramsay MacDonald, the leader of the Labour Party, spent ten days in Palestine; see Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 203. For Weizmann's discussions with MacDonald and his son Malcolm, see also ch. 9, n. 116.

<sup>2</sup> For Wauchope's political views, see Katzburg, "Palestine under the Mandate," 331–33.

<sup>3</sup> Ilan, "Political and National Struggle," 43; Near, "Worker's Settlement, 1919–1948," 446–52.

the country could not be utilized constructively. The number of olim during Wauchope's first period was around 240,000, twice that of those who arrived under the previous High Commissioners. Incoming capital during that period amounted to £25 million and contributed to important developments throughout the country.<sup>4</sup> Wauchope's second and final period brings us to the third sub-period of the British Mandate, one marked by significant political and security issues which shall be discussed in the next chapter.

A change in the status of the League of Nations also began during the 1930s. The decisions of this organization were tangible as long as they were founded on general agreement, since the League did not have the power to enforce its policies. In September 1931, when Japan attacked China in Manchuria, the League of Nations could not stand up against it. In October 1933 Germany withdrew from the League of Nations Disarmament Committee, and later from the League of Nations itself.

During the first half of the 1930s, Italy started to play a part in diplomacy relating to Palestine. During the 1920s contacts began between Zionist and Italian personalities which were renewed at the beginning of the 1930s. Desiring to increase its influence in the Middle East, Italy took a growing interest in Zionism. Benito Mussolini adopted a positive attitude towards the establishment of a Jewish state in a divided Palestine, a matter he discussed in meetings with Weizmann in April 1933 and February 1934. Apparently, his interest stemmed from a belief that Italian influence could thus penetrate Palestine, especially in Jerusalem. At the same time Italy also supported the Arab national movement and the Italian press tended to be supportive of the Arab side.<sup>5</sup>

The intensification of Nazism and Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933 led German Jews to immigrate to Eretz Israel, consequently accelerating the demographic and industrial development of the country. When Germany began to rearm, Britain understood that it should place an emphasis on its own arming as well, especially the power of its fleet. Throughout the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936) Britain avoided taking any far-reaching steps. The Ethiopian crisis underlined the importance of the Middle East for Britain's strategic-global policy, as the crossroads in the routes from the metropolis to the Far East. In order to ensure its standing in the Middle East, Britain took steps to gain the favorable attitude of governments and peoples in the region. With the failure of its policy of appeasement towards Germany (the Munich Agreement of September 30, 1938) and the fear of a second world war, Britain

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<sup>4</sup> On the economic development of Palestine and Jerusalem during the Mandate period, see Nachum, T. Gross, *The Economic Policy of the Mandatory Government in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Maurice Falk Institute for Economic Research in Israel, 1982); Nadav Halevi et al., *Banker to an Emerging Nation: The History of Bank Leumi LeIsrael* (Haifa: Shikmona, 1981), 53–112. Below, I shall devote a sub-section to the Fifth Aliyah.

<sup>5</sup> Katzburg, "Palestine under the Mandate," 329–30, 354–55. For Weizmann's recollections of his interviews with Mussolini, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 455–59.



changed its policy on the issue of Palestine and the establishment therein of a Jewish national home. It began leaning towards the Arab side, trying to win its favor.<sup>6</sup>

**In the Zionist movement: the strengthening of Mapai and the Revisionists; the seventeenth congress, 1931; non-election of Weizmann as president; Arlosoroff murdered, 1933; the eighteenth congress, 1933; the nineteenth congress, 1935; Weizmann re-elected as president**

The first half of the 1930s was marked by major political changes in the Zionist movement. In part these were the fruit of internal developments within Jewish society, and in part a response to the harsh consequences of the 1929 riots and the changes in policy reflected in the White Paper of 1930, discussed in the previous chapter.

The first event I shall note is the union of two political parties, Ahdut Ha'avodah and Hapoel Hatza'ir, into one party: Mapai (an acronym for Mifleget Po'alei Eretz Israel). This union had important ramifications regarding control of the Zionist movement.<sup>7</sup> The motivation to unite the two parties began in the 1920s, but came to fruition only in 1930 due to a number of factors: their common socialist background, joint support of Weizmann's Zionist policy and the establishment of the enlarged Jewish Agency, objection to the Revisionists, and shared objections to the middle class. The united party protested the accusations raised against Weizmann – that his moderate policy was the cause of the 1929 riots due to his faith in the British and his cooperation with them – because no one person should be blamed for occurrences that were a result of changes in British policy.<sup>8</sup>

During those same years in which Mapai was taking shape, the Revisionist movement was becoming stronger as well. On January 24, 1930 Jabotinsky testified before the Shaw Commission in London. In August 1930 the fourth World Congress of the Revisionist Party convened in Prague. Jabotinsky still objected to a total rift with Britain and supported “a final attempt” at continued cooperation. Following the 1929 riots, the Revisionists had adopted a more extreme stance, raising a demand to declare the establishment of a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River. In the elections to the Seventeenth Zionist Congress in 1931, the Revisionist party came in third. While in the previous congress, in 1929, they had 21 delegates representing 18,000 voters, they now numbered 52 delegates representing 55,848 voters, accounting for 21 percent of the delegates. In his speech at the congress, Jabotinsky stated that the prevalent terms in Zionism such as “a Home guaranteed by public law,” “National Home,” and “Jewish State” were not clear enough. The first lacked legal validity, and was coined at the first

<sup>6</sup> Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate.” I shall return to these issues in greater detail in Chapter Eleven.

<sup>7</sup> See ch. 9, n. 77.

<sup>8</sup> Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 38–43.

Zionist Congress due to its vagueness so as not to anger the Ottoman authorities. The term “National Home” was not clear and lacked legal tradition, while “Jewish State” remained to be defined. Jabotinsky proposed two determining factors: a majority of Jews within the total population of the country and self-rule, and demanded an explicit declaration of “the ultimate aim of Zionism,” including “the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine on both sides of the Jordan.” The Revisionist Party viewed the 1929 riots as the utter collapse of the policy of the Zionist leadership and itself as a suitable alternative to lead the Zionist movement.<sup>9</sup>

At the Zionist Executive Committee meeting in Berlin in August 1930, prior to the Seventeenth Zionist Congress, a severe confrontation took place between Weizmann and his objectors, but the attempt to oust him from the presidency failed. As noted, the number of Revisionist delegates increased in the Seventeenth Congress. Together with the Mizrahi movement and some General Zionists and American Zionists, the Revisionists formed a group which objected to Weizmann’s continued serving as president. Opposing these right-wingers was a left-wing bloc of Mapai and other movements that focused on internal affairs, such as employment opportunities in the private market and the issues of Jewish labor and relations between the working class and the farmers, all of whom supported Weizmann and his policies.<sup>10</sup>

The result of the congress in Basel was that after a fairly long period as president, Weizmann was not re-elected. The Revisionists celebrated their victory, but were unable to achieve their aim of attaining the presidency. Nahum Sokolow, one of the first leaders of the Zionist movement, was chosen to head the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency. Respected, older, but without his own political backing, to a great extent he served only as a figurehead president. Dr. Chaim Arlosoroff was also chosen at that congress to head the Political Department of the Jewish Agency in place of Colonel Fredrick Herman Kisch, Weizmann’s man. In addition, the labor movement became the largest faction in the Zionist Congress.<sup>11</sup>

The changes that began taking place during the Seventeenth Congress also marked the beginning of the process in which the center of gravity of the Zionist Organization moved from London to Jerusalem. Since 1917, Weizmann had been the dominant figure in the Zionist arena. His residing in London afforded the leadership there a special standing which Sokolow failed to achieve for himself.<sup>12</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> For the Revisionist position, see Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate”; Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 108. For Jabotinsky’s address to the Seventeenth Zionist Congress, see Schechtman, *Fighter and Prophet*, 147–50.

<sup>10</sup> Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 109–18. For more intensive activity by Mapai abroad under the leadership of Ben-Gurion, especially in Poland and the enlarged Jewish Agency, until he was elected its chairman in 1935, see Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 405–6, 419.

<sup>11</sup> Arlosoroff filled a leading role in Mapai even before he was chosen to head the Political Department; see Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 89–93.

<sup>12</sup> Sokolow passed away in London on May 17, 1936. Shertok paid a visit to his two daughters on Mar. 20, 1937; see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:87–88 and notes on 469–70.

importance of the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem also increased due to the growth of the Jewish community in Eretz Israel. The Yishuv was the power basis of the labor parties whose representatives were leading members of the Jewish Agency Executive. Over the years a division of labor had developed between the Yishuv and the diaspora, but now a new resolute leadership in Eretz Israel gained control of the Zionist Organization.<sup>13</sup>

Weizmann was greatly offended by his deposal and harbored bitterness towards the new leadership. Despite that, he agreed to meet with representatives of the labor movement, while they, for their part, were interested in his cooperation. However, he refused to do so on an official basis, even though he maintained close personal relations with some of the Mapai leaders, mainly Arlosoroff.<sup>14</sup>

The election of Arlosoroff as head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency afforded Mapai important influence on political matters. Arlosoroff supported the policy that the Zionist movement should continue to rely on and cooperate with Britain due to their fundamental common interests. He maintained special relations with Weizmann who, in the eyes of many, especially in Britain, remained the representative par excellence of Zionism. Arlosoroff often consulted with him, as evident from the exchange of letters between them, so much so that there are those who defined Arlosoroff's policy as the continuation of "Weizmannism."<sup>15</sup> Arlosoroff spoke out against any action that could give the impression that Zionism was the enemy of the British Empire. In his diary, which he began on August 10, 1931 and ended on April 14, 1933, the month of his murder, he writes of his relations with High Commissioner Chancellor, but mainly with the new High Commissioner Wauchope to whom he also presented an English translation of Yehuda Leib Pinsker's *Auto-emancipation*, so that he would better understand Zionism. Arlosoroff accompanied Wauchope on tours throughout the country and often held discussions with him.<sup>16</sup>

Arlosoroff's view was controversial within Mapai, even before the establishment of the united party and mainly afterwards. Apparently, there were two prevalent policies in Mapai at the time, termed "autonomism" and "etatism" (non-separatist) in Israeli historiographic literature.<sup>17</sup> This had already begun in the 1920s but gained momentum in 1931, on the eve of the third session of the Mapai Council. Ben-Gurion,

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<sup>13</sup> Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 417–26. On Weizmann's resignation, the Mizrahi movement, and the election of Sokolow, see Shapira, "Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine," 1.

<sup>14</sup> On the personal relations maintained by members of Mapai with Weizmann since the Seventeenth Zionist Congress in 1931 to the beginning of 1933, see Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 137–41, who also notes a personal visit by Ruppin to Weizmann's home in London.

<sup>15</sup> Four letters Arlosoroff sent to Weizmann on June 10, 1932, June 30, 1932, Nov. 21, 1932, and Feb. 2, 1933 are in the appendix to Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary*, 327–59.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 319–24. He also records his earlier meetings with Chancellor; see *ibid.*, in the index.

<sup>17</sup> For Arlosoroff on etatism vs. autonomism, see Avineri, *Arlosoroff*, 82–90.

Berl Katzenelson, and others supported autonomism, i.e. they had no faith in Britain, which was not supportive of creating a Jewish majority in Eretz Israel. They wanted the British government to enable autonomous development of the Yishuv, and that the British administration in Palestine transfer authority, provide financial assistance, and allocate separate funds for this development. In contrast, Arlosoroff and other members of Mapai adhered to etatism: no authority should be transferred from the British administration to autonomous bodies and all major matters should remain in its hands for good. Their reasoning was that a development towards autonomy might lead to an unending British–Arab alliance and isolation of the Jews. They believed it was important to maintain good relations with the British and try to influence them. Seemingly, upon assuming his position in the Jewish Agency, Arlosoroff became more convinced in his etatist viewpoint, calling it “Eretz Israel politics.”<sup>18</sup>

On April 14, 1933, two years after his appointment, Arlosoroff was murdered on the Tel Aviv seashore.<sup>19</sup> There are those who connect the murder to the transfer agreement with Germany, with which Arlosoroff was very much involved, and shall be discussed below.<sup>20</sup> Tension between the labor movement and the Revisionists, also connected to the distribution of aliyah certificates issued by the British as well as their conflict over “Jewish labor,” was greatly intensified. At first even Ben-Gurion tended to accuse the Revisionists of the murder, but later moderated his view and supported coming to an arrangement with them. In October 1934, Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky conducted lengthy talks in London which ended in the signing of an agreement, indicative of their attempt at reconciliation. However, the authorized bodies of both parties refused to ratify this agreement.<sup>21</sup>

Arlosoroff was replaced by his deputy Moshe Shertok (later Sharett). In addition, already prior to the Eighteenth Zionist Congress in Prague in 1933 Ben-Gurion was chosen to head Mapai. Even before the congress convened, he set out for a major visit to Poland as leader of Mapai. The activities of all the Zionist left-wing

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**18** On Arlosoroff's close relations with Wauchope, see also Frumkin, *A Judge*, 312–15. He tried to help Wauchope with the matter of the proposed Legislative Council, to which I shall return, but Ben-Gurion and Berl Katzenelson opposed the ideas raised in that connection.

**19** For a short biography of Arlosoroff, see Avineri, *Arlosoroff*, 1–10, including the transfer agreement and his murder. On all these, see also Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 118–32; Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 422–69; Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 168–216.

**20** Avineri, *Arlosoroff*, 77–98, in a chapter entitled “Confronting the British Empire,” dwells on Arlosoroff's character and his ideas about how to solve the Jewish–Arab issue. He also provides a detailed analysis of the nine-page letter to Weizmann of June 30, 1932 (note 15 above).

**21** On the agreement between Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky, see Yaacov N. Goldstein and Yaacov Shavit, *Without Compromises: The Agreement between Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky and Its Failure, 1934–1935* (Tel Aviv: Yariv, 1979) (Hebrew). On the conflict between the labor movement and the Revisionists in 1930–1934, the changes in Ben-Gurion's stance, the reactions within Mapai to the agreement, and more, see Meir Chazan, “Mapai in Shock: Ben-Gurion against His Party in Crises of the 1930s,” *Cathedra* 137 (Sept. 2010): 127–38 (Hebrew).

parties greatly increased in Europe, mainly in Poland and Germany, and a there was a significant rise in the paid membership of the Zionist Organization who could participate in elections to the congress.<sup>22</sup> In preparation for the Eighteenth Congress, discussions were held with Weizmann with the view of reinstating him as president of the Zionist Organization. Opinion in Mapai was divided on this step, but in any case Weizmann refused to do so.<sup>23</sup>

Ben-Gurion's election as the head of Mapai, now the largest party in the Zionist Organization, heightened his unique status in the Zionist movement, and he began his involvement in political issues as well. As opposed to Arlosoroff, Ben-Gurion believed in autonomism and gradual Zionist progress, independent of the British administration. He first presented his plan on November 9, 1929 to a small forum of participants, among them Judah L. Magnes. He put his plan in writing and began making it public only a while later. Ben-Gurion envisaged that Jewish nationalism in Eretz Israel would develop in stages and tied this in with the notion of a legislative council based on parity, to be discussed below, as well as the idea of cantons. Ben-Gurion also reflected on the final stage, the form of government in the country after the Mandate came to an end. He aspired to establish a federation comprised of autonomous cantons, its broad outlines reminiscent of Switzerland. The general gist of his plan was that while the cantons would be national in character, the federal government would be bi-national.<sup>24</sup>

During the seventh session of the Mapai Council, that convened in Tel Aviv on March 21–24, 1934, Ben-Gurion once again presented his earlier plan with certain changes, i.e. the concept of the gradual establishment of Jewish cantons which would later, together, be defined as a Jewish state that would support the establishment of an Arab federation in the region. It is difficult today to understand the complex structure he proposed, but it explains his two central perceptions: Jewish progress, with British assistance, in the establishment of Jewish cantons without giving up on the notion of a future Jewish state, and seeking ways to become integrated into the Arab domain as part of a federative framework that would include all those present within it.<sup>25</sup>

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**22** Ben-Gurion placed great importance on increasing the membership of the labor movement and Hehalutz in preparation for the Eighteenth Zionist Congress. His efforts were successful: at that congress the representatives of the labor movement accounted for 44 percent, as compared with 29 percent in the previous one. Ben-Gurion maintained that the effort to increase the ranks of Mapai was more important than the struggle against the Revisionists.

**23** For negotiations between Mapai and Weizmann to have him return to the presidency of the Zionist Organization at the Eighteenth Congress, see Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 137–55.

**24** For details of his political plan, see Jacob (Yaacov N.) Goldstein, "David Ben-Gurion and the Bi-national Idea in Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 24 (1988): 460–72.

**25** On the program he presented in 1934, the debate it engendered and the criticism leveled against it, see Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 75–83.

In the meantime, preparations were in progress for the Nineteenth Zionist Congress to be convened in Lucerne in 1935. The labor representatives contacted Weizmann again, requesting that he agree to return to the role of president of the Zionist Organization.<sup>26</sup> And indeed, Weizmann was later re-elected as president, this time on the basis of a new unwritten alliance between him and the labor movement by which Ben-Gurion became chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive. Discussions at this congress dealt with the problem of German Jewry and the transfer agreement. It was at this congress, too, that the Revisionist movement permanently left the Zionist Organization and established the New Zionist Organization (NZO). Led by Jabotinsky, the Revisionists espoused a dynamic and vigorous Zionist policy and aspired to follow their own independent path. After their withdrawal, they initiated broad worldwide activities and the signing of a petition which they submitted to the British in an attempt to influence them to change their policy in Eretz Israel. Jabotinsky assigned great importance to this petition, while the Zionist leadership objected to it as being detrimental to the Zionist movement and to the interests of the Jewish national home.<sup>27</sup>

### **The concept of a legislative council and the future of self-rule; the parity plan**

After Wauchope's arrival in Palestine, he again raised the idea of establishing a legislative council. It had first been broached in 1922, during Herbert Samuel's commissionership, but was shelved at the time since the framework then proposed was not acceptable to Arabs and Jews alike.<sup>28</sup> In the White Paper of 1930, the British government reiterated its intention to establish a legislative council in Palestine, but the MacDonald Letter, which in effect cancelled the White Paper, does not mention the legislative council. When he began his term as High Commissioner, Wauchope assumed that there was a commitment to implement the idea, but not necessarily as one for immediate realization. Thus, he decided to conduct discussions regarding it. The Jews objected a priori to the idea, fearing they would remain a minority in the council while hoping that increased aliyah would turn them into the majority in the future. The Arabs conditioned their participation on the demand for an Arab majority in the legislative council. The difference between the two sides on this point was clear: while the Jews viewed the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate as a commitment to the Jewish people as a whole, the Arabs demanded self-government solely for the inhabitants of the country and refused to recognize the Mandate document as binding.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 155–67.

<sup>27</sup> Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 450.

<sup>28</sup> See the discussion in Chapter Eight at nn. 109–13 in the text.

The Arabs raised the following objections to the Mandate for Palestine: (a) the McMahon commitments given to the Arabs before the Mandate was issued (see Chapter Seven for details); (b) the wording of the Mandate for Palestine contradicts the League of Nations covenant that promises independence to all peoples; (c) the will of the local population was not taken into account in the choice of the mandatory power, in contradiction to the covenant; (d) the Arab states were not members of the League of Nations when the Mandate was drafted and approved.<sup>29</sup>

The Jews rejected these objections, maintaining that all these claims were known at the time, and yet the League of Nations made its decision. According to the Arabs, the concept of a Jewish national home in Palestine had already been realized, since the number of Jews had greatly increased and they had their own institutions. Accordingly, it was time to advance towards the end of the Mandate and to base the legislative council that would replace it in the future on the relative size of the overall population of the country.<sup>30</sup>

At the same time, there were Jewish leaders, among them leading personalities, who sought ways to reach a compromise with the Arabs. At the Ahdut Ha'avodah conference in 1924, Shlomo Kaplansky proposed options for such a compromise, but they were totally rejected. After the 1929 riots, the White Paper of 1930, and the establishment of Mapai, a tendency towards equal representation on the legislative council as a solution to the problem was evident among the party leadership. Ben-Gurion and Berl Katzenelson favored the idea at the time, but with one clear condition: that no limitations would be placed on Jewish immigration. They emphasized that realization of the matter should be delayed until the Yishuv would grow larger.<sup>31</sup>

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**29** For Wauchope's efforts to establish a legislative council, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 466–69. It should be mentioned that Chancellor had already raised the matter of the council in mid-1929 with Ragheb Nashashibi and Musa Kazim al-Husseini, the leaders of the two major Palestinian factions, and even proposed to go ahead with the initiative after his return from a vacation in England, but the outbreak of the 1929 riots upset his plans; see Sela, "The 'Wailing Wall' Riots," 67, 70.

**30** Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 231–32, sums up the Arab claims. The idea of creating cantons was also raised in these discussions: every canton would be given a measure of independence under the British administration of the country. However, as noted, nothing came of these discussions.

**31** Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 50–51; Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 239–63. Weizmann was prepared to consider this, but only as an interim solution. Ben-Gurion opposed Weizmann on this point, believing that parity posed a danger to Zionism; see the chapter "Weizmann: A Danger to Zionism" in Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 511–36. Ben-Gurion was known to change his opinion, often to the surprise of his colleagues in Mapai. See Chazan, "Mapai in Shock," who notes three such instances: (a) Ben-Gurion's harsh criticism of the White Paper of 1930; (b) the agreement he signed with Jabotinsky; (c) his call in 1939 for revolt against the British after publication of the third White Paper. The author also notes Ben-Gurion's overwhelming influence in important deliberations and decisions.



In contrast, Weizmann was the main spokesman in favor of the idea, apparently as early as 1930–1931. He believed that, after suitable groundwork, an agreement could be reached with the Arabs regarding the establishment of a parity-based legislative council so that no one people would rule over the other, no matter what their numbers in the overall population. Weizmann acted to promote the idea with British organizations. He spoke about it with Prime Minister MacDonald, and even sent Ben-Gurion and his friend Professor Lewis Namier to meet with him. He planned to bring his support of the concept to the Seventeenth Zionist Congress in 1931. When he did so, it was rejected, and it appears that this was one of the reasons that led to his not being re-elected as president of the Zionist Organization.<sup>32</sup> There were other Zionist leaders who continued to espouse the concept of parity with him, until the Peel Commission proposal to partition Palestine. They repeatedly made it clear that they would accept the idea, with an unequivocal condition that no one people would rule or be ruled: that they would not be part of any council in which Arab representation was greater than theirs. The parity plan was even confirmed by the Mapai Council in 1931, but never received the approval of the Zionist Actions Committee. As of 1933, the matter gradually disappeared from the agenda.

In 1936 there were again some who sought ways for a compromise with the Arabs and returned to the parity proposal, but it seems this was mostly done to placate the British who were pushing for a solution regarding the legislative council. The Arabs rejected the idea from the start, and managed to convince High Commissioner Wauchope to oppose it as well. Wauchope tried to propose other compromise solutions for the council's composition, but the response of the Jews was uniform – total rejection. This time Weizmann, too, joined the opponents, and even issued an official communication on the issue. The matter came up for discussion one last time in the British Parliament in London in 1936, where the debate exposed extreme doubts regarding the proposal. It was decided to invite an Arab delegation to discuss it, but then the Arab Revolt broke out in Palestine and the matter was taken off the table again.<sup>33</sup>

Without a doubt, the years 1931–1935 were also the period of the greatest momentum in the growth of the Yishuv in Eretz Israel. I will now discuss the Jewish wave of immigration that was its cause.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> There were some who accused Weizmann of almost adopting the ideas of Brit Shalom; see Goldstein, *On the Road to Hegemony*, 31–32.

<sup>33</sup> Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 339–51; Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 95–96; in the introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 20–21. Heller, too, notes that in 1936 Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, and Shertok were in favor of parity in the legislative council. They were prepared to adopt a tactical solution of continued aliyah until the number of Jews in the country would be equal to that of the Arabs. On the last stages of plans for the establishment of a legislative council, see also *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:469–71.

<sup>34</sup> Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 356–58.

## The Fifth Aliyah; Nazi rule in Germany; the transfer agreement; increase of the Jewish population; the growth of Tel Aviv and the relative decline of Jerusalem

### Increase of the Jewish population during the Fifth Aliyah

High Commissioner Wauchope's support of Zionism was mainly reflected in his attitude towards Jewish immigration. The great aliyah that received the name "the Fifth Aliyah" began in 1931, at the outset of Wauchope's commissionership, but was most pronounced between 1933 and 1935.<sup>35</sup> In the MacDonald Letter, the new government in London approved the principle of economic absorptive capacity for determination of Jewish immigration quotas to Palestine. On the basis of this principle and earlier regulations and practices, the Immigration Ordinance was published in 1933 in which four categories were defined for immigrants permitted to arrive in Palestine: (a) persons of independent means whose capital or profession enabled the creation of a livelihood without seeking employment in the existing labor market; (b) persons whose maintenance was assured by institutions that would support them; (c) working class persons who have definite prospects of employment in the country; (d) family members dependent on permanent residents or immigrants as described above. The common denominator was "economic absorptive capacity." This immigration ordinance also received the support of Colonial Secretary Cunliffe-Lister, who held progressive economic views and hoped that Jewish immigration and import of capital and businesses would advance the country economically and free it from dependency on the British treasury. The issue of economic absorptive capacity and appropriate annual aliyah quotas became the bone of contention between the Zionist leadership and the British authorities. Illegal immigration, *ha'apalah* in Hebrew, began in 1934 and was called "Aliyah Bet." Its goal was to bring in immigrants who did not meet the absorptive capacity principles.<sup>36</sup>

The growth in aliyah stemmed from deep-rooted changes in the condition of European Jewry. The pressure exerted by antisemitic policies in Poland and other east European countries increased. In January 1933 the Nazi party came into power in Germany and immediately began implementing its anti-Jewish policy. These events raised much motivation for aliyah with the Zionist movement, especially among the youth and large numbers of lower-class Jews. The gates of Palestine

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<sup>35</sup> Some believe that Wauchope was the best High Commissioner from the Jewish standpoint, but not all agree. See a critical view in *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:445.

<sup>36</sup> The Revisionists claim that illegal immigration had begun already in 1932, and that Jabotinsky may properly be termed "the father of *ha'apalah*." On illegal immigration with statistics of olim per year, see Katzburg, "Palestine under the Mandate," 333–38. On the Mandate authorities and the question of aliyah, see Dalia Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust: Illegal Immigration to the Land of Israel 1939–1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3–20.

were opened to refugees with capital as well as to laborers who could be employed with the abundant arriving capital. The whole country developed.<sup>37</sup> Around 46 percent of the overall Jewish immigration throughout the world arrived in Eretz Israel in 1932. By 1935, this rate increased to 79 percent, and in 1939 decreased to 29 percent. While the aliyah quota for Jews allocated by the Mandate authorities for those streaming towards Eretz Israel grew, it was not enough to meet the great demand.<sup>38</sup>

During the first half of the 1930s, the idea was raised to reach an agreement with the German authorities to allow Jews with capital funds to leave Germany for Palestine, bringing their capital with them. This became known as the “Transfer Agreement.” It was first signed between the Zionist Organization in Germany and the government in Berlin in 1933, and was formally sanctioned by the Zionist movement at the Nineteenth Zionist Congress in Lucerne in 1935. The crux of the agreement was that Jewish immigrants to Palestine would be able to sell their property in Germany and receive funds in return, with which they could purchase real estate in their new country. These immigrants had to deposit in Germany a minimum sum of one thousand British pounds, a large sum at the time, and could buy any German merchandise they wanted, thus promoting German industry. They could then transfer whatever they bought to Palestine, and the British authorities would not levy taxes on this merchandise. The immigrants brought in large shipping containers that also included building materials. There are still houses in the country, in Jerusalem for example, built of the materials imported under this agreement.<sup>39</sup>

There were those who viewed the Transfer Agreement as an option for raising capital from countries in which Jews lived in distress. Arlosoroff was very active in handling the agreement. As early as 1933, his aim was twofold: in addition to bringing in Jewish immigrants, he sought to make Eretz Israel an attractive target for the capital of wealthy German Jews and to subject these funds to the supervision of the Zionist Organization.<sup>40</sup>

Those years were also marked by the beginning of the aliyah of pioneers (*halutzim*) and children and youth from Germany.<sup>41</sup> While the widespread image of the Fifth

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<sup>37</sup> Halevi et al., *Banker to an Emerging Nation*, 53–112.

<sup>38</sup> For a short summary of the Fifth Aliyah, see Giladi, “From Aliyah to Aliyah,” 169–72. For the typology of olim in this period, see the comprehensive study by Yoav Gelber, *New Homeland: Immigration and Absorption of Central European Jews 1933–1948* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1990), 152–221 (Hebrew). For developments in the cities and the agricultural settlements, see also *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:471–86.

<sup>39</sup> Edwin Black, *The Transfer Agreement: The Untold Story of the Secret Agreement between the Third Reich and Jewish Palestine* (New York: Macmillan, 1984).

<sup>40</sup> On the transfer agreement, see also Gelber, *New Homeland*, 23–29, 152–74; Halamish, *A Dual Race against Time*, 250–67.

<sup>41</sup> On aliyah from Germany, both of pioneers and children and youth, see Gelber, *New Homeland*, 175–221. For the characteristics of aliyah from Germany, its extent, composition, absorption in Eretz Israel, and its influence up to the outbreak of World War II, see id., “The Consolidation of Jewish

Aliyah was given it by the German immigrants, in actual fact between 1932 and 1939 only 36,000 persons out of a total number of 186,000 arrived from Germany. To them may be added German-speaking immigrants from Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Hungary. 76,500 people came from Poland during the period, the remainder arriving from other European countries, from the United States (4,492) and from Asian and African countries (5,590 persons arrived from the Yemen alone). Prevalent among the immigrants from Germany were persons with a university education: doctors, engineers, lawyers, architects, scientists, and members of the free professions, in addition to merchants, and industrialists. In 1934, the Jewish Agency founded the Rassco Company with the object of providing housing for the olim. Many of them made their way to agricultural settlements. The variegated composition of the Fifth Aliyah thus formed a balanced structure of middle class, laborers, and pioneers trained abroad in agricultural training farms, and contributed greatly to the development of the economy of Eretz Israel on the one hand, and its cultural life and other aspects, on the other.<sup>42</sup>

The British census of 1931 recorded 174,610 Jews, accounting for 18 percent of the total population of Palestine. Five years later, in December 1936, the Jewish population numbered around 400,000 persons, 31 percent of the country inhabitants. What most marked the Fifth Aliyah was the boom in all sectors of the economy. In 1933, 14,500 persons were employed in Jewish industrial establishments and 5,200 in workshops. Two years later, 22,000 were employed in industry and 8,000 in workshops. Over 4,000 industrial plants operated in the country, over half of them in the Tel Aviv area. The main part of their production was marketed locally.<sup>43</sup>

The greatest effect of the Fifth Aliyah, like the Fourth Aliyah about ten years earlier, was on the big cities. Tel Aviv and its suburbs absorbed around half of the immigrants and their population increased from 46,000 at the end of 1931 to 135,000 at the end of 1935. After Tel Aviv, the largest number of olim settled in Haifa, the city of the future, whose large modern port was opened in November 1933, and where the oil pipeline from Iraq, which operated until 1948, was inaugurated in 1934. The population of Haifa grew by three hundred percent between 1931 and 1935, from 16,000 to 50,000. Jerusalem's population increased from 53,700 persons at the end of 1931 to 70,000 in 1935, but by then Tel Aviv had already surpassed Jerusalem.

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Society in Eretz Israel, 1936–1947,” in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The British Mandate Period, Part 2*, ed. Moshe Lissak, Anita Shapira, and Gavriel Cohen (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 1994), 312–35 (Hebrew). On Youth Aliyah, see Dvora Hacothen, *The Children of Time: Youth Aliyah 1933–1948* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi; Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2011) (Hebrew).

<sup>42</sup> On Rassco, the company that built homes for and settled middle class immigrants, and the first three settlements it established – Kfar Shmaryahu, Sdeh Warburg, and Shavei Zion, see Amiram Oren, “Rassco’s Activities on Behalf of Immigrants of the Fifth Aliyah (1934–1940),” *Cathedra* 55 (Mar. 1990): 126–59 (Hebrew).

<sup>43</sup> On the Fifth Aliyah in general, see Giladi (note 38 above) and Gelber (note 41 above).

### The growth of Tel Aviv and the relative decline of Jerusalem

One of the important developments in the geographic-settlement landscape of Palestine during the British Mandate period was the development of Tel Aviv. It became the largest Jewish city in the country, in contrast to the relative halt in the growth and development of Jewish Jerusalem, which until the Mandate period was the largest and most important Jewish city in the country. Early signs of this change were evident during the final period of Ottoman rule. The first Jewish neighborhoods outside the bounds of the city of Jaffa imitated the process followed by the first Jewish neighborhoods built outside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century the New Yishuv began to take root in Jaffa and establish Zionist institutions there until, in 1909, with the founding of the neighborhood of Ahuzat Bayit, a new Jewish city was envisioned. The expulsion of the Jews of Jaffa and Tel Aviv during World War I somewhat delayed the development of the new city, but with the British conquest and return of the expelled residents to their homes the rapid development process of Tel Aviv was set in motion. In many ways, the beginning of the Mandate period was one of the most important times in the development of Tel Aviv. Realization of the vision of a completely Jewish city developed out of a Jaffa neighborhood. While the Third Aliyah in part continued the tendency of the working class Second Aliyah, it was also very significant for Tel Aviv. There is thus little wonder that a book written on the development of the city until 1924, *The Dream Became a Metropolis: The Founding and Growth of Tel Aviv, the First Hebrew City in the World*, calls Tel Aviv the city that gave birth to a state. The vision and future of Tel Aviv had already begun to take permanent shape.<sup>44</sup>

The greatest difference between the development of Jerusalem and that of Tel Aviv during the British Mandate period was that in Jerusalem the British administration served as a central factor in the development of the city, both positively and negatively, while in Tel Aviv it was almost totally uninvolved, beyond government laws and ordinances regulating such activity as construction. Tel Aviv was built and developed by the new Jewish and Zionist society in the form of the municipality, the mayor, the social elite, the architects and planners, and the progressive Jewish population that took up residence there. All these contributed to the impressive development of the city, its institutions, and economy.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Shchori, *Dream*. On the beginnings of Tel Aviv, especially in the period under discussion, see also Elisha Efrat, "The Beginnings of Tel Aviv in the Test of Urban Geography," in *Tel Aviv-Yafo: From a Garden Suburb to a World City: The First Hundred Years*, ed. Baruch A. Kipnis (Haifa: Pardes, 2009), 62–84 (Hebrew).

<sup>45</sup> On these aspects, even beyond the time period presently under discussion, see Yaacov Shavit and Gideon Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv*, 4 vols. (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2001–2013), 1: 163–77 (Hebrew).

Later during the Mandate period, with the arrival of two additional waves of Jewish immigrants, the city grew and developed further. The Fourth Aliyah, during 1924–1929, brought on an impressive development in the city and an increase of its Jewish population. Even though there was an economic crisis throughout the country between 1926 and 1928, it did not halt the development of Tel Aviv.<sup>46</sup> With the arrival of the Fifth Aliyah from Germany and central Europe between 1931 and 1935, as noted, the main flow of immigrants was directed towards Tel Aviv.<sup>47</sup>

Though some members of these two aliyahs took up residence in Jerusalem, their numbers cannot be compared to those of Tel Aviv. These were dominant years in Tel Aviv, during which it became a large metropolis and gained the title of “the first Hebrew city.” An examination of the Jewish population statistics throughout the country, in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Jaffa as presented in the following table, is informative of this major change in Jewish settlement patterns in mandatory Palestine.<sup>48</sup>

Jewish population of Eretz Israel: Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Jaffa 1922–1946 (in thousands).

Year	Throughout the country	Jerusalem	Tel Aviv	Jaffa + Tel Aviv
1922 (census)	83.8	34.0	15.1	20.2
1931 (census)	174.6	51.2	45.6	52.8
1939 (estimation)	445.5	80.8	131.7	166.0
1946 (estimation)	608.2	99.3	182.5	213.3

The event that led to the great difference between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in the middle of the Mandate period, between 1925 and 1936, was the 1929 riots, which had far-reaching consequences in Jerusalem. In the Old City, Jews no longer frequented the Arab markets and residential areas outside of the Jewish Quarter, but the riots also intensified Jewish nationalist-religious sentiments regarding the Western Wall and the sanctity of Jerusalem. They also greatly affected the new city outside the walls, since segregation between Jewish and Arab residential areas was intensified. If at the beginning of the Mandate period there as yet was not such a significant separation between Jews and Arabs, after the 1929 riots it was almost total.

In Tel Aviv, the riots intensified the severance from Jaffa that had begun during the violent events of 1921. However, in terms of the city itself, they had a completely

<sup>46</sup> For the influence of the Fourth Aliyah on the development of Tel Aviv, and the economic crisis of 1926–1928, see *ibid.*, 1:122–28.

<sup>47</sup> On the Fifth Aliyah and its involvement in the accelerated economic development of Tel Aviv in 1933–1936, including the Orient Fairs and Maccabiah Games, see *ibid.*, 1:129; for the municipal budget, see *ibid.*, 1:180–91. On the importance of this period in Tel Aviv’s early history, see also *ibid.*, 2:6–11.

<sup>48</sup> For population statistics and the economic aspects of these changes, see Romann, “Shift of the Demographic and Economic Center,” 120.

opposite effect. Tel Aviv absorbed the Jaffa refugees, so that its development increased.<sup>49</sup> This impressive growth of Tel Aviv until the end of the Fifth Aliyah was also noted in the report of the Royal Commission which summed up its impression of the country as follows: “Yet more impressive has been the urban development. Tel Aviv, still a wholly Jewish town, has leaped to the first place among the towns of Palestine . . . . But it is essentially European. From its beginnings the contrast between Tel Aviv, an artificial creation, rising so quickly from a barren strip of sand, and ancient Jaffa . . . was clearly marked, and it is now quite startling.”<sup>50</sup>

With regards to Tel Aviv, it appears that during its deliberations the Peel Commission considered it an existing Zionist reality, greatly commended its development, and saw it as the heart of the Jewish sector of the country. In the commission’s recommended borders for the proposed Jewish state, Tel Aviv was marked as its center and its southern border was set somewhat to the south of that city.

## Creation of the N-shaped pattern of Jewish settlements

### Beginnings of the N-shaped Jewish settlement pattern in the late Ottoman period

In previous chapters, I focused on the relationships formed between Jews and Arabs following Jewish land acquisitions. I shall now address the effect of these acquisitions on the distribution pattern of areas in which Jewish settlements were established. In 1979 Shalom Reichman published his book *From Foothold to Settled Territory*, which dealt with the subject in depth. A map appears on the book cover entitled “Formation of the map of Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel, 1918–1948.” The contiguity of Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel stands out on this map, from the beginning of Jewish agricultural settlement until 1948. It fills the coastal plain area from its south in the Gederah-Be’er Tuviah area and north towards Rehovoth and Rishon Lezion, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, and from there along the Sharon Plain to the foothills of the Carmel range and Haifa, from where it runs through the Zevulun and Jezreel valleys and eastern Lower Galilee towards the Jordan Valley and north of Tiberias to eastern Upper Galilee. This distribution pattern forms the shape of the letter N, hence its name: the Jewish N-shaped settlement pattern.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The riots of 1921 and 1929 receive only scant attention in Shavit and Biger, *History of Tel Aviv*, 1:99, 117–19, perhaps quite justifiably, since they had little influence on the development of Tel Aviv.

<sup>50</sup> Palestine Royal Commission, *Report: Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament . . . July 1937* (Cmd. 5479) (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1937), 114.

<sup>51</sup> See the cover of Shalom Reichman, *From Foothold to Settled Territory: The Jewish Yishuv 1918–1948: A Geographical Interpretation and Documentation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979) (Hebrew). It is reproduced in this chapter. See also id., “Formation of the Map of the Yishuv during the Mandate Period,” in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The British*



In order to understand this pattern, we have to go back to the process of Jewish settlement in Palestine. The first reason for emergence of the N-shaped pattern is that until the onset of the First Aliyah, towards the end of the Ottoman period, the Jews lived only in the four holy cities of Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron. A Jewish community began to form in Jaffa, but it was only due to the fact that Jaffa served as the port for Jerusalem. A few Jewish families lived in several Galilee villages, in Gaza and in Acre, and perhaps a few other places, but these were usually single families who lived there due to considerations of livelihood, just as did other Jews in additional cities of the Ottoman Empire in the Levant: Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, and more. The new map of Zionist settlement began with the First Aliyah.

The second reason for the N-shaped pattern was that at first the Jews usually acquired land and founded settlements in areas that were marginal for the Arabs living in the country. The Arab villages of Palestine were primarily based on subsistence farming in mountainous areas where there was sufficient precipitation for dry farming to raise orchards, olive trees, and vines, as well as field crops such as wheat, barley, vegetables, and more. There were also areas in which springs supplied water for intensive cultivation. This was adequate for the living conditions of the time. There were no Arab settlements in areas where precipitation was not sufficient, such as the Negev and further south, or in places where the land was not suitable for crops, like ground covered by basalt or hard rock, swamps, or sandy soil that did not hold water, as in the coastal plain.<sup>52</sup>

The third reason for the N-shaped pattern was that areas in which there was no permanent settlement and for which no levies were paid became lands that Sultan Abdülhamid II took control of and were known as the Sultan's lands (*jiftlik*). In 1908, following the Young Turk Revolution, they became state lands and were put on sale in the real estate market. The remaining uncultivated lands like the *Mawat* (dead) lands, which had no owners, or lands belonging to effendis who acquired and then worked them by extensive cultivation through the agency of tenant farmers whom they hired and employed, usually under conditions of exploitation. These lands were preferable for acquisition since this enabled purchase of large properties, which was impossible in the mountainous areas where lands were of the *Musha'* category, divided into small plots between the village families.

The fourth reason for the location of the first Jewish settlements was their proximity to the cities from which came the settlers. During the First Aliyah, and especially the Second Aliyah, the Jewish communities in the cities also grew. The cities served as convenient bases for the rural settlements in their vicinity. The

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*Mandate Period, Part 3*, ed. Moshe Lissak (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2007), 173–299 (Hebrew).

<sup>52</sup> On the physical geography of the Sharon Plain and how it influenced settlement development, see Yehuda Karmon, "Geographical Conditions in the Sharon Plain and Their Impact on Its Settlement," *Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society*, 23 (1959): 111–33 (Hebrew).

establishment of one settlement also encouraged the establishment of the next one, forming groups of Jewish settlements that could assist one another. By the end of the First Aliyah period there were already twenty-eight settlements established according to this model.<sup>53</sup> The settlement initiative during the Second Aliyah also adopted this model.<sup>54</sup> In 1914 there were fifty Jewish settlements in the country.<sup>55</sup> By the end of Ottoman rule, the extent of Jewish-owned land area was more than 420,000 dunams. Thirty years later, when the British left the country, Jewish landed property amounted to 1,800,000 dunams, an increase of nearly 4.5 times.<sup>56</sup>

### **Further spread of the N-shaped pattern during the first decade of the British Mandate**

The first decade of the British Mandate in Palestine was characterized by the transition from the development of Jewish rural agricultural settlements to urban development, especially of Tel Aviv, as noted above. It was complemented by another important aspect – the development of citriculture in the Tel Aviv area and along the nearby coastal plain. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the export of citrus fruit became an increasingly important factor in the economy of Palestine. Jaffa was the center of the local citrus industry. Demand for Jaffa Oranges and the development of marine commerce by steamships in the eastern Mediterranean had begun by mid-century. Nevertheless, direct connection between steamships and Britain, the main market for Palestinian oranges, dates only from 1895. The success of citriculture was not lost on the first Jewish settlers in the country. However, it should be noted that in Baron

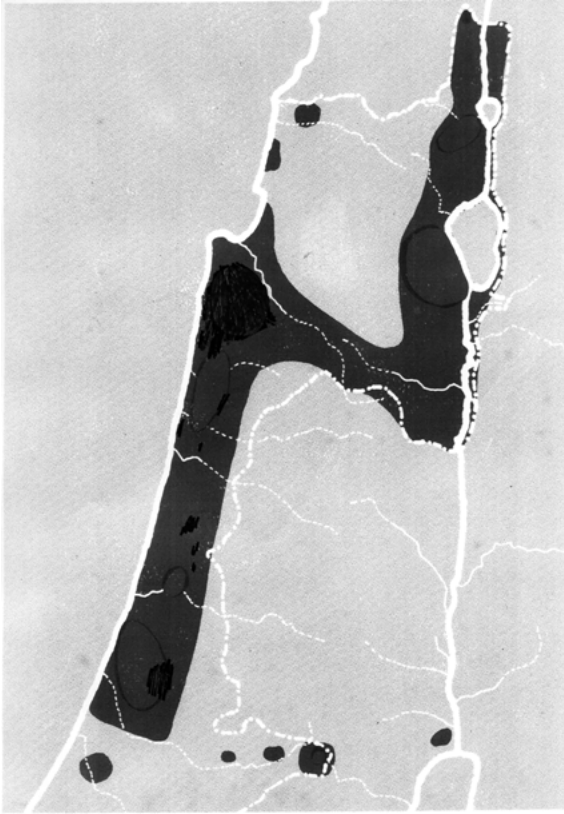
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<sup>53</sup> The development of Jewish settlements during the First Aliyah period was discussed at length in Chapter Five. See also the maps in Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, “Geographic Aspects of the Development of the First Jewish Settlements in Eretz Israel,” in *The First Aliyah*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1981), 1:90, 94 (Hebrew). For a listing of the twenty-eight colonies in 1904, see Aaronsohn, “Building the Land,” 272–74. Their total area was around 250,000 dunams, and about another 100,000 dunams, mostly in the northern area east of the Jordan, see *ibid.*, n. 102. See also Leo Motzkin, “The Jews in Eretz Israel,” in *The Motzkin Book: Works, Selected Speeches, Biography* . . . ed. Alex Bein (Jerusalem: Executive of the Zionist Organization and the World Jewish Congress, 1939), 28–29 (Hebrew).

<sup>54</sup> See Katz, *The “Business” of Settlement*, 27, 165, 224 respectively for the following maps: “Jewish Settlement Projects in Palestine on the Eve of the Twentieth Century” (Map 1); “Distribution of Neta'im Association Plantations and Proposals for Additional Centers, 1905–1914” (Map 6); “Land-related Activities of Estate Companies, 1908–1914” (Map 8). For increasing private settlement initiatives, see Chapter Six, at nn. 87–90 in the text.

<sup>55</sup> See the map in Ben-Artzi, “First Aliyah Colonies,” 143. In 1914 there were already about fifty rural settlements in addition to the communities in the cities, and they are noted on that map according to their type. The development of Jewish settlements during the Second Aliyah period is discussed in Chapter Six.

<sup>56</sup> Reichman, *From Foothold to Settled Territory*, 49.



**Map 25:** The N-shaped Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel, 1918–1948. (Reichman, *From Foothold*, front cover).

Rothschild's thoughts about agriculture, citriculture did not play a central role. The leading crop in the Baron's colonies was grapevines for production of wines, while only limited areas were allocated for citrus orchards. In contrast, in private Jewish agricultural enterprises, beginning in Petah Tikvah and the southern colonies, especially Nes Zionah and Rehovot, citriculture ruled the day. Apparently there were a number of reasons for this: the light soil of these colonies enabled access to convenient sources of water; the climate was more suitable for growing citrus fruit than in the northern colonies such as Zikhron Ya'akov and those of the Galilee; and the short distance from the main port of export.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> On technological developments in the citrus orchards, see Nahum Karlinsky, *California Dreaming: Ideology, Society, and Technology in the Citrus Industry of Palestine 1890–1939* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), 49–56; for the development of citriculture in that area, see *ibid.*, 87–110.

A central factor that determined the ability to engage in citrus growing was the availability of ground water, since it was necessary to irrigate the citrus orchard for six or seven months each year. Citrus trees need a great amount of water every month of the year. During the rainy months of an average year, there was no need to add to the rainwater, but during the seven dry months, from May to November, most of the orchards were irrigated by well water. Thus the Arabic name for orchard is *biara* from the Arabic *bir* (well) situated in every orchard at the time. During this period, mechanization to draw water from wells was introduced into the local orchard. The availability of ground water at a depth of no more than 10–20 meters was the basis for the regular and inexpensive operation of the orchard well. Accordingly, most citriculture during the nineteenth century was centered round the coastal plain, especially in the Jaffa area. The first step in increasing the amount of water available in the orchards was the introduction of fuel operated motors, which enabled drawing water from a depth of 20–30 meters. Thus were the areas of the orchards expanded and their yields increased.

The citrus industry suffered from a difficult crisis during World War I, from which it only recovered in the mid-1920s, during the Fourth Aliyah, with the development of Tel Aviv and the nearby southern Sharon region. In those years, there were important technological developments in Palestine in the areas of electricity, water supply, motor transportation, and more, which also greatly affected the development of citriculture. Orchards began playing a central role in the urbanization of new and existing settlements. Since the produce of the citrus orchards was intended primarily for export, an advanced marketing system emerged, serving as an important source of diverse employment options, while the number of laborers employed in the citrus orchards also increased. The improvement in maritime transport between Palestine and Europe made marketing the produce easier, and also induced the Mandate government to develop the country's road system. Deep water drilling reached the confining units (aquiclude) that stored water above them, making orchard irrigation easier. The proximity to Tel Aviv and the urban area taking shape around it contributed to the impressive development of the southern Sharon region.<sup>58</sup>

An important development in forming the Jewish N-shaped pattern as early as the 1920s was the acquisition of the lands of Wadi al-Hawarith (Hefer Valley), a 31,000 dunams bloc for which Hankin had negotiated for decades and was finally purchased by the Jewish National Fund in 1927. The settlement of this area, situated almost midway between Tel Aviv and Haifa, formed a bridge that connected between the two Jewish settlement areas that gradually drew closer: the Sharon region north

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<sup>58</sup> For all these topics, see Gonen, “Geographical Heartland”; id., “Urbanization of the ‘Moshavot’.”

of Tel Aviv and the Samaria area south of Haifa. However, the establishment of many settlements in these areas occurred only after the 1929 riots.<sup>59</sup>

### Continued development of the N-shaped pattern, 1931–1935

The 1929 riots were a traumatic event for the Yishuv, but strengthened the N-shaped settlement pattern and the preference for continuous groups of settlements. The cities that suffered from the riots were precisely those in which Jews had always resided such as Hebron, Safed, and Jerusalem. The settlements most badly affected were those on the periphery of the Jewish center: the Jerusalem suburbs, Ramat Rahel, Motza, Hartuv, Kfar Uriah, Ein Zeitim, Huldah, and Be'er Tuvyah. The Jewish reaction to the riots was clear: further development of the central Jewish area. Settlement of the Hefer Valley was begun: its land was parceled out between 1932 and 1934 to establish many kibbutzim and moshavim.<sup>60</sup>

Another issue to which the British administration gave much thought at the beginning of Wauchope's tenure was the matter of lands purchased from Arabs by Jews, and the tenant farmer problem. This was one of the complex issues that occupied the country throughout the Mandate period, and Zionist institutions even before World War I, which I discussed at length in the previous chapter. It was also one of the main points of criticism by the Shaw Commission and included in the Hope Simpson report regarding the deprivation and dispossession of the Arab tenant farmers living in effendi-owned large estates whose lands were sold to Jews. As noted, the reports submitted by these commissions influenced the wording of the White Paper of 1930. The MacDonald Letter was published on February 13, 1931 in response to the campaign launched by the Zionist movement against this White Paper and in effect cancelled the severe restrictions included in that document. The MacDonald Letter declared that there would be no prohibition of immigration to Palestine or of land acquisition by Jews. Arabs who would prove they had been dispossessed of their lands due to acquisition by Jews and had not received alternate land or reasonable employment would be resettled.<sup>61</sup>

On June 26, 1931 the British government appointed another expert, Lewis French, to direct the development of Palestine. French had formerly been an agricultural expert in the Indian Civil Service. Two main tasks were included in his letter of appointment:

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<sup>59</sup> For the acquisition of land in the Hefer Valley, see ch. 9, n. 19, and also references there to earlier attempts.

<sup>60</sup> On the settlements of the Hefer Valley, see Bein, *Return to the Soil*, 466–68 and the appendix: an alphabetical list of Jewish settlements noting the type of settlement, date founded, and population as of December 1950.

<sup>61</sup> On the MacDonald Letter, see Chapter Nine, at n. 118 in the text; Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 114–61 and the sources cited there.

(a) to draw up a precise list of Arabs dispossessed of their lands and propose where they should be resettled, after calculating the necessary funds to be allocated for the purpose; (b) to prepare a survey of the government lands at its disposal which, after resettlement of the dispossessed farmers, could be allocated for Jewish settlement. Apart from that, French was asked to provide reports regarding land available in the mountainous areas, water resources, and more. In April 1932, after Wauchope had begun his term as High Commissioner, French submitted his reports for study by the Jewish Agency before their official publication. The Agency's response memorandum, written by Arlosoroff, states that the French report was the fourth in a series of documents issued since the 1929 riots (the Shaw Commission report, the White Paper of 1930, and the Hope Simpson report), all based on the mistaken assumption that Jewish settlement was the cause of the dispossession of Arabs and limited their freedom of action. The French report absolutely refuted these mistaken conclusions.<sup>62</sup> French notes that he found the claims of Arab dispossession to be greatly exaggerated. The number of dispossessed was much smaller than assumed, and the problems of many of them were solved by resettlement and monetary compensation.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the French report, the Arab land problem continued to weigh heavily upon the British administration in Palestine, which considered itself responsible for the Arab farmers and obligated to protect the tenant farmers, especially since the issue had strong repercussions among Palestinian Arabs, other Arab nations, and the world at large. The matter was also brought before the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, and government ordinances continued to be issued demanding protection for Arab tenant farmers. The Royal ("Peel") Commission of 1937 (see the next chapter) proposed the establishment of a separate commission that would continue to deal with and examine the subject. The problem became more acute when the Arabs raised claims that lands of Arab fellahin who were not tenant farmers were being sold and the problem was continuously becoming more widespread. High Commissioner Wauchope was especially sensitive to the problem. While in other matters he assisted the Zionist movement, with regards to land, he supported the proposal for laws limiting its acquisition. Weizmann spoke out against him, emphasizing that the matter had been decisively settled in the MacDonal Letter and there should be no deviation from it. Wauchope continued to insist and went so far as to inform both Jews and Arabs that a law regarding the issue was in the works and a decision about it would soon be made. In the meantime, the problem gradually became more severe

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<sup>62</sup> On French, see ch. 9, n. 107. He is also frequently mentioned in Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary*, see the index. For French's memorandum, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 3:376, n. 1; 1:379, n. 10; 1:382, n. 8.

<sup>63</sup> Ofer, "Consolidation of the Mandatory System," 319–24; Bentwich, *Mandate Memories*, 147. French resigned his position in October 1932 and returned to Great Britain.

since it also turned into an internal problem within Arab society and a central issue in their political struggle against the Zionist movement, as shall be discussed below.<sup>64</sup>

During 1931–1935 there was unprecedented expansion of citriculture. A “planting mania” resulted in large-scale planting of orchards. In those years six million Palestine Pounds were invested in citriculture (not including land purchases) out of a total of 7.6 million Palestine Pounds invested in agriculture throughout the country. As part of the “Thousand Families Settlement Scheme” intended to settle a thousand working class families in areas where citrus orchards had been planted, between 1931 and 1933 around four hundred families were settled in the coastal plain area and over ten new settlements were established, in addition to other ones unrelated to the “Thousand Families Settlement Scheme” that arose in proximity to the expanding plantation settlements of the Sharon Plain.<sup>65</sup>

The final subject I shall note here with regards to the expansion of the N-shaped pattern relates to the immigrants from Germany who came to live in that area. Between 1920 and 1932, a total of over 2,000 olim arrived from Germany. As we have seen, a large wave of immigration from Germany began in 1933 with the Nazi rise to power. In that year alone 7,510 came from Germany, 9,729 in 1934, and 8,460 in 1935. All in all, over a period of three years 25,700 German Jews arrived, accounting for 19 percent of the total number of immigrants. While immigration from Germany primarily added to the urban population, over 25 percent moved to the countryside and also left their mark on the rural areas. They settled mostly in existing settlements, but some also established new ones of their own. For example, Nahariyah was a new village settled in 1935 that was planned as an agricultural settlement based on the method proposed by agricultural expert Selig Soskin. However, it very rapidly became a mixed agricultural-urban settlement with a distinctive German character. There were many other settlements established by German immigrants throughout the country from Kiryat Bialik in the north to Kfar Shmaryahu near Herzliyah in the central region. These were a special type of agricultural settlement, a middling construct between the older colony type and the newer moshav, an original contribution to the field of Jewish settlement. The foundations for all these settlements were laid before the outbreak of the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, which brought with it new developments.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> For the continuation of the Zionist conflict with the Mandate authorities over land acquisition, see Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 162–73 and the sources cited there.

<sup>65</sup> On the “Thousand Family Settlement Scheme” and the names of settlements established under it, see Bein, *Return to the Soil*, 461–63.

<sup>66</sup> For the settlement of immigrants from Germany, see *ibid.*, 442–45, 470–74. For the next stage in the development of the N-pattern of settlement during the “Stockade and Tower” period, see Chapter Eleven.



## **The rise of Hajj Amin al-Husseini and the decline of Ragheb Nashashibi and Musa Kazim al-Husseini; Abdullah’s involvement; Muslim radicalism intensifies; sale of land to Jews**

### **Hajj Amin al-Husseini, Ragheb Nashashibi, and Musa Kazim al-Husseini; the Jerusalem municipality; the Khalidis**

The previous chapter presented the development of events in Jerusalem that led to the outbreak of the 1929 riots, beginning with the Western Wall conflict on Yom Kippur of 1928, a conflict for which, to a great extent, the British authorities were to blame. Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini took advantage of the conflict to increase his power as head of the Supreme Muslim Council and to enhance the religious status of Jerusalem for Muslims, especially the Temple Mount, Haram al-Sharif, the “Noble Sanctuary.” Jewish extremists began to fan the flames as well, until the bloody riots of August 1929 throughout the country. Following these violent events, the extremists in the Palestinian Arab national movement gained greater influence, and the holy sites became the banner of the struggle against Zionism more than ever before. Hajj Amin al-Husseini took advantage of this trend to turn himself into the leader of the movement, at the expense of the veteran leadership. This was first manifested in the Central Relief Committee for the victims of the 1929 riots. The mufti was not content with his religious status alone, but took over organization of the activities of the Relief Committee. Later, when the Arab Executive Committee convened to choose the members of the Arab delegation that was to set out to London, Hajj Amin al-Husseini was chosen to lead it instead of the incumbent head of the AEC, Musa Kazim al-Husseini. This decision caused an uproar, following which the matter was discussed again and this time Musa Kazim al-Husseini was chosen to head the delegation. The conflict between the two was now out in the open, and the mufti continued his efforts to subvert the authority of Musa Kazim al-Husseini.<sup>67</sup>

The Jerusalem municipality also became an arena of struggle between the Husseinis and the Nashashibis. I already mentioned in a previous chapter that following the 1920 riots, Ronald Storrs, then military governor of Jerusalem, deposed mayor Musa Kazim al-Husseini due to his role in the rioting and appointed Ragheb Nashashibi to replace him for a period of two years. Due to formalities, the appointment continued for seven years, until 1927. The influence of the Nashashibis, particularly Ragheb, was greatly enhanced by the office. In 1927, after Plumer enacted ordinances regulating the operation of local government and the municipalities, the first municipal elections were conducted in Jerusalem in which

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<sup>67</sup> On the Relief Committee, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 2–3; for the conflict between the two factions, see *ibid.*, 110, 118–19 and the sources cited.

Ragheb Nashashibi was elected to continue as mayor, supported by the votes of the Jews who preferred him over a representative of the Husseinis.<sup>68</sup>

During 1928–1929 Hajj Amin al-Husseini and the Supreme Muslim Council launched a vigorous propaganda campaign. At the time, the Nashashibis still played a minor role, also in the anti-Jewish campaign regarding the right of Jews to pray at the Western Wall, in which the members of the opposition did not participate. Due to the growing conflict between Musa Kazim al-Husseini, the veteran leader and president of the Arab Executive Committee, and Hajj Amin al-Husseini, members of the opposition, led by Ragheb Nashashibi, drew nearer to Musa Kazim al-Husseini. This cooperation was also expressed in the final vote in which Musa Kazim was chosen to head the delegation to London. Following this cooperation, Musa Kazim al-Husseini evinced some moderation towards the Jews and even met with a number of Jewish leaders.

However, after the 1929 riots, and especially after the MacDonald Letter was made public in February 1931, extreme views were on the rise among the Arabs. These added to Hajj Amin al-Husseini's status and power until the opposition had no choice but to join in the general trend. The mufti sought to give the Jewish–Arab conflict a pan-Islamic character, especially with regards to the struggle over the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. In December 1931, when a pan-Islamic congress convened in Jerusalem, one of its participants was the Indian Muslim Shaukat Ali who wished to promote Islamic solidarity and was a leader of the Khilafat Movement that aspired to renew the Islamic Caliphate. In October 1933, Arab mass demonstrations against the British were held in Jaffa and Jerusalem, led by Musa Kazim al-Husseini. In March 1934, Musa Kazim passed away at the age of 84. Upon his death, the Arab Executive Committee which he had headed was abolished, and the struggle between the Nashashibis and the Husseinis was renewed with greater intensity.<sup>69</sup>

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**68** On the elections to the Jerusalem Municipality, see Chapter Eight, in the text at nn. 56–59; Ben-Arieh, *New Jewish Jerusalem*, 1794–95, and the sources cited there. Frumkin, *A Judge*, 285–88, notes that prior to the Mandate period the Nashashibis did not play a central role among the notable Arab families in Palestine. Their later status was acquired thanks to Ragheb Nashashibi. Supreme Court Justice Frumkin writes about Ragheb's personality and his struggle with the Husseinis.

**69** The Arab Executive Committee continued operating until 1934 and stopped functioning with the death of Musa Kazim al-Husseini; see Shimoni, *Arabs in Palestine*, 283. On Musa Kazim and his cooperation with the Nashashibis during the last years of his life, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 31–35, 44–47. For the serious conflict between the Arab Executive Committee, headed by Musa Kazim al-Husseini, and the Supreme Muslim Council, led by Hajj Amin al-Husseini, see Avraham Sela et al., "Arab-Palestinian Leadership and National Institutions during the Mandate Period," in *Jerusalem and the British Mandate: Interaction and Legacy*, ed. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh (Jerusalem: Mishkenot Sha'ananim; Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2003), 92–96 (Hebrew). I am grateful to Prof. Sela who read and commented on sections of Chapters Nine to Twelve. Naturally, I take full responsibility for the opinions expressed in them.

Even before that, the Jewish community was greatly disappointed by the stance adopted by Mayor Nashashibi who, as noted, was elected thanks to the Jewish vote and following an agreement between them. After the 1929 riots he joined the Arab delegation that traveled to London in March 1930 to express anti-Jewish sentiments. In protest against his conduct, the Jewish members resigned from the municipal council and awaited the next elections. When the time arrived, the British authorities decided to postpone the elections until conditions were more suitable. In 1934, the British nevertheless decided to hold them despite the demonstrations against government policy organized by the Arabs at the end of October 1933.<sup>70</sup> On January 12, 1934 the new Municipal Ordinance was published. Due to their disappointment with Ragheb Nashashibi, the Jews decided not to support him. They transferred their backing to Dr. Hussein al-Khalidi, hoping he would adopt a more neutral stance towards the Jewish–Arab conflict and avoid involvement in it. Khalidi was indeed elected, due in part to the Jewish vote, but from the summer of 1935, a short while after the municipality started operating, relations between him and the Jews began deteriorating. It turned out that he, too, tended to cooperate with the mufti. In April 1936, with the outbreak of the Arab Revolt and the establishment of the Arab Higher Committee, he joined ranks with the mufti. Later, when the British deported some of the Arab leaders to the Seychelles, Khalidi was among them.<sup>71</sup>

### **Abdullah's attempts to solve the Palestine problem and his meetings with the Husseinis and Nashashibis**

Relations between the Hashemite dynasty and Palestinian Arabs gained importance at the beginning of the 1930s. As early as during World War I, Palestinian Arabs began supporting the efforts of Feisal, a member of this dynasty. Several of them were involved in the short-lived political framework established by Feisal in Damascus. Earlier, the Palestinian Arabs followed with interest the relations that developed between Hussein, the Hashemite king of Hejaz, and Britain. Later they witnessed the establishment of Transjordan as a separate semi-independent entity under Abdullah. They saw the installation of the Hashemite King Hussein, Abdullah's father, to head the Caliphate in 1914, and later, when the Saudi royal dynasty deposed him from

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<sup>70</sup> The Jewish members of the Municipal Council did not participate in its deliberations for a period of about four years, from their resignation in 1930 until the elections in 1934. During these years the directors of Va'ad Hakehillah (the Communal Committee) filled in for the missing Jewish members in municipal matters.

<sup>71</sup> Ben-Arieh, *New Jewish Jerusalem, 1796–97* and the sources cited there. On the Khalidi family and several of its members, see the index in Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*.

control over the Hejaz in the 1920s, were prepared to accept the British steps adopted to strengthen Transjordan and its military force there.<sup>72</sup>

Throughout that entire period, Abdullah's relations with the Jewish institutions in Eretz Israel followed the norm expected of polite neighbors. Colonel Kisch visited Transjordan a number of times and even set out on a journey to Amman in January 1924 while King Hussein was also there. Abdullah also cooperated with the two Jewish entrepreneurs, Pinchas Rutenberg and Moshe Novomeysky, when they began establishing their projects – the hydroelectric plant at Naharaim and the potash works in the Dead Sea – with British assistance. Both met personally with Abdullah and stressed that they were professional economic entrepreneurs, yet it was also clear that they were Zionists closely connected to the Zionist movement.<sup>73</sup>

In late 1930 the relations between Abdullah and the Jewish institutions began to take a more practical turn. For economic reasons, one of the important sheiks in Jordan, a friend of Abdullah's, proposed selling 30,000 dunams of his land to Jewish institutions. Other sheiks followed suit and proposed entering into joint economic projects with Jews and selling them land. Abdullah was obviously aware of these initiatives by important tribal leaders in his emirate.<sup>74</sup>

The political importance of these initiatives became fully clear in mid-1932, when Abdullah himself proposed leasing 70,000 dunams of his lands in Ghaur al-Kibd to Jewish institutions.<sup>75</sup> Negotiations continued for six months, and on January 7, 1933 an agreement was reached between Abdullah and the representative of the Jewish Agency. Abdullah granted the Jewish Agency a six-month option to lease the land for ninety-nine years in return for an annual fee of two thousand Palestine Pounds. Since the Government of Palestine expressed its objection to the deal, talks were halted for a while, but continued in secret until 1939.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 71–72, and in earlier chapters of his book. For Abdullah's plan for Greater Syria and his attempts to achieve it, see id., *In Search of Arab Unity*, 22–27, 38–39.

<sup>73</sup> On Rutenberg and Novomeysky, see Chapter Nine. For the involvement of Jewish entrepreneurs in efforts to achieve peaceful cooperation with Abdullah, see also *History of the Haganah*, 2,1: 456–57 which blames the British for the failure of this initiative, an opinion also held by Aaron Cohen, as noted in ch. 9, n. 91. On the position adopted by the Arabs, see *ibid.*, 2,1:460–64. Arlosoroff had an opposite view of the role of the British; see Avineri, *Arlosoroff*, 77–82. On Arlosoroff's involvement with the issue of Transjordan, see *ibid.*, 74–76.

<sup>74</sup> For the initiative of the sheiks and their efforts to sell land to the Jews, see Anita Shapira, "The Option on Ghaur al-Kibd: Contacts between Emir Abdallah and the Zionist Executive, 1932–1935," *Zionism* 1, no. 2 (1980): 239–43.

<sup>75</sup> Ghaur al-Kibd is a stretch of land on the banks of the Jordan River north of the Dead Sea, near the Damia Bridge. These were *jiftlik* lands formerly belonging to the Ottoman sultan which were transferred to Emir Abdullah for his use, but not to sell. For his attempts to sell them nevertheless, see *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> For the British opposition to Abdullah's initiative and what lay behind it, see *ibid.*, 251–59.

Abdullah needed the transaction for economic reasons since he was almost totally dependent on the annual grant he received from Britain and sought another source of income. However, there were other reasons as well, as later developments proved. Since 1933, Abdullah's relations with the Jewish Agency were cordial and characterized by an atmosphere of cooperation. In April 1933 a group of Bedouin sheiks openly met with a delegation from the Jewish Agency at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, despite the sharp criticism leveled by the the Arab press in Palestine and elsewhere.<sup>77</sup>

Apparently, the reason why Abdullah chose this approach was his aspiration to realize his lifelong dream of uniting Greater Syria under his rule. Palestine was to be the first stepping stone in realizing his plan, and its Jewish–Arab conflict the means by which he would achieve it. To this end, in the spring of 1934 he sent an envoy to the Jewish Agency's Political Department with a proposed agreement: (a) Palestine and Transjordan would be united under his rule; (b) the Arabs would acknowledge the Mandate, including the rights of the Jews which it contained (c) each of the two countries would maintain its political standing and have a legislative council of its own under the leadership of an elected prime minister. The two prime ministers would be subordinate to the emir and conduct their affairs in daily consultation with him; (d) a Jewish–Arab agreement would be reached on immigration and the sale of land, issues that would be expropriated from the authority of the legislative councils. Abdullah's envoy made clear the full significance of this step when he added that it was possible that in a few years' time Syria, too, would join the kingdom and new horizons would be opened for the Zionists.<sup>78</sup>

At the same time, in 1934 Abdullah also invited two delegations of Palestinian Arabs, one of the Husseinis and the other of the Nashashibis, headed by Hajj Amin al-Husseini and Ragheb Nashashibi, respectively, to meet with him. The first meeting, with the Husseini delegation, came to naught, even before Abdullah presented them with his proposal, when the mufti declared that he adhered to the consensual Arab plan of action: cancellation of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration and full independence for Palestine with an Arab majority. In contrast, the second meeting with the Nashashibi delegation ended in total agreement. Ragheb Nashashibi expressed

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<sup>77</sup> For the meeting in the King David Hotel, attended by Weizmann and Arlosoroff from the Jewish side, and the criticism its engendered among Palestinian Arabs, see *ibid.*, 247. On relations with Transjordan, see also Yaron Ran, *The Roots of the Jordanian Option* (Tel Aviv: Citrin, 1991) (Hebrew).

<sup>78</sup> Shertok was also invited to the meeting. Abdullah's plan was that should he come to an agreement with the Jews, he would go to London to convince the British that this was the solution to the Jewish–Arab conflict; see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 73–74. For the meeting of Aaron Hayyim Cohen, of the Jewish Agency's Arab Bureau, and Shertok with Abdullah on Dec. 28, 1934 and Cohen's discussion with Muhammad al-Unsi on Jan. 1, 1935, see Neil Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy, 2: Arab–Zionist Negotiations and the End of the Mandate* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), 203–4 (no. 9). For Shertok's meeting with Abdullah in Amman on July 11, 1935, see *ibid.*, 204–6 (no. 10). On Britain and Abdullah's Greater Syria plan, see Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 203–16.

his opinion that an agreement with the Jews should be obtained as soon as possible. He declared his loyalty to Emir Abdullah and proposed that when Abdullah set off for London, a representative of the Nashashibis would also accompany him.<sup>79</sup>

The results of Abdullah's attempt to bring peace to Palestine intensified the conflict between the Husseinis and the Nashashibis. The former attacked Abdullah as a "friend of the Jews" and ruled out his ideas to permit Zionist penetration into the neighboring Arab countries. In contrast, the Nashshibi opposition made Abdullah's ideas public and expressed their clear and overt support of him. They began cooperating with him in his trips to London and also supported his plans for a Greater Syria.<sup>80</sup>

However the British authorities did not agree with Abdullah's ideas, the main objector being High Commissioner Wauchope, and thus their progress was halted. In the meantime, there were other developments in the country. The Arab "General Strike" broke out in 1936. In its wake came the Royal (Peel) Commission, and the situation in the country was completely changed. All these will be dealt with below.

### The Istiqlal party and pan-Arabism; increasing radicalism

After the MacDonald Letter of February 13, 1931 was made public, various Arab societies in Palestine intensified their criticism of the moderation displayed by the Arab Executive Committee. Much criticism was leveled against the decision to avoid a general strike on "Palestine Day," which was intended to take place, like every year, on May 16. While the usual demands to cease Jewish immigration and land acquisition were voiced, other far-reaching general demands were added, such as calls for "Liberty, Unity, and Independence." This was the atmosphere that enabled the entrance of the younger, educated, generation into the field of political activity. Some of them were the offspring of well-known dignitaries who, in the 1920s, expressed moderate opinions regarding Jews and were even on friendly terms with them. Beginning in 1931, sharp condemnation of the leadership by the dignitaries was heard in many Arab youth societies throughout the country. They began to organize and established the "Congress of the Arab Youth," a radical pressure group and one of the factors that brought the Arab Executive Committee to decide to hold the October 1933 demonstrations. Youth societies also organized as Arab Scouts companies in various frameworks. These groups grew in strength during 1932–1933. The rise of the radical youth

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<sup>79</sup> Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 73–74. In his diary, Shertok notes an additional, later, meeting on July 26, 1936, during the Arab Revolt, a telephone conversation between Abdullah and Ragheb Nashashibi, and a telephone call by Abdullah from the King David Hotel on Nov. 24, 1936, inviting Shertok to meet him; see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 1:242–45, 250, and 362, respectively.

<sup>80</sup> Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 74–75, who notes that their support of Abdullah continued until the annexation of the Arab parts of Palestine by Transjordan after the signing of the Israel–Jordan armistice agreement following the War of Independence.

and its organizations played an important role in the history of the Palestinian Arab national movement.<sup>81</sup>

A radical organization that was established during this time was the Istiqlal (Independence) Party. Actually, it was a by-product of the attempt to establish a pan-Arab political organization but ended with the creation of a new Arab political party in Palestine. The first obstacle the initiators of the pan-Arab notion had to deal with was King Ibn Sa'ud's fear that the movement would promote the status and union of the Hashemite rulers. Their plan was that the founding conference of the party would be held in Baghdad under the aegis of King Feisal of Iraq. The British were worried that a Saudi–Hashemite struggle would ensue and found ways to postpone the conference in Iraq until the autumn of 1933. The death of King Feisal on September 8, 1933 put an end to the option of holding the conference there, but the preparations made for it laid the foundations for the party whose center was established in Palestine. An outstanding fact is that none of the founders were from Jerusalem. Some came from the northern district, and others, the most prominent among them, were from Nablus and its vicinity, notable among them being the attorney 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi.<sup>82</sup>

The composition of the founding members reflected the fact that over and above ideological motives, they were also greatly motivated by protest and disgust at the conflicts between the Jerusalemite families. It seems that the establishment of the Palestinian Istiqlal party was based on a desire to provide an organized and political framework to express the founders' aspiration to distance themselves from local and personal politics. The party platform was based on a "Manifesto to the Arab World" published in 1931 as a side issue to the Islamic Conference convened in Jerusalem. The manifesto called for absolute freedom of the Arab countries, with emphasis placed on the fact that the Arab countries were one united entity that could not be divided up, and that Palestine was an Arab country and a natural part of Syria. The platform also included demands such as the cancellation of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration, and establishment of an Arab parliamentary regime in Palestine.

After it was founded, Istiqlal began political activity of a pan-Arabic, anti-imperialistic, anti-British, and of course anti-Zionist character. Palestine was called

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 121–23. For Palestinian Arab political parties and movements during the 1920s and 1930s, see Sela et al., "Arab-Palestinian Leadership," 100–103; see also Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 75–79. For an overview of the Arab economy and society, see Avraham Sela, "Palestinian Society and Institutions during the Mandate: Changes, Lack of Mobility, and Downfall," in *Economy and Society in Mandatory Palestine, 1918–1948*, ed. Avi Bareli and Nahum Karlinsky (Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2003), 291–347 (Hebrew).

<sup>82</sup> Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 123–27. On 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi, who developed into a prominent Arab leader, see the indexes to all volumes of Sharett, *Political Diary*. See also a document by Shertok on a conversation between Arlosoroff and 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi in the home of Gershon Agronsky in Jerusalem, in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 186–87 (no. 3).



Southern Syria in the party platform, a return to the terminology of 1918–1920. At the beginning of 1933, the party leadership adopted a sharper tone and aroused response among the public, in general, and young Arabs and the intelligentsia, in particular. It seems that the party reached the height of its popularity and influence during the first half of 1933, while later its activities were significantly reduced. Its final public meeting was held in September 1933. To all intents and purposes, Istiqlal's chapters ceased to exist towards the end of 1933. The cause for its downfall was the division from which the party in Palestine suffered from the very outset, and when it failed to become a pan-Arab party active in other Arab countries as well the split increased in Palestine between the pro-Hashemite and pro-Saudi factions. At the beginning of 1933, when news of the negotiations between Abdullah and the Jewish Agency became public, the pro-Saudi faction pounced on the opportunity to strike at the prestige of the pro-Hashemite group. To the political disagreements were added personal conflicts, financial difficulties, and internal mutual accusations within the Palestinian Arab parties.

### **Sale of land to Jews and its effect on Arab nationalism; the growing threat of Jewish immigration**

I addressed the issue of land acquisition by Jews at length in the previous chapters. However, the emphasis there was on the need for land to enable development of Jewish settlement in the late Ottoman era and during the Mandate period. Here I shall address its effect on the Arab community.

At first, Jewish settlement in most cases focused on areas that in a large part were not densely populated by Arabs, and thus there was no particular harm done to the Arab population. On the contrary, the local Arab residents often somewhat benefited from it.<sup>83</sup> Afterwards, when Jewish acquisitions increased in scope, this was mostly in extensive areas owned by effendis who were absentee landlords and lived abroad. The major claim raised then concerned the damage done to the livelihood of the Arab tenant farmers who were required to vacate the land, the solution being the provision of suitable monetary compensation or another plot of land.<sup>84</sup>

However, following the violent events of August 1929 the Arabs began raising another claim which they employed both in their internal struggle to increase Arab national sentiment, and externally in their struggle against the British government

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<sup>83</sup> Acquisition of land by Jews during the First and Second Aliyah periods was discussed in Chapters Five and Six, and in the Mandate period in Chapters Seven to Nine. For a detailed survey of Jewish land purchases, including tables by date of purchase, region, and more, and also the number of dispossessed tenants, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 80–90.

<sup>84</sup> On the tenant farmers, see also Chapter Nine, the sub-section on acquisition of land from Arabs, 1918–1928.

and the Jewish community. They maintained that land acquisition was one of the central means employed by the Jews to gain control of the country, a claim that became one of the major elements in the conflict between the two nations. The change in attitude also surfaces when one examines discussions by Palestinian Arabs among themselves. During the Third and Fourth Palestinian Congresses (December 1920 and May 1921), the issue of land sales was not yet raised, so no decisions had to be taken on the subject. During 1921 there was a great increase in Jewish land acquisition. Nevertheless, though there were discussions on the subject during the Fifth Congress (August 1922) it did not make any decisions and settled for the appointment of a committee that would examine the question of land transfer to Jews. In the following years, 1924–1927, the Palestinian Arab national movement was badly split. The Seventh Congress, in June 1928, still did not debate or decide anything about the matter. This indifference ended in the second half of 1929, replaced by increasing agitation regarding the sale of land to Jews. The land issue was raised at several meetings in the autumn of 1929 convened to deal with the Western Wall conflict. The participants pledged to protect and keep the land in Arab hands, not to sell it to Jews, whether directly or indirectly, and not to serve as middlemen in such sales. The Arab Executive Committee, which convened in January 1930, also began addressing the subject, and even appointed a special committee to examine it. A telegram was sent to the British government with a demand to prohibit by law the sale of land to Jews by Arabs. This was the first time this demand was raised, one which from the mid-1930s until the end of the Mandate period became a cornerstone of the Palestinian Arab national struggle.<sup>85</sup>

Since the 1930s, Arab organizations began to take action against Arab land sellers and agents. The problem became a central issue of the Arab community, about which much was said and written. One cannot overestimate the destructive result of land sales for the Palestinian Arab national movement. Due to economic reasons the sales were very widespread and engendered an atmosphere of suspicion, deception, and irritability. Accusations against political rivals regarding land sales were a daily occurrence. The word “middleman” (*sum-saar*) became a derogatory epithet, and accusations abounded claiming that the Arabs could only blame themselves for this state of affairs. The leaders of the Arab national movement realized that the solution to the problem lay with the Palestinian Arabs themselves. Accordingly, the Arab press began devoting space in its pages to explain the great danger inherent in these sales. Contrary to the 1920s, the land issue was now considered a matter of life and death, no less than the issue of Jewish immigration. Palestinian institutions, among them the Arab Higher Committee and the Arab Executive Committee,

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<sup>85</sup> Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 90–92, and the sources cited there. See also the discussion of the Shaw Commission and the Hope Simpson report in Chapter Nine.

began adopting measures such as the establishment of national funds to save land from being sold to Jews.<sup>86</sup>

All this notwithstanding, there is no doubt that the main factor of Arab radicalization was the increase in Jewish immigration starting in 1932, as described above. The growing realization that putting a stop to the growing strength of the Zionist enterprise would only be achieved with the help of the Arab world was one of the reasons for the positive public response to the pan-Arab propaganda of the Istiqlal party and other societies at the time. The Arab outcry against the Jewish “flood of immigration” did not cease after it began in 1932, and to a great extent was the cause for the Arab Revolt.

The great increase in aliyah prodded the Jewish authorities to try to realize the policy of “Jewish labor.” To this policy that was rooted in the fundamental ideals of the Zionist revival – a return to the land, physical labor, and reform of the economic structure of the Jewish people – was now added another element: economic absorptive capacity. Since the scope of Jewish immigration to Eretz Israel depended on this absorptive capacity, the Jewish authorities had to ensure that any employment opportunity in the Jewish economy would be available for the absorption of Jewish immigrants. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the Arab outcry against Jewish immigration was accompanied by a protest against the policy of “Jewish labor” which was detrimental to Arab laborers. The outcry increased when that policy was supported by the Histadrut labor union, causing clashes between Jewish and Arab laborers. The Arabs called upon the British government to intervene and prevent an economic boycott, and Arab newspapers wrote that “the real struggle which now exists in the country is between Arab and Jewish labor.”<sup>87</sup>

Against such a background, the tension and hostility between Arabs and Jews gradually increased. Both sides viewed the victims in the 1929 riots as sacred national heroes. Arab youths began organizing in military units under the cover of sport clubs or Boy Scout troupes, hoarding weapons and undergoing training. Regional organizational centers were formed, and various associations were established. Their activities increased as 1935 drew near and continued until the breakout of the Great Arab Revolt of the Palestinians in 1936.

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**86** For the role of the Supreme Muslim Council and the attitude of the Mandatory government on land purchase, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 94–103. In October 1933, Rashid Rida, an Egyptian Muslim scholar, issued a *fatwa* in which he declared that anyone who helps the Jews to acquire land in Palestine is “a traitor to his nation and country, and an enemy of God, his Prophet, and believers”; see *ibid.*, 95. I thank Avraham Sela for bringing this to my attention.

**87** For details and sources, see *ibid.*, 127–30.

## **Jewish attempts for compromise with the Palestinian Arabs from 1929 until the end of the Arab Revolt, 1929–1939**

Immediately following the Balfour Declaration, attempts began to negotiate with the Arabs to reach a compromise on the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. I discussed some of these shortly in the previous chapters. In what follows I will focus on the attempts made during the period between 1929 and the end of the Arab Revolt in 1939. After the 1929 riots, the Jewish political leadership realized that it was necessary to attain peace with the Arab world. During the Zionist Congress in Basel in 1931, it was decided to act determinately in order to achieve Jewish–Arab agreement on the basis of the parity concept detailed above. Such attempts were made in the early 1930s by Arlosoroff, and later by Ben-Gurion and other individuals and groups.

### **Brit Shalom and Ruppin's return to the Zionist mainstream**

The first group that tried to negotiate with the Arabs was Brit Shalom. I presented its establishment in 1925 in the previous chapter. Its general aim was to raise ideas and plans for achievement of peace between Jews and Arabs. It appears that Brit Shalom's major line of thought was the establishment of a bi-national form of government in the country and readiness to forgo a Jewish majority in favor of a special minority status. The Zionist movement opposed this idea in a broad consensus that ran from right to left. The majority of the Yishuv was generally in favor of an exactly opposite solution: the establishment of a Jewish state by continual accumulation of strength under the aegis of the British Mandate. Weizmann was a proponent of this process and did not view it as a move that would necessarily lead to a violent clash with the Arabs. He believed that the idea of parity, which posits political equality regardless of numbers, was a practical solution as long as it did not conflict with the continued development of the national home and with aliyah to Eretz Israel. Following the 1929 riots, Brit Shalom tried to continue its operations, but in the wake of the traumatic events Ruppin, the founder of the society in Eretz Israel, came to the conclusion that in the current state of affairs peace with the Arabs was unattainable, and returned to support the moderate policy of mainstream Zionism led by Weizmann.<sup>88</sup> After the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in 1936, the Royal (Peel) Commission proposed a plan to partition

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<sup>88</sup> German Zionists, too, went through a crisis of unity in the wake of the 1929 riots. While the leadership tried to continue following the policy of Brit Shalom, Jewish public opinion in Germany was more supportive of Weizmann's position; see Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe*, 181–226. Some leaders at first also supported Magnes and his policy of a separate peace, but the leadership underwent a change.

western Palestine and establish a Jewish state in part of it. Ruppin supported this recommendation and viewed it as the only option for achieving peace between the two sides.<sup>89</sup>

### Judah L. Magnes and his first meeting with St. John Philby

Prominent among the first Jewish individuals who sought ways to attain peace between Jews and Arabs was Judah L. Magnes, president of the Hebrew University. Magnes did not join in the founding of Brit Shalom in 1925, even though the society was established during the days of the university's opening celebrations and included several of his close friends, among them Hugo Bergmann and Gershom Scholem. Magnes considered Brit Shalom under the leadership of Ruppin as too moderate. He believed that Ruppin had arrived at his peace notions and the option of a binational state not on the basis of ideological and moral viewpoints but for practical utilitarian reasons, while he himself objected to the idea of a Jewish state that would be detrimental to another people. Magnes continued to believe in the necessity for peace with the Arab world, even if this meant that the Jews would not have a state of their own.<sup>90</sup>

The first step Magnes took in this direction was to conduct negotiations with St. John Philby, a British convert to Islam who operated in the service of Ibn Sa'ud as a representative of the Arabs. These talks already began during the deliberations of the Shaw Commission in October–November 1929, the period following the riots of August 1929. Philby presented himself as a close friend and confidant of Lord Passfield, the British colonial secretary, and as one who maintained close ties with the leadership of the British Labour Party of which he was a member. He arrived in Damascus in October 1929, from where he continued to Jerusalem for a meeting with the mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini. In Jerusalem he also met with Magnes who in turn shared his ideas with British High Commissioner Chancellor. When Magnes' negotiations with Philby failed, he continued writing articles, published an anthology of his

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<sup>89</sup> See the chapter "Between 'Civil War' and 'Peace in the Yishuv' 1931–1935," in Shapira, "Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine," 73–108. On Brit Shalom, Magnes, Philby, ideas concerning the parity plan, and the Revisionists, see *ibid.*, 108–32. For negotiations between Zionist leaders and prominent Palestinian Arabs, see Avraham Sela, "Conversations and Contacts between Zionist and Palestinian Arab Leaders, 1933–1939," *Hamizrah Hehadash* 22 (1973): 401–23; 23 (1973): 1–21 (Hebrew).

<sup>90</sup> For Magnes' principles on this issue, see Heller, *From "Brit Shalom" to "Ihud,"* 41–45, 81–89; see also Hedva Ben-Israel, "Politics on Mount Scopus during the Mandate Period," in *The History of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Academic Progression in a Period of National Struggle*, ed. Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2009), 8–13 (Hebrew).

articles, and temporarily ceased his political activities.<sup>91</sup> Later he renewed his political efforts and even assisted Ben-Gurion in his talks with the Arabs in 1936.

As opposed to Ruppin, in 1937 Magnes rejected the Royal Commission's proposal. He found support among former members of Brit Shalom, which no longer functioned as a group. Accordingly, he decided to set out on his own political path which called for the foundation of a Jewish solely spiritual center in Eretz Israel. He claimed to be continuing in the footsteps of Ahad Ha'am who designated the country to serve as a global Jewish cultural center.<sup>92</sup> Later, Magnes tried to involve American Jewish leaders in the attempt to apply pressure on the Zionist Organization and Weizmann to accept his plans. His American friends, Felix Warburg, the non-Zionist member of the Jewish Agency, and many others all turned him down and admonished him for going his own separate way without consulting with his friends in advance, but he continued to hold his own.<sup>93</sup>

### Pinchas Rutenberg and his peace efforts

Another person active in attempts to achieve peace with the Arabs was Pinchas Rutenberg. He began his public activity by helping in the creation of the Jewish Legion during World War I in collaboration with Jabotinsky, and assisting in the defense of Jerusalem in 1920. He maintained close relations with Weizmann and the Zionist leadership. During a period of crisis in the National Council, he was called upon to serve as its chairman from September 24, 1928 to February 18, 1931. In the meantime his relations with the Zionist leadership deteriorated, and at the end of his tenure he resigned from the Elected Assembly as well.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> For a detailed study of Magnes' negotiations with Philby in 1929, including original documents, see Menahem Kaufman, *The Magnes–Philby Negotiations, 1929: The Historical Record* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998). In the introduction, Kaufman also notes Magnes' relationship with Rutenberg. See also Ben-Israel, "Politics on Mount Scopus," 13–15. Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 209–20, publishes four of Philby's documents from October and November 1929: a letter from Damascus to Lord Passfield; drafts of points presented to Philby by Arabs at Damascus; Magnes' proposals for Arab–Jewish understanding in Palestine; a letter from Philby to Lord Passfield sent from Cairo.

<sup>92</sup> Many claimed that they were disciples of Ahad Ha'am but continued to believe in the vision of a Jewish state. Weizmann considered Ahad Ha'am to be his mentor, especially when both were in England during the First World War; Jabotinsky visited Ahad Ha'am in Tel Aviv and understood from him that he was in favor of a real Jewish state; see Chapter Nine at n. 66 in the text.

<sup>93</sup> Later, Philby tried to convince Ibn Sa'ud to raise once again the idea of a federation in Palestine, a topic to which I shall return in Chapter Eleven, at nn. 83, and 90 in the text.

<sup>94</sup> On the tense relations between Rutenberg and the Zionist leadership, see Chapter Nine, at n. 43 in the text. When the hydroelectric plant was dedicated on June 9, 1932, the Zionist leaders were not invited, and Weizmann was deeply offended. Arlosoroff notes that Rutenberg greatly feared what was in store for the Jews in Eretz Israel, and that during the past three years he began every speech with "As is well known, we are standing at the brink of disaster." See Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary*, 28.

At the beginning of Rutenberg's tenure as chairman of the National Council, Magnes met with Philby. Rutenberg was not directly involved in these talks, but apparently was aware of them. He began toying with ideas of his own for peace with the Arabs. They focused mainly on his relations with Abdullah through the Naharaim hydroelectric station which was already under construction. Rutenberg traveled to London to discuss the matter with several personages. He also forged a special relationship with High Commissioner Chancellor and shared his thoughts with him. However the Jewish Agency leadership, with strong backing from Weizmann, rejected all of his proposals.<sup>95</sup>

### **The initiative of “the Five”: Magnes, Rutenberg, Novomeysky, Frumkin, and Smilansky**

The Arab General Strike of 1936 gave rise to an initiative by two of those mentioned above who were joined by others with the purpose of improving relations between Jews and Arabs. This attempt took place around a month after the strike began, and is known as the initiative of “the Five”: Magnes, Rutenberg, Novomeysky, Frumkin, and Smilansky. Apparently it was Rutenberg who first proposed it, and he was also the first to submit a detailed memorandum on the subject, that bears his name alone, to the Jewish Agency in which he set out what should be done in order to promote an agreement between Jews and Arabs. Gad Frumkin wrote at some length about “the five who banded together” and published the text of the memorandum, together with his own suggestions for the memorandum which he claims were merged into the agreed proposal submitted by the five.<sup>96</sup> On July 28, 1936 they also sent the memorandum to Shertok, with an accompanying letter. On August 14 Shertok confirmed receipt of the memorandum, saying he would pass it on to all members of the Jewish Agency Executive. After some time, Frumkin was informed that Shertok and Bernard Joseph had talked with Musa al-'Alami, who recounted this to Magnes, and he in turn informed Rutenberg.<sup>97</sup> Later, Frumkin decided not to be involved with

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<sup>95</sup> For Rutenberg's efforts towards a peaceful solution with the Arabs, see Shaltiel, *Pinchas Rutenberg*, 214–294. See also the proposals submitted by Rutenberg to the Colonial Office in May 1930 in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 225–27 (no. 35).

<sup>96</sup> Frumkin, *A Judge*, 325–40. Their proposal included limiting Jewish immigration to 30,000 per year for ten years, by which time there would be 800,000 Jews in the country accounting for 40 percent of the total population of 2,000,000; see *ibid.*, 328–29. For a preliminary plan presented by Frumkin on May 18, 1936, see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 206–8 (no. 11); for the proposal presented by the “five” to the Jewish Agency on June 1, 1936, see *ibid.*, 211–13 (no. 13).

<sup>97</sup> For reports on previous conversations with al-'Alami by Joseph on May 28, 1936 and Shertok on June 21, 1936, see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 208–11 (no. 12), 213–15 (no. 14), respectively. In his diary entry for May 23, 1936 Shertok records the same details and mentions that the persons who spoke with them were Musa al-'Alami and Musa al-Khalidi; see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 1:136.



this initiative anymore and withdrew from politics. Moshe Smilansky, who joined the five, also describes it in his autobiography, where he calls himself Yehudah.<sup>98</sup> These sources and others provide details about the meetings between al-'Alami and Shertok. Magnes also writes about them.<sup>99</sup> The five were apparently prepared to limit aliyah to Eretz Israel, to which the Jewish Agency leadership objected. In the final tally, it became clear that the Arab personages with whom they were talking did not represent the Palestinian Arabs.<sup>100</sup>

### Ben Gurion's talks with the Arabs, 1934–April 1936

There is no doubt that the most important attempts by a Jewish leader to conduct talks and negotiations with the Arabs were made by David Ben-Gurion. It is likely that the tension between the two sides, which gradually increased during the years prior to the Arab Revolt of 1936, encouraged Ben-Gurion in 1934 to personally conduct talks with the Arabs. Recounting these meetings, he first notes Arlosoroff, whom he thinks came to a pessimistic conclusion, this on the basis on his letter to Weizmann of June 30, 1932. From that letter, Ben-Gurion concludes that Arlosoroff believed there was no other option but to establish a national minority government, since it alone would be able to achieve the aims of Zionism. Ben-Gurion writes that he does not understand how Arlosoroff even thought it would be possible to do so.<sup>101</sup>

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He notes that the negotiations were not serious. On these two persons see the indexes to all five volumes of the diary. Rutenberg heard from Magnes that al-'Alami decided to cease his involvement in the matter because Shertok demanded that he bring a document signed by the mufti, but Shertok refuted that claim; see *ibid.*, 1:234.

**98** Smilansky, *Revival and Holocaust*, 187–97, writes of his joining and activity in the group of five, with details quite similar to those supplied by Frumkin (note 96 above). He writes warmly about Magnes and his conversations with him; *ibid.*, 182–83 and also mentions members of Brit Shalom, such as Kalvarisky and others.

**99** For a summary of these events with documents, see Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 266–76. On Musa al-'Alami, see *ibid.*, 312, starred footnote. See also Eliahu Elath, "Conversations with Musa al-'Alami," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 41 (1987): 31–75; *id.*, *Through the Mist of Time*, 141–80; Frumkin, *A Judge*, 338; the entry for June 21, 1936 in Sharett, *Political Diary*, 1:176–79. For an earlier conversation of Shertok and Ben-Gurion with al-'Alami in the home of Shertok, see David Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders* (New York: The Third Press, 1973), 15–17. See also Geoffrey Furlonge, *Palestine Is My Country: The Story of Musa Alami* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 102–3.

**100** On Magnes' involvement in the initiative of "the five," see Ben-Israel, "Politics on Mount Scopus," 22.

**101** Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 13, with a reference to Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary*, 341; Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 243–44. Cohen believes that Arlosoroff was a disciple of Martin Buber and one of the most moderate in the Zionist leadership in relation to relations with the Arabs; see *ibid.*, 251–55. For Arlosoroff's letter to Weizmann of June 30, 1932, see notes 15 and 20 above.

Ben-Gurion reports that after he was elected to the Jewish Agency Executive at the Eighteenth Zionist Congress in 1933, he decided to examine options for peace talks with the Arabs. His position at the time, which he states first came to him on November 23, 1929, was that a Jewish state should be established in Eretz Israel only after there was a Jewish majority. During the Mandate period, Zionist aspirations would be ensured by participation in a parity government of Jews and Arabs. He believed that solution would be possible should a large Arab federation be formed. In 1934, Ben-Gurion even thought that perhaps fear of Jewish immigration would lead the Arabs to agree to a Jewish state as part of a Semitic federation with neighboring Arab countries.<sup>102</sup>

The first Arab with whom Ben-Gurion sought to meet to discuss his plans for peace was Musa al-'Alami, then the legal consultant to the British administration, a nationalist Arab with connections, also through family ties, to the Husseini leadership. Their first meeting took place in March 1934 in Shertok's home in Jerusalem. The Arlosoroff murder trial began during those days, and since Musa al-'Alami was the assistant prosecutor in the case, further meetings with him were postponed.<sup>103</sup>

When Ben-Gurion told Magnes about this meeting, the latter responded that he had not met with Arabs for a long time and was depressed by the situation. In the meantime, there were two other attempts to conduct talks with Arabs. Shertok traveled to Lebanon to meet with Riad al-Solh, a Lebanese leader who later became prime minister of Lebanon. Al-Solh promised to come to Palestine, and indeed in May-June 1934 he arrived and met with Ben-Gurion. A few days later, Ben-Gurion told Magnes of the meeting and asked for his help in arranging a meeting with a nationalist Palestinian leader with whom Magnes thought he should meet. Magnes proposed that Ben-Gurion speak with 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi, the head of the Istiqlal party. They met on July 18, 1934 in Magnes' home in Jerusalem.<sup>104</sup> After that, Ben-Gurion was able to meet Musa al-'Alami three additional times in the latter's home in a village near Jerusalem on August 14, 27, and 31, 1934. During the final meeting, when Ben-Gurion told his host that he planned to travel to London, al-'Alami suggested that from there he go to Geneva to meet with two members of the Syrian-Palestinian Council, Shakib Arslan and Ihsan al-Jabari. On September 2, 1934

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**102** Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 24, where he also records that at the merger convention in 1930 that created Mapai he said that his opposition to Brit Shalom does not stem from a negative attitude to the idea of peace and understanding with the Arabs, but Zionist aspirations must be preserved. See also Sela, "Conversations and Contacts." For Jewish proposals until 1939, especially the efforts of Ben-Gurion and the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, see also Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 58–64.

**103** For their meeting in March 1934 see the accounts of Ben-Gurion and al-'Alami in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 189–92 (no. 5). On Musa al-'Alami and his meetings with Ben-Gurion, see also Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 59–61, where mention is also made of the Lebanese leader Ri'ad al-Solh.

**104** See the accounts of Ben-Gurion and 'Awni 'Abd-al Hani about their meeting on July 18, 1934 in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 192–96 (no. 6).

Ben-Gurion set off for London. On his way, he sent Magnes a letter with the proposal that he join him for the meeting in Geneva, but Magnes was unable to do so. On September 22, 1934 Ben-Gurion went to Geneva to meet with the two Arab dignitaries. From there he continued to Poland and returned to Eretz Israel only in December. Upon his return he discovered that the meeting in Geneva had been made public in the newsletter of the Syrian-Palestinian delegation in Geneva, despite the agreement to keep it secret. What Ben-Gurion said was presented in an insulting and counterfactual manner. As a result, he refrained from further meetings with Arab personages for a period of about eighteen months.<sup>105</sup>

In April 1936 Magnes proposed that Ben-Gurion meet with George Antonius in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem. They met twice, on April 17, 1936 and shortly thereafter on April 29, with Magnes present at both meetings. Riots broke out in Jaffa on April 19, 1936, between the two meetings. After the second meeting, Magnes informed Ben-Gurion that Antonius had left for Turkey and Ben-Gurion never met with him again.<sup>106</sup>

There are those who claim that Ben-Gurion's talks with Arab leaders between 1934 and 1936 were the most significant attempt to close the gap between Jews and Arabs in the first half of the 1930s, yet nothing came of them except for an exchange of views and clarification of positions. Even though the Arabs were apparently willing to come to an agreement, their conditions would have been unacceptable for the Zionist movement. The main point of conflict was the matter of halting or limiting Jewish immigration, a condition the Jewish leadership was unable to accept.<sup>107</sup>

### Talks during the Arab General Strike, April–October 1936

Negotiation attempts continued even after the Arabs declared the General Strike that began the Arab Revolt.<sup>108</sup> I shall note the most significant among them, beginning

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**105** For three accounts about Ben-Gurion's three meetings with Ihsan al-Jabari and Shakib Arslan in Geneva on Sept. 23, 1934, see *ibid.*, 199–202 (no. 8). For his talks with these two, 'Awni 'Abd-al Hadi, and others, see also Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 60.

**106** For Ben-Gurion's version of his meetings with Arab leaders at this time, see Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 14–62. He provides many details of the positions he presented and their replies, all, of course, according to Ben-Gurion. Apr. 19, 1936 is the accepted date for the beginning of the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, to which I shall return in Chapter Eleven. On Antonius, see Kaufman, "George Antonius."

**107** Katzburg, "Palestine under the Mandate," 359–67; Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 457–69.

**108** My present discussion of negotiations between Jews and Arabs will go beyond the chronological framework of this chapter, which ends with the outbreak of the Arab Revolt. During its first stage, known as the General Strike, there were still attempts to find a compromise between the sides. I will include them so as not to disrupt the continuum of their presentation.

with Nuri al-Sa'ud, who, after the death of Feisal, the first king of Iraq, on September 8, 1933 became one of the prominent Arab politicians in the Middle East. Towards the end of 1935, Nuri al-Sa'ud began raising ideas regarding federations and confederations in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. In June 1936, during his stay in London, he met with Weizmann and presented his concept of a great Arab federation that would include the Jewish national home, but on condition that Jewish immigration would be halted for one year. He maintained that Weizmann agreed to that condition, but Weizmann denied the claim and stated that it was a misunderstanding.<sup>109</sup> Two months after his visit to London, Nuri al-Sa'ud came to Jerusalem and proposed that he mediate between the Mandate government and the Higher Arab Committee; however the British rejected his offer. Nuri al-Sa'ud met with Shertok in Jerusalem and presented his ideas to him. In October 1936, when the Palestinian Arab General Strike ended, he once again presented his proposed plan to the British ambassador in Baghdad, but there was a military coup in Iraq that same month and Nuri al-Sa'ud was removed from office.<sup>110</sup>

There was also much involvement of Ibn Sa'ud, the king of Saudi Arabia, in Palestine during the General Strike. In April of that year he signed treaties of friendship with Iraq and Egypt, and throughout the spring and summer was partner to the involvement of the other Arab countries in the Palestinian General Strike. Ben-Gurion recounts talks with a number of leading personalities from Arab countries and also mentions Ibn Sa'ud and his envoy Yusuf Yasin, as well as his personal representative in Syria, Fuad Bey Hamza. They tried to present their own proposals, but the British, on whom the Saudi king was dependent, advised them to cease. Later, Ben-Gurion tried to dispatch some Jewish personages to contact Ibn Sa'ud's people. In 1937, when Ben-Gurion went to London, he arranged meetings for himself with Philby who was a confidant of Ibn Sa'ud and, as noted, had been involved in 1929 in a peace initiative in collaboration with Magnes. Apparently Philby first rejected Ben-Gurion's

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**109** Nuri al-Sa'ud filled several important positions in Iraq even during the rule of King Feisal, but his efforts to find a solution in Palestine were conducted mostly after Feisal's death. His major plan was to create a Hashemite federation between Iraq and Transjordan; later he widened his proposal to a confederation that would also include Syria; see Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 39–40, including Nuri's talk with Weizmann in London. Porath also traces his continued efforts at mediation until the end of the British Mandate; *ibid.*, 41–57. For Nuri al-Sa'ud's mediation efforts, see also Kabha, *The Palestinians*, in the index.

**110** For the talk between Nuri al-Sa'ud and Shertok, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 1:271, who writes that Nuri told him that he has known Weizmann since 1918, has met with him, and knows his opinions. This was followed by an interesting discussion between them. Shertok later summed up by noting that all such talks ranged from general pan-Arab ideas to local Arab nationalism; *ibid.*, 2:20–21. Shertok also spoke with Wauchope on Sept. 2, 1936, upon the High Commissioner's initiative; *ibid.*, 2:291–96.

ideas but later he returned to consider them. The concept of an Arab federation headed by Ibn Sa‘ud as a solution to the Palestine problem is attributed to him.<sup>111</sup>

There were also some in Syria who tried to help solve the Palestine issue, but they feared that their involvement in Palestine might adversely affect their contractual negotiations with the French towards Syrian independence. Abdullah, too, was much active during the period of the General Strike and as a result of his own interests tried to mediate on several occasions, but the British rejected his efforts. Egyptian Prime Minister Mustafa al-Nahhas Pasha and the Imam of Yemen also tried their hand at mediation. While the High Commissioner agreed to efforts of the mediators, the first condition the British insisted on was termination of the strike.<sup>112</sup>

### The Samuel and Winterton initiative; the Rutenberg initiative

A unique British peace initiative, still during the Palestinian General Strike and apparently earlier than September 1936, is deserving of special attention and became known as the Herbert Samuel and Lord Winterton initiative. Its importance lies in the fact that one of its proposers was Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner for Palestine, who after his return to Britain served as leader of the Liberal Party. In 1935 Samuel was not re-elected to continue leading the party.<sup>113</sup> Samuel continued to take an interest in the issue of Eretz Israel and did not refrain from voicing his opinion regarding possible solutions raised. He was party to the view that the solution to the Jewish–Arab conflict lay in establishing a large Arab federation within which the Jewish national home would find its place.<sup>114</sup> Like the proposal presented

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**111** Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 121–41. On Ibn Sa‘ud’s involvement with the conflict in Palestine, see Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 80–106, who calls this sub-chapter “The Philby Scheme, or the Proposed Saudi-led Federation.”

**112** Sharett, *Political Diary*, 1:269, in the entry for Aug. 22, 1936, writes that he himself tried to help Abdullah in his efforts to put a stop to the riots in Palestine, and that following his talks with Nuri al-Sa‘id the Egyptians requested a meeting, so Bernard Joseph went there. In another diary entry, for Feb. 11, 1937, *ibid.*, 2:19–20, he notes that since the outbreak of the riots in the country, there had been changes in relations with neighboring countries; an independent government had come to power in Syria and the question of their relations with Syria had arisen. On the one hand, these events encouraged the rebelling Arabs in Palestine; on the other hand, Arab countries which found themselves in difficult situations wanted a state of quiet in Palestine.

**113** In the chapter which dealt to a great extent with Herbert Samuel, I referred to a lecture he delivered in 1935; see ch. 8, n. 157. While the first part of his lecture was devoted to his efforts to develop Eretz Israel, in the second part he stated that solving the Arab problem was the key point of his policy; see Samuel, *Great Britain and Palestine*, 19–21. Apparently, after 1935, when he was no longer much involved in the Liberal Party, he continued to seek solutions to the Palestine problem.

**114** Shertok recorded in his diary that Samuel met with Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore in London on Sept. 20, 1936 to discuss this matter at the invitation of Ormsby-Gore. Samuel told the colonial secretary that the initiative was Rutenberg’s who had arrived in London in a depressed mood and

by the “group of five” noted above, the Samuel and Winterton proposal included the principle of government limitation of Jewish immigration, in addition to acceptance of the fact that the Jewish community would remain a minority of up to 40 percent of the population.<sup>115</sup> Samuel and Winterton hoped they would be able to get Nuri al-Sa’id’s support for their proposal and have Palestine become part of the Hashemite federation which he was actively promoting, but their plan failed.<sup>116</sup>

After Samuel and Winterton admitted their failure to convince Nuri al-Sa’id, Rutenberg raised an initiative of his own, somewhat similar to his previous plan to limit aliyah. He managed to recruit Weizmann for a meeting with members of the Colonial Office on October 3, 1936. Weizmann was willing to adopt the parity principle despite the great difficulties it entailed.<sup>117</sup> However, he rejected Rutenberg’s willingness to introduce changes into the principle of economic absorptive capacity by setting standards for the scope of immigration.<sup>118</sup>

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asked Samuel to do everything in his power to put an end to the riots. Samuel reported the conversation to Weizmann, who informed him that Rutenberg had no authority to speak in the name of the Jews; see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 1:309–10. The diary also includes Weizmann’s letter to Selig Brodetzky, Sept. 25, 1936, in which he complains of Samuel’s intervention and asks Brodetzky to find out exactly what Samuel said to Ormsby-Gore.

**115** On the joint initiative of Samuel and Lord Winterton, an MP who was a supporter of Arabs in Parliament and a friend of Nuri al-Sa’id, and the opposition of Weizmann and other Zionist leaders to Samuel’s involvement, see Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 74–76. Samuel and Ormsby-Gore met with Nuri al-Sa’id in Paris on Sept. 19, 1936; see Samuel’s draft proposals and the accounts of both sides to the meeting in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 224–29 (no. 19).

**116** For Nuri al-Sa’id’s great involvement in Palestine and attempts to achieve Jewish–Arab cooperation with persons such as Magnes and others of like mind to oppose the partition plan, see Yoram Nimrod, “Nuri al-Sa’id’s Involvement in Palestine: Jewish–Arab Collaboration, 1937–1938,” *Cathedra* 14 (Jan. 1980): 153–79 (Hebrew); see also note 109 above. For the British reaction to Nuri al-Sa’id’s initiative, see Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 216–23. See also the following relevant documents: Rutenberg’s proposal of July 1936 for the development of Transjordan through Jewish–Arab cooperation in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 216 (no. 15); Shertok’s report of his conversation with Nuri al-Sa’id, Aug. 21, 1936, *ibid.*, 221–24 (no. 18); the talks conducted by Bernard Joseph in Cairo on Sept. 21 and 23, 1936, *ibid.*, 229–33 (no. 20); Shertok’s report of his meeting with ‘Awni ‘Abd al-Hadi, Apr. 21, 1937, *ibid.*, 233–35 (no. 21); a conversation of Norman Bentwich with Jamal al-Husseini in London, July 14, 1937, *ibid.*, 235 (no. 22).

**117** The parity proposal was discussed in the text and notes 31–33 above. See also Sharett, *Political Diary*, 1:325, entry for Oct. 4, 1936, who notes that Weizmann was in favor of the idea, but after his talk with Ormsby-Gore he thought that care should be taken to ensure that the Arab kings would not be involved. Weizmann, however, did not put his trust in the High Commissioner and thought that the initiative should come from the Arabs. Only then would it be possible to accept it, but on condition that it would not place any restrictions on Jewish immigration; see the notation for Nov. 3, 1936, *ibid.*, 1:360.

**118** On Rutenberg’s joining “the five” and his ostensible agreement with Abdullah in July 1936, the Samuel-Winterton initiative, and Abdullah and the Colonial Office, see Shaltiel, *Pinchas Rutenberg*, 444–471. Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:414, entry for Nov. 13, 1937, records Rutenberg’s support of the

### Peace talks continue during the sojourn of the Royal Commission, 1936

All the mediation plans proposed before, after the outbreak of, and during the Arab General Strike seem to have been based on a number of common presuppositions. The first was that the growth of the Yishuv would be halted or limited in such a way that the Jews would remain a minority in Palestine in which an Arab majority would always rule. The second assumption was that the crucial interests of the British Empire would be maintained in any solution adopted, whether an independent Palestinian state or a federation in which Britain would be granted the status of trustee.<sup>119</sup>

The Palestinian Arabs, through the Arab Higher Committee, presented more extreme positions. They insisted on three demands: total cessation of Jewish immigration, severe limitation of land sales to Jews, and immediate initiation of talks for the establishment of a national government in Palestine. At the same time, the General Strike caused great damage to the Arab economy and society just as the citrus export season was about to begin, posing a threat to the major branch of the Palestinian Arab economy. The Arab Higher Committee lost control of events. Its leaders, the Husseinis among them, feared that serious damage would be done to their image and political standing if they tried to end the strike without any visible achievement. Finally, after a public appeal by the kings and leaders of the Arab countries to cease the strike – a step taken with the encouragement of the British government which promised that the reasons that led to the strike would be examined – the Palestinian Arabs agreed to call it off one month before the Royal Commission arrived in the country on November 11, 1936. During the commission's deliberations Ben-Gurion continued to hold talks with Arab personages; however, all were waiting to see what the commission would recommend.<sup>120</sup>

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Peel Commission's partition plan. It should be noted that despite his personal opinions, Rutenberg took pains not to come out openly against the Zionist leadership, as when he notified the High Commissioner that the Jews would never surrender their arms; see *ibid.*, 5:55. Yet, Rutenberg continued to maintain personal relationships with the High Commissioners.

**119** In negotiations with Arab leaders on May 11, 1936 and 25 Sept. 1936, the preconditions were that the Jews would waive their demand for a Jewish state; see appendices 3 and 4 in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 126–32.

**120** Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 104–21. For details of two talks with Fuad Bey Hamza, the first by Eliahu Epstein (Elath) and the second by Ben-Gurion, in April 1937 – several months after the Royal Commission arrived, see *ibid.*, 121–26. A month later, on May 18, 1937, Ben-Gurion met in London with Philby and Captain Harold C. Armstrong, both close to Ibn Sa'ud; see *ibid.*, 127–41. On July 7 the Peel Commission published its report.



### Talks following the Royal Commission's partition recommendation; Samuel's involvement, 1937

The Royal Commission submitted its report and recommendations on July 7, 1937, among them termination of the Mandate and partition of Palestine. However there were still those, among them supporters of Zionism, who preferred the Arab federation plans to those of the Royal Commission.<sup>121</sup> Most prominent among them was Herbert Samuel. I have already mentioned the proposal he made together with Lord Winterton in 1936. When the Royal Commission's partition plan was made public, he came out against it. He continued to believe the plan to partition Palestine was mistaken and repeated his proposal to permit Jewish settlement in Transjordan and allow the Jewish community to increase up to 40 percent of the total population. His proposals, however, did not receive support. Even much later, when in 1947 the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine recommended partitioning the country and the establishment of a Jewish state within part of it, Samuel continued to hold this view. Only after the State of Israel was founded did he admit that perhaps he had been mistaken in his objections to the partition plan and the establishment of an independent Jewish state. There were also other leading British personalities, Zionist supporters, who opposed the partition plan; apparently this was also Winston Churchill's viewpoint at the time. The only one who supported partition was Leopold Amery who also came out against the 1939 White Paper.<sup>122</sup>

### The Hyamson-Newcombe plan and Magnes' involvement during the activity of the Woodhead Commission

The final proposal I shall discuss, deliberated between the end of 1937 and late 1938, is the Hyamson-Newcombe plan. In January 1938 the British government announced that conditions were not suitable for implementation of the Royal Commission recommendation to partition Palestine. In March 1938 it appointed a new commission headed by Sir John Woodhead, whose purpose was to examine the option of implementing the partition plan or to propose other solutions. The commission set out in April 1938 and submitted its report and conclusions in mid-October 1938. The Woodhead Commission unanimously opposed the Royal Commission's partition plan, claiming that it was not

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<sup>121</sup> Though the Peel Commission and the continuation of the Arab Revolt will be discussed in the next chapter, I am including here details of peace talks with the Arabs conducted after publication of the commission's report in order to present a fuller picture of these talks.

<sup>122</sup> Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 381–96. For Samuel's visit to Israel and meeting with Weizmann after the establishment of the state, see ch. 8, n. 159. He passed away on Feb. 5, 1963, at the age of 92. For Churchill's apparent opposition to the partition proposal at this time, see Gavriel Cohen, *Churchill and Palestine, 1939–1942* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1976), pp. xi–xiii (Hebrew).

practical, and proposed other solutions. The British government availed itself of the opportunity to shelve the partition plan for good.

However, on November 4, 1937, months before the Woodhead Commission was even appointed, another proposal for an attempt to achieve a compromise between Jews and Arabs was raised in the Hyamson-Newcombe document sent to Weizmann by Albert M. Hyamson.<sup>123</sup> According to their proposal, the area on both sides of the Jordan River would be an Arab state in which the Jews would have full autonomy and where they would account for less than 50 percent of the population. The Jewish Agency considered the proposal, but rejected it when it became clear that the Arabs, in this case the representatives of the mufti, were unwilling to agree to any additional Jewish immigration.<sup>124</sup>

The person who tried to promote this plan and even took steps of his own was Magnes. After the outbreak of the Arab Revolt and the publication of the Royal Commission partition plan, his views became more extreme. He objected to the partition plan and decided to act in the political arena according to his conscientious beliefs. He believed that the Zionist policy that aspired to attain a majority in Eretz Israel and establish a Jewish state was alarming the Arabs and spurring them to violence. This led him to propose limiting aliyah. He went so far as to speak out openly against the Peel Commission partition proposal at the Twentieth Zionist Congress in 1937. In October 1937, he began supporting the Hyamson-Newcombe document. Magnes contacted Hyamson and together they decided that it should be included in the Arab federation plan. Their candidate for whom to contact on the subject was Nuri al-Sa'id who traveled back and forth between the Middle East and London, where he met with Hyamson. The American consul in Jerusalem also joined them and together they suggested that Magnes should travel to Beirut to meet with Nuri al-Sa'id. Magnes set off to the meeting in the Beirut area in February 1938. However at that meeting the Hyamson-Newcombe proposal was rejected and another one decided upon, based on the concept of a federation with Iraq, the idea championed by Nuri al-Sa'id, as noted above. Magnes returned to Jerusalem with this plan where he received the support of non-Zionists. When he presented it to the Zionist leadership, he was fiercely criticized for what he had done and for apparent

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**123** Albert Montefiore Hyamson, a well-known British Jew, served for several years as director of the Immigration Department of the Mandate and was known as not being supportive of Zionism. He published several books relating to Palestine. Stewart Francis Newcombe was a British officer who participated in the mapping of northern Sinai; see Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery*, 219. He was also involved in setting the northern border of Palestine, and was known to be a confidant of T.E. Lawrence, a friend of the Arabs, and their representative in London. On Newcombe see also ch. 8, n. 108.

**124** Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 142–45; Sharett, *Political Diary*, 3:17–22, entry for Jan. 1, 1938, and 3:353, n. 4; see also the draft bases for discussion of the Hyamson-Newcombe plan in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 236–38 (no. 23); Emir Abdullah's proposal for the solution of the Palestine problem submitted to the Woodhead Commission, May 1938, *ibid.*, 238–39 (no. 24).

acceptance of the principle of a “permanent Jewish minority.” In the meantime, it transpired that Nuri al-Sa’id had not succeeded with his plan among the Arabs either.<sup>125</sup>

In October 1938, the Iraqi foreign minister Tawfiq al-Suwaydi visited London. He presented to the British another proposal from Nuri al-Sa’id according to which the Jews could be afforded autonomy as part of a federation of the Fertile Crescent. In addition, there were plans for Weizmann to travel to meet Ibn Sa’ud or to Iraq, together with Malcolm MacDonald, to reach an agreement, but nothing came of all these proposals as well.<sup>126</sup> Magnes remained convinced that he should make his ideas public. He did not change his ways, even when he left the country for the United States, where he continued to do so even after the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel. Judah Leon Magnes passed away in October 1948.<sup>127</sup>

### The Kedmah Mizrahah Association

With regards to Jewish efforts to reach a compromise with the Arabs even before the Arab Revolt, mention should also be made of the Kedmah Mizrahah Association. First steps for the establishment of this association were taken already in April 1936. The association’s objective was to advance peace between Jews and Arabs and achieve a Jewish–Arab agreement. It was formally established on June 22, 1936 and included, in addition to a number of former Brit Shalom members, mainly leading persons from respected veteran Jewish families in Eretz Israel. The association declared itself a non-partisan organization, the aim of which was getting to know the Orient and forging cultural, social, and economic relations with the peoples of the region.

Kedmah Mizrahah maintained that greater acquaintance with Arab society, its language, and people could improve relations with the Arabs, which might advance

<sup>125</sup> For many details, see Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 132–95.

<sup>126</sup> Shertok records his meetings with al-Suwaydi in London; Sharett, *Political Diary*, 3:309–11, entry for Oct. 11, 1938. He also writes about a parliamentary delegation from Egypt whose members suggested to hold another meeting with Ibn Sa’ud, even though they considered him to be a person of extreme opinions; *ibid.*, 3:302–3, entry for Oct. 9, 1938. Shertok also writes of the views of Malcolm MacDonald, who was perturbed by the Arab efforts to gain support at a time when Prime Minister Chamberlain was in a difficult position concerning Czechoslovakia and in his relations with Nazi Germany. See the summary note by Weizmann of his interview with Tawfiq al-Suwaydi in London on Oct. 6, 1938 in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 239–40.

<sup>127</sup> For Magnes’ opposition to the partition plan and the final years of his life, see Ben-Israel, “Politics on Mount Scopus,” 20–26, 74–86; see also Bentwich, *For Zion’s Sake*, 192–93, 296–314. On Magnes’ earlier activity, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:431–34; 3:17–19. For his meeting with Nuri al-Sa’id, see *ibid.*, 3:43–45, 55–56.

a political solution.<sup>128</sup> Among those active in the association were leaders of the Sefardi communities in Jerusalem, as well as writers and philosophers who adhered to mainstream Zionism. One of them, Rabbi Benjamin, the literary pseudonym of Yehoshua Radler-Feldman, even published two works in the name of the association, *A Collection of Articles on the Arab Question*, which he edited that was published in anticipation of the meeting of the Zionist Executive Committee in Zurich in the summer of 1936, and a booklet in German which he authored, *On the Arab Question: A Word at the Twelfth Hour*. Many members met with Ben-Gurion for discussions in which they presented the ideas of the association, stating that their views were not meant to be detrimental to the Zionist Organization but to assist it. Kedmah Mizrahah was active from 1936 to 1939, with relatively limited influence.<sup>129</sup>

### Peace efforts of Hayyim Margalioth-Kalvarisky

No survey of the aspirations of Jewish figures for the attainment of peace between Jews and Arabs can be complete without a few words about the veteran campaigner for peace Hayyim Margalioth-Kalvarisky, one of the active members of the Kedmah Mizrahah Association.<sup>130</sup> Kalvarisky began his efforts for Jewish–Arab conciliation at the time of the postwar peace conferences.<sup>131</sup> The focal point of his plan was the notion that Palestine is the homeland of its residents – Jews, Muslims, and Christians alike – all citizens with equal rights. In his plan he proposed that representatives of all Semitic nations in the Orient join hands to establish independent

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**128** Shertok relates that members of Kedmah Mizrahah, who had developed relations with the Egyptians, went there and negotiated primarily with Mahmud Azmi, whom they sent on a mission to Syria and Baghdad; see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:12–13. On Azmi, see Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 299, †-marked footnote; for his visit to Palestine during the inauguration of the Hebrew University, when he stayed at Justice Frumkin’s home, see Frumkin, *A Judge*, 265. On the Kedmah Mizrahah conference at Mikveh Israel, with sixty participants, addressed by Kalvarisky, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:129–30.

**129** Moshe Gabai, “*Kedmah-Mizrahah*” 1936–1939 (Givat Haviva: Institute for Arab Studies, 1984) (Hebrew), discusses the background for its establishment, the social composition of its membership, and more. Appendix 3 is an interesting discussion between the representatives of Kedmah Mizrahah and Ben-Gurion; *ibid.*, 85–106. See also Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 297–300.

**130** Hayyim Margalioth-Kalvarisky was born in Poland in 1867 and immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1895. He served as the administrative director of the JCA colonies in Galilee and purchased land in Lower Galilee on which several Jewish settlements were established. He spoke Arabic fluently and was well acquainted with Arab customs. See ch. 6, n. 38. See also a note by Kalvarisky on a secret accord proposed by Omar Salih al-Barghuti, Feb. 25, 1930, in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 1, 224–25 (no. 34) and Kalvarisky’s “Platform for Jewish–Arab Accord,” Aug. 4, 1930, *ibid.*, 227–31 (no. 36).

**131** Kalvarisky presented a proposal for a Jewish–Arab accord to the Syrian General Congress that convened in Damascus in 1919 and 1920. His original plan, with slight changes, was discussed again after the 1929 riots and during 1936–1937, after the outbreak of the Arab Revolt.

states that would flourish both economically and spiritually. He planned the establishment of one single state, uni-racial but not uni-national, in Palestine. Jewish immigration would not be limited and Jews would even be allowed to settle in the area east of the Jordan River. The final and ideal stage of his plan was the establishment of a broad Semitic federation in the Middle East, which all the countries that would be established in the region would join of their own volition. Kalvarisky celebrated his seventieth birthday in 1938 while continuing to plan efforts to achieve a Jewish–Arab peace. Hayyim Margalioth-Kalvarisky passed away in 1947.<sup>132</sup>

### **Summary: what led to the failure of attempts to reach a compromise between Jews and Arabs?**

I devoted the final part of this chapter to attempts by Jews and others to reach a compromise or an agreement between Jews and Arabs. I did so consciously bearing in mind what occurred later. I also extended the time frame of this section to include the duration of the Arab Revolt, and not just the first half of the 1930s, which is the chronological period set for this chapter. I did so because I believe that this matter should be examined together with its continuation in the later period of the Arab Revolt and until the fundamental change in British policy in 1939 and publication of the White Paper of that year.

The central question that arises from all the meetings and plans discussed above is why all attempts to reach some compromise between Jews and Arabs failed. Those opposed to the Zionist movement will claim that the entire concept of Zionism was invalid, that there was no justification for the return of the Jews to Eretz Israel and the establishment of a Jewish state within it after a hiatus of hundreds of years, and that from the very outset an Arab state should have been established there. In this study I have tried to show that when Zionism was born Eretz Israel had not yet existed as a separate entity, and the founders of Zionism believed there was also room in the Middle East for a Jewish state. At the time the Balfour Declaration was issued, many personages and countries were also of that opinion, but the Arabs refused to accept it. Many supporters of the Zionist movement tend to put the blame on the personality of the mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who was unwilling to compromise – not before, during, or after the Arab Revolt – and even collaborated with Nazi Germany in his extreme hatred of the Zionist movement,

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<sup>132</sup> On Kalvarisky, see also Sharett, *Political Diary*, 3:101–2, entry for Apr. 21, 1938. Kalvarisky served as director of the Arab Bureau of the Jewish Agency in 1923–1927. He was a member of Brit Shalom, Kedmah Mizrahah, and the League for Jewish–Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation. For his seventieth birthday celebrations, see *ibid.*, 3:155–56, entry for July 1, 1938, and 218–20, entry for July 27, 1938.

leading the Palestinian Arabs to disaster. While there seems to be some truth in this interpretation, there are still a number of other issues to be clarified.

During the first half of the 1930s, many Zionist leaders still believed there was a possibility that the Arabs would agree to a broad Arab federation within which there would also be room for an independent Jewish state. This was why persons such as Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, Shertok, and others tried to talk with the Arabs and persuade them to move in this direction. It also seems that agreement by the Zionist leadership, already at the Seventeenth Zionist Congress in 1931, to the idea of parity in the proposed temporary legislative council – with the condition that aliyah and the development of the Jewish national home would continue – was born of the aspiration for a compromise with the Arabs within a federative framework.<sup>133</sup>

As for Arab positions, from the emergence of the Palestinian Arab national movement in the wake of the Balfour Declaration and the British conquest of Palestine, opposition to Zionism and its goals apparently became the cornerstone of the its political viewpoint, both among the nationalist faction led by the Husseinis and also those who opposed them. For example, during the visit of the Palestinian delegation to London following the 1929 riots, they refused to have any contact with Zionist leaders, claiming that they do not acknowledge them as partners in discussing the future of Palestine. Throughout the entire Mandate period, it was mainly the Jews who initiated contacts with Arab personages in an attempt to seek a compromise and an arrangement that would prevent a violent confrontation between the two developing entities. At times they were joined by intermediaries from the Western or Arab countries, who tried to some extent to mediate between the parties.

Apparently, the time was not ripe for such ideas, and they could not be advanced. The split between the opposing political parties within Palestinian Arab society and in the Arab countries emerging in the region was a cause of its failure from the very beginning. Similar competition also existed between the Hashemite rulers of Iraq and Transjordan, each of whom dreamt of a federation led by themselves and serving their own interests, while other Arab rulers objected to any kind of regional unity under the Hashemites. Over and above all these were the objections of the Palestinian Arabs to any regional arrangement that would enable continued Jewish immigration and would necessarily be at the expense of their separate national independence.

Jewish aspirations for independence also intensified following the 1929 riots, becoming even more pronounced during the first half of the 1930s, a period of great development of the Yishuv, whose population doubled in size in those years. There was a great increase in the number of agricultural settlements throughout the

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<sup>133</sup> Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, calls the second chapter of his book: “The Ever-Present Pancaea – Arab Federation as a Solution to the Palestine Question.” This sentence can truly sum up all the unsuccessful efforts to achieve peace between Jews and Arabs.

country while the Jewish population in the important cities began to outnumber the Arabs. The new city of Tel Aviv near Jaffa was a fait accompli, the new Jewish Jerusalem was closing in on the Old City from the west, and in Haifa the Jewish majority grew, looking down at the Arab population below from the heights of Mount Carmel. The mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, and his supporters exploited this new Jewish development of the first half of the 1930s to advance their aspirations for Arab independence in Palestine. During those very years considerable progress was made towards the independence of several Arab states, a development that encouraged Palestinian Arab nationalists to define themselves as a separate Arab national entity, an inseparable part of the larger Arab nation.

In the first stage of the Arab Revolt – the General Strike – Palestinian Arabs complied with the counsel they received from the neighboring Arab countries and accepted the British proposal to cease the strike and thus enable the Royal Commission to come to Palestine to investigate the situation there. When that commission, for the first time, proposed dividing western Palestine between the two sides, the Palestinian Arabs, under the leadership of the mufti, vehemently rejected the proposal. Their response was also manifested in the renewal of the Arab Revolt with great force, bringing about the cancellation of the plan. The continuing Arab Revolt and other developments in its wake, as well as the final period of British rule in Palestine and the end of the Mandate, shall be discussed in the next chapter.

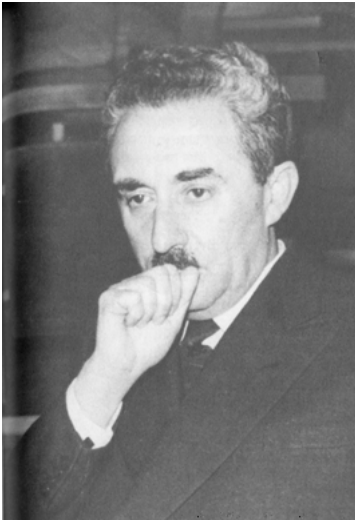




Arthur Wauchope.  
Fourth British High Commissioner



Chaim Arlosoroff.



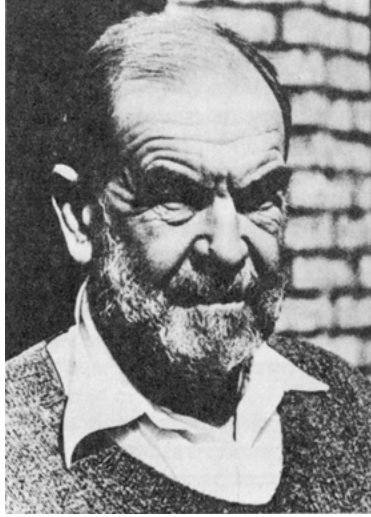
Moshe Sharett (Shertok).



David Ben-Gurion.



Judah L. Magnes.  
President of the Hebrew University



St. John Philby.  
Briton who represented Saudi interests



Musa al-'Alami.  
Judge in British-appointed court



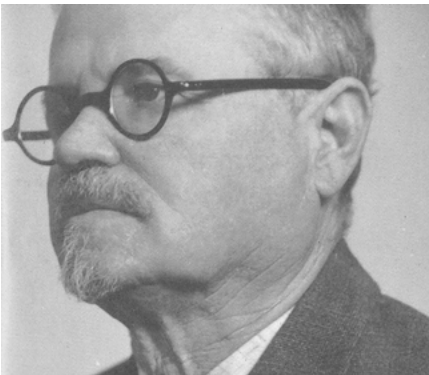
George Antonius.  
Arab nationalist leader



'Izz al-Din al-Qassam.  
Arab nationalist leader



Gad Frumkin.  
Judge in British-appointed court



Moshe Smilansky.



Hayyim Margalioth-Kalvarisky.

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## Chapter 11: The end of the British Mandate, 1936–1947

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## The period of the Arab Revolt, 1936–1939

I shall divide my discussion of the final period of the British Mandate in Palestine, 1936–1947, into three sub-periods: the period of the Arab Revolt (1936–1939), the World War II years (1939–1945), and the period of Jewish–British conflict in Palestine (1945–1947).

### The beginning of the Arab Revolt, April–October 1936

At the beginning of Part Two, in the discussion of the British Mandate period, I noted that I believe it should be divided into three sub-periods: the beginning, the interim period, and the end. During the third sub-period, the end of the Mandate, which began in 1936 and concluded with the State of Israel's War of Independence, issues of defense and politics overshadowed everything else. This period, too, can be divided into three parts: (a) the Arab Revolt; (b) World War II; (c) the Jewish–British confrontation.

The period of the Arab Revolt, 1936–1939, was marked by various political deliberations and acts: the Royal (Peel) Commission and its partition plan; the Woodhead Commission (sometimes called the Partition Commission) whose recommendations led the British government to shelve the Royal Commission's partition plan; the London Conference, also known as the St. James Conference; and the issuing of the third White Paper of 1939, a result of the failure of the talks between British, Arab, and Zionist representatives. The second part of the final period of the Mandate corresponds to that of World War II, 1939–1945, and the Holocaust of European Jewry. In the third part of this chapter, I shall discuss the Jewish–British confrontation in Palestine between 1945 and 1947. The overall aim of this chapter is to present the important political changes that took place in the country during these three periods. I shall do so through a chronological delineation of the events while focusing on the three active protagonists: the Arabs, the Jews, and the British, whose activities are interconnected and intertwined and tell the dynamic story of Eretz Israel in one of the most definitive periods in its history.

In the previous chapter I dealt briefly with the breakout of the Arab Revolt and the Arab general strike with which it began. However, most of the attention there was on the talks and attempts to achieve a compromise between Jews and Arabs, attempts that continued throughout the strike and following it, during the revolt. I shall now focus on the events of the revolt itself as they developed until the St. James Conference in London at which the British announced the third White Paper.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This section shall trace the events of 1936–1939 in chronological order.

The “disturbances” leading to the Arab Revolt broke out on April 19, 1936 and continued until 1939.<sup>2</sup> Earlier events can also be noted that led to the general strike and the outbreak of the revolt. Already as early as October 1933 the Arab Executive Committee called for a general strike and demonstrations against government policy which enabled increased Jewish immigration.<sup>3</sup> A few days later, a demonstration took place in Jaffa that was forcefully repelled with several dead and injured among the participants. However, radicalization was most extremely represented by the organization of secret groups of Arab rebels. The most famous of those was that of the sheik, preacher, and religious teacher ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, the first Muslim leader to form a group of guerilla fighters, “the Black Hand,” with the purpose of attacking both the British and the Jews. There are those who view this movement as the first step in the formation of Arab zealot and terrorist organizations. In November 1935 ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam and several of his followers were killed by British police near Jenin. His death made a significant impression on the Arab public and his funeral became a nationalist demonstration, intensifying Arab nationalist sentiments.<sup>4</sup>

The rise of Muslim radicalism should also be considered in relation to previous events: the Arab setback upon cancellation of the 1930 White Paper by the MacDonalld Letter; the increase of the Jewish population in the country between 1931 and 1935; and intensification of Jewish land acquisition from Arabs throughout the country. All these gave rise to Arab fear that the Jews were progressing towards the establishment of their state. The decline of the Arab Executive Committee headed by Musa Kazim al-Husseini, an organization that was less active than the Supreme Muslim Council under the leadership of the mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, and the death of Musa Kazim in 1934, created a political vacuum. New political parties and activist nationalist leaders entered this void, most prominent among them were the members of the Istiqlal (Independence) party.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The following are the major studies I have consulted to trace the first stage of the Arab Revolt: Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*; Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 367–71; id., *From Partition to the White Paper*; Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*; Orren, *Settlement and Struggles*.

<sup>3</sup> On the protest riots in October 1933, see also Chapter Ten at nn. 69–71 in the text, related also to the Jerusalem municipal elections and the organization of Arab youth. See also the comprehensive study, which begins with the events of 1933, Monty N. Penkower, *Palestine in Turmoil: The Struggle for Sovereignty, 1933–1939*, 2 vols. (New York: Touro College Press, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> For ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, his guerilla movement, and his death at the hands of the British police, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 132–37. See also Shai Lachman, “Arab Rebellion and Terrorism in Palestine, 1929–1939: The Case of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and His Movement,” in *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel*, ed. Elie Kedourie and Sylvia G. Haim (London: Frank Cass, 1982), 52–99.

<sup>5</sup> On the strained relations between the mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, and Musa Kazim al-Husseini, see also ch. 10, n. 69; Sela et al., “Arab-Palestinian Leadership,” esp. the discussion following the article. On the revolt from the Arab standpoint, see also Zvi Elpeleg, *The Events of 1936–1939: Disturbances or Revolt?* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1977) (Hebrew); Yigal Eyal, *The First Intifada:*



General global developments of the time should not be overlooked. In September 1931, the status of the League of Nations began declining after the principle of overall security was dealt a blow when Japan attacked China in Manchuria, and the organization was unable to oppose it. In October 1933, Germany left the League of Nations Disarmament Commission, and after that the League as a whole. This was the beginning of the end of the League of Nations.

At the same time, in 1933 Hitler came into power in Germany and began rearming. The attack and conquest of Ethiopia by Italy in 1935, without any response by other countries, added to the sense of decline. The Italian conquest exposed the weakness of the League of Nations, as well as that of Britain. Their powerlessness vis-à-vis the Nazis continued until March 7, 1936, when the Germans breached the agreement about demilitarization of the Rhineland.

In November 1935, a civil uprising against the British calling for independence broke out in Egypt. At the same time, an uprising against the French erupted in Syria, demanding Syrian independence and urging the Palestinian Arabs to join them. In 1935 Jews smuggled arms into Jaffa harbor in barrels of cement. On November 2, 1935, the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, protest gatherings by Arabs took place throughout the country. Upon the return of High Commissioner Wauchope to the country, on November 25 a protest memorandum was submitted by the Arab leadership which included three demands: (a) cessation of all Jewish immigration into the country; (b) limitation of Jewish options to acquire lands from Arabs; (c) establishment of a democratic government of the inhabitants of the country, in accordance with the League of Nations covenant (and Paragraph 2 of the Mandate for Palestine), and the development of independent government institutions. Following these demands, the explosive situation led the Palestinian Arabs to launch a strike against the British administration.<sup>6</sup>

In its initial stage, the strike was fueled by local initiatives. The call emanated from Nablus, the stronghold of several Istiqlal party leaders, and from there speedily spread throughout the country. It quickly took shape as a nationalist network incorporating all Palestinian Arab parties. On April 19, 1936 riots began in Jaffa, followed the next day by the declaration of a general strike and on April 25 by establishment of the Higher Arab Committee under the presidency of Hajj Amin al-Husseini. The strike continued for six months, until mid-October 1936. The first action by the Higher Arab Committee was to legitimize the spontaneous strike by defining its nationalist goals: halting Jewish immigration, prohibiting land sales to Jews, and the establishment of a

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*The Suppression of the Arab Revolt by the British Army 1936–1939* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Pub. House, 1998) (Hebrew).

<sup>6</sup> Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 109–61; Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 367–71. On the general strike that began the Arab Revolt, April–October 1936, see also Kabha, *The Palestinians*, 21–22; Sharett, *Political Diary*. 1:91, who records meetings with Abdullah on this matter. For the three Arab demands, see also Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 63.

national Arab government in Palestine. At the beginning of May the strike turned into a general strike, thus revealing the deep-rooted Arab objection to the development of the Jewish national home in Palestine. Daily economic and commercial relations between Jews and Arabs came to an almost complete stop. The cessation of commerce and transportation was a major reflection of Arab nationalist sentiment. Attacks on Jewish settlements and transportation began accompanying the strike.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, it can be affirmed that the strike as a whole failed for two main reasons: the country was not under full Arab control, and the Jews, for their part, began to develop new economic spheres, thus lessening their dependence on the Arabs. In 1936 the Jewish population amounted to over 400,000, close to 30 percent of the general population. In cities such as Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Jaffa (together), Haifa, and Tiberias, Jews were the majority and thus were only partially affected by the strike. The most prominent example of new economic development was the first steps taken to establish a port in Tel Aviv instead of Jaffa port that was paralyzed by the strike. This dealt a serious economic blow to many Arab inhabitants. In order to continue enforcing the strike on the Arab population, Arab nationalist forces applied pressure and means of coercion through “national committees” established in Arab cities and towns. Alongside the general strike, as early as April 1936 Arabs initiated acts of violence throughout the country. At first these were concentrated in the mountain village areas, and from time to time roads that served Arabs and Jews alike, as well as cities with a mixed population, were also attacked. Each band of rebels had a different leader. Fawzi al-Qawuqji, who led a force of Arab volunteers supported by the Iraqi kingdom, arrived in the country in June 1936. The Higher Arab Committee, headed by the Mufti, generally did not assume formal responsibility for the events, and when it did in specific cases, it operated from within the Temple Mount area in Jerusalem. The Committee did not function as an efficient nationalist leadership, not in relation to the Arab population and not with regard to acts of violence by individuals or groups. Immediately upon its establishment, it already suffered from internal divisions and conflicts.<sup>8</sup>

The Haganah was not prepared for the strike or the acts of violence. Both the Haganah and the Zionist leadership adopted a policy of restraint, *havlagah* in Hebrew, and avoided actions against the Arabs. As a result, some of the Haganah members split off from it and established their own separate organization that

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7 For the spontaneous establishment of the Higher Arab Committee, see Sela et al., “Arab-Palestinian Leadership,” 96–100. For the political aspects, see Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 515–36. On the Arab Revolt from the Jewish viewpoint, see Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 367–75; for the first stage of the revolt, including the figures of eighty Jewish dead and about 440 wounded until the establishment of the Peel Commission, see Bracha Habas, *The 1936 Disturbances* (Tel Aviv: Davar, 1937) (Hebrew).

8 On the beginning of the disturbances and the arrival of Qawuqji in Palestine, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 162–95; id., *In Search of Arab Unity*, 164.

espoused retaliation against the Arabs. Several of them later established the Irgun Zvai Leumi (known by its acronym Etzel).<sup>9</sup> This group responded with retaliatory acts against the Arabs in the markets, on the roads, and elsewhere. In contrast, the Zionist leadership attempted to achieve close cooperation with the Mandate government in activities such as construction of Tel Aviv port, establishment of the “Stockade and Tower” settlements, and other areas with which I shall deal in greater extent below. The Haganah even proposed that the British recruit Jews as supernumerary police to supplement the British police forces. After a while, this unit became known as the Jewish Settlement Police. Jews also served as military attachés and in other roles in the British military. The period of the Arab Revolt demonstrated the essentiality of the organized Yishuv institutions that received the backing and cooperation of the majority of the Jewish community.<sup>10</sup>

The British response to the strike and the Arab Revolt was generally restrained. It appears that during the first part of the revolt controversies arose between High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope, supported by Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore, and the British military forces. Wauchope and Ormsby-Gore were moderate in their stance and put forward ideas to try and comply with Arab demands, such as a limitation – or even a temporary halt – of Jewish immigration. In contrast, the British army demanded forceful suppression of the revolt. In May 1936 Wauchope suggested appointing a royal inquiry commission to investigate the roots of the problem. The British government approved his proposal and on July 29, 1936 established the Royal Commission for Palestine. The Arabs demanded complete cessation of Jewish immigration as a condition for ending the strike, but the British refused it. At the time, the High Commissioner believed that in the end the two parties could be brought to live side by side in peace if the size of both populations was equal. Wauchope was prepared to limit the scope of immigration, but not to stop it altogether.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> On the first split in the ranks of the Haganah, the creation of “Haganah B” and the final establishment of the independent Irgun Zvai Leumi (Etzel) in 1931, as well as to what degree the Irgun was connected to Jabotinsky and the differences of opinion between him and the young members of the Irgun, see Shlomi Reznik, “Jabotinsky and the Irgun: ‘In the Beginning God Created Politics,’” in *In the Eye of the Storm: Essays on Ze’ev Jabotinsky*, edited by Avi Bareli and Pinhas Ginossar (Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2004), 459–73, esp. nn. 8, 17, 20, 21 (Hebrew).

<sup>10</sup> For the Haganah and its activities during the violent events of 1936, see *History of the Haganah*, 2,2:664–97. In order to improve the security situation in the country, on Sept. 1, 1936 the Mandate government sanctioned mobilization of 2863 supernumerary police and did not yield to Arab demands that Jewish immigration be halted; see also the editor’s introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 19.

<sup>11</sup> For the moderate stand adopted by the British on the Arab general strike, see Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 537–89. Ben-Gurion called this “exploiting disaster,” and was convinced that there was no possibility of a peaceful solution with the Arabs; therefore, the important thing is to strengthen the Jewish defense forces. Despite this, he decided on a policy of restraint, which gained him the support of Weizmann.

When the strike began, Hashemite Arabs in Iraq and Transjordan attempted to stop it. They were later joined by other Arab countries, following lobbying by the British government that wanted the strike to end. On October 10, six months after the strike broke out, a joint communiqué to Palestinian Arabs was issued by the Arab rulers of Iraq, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen urging them to agree to end the strike and enable the deliberations of the Royal Commission.

On October 12 the Palestinian Arabs acquiesced in the request to cease the strike, but claimed they were doing so upon their own initiative. The hiatus of the strike and revolt lasted for one year, from October 1936 to September 1937. The Higher Arab Committee, national Arab committees, and the armed bands did not disband. They took advantage of the time for economic and political recovery, and to intensify the economic boycott of the Jews. The division between Jews and Arabs constantly increased as did the abyss that separated the two opposing sides.<sup>12</sup>

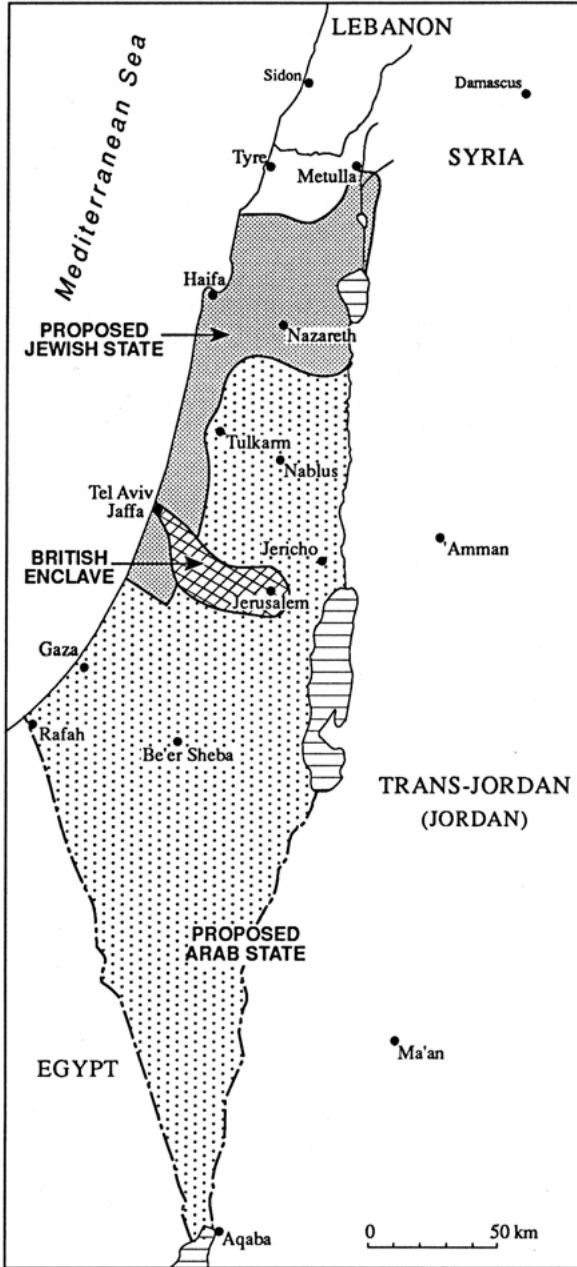
### **The Royal (Peel) Commission November 1936–July 1937**

On July 29, 1936 Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore notified Parliament of the establishment of a royal commission. After the disturbances came to an end, the commission would begin investigating the Palestine problem, the conflict there and its reasons, and was to propose solutions. The commission would be headed by Lord Peel, a former member of the British government and an expert on colonial issues.<sup>13</sup> The commission arrived in Palestine in November 1936 and conducted its inquiry until April 1937. During its sojourn it also examined the concept of cantonization, an idea that had been considered by various persons – Arabs, Jews, and British – ever since the 1929 riots. In the spring of 1936 it was raised once again by Archer Cust, a former official of the Palestine government, after his retirement from service. The commission members rejected his proposal since they did not view it as a final solution to the Palestine problem. The commission was of the opinion that clearly the central objective of the Mandate, as expressed both in its preface and some of its clauses, was to assist in the establishment of a Jewish national

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<sup>12</sup> Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 199–216; Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 378–81. For negotiations until announcement of the decision to establish the Peel Commission, see *History of the Haganah*, 2,2:705–11.

<sup>13</sup> For the Peel Commission, see Penkower, *Palestine in Turmoil*, 355–410. About earlier plans for the territorial division of the country, see Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 384–86. On the composition of the Peel Commission, including its secretary, John Martin, see Palestine Royal Commission, *Report*, 397. For a study that focuses on the Zionist reactions to the commission’s recommendations, see Itzhak Galnoor, *The Partition of Palestine: Decision Crossroads in the Zionist Movement* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). See also id., “Territorial Partition of Palestine: The 1937 Decision,” *Political Geography Quarterly* 10 (1991): 382–404.



Map 26: Partition proposal of the Royal Commission, 1937 (Galnoor, *Partition of Palestine*, 83).

home.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, it adopted the solution proposed by one of its prominent members, Sir Reginald Coupland. He proposed partitioning the country into two separate parts: one for the Jewish state, and another – Arab – part that would be annexed to Transjordan, while affording a special status to the Jerusalem and Bethlehem area with a corridor to the sea.<sup>15</sup>

With regard to Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the commission determined that as holy cities within whose bounds were many sites holy to the three monotheistic faiths, they would remain under British mandatory rule for eternity as “a sacred trust of civilization.” The commission hinted that in the absence of permanent enlightened rule over these sites, there was a danger they would be desecrated – whether by Jews or Arabs – and thus must be protected. To this end it decided that a continuous corridor should be maintained between Jerusalem and the sea, which would include the cities of Ramleh and Lydda, as well as Lydda airport, culminating in Jaffa. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the area would be citizens of the Mandate state and maintain it through their taxes. British rule would be obliged to assist in maintaining the peace and development of the area, and all its inhabitants would enjoy equal rights. The details of the border lines were left to be decided by a new technical committee.<sup>16</sup> The commission also recommended that should disturbances break out once more, the situation would call for military rule, on the one hand, and setting a limit on Jewish immigration, on the other hand. Immigration would be limited to 12,000 annually for five years and would be subject to the economic absorptive capacity of the country.<sup>17</sup>

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**14** Palestine Royal Commission, *Report*, 381. On Cust’s “New Plan for Palestine,” see Penkower, *Palestine in Turmoil*, 254–55. Among the leading British personalities who supported partition were Lloyd George and the Archbishop of Canterbury; see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:40, 49, 58. Herbert Samuel was opposed to partition, but promised Weizmann that on the issue of aliyah he would uphold the principle of the economic absorptive capacity of the country. On reactions in the British press and the debate in Parliament, see Klieman, *Divide or Rule*, 43–48. French Prime Minister Leon Blum also supported plans for partition; see Rose, *Gentile Zionists*, 128–31.

**15** For Coupland’s meeting with Weizmann and Ben-Gurion, who was the first to lend his support to the idea, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:177–79, entry for June 8, 1937. It is interesting that throughout the commission’s deliberations its members thought of a voluntary transfer of population. On the differences of opinions in the commission and the decision to seek a solution that would end the problem once and for all, see Klieman, *Divide or Rule*, 34.

**16** Palestine Royal Commission, *Report*, 381–82; Abbady claims that the commission’s report “is the most important document . . . we have been fortunate to receive during the years of the British Mandate,” Abbady, *Between Us and the English*, 54–55. Many would agree with him. There is no doubt that the report is an impressive document to this very day. It was probably drawn up by Martin, the commission’s secretary, but the person most responsible for its content was Coupland. An interesting part of the report is the historical survey up to the commission’s arrival, which can serve as a historical source even today, though it was tailored to suit the commission’s conclusion that the only solution was partition.

**17** Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 391. For the Zionist and Arab reactions to the commission’s report, see *ibid.*, 394–97. When the League of Nations Mandates Committee discussed the recommendations, opinions for and against were balanced; *ibid.*, 398–99.

After the plan was submitted, Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore successfully convinced the Neville Chamberlain government, which had recently taken office, to adopt it. In July 1937 the British government published the commission's report, together with an official statement that it was adopting its conclusions.<sup>18</sup> Upon arrival of the Royal Commission in Palestine, the Higher Arab Committee appointed a special committee to prepare the Arab standpoint. It also continued demanding suspension of Jewish immigration during the commission's deliberations. While the British rejected this demand, in fact they did limit the number of immigration certificates issued that year. They also tried to influence Palestinian Arabs, through the Arab countries, to appear before the commission, to which they finally agreed, but under certain conditions. Transjordan and Iraq presented their own suggestions to the commission. When the commission's partition recommendations were confirmed, Transjordan was the only Arab state to support them, due to the fact that it was to annex the proposed Arab part of the country. Finally, and after much hesitation, on September 8, 1937, at a conference of Arab organizations and parties convened in Baludan in Syria, it was decided to reject the commission's recommendations and continue the struggle for Palestine until it was released from the British Mandate and would come under Arab sovereignty.<sup>19</sup>

Even before publication of the Royal Commission's report, the Jewish Agency also began to take action so that the plan, should it be approved, would be suited to the needs of the Zionist movement. When the report was officially published, there were differences of opinion towards it among the Zionist leadership. Among those who supported the recommendations were Ben-Gurion and Weizmann, who maintained that with a few required amendments it would be possible to support the plan.<sup>20</sup> Opposing

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**18** *Palestine: Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom: Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament . . . July 1937* (Cmd. 5531) (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1937), in Aaron Klieman, ed., *The Royal Commission Report 1937, Rise of Israel*, 24 (New York: Garland, 1987), 425–27. On the deliberations in Britain about the commission's report, see Katzburg, *From Partition to the White Paper*, 21–45, including the documents. On the proposal to first establish two temporary governments, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:15–17, entry for Jan. 11, 1938. According to Klieman, *Divide or Rule*, 61, Ormsby-Gore was generally considered pro-Zionist. However, Abbady, *Between Us and the English*, 5, maintains that upon being appointed colonial secretary he somewhat changed his opinion.

**19** On the Baludan conference and its participants, see Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 168–69. For Arab reactions to the commission and its report, see id., *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 217–32; Sela, "Conversations and Contacts," part II. Bernard Joseph spoke about the Arab reaction to the Peel Commission report at a meeting of the Mapai Central Committee on Sept. 18, 1937; see Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 217–23. On the reactions of the Arab states, see also Klieman, *Divide or Rule*, 52–54, 73–75, 87–99, with details of the position advanced by George Rendel of the Foreign Office, who led the opposition to the plan.

**20** David Ben-Gurion, "Between Partition and 'Freezing' – Partition is Preferable," at a meeting of the Zionist Inner Actions Committee, 21 Apr., 1937, in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 173–77. For Ben-Gurion's meetings with Coupland, see three chapters in Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 556–630.



them were the objectors to the plan such as Menahem Ussishkin, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, Yitzhak Tabenkin, and Berl Katznelson.<sup>21</sup> The objectors were extremely critical of the plan, especially the proposed status of Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup> The final decision was not to decide and to wait to hear the Arab position. The Jewish controversy was mainly an internal disagreement and had no effect on political developments, apart from support of the Royal Commission's declaration that the Mandate government had failed and should be replaced by a new order.<sup>23</sup>

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After Ben-Gurion became convinced that the partition plan was best, he tried to convince other persons in Mapai to support it. For his testimony before the Peel Commission, see Galnoor, *Partition of Palestine*, 60–65. On Weizmann and the Peel Commission, see Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 316–30, who records that Lord Passfield told Weizmann that “there is not room to swing a cat in Palestine.” See also id., *Gentile Zionists*, 123–50, esp. 123–32 for Weizmann's discussions with Coupland; his own description of the events, Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 469–78; his statement to the Twentieth Zionist Congress, Aug. 4, 1937, to the effect that a partitioned state would strengthen the Yishuv, in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 194–96. In London Weizmann met with leading British statesmen, including Churchill, to convince them to support the partition plan, see Galnoor, *Partition of Palestine*, 56–60.

**21** See Ussishkin's speech to the Zionist Inner Actions Committee, 21 Apr. 1937, in which he pointed to Arab opposition to the plan as an argument against partition, in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 177–82. For his opinion of “that accursed partition,” see Goldstein, *Ussishkin*, 2: 176–89. An interesting reaction to the partition plan is that of Frederick Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, 448–59, where he writes of his regret that the partition plan was not implemented and continues his criticism of Richmond, who in February 1938 published another pro-Arab article. For the views of the Revisionist Movement and Jabotinsky's appearance before the commission, see Galnoor, *Partition of Palestine*, 65–68. On Tabenkin and Katznelson and their opinions on partition, see the index in *ibid.* For Katznelson's memorandum to Weizmann, Apr. 27, 1937, see Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 190–93. On the positions adopted by Ben-Gurion and Tabenkin, see also Kolatt, *Zionism and Israel*, 15–17.

**22** For support of partition, despite the issue of Jerusalem, and the opinion that if the Arabs oppose partition they must find a way to come to an agreement with the Jews, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:105–13. His diary also includes several chapters on the opponents and supporters of the partition plan; *ibid.*, 2:177–266. For the position on partition of the Chief Rabbinate, see Shulamit Eliash, “The Chief Rabbinate and the Partition Plan of 1937,” *Cathedra* 21 (Oct. 1981): 155–70 (Hebrew). For that of Irish leader Eamon de Valera, see id., “De Valera and the Palestine Partition Plan,” *Cathedra* 97 (Sept. 2000): 117–48 (Hebrew).

**23** On the controversy in the Zionist movement whether to accept or reject the partition plan, see Anita Shapira, “The Concept of Time in the Partition Controversy of 1937,” *Studies in Zionism* 6 (1985): 211–28. See also Shmuel Dothan, *Partition of Eretz Israel in the Mandatory Period: The Jewish Controversy* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979) (Hebrew); Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 394–96; the editor's introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 18–30. Yehuda Slutsky, “From the Balfour Declaration to the Disturbances of 1936,” in *The Jewish National Home from the Balfour Declaration to Independence*, ed. Binyamin Eliav (Jerusalem: Keter, 1976), 3–60 (Hebrew) notes that Ben-Gurion proposed that Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth would remain part of the British Mandate. Other cities with a mixed population, such as Haifa, were also mentioned in this context during the commission's deliberations.

As for Jerusalem, the Zionist position was to demand partition of the city and include the western Jewish section in the Jewish state. In October 1937, after it became officially known that the British government planned to send a new commission to examine the option of implementing the Royal Commission recommendations, the Political Department of the Jewish Agency appointed a “Committee on Jerusalem.” Its purpose and authority was “to prepare persuasive claims for the inclusion of Jewish Jerusalem in the proposed Jewish state.” To all intents and purposes, this was consent by the Zionist Organization to the partitioning of Jerusalem: the Old City would remain within the area of the new proposed British Mandate, and the Jewish section of Jerusalem outside the walls would be annexed to the Jewish state.<sup>24</sup> Upon the arrival of the Woodhead Commission, the Committee on Jerusalem formulated its final recommendations and submitted them during June–August 1938. To the final document submitted, that called for partitioning the city, was appended a topographic map that delineated the borders of the divided city together with a written description of the borderlines. Demands were also raised for additional amendments to the Royal Commission’s partition plan. The first was the inclusion of the Negev, or parts of it, in the Jewish state, but there were also demands to include other small areas that had been omitted.<sup>25</sup>

We may sum up the Royal Commission’s recommendation to divide western Palestine between the Jews and the Arabs as a bold decision for its time. It appears that this was the most important decision regarding the future of the country since the British government decided to issue the Balfour Declaration and its confirmation in the Mandate for Palestine granted to Britain by the League of Nations. I shall attempt to point out the three central issues dealing with the question of why it was not implemented, and why ten more years were necessary until adoption of the partition plan proposed by UNSCOP, which in large part was a repetition of the ideas put forward by the Royal Commission.

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<sup>24</sup> Yair Paz, “A Zionist Partition Plan for Jerusalem, 1937–1938,” *Cathedra* 72 (June 1994): 113–34 (Hebrew), including the maps presented to the commission. See also Yossi Katz, *Partner to Partition: The Jewish Agency’s Partition Plan in the Mandate Era* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 61–84; Ben-Arieh, *New Jewish Jerusalem*, 3:1807–13, for a description of the census which is the basis for my book. On the census, see also David Gurevich, *The Jewish Population of Jerusalem: A Demographic and Sociological Study of the Jewish Population and Its Component Communities, Based on the Jerusalem Jewish Census, September 1939* (Jerusalem: Department of Statistics of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1940).

<sup>25</sup> For details of the Jewish demands, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:229–31; on demands relating to Jerusalem, the potash and electricity companies, settlements in the Jordan Valley, and more, see the editor’s introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 21–25. In a postscript to the Hebrew translation of his diary, dated Feb. 12, 1939, Kisch add a few personal thoughts of his own on partition, including what he heard from Lord Peel, who was very much in favor of the plan.

The first point is the commission's decision that the Arab territory would be annexed to Transjordan ruled by Abdullah. Apparently at the time the British did not yet consider the Palestinian Arabs as an independent body able to govern its own state, and the option of including them in Transjordan appeared to be a suitable solution. By then Abdullah had succeeded in establishing a special status for his country. In addition, it seems that the British were hoping he would be able to form a relationship with the Jews, with whom he had previously maintained good relations, and thus the Jews would be inclined to agree to the transfer of the Arab area under his rule.

The second point was related to the primary and central conclusion that, in fact, British rule in Palestine under the Mandate should come to an end. Since this recommendation could have been perceived as being critical of earlier British rule, they aspired that their plan should not be viewed as criticism of the Mandate but as one for its continuation. This accounts for the decision to leave the Jerusalem region and a corridor to the sea under permanent British control as a trust granted to the enlightened British state. Establishment of the Jewish state, even if it was smaller – a mere fifth of the area of western Eretz Israel – would serve as fulfillment of the British promise to assist the Jewish people throughout the world by establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine. Finally, with regards to the Palestinian Arabs, the Jews apparently hoped that transferring the large and major area populated by the Arabs to Transjordan would appease them.

The third point is also connected to Transjordan and the recommendation that all of southern Palestine and the Negev would be annexed to it. But here another consideration was a factor, born of a wish to provide Britain with strategic compensation in case it needed that region to defend the Suez Canal and Egypt, with the option of establishing British bases there.<sup>26</sup>

The above is not meant to suggest that should the Peel Commission plan have been treated differently it would have succeeded and been approved, but only to discuss its fundamentals. The plan was not approved since it was apparently ahead of its time for several reasons. First, the political situation in the world began changing rapidly, causing Britain's hasty retreat from the plan. Secondly, the other Arab countries in the Middle East were not prepared to agree that the Arab territories, including Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, would be awarded to Transjordan. Moreover, they feared that the initial establishment of a Jewish state in their area would later be additionally detrimental to their interests. Thus, the Arab states declared their opposition and supported the objections of the Palestinian Arabs to the plan, including the transfer of parts of the country to Transjordan.

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<sup>26</sup> On this geo-political and strategic policy of Britain prior to, during, and after World War II, that led to tension between the British and the Jews over the Negev, and Ben-Gurion's changing stance on this issue until the mid-1930s, see Ilan Asia, *The Core of the Conflict: The Struggle for the Negev 1947–1956* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1994), 9–33 (Hebrew), who also details Bevin's later position on this question.

### The second stage of the Arab Revolt, July 1937–September 1939

In July 1937, immediately following publication of the Royal Commission report, including the partition plan and the proposal to grant Jerusalem special status, Palestinian Arab violence was renewed with vigor. The most outstanding event as the second stage of the Arab struggle got underway occurred during the last week of September 1937. Acting District Commissioner of the Galilee Lewis Andrews was murdered at the entrance to the Anglican church in Nazareth. His murder shocked the British authorities. On October 1, 1937 the Higher Arab Committee and the national Arab committees were declared illegal. The mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, president of the Supreme Muslim Council, was deposed. Five Arab leaders were exiled to the Seychelles islands while the mufti and Jamal al-Husseini fled the country.<sup>27</sup>

There are those who believe that there were two reasons for the assassination of the district commissioner in Nazareth: (a) the Galilee, the northern part of the country, was included in the area of the Jewish state according to the Royal Commission proposal, and the assassins wanted to emphasize that the Galilee was part of the country that belonged to them; (b) since during the first period of the revolt there were fewer acts of violence there than in other areas of the country, the assassins wished to make a display of their power there. After the assassination, the British responded with severe punitive actions against the Arabs.<sup>28</sup>

The Arab Revolt continued for almost two more years, and the second period of the revolt was the harshest. It may be maintained that preparations to renew the revolt began already in the autumn of 1936, when the strike ended. Most of the armed gangs kept their weapons. The opposition to the Husseinis did not join in the revolt during this second stage, nor could it be said that they had previously played a central role in it either. The moderate leaders fled the country for fear of being murdered. The most violent acts of the Arab gangs were committed when they took control of Arab villages and entrenched themselves in the mountains. The peak occurred during the summer of 1938, when for a short period of time gangs of Arab warriors gained control of most of the mountainous regions. British suppression began with pursuit of these gangs by the military.

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<sup>27</sup> In many respects Andrews had been on good relations with the Jews; see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2:345–46, entry for Sept. 27, 1937, and in the index. For the change in the policy of the British government and public opinion in Britain after his murder, see *ibid.*, 373–76, 417–26, entries for Oct. 17 and Nov. 16, 1937, respectively. Hajj Amin al-Husseini fled to Iraq, and after the outbreak of World War II participated in the coup staged there by Rashid ‘Ali al-Gaylani. When the British suppressed it, the mufti fled to Nazi Germany; see Elpeleg, *Grand Mufti*, 56–69.

<sup>28</sup> On the renewed Arab Revolt and its suppression by the British, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 233–49; Eyal, *The First Intifada*, 309–17. For the most part, Christian Arabs, and also the Druze, were less active in the revolt; *ibid.*, 319–24. For the Haganah during the second stage of the Arab Revolt, 1937–1939, see *History of the Haganah*, 2,2:797–832.

In contrast to the military, High Commissioner Wauchope adopted a more moderate policy. Apparently, already in 1934–1935 he began changing his previous policy, which had been positive towards the Jews.<sup>29</sup> He proposed limiting Jewish immigration, preventing Jews from acquiring land from Arabs, and tried to establish a legislative council. With the outbreak of the Arab Revolt, it turned out that all his efforts had been in vain, and he lost favor with everyone. Since he was not in the country when the violence was renewed at the beginning of October 1937, it was easy for the British cabinet to replace him.<sup>30</sup> Sir Harold MacMichael was appointed the new High Commissioner and arrived in Palestine in March 1938. He had previously served as the colonial administrator in Tanzania and was far from understanding Zionist motives. His served as High Commissioner for six years, from 1938 to 1944.<sup>31</sup>

The second stage of the Arab revolt lasted for about two years, from the summer of 1937 to the summer of 1939. During this period, the revolt was spearheaded by the armed gangs and characterized by more extreme actions than during the previous stage of the uprising. The aim this time was to gain control of certain areas in the country.<sup>32</sup> The rebels started organizing themselves in regional groups while the Arab leadership began to place a greater emphasis on political issues.<sup>33</sup> Following the signing of the Munich Agreement in Germany in September 1938, the British army was able to transfer more of its forces to Palestine. Military rule was expanded as British efforts to suppress the revolt increased. Punitive actions were mounted against those who assisted the rebels, there were more attacks against the Arab forces, and the revolt began to die out. Towards the end of 1939 acts of violence by the Arabs against the British and the Yishuv ceased.<sup>34</sup>

In Jerusalem the British forces regained control of the Old City after Arab gangs had succeeded in holding most of its area. The military began adopting stricter measures throughout the country. On November 1, 1938 the military authorities ordered that all residents had to carry identification cards and driving licenses, where

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**29** For the change in Wauchope's policy, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 1:92–93; on a tense conversation Weizmann held with him, see *ibid.*, 1:104, entry for May 10, 1936. The change is even more evident in the diary for 1937; see, for example, *ibid.*, 2:195–98, 240–47, entries for June 15 and July 8, 1937, respectively. On a new ordinance to restrict immigration, see *ibid.*, 2:385–87, entry for Oct. 19, 1937.

**30** An interesting conversation, in which Wauchope more or less took leave of Shertok, is recorded in *ibid.*, 3:47–54, entry for Feb. 6, 1938.

**31** For reports of Shertok's first meetings with MacMichael, see *ibid.*, 3:72–76, 197–203, entries for Mar. 7 and July 22, 1938, respectively. The first meeting between them at the initiative of the High Commissioner took place on Aug. 4, 1940. On MacMichael, see Gavriel Cohen, "Harold MacMichael and Palestine's Future," *Zionism* 3 (1981): 133–56.

**32** Elpeleg, *The Events of 1936–1939* who also provides a reference to a list of 496 Jewish victims in three years published in *Ha'aretz*, Apr. 19, 1939.

**33** For a detailed description of the Arab Revolt in these years, including statistics on the number of fighters, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 249–73.

**34** Katzburg, "Palestine under the Mandate," 399–417; Kabha, *The Palestinians*, 22–30.

applicable. The rebels now turned to personal terrorism. In contrast, there was greater cooperation between the military and the Jews, especially in terms of intelligence. Earlier, in May 1938, Special Night Squads commanded by British officer Charles Orde Wingate began operating, as well as Field Companies. Upon the initiative of Sir Charles Tegart a border fence and fortified police stations known as “Tegart forts” were built in the north of the country.<sup>35</sup> Whereas the Haganah continued to follow a policy of restraint, *havlakah*, the Etzel intensified its actions against Arabs. I shall go into greater detail on the Jewish response below.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the increased British operations against the Arab revolt, it is important to note that signs of division and internal conflict were already evident among the Arab population as early as the beginning of its second stage, in the autumn of 1937. The internal division was mainly along clan or geographical area lines. The renewed terrorist activities in the spring and summer of 1938 were also aimed against moderate Arabs suspected of supporting the partition plan. To a certain degree, the attacks against them were even more severe than those aimed at the British and the Jews. It is also noteworthy that the large group led by the Nashashibis did not join in the second stage of the revolt. During 1938 “peace bands” were formed among the opposition circles which, with British support, fought the rebels. This was a new peak in the internal struggle between the Husseinis and the Nashashibis. Fakhri al-Nashashibi, a nephew of Ragheb al-Nashshibi, recruited other personages and organized efforts against the Husseinis. The authorities, however, apparently avoided cultivating the opposition as an alternative to the Husseinis, and the internal situation among the Arabs continued to deteriorate. The prolonged revolt, its violent suppression by the British, the internal conflict between urban residents and villagers, the thousands of victims of the revolt, and the struggles between opposing political parties dealt a serious blow, both economic and social, to the Palestinian Arab population. The animosity engendered by the internal split greatly affected the ability of Arab society to deal with the Zionist challenge less than a decade later, when the battle for the future of the country reached its peak.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout the period of the revolt, the Arab countries displayed solidarity with the Palestinian Arab community. It was intensified upon the renewal of the

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<sup>35</sup> On Wingate, see Christopher Sykes, *Orde Wingate: A Biography* (Cleveland: World Pub., 1958); for the Tegart forts and the wall he ordered built along the northern border, see Horne, *A Job Well Done*, 235–37, 488–89. For the first military actions conducted by the Special Night Squads and the Field Companies, and on Yizhak Sadeh, see *History of the Haganah*, 2,2:911–67.

<sup>36</sup> On the different reactions of the Haganah and the Irgun, see in the text and notes 43–44 below.

<sup>37</sup> On the “peace bands” and the political split in the ranks of the Arab Revolt, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 249–60. Fakhri al-Nashashibi was a police officer and served as an aide-de-camp to Herbert Samuel and as secretary to Ragheb al-Nashashibi. He was assassinated in Baghdad in 1941; see Shimoni, *Arabs in Palestine*, 214. On his friendship with David Hacohen, see Sharet, *Political Diary* 2:373, 386, entry for Oct. 17, 1937. For a visit by Shertok to his home in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem, see *ibid.*, 3:78, entry for Mar. 7, 1938.



revolt, when the recommendations of the Royal Commission to partition Palestine were made public. After the Higher Arab Committee was dispersed and its president, the mufti, fled the country while other Arab leaders were exiled to the Seychelles islands, Arab political activity regarding the future of Palestine passed to the Arab countries. They became actively involved and organized a propaganda campaign against the partition plan. This, of course, did not include Emir Abdullah of Transjordan who viewed the annexation of the Arab part of Palestine to his state as a great advantage.<sup>38</sup>

On October 7, 1938 the Arabs convened an Inter-Parliamentary Congress in Cairo which demanded cancellation of the partition plan. Apparently, the growing solidarity displayed by the Arab countries with the Palestinian Arabs was the main cause of the dissatisfaction the British began feeling regarding the partition plan. Forceful coercion was not an option the British favored, and the dissatisfaction of the British government, especially in the Foreign Office, continuously increased.<sup>39</sup>

As a result, there was a rapid change in the British position regarding the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Already in January 1938 the Chamberlain government issued a statement to the effect that at this stage conditions were not yet suitable for implementing the recommendations. In March 1938 a decision was taken to appoint a new government commission, a technical commission to be headed by Sir John Woodhead, an expert on Indian affairs. The purpose of the commission was to examine ways of implementing the partition plan or to propose alternative solutions.<sup>40</sup> On May 16, 1938 there was a change in personnel in the Colonial Office. Ormsby-Gore, who continued to support the partition plan, was replaced as colonial secretary by Malcolm MacDonald, who was considered a Zionist supporter but changed his outlook in favor of the new British policy.<sup>41</sup>

As the British continued their forceful punitive actions to suppress the Arab Revolt, and while the renewal of the revolt caused the Woodhead Commission to delay setting out for Palestine until April 1938, changes in the British position began to be felt in London. The Woodhead Commission submitted its report in mid-October 1938, expressing its unanimous objection to the Royal Commission partition plan

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**38** Sharett, *Political Diary* 2:262, entry for July 13, 1937. For the Iraqi government's scorn of the partition plan, see *ibid.*, 2:484, n. 1.

**39** Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 274–81.

**40** On the Palestine Partition Commission (the Woodhead Commission) and its recommendations, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 477–92. For the commission's report, see Palestine Partition Commission, *Report: Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament ... October 1938* (Cmd. 5854) (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1938). For a detailed study of Britain's retreat from partition, see three chapters in Penkower, *Palestine in Turmoil*, 411–611.

**41** For Ormsby-Gore's replacement by MacDonald, who came to Palestine for a secret visit with MacMichael to explain the objective of the Woodhead Commission, and the Jews' disappointment with him, see Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 631–53. Ben-Gurion considered MacDonald and MacMichael to be the two persons most responsible for the British change of mind about Zionism; see ch. 9, n. 46.



with the claim that it was not practicable. Several of the commission members tried to propose alternative partition plans, for instance by reducing the area of the Jewish state. In the Royal Commission plan it was to comprise 5,000 sq m., in the Woodhead Commission “B” Plan its size was reduced to 3,300 sq m., while in the “C” Plan it was 1,250 sq m., and this in areas already partially settled by Jews. The British government seized the opportunity and decided to permanently shelve the partition plan.<sup>42</sup>

### The Jewish response to the Arab Revolt, 1936–1939

Each of the Palestinian Arab riots preceding the revolt – in 1920, 1921, and 1929 – were relatively short lived. In contrast, the Arab Revolt continued for a prolonged period of three years, from 1936 to 1939. There is no doubt that it left a very strong mark on the country. The Jewish response to the Arab Revolt comprised four central issues: (a) a policy of *havlagah* (restraint); (b) the controversy over the Royal Commission partition plan; (c) illegal immigration, known in Hebrew as *ha‘apalah*, literally “striving upwards”; (d) the decision to establish the Stockade and Tower settlements as a strategic-geographical change.

*The first issue* to arouse controversy in the Yishuv during the Arab Revolt was how to respond to Arab attacks. The Yishuv leadership opted for a basic policy of *havlagah*. On this issue there were even differences of opinion among Haganah members. Though taking revenge was common practice in Arab society, the leaders of the Yishuv believed that there was more to lose than to gain from a policy of revenge, and so preferred *havlagah*. However, though some Haganah members and commanders already believed that it was a necessary evil and were in favor of taking revenge on terrorists and rioters, *havlagah* became the policy of the Jewish Agency. Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, and Shertok viewed it as binding on all, and forced it on the Haganah. Their opinion was that the lesson of the 1921 and 1929 riots was that the Arabs, and their supporters among the British administration, would like to present the violent events as a civil war between equal sides. However, since the fate of the Yishuv would not be determined in the suburbs of Jaffa or the mountains of Nablus, and even not in the High Commissioner’s office in Jerusalem, but in London, it was important to aim all efforts at influencing British public opinion and not be swept into military actions against the rioters, stooping to their level of murder and cruelty. “The English front is the crucial one at this time and we should base all our conclusions on this assumption. Not a bloody war will rule the day but the political campaign between us and the

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<sup>42</sup> On the Woodhead Commission, see note 40 above. For Ben-Gurion’s expectations and disappointments in relation to the Woodhead Commission in a letter to Avraham Katznelson in London, Sept. 9, 1938, see Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 241–42.

Mandate government,” wrote Ben-Gurion to his colleagues. The Yishuv leadership also maintained that a policy of havlagah would present the Yishuv as a law-abiding public demanding its rights from the government, thus assisting the friends of Zionism in London. Indeed, even the anti-Zionist *Daily Telegraph* wrote that while recently there has been much Jewish immigration to Palestine, which aroused fear among the Arabs, these immigrants were loyal citizens of the country. This was evident in their conduct when faced with terrible provocation.<sup>43</sup>

Apparently, Ze'ev Jabotinsky also supported havlagah at first in order to maintain the good name of the Yishuv and relations with the British government. However, it seems that his influence in Eretz Israel was no longer great. In June 1937 the Revisionists were joined by a group of Haganah members who had left that organization in 1931 and never returned. They objected to the policy of the Zionist leadership and began launching reprisal attacks against Arabs, initially of a limited nature. On April 1, 1938 three members of Beitar in Rosh Pinnah set out to revenge the murder of Jewish passengers on the Acre–Safed road by attacking Arab cars and were apprehended by the British. After one of them, Shlomo Ben-Yosef, was executed by hanging at Acre prison on June 29, 1938, Etzel increased its revenge operations. Though attempts were made to find some common ground between the two sides, the moderate and the extremist, their differences of opinion extended to other matters as well.<sup>44</sup>

*The second issue* that was the cause of a bitter controversy in the Yishuv was how to react to the Royal Commission partition proposal. After much deliberation, the Zionist leadership – Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, Shertok, and others – was prepared to support the proposal, conditional upon two amendments: including the Negev and western Jerusalem in the proposed Jewish state and advance agreement by the Arabs. The Revisionists rejected the proposal in its entirety, claiming a British commitment to grant the whole of Palestine west of the Jordan River to the Jewish people. Moreover, they demanded the territory on both sides of the Jordan,

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**43** On the ideology of havlagah, including differences of opinion within the ranks of the Haganah, see *History of the Haganah* 2,2:833–50. For the attitude towards the Haganah of Weizmann, Jabotinsky, and other leading personalities, see *ibid.*, 2,2:605–25. On the Jewish Agency's policy on havlagah and the Irgun's acts as part of its policy of terror contra terror, see the editor's introduction in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 27–29; see also Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 157–67.

**44** On the first stage of the Irgun, those who seceded from the Haganah, see *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:575–85. On the Irgun's retaliatory acts and its earliest period including the case of Shlomo Ben-Yosef, though from the standpoint of researchers who were members of the Haganah, see *ibid.*, 2,1: 574–85, 2,2:605–25. 798–832, 1053–72. For Shlomo Ben-Yosef, who led an attack on an Arab bus near Rosh Pinnah and was the first to be sent to the gallows, see J. Bowyer Bell, *Terror out of Zion: Irgun Zvai Leumi, Lehi, and the Palestine Underground, 1929–1949* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 39–41; Bruce Hoffman, *Anonymous Soldiers: The Struggle for Israel, 1917–1947* (New York: Knopf, 2015), 75–78.

which had been promised in the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate, and the peace agreements signed after World War I.

During the twentieth Zionist Congress in Zurich in 1937, other persons who were not members of the Revisionist movement objected to the Royal Commission plan, or cast doubt regarding its immediate acceptance. The final decision at the Congress was not to decide, to present Zionist demands and wait to see how things developed. Rejection of the proposal by the Arabs led the British, too, to retreat from it, and thus a final decision on the subject was avoided. Zionists increasingly felt that nothing could be expected of the Arabs, and there was no counting on the British, intensifying their demand to act more determinately against both the Arab Revolt and British policy.<sup>45</sup>

*The third controversial issue* was the response to the limitations imposed by the British on immigration. The issue of Jewish immigration was what began to reveal the differences between the Zionist movement as a whole and the British. The Jews claimed that the commitment to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine included in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine called for unlimited aliyah to the country. Following the British conquest of Palestine and until the beginning of Herbert Samuel's period as High Commissioner there was no specific limitation on aliyah, but after the White Paper of 1922, it was determined that Jewish immigration would be based on the country's "economic absorptive capacity." That term became a constant subject of debate between representatives of the Yishuv and the British administration that originated it, and according to which certificates for immigration were issued.<sup>46</sup>

The Arabs also refused to accept even this principle, demanding immediate cessation of Jewish immigration to Palestine. When the British limited the number of immigration certificates for Jews, illegal immigration developed and became known as "ha'apalah." The concept of ha'apalah was welcomed in Revisionist circles who objected to British limitation of immigration as early as the beginning of the 1930s and began organizing groups of illegal immigrants. At the time, this clandestine immigration was of individuals or small groups. As noted, during the first half of the 1930s there was a great increase in Jewish immigration permitted by the British. However, already in 1934 the Zionist leadership began organizing groups of illegal immigrants. There are those who view the beginning of the ha'apalah in that year by the Zionist leadership with the dispatch of the ship *Velos* to Eretz Israel. After the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in 1936, which served to lend force to the Arab demand that the British cease all Jewish immigration, ha'apalah operations by the

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<sup>45</sup> On the Arab Revolt and its great influence on the Yishuv in terms of security, economy, settlement efforts, and changes in relations with the Arabs and the British, see Gelber, "Consolidation of Jewish Society," 374–88.

<sup>46</sup> On the restriction of Jewish immigration by the Mandate authorities, see Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust*, 4–7.

Revisionists increased. Their disagreement with the Zionist leadership in this matter was related to the broader controversy about how to react to British government decisions in Palestine and in London. Organizing ha'apalah became a major operation of the Revisionist movement and Etzel. As anti-Jewish pressure increased in Germany and other countries, so did illegal Jewish immigration, and unorganized ha'apalah ships began setting off as well. The British authorities hardened their hearts. At this same time, the Haganah, too, once again began organizing ha'apalah ships and also established the "Mossad Le-aliyah Bet" to bring in illegal immigrants also by overland routes through the neighboring Arab countries.<sup>47</sup>

Ha'apalah, like the other two issues noted above, increased the tension within the Yishuv between its two central groups: those who believed in the need to maintain good relations with the British and present a moderate front of havlagah, and those who despaired of these relations, even if this mandated independent and extreme action. This state of affairs would also come to the fore later, mainly during the period of the Jewish–British conflict in 1945–1947.

*The fourth issue* in the Jewish response to the Arab Revolt was the result of a strategic-geographic change in policy whose significance increased after publication of the Royal Commission partition plan. This was the network of "Stockade and Tower" settlements established at the time, and about which much has been written. This operation differed significantly from previous Jewish settlement efforts in Eretz Israel, not only in the number of new settlements and the rapid pace of their establishment, but also since in previous periods only one single settlement was established at a time, or efforts were concentrated in one specific region, such as the Jezreel Valley, the Sharon region, or the Hefer Valley. In contrast, establishment of the Stockade and Tower settlements during the years of the Arab Revolt was carried out all at once, and in many areas. This was a settlement operation whose goals were also political and strategic.<sup>48</sup>

In the previous chapter, I discussed the Jewish N-shaped settlement pattern and traced its creation until 1936, the date when the Arab Revolt began. Now I would like to address an especially interesting aspect of the Stockade and Tower settlements, and that is the strategic-geographic change in Zionist settlement policy as a response to the Royal Commission's partition plan. This change is manifested in two main areas: the regions in the country in which settlements were already

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<sup>47</sup> On the early years of ha'apalah, 1934–1937, see *ibid.*, 9–11. For the renewal of illegal immigration in 1937–1939, including the Revisionist "Aliyah Center" and the "Mossad Le-aliyah Bet," as well as Hehalutz which was active in Europe with headquarters in Paris since early 1939, see *ibid.*, 11–17. On illegal immigration in general, including that of the Revisionists, see *History of the Haganah*, 2,1:1033–52; 3,1:842–48.

<sup>48</sup> "Stockade and Tower" actually continued the development of the N-shaped settlement pattern dealt with in Chapter Ten, but now it was also motivated by political and strategic policies. For these aspects of the Stockade and Tower settlements, see Near, *Kibbutz Movement*, 1:315–28.

established, and the first signs of a politically and geographically limited settlement policy that set the boundaries of Jewish settlement decided upon by the Zionist Executive.<sup>49</sup>

Apparently, the Royal Commission partition plan convinced the Zionist leaders that if they aspired to the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Israel, this could only come about by partitioning the country, and that the mountainous Arab region would not be included within its borders. As this understanding dawned on many of the Zionist leaders, Ben-Gurion among them, their settlement policy began to change as well. Hence the main goal was not to gain a foothold in areas filled with Arab villages, but to reinforce the areas into which Jewish settlement had already penetrated and widen their boundaries, so that should another proposal be raised to establish a Jewish state in part of Eretz Israel, its territory would be greater. The mountain regions were viewed as a lost case – perhaps excluding the Jerusalem Hills area, since in their opinion Jerusalem, and especially its new Jewish sector, had to be part of the territory of the Jewish state. This explains efforts for the continued possession and development of the Etzion Bloc, Atarot, and Neveh Ya'akov, and obviously the settlements on the road leading from the coast to Jerusalem.<sup>50</sup>

It is abundantly clear that the many new settlements established as part of the Stockade and Tower settlements were in borderline areas (the Beit She'an Valley, Upper Galilee, Eastern Galilee, Western Galilee and the Bay of Acre); areas that had previously been overlooked (Lower Galilee); other isolated areas; and in shoring up of Jewish settlement throughout the country. Efforts were concentrated, first and foremost, in Upper Galilee and the Beit She'an Valley. The establishment of fifty-two Stockade and Tower settlements is a clear indication of this development. The above is not meant to derogate from the speedy pace of settlement, the unique stockade and tower construction method, and their great importance, only to add to the general role intended for them.<sup>51</sup> The spread of these settlements during 1936–1939

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**49** On Jewish settlement after 1936, see also Joseph Weitz, *Our Settlement Activities in a Period of Storm and Stress, 1936–1947* (Merhaviah: Sifriat Poalim, 1947) (Hebrew). On the strategic importance of Jewish settlement in shaping the borders of Eretz Israel, see also Sharett, *Political Diary*, 2: 171–74, entry for June 7, 1937.

**50** For details about plans to improve the borders of the Jewish section in a partitioned Eretz Israel, see Elhanan Orren, "Zionist Responses to the Partition Plan (1937) and the Haganah," *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisrael* 4 (1994): 44–47 (Hebrew); Bitan, *Changes in Settlement*, 156–61. For a listing of Stockade and Tower settlements, see Bein, *Return to the Soil*, 487–89. For a map of these settlements, their unique character, how they were built and defended, and more, see *History of the Haganah*, 2,2:958–1032.

**51** The Beit She'an Valley is a good example. Tel Amal (today Ramat David) was the first Stockade and Tower settlement. Initially, it was planned to establish it in the Golan or in Transjordan, but finally settlements were established in the Beit She'an Valley to ensure that this region would remain Jewish; see Elhanan Orren, "Tel-Amal, Pioneer of the 'Stockade and Tower' Settlement: From Tactical Initiative to the Evolution of a Policy," *Hatzionut* 4 (1975): 165–82 (Hebrew). And, indeed, a

marked a major political-geographical change in the goals of the Zionist movement for the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Israel.<sup>52</sup>

### The St. James conference in London; the 1939 White Paper

In mid-October 1938 the Woodhead Commission (the Partition Commission) submitted its conclusions that rejected the Royal Commission's partition plan. Even earlier, in October 1937, MacMichael replaced Wauchope as the High Commissioner in Palestine and on May 16, 1938 Malcolm MacDonald replaced Ormsby-Gore as colonial secretary. The groundwork was laid for the big change in British policy regarding Palestine.

On November 7, 1938 the British government approved the Woodhead Commission report that in effect put an end to the Royal Commission partition plan. It announced its intent to convene an Arab–Jewish conference, in which representatives of the Arab countries would also participate, in order to seek a solution to the Palestine problem. The Arab countries responded positively, and Palestinian Arabs also sent a delegation to the conference. At first, the Zionist movement tried unsuccessfully to change this decision. Weizmann conferred with MacDonald, but this conversation, too, did not bring about any change. The British proposed limiting Jewish immigration to the country for a few months. There were arguments within the Zionist movement whether or not to attend the conference, but it was finally decided to do so. However, at the same time, anti-British sentiment in the movement increased, Ben-Gurion inclined towards a more aggressive Zionist policy, and even American Jewry supported a tougher line.<sup>53</sup>

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comparison of the partition maps of the Royal Commission and of UNSCOP (Maps 26 and 27) proves that there was a change in this area, as well as in additional ones.

52 After the Six-Day War I delivered a lecture at a conference of the Israel Exploration Society that was convened in the Nablus region. In my lecture I explained that Jewish settlement activity was not conducted in the hilly regions due to the physical and geographical conditions of those regions. After the lecture, my colleague, the late Prof. Israel Kolatt, admitted that though what I said was true, it should also be borne in mind that there was a political decision by Ben-Gurion and the Zionist leadership, taken after the outbreak of the Arab Revolt and the recommendations of the Peel Commission, to refrain from settlement efforts in areas that were outside the partition borders recommended by the commission, since already then they were considered a lost case. When I reviewed the matter, I realized how right he was, and that there is detailed documentation to support his comment.

53 *Palestine: Statement by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom: Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament . . . November, 1938* (Cmd. 5893) (London: HMSO, 1938), in Aaron S. Kleiman, ed., *A Return to Palliatives, 1938*, *Rise of Israel*, 26 (New York: Garland, 1987), 473–76. The statement declared that the British government withdraws its support of the Royal Commission's recommendations and intends to convene discussions in London. For Ben-Gurion's strong criticism of MacDonald and the British and the debates during the St. James Conference, see Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 199–266. For his stance at the conference,

The conference opened at St. James Palace in London in February 1939. It very quickly became clear that this conference was another stage in the attempt to resolve the question of Palestine in an agreed arrangement that would be acceptable to the Arabs. It was evident that after the British government had abandoned the idea of partitioning Palestine, the international situation called for finding a solution that would ensure continued British control of the country. To that end, the conference was prepared to freeze the process of developing the Jewish national home by limiting immigration and sale of lands to Jews, and, as much as possible, agreeing to Arab wishes for self-government, but in such a manner that would be compatible with continued British rule.<sup>54</sup>

As a result, MacDonald drafted a plan, in the form of a lengthy statement presented to the British cabinet on January 4, 1939, which included the following proposals: (a) establishment of a legislative council in Palestine, alongside British rule, with equal representation of Arabs and Jews; (b) limiting Jewish immigration so that within a decade it would account for 35–40 percent of the total population of the country, and no more. A second alternative was that immigration would be conditional upon agreement between the Jews and the Arabs, which obviously would meet with an Arab veto; (c) limitation of land acquisition, without going into details.

In addition to this statement, MacDonald also submitted a memorandum by the heads of the British military, dated January 16, 1939, which pointed to the strategic importance of Egypt and the Arab countries for Britain, as a link between the metropolis and India and the Far East and as major suppliers of oil. An additional point they made was that the failure of all efforts in 1937 to reach an understanding with Italy and Mussolini, and the possibility that in the future Italy would constitute a potential British enemy, added to the importance of the Middle East for Britain. Apparently, the change in the British position stemmed from fear that their interests would be compromised, together with apprehension about Italian and German involvement in the area, especially in the Suez Canal.<sup>55</sup>

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and that developments in British policy were compatible with what was happening at the time in Germany, see Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 654–94. On informal talks between Jewish and Arab representatives at the conference, see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 240–60 (nos. 26 and 27), Feb. 23 and Apr. 7, 1939 respectively.

<sup>54</sup> For two of Ben-Gurion's diary entries during the St. James Conference, see Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 255–56. For a telephone conversation of Shertok with Weizmann to learn about Weizmann's discussion with MacDonald on the previous day, and about Shertok's talk with Ben-Gurion regarding the difficult situation that had emerged, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 4:17–20, entry for Feb. 5, 1939. For Ben-Gurion's opinion of Malcolm MacDonald, see *ibid.*, 4:164. On the St. James Conference, see also the discussion in *History of the Haganah*, 2,2:788–91, which ends: "Twenty years of cooperation and a pact with Britain have come to an end . . . the only choice left is to fight."

<sup>55</sup> Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 281–94. Upon MacDonald's entry into the Colonial Office, he apparently decided to try to solve the conflict between the Jews and the Arabs, but failed.



The Jewish Agency put together a large delegation of forty-three members to the conference, headed by Weizmann and Ben-Gurion. The Arabs, too, sent their delegations. The central issue was the matter of continued Jewish immigration. The Arabs also raised the subject of the McMahon letters, which they repeatedly claimed were contradicted by the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. It was evident to all that a compromise acceptable to both sides would not be reached.<sup>56</sup>

The joint conference ended on March 17, 1939, and each side continued to hold its own conference. MacDonald had begun drafting a statement of the new British policy. However, the annexation of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis a short while earlier delayed its publication. In October 1938 Sudetenland was handed over to Hitler following the Munich Agreement. On March 15, 1939 Hitler annexed Czechoslovakia, thus in fact nullifying the Munich Agreement. In spite of this, British Prime Minister Chamberlain continued to believe him.<sup>57</sup>

Two months later, on May 17, the final British decision was published in the White Paper of 1939.<sup>58</sup> The document included the following three clauses: (a) the establishment of an independent Palestine State in ten years' time; (b) limitation of Jewish immigration for five years to 15,000 persons per year, which would amount to a maximum of 75,000 persons; (c) an almost total limitation of land acquisition from Arabs.<sup>59</sup> As for Jerusalem, it would be part of the state to be established a decade later. International guarantees regarding the holy sites were mentioned; however, since the majority of the population was Arab, this meant that the new state would also be Arab, and Jerusalem part of it.

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The Jews accused him of betraying them; see the index to vol. 3 of Sharett, *Political Diary*, including the relevant notes. See also note 41 above.

**56** For the McMahon letters, see Chapter Seven, at nn. 130–31 in the text. On Churchill's speech against the White Paper and his personal, as well as Britain's, commitment to the Balfour Declaration, see note 60 below.

**57** On the St. James Conference, see also Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 334–55; Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 493–507. Weizmann also writes about interesting talks he held with various personages at the conference, including Churchill with whom he discussed the possibility of mobilizing Jews for the British armed forces, and with Churchill's secretary John Martin, who had previously served as secretary to the Peel Commission; *ibid.*, 525–32.

**58** The Twenty-First Zionist Congress convened in Geneva in August 1939 under the dark shadow of the White Paper. It quickly came to an end when the participants heard of the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement. On the White Paper, the fading out of the Arab Revolt, and the Jewish reaction, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:9–55; ESCO Foundation, *Palestine*, 876–955.

**59** *Palestine: Statement of Policy: Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament . . . May, 1939* (Cmd. 6019) (London: HMSO, 1939), in Aaron S. Klieman, ed., *The Darkest Year 1939, Rise of Israel*, 27 (New York: Garland, 1987), 302–13. On the St. James Conference and the White Paper, see Penkower, *Palestine in Turmoil*, 612–79. See also the relevant chapters in vol. 4 of Sharett, *Political Diary* who calls the conference “a round table conference” and gives one chapter the title: “A Duel with Malcolm in Three Stages.”

On May 22–23, a debate was conducted in Parliament regarding the White Paper. Winston Churchill spoke out against it. Later, in additional discussions, he would quote excerpts from this speech and turned it into a sort of political declaration. Several other Zionist supporters spoke out against the White Paper, but in the end, Parliament ratified it.<sup>60</sup> In June 1939 the League of Nations Mandate Committee convened. The proposal to amend the Mandate for Palestine was rejected there, and it was decided to bring it before the League of Nations Council. Then World War II broke out, and the intended meeting was never convened.

Following publication of the White Paper, vigorous Jewish efforts began for its cancellation. They tried to get the United States to act. In addition, on May 17, 1939 the Yishuv began sharp protests against the laws and prohibitive decrees of this extremely anti-Zionist document. Though the Zionist leadership strongly criticized the policy reflected in the White Paper, the British government under Prime Minister Chamberlain continued in its policy.<sup>61</sup>

The Etzel began taking military action against the British administration. Bombs were planted in the Rex Cinema in Jerusalem, as well as the central post office building and the government broadcasting center. British officers who tortured the perpetrators they caught were attacked.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, when World War II broke out on September 1, 1939, the Haganah and Etzel announced that they were ceasing operations against the British and would cooperate with them in the war against the common German enemy.<sup>63</sup> Only a group that seceded from the Etzel, later named Lehi, an acronym for Lohamei Herut Yisrael, continued operating against the British during the war.<sup>64</sup>

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**60** Cohen, *Churchill and Palestine*, Hebrew section, 13–14 and the sources cited there. Churchill remained almost the sole supporter of Zionism; *ibid.*, Hebrew section, 15–29 and the relevant documents. While Churchill was supportive of Zionism, he cannot be labeled “a Zionist”; see Shertok’s unequivocal opinion in Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:57, entry for May 14, 1940, where he also notes that Lord Halifax and Malcolm MacDonald expressed opinions opposed to Zionism, with which Prime Minister Chamberlain concurred.

**61** On steps taken by the British against the Haganah and its members after publication of the White Paper, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:120–45. For details about the “land decrees,” a report about a meeting with the colonial secretary on Feb. 26, 1940, and statements made during meetings of the Jewish Agency Executive on Apr. 1 and 8, 1940, and at sessions of the Mapai Central Committee on Apr. 9 and 14, 1940, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:35–48.

**62** Yehuda Lapidot, *The Flames of Revolt: The Irgun in Jerusalem* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1996), 42–56 (Hebrew); Bell, *Terror out of Zion*, 48; *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:56–67.

**63** Despite this decision, in October the British arrested forty-three members of the Haganah who were on a training hike as part of a course for commanders and sentenced them to ten years in prison. They were released after a year and a half by order of the central government in London.

**64** On the secession of Lehi and its actions during the war period, see Yaakov Banai, *Anonymous Soldiers: Operations of Lehi* (Tel Aviv: Group of Friends, 1958) (Hebrew); Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, rev. ed. (New York: Nash Publishing, 1977); *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:494–519.

In February 1940 the British government decided to implement the “land decrees” included in the White Paper, despite Churchill’s attempts to delay them. Before leaving on his journey to the United States, Foreign Secretary Halifax even sent Weizmann a letter explaining the British decision to continue with the White Paper policy it had adopted.<sup>65</sup> Ben-Gurion then coined his famous saying “We shall fight against the White Paper as if Hitler does not exist, and we shall fight Hitler as if the White Paper does not exist.” However, he spoke out against the British government at the Jewish Agency leadership meeting and resigned from his role as president of the Zionist Organization. Ben-Gurion’s resignation was not accepted. The Higher Arab Conference in exile, headed by the mufti, also rejected the White Paper, even though it reflected a clear-cut pro-Arab policy. Despite all this, the British government adhered to the document and its implementation throughout the period of the war.<sup>66</sup>

A summation of the 1930s clearly shows that they began stormily and ended no less violently. The question arises whether there is a connection between the two. Some scholars, usually Jewish, claim that the British retreat from support of Zionism and the Balfour Declaration was evident as early as the Western Wall conflict and the 1929 riots. It was already reflected in the White Paper of 1930, from which Britain rapidly dissociated itself. Towards the latter part of the 1930s, Britain backed away from Zionism again, in its decision to issue the 1939 White Paper that in effect closed the door on the possibility of Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Israel. Other researchers, characteristically on the Palestinian Arab side, claim that in 1930 the British began acknowledging the Palestinian Arabs as a nation, then reversed their policy, but finally, in the White Paper of 1939, returned to support the Palestinian Arab community. A third view holds that what decided things in Palestine were first and foremost British interests. Events in Palestine, both at the beginning and the end of the 1930s, were played out according to these interests, which can be

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<sup>65</sup> *Palestine Land Transfers Regulations . . . : Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Parliament . . . February 1940* (Cmd. 6180), in Michael J. Cohen, ed., *Implementing the White Paper 1939–1941, Rise of Israel*, 28 (New York: Garland, 1987), 98–106. On the regulations of Feb. 28, 1940, which were a development of what was written in the 1939 White Paper, including an angry statement by Ben-Gurion on this matter, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:323–34 and his explanation about the regulations, *ibid.*, 335–36.

<sup>66</sup> For the Jewish and Arab reactions to the White Paper, see Katzburg, “Palestine under the Mandate,” 427–30. See the statements by Ben-Gurion to the Zionist Inner Actions Committee on June 26, 1939 in which he declared that aliyah and a Jewish army are the proper response to the White Paper, in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 258–64, and at a meeting of the Mapai Central Committee on Sept. 12, 1939 in which he again expressed his belief that the establishment of a Jewish armed force is the way to achieve a Jewish state; *ibid.*, 273–78.

summed up as continued control over the territory of Palestine. In other words, British pragmatism determined British policy.<sup>67</sup>

## World War II, 1939–1945

### 1939–1941: Churchill replaces Chamberlain; Germany defeats France and attacks the USSR; the United States joins the war after Pearl Harbor

Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Two days later British Prime Minister Chamberlain, who had previously signed the Munich Agreement with Hitler and abandoned Czechoslovakia, declared war on Germany. Eight months later, on May 10, 1940, when the Germans began their invasion of Belgium and France, Chamberlain resigned, his failure being evident to all.<sup>68</sup> Churchill replaced him as prime minister and established a national coalition government that included the Labour and Conservative parties. Upon Churchill's assuming office, the Yishuv hoped for a change in British policy, but none came.<sup>69</sup> Even during the war, the British did their best to continue the White Paper policy, with a number of necessary changes, but did not abrogate it. Jews in Palestine began enlisting in the British army, while the struggle against the White Paper continued simultaneously.<sup>70</sup>

On June 22, 1940 the French government capitulated to Germany and signed a cease-fire agreement according to which its army was forced to disarm and three-fifths of France was placed under German supervision. The Vichy government, headed by Marshal Henri-Philippe Pétain, controlled the remaining territory. The commander of the French forces in Syria declared that he would not surrender, but was soon forced to comply with the decision of the Vichy government. Later, the

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<sup>67</sup> Gabriel Sheffer, "The Principles of British Pragmatism: Re-evaluation of British Policies toward Palestine in the 1930s," *Cathedra* 29 (Sept. 1983): 113–44, esp. his summary conclusions, 142–44 (Hebrew).

<sup>68</sup> There are those who divide World War II into three sub-periods from the standpoint of the Yishuv: (1) from the outbreak of the war on Sept. 1, 1939 to the entrance of Italy on July 10, 1940; (2) from the entrance of Italy to the Allied victory at El-Alamein in November 1942; (3) from the beginning of 1943 until the final defeat of Germany in May 1945; see *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:91–103.

<sup>69</sup> In his diary, Shertok noted the change of government in Britain with the remark that one should not hold high expectations of it; Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:57–65. For the deposing of MacDonald as colonial secretary in May 1940, without any change in the White Paper policy, see Cohen, *Churchill and Palestine*, Hebrew section, 30–38. For the continuation of deliberations concerning Palestine after his removal from office, see also Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 114–24.

<sup>70</sup> On continued opposition to the White Paper during the war, see the editor's introduction, Heller ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 35–37. On the danger of German invasion of Eretz Israel and enlistment in the British armed forces, see *ibid.* For an appeal to members of the Yishuv aged 17–45 to enlist in the British army as a national duty, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:359, n. 1, entry for June 28, 1942. On volunteering for the army, see, in greater detail, *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:649–798.

British succeeded in taking control of Syria with the help of the Free French forces and assisted by units from the Haganah. After the surrender of France and Syria, the British apparently began to understand the need to cooperate with the Jewish community in Palestine.<sup>71</sup> As a result, they decided to permit the enlistment of additional Jews in the British military and also to establish special Jewish defense units in the country, such as the Palmah. This did not prevent the British from continuing implementing the limitations imposed by the White Paper and even searching Jews for weapons.<sup>72</sup>

As for Zionist activity, ha'apalah efforts increased as early as the summer of 1939, and the "Mossad" was established as the organization chosen to carry them out.<sup>73</sup> Ha'apalah operations also entailed grave tragedies. On December 14, 1940, 204 immigrants aboard the ha'apalah ship *Salvador* sank to their death in the Mediterranean.<sup>74</sup> Another tragic event occurred on November 25, 1940 in Haifa port with the sinking of the *Patria*. The ship was sunk due to a miscalculation by the Haganah, which only intended to sabotage it to prevent deportation of the immigrants gathered upon it from three ha'apalah ships: *Atlantic*, *Pacific*, and *Milos*.<sup>75</sup> On December 9, 1940, some of the ha'apalah immigrants who survived the *Patria* sinking were deported to the island of Mauritius.<sup>76</sup>

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71 For Shertok's record of these developments in Syria, see the chapter called "The Middle East under the Shadow of War" in Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:89–122 and n. 2 on p. 345. For the declaration by the representative of the Free French forces about cooperation with the British, the annulment of the French mandate over Syria and the promise of independence, the Palmah and its relationship to the Field Companies which operated under the command of Orde Wingate, see Zerubavel Gilad, ed., *The Book of the Palmah* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1953), 5–111 (Hebrew).

72 For developments on the Jewish side during the first years of the war, 1939–1942, see Monty N. Penkower, *Decision on Palestine Deferred: America, Britain and Wartime Diplomacy, 1939–1945* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 3–184. For certain changes in British policy in Palestine in the years 1940–1945, see Katzburg, *The Palestine Problem in British Policy*.

73 On ha'apalah and how the Zionist leadership related to it following the change in British policy, see note 47 above.

74 The *Salvador*, a large Bulgarian sailboat, sank on Dec. 14, 1940 as it exited the Dardanelles. It carried 326 illegal immigrants, of whom 204 perished; see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:282 and 335, n. 1; Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust*, 93–97. For their commemoration in Eretz Israel, see Bar, *Ideology and Landscape*, 173–77.

75 On the *Patria* and its victims, see the thoughts expressed by Pinhas Lubianiker (Lavon) at a meeting of the Mapai Central Committee on Feb. 15, 1940, in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 297–307. Shertok devoted an entire chapter in his diary to the sinking of the *Patria*; Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:123–43. For the debate in the Zionist leadership about the "three ships," see Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust*, 31–39; on the sailing of these ships to Eretz Israel, see *ibid.*, 117–23.

76 The Zionist leadership placed full blame for the deportation to Mauritius on High Commissioner MacMichael. It comes as no surprise that Shertok called the chapter in his diary "The High Commissioner Must Go," Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:144–64. On the sinking of the *Patria* and the deportation to Mauritius, see also the editor's introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 38–39.

As 1941 began, there was an increase in Jewish volunteers to the British army. However, the demand to establish separate units was rejected. On April 1, 1941, Shertok wrote: “To sum up . . . one should note that the great issue – the establishment of a Jewish military force – was very forcefully stricken off the agenda . . . . However, it is clear that due to the fact that 8,000 Jews from Eretz Israel are serving in the army, and due to . . . other facts, it may be . . . that the units will bear a Jewish name, have a Jewish flag, and perhaps something more important.”<sup>77</sup>

The Palmah force was established in May 1941. In the spring of 1942, when the German military was deployed at El-Alamein deep in the heart of Egypt, the British officially recognized the Palmah. It had 462 members in November 1941, 1,517 in 1944, and 3,100 during the War of Independence.<sup>78</sup> Much has been written about Jewish volunteers in the British army, the establishment of the Jewish Brigade, and the role played by soldiers from Eretz Israel in assisting Holocaust survivors and the ha‘apalah operation.<sup>79</sup>

There were also changes in the Revisionist movement. On August 3, 1940, a year after the war broke out, the movement’s leader Ze’ev Jabotinsky passed away in the United States.<sup>80</sup> On May 20, 1941 David Raziel, commander of the Etzel, was killed while serving with the British army during the Rashid ‘Ali al-Gaylani mutiny in Iraq. At the time, attempts were made to have the members of the Etzel return to the Zionist Organization, but Ben-Gurion was opposed and demanded that the Etzel be disbanded.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> On volunteering for service in the British armed forces, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:165–87, esp. 186–87; Yoav Gelber, *Jewish Palestinian Volunteering in the British Army during the Second World War*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979–1984) (Hebrew).

<sup>78</sup> On the establishment of the Palmah and its development, see Gilad, ed., *The Book of the Haganah*, for the days of the battle of El-Alamein, see *ibid.*, 1:111–154. See also *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:356–469; Yaakov Dostrovsky (Dori), “Summing Up the Period of Alert during the Days of El-Alamein,” appendix 10 in *ibid.*, 1865–71; the editor’s introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 46–47.

<sup>79</sup> In addition to Gelber, *Jewish Palestinian Volunteering*, a book that summarizes the activity of Haganah members in the British army in the Levant, Egypt, North Africa, and Europe is Hanoch Patishi, *An Underground in Uniform: The Haganah and the Jewish Soldiers from Palestine in the British Army, 1939–1946* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Pub. House, 2006) (Hebrew). See also Morris Beckman, *The Jewish Brigade: An Army with Two Masters, 1944–45* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1998). For a selection of documents, see Michael J. Cohen, ed., *The Jewish Military Effort 1939–1944*, Rise of Israel, 29 (New York: Garland, 1987).

<sup>80</sup> For an insightful essay on Jabotinsky, see Israel Kolatt, “Jabotinsky’s Place in the National Pantheon,” in *In the Eye of the Storm: Essays on Ze’ev Jabotinsky*, ed. Avi Bareli and Pinhas Ginossar (Sede Boqer: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2004), 7–23 (Hebrew). See also additional articles in this volume.

<sup>81</sup> For the efforts by Elishah Golomb, Berl Katznelson, and Shertok to have the Revisionists rejoin the Haganah, see Teveth, *David’s Zealotry*, 4:364–434.



On June 22, 1941 Nazi Germany breached its non-aggression agreement with the Soviet Union in the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, and invaded Soviet territory in Operation “Barbarossa.” The Soviet Union immediately joined the Allies in their war against the Axis powers. The Middle East became an increasingly significant theater.

On June 2, 1941, a year after Churchill assumed the office of prime minister and before the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden delivered an important speech regarding Britain’s war aims, also outlining the new world order after the war. He devoted a whole section of his speech to the future of the Middle East. Eden sided with Syrian aspirations for independence and spoke of the need for Arab unity. This speech is considered to have been the first step in the establishment of the Arab League.<sup>82</sup>

Eden did not address the status of Palestine in his speech. This could be interpreted in two ways: either the country was part of the entire region and there was no need to make special mention of it, or it was to be afforded a special status. Apparently, following this statement thoughts were again raised in the summer of 1941 regarding cooperation for establishing an Arab federation.<sup>83</sup> Weizmann and the Indian Muslim leader Sir Firoz Khan Noon conversed on the subject. It was Churchill who suggested such a meeting to Firoz Khan, who reported it to Leopold Amery, then the secretary of Indian affairs. Churchill was provided with a summary report of the meeting. Other ideas were raised and meetings were conducted with Arab personages.<sup>84</sup> Since it was deemed important to examine possible relations with Arab countries, Shertok visited Egypt for meetings with British officials and, if possible, also with leading Arab personalities.<sup>85</sup>

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**82** Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:341, n. 1. On Eden’s statement, which also referred to the possibility that the Germans would conquer Palestine, and on the British invasion of Syria and the help extended by Jewish settlements, see *ibid.*, 5:193–222. On the relation of Eden’s statement to the Arab issue, see Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 134–48.

**83** Shertok records three conversations he held with Aref al-Aref on the Jews within a confederated state, but these, too, came to nothing; see Sharett, *Political Diary*, 5:204–5, 207–9, and the note on pp. 341–42. On the flight of Aref al-Aref after the riots of 1920 and his later return to the country, see ch. 8, n. 65.

**84** Amery was an MP for the Conservative Party, a supporter of Zionism, and an ally of Churchill. In 1940 he called upon Chamberlain to resign, quoting Cromwell when dismissing the Long Parliament: “You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!” For the idea of a federated state which was raised at the time, the Philby plan, Lord Moyne, and the stance of Amery, see Cohen, *Churchill and Palestine*, Hebrew section, 39–51. On Lord Moyne and his views on the Jewish–Arab issue, see also Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 134–48.

**85** During Shertok’s visit to Cairo he met with British representatives and raised the matter of the 9,000 Jewish volunteers in the British army and the casualties they suffered in the campaign in Greece. He also met with Nuri al-Sa’id, who was in Egypt at the time, and Mahmud ‘Azmi, an Egyptian writer, journalist, and lawyer who eventually headed the Egyptian delegation to the



The subject of three million Jews for whom a refuge had to be found after the war was raised for the first time during the talks in Egypt. Though information about the Holocaust in Europe was still unknown, Nazi Germany's persecution of the Jews was already sensed. It was later made known that Lord Halifax, the British ambassador to the United States, had received instructions to explain that the problem of the Jews after the war could not be solved in Europe, or in Palestine. Hence it was crucial to find another solution in Africa, Australia, or elsewhere.

American president Franklin Delano Roosevelt considered himself a friend of the Jews, but he, too, did not believe that Palestine could absorb the many Jews and solve the Jewish problem. He even toyed with the idea that it might be possible to do so in California. Lord Moyne, the British resident minister of state in the Middle East, stated that when the question of three million homeless Jews would surface their absorption in Palestine alone would not solve the problem, and it was thus imperative to find them another territory.<sup>86</sup>

The Madagascar plan of 1937 resurfaced on September 3, 1941 with a proposal that the French colony would absorb millions of Jews.<sup>87</sup> Britain's policy was that Palestine was not the solution for the problem of the Jewish refugees, which explains its attitude towards ha'apalah. The British further claimed that immigration was a political means to promote the aims of the Zionist movement. However, as the flow of Jewish immigrants increased, accompanied by tragedies, British policy makers found it difficult to maintain their position and disagreements developed between them.<sup>88</sup> One of the most horrendous cases was that of the ship *Struma* which sank in the Black Sea on February 24, 1942 with the loss of all but one of its 769 passengers.<sup>89</sup>

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United Nations; Sharett, *Political Diary* 5:223–37. He also noted Kalvarisky's activities in Cairo; *ibid.*, 5:246–49.

**86** *Ibid.*, 5:251–53. Weizmann discussed the issue with Lord Moyne, *ibid.*, 5:269. On Sept. 30, 1941, Moyne sent a memorandum to the War Cabinet pointing to the danger inherent in the extreme resolution passed by the convention of the Zionist Organization of America in September, with the backing of Weizmann and Ben-Gurion, calling for the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Israel and the necessity to transfer there at least 3,000,000 Jews; see *ibid.*, 5:351, n. 1.

**87** *Ibid.*, 5:257. At the beginning of World War II there were rumors that the Germans intended to bring together millions of Jews in Madagascar. In May 1941 the American Jewish Committee published a memorandum in which it refuted the possibility of such a plan. In his talk with Shertok, Moyne referred once again to the idea broached by the Jewish Agency in 1941 about the need to begin planning the transfer of millions of Jews to Palestine after the war; *ibid.*, 5:350.

**88** For the influence of the White Paper on the fate of European Jewry and differences of opinion between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, see Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust*, 128–44.

**89** The *Struma* was organized by the Revisionists. It arrived in Istanbul from Romania on Dec. 14, 1941 and remained there because the British refused to issue its passengers immigration certificates. On Feb. 23, 1942 it was towed by the Turks into the Black Sea where it was sunk the next day, probably by a Russian submarine, with only one survivor; Sharett, *Political Diary* 5:285, 291–95,

**1942: The Zionist Biltmore Conference, May 9–11**

With the outbreak of World War II, the Zionist leadership began to reconsider how it should react to British policy following the issuance of the 1939 White Paper. Ben-Gurion and Weizmann, each of his own accord, reached the conclusion that Britain could not be counted upon to assist in fulfilling Zionist aspirations, and the movement should revert to its original basic demand that all of Eretz Israel should constitute the Jewish state. Both Zionist leaders began to openly express this view in 1940. In 1941–1942, Weizmann and Ben-Gurion were in the United States trying to persuade American Jews to act vigorously for the establishment of a Jewish state, a Jewish “commonwealth” in Eretz Israel, and also to influence the Arabs to agree to a population transfer.<sup>90</sup> As for past agreement to a parity plan, even prior to the Royal (Peel) Commission, it had already been declared that this applied to the Mandate period alone, and not to an independent state. On May 9–11, 1942 an emergency conference was convened at the Biltmore Hotel in New York at which the “Biltmore Program” was adopted, a political plan for the postwar period. It absolutely rejected the idea of partition and demanded opening the gates of Eretz Israel to unlimited Jewish immigration. The Jewish Agency would be authorized to supervise aliyah, and a Jewish state was to be established in all of Eretz Israel, which would take its place in the postwar world. On October 16, 1944 the Jewish Agency issued a memorandum in which it presented the Biltmore Program as its official proposal for the postwar period.<sup>91</sup>

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354, n. 2. On the *Struma* tragedy and Jewish reactions, see Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust*, 147–82. For the ha’apalah organized by the Revisionists, see *ibid.*, 69–82.

**90** Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 376–83. Weizmann and his friend, Professor Lewis Namier, held two conversations with Philby in London on Sept. 23 and Oct. 6, 1939. Philby proposed that in return for acceptance of a Saudi federation, including Syria, and payment of a large sum of money, the Jews would receive all of Palestine as a state, perhaps minus the triangle of Nablus–Jenin–Tulkarm. Weizmann considered this proposal until Jan. 8, 1940, and perhaps it led him to conceive the Biltmore Program; see Yehuda Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance: A History of Jewish Palestine, 1939–1945* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 224–33. Shertok claimed that Weizmann considered Philby’s proposal to be a fantasy; Sharett, *Political Diary*, 4:373–76, entry for Oct. 6, 1939. On Namier, see Norman A. Rose, *Lewis Namier and Zionism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). On the talks with Philby, see also Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2, 260–63 (nos. 28–29). For an extract of a note by Ibn Sa’ud to Col. Hoskins in Riyadh, Aug. 20, 1943, see *ibid.*, 263–64 (no. 30). On Philby, see Chapter Ten, in the section on plans for a Jewish–Arab peace.

**91** On the birth of the Zionist Biltmore Program during the war years of 1940–1942, see Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 376–83; Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance*, 234–52; David H. Shapiro, “The Political Background of the Biltmore Resolution,” *Herzl Yearbook* 8 (1978): 166–77; Kolatt, *Zionism and Israel*, 20–26. Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, in the editor’s introduction, 42–50, maintains that in all these there was some element of messianic expectations; see also the meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive, Nov. 11, 1942, to discuss approval of the Biltmore Program, in *ibid.*, 336–38; Ben-Gurion’s reply to discussants at the meeting of the Inner Zionist Actions Committee,

Simultaneously, in contrast to the Jewish Agency, Jewish peace organizations also began renewing their efforts in Eretz Israel. On August 3, 1939 the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation was established, its platform declaring that Eretz Israel was a common homeland for the two peoples. The views of the movement were quite similar to those of Hashomer Hatza'ir, but it remained a small ineffective group.<sup>92</sup> As a result, in July 1942 another organization named Ihud (Union) was established in Jerusalem with the aim of uniting the previous peace movements, such as Brit Shalom, which were opposed to the decisions of the Zionist institutions to promote the Biltmore Program. Its founding assembly convened on August 11, 1942 at the "Berger Club" in Jerusalem, with a hundred participants. A presidium was chosen comprised of Judah L. Magnes, Henrietta Szold, Hayyim Margalit-Kalvarisky, Martin Buber, former regional judge Dr. Yosef Moshe Valero, and Moshe Smilansky. Sali Hirsch of the Association of Jews of Central Europe and the "Aliyah Hadashah" (New Aliyah) party was elected its president.<sup>93</sup>

Even in later years, supporters of a binational solution continued to voice their ideas. Once more it was Judah L. Magnes who led those efforts. As noted, at the end of April 1948 he returned to the United States, where he passed away.<sup>94</sup> Ernst Simon, a leading personality among those supporting binationalism, succinctly summarized the Zionist debate between those who adhered to this position and the Zionists who called for the establishment of an independent Jewish state. According to him, this is what Ben-Gurion said to Magnes when they met:

Dr. Magnes, the difference between us actually is not so much one of aims but of means. You too want a state; you too do not wish to remain under a British mandate. What you want is a bi-national state, and that too is a state. You believe that peace with the Arabs will bring it about. I cannot believe in the existence of a bi-national state and I do not at all believe that peace with the Arabs will bring it about. But I do believe something which you do not believe, and that is that the Jewish state will bring us peace.<sup>95</sup>

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Mar. 5, 1945, in *ibid.*, 372–76; *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:188–94. On the Biltmore Program and the Arabs, see also Kolatt, *Zionism and Israel*, 34–37.

**92** On the League, see the index in Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*; for its platform, see *ibid.*, 305–6. On the stand adopted by Hashomer Hatza'ir, see Margalit, "Binationalism," 290–94.

**93** On Ihud and its leading members, see Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 306–7; see also Daniel P. Kotzin, *Judah L. Magnes: An American Jewish Nonconformist* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 276–89; Heller, *From "Brit Shalom" to "Ihud,"* 258–64; Gelber, "Consolidation of Jewish Society," 442–63.

**94** Heller, *From "Brit Shalom" to "Ihud,"* 297–404. For Magnes and Ihud, including his contacts with other members, see Bentwich, *For Zion's Sake*, 252–55.

**95** Ernst Simon, "Buber's Legacy for Peace," *New Outlook* 9, no. 8 (1966): 14–24, esp. 24. Ben-Gurion maintained a special relationship with Magnes who in 1936, just before the outbreak of the Arab Revolt, even arranged for Ben-Gurion to meet with George Antonius in the latter's home in Jerusalem; see ch. 10, n. 106.

### The Churchill cabinet's debates and plans regarding the future of Palestine

There were also consultations by the British among themselves regarding the future of Palestine. Some historians believe that already in 1941, when it became clear that the recommendations of the White Paper could not be implemented, the British also began engaging in informal talks and correspondence regarding other solutions to the Palestine issue. High Commissioner MacMichael supported the pro-Arab change of policy reflected in the 1939 White Paper and went so far as to maintain that any such policy had to be based, first and foremost, on annulment of the Mandate, turning Palestine into a Crown Colony, and the disbandment of the Jewish Agency. In September 1941 he sent a lengthy communiqué to London in which he wrote that only after such action, and a period of British trusteeship over Palestine, would Britain be free of its mandatory commitments and an independent state could be established in the country.<sup>96</sup>

At the end of 1941, fear that the Yishuv was adopting a more radical stance increased among British government circles in the Middle East and in Britain, including the foreign and colonial offices. Due to a combination of the adoption of the Biltmore Program, the initiation of a Zionist publicity campaign in the United States, and an increase in underground activities in Palestine together with widespread anger towards Britain, it had to face a new challenge to its rule Palestine that was reflected in British memoranda of the period.<sup>97</sup>

Apparently, from the moment he became prime minister and until 1942 Churchill had not formulated a final plan regarding Palestine. Though he spoke in terms such as fulfilling the commitments of the Balfour Declaration and the 1922 White Paper, it seems there were thoughts racing through his mind in three different directions.<sup>98</sup> His diverse views were expressed in memoranda, in personal talks, and in cabinet discussions: (a) the establishment of western Palestine as a Jewish state as part of a confederation of Arab states. At times Churchill added that this confederation would be headed by Ibn Sa'ud; (b) partitioning western Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab part, without stating the political future of the Arab territory; (c) a statement in general terms regarding a Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> On the views held by MacMichael, see Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 119–48. For his “Note on the Prospects of ‘Federation’ as a Solution of the Palestine Problem,” see Michael J. Cohen, ed., *Palestine and Arab Federation 1938–1945*, Rise of Israel, 32 (New York: Garland, 1987), 132–41.

<sup>97</sup> On the British fear of more extreme views in the Yishuv, until 1944, see Ronald W. Zweig, “Great Britain, the Haganah, and the Fate of the White Paper,” *Cathedra* 29 (Sept. 1983): 145–72 (Hebrew).

<sup>98</sup> Gavriel Cohen, “Churchill and the Establishment of the War Cabinet Committee on Palestine, April–July 1943,” *Hazonut* 4 (1976): 261–75 (Hebrew). Cohen focuses on Churchill’s differences of opinion with other members of the cabinet.

<sup>99</sup> Cohen, *Churchill and Palestine*, Hebrew section, 62–66. Most interesting is the second of the three, which in some aspects was a return to the partition plan of the Peel Commission, with the addition of the Negev to the Jewish state. Churchill may have been influenced by Amery, who had

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was launched on December 7, 1941. Three days later Germany declared war on the United States, which then joined the Allies in World War II.

Doubts regarding the status quo on the Palestine issue began surfacing in the winter of 1942–1943, this for a number of reasons. Most of these were connected to the events of the war: the battles of El-Alamein and the forced German retreat, the German defeat at Stalingrad, and the Allied invasion of North Africa and its consequences for the Middle East. On July 2, 1943 the British cabinet decided to establish a special cabinet committee to discuss the future of Palestine after the war and propose a clearly defined plan of British policy, including how and when it would be implemented. The high level committee, among whose members were ministers with experience and knowledge in Palestine affairs, operated until the end of Churchill's wartime coalition government.<sup>100</sup> The matter of Jewish immigration was raised in the committee since the five-year period granted for continued Jewish immigration to Palestine according to the White Paper was to come to an end on March 31, 1944. All the committee members believed that continued immigration should be permitted until the five-year quota of 75,000 certificates stipulated in the White Paper would be met. Churchill even added that once the quota was filled, this would not in any way be indicative of future policy on immigration.<sup>101</sup> The cabinet committee continued to discuss the subject of Palestine during 1943 and 1944. Finally, it drafted a secret plan that recommended returning to an improved version of the Peel Commission partition plan. With regards to Jerusalem, it proposed that in addition to the city itself, it would also include the broadcast facilities in Ramallah, Lydda airport, and the Rosh Ha'ayin water sources. It was later proposed that the inhabitants of that area would be citizens of the "Jerusalem State."<sup>102</sup>

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supported the plan at the time, and perhaps also by John Martin, who served as secretary to the Peel Commission and was now Churchill's principal private secretary. Cohen notes that this idea was beginning to gain acceptance among some who held pro-Arab views.

**100** For the members of the committee, see Cohen, "Churchill and the War Cabinet Committee on Palestine," 258. The committee, which also functioned during the period of the Atlee government after the war, was reconstituted in August 1945 and began its discussions in September. On the beginnings of the retreat from the status quo and the White Paper in late 1942, see *ibid.*, 275–88.

**101** *Ibid.*, 327, n. 197, where it is noted that until Mar. 31, 1943 only 41,000 of the quota of 75,000 certificates stipulated in the White Paper had been used.

**102** *Ibid.*, 325–36; see also Shmuel Dothan, *A Land in the Balance: The Struggle for Palestine 1918–1948* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Pub. House, 1993), 368–407, and the map of one of the British Cabinet's plans, Jan. 1944, *ibid.*, 390; Katzburg, *The Palestine Problem in British Policy*, Hebrew section, 78–79, 95 (map 3), 106–15; Zweig, "Great Britain, the Haganah, and the Fate of the White Paper," 172.

During the cabinet committee's deliberations, it was decided to check out the possibility of adding the Negev to the Jewish territory.<sup>103</sup>

Towards the end of the war, it seemed that the standing of the Zionist movement vis-à-vis Britain had improved. The Zionists could also draw some optimism from the policy of the Labour party that was part of Churchill's coalition government. In the spring of 1944 it had drafted a pro-Zionist plan, which it made public, that included border changes that would benefit the Jews and the evacuation of Arabs in favor of Jewish immigrants.<sup>104</sup> However, by the end of the war, when the Labour Party came into office, it had undergone a radical change in its policy on Palestine.

### **Initial news of the Holocaust; renewal of Etzel; assassination of Lord Moyne; establishment of the Arab League; the end of the war, May 8, 1945**

Towards the end of 1942, initial news reached Eretz Israel regarding German mass extermination of Jews in Europe. Between June and September 1942, the Yishuv still failed to believe the news and continued to think that the reality in Europe was as it had been during the previous two years. On November 5, 1942 Eliahu Dobkin, head of the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department, submitted the first authoritative report about the Holocaust in Europe. The extent of the catastrophe gradually became clear. Apparently, there were some who at first believed that just as history had proven in the past (after the pogroms of 1881, 1904–1906, 1919, and 1933), Zionism might perhaps benefit from the growing Jewish distress.<sup>105</sup>

Mass exterminations were carried out in the spring and summer of 1943 throughout Poland. In other countries as well, the Germans changed their practice from deportation to extermination of Jews.<sup>106</sup> Once initial news of the Holocaust arrived, Ben-Gurion and other leading figures began accusing Britain of enabling the Germans to carry out their murderous scheme, since it had not permitted the Jews to establish a state of their own before the war broke out. Others engaged in self-reproach. Ben-Gurion expressed the shared fate of the Yishuv and the diaspora: "They are ghetto rebels, and one may learn [from them] the new practice of death taught and bequeathed to us by the defenders of Tel-Hai and Sejerah . . . a death of

**103** Cohen, "Churchill and the War Cabinet Committee on Palestine," 333. On the special committee and its discussions, see *ibid.*, 330–36. On the issue of the Negev, see note 26 above.

**104** On the greatly pro-Zionist stance of the Labour Party, see in the editor's introduction, Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 61, and the sources he cites.

**105** On the disbelief with which the first news of the Holocaust in Europe was met, see Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust*, 180–82. On the first information that reached the Yishuv in late 1942, see Gelber, "Consolidation of Jewish Society," 416–20. For the Yishuv's response, see Dina Porat, "Palestinian Jewry and the Jewish Agency: Public Response to the Holocaust," in *Vision and Conflict*, ed. Richard I. Cohen (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1985), 246–73.

**106** Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust*, 183–98.

heroes.” From that point on, Zionism presented the ghetto uprisings, especially in the Warsaw ghetto, as fueled by Zionist consciousness.<sup>107</sup>

In the meantime, the Jewish underground groups continued to operate in Eretz Israel. On February 12, 1942 Avraham Stern, the leader of the Lehi underground, which did not cease its operations, was murdered in Tel Aviv. On December 1, 1943 Menachem Begin, who had arrived in the country with the army of Polish General Władysław Anders, was chosen to command the Etzel. Two months later, on February 1, 1944, the Etzel began to mount actions against the British administration. In Jerusalem, the Department of Immigration on Queen Helene Street, the income tax offices on Jaffa Street, and the regional and national headquarters of the British secret police were attacked.<sup>108</sup>

During 1943 and 1944, the Zionist movement’s aliyah efforts were carried out through the Mossad Le-aliyah, including various attempts to get Jews out of Europe. Groups of olim from Bulgaria and Romania were also brought through Istanbul.<sup>109</sup>

Following the renewed actions by the Etzel against the British, a controversy broke out between the Zionist leadership and the Etzel and Lehi, since the former viewed these operations to be a challenge to the Yishuv institutions and decided to counteract them. At first the Haganah chose to act against Lehi and even turned in some Lehi members to the British in what was known as “the saison” (the hunting season), although the greater “saison,” against both the Etzel and Lehi, began after the assassination of Lord Moyne in Cairo. On October 19, 1944 members of Lehi and Etzel were deported to Eritrea.<sup>110</sup>

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**107** See the editor’s introduction in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 51–53, and the sources he cites. On the Holocaust, the ghetto revolts, and Jewish partisan fighters, see *History of the Haganah*, 1,4:548–614. Though much has been published on these subjects since then, it is important to see what was written in 1973 in a book devoted to the history of the Haganah in Eretz Israel. The cited pages are followed by chapters on Jewish soldiers who fought the Nazis as members of various armies and on the Yishuv members who parachuted behind enemy lines in an attempt to rescue European Jews.

**108** Lapidot, *Flames of Revolt*, 96–100. It is clear that since command of the Etzel passed to Begin there was a great change in its mode of activity. On Begin’s rejection of the havlagah policy of the Haganah, the beginning of Etzel actions against the British in October 1944, and his views on British policy and on Churchill, see Begin, *The Revolt*, 47–114. On the Etzel at the beginning of World War II, when it suspended its actions, and the death of David Raziel in Iraq, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:470–93. On the split between the Etzel and Lehi and the assassination of Avraham Stern, see *ibid.*, 3,1:494–519.

**109** For details about illegal immigration and efforts to rescue Jews in 1943–1944, with appendices, including a list of ha’apalah ships in these years, see Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust*, 183–310 and the appendices, 319–27. For the sinking of the *Mefkura* on Aug. 1, 1944, see *ibid.*, 195–98. On the war years, 1939–1945, from the Jewish standpoint, see in detail Penkower, *Decision on Palestine Deferred*, 185–360.

**110** On the Etzel, the British, and the Haganah in 1944–1945, and the deportation to Eritrea, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:520–43. For the controversy on how to oppose the British, see *ibid.*, 3,1:



On November 6, 1944 Lehi members assassinated Lord Moyne, the British resident minister of state in the Middle East, in Cairo. The act was immediately sharply denounced by the Zionist institutions, as well as by Churchill, who had been a friend of Lord Moyne's. Churchill threatened to distance himself from the Jews, even though he had usually been supportive of Zionism until then.<sup>111</sup> Following the assassination, the British cabinet committee's plan also died out, and its members never dealt with it again.<sup>112</sup> On September 25, 1944 the preparatory conference for the Arab League was convened in Alexandria upon the initiative of the British. Six months later, on March 23, 1945, the Arab League was formally established, its platform including a special appendix regarding the issue of Palestine with a commitment to achieve independence for Palestinian Arabs and maintain the Arab character of the country.<sup>113</sup>

As noted, towards the end of the war, the Etzel renewed its military actions against the British, raising the danger of a fraternal war between the Haganah (representing the Jewish Agency) and the Etzel and Lehi. The "saison," that was intensified after the assassination of Lord Moyne, continued until May 1945. Following a Lehi assassination attempt on High Commissioner MacMichael, Ben-Gurion even met with him personally, and stronger denunciations of the underground groups were issued.<sup>114</sup> However, as early as February 1945, Ben-Gurion had begun considering Jewish resistance against the British. Moshe Sneh, the Haganah chief of staff, was partner to his thoughts and together they began formulating the idea. They contacted the Etzel and Lehi requesting they cease attacks on the British until the end of the war. On May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered to the Allies and the war came to an end. In Eretz Israel, negotiations began to establish a united Jewish resistance movement.

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941–59; the editor's introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 59–61. On the "saison," see the statements by Weizmann and Ben-Gurion at a meeting of the Zionist Inner Actions Committee, in *ibid.*, 411–20. See also Joseph Heller, *The Stern Gang: Ideology, Politics, and Terror, 1940–1949* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 138–42.

**111** On the stance adopted by Churchill after the assassination of Lord Moyne, see the editor's introduction in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 63.

**112** See the introduction in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 48–50; Katzburg, *The Palestine Problem in British Policy*, Hebrew section 116–19. On the assassination of Lord Moyne, see also Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 537–38, who sent a letter condemning the murder to Churchill. On the murder of Lord Moyne from the viewpoint of the Lehi, see Banai, *Anonymous Soldiers*.

**113** For the establishment of the Arab League, see also Assaf, *Awakening and Flight*, 167–74; Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, 313–14, including the text of a resolution on Palestine that became part of the League's protocol in March 1945. On relations between Englishmen and Arabs in the Middle East during the war years, efforts to reorganize the Palestinian Arabs, and the establishment of the Arab League, see also *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:104–19.

**114** On the continuation of the "saison," see in the introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 66–69. On the conflict over authority in the Yishuv, see Teveth, *David's Zealotry*, 4: 407–98. See also the report by Moshe Sneh of his discussion with Begin about the "saison" on Oct. 9, 1944, in *History of the Haganah*, 3:1887–93 (appendix 26). This should be compared with Begin's version of the event, Begin, *The Revolt*, 135–41.

## The Jewish–British conflict 1945–1947

### 1945: Intensification of the Jewish–British conflict after the war

With the end of WWII, the Zionist institutions and the Yishuv expectantly awaited the British decision regarding the future of Eretz Israel. The major effort of the Zionist leadership focused on increasing immigration of Holocaust survivors through *ha'apalah*. There was also greater involvement in Zionist aspirations among American Jewry after news of the Holocaust reached the US. On June 18, 1945 the Jewish Agency submitted a memorandum to the British government with the express demand that 100,000 Holocaust survivors be immediately allowed to enter Palestine. The prime minister refused to commit himself to acquiesce in the demand.<sup>115</sup>

In the meantime, changes also occurred in the British personnel in Jerusalem. In October 1944 High Commissioner Lord Gort began his term, but was forced to leave after a year due to ill health. Sir Alan Cunningham was appointed to replace him.<sup>116</sup>

Elections were held in Britain at the end of July 1945. The Labour Party, that had previously been supportive of Zionism, won the elections, but it, too, refused the Jewish demands and demonstrated a pro-Arab, anti-Zionist policy due to British imperial interests.<sup>117</sup>

On November 13, 1945 Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin delivered a grave statement in Parliament on a new policy according to which displaced persons should be returned to their former countries of residence, since their absorption in Palestine alone could not solve the Jewish problem. There were angry reactions in Eretz Israel and throughout the world. Ben-Gurion set out on a visit to the DP camps to initiate from there the campaign for the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Israel.<sup>118</sup> The Jewish Agency Executive decided to set out on a military struggle

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**115** Cohen, *Churchill and Palestine*, Hebrew section, 68–75; Elath, *Through the Mist of Time*, 9–21.

**116** On Cunningham, see, Motti Golani, *The Last High Commissioner: General Sir Alan Cunningham 1945–1948* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2011) (Hebrew); for Lord Gort, see *ibid.*, 31–33. See also *id.*, *Palestine between Politics and Terror, 1945–47* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2013). Due to the abundance of information included throughout my book, and especially in the present chapter, I shall not provide details of the periods of the last two High Commissioners.

**117** On the earlier sympathy for Zionist aspirations expressed by leaders of the Labour Party – Herbert Morrison, Clement Attlee, and even Ernest Bevin, see Sharett, *Political Diary*, vol. 5 in the index. On Bevin's later anti-Zionism, once the Labour Party came into power, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 549–50, who quotes Bevin's remark: "If the Jews, with all their suffering, want to get too much at the head of the queue, you have the danger of another anti-Semitic reaction through it all." See also the editor's introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 72–76. On earlier statements by Bevin, and conversations with him, see Elath, *Through the Mist of Time*, 27–53.

**118** Teveth, *David's Zealotry*, 4:566–638. On Bevin's statement to Parliament, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:810–12. For Shertok's report of his conversation with MacMichael after the British

against the British administration, resulting in the establishment of the Jewish Resistance Movement on November 1, 1945 with the purpose of coordinating the operations of the three Jewish underground forces.<sup>119</sup>

Despite the establishment of the joint movement, the three organizations still operated separately. The Haganah continued to focus its efforts on bringing in ha'apalah immigrants and mainly attacked British bases and facilities involved with efforts to stop illegal immigration.<sup>120</sup> The Lehi mostly attacked soldiers, policemen, and British personages.<sup>121</sup> The Etzel focused on attacking administrative and military institutions, many of which were situated in Jerusalem, the center of British government. The city was populated by a large Sefardi community as well as religious nationalist groups that favored the Etzel and provided it with behind the scenes support. Thus did the underground groups continue their fight against the British mandatory administration. On December 27, 1945 a joint attack was launched by the Etzel and Lehi on national police headquarters. On January 19, 1946 the Etzel launched an unsuccessful attack on the central prison in the Russian Compound in Jerusalem.<sup>122</sup>

#### **1946: Ha'apalah; the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry's recommendation; the King David hotel bombing; disbandment of the Jewish Resistance Movement**

1946 was marked by increased illegal immigration of Holocaust survivors (commonly called *ma'apilim*, from the term ha'apalah) and the intensification of Jewish underground military action against the British.<sup>123</sup> Additionally, there was growing American

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conducted an arms search in Kibbutz Ramat Hakovesh, in which he warned the High Commissioner of the danger of a bloody conflict between the British and the Jews, see Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 389–92.

**119** On the Jewish Resistance Movement and some of the military attacks carried out, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,1:848–89. For details of the agreement between the three groups, see Begin, *The Revolt*, 196.

**120** Shapira, “Politics of the Jewish Community in Palestine,” 167–71. For ha'apalah ships that reached Eretz Israel after the war, see Abraham J. Edelheit, *The Yishuv in the Shadow of the Holocaust* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 255–57. On ha'apalah after the war, how it was organized in Europe, *brihah* (flight), the deportation of illegal immigrants to detention camps in Cyprus, and more, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:997–1192. On *brihah*, the underground movement that helped Holocaust survivors reach European ports of embarkation to Eretz Israel, see also Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and Rescue: Brichah* (New York: Random House, 1970).

**121** Banai, *Anonymous Soldiers*, 667–68; Heller, *The Stern Gang*.

**122** On these attacks, see Lapidot, *Flames of Revolt*, 133–48.

**123** From Nov. 21, 1945 the British began transferring *ma'apilim* to the camp at Atlit, and from June 27, 1946 started to deport them to detention camps in Cyprus. For the ships *Berl Katznelson* and *Josiah Wedgwood*, whose *ma'apilim* were detained in Atlit, see Shai Horev, *Ships before Dawn: The Story of the Clandestine Immigration Ships from “Velos” to “Battle of the Ayalon Valley”* (Haifa: Pardes, 2009), 124 and 135, respectively (Hebrew).

pressure on the British government to allow the immediate entry of 100,000 Jews into Palestine. Towards the end of 1945 it was decided to establish a twelve-member Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine to examine the matter, with six members from each country. Ben-Gurion initially boycotted the committee, since he called for a political solution and not just a remedy to the problem of Holocaust refugees, but finally agreed to appear before it.<sup>124</sup>

Weizmann objected to all the operations of the Jewish Resistance Movement. He appeared before the committee demanding that precedence be given to bringing Holocaust survivors to Palestine. The committee began its hearings in November 1945 and submitted its report on April 20, 1946, which contained a number of recommendations. The most immediate and important was to immediately allow 100,000 displaced Jews to enter Palestine.<sup>125</sup> Since the report was of a general nature without going into great detail, it did not deal with the issue of Jerusalem. Following its publication, the British refused to implement the recommendation to allow 100,000 displaced Jews to enter the country, among other things since the United States refused to participate in the logistic and security effort of its implementation, but also due to fear of Arab riots in the country should it be carried out.<sup>126</sup> The position put forward by the Zionist movement at the time in fact marked a retreat from the Biltmore Program and a return to a partition plan similar to that of the Royal (Peel) Commission.<sup>127</sup> The British refused to consider any such solution and decided to respond aggressively,

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**124** For the committee's report, see Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, *Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry Regarding the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine, Lausanne, 20th April 1946: Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* (Cmd. 6808) (London: HMSO, 1946).

**125** *Ibid.*, 2. Chaim Weizmann, *We Warned You, Gentlemen: Testimony of Dr. Chaim Weizmann before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine* (Jerusalem: The Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1946). For a joint memorandum presented by the three underground movements, the British refusal to allow immigration of 100,000 survivors, and the relations of the Yishuv with the British authorities in the summer of 1946, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:812–24. See also Joseph Heller, "The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine (1945–1946): The Zionist Reaction Reconsidered," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 689–723.

**126** Kolatt maintains that the committee's recommendations seem to have driven a wedge between the idea of aliyah and the concept of a state, since its report proved that one could not evade the issue of a Jewish state; see Kolatt, *Zionism and Israel*, 29–30.

**127** The editor's introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 80–85. On the retreat from the Biltmore Program to one of partition, see also Teveth, *David's Zealotry*, 4:667–704. For the dilemma that arose after the war in relation to the Biltmore Program, see Kolatt, *Zionism and Israel*, 26–28. On the report of the Anglo-American Committee as a turning point, see the minutes of a meeting (marked "Secret") at the Zionist head office in London on Apr. 29, 1946, in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 478–81.

their plan being to strip the Jewish Agency of its status. The Jewish struggle against the British intensified.<sup>128</sup>

On June 13, 1946 two members of the underground who had been caught during a military operation against the British were tried and sentenced to be hanged. The Etzel responded by seizing British officers, among them Major H.P. Chadwick. On June 29, 1946 the British launched Operation Agatha, which the Jews called “the Black Sabbath,” detaining Yishuv leaders, searching for weapons, and imposing a curfew in the cities. The British did not inform the Americans of the operation.<sup>129</sup> After Operation Agatha, they made public the Morrison-Grady Plan, a joint British-American program that once again raised the option of a federative state based on a division of the country into cantons, with a special status granted to Jerusalem.<sup>130</sup>

British opposition to illegal immigration increased. On July 23, 1946, less than a month after the Black Sabbath, the Etzel set off a bomb in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, the headquarters of the central British administration and the British military. The explosion caused the death of around a hundred persons of all three religions and horrified the Jewish community and the whole world.<sup>131</sup> On August 5, 1946 the Jewish Resistance Movement was formally disbanded, but the Etzel and Lehi continued their actions against the British. On October 30 the Jerusalem train station was attacked; on November 20, the income tax offices were blown up; on December 5 an unsuccessful attack was carried out against the Air Force headquarters in the St. Paul building opposite Damascus Gate.<sup>132</sup> After the resistance movement was disbanded, the Haganah broadened its ha‘apalah operations by

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**128** On the reaction to the report by Foreign Minister Bevin, see Dothan, *A Land in the Balance*, 476–502.

**129** For the seizure of the British officers, see Bell, *Terror out of Zion*, 164–66. On the Black Sabbath, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:824–26, 889–905. Many Zionist leaders were apprehended, but Ben-Gurion was out of the country, and Moshe Sneh fled to France. On Operation Agatha, see also Teveth, *David’s Zealotry*, 4:705–78; Golani, *Palestine between Politics and Terror*, 84–106.

**130** The Morrison-Grady Plan proposed a federative state with central British rule, that would be divided into four regions: (a) Jewish; (b) Arab; (c) the Jerusalem District to include Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the vicinity; (d) the Negev, under British rule. See *History of the Haganah*, 3,2: 828–30; Teveth, *David’s Zealotry*, 4:779–812, who maintains that the plan was based on that of Nuri al-Sa’id for a large Hashemite province that would include a small Jewish state. Participants at the Twenty-Second Zionist Congress in late 1946 were confused as to what the future held in store; see Kolatt, *Zionism and Israel*, 30–34.

**131** On the bombing of the King David Hotel, see Thurston Clarke, *By Blood and Fire: The Attack on the King David Hotel* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1981); Golani, *Palestine between Politics and Terror*, 141–63. See also Begin, *The Revolt*, 212–30. For the British reaction, including the anti-Semitic phrasing of Gen. Barker’s written order to his Command, see George Kirk, *The Middle East 1945–1950* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 222–23.

**132** This last attack received the code name “Operation Dovecote.” For details on all of them, see Lapidot, *Flames of Revolt*, 193–213. On the activity of the underground movements after the disbandment of the Jewish Resistance Movement, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:906–40.

purchasing large ships, placing the British in a situation in which its monthly quota policy of 1,500 immigrants a month completely collapsed. From August 1946 to December 1947, 51,700 *ma'apilim* arrived in thirty-five ships. Despite the fact that most of them were apprehended and sent to Cyprus, pressure against the British increased and Ben-Gurion made his famous declaration: “the *ma'apilim* are our Dunkirk.”<sup>133</sup>

As the situation deteriorated, the British suggested holding a round table conference in London, but the Jewish Agency leadership refused to participate. The British proposed a new plan, the Bevin-Beeley Plan, even worse than the Morrison-Grady Plan, which obviously the Jews could not accept. Later talks took place in London in two rounds: the first in September and October 1946, and the second in January and February 1947. In the first round, discussions were conducted between the British government and delegations from the Arab countries, with no representation of Palestinian Arabs or the Zionist movement. Representatives of the Palestinian Arabs, headed by Jamal al-Husseini, and the Zionist movement did participate in the second round of discussions. The British met with Jews and Arabs separately since the Arabs refused to hold a joint meeting of all three parties. Already in the summer of 1946, Arab governments and the Higher Arab Council proposed that the question of Palestine should be decided by the United Nations Organization. And indeed, upon the failure of the talks, in February 1947 the British cabinet decided to refer the Palestine problem to the United Nations.<sup>134</sup>

### **1947: Further deterioration and execution of members of the underground; security zones; UNSCOP; underground activities; the *Exodus* immigrants**

Despite the British decision to refer the Palestine problem to the United Nations, the Jewish–British confrontation in the country continued for another whole year. On January 1, 1947 Dov Gruner, a member of the Etzel, was sentenced to death. The Etzel retaliated by seizing two British personages, Major Collins in Jerusalem and Judge Ralph Windham in Tel Aviv, to serve as hostages for Gruner. Five days later,

<sup>133</sup> On the extent of illegal immigration, see in the editor's introduction to Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 89. See also a letter sent by Shertok on Sept. 3, 1946 from the Latrun prison camp to the sixth conference of Mapai about ha'apalah, settlement, and diplomacy as the means for conducting the political struggle, *ibid.*, 437–42. On resistance to British searches for illegal immigrants in settlements, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,3:appendix 29. For the ships *Exodus*, *Hannah Szenes*, and *Max Nordau*, see *ibid.*, 3,3:1901–14. See also note 123 above. On Ben-Gurion's plan for mass immigration in 1942–1945, see Dvora Hacothen, “Ben-Gurion and the Second World War: Plans for Mass Immigration to Palestine,” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 7 (1991): 247–68.

<sup>134</sup> On political developments from the Anglo-American Committee to the Morrison-Grady Plan and the London Conference, see Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945–1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), esp. 96–134.



the British government announced that due to the latest events in the country, it had been decided that women, children, and other British subjects whose presence in the country was not essential would be evacuated in “Operation Polly.” Within a short while 1,500 men, women, and children were transported to Egypt by train and from there by ship to Britain.

The army began creating “security zones” in the three large cities. Four zones were established in Jerusalem: Zone A, the Allenby military base and the German Colony; Zone B, the King David Hotel and part of the Rehavia neighborhood, including Goldschmidt House that served as a British officers club; Zone C, the Russian Compound, Generali Building, the Central Post Office, and the Anglo-Palestine Bank; Zone D, the Schneller military base. Each security zone was surrounded by barbed wire and entrance was permitted only upon presentation of an identity card. The security zones, called “Bevingrads,” quickly became sort of detention centers for the British policemen and soldiers who were ordered not to leave them unless on duty. The British ceased visiting places of entertainment and their contacts with the civilian population greatly diminished.<sup>135</sup> Despite the establishment of the security zones, the Etzel continued its attacks against British sites in Jerusalem. On March 1, 1947 many officers were killed in an attack on the Goldschmidt House British officers club, opposite the Yeshurun Synagogue. Another attack was launched against the Schneller military base on March 12. The British responded on April 16 by executing four Etzel and Lehi members: Dov Gruner, Yehiel Dresner, Eliezer Kashani, and Mordechai Elkahli. Five days later Moshe Barazani and Meir Feinstein, two members of the underground awaiting execution, blew themselves up in their prison cell in the Russian Compound in Jerusalem. On May 4 the Etzel carried out its largest operation – the break into Acre prison.<sup>136</sup>

Simultaneously, Zionist institutions, through the Haganah, continued to increase the extent of the ha’apalah. There was growing American pressure to permit Holocaust survivors to enter Palestine. All these led to the British decision to bring the Palestine problem before the United Nations General Assembly. Following the cabinet decision noted above, on February 18, 1947 the British Parliament confirmed referring the issue to the UN. A special session of the General Assembly was convened on April 28 that on May 15 decided to establish a committee – the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) – which was to submit its recommendations for a solution. The committee members represented eleven UN member countries, excluding the great powers and

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**135** Lapidot, *Flames of Revolt*, 237, and the map of the security zones at the end of the book marking the locations attacked by the Etzel. For the lives of the British in Palestine and Jerusalem during the years of Jewish–British conflict, see Ari J. Sherman, *British Lives in Palestine, 1918–1948* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997).

**136** On these attacks, see Lapidot, *Flames of Revolt*, 218–27, 233–50; Jan Gitlin, *The Conquest of Acre Fortress* (Tel Aviv: Hadar, 1982).



Arab states. For the first time, a neutral committee that was neither British nor Anglo-American was assembled to investigate the issue of Palestine. The committee arrived in the country on June 16, 1947.

While UNSCOP carried on its deliberations, the Jewish–British conflict continued. Ha‘apalah by Holocaust survivors reached its peak in the large ship *Exodus 1947*, which arrived in Haifa on July 11, 1947.<sup>137</sup> The chairman of UNSCOP and another member came to Haifa port to view how the British dealt with the immigrants. The British deported the *Exodus ma‘apilim* back to Marseilles, their port of embarkation in France, but were unable to put them ashore there. The passengers were forced to return to a port in Germany, to be placed once again in DP camps on German soil. The world was shocked.<sup>138</sup>

During those very same days, on July 28, 1947 the British executed three other underground members, Ya‘akov Weiss, Avshalom Haviv, and Meir Nakar. Before the sentences were carried out, the Etzel kidnapped two British sergeants to serve as hostages. After the execution, the Etzel implemented its threat and the two sergeants were hung in a Netaniah orchard.<sup>139</sup>

Britain was in uproar. UNSCOP hastened its deliberations and Jewish pressure on the British in Palestine increased. On August 2 the Etzel attacked the Royal Air Force Club in Rehavia, within the security zone. On August 6 it carried out an operation against the premises of the government Labor Office in Jerusalem, the previous residence of the German consulate.<sup>140</sup>

On August 31 the members of UNSCOP signed its report and recommendations at the “Kadimah” house in Jerusalem and sent them to the General Assembly. Most of the committee members proposed partitioning Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, with Jerusalem as a corpus separatum. The UN partition plan was in many ways similar to that of the Royal Commission ten years earlier, except for a few differences: (a) the territory intended for the Jewish state was now larger, mainly since most of the Negev was included within it; (b) Western Galilee was allocated to the Arab, not the Jewish state; (c) in the Royal Commission proposal, the Arab

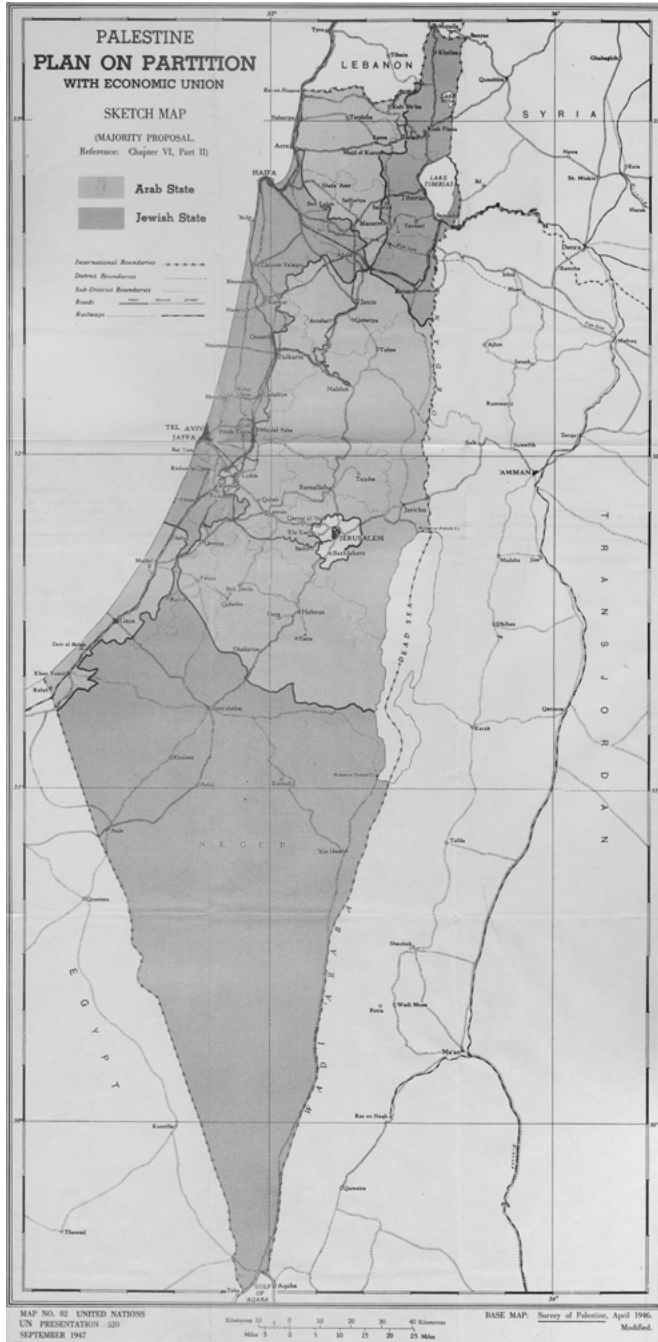
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**137** On UNSCOP, see Elad Ben-Dror, “UNSCOP: The Beginning of the United Nations Involvement in the Arab-Israeli Conflict” (PhD diss., Bar-Ilan University, 2003) (Hebrew), who notes Weizmann’s impressive appearance before the committee, 138–47. See also Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 554–63. With the establishment of UNSCOP, relations were renewed between the Jewish Agency and the Etzel; see Begin, *The Revolt*, 344–47.

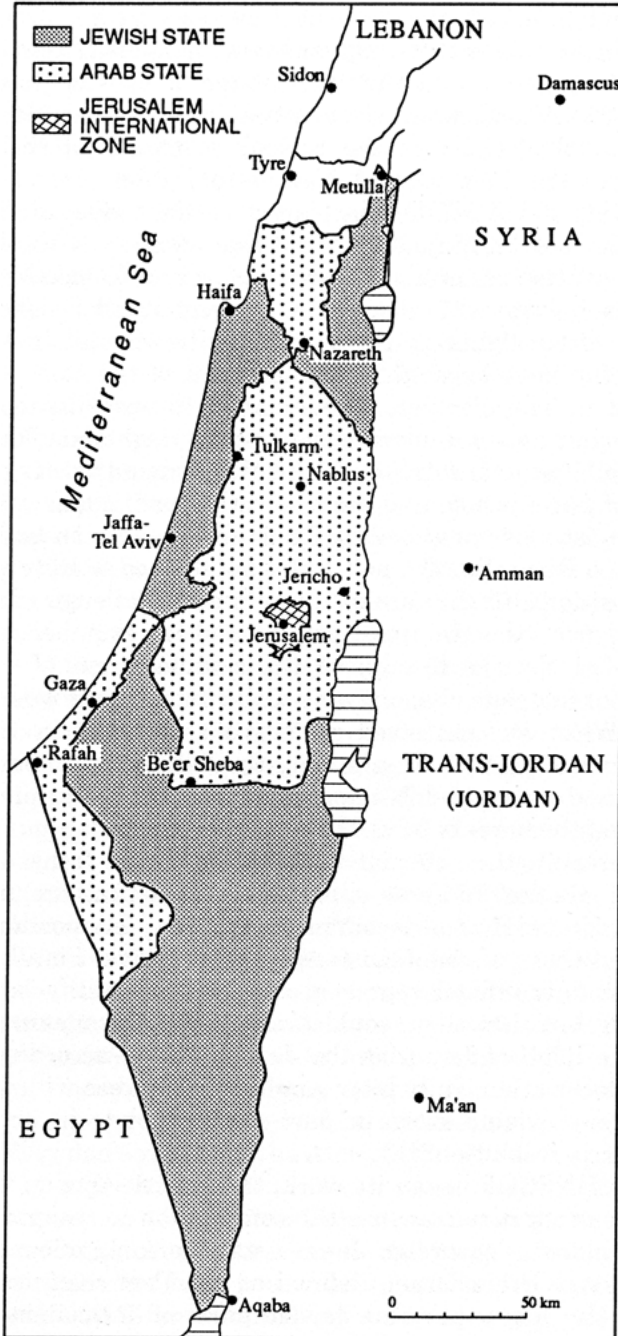
**138** On the *Exodus*, see Aviva Halamish, *The Exodus Affair: Holocaust Survivors and the Struggle for Palestine* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), esp. the concluding chapter, 252–74, entitled: “Who, Then, Was the Victor?” For the continuation of ha‘apalah after the *Exodus*, including the two “Pans” – *Pan Crescent* and *Pan York*, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:1178–90.

**139** On the hanging of the two sergeants, see Begin, *The Revolt*, 288–90. See also the report by Golda Meyerson (Meir) of her meeting on the subject with the High Commissioner on July 31, 1947 in Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 465–67.

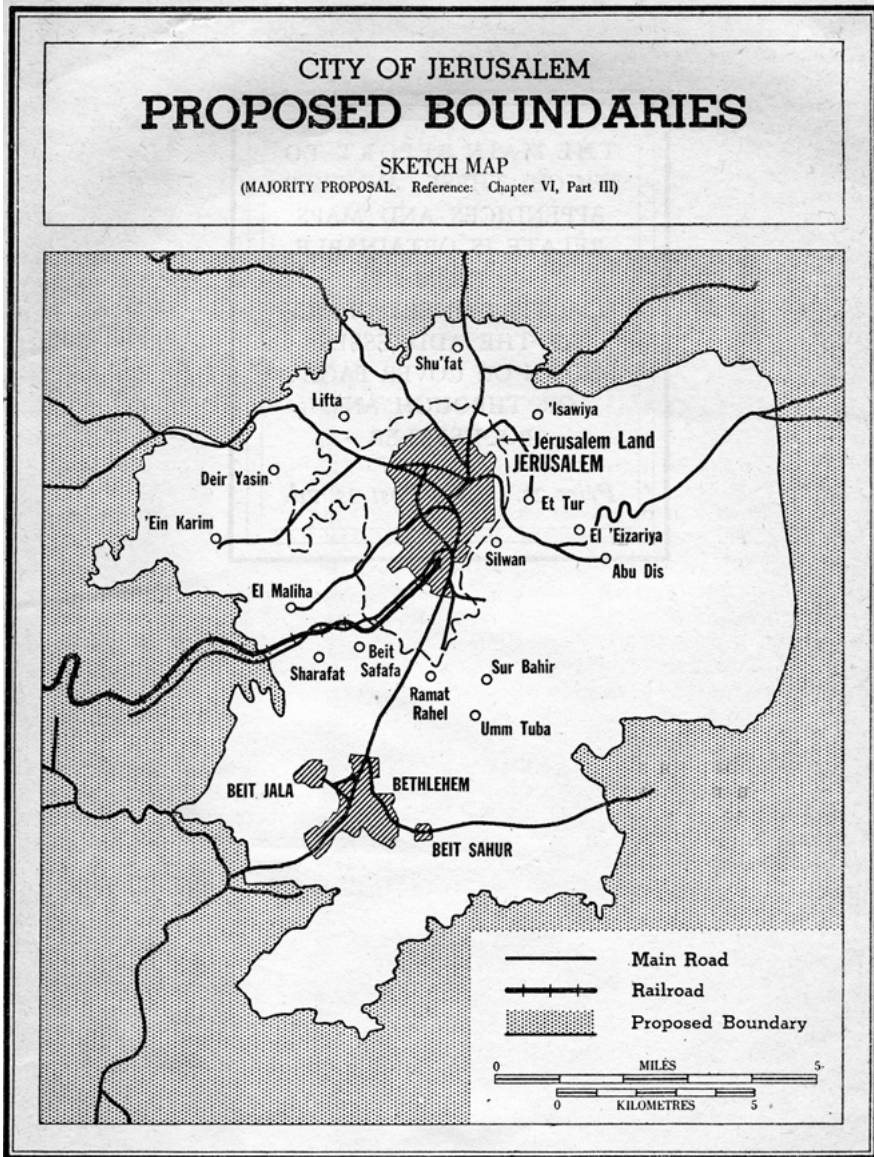
**140** Lapidot, *Flames of Revolt*, 258–60.



**Map 27:** Partition plan proposed by UNSCOP, September 1947 (UNSCOP, *Report*).



**Map 28:** Partition plan adopted by UN General Assembly, Nov. 29, 1947 (Galnoor, *Partition of Palestine*, 284).



**Map 29:** UNSCOP'S proposal for Jerusalem as a "Corpus Separatum" (UNSCOP, *Report*, vol. 2: *Annexes*, 103).



territory was to be annexed to Transjordan, while according to the UN proposal, an independent Arab state was to be established; this was the greatest difference between the two proposals; (d) according to the Royal Commission proposal, Jerusalem and a corridor to the sea would remain under a British mandate, while UNSCOP proposed that Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and their surroundings were to remain a separate entity under UN control.<sup>141</sup> On November 29, 1947 the UN General Assembly adopted the recommendations of the committee of inquiry with but a few changes.<sup>142</sup>

## Summary: why was the issue of Palestine referred to the United Nations

### The Palestinian Arabs vanish from the political arena in the country

One of the most surprising aspects of the final years of the Mandate, from publication of the 1939 White Paper until the UN partition plan of 1947, was the almost total disappearance of the Palestinian Arabs from involvement in the conflict over Palestine and its transformation from an Arab–Jewish struggle to one between the Jews and the British. There seem to have been three reasons for this: (a) Arab rejection of the White Paper; (b) the results of the Arab Revolt; (c) the Arab leadership’s alignment with Germany during the period of World War II.

The 1939 White Paper awarded Palestine’s Arabs almost everything they wanted, but they were not content with that achievement and aspired to receive immediate independence, without having to wait five years. The truth of the matter is that they did not trust the British, and later admitted they had erred and should have accepted the decisions unquestioningly. Thus, it transpired that implementation of the White

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**141** The original recommendation of UNSCOP allocated 62 percent of the country to the Jews and 38 percent to the Arabs, but this was later amended to 55 and 45 percent respectively. For the map of the “State of Jerusalem,” see *Annexes, Appendices & Maps to the Report by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine . . .* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1947), 103, reproduced in this chapter as Map 29.

**142** For the recommendations of UNSCOP, see United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), *Report to the General Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland, 31st August 1947* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1947), 64–97. On Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum*, see *ibid.*, 86–88. For the resolution passed by the UN General Assembly on Nov. 29, 1947, see Michael J. Cohen, ed., *United Nations Discussions on Palestine 1947*, *Rise of Israel*, 37 (New York: Garland, 1987), 163–84. After the American delegation to the General Assembly proposed severing the southern Negev from the future Jewish state, Weizmann traveled to the US to discuss this with President Truman, and this was changed; see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 561–63. The resolution adopted by the General Assembly also incorporated a few changes compared to UNSCOP’s recommendations: the southwestern region of the Negev was removed from the Jewish state but the area south of the Hebron Hills and Beersheba was added to it. There was a also slight change in the Galilee. See Maps 27 and 28, and compare them with the proposal of the Peel Commission in 1937 (Map 26 on p. 557 above).

Paper became an exclusive British assignment, and even if the British in effect did the job for the Arabs as well, this was due to their own interests.

The second reason for the disappearance of the Arabs was that British repression of the Arab Revolt during 1936–1938 caused the collapse of the Arab forces in Palestine. The Arabs did indeed gain an important political achievement – the decisions included in the White Paper, but Arab society in Palestine was beaten and broken, also due to internal struggles between opposing factions. Arab society needed many years to reorganize.<sup>143</sup>

The third reason was that during World War II some of the Arab leadership, headed by the mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, aligned itself with Germany. Upon the German defeat, the Arab leadership that was identified with Germany was also defeated, which constituted a great downfall for the Palestinian Arabs.<sup>144</sup>

The Arab countries continued attempts to assist their Palestinian brethren, during the war and mainly afterwards, but both pinned their hopes on the British government, while the importance of the United States gradually increased, mainly after the war ended. In contrast, the leaders of the Zionist movement realized that the center of gravity in the international arena had been relocated to a new country, America, and it was there that they began making their greatest efforts.

### Increased American involvement

As stated, by the end of World War II America had become increasingly involved in the region. Already at the end of World War I and during the first deliberations about the peace treaties, American President Woodrow Wilson and his administration aspired to begin exerting their influence in the Middle East. However, due to the president's illness and also because of the American policy of isolationism, the United States quite soon abandoned the Middle East to the European countries. With the outbreak of World War II, and especially after America joined the war against Germany and Japan, it was clear that when the war ended the United States would not be a passive onlooker on many issues. It was then that the Zionist movement began banking on the United States, seeking the assistance of its Jewish community, whose influence was growing. Indeed, after the war America did become

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**143** On the political split in the ranks of the Palestinian Arabs, the internal conflict, the waning of the Arab Revolt, and the mistake they made in not accepting the White Paper, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 249–60, 293–94; Eyal, *The First Intifada*, 475–80; id., “The Arab Revolt, 1936–1939: A Turning Point in the Struggle over Palestine,” in *A Never-ending Conflict: A Guide to Israeli Military History*, ed. Mordechai Bar-On (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 21–42.

**144** Hajj Amin al-Husseini has been the subject of several books. To note but a few: Elpeleg, *Grand Mufti*; Mattar, *Mufti of Jerusalem*; Jennie Lebel, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Haj-Amin el-Husseini and National Socialism* (Belgrade: Cigoja Stampa, 2007).

much more involved in the matter of Eretz Israel and also played an important role in the solution proposed by the UN. This was mainly the result of the growth of the Jewish community in the United States, but also due to President Harry Truman's personal feelings towards the victims of the Holocaust and its refugees, who needed political assistance. The American people supported the Zionist movement in its demand to absorb the Holocaust refugees in Palestine and in the Jewish–British confrontation over the future of the country.

In the end, not only was Britain forced to transfer the decision regarding Palestine to the United Nations, but it also had to leave the country with no influence on any future arrangements.

In retrospect, the British themselves admitted that American involvement in the Palestine issue was the key factor in the failure of their plans regarding the country, whether with the establishment of the Anglo-American committee that unanimously supported the immediate entry of 100,000 Jews to Palestine, the decision to transfer the matter of Palestine to the United Nations, and during the Israeli War of Independence when establishment of the State of Israel was declared.

### **British frustration and obstinacy**

The most baffling aspect of the final period of the British mandate in Palestine was the obstinacy of the Labour government's anti-Jewish stance, despite the fact that many of its leaders had previously been opposed to the 1939 White Paper and were avid supporters of Zionism. There seems to be no logical explanation other than Britain's great frustration after World War II. The superpower, which bore the major brunt in the horrific war against the Germans under the leadership of the outstanding and victorious Churchill, found itself devastated and empty-handed at the end of the war. Churchill's wartime achievements did not stand him in good stead. He lost the first elections conducted after the war and the Labour Party came into power. The country was in desperate need of rebuilding, recovery from the damage inflicted by the German bombings, and a reconstructed new and healthy economy for the proud British people who had suffered a large number of dead and wounded in the war.

To all this was added the Jews, with their problems and unending conflict with their Arab neighbors. At the time, the British were not considering full and immediate withdrawal from Palestine. In other countries, too, such as the British colony in India, they left after the war but always aspired to maintain their interests and sought suitable solutions. In Palestine, as well, despite the difficult economic situation of the country and the necessity to diminish overseas commitments, the British still did not consider total abandonment. When plans were raised for partitioning the country, they still hoped that Jerusalem and a large area surrounding it would



remain a British enclave and aspired to maintain other of their interests in the region.<sup>145</sup>

The British struggle against the Jewish underground organizations and ha'apalah following World War II cannot be understood without accepting the assumption that they were indeed hoping to maintain the status quo and continue governing Palestine, or at the very least important military bases within it, even after the war. Their ambition to maintain the Jerusalem area under their control may well explain why they continued planning that city until the very end of their presence there. In 1943 the British renewed their plan to build a majestic government compound in the city, and purchased a large area for it on the site where the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the official residence of the President of Israel are located today. In 1945 there were even discussions about beginning construction in the area. During the war, the British even intended to establish a British Council cultural center which they intended to invest with the status of an English university of sorts. In March 1946, British architect Austen St. Barbe Harrison was requested to prepare an architectural plan for the building, which he submitted in May 1946. In 1944, the fifth city plan for Jerusalem was prepared by architect Henry Kendall, who continued working on it until 1948 when he published it in his monumental book. The preface to the book was written by the last British High Commissioner for Palestine, Cunningham, on the eve of his departure from the country.<sup>146</sup> While perhaps this does not indicate British policy regarding Palestine, it reiterates their special attitude towards Jerusalem and their assumption that they would continue to govern it.

### The Holocaust and the Jewish struggle for Palestine

There is no doubt that one of the main reasons that caused Britain to refer the Palestine issue to the United Nations was the Jewish armed struggle against it. Perhaps at first the British did not believe the UN would succeed in solving the dangerous situation and thought it would turn to them for assistance in solving the problem. This can be inferred from their behavior afterwards, during the Israeli War of Independence, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Paradoxical as it may seem, Jewish success in their struggle against the British was derived precisely from a combination of the two methods they adopted to pursue it. The first was the Zionist movement's moral demand to open the gates of Eretz

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<sup>145</sup> Sheffer, "British Pragmatism," 113–14.

<sup>146</sup> Ron Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison: A British Architect in the Holy Land" (PhD diss., Technion: Israel Institute of Technology, 1992) (Hebrew); David Kroyanker, *Jerusalem Architecture – Periods and Styles: The Period of the British Mandate* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1989), 122 (Hebrew); Kendall, *Jerusalem, the City Plan*.

Israel, which seemed much more legitimate after the horrific Holocaust of World War II. The Holocaust did not create the Zionist movement, nor was the establishment of the State of Israel a result of the Holocaust, for, after all, Zionism had arisen towards the end of the nineteenth century and until World War II, even before the Holocaust, it had achieved much in Eretz Israel. However, the combination of the appalling events of the Holocaust and the efforts of the Zionist movement lent Zionism great power. The shock caused by the cruel British policy that prevented even 100,000 Jewish Holocaust survivors from finding refuge in Palestine, as unanimously recommended by the joint committee of inquiry comprised of six Englishmen and six Americans, placed the British in an illogical and inhumane situation, until pressuring them was deemed acceptable to every enlightened person in the whole world.

The Zionist movement knew how to exploit the situation and use it to promote its willingness to take in the Holocaust refugees, who proudly bore the burden of the ha'apalah struggle in which lay their final salvation. The Holocaust also made the underground movements' uncompromising struggle against the British easier. A ruling nation which prevented gas chamber survivors from reaching their desired destination was deserving of any response, even if it, too, was cruel and inhumane. The bombing of the King David Hotel with its horribly tragic outcome, the hanging of the two innocent British sergeants in an orchard in the Sharon area, and more were all viewed against the background of the extreme inhumanity of the British rulers.

The campaign mounted by the entire Yishuv against the British administration was carried out by the two methods I have presented and by all Jewish inhabitants of the country at the time, no matter what their social status or ethnic community. Membership of the Etzel included new immigrants and native born. The ranks of the Palmah and the Haganah were filled with religious and secular kibbutz members, Sefardim and German Jews, as well as recent and veteran immigrants. The goal was one: to open the gates of Eretz Israel to the Jewish survivors of the horrific Holocaust waiting and wishing to come there. The members of the Yishuv conducted the struggle against the British in any way possible. It was also they who later shed much blood in the war for Israeli independence that brought about the establishment of the State of Israel.<sup>147</sup>

The man who ten years before the UN decision observed that there was no solution to the Palestine problem other than dividing the country between Jews and Arabs was no dignified statesman or military hero, but a historian from a prestigious British university, Sir Reginald Coupland. As a member of the Royal Commission appointed to seek a solution to the Palestine problem, he studied and understood the compound and complex history of the country, and it was he who wrote the chapters dealing with its past in the commission's report, which to

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<sup>147</sup> For the War of Independence, and "the silver platter" on which the State of Israel was presented to the Jewish people, see in the conclusions to Chapter Twelve.

this day is still deserving of close study. Coupland concluded that there was no solution to the country other than by dividing western Palestine between the two peoples inhabiting it. It was he who made the effort to convince the other members of the commission to adopt this solution. However, his wisdom was apparently not sufficient to rule the day, and it took ten more years until the United Nations General Assembly decision for everyone to understand it. Yet even this was not the end. Only a bloody war between the Arabs and the Jews brought about the establishment of a Jewish state, the State of Israel.<sup>148</sup>

However, peace did not descend upon the Middle East. The Palestinian Arabs refused to accept the Royal Commission's proposal in 1937 and the UN decision in 1947. They dragged the neighboring Arab states into a bloody war, at first against the Yishuv and later against the State of Israel. Although four Arab states did finally agree to sign the cease-fire agreements with Israel in 1949, there is no total peace in the Middle East to this very day.

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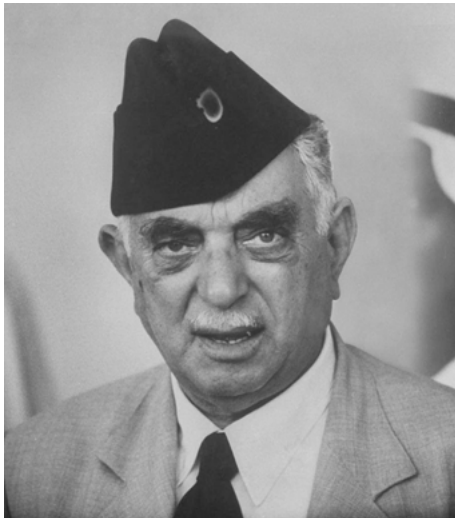
**148** It therefore comes as no surprise that the day after the UN resolution on partition, Weizmann cabled Coupland: "Deeply moved by United Nations vote on partition. My thoughts and those of my people go to you who has conceived the idea of partition as a means to give my people a home and the Middle East peace and prosperity. Your name will live in the annals of Jewish history"; Chaim Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, Ser. A, vol. 23 (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1980), 48.



Harold MacMichael.  
Fifth British High Commissioner



Malcolm MacDonald.  
British colonial secretary



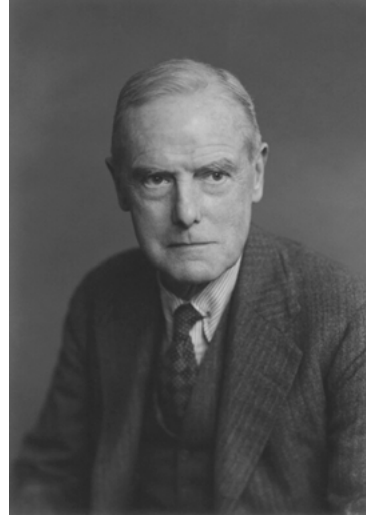
Nuri al-Sa'id.  
Prime minister of Iraq



Ibn Sa'ud.  
King of Saudi Arabia



Lord Peel (William Peel).  
Chairman of the Royal Commission



Reginald Coupland.  
Member of the Royal Commission



David Raziel.  
Commander of the Etzel



Avraham Stern ("Yair").  
Commander of Lehi



Ernest Bevin.  
British foreign secretary



Lord Moyne (Walter Edward Guinness).  
British ambassador in Egypt



Menachem Begin.  
Commander of the Etzel



Dov Gruner.  
Executed by the British





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## Chapter 12: Israel's War of Independence, 1947–1949

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## Phase one: the war begins, November 29, 1947–April 1, 1948

### Introduction

Numerous books and articles have been written about Israel's War of Independence. In this chapter I shall not deal with all aspects of the war or the many important publications about it. I shall only attempt to summarize the war as a momentous event that brings the previous chapters full circle, in accordance with the objectives I set for this book. What follows will mostly be devoted to reconstruction of the course of the war within the territory of Eretz Israel. I shall sum up the chapter with a number of general conclusions.

The following reconstruction is based to a great degree on my personal knowledge from as early as the 1950s when I served in the IDF History Branch (today the History Department) commanded by Netanel Lorch. At the time, I assisted Lorch in writing the first definitive draft of a history of the War of Independence, entitled *Sefer Hamedinah*, literally "The Book of the State."<sup>1</sup> Recently the draft has been republished by the IDF. The current head of the History Department, Yigal Eyal, succinctly explains the importance of the republication in the preface to the book, stating that the emphasis in the book is on the battles as reconstructed a very short while after the war itself.

The draft of *Sefer Hamedinah* served as the basis for an instructional booklet by the IDF Education Branch, a history of the war published by the History Branch under the title *Toldot Milhemet Hakomemiyut* (History of the War of Renascence), and Netanel Lorch's *Toldot Milhemet Ha'atzmaut* (History of the War of Independence).<sup>2</sup> The footnotes in this chapter often reference Lorch's book in its English translation, since the emphasis in his book, too, is on the war's development within the territory of Eretz Israel. It is important to note that all the historical facts in that book are generally accurate. At times I note a number of studies – articles and books – written after the publication of the first works by the History Branch when they serve the

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed analysis of how Lorch prepared the draft for *Sefer Hamedinah*, see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "Beginnings of the Historiography of the War of Independence and the State of Information in 1955 on the Balance of Forces," in *The Few against the Many? Studies on the Balance of Forces in the Battles of Judas Maccabaeus and Israel's War of Independence*, ed. Alon Kadish and Benjamin Z. Kedar (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005), 141–85 (Hebrew).

<sup>2</sup> The IDF History Branch, *History of the War of Renascence* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Pub. House, 1959) (Hebrew); Netanel Lorch, *History of the War of Independence* (Tel Aviv: Masada, 1958) (Hebrew). In the notes I shall refer to its English version: id., *The Edge of the Sword: Israel's War of Independence, 1947–1949*, introduced by S.L.A. Marshall with an epilogue by Yigael Yadin (New York: Putnam, 1961). For an important survey of the hostilities, but only until the establishment of Israel in May 1948, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:1343–600.

purpose of this chapter, but since my main goal is the reconstruction of the course of the war, I shall not discuss many of the issues with which they deal.<sup>3</sup>

On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved the recommendations of the majority of its Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP).<sup>4</sup> This was not the first committee appointed to investigate the matter of Palestine, but this time it was an official international committee and its recommendations were adopted by the highest international institution – the UN General Assembly. The proposal was approved by a majority of 33 countries in favor, 11 against, 10 abstaining, and 1 absent.<sup>5</sup>

In short, the main aspects of the decision were as follows: (a) The Mandate for Palestine shall terminate no later than May 1, 1948, and the British armed forces shall be withdrawn over a period of five months and no later than August 1, 1948. The government shall temporarily transfer to a UN executive committee. Britain shall inform the commission of the date of its evacuation of each and every area; (b) Upon termination of the Mandate, and no later than October 1, 1948, two states shall be established, Arab and Jewish, the boundaries as noted in the UN Committee recommendations, and a separate international regime for the city of Jerusalem will come into existence; (c) Councils, temporary governments, will be established for the two states. The transfer of authority will occur no later than October 1, 1948; (d) An area situated in the territory of the Jewish state, including a sea port and hinterland adequate for providing services for unlimited Jewish immigration, shall be evacuated no later than February 1, 1948. Civil government in the country will be transferred to a UN commission from which authority will gradually be transferred to the temporary governments.<sup>6</sup>

The Yishuv in Eretz Israel received the news of the UN decision with joy, but the very next day the Arabs responded by attacks on Jews and their institutions, in effect marking the beginning of the War of Independence. Customarily, the period of the war is divided into two sub-periods, from November 30, 1947 until May 15, 1948, when fighting was mostly with the local Arab population, and from May 15, 1948 onwards,

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<sup>3</sup> I have consciously refrained from touching upon issues that are outside my main objective. Thus, for example, I will not deal with the Irgun ship *Altalena*, and the issue of Deir Yassin will only be described in short, without going into details and its implications.

<sup>4</sup> UNSCOP has been dealt with in Chapter Eleven. It is important to note that three of its members presented a minority report that opted for a federative solution. Magnes was in favor of the minority opinion; see Kotzin, *Judah L. Magnes*, 310–11. Lehi, for its part, continued to demand the “two banks of the Jordan.” See a detailed analysis of the memorandum presented to UNSCOP on June 26, 1947 by Nathan Friedman-Yellin in Heller, *The Stern Gang*, 173–78.

<sup>5</sup> For the adoption of the partition resolution by the General Assembly, and the differences between UNSCOP's proposal and the final decision of the GA, see ch. 11, n. 142. Britain was the only Great Power to abstain, and the representative of Siam was absent.

<sup>6</sup> The British moved up the date of their evacuation to May 15, 1948, The UN's Palestine Commission was appointed on Jan. 9, 1948, arrived in the country on Mar. 3, and afterwards returned to the US.

when the war was mainly between the newly established State of Israel and the Arab countries that attacked it. The war continued until armistice agreements were signed with four of these countries.

It is also the custom to divide the two sub-periods of the war into five phases, two during the first sub-period, and three during the second.<sup>7</sup> These five phases are: Phase 1: The War Begins, November 29, 1947–April 1, 1948; Phase 2: Decisive Turn, April 1, 1948–May 14, 1948; Phase 3: Repelling the Invasion, May 15, 1948–June 11, 1948; Phase 4: First Truce and the Ten Days Fighting, June 11, 1948–July 9, 1948; Phase 5: Israeli Offensive, July 19, 1948–January 7, 1949, including the large operations until the signing of the armistice agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. Iraq also participated in the war, but did not sign an armistice agreement since it had no shared border with Israel. The large operations and the dates of the armistice agreements will be presented below, in the discussion of the final stage of the war.<sup>8</sup>

### **Fighting in cities of mixed population; defense of isolated settlements; reprisal raids**

On December 1, 1947, immediately after the UN approved the partition plan for Palestine, the Arab Higher Committee declared a three-day general strike, similar to the previous Arab strikes during the Mandate period. The strike resulted in great numbers of unemployed who were incited against Jews throughout the country. The most serious attack took place in Jerusalem's Jewish commercial center. A wild mob, headed by inciters, torched the Jewish shops, and even succeeded in driving the Jews entirely out of the commercial center. Acts of violence increased in cities with a mixed population. Following these mob attacks, more calculated and deadly ones continued in the cities, in three forms: (a) sniping from a distance and attacks by infantry; (b) planting car bombs in Jewish areas; (c) attacks on Jewish suburbs and isolated neighborhoods.

Sniping was one of the deadliest forms of warfare at the time. The second, car bombs, was not only lethal, but also had a grave impact on the spirit of the inhabitants. Several of the car bombs caused great losses of life and much panic among the Jewish population. I shall note three of them: *The Palestine Post* building explosion in Jerusalem on February 2, 1948; the car bomb explosion on Ben-Yehudah Street in

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<sup>7</sup> For the five phases and their dates, see the contents to Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*.

<sup>8</sup> Gilad, ed., *The Book of the Palmah*, also divides the war into five phases, focusing on the role played by the Palmah in each phase. On this division, see also Ben-Arieh, "Historiography of the War of Independence," n. 26, with a reference to an article by Israel Baer. On the first phase, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 55–84. For another overall study of the course of the war, see David Tal, *War in Palestine 1948: Strategy and Diplomacy* (London: Routledge, 2004).

Jerusalem on February 22, in which several dozen persons lost their lives; and the car bomb explosion in the courtyard of the Jewish National Institutions in Jerusalem on March 2. Other car bombs exploded in additional mixed population cities. The Jewish side responded by also employing car bombs in Jaffa, Jerusalem, Haifa, and other concentrations of Arab population. There were attempts by Arabs to gain control of Jewish border neighborhoods. The largest attack was waged against the Hatikvah neighborhood in Tel Aviv. Attacks in Jerusalem and its vicinity were aimed at the urban neighborhoods of Makor Hayyim and Yemin Mosheh, the Jewish Quarter in the Old City, Kibbutz Ramat Rahel, and more. Additional attacks were launched against the Jewish commercial center in downtown Haifa; the Jewish quarter in the old city of Tiberias which was cut off from the Jewish neighborhood of Kiryat Shmuel, and thus too with the Jewish quarter in Safed.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from attacks on isolated Jewish neighborhoods in the cities of mixed population, Arabs also attacked isolated Jewish settlements with the aim of causing damage and even conquering them. The first such large action was that of Syrian forces against Kfar Szold on January 10, 1948. The attack was warded off with the help of the British military that still ruled the country and was unwilling to assent to a military operation originating from beyond the border. Other assaults ensued throughout the country. Gush Etzion (the Etzion Bloc) came under attack. A unit of the Haganah forces, the Lamed Heh platoon, so-called because it was comprised of thirty-five fighters, set off to help defend the isolated bloc, encountering an Arab force on the way. Following a heroic battle, all the platoon fighters were killed. On January 20, Kibbutz Yehiam in the Western Galilee was attacked; on February 16 an assault was launched against Kibbutz Tirat Tzvi in the Beit She'an Valley. Additional settlements around the country also came under attack, such as Atarot and Neveh Ya'akov north of Jerusalem, and Hartuv to its west, as well as Nitzanim and Nevatim in the southern part of the country and the Negev. The great achievement of the Yishuv was that all enemy attacks were repelled and all the settlements managed to endure them.

In response to the Arab attacks, the Haganah adopted a policy of reprisal raids, which was implemented in stages. Initially, general opinion was that the response should take place against the inciter or attacker himself, and any harm to innocent bystanders should be avoided. Later they moved on to reprisal raids in the village or settlement from which came the attackers. Only later did they reach the stage in which the reprisal was directed against the enemy everywhere, meaning hitting the enemy wherever he was present. Thus reprisal raids took place in Arab villages, Arab areas, cities, and on the roads.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> On the fighting in cities of mixed population, see Tal, *War in Palestine*, 64–67.

<sup>10</sup> For the defense of the first isolated settlements to come under attack, and some of the reprisals, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:1409–20.

### **Battle for the roads; political developments**

It soon became clear that the battle for the roads had become one of the major issues during this first phase of the war. Most likely, there were two main reasons: (a) Arab areas separated between almost all areas of Jewish settlement, and the Arab forces took advantage of this fact; (b) the resolute decision of the Jewish leadership was that no settlement would be given up or evacuated of its inhabitants, in keeping with the slogan: “the whole country is a front, and the people as a whole are an army.” Accordingly, the focus of the war transferred to the roads. Jewish transportation along the country’s roads became dangerous. The Jewish response also developed in several stages. Initially, individual cars traveled the roads, carrying weapons. After many such cars were hit, they started traveling in pairs, later in a group of cars accompanied by small trucks with supernumerary police who provided protection, and finally in large convoys, with supernumerary police inside the cars and armored vehicles escorting them.

Transportation hardships were especially plentiful on the road to Jerusalem and from that city to its outlying neighborhoods and the settlements around it: Gush Etzion, Atarot, Neveh Ya’akov, Mount Scopus, and more. The same occurred on the roads in and to the Negev, where the problem was twofold: passage from the north of the country to the Negev and from one settlement to another within the Negev expanses. An additional problem was safekeeping the water pipelines that brought water to the Negev settlements. Travel to the upper Galilee and eastern Galilee also became dangerous, as well as to western Galilee settlements and in the Sharon region. In sum, there was no road exiting a Jewish settlement towards another location that did not endanger life. During the last week of March 1948, after over three months of fighting, the Arabs succeeded in roadblocking and hitting three large Jewish convoys and causing weighty losses. On March 26, 1948, a convoy successfully reached Jerusalem. Most of the armored vehicles operated on this line. The next day, the majority of the convoy, including armored vehicles that could break through roadblocks, was sent to bring supplies and reinforcements to Gush Etzion. The convoy managed to get to Gush Etzion, but during its return, and despite the success of the first vehicle to break open several roadblocks, the convoy was halted near Solomon’s Pools. The persons in the convoy were forced to abandon their vehicles and escape to a nearby house near the village of Nabi Daniyal, thus becoming known as the “Nabi Daniyal Convoy.” A battle was waged throughout that day and the next, until most of the ammunition ran out. During the battle, the first roadblock breaking armored vehicle was blown up, killing its commander and fighters who had fought heroically. Finally, with Red Cross and British intervention, it was agreed that the British would transport the Jews to Jerusalem, with the provision that all their weapons and armored vehicles would be given over to the Arabs. In the absence of other options, the Jews accepted the terms and were taken to Jerusalem. The battle ended in heavy losses and a gnawing sense of frustration.



While the Nabi Daniyal battle still preyed heavily upon public consciousness, on March 28 a convoy to Kibbutz Yehiam in western Galilee was caught in an ambush. Here too an attempt was made to break open the blocked road with armored vehicles. However an ambush was set up east of the village of Kabri, where the narrow road winds between the hills. The first armored vehicle made it safely to Yehiam, but the rest of the vehicles were halted. Forty-two of the “Yehiam Convoy” fighters were killed in the battle that lasted over ten hours, among them their commander Ben-Ami Pachter. The next day another convoy tried to reach Jerusalem, but came across an ambush and roadblocks after passing Kibbutz Huldah. They retreated under heavy fire and seventeen men were killed. The convoy withdrew and Jerusalem remained entirely isolated. Earlier the Arab forces succeeded in cutting off most of the roads to the Negev. The whole country was in crisis.<sup>11</sup>

Nearly 1,200 Jews were killed in the first four months of the war, over half of them civilians. As the battles continued, the number of victims grew. In December 1947, an average of two people died per day, while in March 1948 an average of ten people were killed each day. The crisis brought forth the first major turning point in the war, Operation “Nahshon.”

March was also greatly disappointing on the political front. While the acts of hostility continued in the country, increasing all the while, hectic political activities were taking place at Lake Success, the seat of the UN in the United States, regarding implementation of the partition plan. UN Secretary General Trygve Lie appointed a Palestine Commission to oversee its implementation and appointed Ralph Bunche, one of his assistants, as its secretary. The commission was supposed to arrive in the country to receive authority over the land in an organized fashion, to transfer it to the Arabs and Jews in the two states to be established, and to administer the Jerusalem and Bethlehem areas as an international enclave controlled by the UN. However, problems arose immediately after the partition decision. Britain was opposed to the partition plan a priori, and even abstained from voting on it at the UN General Assembly.<sup>12</sup>

It was Britain that referred the Palestine issue to the UN General Assembly, but after the decision was taken, it refused to cooperate with it. Britain claimed that it was prepared to transfer rule only upon the agreement of both sides. Since the Arabs were opposed to the plan, the British were indeed ready to evacuate the country, as decided by the UN General Assembly, but would not cooperate with it, since one of the sides

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<sup>11</sup> On the battle for the roads, see *ibid.*, 3,2:1441–56.

<sup>12</sup> For British opposition to the UNSCOP proposals, see the memorandum of Sept. 18, 1947 sent to the Cabinet by Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, in Michael J. Cohen, ed., *The British Decision to Evacuate Palestine 1947–1948*, *Rise of Israel*, 36 (New York: Garland, 1987), 201–9. Abbady, *Between Us and the English*, 92, notes that most of his book was written in the final year of the Mandate, but before the British government announced its intention to leave Palestine if a solution acceptable to both parties would not be found.

objected to the decision. At the same time, Britain set May 15, 1948 as the final date for the evacuation of its forces from Palestine.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the lack of British cooperation, the Palestine Commission set out, but it came across multiple obstacles. The Arab Higher Committee declared it would continue to reject the partition plan, refusing to accept the UN decision or even to send its representatives to the commission's deliberations. While the British did appoint a representative to appear before the commission, he did not cooperate with it. The Jews were the only ones willing to assist, but that was not enough. In mid-February 1948 the commission contacted the UN Security Council, demanding assistance. The Security Council convened on February 24 to hear the commission's report. Britain declared that it would not be able to guarantee its military assistance as demanded by the UN. The United States, previously unconditionally supportive of the plan, began to hesitate and did not support the dispatch of an international force to the region. The Security Council decided to continue its discussion of the issue. On March 19 Warren Austin, the US representative, announced that he had received new instructions. He proposed that the decision on the nature of the final political arrangements for the Palestine area would be delayed until a special meeting of the General Assembly was convened. In the meantime, the Security Council would decide that for the sake of peace, a temporary UN trusteeship would be established in Palestine and the Palestine Commission would delay implementation of the partition plan. The Austin proposal was put to the vote at the Security Council and won a majority vote in favor. The American retreat dealt a blow to the UN and all supporters of the partition plan.<sup>14</sup> It was now the end of March, the armored vehicles of Nabi Daniyal were being gloriously exhibited in Bethlehem, and the charred skeletons of the Yehiam and Huldah convoys rusted at the side of the roads in the winter rains.

## Phase two: decisive turn, April 1–May 14, 1948

### Operation Nahshon

At the end of March 1948, the Jewish forces were in a grave situation on most fronts. Here begins the second phase of the war.<sup>15</sup> The situation of Jerusalem was especially grave. The city remained cut off and fewer supplies reached it. Some sections of its

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<sup>13</sup> Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 558, writes that the British employed every means to interfere with the possibility of establishing the Jewish state.

<sup>14</sup> America's gradual retreat from support of partition was the result of pressure by the State Department and the Pentagon, led by Secretary of State George Marshall. See Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers*, 345–54. For the reaction of American non-Zionists, see Kaufman, *An Ambiguous Partnership*, 312–57 and Appendix K: Joseph Proskauer to Moshe Shertok, Apr. 27, 1948, *ibid.*, 388–90.

<sup>15</sup> For the second phase, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 87–137.

Jewish population were marked by defeatism, due to the military failures, on the one hand, and the UN decision, on the other, that decreed that Jerusalem would not be part of the Jewish state but rather an international enclave within the Arab state. It was evident that the Arabs discerned their great chances of success in Jerusalem, and were therefore operating diligently to keep it isolated, to bring it down by siege. Not only Jerusalem was in their sights. Ben-Gurion, then the head of the Jewish Agency Executive, determined that the Arabs calculations were correct; the surrender, conquest, or destruction of Jewish Jerusalem would be a fatal – perhaps deadly – blow to the Yishuv and perhaps break the will of the Jews and their ability to withstand Arab aggression. Thus breaking through the road to Jerusalem was a necessity, come what may. On April 1, 1948, in a meeting held at night in the home of Ben-Gurion, the decision was taken to concentrate an armed force of 1,500 men for an operation intended to break the siege of Jerusalem. As Israel Galili, the Haganah chief of staff, made clear, the great innovation in this operation was the concentration of force in one place, striking in one location, even at the price of exposing other fronts and areas. This germinal operation was named Operation “Nahshon.”<sup>16</sup>

Until Operation Nahshon, Haganah forces operated at company strength. Now it was decided that a force of three battalions, serving as a brigade, would be deployed in one operation. To that end, forces and weapons were gathered from all over the country. During the operation, weapons began arriving from abroad, the first shipment from Czechoslovakia. The objective now was to gain permanent control of key points along the road to Jerusalem.

Before the beginning of the operation, an advance action to take the al-Qastal outpost was initiated, the first permanent Arab village conquered in the country, with the aim of remaining there for good. ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini, the leading Arab commander of the Jerusalem area, was killed in the Arab counterattack. Later, control was gained of additional outposts and the road to Jerusalem was opened. However, we cannot complete the description of the operations in the Jerusalem area without mentioning the Deir Yassin affair. During the conquest of the village by the forces of the Etzel and Lehi, many of its inhabitants were killed, causing great damage to the reputation of the Yishuv. It should also be noted that the great publicity given to the killing by Arab spokesmen increased the number of Arabs fleeing their villages in fear.<sup>17</sup>

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**16** Operation Nahshon was named after Nahum Arieli, whose code name in the Haganah was “Nahshon” and had fallen in the battle for the Castel hill. Later, because Operation Nahshon was the first major one of the war, it was mistakenly claimed that it was named after Nahshon ben Aminadav, traditionally the first to jump into the Red Sea when the Children of Israel left Egypt. When asked about the name of the operation, even Yigael Yadin, the Chief of Operations during the War of Independence, gave this mistaken explanation. Many other operations during the war were named for commanders.

**17** For Operation Nahshon, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 89–92; Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 121–39, including the Deir Yassin killing and a map of the operation; see also Tal, *War in Palestine*, 90–92. I shall briefly discuss the issue of the Palestinian refugees in the summary to this chapter.

## Battles of Mishmar Haemek and Ramat Yohanan; Plan D; liberation of Tiberias and Haifa

While Operation Nahshon was underway in the Jerusalem “corridor,” battles also began in the northern part of the country. On April 4, 1948 Fawzi al-Qawuqji, leading a force of volunteers from Arab countries, attacked Kibbutz Mishmar Haemek, supported by artillery fire, with the aim of conquering it. The assailants reached the gates of the kibbutz, but were halted with the assistance of Haganah forces. On April 11, 1948 Qawuqji requested the assistance of a volunteer regiment comprised of Syrian Druze which had arrived in Shafa-‘Amr and pressured its commander to help by attacking a Jewish settlement. On April 12, 1948 this regiment attempted to attack Kibbutz Ramat Yohanan, but was warded off by its defenders and assisting forces. Contact was made during the battles between representatives of the Haganah and Druze commanders and local dignitaries, and an agreement of sorts was signed between the Druze and the Yishuv by which each side would refrain from attacking the other.<sup>18</sup>

Previously, following the UN partition decision and the intensification of the war in the country, Haganah headquarters had decided to prepare a comprehensive plan for the day after the British evacuation, “Plan D.” The main objective was to gain control of the territory set for the Jewish state according to the partition plan and to defend its borders in preparation for invasion by Arab armies.<sup>19</sup> The various brigades, which had begun forming, were given assignments and were based primarily on the Haganah, the veterans of the British forces during WWII, Jewish supernumeraries in the British police force, and new recruits. Of all these emerged the twelve brigades of the IDF that fought in the War of Independence according to the numbers assigned them. The first six were (1) Golani; (2) Carmeli, both of which operated in the northern parts of the country; (3) Alexandroni, operating in the central region, from Zikhron Ya‘akov to Ramat Gan; (4) Kiryati, in the Tel Aviv area; (5) Givati, in the south, up to the Majdel–Bait-Jebrin road; and (6) Etzioni in Jerusalem and the Judean hills. Three brigades were founded on the basis of the Palmah battalions: Yiftah in the north, Harel in the center and Jerusalem, and Hanegev in the Negev area. Three additional brigades were established only after May 15: (7) the “New Brigade,” (8) the Armored Brigade, and (9) Oded Brigade in the eastern upper Galilee.<sup>20</sup> Additional manpower arrived

<sup>18</sup> Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 93–95; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 94–96.

<sup>19</sup> “Plan Dalet” in Hebrew, *dalet* being the fourth letter in the Hebrew alphabet. On Plan D, see Tal, *War in Palestine*, 86–88 and in the index; Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 87–89; Morris, 1948, 119–21, who refers to incorrect claims by the Arab side as to the objective of this plan. I shall discuss the implementation of Plan D below.

<sup>20</sup> For details of the forces, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 44–50. For the six brigades formed out of Haganah members, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:1485–1516. On the Palmah during the War of Independence, see vol. 2 of Gilad, ed., *The Book of the Palmah*. On the contribution of soldiers who served in the British forces to the shaping of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), see Yoav Gelber,

from Gahal – an acronym for “recruits from abroad” and Mahal – an acronym for “volunteers from abroad,” Jewish and non-Jewish volunteers who arrived to assist the new Jewish state and joined the brigades.<sup>21</sup>

In the meantime, as the war unfolded, changes occurred in the manner of the British military evacuation of the country. Initially, the British declared that their evacuation of all areas would take place simultaneously. Accordingly, Plan D was meant to be implemented at one time, together with the British evacuation. However, the British changed their evacuation method, and as early as February began evacuating whole areas of the country. In March, together with the severe setbacks suffered by the Jewish forces, a change occurred in the position of the United States at the UN. All these forced the Jewish military leadership to start implementing Plan D in its entirety as early as April, upon completion of the planning stage. I shall describe in short the operations carried out under Plan D, beginning in the north with the two large cities of which the Jewish forces gained control – Tiberias and Haifa.

One of the first Plan D assignments was to capture the city of Tiberias that controlled the routes to the eastern Galilee and the Hula Valley. Tiberias at the time was divided into three parts: (a) the Jewish quarter in the Old City; (b) the Arab quarter in the Old City; (c) the new Jewish section of the city, halfway up the hill, most of which was the Kiryat Shmuel neighborhood. There were a number of Arab villages above the new Jewish section. The population was comprised of 6,000 Jews and 4,000 Arabs. Relations between the Arabs and Jews at the beginning of the war were initially good, and efforts were made by leading members of both groups to keep the population calm. As the fighting throughout the country intensified the situation in the city deteriorated, and the Jewish quarter in the Old City was cut off. It was thus decided to gain control of the entire city. The Jewish attack took place on the night between April 16 and 17. In the morning, the Arab residents agreed to the British proposal to assist them in evacuating the city, and all of them left Tiberias.

The taking of Tiberias was followed by the conquest of Haifa, which was part of the Jewish state according to the UN partition plan. Like Tiberias, Haifa too consisted

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*The Emergence of a Jewish Army: Veterans of the British Army in the IDF* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1986) (Hebrew).

<sup>21</sup> Members of Gahal were mostly untrained men recruited from the Displaced Persons camps in Europe; see Hanna Torok-Yablonka, “The Recruitment of Holocaust Survivors during the War of Independence,” *Studies in Zionism* 13 (1992): 43–56. On Mahal, see David J. Bercuson, *The Secret Army* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984); Michael Cohen, “They Came to Us when We Needed Them Most: Mahal in the War of Independence,” in *The Sixty-Year-Old War: Discussion, Studies, and Sources on the War of Independence*, ed. Assnat Shiran (Ef’al: The Association for Research of the Defense Forces, 2008), 177–218 (Hebrew). On Teddy Eytan, commander of the 75th Battalion and the so-called “French commando,” see id., “Teddy Eytan, the 75th Battalion, and the ‘French Commando,’” in *Jews and Arabs in a Protracted Struggle for Eretz Israel*, ed. Assnat Shiran (Ef’al: The Association for Research of the Defense Forces, 2006), 99–150 (Hebrew). See also Teddy Eytan, *Neguev: l’héroïque naissance de l’État d’Israël* (Neuchatel: La Baconnière, 1949).

of three parts: (a) the lower one near the sea; (b) the middle part halfway up the hill – Hadar Hacarmel; and (c) the upper section, the neighborhoods on Mt. Carmel. The population of the last two was mostly Jewish, while the Arab community was concentrated in the lower part of the city. The Jewish neighborhoods had a topographical advantage, but the roads in Haifa and those leading to it from the south and from the east were mostly under Arab control. Conditions for Jewish action were relatively expedient. The Jewish population of the city was well organized. Work at Haifa port continued uninterrupted, despite the comparatively small number of Jewish laborers, 500 compared to 1,500 Arabs. As fighting intensified throughout the country, tension in the city also grew. On the morning of April 21, both sides received notice that the British had begun evacuating their positions in the city. The news was met with great surprise as the British had expressed their ambition to continue holding Haifa port beyond the date planned for the end of the Mandate, mid-May 1948, and everyone believed that Haifa port and the city as a whole would be the last to be evacuated. Time was of the essence and quick action was necessary. Plan D for the conquest of Haifa was ready, and the operation began. During the noon hours of April 22 the Arab defenses started collapsing and the Arab citizens of Haifa began running for their lives. Haifa's Arab notables turned to British military commander Hugh Stockwell and asked for his intervention to stop the fighting. Stockwell set a meeting with the leaders of both sides at the municipal council chambers, where the Arabs were presented with the terms of surrender on behalf of Haganah headquarters. Several Jewish leaders, among them the Jewish mayor, entreated the Arabs to accept the terms and remain in the city, living in peace with their Jewish neighbors. The Arabs requested an interval of a few hours in order to decide whether to accept the Haganah surrender terms. Finally, perhaps due to external pressure, they decided to leave Haifa. Before the hostilities began, there were 30,000–40,000 Arab residents in Haifa, out of a total population of 70,000. The Arabs asked the British to safeguard their exit. The conquest of Haifa could not be completed since the British still held an enclave that included the port, the refineries, and the military base at Ramat David (until June 30, 1948). However, the political achievement was significant. Haifa was the third largest city in the country and a major port in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> On the battles for Tiberias and Haifa, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 96–100; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 100–104. On the events in Haifa, see the comprehensive study by Tamir Goren, *The Fall of Arab Haifa in 1948* (Sede Boqer: The Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2006) (Hebrew). For relations between Arabs and Jews in Haifa, see id., *Cooperation in the Shadow of Confrontation: Arabs and Jews in Local Government in Haifa during the British Mandate* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2008) (Hebrew).

### **Operation Yiftah: eastern Upper Galilee and Safed; Lower Galilee and the valleys; western Galilee and Acre**

The British concluded the evacuation of Upper Galilee by mid-April, sooner than expected, and handed over a number of key locations to the Arabs such as the police stations at Nabi Yusha, Halsah, and Mt. Canaan, the army camp at Malkiyya, the “Citadel” and other sites in the city of Safed. The Arab commander of the eastern Upper Galilee area was Adib Shishakli, who later ruled Syria, a Syrian officer who joined the army of Arab volunteers that arrived in the country, and at whose disposal were local fighters and a few hundred Iraqi and Syrian volunteers. Many of the Jewish settlements found themselves under siege. On April 15, upon the British evacuation of eastern Galilee, Jewish forces tried to take over Nabi Yusha, but the attack failed. Five days later, on April 20, 1948, Palmah forces made a second attempt to conquer the police station, yet despite their bravery the action failed again, with twenty-two fatalities. The situation called for a comprehensive well-planned action – the “Yiftah” operation. On April 28, the Rosh Pinnah police station was captured, and that same day the nearby military base was also conquered. The target now was Safed. On May 1, the Arab villages of Biriyya and Ein Zeitun fell to the Jewish forces, and a corridor to the city was opened. On May 5 concentration of forces in the city was completed, and the attack on the citadel was initiated. Safed was conquered during three days, May 10–12, and its Arab residents fled. At the same time, on May 4 Operation “Matateh” (Broom) was launched, and the area from the Sea of Galilee to the Rosh Pinnah line was conquered so as to ensure the transportation route from Tiberias northwards to the whole eastern Galilee area. Jewish forces also gained control of the whole eastern Upper Galilee area.

In anticipation of a possible Arab invasion from the east, operations to gain control of other places in the valleys, lower Galilee, and western Galilee were begun. On April 17, the former Templer colonies of Waldheim and Bethlehem of Galilee, which the British had emptied of their inhabitants during World War II, were captured, as well as many villages, including the Arab village of Baysan, and controlling sites such as the ruins of the Crusader fort at Kawkab al-Hawa. In western Galilee, military camps evacuated by the British were taken in the “Ben-Ami” Operation named for Ben-Ami Pachter, commander of the Yehiam convoy. In addition, all the Galilee shoreline villages, from Acre northwards, were captured. Acre itself fell on May 17, after the establishment of Israel.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For Operation Yiftah, the taking of Safed and its surroundings, the other conquests, especially of Arab villages and Acre, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 103–7, including a map of the battle for Safed and its environs; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 104–11.



## Operation Hametz and the conquest of Jaffa; the fighting in the Jerusalem corridor; Operation Kilshon

For political and military reasons, Jaffa was not attacked directly during the phase that preceded the end of the British evacuation, not wanting to aggravate the British. It is important to note that according to the UN partition plan, Jaffa was supposed to remain an Arab city enclave within the Jewish territory. Accordingly, it was decided to capture all the Arab villages surrounding the city, the assumption being that surrounding the city might cause the residents of Jaffa to surrender. The operation, called Operation “Hametz” (Unleavened Bread) due to the Passover holiday celebrated at the time, began on April 27–28. During the operation, the Tel Litwinski (present-day Tel Hashomer) army base and two neighboring villages were taken. A fierce battle was waged at Tell Arish, near present-day Holon, and it remained in Arab hands. The villages of Salameh and Yazur were conquered in the second stage of the operation.

On April 25, during the Operation Hametz planning stage, Etzel forces attacked Manshiyya, the northernmost neighborhood in Jaffa. For this attack, the Etzel brought in units from different parts of the country. The number of fighters was in the hundreds, and the weapons used were taken a little earlier from a British military train in the vicinity of Pardes Hannah. The attack was meant to cut off the Manshiyya neighborhood from the rest of the city, but the goal was not achieved during the first night. In the meantime, British military reinforcements were called in, and a severe warning was issued by the authorities demanding the attack be halted. Nevertheless, on the morning of April 27 the Etzel renewed its attack and reached the sea after suffering many losses. The Manshiyya neighborhood was thus successfully isolated from the rest of Jaffa. The Etzel forces also began a heavy mortar barrage on Jaffa, leading to a mass flight of Arabs from the city. At this stage the British began to intervene with forces and shelling to emphasize their demands to leave Jaffa alone. Following negotiations between the parties, it was decided to leave the situation as is and to replace Etzel members in Manshiyya with those of the Haganah. The exchange was effected, and Haganah members and soldiers of a Scottish regiment occupied adjacent positions. However the Jaffa residents continued to flee, and only several thousand persons remained of its original population of 70,000. On Thursday, May 13, 1948, Jaffa’s Arabs signed a surrender agreement and the city became occupied territory. The next day, upon the British evacuation of the Beit Dagon police station, Jewish forces took control of it.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> For Operation Hametz and the conquest of Jaffa and its vicinity, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 108–11; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 111–15; Itamar Radai, “Jaffa 1948: The Fall of a City,” *Journal of Israeli History* 30 (2011): 23–43. On the participation of Etzel in the capture of Jaffa, see Begin, *The Revolt*, 348–71. For the influence of the conquest of Jaffa on Tel Aviv and the entire region, see Arnon Golan, “The Demarcation of Tel Aviv-Jaffa’s Municipal Boundaries following the 1948 War: Political Conflicts and Spatial Outcome,” *Planning Perspectives* 10 (1995): 383–98.

The most severe battles during the second phase of the war were on the road to Jerusalem and within the city itself. Following Operation Nahshon, the road to Jerusalem remained open. Operation “Harel” was initiated to escort the convoys to Jerusalem. During the five days of the operation, April 15–21, three convoys made their way to Jerusalem, 250–300 supply vehicles in each, with a length of up to fifteen kilometers per convoy. Outposts were conquered on both sides of the road, and three Arab villages near the road – Saris, Bait Surik, and Biddu, were also occupied and partially destroyed. An attempt to take the village of Suba failed. While the operation was in full swing, the situation in Jerusalem deteriorated greatly and the forces halted the operation along the road to Jerusalem and rushed up to the city. Even before Operation Harel, on April 13, two days after the Deir Yassin massacre, the Hadassah convoy tragedy occurred in Jerusalem, shocking the whole Yishuv. A convoy of the leading doctors of Hadassah Hospital and teachers from the Hebrew University came under attack in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, while British forces did nothing to stop it. About seventy-eight victims were killed.<sup>25</sup>

In the meantime, rumors spread throughout Jerusalem that the British were planning to evacuate parts of the city and hand them over to the Arabs. This led the General Staff to decide that the Harel brigade, situated in Kiryat Anavim, would go up to Jerusalem for Operation “Yevusi.” At dawn on April 20, 1948, the largest of all convoys to Jerusalem set off from the Bilu camp near Rehovoth. One of the cars drove Ben-Gurion and the commander of the Yevusi operation. When the lead car arrived at Sha’ar Hagai, shooting began increasing in volume. The convoy was stuck. Only reinforcements of armored vehicles and infantry that arrived in the late afternoon succeeded in extricating the convoy and getting it to Jerusalem. Burnt vehicles remained on the road, and several of the Harel fighters were killed in the ambush. The forces that did reach Jerusalem prepared for the planned operation. Operation Yevusi had three goals: (a) opening the road to Neveh Ya’akov by conquering the Arab village of Nabi Samwil and the villages around it; (b) opening the road to Mount Scopus by gaining control of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood; (c) creating and holding a corridor to Mekor Hayyim, the isolated Jewish neighborhood in the southeast, by conquering part of the Arab Katamon neighborhood.

On April 22, 1948, the forces set off to achieve their first goal, but met with great resistance, failed to conquer Nabi Samwil, and retreated after suffering losses. In the second action, which began on April 24, the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood was conquered. British forces came to the scene and demanded its evacuation since it lay on the route through which the British High Commissioner was meant to travel to the airfield at Atarot (Kalandia) from where he was to fly to Haifa and from there to Britain.

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<sup>25</sup> For the massacre of the Hadassah convoy, see Moshe Ehrenvald, *Siege within a Siege: Mount Scopus in the War of Independence* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010), 133–90 (Hebrew), who also maintains that there were 79 victims.

The British promised that they would hold the neighborhood until they evacuated the country and would then hand it over to the Jews, and kept their word. The third part of the operation began on April 29, 1948 with the objective of gaining control of the Saint Simon monastery in the Qatamon quarter. One of the most severe battles of the war developed at the site, against local Arab forces and Iraqi volunteers. Finally, the monastery and the area around it remained in Jewish hands, and a panicky flight of Arabs from all the southern neighborhoods of the city ensued. However, once again British forces appeared and everything was halted until the British evacuation, after which the Arab neighborhoods in southern Jerusalem were occupied by the Haganah.<sup>26</sup>

While battles were being fought in the city of Jerusalem and its surroundings, the road to Jerusalem remained closed since the arrival of last large convoy on April 21, 1948. When the battle for Saint Simon ended, it was decided to send the Harel force back to Kiryat Anavim to reopen the road to Jerusalem in Operation “Maccabi.” The plan was to open the road in the area of Sha’ar Hagai–Latrun where it had been blocked during the previous convoy. The operation had two stages. The first began in May when forces descended from Jerusalem, and tried to take control of all the outposts from al-Qastal to Sha’ar Hagai, including that of Bait Mahsir, located high above the road. The plan was for a Givati brigade to arrive from the south, conquer Latrun, and proceed from there to Sha’ar Hagai where it would join the Harel force. The actions took place from May 10 to 13. Despite the conquest of the outposts, on the one hand, and Latrun, on the other, the forces failed to meet. During the second stage of the operation, additional forces from the south were recruited and this time, between May 14–16, the units succeeded in joining forces. On the first night, a convoy arrived bringing in just one vehicle and was therefore called the “Orphan Convoy.” A few dozen trucks made the way to Jerusalem in the convoy on the second night, and these were the final vehicles to get to Jerusalem at this stage of the war, since the next day the southern forces were called back to participate in halting the Egyptian invasion that began moving towards Tel Aviv. The road to Jerusalem was blocked again for a month and was only reopened due to the famous Burma Road that was breached only during the first truce, after a month of battles to check the enemy.<sup>27</sup>

While the Harel and Givati brigades fought in the Jerusalem corridor to reopen the road to the city, the Etzioni brigade was waiting for the British evacuation of

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<sup>26</sup> On irregular Arab forces in the battle for Jerusalem, see Itamar Radai, “From Nabi Samwil to Operation Kilshon, or ‘the Red Days’: Arab Irregular Troops in the Battles for Jerusalem from Late April to Late May 1948,” in *Jews and Arabs in a Protracted Struggle for Eretz Israel*, ed. Assnat Shiran (Ef’al: The Association for Research of the Defense Forces, 2006) (Hebrew), 55–98, based on many Arab sources. On Operation Yevusi, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 114–20, including a map of the operation; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 117–20. See also Itamar Radai, “Qatamon 1948: The Fall of a Neighborhood,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 46 (2011): 6–14.

<sup>27</sup> The operation was named after Maccabi Moseri, one of the senior Palmah commanders, who fell during the big convoy to Jerusalem on Apr. 21, 1948. The name has no connection to Judah Maccabaeus. For its two stages, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 120–23; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 120–23.

Jerusalem. Forces were concentrated in the city for an operation to take control of British-held areas. Operation “Kilshon” (Pitchfork) was planned as a three-pronged attack, and thus its name. The northern force was meant to set out from the Batei Ungaren quarter in Jerusalem and to retake the Police School and the Sheik Jarrah neighborhood about to be evacuated by the British. The central force was ordered to gain control of the Bevingrad area in the center of the city and to get as far as the Notre Dame monastery and the New Gate of the Old City. The orders of the southern force were to take control of Camp Allenby, the Baq’a neighborhood, the train station, and the Government Printer compound, and to advance up to the Abu Tor neighborhood. The operation began in the morning hours of May 14 and for the most part achieved its aims. While Operation Kilshon obtained important positions in Jerusalem, an invasion by Arab states was imminent, including the joining in the fighting of the Jordanian Arab Legion. I shall deal below with these developments and the grave events in the Etzion Bloc.<sup>28</sup>

In the south and the Negev, the conditions prevailing during the first phase of the war were also in force during its second phase – the south was cut off from the center of the country, and the options for maintaining road transportation between the many settlements scattered there were limited. Therefore, as part of Operation “Abraham,” named after one of the Negev convoy defenders, it was decided to establish a new settlement on the main road leading to the Negev. The operation began on the night of April 20, 1948. A new Jewish settlement was established at dawn: Bror Hayil, opposite the Arab village of Breir, one of the major villages blocking the road to the Negev. Later, as part of Plan D, the Givati Brigade was sent on Operation “Barak” with the objective of clearing the southern area of Arab villages and taking control of the area before May 15. Thus were conquered a number of villages in the south and on the road to the Negev, and the settlements of the south and the Negev could have some respite, at least for a short while.<sup>29</sup>

### **Phase three: repelling the invasion, May 15–June 11, 1948**

#### **Fall of the Etzion Bloc; declaration of the establishment of the state, and political deliberations**

The days immediately preceding the declaration of the State of Israel were critical ones in the history Yishuv. One of the gravest events of the War of Independence was the fall of the Etzion Bloc on May 12, 1948. There were four settlements in the

<sup>28</sup> On Operation Kilshon, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 123–24; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 207–10.

<sup>29</sup> For operations Abraham and Barak, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 130–31; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 174–75.

Bloc: Kfar Etzion, Masu'ot Yitzhak, Ein Tzurim, and Revadim. The Bloc was isolated from the beginning of the war, and only a few convoys succeeded in breaking through to it. An airstrip was built there, and the only contact with the Bloc was by light planes. It was first attacked on January 14, 1948, but then months passed with no actual attack. The fall of the Lamed Heh platoon on its way to the Bloc, and the capture of the Nabi Daniyal convoy as it tried to return to Jerusalem, clarified the condition of the Bloc and emphasized the fact that it was completely cut off.<sup>30</sup>

The Etzion Bloc prepared to defend itself by seizing important outposts in the area to create a defensive compound. On April 4 and 12, during the period when the Bloc was under siege, a number of attacks against it were repelled. Following orders, the members of the Bloc struck at Arab transportation on the road from Hebron to Bethlehem in order to reduce the pressure on Jerusalem. On May 4, the Bloc was attacked for the first time by the Jordanian Arab Legion accompanied by hundreds of local Arab fighters who now joined in every one of the Legion's attacks. This attack, too, was repelled, but with heavy losses: twelve dead and many more wounded. Most of the women and children had already been evacuated, and the lack of manpower in comparison to the enemy forces created a "Massada" state of mind.<sup>31</sup> These are the words of Moshe Silberschmidt, commander of the Bloc, at the funeral of the twelve victims: "What are we and what are our lives compared to the operation as a whole? The Etzion battles will go down in history, and we should be proud of our privilege to fight for the Glory of Israel." However other opinions maintained that they should consider evacuating the people, if not all of them then mainly those not suited for battle conditions. These considerations were transferred for decision to the High Command. Based on the guiding principle of the war, "the whole country is a front, and the people as a whole are an army," the order received was not to evacuate any settlement, since evacuation of one would cause the fall of many. Eight more days passed, and on May 12, 1948 the Bloc faced another, more severe, attack by the Legion against its settlements and the outposts they held in the area. The outposts fell one after the other, the Bloc commander was killed, and on May 13 a Legion force penetrated Kfar Etzion. After the surrender of the remaining settlers, an Arab mob burst into the village and massacred its inhabitants. Only four survived. The next day, the other three settlements received permission to surrender. With no other choice but to give in, they surrendered and their people were imprisoned. The fall of the Etzion Bloc sent a shockwave through the Yishuv and the High Command.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See above, p. 615.

<sup>31</sup> Massada, a fortress on a high hill in the Judean Desert, was besieged by a large Roman army and fell in 73 CE. Its defense became a symbol of a heroic last stand.

<sup>32</sup> On the fighting in the Etzion Bloc, including a comparison with the defense of Tel-Hai in 1920, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:1429–40. See also Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 125–29; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 203–4; Yitzhak Ronen, "Transjordan's Attack on the Etzion Bloc during the 1948 War," *Israel Affairs* 17 (2011): 194–207.

While the Etzion Bloc waged its final battle, discussions continued in the country and around the world concerning the future of Palestine. Final attempts were made at UN headquarters to prevent a war from breaking out on May 15, 1948, the date declared by the British as the end of their rule. On April 1, the UN Security Council agreed to the American proposal to convene another special session of the General Assembly to deal with Palestine. Before the UN adopted the partition resolution in November 1947, Weizmann had met with US President Truman, and persuaded him to leave the Negev as part of the Jewish state in the partition plan. Now Weizmann went once again to the United States, but his scheduled meeting was postponed. On March 25 he published an open letter in the American press, and on April 9 even wrote a personal letter to Truman requesting that he intervene to change the policy.<sup>33</sup> Yet nothing changed.

On April 16, the UN General Assembly reconvened and sat in session for a month. A report sent from Palestine by the UN special commission was brought before the assembly, stating that the Mandate government was refusing to cooperate, leading Palestine to chaos. The United States' new trusteeship proposal was tabled, but the deliberations were prolonged and no decision was reached. The November 1947 partition decision was not rescinded, but the Palestine Commission was thanked for its efforts and released of any further responsibility. At the same time, the Security Council adopted a series of decisions demanding that all parties agree to a truce in Palestine. On April 24, the Security Council appointed the consuls in Jerusalem representing the United States, France, and Belgium to serve as a truce supervisory committee. At the beginning of May, the United States pressured Britain to agree to remain in Palestine for an additional period, even if only for two more weeks. Britain refused, and there was no room for doubt: the fate of the country would be decided within its borders.<sup>34</sup>

In the country, the scales began tipping towards the Jewish side. However, all the military operations, the taking control of Tiberias, Haifa, Safed, and Jaffa, and the success of Plan D did not generate a change in the UN. On April 12, the Zionist Executive Committee together with the National Council decided on the establishment of a provisional state council, Mo'etzet Ha'am (lit. the nation's council) and a temporary cabinet, Minhelet Ha'am (lit. the nation's administration), a legislative authority and an executive authority. Minhelet Ha'am convened to deliberate the fateful question it now faced: what to do when the British evacuated. It was decided to advance the date of the declaration establishing the state to the day the British left the

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<sup>33</sup> Rose, *Chaim Weizmann*, 411–22. For Weizmann's own record of his meeting with Truman, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 561–63. For an appreciation of Truman as a person and statesman, see Elath, *Through the Mist of Time*, 91–114.

<sup>34</sup> For a summary of the political developments, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 135–37; Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers*, 366–79.

country. Since that was planned to take place on a Saturday, it was decided to advance the declaration to Friday, May 14, at the premises of the Tel Aviv Museum.<sup>35</sup>

The Arab states threatened that should the Jews declare the establishment of their state on the planned date, they would attack on May 15 and conquer the entire territory of Palestine. Seven countries joined forces in this decision: Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. There was some hope that at least Jordan would back down from the decision. Already in November 1947, Golda Meyerson (Meir) met with King Abdullah. At the time the idea was raised that Abdullah would take control of all the territories of the Arab state planned by the UN, with no violation of the territory allocated to the Jewish state. However, due to the intensification of the military conflict between Jews and Arabs during the first months of 1948, Jordan joined the rest of the Arab countries.<sup>36</sup>

On May 2 Meyerson set out for an emergency meeting with King Abdullah, but even she was unable to change his new position.<sup>37</sup> On Wednesday, May 12, a crucial Minhelet Ha'am meeting took place in Tel Aviv. Yigael Yadin, Chief Operations Officer of the Haganah, reviewed the military situation for Minhelet Ha'am, ending with the following words: "To sum up, I would say that the outlook at this time seems delicately balanced. Or – to be more honest – I would say that their superiority is considerable, if indeed their entire forces enter battle against us."<sup>38</sup>

It was then that the option of agreeing to a truce proposed by the British High Commissioner, who was still in the country, came up. The committee of three consuls – American, French, and Belgian – which dealt with the issue of Jerusalem, which was to be transferred to UN administration after the British left, also supported this proposal. There were also others who viewed with favor the proposal for

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**35** For the decision to establish the legislative and executive bodies, see Meir Pe'il, "The War of Independence 1948–1949," in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: Israel, the First Decade*, ed. Moshe Lissak (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2009), 46–48 (Hebrew).

**36** In May 1946 the Emirate of Transjordan became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan under King Abdullah. The king changed his outlook during the fighting, since Jordan was one of the five Arab countries that sent troops to aid the Palestinian Arabs and he could not back out of that obligation, as he explained to the Jewish delegation.

**37** See the report by Ezra Danin of the meeting between Meyerson and King Abdullah on Nov. 17, 1947 in Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 2:277–79 (no. 35). For Meyerson's report of May 12, 1948 to Minhelet Ha'am about her talks with Abdullah on May 2, see Zeev Sharef, *Three Days* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962), 72–76. See also Yoav Gelber, "The Negotiations between the Jewish Agency and Transjordan, 1946–1948," *Studies in Zionism* 6 (1985): 53–83; Avraham Sela, "Transjordan, Israel and the 1948 War: Myth, Historiography, and Reality," *Middle Eastern Studies* 28 (1992): 623–88; Yaacov Shimoni, "Jordanian, Egyptian, and Palestinian Orientations in the Policies of the Jews of Palestine, the Zionist Movement, and Nascent Israel," *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisrael* 4 (1994): 54–65 (Hebrew). Shimoni maintains that while there may have been a special orientation towards Jordan, it is not clear how this came about.

**38** Quoted in Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 136.



a general truce in Jerusalem and throughout the country. One implication of the proposal was postponement of the declaration to establish the State of Israel. The question was brought before a meeting of Minhelet Ha'am. After deliberations by the ten members present, and with the active personal involvement of Ben-Gurion, in a historical vote, by a majority of six to four Minhelet Ha'am decided to reject the truce proposal and not to agree to any delay in the date proposed for the declaration of the Jewish state. Later in the discussion, all the members approved this crucial decision. This was Ben-Gurion's great day. He took upon himself the decision not to delay the establishment of the state, despite the risk of an overall attack by all the Arab countries. He did so under the impression of the news from the front regarding the Arab Legion attack in the Etzion Bloc and Meyerson's failure to change King Abdullah's mind regarding participation in the Arab war coalition.<sup>39</sup>

While at this time Ben-Gurion was the acknowledged leader of the Yishuv, he had not yet reached the unique status he achieved during the War of Independence and even later after the establishment of the state. The "one and only of his generation" is how he began to be called by many who admired his decision-making capabilities.<sup>40</sup>

On Friday, May 14, 1948 the Yishuv leadership convened at the Tel Aviv Museum hall and Ben-Gurion read out the Declaration of Independence in which the establishment of the State of Israel was declared. That same night, the armies of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq invaded the country and a new phase of the war began, the third phase of the Israeli War of Independence.<sup>41</sup>

A day earlier, on May 13, Weizmann, with the cognizance of Shertok, sent a letter to the president of the United States requesting that he recognize the Jewish state to be declared on May 14, 1948. The next day, a few minutes after six o'clock local time, news reached the UN center at Lake Success of the declaration of the State of Israel. Very shortly afterwards President Truman recognized the new state. This was the first

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<sup>39</sup> Sharef, *Three Days*, 120–23. The author served as secretary to Minhelet Ha'am and later as the first cabinet secretary in the State of Israel. See also *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:1349–57. Various sources have reported incorrectly about these three fateful days and the votes taken. For an exact description of the events, including the wording of the Declaration of Independence, see Ariel L. Feldstein, "One Meeting – Many Descriptions: The Resolution on the Establishment of the State of Israel," *Israel Studies Forum* 23, no. 2 (2008): 99–114.

<sup>40</sup> Apparently, the first to use this epithet to refer to Ben-Gurion was journalist and author Bracha Habass in articles she published in newspapers, especially *Davar*, and in her books. It was then picked up by others. On Ben-Gurion, who even when he was a labor leader gave preference to realization of the Zionist ideal in Eretz Israel over socialist ideology, see the articles by Meir Avizohar and Israel Kollat and the concluding remarks by Nathan Rotenstreich, in *David Ben-Gurion as a Labor Leader*, ed. Shlomo Avineri (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1988) (Hebrew). For his ability to make important decisions, see the editor's introduction, Heller, ed., *Struggle for the Jewish State*, 108–110.

<sup>41</sup> For the text of the Declaration of Independence translated into English, including the names of its signatories, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 455–58. It should be emphasized that it did not note the future boundaries of the state, nor of Jerusalem, just as they were not delineated at the meeting of Minhelet Ha'am at which the decision was taken to declare the establishment of Israel.

de facto recognition of the State of Israel, an unprecedented case of recognition of a state, whose boundaries were still undefined and whose government was one day old. In the internal conflict in the United States between the Department of State and the White House, the decision was the president's. Three days later, on May 17, the Soviet Union officially granted de jure recognition to Israel.<sup>42</sup>

From the moment the British Mandate for Palestine came to an end and the State of Israel was established, a fundamental change occurred in the conditions in the country. The new government now had to make policy decisions on every matter. The first and foremost challenge of the new state was defense of its very existence. True to their promise, the Arab countries began their attacks on Israel immediately upon the declaration of its establishment.<sup>43</sup>

### **The front in Jerusalem and its environs; fall of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City; the road to Jerusalem**

The declaration of the establishment of Israel did not do much to change the situation in Jerusalem and its surroundings. Furthermore, the fall of the Etzion Bloc caused a state of anxiety in the settlements around Jerusalem. On May 14 Atarot notified that it was under severe attack. That same night, its residents and defenders evacuated Atarot and retreated to Neveh Ya'akov. At midnight a telegram was received with the message "Atarot is burning." The next morning an attack was launched against Neveh Ya'akov and was repelled, but at a toll of four dead and many wounded. After burying the dead, the defenders retreated to the Hadassah hospital on Mt. Scopus, where they arrived on the morning of May 17.

The fall of the Etzion Bloc had apparently left its mark on the entire Yishuv. The taboo of non-evacuation proved impossible to maintain. The High Command, too, considered its responsibility for the massacre in Kfar Etzion. People living and working in the northern Dead Sea area, Beit Ha'aravah and the potash works, also began evacuating and sailed in boats to the southern region of the Dead Sea. On May 15, residents of Hartuv evacuated their settlement and moved to Kfar Uriyah. Now it was Jerusalem's turn as the Arab Legion began attacking the city. Jerusalem was under an artillery bombardment for almost a month, until the first truce on June 11, 1948.

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<sup>42</sup> On President Truman's recognition of Israel, see Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 582–85. For the changing policy of the USSR, see Oles M. Smolansky, "The Soviet Role in the Emergence of Israel," in *The End of the Palestine Mandate*, ed. Wm. Roger Louis and Robert W. Stookey (London: I.B. Tauris, 1986), 61–78.

<sup>43</sup> On different views about the invasion by regular Arab forces from May 15 until June 10, 1948, see Morris, *1948*, 180–261; for a map of the invasion by four Arab armies and the Haganah brigades that faced them, see *ibid.*, 184. On the entire third phase of the war, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 141–246; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 145–268.

Additionally, attempts to penetrate the city were made from the north, first directly into the border neighborhoods and later at the city center, through the Notre Dame monastery, but all were repelled. At the same time, Kibbutz Ramat Rahel, to the south of Jerusalem, came under attack by irregular Muslim Brotherhood forces from Egypt who advanced through Hebron with the help of inhabitants of southern Palestine. The kibbutz underwent a severe attack and changed hands three times, but remained in Israeli control. During those same days attacks against the Mount Scopus area were also thwarted. The road to Mount Scopus was cut off at Sheik Jarrah, a situation that was unchanged until the end of the war. Mount Scopus remained a Jewish enclave within the Arab territory and contact with it until the Six Day War was only by means of agreed-upon convoys.<sup>44</sup>

On the eve of the War of Independence, only 1,250 Jews remained in the Old City, all in the Jewish Quarter. At first the British, as rulers of the country, took upon themselves the maintenance of order in the Old City. As such, they also prevented the provision of manpower and equipment to the Jewish Quarter. On May 15, when the British evacuated Palestine, the situation in the Quarter worsened. The entrance of the Jordanian Arab Legion into the Old City increased military pressure there. A heroic effort was made on the night of May 17–18. The Palmah succeeded in breaking in through Zion Gate to bring in reinforcements, but due to a problem with communications the Palmah fighters abandoned the gate, which shortly afterwards came under the control of an Arab Legion force just entering the Old City.<sup>45</sup> Following the final battle, in which a few stood up against the many, the inhabitants of the Quarter were forced to surrender and were imprisoned in Jordan. The Quarter remained in Arab hands for nineteen years, until the Six Day War. Jews were not permitted to reach the Western Wall throughout the entire period it was under Jordanian rule, despite that freedom of passage was part of the armistice agreement with Jordan signed at the end of the war. The fall of the Jewish Quarter cast a dark shadow over the

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<sup>44</sup> For the fighting in Jewish Jerusalem outside the walls of the Old City and its surroundings, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 178–81; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 216–19. On Jerusalem during the War of Independence, see Motti Golani and Elhannan Orren, “The Issue of Jerusalem at the Beginning of the War of Independence,” *Cathedra* 54 (Dec. 1989): 156–84 (Hebrew).

<sup>45</sup> The Arab Legion’s intervention in fighting in Jerusalem is analyzed in Sela, “King Abdullah and the Government of Israel.” The author notes that it was not in the Legion’s original plans because of limitations set by the British in order to maintain the borders set by the UN resolution. Moreover, the Legion had no experience in fighting in built-up areas and feared heavy losses. Only after the success of Operation Kilshon, in which the Jewish forces gained control of all the approaches to the Old City except from the east, did the Legion intervene in Jerusalem by personal order of King Abdullah. The Jordanians maintained that this did not violate Abdullah’s commitment not to intrude into the Jewish state, since Jerusalem was outside its boundaries according to the UN resolution.

young Jewish state, and especially Jerusalem that was intended to be the capital city and in effect was struggling for its right to exist as a Jewish city.<sup>46</sup>

As noted, on May 16–17, Givati forces fighting in the Latrun area were called back to the southern front to assist in halting the advance of the Egyptians. The Arab Legion forces availed themselves of the opportunity to take over the Latrun police station (one of the “Tegart fortresses”) that controlled the road between Jerusalem and the west. The result was drastic; the road to Jerusalem was completely cut off. Three attacks against Latrun ended in failure and the road remained blocked. Jerusalem suffered from hunger and water shortage and there was no way of reaching it and its 100,000 inhabitants. This was without a doubt the most difficult period Jerusalem knew during the war.<sup>47</sup>

There were two additional events in the area around the road to Jerusalem before the first truce (June 11, 1948): the invasion of Kibbutz Gezer and the tragic death of Colonel Mickey Stone. Kibbutz Gezer is located not far from Latrun. It was held by the Jordanian Legion forces for one day during which they pillaged and robbed the place, but it was retaken by Israeli forces that same evening. An unfortunate event occurred in the morning of June 11, the day the truce began, when Colonel Mickey Stone, a Mahal volunteer and the commander of an Israeli force, was mistakenly shot by a guard at a military camp near Abu Ghosh, on the road to Jerusalem.<sup>48</sup>

### **The northern front: The Jordan Valley and Deganiah; Gesher; Jenin and the Sharon plain; Mishmar Hayarden and Malkiyya; the Qawuqji force and Sejerah**

On the eve of May 15, 1948, car lights were seen moving along the Golan Heights in Syria. At 01:00 a.m. that night, the Syrians began shelling Kibbutz Ein-Gev with artillery and mortars. In the morning hours airplanes bombed the settlements of the Jordan Valley. Masadah and Sha’ar Hagolan came under artillery fire. Infantry forces came down from the mountains and under cover of artillery fire began advancing towards the abandoned British police station in Tzemah, taking control of it. At the same time, another Syrian force made its way towards the water pumping station on the Yarmuk

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<sup>46</sup> For the Jewish Quarter during the War of Independence, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 182–88; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 209–14. See also Ben-Arieh, *Jewish Quarter*.

<sup>47</sup> There were three attempts to take the Latrun police outpost: Operation Ben-Ami A on May 25; Operation Ben-Ami B on May 30, and Operation Yoram on June 8–9, 1948; see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 190–98, with maps of the first two attempts; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 219–31, 235–40.

<sup>48</sup> Mickey Stone was the code name of US Col. David Daniel Marcus when serving with the Israeli forces, since American citizens were prohibited from fighting for foreign armies. In late May he was appointed commander of the Jerusalem front, but a few days later was accidentally killed by friendly fire; Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 198. For a biography, see Ted Berkman, *Cast a Giant Shadow: The Story of Mickey Marcus, a Soldier for All Humanity* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967).

River, backed by armored vehicles and artillery cover. They took over the station, killing most of the station crew. The attackers tried to continue towards Masadah and Sha'ar Hagolan, but were pushed back. After two additional days of fighting, on May 18 another attack was launched against Tzemah. Despite a strong fight to defend it, the Tzemah police station also fell into Syrian hands. At nightfall, the settlements of Masadah and Sha'ar Hagolan were evacuated. On May 20, 1948, at 4:30 in the morning, a severe attack began. Its main target was the bridge over the River Jordan, north of Kibbutz Deganiah Alef. Artillery and machine gun fire preceded the advance of five tanks, a number of armored vehicles, and infantry soldiers towards Deganiah Alef. One of the tanks even managed to penetrate the kibbutz, but a Molotov cocktail hit it, killing its crew. In a heroic battle, the defenders succeeded in making the Syrians retreat. That same day, the first pieces of IDF field artillery that arrived in the Jordan Valley were stationed on the Poriyah mountain range and began shelling the Syrian army positions. Though military confrontations and shelling continued in the area until the first truce, the Syrians decided to transfer their major effort northwards to the Mishmar Hayarden area, which I shall discuss below.<sup>49</sup>

Simultaneously with the Syrian attacks on the Jordan Valley and its settlements, the Iraqis launched an attack in the area of Kibbutz Gesher in the southern part of the valley, in an attempt to cross the Jordan River and advance towards the Meggido junction. Their moves were coordinated with those of the Syrians in the Jordan Valley. Apparently the Syrians intended to reach Tiberias and free it, but their main objective was to get to Nazareth, the center of Arab population in the north, and from there to Haifa. The Iraqis, too, hoped to ascend the Sirin Plateau from Gesher and from there to get to Nazareth and on to Haifa, perhaps also in collaboration with Syrian forces. However, the Iraqi attack against Gesher, like the Syrian one on Deganiah Alef, were pushed back, albeit only after heavy fighting.

On May 14, the Arab Legion occupied the electric power plant in Naharaim, and took the thirty remaining Israeli guards there as prisoners to Jordan. That same night, when it became clear to the Israeli forces that they would be unable to hold the Naharaim plant, they blew up the two bridges over the Jordan River near Gesher. The Iraqi force constructed a floating bridge by which infantry forces crossed the river and began attacking Gesher and the nearby police station. The next day they succeeded in transferring armored vehicles across another bridge they built, and tried to attack again. This time they succeeded in penetrating the police building, but were repelled. An Iraqi unit tried to climb up to the fortress at Kawkab al-Hawa, overlooking the Jordan Valley, but was attacked en route and retreated.

After the Iraqi failure to move west across the Jordan River, and since the Arab Legion was forced to deploy the majority of its forces in the Jerusalem–Ramallah–

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<sup>49</sup> On the Syrian attacks against the Jewish settlements in the Jordan Valley, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 147–54; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 251–55.

Latrun area, on May 23 the Iraqi force crossed the river in an area controlled by the Jordanians and reorganized in the Nablus–Jenin–Tulkarm area. This time, the Israeli forces decided to anticipate their move and attack in the Jenin area where the Iraqi forces were concentrated. The Jenin battle plan was divided into two stages. In the first, beginning on June 1, Israeli forces succeeded in taking control of the Arab villages on the western slopes of the Gilboa mountains on both sides of the Afulah–Jenin road. During the second stage, villages on the way to Jenin were conquered and an attempt began to surround Jenin by taking the outposts overlooking the city. Though the outposts fell to the Israeli force, the attack was meant to take place simultaneously with one on the city of Tulkarm by the Alexandroni Brigade from the Sharon area. Since the latter brigade had been transferred to the fighting in the Latrun area, Tulkarm was not attacked and the Iraqi forces in the area were free to come to the aid of Jenin and mounted heavy attacks against the Israeli forces at the outposts which suffered heavy losses while trying to evacuate one of them. The attempt to capture Jenin failed, and Israeli forces deployed on the hills a few kilometers from the city.<sup>50</sup>

On May 23, 1948 the Iraqi spearhead force arrived in Nablus, and on May 28 it began its advance on the coastal plain. Geulim, near Kfar Yonah, fell that same day but was retaken in an Israeli counterattack, and Kfar Yavetz was also attacked. On May 30, the Iraqis attacked Ras al-‘Ayn, which had previously fallen to the Israelis, and succeeded in retaking it. The site remained under their control until the “Ten Days of Fighting” (see below), but they did not continue to advance from there. The most crucial target in the area was without a doubt Tulkarm, which controlled the road from Nablus and Jenin towards the coastal area. However, lacking sufficient Israeli forces to attack it, smaller targets were chosen, the most important among those being the Arab village of Qaqun. On the night between June 4 and 5, the area came under Israeli control after battles with the Iraqi forces holding it. An additional conquest was of the village of Tantura, situated on the seashore near Atlit. During the following month until the first truce, the situation remained more or less the same, with continuous shooting, artillery shelling, and bombing from the air.<sup>51</sup>

Even before the invasion by the armies of the Arab states, there was apprehension of a Lebanese advance through the Arab village of Malkiyya as a route that could lead them into the eastern Upper Galilee. Accordingly, with the end of Operation Yiftah after the conquest of Safed on May 11, and in anticipation of such a Lebanese move, Israeli forces in the area were sent to gain control of this strategic area. On the night of May 14–15, the forces set out to attack the outposts of Malkiyya and the neighboring village of al-Qadas, in order to precede an expected Arab invasion. They were successful during the first stages, but Arab forces, which

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**50** For the fighting around Jenin, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 172–75; 231–34.

**51** On the taking of the Sharon Plain region and the village of Qaqun, see *ibid.*, 175–76.

had been preparing for invasion, immediately counterattacked and forced the Israelis to retreat. Despite heavy losses, the penetration of Arab forces into Israeli territory was prevented. Later the Israeli forces took the Nabi-Yusha police installation and invaded areas in Lebanese and Syrian territory, such as the tax collecting station near the Bnot Ya'akov (Daughters of Jacob) Bridge. Arab forces in the area could note no additional gains. In the meantime, it was decided to transfer the Palmah forces from the north to the central front where the situation had become grave. Defense of the area was handed over to the newly formed "Oded" Brigade.

After about a month in which the invasion was prevented, the second stage of the Syrian and Lebanese attacks got underway. The attacks were coordinated between the two countries with the aim of cutting off the Galilee Panhandle. The attacks began on June 6 with two targets. The Lebanese moved towards Malkiyya, and this time succeeded in conquering it and the village of al-Qadas, thus clearing the way for Qawuqji's volunteer army to deploy in the Galilee. The Lebanese themselves avoided crossing the border, and from then until the end of October 1948 only provided logistic assistance to the volunteer army.

The Syrians, for their part, following a short bombardment crossed the Jordan River and attacked the Jewish settlement of Mishmar Hayarden. The first attack was repelled. However, in the second attack on June 10, the Syrians bypassed Mishmar Hayarden and continued west towards Mahanaim. Surrounded, Mishmar Hayarden fell, and then, in the afternoon hours of that same day, Ramot Naftali came under an attack that did not succeed. On the same day another large attack was launched against Ein Gev, east of the Sea of Galilee, and it, too, was driven back. At this stage the Syrians concentrated all their forces at the bridgehead they had formed beyond Mishmar Hayarden and increased their efforts to get to the central road leading to the Galilee Panhandle in order to cut it off. The counterattack checked them and even pushed them back, but the Syrian bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden, where the fighting continued until the June 11 truce, remained under their control. At this time, Qawuqji, with his army of volunteers, attempted to attack Sejerah. The attacks continued on June 11–12, but all attacks were repulsed.<sup>52</sup>

### **The southern and Negev front: the Egyptians advance and their halt at Isdud; Kfar Darom; fall of Yad Mordechai and Nitzanim; Negba; the Negev is cut off**

The first Egyptians to participate in the war were members of the Muslim Brotherhood, a religious and fanatic pan-Islamic organization. Even before the Egyptian invasion, units of the Muslim Brotherhood had arrived in the Negev. These units excelled both in

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<sup>52</sup> For the battles against the Lebanese and the Syrians on the northern front, see *ibid.*, 155–166; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 260–66.



their fighting spirit and their devotion to the cause. Once the decision was taken to invade Palestine with regular Arab armies, Egyptian headquarters decided to take these units under its aegis and turn them into regular units commanded by Egyptian officers. Even prior to the Egyptian invasion, on May 10, 1948 the Muslim Brotherhood unsuccessfully attacked the southernmost isolated Jewish settlement of Kfar Darom. On May 15, it attacked again, this time under Egyptian command. The attacking force was preceded by artillery shelling and many tanks. The attack failed, repulsed by the small group of settlers. As opposed to its failures at Kfar Darom, even before the invasion the Egyptian army had made a gain elsewhere. When the British evacuated the strategic Iraq Suweidan police station, they handed it over to the Arabs, and the Egyptian army received a very important Tegar fortress. Israeli forces attacked Iraq Suweidan eight times before it fell to them. No wonder that it earned the sobriquet, “the Monster on the Hill.” Its importance lay in that it controlled the “interior road” to the Negev and the Majdel–Bait Jebrin road from which the area could be under surveillance.

On May 15, the day on which Kfar Darom was attacked, following an artillery barrage and under aerial cover, the Egyptians attacked Kibbutz Nirim (present-day Nir Yitzhak). Fighting continued for two days until reinforcements arrived and the attack was repelled. The Egyptians suffered heavy losses, but the small settlement was also badly hit: seven of its forty defenders were killed and many others wounded.

When the Egyptians realized they would not succeed in attacking isolated settlements, they decided to change their mode of operation, to forgo the settlements and advance northwards along the road. It was then that they encountered Kibbutz Yad Mordechai, located right on the road. On May 19, a massive Egyptian attack was mounted, supported by artillery bombardment. The Egyptians managed to penetrate the settlement on the first day, but were pushed back. The fighting continued day after day. The number of dead and wounded among the defenders was high. On the night of May 23–24, reinforcements arrived to take out the wounded. On the morning of May 24, it was decided to evacuate all in the kibbutz towards the neighboring Kibbutz Gvar'am. The five-day battle of Yad Mordechai enabled forces from the north to arrive, and ready themselves in preparation to face the invading Egyptian force. However, no doubt the conquest of an Israeli settlement was an important morale-boosting victory for the Egyptians.

As the Egyptian regular army advanced, the Muslim Brotherhood forces were directed eastwards. They arrived in Beersheba from where, on May 17, they tried to attack Beit Eshel, but were repulsed. From there they began advancing towards the Hebron area and continued to Jerusalem and Ramat Rahel, where they participated in the attack on the kibbutz.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> On the battles at Kfar Darom, Iraq Suwaydan, Kibbutz Nirim, and the fall of Yad Mordechai, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 202–10; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 291–97. See also David Tal, “Who

The fall of Yad Mordechai opened the route to the north for the Egyptians. The Israeli forces took several steps in preparation for their advance. On May 18, three villages were conquered on the road between Negba, Kfar Warburg, and Be'er Tuvyah. During the night of May 19–20 the Sarafand army base, which the British had previously handed over to the Arabs, was taken. On May 14, the day of the first unsuccessful Israeli attempt to capture Iraq Suweidan, the first Egyptian attack was launched on Negba. The attack was accompanied by bombing from the air, during which the local commander Yitzhak Dubno, whose Haganah code name was "Yoav," was killed. On the night of May 27–28 Israeli forces gained control of Camp Julis. Earlier, on May 17–18, Operation "Baby" was carried out, in which children and non-combatants were evacuated from settlements in danger of attack: Negba, Nitzanim, Gat, Gal'on, and Kfar Menahem.<sup>54</sup>

In the noon hours of May 29, observation posts from the settlement of Nitzanim reported sighting a large Egyptian convoy of brigade strength numbering hundreds of vehicles, including artillery and tanks. The convoy bypassed Nitzanim, moving north until it reached Isdud bridge, which had been blown up the previous day. That same day, the assembly of four Messerschmitt fighter planes was completed at the Tel Nof military airport, the first Israeli Air Force planes. Several missions were planned for the planes, but due to the grave situation near Isdud it was decided they would attack the Egyptian convoy. The Messerschmitts met with heavy concentrated fire by which one of them was downed. Yet, the appearance of the Israeli air force had an intense psychological effect, and the Egyptian command began changing its plans. Its soldiers were observed digging in, as if preparing for a prolonged stay. In the meantime, Israeli 65 mm cannons were called in and began shelling the Egyptian convoy. The attacks on the convoy, which continued for a number of days did not destroy the convoy, but forced it to adopt a defensive stance. Apparently, when the Egyptian command was forced to change its plans the decision was to cut the Negev off from the rest of the country.

While battles raged along the coastal road, another Egyptian force began a massive attack on Negba, which was of great strategic importance. Negba was the Israeli settlement nearest to the junction of the interior Negev road with the Majdel–Beit-Jebrin road. Commanding that road meant control of travel on these two important routes. Armored corps and infantry were thrown into the attack on Negba, supported by artillery and bombing from the air. This was one of the most severe attacks on an Israeli settlement. The armored unit almost broke into Negba itself, but reinforcements that managed to get to the area came to its aid by attacking from the sides, extricating the settlement that was defending itself. The Egyptians retreated with heavy losses.

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Curbed the Egyptian Army in the 1948 War?" *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisrael* 10 (2000): 102–21 (Hebrew). As already noted, I do not intend to go into a detailed analysis of the invasion by the regular Arab armies, only to outline the basic facts.

<sup>54</sup> Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 212–15.

Having given up on advancing north, the Egyptians turned to cleansing the rear. Nitzanim was a thorn in their side. At midnight on the night of June 6–7 they opened fire on the settlement. The attack itself began at 06:00 a.m. The kibbutz was covered by artillery fire. Anti-tank guns blew up the prominent outposts one after the other. The first attempt to breach the defenses was repulsed. In the second attack, Egyptian tanks succeeded in breaking into the kibbutz, followed by the infantry. The fighting was now carried out inside the kibbutz itself. Radio contact with the forces outside was disrupted. At 04:00 p.m. the defenders surrendered after having suffered heavy losses. Thirty-three men were killed in Nitzanim, half of them kibbutz members and the rest were soldiers. Those who surrendered were taken prisoner to Egypt.<sup>55</sup>

Simultaneously with the fighting at Nitzanim, battles with Egyptian forces were also conducted on Hill 69, a high hill west of the Nitzanim road on which there were three water towers. Israeli forces conquered the hill for a while, but were forced to retreat. Until the first truce came into effect, the Israelis had conquered Arab villages and important outposts in the south and Negev areas. Yet, on the morning of June 11, the day the truce began, the Egyptians succeeded in creating a *fait-accompli*: they dug in at the junction of the interior Negev road with the Majdel–Beit-Jebrin road, thus effectively cutting off the Negev from the territory of the State of Israel.

## Phase four: first truce and the ten days of fighting, June 11–July 9, 1948

### Burma Road

As stated, immediately after the declaration of the State of Israel it was recognized by the two great powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Jordan, assisted by the Iraqi army, achieved its goals and gained control of the area between Jenin and Hebron, including eastern Jerusalem and the Old City. Britain initiated a diplomatic effort in the Security Council to effect a truce, simultaneously with the imposition of an embargo on the supply of weapons to the parties involved in the war. The UN appointed a mediator and charged him with two missions: (a) to achieve and supervise a cease-fire; (b) to seek a basis for a peaceful solution between the two sides. The Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte was appointed mediator, effective as of May 21, 1948. From that day until the first truce, which came into effect on June 11, the major political effort focused on the truce, its conditions, dates, and how to supervise it. Immediately

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<sup>55</sup> The Givati Brigade's cultural officer, Abba Kovner, issued a "combat page" that sharply criticized the kibbutz members for surrendering, which aroused a stormy debate in Israel. For the battle and surrender of Nitzanim, see Tal, *War in Palestine*, 188–89; Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 219–20.

following his appointment, the mediator was joined by his assistant, Ralph Bunche, the personal representative of UN Secretary General Trygve Lie.<sup>56</sup> Bernadotte arrived in the Middle East on May 28, choosing to make his headquarters in Cairo. Upon arriving there he began negotiations to set the date for a truce between the warring parties. After a number of dates were proposed, it was finally agreed that the truce would begin on Friday, June 11, at 06:00 a.m. The opposing sides were called upon to implement the terms, and supervisors were appointed. An accord was reached in advance that the truce would last only four weeks until Friday, July 9, at 06:00 a.m.<sup>57</sup>

Both sides took advantage of the truce to rest, reorganize the troops, and replenish their arms. The event of the ship *Altalena* occurred during the period of the truce. At the beginning of June 1948, a ship purchased by the Etzel set sail towards Israel from a port in the south of France, with 900 people on board as well as a large supply of weapons. Learning about it, the government of Israel demanded that the ship and everything on it be placed at its disposal, but the Etzel presented conditions of its own. Initially the ship anchored off the shore of Kfar Vitkin and then sailed to Tel Aviv where the argument arose again. The ship came under artillery fire by government order, many of its passengers were killed and injured, and finally the *Altalena* and its contents were transferred to the control of the government.<sup>58</sup>

During the fourth phase of the war, and as also in the first truce period, the IDF continued its military organization. On May 26, Order No. 4 establishing the Israel Defense Forces, was published by the temporary government over the signature of the prime minister. On May 31, an Order of the Day was published which included the oath that every soldier serving in the IDF, whether male or female, had to take.<sup>59</sup> On June 1, an agreement was reached with Menachem Begin, leader of the Etzel, for the disbandment of that organization, transfer of its weapons and equipment to the IDF, and the establishment of three regiments in the IDF comprised solely of Etzel personnel. Following the *Altalena* episode, these regiments were disassembled and their men incorporated into other units of the army. The Lehi had disarmed earlier. During the first truce period, on June 28, 1948, all IDF soldiers swore allegiance to the State of Israel. On June 30, the British evacuated the Haifa enclave, the British flag was taken down and the Israeli flag raised.<sup>60</sup>

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**56** For Bunche and his role in UN activity since that organization took upon itself to deal with the Palestine issue and until the cease-fire agreements that ended the war, see Elad Ben-Dror, *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Mediation and the UN, 1947–1949* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

**57** On Bernadotte and his conciliation efforts in Palestine, see the detailed study, based on many sources, Amitzur Ilan, *Bernadotte in Palestine, 1948: A Study in Contemporary Humanitarian Knight-errantry* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1989).

**58** As indicated in note 3 above, I do not intend to go into the details of the *Altalena* affair. For a summary, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 255–56.

**59** For the entire fourth phase, see *ibid.*, 249–317; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 269–343.

**60** Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 257–58.

During the first truce period, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) was established, headed by Bernadotte. He made every effort possible to find a final political solution for the Palestine problem. He transferred his headquarters from Cairo to Rhodes and invited the two sides to send their representatives to present the facts and conditions of their demands. The mediator did not see himself subject to the UN resolution of November 29, 1947 or any other decision regarding the future of the country. The truth of the matter is that he was greatly influenced by the British government which aspired to design the future of Palestine according to its geopolitical needs in the region. Thus, Bernadotte sought a solution to the Palestine problem other than that decided upon by the UN.

According to his assessment, the Palestinian Arabs suffered a total collapse due to the war, and thus annexation of parts of the country to the Kingdom of Jordan would make it easier for the parties to reach a compromise. His proposal, signed on June 27, was delivered, together with an accompanying letter, to the Israeli foreign minister and to Nuqrashi Pasha, prime minister of Egypt, and alternate chairman of the Arab League Council. The Bernadotte proposal significantly reduced the territory of Israel, mainly due to the transfer of the Negev and part of the southern area of the country to Jordan, while in compensation it was proposed that the western Galilee would be included in the Jewish state. All of Jerusalem would be transferred to Jordan, with autonomy for its Jewish population. Haifa port and the final section of the crude oil pipelines from Iraq, as well as Lydda airport, would become free zones, and the solution for Jaffa was deferred to a later date. The Israeli reply was that it would be willing to discuss the proposal; however it contained sections that Israel would be unable to accept. The Arab countries rejected the proposal outright. After his efforts in the political arena failed, Bernadotte contacted both sides proposing the extension of the truce by thirty additional days. The Arabs refused point-blank, and also were unprepared to agree to the Security Council requests in the matter. The only achievement of the talks was an agreement to create a demilitarized zone on Mount Scopus that would include the Hebrew University, Hadassah hospital, and the Auguste Victoria hospital. On July 8, Bernadotte instructed the UN supervisors to leave their posts. The first truce officially came to an end on Friday, July 9, at 06:00 a.m.<sup>61</sup>

Israel took advantage of the first truce to organize, train the army, and add weapons that arrived in growing quantities following the acquisition of World War II surplus arms and deals signed with the government of Czechoslovakia. However Jerusalem was crying for help. During the previous month of fighting, the city was in a very bad state and its inhabitants started leaving. It was decided to use grave means to prevent its abandonment, and even the proposal to evacuate the children

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<sup>61</sup> For Bernadotte's efforts until the end of the first truce, including his first plan, see Ilan, *Bernadotte in Palestine*, 55–123. I shall discuss his second plan below. See also Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 258–62; Pe'il, "The War of Independence," 62–64.

was turned down. The central issue was food and supplies. Since Latrun was controlled by the Jordanians, the UN supervisors and Legion officers were permitted to conduct meticulous checks of the convoys traveling to Jerusalem, and thus prevented adding to the city's supplies. Hence the urgent need for the improvement and expansion of the Burma Road, that was not subject to such supervision.<sup>62</sup> The route for the Burma Road was discerned even before the first truce, after the units of the Seventh Brigade, during their attacks on Latrun, conquered the villages of Bait Jiz and Bait Susin south of the Latrun road. It was then discovered that in the area between the Latrun road and the Egyptian forces that arrived from the south, was a strip of land that connects Kibbutz Hulda with a point near the Hartuv-Sha'ar Hagai road from where a steep dirt road ascends through Bait Mahsir to Saris on the Jerusalem highway. It was apparent that this route could be traveled by foot to get to the capital. At first it was used only by individuals, but then, on June 1, a platoon to reinforce the Harel Palmah Brigade also walked this route. After the platoon made it through, the route was traveled by a lone jeep carrying a unit of scouts. When the first truce began, it became possible to prepare the Burma Road which to a great degree saved Jerusalem. After the end of the War of Independence the "Road of Valor" was paved to the south of Burma Road, and served as the highway to Jerusalem until the Six Day War in 1967.<sup>63</sup>

### **The ten days: Operation Dani – conquest of Lydda and Ramleh; the battles in Latrun and Jerusalem**

Though the Burma Road to Jerusalem was opened during the first truce, even then it was clear that if Jerusalem was to be included in the State of Israel, Burma Road was not enough. The connection between Jerusalem and the center of the country had to be more secure, and an additional attempt had to be made to take Latrun. Accordingly, planning of "Operation Dani" began, initially intended to be named "Operation Mickey" for Colonel Mickey Stone who was accidentally killed before the first truce. Later it was decided that the operation would be named "Operation Dani" for Dani Mass, the commander of the Lamed Heh platoon that rushed to the assistance of the Etzion Bloc. This operation is connected to an earlier one planned

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<sup>62</sup> Named after the famous "Burma Road" created between Burma and China during World War II to supply arms and equipment to the Chinese forces fighting the Japanese.

<sup>63</sup> On the Burma Road to Jerusalem, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 195–97, with a map of the road. See also Menahem Talmi, *The New Road: the Story of the Burma Road* (Jerusalem: Keren Hayesod, Youth Department, 1950).

in May with the aim of doing away with the threat of a possible concentration of forces in the cities of Lydda and Ramleh that could also threaten Tel Aviv.<sup>64</sup>

Operation Dani had two major objectives. The first was the conquest of the cities of Lydda and Ramleh and the villages around them. The second objective was to conquer Latrun and secure transportation from there to Jerusalem, as well as advancement towards Ramallah so that Jerusalem could also be approached from the north. In the first stage, there were a few battles for villages in the Lydda and Ramleh area, most of which were conquered. In addition, the forces took over Lydda airport. Afterwards, on the evening of July 10, came the quick advance of a motorized commando battalion commanded by Moshe Dayan that stunned the city of Lydda with a quick and severe barrage of fire. Jeeps, led by an armored vehicle armed with a cannon which was later given the name “The Terrible Tiger,” cut through Lydda, shooting and shelling in every direction until they arrived at the outskirts of Ramleh and entered it as well. This attack eased the entrance into Lydda for the Palmah Yiftah brigade. Upon its entry, the Lydda inhabitants began a mass surrender and gathered near the large city mosque. Next morning, a force of three Jordanian armored vehicles sent from the Bait ‘Arif front began advancing towards Lydda. It ran up against a roadblock set up by Palmah fighters and retreated following a short exchange of fire. The Arab population that had surrendered the previous day believed that Jordanian reinforcements had arrived, and thus shooting and sniping were renewed, with many fatalities among the local Arab inhabitants. After the Jordanian force retreated, the Israelis retook the city, gathering many of the men in one of the city mosques. In response to the renewed shooting, it was decided to exile the Lydda population. Thus, whole families abandoned the city – men and women, young and old. They walked eastwards towards Jordanian held territory. After Lydda, on July 12 Ramleh, too, fell. Also there, the majority of the inhabitants that had not fled were exiled eastwards. The first stage of Operation Dani had been completed.<sup>65</sup>

Immediately upon the renewal of the fighting, discussions were resumed in the Security Council, and with them a vehement demand by the British representative for a second immediate truce. The grave situation that developed in the south demanded the transfer of forces from the center to assist in the fighting there, effecting a decision to limit the scope of the second stage of Operation Dani and deletion of Ramallah from it. On July 14, a new operational order was issued that included

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<sup>64</sup> For what Ben-Gurion said during the first truce about the importance of Jerusalem, and the planning of Operation Dani, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 279–81; see also Tal, *War in Palestine*, 304–6.

<sup>65</sup> Much has been published about Operation Dani, but I do not intend to deal with all the issues connected to it. For a summary description, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 281–87; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 306–13. On the capture of Lydda and the expulsion of its Arab population, see also Alon Kadish and Avraham Sela, “Myths and Historiography of the 1948 Palestine War Revisited: The Case of Lydda,” *Middle East Journal* 59 (2005): 617–34.



the following main objectives: (a) opening the Tel Aviv–Ramleh–Latrun–Jerusalem highway; (b) ensuring control of the Ras al-‘Ayn–Jerusalem water pipeline. To achieve them it was necessary to capture Latrun, including the area to its north up to the Bait Sira junction. This time, it was proposed to try and capture Latrun from the east, through a site called “Artillery Ridge” that overlooked Latrun, in contrast with the previous three attacks mounted before the first truce, all coming from the west and the southwest. The attack was planned for the nights of July 16 and 17. The first night ended with a retreat by all the forces and total failure. The fourth attempt to conquer Latrun failed.

At the same time, during the second stage of Operation Dani, Israeli forces advanced eastwards from Lydda towards the Latrun–Ramallah road. The forces arrived at the two outposts that controlled the road and from there attempts were made to cross the road to the other side and capture the Bait Nuba outposts. That task was not a complete success; the Legion forces counterattacked, and in one of the battles after the conquest of the village of Shilta in Khirbet Korikar, an Israeli company was caught in a Jordanian ambush. Forty-four men were killed in action.<sup>66</sup> This was the hardest blow the forces suffered in one place in Operation Dani. In the meantime the date of the second truce was drawing near. It was decided to try to conquer Latrun again, in a frontal attack, with a convoy of armored vehicles that included two tanks advancing on the main road, from the west. However, on the way one of the tanks accompanying the attackers encountered a number of problems and the commander decided to turn the force around and return to base. Thus the fifth attack on Latrun also failed. The road remained blocked, and the road from Latrun to Ramallah also remained under Jordanian control. Though it was within the range of Israeli fire, with the beginning of the second truce they could not advance along the road which remained under the control of the Jordanian Legion.

The failure to capture Latrun and gain control of the main highway to Jerusalem increased the importance of conquering Arab villages south of the Latrun–Jerusalem road. On the night of July 13, Israeli forces occupied the village of Suba located on a high hill controlling the area. Two previous attempts to capture the village in the period before the first truce had failed. That same day Sar‘a was also captured, another step in gaining control of the Hartuv area. On July 16, additional villages fell, opening an alternative route to Jerusalem. On the night before the truce, Israeli forces succeeded in capturing Deir Rafat, the Jewish colony of Hartuv, and Arab Artuf as well. Simultaneously, already in the beginning of Operation Dani, Israeli forces also extended their hold northeast of Petah Tikvah.

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<sup>66</sup> The bodies of the soldiers remained for some time where they fell until they were removed after an agreement with the Jordanians. On the tragic battle of Shilta and Khirbet Korikar, see Amit Gudes, “The Battle of Khirbet Korikar,” in *Jews and Arabs in a Protracted Struggle for Eretz Israel*, ed. Assnat Shiran (Efal: The Association for Research of the Defense Forces, 2006), 319–46 (Hebrew), esp. 330–333 for the tragedy at Shilta.

Wilhelma, Rantis, Tira, and Qula were captured following a tough battle in Qula. In contrast Yahudiyya was taken without firing a shot. On June 12, the day of the Ramleh surrender, Ras al-‘Ayn and Majdal Yaba east of Petah Tikvah were conquered. These conquests also enabled control of the sources of the Yarkon River, from where water was supplied to Jerusalem at the time.

With the end of the first truce, on the eve of July 10, the “Yehonatan” company of the Jerusalem Gadna (an acronym for Youth Battalions) set out from Jerusalem and took control of the hill that is today Mount Herzl, overlooking the important village of ‘Ayn Karim. Over the next several nights, Hirbet Bait Mazmil and the village of Malha were also captured, and by the end of the ten days the outpost at the site known as “Miss Carrie” overlooking ‘Ayn Karim also fell to the Israelis. As for Jerusalem itself, Operation “Kedem” was planned for the ten days of fighting with the aim of breaking into the Old City. However, the forces in Jerusalem were delayed, and while the commander decided, on the eve of the second truce, to try to break through into the Old City by a frontal attack, it failed. The Jordanian Legion also initiated artillery fire and attacks on the outlying neighborhoods of the city, but made no gains. The second truce began on the evening of July 18. The Jerusalem front remained similar to that of the time preceding the truce.<sup>67</sup>

### **The north: Operation Brosh in Mishmar Hayarden; Operation Dekel – conquest of Nazareth and the southern Galilee**

Operation Brosh was intended to reconquer the Mishmar Hayarden bridgehead that the Syrians had succeeded in gaining. The operation began in a series of attacks immediately at the end of the truce, on July 9, 1948. It immediately became clear that the Syrians, too, had been awaiting this day and had made preparations to advance from the bridgehead towards the main eastern Upper Galilee road with the aim of cutting off the Galilee Panhandle. After a few days of fighting, the situation remained unchanged: the Israeli forces failed to take the Syrian bridgehead, and the Syrians were unable to advance westwards towards the Upper Galilee road. The Syrians continued to hold the bridgehead until the cease-fire agreement was signed, at which time Syria was forced to return it to Israel, but as a demilitarized zone.

While the IDF attacked the Syrians at the bridgehead, the Iraqis advanced on the Jenin front. On the eve of the first truce, IDF units held positions along a line 3–4 kilometers from the city. When the Iraqis attacked on July 10, it was decided that the Israeli forces would withdraw to a more convenient defense line from which they succeeded in repelling all Iraqi attacks. It remained the borderline in this area until the cease-fire agreement at the end of the War of Independence.

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<sup>67</sup> For the fighting in Jerusalem during the “Ten Days,” see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 294–95; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 325–28.

In contrast with the stable situation in the Jenin area, fierce battles developed in the southern Lower Galilee between the Qawuqji army of volunteers and the defenders of Sejerah (Ilaniyah). Here, where he had failed before the first truce, Qawuqji made another attempt to capture the settlement, this because it threatened the only road that connected Nazareth with the Arabs in the Galilee, the Nazareth–Eilabun–Maghar road. Sejerah's control of this road could disconnect Nazareth from its Arab hinterland. Several attacks were launched against Sejerah, on July 12 and on July 14, but all were repelled. However, while Qawuqji was fighting Sejerah and its defenders, "Operation Dekel" forces arrived in his rear from the west.

Operation Dekel was the second planned by the IDF in the Galilee during the ten days of fighting. When the operation began, the plan was to extend Israeli control from the coastal plain eastwards into the Galilee by capturing Arab villages situated on hilltops overlooking the area, from Kabri in the north, through Birwa in the center, to Shafa-'Amr in the south. Indeed, these villages were occupied at the very beginning of the operation, but as Qawuqji's attacks on Sejerah increased in force, it was decided to change the aims of the operation and target Nazareth and the nearby settlements so that Qawuqji would be roundly defeated and Sejerah would be relieved. Thus did Operation Dekel turn into the northern success of the ten days of fighting. The 7th Brigade, together with an armored force, advanced from Shafa-'Amr through Safuriyya (present-day Tzippori) towards Nazareth, while other Israeli forces came up from the Jezreel Valley towards Nazareth. The relations with the Druze, who since the battles of Ramat Yohanan were in contact with Israeli representatives, made the advance of the forces easier. Druze villages remained unharmed. On July 16 the Israeli forces reached Nazareth; by nightfall the city had surrendered and a military governor was appointed. The collapse of Nazareth left its mark on the Sejerah area and Qawuqji's volunteer army began a quick retreat to the north. The Arab villages surrounding Nazareth also surrendered, and the Israeli border formed along the length of the Beit Netufah Plain, with the area of the Galilee north of it remaining under control of the Arab forces.

Following the beginning of the second truce, Operation "Shoter" (Policeman) was mounted in the interior of the Mount Carmel. After the occupation of Haifa, Israeli forces captured the Arab villages along the Carmel shoreline, including the large village of Tira south of Haifa with support from the sea. Two Druze villages, Daliyyat al-Karmel and Isfiyya, as well as Fureidis near Zikhron Ya'akov were not attacked since they had reached prior arrangements with Israeli representatives. Only three Arab villages remained in the central Carmel that became known as the "Small Triangle" which refused to surrender and even took action against Israeli targets, mostly attacks against traffic on the Tel Aviv–Haifa highway. Therefore, it was decided to conquer the triangle, and to do so as a police operation intended to preserve order in the sovereign territory of the state so as to prevent being accused of violating the truce, which accounts for the name "Operation Shoter." On July 25, 1948, the forces took control of these villages. The residents were evacuated towards Wadi

‘Ara, which at the time was still outside the borders of Israel, and from there some continued to Jordan and even Iraq with the help of the Iraqi army stationed in the area of Samaria.<sup>68</sup>

### **The south and the Negev: the Egyptian offensive and Israeli response; Kfar Darom and Be’erot Yitzhak; Operation Mavet Lapoleh; blocking the road to the Negev**

The most difficult front for Israel during the ten days of fighting was in the south. On the central and northern fronts the Israelis initiated their own operations: Dani in the center and Brosh and Dekel in the north. On the southern front, the Egyptians did not wait for the Operation “An-Far” (Anti-Farouk) prepared by the Israelis, and twenty-four hours before the end of the first truce initiated attacks on the Israeli outposts that were near the junction between the interior Negev road and the Majdal–Bait-Jebrin road. They took control of the junction, thus cutting off the Negev from the rest of Israel’s territory.

According to the terms of the first truce, the Egyptians were obligated to enable traffic to transfer supplies and food to the Negev settlements through the Negev junction, yet from time to time the Egyptians violated the terms and forced the Israelis to supply them by air. Now the Egyptians aspired to expand their control in the area of the junction and attacked Israeli outposts. Southwards, they advanced in the direction of the Kawkaba and Hulayqat outposts that had been captured by the Israelis before the first truce. Northwards they attacked the triangle formed by Bait Daras, Negba, and Julis which was also in Israeli hands on the day before the truce ended. By a surprise attack, the Egyptians succeeded in conquering Kawkaba and Hulayqat. However in the north, the Israelis pushed them back from the Bait Daras–Negba–Julis triangle.

Now it was Israel’s turn to respond with Operation “An-Far” in the south. Upon the end of the first truce, another attempt at capturing the Iraq Suweidan police station failed, but two villages east of Negba were conquered. The Egyptian response came on July 12 with the largest attack yet on the southern front, this time against Kibbutz Negba. It was a three-pronged frontal assault supported by artillery and from the air. A failed first attempt was followed by a second one, and it too was repulsed.<sup>69</sup>

A number of attacks on isolated settlements took place in the Negev even before the first truce. As a result, towards the end of the first truce, it was decided to

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<sup>68</sup> On Operation Brosh and the attack against the Syrian bridgehead, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 265–69; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 339–43. For the battle of Sejerah and operations Dekel and Shoter, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 270–79. See also Tal, *War in Palestine*, 334–39; Morris, *1948*, 278–83.

<sup>69</sup> On the defense of Negba and the fighting in that area, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 300–8; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 291–94.

evacuate Kfar Darom, the most isolated settlement on the Egyptian front. The operation was carried out during the night preceding July 8. The defenders set out in the dark, and cars waiting for them nearby carried them to safety. The Egyptians began attacking other settlements. Kibbutz Gal'on was attacked twice on July 14–15, but the attackers were pushed back. At dawn on July 15, an attack was mounted on Be'erot Yitzhak accompanied by tanks, an artillery barrage, and bombing from the air. The attackers managed to break into the settlement and take control of some of it, but then reinforcements arrived at last and succeeded in extricating the defenders and repelling the Egyptians.

In the meantime, it was decided to take the offensive with Operation “Mavet Lapolesh” (Death to the Invader). The plan included occupying enemy bases east of Iraq Suweidan: two north of the Majdal–Faluja road, in Bait 'Affa and Hatta, and one south of Karatiyya where the attacking forces would be joined by ones coming from the Negev. Thus they would be able to open a secondary road to the Negev that would also cut off the Egyptian road from Majdal to Faluja. Fierce battles raged for several days; the Israelis succeeded in capturing Hatta north of the Majdal–Faluja road, gaining control of the road itself, and reaching and capturing Karatiyya in the north, but the Egyptians counterattacked and retook Karatiyya. Then, on July 18 at 19:00, the second truce began. The Egyptians took advantage of the truce and during its first days paved a road that connected the Negev junction (between the interior Negev road and the Majdal–Bait Jebrin road) and the Iraq Suweidan police station with Karatiyya and from there to Faluja. This road cut northern Israel off from the Negev, even though the Majdal–Bait Jebrin road remained in Israeli hands.<sup>70</sup>

## Phase five: Israeli offensive, July 19, 1948–January 7, 1949

### The second truce; Bernadotte's plan and his assassination; Operation Yoav and the conquest of Beersheba; the “Faluja Pocket” and Operation El Hahar

What characterized the fifth phase of the War of Independence was that at this stage battles generally were fought on one front at a time, Israel was the initiator, and the battles broke out within the timeframe of the second truce, each time with a different reason for renewing the fighting. The second truce began on July 18, 1948, after efforts by the mediator Bernadotte. The great difference between the two truces was that the first was limited in time, exactly four weeks. When the four weeks were up, Bernadotte tried to convince the two sides to extend it for the same

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<sup>70</sup> For Operation “Death to the Invaders” and the battles for the roads to the Negev before the beginning of the second truce, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 308–11; Morris, *1948*, 276–78; Pe'il, “The War of Independence,” 57–62. For a map of the Israeli-held territories at the the Ten Days of Fighting, see Morris, *1948*, 297.

length of time, but the Arab side refused and the fighting were renewed. Bernadotte returned to the UN Security Council to report on the situation in Palestine. This time the Security Council decided that the truce would not be limited in time and threatened sanctions against anyone who violated it. It instructed the mediator to recommence his efforts to achieve a permanent solution. This time too, Bernadotte did not consider himself bound by the UN resolution of November 29, 1947 and returned to his former ideas, those he had adopted before the end of the first truce.

Around two months after the beginning of the second truce, on September 16, 1948, Bernadotte signed his second report and submitted it to the UN Secretary General. In this report he formulated the basic principles for any final solution to the Palestine problem. One of the changes in this report compared to his first one was that Jerusalem would become an international city, whereas his previous proposal was that Jerusalem was to be part of the Arab territory intended to be annexed to the Jordanian kingdom.

However, on September 17 – the day after Bernadotte completed and signed his second report – he was shot and killed in his car by a group of Lehi operatives in Jerusalem.<sup>71</sup> It is important to note that at this stage of the war, that part of the city held by IDF forces had not yet been designated part of the State of Israel and was under the rule of a military governor. Following the Bernadotte assassination, the government decided to take severe action against the murder suspects, but they were never detained and the investigation came to nothing. Following the assassination, the separate Etzel and Lehi units in Jerusalem were disbanded and their members incorporated into the IDF fighting units. The recommendations in Bernadotte's report became a sort of political last will and testament that the UN assembly was planned to discuss in the autumn of 1948. Where Israel was concerned, the worst part of the Bernadotte plan was his recommendation to sever the Negev from the territory of the State of Israel and annex it to Jordan. Apparently, this recommendation was based mainly on the military facts on the ground, that the Negev had been cut off from the central territory of the Jewish state and under siege almost from the beginning of the war. The continued Egyptian behavior during the second truce, when they did not comply with the terms set by the UN permitting the passage of Jewish convoys to the Negev, served as political justification for a large IDF military action in "Operation Yoav." The operation handed a defeat, albeit not final, to the Egyptian army.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> It is important to note that Bernadotte's assassination was carried out in the context of his first plan, not the second one, which was not yet known to both parties on the day of his death. For Bernadotte's activity since the end of the first truce until his assassination, see Ilan, *Bernadotte in Palestine*, 145–222. See also Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 321–24; Pe'il, "The War of Independence," 73–77.

<sup>72</sup> It is widely believed that Bernadotte's second plan clearly bears the mark of British policy, that Britain viewed the Negev as a base from which it could defend the Suez Canal, and that it continued its diplomatic effort to have Israel relinquish the Negev in return for peace agreements with Egypt

The main objective of Operation Yoav, the biggest IDF operation until then, was once and for all to resolve the problem of the separation of the Negev from the rest of the country. Unlike previous operations, the aim was not only to create a corridor and control it, but to rout the Egyptian forces. It was estimated that such a powerful defeat would in any case bring about control of the road to the Negev. Initially the general staff named it “Operation Ten Plagues,” but the staff of the southern front changed its name to Operation Yoav, named after Yitzhak Dubno, one of the Negba commanders who fell in its defense. I shall not go into the operation in detail, but shall just note that forces from all over the country were brought together for its execution. The plan was to break into the “separation corridor,” the strip of territory held by the Egyptians on the Majdal–Bait-Jebrin line, the width of which was less than ten kilometers and separated the center of the country from the Negev.

On October 15 the forces were ready for action. That same day a Jewish convoy, coordinated with the UN, set out towards the Negev. When it drew near the Egyptian outposts, it came under fire. One of the vehicles went up in flames and the rest retreated. This was the cue to begin the operation. That evening, the Israeli air force bombed several targets and IDF units set out on a number of attacks against the Egyptian forces. One of them, against Iraq al-Manshiyya, ended in failure with heavy losses. In addition, Israeli forces attacked the interior Negev road, the Majdal-Bait-Jebrin road, and the Karatiyya area. The Security Council convened for an emergency meeting on October 19 and decided on the termination of fighting on October 21. The two remaining days made it possible for the Israeli forces to attack the outposts of Huleiqat and capture them, and thus open a route to the Negev and cut off the entire Egyptian forces located east of it. In addition, one unit was sent to open the route to the sea so as to form a wedge at Bait Hanun from which Egyptian traffic on the Gaza–Majdal road could be harassed. Less than twelve hours after the roads to the Negev were opened, in the afternoon of October 20, the order was issued for a quick operation to exploit the success and also conquer Beersheba, which fell following a battle there.<sup>73</sup>

While the battles of Operation Yoav were being waged, an order was issued for the forces in the center of the Jerusalem corridor to begin actions against Arab villages and forces south of the Lydda–Jerusalem railroad line. They advanced towards the Elah Valley, captured Bait Natif, and from there continued eastwards up to a distance of ten kilometers from Bethlehem. South of Jerusalem, forces conquered the village al-Walaja opposite the village of Batir. Other units advanced towards the area of ‘Ajjur and Bait Jebrin. However, UN pressure increased, and on

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and Jordan. For details, see Asia, *The Core of the Conflict*, 50–66. See also in the discussion of Operation ‘Uvdah (Fact) in the text at notes 82–83 below.

<sup>73</sup> For a detailed description of Operation Yoav and the conquest of the Negev, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 335–59; see also Tal, *War in Palestine*, 376–88; Morris, *1948*, 321–31, including a map of the operation and its aftermath.



October 22, the command was given to cease fire. Thus came to an end Operation Yoav and Operation El-Hahar (To the Mountain). The Majdal–Bait Jebrin separation corridor was cut in two, forming the “Faluja Pocket,” an area around the village of Faluja which left an Egyptian battalion completely surrounded. The strip along the shoreline from Isdud to Bait Hanun was also about to be evacuated. In the days following the operation, on October 23–28, this whole strip was captured. Once Bait Jebrin and the Lachish area also fell to the Israeli forces, the area of the Faluja Pocket to the east was also reduced.<sup>74</sup>

### **Operation Hiram in the Galilee, October 29–31; Jerusalem during the second truce; the Lot and Assaf operations in the south and the Negev**

The decision to undertake Operation Hiram shifted the fighting to the Galilee which, from the Beit Netufah Plain northwards, was controlled by Qawuqji and his volunteer army. Qawuqji maintained that his was not an army of a UN member state, and thus the rules of the truce did not apply to him. By this subterfuge he took advantage of the second truce to improve his positions on the borders with Israel. The final motive for initiating Operation Hiram was Qawuqji’s attack on an outpost near Manarah and his attempt to move against Manarah itself. In political terms, these made it easier for the IDF to initiate the operation during the truce.

Operation Hiram began on the night of October 28–29 and was completed within sixty hours. Four IDF brigades were brought north and attacked Qawuqji’s force from a number of directions. The objective was to completely neutralize the force and create a stable line of defense along the northern border of mandatory Palestine. The attacking units succeeded in their major mission. Those elements of Qawuqji’s force that were not hit retreated quickly from the center of Upper Galilee, leaving most of their heavy equipment behind them. They took a dirt road from Tarshiha to the road that ran along the northern border of mandatory Palestine, through Deir al-Qasi and from there to Rmaich in Lebanon, along a road that was not believed to be passable by vehicles and which has since been known as “Qawuqji Road.” Thus ended Operation Hiram, and the aim of gaining control of the Galilee was achieved. In addition, IDF forces entered Lebanese territory and occupied many villages there. This was the final battle on the northern front, followed by the cease-fire agreements with Lebanon and Syria.<sup>75</sup>

When the second truce began, divided Jerusalem was relatively quiet, although there was some sniping and encounters from time to time, especially around the borderlines. The problem of the road to Jerusalem was solved to some extent by the

<sup>74</sup> On Operation El Hahar and air and naval operations, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 359–68.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 368–79; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 421–25.

opening of Burma Road, the alternate road to that city. Water supply to Jerusalem was also improved by the laying of a new pipeline from Huldah along the course of Burma Road. On the night of August 17–18 clashes broke out between Israeli and Muslim Brotherhood forces near the British “Government House” due to the latter trying to break into it even though the area had been declared a demilitarized zone. With the renewal of the battles in the Negev at the beginning of Operation Yoav, there were clashes with the Muslim Brotherhood in that area. The conquests by the Israeli forces around Bait Jebrin and the Elah Valley in Operation El Hahar cut off the Muslim Brotherhood from the major Egyptian force in the Negev, weakening them. After the cease-fire agreement was signed with Egypt, all Muslim Brotherhood forces left and the Jordanians took over the area. During Operation Yoav (October 15–22), preparations were made for Operation “Yekev” (Winery), with the intention of climbing up through the Cremisan monastery to the peaks above it, however opposition by Arab forces prevented it. The railroad tracks to Jerusalem served as the borderline until the cease-fire agreement signed between Israel and Jordan.<sup>76</sup>

Following the formation of the Faluja Pocket in Operation Yoav and the narrowing of its territory on the eastern side in Operation El Hahar, it was decided to try and take the Iraq Suweidan police station on the western edge of the Faluja Pocket. As noted, this police station was known as “the Monster on the Hill” which the Israeli forces had repeatedly tried to capture. This time the operation was fully prepared in advance, and on November 9 the fortified position was attacked and taken. Now the Faluja Pocket was also reduced in the west and remained, in effect, the territory between Faluja and Iraq al-Manshiyya. It later turned out that the seeds for the Egyptian “Free Officers” under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who served as the besieged Egyptian battalion’s operations officer, were planted here. This movement initiated the military coup against the monarchist government in Egypt in 1952. Later during Operation Horev an unsuccessful attempt was made to break into this pocket, with a high price in dead and wounded. The pocket was evacuated only after the signing of the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Egypt.<sup>77</sup>

Two additional operations were mounted in the Negev: “Lot” and “Assaf.” Operation Lot brought together forces advancing from Beersheba through the police outpost at Kurnub (ancient Mampsis), through Ma’aleh Akrabim (Scorpion’s Pass) and ‘Ayn Husub to Sodom, where they arrived on November 25, 1948. Operation Assaf was conducted on December 5–7, 1948 with the objective of preventing the Egyptian forces in the Gaza strip from advancing eastwards towards Beersheba. The

<sup>76</sup> Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 379–83.

<sup>77</sup> On the taking of Iraq Suweidan and the fighting around the Faluja Pocket, see *ibid.*, 383–87. Under a flag of truce, the commander of the Egyptian forces, Colonel Said Taha, met with OC Southern Command Yigal Allon on November 11 in Kibbutz Gat; for the text of their dialogue see Morris, *1948*, 335–36 and the source noted on 482, n. 80.

Egyptians were halted in these battles. This effort was part of the preparations on the southern front for Operation Horev.<sup>78</sup>

### **Operation Horev: taking of Nitzanah and the advance into Sinai; the battle of Rafah and the armistice agreement with Egypt, February 24, 1949**

The Security Council decision of October 19 effected a cease-fire in the Negev, but the situation remained fragile. Following the assassination of Bernadotte on September 17, his assistant, Bunche, submitted the second Bernadotte plan to the UN. The UN viewed it as an alternative to its own partition plan of November 29, 1947. Bunche also tried to bring the parties to the table for peace or cease-fire negotiations. Although the Great Powers recognized the existence of the State of Israel, they still had not afforded recognition to its borders. According to Bernadotte's new plan, the Negev was especially endangered and called for additional military action. The objective of the operation was twofold: removal of the threat that the Negev would be separated from the State of Israel through some political compromise, and forcing Egypt to begin negotiating a cease-fire agreement, based on the assumption that other Arab states would then follow Egypt.

Operation Horev got underway on December 22, 1948. It was preceded by a declaration that Israel views itself free to take action against Egypt due to its refusal to begin negotiations for a cease-fire. The operation itself was divided into two stages: the aim of the first was to defeat the the Egyptian force deployed in the east from Bir 'Asluj in the north to 'Auja al-Hafir (Nitzanah) in the south, while executing a diversion with a real force in the Gaza Strip in the west against Hill 86, a major outpost that strategically controlled a large area of the strip. The Israeli force took the outpost, but counterattacks by the Egyptians caused it to retreat with many losses. This attack, in addition to others against the Gaza Strip achieved the diversion objective. On December 25 Israeli forces began advancing along an ancient Roman road cutting through deep sands from Halutzah towards Nitzanah, while other units attacked the Egyptian outposts along the central Negev road leading to Nitzanah. Following difficult passage through the sands and battles for the outposts on the main road, Nitzanah was conquered on December 27. Afterwards, IDF forces entered the Sinai Peninsula and also captured Quseima on the route between Nitzanah and the Gulf of 'Aqaba. It was then decided to exploit the success and continue towards Abu 'Ageila in Sinai. From there, the advancing Israeli force attacked an Egyptian base in Bir al-Hama and turned towards El-Arish. The deep

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<sup>78</sup> For operations Lot and Assaf, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 389–95; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 431–33.

incursion into Egyptian territory was a hard blow for the Egyptians who retreated in panic.<sup>79</sup>

The Security Council was in uproar and at its meeting on December 29, the day Abu 'Ageila fell, ordered an immediate cease-fire and Israeli retreat from the Sinai Peninsula. At the same time, a grave event took place that sent shockwaves everywhere. Five British fighter planes carried out reconnaissance flights above the area, to check whether the IDF forces were fulfilling the command to retreat from Egyptian territory, and were shot down by Israeli planes. Britain exploited the Israeli incursion into Egyptian territory to threaten intervention in the fighting, claiming that according to the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1936 it was obligated to defend Egypt. Israel agreed to retreat from the Sinai Peninsula and instructed all the units across the mandatory border with Egypt to return. Abu 'Ageila was abandoned and the forces returned to Nitzanah.

The objective of the second stage of Operation Horev was Rafah, the location of the Egyptian headquarters. The Israeli pretext was that the Egyptians were in the Gaza Strip, yet were unwilling to negotiate a cease-fire agreement. On the night of January 4–5, 1949, Israeli forces advanced along a number of different routes, including on the Nitzanah–Rafah road, intending to conquer and gain control of the Rafah outposts in the south and thus to cut off the Gaza Strip from the Sinai Peninsula and form a sort of second Falujah pocket. There was much hard fighting. On the night of January 6–7, 1949, Israeli forces captured the outposts south of Rafah and blocked the road southwards. That same day, Egypt declared its willingness to begin immediate negotiations for a cease-fire. Israel agreed, and the cease-fire came into effect on January 7, 1949 at 19:00.

The negotiations between Israel and Egypt were conducted in Rhodes, the seat of the UN mediator. They began on January 12, with UN representative Ralph Bunche and his assistants as mediators. Skillfully and meticulously, Bunche directed the discussions from minor to more significant issues. For the first time, an agreement not to renew acts of hostility was reached. In its wake it was decided to allow the gradual evacuation of the besieged brigade in Falujah. Later many disagreements came up, but on February 24, 1949, an armistice agreement was signed with the Egyptians at Rhodes, the first in a series of agreements between Israel and the Arab countries.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> On Operation Horev, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 404–36; Tal, *War in Palestine*, 433–58.

<sup>80</sup> On the armistice agreement between Israel and Egypt, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 439–40; Morris, 1948, 375–78 and the map on 379.

### Operation 'Uvdah, March 6–10, the conquest of Eilat and Ein-Gedi

At the same time that negotiations with Egypt were taking place, preliminary talks towards a cease-fire agreement were being held in Rosh Hanikrah (Ras al-Naqura) with Lebanon, and with Jordan in Jerusalem and at King Abdullah's palace in Amman. During the negotiations with Jordan, it transpired that the Jordanians were claiming control of the southern Negev and demanding its annexation. It was necessary to impress the truth of the matter upon them that the area had been designated part of the Jewish state in the UN partition resolution, including the northern tip of the Gulf of 'Aqaba. It is important to note that behind the Jordanians stood the British, who for their own strategic considerations aspired to transfer the southern Negev to Jordan in order to create a direct connection between Jordan and Egypt.<sup>81</sup> This led to the decision to launch Operation "'Uvdah" (Fact) and two Israeli forces began advancing towards the southern Negev and the Gulf of 'Aqaba: one through the Negev mountains, under difficult topographical conditions, and the other through the 'Aravah Plain towards Umm Rashrash (Eilat). On March 10, 1949, the two forces reached the police station that was nothing more than a few mud huts with the sign "Police" hanging outside. The Israeli flag was raised, and a telegram was sent to headquarters apprising of the forces' arrival in the Gulf of 'Aqaba and the conquest of the Umm Rashrash.<sup>82</sup>

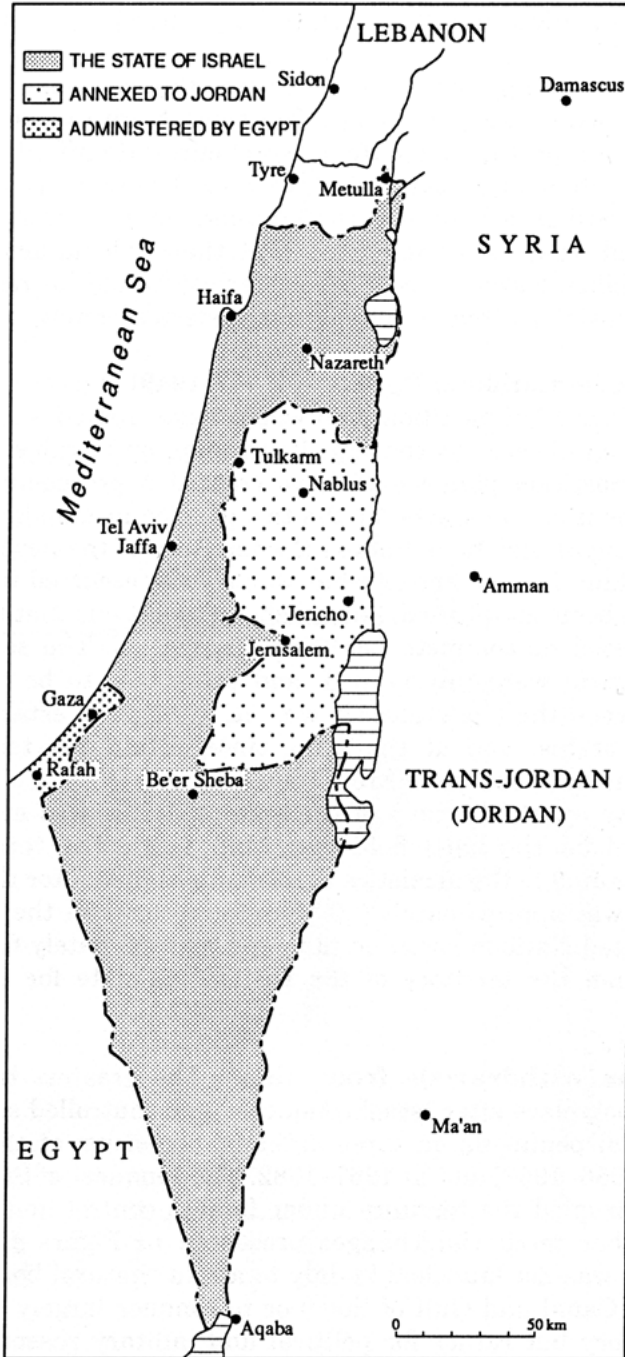
Another military action in another region, but that was an inseparable part of Operation 'Uvdah, was the conquest of Ein Gedi, which extended the Israeli controlled area. A force coming from Beersheba captured outposts on the slopes of the Judean Desert hills towards the Dead Sea, while another force advanced by sea. On March 8, a marine force set out in boats from Sodom towards Ein Gedi, landed under cover of darkness, climbed up the hill to the top of the range. By morning the whole area, including the Massada historical site, was under Israeli control.<sup>83</sup>

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**81** For the political and diplomatic background that led the IDF to conquer Eilat and the southern Negev, see Asia, *The Core of the Conflict*, 67–114. See also note 72 above.

**82** On Operation 'Uvdah, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 440–44; Morris, *1948*, 380–84. For a volume devoted entirely to Operation 'Uvdah, see Elhannan Orren and Meir Avizohar, ed., *The "'Uvdah" Campaign* (Sede Boqer: Midreshet Sede Boqer, 2002) (Hebrew). The "wedge in the Negev" continued to be part of Israel's security policy in the years 1951–1956. For a few attempts in those years by Britain, the US, and Arab states – especially Egypt – to create a corridor from Sinai to the Arab countries through the Negev, and the involvement of Project Alpha by which Israel would yield to Egypt and Jordan small triangular areas in the Negev that would enable overland connection between the two Arab countries, see Asia, *The Core of the Conflict*, 115–220.

**83** Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 444–45.



Map 30: Borders of Israel after the armistice agreements, 1949 (Galnoor, *Partition of Palestine*, 295).

### **The cease fire agreements with Lebanon (March 23, 1949), Jordan (April 3, 1949), and Syria (July 20, 1949)**

On March 23, 1949, a short while after Operation ‘Uvdah, a cease-fire agreement was signed with Lebanon at Rosh Hanikrah. During Operation Hiram, fourteen Lebanese villages were occupied and were now returned to Lebanon. The mandatory border was set as the cease-fire line. Negotiations for a cease-fire agreement with Jordan were lengthy and difficult. The line across which the forces faced each other on the central front was shaped during the second truce, and since then there had not been any large operations similar to those on the northern and southern fronts. The long winding line separated the majority of the Jewish population from most of the Arab population in the country and divided Jerusalem in two. The points of conflict were many. The fact that Iraq decided to withdraw its forces without negotiating with Israel provided Israel with leverage to demand receipt of the western slopes of Samaria, including the line of villages from Kafr Qassem in the south to those of Wadi ‘Ara in the north. These villages made it possible for Israel to expand its “narrow waistline” in the area, in return for its agreement to the entrance of Jordanian forces into the area vacated by the Iraqis. King Abdullah’s efforts to enlist international support to reject Israel’s demands were unsuccessful, and he was forced to give in. Even though the official agreement spoke of territorial exchanges between the two countries, this was merely a dead letter. The only exception was an exchange of territory along the railroad line to Jerusalem. The agreement was signed between the parties at Rhodes on April 3, 1949.<sup>84</sup>

The cease-fire agreement with Syria was signed on July 20, 1949, marking the end of the War of Independence. Negotiations for the three earlier agreements – with Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan – took two months. In contrast, negotiations with Syria were conducted for three and a half months and were the most difficult. Syria was the only Arab country that conquered and held territory allocated by the UN to the Jewish state: the Mishmar Hayarden bloc, and also territories east of the Sea of Galilee, near the estuary of the Jordan River into the Sea of Galilee, and the Banias Plateau east of Kibbutz Dan. Negotiations were difficult, but under the pressure applied by the UN mediator and threats by Israel, the Syrians agreed to evacuate their troops from the areas they held and return to the international border. It was also agreed that the area they had held would become a demilitarized zone. Finally, on July 20, 1949, in a tent in the no-man’s land near Mahanaim, the cease-fire agreement with Syria was signed. This

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<sup>84</sup> On the armistice agreements with Lebanon and Jordan, the withdrawal of Iraqi forces and Jordan’s taking control of the area evacuated in the West Bank, the exchange of territories, and more, see Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 445–48. For the text of the Israel–Jordan armistice agreement, see *ibid.*, 460–64. See also Elad Ben-Dror, “The Armistice Talks between Israel and Jordan, 1949: the View from Rhodes,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 46 (2012): 879–902.



was the final cease-fire agreement with the Arab states and marked the end of the War of Independence.<sup>85</sup>

## Summary: the Arab refugees; “Few against Many”; “The Silver Platter”

### The Arab refugee problem

Much has been written on the subject of the Arab refugees resulting from the War of Independence.<sup>86</sup> In what follows, I do not intend to deal with this complex and difficult subject, only to point out the stages of its development during and after the war.<sup>87</sup> The development of the Arab catastrophe can be divided into four main stages: (a) the first four months of the war from December 1947 to March 1948; (b) Operation Nahshon that began in April 1948 until the invasion by the Arab countries; (c) from the Arab invasion until the end of the war; (d) the stage following the end of the war and determination of the armistice agreement borders, during the first years after the establishment of the State of Israel.

During the first stage of the war, no Arab village had yet been conquered and what characterized it were mainly Arab attacks on isolated Jewish settlements, fighting in cities of mixed population by means of car bomb explosions, sniping, and attacks on neighborhoods, as well as attacks against traffic on the roads. Jewish actions were mainly reprisals. Arabs who left the country during this period were usually people of means from the mixed population cities who preferred leaving a place that was in a state of emergency and war. The future was yet unclear: whether or not a Jewish state would be established, whether the British would remain in the country for some reason, whether the UN would intervene in the events after all, whether the Arabs would win the war or the Arab countries would take over the country, if not all of it then perhaps at least part. It should be noted that during this stage thousands of Jews, mostly from the cities of mixed population, also abandoned their homes and became refugees.

During the second stage of the war, following Operation Nahshon, a substantial flight of Arabs began. Operation Nahshon got underway at the beginning of April 1948, during which the first permanent Arab village in the country, al-Qastal, was conquered and ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini, the major Arab commander in the

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<sup>85</sup> Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword*, 448–49. For all the armistice agreements, with their maps, see Morris, 1948, 379–91.

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, Yoav Gelber, *Palestine 1948: War, Escape and the Emergence of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic, 2001).

<sup>87</sup> Assaf, *Awakening and Flight*, 180–82, divides the flight of the Palestinian Arabs into four phases: (a) from the beginning of Dec. 1947 to the end of Feb. 1948; (b) Mar. 1948; (c) April 1948; (d) the first half of May 1948, until the establishment of Israel, to which he devotes about half of his book.

Jerusalem area, was killed. Later the Jews captured the village of Deir Yassin and many of the Arab inhabitants who surrendered were killed. The Arab leadership published ghastly reports of the murder in Deir Yassin, thereby increasing the Arab population's fear of their fate should they be attacked by Jews. After that Tiberias, Haifa, Safed, Jaffa and other places were captured, and the great Arab flight increased. Their leadership added fuel to the flames by promising that people would shortly be able to return to their homes, and questions regarding the future remained open.

The third stage began with the invasion by Arab armies of the Jewish areas. Jewish defensive action now turned into a war for life or death. Operational commands and local commanders gave orders to chase the Arab population out of towns and villages, mainly when the Israeli force in the area was limited and might not be able to put down a general uprising of the population, especially when there was a possibility that the armies of the Arab countries were on their way there. This was the case with the well-known expulsion of the Arabs of Lydda and Ramleh. Other similar events occurred in strategic locations where Israeli control was of major importance. However, there were also contrary events, mostly in the Galilee, in the city of Nazareth and other places, where the Arab citizens remained in place. There were also looting by Jews, mostly in the conquered areas such as the Katamon neighborhood in Jerusalem and more, usually perpetrated by those who had not participated in the fighting and only came to loot and plunder. During this stage, thousands of Jews also lost their homes and became refugees, among them those from the Old City. Captured Jewish settlements were looted and totally destroyed. Many thousands of inhabitants, mostly women and children, were evacuated from the besieged Negev settlements and from those that had come under attack in the Galilee and in the center of the country. In total, over the course of the war more than seventy thousand Jews became refugees.

The fourth stage of the creation of the Arab refugee problem is in fact the stage after the war and the determination of the armistice agreement lines. The borders set in 1949 are to a great extent those of 1967. The Arab countries refused to recognize these lines for many years and demanded that Israel return to the borders of the 1947 UN partition plan. In some cases, Arabs residing near the borders of the new state were expelled from their villages, at times to other Arab settlements within Israel, and at other times across the armistice borderlines. This stemmed from the fact that as long there was no prospect for full peace in the foreseeable future, and the Arab side sounded battle cries and evinced total unwillingness to recognize and make peace with Israel, the young state had no choice but to consider how it could protect itself should the war with the Arab countries break out again. At times, local commanders even made promises to those who left that they would return to their homes, promises that were not always kept.

It is also a fact that many of the villages emptied of their population during the War of Independence, were destroyed in the following years out of the fear that their existence would increase infiltration by Arabs across the armistice borderlines. Yet all these are subjects related to the period after the War of Independence, a

period I shall not discuss in this book, and which I only mentioned in order to understand the complicated process that led to the Arab catastrophe.

### “Few against Many,” fact or fiction?

In 1999, an academic conference was conducted at the Hebrew University on the theme of “Few against Many” that dealt also with the War of Independence. The proceedings of the conference were published as a book. In the preface and summary, the two editors present the consensus of opinion today that in terms of the balance of power in the battles, as well as of weapons, the Arab side usually held no advantage in the battlefield. In his article in the book, Mordechai Bar-On expands on the subject. In a previous article he even states that Moshe Dayan did not like the attempts to describe the War of Independence as a war between David and Goliath.<sup>88</sup>

It does indeed appear there no miracle occurred here. The question arises, then as to what did in fact happen, and how was the myth created. It seems that the main reason is the basic fact that cannot, under any circumstances, be ignored, that upon the beginning of the War of Independence, there were two populations in conflict: the Jewish community, comparatively small, numbering around 650,000 persons and living within a limited area in Eretz Israel, facing a much larger Arab population of around 1,250,000 Arab inhabitants of Western Palestine.<sup>89</sup> Another forty million people, living in the surrounding Arab countries, promised and delivered assistance with their own attacks to prevent the realization of the UN proposal for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Four countries: Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq, physically invaded the country, and their armies played an important role in the battles of the war against Israel, yet they suffered a thorough defeat.<sup>90</sup>

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**88** *The Few against the Many? Studies on the Balance of Forces in the Battles of Judas Maccabaeus and Israel's War of Independence*, ed. Alon Kadish and Benjamin Z. Kedar (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005) (Hebrew); Mordechai Bar-On, “‘Few against Many’ in the Experience of a Generation,” in *ibid.*, 201–13, esp. 206. For Dayan's stance on “David and Goliath,” see *id.*, *The Beginnings of Historiography of the 1948 War* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Pub. House, 2001), 176–77 (Hebrew). See also the colloquium on the historiography of the War of Independence in *The War after Sixty Years: Discussion, Studies, and Sources on the War of Independence*, ed. Assnat Shiran (Efal: The Association for Research of the Defense Forces, 2008), 44–113 (Hebrew).

**89** The official British estimates of the population of Palestine on Dec. 31, 1946 were 1,075,780 Muslims, 145,060 Christians, 15,490 others (especially Druze), and 608,230 Jews, for a grand total of 1,845,560. All groups increased during the following eleven months until the end of November 1947. For summaries of the statistics, see Avneri, *Claim of Dispossession*, 252.

**90** For estimates of the Arab forces at the beginning of the war and the first stages of their invasion of Palestine, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:1358–70. On the development of the Jewish military forces, see Yoav Gelber, “The Evolution of the Yishuv's Military Power,” in *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882: The British Mandate Period, Part 3*, ed. Moshe Lissak (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy for Sciences and Humanities; Bialik Institute, 2007), 593–646

In the attempt to explain the results of the war that ended in the victory of the small Jewish community over the Palestinian Arabs and those of five neighboring countries, there are three factors that, taken together, can account for the Jewish victory: (a) the organization of the Yishuv; (b) the inability of the Arab population to recruit military forces; (c) the determination under fire of the young Jewish fighters.

The first factor that stood in favor of the Yishuv when hostilities broke out and during the war itself was the fact that it was well organized in contrast with the lack of organization of the Palestine Arabs and the volunteer forces that arrived in the country, and even the Arab armies that invaded it.<sup>91</sup> There are scholars who mark the Israeli War of Independence as the first in a line of wars against the Arabs. I believe that is a mistake. When the fighting broke out, none of the parties could predict the wars to follow. By contrast, anyone living in the country at the time was aware of what preceded, from the beginning of the First Aliyah and over the course of seventy years, an effort directed at fulfillment of the Zionist enterprise in Eretz Israel and of the dream to establish a Jewish state.

The War of Independence, therefore, was not the beginning, but the end of a process of empowerment by a society that saw itself as a state-in-the-making. For dozens of years, it established and cultivated a sophisticated system of self-rule that included all the institutions necessary for the operation of a state, including administrative bodies and security forces that served as the basis for the state's army. The Yishuv had a mission and it stubbornly furthered it. It viewed the UN resolution of November 29, 1947 as a possibility and an opportunity to achieve its goals, and it used all the organizational tools it had been building over a long period in order to realize these goals. Yishuv security forces had begun organizing long before the war as paramilitary forces, and it is estimated that upon the beginning of hostilities it had a potential 17,200 fighters in the field, and with the addition of Guard Forces, whose primary objective was to defend settlements, their number reached 33,200.<sup>92</sup>

Not only military organizations were established in the state-in-the-making, but also all the civilian institutions of a functional state: medical services and hospitals, transportation and its supporting fields, education and all related institutions, supply

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(Hebrew). Many scholars have tried to provide estimates of the military forces of the two sides. I have no intention to deal with that aspect as it seems irrelevant to me in view of the unique conditions that developed during the War of Independence.

<sup>91</sup> For many details relating to the organization of the Yishuv, including military matters, see *History of the Haganah*, 3,2:1193–1600. On the importance of organization in the development of the Yishuv, in general, see Ben-Arieh, "Historiography of the War of Independence," 165–67 and the cited source.

<sup>92</sup> Ben-Arieh, "Historiography of the War of Independence," 157, Table 4.

of food and other products, and more; during the difficult hours, all these were harnessed to serve the one goal.<sup>93</sup>

The second factor is fundamentally a negative one, the inability of Arab society to recruit military forces that could stand up to the Jewish force. The Palestinian Arabs did not possess significant organized security forces. Their customary fighting mode was *faz'a* (summons), i.e., their leaders call villagers or members of a clan to battle. When the fighting is over, each would return to his own home. While large forces could be summoned to a number of simultaneous operations this way, at the end of the operation no organized military forces remained in the field.<sup>94</sup>

As for the Arab regular forces that invaded the country on May 15, if we sum up their numbers during the invasion, we receive quite a surprising picture. The scope of these armies was comparatively small; in numbers it was even smaller than the Jewish military force that defended the country. The Arabs held an advantage in artillery units, armored corps, and air forces compared with the total absence of these on the Jewish side when the war broke out. The inability of the Arab countries to throw additional large forces into the war against the IDF throughout the entire duration of the war, in addition to the lack of coordination and collaboration between the armies of the different countries, were without a doubt central factors leading to Israel's victory. However, there was also another, third, factor, to which I shall devote the final section of this summary of the Israeli War of Independence.

### “The Silver Platter”

The third factor, with the greatest influence in determining the results of the Israeli War of Independence, was the determination and self-sacrifice of the Jewish fighters, many of whom were killed on the battle field. The renowned poem by Nathan Alterman, published only a short while after fighting broke out, became a canonical work that reflected the unique period of that war.<sup>95</sup>

There is nothing that can better demonstrate the significance of the fatalities suffered by the Israeli forces during the War of Independence than the following

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<sup>93</sup> See the many articles in Mordechai Bar-On et al., ed., *Studies on the Civilian Society during the War of Independence*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2006–2017) (Hebrew).

<sup>94</sup> When referring to potential local Arab fighters, these are not units of volunteers from neighboring Arab countries but inhabitants of Arab villages in Palestine.

<sup>95</sup> On Dec. 15, 1947, *Ha'arets* quoted Chaim Weizmann as saying, only a few weeks after the UN partition resolution of Nov. 29, that “the state will not be given to the Jewish people on a silver platter.” Four days later Nathan Alterman published his poem in *Davar*. In the poem, a young woman and a young man, dressed in dirty battle gear, stand at attention. “Then a nation in tears and amazement will ask ‘Who are you?’ / And they will answer quietly, ‘We are the silver platter on which the Jewish state was given.’” [http://zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Silver\\_Platter.htm](http://zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Silver_Platter.htm) (accessed Aug. 28, 2018).

table. The data was taken from one of the most comprehensive compilations carried out by the IDF History Department at the beginning of its existence, the study by Moshe Sicron, later the director of the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics and a professor of statistics at the Hebrew University. A summary of the work was distributed in a wide internal distribution under the title: *Survey of the Fallen of the IDF*, in which it was noted that the work was carried out in collaboration with the Chief Adjutant's Office. It includes a statistical analysis in different segmentations by areas, stages of the war, ranks of the fallen, age, origin, and more.<sup>96</sup>

In 1955, the data regarding the fallen of the IDF was arranged according to the five phases of the war in the instructional booklet by the IDF Education Branch noted at the beginning of this chapter, where the number of IDF fallen and civilian fatalities is listed in the summary of each phase. The following table is a summary of the above.

Jewish military and civilian losses in the War of Independence.

Phase	Dates	Soldiers	Civilians	Total
Phase One	November 29, 1949 – April 1, 1948	506	625	1,131
Phase Two	April 1, 1948 – May 15, 1948	754	525	1,279
Phase Three	May 15, 1948 – June 11, 1948	914	300	1,214
Phase Four	The First Armistice (June 11-July 9, 1948), The Ten Days (July 9-18, 1948)	784	300	1,084
Phase Five	The Second Armistice and the big operations (July 18, 1948 – July 20, 1949)	1123	(around) 250	1,373
TOTAL		4,081	(around) 2,000	6,081

The information revealed in that publication was received with heavy hearts. It became clear that the number of fallen amounted to around 6,000 persons (4,000 soldiers and around 2,000 civilians), around 1 percent of the total Jewish population of Eretz Israel at the time. For demonstrative purposes, if we compare the State of Israel to the United States, the meaning is that in such a war 2.5 million Americans would be killed. The picture becomes even clearer in an analysis of the data. It turns out that during the first two stages of the war, until May 15, 1948, the number of soldiers who fell in battle was 1,260. If we take into account that the total number of people serving as fighters at the time was only 20,000, it means that 6.5 percent of them were killed in battle.<sup>97</sup>

According to the norm then, which also appears to hold true today, for each fallen soldier there is usually one seriously wounded, two slightly less wounded (and others lightly wounded), who were no longer able to engage in combat. Thus

<sup>96</sup> For details of the losses during the war, see Ben-Arieh, "Historiography of the War of Independence," 162–64 and Table 7.

<sup>97</sup> There are some slight differences in the number of fallen during each phase resulting from different totaling up or in the dates marking the beginning and end of each phase.

the number of casualties during the first period of the war reached 5,000, i.e. a *quarter* of the Israeli fighting population. The picture becomes even graver when dealing with the units on the frontlines, since the average does not correctly reflect what happened in each unit. Thus it befell the Palmah Harel brigade to be hit much harder than the average, while the Palmah Negev brigade suffered less.<sup>98</sup>

Yet it seems that the most impressive piece of data is that if we add these estimated numbers of seriously and badly wounded to the 4,000 soldiers who fell in the war, we reach a number of 16,000 casualties, nearly one-third of the fighting forces. This estimate is based on the fact that the number of enlisted persons at the end of the war was around 80,000, 30,000 of them serving in the service corps. During the peak period, the number of fighters in the field did not exceed 50,000 soldiers.

During the second phase of the war, until May 15, the situation was not much better. During the third phase, the month in which all efforts were aimed at halting the invasion, over 900 soldiers fell, and in phase four, during the ten days of fighting, almost 800 soldiers were killed.

Later in the war, the increase in the number of recruits to the IDF is quite impressive. On the eve of Operation Horev, the number of soldiers reached 85,000. Surprisingly, together with the increase in the number of soldiers, there was also an increase in the number of recruits to service units until these accounted for over a third of the IDF personnel (35,300). However the number of fatalities was still high, especially among the infantry. During this final phase the large operations were launched, including some very hard battles, and the number of fallen reached 1,123.

The above is not intended in any way to diminish from the devotion and determination of the whole Yishuv during the war period. Without it nothing would have been achieved. It was the lengthy nurturing of a vision supported by suitable organizational tools that enabled victory on the battle field and realization of the goal. Those who fell in battle were indeed the “Silver Platter” on which the Jewish state was given.

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<sup>98</sup> The number of soldiers in the IDF on May 15, 1948 was ca. 30,000. However, it should be taken into account that many of them had been recruited only shortly before that date. By way of comparison, on April 1 the number of members of the Haganah was only 18,650. See Ben-Arieh, “Historiography of the War of Independence,” 157, Table 4, and the more detailed one in the appendix. In addition, not all of these served in combat units.





Harry S. Truman.  
President of the United States



Count Folke Bernadotte.  
United Nations mediator



Dani Mass.  
Commander of the "thirty-five"



Moshe ("Mosh") Silberschmidt.  
Commander of the Etzion Bloc



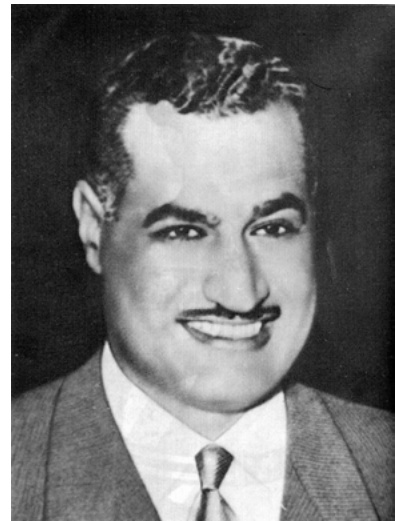
Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini.



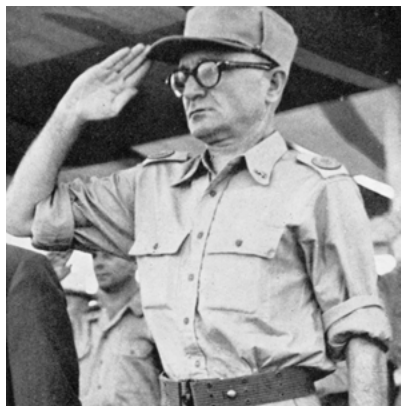
Fawzi al-Qawuqji.  
Commander of the Arab Liberation Army



Ralph Bunche.



Gamal Abdel Nasser.  
Captured in the "Faluja Pocket"



Yaakov Dori.  
First IDF chief of staff



Yigael Yadin.  
Deputy of the first IDF chief of staff



Yigal Allon.  
Commander of the Palmah



Moshe Dayan.  
First IDF operations officer



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## **General summary**

The making of Eretz Israel as a geographical entity and establishment of the State of Israel within it: The result of a process of 150 years, 1799–1949

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## Three sub-periods

The formation of the geographical entity “Eretz Israel,” within whose borders the State of Israel was established, was a lengthy process that lasted 150 years. It may be divided into three sub-periods: the first, 1799–1882; the second, 1882–1925; and the third, 1925–1949.

### The first sub-period: Western penetration into the Holy Land, 1799–1882

The first eighty years of the nineteenth century were characterized by the penetration of European powers into the Ottoman Empire, including the area that would later be known as “Eretz Israel.” The country was not a separate political entity unto itself during the Ottoman period: it did not have its own borders, its area was divided between different administrative units, and it bore no special name or title, neither “Eretz Israel,” nor “Palestine,” or “Filastin.” While the name “the Holy Land” was prevalent among persons belonging to different religions who arrived in the country from abroad in steadily growing numbers, the physical geographical boundaries of the Holy Land remained undefined. The city of Jerusalem was renowned throughout the world, and there were some for whom the name “Jerusalem” included the region surrounding the city. I devoted the first four chapters to this first sub-period.

The Napoleonic invasion of the East during 1798–1799 was the formative event that marked the beginning of this period. Later, in 1831, Muhammad ‘Ali, the ruler of Egypt, invaded and conquered the area of Eretz Israel and Syria. France supported his invasion, but the counteraction of Britain and other powers brought about ‘Ali’s complete withdrawal less than a decade later. He then received Egypt as a hereditary ruled territory for his dynasty, nominally part of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans undertook to introduce reforms (Tanzimat) into the constitution, which greatly changed the living conditions of foreigners in the empire, especially in the territory of the Holy Land.

The view that the Napoleonic invasion was related to the concept of the return of the Jews to the land of their forefathers is untenable. True, there were already some Jewish personalities in the nineteenth century – rabbis and philanthropists – who raised this concept, but their plans and writings were far from any form of realization.

During those years, the traditional Orthodox Jewish population in Jerusalem increased consistently. This stemmed from a sense of yearning and connection to the land of their forefathers, not from “messianic” visions of establishing a Jewish state. The Ottoman reforms made it possible for Jews to maintain their foreign citizenship, thus enabling assistance and protection by the foreign consuls. In addition, there was an improvement in travel conditions to the country. Jerusalem became the largest city while the Jewish population also increased in the other



three holy cities: Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron. The number of Jews in Jaffa also began growing since it served as the port city for Jerusalem. The main source of Jewish subsistence was the halukkah funds arriving from abroad.

Jews, too, did not call the country “Eretz Israel” during this period, referring to it as the “Holy Land” and to Jerusalem as the “Holy City.” Aliyah at the time was unrelated to Jewish national sentiments.

There was also a great increase in the number of “travelers,” mostly non-Jews, arriving in the country, touring and writing about it. They, too, called it “the Holy Land,” and often mentioned the name “Palestine” – without identifying its residents as Palestinians, only as a historical name that had taken root over time alongside “the Holy Land.” Later, nineteenth-century travel literature began quoting the biblical boundaries of “from Dan to Beersheba.” These boundaries were defined as encompassing the area from Wadi Qasimiyeh (the Litani River) in the north to a line from Gaza to Beersheba in the south. The customarily accepted eastern border was the waterline from the Litani River in the north to the sources of the Jordan River, continuing southward along the Jordan from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. Transjordan and the Negev were generally not included within these boundaries.

### **The second sub-period: beginnings of the Zionist movement; transition of government from Ottoman to British rule; formation of the political entity of Eretz Israel; 1882–1925**

The second sub-period began in the 1880s, with the first wave of Zionist immigration known as the First Aliyah. The importance of the First Aliyah lay in its projection of a new form of Jewish life. Its settlements were established in marginal areas of the country. It is doubtful whether these settlements would have survived without the assistance of Baron Rothschild, a philanthropist who set out to help his Jewish brethren. During the period of Baron Rothschild’s activity, the country’s borders were still not defined, and settlement plans also extended to areas such as the Golan Heights and the Hauran. The baron’s officials adopted harsh measures to oversee the colonies; however during the twenty years of his active involvement almost thirty Jewish settlements were founded in which a new Jewish generation was brought up in the Hebrew language and the new national society and culture taking shape in the country.

In 1896 Theodor Herzl began his political efforts. Initially, he objected to the settlement method adopted by the First Aliyah, believing that the correct strategy was to first of all declare the objective of the Jewish people as the establishment of a Jewish state, which he presented in his book *Der Judenstaat*. He adopted two methods to achieve that goal. He petitioned the Ottoman sultan for a charter to the territory of Eretz Israel, or part of it, that would enable the establishment of an organized Jewish community that would in time bring about the establishment of a

Jewish state. In this he met with total failure in Eretz Israel and also in other countries. His second method was the establishment of a permanent Zionist body, the Zionist Organization, which would represent the Jewish people throughout the world. Herzl was personally involved in the establishment of this organization, which continued functioning after his death.

In 1904 began the Second Aliyah. Like its predecessor, the First Aliyah, it too was a result of the extreme persecution of Jews in eastern Europe. What was new about it was a small number of its members: young men and women imbued with socialist views that came to Eretz Israel not only to create a new country, but also to form a new society. During this period the Palestine Office headed by Arthur Ruppin began operating, representing the Zionist Organization. It cooperated with the members of the Second Aliyah in establishing ideological cooperative settlements – the first kibbutz and other settlement formats – and assisted in the founding of private Zionist bodies and organizations that began carrying out plans for the establishment of settlements of the *ahuzah* and plantation types. While the working class Second Aliyah was in ideological conflict with the second generation of the First Aliyah colonies, what united them was greater than their differences: the creation of a new society based on Jewish cultural and national ideas.

Even before the First Aliyah, in 1876 Sultan Abdülhamid II ascended the throne of the Ottoman Empire and ruled for over thirty years. He developed a dictatorship, which he believed would guarantee the existence of the empire. He viewed the concept of a Jewish revival in Eretz Israel as a grave danger to his interests, a belief exacerbated with the appearance on the scene of Herzl and his attempts to receive a charter for Eretz Israel. None of Herzl's monetary proposals could overcome what the Sultan viewed as a fundamental interest of the empire. He was prepared to sanction free Jewish immigration to other parts of the empire, but explicitly excluded the Holy land.

An event of the utmost importance occurred in Eretz Israel during World War I: Ottoman rule was replaced by British rule. It was then, too, that the Balfour Declaration was issued, promising British assistance to the Jewish people for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine/Eretz Israel. The essence of this home and its borders remained vague. Then came the British conquest of Palestine. Even then, it was only during the period of Herbert Samuel as the first High Commissioner that the borders of the geographical unit of western Palestine were delineated, and whose name was set as Palestine/Eretz Israel. I devoted four chapters to the second sub-period: Chapters Five and Six to the end of the Ottoman era and Chapters Seven and Eight to the early British Mandate period.

### **The third sub-period: the Jewish–Arab conflict and changing British attitudes towards it; the Jewish–British conflict; the UN resolution on Palestine; the War of Independence and establishment of the State of Israel, 1925–1949**

The third sub-period began after the boundaries and territory of Palestine/Eretz Israel were set and ratified by Britain and the League of Nations. The conflict between the two populations inhabiting the country, Jews and Arabs, developed during these years. It centered on interpretation of the Mandate granted Great Britain to rule Palestine, a document that included the text of the Balfour Declaration, and the question of what would take place after the Mandate came to an end, i.e. who would receive the right to control the country after the termination of British rule, for which no date had been set.

The third sub-period is covered in the four final chapters, Nine to Twelve. Clashes between Jews and Arabs broke out already during Herbert Samuel's first year as High Commissioner. They began on May 1, 1921, after which relative quiet prevailed for a period of seven to eight years, the quiet before the storm. On Yom Kippur of 1928, the Western Wall conflict erupted between Jews and Arabs, followed ten months later, in August 1929, by rioting that included the massacre of Jews in Hebron, Safed, and other places. Many victims were killed during the riots throughout the country, following which a British commission and other experts were sent to investigate the Palestine problem. The British government then decided to issue the second (Passfield) White Paper which, to a great extent, annulled the Mandate document with regards to the Jewish national home in Palestine. High Commissioner John Robert Chancellor even proposed returning the Mandate to the League of Nations to be amended. This was the first in a line of events indicating a change in British policy. A short while later, the British prime minister backed down from this policy and sent a missive, named after him: "the MacDonald Letter." The letter, in effect, repealed the Passfield White Paper and reconfirmed the British commitment to the original Mandate for Palestine.

During the 1930s Jewish immigration increased, also as a result of the Nazi rise to power in Germany. Jewish settlement in the country expanded greatly, mainly developing in an N-shaped settlement pattern. At the same time, the Palestinian Arabs gradually adopted a more extreme stance under the leadership of the Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini. All attempts to reach an agreement between Jews and Arabs came to nought, even the proposal for parity in a legislative assembly, which would have meant some sort of incorporation of an independent Jewish national home within a large Arab federation.

On April 19, 1936 a general strike began which developed into the Arab Revolt. During the period of the strike, the British decided on the appointment of the Royal (Peel) Commission of Inquiry into the Palestine problem. In July 1937, the commission published its report and recommendations, which included the conclusion that there was no other solution to the problem but to partition Palestine into two

separate entities: a Jewish national state, and a larger Arab section that would be annexed to Transjordan. Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and a land corridor to the sea at Jaffa was to remain as a British enclave. The Zionist leadership was divided regarding this plan, but tended to support it subject to a few changes being made, especially concerning Jerusalem and the Negev. In the end they decided to wait and see the Arab response. The Arabs decided on outright rejection of the plan. The Arab Revolt was renewed in September 1937 and continued for two more years, which were its most difficult part.

Increasing solidarity with the Palestinian Arab community on the part of Arab countries was the main cause of British dissatisfaction with the partition plan. Accordingly, they sent a second commission of inquiry, the Woodhead Commission. In its conclusions, the commission rejected the partition plan, claiming it was impractical. The British government decided to shelve the plan and proposed a round table conference in St. James Palace in London. The conference talks failed. On May 17, 1939 the British government published the 1939 White Paper, which totally turned the tide on the previous British policy regarding Palestine. This was apparently connected to events in Europe following the Nazi rise to power in Germany, and increasing apprehension in Britain of the possibility of another world war. The British were concerned about the stance of the Arab states, lest they should assist the enemy and operate against British interests in the Middle East.

Following publication of the 1939 White Paper, the Yishuv began mounting extreme protests. Yet, upon the outbreak of World War II on September 1, 1939, with the exception of Lehi which had broken away from the Etzel and continued its anti-British activity, the Yishuv decided to cease all actions against the British and collaborate with them in the war against Germany.

Eight months after the beginning of the war, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigned. He was replaced by Winston Churchill, who created a national coalition government. Hopes for a change in British policy arose in the Yishuv, but none came. Although the cabinet members discussed possible changes in British policy after the war, they continued the White Paper restrictions and did not annul them.

Towards the end of World War II, and mainly in the postwar period, an extreme struggle began between the Yishuv and the British government which continued implementing the restrictions of the White Paper. At the beginning of February 1947 Britain decided to submit the Palestine problem to the United Nations. A special session of the UN General Assembly convened at the end of April and decided to appoint a special commission (UNSCOP) to inquire into the Palestine problem and submit its recommendations for a solution. At the beginning of September, UNSCOP signed its recommendations and submitted them to the General Assembly. The majority of its members proposed dividing western Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, with Jerusalem to be a *corpus separatum* governed by the UN.

On November 29, 1947 the UN General Assembly adopted the recommendation of UNSCOP, with a few changes. The Palestinian Arabs rejected the recommendations and began hostilities against the Jewish community in the country. On May 14, 1948 the State of Israel was established. The armies of the surrounding Arab countries immediately invaded the country, and the fighting continued. The War of Independence ended in 1949 with the signing of cease-fire agreements between Israel and the four Arab countries that participated in the war against it. A majority of countries throughout the world recognized the new state. A new period was beginning in the history of Eretz Israel.

## **Jews, Arabs, Muslims, Christians**

The major part of this book deals with matters relating to the Jewish population. It could thus be claimed that the book is unbalanced. However, the viewpoint that lies at the base of this study is that the element that led to the making of the geographical entity known as Eretz Israel/Palestine was the Jewish factor. It is pointless to summarize the Jewish matters I discussed in the book; they are presented throughout its chapters. On the other hand, a discussion of a few basic aspects of the non-Jewish population living in the territory of Eretz Israel during the period is in order.

The largest group throughout the period discussed was the Arab population. However, until the British conquest of the country, it did not differ from the general Arab population that surrounded it. That was also the case during the period of World War I, when separate Arab nationalism was initiated and led by the Hashemites from Hejaz, as one of its sons, Emir Feisal, commanded an Arab force that even entered Damascus. The Arab inhabitants of Palestine supported the emir, expecting that they would be partner to the establishment of one large Arab state in the territory of the crumbling Ottoman Empire. Only after the borders of western Palestine were determined in the 1920s and it became a unique territorial entity, did a separate Palestinian Arab nationalism begin to take shape that intensified during the 1929 riots which focused on Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. It increased even more in the 1930s, especially during the Arab Revolt (1936–1939), when the idea was raised of uniting the Arab part of Palestine with Transjordan, or as part of a large Arab federation. The Palestinian Arab leadership preferred to oppose the British and the Jews, with the aim of creating an independent Arab state in Palestine, just as the other Arab countries had achieved their independence.

At the end of the Arab Revolt after its harsh suppression by the British, the Palestinian Arabs gained their greatest achievement: the 1939 White Paper. But this did not satisfy them, since their national goal was not immediately met. Their leader, the Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who had fled the country during the revolt, preferred to side with the Germans in World War II, thus bringing about the end of

his personal standing and causing grave damage to his people. Acts of violence by the Arabs of Palestine ceased throughout the period of the war and in its aftermath, until the UN partition resolution that called for the establishment of an independent Jewish state in part of Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs initiated a war to obstruct this resolution, with the support of other Arab nations, a war that brought about their greatest disaster.

The term “Arabs” is usually identified with Muslims. However the Arab population of the country during the period under discussion, and today as well, although gradually diminishing, also included Christian Arabs. Residing in the Arab cities and villages, Christian Arabs did not differ from their Muslim brethren in lifestyle, customs, and opinions, only in their religion. This held true for Christians of all denominations: Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and other smaller Christian denominations living in the country. Furthermore, with the development of Arab nationalism in the Middle East in general, and especially in Palestine, several of the Arab nationalist leaders were Christian Arabs. This serves as proof that the roots of Palestinian Arab nationalism were not only related to the age-old connection of Islam to the country, to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, but were also affected by the winds of nationalism blowing at the time, mostly in Europe, but also in the Middle East, of which Palestine is part, although there they came as a counter-response to the development of the Jewish Zionist national movement. Even after Muslim rejection of the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine intensified, their partnership with the majority of the Palestinian Christian Arabs continued, apparently due to a shared sense of brotherhood among the country’s inhabitants who claimed that their homeland was being taken from them.

With regard to the historical basis, just as I chose not to delve into the debate regarding the historical connection of the Jewish people and the Jewish religion to Eretz Israel, I also did not deal with Islam’s ancient historical relationship to Palestine, mainly to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. It is important to note that in terms of the Muslim community in Palestine, the great majority belonged to the Sunni denomination and other small groups, especially the unique Druze minority.

I have already noted that with the beginning of the modern era in the Middle East, involvement of the Western powers in the area increased significantly. Their involvement did not have any real influence on the composition of the population in the period I dealt with. During this lengthy time span, a number of important Western Christian groups arrived and settled in the country, most prominently the German Templar colonies, but also small groups of American millenarists and private individuals, Christian missionaries, and persons from other Christian states. Despite their importance at the time, they did not strike permanent roots and eventually almost completely disappeared from the Eretz Israel landscape.

Worldwide Christian interest in the Holy Land during the period was mainly manifested in a number of fields: assisting the inhabitants of the country and aspiring to influence them by establishing religious, educational, health, and other

institutions; constructing representative religious and public buildings, such as churches and monasteries, with the purpose of expanding Christian presence in the Holy Land and also to provide quarters for the large number of Christian pilgrims who began arriving in the country; studying, researching, and gaining deeper knowledge of the Holy Land, the cradle of the monotheistic religions and the birthplace of Christianity and its messiah; and great involvement in shaping the future nature of the land of the Bible. In terms of actual Christian settlement in the country, foreign Christians left no mark during the period under study. Thus, the conflict in Palestine was left to the other two parties living there, the Jews and the Arabs.

### **Focus on Jerusalem**

Jerusalem played an important role in events throughout the period of circa 150 years which form the chronological framework of this book.

During the Napoleonic invasion of Palestine, Jerusalem was still a small city surrounded by a wall whose gates were shut at sundown, no more than the seat of a sancak, an Ottoman sub-district. The Napoleonic army invaded the country and stayed there for five months, yet did not see fit to visit Jerusalem even though it was camped in Ramle, only a short distance from the holy city. Napoleon was no Christian pilgrim, nor was the small Jewish community residing in Jerusalem at the time of any interest to him. What motivated his invasion of the country were strategic military objectives related to his ambition to gain control of the routes connecting Europe to the East, mainly to India.

With the invasion of the Levant by Muhammad 'Ali, the ruler of Egypt, and his rule over it during 1831–1840, the status of Jerusalem began to rise. A preferential attitude of the Egyptian authorities was evident towards the Christian and Jewish minorities in the city, in contrast to their more severe treatment of the Muslim population. Muhammad 'Ali's conquests threatened the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and led the European countries, with the exception of France, to turn against him and expel him from the Levant, including Jerusalem.

The reforms that accompanied the return of Ottoman rule in Palestine were enacted in two stages: from 1839 until the Crimean War (1853–1856), and from its end until the ascent of Sultan Abdülhamid II to the throne in 1876. These reforms enabled greater presence in Jerusalem of the Western powers, both through the establishment of consulates, and by the activities of Christian educational, health, and charitable institutions. The status of Jerusalem's traditionally religious Jewish community was also enhanced, many of whose members continued to hold foreign citizenship and enjoyed the protection of the foreign consulates. These were years in which Jerusalem became a central factor in the area, and the Ottoman government also began granting it a status of precedence.



With the beginning of Zionist aliyah and the establishment of Jewish agricultural colonies throughout the country, tension developed between the Old Yishuv, which subsisted on the halukkah funds, and the New Yishuv, that rejected the lifestyle and the pattern of economic livelihood of the traditional religious community. During this period, the status of Jerusalem declined among members of the New Yishuv who began establishing settlements throughout the country. Jerusalem maintained its significance for the Christian denominations and the Western powers, and, as noted, the Ottoman government also began to ascribe importance to it. The period of World War I was the most difficult for the Jewish residents of the city. The halukkah funds ceased arriving from abroad, and hunger reigned. Mortality rates rose, especially among babies, and Jewish emigration from the country reached a peak, also resulting from cancellation of foreign citizenship status and Ottomanization demands by the authorities. The Jewish population in the city decreased by one-third.

The most important turning point in the status of Jerusalem occurred at the beginning of British rule. The British had a special attitude towards Jerusalem. General Allenby's declaration at the ceremony marking the conquest of the city, that Jerusalem was a city holy to all three world religions, reflected the British viewpoint. They designated Jerusalem as the capital city of Palestine, the seat of the High Commissioner and most government departments. It was British policy that Jerusalem should not become an industrial center, but must be preserved as a historical holy city. The Zionist movement followed in the footsteps of the British and began setting Jerusalem as its center of operations. At first, some Jewish personages and institutions moved to Jerusalem, but later returned to Tel Aviv, which developed into the major Jewish city in the country.

The riots of 1928–1929 mark the beginning of the emergence of Palestinian Arab nationalism. The Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini set out to enhance the sanctity of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, which became prominent in the Western Wall conflict of 1928 and during the 1929 riots that spread throughout the country.

As noted, with the outbreak of the first part of the Arab Revolt (April–October 1936), Britain decided to appoint the Palestine Royal Commission. The commission proposed a partition plan for Palestine in which Jerusalem, together with a corridor to the sea, would remain under British rule. Apparently, it was Jerusalem's holy status, together with British strategic interests, that were at the basis of this plan.

On May 17, 1939, Britain adopted a new policy regarding Palestine and published the 1939 White Paper. In addition to limitations on Jewish immigration and land acquisitions, it also included a section regarding the establishment of an independent Palestine state ten years after its publication, with international guarantees for the holy sites. Since the majority of the population in the country was Arab, this meant that it would be an Arab state, and Jerusalem would be part of it.

At the beginning of September 1947, the majority recommendation of UNSCOP was submitted to the UN General Assembly, which adopted the recommendation to

partition the country into a Jewish state and an Arab state, leaving Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum*. The UN decision was similar to the proposal of the Royal Commission ten years earlier. However, with regard to Jerusalem the Royal Commission proposed that the city, together with its surroundings and a corridor to the sea, be left under a British mandate, while in UNSCOP's plan only Jerusalem and Bethlehem and their surroundings would become a separate entity controlled by the UN.

When Israel's War of Independence began, the situation regarding Jerusalem was changed. During the first phase of the war, the fighting was mainly between the Arabs of Palestine and the Jewish inhabitants of the country. This was also the case in Jerusalem. After the establishment of the State of Israel and its invasion by regular forces from the Arab countries, the Jordanian Legion gained control of the eastern part of Jerusalem and the Old City, including the Jewish Quarter. During the fighting, Jewish forces took over the western part of the city, including its Arab neighborhoods. As the war continued, the situation in Jerusalem remained just as it had been during the first cease-fire. When the war ended with the signing of armistice agreements between four Arab countries and Israel, the future of Jerusalem was determined in the agreement signed with Jordan that was based to a great extent on the cease-fire line between Israel and Jordan during the war itself. Signed in Rhodes on April 3, 1949, the agreement determined that Jerusalem would remain divided. The Old City, including the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall, would remain under Jordanian control. Jordan guaranteed that the free passage of Jews to the Western Wall would be maintained, a promise that was never fulfilled throughout the entire period when Jerusalem was divided (1949–1967). Israel conquered the Old City and eastern Jerusalem during the Six Day War, a period that is outside the scope of this book.

## **Government, leaders, people**

The developments and changes Jerusalem underwent during the period under discussion in this book are important, but vastly more important is the establishment of the State of Israel. Over the course of a hundred and fifty years, a new geographical entity was created in the Middle East that received the name "Palestine/Eretz Israel." During the War of Independence the Zionist vision of establishing a Jewish state in Eretz Israel came to fruition. The signing of Israel's armistice agreements with the Arab nations at the end of the War of Independence also marks the end of an era in the history of Eretz Israel. The people residing in that part of the country in which the Jewish state was constituted elected legislative and executive bodies to govern them. This was the most important change, which marked the end of one period and opened a new one. The geographical-historical narrative of the country after the establishment of Israel was a totally different story, one that calls for separate research and study.

In this book, I have chosen to deal with the period that preceded the establishment of Israel, many long years during which government of the country was not in Jewish hands. The area was initially called “the Holy Land,” and later “Eretz Israel” by the Jews. Ottoman rule is long gone, and the British government departed many years ago, yet the Palestinian Arabs have still not achieved their final political-territorial framework. Two areas of mandatory Palestine – the West Bank and the Gaza Strip – remained under Jordanian and Egyptian rule for nineteen years after the establishment of Israel. The future of these areas is still unclear today.

The vision of establishing a Jewish state and creation of a new Jewish society in Eretz Israel began towards the end of the Ottoman era. Its development and implementation was greatly advanced during the British Mandate period, and thanks to it the State of Israel was established. Accordingly, I have chosen to end this work with reference to the Jewish leadership that was responsible for the geographical-historical change that came about in the territory which is the subject of this study: the establishment of the State of Israel.

It may be said that three Jewish personalities stood at the helm and led the lengthy process that culminated in the establishment of the Jewish state. The first was Herzl, whose basic fundamental understanding was that a people needed its own state. A state means government, and a government has the power to shape the character and essence of the state over which it rules. Accordingly, Herzl made it his main mission to establish a Jewish state, as part of the process of redeeming the Jewish people from their abnormal lives in the countries of the diaspora. Initially, he hoped to realize this goal by influencing the Ottoman sultan who ruled the country that was the natural and historical venue for the Jewish state. When he realized that this was impossible, Herzl began considering the establishment of a state in part of the country (the Acre sancak), or close by (Cyprus, El-Arish), or perhaps even far from it, as a temporary or partial solution (Uganda), until the Ottoman ruler of the land would agree to the establishment of the Jewish state in the area under its control. Had the Ottomans continued to rule the country, it is doubtful whether the Jewish state would ever have arisen. Herzl understood that man was not immortal, and if he wanted to realize his vision he had to create an organizational body that would act to realize his vision. To that end he established the Zionist Organization that adopted as its mission the establishment of a Jewish state in its ancestral land. Herzl’s greatest achievement was his success in establishing the Zionist movement that continued his vision and finally fulfilled it.

Herzl’s vision of creating a Jewish state was continued by Chaim Weizmann. Just as Herzl decided to act on his own, with the outbreak of World War I Weizmann, too, decided to act alone, betting all his chips on Britain. Not all Zionist movement leaders of the time agreed with his decision, since they were as yet uncertain what would be the outcome of the war. Weizmann hoped that Britain’s special attitude towards the Holy Land and the Bible, in addition to its political interests in the Middle East, would lead it to adopt a sympathetic view towards

Zionism. The efforts of Weizmann and other leading personalities, Jews and non-Jews alike, convinced the British government to issue the Balfour Declaration, even before it completed the conquest of Palestine. Weizmann did not insist on the precise wording of the declaration, and accepted what he could get. Even in his later political career he turned out to be a moderate man who tried to advance his plans by gradually accruing power, while cooperating as best he could with the new rulers of Palestine, forgoing unattainable dreams. He gained important achievements at first; however, when British policy gradually changed and the Arabs of Palestine began opposing Zionism, his standing in the movement declined. Nevertheless, he remained active in the Zionist movement and assisted it as much as he could.

The third person, whose leadership qualities came to the fore during the War of Independence, was David Ben-Gurion, a member of the labor movement, the leader of Mapai. At the beginning of his leadership role, during the 1930s under the British Mandate, he too was a politically moderate leader. Ben-Gurion and Weizmann supported the legislative assembly parity plan proposed by the British under one condition: that Jewish immigration would not be limited. The Arabs objected to it altogether. On the eve of the Arab Revolt in 1936, Ben-Gurion met with George Antonius in his home in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem, together with Judah L. Magnes, president of the Hebrew University and an extreme peace activist, with the aim of seeking a way to achieve peace with the Arabs. However, not long after this meeting, George Antonius left the country. When the Royal Commission presented its recommendation to partition western Palestine and establish an independent Jewish state in part of it, Weizmann and Ben-Gurion supported the idea. It was Reginald Coupland, the most active British member of the commission, who persuaded them to support it if the Arabs did so as well. Had an independent Jewish state been created in 1937, perhaps a different fate would have befallen the Jews of Europe during World War II, and at least some of them could have been saved and come as immigrants to an independent Jewish state.

Ben-Gurion and Weizmann did not have a personal friendly relationship, yet their political views were quite similar until the beginning of the complex struggle between the Jews of Eretz Israel and the British, a struggle to which Weizmann objected. Both Herzl and Weizmann did not reside in Eretz Israel: Herzl passed away early in his activities, away from Eretz Israel while Weizmann lived in England most of his life. Ben-Gurion grew and developed together with the Yishuv in Eretz Israel. He knew what members of the Yishuv felt, was hurt by British policy which he believed betrayed his people, and at times adopted extreme views. However, when the UN partition plan was finally put on the table with the option of a Jewish state in part of Eretz Israel, and when it became clear that it was necessary to obtain the support of US President Harry Truman for the inclusion of the Negev in this state, Ben-Gurion called upon Weizmann to meet with Truman, a meeting that also resulted in the United States being the first country to recognize the State of Israel. It therefore is not surprising that the person who recommended Weizmann as the

first president of the State of Israel was Ben-Gurion. His character – and mainly his ability to make resolute decisions in difficult times – were succinctly demonstrated during the War of Independence.

Government and leaders are significant factors in the development of every country, but the people living in the country are no less important, perhaps even more so. In this book, I have also tried to present the Jewish society that grew and developed in a period during which the country that is the subject of my study was given the name “Eretz Israel.” This lengthy period was witness to many great changes and transformations, many of them ephemeral. What remained was the Zionist vision of establishing the State of Israel. Most likely this vision could not have been realized had there been no actual changes in the country itself since the beginning of the nineteenth century. To carry out that vision it was necessary to have a ruling power willing to enable it, great personalities to lead it, and mainly people who believed in it. At first there was no ruling power prepared to enable it, but as the vision continued to develop, the number of Jews who adhered to it increased consistently. Then came the moment of crisis: a new governing power, Great Britain, which initially encouraged and assisted progress towards achieving the goal but later reversed itself and caused disappointment. However, by that time there was a sufficient number of Jews who believed in the vision, and leaders who steered them towards realization of their dream. They, on their own, by force of their dedication and personal sacrifice, realized their vision and established their state.



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