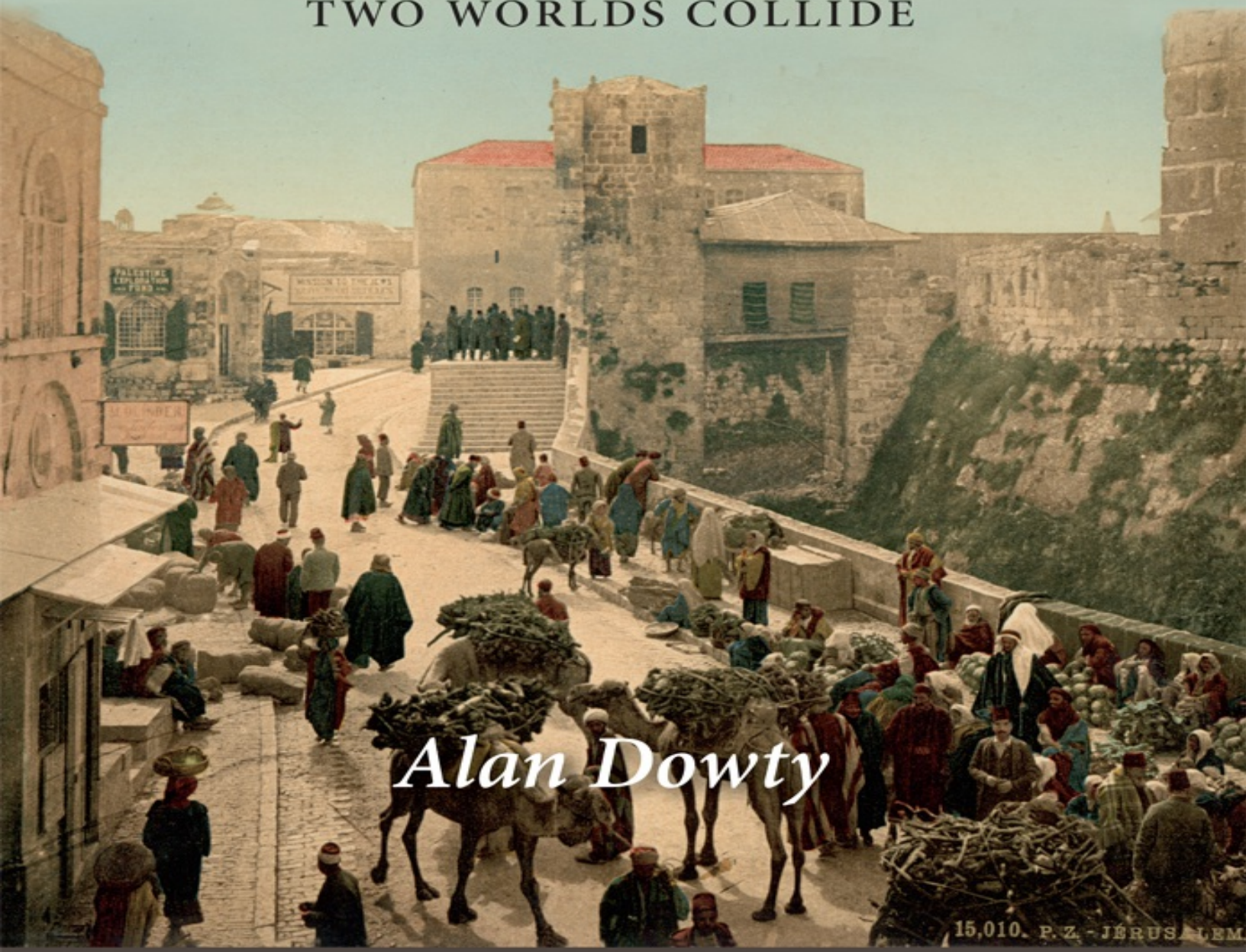
Arabs *and* Jews *in* Ottoman Palestine

TWO WORLDS COLLIDE



Alan Dowty

ARABS AND JEWS IN OTTOMAN PALESTINE

PERSPECTIVES ON ISRAEL STUDIES

S. Ilan Troen, Natan Aridan, Donna Divine, David Ellenson, and Arieh Saposnik, editors

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK HAS HAD AN unusually long period of gestation. As a result, it overlaps two periods as a visiting fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. Much of the basic research was done, therefore, in the Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford and in the Oxford Centre's own Kressel Archive. I am grateful to the Oxford Centre for providing me with an excellent environment in which to undertake this project—and at the same time I am also relieved that there is, at long last, something to show for it.

The Azrieli Institute for Israel Studies, at Concordia University, also provided me with a visiting fellowship at a key time in the book's development. My thanks to the institute and to its director, Csaba Nikolenyi.

In addition, much of the primary material came from the Central Zionist Archives, in Jerusalem, and from archival holdings in the National Library on the Hebrew University campus, during periods of residence in Jerusalem.

My intention with this book was to work from the ground up, tracking the development of Arab-Jewish conflict in Ottoman Palestine in large part through memoirs, letters, diaries, and other primary sources of contemporaries. This does, however, raise an issue of an inherent imbalance. Such sources are abundant on the Jewish side; in fact, a huge number of them are available in published formats. There are far fewer equivalent Arab sources for this period, especially before the rise of Arab nationalism in the years shortly before World War I. There are other kinds of Arab (and Turkish) sources that have been fully utilized by Palestinian and other scholars—newspapers have been thoroughly surveyed by Rashid Khalidi; diplomatic and governmental documents by Neville Mandel and Alexander Schölch; court records by Yuval Ben-Bassat. I have drawn extensively from these studies and others, but still there remains less direct Arab testimony about the localized clashes that form a good part of the story. The Jewish testimonies do include some serious attempts to describe and understand their Arab neighbors, but this is not the same as having direct expressions from these neighbors.

Readers will also note that there is relatively more emphasis on the first *aliya* (wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine), 1882–1905, than on the second *aliya*, 1905–1914. In part this could be justified on grounds that the second *aliya*, though covering a shorter period, has received much more attention from historians and thus needs less elaboration. In fact, I come away from this study feeling that the first *aliya* has been unjustly minimized, and even denigrated, in evaluations of its role in Arab-Jewish relations and in the rise of Zionism generally. This book can therefore be seen as part of an effort to redress the previous fixation on the second *aliya* and even to call into question the sharpness of the supposed differences between the two waves of immigration. What happened between Arabs and Jews in the last decade before World War I was, by and large, an extension of relations from the preceding quarter century.

For the convenience of the reader, wherever possible, I have made use of the abundance of

published primary sources to cite and quote from published versions and English translations. Unless otherwise noted, all other English translations are my own. I have used the Hebrew Language Academy system to transliterate Hebrew to the Latin alphabet and the American Library Association–Library of Congress system for transliteration of Arabic. Since the Jewish year does not correspond to the Western calendar year, dates of publication for some Hebrew-language sources will appear as two successive years.

ARABS AND JEWS IN OTTOMAN PALESTINE

chapter one

PALESTINE BEFORE ZIONISM

COULD A SHARP-EYED OBSERVER OF mid-nineteenth-century Palestine have detected hints of the future struggle between Jews and Arabs over this land?

It seems unlikely. The fact is that none of the observers at the time foresaw the conflict that was yet to come. Before the first wave of Jewish immigration in the 1880s, the most vivid portraits of Palestine came from European or American travelers who saw little promise for either Jews or Arabs in the Promised Land. The tiny and impoverished community of Jews, subsisting mainly on charity, hardly seemed a contender for territorial domain, and the Arab population living under Turkish rule appeared devoid of political identity or ambitions. Neither future contender made much of an impression; it was, in the eyes of outsiders, a dismally set stage without a credible script or convincing actors.

A MOURNFUL DESERT

Western observers left scathing observations about what they saw. From their blinkered perspective, the Palestinian provinces of the Ottoman Empire were marked by bleak desolation, rampant lawlessness, and breathtaking misery. Those religiously inclined saw this as divine judgment on non-Christians. William Thomson, an American Protestant missionary who spent over 40 years in Beirut, wrote, after an 1857 visit to Palestinian areas, that their "mournful deserts and mouldering ruins rebuke the pride of man and vindicate the truth of God."[1]

Secular visitors could be just as harsh. A 31-year-old Mark Twain, known at this point only for his short stories and humorous travelogues, reached Palestine in 1867 during his five-month voyage, immortalized in *The Innocents Abroad*. Unmoved by biblical sentiments that inspired others, he concluded: "Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince. . . . Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies." The barrenness of the hills was matched by the repulsiveness of the cities: "thoroughly ugly, and cramped, squalid, uncomfortable, and filthy."[2] Twain's observations mirrored those of another notable American literary figure, Herman Melville, who had visited in 1857 and in his journal noted that in the landscape "you see the anatomy—compares with ordinary regions as skeleton with living and rosy man." The contrast between physical reality and religious sanctity struck Melville: "The mind can not but be sadly & suggestively affected with the indifference of Nature & Man to all that makes the spot sacred to

the Christian."[3]

It is not too surprising that visitors from the verdant lands of Europe or America would be struck by the rocky aridity of much of the Middle East; similar observations are made today. But nineteenth-century observers were also struck by the sparse population they encountered, even in places that looked more inviting for settlement. Riding across the Plain of Sharon in "the vivid green of early spring" in 1873, Reverend Samuel Manning, American author and illustrator of numerous travelogues, noted the wildflowers on all sides but remarked that "this fertile plain which might support an immense population is almost a solitude." By the Sea of Galilee, where entire fleets sailed in ancient times, Manning found only "a single filthy ruinous town—Tiberias—half-a-dozen wretched villages, and the black tents of the Bedouins." In the whole Jordan Valley, he claimed, "there is not a single settled inhabitant."[4] Claude Reignier Conder, a British military engineer who carried out detailed surveys of Palestine for the Palestine Exploration Fund in the 1870s and 1880s, wrote that "the population of the land is insufficient, and it has been calculated that Palestine might support ten times its present total of inhabitants."[5] Most Western visitors made similar observations.[6]

Where the visitors did encounter inhabitants of the land, their judgments were equally harsh. Upon arrival at Jaffa, Manning's ship was met by a number of boats "manned by half-naked Arabs, howling, yelling, and fighting like demons." Upon finally making it ashore, "a crowd of wretched creatures press round us, clamouring for backsheesh [gratuities]. . . . Foul sights, and yet fouler smells, offend the senses."[7] Visitors frequently commented on the purported indolence and fatalism of the residents of Palestine. Thomson claimed that "laziness seems to have been a very prevalent vice in this country from the days of old."[8] Charles Thomas Wilson, a British missionary who later wrote on peasant life in Palestine, asserted that the fatalism of "the Oriental mind" was potentially "destructive of all civil government" and led to lapses in elemental common sense: "roads along the edge of precipices are often left without any protecting wall on the outer side . . .; houses, whose roofs are used almost as much as any part of them, are built without parapets."[9]

As usual, Mark Twain made some of the most trenchant and colorful comments. Embroidering on the difference between idealized engravings of the East and stark reality, he noted that in the engravings there was "no desolation; no dirt; no rags; no fleas; no ugly features; no sore eyes; no feasting flies; no besotted ignorance in the countenances; no raw places on the donkeys' backs; . . . no stench of camels." In sum, "Oriental scenes look best in steel engravings. I can not be imposed upon any more by that picture of the Queen of Sheba visiting Solomon. I shall say to myself, You look fine, Madam, but your feet are not clean, and you smell like a camel."[10]

These negative stereotypes were not limited to clerics and literati who might be expected to see other religions and cultures with a jaundiced eye. Consider the advice given to Westerners traveling to the region in one of the first guidebooks, published in 1868. The author, one Josias Leslie Porter, warns would-be pilgrims that in "their dress, their manners and customs, and their language," the inhabitants of the Holy Land "are all primitive." Furthermore, "the Arabs are illiterate, and ignorant of all Frank [European] inventions." Muslims generally are described as "proud," "fanatical," "dishonest," and "immoral." The Turkish rulers are portrayed as "ignorant

and presumptuous, vain and bigoted, proud without any feeling of honour, and cringing without humility."[11] Any traveler who took this advice seriously would have arrived in Palestine expecting the worst.

What struck outsiders most forcefully was a basic lack of law and order. The sparse population in open areas was, they reasoned, a result of the vulnerability to attack. The English clergyman and biblical scholar Henry Baker Tristram, who visited Palestine several times between 1858 and 1881, wrote that "nothing tells more plainly of the insecurity which has for ages cursed the land than the utter absence of isolated habitations." No matter how wide or rich a plain might be, it harbored no villages: "these are all hidden in the nooks of the mountains," protected from marauders.[12] Travelers were warned that territory outside towns and villages was generally controlled by the Bedouin, and travelers' accounts were full of stories of violence and extortion at the hands of these lawless tribal nomads. James Finn, the British consul in Jerusalem from 1846 to 1863, wrote of Bedouin raids that "none but those who have seen it can appreciate the devastation wrought in a few hours by these wild hordes. Like locusts they spread over the land . . . while they trample down, all corn or vegetable crops, leaving bare brown desolation where years of toil had made smiling fields and vineyards. Nor is this all, for the cattle and flocks are swept off to the desert by the marauders—who leave behind, for the unfortunate peasant, nothing that they can carry away."[13]

Finn found himself often, during this period, engaged in trying to settle conflicts among local villages and Bedouin tribes—an odd occupation for a foreign diplomat. Traveling in the early 1840s, the noted English author Walter Keating Kelly found that even the main road from Jerusalem to Jericho required an armed escort for protection against the Bedouin who "occasionally swoops upon his prey."[14]

Security was not generally an issue on the main routes, but elsewhere foreigners were advised to carry weapons and/or have an armed escort. The 1868 guidebook advised travelers that a revolver was "a useful traveling companion" and that it should be worn visibly for the best effect. But in "less frequented districts" an armed escort was necessary, and as a rule it was composed of "members of that tribe to which the country we propose to visit belongs."[15]

The critical reactions of European and American travelers do not, of course, represent a complete or objective picture of Palestine at the time. Other observers present a much less negative image; for example, the Arab traveler Nu'man al-Qasatli, visiting in 1874, paints a much more positive portrait of the commerce and industry that he encountered, noting that the population generally enjoyed a good life.[16] Nor were Western observers uniformly negative. George Adams Smith, the British Old Testament scholar and author of an 1894 historical geography that went through 25 editions, allowed that Palestine was "a carcase of a land" but then wrote in defense of its many scenic sites.[17] Despite his concern over security, Walter Keating Kelly disputed the image of emptiness and desolation: "Writers who have described the 'goodly land' of Palestine as so infertile . . . can never have beheld the plain of Sharon when arrayed in the lovely garb of spring."[18] Thomson offset his unflattering view of the Palestinian landscape with lyrical descriptions of a weekly market in the Jezre'el Valley and of harvest time in the same Plain of Sharon that others—at least in earlier years—had found so forlorn.[19]

Whether travelers from the Christian West focused on the barrenness or the beauty of what

they saw, they usually employed a biblical frame of reference. They directly linked the perceived backwardness they encountered to the Palestine of the scriptures, a reflection of the timelessness of the Holy Land that brought them close to the days of antiquity. “In [Palestine’s] distant hamlets, secluded gorges, and barren wilderness,” wrote Charles Thomas Wilson, “life is much what it was when Jacob fed his flocks on these same hills, or Ruth gleaned in the fields of Bethlehem.”[20] But the patches of majesty evoked similar images of a timeless Palestine: “The hills, the valleys, the sea, the plains make up a scene of surpassing beauty, the main features of which are unaltered by the lapse of centuries.”[21] Most Western travelers to Palestine shared the religious orientation of Tristram, who attested: “I can bear testimony to the minute truth of innumerable incidental allusions in Holy Writ. . . . The Holy Land not only elucidates but bears witness to the truth of the HOLY BOOK.”[22]

THE REALITY: PALESTINE IN TRANSITION

Travelers from the West, especially those with strong religious impulses who considered Palestine at just one point in history, were ill-equipped to understand some of the forces that were transforming this land during the nineteenth century. The period immediately before the first modern Jewish settlements—roughly from the end of the Crimean War in 1856 to the 1880s—was, in particular, a time of fundamental shifts in governance, economics, and relations with the outside world. It can be described as “a qualitatively new stage” in Palestinian history, marked by a surge of Ottoman reform and centralization on one hand and a thrust of European penetration and integration into the world economy on the other.[23]

The backdrop to these changes was Europe’s increasing engagement in the Middle East. Russia was pressing southward against the Ottoman Empire, having annexed Crimea in 1783 and continuing to move in the direction of its celebrated goal of controlling the straits—the Bosporus and the Dardanelles—that blocked its exit from the Black Sea. And in 1798 Napoléon Bonaparte—soon to be crowned emperor of France—inflicted the first European conquest in the Islamic Middle East since the final defeat of the crusaders five hundred years earlier. Though soon forced out by the British, Napoléon’s brief invasion of Egypt and Palestine inaugurated more than a century of European intervention that culminated in the division of the region among colonial powers after World War I.

This Napoleonic interlude cast a shadow over Palestine in the following years. Muhammad Ali, a military commander of Albanian origin, seized power in Cairo in the chaotic aftermath and established an Egyptian dynasty (the Alawiyya) that lasted until the 1952 Nasserist revolution. Though nominally still subject to the Ottoman sultan, Muhammad Ali ruled Egypt independently and even threatened other Ottoman domains. An Egyptian army under Ibrahim Pasha, Muhammad Ali’s son, conquered Palestine and Syria in 1832, and for a time even threatened to march on Constantinople itself. The Egyptians were forced out of Syria and Palestine in 1840 by an international coalition that, because of its own rivalries, chose to save the Ottoman Empire from collapse. But the entire episode opened up the Palestinian districts to new outside influences and fanned a revolt against Egyptian rule in 1834 that represents, perhaps, the first incarnation of a Palestinian political identity.[24] The pioneering historian of Arab nationalism, George Antonius, goes so far as to label Ibrahim Pasha the first modern Arab nationalist and to claim that his failure to mobilize non-Egyptians to his cause was due to it being “in advance of

the birth of modern Arab national consciousness."[25]

At the time there was, as it happens, no administrative unit in the Ottoman Empire that corresponded to Western conceptions of Palestine. The three districts (*sanjaks*) that were later stitched together to create the British Mandate of Palestine were Jerusalem (south), Nablus or Balqa (central), and Acre (north), and before 1830 they were part of a province (*vilayet*) ruled from Damascus. From 1830 to 1864 the three districts became part of another province ruled variously from Sidon (in present-day Lebanon), Acre, or Beirut. In 1864 they were reattached to Damascus.

On three occasions—in 1830, 1840, and 1872—the Turks considered plans to amalgamate the three Palestinian districts into a new province of Palestine. On all three occasions they backed down, fearing that concentrating the holy sites into one unit would invite focused Western interest and intervention.[26] But they did recognize the particular sensitivity of Jerusalem in 1873 by making it an independent sanjak (or *mutasarriflik*) reporting directly to Constantinople.[27] In 1888 the remaining two Palestinian districts, Nablus and Acre, were attached to a new vilayet of Beirut, thus keeping Palestine divided. Despite this administrative division, however, it is clear that the concept of Palestine was taking hold not only in the minds of the outside world but also among the largely Muslim inhabitants of the land.

The basic demography of Palestine during this period was anything but static. The population of the three districts together in 1800 has been estimated at about 275,000 (the same area today holds almost 12 million).[28] This reflected a decline in the number of villages and the density of population over the previous two centuries, accounting for the abandoned villages noted by travelers.[29] But by 1882—the beginning of modern Jewish settlement—this had grown to 462,465 according to the best adjusted Ottoman data, with 65 percent of this growth coming after 1850.[30] This increase, almost doubling the population in about eight decades, confirms other observations on improvements in basic security, physical conditions, and economic advances. Beginning in the 1840s, for example, many of the abandoned villages were once again inhabited.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Muslims constituted an estimated 89 percent of the population, Christians about 8 percent, and Jews 2.5 percent. These figures had shifted only slightly eight decades later to 87 percent, 9.5 percent, and 3.2 percent, respectively. Nearly all the Muslims and Christians were Arab in language and culture; the exceptions were principally Muslim Turkish officials and soldiers in one case, and small numbers of foreign-born Christian clergy in the other, both of which accounted for less than 1 percent of the relevant community.[31]

Apart from the religious divide, the Arab population was split in other ways. During the early part of the century, Arab localities in Palestine still identified themselves as "Qays" or "Yaman," based on their supposed origin in either northern or southern Arabia. These largely fictitious identities still ignited violent clashes from time to time, although by late in the century Charles Thomas Wilson noted that such conflicts "have become, to a large extent, a thing of the past."[32]

Most observers distinguished three major segments of the Arab population: town dwellers (which included the local elites), villagers, and nomadic Bedouin. The villagers, known as fellahin, were the farmers or peasants who were in fact the mainstay of the economy but were looked down on by both townsmen and Bedouin. Finn described fellahin as "existing in a very low social condition approaching nearly to barbarism," living in "wretched" dwellings with the

fruits of their labor going mainly to landowners and tax collectors.[33] Porter's handbook cautioned that the fellahin "are scarcely less wild and lawless than the [Bedouin]. . . . They are a rough, athletic, and turbulent race," and advised travelers "to treat them with cool dignity."[34]

The unsettled Bedouin regarded themselves, and were often regarded by others, as "true" Arabs who had remained bearers of the ancient heritage, and the label of "Arab" was sometimes reserved for the Bedouin alone. Their reputation for lawlessness and plunder has been noted, and the European clerics or scholars who ventured into their domains seldom had kind words for them, calling them "vulgar brutes," "villainous-looking cutthroats," "beasts of prey," "land-pirates," and "insolent barbarians." And again they employed the Bible to make sense of what they encountered: the Bedouin were "the sons of Ishmael, differing little in their appearance from their wild nomad ancestor."[35]

The fact that this fractured society was governed by rulers of another language and ethnicity —the Ottoman Turks—was another obstacle to the growth of a sense of common identity. Most shared the bond of Islam with the Turks, backed up by general recognition of the Ottoman sultan as caliph, the successor to Muhammad as titular ruler of Muslims. But beyond this, the sense of identification with the state or a shared public interest was notably weak. Outsiders commented on what they saw as a lack of patriotism comparable to that in European states; the patriotism of the Arab, one wrote, "is confined to his own house; anything beyond it does not concern him."[36] This helped explain the lack of public works: the absence of roads, the disrepair of official buildings, the accumulation of refuse.

Before the mid-nineteenth century, Ottoman rule concentrated primarily on two functions: the collection of taxes—usually through a tax farmer who had every incentive to extract as much as possible[37]—and the conscription of soldiers when needed. Much of the actual governance remained in the hands of local sheikhs and notables, an arrangement that suited most concerned. As a visitor during this early period remarked, "the Fellaheen do not appeal to the Turkish law courts in the cities if they can possibly avoid doing so" but preferred decisions by village chiefs and elders respected for their wisdom.[38] Very few Arabs rose to the highest ranks in Ottoman officialdom, but representatives of the leading Arab families served as intermediaries between the population and the regime. And while the Ottoman authorities did not make a heavy imprint on local politics, the Palestinian provinces held a relative high priority for Constantinople because of their religious importance, their function as a major route for the hajj to Mecca, and the pressures of European powers seeking a foothold in the Holy Land.[39]

The Egyptian occupation of Palestine and Syria from 1832 to 1841, together with the need for British and Austrian support in ending that occupation, impelled the Ottoman sultan to embark on an extensive program of reform, modernization, and centralization known as the *Tanzimat* (reorganization). In 1839, even before the occupation ended, Sultan Abdulmecid issued an imperial rescript (the *Hatt-i-Sharif*), based on European models, that led to regularized and extended administration throughout the empire, an end to tax farming, establishment of state schools and universities, secularization of the court system, and (at least in theory) equality before the law for non-Muslims. The implication for the Palestinian provinces was clear: with the Egyptians gone, Ottoman authorities planned to solidify their control of the Arabic-speaking areas and curb the independence of the sheikhs and notables. As one Ottoman official told

resistant sheikhs, “formerly the Turkish government was weak in Syria and we could not compel you always to obey us, but now we are strong and if you are insubordinate I will . . . throw you into the sea.”[40]

A second wave of Tanzimat reform began with the imperial rescript of 1856 (*Hatt-i-Humayun*), which eliminated all discrimination on the basis of religion, language, or race—a huge step for a regime headed by the caliph of all Muslims. Religious freedom was thereby guaranteed (though not the right of Muslims to convert). Foreigners could possess land, pending arrangements with relevant states. While it represented an important step forward in human rights, the Hatt-i-Humayun also inevitably provided considerable leverage for further foreign penetration. The timing of this document also reflects dependence on support of European states. It came as the Crimean War (1853–1856), in which the Turks had once again been rescued from a serious threat (this time from Russia), was winding down and their saviors—primarily Britain and France—were pressing for further opening of the Ottoman territory, especially “the Holy Land.”

By minimizing religious and ethnic distinctions, the Ottoman government hoped not only to discourage separatist nationalisms within the empire but also to avoid giving European powers a pretext for intervention in support of such movements. In place of other identities, the rescripts of 1839 and 1856, followed by further legislation of equal status in 1869, were meant to forge a common Ottoman loyalty. This was reinforced during the reign of Abdul Hamid (1876–1909) by the establishment of about ten thousand schools, on all levels, promoting this state ideology of “Ottomanism.”[41]

The impact of the Tanzimat, like all such sweeping programs, was uneven. Government schools and secular courts expanded slowly, though much justice was still carried out by local custom and authorities. The end of tax farming and the institution of more efficient taxation did not mean that more revenues were available to meet local needs; instead, more and more went to Constantinople and other urban centers, leaving little (an estimated 5–15 percent in some cases) to meet local needs.[42] And compulsory conscription, particularly during the Crimean War and the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878, continued to inflict a disproportionate burden on the poorer segments of the Arab population and to stir resentment against wars of the sultan in which they felt no stake.

But all observers agree that by the 1870s and 1880s there was a vast improvement in basic law and order throughout Palestine. As late as 1860, a horde of six thousand Bedouin had occupied the city of Tiberias to demand a payoff, but this was apparently the last attack on that scale. By the late 1870s, the only major battles were among the Bedouin tribes themselves, and the route between Jaffa and Jerusalem was guarded by 17 watchtowers (though wagons still preferred to travel in convoys).[43] The fear of establishing new settlements in open territory, which had deterred Jewish and other projects in the past, had passed. Yehoshua Yellin, a leading figure in the Jewish community, wrote in the new Jerusalem Hebrew newspaper *Havatselet* in 1872: “I refrained from raising my voice to you so long as the shadow of fear of the *Beduin* faced us, but now you see with your own eyes that the shadow of fear is gone. . . . And fear of the Arabs is no longer felt, because there is no fear.”[44] Yellin was instrumental in the effort to establish the first modern Jewish agricultural settlement at Motza, on the road to Jerusalem, where land had been purchased by a wealthy Baghdadi Jew in 1854.

THE SHIFTING AGRARIAN BASE

Subsistence agriculture remained the economic base of Ottoman Palestine throughout the nineteenth century, but increased security, Ottoman reforms, and European penetration sparked significant shifts in this base. Between the time of the Ottoman return to control in 1840 and the beginning of Zionist settlement in the 1880s, great changes took place. By the 1870s Ottoman authority reached into local levels as it never had before. Agriculture was becoming more commercialized, trade with Europe increased greatly, a merchant and banking class emerged, and a state school system was beginning to take hold. In the two decades following the Crimean War, Palestine experienced "a significant economic upswing."[45]

These developments were tied to the integration of Ottoman Palestine into the world economy, but this integration came at a price. The Industrial Revolution in the Western world undercut local crafts and industries in Palestine as elsewhere, flooding local markets with cheap manufactured goods (textiles, for example) and reducing non-European regions to the role of supplier of raw materials. At the same time, the increased demand and higher prices for these raw materials—especially agricultural products—created prosperous new markets for landholders and middlemen in these regions and led to diversification in agricultural production. Palestine became a source of wheat, barley, sesame, olive oil, soap, citrus fruits, and vegetables for Europe, while importing in return manufactured goods, textiles, rice, sugar, and lumber. During this period, the Palestinian provinces seem to have maintained a positive trade balance of exports over imports.[46]

Improved security, together with the creation of large landed estates devoted to cash crops, made it possible to expand cultivated land and agricultural production. Much previously uncultivated land was taken up by new olive and orange plantations. Oranges, in particular, became a prime export, first within the Middle East but after 1875 increasingly to Europe. Orange groves in the Jaffa area—from whence the famous "Jaffa orange" comes—quadrupled in size in the three decades from 1850 to 1880.[47]

The commercialization of agriculture was, in turn, linked to changes in landownership and tenure that were an unintended consequence of Tanzimat reforms. Much of the arable land in Palestine was state land (*miri*), as distinguished from private land (*mulk*), lands held by religious trusts (*vakif*), tribal lands (*metruk*), or wasteland (*mevat*). Most of the *miri* or state land was cultivated by fellahin under a system of land tenure (*musha'*) that entitled them to live on the land and pass it on to their heirs. But this changed dramatically following the new Land Law in 1858, enacted by the Ottoman government with the intention of systematizing and rationalizing the chaotic system of land tenure. The government ordered the registration of state land by the users; the actual tillers of the land, fearing greater exposure to taxation and conscription and unskilled in legal matters, allowed the land to be registered in the names of local officials and notables. In theory the land remained state land, but in practice it became indistinguishable from private land, and those living on it lost their right of tenure. At the same time large areas of previously uncultivated land were acquired by the same landholders. Both of these developments contributed to the creation of large landed estates, tied to the rise in agricultural exports, and the emergence of a new class of urban notables.[48]

This urban notable class, often drawn from the same families that had dominated local society, now drew its wealth and power from landowning and from positions of power in the

expanded Ottoman administration. It also included an emerging group of merchants and financiers, largely in the coastal cities, which in that period included Beirut as a center relevant to Palestine. Among the most important landholders, for example, was the Sursuq family of Beirut, which in the 1870s acquired title to a huge tract of land in the Esdraelon or Jezre'el Valley, part of the Acre sanjak. The position of such landholders was stated, perhaps overdramatically, by the British author and diplomat, Laurence Oliphant, who visited the Sursuq domain in 1883: "No despot exercises a more autocratic power over the liberties and lives of his subjects than does this millionaire landed proprietor, who continues annually to add to his territory till the whole of Galilee seems in danger of falling into his hands."[49]

The new regime in land tenure also opened the door to sales of land to foreign nationals. Before 1867, foreign non-Muslims could purchase land in the Ottoman Empire only by special permission (*firman*) from the sultan. Finn obtained such permission for the purchase of lands near Jerusalem in 1850 and 1852, part of which later became the Jewish neighborhood of Kerem Avraham. Moshe Montefiore, the prominent British Jewish philanthropist, managed in 1855 to purchase land to establish Mishkenot Sha'ananim, the first neighborhood outside the Old City walls. With the new market in state lands (*miri*) and pressure from the European powers to broaden access on a nondiscriminatory basis, the Ottoman government finally issued a law in 1867 that gave many European nationals the right to buy property in Ottoman territory.[50]

The opening of new lands and the expansion of exports was tied to significant improvements in transportation. Few themes appear more often in contemporary travelers' accounts than the absence of roads suitable for wheeled vehicles and the consequent reliance on animal power for moving both goods and passengers. Travelers from Jaffa, Palestine's central port, to the Galilee (in what is now northern Israel) actually found it faster and cheaper to travel by sea to Beirut, then again by sea to Sidon in what is now southern Lebanon, and then by mule or horse to the final destination.[51] Charles Thomas Wilson, among others, noted that there were still remnants of paved Roman roads throughout the area, but that they had become useless from neglect.[52] Some, like William Thomson, put the blame on the Muslim conquest: "When the wild Arabs of the Mohammedan desolation became masters, wheeled vehicles immediately sank into neglect, and even contempt."[53] Others detected a more subtle resistance to improving access: Finn quotes a urban notable as commenting, when he built something of value, "I do not make a road up to that object in order to invite strangers to come that way." How much more so regarding Jerusalem, "the jewel after which all Europeans are greedy; why should we facilitate an access to the prize they aim at?"[54] When an Austrian engineer in the mid-1860s proposed building a railroad between Jaffa and Jerusalem, the Grand Vizier in Constantinople reportedly responded, "I will never grant the crazy Christians a road facility in Palestine, because if I did they would turn all of Jerusalem into a Christian madhouse."[55]

The existing road to Jerusalem was indeed a focus of attention. Mark Twain, in 1867, described it as "a narrow bridle-path which traversed the beds of the mountain gorges," with "long trains of laden camels and asses" that mashed their parties against perpendicular walls. "However," he added, "this was as good a road as we had found in Palestine."[56] Had Twain traveled but one year later, he could have enjoyed the first modern road in Palestine, built by the Ottoman authorities between Jaffa and Jerusalem and opened to traffic in 1868. Within a few

years the first vehicles appeared, providing a regular wagon service between the two cities. Other new roads, and regular vehicle services, soon followed. The upgraded transportation was accompanied by improved communication; for example, the first telegraph line between Jerusalem and Damascus began operating in 1865. For the Ottoman authorities, modernization was a tool for tying together various areas of the empire.

FROM RULE OF SHEIKHS TO RULE OF NOTABLE FAMILIES

Improved transportation and communication helped the Ottoman bureaucracy and army expand and reach ordinary subjects in rural areas who previously had little direct contact with Turkish rule. In Jerusalem, for example, the Ottoman governor had previously exercised little power outside the city itself; local sheikhs still ruled, and contended with each other, in the villages throughout the Jerusalem district. In the framework of the Tanzimat, the Ottoman governor moved in 1858–1859 to curb the authority of the sheikhs and establish direct control.[57]

Part of this extension of Ottoman administration was the establishment during the 1860s and 1870s of municipal, district (sanjak), and provincial (vilayet) councils, whose members were either appointed by the local governor or elected by male property owners. The powers of these councils were limited; Ottoman reformers believed that only a strong central government could carry out the wrenching changes contemplated in the Tanzimat. But they served the purpose of pulling local elites, who dominated as either appointed or elected members, into the Ottoman hierarchy.[58]

This process not only drew in the local elites (at least those who cooperated with the Ottomans) but also altered the composition of these elites. The "rule of the sheikhs," usually on a clan or tribal basis, had long prevailed in the Palestinian highlands, the center of Arab life. The notable urban families (*ayan* in Arabic) had often formed patron-client relationships with village sheikhs. But as Ottoman authorities replaced hereditary sheikhs in the villages with appointed *mukhtars*, who were officials of the state, power shifted decisively to the urban notables—many of whom had also become large landholders following the changes in land tenure and registration.[59]

The urban notables, from families who had long been prominent in religious life and religious (sharia) courts, now became the key mediators between Turkish rulers and the Arab population. They became the moving force both in the new administrative councils and in the new network of secular courts and played a key role in new commercial and agrarian pursuits. This pattern of dominance by the urban notables survived until well into the twentieth century.[60]

This pattern was particularly evident in Jerusalem. A prime example was the al-Khalidi family, which for centuries had filled key positions in the Jerusalem religious courts and other administrative posts. Yusuf Diya al-Khalidi, born in 1842, illustrates in his career the changed roles that urban notables came to play in the shifting sands of Ottoman rule. First in his family to acquire a secular education as well as the customary religious studies, Yusuf al-Khalidi was appointed as mayor of Jerusalem in 1867 (at the age of 25!) and then was elected to the first Ottoman parliament when Sultan Abdul Hamid promulgated a short-lived constitution in 1876. Though loyal to the Ottoman Empire throughout his life, al-Khalidi was an outspoken advocate of liberal reform; consequently, when the sultan scrapped both constitution and parliament in 1878, he was among the members of parliament also to be expelled from Constantinople. But

even notables known to be critical were incorporated into the power structure, and at the time of the first encounters between Arab inhabitants and Jewish immigrants, in the early 1880s, al-Khalidi was serving as governor of the Jaffa subdistrict of the Jerusalem district.[61]

Jaffa, gateway to Jerusalem and the most important port at the time, was one of the cities that were prospering and expanding with the economic and social transformations. During the 1870s the city "burst its seams" as growth moved outside the city walls, which were in fact demolished by the end of the decade.[62] Jaffa lacked real port facilities; ships were loaded and unloaded from boats while anchored in the roadstead. But, at the same time, the growth of rural suburbs, gardens, and citrus plantations beyond the disappearing walls created an impression on incoming visitors that was in sharp contrast to their generally negative observations.

Acre was still the main port of northern Palestine, but Haifa was developing rapidly and would eventually take its place. In the three decades before 1882, Haifa's population had tripled to six thousand and had, as in Jaffa, spilled out beyond the city walls.[63] Among the inland cities, Nablus was singled out, even by Western travelers, for its thriving appearance. Manning, visiting in 1873, wrote that "in Nablus alone of all cities of Palestine it is possible to see and feel what 'the good land' was in the days of its prosperity."[64] As regional center of the most economically successful area of the period, Nablus flourished from the trade in agricultural commodities (such as cotton) and the production of soap and oil. Bethlehem, another inland city that was growing rapidly, had nurtured a growing trade in religious crafts and souvenirs.

Jerusalem, while also growing rapidly during this period, still evoked mixed reactions. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century, though serving as a district capital, it remained a local center of limited significance. But after the end of the Crimean War in 1856, and even more after it became directly linked to Constantinople in 1873, it became a regional center. From a town of fewer than nine thousand in 1806, Jerusalem had thirty thousand inhabitants by 1880 (a majority of them Jewish).[65] The leading families—the al-Khalidis, the al-Husaynis, and many others—became leading actors in Palestinian society and politics. New construction spilled out beyond the Old City walls, though (in contrast to Jaffa) the walls were left standing.

Of course, Jerusalem had a religious significance that colored perceptions enormously. American Protestants, in particular, found the very objects of worship to be especially abhorrent. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, wrote Thomson following an 1857 visit, was defiled by "the buffoonery and the profane orgies performed by the Greeks," and the Latin rites were "[not] a whit less distressing and offensive."[66] Herman Melville, visiting in the same year, said of this holiest site of Christianity: "All is glitter & nothing is gold. A sickening cheat."[67] Ten years later, Mark Twain found no relief in the city from his generally caustic view of Palestine: "So small! Why, it was no larger than an American village of four thousand inhabitants. . . . A fast walker could go outside the walls of Jerusalem and walk entirely around the city in an hour." And regarding the fourteen thousand residents then living in the city: "Rags, wretchedness, poverty and dirt . . . lepers, cripples, the blind, and the idiotic, assail you on every hand, and they know but one word of but one language apparently—the eternal 'bucksheesh.' . . . Jerusalem is mournful, and dreary, and lifeless. I would not desire to live there."[68]

Palestinian villages were also growing; abandoned villages were repopulated, and marginal lands were added to existing holdings. Much of this growth came in the Shefala, the transition

zone between the coastal plain and the highlands, and in areas around the developing major cities. Motivated by demographic pressure and improved security, some Bedouin established permanent settlements. There were also immigrants from outside Palestine—Egypt, Syria, Algeria—who were encouraged by Ottoman authorities to settle in order to offset the growth of the non-Muslim community.[69] While earlier in the century village houses were usually mud huts, in blocks with joining outer walls for defense, as the century progressed they were increasingly built of stone, with tile roofs.

In the villages, however, traditional patterns and practices were more resistant to change. Villages were organized around the clan or extended family (*hamula*), even though sheikhs who ruled as heads of family were being replaced by appointed *mukhtars* (who often played the same role). The village mosque remained the center of village life and villagers were noted for their religious frame of reference in all matters, leading to fatalistic acceptance of whatever transpired as the will of God. And while European dress had penetrated the cities, it did not prevail in the villages until the twentieth century. Women's dress remained even more traditional; Thomson, in 1857, remarked on the prevalence of women, when in public, "closely veiled from head to foot."[70]

The village division of labor was also set in stone. Men worked the fields, and women did the rest: fetching water and fuel, grinding grain, tending animals, caring for children. Water, a scarce resource, was drawn by hand from wells, where they existed, or obtained from cisterns that collected rainwater. And added to the usual hardships was the imposition on village fellahin of ever heavier taxes from an increasingly intrusive Ottoman regime and ever heavier rents imposed by the new class of absentee landowners. According to one estimate, the average fellah typically gave up over two-thirds of the value of his crops in taxes and rent, before calculating his own expenses.[71] This helps explain the often-noted hostility to outside authority.

At the same time, both cities and villages suffered some of the chronic weaknesses of underdeveloped societies. Medical care and basic hygiene were lacking; malaria, typhus, cholera, and eye diseases were endemic; even the biblical curse of leprosy was still starkly visible.[72] Despite progress made, a visiting physician in 1881 still declared that "here, hygiene is altogether unknown . . . refuse and animal corpses fill entire neighborhoods with their stench."[73] It was only in 1842 that the first modern hospital was established in Palestine; by 1878 there were five hospitals—though still only 18 doctors—to serve Jerusalem's thirty thousand residents.[74]

Slavery still existed at a low level in Palestine, as elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. In 1830 European pressure had finally forced the Ottomans to emancipate (at least in theory) all slaves of European origin. In 1858 they banned the slave trade in black (African) slaves, though they did not emancipate existing black slaves. In 1871 they backed up the slave trade ban, finally, by imposing a penalty on violators. In 1880 the Ottoman government signed a treaty with Great Britain eliminating all slavery, meaning that slavery was formally outlawed just as Jewish settlement in Palestine was about to begin. But the provisions of the treaty were not enforced until 1889, and in reality "slaves were a feature of Jerusalem households until well into the 20th century."[75]

The subjugation of women also remained a principal feature of Palestinian society in both

cities and villages. A woman traveler, in 1858, noted that throughout the region women "are the abject slaves of the 'lords of creation.'"[76] Male visitors were hardly less caustic. Thomson wrote that the treatment of women was justified "by the tyrant's plea of necessity," and that "hence they literally use the rod upon them." He was particularly struck to see "small boys lord it over both mother and sisters in a most insolent manner."[77] Charles Thomas Wilson wrote of the "degraded" position of a woman: "looked upon as hardly a human being, soundly thrashed whenever she displeases her lord and master, and . . . liable to be divorced any moment."[78]

In sum, the Tanzimat reforms triggered momentous changes in Palestinian provinces but also left much untouched or little touched. Palestine remained an agrarian society, mostly on a basis of subsistence agriculture though with a growing cash crop sector. Foreign trade was still a small part of the economy. Most of the arable land—70 percent by one estimate—remained within the communal (*musha'*) system of land tenure. Though cities grew, it was still a predominantly rural society.[79] This then is the picture of the domestic transition in nineteenth-century Palestine, a transition largely impelled by Ottoman initiatives and forces of local development. We now turn to the second dimension of transition: the changes brought about by foreign pressures and penetration.

"THE EASTERN QUESTION"

The foreign presence in Ottoman Palestine was minimal at the beginning of the nineteenth century. No foreign diplomats had been officially allowed in Jerusalem since the Muslim conquest in the seventh century (except, of course, during the Crusades), and attempts to skirt this prohibition had been frustrated by popular and governmental hostility.[80] Pilgrims were permitted in small numbers, but foreign non-Muslims had no right of permanent residence in Jerusalem. Public displays of Christian or Jewish symbols—church bells, ram horns—were not allowed. Non-Muslim religious institutions that predated Islam were allowed to remain, but generally no new non-Muslim institutions were permitted.

European states did, however, have certain privileges defined by the Capitulations: treaties that the Ottoman Empire had signed with European states beginning in the sixteenth century. These treaties granted European governments, initially, jurisdiction over their own citizens within Ottoman borders. They were not "capitulations" in the modern sense; the title actually derives from the *capitula*, or chapters, in the agreements. They were actually perfectly in accord with traditional Muslim practice and the Turkish millet system, under which non-Muslim religious communities enjoyed internal autonomy. But the Capitulations became a tool for European penetration when the states involved came to claim jurisdiction over all coreligionists within the Ottoman Empire: France as protector of Roman Catholics, Russia of Orthodox Christians, Britain and Prussia of Protestants.[81]

From the time of its reversal at the gates of Vienna in 1683, the Ottoman Empire had suffered one defeat after another. It fought 13 wars with Russia between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, losing the Crimea and other Black Sea domains and bringing the Russians to the brink of achieving their long-sought goal of controlling the Bosporus and the Dardanelles, the straits allowing their exit from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean.

In the course of the nineteenth century, the Ottomans also suffered the loss of Greece, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria, retaining only a fraction of their European holdings (and most of this

was also lost on the eve of World War I). They had also experienced the near-loss of Syria and Palestine to Muhammad Ali of Egypt in the 1830s. The French established a de facto protectorate in Lebanon in 1860–1861, while the French and British penetrated Egypt, still technically part of the Ottoman domains, in the course of building the Suez Canal, with the British finally occupying Egypt in 1881–1882. In North Africa, the French began the conquest of Algeria in 1830 and established a protectorate over Tunisia in 1881. All in all, in the course of two centuries the Ottomans lost over half their territory to a combination of European imperialism and restive non-Muslim (mostly Christian) Western-oriented minorities.

In European diplomacy the Ottoman Empire was tagged as "the Sick Man of Europe," and the question of how to divide the spoils from the sick man's impending collapse was labeled "the Eastern Question." The Turks for their part exploited rivalries among the European powers in order to block further inroads into the Ottoman heartland. In the Crimean War, for example, the Russian threat was countered by British and French support; immediately after the war, however, the Ottoman sultan gave the Russians a prime piece of real estate in Jerusalem (the "Russian Compound") to counter growing dependence on Britain and France.[82] Later in the century, the new European power, Germany, became the counterweight to British and French pressures. The Turkish practice of this diplomatic art was recorded at midcentury by the British consul in Jerusalem, James Finn: "But the sweetest morsel of Osmanli [i.e., Ottoman] performance was what went to weakening that which they disliked the most—European influence in the East. This they tried to do in Jerusalem by setting the Consuls against each other. . . . These arts are the resource of feebleness, however skillfully practiced; and that they are often practiced with consummate skill no one who has watched Turkish diplomacy on a large or a small scale can deny."[83]

Given heavy dependence on European powers—especially Britain and France, during most of this period—Ottoman authorities had to yield on the exclusion of Franks (Europeans) from places of religious sensitivity. In 1841 Britain and Prussia (soon to be Germany) were allowed to establish a joint Anglican-Lutheran bishopric in Jerusalem, and the Greek Orthodox patriarchate moved from Constantinople to Jerusalem. In the same year, the office of chief rabbi (*Hacham Bashi*) was established for the Sephardic (Middle Eastern) Jewish community. In 1848 the office of Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, which had been moribund since the Crusades, was revived and the French assumed the role of protector of the Roman Catholic Church in the region.[84] Over the years, permits for the building of new churches were granted to British, French, Russian, Prussian, and other Christian sponsors.

These changing power realities forced an end to exclusion of non-Muslims from the *Haram ash-Sharif*, or Noble Sanctuary, known to Jews and Christians as the Temple Mount. This enclosure, in the southeastern corner of the Jerusalem Old City walls, is holy to the three religions; as the site of the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, it is considered the third most holy site in Islam after Mecca and Medina. Entrance to the compound had been strictly forbidden to non-Muslims since it was wrested back from the crusaders in the twelfth century. But during the Crimean War, with Ottoman Turkey dependent on Western rescue from the Russians, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the exclusion. In 1855 one of the first royal visitors since the Crusades, the Belgian duke of Brabant (later king of Belgium), arrived with a *firman* (imperial decree) from the sultan granting access to the *Haram*. From this point on,

admission to the holy site became a common occurrence.[85]

The prohibition of Christian diplomats in Jerusalem also fell during this period. Great Britain was allowed to establish a consulate in Jerusalem in 1838, when it was still occupied by Ibrahim Pasha's Egyptian forces. This was followed by Prussia in 1842, Sardinia and France in 1843, Austria in 1847, Spain in 1854, the United States in 1856, and Russia in 1857. The growth of European diplomatic powers inside Ottoman territory increased the scope of the application of the Capitulation treaties. The initial purpose of these agreements was to allow foreign governments to exercise jurisdiction over their own citizens who were temporarily visiting or living in the Ottoman Empire. This was considered normal in the case of non-Muslims to whom Muslim law was irrelevant; it also served the purpose initially of attracting foreign merchants and companies to do business in the empire. But in the nineteenth century it became an extremely useful tool of intervention for foreign consuls, who engaged in lively competition to extend the number of their nation's protégés as much as possible. One of the issues in the Crimean War was the Russian demand for recognition of its right to act as protector of all Orthodox Christians—not just Russians—in the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman authorities, not surprisingly, deeply resented this misuse of the capitulatory system, which infringed on their sovereignty and encouraged separatist and nationalist tendencies. They tried to abrogate it when the Hatt-i-Humayun, guaranteeing equal rights to all, was issued in 1856. This, they argued, removed the need for protection of particular communities. But they were rebuffed in this by the European powers, who insisted in the Treaty of Paris that same year, and later in the London Conference of 1871 and the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, on the continued unchanging observance of all existing treaties and conventions.[86] Thus European consuls were able to intervene extensively in defense of the right of foreigners and non-Muslims to buy land and get building permits.

"A PEACEFUL CRUSADE"

The "hard power" of European intervention in Ottoman Palestine reinforced "soft power" penetration through religious, educational, scientific, and charitable institutions. In some cases, these activities carried a millennial or messianic overtone with a redemptive future for the Holy Land, what one scholar of the period has labeled "the Peaceful Crusade."[87]

Greater contact with Europeans brought about a shift in attitudes within the region. Hostility toward the Christian West had a long history, but for some time Europeans had been seen neither as a threat nor as having anything worth copying. Despite some material advances, they were regarded—as they had been during the Crusades—as cultural and civilizational inferiors. But now the local population had to come to terms with a post-Renaissance European challenge of an entirely different order. Some Western institutions seemed to be worth copying; this was clearly an element in the Tanzimat program of reform and modernization. Within the Palestinian areas as elsewhere, European models of education were also adopted, sending children of the elite to local missionary or private Western-model schools or to European schools and universities.[88]

The greater visibility of Europeans was an element in this change. Organized pilgrimages to the Holy Land began in the 1860s, and by the 1870s thousands of Christian pilgrims each year were passing through the major religious sites. In Jerusalem they seemed at times to outnumber the inhabitants. Travel guides for European and American pilgrims began to appear; the first

Baedeker guide to the Holy Land was published in 1875. The advice given to travelers reflected the patronizing perceptions Westerners had of the population they encountered. The pilgrims were warned that only in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Hebron—the main sites of Christian interest—could they expect European-style hotels of a reasonable standard. They were urged to employ a dragoman—literally, a translator, but in practice a contractor who would make all the necessary local arrangements. Security was not generally an issue on the main routes, but elsewhere they were advised to carry weapons and/or have an armed escort. They were advised to expect a constant litany of demands for baksheesh.[89]

The various Christian denominations competed in establishing schools that provided Western-style education as well as promoting their particular religious persuasion. The language of instruction was usually the European language of the sponsors—English, French, German, Russian—and this was a major vehicle for disseminating access to European literatures and cultures. According to a French report, by 1895 there were 101 foreign schools in the Jerusalem district alone.[90] At the same time, Ottoman reformers were introducing a network of secular state schools, but even by 1914 the Ottoman schools had grown to only seventeen thousand students in Palestine (out of a population of roughly one-half million).[91]

The French pursued their claimed "protectorate" over all Catholics on Ottoman territory, sometimes in conflict with other states (Italy, Spain, Austria) seeking to protect their own Catholics. The Russians were active in expanding their base in the Russian Compound in Jerusalem and in promoting Orthodoxy throughout the area with land purchases and building.[92] The Orthodox were the largest single group among Ottoman Christians, and by the end of the period Russian pilgrims were the single largest group among Christian pilgrims (when Russian Jews began to arrive in numbers, the route from Odessa had already been well established).

Protestants had a very small presence among local Christians and were more attuned to proselytization. But proselytizing among Muslims was strictly forbidden, and in any event converting them to Christianity seemed hopeless (as Herman Melville noted during an 1857 visit, "might as well attempt to convert bricks into bride-cakes as the Orientals into Christians").[93] That left other Christian denominations and Jews as the focus of their attention. And the conversion of Jews was tied to their prophesied resettlement in Palestine.

The idea of Christian or Jewish settlement in Palestine came from both colonial instincts and religious impulses. Typical was a German religious publication that declared in 1872 that the fellahin would willingly sell their land to Europeans and would then serve as agricultural workers on that land.[94] The attitude toward the indigenous population was reflected in the same year by a representative of the Palestine Exploration Fund (an English organization), who wrote: "I can only say that it would be a most splendid thing if the [Ottoman] government would overcome its aversion to selling land to foreigners. With the right guarantees, a great portion of this land would find a favorable market, and then the peasants now there would either be cleared away or transformed into useful members of society, while the increased income of the Turkish government would be considerable."[95]

It was only a short step from the idea of European settlement in Palestine to the millenarian vision of the reestablishment of a Jewish homeland there as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy—in this case, Christian prophecy. This particular strand of apocalyptic thought, known as

Restorationism, was common throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in Great Britain and the United States. Some of the pilgrims who arrived in the Holy Land with these ideas actually tried to put them into effect. An example was the American Clorinda Minor of the Millerite movement (a precursor to Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-Day Adventists). Minor arrived in Ottoman Palestine in 1851 with the intent of establishing a colony of Christian converts from Judaism (the conversion of Jews being, in this view, a necessary precondition for the second coming of Christ). She was particularly taken with the efforts of one John Meshullam, a converted Jew trying to build such a colony near Bethlehem.[96]

Another Restorationist was Warder Cresson of Philadelphia, who left his family in 1844 and traveled to Jerusalem. Cresson reversed standing doctrine by converting to Judaism and calling on all Christians to do likewise. Adopting the name Michael Boaz Israel ben Avraham, he tried to establish Jewish agricultural colonies in Palestine and was eventually buried in the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives. He is memorialized in Herman Melville's epic poem *Clarel* as the Jewish convert "Nathan," who against all odds tries to bring Jews back to the soil.[97]

But the most serious effort of Protestant Restorationism was the work of the Temple Society, a German sect with roots in Pietist Lutheranism. Founded in 1861, the movement aimed to advance the second coming of Christ by settling in Palestine and, in the course of time, reclaiming the land for "God's people." The Templers established colonies near Haifa in 1868, near Jaffa in 1871, and near Jerusalem in 1873. A second wave of settlement in the first decade of the twentieth century added four additional settlements; at its height, the Templer community numbered about twenty-two hundred. Though the Ottoman regime was opposed to any European settlement in its territory, it became increasingly dependent on Germany during the closing decades of the nineteenth century as Britain and France drew closer to its traditional foe, Russia. And the Germans, like the other powers under the capitulations, were assiduous in protecting their own citizens on Ottoman soil—even the members of an apocalyptic sect.[98]

The Templers showed that European settlement in Palestine was conceivable and viable. After initial difficulties, they established flourishing colonies that were considered an example of what could be achieved despite the opposition of Ottoman authorities and the open hostility of the host population. They successfully introduced European farming methods and, while having limited influence on the traditional agriculture of the fellahin, served as a model for others who were to follow.[99]

The Templers did not include restoration of the Jews in their own millenarian vision, but common background, common interests, and similar situations later led to some cooperation with the early Zionist settlers from Europe. For example, the two groups worked together to persuade the Turkish government to rescind an arbitrary tax on wine.[100] More specifically, the Templers' agricultural practices, with a focus on orchards rather than field crops, influenced early Zionist agriculturists.[101] On a more general level, the Templers showed what could be accomplished. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, father of modern spoken Hebrew and leading ideologue of the first wave of Zionism, wrote in 1881: "Did or did not [the Templers] who settled near Jaffa find blessing in their labors? Did they not turn the land that was desolate desert into a Garden of Eden?"[102] From an Arab perspective, the Templers have been described as proto-Zionists who served as a model to later Zionist settlers in a number of ways, including poor relations with the local

population and the importance of consular protection.[103]

HOSTILITY TO EUROPEANS

The European presence in Ottoman Palestine provoked a clear reaction among Turkish rulers and Arab inhabitants. The more visible this presence became, the more it evoked opposition and hostility from those affected. To be sure, the Muslim world had traditionally exhibited strong antipathy toward the Western Christian world. When Napoléon's forces approached Palestine in 1799, the governor of Gaza referred to them as "the damned French infidels, may God destroy them all."[104] The two worlds had been in collision since the seventh century, clashing over the control of areas from the Iberian Peninsula to the Balkans to Constantinople itself. The Crusades still registered strongly in the collective Muslim historical memory.

Non-Muslims under Muslim rule, while permitted to practice their own religions, were subject to various discriminatory measures. But there was an added animus in the case of Western Christian Europeans, or, in common speech, "Franks." As the European presence grew, there was an increasing tendency to focus on the civilizational rather than the religious divide; in the words of James Finn, "The intolerance of the old school was directed in our era rather against Europeanism than against the Christian religion."[105] On the popular level this was reinforced by a general dislike of all foreigners (put simply, xenophobia), a phenomenon hardly restricted to nineteenth-century Palestine.

The popular dislike of Western foreigners in their midst was noted by the many pilgrims and travelers. Mark Twain, recounting his 1867 visit, mentions avoiding a village where "we would be attacked by the whole tribe, for they did not love Christians," and likewise being refused water elsewhere because of "the idea of Christian lips polluting a spring whose waters must descend into their sanctified gullets."[106] Isabel Burton, wife of the noted explorer Richard Burton, tells of having to carry slippers to put on in places where Muslims bare their feet, because "a dog of a Christian" should not tread barefoot on sacred ground.[107] Major C. R. Conder, who carried out an important survey of Palestine in 1872–1874, wrote later: "Let the student of Islam run the gauntlet of the fanatical guards of these sanctuaries, let him be stoned for a dog and denied a drink of water as a Kafir [unbeliever], and then acknowledge that the stern prejudices of the Middle Ages are not extinct."[108]

In this setting, each new European intrusion triggered negative and sometimes explosive reactions. When European consulates were finally opened in Jerusalem beginning in 1838, foreign diplomats moved about only with armed escorts. The ringing of church bells, forbidden in the past, ignited protests and riots. Initially the new consuls were not allowed to raise their national flags over their missions in the Holy City; when the French did so in 1843, an angry mob quickly tore it down. Only the Crimean War, underlining increased Ottoman dependence on British and French support, changed the complexion of things. At war's end in 1856, the British consulate in a spirit of celebration hoisted a Union Jack from its chimney, and other consulates soon followed suit.[109]

However, in the first phase of the Crimean War, when the Ottomans faced Russia alone, the Christian population of Palestine was seized by tremendous fear of massacre at the hands of furious Muslims. Finn recounts that native Christians asked in panic "whether all Christians were

to be killed on account of Russia being at war with Turkey, or whether only the Greeks . . . would be murdered."[110] In 1856 the accidental shooting of a beggar by a missionary in Nablus led to ugly mob scenes and to the sacking of Christian homes and churches as well as foreign missions.[111] That same year the proclamation of the Hatt-i-Humayun, establishing legal equality for all religious and ethnic groups, was met by staunch opposition within the Palestinian areas from conservatives who objected in principle to the equality of non-Muslims. Consequently it could only be implemented gradually; as Finn concluded, the liberal provisions of the new charter "ran so strongly counter to the recorded principles of old that are held so sacred, and to the inveterate habits of many generations . . . that it really did require patience, together with firmness, for putting the new charters and edicts into execution."[112]

The May 1876 murder of British and French consuls in the city of Salonika (in the Ottoman Balkans) caused another panic among native Christians in Palestinian cities, and especially in Jerusalem. Christians boarded up their homes and shops and fled to monasteries; only a public announcement by Muslim notables denying any planned attacks calmed the situation.

Apart from these ongoing frictions, there was a special hostility shown to foreign land buyers, even when the transactions were perfectly legal. In many cases, the sale of what the fellahin had considered to be communal land was an element in the conflict. This was the case in the 1870 purchase of land for a Jewish agricultural school, Mikveh Yisrael, often considered to be the beginning of modern Jewish settlement in Palestine. The land in question, near Jaffa, was government land acquired through a *firman* of the sultan by the French Alliance Israélite Universelle, but the fellahin of the village of Yazur had farmed it for many years and thought of it as their property. When the *wali* (governor) of Damascus visited the site, he was accosted by villagers who seized the reins of his mule and his trousers and demanded that the sale be annulled. Thus "even the first beginnings of Jewish settlement bore the seeds of later conflict."[113]

The Templers faced particularly strong hatred from the local populations from the outset of their venture. Both Turks and Arabs regarded the Templers, as well as the Jews, as agents of European conspiracy. It was commonly believed that, in any anti-Christian riots that might take place, the Germans would be the first targets of the mobs. There were in fact frequent attacks and violence directed against the Templers, and Germany even dispatched gunboats off the coast in order to pressure the Ottoman authorities to protect them.[114] The relations between Templer colonies and their neighbors are described as "permanent guerrilla warfare" and the situation during the 1876 panic as "a virtual state of war."[115] For its part, the Ottoman government put off registering land purchased legally by the Templers, despite international obligations to permit such purchases, until the 1877–1878 war with Russia—where once again Ottoman dependence on European support peaked—forced it to submit to Germany's pressure on behalf of the Templers.[116]

The influx of European settlers, even in small numbers, galvanized the Ottoman government also to move to increase the Muslim dominance in the population. The sultan purchased some lands in his own name and brought in Muslim settlers from places as diverse as Algeria, Egypt, Bosnia, and the Caucasus.[117] If it were to develop into a demographic war, the Turks were not going to lose by default.

THE ROOTS OF ARAB NATIONALISM

In the nineteenth century, liberal nationalism—the idea that every nation (in the sense of "a people") should exercise self-determination in its own nation-state—was sweeping Europe but only beginning to take root elsewhere. In the prenationalist Middle East, most inhabitants were identified as "Arab" in language and culture but also bore other identities, sometimes equally or more significantly: Muslim or Christian; clan or tribal kinship; Bedouin, fellahin, or town-dweller; Ottoman citizen; or finally, the disappearing Qais-Yamani divide. There was, in particular, a strong attachment to one's own locality and kinship group, a fact that made compulsory conscription for the sultan's wars in faraway lands extremely unpopular. There was also some sense of attachment to Palestine—especially Jerusalem—for its religious importance and as an administrative entity, expressed in "pre-nationalist terms."[118]

Outside observers often remarked, however, on the weak sense of a broader common identity. Mrs. Finn, the wife of the British consul—who lived in Jerusalem for 17 years and was fluent in Arabic—noted that the fellahin "speak Arabic, and call themselves Arabs, but they feel no patriotic attachment for Palestine as a whole." She referred to them as so-called Arabs who were in fact "the fragments of distinct and even hostile nations," probably descended from the ancient Canaanites rather than from the Arab conquerors.[119]

The relationship between Ottoman rulers and Arab subjects has a long and complicated history that includes many instances of Arab antipathy toward the Turks. Revolts in various Palestinian locales are recorded in 1705, 1808, and several times in the 1820s prior to the Egyptian occupation.[120] Hostility to the Turks as Turks was clearly part of this unrest, though it is difficult to separate the ethnic element from reactions to simple misrule, something hardly lacking under the Ottomans. In any event, these clashes certainly strengthened a sense of common identity not shared with Turkish rulers. Arabs during this period were not demanding separation from the Turks; the sultan was generally recognized as caliph—successor to Muhammad as the supreme authority in Islam—and religion was still a stronger common bond than shared language. But there was growing sentiment for restoring Arabs to their historic place at the center of the world of Islam.

The Tanzimat reforms, with their emphasis on "Ottomanizing" the diverse peoples who made up the empire, also reminded Arabs of their own linguistic and cultural identity, promoting the emergence of Arab national consciousness.[121] As the Turks were copying the Western model of the nation-state, they were also conveying this idea to their own subject nations. The Hatt-i-Humayun proclamation in 1856 declared equal rights to all peoples under Ottoman rule; the following year, a handful of young intellectuals in Beirut founded the Syrian Scientific Society, apparently the first such all-Arab society that included members across religions—Muslim, Christian, and Druze. Arab Christians played a prominent role in such undertakings, for quite understandable reasons. The emphasis on a common secular Arab identity made them part of a broader historical movement rather than a divergent element in a largely Islamic setting, and as Christians they were also more closely attuned to the concepts of nationalism and national self-determination that were ascendant in the Western world.

French intervention in Lebanon in 1860, leading to creation of an autonomous Christian enclave, lent further impetus toward Arab unity and anti-Ottoman sentiment. In 1866 the Syrian Protestant College, which later became the American University of Beirut, was established and

became a center of this cultural awakening. The first daily newspapers in Arabic appeared in Beirut in 1873 and Cairo in 1875. What is called "the first cry" of Arab nationalism was a poem ("Arise, ye Arabs, and Awake") declaimed at a secret meeting of the Syrian Scientific Society in 1868. Though not printed at the time because of its seditious call to throw off Turkish rule, reportedly the poem was widely recited throughout the region and is credited with fostering the idea of Arab unity and independence.[122]

In August 1876 the last Ottoman sultan who actually ruled, Abdul Hamid II, came to power after the forced abdication of his erratic uncle and the debility of his brother. Facing growing unrest in the Balkans and unrelenting European pressure, Abdul Hamid granted a constitution in December of that year that established a parliament as a check on his powers. But in the immediate aftermath of the 1877–1878 war with Russia, in February 1878 he suspended the constitution, and it remained suspended for 30 years, until the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. This "Hamidian despotism," as it was labeled by the classic historian of Arab nationalism,[123] accelerated the opposition to Turkish rule and the calls for Arab self-determination.

Already in 1875, before the accession of Abdul Hamid, a group of young intellectuals in Beirut—predominantly Christians but including Muslims and Druzes—formed a secret society to promote Arab national consciousness. Following the restoration of autocratic rule, and the imposition of hated military conscription during the war with Russia, the group moved in 1880 to the only mode of action possible under the circumstances: posting anti-Turkish placards around cities (Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli, and Damascus) in the dead of night.[124] None of this took place in Palestinian cities, but two of the three Palestinian provinces, it should be recalled, were ruled from Beirut, and the classic historian of Arab nationalism who first tracked these events—George Antonius—served in the British Mandatory administration of Palestine.

Though not striking a deep popular chord at the time, the ideas of the young Arab nationalists laid the basis for a future shift of identity. From identity as Muslims, Ottoman citizens, or members of local tribes or clans, they forged a relation to a broad "Arab nation" speaking a common language across North Africa to the borders of Iran. The model of the new states of Italy and Germany, both recently unified on an essentially linguistic basis, was readily visible. The posters of the secret society called not only for independence for Syria, understood in those days to include Lebanon and Palestine, but also for Arabic as an official language and an end to military conscription for faraway wars in which Arabs felt no stake. This was, claimed Antonius, "the first trumpet-call emitted by the infant Arab movement."[125] As it happens, this call came on the very eve of the first wave of Jewish immigration into Palestine.

Contemporary observers in the early 1880s report growing antipathy toward Turkish rulers throughout Arab areas: not only in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine but also in North Africa, the Persian Gulf, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula.[126] Echoes can also be traced in the career of Yusuf Diya al-Khalidi, of the notable Jerusalem family, who spoke eloquently against Sultan Abdul Hamid in the short-lived Ottoman parliament and was consequently expelled from Constantinople. Two years later, in 1880, al-Khalidi wrote: "We have strong hope that the Arabs will soon restore their place among the prevailing civilized nations because this people . . . is still large, its countries are wide, its honoured language prevails among many people in Asia and Africa, and it is the nearest among the people of the east and the west to this new . . . civilization without which it is impossible to obtain the required comfort beside those Franks."[127]

JEWS IN OTTOMAN PALESTINE

The Jewish population of the three Palestinian districts in 1881–1882—the beginning of the first Zionist *aliya*, or immigration wave—consisted of about 15,000 Ottoman citizens and an estimated 5,000–10,000 unregistered residents. This was triple the estimated Jewish population of 7,000 in 1800, though Jews still constituted only 4–5 percent of the total population of 462,465.[128] From about 1865, however, Jews were a majority in Jerusalem.[129] At the beginning of the nineteenth century most of the Jewish population was Sephardi (of Middle Eastern origin); by the end of the 1870s a clear and growing majority was Ashkenazi (of European origin).[130]

Western visitors in the mid-nineteenth century noted the lowly position of the existing Jewish community, concentrated in the four "holy cities" of Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron. Herman Melville wrote that "in the emptiness of the lifeless antiquity of Jerusalem the emigrant Jews are like flies that have taken up their abode in a skull."[131] Henry Harris Jessup, an American missionary who spent 53 years in Beirut, declared that "in the gradations of Oriental cursing, it is tolerably reasonable to call a man a donkey, somewhat severe to call him a dog, contemptuous to call him a swine, but withering to the last degree to call him a Jew."[132] Thomson called the Jews of Safed "an incredible and grotesque mélange of filth and finery, pharisaic self-righteousness and Sadducean licentiousness."[133] Tristram, found the Jews of Tiberias to be "an apt type of the decayed and scattered people, with their musty and crumbled learning."[134]

The deplorable circumstances of Jews in Jerusalem attracted special attention. Up to and beyond midcentury, the Jewish Quarter in the Old City was universally condemned for crowded and unsanitary conditions, dilapidated housing, bad water, dire poverty, malnutrition, and disease.[135] For some this seemed to validate a theological point; Walter Keating Kelly declared that "here, in addition to the usual degradation and suffering of a despised, stricken, outcast race, they bend under extreme poverty, and wear the aspect of a weeping and mournful people, lamenting over their fallen greatness as a nation, and over the prostrate grandeur of their once proud city."[136] Jews were also excluded from Christian and Muslim holy sites. Finn records an instance of a Jew being attacked by a mob, and nearly killed, for crossing the far side of the square in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[137] Jews were allowed to pray along a small stretch on the outside of the enclosure wall around the Temple Mount/*Haram ash-Sharif* (this is the origin of today's Western Wall). In 1840 an Ottoman decree, confirmed as late as 1911, forbade Jews from paving the area, bringing in chairs, screens, or other articles, or praying too loudly.[138]

In this setting, the persecution of Jews continued along historical lines. During the 1834 uprising against the Egyptian forces of Ibrahim Pasha, attacks on Jews were carried out both by Egyptians, who massacred Jews in Hebron, and by the insurgents, who sacked Jewish homes and shops in Jerusalem.[139] In Safed there were violent attacks on Jews in 1834 and 1837, and in 1840 Damascus was the scene of a notorious "blood libel" (the calumny that Jews use the blood of non-Jewish children to make matzo—unleavened bread—for Passover). In 1847 Jerusalem had its own blood libel case when a Jewish boy was accused of wounding a Greek pilgrim boy to

get his blood.[140]

Ashkenazi Jews—those of European origin—had often borne the brunt of antisemitism. The first organized Ashkenazi community dated only from 1687, and in 1720 a mob stormed the Ashkenazi quarter in Jerusalem. This led to the 1723 barring of European Jews from entering Jerusalem. Some were finally allowed to settle there in 1815, and the Ashkenazi community was restored in 1836, during the Egyptian occupation under Ibrahim Pasha.[141]

Initially European Jews had no foreign protection against arbitrary Ottoman authority or popular hostility and were subject to constant humiliation and exploitation. Among Arabs, the wife of British consul Finn reported, the word "Siknaj" (the Arabic corruption of "Ashkenazi") was a term of contempt reflecting the image of European Jews as "timorous."[142] Sephardi Jews, those of Middle Eastern origin, were in a relatively better position; though also facing discrimination and hostility, they fit into local culture and society and were recognized as an established community under an official chief rabbi. This gave the Sephardi community control over Jewish communal affairs such as ritual slaughtering and burial.

The Ashkenazi community, on the other hand, generally chose to remain European in culture, refusing to assimilate or to take Ottoman citizenship. Relations with the local Arab community, unlike those of Sephardi Jews, remained strictly functional. As the numbers of European newcomers grew, they came to challenge Sephardi dominance in communal affairs, and began using the protection of the newly established European consuls as support. In 1867, for example, they appealed to the consuls to help end the Sephardi monopoly on income from the tax on meat—and the Prussian, British, and Austrian consuls undertook to arbitrate the issue.[143]

Ottoman authorities regarded European Jews as an alien element, and already in the 1850s—well before the Zionist movement appeared on the scene—were trying to limit the influx of Jews from Europe.[144] They became particularly alarmed during the 1878 Berlin Congress—called to deal with consequences of the Russo-Turkish war—when a petition was received, purportedly representing hundreds of thousands of Jews, calling for the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Ottoman Palestine.[145] Clearly official Ottoman antipathy was not directed to Jews as such, but from the beginning it had a civilizational dimension that saw the Jews of Europe differently from the "Ottomanized" Jews.[146]

From the 1850s, the development of the Jewish community was notable. The first newspapers in Hebrew appeared during the 1860s. Moreover, because of the lack of any other common language between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, the use of spoken Hebrew as a lingua franca among Jews was noted by James Finn in the 1850s, anticipating the Zionist campaign to revive Hebrew as a national language by some three decades.[147]

During this period there was also a strong movement among Jews in Palestine, and especially in the Ashkenazi community, to revitalize Jewish life and move away from the dependence on charity (*haluka*) from Jews in the Diaspora. The watchword of this movement was "productivization": learning trades, launching commercial ventures, introducing modern technology, and otherwise moving to make Jews in Palestine self-supporting and self-assured. In Jerusalem, the first Jewish houses outside of the city walls were built in 1857 on land bought, with special consent of the sultan, by the British Jewish philanthropist Moshe Montefiore. Other purchases of land for new self-sustaining Jewish neighborhoods were made in Nahlat Shiva

(1867) and Me'ah She'arim (1875). During his 1864 visit, Tristram remarked on the gardens and tended fields adjacent to the new houses built by Montefiore.[148] Indeed, no element of productivization was of greater emotional resonance in the Jewish community than the dream of agricultural settlement and a "return to the soil" in the historical homeland.

The idea of a Jewish return to the soil also tied in with the programs of the Christian Restorationists who believed that Jews would make the land flourish once more. Herman Melville, visiting in 1857, believed that "the idea of making farmers of the Jews is vain. . . . The Jews dare not live outside walled towns or villages for fear of the malicious persecution of the Arabs & Turks."[149] The most notable Restorationist was none other than James Finn, the British consul from 1846–1863, who in addition to his diplomatic role was also a leading member of the Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews and who knew Jewish life well, speaking both Hebrew and Yiddish. Strongly believing in both productivization and the Jewish return to Zion, Finn bought land outside the city walls (Kerem Avraham) in 1850 and 1852 and employed Jewish workers from Jerusalem to farm it. Despite rabbinical opposition, based on suspicion of Finn's proselytizing and the belief that Jews in Jerusalem should engage only in sacred pursuits, Finn's project helped the idea of Jews working the soil to take root.[150]

But nothing was more critical to building Jewish life in Palestine than the protection of the European powers. The intervention of the consuls could be critical at all three points: initial entry into the Palestinian districts, ability to purchase land there, and acquisition of the necessary building permits. The European governments were generally willing to provide this protection as an extension of their own policies and interests. Having protégés to protect helped them enlarge their own presence on Ottoman territory, and no less importantly helped them match or block the similar activities of their European rivals engaged in the same enterprise.[151] Humanitarian issues were not irrelevant in this context; many of the interventions involved the invocation of "human rights" guaranteed by the Ottomans in the Hatt-i-Humayun and elsewhere. But the dynamic of the situation actually impelled European states into competition to find protégés. Jews found themselves in the unusual position of having foreign powers competing for the right to protect them.

The Russian government was, however, slow to appreciate the implications of the situation. In 1848 it actually set Russian Jews in Palestine adrift, telling them to turn elsewhere for protection.[152] The British, having few natural clients in the region by religion or nationality, stepped into the breach. The protection of Jews (at least those not belonging to another European power) became the main concern of the British consul in Jerusalem.[153] This of course intertwined very closely with James Finn's own preoccupations and personal inclinations. But in addition to being instructed by his government to act officially only on behalf of persons actually under British protection, "the Consul was on every suitable occasion to make known, to the local authorities, that the British Government felt an interest in the welfare of Jews in general."[154]

Of course, many Jews came to Palestine with Austrian, Prussian/German, French, or other passports and could claim protection as citizens of their states of origin. But the fact that the Russian Jews—the largest single group among the newcomers—turned to the British gave that nation's representatives an excellent card for intervention in internal Ottoman affairs. This continued until 1890, when Russia, realizing the utility of defending Russian Jews elsewhere (if

not in Russia itself), reclaimed its jurisdiction over Russian Jews on Ottoman territory.[155]

In the framework of productivization and European penetration, ideas of settlement of land—proto-Zionism—developed not just among Christian Restorationists but also within the Jewish community. The idea of working the land, of a return to the soil, became a recurring theme among educated Jews. In 1860 the "Colonization Society for Palestine" was founded in Frankfurt am Oder.[156] In 1870, as noted, the first Jewish agricultural school, Mikveh Yisrael, was established near Jaffa by the French Alliance Israélite Universelle. In 1871 a traveler's inn was established in Motza, in the Judean hills near Jerusalem, on land that had been purchased in 1854. Other efforts in the 1870s to buy land near Jericho, on the coast near the modern city of Rehovot, and near Hebron all failed because of opposition to the sale of land to Jews.[157] However, in 1878 a group of Jews in Jerusalem managed to buy land and begin settlement of a coastal plain area they named Petah Tikva, which is often considered the earliest "Zionist" settlement, even though it predates Zionism.

In light of these developments it is not too surprising to find a call for an independent Jewish state in *Erets Yisrael*/Palestine published in a Jewish Jerusalem newspaper, *Sha'arei Tsion*, in 1876.[158] In light of these and other developments, one historian of the period has concluded that "the Jews of Palestine would have eventually produced their own secular Zionism, even without the *aliyot* (immigrations) from Europe."[159] This is disputed by another historian who argues that "the original and genuine character of Zionism, certainly true in the European context, is here arbitrarily projected onto Palestine."[160] Be that as it may, clearly transformations in nineteenth-century Ottoman Palestine made it, by century's end, into a much more promising setting for the Zionist enterprise than it would have been at the onset.

THE STAGE IS SET

Napoléon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 is usually regarded as the beginning of modern European intervention in the Middle East, culminating in the division of the area among the imperial powers a little over a century later. Engaged in a titanic struggle with Great Britain, Napoléon's France was seeking to outflank British sea power, block the major route to India (crown jewel of the British Empire), and mobilize the Muslim world to France's side.

In the Battle of the Pyramids, July 21, 1798, Napoléon inflicted a decisive defeat on the Mamluk Turkish rulers who had dominated Egypt since the thirteenth century. The victory dramatized a radical shift in the military balance, underlining European advances in military technology and organization against the formerly formidable Turkish forces. Napoléon was, however, dealt a punishing blow when a British fleet, under Admiral Horatio Nelson, destroyed the French fleet in Alexandria only a week after the French victory on land. Determined to recoup his losses, Napoléon proceeded to invade Palestine and Syria, then (like Egypt) provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

Napoléon's advance was held up by his failure to capture the fortified city of Acre, then the chief port of the Palestinian areas. Had his siege of Acre in 1799 been successful, Napoléon asserted later, "I would have put on a turban, I would have made my soldiers wear big Turkish trousers. . . . I would have made myself emperor of the East, and I would have returned to Paris by way of Constantinople."[161] But Napoléon did not confine his search for allies to the Muslim

world; while encamped outside Acre he also issued an appeal to “the Jewish nation” to come and reclaim Palestine: “Israelites, unique nation, whom, in thousands of years, lust of conquest and tyranny have deprived of their ancestral lands, but not of name and national existence! . . . Rightful heirs of Palestine! . . . Hasten! Now is the moment, which may not return for thousands of years, to claim the restoration of civic rights among the population of the universe which had been shamefully withheld from you for thousands of years, your political existence as a nation among nations.”[162]

But it was not to be. Apart from Napoléon’s military defeat, the Middle East of 1799 was not the Middle East of a century later. There was neither a rally of Muslim support against the Ottoman sultan nor a visible Jewish response to Napoléon’s call for restoration of the Jews to Palestine. In fact, the chief adviser to his Ottoman adversary in Acre, Jazzar Pasha, was a Jew: Haim Farhi. Napoléon was forced to withdraw from Palestine and, eventually, Egypt.

Napoléon’s call for Jews to reestablish their homeland fell upon barren soil. Conditions in Palestine provided no opening to any massive influx of newcomers, particularly from Europe, and the Jewish world—inside and outside Palestine—was not attuned to such ephemeral visions. There was no infrastructure, no guiding spirit, and no clientele.

By 1880, all of this was transformed. The economic base in the Palestinian districts had greatly expanded, with impressive urban growth and commercialization, better transportation, more modern technology, and generally more opportunities than before. Changes in land registration had made more land available for private purchase, including sales to foreign buyers. Security throughout the region had vastly improved, making it safer for new ventures by both citizens and foreigners.

But while internal security may have advanced, the Ottoman Empire as a whole, and its hold on the Palestinian districts, was demonstrably weaker in the late nineteenth century. Rescued from defeat and possible dissolution three times during the century, the sultan was forced into humiliating dependence on the European powers—and on his skill in playing them off against each other. As a result the Ottoman regime was forced to concede a much greater European presence in its own territory, and especially in the religiously sensitive Holy Land. Exclusion from this area by Turkish authorities and the hostility of Arab residents were both overcome in a series of inroads that breached one barrier after another. The capitulations, initially limited to European jurisdiction over Europeans within the empire, became a tool for European intervention in the relations of large communities of non-Muslims with their own government.

The particular religious significance of Palestine to Christians drove a huge expansion of Western-oriented religious, charitable, educational, and economic institutions. This extended to encouragement of a larger Jewish presence, in the form of Christian Restorationist programs for a Jewish return to Zion. Even the Ottoman regime recognized the special place of the Holy Land in the Western world, in a backhanded way, when it established the Jerusalem district as an independent district directly under the rule of Constantinople.

The growing Western presence also provided a model of European settlement in Palestine in the form of the German Templer movement. While remaining numerically small, the successful establishment of seven settlements showed that, despite the obstacles, such settlement was viable. Simultaneously, the Jewish community in Palestine tripled in size during this period, became more European in its composition, and began the first steps toward building a self-sustaining foundation based on modern trades and agriculture.

All of these developments evoked increased resistance and hostility from both Turks and Arabs, though what had previously been mainly religious animosity became increasingly civilizational, in the form of antipathy toward Europeans. In this framework, Jewish immigrants from Europe faced greater aversion than the native Sephardic Jewish population. The Ottoman authorities and the Arab public, it was clear, would see any future Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe in the framework of their overall struggle against European penetration in all its forms.

One of the leading historians of Ottoman Palestine has pointed out that Zionism was but one of many European movements dedicated to the "reclamation" of Palestine.[163] This is true, but the success of Zionism compared to the other movements is due primarily to a factor that was absent in the others. All the movements had a "pull" factor in the form of religious yearnings and/or the nationalism sweeping nineteenth-century Europe. But Zionism also had a hugely influential "push" factor: the outbreak of a new racial antisemitism in late nineteenth-century Eastern Europe. That is the subject of the next chapter.

NOTES

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chapter two

RUSSIAN JEWS BEFORE ZIONISM

TWO YEARS BEFORE HE CALLED for Jews to reclaim their ancestral lands during his 1799 Palestine campaign, Napoléon Bonaparte had already written a page in Jewish history by breaking down barriers that had stood for centuries. At the head of a French army invading Italy, he had ordered the destruction of ghetto walls behind which Jews had been forced to live. In Turin, Milan, Modena, Verona, Mantua, Ancona, Pesaro, Padua, Venice (site of the first "ghetto"), Ferrera, Cento, Lugo, Florence, Sienna, and finally in Rome, the walls came down. The French-imposed administration of Rome decreed that "all laws and particular regulations concerning Jews shall be null and void forthwith" and in Milan the future emperor told Jews in the language of the French Revolution: "You are free men, you are free men. . . . I shall maintain your freedom."[1]

In Ancona, Napoléon himself led his troops into the city, where they destroyed the ghetto gates and tore off the yellow badges that Jews had been forced to wear, replacing them with revolutionary tricolor rosettes. Napoléon was celebrated as one of the liberators of Jewish history, sometimes referred to in Hebrew as *helek tov* (Good Portion), a literal translation of "Bonaparte." Some Jews joined his army; stories were told of Italian Jewish soldiers singing Hebrew psalms to the tune of "the Marseillaise" during the retreat from Moscow.[2]

Napoléon's later appeal for a Jewish restoration in the Middle East fell on barren ground. But his previous moves to free Jews from historical restrictions in Europe were part of a revolutionary change that would, within a century, completely transform Jewish life in the Christian world. This change would, in turn, create more fertile ground for restoration of a Jewish communal life in the ancestral homeland.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: EMANCIPATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

The worldwide Jewish population at the end of the eighteenth century was about two and one-quarter million, of which two million lived in Europe. Even this modest number was an impressive increase since the mid-seventeenth century, when there were fewer than one million Jews in the world—a figure that had hardly changed over the previous millennium, as the natural increase was offset by assimilation and high mortality. And these numbers would continue to soar in the nineteenth century, reaching roughly seven and one-half million by 1880 (seven million in Europe). This "demographic miracle" was driven by improved living conditions,

sanitation, and medical care, leading to sharp drops in infant and adult mortality. With effective communal welfare institutions, Jewish communities grew even more quickly than those of their host populations during this period of population explosion in Europe.[3]

During the Middle Ages, Western European nations had forced out Jewish populations, culminating in the expulsion from Spain—then center of the Jewish world—in 1492. Many of these Jewish refugees moved to Eastern Europe, where as early as 1264 Polish and Lithuanian rulers had granted rights of residence to Jews, seeking their commercial and artisanal skills. Consequently, Eastern Europe became the center of Jewish life; and when the Russian Empire annexed most of Poland in the late eighteenth-century partitions of that land, the empire became home to about half of the world's Jews.

But whether they lived under the Russian tsar's rule or in reestablished communities of Western Europe, Jews lived apart from the general society. They were not citizens; even their right of residence was a privilege that could be revoked. Before emancipation, they were excluded from cities in many lands, living in small towns and villages, even under Polish and Lithuanian rule. Where allowed to live in cities, they lived in segregated quarters—ghettos—established centuries earlier. They were generally prohibited from owning land or joining artisans' guilds and had few if any rights in their choice of occupation, freedom of worship, guarantee of property, free movement, access to justice, or even marriage and family. Even dress was often prescribed. Some countries, notably England and the Netherlands, had loosened restrictions in the framework of general liberalization, but in no place were Jews treated as equal citizens.[4]

As late as 1775, Pope Pius VI issued an "Edict on the Hebrew" that reimposed all previous anti-Jewish laws in the Papal States (at the time, the entire central region of Italy). Jews found outside the ghetto walls at night were condemned to death, they were required to wear the yellow badge at all times, the study of Talmud was banned, and relations with Christian neighbors were forbidden. These were the restrictions that were in place when Napoléon's army arrived 22 years later.[5]

Living apart from their neighbors, Jews developed strong communal self-reliance and autonomy. Jewish communities chose their own leaders, passed their own laws, taxed themselves, established welfare systems, had their own courts, and maintained relations with external authorities as a community.[6] This sort of communal self-governance—known as the *kehilla* or *kahal* in Jewish history—was perfectly in accord with the patterns of premodern monarchical government that dealt with subject populations as groups or classes rather than as individual citizens. In this corporatist system, the existence of less-than-equal closed Jewish "corporations" was part of the natural order.

But by the end of the eighteenth century, new currents of nationalism, secularism, and liberalism were challenging the old order. Curiously, one of the precursors of the new order was a "liberated" Jew in relatively liberal Amsterdam, Baruch Spinoza: a Jew too liberated for his own Jewish community, which excommunicated him in 1656. Spinoza was followed by other luminaries of the Enlightenment: John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Charles Louis de Montesquieu, François Marie Arouet (Voltaire), Adam Smith, Thomas Jefferson. The influence of these new currents was strong enough by 1782 that even an absolutist monarch, Emperor Joseph II of Austria, issued an "Edict of Tolerance" that admitted Jews to schools and

universities, allowed them to reside anywhere in Vienna, and opened up previously closed occupations.

In the course of the nineteenth century, Jews of Europe came to live the same history as others. This was the Jewish emancipation: a gradual process of obtaining equal rights and ending discriminatory laws. Jewish communities became better integrated and less isolated. All of this was tied to a general process of democratization as autocracies fell and the old corporatist organization of the state gave way to a liberal order with a direct relationship between the state and individual citizens enjoying (at least in theory) equality before the law. Jewish leaders and organizations, not surprisingly, played an active and even assertive role in this process.

The first definitive Jewish emancipation—meaning full equality and not just tolerance—was the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen by the revolutionary French National Assembly in 1789. This document put Jews on the same footing as other citizens, taking religious or other differences out of the equation. In the French debate there was, however, a harbinger of the future dilemma that emancipation would pose: the expectation that Jews, in return for gaining equality as individuals, would forgo their distinctiveness as a group and assimilate to the dominant society. As the Deputy Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre proclaimed, "The Jews should be denied everything as a nation, but granted everything as individuals."[7]

The French notion of Jews as equal citizens traveled with the French revolutionary armies as they conquered much of Europe: to Italy (as already noted), the Netherlands, and many German states. Though there was considerable regression after Napoléon's defeat in 1815, emancipation reached most German states before their 1871 unification into a united Germany, which extended equal rights to all. Austria-Hungary decreed equality of all citizens when the dual monarchy was established in 1867, as did the new nations of Belgium and Greece when founded in 1830. Other nations followed suit, though the Papal States resisted until forcibly incorporated into Italy in 1870 (and the rebuilt ghetto walls in Rome were demolished only in 1888). The last limitation on Jewish civic rights in the United Kingdom was removed in 1858 when Lionel de Rothschild was finally allowed to take a non-Christian oath of office as a member of Parliament (to which he had been continuously reelected since 1847). Spain finally declared full equality only in 1910, and Portugal in 1911—and Russia only after the revolution of 1917.

The US Constitution, adopted the same year as the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, declared that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." The First Amendment to the constitution added that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Jews were thus "emancipated" in federal law; from the outset they never existed as a statutory entity separate from other citizens. But this was not the case on the state level; at the time the Constitution was adopted, only New York and Virginia allowed Jews to hold high political offices, and many states limited voting and other civil rights of Jews (and others who were not the right kind of professing Christian). These restrictions were gradually dropped state by state, with New Hampshire being the last state to grant full civic equality in 1877.[8]

The course of emancipation was uneven: mirroring broader trends, it began and developed more fully in Western Europe (and the Americas) than in Eastern Europe where the bulk of the Jewish population was actually located. This, together with population pressures in the East, led to westward migration throughout the century, tied in with processes of urbanization and occupational changes. The great majority remained in commerce or crafts, but Jews now became

prominent also in banking, railways, industry, and the liberal professions including journalism, literature, and music. In the new economy of the second half of the nineteenth century, they proved to be especially well situated to provide essential services to modern capitalism, given their experience in commerce, their support networks, and a historically conditioned willingness to take risks. Late in the century, more than 40 percent of owners and directors of Germany's banking and credit institutions were Jewish or of Jewish origin.[9] The rise of the fabled Rothschild banking family stands as an icon to the success of Jews as individuals in postemancipation Europe.

However, the breaking down of barriers for Jews as individuals did not resolve the issue of where Jews stood as a community, or what the cost might be in terms of Jewish identity. As the modern liberal secular state evolved, it intruded into the autonomy that Jewish communities had enjoyed in the old corporatist order. So long as society had been sharply divided along religious lines, Jews were oppressed but at least the sharpness of the division left them with a clear sense of identity. When Jews became (at least formally) equal citizens, this identity became problematic. The relationship of Judaism to Christianity was clear, but the identity of Jews as French or German was an unsettled issue. Total integration was presumably an option, but would it mean the loss of any meaningful identity as Jews? From the beginning, emancipation raised the issue of whether Jews in the new order would differ only by religion, or whether they remained a distinct "nation" in the sense of a people maintaining their own collective identity even as citizens with equal rights in European states.[10]

When new opportunities opened up, many Jews in Western Europe naturally began to reduce the distinctiveness that had set them apart. They moved out of ghettos, adopted prevailing dress, took indigenous names, and embraced the language of the country as their native tongue. Even when legal emancipation stalled (in the years after 1815), cultural and social assimilation continued. Echoes of this process were soon felt in synagogues as well; between 1810 and 1820 congregations in German cities began introducing fundamental changes in worship and ritual: mixed seating, replacing Hebrew with German, dropping dietary laws, and deemphasizing the ancestral tie to the Land of Israel. This latter point was of particular importance, since the opponents of emancipation argued that Jews could not be loyal citizens because of their ties to the historic homeland. Consequently, Western Jews caught up in the drive for emancipation, during this period, had good reason to denigrate or dismiss the idea of a return to Zion; clearly this was not the case for Jews of Eastern Europe who had no emancipation to defend.[11] In any event, the liberalization of religious practice and doctrine in the West crystallized as the movement of Reform Judaism, under the leadership of Rabbi Abraham Geiger. Geiger argued that as Jewish history was a history of change and adaptation, it was legitimate and even necessary to fit Judaism to the realities of the early nineteenth century.

Even with religion being relegated to the private sphere, full assimilation could still come only with conversion to the dominant faith. Interestingly, conversion of Jews to Christianity became a major trend only after emancipation in most German states had been extended and then snatched away in the post-1815 regression. (This pattern of critical life changes in reaction to dashed hopes was to be repeated, with much broader consequences, in Russia at the end of the century.) During the 1816–1835 period, almost 30 percent of the Jews of Berlin converted to Christianity.[12] Among German Jews who converted during this period was the young poet

Heinrich Heine, who had hoped for an academic career. But in 1822 the Prussian government reenacted its pre-1812 exclusion of Jews from academic posts; in reaction Heine converted to Protestantism in 1825, calling it "the ticket of admission to European culture."

There was another form of assimilation that did not (necessarily) involve a change of faiths: absorption into radical political movements. Socialism solved the issue of Jewish identity by subsuming all such differences in a new frame of reference; Jewish workers would join other workers as equals in the proletarian class. This was naturally an attractive path for Jews drawn into a growing working class created by the Industrial Revolution. It was also quite consonant with Jewish traditions: emphasis on collective interest, concern with social justice, a conception of ultimate deliverance, perception of a basically hostile environment, and justification of revolt against established authority.[13] Not surprisingly, socialist parties attracted so many Jewish adherents that they were often discredited as Jewish movements.

Karl Marx (born in Trier in 1818) was, by some accounts, a direct descendant of the illustrious Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki) of the eleventh century on his father's side, and of the famous Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague on his mother's side. In any event he came from a long line of noted rabbis in Trier.[14] His father had converted to Christianity as part of the wave of conversions in reaction to Prussian backsliding on Jewish emancipation, and the young Marx himself was baptized at the age of six. As a founding figure of socialism, the adult Karl Marx was critical of all religions and of Judaism in particular. One of his collaborators was Moses Hess (born in Bonn in 1812), who had received a more traditional Jewish education and later in life would (as we shall see) reaffirm his Jewish identity and his belief in a Jewish national revival.

There were, of course, Jews who rejected the siren call of emancipation and its corollary, assimilation into what they still regarded as subversive and hostile ways of life. This was especially true regarding religion but also extended into cultural and social realms. In response to early practices of Reform Judaism, the Hamburg Rabbinical Court in 1819 put together a statement of 22 of Europe's leading rabbis that condemned changes in traditional prayers, the use of any liturgical language but Hebrew, or the use of musical instruments in services. They also objected to the removal of references to the Ingathering of the Exiles, and other minimization of ties to the Land of Israel, in Reform Judaism. The movement was, in their eyes, a threat to the unity of the Jewish people.[15] The widely revered Hatam Sofer (Rabbi Moses Sofer) of Pressburg, Hungary, perhaps the central figure in Orthodox Jewry at the time, wrote yet more scathingly: "Be warned not to change your Jewish names, speech, and clothing—God forbid. . . . Never say: 'Times have changed!' We have an old Father—praised be His name—who has never changed and never will change."[16]

In Eastern Europe there was little rejectionism in the earlier part of the century because, as yet, little significant emancipation or assimilation existed to be rejected. In fact the major transformation to Jewish life in the eighteenth century was the rise of a movement that made Jews more, not less, distinctive. This was the appearance of Hasidism, which in reaction to the legalism of Talmudic scholarship promoted spiritual revival through a more populist and charismatic style of devotion. The founding figure of Hasidism was the Ba'al Shem Tov (Rabbi Israel Ben-Eliezer, 1698–1760), who began building a following in the 1740s in Ukraine. By 1830 the various Hasidic rabbis and their followers may have constituted a majority in Ukraine,

Galicia, and central Poland, areas then mostly under Russian rule. The second major Jewish force in the region were the Orthodox opponents of Hasidism, known as the *Mitnagdim* (opponents), who derided Hasidic mysticism, emotionalism, and difference in dress while upholding an emphasis on traditional scholarship and learning. The principal figure in this camp was the Gaon (Genius) of Vilna (Rabbi Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman Kremer, 1720–1797), who from his base in Lithuania denounced Hasidism as heresy and even pronounced a *herem* (excommunication) on the movement. Both camps, however, adhered to Orthodox (or even ultra-Orthodox) religious practice and remained hostile to the penetration of Western ideas and models when these challenging forces finally arrived in the East.

HASKALA: THE JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT

Between total assimilation and total separation there was a middle ground. Some in Western Europe sought, from the first, to make use of the changing intellectual landscape to modernize Judaism and find a legitimate place for Jews in the new order, without the sacrifice of identity. This movement became known as the Haskala, or the Jewish Enlightenment. It was clearly inspired by and a part of the general European Enlightenment, with a belief in the power of reason, faith in the promise of progress, opposition to dogmas and traditions that perpetuated injustice, and the promotion of secular education. The Jewish version was tied to integration into the new liberal order, with equality as Jews. Jews should, in this view, learn European languages, master secular learning, and challenge traditional authorities on both sides of the divide. As the old corporatist separation dissolved, they could in this way participate as full members in a liberal society that did not discriminate among the groups of which it was composed.

Moses Mendelssohn (1726–1789) was a key figure who personified the Haskala. He was born in Dessau, a German city about 80 miles southwest of Berlin; his native language was a form of Yiddish, the Jewish language based on medieval German. At the age of 14, and despite suffering from a spinal deformity, he walked to Berlin to continue studying with a teacher who had moved there. Within 5 years he had mastered German, French, Latin, and Greek, and within 20 years he had published philosophical works that made him a leading figure in the European Enlightenment—the first Jew after Spinoza to achieve such recognition.[17]

In addition to promoting general Enlightenment ideals of freedom and reason, Mendelssohn sought to bring Jews into the new currents of the time as Jews, with a continued distinct identity and religious affiliation. He translated the Hebrew Bible into German, with commentary, and with emphasis on Judaism as the closest to a “natural” religion. He defended freedom of religion, and its natural corollary diversity of religious practice, both on a general level and within Judaism. While remaining observant of traditional Jewish religious practice, he subjected religion to the rule of reason and was critical of traditional authorities. His calls for reform of Jewish law were later to become part of the basis for Reform Judaism.

Followers of Haskala, known as *maskilim*, also promoted the use of Hebrew as the Jewish literary language. Hebrew was regarded as the authentic base of Jewish culture, putting Jews on an equal footing with the European nations with their national tongues—which Jews should also learn. Hebrew was also intended to replace Yiddish, which was stigmatized as an essentially non-Jewish language associated with exile and the ghetto. Maskilim expanded the use of Hebrew from religious literature—where it had remained central—to secular literature of all kinds, which was, of course, an innovation opposed by traditionalists. From 1783 to 1811, Mendelssohn’s

followers published the first modern periodical in Hebrew, *HaMe'asef* (The Gatherer), a compendium of Jewish news, poetry, essays, and scholarly articles.

The Haskala thus initiated a Hebrew literary renaissance that continued throughout the nineteenth century and in fact fused into the rebirth of Hebrew as the vehicle of Jewish national revival. Poets, novelists, journalists, and scholars all contributed to the development of the language in secular contexts, while paradoxically pushing for a return to a more biblical Hebrew in preference to the rabbinical Hebrew of religious literature. Several other periodicals followed after *HaMe'asef*, including (after midcentury) Hebrew-language newspapers published under censorship in Russia. As the century progressed, the Hebrew literary renaissance became concentrated primarily in the East, and particularly in Russia, since Western Jewish writers followed their readers into the dominant national tongues. Important literary figures such as Abraham Mapu (1808–1867), Yehudah Leib Gordon (1831–1892), Moshe Leib Lilienblum (1843–1910), and Peretz Smolenskin (1842–1885) were read in Jewish communities across the continent, but especially in Eastern Europe—thanks in part to the fact that traditional Jewish education, with its emphasis on basic literacy in Hebrew, created a literate readership. Some of these authors were to become important intellectual figures in early Zionism.[18]

After midcentury, however, emancipation and Haskala began to lose some of their luster in Western Europe. Great changes had taken place; Jews were now admitted to precincts where they had never trod before. But full acceptance still proved elusive. Even more strikingly, their very success was proving to be a new source of troubles. As Jews became better integrated and thus more visible, they were now resented not for their separation but for their proximity. Even those who had taken the final step of assimilation, converting to Christianity, discovered that they were still held at arms' length. A few months after his conversion, Heinrich Heine wrote to a friend: "I cannot at all see that things have gone better for me since then, on the contrary, I have had nothing but misfortune."[19]

Other changes were also taking place. Initially, nationalism was a liberal principle tied to the struggle for democracy and self-determination for all peoples. The unification of Italy in 1860 and Germany in 1871 were still carried out, for the most part, in this spirit, in which the same rights are conceded for all nations and the domestic order has room for all who identify with the state. Thus, as late as 1881, a young Jewish student at the University of Vienna named Theodor Herzl could still join a German nationalistic dueling fraternity that had other Jewish members and alumni. But the liberal version of nationalism was already giving way to a more assertive version that focused on the virtues of a particular people, its exclusive rights within the state, and the superiority of its claims over the rights of others. Within two years, an antisemitic tirade forced the young Herzl to resign from the fraternity, which then barred membership to any Jews in the future.

Exclusive nationalism gave rise to a new and more vicious racial antisemitism that nullified the option of assimilation for many Jews trying to find their place in the new Europe. When religion was the dividing line, Jews at least had the theoretical option of conversion. But one could not convert to a new ancestry, and consequently even the most assimilated Jews were excluded. This was driven home by the 1894 Dreyfus trial in France, in which a Jewish army officer, totally French in culture and loyalty, was falsely convicted of treason in a conspiracy involving the military high command.

Traditional antisemitism had not, of course, disappeared. In 1840, French prime minister

Adolphe Thiers and the French consul in Damascus both professed to believe a false confession (extracted under torture) that Jews had murdered a Capuchin monk in that city in order to use his blood in Jewish religious rites (an infamous medieval slander). As self-proclaimed protector of all Catholics in the Ottoman Empire, France was deeply involved in the affair. In 1858, the Vatican (still ruling in the Papal States) kidnapped a Jewish boy in Bologna who had been secretly baptized by a maid and refused to return him to his family. This incident inspired the organization of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in France (1860), a sign that Jews in Western Europe were now organizing to defend and extend their newly won rights. As noted (chap. 1), the alliance in 1870 established the first Jewish agricultural school in Palestine (Mikveh Yisrael), sometimes regarded as the beginning of the Zionist return to the land.

But this was now overshadowed by the new antisemitism based less on religious and more on racial grounds (the term "antisemitism" was itself invented by its adherents for its pseudoscientific aura). The First International Anti-Semitic Congress was held in 1882 in Dresden; it concluded that emancipation of the Jews had been a "fatal mistake" and called for its retraction, even for the most assimilated Jews, who "constitute no less of a danger."[20] From such a perspective, the entry of Jews into mainstream society was not a solution but was in fact the very heart of the problem.

As old hatreds emerged alongside the new dilemmas, old solutions also made their appearance. Of course the idea of a return to the Land of Israel had never gone away; it was a constant in Jewish history. But from the middle of the nineteenth century, "precursors" of the modern Zionist movement made their way onto the stage. In no small part, these early advocates of Jewish national revival were reacting to growing signs that high hopes raised by emancipation had not been realized. The ideas they expressed were a premonition of ideologies yet to come.

The rabbinical establishment generally opposed "messianic" movements aimed at a restoration of the Jewish homeland. There had been too many false messiahs in recent centuries, and they believed that the true Messiah would come only when ordained by God. But two of the forerunners of Zionism were rabbis: Zwi Hirsch Kalischer from the Prussianruled region of Poland and Yehuda Hai Alkalai of Serbia, then an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire. Both were influenced by the rising nationalism of peoples among whom they lived, and both felt ambivalent about an emancipation that had not really reached them. Rather than waiting passively for the Messiah, Kalischer and Alkalai sought to channel age-old messianic impulses in concrete directions. Alkalai in 1843 published *Minhat Yehuda* (The Offering of Judah), calling for a return to the Land of Israel in gradual stages, given that it was in his view mainly uninhabited and that "the Sultan will not object"—a view shared by others who knew Palestine only from a distance.[21]

Kalischer published a similar call for Jewish settlement, *Drishat Tsion* (Seeking Zion), in 1862, likewise invoking the common image of a desolate Palestine. But Kalischer also called attention to a possible clash with the existing inhabitants: "Many stress the insecurity of property in the Land of Israel [where] Arab gangs are likely to seize the crops of Jewish workers of the soil." Kalischer quickly dismissed these fears, however: "Arab attacks for plunder can never happen, since it is well-known that the present Pasha pursues law and order, and severely punishes every act of theft and thievery inflicted on his subjects."[22] Apparently the rabbi had caught word of the recent improvements to security in Ottoman Palestine. The calls of the two rabbis had little impact at the time, but their work did contribute to the demystification of the

Return to Zion, making it a human rather than a divine undertaking, and formed a link with the religious Zionism that arose eventually after an interlude dominated by secular Zionists.[23]

Another call for a Return to Zion came from an unusual source: a non-Jewish secretary to the French emperor Napoléon III (1852–1870), Ernest Laharanne, who in 1860 published an impassioned plea for France and the world's Jews to unite in the reestablishment of the Jewish homeland.[24] Laharanne was a liberal Catholic who saw God's hand in human events, strongly supported the prevailing belief in the civilizing mission of Western civilization to other parts of the world, and regarded the Ottoman Empire as "the great sleeping corpse of the East."[25] His approach was geopolitical, in the context of the 1860 French intervention in Lebanon to protect Christians from massacres that the Turkish rulers failed to prevent. Ottoman Turkey no longer existed, he argued, and its Asian provinces should become the basis for three new empires: one based on Egypt, one on Arabia, and the third to be a restored Judea. The new Jewish state should extend from Suez to Smyrna, in his view, including the Lebanese and Anatolian coastlines. He appealed to Jews to take on this divinely ordained destiny: "A high mission is reserved for you. Placed as a living union among three worlds, you need to bring civilization to peoples still inexperienced, you need to bring to them the lights of Europe that you have gathered abundantly. . . . Your gold will serve to make these fertile lands productive, and there where the desert has sown its dust and its aridity, there you will bring forth riches, and the land will regain its fertility, by means of work and the aid of modern industries."[26]

Laharanne's little book was thus apparently the first full expression of the argument, later to become so central, that Jews would have a civilizing mission to bring modernity to the peoples of the area.

Though his plea had no impact at the time, and is practically forgotten today, Laharanne seems to have had some influence on a more important figure who has already been introduced. Moses Hess, as noted above, was a close collaborator of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the early socialist movement. Unlike Marx, however, he received a religious Jewish education and remained Jewish in identity, while viewing his Jewishness in national rather than religious terms. Hess was shocked by the 1840 blood libel case in Damascus, given the deep French involvement in the affair (he was living in Paris at the time). Eventually he came to the same conclusion as others: that the new nationalism, and even more the new antisemitism, had little or no place for Jews. In 1862 he published *Rome and Jerusalem*, advocating a socialist Jewish commonwealth in the historic homeland. Hess emphasized those parts of Jewish tradition that seemed to favor socialism, and—consistent with his advocacy of national self-determination for all peoples—also called for the independence of Arab states in the region. His only reference to facts on the ground in Palestine was a quotation from Rabbi Kalischer's book with its standard European images of "wilderness," "heap of ruins," "uninhabited," "uninhabited desert land," and the need to defend against "rapacious attacks of Bedouins."[27]

Hess's book, like the other proto-Zionist works, attracted little attention at the time. As Kalischer and Alkalai were links to religious Zionism, Hess was later regarded by socialist Zionists as an ideological founder (he was eventually reburied together with other socialist Zionist figures in an Israeli cemetery). For all of the precursors, however, the Return to Zion remained a vision rather than a concrete program of action or an actual movement of any consequence. None of them, moreover, showed an appreciable interest in or knowledge of the

prevailing conditions in the Palestine of their days, nor offered any serious thought about the future relations of a restored Jewish homeland with the existing inhabitants of that land.

THE HASKALA REACHES RUSSIA

Few if any areas outside the Land of Israel have had as broad and deep an impact on Jewish history and culture as Russia. Yet, paradoxically, Jews were excluded from Russia throughout much of its history. Russia became central to our story not only because the Jews came to Russia but because Russia came to the Jews.

Though there are some records of Jews in Crimea and the Caucasus in the early Christian centuries, from the seventh to the tenth centuries Judaism was banned in the Eastern Roman Empire (labeled by historians as "Byzantine"), to which the rising state of Russia claimed succession as "the Third Rome." As the new state spread from its core in Moscow, it imposed the exclusion of Jews on areas annexed. When Tsar Ivan IV ("The Terrible") captured Polotsk in 1563, for example, he massacred all Jews who refused to convert. When the Romanov dynasty came to power in 1613, Jews were expressly banished from the extensive territories that the tsar (a title derived from "Caesar") controlled.[28]

The expansionist habits of Russian rulers, however, soon put this policy to the test. White Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish territories annexed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had preexisting Jewish communities. Nevertheless, the general exclusion of Jews was restated in 1727, 1740, and 1742. Catherine the Great (1762–1796) reportedly considered opening up her non-Russian domains to Jews, but this question was superseded by the Polish partitions of 1772, 1793, and 1795, by virtue of which Russia acquired huge chunks of the former kingdom of Poland with its heavy Jewish population. The Russian response to this challenge was to leave the Jews where they were but to forbid them from entering the Russian heartland. This was the origin of the restrictive "Pale of Settlement" (established in 1791), which essentially kept Jews in the non-Russian (Polish, White Russian, Ukrainian, and Baltic) parts of the empire, and remained formally in force until the 1917 revolution.[29]

Understandably, Russian Jews felt much less pressure or temptation to integrate into their own society than their Western counterparts felt toward theirs. The emancipation that had opened doors in the West was hardly felt under Russian autocracy in the early nineteenth century. Second, any attraction that Russianization might have had was hardly operative when most Jews lived among Poles, Ukrainians, or Lithuanians. As a result, Russian Jews remained much more distinctive in their dress, language, and occupations—and most lived in a state of poverty that only reinforced their separation and stagnation.

As a *kehilla* or *kahal* (community), Jews in Polish or Lithuanian lands had, as already noted, enjoyed considerable autonomy in their internal affairs. Much of this continued under Russian rule, since the corporatist model—dealing with the population as classes of people—still prevailed. But, as the century progressed, the Russian government moved to limit or abolish the autonomy of Jewish communities. Partly this was because modern theories of the state were replacing the corporatist model, but in the tsarist case it probably had more to do with the instincts of absolutism.

The reign of the reactionary Nicholas I (1825–1856), a period of emancipation and Haskala in the West, was a period of retrogression in Russia. The Russian regime enacted further restrictions on residence, employment, censorship, and even dress. There was a wave of blood

libel cases, reviving the medieval calumny of Jewish murder of Christians. The most widely hated new measure was the "cantonist" military draft in which Jewish boys as young as 8–10 years of age were forcibly conscripted into the Russian army for a period of 25 years; those taken were lost to their families and to the Jewish community. In 1844, Russia formally abolished the *kahal* organization of Jewish communities in order to tighten government control, though many communities managed to retain some autonomy by more informal means.[30] Russian policy toward its Jewish population was never consistent, vacillating between separation and forced assimilation. One measure designed to encourage assimilation was the establishment in 1848 of state "crown" schools for Jews. The number of such schools grew slowly given Jewish resistance; their major impact was to serve as a channel through which many later activists and radicals—the Russian maskilim—became politically conscious and engaged.

Tsar Alexander II (1856–1881) was the liberator tsar who ended serfdom in Russia. The Crimean War (1853–1856) had demonstrated that the Russian colossus had feet of clay; Alexander initiated wide-ranging reforms aimed at catching up with Western Europe. The policy toward Jews shifted definitively toward limited emancipation and promotion of assimilation. On the day of the new tsar's coronation, the hated cantonist system of forced conscription of young Jewish boys was abolished. Access to universities was eased, and Jewish university graduates were allowed to hold government jobs. In 1859 Jewish merchants in the highest guild were allowed to move outside the Pale of Settlement; this liberalization was extended to holders of academic degrees in 1861, to certain classes of artisans in 1865, and to Jewish soldiers in 1867. New laws on rural government and judicial reform placed no restriction on Jewish participation. In practice there were still obstacles to integration into Russian society, but slowly a new (and fairly sophisticated) Jewish presence grew in Moscow and the other major cities of Russia—which consequently later became centers of Jewish dissent.[31]

Jews in Russia responded to liberalization much as Jews in Western Europe had a generation earlier. The ideas of the Haskala, incorporating the ideals of the Enlightenment and the influence of secular European thought, began to penetrate Russia by the 1840s. Adherents of the movement believed that Jewish emancipation would evolve as it had elsewhere, that it represented the inevitable march of human progress. The dramatic reforms under Alexander II seemed to confirm this expectation, which Russian Jewish intellectuals hastened to proclaim. The mood was one of tremendous hope with an undercurrent of urgency; it was captured vividly in a poem of 1866 by Yehuda Leib Gordon, one of the maskilim creating a new secular Hebrew literature:

> Awake, my people! How long will you slumber?
> The night has passed, the sun shines bright. . . .
> This Land of Eden [Russia] now opens its gates to you,
> Her sons now call you "brother"! . . .
> Raise your head high, straighten your back,
> And gaze with loving eyes upon them.
> Open your heart to wisdom and knowledge.
> Become an enlightened people, and speak their language. . . .
> Be a man abroad and a Jew in your tent,
> A brother to your countrymen and a servant to your king.[32]

The Russian Haskala, like its counterpart elsewhere, promoted a limited assimilation that

preserved, and in some senses even strengthened, Jewish identity. Gordon exhorts his audience to become a member of the broader society ("be a man abroad") while still remaining "a Jew in your tent." Jews should learn Russian, drop their distinctive dress and other outward symbols of difference, and enlist in the enlightened forces at work. They should also learn "all manner of arts and crafts," moving away from the distorted occupational structure of ghettoized Jewish communities (just as in Palestine Jews were being pushed to productivization). There was also a strong streak of agrarianism in the movement, a call for a return to the soil that borrowed from both Russian populist thought and the long-felt Jewish yearning to reestablish a link to the land. But Russian maskilim, working in a different environment, were never attracted by the vision of total integration into their host society; many of them (Smolenskin, for example) strongly denounced "*Haskalat* Berlin," meaning the reduction of Judaism to religion only, with Jews becoming Frenchmen or Germans "of the Mosaic persuasion."

The distinctively Russian Jewish voice of the Haskala was evident, above all, in the new Jewish press that emerged with the relaxation (though not abolition) of censorship. The maskilim dominated the new newspapers and journals. While there were Jewish publications in Russian (especially the newspaper *Razsvet*) and later in Yiddish, the major push was in Hebrew, the Jewish national language. The most prominent platform in this period was *HaMelits*, a weekly published from 1860 to 1870 in Odessa and from then to 1904 in St. Petersburg, the Russian capital. *HaMelits*, edited by Yehuda Leib Gordon (the poet quoted above) and Alexander Tsederbaum, was devoted to Haskala ideals: the revival of Hebrew as a living literary language, modern secular education, and social reform.

The city of Odessa became the hotbed of Haskala thinking. Odessa was a relatively new city, established after Russian conquest of northern Black Sea shores at the end of the eighteenth century. The Russian government encouraged settlement, even by Jews, and the heavy hand of the government was not as evident as elsewhere. As a frontier city and a major seaport, Odessa experienced a flow of people and ideas that made it into a relatively diverse, open and liberal enclave. It was a perfect base for the maskilim as they tested the limits of official liberalization.

From the beginning there had been serious doubts that emancipation and Haskala could take root in Russia as they had elsewhere. Clearly the abolition of official anti-Jewish laws—as welcome as it was—did not necessarily banish deeply held popular prejudices among the general population. In fact, it became apparent over the course of time that bringing Jews into the mainstream *could actually aggravate antisemitism*. It had happened before: a formerly denigrated and suppressed group become presumed equals and competitors, arousing vociferous, even violent, reactions. Nothing demonstrated this more vividly than the occurrence of anti-Jewish riots in Odessa itself—that island of tolerance and progress!—in 1821, 1849, and 1859. Finally, in 1871 came attacks on Jews in Odessa on such a scale that it shook the confidence of even the most optimistic maskilim. One Jewish doctor in Odessa who had been very active in Haskala publications—Leo Pinsker—withdrew from public life for several years (we will meet Dr. Pinsker again later).[33]

As in the West, some of those seeking emancipation from the Jewish past turned to revolutionary movements, including Marxism. Socialism in its purest form, they felt, would erase—or render irrelevant—all religious, national, or ethnic differences. The common identity of workers as members of the international proletariat united them and superseded other differences. Only in this way, as they saw it, would the "Jewish question" be resolved—though

its resolution was merely a secondary consequence of a much larger and more central evolution of human society. In the short term, of course, this meant a process of Russianization in order to become Russian socialists; de facto, the result was a breaking of ties with the Jewish community.[34] In any event, from the 1870s Jews played an important role in the various socialist movements.

Various Russian Haskala leaders offered their own blend of ideas. Moshe Leib Lilienblum, already mentioned for his role in Hebrew literature, was born in Lithuania in 1843 and like most maskilim of his generation had a traditional religious education. But after teaching for five years in a yeshiva (religious seminary), his advocacy of reforms made him unwelcome and he fled to Odessa in 1869. The 1871 anti-Jewish riots shook Lilienblum, as they had shaken Pinsker, and he responded with a series of articles criticizing Haskala thinkers for not seeing reality. Lilienblum was attracted to socialist ideas, but above all he recognized the new antisemitism as something linked to the new nationalism rather than as a relic of the past. Accordingly, he urged a national renaissance of the Jewish people as the only appropriate response.[35]

Peretz Smolenskin, who was also a key figure in the literary revival of Hebrew and had a traditional education, also moved to Odessa (in 1862). He then moved on to Vienna in 1868 and founded the important pro-Haskala monthly *HaShahar*. Smolenskin had the searing experience of seeing his older brother, whom he never heard from again, seized by the cantonists for army service at the age of 10. Some of this went into an autobiographical novel, *HaTo'eh BeDrechei HaHayim* (A Wanderer in Life's Ways), that was the most widely read Hebrew book in the 1870s. Smolenskin condemned Haskala thinking that tended to reduce Judaism to a religion, and like Lilienblum he argued for the assertion of Jewish national cultural identity. Also like Lilienblum, he doubted—already in the 1870s—that emancipation would remove or even reduce the threat of antisemitism.[36]

Leo Pinsker (1821–1891) was a second-generation *maskil* whose father, a noted scholar of Jewish history, moved from Poland to Odessa in 1825. Pinsker's history is another illustration of how Haskala thinking, tempered by antisemitic storms, led to Jewish nationalism. Pinsker studied law but as a Jew was unable to practice (even in liberal Odessa). He then earned a medical degree in Moscow, at a time (1849) when this was a remarkable achievement. Pinsker's approach to integration was in some ways more Western European than Russian; his main languages were Russian and German, and he actually knew very little Hebrew. As noted, he withdrew from involvement in Jewish publications after the shock of the 1871 anti-Jewish riots.[37]

Another Russian maskil worth noting is the young Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858–1922), born as Eliezer Perlman in Lithuania. Perlman also had a traditional yeshiva education but at age 15 transferred to a scientific high school. In 1879 he became interested in cultural nationalism and corresponded with Smolenskin, leading to his first published essay (for which he Hebraized his name), in *HaShahar*. In early 1881 Ben-Yehuda engaged in a fascinating exchange with Smolenskin, published in *HaShahar*, that represents the range of thinking among Russian maskilim on the eve of massive tumult in Russian Jewish life. Ben-Yehuda begins by joining Smolenskin in denouncing the view of the "Berlin *maskilim*" that Jews are not a people. In the past the identity of Jews as a people was guaranteed by their forced separation, he argues, but with the walls coming down the danger is that Jews will in fact become nothing more than

another religious denomination. Smolenskin's advocacy of Jews as a spiritual nation will not avail, he insists, without a national language, and a national language must be a living language, spoken as well as written, with a territorial base: "But we cannot revive the Hebrew language except in a land where the number of Hebrew inhabitants exceeds the number of gentiles. Let us therefore multiply the number of Jews in our barren land; let us bring back the remnants of our people to the land of their fathers; let us revive the nation and we will also revive its language."[38]

For Ben-Yehuda, known primarily as the key figure in the revival of modern spoken Hebrew, language was not an end in itself but the key to preserving Jews as a people. "The Jewish religion," he adds, "can survive even in foreign lands. . . . But the nation? The nation can only live on its own soil and only on its soil will it renew its youth and bear magnificent fruit as in ancient times."[39]

But Ben-Yehuda was ahead—if only by a few months—of his fellow maskilim in the Russian Jewish intelligentsia. Smolenskin appended his own response to Ben-Yehuda's plea, belittling the priority given to the land over the Torah: "And if they say to us today: here is your country before you, take it and put in it what you will, establish in it a kingdom as your spirit commands . . . but with the small condition that you change your faith to another faith, what will you say, Ben-Yehuda my friend?"[40]

Smolenskin also taunted Ben-Yehuda over the unpleasant realities facing any attempt to organize settlement in Palestine: "You want to go to your country? Good. But whoever is going with you?" He underlined the misery of Jews now living in the Holy Land only with the help of *haluka* (charity), invoking the prevailing negative images: "and in all the streets of Jerusalem there will be robbery and killing and bloodshed, and this will be our redemption?" Before adding a tower, Smolenskin declared, one must first erect a cornerstone and build a house: "And when this idea begins to penetrate the hearts of many of us, and when a great number of our brothers will settle in Zion and live on their land, and not just the poor and bereft depending on *haluka*, then will be the time to rebuild the ruins of Zion."[41]

Smolenskin could not have foreseen how soon the time would come when the idea of a Return to Zion would "penetrate the hearts of many." In fact, for Smolenskin himself, as we will see, it arrived before this very issue of *HaShahar*, containing his lively debate with the as-yet-unknown Ben-Yehuda, had made its way to all its readers. For Ben-Yehuda, this advocacy of Jewish settlement in Palestine, just before the eruption of the storms, made him into a pre-Zionist Zionist of sorts. As it happens, he was actually en route to Palestine, acting on his beliefs, when the storms broke.

STORMS IN THE SOUTH

Contrary to common images, prior to the late nineteenth century there was no history of organized violence against Jews in Russia. Jews had only been present in large numbers on Russian soil for about a century, by virtue of the annexation of areas in which they lived—and during this century there had been no major anti-Jewish eruptions apart from the riots, mentioned above, in Odessa. But in the Pale where Jews lived, and especially Ukraine, there was a bloody history before Russian annexation. The most notorious attacks came during the revolt against Polish rule led by Ukrainian Cossack Hetman Bogdan Chmielnicki in 1648–1654, when Jews

were caught in the middle as agents of Polish landowners and tens of thousands were massacred. A similar Cossack uprising in 1768–1769 incited a similar scale of devastation on Jewish communities in western Ukraine.[42]

Clearly in Ukraine, Jews had become hated targets of Ukrainian nationalists, but given the antisemitic history of Russia proper (where Jews had long been scornfully excluded) they were hated there as well. In 1844 Russia abolished the Jewish communal structure (the *kahal*) that had existed in the former Polish and Ukrainian areas (the Pale of Settlement), but by most accounts Jewish self-government within their own communities persisted and became the object of hostile government investigations. Popular images of Jews, fed by long-standing antisemitic stereotypes, accused them of exploiting peasants and urban dwellers by their control of the liquor trade, their sharp business practices, their dealings in stolen goods, and, of course, the classic charge of usurious moneylending. The Jews were, in short, indicted for taking advantage of the ignorance and simplicity of honest and hardworking Christians.[43]

On top of this traditional antisemitism came the unsettling reverberations of Alexander II's well-intentioned reforms. Twenty years after their liberation (in 1861), former serfs were often worse off than they had been before, having received less land to farm. A mass of impoverished peasants crowded into cities and towns, especially in the south (Ukraine), where they constituted a "barefoot brigade" that threatened law and order. Rising prices, high unemployment, and general instability worsened their condition. And here they came face-to-face with Jewish entrepreneurs and competitors who were increasingly visible as they moved into new spheres made available by the partial emancipation.[44]

The emancipation of a previously suppressed and despised minority triggered resentment and violence from those who felt threatened by the sudden intrusion of those they regarded as inferior. Jews were now prominent in schools and universities, in occupations from which they had been excluded, and in new residential areas. But their very success in making use of these new opportunities was not a solution to antisemitism; in fact, it aroused the antisemites. The new antisemitism, piled on top of traditional religious prejudice, made the attempt to assimilate seem self-defeating. The fact that the only major anti-Jewish attacks before 1881 came in Odessa—the city in which Jews had made the most progress!—should have been noted. Clearly, success came with great costs.

The tinder was laid; it awaited a spark. On March 13, 1881,[45] Tsar Alexander II was assassinated in St. Petersburg by members of the radical revolutionary *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Will) organization. For the Jews of Russia, this was an ominous event tinged with sorrow and trepidation, though no one could imagine the dimensions of the disaster to come. Among those Jews seeking to integrate, a typical response was that of a 16-year-old Jewish gymnasium (secondary school) student in Moscow. Haim Hisin. Hisin's family had moved to Moscow from Lithuania when the tsar had opened the path; he represented the new generation of Russianized Jews who sought to find their place in the new Russia. In his diary, his reaction to the assassination was one of sincere anguish: "The Emperor Tsar Alexander II, liberator of the people and friend of mankind . . . has departed this earth."[46] But Hisin did not yet anticipate the conflagration that was to come.

The son and heir of Alexander II, Alexander III (1881–1894), was in many respects the diametric opposite of his father. Since 1865 he had been tutored by the reactionary Konstantine

Pobedonostov, procurator of the Holy Synod and de facto head of the Russian Orthodox Church, who was a fervent champion of autocracy and a bitter opponent of reform. It was the tsar's liberalization, in Pobedonostov's view, that had led to his assassination. The procurator guided the new tsar's thinking throughout his reign, and many of the reforms, including those affecting Jews, were rolled back. Needless to say, Pobedonostov and his imperial pupil regarded Jews with the traditional doctrinaire hostility of Russian Orthodoxy.

Rumors quickly spread that "the Jews" had killed Alexander II. The fact that most Jews had regarded the tsar as a benefactor did not matter, and one of the close associates of the assassins was a Jewish woman. Then, April 27–28, 1881—Orthodox Easter—a massive attack on Jewish businesses and homes erupted in Yelizavetgrad, a central Ukrainian city that, like Odessa, was a relatively new city and leading trading center. Establishing a pattern for the months to follow, the rioting and destruction quickly spread to towns and villages in the area around the city. During May the attacks spread to other provinces in eastern Ukraine and to Kiev, the capital, where the violence continued for three days. During this phase, the Russian police and army generally allowed the rioting mobs to continue, intervening only when matters threatened to get out of hand.

During July and August the contagion spread to north central Ukraine, first to the major cities and then to the towns and villages. Up to this point, the main focus was on destruction of property, looting, and beatings, with relatively few killings. Also, the police and army began to intervene more forcefully, and the attacks began to taper off. But eventually they spread to areas beyond Ukraine: Warsaw on Christmas Day in 1882; Rostov and Nizhni Novgorod, in Russia proper, in 1883 and 1884, respectively. Later attacks also had a higher death toll as rioters began to massacre targeted Jews.

For Jews throughout Russia, the violence in Ukraine was referred to in the printed press (under censorship) as "storms in the south," a reference to Isaiah 21:1 ("Like the storms that race through the south, it comes from the desert, the terrible land"). But soon the Russian word for "devastation"—*pogrom*—came into use and has since become the standard label for violent mob attacks on Jewish communities. By the end of 1881, the wave of pogroms had washed over about 215 cities, towns, and villages, leaving thousands of homes and businesses destroyed and creating a massive outflow of refugees.

The pogroms were largely an urban phenomenon, with the newly arrived migrants and peasants—the "barefoot brigade"—providing much of the manpower. However, it appears that the petty bourgeoisie of the cities and towns were the core of the rioters: merchants, artisans, tradesmen, and others for whom the Jews were emerging as competitors as well as a traditionally despised class.[47]

Given the depth of traditional antisemitism in Russia and the destabilizing impact of recent changes, the hostility of displaced or threatened groups was no surprise. But the silence, or even hostility, of liberals and revolutionaries from whom Jews expected support was stunning. Some in these circles apparently shared the negative view of Jews spewed out by the vociferous antisemitic press. Many appear to have believed that popular movements, even vicious ones like pogroms, were intrinsically legitimate since they came "from the people." And if "the people" felt they had been exploited by Jews, there must be some truth in their claims.[48]

Jews were deeply distraught that major figures of the Russian intelligentsia, such as Turgenev and Tolstoy, remained silent as the pogroms continued. But they were shocked when

some of the revolutionary ideologues went much further, claiming that the pogroms were a step forward in history. *Narodnaya Volya*, whose members had assassinated the tsar, noted that "even the great French Revolution began with the beating of the Jews . . . when the anti-Jewish movements begin one can be assured that they conceal a protest against the entire order, and that a much more profound movement is beginning."[49] Another proclamation from the same source told Ukrainians: "Wherever you look, wherever you go—the Jews are everywhere. The Jew curses you, cheats you, drinks your blood. . . . You have done well. Soon the revolt will be taken up across all of Russia, against the tsar, the *pany* [nobility], the Jews."[50]

There has always been widespread suspicion that the Russian government, seeking to channel popular unrest toward another target, actually instigated the pogroms. Extensive research has, however, failed to find evidence that high officials initiated or organized the attacks. The weight of evidence is that the government was also caught by surprise, which helps account for their confused and ineffective response. For an absolutist regime, any kind of spontaneous popular explosion is by its very nature a threat. Pobedonostov himself firmly opposed the pogroms, fearing exactly what the revolutionaries hoped for: that the mobs would eventually redirect their anger from the Jews to the state.[51] This does not mean, however, that the regime did not exploit the pogroms to further its own ends, which were hardly favorable to Jews. It also does not rule out the possibility that officials on lower levels had a hand in helping organize or facilitate attacks that often showed ample evidence of planning and coordination.

The new tsar also replaced a reformist minister of the interior with the reactionary and vociferously antisemitic count Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatyev. After the pogroms erupted, Alexander III issued an edict establishing investigative commissions, and Ignatyev sent instructions to the commissions to focus on two questions: which economic activities of the Jews harmed the local population, and what new laws would help restrain these harmful activities. In essence the document put the blame on the Jews, because of "the detriment caused to the Christian population of the Empire by the activity of the Jews, their tribal exclusiveness and religious fanaticism" and it especially emphasized "the exploitation of the indigenous population and mostly of the poorer classes."[52] Such a frame of reference could clearly only lead to new anti-Jewish restrictions, using the pogroms perversely as cover for reversing the reforms of Alexander II and returning to a policy of unrelieved repression. It led directly to the "May Laws" of 1882, which forbid Jews from settling outside cities and towns or from buying, leasing, or administering new properties.[53] This was followed by the restoration of other restrictions, marking the end of hopes for emancipation by governmental reform.

Russian authorities did become increasingly forceful over time in containing the pogroms, thereby demonstrating what might have been accomplished in suppressing the violence at an early stage. This belated forcefulness was not simply an expression of conservative instincts for law and order but also foreign pressure and the growing economic costs of the riots impelled it. Commercial and industrial interests were pressing for an end to the pogroms, which were highly detrimental to business. Early in May 1882, representatives from 50 Moscow firms petitioned the government to act more forcefully, detailing the great damage that was being inflicted.[54] In the same month, Interior Minister Ignatyev was replaced by Dmitri Tolstoy, also a reactionary but strongly opposed to permitting mobs to rule. Tolstoy initiated a firm policy of suppressing and punishing the rioters, and from this point on the outbursts were sporadic.

A BROKEN REED?

The pogroms of 1881–1884 fell like a thunderbolt on the Jewish community of Russia, and especially on those who had expounded emancipation and integration. The initial reaction was one of total shock and disillusion. Typical was the experience of Zalman David Levontin, a 25-year-old bank clerk with Hasidic roots who had pursued secular studies and worked in both Jewish and Russian circles. As it happened, Levontin had just been expelled from a hotel in Kharkov—a city beyond the Pale, where he was not allowed to spend the night—on the day of the very first pogrom in Elizavetgrad. Returning home on an overnight train, he heard of the pogrom from a policeman who spoke of the "cursed Jews." Sitting in a compartment where he was not immediately recognized as a Jew, he was forced to endure a stream of tirades about "blood-sucking" Jews and his tentative protests only made him the target. He returned home in a state of despair, shared by the entire Jewish community: "The European enlightenment [Haskala] was a broken reed for us."[55] Levontin was to become the key founding father of Rishon LeTsion, the first Zionist settlement.

In another city a young law student recorded the prototypical experience of those in his generation who had pinned their hopes on becoming good Russians: "With my own eyes I saw the terrible tragedy in one of the more beautiful and enlightened cities, in which important people were joining in. If they did not actually do the beating, they were stirring the fire and adding fuel to the flames. When I saw all this something in me snapped. . . . In one flash all my illusions were revealed, and all the beautiful pictures of the future, that I and my friends painted for ourselves, dissipated like smoke."[56]

Even those who had been fervent advocates of Russianization now drew back in horror. Lev Levanda, a veteran journalist and writer who had long urged assimilation, wrote in the Russian-language Jewish press that the idea of "merger," which had seemed like the obvious solution to Jewish distress, was now dead: "But what can one do if those with whom one wants to merge shun the merger . . . with crowbars and clubs in their hands . . .? It is not with joy that many of us are now devoting ourselves to the most unheard-of plans. Even the dreamer . . . who dreams of an independent Jewish state does so, we believe, only because people and events are driving us into the kingdom of darkness."[57]

Moshe Leib Lilienblum, the scholar and author who had moved to Odessa and was now in his late 30s, represented one of the most profound (and influential) transformations. Lilienblum had called for a Jewish national renaissance but within a Russian framework; in particular, he tapped into Russian populist agrarianism by advocating a massive transfer of poor Jews to agricultural colonies. But in his diary he recorded his horror as the pogroms progressed and engulfed his own city. When the first pogrom erupted, he wrote: "Alarming reports from Elizavetgrad. Confusion, brutality, the blood freezes, the heart fails, what is it all?" When the attacks reached Odessa on May 5, he was appalled and terrified: "The situation is terrible, terrible and very frightening. It is as if we were besieged, the courtyard is bolted shut, . . . we sleep in our clothes . . . for fear that robbers will fall upon us and so that we can then quickly take the little children . . . and flee wherever the wind will carry us. But will they let us escape? . . . Terrible, terrible! Until when, O God of Israel?"[58]

When the worst had passed, Lilienblum registered a striking thought that underlined the linkage, in his own mind, to the thrust of Jewish history: "I am glad I have suffered torment . . .

For once in my life I have felt what my forefathers felt all through their lives . . . why should I not feel something of the dread which they felt throughout their days?"[59]

For maskilim who had so readily pursued new opportunities opened up by the limited reforms, the crushing of these hopes left them stunned and in despair. Extending hope, and then abruptly withdrawing it, has historically stirred up many more vociferous reactions than the simple continuation of unchanged oppression. Crane Brinton, in his classic study of revolution, concludes that prerevolutionary societies were "on the whole on the upgrade economically before the revolution came, and the revolutionary movements seem to originate in the discontents of not unprosperous people who feel restraint, cramp, annoyance, rather than downright crushing oppression. . . . These revolutions are born of hope."[60] The shattered hopes of those who had tied their future to Russian reform were eloquently expressed by one of the Jewish intelligentsia: "When I remember what has been done to us, how we have been taught to love Russia and Russian speech, how we have been induced and compelled to introduce the Russian language and everything Russian, and how we are now repulsed and persecuted, then our hearts are filled with sickening despair from which there seems to be no escape. . . . I feel worn out by this accursed year, this universal mental eclipse which has visited our dear fatherland."[61]

Haim Hisin, the 16-year-old secondary school student in Moscow—where the Jewish community was most Russianized—reacted in much the same way: "Until these pogroms began I myself had thrust aside my Jewish origins. I considered myself a devoted son of Russia. I lived and breathed a Russian life and every new Russian scientific discovery, every new creation of Russian literature, every victory of Russian imperial power, everything Russian filled my heart with pride."[62]

By the time of the pogroms a large part of the younger generation had pinned their hopes on integration into a liberalizing Russia. Now these hopes had collapsed. Not only had liberalization been reversed but a tide of medieval violence had swept over the Jewish heartland. If becoming Russian was no longer an option, what remained? For many of those most disillusioned, the answer was a defiant reassertion of Jewish identity, the very identity they had sought to escape or minimize. Hisin expressed the thought common to many: "Yes—whether I wish it or not, I am a Jew. . . . We have in common a great past in which we served the world, gave it its basic ethics."[63]

There were moving scenes across the country as young Russianized Jews returned to the Jewish community they had supposedly left behind. In Kiev, scene of one of the worst pogroms, a group of Jewish students entered a synagogue and one of them proclaimed (in Russian) to the dispirited congregation: "We are your brothers, we are Jews like you, we regret and repent that we considered ourselves Russians and not Jews until now. The events of the past weeks . . . have shown us how tragically we were mistaken. Yes, we are Jews."[64]

The shock waves were no less intense for the intellectual figures of the Russian Haskala. Peretz Smolenskin, observing from afar in Vienna, had just written a stern admonition to the young Eliezer Ben-Yehuda in the pages of his journal *HaShahar* for his unrealistic vision of a massive Jewish exodus to the Land of Israel (see above, "The Haskala Reaches Russia"). Fortuitously, the pogroms intervened before this issue was sent to press, and Smolenskin traveled to Russia for two months to observe matters for himself. He returned a changed man. He

immediately penned a passionate argument for Jewish emigration and published it in the same issue of *HaShahar* alongside Ben-Yehuda's article and his own scornful response. The journal's readers must have wondered which Smolenskin was the operative version.

The new Smolenskin, in his postpogrom advent, claimed that he had in fact foreseen everything: "I regret to say that my frequent written and verbal predictions about the imminence of the evil have come true. . . . Sad events have proved who was right." Nevertheless, in this important article Smolenskin records a turnabout in his thinking that was shared by a great many of his fellow maskilim. Smolenskin records his shock in striking language: "Calamity after calamity and disaster after disaster have afflicted the Jews of Russia. In many communities not a stone has been left standing. The shops of our brethren have been pillaged and looted, and whatever the mob could not carry off, it has utterly destroyed. Many Jews have been murdered and the wounded are without number. The mob, a ravenous wolf in search of prey, has stalked the Jews with a cruelty unheard of since the Middle Ages. . . . Everything happened so suddenly and without warning."[65]

The measure of the catastrophe in Smolenskin's mind is embodied in his embrace of ideas that he had only lately ruled out of hand: "At present our enemies in Russia are venting their rage by demanding that the Jews leave the country. This horrifies our brothers even more than all the disasters that have befallen us. But is it wrong even for a Jew to say: Why should we not emigrate, if the government allows it?"[66]

Moshe Leib Lilienblum was another leading maskil who passed through a fundamental shift in his thinking. Lilienblum's shock over the attacks in his own Odessa has already been noted; by September he had dropped out of his secular studies, feeling that it was no longer relevant to absorb "high culture" (at least the Russian version). In October he published a two-part article in the Russian-language Jewish press that represent a full statement of the new fundamental thesis that had evolved among a large segment of the Jewish intelligentsia.

Lilienblum began with the observation that the pogroms were not an aberration but that antisemitism was inevitable in human society: "Certainly no one man . . . has the power to create so great an ape as antisemitism; and since we see that the ape has been created and does now stand before us, it is a sign that the earth is well able to bear such evil beasts."[67] Antisemitism could not be eradicated, in this view, because it was rooted in the universal distrust of aliens, and for historical reasons Jews would always be aliens in Europe. And in opposition to the basic maskil article of faith in emancipation and integration, the success of Jews in non-Jewish societies would actually intensify, rather than lessen, the hatred of the antisemites: "The moment the 'aliens' took up [science and agriculture], the cry went out, 'Beware, the Jew is coming!'"[68] The only way out of this impossible dilemma was to evacuate Jews from Europe, even if it took a century, to a place where they "would no longer be strangers but citizens and masters of the land themselves."[69]

Apart from changes in prevailing ideas, the pogroms also sparked the emergence of a new Jewish politics, of new grassroots movements and leaders who rejected the integration scenario. This did not happen instantly. The elitist politics of the pre-1881 Jewish community only slowly gave way to new mass organizations and parties committed to more radical ideas. In fact, the first organized response to the pogroms was in the historical pattern of *shtadlanut* (lobbying, intermediation), with a delegation of prominent and wealthy notables calling on the tsar already

in early May 1881. Given the tsar's stated view that hostility to Jews was a response to their exploitation of ordinary Russians, the meeting produced no positive results.[70] The traditional Jewish elite were instinctively opposed to the idea of emigration as a solution; when the possibility was mentioned in a St. Petersburg meeting of Jewish leaders, it was decisively rejected.[71] The same was true of an April 1882 conference, also dominated by the traditional leadership, that condemned emigration as subversive "of the historic rights of the Jews to their present Fatherland" and continued to focus on the realization of these rights.[72]

The radicalized members of the Jewish community who had put their trust in class rather than ethnic identity also continued, by and large, to support the growing revolutionary movements (at least the movements that had not welcomed the pogroms). The Marxist worldview generally regarded the pogroms as "reactionary" phenomena that would disappear in a socialist world. But many of the young maskilim, who had flocked to the universities and other channels of integration and were now shocked and disillusioned, began to organize and provide new platforms and new leadership. The phenomenon of Russian-educated youths returning to their Jewish origins left a broad impact. In Kiev (as noted above), in Odessa, in St. Petersburg, and elsewhere, students organized a "going to the [Jewish] people," where they appeared en masse in synagogues to express solidarity (mostly in January–February 1882).[73] Students also began organizing their own meetings; the excitement of the first Moscow meeting, in late 1881 or early 1882, was later conveyed by Menachem Ussishkin, a participant, who was to become one of the most influential Zionist leaders in Palestine: "The meeting, which was in secret, of course, because of the police, was held in a fairly large hall on Karetnyi Row. It was very crowded. The throats of the speakers were sore from excess of talk and excess of smoke. Students of several schools of higher education participated, among them a few women. All the discussions were in Russian, of course."[74]

In contrast to the elite meetings, the idea of emigration from Russia "was not an issue" among the students of Moscow—because there was already general agreement that it was the only solution: "Those participating in the discussion were solely concerned with the choice of country of migration; there was no debate on whether or not Russia should be left for some other country in which an independent state would be established."[75] By the time he left the hall, the young Ussishkin had already decided to leave Russia and to organize a group of people to settle in Erets Yisrael.

Societies and associations dedicated to emigration began to emerge in all parts of Jewish Russia, in direct opposition to the wishes and inclinations of the established leadership of the Jewish community. What the pogroms of 1881–1882 set in motion was "a dramatic shift in the center of gravity of Jewish life . . . America and Palestine became the new centers of Jewish life."[76] It would take several decades, and the unspeakable tragedy of the Nazi Holocaust, for this process to play out, but what was happening was nothing less than a major turning point in Jewish history on a scale with the original exile from Palestine, the expulsion from Spain, or the migration to Eastern Europe.

Within a few months, "the image of a new exodus, a going-out from the land of bondage to a promised land, came to dominate, however momentarily, every aspect of Jewish public life in Russia."[77] The students led the way; in the days following the pogrom in Odessa, already local

students organized to establish an agricultural commune in the United States. By the end of the year, emigration was on the agenda everywhere, despite the opposition of the Russian Jewish elite. What was less clear was the position of the Russian government. In theory, emigration was illegal without government permission, and (in line with classical mercantilist thinking) Russian authorities opposed the loss of its human resources, even Jews. Yet official behavior seemed to be ambivalent; lower-ranking officials frequently granted exit visas, and government policy often seemed designed to drive Jews out.[78]

But many people—especially those made homeless by the pogroms—were not waiting for the approval of Jewish notables or government authorities. Rumors of assistance from Jewish organizations abroad, especially the Alliance Israélite Universelle, spread throughout Jewish communities. By August 1881 there was already a movement across the border into the Galician province of Austria-Hungary, where they were concentrated in the city of Brody.

Then, in January 1882, the rabidly antisemitic count Nikolai Ignatyev, minister of the interior, was quoted in print as saying: "The western frontier is open for the Jews. The Jews have already taken ample opportunity of this right, and their emigration has in no way been hampered."[79] This seemed to indicate that the Russian government of the moment had, in fact, decided to push Jews out. The reaction of Russian Jews was one of shock and fear. Haim Hisin recorded in his diary that "suddenly, with no warning, we were shown the door and were told flatly: 'The Western frontier is open to you.'"[80] Emigration fever reached a peak in early 1882, with inflammatory articles appearing in the Jewish press, even in the presumably more moderate journals. By the end of May, there were reportedly more than twelve thousand refugees crammed into Brody.[81] The stampede was on.

Surprisingly, the flood of refugees across the border did not consist primarily of the homeless and destitute. The alliance sent a representative, Charles Netter, as emissary to check on the situation (Netter had been the first head of the Mikveh Yisrael agricultural school in Palestine). Netter reported back: "The men wear neither side-locks nor caftans; they are handsome, tall, clean, intelligent. . . . The usual language of these people is Russian. . . . Among the young people there are many, perhaps half, who were students expelled from the gymnasiums. . . . First, they were reproached with not wanting to assimilate, now it has been found that they are assimilating too well."[82]

Many of the refugees, it appeared, spoke Russian and were middle class and what Netter called "half-assimilated Jews." This was not, in other words, a conventional refugee flow, nor would it follow conventional patterns.

AMERICA OR PALESTINE?

By early 1882, then, emigration fever had gripped the Jews of Russia, and growing numbers, especially among the youths, were taking practical steps to make it happen. Zalman David Levontin, the bank clerk who heard of the first pogrom while surrounded on a train by antisemites, was by this time already in Palestine looking to buy land. His brother wrote to him on March 26 that "everyone is agitated and will not be silent until they leave Russia. There is no city or town, large or small, without people ready to leave for Palestine or America. There is no large city without its committees, colonization projects, fund-raising, office, program, etc."[83]

A few days earlier, on March 20, Haim Hisin in Moscow wrote in his diary that "there

remains only one option—to emigrate. Then the question arises: emigrate to where? Some favor *Erets-Yisrael*, some favor America." After some debate with himself, Hisin decided, "I am traveling to America, only to America." But then he discovered, three days later, that the girl of his dreams had different plans: "I was certain that Fanny would travel with us to America, but when I spoke with her about it I was surprised to hear that she was already a member of another society that intended to travel to *Erets-Yisrael*." This forced Hisin to weigh matters again, and by April 24 he had managed to convince himself that Fanny had it right: "For a week I hesitated, but in the end I resolved in my heart to go to *Erets-Yisrael*."[84]

There was heavy opposition to the Erets Yisrael/Palestine solution, marshaling the same practical arguments that Smolenskin had used to refute Ben-Yehuda. The prevailing image of Palestine as a desolate, arid, and primitive land, as delineated in chapter 1, had no less a hold on Russian Jews. Little cultivable land, it was said, was available; the climate was not supportable for Europeans; disease and unhealthy conditions prevailed; there was little security for life and property; Turkish rule was both oppressive and ineffective; modern transport, communications, or other technologies did not exist; overall, as a prominent English Jew wrote, the "state of civilization by which emigrants would be surrounded" was a guarantee of misery.[85] Critics of the Palestine option never tired of citing the miserable condition of Jews living there and subsisting only by virtue of *haluka*, charity provided by Jews elsewhere. Interestingly, the opponents focused on the material and practical difficulties of settlement in Palestine; little—almost nothing—was said about possible antipathy of the local population to incoming foreigners.

One of the opponents of Palestine was Simon Dubnov, who later became the most noted Russian Jewish historian and whose older brother Vladimir (Ze'ev) was one of the first Jewish settlers in Palestine. Simon Dubnov later recounted his own role in the debate, writing on "The Question of the Day" in the Russian-language *Razsvet*. He found Palestine "unsuitable" because of its despotism, primitivity, hostility to modern education, and lack of agricultural opportunity. Consequently, "only one destination was left: the great democracy of North America." As it happened, two months after his article appeared, Dubnov was shown the manuscript of Lilienblum's article (quoted above) that was to become so influential. Asked to guess on which side Lilienblum came down, Dubnov answered "probably in favor of America." Like many others, he was shocked to discover that the noted author, "my teacher in all things radical," would in fact "turn his face to the East."[86]

The fact is that the vast majority of the Jews who left Russia between 1881 and World War I (1914–1918) did go to America and other Western destinations. Furthermore, those who chose Palestine did not differ in essential ways from those who chose the West.[87] The very first wave of organized emigrants leaving Jewish Russia, in 1881, went to America, sent by the alliance.[88] But one would not have guessed this from the nature and tone of the debate in 1882, when "America" and "Palestine" both stood as options explored and debated fervently. If anything, "Palestine" may even have held a momentary advantage among intellectuals and the youths.

Palestine appealed not only because of ancestral ties and age-old yearnings but—more importantly at this moment—because the pogroms seemed to discredit the model of emancipation that had dominated Jewish life for a century. Clearly emancipation wouldn't work in Russia, but would it work anywhere? Russian Jewish observers were only too aware of the

emergence of the new antisemitism in Western Europe that threatened to undo the progress painstakingly achieved over the decades. Influential public figures and supposed scholars were leading organized movements that used pseudoscience to attack the very basis of the Jewish aspiration to equality. At the very time that Jews in Russia were reeling from the unexpected onslaughts of the past year, in May 1882, the First International Anti-Semitic Congress was meeting in Dresden amid considerable panoply and publicity. The term "antisemite" came into use around this time, invented as noted by the antisemites themselves to give their racism a more dignified facade.

In this atmosphere it was not hard to believe that Judeophobia (to use another term) was a historical constant and not just a passing phenomenon. Moving to another state would not solve the problem; by their very presence—and even more their success if allowed to prosper—Jews would evoke hostility and in the end be forced out. What other lesson could one learn from Jewish history? Why would America be any different? The only solution was Palestine, because only Jews would go to Palestine. Only in Palestine could Jews have their own homeland, where neither assimilation nor a hostile host society would be an issue.

An important voice was added to the debate when Smolenskin weighed in heavily on the side of Palestine. In the same article in which he declared his support for emigration from Russia, the editor of *HaShahar* also reversed his position on a practical program for Jewish settlement in the Holy Land. Non-Jewish experts, he reported, had recently investigated Palestine and found that "the land is very good and that, if cultivated with skill and diligence, it could support fourteen million people." It now occurred to Smolenskin that Palestine offered many advantages over America: the ancestral ties would attract more settlers, it was not as distant, Jews could more easily maintain their own traditions there, the settlers would influence the existing Jews there to become productive rather than living in idleness on the *haluka*, and Jews could make Erets Yisrael a center of commerce between Europe and Asia.[89]

Later in 1881, in an issue of *HaShahar*, Smolenskin broadened the argument for Palestine, putting in the framework of the grand sweep of Jewish history. America could only provide a solution for individuals, he reasoned, and not for Jews as a nation—the theme at the center of his life's teachings. Wherever Jews found refuge, they would always be a minority—but not in Palestine. Picking up Ben-Yehuda's thesis, which he had rejected at the time, he projected that "if large numbers of Jews go there they will be the majority and will decide how things should be and will be able to help their brethren in other countries."[90]

Among those inspired by Smolenskin's impassioned pleading was a young poet, M. M. Dolitzky, who wrote: "Read that article again and you will see that every word, every word, is written in his blood, in the blood of our brothers." If Jews unite, he declared, "there will be enough money not only to buy from Turkey all the Jordan Valley . . . but also to rebuild there a thousand towns now laid waste and to maintain our brothers until they have established themselves."[91]

Lilienblum was another early and influential convert to "Palestinophilism," as it was then called (the term "Zionism" came later). Lilienblum argued forcefully that antisemitism was permanent and universal and that Jewish success only intensified it. Responding to arguments for America as a refuge and debate over the role of religion in the Return to Zion, Lilienblum defined the situation as "plainly and simply a matter of life and without whose solution we are doomed as a people." All other questions "pale into insignificance" in light of that central

concern, and only settlement in Palestine would assure the future of the Jewish people.[92] The following year, he bluntly asserted that there were only three choices for Russian Jews: (1) to be oppressed forever (and not safe from a major holocaust), (2) to be totally assimilated, with no remaining trace of Jewish origin, or (3) to pursue a normal national life through renaissance in the ancestral homeland. "Make your choice!" was his peremptory challenge.[93]

Lilienblum embodied a major shift in the Russian Jewish intelligentsia; his October 1881 article in *Razsvet* is credited with tipping the balance in that journal's editorial board not only in favor of emigration but also in favor of Palestine rather than America. *Razsvet* in Russian, together with *HaShahar* and *HaMelits* in Hebrew, became the primary organs for Palestinophilism, the angry tide of emotion asserting that Russia had rejected them and that the only way of guaranteeing a Jewish future was a return to Zion.[94]

Palestinophilism was naturally attractive to the first generation of maskilim, intellectuals who were immersed in secular learning but had a solid grounding in traditional Jewish education and were advocates of Hebrew as a national language. But the gravitational pull of Palestine went far beyond these circles; it tapped into a deep reservoir of religious and historical sentiment. Better one hour in the Holy Land, it was said, than a lifetime in dispersion. By early 1882 there was a broad upsurge of support throughout the Jewish public. America was far away and unknown; in the feverish atmosphere of continuing violence in Russia, it was not hard to believe that sooner or later antisemitism would force Jews out there as well. Even some of the Jewish revolutionaries began to turn to Palestine, where Jews could (at least in theory) build their own community, free from the malicious impulses of a host society.

But the Palestinophiles still lacked leadership and organization. Into this role stepped a somewhat unlikely figure: Dr. Leo Pinsker, the Odessa physician and supporter of emancipation who had not been particularly active in public affairs since the 1871 Odessa pogrom. As a second-generation maskil, Pinsker was less attached to Jewish tradition; he knew little Hebrew. But the shock of the 1881 pogroms galvanized him, and by early 1882 he joined the movement of Palestinophilism, believing that Jews must extricate themselves from dependence on others and that only Palestine had the power to motivate Jews to such an enterprise. Still being more oriented to Western Europe, he traveled there in search of support—and when this ended in frustration, he recorded his proposals in a small book now generally recognized as the first full manifesto of Zionism (over 13 years before Theodor Herzl's small book).

Pinsker wrote *Auto-Emancipation* in German and published it anonymously ("by a Russian Jew") in September 1882 in Berlin (still looking for support from the West). The title reflects the basic thesis: Jews must liberate themselves. The essence of the problem, he asserted, was that Jews in other nations "form a distinctive element which cannot be assimilated." They would always face "Judeophobia," which was "a psychic aberration. . . . As a disease transmitted for two thousand years it is incurable." Recent persecution, especially in Russia and Romania, had sparked "an irresistible movement toward Palestine" that testified "to the correct instinct of the people." The problem was that "we are nowhere at home, and that we finally must have a home"; such a home could be built elsewhere, but if it were to be in the Holy Land, "all the better." Putting it all together: "The Jews are not a living nation; they are everywhere aliens; therefore they are despised. . . . The civil and political emancipation of the Jews is not sufficient to raise them in the estimation of the peoples. . . . The proper, the only remedy would be the creation of a Jewish nationality, of a people living upon its own soil, and auto-emancipation of the Jews; their

emancipation as a nation among nations by the acquisition of a home of their own."[95]

The authorship of *Auto-Emancipation* was soon revealed, and Pinsker emerged as a natural candidate to organize and lead the emigration of Jews to Palestine—a rather arresting preview of Theodor Herzl's trajectory a few years later. Local groups of would-be settlers, students, and others, had come together, as recorded in the accounts of Zalman David Levontin and Haim Hisin. Members of these groups became known as *Hovevei-Tsion* (Lovers of Zion), and their organization as *Hibat-Tsion* (Love of Zion). In October 1883, Pinsker held a meeting at his home where 34 local leaders established an Odessa branch of *Hibat-Tsion*; given the prominence of Odessa in Jewish intellectual life, it would serve as the core of the emerging movement.

Hovevei-Tsion adherents and other "Palestinophiles" from across Russia finally met in November 1884—safely across the border in the Prussian city of Kattowitz—to establish an overarching organization to promote Jewish settlement in Palestine. Pinsker was chosen as the first president of what was at first known as the Moses Montefiore Memorial Fund and later as the Society for the Support of Jewish Farmers and Artisans in Syria and Palestine. Informally it was known as the Odessa Committee. Nominally it commanded a movement with about one hundred branches and a membership of fourteen thousand, but in reality it was active only in major cities.[96]

The Odessa Committee, and *Hibat-Tsion* generally, remained relatively weak until being overtaken in the late 1890s by Herzl and the Zionist movement. The movement to settle Jews in Palestine operated under a number of severe constraints on the Russian side, even before confronting the obstacles in Palestine: hostility of the Russian government, opposition from well-established Jews of Russia and Western Europe, and obstruction by Orthodox Jewish leaders who rejected secular political movements. Above all, given the lack of support from the wealthier segment of their own community, the Odessa Committee was never able to provide the kind of funding needed to underwrite a massive settlement program. Pinsker had provided a conceptual framework and continued to provide intellectual direction but was not the kind of leader who inspired his followers or mastered the practical problems of building a mass movement. He himself had looked for leadership from men of affairs, with real political experience, in Western Europe, and continued to hope that help would come from that quarter.[97]

COME, LET US GO

Many of the Palestinophiles were not waiting, however, for deliverance from above. The movement had begun on a grassroots level, springing up in the more progressive centers of Jewish life as the pogroms hit. Once the radical notion of a return to Zion had been taken from the realm of religious vision to that of needed haven, waiting for the Messiah (or the Odessa Committee) no longer applied. Why not go at once? Individuals or small groups could board the ships sailing to the Holy Land (providentially, from Odessa), buy land, build homes, and generally make their own way. Zalman David Levontin, after the trauma of his return by train from Kharkov, organized his own local society in Kremenchug and proceeded to address the practicalities. In his words, the Russians had launched "a war against the sons of Shem," and the only remedy was "to plant our stake among the peoples who are sons of Shem, in the land where we arose and became a people." Levontin brought together 15 families who agreed to settle in the Holy Land "and chose me to go ahead of them and promised that if . . . I find a piece of land

suitable for establishing a settlement for working the land, they will come after me and begin the holy work."[98] And thus in early 1882, when the ideological debate was at its most intense in the Jewish press, Levontin was already in Ottoman Palestine looking for land to buy—less concerned with ideology than with practical results.

Students at Kharkov University were similarly inclined. They formed a society, initially of 14, of those willing to commit to emigrating at once to Palestine. The movement spread rapidly, reaching among others Haim Hisin in Moscow, and at its peak in April–May 1882 had between 300 and 500 members.[99] They adopted the name *Bilu* from the Hebrew initials of Isaiah 2:5: "House of Jacob, come, let us go." Determined to demonstrate their seriousness, an advance guard landed in Jaffa already in June. Though the Bilu society never sent more than a few dozen settlers to Palestine, they became an important symbol of the pioneering ethic later established: personal sacrifice, working the land, overcoming all obstacles in order to reestablish a Jewish presence in Erets Yisrael. In their initial manifesto, issued from Constantinople en route to Palestine, the *Biluim* (members of Bilu) also spelled out, probably for the first time, a concrete political goal in relation to existing Ottoman rule and demographic realities. After attacking "the false dream of assimilation" and noting that the pogroms have awakened the Jewish people from its "charmed sleep," the manifesto ends:

We want:

1. A home in our country. It was given us by the mercy of God; it is ours as registered in the archives of history.
2. 2To beg it of the Sultan himself, and if it be impossible to obtain this, to beg that we may at least possess it as a state within a larger state; the internal administration to be ours, to have our civil and political rights, and to act with the Turkish Empire only in time of foreign affairs, so as to help our brother Ishmael in the time of his need.[100]

The Biluim were in many ways ahead of their time; the objectives of most of the early Jewish settlers in Palestine were not nearly so well delineated. For the most part early settlers talked about settling the Land of Israel, rebuilding Jewish life there, and about redemption on a personal level. Anything beyond that, under the circumstances, seemed very presumptuous. But the Bilu manifesto had many elements that became notable later. It asserted the historical claim to Palestine, even invoking the Almighty in support (though the Biluim were not particularly religious). At the same time, in implicit recognition of the realities on the ground, it defined the goal as a "home," to be begged of the sultan. It suggested some kind of autonomy ("a state within a state") if—as seemed likely—the sultan would prove unwilling to simply cede a piece of his territory. And it invokes the image of cooperation with the Muslim Turkish rulers (our brother Ishmael) without any specific mention of the Arab inhabitants.

By the time that this manifesto was issued, however, much had changed regarding the Ottoman attitude toward Jewish immigration to Palestine. By May 1882, hundreds of families had sold their property and had set sail for Jaffa. Various emissaries in addition to the Bilu representatives in Constantinople, both Jewish and non-Jewish, had been attempting to negotiate with the Ottoman government on behalf of Jewish immigration and land purchases. Inevitably the Turks took note of these activities and responded but not in the spirit that the Biluim or other advocates of Jewish settlement in Palestine might have wished.

On April 28 the Ottoman consulate in Odessa posted a notice that, by order of the sultan,

Jews from Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria were forbidden to immigrate to Palestine but would be permitted to immigrate to other areas of the Ottoman Empire provided that they became Ottoman citizens and lived by Ottoman law.[101] There was a historical irony involved; going back to the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, the Ottoman Empire had served as a haven for Jewish refugees, some of whom had found their way to Palestine. It now appeared that Jews would be permitted anywhere except Palestine (it was not immediately clear if this meant just the sanjak of Jerusalem or included parts of historic Palestine in the provinces of Beirut and Damascus). If enforced strictly, this ban on Jewish immigration would stop the Return to Zion at the outset. As we shall see, it was not always enforced strictly, Turkish policy wavered at times, and there were various ways of circumventing the official prohibition. But the opposition of the Turkish government to any large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine remained a significant obstacle until the end of the Ottoman era.

This obstacle came on top of those already existing. The major Jewish organizations actually working in Palestine, such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle, consistently warned that the land could not absorb large numbers of Jewish refugees. It was too barren and the existing conditions too miserable. The hostility of the existing population was also mentioned, though primarily in terms of the insecurity caused by the lack of law and order. Many of those who managed to enter Palestine did not remain for long, and they discouraged others. Given this reality, the number of Russian Jewish immigrants in Palestine did not match the emigration fever of early 1882; in the end only a few hundred made it there that year, and in the entire decade only a few thousand.[102] The Palestinophiles may have prevailed in the debate—or so it seemed at the time—but it is important to remember that of the estimated two and a half million Jews who left Russia in the troubled years of 1881–1914, only a small trickle, perhaps 3 percent, went to Palestine. The argument for emigration to the West may have been rejected by the intellectual maskilim, but it clearly registered more resoundingly with the general Jewish public. In overwhelming numbers, they opted for America.

The small trickle from Russia was joined by another small trickle from Romania, a nation where Jews faced trials similar to those in Russia. Romania was an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire before 1878, when it gained full independence. The growth of Romanian nationalism made Jews into targets; as in Russia, the new antisemitism was racial and nationalistic rather than religiously based. Already in 1866 anti-Jewish riots and attacks took place in Bucharest, and a new constitution limited citizenship to Christians. Renewed pogroms in 1867 and 1872–1873 even brought the threat of intervention by the sultan, still nominally the ruler. The Congress of Berlin in 1878 recognized Romanian independence on condition of an end to discriminatory laws against Jews, but the Romanian government managed to evade these provisions and official persecution continued .

These pressures pushed growing numbers of Romanian Jews to leave. In 1880, before the pogroms in Russia, a Palestine Settlement Society was founded in Bucharest, and within a year there were over 30 such societies in the country. A national conference was called in December 1881, when 51 delegates from these societies met in Focsani to discuss settlement in Palestine; this might be considered the first “Zionist” congress anywhere. The delegates laid plans for one hundred families to leave for Palestine in 1882 and sent agents there to purchase land for settlement. Romanian emissaries managed to purchase tracts of land on the coast south of Haifa (today’s Zikhron Ya’akov) and in the central Galilee (Rosh Pina), and the first party of 228

emigrants set sail in August of that year.[103]

In sum, then, a few hundred Jewish refugees from Russia and Romania found their way to Palestine in 1882 and laid the first foundations of the modern Jewish community there (the "New" Yishuv [community], as it was later called). What were the expectations of this first contingent regarding the existing population and future relations with this population? Jewish history and tradition furnished little guidance. Jews had lived as a minority among other peoples and had relied on separation and solidarity for self-preservation and protection. Within Jewish communities, where "Jewish politics" operated (see above, "The Nineteenth Century: Emancipation and Enlightenment"), there was little need to deal with non-Jews, who fell under the jurisdiction of the non-Jewish national government. Jewish law mandated humane treatment of "the stranger in your midst," but this applied only to individuals who might become part of a Jewish community. There was no experience in dealing with non-Jewish groups who might fall under Jewish jurisdiction; this was outside Jewish history and tradition (at least since ancient times). Thus it is not too surprising that the new immigrants to Palestine, entering a land where they expected to build their own community, simply did not think too much about what was already there. Though this obliviousness would dissipate after they encountered reality, the indigenous society was basically irrelevant and did not play a role in their visions of the future.

This remarkable omission can be illustrated on many fronts. Modern Hebrew fiction begins with Abraham Mapu's *Ahavat Zion* (Love of Zion) in 1853, and up to the early 1890s much of it dealt with Erets Yisrael, both ancient and modern. The leading scholar of this literature has written: "I cannot pretend to have read all Hebrew fiction published during those 40 years, but I have read a goodly portion of it, and I have come across only two examples suggesting that *Erets Yisrael* might be occupied by any other people. Only two!"[104]

Among would-be emigrants, during the debate between America or Palestine as the preferred destination, ignorance about actual conditions in Palestine was sometimes an advantage for its partisans. When Haim Hisin was struggling to find rationalizations for going to Palestine with his beloved Fanny rather than to America as originally decided, he was provided by a fellow student with a superb argument: "He confronted me with the fact that in *Erets Yisrael* there are no agricultural competitors, . . . [compared] with the significance of their presence in America," where—according to his poorly informed informant—Americans knew how to keep new immigrants down.[105] While Hisin must have learned before his arrival in Palestine that there were indeed "agricultural competitors" there, this particular myth served his private purposes and was apparently widely believed in certain circles at the time.

To the extent that Palestinophiles had clear impressions about Ottoman Palestine, they saw it as part of a backward civilization that would profit from the skills and resources that they, the new immigrants, would bring from the more advanced European world. This would become, in fact, the basic mantra that Jewish settlers in Palestine would adopt in years to come. Though it was the hostility of Europe that forced them out, they still believed in European civilization. Europeans themselves, they probably would have grumbled, should give it a try.

THE COMING WAVE

Not all the Palestine advocates clung to the European model. For example, one Moshe Aizman argued at the height of the emigration fever: "The [Jewish] people . . . must turn their back to all

the luminaries and mighty lords who choose to assimilate Israel among the nations, and must help one another to settle in the land of our fathers. . . . There we will not be enslaved by the fist of an impure European civilization. There we will spread the wellsprings of the civilization of the Children of Shem among our relatives, the Arab tribes, and the civilization of Shem is—wisdom and morality, love and mankind and peace."[106]

A similar note was sounded by Naphtali Herz Imber, the Hebrew poet whose 1877 composition *Tikvateinu* (Our Hope) is the basis of the Israeli national anthem. Reacting to the Bilu manifesto, Imber later recorded in his diary that "numbers went to Palestine with the idea of starting for the desert in Arabia to live a simple life like the *Beduins*, to learn the customs of the natives."[107]

But these were rare exceptions. Actually Imber should have known that Jewish newcomers were not copying the Bedouin, since he lived in Palestine himself in the early 1880s.

As for Aizman's case for a Middle East orientation and his sweeping rejection of Europe: it was brusquely dismissed by other emigration proponents. Moshe Leib Lilienblum quickly responded with a retort that expressed the general identification of the Palestinophiles with European achievements and values, if not with European excesses: "There are many among us in general who, after the pogroms, let out their fury at the *Haskala* in all its aspects and argue that we have to return to the ways of our fathers in the Dark Ages. It is hardly necessary to say that this is . . . so much froth on the ocean."[108]

The Russian Jews who were arriving in small numbers in Palestine expected to bring with them the fruits of European civilization and not to engage in any extensive way with the society and culture that they would find there. In an age when massive movements of Europeans to all corners of the globe had become commonplace, and the exaltation of modern (i.e., Western) civilization went largely unchallenged, it was not exceptional for Russian Jews with a European orientation to believe that they could build (or rebuild) their own community and society in the ancestral homeland without taking on the existing population as partners. There were many, many problems with this enterprise that were discussed exhaustively, but this was not one of them. In fact, the first explicit mention of the Arabs as a threat to the very existence of a Jewish homeland in Palestine apparently came only in 1886, when a young Jewish revolutionary critic of the Palestinophiles wrote from Paris: "What is to be done with the Arabs? Would the Jews expect to be strangers among the Arabs or would they want to make the Arabs strangers among themselves? . . . The Arabs have exactly the same historical right and it will be unfortunate for you if . . . you make the peaceful Arabs defend their right. They will answer tears with blood and bury your diplomatic documents in the ashes of your own homes."[109]

The stream of Russian and Romanian Jews that began to arrive in Palestine in 1882 was driven, first and foremost, by antisemitism. But there was an unusual twist; this movement was largely inspired and led by those who were most Europe-oriented. It was the intellectuals, the educated, the young—those who had put their faith in Enlightenment (Haskala)—who were the most disoriented when the shock of the pogroms hit and who turned to the most radical alternative. Now they were planning to put the same progressive ideas into practice but in their own homeland where they could do so independently. They would bring Europe to the Orient.

But in Palestine, there was a building resistance to the penetration of Europeans and European ideas. Turkish rulers and Arab subjects alike were alarmed by the threat of further

unwanted Western intrusions into a core region of their world. Though Palestine might appear somnolent to outside observers, new forces were at work.

When these two realities met, collision was inevitable.

NOTES

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3. Shmuel Ettinger, "The Modern Period," in *A History of the Jewish People*, ed. H. H. Ben-Sasson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 790–799; Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770–1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 9–10; Eli Barnavi, *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People* (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), pp. xii–1.

4. Ettinger, "The Modern Period," p. 727; Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, pp. 9–27; David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 24.

5. "Edict over the Hebrew," Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/anti-semitism/Edict1775.html.

6. Alan Dowty, *The Jewish State: A Century Later* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), chap. 2.

7. Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *Jew in the Modern World*, p. 124.

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9. Goldfarb, *Emancipation*, p. 262.

10. Ben Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 58–59.

11. Halpern, *Idea of the Jewish State*, p. 61.

12. Deborah Hertz, *How Jews Became Germans* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 225.

13. Dowty, *Jewish State*, p. 38; Anita Shapira, "Introduction," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 4–5.=

14. Goldfarb, *Emancipation*, pp. 208–209.

15. *Eleh Divrei Ha-Brit* [These Are the Words of the Covenant], trans. and repr. Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 187–189.

16. Cited in W. Gunther Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism: A Sourcebook of Its European Origins* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1965), pp. 256ff.; Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, pp. 189–192.

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18. Halpern, *Idea of the Jewish State*, p. 71; David Patterson, *The Hebrew Novel in Tsarist Russia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1964).

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25. Laharanne, *Nouvelle Question d'Orient*, p. 6.

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32. Yehudah Leib Gordon, "Hakiza Ami," *HaKarmel* 7, no. 1 (1866), trans. D. Goldman, in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 360–361; see also Vital, *Origins of Zionism*, pp. 37–48.

33. Berk, *Year of Crisis, Year of Hope*, p. 32; Benzion Netanyahu, "Introduction," in Leon Pinsker, *Road to Freedom: Writings and Addresses* (New York: Scopus, 1944), pp. 41–43.

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36. Peretz Smolenskin, *HaTo'eh BeDrechei HaHayim* [A Wanderer in Life's Ways] (Vienna: HaShahar, 1876); Hertzberg, *Zionist Idea*, pp. 143–144; Avineri, Making of Modern Zionism, pp. 56–64; Berk, *Year of Crisis, Year of Hope*, p. 18.

37. Netanyahu, "Introduction," pp. 20–44.

38. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, "Michtav L'Ben-Yehuda" [Letter from Ben-Yehuda], *HaShahar* 10, no. 5 (1881): 241–245. Individual issues of the journal are not dated, but from internal content and other sources it is clear that this issue appeared in summer 1881.

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chapter three

TWO WORLDS COLLIDE

FROM THEIR VANTAGE POINT IN Eastern Europe, prospective Jewish settlers in the historical homeland remained largely unaware of the presence of another people in that land and were thus largely untroubled by possible complications for their visions of restoring Jewish life there. But when they actually set foot in the Holy Land, they came face-to-face with a demographic reality they could no longer ignore. As David Patterson noted regarding the leading Hebrew authors of the day, "Writer after writer left the shores of Europe in search of *Erets Yisrael* [Land of Israel], only to find themselves in Palestine. What a trauma! What a shock!"[1]

One outstanding example of this revelation was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the young pre-Zionist who was already on his way to Palestine before he knew of the Russian pogroms that were to motivate so many to follow. Upon parting from *HaShahar* editor Peretz Smolenskin in Vienna in the summer of 1881 (see chap. 2), Ben-Yehuda and his new wife proceeded by ship to Palestine, arriving toward the end of September. Upon nearing the port of Jaffa, he took note of the Arab passengers who now dominated on board the ship and were excitedly anticipating their return home. As Ben-Yehuda later recounted: "I must admit that this first encounter with our Ishmaelite cousins was not a happy one for me. A depressing feeling of fear, as though I were confronted by a fortified wall, suddenly filled my heart. I sensed that they felt themselves to be citizens of the land of my forefathers, and I, despite being a descendant of those forefathers, was coming to it as a stranger, a citizen of a foreign country, a member of a foreign nation."[2]

But Ben-Yehuda did not dwell on these thoughts for long. After landing in Jaffa and spending a few days in Jerusalem, he found comfort in a new set of observations: "I found a little consolation in the general condition of the Arabs in Palestine. I had already managed to observe that in general it was very miserable, that they were poverty stricken and utterly ignorant. In this fact . . . lay my greatest hope from the moment I set foot in Palestine."[3]

For Ben-Yehuda, then, what he saw as the backwardness of Palestine was not an obstacle, but was rather a reality that gave purpose and meaning to the entire Jewish settlement project. This was, in the course of time, to become the central theme regarding relations with Arabs in Palestine: that Jews were bringing the blessings of modernity to an unenlightened population. What was unusual in Ben-Yehuda's case was that he encapsulated within a few days an evolution of thinking that took much longer for most others.

THE NEWCOMERS

The first Jewish settlers, like Ben-Yehuda, did not come with the idea of copying local ways of life. Even in agriculture, where Jewish experience was meager, they took the methods and technologies of their countries of origin as a point of departure. Thus when the very first furrows were turned over in the new settlement of Petah Tikva, in late 1878, the resident "agronomist"—David Regner, who had some farming experience in Hungary—insisted on ordering an iron plow from Europe. When it turned out that the local oxen could not pull the plow, stronger oxen were brought from Damascus, only to fall victim to the hotter climate of the Palestinian coast. The Jewish settlers also decided to plow and sow after the first rains rather than before as Arabs did. Regner was quoted as saying that "the Arabs will not be our instructors in work, but we will serve as a model for them."[4]

It is fair to say that the Jewish newcomers came without particular reference to their new setting. It was not relevant to the program that they brought with them; as one scholar notes, the "point of departure was not in the actual realities of Palestine."[5] This did not mean that they ignored the realities they encountered, but the overall project could, in theory, be implemented in other places. Thus the Zionist movement, later on, could and did discuss other possible geographic options, though none could compete with Erets Yisrael as a rallying cry. And Erets Yisrael was also the one land in which, theoretically at least, Jews were not obliged to adjust to other peoples.

The key was having control of one's own destiny and building one's own society, rather than joining an existing society. The movement was founded in an extreme pessimism that grew out of the historical failure—as Jews saw it—of dependence on others.

This should be seen in perspective. Of the estimated thirty thousand Jews in Palestine in the early 1880s, only a small minority were conscious nationalists like the Bilu pioneers (see chap. 2) or other immigrants who established the 28 new settlements of the New Yishuv (Jewish community in Palestine) during the period up to 1905 (the end of the first *aliya*, or wave of immigration). By that time the total population of the new settlements was about five thousand, out of a total Jewish population of perhaps fifty-five thousand. To add further perspective, in the entire period of 1881–1914 (encompassing the second *aliya* as well as the first) the Jewish immigration to Palestine comprised only about 3 percent of the estimated 2.4 million Jews who left Eastern Europe during that period: an estimated total of sixty-five thousand, up to half of whom did not remain.[6]

The early settlers did not arrive with a complex ideology; as they expressed it, they came to live in Palestine, to work the soil, and to reestablish a Jewish life in the homeland where they would not be oppressed by others or forced to live their lives according to the rules of others. They had been influenced by the Haskala (the Jewish Enlightenment); Russian, not Yiddish, was their primary language. But at the same time, they were not hostile to Jewish religion and traditions, nor were they (save for a few like the Biluim) committed to collectivist ideals. The early settlements were usually based on private initiatives and generally respected religious practices.[7]

But while the New Yishuv may have been a minority, it set the important patterns that were eventually to dominate, laying the foundation for what was to come. This was nowhere more critical than in relations between the new settlers and the Arab population of Palestine. In the

cities, long-established patterns of majority-minority relations, in their Ottoman/Islamic variant, tended to prevail during this period. But the new settlements were separate from the existing urban Jewish population (the Old Yishuv), independent, often isolated, and surrounded by Arab villages. Direct contact between Jewish settlements and Arab villages was unavoidable, and there were no established patterns.

The founders of the new settlements did not link their plans and projections to relations with their Arab neighbors. This was actually not a new departure; it was consistent with relations between Jewish communities and host populations throughout history. In both cases interactions were mainly economic, that is, centered on commercial relationships. The Jewish settlers of the first *aliya*, consequently, saw no problem in hiring Arab laborers in their endeavors, unlike Jewish settlers in later periods. But ideas of economic or other relationships going beyond that—joint frameworks, common projects—was never really on the agenda (and it may not have mattered, since it seems unlikely that Arab villages would have responded to Jewish initiatives).

Initially, the question of relations with Arabs was not high on the Jewish agenda because it was not considered critical to the settlement enterprise. The legitimacy of Jewish settlement was taken for granted, and success would depend, as the settlers saw it, on their own motivation and dedication. Contact between the two sides was predominantly incidental, not planned, with a sense of a large gulf and a tendency on both sides, conscious or unconscious, to minimize interactions. There was little or no social or cultural contact; both sides had their own community life and there were few points of convergence between them. There was, as a result, little or no awareness of how the other side saw them.[8]

This did not mean that the Jewish settlers "ignored" the Arabs. Like Ben-Yehuda on the ship nearing Jaffa, they could hardly have ignored a population that constituted 95 percent of their human environment. There were calls for learning Arab folkways and customs, if only in order to avoid "unnecessary" conflict. The importance of knowing at least some Arabic was also particularly obvious to the early settlers who were so overwhelmingly outnumbered and living surrounded by Arab villages. The 1883 Bilu program directed each member of their model colony to learn "the language of the country and to know the people in it . . . so that he learn how to live with, rather than fight, them."[9] The settlement of Mishmar HaYarden in the upper Galilee, founded in 1890, stood out in the later period for its good relations with Arab neighbors; this was attributed to the fact that many of its members were born in Palestine and spoke Arabic. Most of the new settlements in the 1880s did in fact teach some Arabic in their schools, and there was some discussion of making it a required subject.[10] But it was never a priority, and in the end few of the early settlers acquired more than a smattering of the language. Most were occupied learning another new language—spoken Hebrew—and had little energy or inclination left to take on Arabic as well.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Even fleeing from the pogroms of Russia, the new Jewish settlers saw Palestine as a wild and primitive land. Ze'ev Dubnov, a Bilu pioneer and older brother of Simon Dubnov the historian, wrote to his brother upon arriving, "I am now in wild Asia."[11] Menashe Meierovich, another Bilui and later advocate of Arab-Jewish cooperation, wrote of "the wildness of the Arabs—who truly seemed wild to the first of those who arrived here."[12] Moshe Smilansky, an important

literary figure known for his sympathetic understanding of Arab culture, nevertheless in retrospect made reference to "wild Beduin who would kill each other over a pair of shoes."[13]

The prevailing image of the Bedouin, extended to the entire native population, instilled a feeling of fear among many newly arrived Jews. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, before finding comfort in what he saw as backwardness, recalled that when his feet first walked on the holy soil "only one feeling was in my heart—a feeling of fear. . . . I did not kiss the dust. I stood stupefied. Terror! Terror!"[14] But Ben-Yehuda settled in Jerusalem, and in the cities there was, at least in principle, police protection to maintain law and order. The new small and isolated Jewish settlements were far from any protective force, and were surrounded by Arab towns and villages whose population vastly outnumbered them. Living in close proximity—and also often dependent on these towns and villages for basic necessities and labor—the early settlers lived in a state of perpetual fear, even before any violent incidents had occurred.[15] One close observer of the early settlers stated, perhaps a bit hyperbolically, that "their hearts did not rest even at night for fear of the Arabs whom they considered man-eaters."[16] It was feared that the very weakness of the early settlements would invite Arab scorn and aggression; one local activist wondered "why they won't scorn us in their heart, when they see us on the lowest rung in poverty and stress."[17]

But in truth the Jewish settlers were themselves struck by what they saw as the miserable living conditions of their Arab neighbors. Haim Hisin, the secondary school student who came in the first group of Biluim, recorded in his diary the picture of Arab poverty painted by most of the early settlers: "The walls of their huts are made of clay and the outer walls are coated with fresh dung which becomes waterproof as it hardens. . . . The houses of even the wealthiest farmers have no windows, not a stick of furniture, not even a table, chair, or bed. A small earthen elevation inside the hut serves the master as a place for eating and sleeping. The rest of the hut is occupied by cattle, poultry, etc., and you must understand that there is no partition of the hut; man and beast live together in one stable."[18]

Elie Scheid, a French Jew who served as superintendent of the colonies supported by Baron Rothschild and spent four months traveling in Palestine in 1883, likewise observed that "the native made do with one large room, built from natural material, in which the beasts and the family sleep together."[19]

As was common among European visitors to Palestine (chap. 1), the Jewish settlers tended to attribute what they saw as backwardness and primitivity to a deeper fatalism and passivity linked to Islamic culture, as well as to the stagnation and oppression of Ottoman rule. Apart from a certain respect for the Bedouin—the only "true" Arabs as some saw it—the city-dwellers and the fellahin in the villages were seen as lazy, deceitful, and lacking in basic morality. According to Eliyahu Lewin-Epstein, one of the founders of Rehovot and a key figure in the new Yishuv, "You find in a *fellah* almost all of those bad qualities that are described in the Torah as 'ways of the Amorite'" (heathen practices).[20] Haim Hisin, on the basis of his experience in Rishon LeTsion, made the judgment: "Nor can we even rely on the advice of the Arabs, for these treacherous and clannish people swindle and deceive you at every opportunity."[21]

As for Arab hostility toward them, many of the Jewish settlers actually saw it as a welcome change from the traditional scorn to which Jews had been subjected. Being hated, rather than despised for weakness, seemed to many of them to be a positive change, an indication that they

were being taken seriously. Better to be feared and hated, they felt, than to be dismissed as marginal.[22] Once again it was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, now working at the Jerusalem newspaper *Havatselet*, who made the case that perceived Arab backwardness was advantageous for Jewish aspirations: "The nation in whose midst we dwell . . . is not an enlightened nation. . . . Here too this country is better for us than any other . . . because we want to revive our nation . . . and how can we succeed in this in a country where . . . there is an enlightened nation? . . . In such a country the Jews will not be able to be a separate nation in spirit and language even if they want to, because an enlightened nation will not let them do so."[23]

The negative image of Arabs as primitive and unenlightened was linked to characterizations of Palestine itself as desolate (*shomema*) and neglected (*azuva*), words that pop up frequently in many if not most of the observations of Jewish settlers, newly arrived or not. Palestine in ancient times had been a fertile land, it was believed, and its barren state at present was the product of centuries of poor custodianship of the land. Haim Hisin, even before actually setting foot on the land, expressed this common perception of stagnation and neglect in agricultural potential: "*Erets Yisrael* was formerly a fertile land, but that was in times long past. From then and until now and as a result of the neglect that prevailed, winds from the desert incessantly brought clouds of sand that piled up in a layer so that Eretz-Yisrael, once one of the most fertile lands in the world, became now a land of only exposed heights and fields of sand."[24]

The Bilu pioneers, when they composed a "Bilu Charter" during their second year in Palestine, declared: "We knew that the land had long been desolate and very neglected from the indolence of its Arab inhabitants."[25] Moshe Smilansky, the literary figure who wrote extensively about Arab society and culture, recalled that at the beginning, the settlement movement "described the land to which they were going as desolate and much neglected, waiting anxiously for its saviors, and these saviors had only to come and possess it and take off its widow's veil." In Smilansky's view, this perception had much to do with the attitude of the early settlers toward the Arab population.[26]

CLINGING TO EUROPE

Finding themselves in a non-European context, the Jewish colonists overwhelmingly clung to their European identity as a point of reference and as a favorable factor in their new and challenging environment. It is striking how often the word "European" crops up in the earliest writings and expressions of the settlers, whether in reference to European culture, European agriculture, European education, European law and order, European technology, or European ethics—and finally in reference to themselves, in agreement with the way they were perceived by the native population, as Europeans. What happened was similar to the magic by which later immigrants to Israel from English-speaking lands became "Anglo-Saxons." The first settlers had not referred to themselves as "Europeans" while still in Russia, and they had good reason to be bitter about their place of origin. But when they arrived in Erets Yisrael, they became Europeans.

This unsurprising shift of identity was occasioned in the first place by the undeniable cultural difference they encountered upon arrival, and it was reinforced by the self-flattering perception that European civilization was superior. One settler wrote that "Asia has not yet tasted the taste of civilization. . . . Naturally Europeans (including our Jews) are a harsh dissonance here."[27]

Coming from this perspective, it was natural to expect that the Arab inhabitants of Palestine

would acquiesce in the colonization process, just as other peoples around the world were—in this view—falling into the orbit of European influence. It is important to remember the prevailing assumptions of a period in which European powers were establishing their control over Africa and much of Asia, after having Europeanized the entire Western Hemisphere. The spread of European models was considered to be synonymous with the spread of modern civilization.

The same Zalman David Levontin who spoke of living among the sons of Shem also made it clear that the settlers expected to be the senior partner in the relationship: "And if the colonies are established in bonds of love and peace, then the holy land will be a land of freedom and liberty for them; they will not hear the voice of the gendarme and the oppressor, and the Arabs who people the land will submit to them with the attitude of love and respect they show to all Europeans who work the soil and engage in commerce here."[28]

There were, indeed, some instances in which the European image of the settlers worked in their favor. Yisrael Belkind, a Bilu organizer, recounting the financial difficulties in the early days, recalls that "fortunately the Arabs in those days believed that every man wearing European clothes was a consul or a doctor and very wealthy, and therefore gave us almost unlimited credit." Consequently, Belkind incurred so much debt in the first month that he had to master all the side streets of Jaffa in order to avoid encountering his major creditor.[29]

The certainty of European superiority extended to the field of agriculture, an area where the local population possessed extensive experience and the new settlers almost none. Confidence in European methods was reinforced by the dispatch of trained European agronomists to some of the new settlements by their key patron, Baron Edmond de Rothschild of France, though one expert warned that European methods had to be combined with knowledge of local conditions, which the settlers would have to learn from the Arabs.[30] And as Haim Hisin noted, the settlers' certainty of European superiority was not always grounded in reality in such areas as agriculture: "We ourselves knew about European methods of cultivation only from hearsay, and our agriculturist, too, knew very little because each country has its own peculiarities, its own climate and vegetation."[31]

Needless to say, Jews who had lived in the Ottoman Empire for generations and were integrated linguistically and culturally—the Sephardim—felt quite differently. Sephardi Jews were generally Ottoman citizens, spoke Arabic, and were at home in the very same environment that European Jews considered primitive and unenlightened. Accordingly, the Turks and the Arabs did not consider them to be an alien element, and they were not the target of restrictions as the Europeans (the Ashkenazim) were. As one Ashkenazi observer noted, "The government recognizes [the Sephardim] as loyal sons of their country. . . . They are similar in their conduct and their external appearance to the inhabitants of the country, and the populace does not regard them with a somewhat jealous eye as it does the *Ashkenazim*."[32]

In response to the new settlement, there was also some movement of Ottoman Jews from elsewhere in the empire to Palestine. The most intriguing case was Jews from Yemen, which had been reconquered by the Ottomans in 1872. Though they were Ottoman subjects, the ban on Jews moving to Palestine was applied to this community in 1882; nevertheless, a small trickle of perhaps three hundred managed to find their way to the Holy Land in response to news of Rothschild's land purchases, and others followed in later years. The Yemeni Jews in some cases served the new settlements as an alternative to hired Arab labor.[33]

The Sephardim are a telling test case for emerging Jewish-Arab relations. As Jews, they identified strongly with the goal of strengthening Jewish life in the Ottoman Empire. They supported cultural Hebraism and shared the view that Jewish immigration and community-building in Palestine would benefit the entire population. Sephardi figures sometimes played key roles in aiding the new settlers, particularly in purchasing land in their own names during periods when such purchases were limited to Ottoman citizens.

But Sephardi leaders did not, by and large, identify with the political programs proclaimed by their European comrades, nor with the idea of replacing the Ottoman Empire with a new order. They were offended by disparaging attitudes toward Middle Eastern culture and folkways of which they were a part. They believed that the newcomers would be better served by becoming Ottoman citizens, mastering the prevailing language, and working within the system.[34] As we will see, prominent Sephardi leaders castigated European Jews for attitudes and behavior that, in their eyes, foreclosed all possibility of mutual accommodation between Arabs and Jews.

European Jews, for their part, were quick to deny that there was a deep-seated problem of hostility toward Jews among the Arabs and Turks of Palestine. Shmuel Shulmann, who had immigrated from Russia in 1879–1880 and lived in Me'a She'arim, the new ultra-Orthodox neighborhood outside the Old City walls in Jerusalem, wrote in *HaMagid* that "the resident Ishmaelites [Muslims] . . . do not hate us, not from yesterday and not from the day before" and that "religious hatred, that principal hatred that took root in Europe among other peoples, has no reflection and no standing in the hearts of the Ishmaelites," even though, Shulmann adds, "the light of enlightenment has not yet reached them."[35]

The new settlers felt there was a wide civilizational gap between Europe and the Ottoman lands, but this did not mean that relations with their new neighbors had to be a serious threat to their undertaking. As David Patterson has pointed out regarding the Hebrew writers based in Palestine, there was a powerful motivation not to paint a stark portrait of harsh realities but to portray them as manageable. In the case of the considerable literature that came out of Palestine, in Patterson's view only one writer *in the prestate period* (Yisrael Zarhi) dealt with Jewish-Arab relations as a serious problem.[36] A survey of drama and theater during the same period leads to a similar conclusion: the texts highlight the backwardness of Arab society, while ignoring or minimizing the basic issue of the conflict over land.[37]

When early Jewish settlers recorded their thoughts about Arab residents, they also tended to regard them as passive objects of whatever policy or approach Jews might choose to employ, rather than as initiators or actors in their own right. There is nothing unusual about this; it is probably characteristic of all similar group interactions. It was also entirely consistent with the prevailing image of Arabs as fatalistic, passive, and lacking a sense of collective identity and mobilization. It was a tendency that would be challenged by Ahad Ha'am in 1891, and even more strongly by Yitshak Epstein in 1905 (chap. 5 and 7), but throughout this period the upshot was that Arab actions and initiatives were a continuing source of surprise and wonderment to Jewish observers.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, for example, believed that the Jews in Palestine could develop a national spirit, with their own language, literature, and culture, as the Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, and Romanians had done recently in Europe. But the same was not the case for others in Palestine: "Its Arab inhabitants have none of these." In fact, Ben-Yehuda believed that it was

quite possible to revitalize the Hebrew language and make it the language of the entire population: "to bring it to life among the people who dwell in *Erets Yisrael* . . . and let there be one language for all of us, the Hebrew language."[38]

In short, the early Jewish settlers did not see, or did not recognize, a collective dimension to relations with Arabs, in the sense of a set of issues that would have to be dealt with on a political level. The frictions that arose were seen as individual and local issues that could be dealt with individually and locally. They did not need to deal, yet, with the full force of Arab nationalism, which during these years had not moved behind small circles of intellectuals in Damascus and Beirut, and they were insensitive to other broader frames of reference that might become political points of reference (Islam, Ottoman loyalty, anti-Westernism). When they needed to deal with problems on a general level, the only relevant address in their eyes was the Ottoman government, since it was the de facto ruling authority in the Palestinian areas.

Above all, the first settlers had strong motivations to minimize, if not to deny, the existence of Arab hostility that would pose a problem to the settlement project. First of all, they needed to minimize all of the problems of immigration to the historical homeland in order to attract immigrants—and the problems were difficult enough without adding a hostile host population into the equation. But beyond this, the "Palestinophile" advocates based their case on a claim that reestablishing a Jewish presence in Erets Yisrael was a break with the Jewish past and that it would put an end to the painful patterns of Jewish life in the Diaspora. It was, therefore, critical to reject any suggestion that relations with the Arab population in Palestine would simply repeat the long history of troublesome Jewish relationships with host populations. This time it had to be different.

THE ARAB RESPONSE

In the early 1880s the eight new Jewish settlements in Ottoman Palestine held a total population of somewhere between five hundred and one thousand residents.[39] Obviously this had little impact on the vast majority of the Arab population who did not live in the vicinity of these settlements. It also represented a small part of the total Jewish population in Palestinian areas, an estimated twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand concentrated mostly in the "holy cities" of Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias, and Safed. For the Jews in this Old Yishuv, relations with the Turkish rulers and Arab residents continued for the time being along the well-established lines of Muslim societies: freedom of religious practice and active participation in economic and commercial pursuits but limited legal rights as second-class citizens and serious social discrimination.

Where the New Yishuv did come into contact with their Arab neighbors, however, new patterns were being established that were to become a template for later periods when numbers had increased and relations between the two communities became a nationwide issue. Furthermore, the new settlements were generally isolated from each other, in close proximity to Arab villages, and in areas where Jews had not lived in recent history. This meant that a certain level of contact was inevitable and it would not necessarily be bound by the patterns of Arab-Jewish relations set by long-standing traditions in the cities.

Arabs in both urban and rural settings had not yet rallied around their "Arabness" as the center of their identity. This was to come later, toward the end of the period under review. When the first Jewish settlers arrived in the 1880s, they generally referred to the existing population as

"Arabs"—their native language was Arabic—but in general usage the term was often reserved for the Bedouin or for inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. Family, clan, and tribal identities were strong and often played a decisive role in society and politics. Above all, common identity as Muslims was the strongest force, and one that pulled Arabs and Turks together (while leaving out Christian Arabs, who consequently were the first group to be attracted to Arab nationalism). Loyalty as Ottoman citizens was also a factor, though perhaps more for notable families who had gained from Ottoman reforms than for the simple townsfolk or rural fellahin.[40]

Thus, while Arab nationalism was at this point barely beginning to emerge in some distant urban centers—primarily Beirut and Damascus—this does not mean that the villagers whom the first Jewish settlers encountered were entirely lacking in a sense of commonness or political consciousness. The tribal, religious, and political identities cited furnished a lens through which they would view new groups who did not share these identities. Furthermore, there was a civilizational dimension involved with settlers who came from Europe and asserted their European identity. At the most basic level, indigenous populations do not need a developed sense of identity or nationhood to resist what they see as outside intrusions; this will be even more intense if the intruders come from a civilization long viewed with hostility, as was Europe in the Muslim Middle East.

The Arab response to the new settlers was composed, therefore, of different layers. At the most basic level, "the new owners of the land were seen by the *fellahin* as foreigners and strangers, rather than just another set of local or absentee landlords whom they knew how to deal with."[41] In other words, the newcomers were regarded as "trespassers."[42] The distrust of strangers is not uncommon in human interactions; in fact, it is common enough to have earned a special title: xenophobia. It was natural for Arabs in nearby villages to be alarmed at the implantation of foreigners who spoke a different language, professed a different religion, followed different customs, and seemed to scorn existing local culture and customs. Of course, as this indicates, xenophobia worked in both directions, as the settlers brought their own historically conditioned suspicion of potentially hostile non-Jewish neighbors to bear on their new surroundings.[43]

A second layer in the Arab response, accordingly, was the other side of this relationship: the role of the settlers' Jewishness for the local population. Traditional Arab and Muslim attitudes toward Jews were often highly negative, but they differed in important ways from the kind of antisemitism that Europe had produced. They did not include theories of the particular evils or crimes of Jews that often circulated in Europe. For example, the only major blood libel accusation against Jews in the Muslim world was the 1840 Damascus case (see chap. 2), and in this incident the accusation actually came from Europeans. But Islamic societies did tend to denigrate Jews in very negative ways, often summed up in the term "children of death," referring to Jews' weak position as a despised people unable or unwilling to stand up for itself.[44]

The Arabs of Palestine had long lived with a Jewish community—the Old Yishuv—according to the traditional Muslim model of a "protected" minority (*dhimmi*), as already described. Essentially this meant that Jewish citizens of Ottoman Palestine formed recognized communities that were subordinate in status and rights but granted religious tolerance and considerable internal autonomy. The settlers of the New Yishuv did not fit this model. They sought to enter and ultimately redirect the mainstream life of the country, settling throughout the

land as farmers rather than living in segregated urban quarters. They paid minimal deference to Ottoman authority, clinging to their foreign passports and foreign diplomatic protections. In asserting their rights and aspirations, they seemed to be aiming at equality within the Ottoman framework, at the least, if not independence from it in the long run. In short, these new Jews were different from the existing Jewish population that the Muslims of Palestine had been accustomed to regard with "scornful tolerance."[45]

The final, and perhaps in the long run most important, layer in the Arab response was the European element. The deeply rooted antipathy of the Muslim Middle East toward Europe and Europeans, heightened by Western penetration throughout the nineteenth century, has been laid out (chap. 1). A striking example took place during the very first year of the New Yishuv when the revolt led by Colonel Ahmed Arabi in Egypt led to the June 1882 massacre of about 50 Europeans in Alexandria. According to Bilu leader Yisrael Belkind, "The Arabs in *Erets Yisrael* were enthusiastic about the Egyptian 'victories,' and were ready to imitate the deeds of the mobs in Alexandria." A Bedouin on the street, drawing his hand across his throat, threatened a general massacre "when Arabi Pasha comes."[46] The Austrian consul wrote that "the native Moslems profoundly sympathized with Arabi . . . as a Mohammedan fighting against unbelievers."[47]

The strong dislike of Europeans among the native Palestinian population inevitably influenced their relationship with Jewish settlers, especially as the settlers themselves presumed on their status as Europeans and often invoked it. There was, in other words, basic agreement between the two parties on the definition of the relationship: it was a civilizational difference. The settlers saw themselves as Europeans, and their Arab neighbors also saw them—Jewish or not—as Europeans. By all indications, these antipathies played a significant role in the frequent physical fights that took place between settlers and Arab villagers during the early years and often led to semijudicial proceedings in the new settlements.[48]

The Arab villagers near the new Jewish settlements were, for the most part, illiterate and thus did not leave a written record of their responses. Later Arab historians, however, emphasize "outbursts of violence by the peasants against Jewish colonists."[49] Though it was infrequent in the earliest settlements, in later years many tenant farmers were evicted from land that they did not legally own, following the registration of lands under the 1858 land law (see chap. 1). Since the tenants had lived on the land and farmed it for many years, they considered themselves rightful occupants and resisted being displaced when the land was bought by Jewish settlers who, unlike previous absentee owners, intended to occupy it themselves. This was to become a major source of conflict (see chap. 4).

The Arab view of the Jewish settlers moved, over time, from the level of local frictions to the political level. This was parallel, in fact, to the settlers' view of the Arabs, which began with relations at the local level and developed a larger political view as time went on. In the towns, as well, attitudes were shifting as the number of Jewish residents surged (the Jewish population of Jerusalem doubled during the 1880s). The large influx of Jewish immigrants could hardly pass unnoticed when large crowds gathered in Jaffa to greet the newcomers on each incoming ship.[50]

THE OTTOMAN RESPONSE

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, in so many ways a trailblazer for the Jewish Return to Zion, chose one path on which few followed. Shortly after his arrival he inquired about obtaining Ottoman citizenship,

only to be strongly advised by his employer (Yisrael Dov Frumkin, publisher of *Havatselet*) that life as a non-Muslim citizen of the Ottoman Empire was incomparably worse than life as a foreign citizen under the protection of the Capitulations. As Ben-Yehuda himself admitted, shelter from the "tyrannical" Ottoman government came only in three ways: "(1) by giving bribes; (2) by being Christian; (3) by being a foreign subject." Nevertheless, he decided "to get rid of [his] alien condition" and presented himself at a government office to be registered as an Ottoman citizen, surrendering his protected status.[51]

At almost the same time that Ben-Yehuda was becoming Ottoman, his new sovereigns were moving to prevent the arrival of others like him in their Palestinian dominions. This stood in contrast to the historic role of the Ottoman Empire as a haven for Jewish refugees, dating back to the Spanish expulsion of 1492 when Jews forced out of Spain had been welcomed by the Ottoman sultan. This tradition, reinforced in subsequent refugee movements, had long been celebrated in both Jewish and Ottoman narratives. But in November 1881—after the onset of the pogroms but before the arrival of any significant number of refugees—the Ottoman government announced that Jewish immigrants "will be able to settle as scattered groups throughout the Ottoman Empire, excluding Palestine. They must submit to all the laws of the Empire and become Ottoman citizens."[52] Taken literally, this policy would have ended the Jewish Return, and Zionism, before they had begun: no concentrated Jewish settlement, no protection by European passports, and above all no Palestine. And, in essence, it remained the baseline policy of the Ottoman regime down to its last days in Palestine, in 1917, despite exceptions and departures made under pressure from foreign powers, occasional gestures of liberalization, and enormous difficulties in implementation and enforcement.

As recounted in chapter 1, the Ottoman Empire had over the past two centuries lost over half its territories to a combination of European imperialism and uprisings of Western-oriented national minorities, most of them Christian. Most recently the French had intervened in Lebanon in 1860 and most of the Balkan states had achieved final independence, with European support, in the Bulgarian War of 1878. The Turks were also facing unrest in their Armenian (Christian) districts, on the Russian border, where Russian involvement was suspected. In these circumstances, the idea of countenancing the introduction of another Western-oriented minority in the heart of their remaining empire—and in the vicinity of Jerusalem, a holy city for Muslims as well as Jews and Christians—was simply out of the question. British intervention in Egypt, in the following year, simply confirmed Turkish fears.[53]

Ottoman authorities did not want to create a "Bulgarian problem" or an "Armenian problem" in Palestine. In both cases a non-Muslim minority, supported by Russia—the Turks' perennial enemy—sought to dissolve its ties to Constantinople. Most of the new Jewish arrivals came from Russia; the fact that they were fleeing from pogroms did not prevent Ottoman officials from suspecting that they were being introduced to create a new Western foothold in the religiously sensitive area. There was even suspicion that the tsarist regime was forcing Jews into Palestine to create grounds for intervention, on the unlikely assumption that Jews would seek protection from a Russian government that had hardly protected them in Russia. But if not the Russians, then possibly other European governments were (in this view) encouraging Jewish immigration in order to expand their own clientele of protégés, expanding their own challenge to Ottoman rule in Palestine (and Britain did in fact take Russian Jews under their protection). In either case, Russian Jews were European non-Muslims clinging to European protection and likely to bring

with them Western notions of nationalism, religious equality, and political rights.[54]

Sultan Abdul al-Hamid, acting on these impulses, had early on ordered the Ottoman Cabinet to work out a detailed program to curtail the Jewish movement to Palestine. Government ministries were told to persuade foreign powers not to support the movement, to close the borders to Jewish immigrants, to prevent those who got in from acquiring foreign protection, and to thwart their efforts to buy land.[55] Ottoman censorship forbid any references in print to the Jewish connection to Palestine. The November 1881 decree on immigration was followed by another in June 1882 that added tight restrictions or prohibitions on land purchases and on building permits on any land that was nevertheless acquired. Again, in line with its historic role as a haven for Jewish refugees, free land and settlement anywhere in the Ottoman Empire except in Palestine was offered but only for groups no larger than 100–150 families—and, of course, on condition that they surrender foreign protection under the capitulations and become Ottoman subjects to the full extent of the law.[56]

This decree happened to reach Jerusalem on the Hebrew date of the ninth of Av, a day of mourning on the Jewish calendar marking most of the great tragedies of Jewish history. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda heard of it from the interpreter at the Russian consulate, who called out "Well, Mr. Ben-Yehuda, it's finished," referring to Ben-Yehuda's "fantasy" of a Jewish restoration in the Holy Land. Ben-Yehuda later recalled: "From this moment on, war was declared between the Turkish government and us. It was a very difficult war for us because we were not ready for any such war and did not have any weapons apart from the ghetto-like weapon—bribery! With this weapon we fought with all our might, and won many victories with its aid. . . . But it did not work every time."[57]

The prohibition on land sales in Palestine to foreign Jews was initially circumvented by registering the purchase in the name of Ottoman Jewish citizens. However, later (in 1892) the governor of the sanjak of Jerusalem was ordered to prohibit the sale of land to all Jews, even Ottoman citizens.[58] This conflicted with the Ottoman policy of encouraging all newcomers to become Ottoman citizens, in part by giving them building or agricultural permits with an open hand.[59] Easier access to building permits could hardly serve as an inducement to become naturalized if acquisition of the land were forbidden in the first place.

Within two years after the 1882 decree, Ottoman authorities moved to close some of the gaps in the barriers they were trying to erect. The first of these was directed to those who entered ostensibly for commercial or business pursuits. On grounds that the Palestinian region was not a commercial zone, in 1884 the government tried to limit entrance to religious pilgrims alone, and then only for 30 days, a limit secured by a monetary deposit to guarantee departure. Since this also applied to non-Jewish travelers, the measure aroused the intervention of European powers.[60] By the end of 1885, as few of the newcomers were adopting Ottoman citizenship, an effort was made to deport Jews who could not claim foreign protection; the intervention of the US ambassador in Constantinople forestalled the deportation of some four hundred imprisoned immigrants.[61] Western states pointed out that such actions violated the commitment of religious equality and other guarantees made by the Ottomans in 1856 and at other times—including the right of foreign citizens to buy land.[62] In 1888, under pressure from the powers, the Turks relented and agreed to let Jews settle if they arrived singly and not en masse. Also in 1888, the

Ottoman regime marked the special importance of the Jerusalem area, and the struggle over immigration there, by changing its status to that of a *mutasarriflik*, a separate district ruled directly from Constantinople.

The governor of the Jerusalem district (the southern half of the modern state of Israel) from 1877 to 1889 was Mehmed Sherif Rauf Pasha, known as a zealous opponent of Jewish settlement. Rauf Pasha consistently tried to impede land purchases for Jewish settlements, an area where the protection of foreign passports did not apply.[63] Worst of all, he was incorruptible. Ben-Yehuda, after highlighting bribery as the one weapon available to Jews against Ottoman hostility, recounted the consternation when it was reported of Rauf Pasha: "He won't eat"—meaning, he would not take bribes. As Ben-Yehuda put it, "This Rauf Pasha was one of the 'old' Turks in every way but one: he was truly incorruptible, truly beyond bribes." Lower-ranking officials might take them, but opposition at the top level meant that the "feeding" became much more expensive.[64]

The attitude of the Ottoman authorities toward the new Jewish settlers was clear to the Arab public and served to encourage their own challenges to the newcomers. The incidence of trespassing, thefts, and physical attacks grew during periods when the Ottoman police did not intervene forcefully to keep order. Arab villagers were also quick to report to the authorities any activities in the new settlements that might be illegal, such as building without a permit.[65] In this regard Ottoman authorities and Arab neighbors often worked in tandem, as reported by Shmuel Hirsch, manager of Mikveh Yisrael, the agricultural school established by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and one of Baron Edmund de Rothschild's agents in overseeing settlements the baron was funding. Hirsch wrote that "the report going around Palestine that the Pasha opposes Hebrew colonization is supported by his posting soldiers in almost every settlement to make sure that they are not building there, and also in the obstacles that he poses to every single step of the colonists; this encourages the fellahin to harm the Jews, from whom they are in any event estranged."[66]

Clearly there was a close connection between Ottoman policies and Arab attitudes. As fellow Muslims sharing a common antipathy toward the threat of European penetration, their perceptions were parallel if not identical. For the Ottoman sultan, recognized by most Muslims as caliph (successor to Muhammad), the loyalty of his Arab subjects was of the utmost importance. Next to the Turkish heartland in Anatolia, the Arab Middle East (the Fertile Crescent and the Hejaz) comprised most of what was left of the Ottoman Empire. Arab resistance to Turkish rule was yet in the future; for the moment both shared a common antipathy to the European Jewish newcomers and a common opposition to their continued immigration. Revisionist Arab historians writing recently have in fact challenged the negative image of Sultan Abdul Hamid II and rehabilitated his standing in Islamic history, citing his support of pan-Islamism and his total rejection of Zionism.[67]

Jews involved in the Return to Zion did not recognize this connection between the Turks and the Arabs. For them, the hostile policies emanating from Constantinople made no sense; after all, the Jews would bring progress to this backward region. Turkish opposition must be due to misunderstanding or to pressure from other competitors for access to the Holy Land. Alexander Tsederbaum, publisher of *HaMelits*, wrote in June 1882 that "the advent of Israel to Turkey would not only not harm Turkey, but would bring much good to the ruined world there." When

Turkey blocked the entrance, Tsederbaum says, “we stood dumb-founded and silent,” not being able to surmise what could have led to such an action. “One must presume,” he concludes, “that others whispered in her ears and kept her from going in the way of her heart.” The reference is to “many peoples” who also covet a spot in the sacred ground.[68] The widespread belief that the Turks could somehow be brought to see the light was shared by Haim Hisin, recording later in his diary that the Turks wrongly feared that the Jews planned to conquer the land—a “naive” idea at the time—and that the Turkish attitude was based on prejudice that might be cleared up if the right person (“influential and rich”) could only make the right representations in Constantinople.[69] The thought that the Ottoman government might be moved by a strong desire to keep Palestine Muslim and to preserve strong ties with the Arab population there does not seem to have penetrated far among Jewish settlers at this stage.[70]

From the Jewish side, the question was how to overcome an official Ottoman policy that, if fully implemented, would have halted the Return to Zion. Clearly the policy was not fully implemented, given the thousands of Jews who entered the Palestinian districts during the period of the first *aliya* (the first wave of immigrants, 1882–1905). In part this was due to the laxness and inefficiency of Ottoman rule in its declining days, embodied above all in the pervasiveness of baksheesh (bribery). Under the Capitulations, Jewish citizens of most European states had the right to travel in the Ottoman Empire; in practice, Jews could obtain visiting permits (usually as religious pilgrims) and simply remain beyond the specified period.[71] In addition, they could avoid entering through the port of Jaffa, where enforcement was sometimes stricter. The northern half of Palestine was governed from Beirut; would-be settlers could debark in Beirut or Haifa and then travel overland (and some of the new settlements were in the Beirut province). But a key element in the gap between policy and reality was the intervention of foreign consuls protecting their citizens.

When the Ottoman government tried to prevent foreign citizens from landing, or when it tried to arrest or deport them, other governments could intervene on grounds of violations of the Capitulatory treaties or other commitments the Ottomans had made. Consequently the diplomatic representatives of European powers in Jerusalem and Jaffa were very active on behalf of the citizens of states they represented. The British vice-consul in Jaffa was a Jew from Gibraltar, Haim Amzalak, who actively supported the early settlers; the land for Rishon LeTsion was bought in his name. At one point Levontin seriously considered putting the entire Rishon LeTsion colony under British protection, and consulted Amzalak to this end, though nothing came of it.[72]

In 1885 the settlers in Zikhron Ya’akov requested French citizenship. The French prime minister/foreign minister Jules Ferry was legally unable to extend this status to Romanian immigrants in Ottoman territory, but he wrote the French consul in Beirut that “nevertheless, I request that you clarify if there is any possibility of demonstrating our interest in them and of intervening in a semi-official way to defend them against the harassments to which they are subjected by local authorities.”[73] French consuls often intervened actively on behalf of settlements supported by Baron Edmond de Rothschild, of the French branch of the banking dynasty, and Ottoman authorities had to take their relations with France into account in dealing with these settlements.

Haim Hisin later commented that “an official carrying out his duties got nowhere with a

European. All he got was the one answer, 'we have a consul.' In one word, any community of foreigners could create for itself a state within a state."[74]

Even the United States reacted to Turkish policies that could be interpreted as religious discrimination, a subject on which American diplomacy was particularly active, and the absence of direct involvement in the Middle East gave US interventions a more disinterested cast. In this case, the US ambassador in Constantinople protested directly to the Ottoman court over the discrimination of the 1882 treaty.[75] Perhaps more remarkably, Jews in Palestine even turned on occasion to the Russian consul for support, perhaps counting on the fact that Russia was not a disinterested party when it came to pretexts for intervening in the Ottoman territory. On at least one occasion, a high-level delegation to the Russian consul was promised that he would instruct his representative in Jaffa to ensure that all arriving Russian citizens (Jews included) be allowed to disembark.[76]

Generally, however, until 1890 it was the British consul in Jerusalem who, acting on long-standing instructions, looked after the Jews in Palestine (see chap. 1). This was, of course, seen by Ottoman officials as a British maneuver to expand its presence in Palestine by expanding the number of its protégés, given that Britain had relatively few British citizens there to protect. It also impelled other powers to expand their own rosters of protégés, Jews and others, to match the British. Of course, the Ottoman government believed that the entire protégé system was "a source of inexhaustible abuses," and they instituted a strict review (at least on paper) to weed out questionable claims of foreign identity.[77]

There were among the Jewish settlers some who called attention to the costs of reliance on consular protection. They pointed out that it confirmed, for the Turks, their belief that European Jewish immigrants were simply another instrument in the European penetration of Ottoman Palestine and would in the end deepen their opposition to Jewish settlement on a more significant scale. Elazar Rokeah, working for *Hibat-Tsion* in Jaffa in 1886, wrote that, although consular protection seemed necessary because of the harsh and arbitrary nature of Ottoman rule, "one can visualize that the Ottoman government would not tolerate such a situation for long. . . . [Extraterritoriality] is a running sore in the Ottoman body and undermines its very existence. The government, quite justifiably, loathes the foreigners[,] and the Jewish newcomers, who enjoy the protection of the European powers, are viewed unfavorably."[78]

In fact, both Jewish strategy and Ottoman policy contained internal contradictions. The Jewish settlers were trying to convince the Turks that they would be loyal subjects and contribute to the strength of the empire. Yet their own program cast doubt on this, and their refusal to take on Ottoman citizenship cast further doubt. The resort to protection by foreign consuls confirmed for the Turks that they were a threat, stimulating the very Turkish hostility that made them dependent on the protection. As for Ottoman policy, the pressure for Jews to become naturalized citizens was in conflict with the general policy of not allowing large-scale Jewish settlement *in Palestine*—the one spot in the empire where citizenship for Jews might have been a real inducement. In addition, the occasional extension of restrictions to all Jews, including Ottoman Jews, undercut any incentive to escape such restrictions by becoming Ottoman subjects.

What, in fact, was the ultimate impact of Ottoman opposition to European Jewish immigration to Palestine and of active Ottoman efforts to block this immigration? Writing 40 years later, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda felt that the project was saved by the character of the Turkish

government, in particular “that all of its officials sought bribes and that it did not have any control over foreigners.” Had it not been for this, he concluded, “not even a quarter of those who returned from the Diaspora over the past forty years would have been able to settle in our land, and we would not have been able to establish even a single settlement.”[79]

But perhaps Ottoman policy was at least partly successful in stemming the tide of Jewish immigration? From the massive flow of Jews leaving Russia during these years, only a very small percentage chose Palestine. Even among groups (such as the Biluim) who initially committed to the historic homeland, only a small minority actually made it there. The hostile Ottoman policy was well-known and widely discussed. Many would-be settlers were actually blocked from entering. The obstacles to buying land and getting building permits, even where overcome, led to slow growth of the settlements. Without the intervention of foreign consuls, the prospects would have been even more dismal. On the other hand, without these obstacles, how much greater would the numbers have been?

The leading historian of Zionism has identified two effects of Turkish policy. The first was to move those Jewish settlers who dealt with the obstacles to greater determination and ingenuity: “to intensify and accelerate those developments which it was the fundamental object of Turkish policy to inhibit.” But the second effect was “substantially—but never entirely—to inhibit immigration both immediately and physically by refusing Jews permission to land and, in the longer term, by casting doubt in the minds of potential migrants on the practicality of the entire enterprise.”[80]

FIRST SETTLEMENTS

During the first two years of the “New Yishuv,” the “new kind of Jews” who reached Palestine successfully established eight settlements that were also new in a number of ways. They were not tied to existing Jewish communities in urban centers. They sought a “return to the soil,” achieving productivity on an agricultural base. They were seen as part of a larger vision of reestablishing a self-sufficient Jewish communal presence in the ancestral homeland. And they set new patterns in relations with the population among whom they settled.

By the late 1880s the total population of the new settlements was around twenty-four hundred, less than 10 percent of the Jewish population of the Palestinian areas.

Rosh Pina, in the central Galilee (north) about six miles east of the “holy city” of Safed, was actually established in 1878 as Gei Oni, on land bought from the Arab village of Ja’uni. The settlers were 17 families of observant Jews from Safed committed to a “pre-Zionist” program: a return to the soil and the ingathering of Jews in exile—but not (yet) a political vision of restored Jewish nationhood. By 1881, however, only three families remained on the land. The settlement was bought by one of the two groups of Romanian Jews who arrived in 1882 (see chap. 2), reaching Gei Oni (renamed Rosh Pina) in September that year under the leadership of David Shub. As Romania had been formally part of the Ottoman Empire until 1878, the new settlers tried to exploit their status as former subjects of the sultan in dealings with Ottoman officials (located, in their case, in Beirut).[81] In 1883 Rosh Pina became one of the first settlements supported—and supervised—through an administrative framework established by Baron Edmond de Rothschild.

Petah Tikva was also first founded in 1878 by Orthodox Jews, in this case from Jerusalem

and Europe, who were also committed simply to building a more productive Jewish life in Palestine, mainly by tilling the soil, and thus promoting the Ingathering of Exiles. The settlers purchased land from the village of Mulabbis, in central Palestine 12 miles northeast of Jaffa. But the land was in a malarial swamp, and by mid-1881 the settlers had retreated to another tract of land 12 miles south, where they founded the town of Yahud. With the help of Baron Rothschild, they were able to drain the swamps sufficiently to reestablish Petah Tikva in October 1882. Though its founders came principally from the Old Yishuv, because of similar origins and circumstances the settlement was absorbed into the New Yishuv.

Rishon LeTsion, also in central Palestine, about eight miles southeast of Jaffa, was founded by the **Hibat-Tsion** group led by Zalman David Levontin (see chap. 2). Levontin managed to purchase the land from the Arab village of Ayun Kara, and the first group of settlers reached the site at the end of July 1882. Because of the difficult financial strains of the initial period, Rishon LeTsion became a part of Baron Rothschild's support system almost from the beginning.

Zikhron Ya'akov was established on the north coast of Palestine, four miles from the sea and about 23 miles south of the port of Haifa. Like Rosh Pina, it was located in the province governed from Beirut. The land, known as Zamarin, had been bought from a Christian effendi by the second group of Romanian settlers of 1882, who arrived at the site in December of that year. Zamarin also came under Baron Rothschild's patronage in 1883, a dependence reflected in the renaming of the settlement after the baron's father James (in Hebrew, Ya'akov).

Nes Tsiona, in central Palestine near Rishon LeTsion, was the only early settlement that began as an individual private initiative rather than a group enterprise. Reuben Lehrer, a Russian Jewish supporter of settlement in Palestine who owned land near Odessa, met a German Templer from Palestine who had acquired an estate in an area then known as Wadi Hunayn but had left after two of his sons had died of malaria. The two men agreed to swap properties, and Lehrer arrived in the summer of 1883 to claim his property, known at first as Nahlat Reuven. He sold off lots to other settlers; some were bought for homesites by well-to-do Arabs, making the settlement—later renamed Nes Tsiona—initially the only New Yishuv colony with a mixed Jewish-Arab population.[82]

Mazkeret Batya was established in late 1883 about 20 miles southeast of Jaffa, near Rishon LeTsion and Nes Tsiona. In this case Baron Rothschild was actually involved in the project from its beginning, working with **Hibat-Tsion** leaders to bring in a group of young Jews from Russian Lithuania who actually had agricultural experience. Originally named Ekron, from the Arab Akir, it was renamed after the baron's mother in 1887.

Yesud HaMa'ala was founded by members of Hibat-Tsion from Russian Poland and Lithuania who managed to purchase a tract of land north of the Sea of Galilee, near the Jordan River and the marshy Lake Hula, from a notable Jewish family of Safed. Ten members of the founding society moved into the site in March 1884 living at first in huts of mud and straw or tents woven from swamp-reeds. The settlement struggled, finally receiving some support from Baron Rothschild, and in 1889 it became a part of his patronage network.

Gedera was the one settlement founded by the Biluim, though some of them worked in the agricultural school at Mikveh Yisrael, in Rishon LeTsion, and elsewhere. Yehiel Michal Pines of Jerusalem, who despite ideological differences had been an important patron of the young radicals, used Hibat-Tsion funds to buy a tract of land, 30 miles south of Jaffa, from the French consul in that city. The French consul had bought the land from the Arab village of Mughar,

which, it later turned out, may not have actually owned it; this was to be the source of future conflict (see chap. 4). But in the meantime, 10 of the Biluim occupied the site in December 1884, without the support of the baron—who was not favorably disposed toward them—and with minimal aid from Hibat-Tsion or other sources of support.

No other new settlements were founded after this until 1889; these eight outposts, together with some sympathetic supporters in the urban Jewish communities, composed the New Yishuv of the 1880s. All but two of these colonies—all but Nes Tsiona and Gedera—were subsidized and supervised under the administrative apparatus of Baron Edmond de Rothschild's agents.

What were the expectations of the first settlers regarding their Arab neighbors? The founders of Petah Tikva recorded their high hopes in the initial charter of their organization, in 1879: "These Arabs have no sustained hatred of the people of Israel, and if we approach them in peace, they will also return peace to us, and if we put hope in their hearts that we will do good to them and that they will gain benefits from us, they will bow their heads to us and will be our faithful servants."[83]

This one brief statement contains three themes common to the thinking of early settlers, and —with some reservations—of later settlers as well. First, the problem is minimized: antisemitism as experienced elsewhere does not exist, and therefore the outlook is optimistic. Second, benefits for the Arabs are stressed: Jews will bring the fruits of modern civilization to the region. Third, a certain deference is expected: reflecting the prevailing European worldview, the civilizing party will naturally play the leading role.

When the Biluim put together their own charter in July 1883, they also obviously considered that relations with their Arab neighbors would not be a major obstacle if approached with the right attitude: "The society will find people with proper knowledge of the language of the land, and through them will strive always to soothe the heart of the residents, so that they will not look in wrath and anger on those who come to settle in the holy land, and will not be an obstacle in their way."[84]

Levontin, the founder of Rishon LeTsion, expressed similar optimism in explaining the advantages of his new settlement's location. Rishon LeTsion was better off "near the tent-dwelling *Beduin*," he wrote, rather than on the coveted Jaffa-Jerusalem road, "because the *Beduin* have many fields that they have held from ancient times and we can buy them at cheap prices." And by buying from the Bedouin and building mutual dependence, he added "we will buy their hearts to receive us most graciously and we will be able to dwell in their midst with no terror or fear."[85]

Levontin's optimism was challenged a few days later when a translator, from Jerusalem, warned that the nearby Bedouin "would come in the dark and fog of night and rob and murder." Levontin reprimanded the Jerusalemite for his "Diaspora" frame of mind, asserting that the newcomers would establish a new respect for the ability of Jews to defend themselves: "If people come at us with an evil fist, we will make them understand that we also have a fist and a rifle barrel, a spear and a bayonet." A few days later, he ordered the translator to arrange a visit to the Bedouin elders, where—in Levontin's account—"a covenant of friendship was concluded between us."[86] Another account of the visit puts it, however, in a different light: after Levontin had explained that the Jews had come to build a village of farmers, "the Arab elders heard, nodded their heads as courtesy required, but did not understand and did not believe."[87]

Yehiel Michal Pines, the Jerusalemite Orthodox supporter of the new settlers, also advised that the relationship with the Arabs would depend on the settlers themselves and not on the Arabs. Writing in 1881 to prospective settlers, he echoed the theme of Arabs showing deference to a strong hand: "The [Arab] farmers are peaceful and quiet and submit and accept the authority of those who know how to establish authority over them. . . . To be safe from robbery therefore depends only on the Jewish inhabitants themselves, to know how to act toward their neighbors in order to exact their respect and fear of punishment."[88]

As noted, from the beginning the new settlers ignored the methods and tools of the Arab farmers, secure in their preference for European-style agriculture. Sometimes this produced comical results, as when the Rishon LeTsion settlers hitched camels to their wagons, something that their Arab neighbors had never seen before. When such contrivances reached Jaffa, "crowds of Arabs would gather around to see the wonderful spectacle."[89]

THE REALITY OF DEPENDENCE

The early Jewish settlements could not have avoided dealing with the Arabs of Palestine even had they chosen to try. They were sparse in numbers, scattered in isolated locations, and surrounded by Arab villages. Elie Veneziani, a representative of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, reported in mid-1883 that Zikhron Ya'akov was "far from Haifa . . . surrounded only by two or three villages of fellahin." The colonies of the German Templers, he noted, had been sensibly located near the cities and the sea, helping to explain their success. The success of Zikhron Ya'akov, on the other hand, was in his mind far from assured: "time will tell." In the meantime, Veneziani argued, sending more immigrants to these struggling, isolated outposts would be a bad mistake.[90]

Reality forced the new settlers into daily contact with their neighbors in all walks of life. Their mental image of these neighbors, to the extent that they had prior conceptions, was that the native population of Palestine was mired in poverty and primitivity, with little law and order. The common wisdom was that they should convey a message of strength to these neighbors and instill an attitude of respect for the bearers of modern civilization. But in truth there was little in these struggling raw Jewish settlements that would inspire respect. To the contrary, they were forced to turn to neighboring Arab villages for many basic necessities: everyday foodstuffs, water, fuel, transport, and even labor when the settlers found themselves shorthanded.[91] Most of the settlements found it necessary to conduct a regulated trade with their Arab neighbors in order to establish fair market prices.[92]

The employment of Arab labor was later to become the major bone of contention between the settlers of the first *aliya* and those who came later, particularly the more socialistically inclined pioneers of the second *aliya* (1905–1914) who fought for the "conquest of labor." The early settlers had less of a problem with the employment of non-Jews: it was consistent with historical patterns of Jewish life, the labor was essential to the building of new settlements, and it created a relationship embodying the claim that the Jewish presence would benefit the local population.

Settler or frontier societies typically have a great need for unskilled labor. Historically they have met this need by employing (or enslaving) native populations or by importing cheap labor. Importing large numbers of Jewish workers was not an option for the early settlements, given

Ottoman restrictions on entry (as well as the lack of masses of Jewish laborers clamoring to enter). Also, the early settlers adopted an agricultural model that intensified the need for hired labor.

The French experts that Baron Rothschild sent to the settlements he supported were influenced by French colonial experience in North Africa, based on monocultural agriculture. They planned plantations or orchards producing large yields of a few crops to be sold (grapes, citrus fruits, almonds, olives) rather than varied crops for self-sufficiency.[93] This was one reason the settlements depended on local Arab villages for basic foodstuffs. Plantations typically required huge amounts of labor during relatively short harvesting seasons, and the only practical source of such labor was in the neighboring villages, where willing hands were available and the prevailing wage level was low. The number of seasonal Arab workers grew as the settlements grew; by 1889 it was reported that "up to 1000 Arabs" were employed in the winter harvest of Rishon LeTsion.[94] The following year it was estimated that the colonies employed about 1200 Jewish workers and 3800 Arabs.[95] And despite ideological opposition from later advocates of the "conquest of labor," the number of Arabs working in Jewish settlements actually continued to increase over time (see chaps. 6 and 7). This labor was not confined just to agriculture; Arabs were employed in construction, digging wells, pumping water, transporting crops, housework, and laundry and as guards.[96]

Hired Arab labor had several advantages compared to Jewish labor, even when it was available. Arabs in nearby villages were accustomed to agricultural work, were available on a part-time basis, required no infrastructure, and accepted lower wages. Jewish workers, in contrast, required full-time employment at higher wages and generally had to be housed. Another advantage for the Jewish employer was underlined by Moshe Smilansky: "Arab [workers] are distinguished . . . by one virtue that is much appreciated by the Jewish farmers, and it is their lack of development, as a result of which they do not know what to demand from the employers . . . the Arab consents to be working every day of the week, and even continuously for full months without resting for a single day, and he demands no raise for all that."[97]

Though the use of Arab labor did bring the two sides into contact, and often Arabs were expressly hired to reduce tensions with nearby villages, this contact was double-edged. Young Jewish settlers, like Haim Hisin, who in the beginning found themselves competing with Arab workers, proclaimed their own superiority: "Jews worked much better than the Arabs; one could rely on them, whereas the Arabs had to be watched constantly and prodded all the time."[98] The presence of Arab workers brought with it complaints of theft, vandalism, and bad influences on the health and morals of the settlement. There was even regret that beating Arab workers, in response to such offenses, was bringing out the worst in the settlers. Sometimes frictions developed to the point that the settlers tried to end Arab labor from a particular village or completely, but their dependence on this labor was so great that such boycotts were usually ineffective. In fact, the Arab workers, knowing how dependent the settlements were on them, could and did use this weapon in reverse by staging strikes.[99]

The leaders of the Jewish settlement enterprise still hoped, however, to turn this mutual dependence into a positive force. Baron Edmond de Rothschild, the patron of nearly all the first settlements, was particularly insistent on this. During his first visit to Palestine in 1887,

Rothschild met with local Arab notables who called on him in Rosh Pina and in Zikhron Ya'akov, where he also visited one of the neighboring Arab villages. The baron further ordered that the medical staff that he was providing to the settlements should extend free treatment and drugs to their Arab neighbors.[100] This medical treatment thus covered the Arab day-workers in most of the settlements and was extended to all Arabs who came to the clinics in the settlements, sometimes from great distances. The medical staff in Rishon LeTsion, for example, provided free treatment to residents of nine Arab villages in the vicinity. Available evidence indicates that this practice continued into the 1890s and even beyond.[101]

Early interactions of Jews and Arabs thus did, despite ominous signs of friction, give some support to the claim that Jewish settlement would bring benefits to the Arab population among whom it was establishing a foothold. It provided work for many of the underemployed in nearby Arab villages, it provided a market for basic foodstuffs cultivated by Arab farmers, and in some cases it even extended medical care and technical know-how to Arab neighbors. Economic benefits alone could not, of course, eliminate the civilizational gap between the two populations nor dispel indigenous distrust and suspicion of a foreign, European presence. Nor was concern for the local population the dominant motivation among the settlers, who bought Arab goods and employed Arab labor, for the most part, out of necessity. Nevertheless, at this initial stage there were some developments that seemed to fit into the prevailing theory of benefits as expressed by Bilu leader Yisrael Belkind: "We must extend to them a helping hand and share our property with them. We will help them to develop. We will help them to rise up from their lowly position materially and spiritually and in this we will not only bring great benefit to these our brothers . . . but also to ourselves, our land, and our future in it."[102]

Observers noted population growth in Arab villages around the Jewish settlements, including in some cases the repopulation of villages that had been abandoned a century or more earlier.[103] Small in scale as it was, the settlement enterprise from its outset had an economic impact on its immediate environment. It was even conjectured that if Jewish settlement were to concentrate on the sparsely inhabited areas east of the Jordan River—an idea promoted originally by the English proto-Zionist Laurence Oliphant—destitute Arabs would also emigrate there in large numbers to supply labor. In short, all would benefit. As a British Jewish journal proclaimed, "a fresh impulse would be imparted to the whole of Oriental life, now sunk in apathy and laziness, while commerce at large, through the cultivation of a district, fertile and important by its geographical situation, would no doubt reap considerable benefit."[104]

CONFLICT OVER LAND

This picture of early relations, focused on daily interactions and especially economic ties, is the basis for a general belief that during the early period—in contrast to the second *aliya* and later—relations were generally good. One of the leading advocates of Jewish-Arab rapprochement during the 1930s could write, for example, that "in general, the relations between Jews and Arabs in the old settlements were fairly good."[105] The truth is, however, that there was serious conflict between the Jewish newcomers and their Arab neighbors from the very outset.

First and foremost was the clash over the most basic aspect of settlement: the land itself. These land disputes are often attributed to the complexities of the Ottoman land system and cultural differences regarding property rights. These factors did play a role, but the fact is that

conflicts over land "were an inseparable part of the land purchase and the history of every single settlement."[106] When a pattern is so relentless, clearly there are deeper forces at work.

The 1858 Ottoman Land Law created a class of landowners, often absentees, holding legal title to huge tracts of land. Much of this land was marginal, but much had been farmed by Arab fellahin under customary rights of usage that had been prevalent before the reform. Furthermore, competition for supposedly marginal lands increased as security conditions improved, new technologies were introduced, the population grew, and farming became more commercialized. The intensity of the competition, combined with the confusion of changing laws on land tenure, meant that every Jewish land purchase could be, and was, challenged in some respect.

The impact of the Ottoman Land Law was to move much state land (*miri*) that had been farmed communally by Arab villagers under rights of usage (*musha'*) to a status closer to that of private property (chap. 1). The tenant farmers lost their right of tenure; the legal owners could freely sell the land and those farming it—often for generations—could be evicted. Customary rights of usage, long a part of the culture, were in essence being shunted aside in favor of more Western concepts of private property and a free market in land.[107] That those dispossessed should challenge the new order is hardly surprising. There was more to this than disputes over boundaries or differences in customs regarding land usage; it went to the heart of a settlement enterprise dedicated to "redemption" of the land.

Arab villagers did not, however, routinely challenge new settlements over the basic issue of legal ownership. The Jewish land purchases were carried out legally under Ottoman law, and fellahin were poorly positioned to take on the Ottoman government or, for that matter, the powerful landowners who had sold the land. Instead, their resistance was directed at the settlers themselves, who were near at hand and represented a strikingly visible embodiment of dispossession—and in this case dispossession by alien intruders. This often took the form of challenges over boundaries or hostile acts that could be framed as upholding age-old customs.

Jewish settlements found it necessary to guard against encroachment by neighboring villages on lands they had purchased. Boundaries were usually not clearly marked, creating opportunities to establish de facto usage. Accordingly, the new settlements soon adopted the practice of marking borders clearly as soon as possible and maintaining visible control over all the land. But Arab villagers often opposed efforts to demarcate property lines, interfering with the work of surveyors or even uprooting trees planted to mark the boundaries.[108] For the fellahin, such actions represented opposition to imposition of the concept of private property that would end venerable practices of shared land use.

In some cases, Jewish settlements that lacked sufficient working hands to farm all their lands would lease some of their land to their neighbors, often to the same farmers who had worked that land as tenants. This became problematic since it reinforced the Arab farmers' sense of attachment to the land by virtue of the customary right of usage, and thus it made the eventual reclaiming of the land even more difficult. In addition, the free movement of the Arab farmers in the area of the Jewish settlement increased the complaints of theft and other everyday frictions. Over time, most new settlements moved to curtail such relationships, despite their potential for creating greater cooperation between the two communities.[109]

Where the complexities of Ottoman law did present grounds for legal challenges to the land purchase, such challenges were, of course, pursued, often for protracted periods, in the courts. In

some cases, only the intervention of Baron de Rothschild's agents, often through the French government—and often with the help of baksheesh in the right places—helped the settlements to stave off legal attacks. As noted (see chap. 1, "Hostility to Europeans"), the conflicts began with the very first substantial purchase of agricultural land, that of Mikveh Yisrael in 1870, when the villagers of Yazur accosted the visiting governor of Damascus with vociferous complaints over the loss of land they had been farming.

The settlers themselves seem to have expected Arab resistance to their land purchases and did what they could to avoid arousing this resistance. Zalman David Levontin, looking for the land that became Rishon LeTsion, wrote later that he had noted the way that Prussians had become dominant in Poland by purchasing estates and landed properties, so speaking of Jews, "why couldn't this wise and intelligent people buy fields and estates in Palestine and own the land?" Levontin regretted, however, that he seemed to be the only one at the time (early 1882) pursuing this approach: "I am alone on the field of battle."[110] But in looking for land to buy, he was careful not to let Arabs in the area know his intentions: "I know to be careful, so that the Arab inhabitants of the village have no idea of the purpose of my travels."[111] For that reason, and also because of Ottoman law limiting land sales to foreigners, the official buyer of the land that became Rishon LeTsion was Haim Amzalak, Jewish Ottoman citizen and British consul in Jaffa, who was of great assistance in dealings with the Ottoman government.

Zikhron Ya'akov endured a major dispute over title to lands presumably bought in full accordance with Ottoman law. The lands were bought in the name of the chairman of the Romanian society that sponsored the settlement. But when this legal owner of the land died in 1883, false rumors reached Turkish authorities that he had no sons. By Turkish law, only sons could inherit, and if there were no sons, the property would pass back to the state. The authorities moved quickly to expropriate the land of Zikhron Ya'akov, demonstrating their basic hostility to the Jewish settlements they were systematically trying to block in any event. The elder son of the deceased owner, in the meantime, traveled to Paris and transferred ownership to one of Baron de Rothschild's closest associates. The local Ottoman officials refused, however, to register the transfer. Consequently Elie Scheid, the baron's personal representative in Palestine, was forced on a personal odyssey of six months in Ottoman courts, from Haifa to Constantinople, before finally securing official recognition of the new ownership.[112]

Rosh Pina was representative of other settlements where land disputes were more localized and more mundane. When the settlers began building, they uncovered human bones; the villagers in neighboring Ja'uni immediately claimed the site was a Muslim cemetery and did what they could to stop the building. The matter was only resolved when the Ottoman governor arranged the transfer of the remains to a site outside the Jewish lands (and, according to the colony's founder, "it cost us a not inconsiderable sum").[113] More serious clashes came in 1884 when an Arab villager, fencing off his vineyard, also enclosed a neighboring Jewish field. When the Jewish settlers destroyed the fence, the entire village stormed Rosh Pina and a violent physical fight took place. Only the intervention of the Turkish police restored order. The incident, interestingly, does not appear in the official history of the settlement.[114]

Yesud HaMa'ala had a problem from the outset, since the twenty-two hundred dunams purchased for them were part of a forty-eight-hundreddunam plot jointly owned with a Bedouin tribe (a dunam is about one-quarter acre). The plot had never been officially divided, and the

Bedouin opposed any division and thus also any real settlement on the land. As one observer wrote, “If they plant a lovely tree today, tomorrow the Arab will come and uproot it and say this land is mine.”[115] The Jewish settlers could not work the land, except for an orchard that was indisputably theirs, and they could not build permanent houses. For six years they lived in huts like those of the Bedouin, built of mats and papyrus reeds.[116]

Nes Tsiona was also involved from the beginning in a land dispute with a neighboring village, Sarafand. The land had been acquired in a land swap by Reuven Lehrer from a German Templer, who had received Lehrer’s land in Russia. The Arab villagers claimed that the Templer had taken over some of their land, and when the matter went to court Lehrer lost about a quarter of the plot. Later on, in 1887, Jewish settlers went to court with a claim that Sarafand farmers were continuing to use land that they had sold to Jewish buyers.[117]

Gedera, the most ideologically inclined settlement, also had the worst relations with its Arab neighbors. Bilu leader Yisrael Belkind later noted that “indeed in every settlement there were clashes with the Arab neighbors in the first period” but that “Gedera suffered more than any of the settlements from the hostility of its Arab neighbors.” In Belkind’s view, these clashes were “a fixed feature, premeditated.”[118] At the core was a confrontation over land that was extremely complicated and intense. The land on which Gedera was founded had belonged to the village of Qattra, but the village had lost the land when they disclaimed ownership in order to avoid punishment for a murder committed there. The government had transferred legal ownership to others, who eventually sold it to Hovevei Tsion, but Qattra fellahin continued to cultivate it and regarded it as theirs under customary rights of usage. When the Bilu settlers came to occupy the land, the villagers did everything possible to prevent the establishment of a settlement.[119]

Once they actually occupied the land, the Jewish settlers faced the next obstacle: obtaining permits to build on it. The importance of building permanent homes was critical to the newcomers. As Belkind put it, so long as the settlers lived in tents and temporary shelters, they lived in the expectation that they could and would leave at the first sign of serious trouble. But once they had constructed permanent houses and buildings, “they would not leave the settlements that they had established, come what may.”[120] Thus considerable energy was spent on realizing this physical expression of the drive to establish a new Jewish presence in the ancestral homeland.

But consistent with their general hostility to Jewish immigration and settlement, Turkish officials tried to refuse such permits where they could, even where the land was purchased in the name of Ottoman citizens. Technically, foreign powers could not intervene in these internal issues, but in fact European consuls often felt free to do so on the grounds that the Ottoman government was violating its commitments to nondiscrimination and the rights of foreign protégés.[121] On the other hand, Ottoman authorities could count on the cooperation and support of the Arab neighbors of Jewish settlements who often pressed the government to act more forcefully to stop their establishment and growth. Any attempt to build without a permit would be quickly reported to the Turks, who would intervene to force the demolition of “illegal” structures.

In Petah Tikva the Turks stationed a soldier to prevent unauthorized building and even gave neighboring Arab villagers the right to prevent any new building by force. But since one of the

key founders of the settlement held German citizenship, the settlers were able to invoke foreign support. The German consul not only intervened to forestall demolition of houses built without permits but even threatened to mobilize the German Protestant Templers from the nearby settlement of Sarona to prevent such action![122] The settlers in Gedera resorted to a different tactic, digging a large pit, supposedly as a stable, and quickly roofing it over as a shelter for both man and beast before the watchful Arabs of Qattra could summon Turkish forces to intervene.[123] When a Turkish officer appeared to demand the destruction of the stable, Haim Hisin records the colonists' taunt: "You have undoubtedly forgotten, effendi, that you have no right to do that. We have a consul, and no one has the right to touch us without his permission."[124]

The settlers in Rishon LeTsion had no such protection for their synagogue and were forced to halt construction with only the lower floor finished. The impasse continued for four years; when word was received that a Turkish delegation was due the next day to check on use of the unfinished building, general panic ensued: "It was necessary, come what may, to erase all traces. . . . Immediately they removed all the benches and took apart the Holy Ark. . . . It was chaos in the synagogue, with piles of building material and various scraps. . . . All night they were not able to close their eyes."[125]

Later recording in his diary from Gedera, Hisin reflected on the seeming hopelessness of extracting building permits from hostile Turkish officials in Jerusalem, headed by Rauf Pasha. "So much money has been poured out on so many bribes," he lamented, "and what has come of it?" The problem was that Rauf Pasha truly wanted to stop Jewish settlements and was not moved by the remonstrations of European consuls. "He loves the Turks and the Arabs," Hisin wrote, "and hates the Europeans, whom he regards as parasites on his country."[126]

FIRST ENCOUNTERS: THE REALITY

There was little forethought on either side of the first encounters between the new Jewish settlers in 1880s Palestine and the settled Arab population. The Jewish immigrants considered the existing native population to be peripheral to their visions of restoring Jewish life in the ancestral homeland. The Arabs considered the Jewish newcomers as simply another dimension of the growing European presence in their midst.

Jews in this New Yishuv, when they considered the issue at all, took relief in the benefits their presence would bring. Palestinian Arabs reacted with the same mixture of instinctive resistance and selective exploitation that was evoked by European penetration generally. Neither conceived of a future in which the other played a key role.

Because they regarded themselves as agents of a civilizing mission, Jewish settlers saw mainly the primitivity and lawlessness of their new environment and clung to their credentials as Europeans. It was important to them, however, to deny that there was any deep-seated hostility toward European Jews, as Europeans or as Jews—or that relations with the native population would be a serious obstacle to their undertaking. Arabs were seen as passive objects of the actions of others; it was even considered possible that they would assimilate to a new Jewish-centered order. In any event it was not necessary for Jews to adjust to the Arabs; *this was the one place in the world where they were not obliged to adjust to others*. Arabs were seen as individuals who would enjoy material benefits, rather than as a collective body with status and

rights as a group. They were not seen as actors on the political level; the address for general political questions, and the partner in any collective engagement, was Constantinople.

Relations between Jews and Arabs in the vicinity of the new settlements was already establishing new patterns that differed from the traditional place of Jews in Muslim societies and, for that matter, that of Jews in the Old Yishuv in Palestine. Though not yet touched by the ideas of Arab nationalism, the fellahin in neighboring villages had a sense of common identity and regarded the settlers as intruders representing an alien and threatening civilization in both Jewish and European dimensions. The Ottoman government, sensitive to this intrusion and to the inherent threat of another non-Muslim minority it its heartland, tried with mixed success to stem the inflow of Jews with "Palestinophile" aspirations.

The early Jewish settlers circumvented Turkish opposition to their presence in a number of ways, including the venerable institution of bribery. But the rights of foreign powers to protect non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, secured by treaty and solemn Ottoman commitments, was a major weapon in the struggle. European (and sometimes US) consuls intervened repeatedly to secure entry, land purchases, building permits—and protection from local hostility—for their protégés. This only intensified, of course, the perception of the settlers as an alien element.

The Jewish newcomers, for their part, had every reason to minimize opposition to the Turkish government and the Arab population and to differentiate it from the historical experience of Jews as a persecuted minority in other lands. In their view, their presence in their ancestral homeland would only benefit its current inhabitants, who would accordingly defer to their leadership.

The reality was that the first Jewish settlers were highly dependent on Arab neighbors for basic necessities and also labor, which embodied the mutual benefit that they invoked. But there was serious conflict over the very basic issue of title to lands, often fields that had been cultivated by Arab farmers under customary rights of usage. And if this issue were surmounted, they still faced Turkish refusal to issue building permits and Arab surveillance to report any building without permits.

But the clashes did not end here. Worse was yet to come.

NOTES

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4. Eliezer Be'eri, *Reshit HaSikhsukh Yisrael-Arav, 1882–1911* [Beginning of the Arab-Israel Conflict, 1882–1911] (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim and Haifa University, 1985), p. 47; Mordechai Harizman and Ya'akov Ya'ari-Poleskin, *Sefer HaYovel LeMelot Hamishim Shana LeYisud Petah Tikva* [Jubilee Book for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of Petah Tikva] (Tel Aviv: Va'adat Sefer HaYovel she'alyad HaMo'atsa HaMakomit, 1928), p. 22.

5. Israel Kolatt, "The Zionist Movement and the Arabs," in *Zionism and the Arabs*, ed. Shmuel Almog (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel and the Zalman Shazar Center, 1983), p. 2.

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7. Shmuel Ettinger and Israel Bartal, "The First Aliyah: Ideological Roots and Practical Accomplishments," *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 2 (1982): 197–227; Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 55–56; Itamar Even-Zohar, "HaTsemiha VeHaHitgabshut shel Tarbut Ivrit Makomit VeYelidit Be'Erets Yisrael, 1991–1948" [The Growth and Consolidation of a Local and Native Hebrew Culture in Erets Yisrael, 1882–1948], *Katedra* 16 (July 1980): 165–189. On the early Jewish settlements as "covenantal communities," see S. Ilan Troen, *Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs, and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 18–26.

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chapter four

UNNEIGHBORLY RELATIONS

THE STRUGGLING YOUNG JEWISH SETTLEMENTS of early 1880s Palestine could easily have become a minor footnote in history. No objective observer at the time would have rated their chance of success very highly. But while other Jewish "colonies" established during this period—in Argentina, Brazil, the United States, and Canada—withered and died, the settlers in Palestine, fortified by the mystique of historical ties and sheer determination, hung on until they were reinforced by subsequent waves of Jews also fleeing persecution.

The hostility of the established and unfamiliar population among whom they settled was not the most daunting obstacle, as the settlers saw it. Prior to this, they faced official prohibition of Jewish settlement and active measures to prevent or reverse it. Even if they managed to enter and avoid deportation and succeeded in acquiring land, most of the land available—at inflated prices—was either marginal or already occupied by tenant farmers. The physical environment was enormously challenging; water was in short supply and disease was rampant. The newcomers had little relevant agricultural or vocational experience and were almost totally dependent on outside guidance and support, which, despite the activities of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, were very limited. Yet enough of the first generation stayed, against all odds, so that the New Yishuv slowly grew.

As already outlined (see chap. 3), Ottoman policies continued to pose serious obstacles to the development of the new Jewish community. Mehmed Sherif Rauf Pasha, governor of the Jerusalem district until 1889, consistently tried to block Jewish immigration and settlement and was famously impervious to the usual resort to baksheesh (bribery). Although the orders Rauf Pasha received from Constantinople were sometimes softened because of pressure from European powers, it was clear that his opposition was totally in accord with the inclinations of the Ottoman government. When Rauf Pasha's successor began issuing building permits with a freer hand, he was quickly replaced.

The 1882 decree essentially forbidding Jewish settlement was followed in 1884 by the prohibition of business travel to the Palestinian districts on the grounds that the region was not an important commercial zone. Only religious pilgrims were to be granted entry, and then only for 30 days with a monetary deposit required to ensure departure at the end of this period. This was a clear violation of the Capitulations with European states, as well as the Ottoman decree of 1856—Hatt-i-Humayun—guaranteeing equal rights to all. Protests from European governments eventually led, in 1888, to a policy of allowing entrance to single individuals and families,

including Jews, but not to groups. But this liberalization was soon reversed.

GRAZING DISPUTES

Apart from conflict with Turkish authorities, the new Jewish settlements increasingly found themselves in serious clashes with their Arab neighbors. Beyond conflicts over land and building, other issues triggered confrontations, sometimes violent, between Jews and Arabs. The most common cause of friction was Arab farmers grazing their herds and flocks—sheep, goats, cows, oxen, donkeys—in Jewish fields. This is often described as a cultural clash: Arab custom allowed grazing in any uncultivated field, in sharp contrast to European notions of private property. And sometimes this was indeed the source of the clash, as Jewish settlers reacted to any intrusion on their land and debated among themselves over whether to honor local practices.[1] But when Arab shepherds led their herds onto cultivated Jewish fields—something they would not do with cultivated Arab fields—clearly something deeper was at work.

The grazing issue was seldom a subject of legal proceedings like the land disputes; it was rather a source of constant clashes and continuing hostile relations on the local level. It created incidents that, in the context of local patterns of reprisal and retribution, could and did set off cycles of violence that persisted long after the initial provocation had been forgotten.

The pattern appeared early in Jewish settlement history, even before the official founding of first *aliya* settlements. Karl Netter, the founder of the Mikveh Yisrael agricultural school, reportedly had to patrol the school's grounds, rifle in hand, as a precaution against trespassers who "sent the foot of ox and donkey on every cultivated plant that Mr. Netter had planted, and trampled them underfoot." Netter also set the precedent for the solution later adopted by Jewish settlements: to seize and hold some of the animals until satisfaction was obtained.[2]

Grazing disputes were chronic in several of the early settlements, especially Rishon LeTsion, Nes Tsiona, Mazkeret Batya (Ekron), and Gedera. In several cases they led to massive fights between settlers and neighboring Arab villagers, fought with the weapons at hand, which, though not yet including firearms, nevertheless caused serious injuries. Attempts were made to get the Ottoman police to arrest intruders, apparently with mixed success.[3] The Jewish settlements were left, for the most part, to apply their own notions of justice and retribution for what they saw as acts of wanton vandalism.

In Petah Tikva, settlers in the first period (1878–1881) faced the hostility of a notoriously anti-Jewish owner of adjacent land who did his utmost to cripple the new settlement. According to the official history, at one point he sent his cattle to graze in Jewish fields "to trample and destroy the grain at its most vulnerable stage." The settlers rounded up the cattle as ransom for payment of damages and then beat off an attack by fellahin who came "armed with staves and clubs" to rescue the animals. We hear the theme that was to become a central thread of the settler narrative: "The [Jewish] farmers went to meet them and fought them heroically and fearlessly, until they drove them from their land." This is echoed by the daughter of one of the founders, Hannah-Leah Frumkin, who recalled that "the young heroes went out as one man" to face such attacks. In her account, the settlers kept brass trumpets in their homes in order to mobilize the community on such occasions.[4]

As noted, Rishon LeTsion had its share of grazing disputes. At the onset, Zalman David Levontin had tried to prevent any recurrence of such incursions by seizing two shepherds and

five animals grazing in the settlement's fields and (perhaps reflecting his background as a bank clerk) asking for a promissory note in case of future violations. Recalling the incident later, Levontin contributed to the developing narrative of firm Jewish resolve that had won the respect of their Arab counterparts: "From that day on we suffered no loss, not in the fields and not on the towns, and in love and peace our brothers will live with their Arab neighbors."[5]

Unfortunately this was not actually the case. In a letter written in mid-1885, Belkind himself recounted later incidents that testify to continuing conflicts with Rishon LeTsion's neighbors. For example, at one point they seized an intruding herd from Sarafand and demanded that the shepherds and the village sheikh come in person to redeem their animals. As Belkind recounted with a certain sense of satisfaction, "When they came we forced the sheikh to whip [the shepherds] himself—even though he was their uncle—and to do so publicly, in the center of the settlement." On another occasion, clashes with the village of Safriya became serious enough that Rishon LeTsion declared a boycott on employment of workers from the village, which had become an important source of income there—marking perhaps the first use of economic sanctions in the conflict.[6]

The young Haim Hisin, who with other Biluim lived in Rishon LeTsion before Gedera was founded, also provided diary entries that provide a contrast to Levontin's triumphant assurance. In March 1883, for example, he wrote of an incident in which two young Jewish settlers attempted to stop Arab shepherds "who had the incredible gall to drive a great herd of sheep into our barley fields as soon as the shoots were grown." The two Jews were surrounded and attacked by 10 Arab shepherds with clubs but "defended themselves bravely" until other settlers came to their rescue on horseback. "After a wild struggle," Hisin writes, "the Arabs were beaten without mercy and put to flight." As usual, some sheep were taken hostage. Such incidents, Hisin notes, "took place regularly every two or three days." As a result, he states in his own contribution to the growing narrative of Jewish self-assertion, "the young people of Rishon Letsion got the nickname of 'devils' because of their daring in their frequent skirmishes with the Arabs; his fellow Bilui Zvi Horowitz recorded that the settlement itself became known as balad al-katlanin [city of killers]."[7]

Interestingly, in the young Hisin's eyes even the animals belonging to the Arabs had learned to regard Europeans with trepidation. When Arab cattle, sheep, or goats were taken hostage for the payment of compensation for damages, "it always took a great effort to drive the animals into the settlement," Hisin claims, because "the wild Arab cattle are so afraid of Europeans." It was therefore necessary to use force with Arab animals; on the other hand, "we don't usually bother with the shepherds, unless there are many of them and they attempt to fight back; then we beat them without mercy."[8]

THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE

Arab grazing on Jewish fields was a focused issue, a way of expressing hostility on an everyday level. Beyond that was a generalized fear of violence, theft, robbery, vandalism, and other threats that, despite the general improvement in security, plagued all the new Jewish settlements. The Hebrew newspaper *HaMagid* (published in Prussia) expressed grave concern, at the very outset of movement to Palestine, for "the security of the Hebrew colonists in the Land of Israel in the days to come, lest in the course of time there as well the inhabitants of the land will resent them

and will ruin their lives."[9] The early days of almost all the colonies involved a struggle for existence, in terms that were not only material but also of survival in a hostile environment. It might be argued that the threats of violence and criminal attacks were not "political," that is, not directed toward the Jewish settlements in particular, but were part of a general deficiency of law and order. But such attacks were especially frequent and intense when the target was seen as a foreign intrusion.

Typical was the experience of Elie Scheid, a French Jewish official who traveled often among the settlements on behalf of Baron Rothschild. When passing through the Arab town of Qalqiliya, "the children ran behind the cart and threw stones at us. I had to fire my pistol in the air to frighten them. And in this same nasty hole the hostility did not cease over time."[10]

The general hostility in Palestine to Europeans, including European Jews, has already been explored in depth (chap. 1). The settlers themselves had no doubts that acts of violence and criminality directed against them were more than expressions of general lawlessness, and that as a foreign presence they were particularly vulnerable targets. Haim Hisin, for example, wrote soon after arriving that "swindling and chiseling, theft and deceit are considered a form of bravery when they are committed against trusting Europeans."[11] The leading history of Jewish defense forces spells this out more fully: "The Arabs saw the settlers as aliens, as foreigners who did not know the language of the land and its customs, who were outside of society and also outside its laws, foreigners whose property and even lives were forfeit, and it was permissible to plunder and steal their property, if only it could be done. . . . The intrusion of a foreign body, uninvited, into the wild Arab environment, would stir up tension."[12]

The lesson drawn by Hisin and the other settlers was that only a vigorous response to these threats would stop the transgressions and threats. "If they did not do so," continues the Hagana history, "their fields would be plowed by their neighbors, their crops would become food for *beduin* and *fellahin* herds, their animals would be stolen in front of their eyes, their clothes would be stripped from them in the streets, and even their lives would be in danger."[13] Such rhetoric, at a later date, may be overblown, but it is not that far from what many of the early settlers felt at the time. In Hisin's somewhat simpler formation, "It becomes a necessity to beat the desire to steal out of one's Arab neighbors."[14]

Zvi Horowitz, another of Gedera's Bilu founders, kept a diary in which he recorded 14 violent incidents between Arabs and Jews in the Gedera vicinity during the years 1884–1888. One of these was an attack on Horowitz himself just days after Gedera was founded, when he was returning with supplies on a donkey and was attacked by two Arab robbers, who fled when he pulled a pistol and fired shots.[15] One of the most-cited instances of settler resistance to an armed threat took place in Rishon LeTsion in May 1884, when five armed attackers were surrounded by settlement members—men, women, and children—who rushed to the site of a confrontation. The settlers succeeded in disarming and capturing the robbers, turning them over to the local authorities and gaining credit for making the roads in the region safer than they had been.[16]

In Rosh Pina a serious incident took place in the very beginning of the settlement's history, in December 1882. Two settlement members were to be married, and Arabs in the vicinity were invited to the wedding. In Middle Eastern fashion, shots were fired in the air in celebration, but

in drawing his pistol one settler accidentally shot and killed an Arab worker from an important Safed family. As the founder David Shub later recounted, the Rosh Pina settlers "as newcomers who did not yet know the customs of the land and its Arab inhabitants" were unaware of the potential for a blood feud in which all Rosh Pina residents would be targets for retribution. In fact, "with lightning speed about two hundred Arab men, women, and children from the [victim's] family came with sticks and stones in their hands, and fell upon the settlement with shouts and terrible howls." Only the intervention of nearby Arabs from Ja'uni, many of whom worked in Rosh Pina, prevented disaster. The fact that the settlers had built their homes adjacent to the Arab village meant, at least in this case, that the sheikh of Ja'uni considered them to be under his protection.[17]

The Ottoman police arrested the shooter and held him for trial, but in Shub's words "the Arab thirst for blood vengeance did not subside and assault by family members on settlers did not stop." It reached the point that settlers could only visit Safed in large groups and with an armed escort. The shooter was acquitted when the trial was held eight months later and a traditional *sulha* (reconciliation) was arranged—on the basis of a large reparations payment that left Rosh Pina practically bankrupt.[18] The entire incident can, of course, be described as the kind of conflict that was routine to the region, in quarrels among Arab villages themselves. But it also bore the character of "a collision between two systems of concepts and values, different to the core, and the creation of an atmosphere of suspicion and tension."[19]

In the following year Rosh Pina had another serious clash, this time over the ever-present issue of water. The settlers had concentrated the waters of three small springs on their land to make an irrigation ditch and pool, big enough for the needs of Rosh Pina and Ja'uni. The Zangariya Bedouin to the east had in the past watered their flocks and herds in the Jordan River, especially during the dry summer season. But finding this new source more convenient, they began to bring their animals to the Rosh Pina pool in the summer, taking most or all of the available water. Negotiations failed, and it was decided to use force: "We put guards on the pond and drove away the shepherds and their flocks forcefully, by the strength of our arms." The following day the Bedouin sheikh came on horseback with his encampment, and when access to the pond was again blocked "war broke out in all its force." When the sheikh was hit in the head by a stone and fell from his horse, the Bedouin retreated. The settlers once again congratulated themselves on having erased the image of Jews as *awlad al-maut* (children of death) who would not defend themselves: "The fear of our heroism fell over them."[20]

Was this, again, a "normal" quarrel like those among the Arab villages and tribes themselves? Would the Bedouin have taken possession of an Arab watering hole with the same bravado and insouciance? Whatever the answer to that question, and despite Shub's declaration of victory, the quarrel over access to the pond continued for several years and was finally resolved only when (with the help of more of the Baron's money) enough water was provided for all.[21]

The worst conflicts with Arab neighbors came again, not surprisingly, in the most radicalized Jewish settlement, Gedera. There were premonitions of this even before Gedera was established. While the Biluim were still working in Mikveh Yisrael, the agricultural school's director Shmuel Hirsch frequently complained about their attitude toward the Arabs. In an 1883 report back to the Alliance Israélite Universelle, he wrote "I must add that most of these young Russians are very

turbulent and insolent and that despite my patience and against all my urgings they are not able to get along with . . . the Arabs."[22] The following year Joshua Ossowetsky, who had been a teacher at Mikveh Yisrael, wrote to *HaMelits* that "every minute the Arabs came to me and to Mr. Hirsch weeping and wailing that the Biluim shamed them and their religion and called them dogs and pigs and on and on." The situation deteriorated to the point that Arab workers threatened to leave and Hirsch had to threaten the Biluim that he would expel them if they did not change their attitude toward the Arabs.[23]

The Biluim had their own complaints. Some few weeks after arriving in 1882, the first contingent wrote that "it suits [Hirsch] to give the work to Arabs, whose needs are very few and thus they take little for their work."[24] One and a half years later they were still making the same complaint; Shlomo Zuckerman wrote to a Russian friend that "Hirsch employs Arabs on purpose, and not only does he not want to take even one of us, but he tries to get rid of the most experienced and seasoned workers just because they are not Arabs . . . and can much good come from this that the fate of the Jewish settlements is in the hands of such an anti-Semite?"[25]

When the Biluim finally occupied Gedera in December 1884, the outlook for relations with their neighbors was not auspicious, even without the bitter land dispute and the explosive grazing confrontations already described. The first time they tried to plow their fields, "the [Qattra] villagers assaulted them with clubs and stones, claiming that they were trespassing."[26] The Bilu leader Belkind cited "enmity from Arab neighbors" as one of the three existential problems facing Gedera, together with buildings and water.[27] Gedera was among the most isolated settlements, in part because it was the only Jewish settlement that fell into the Gaza district where there were almost no other Jewish residents—or for that matter, any Europeans—and where they had to deal with local authorities who were extremely suspicious of and hostile toward any foreign presence. The Gaza officials, for example, instructed Gedera's Arab neighbors to keep a close eye on the new settlers and report on everything that transpired.

The first group to settle Gedera numbered only 10; they were vastly outnumbered by the Arab villages surrounding them, even more than other new Jewish settlements had been. The mood was somber. Only a month after arriving, they noted in a joint letter what a "strange case" it was for "a few people with only spades in their hands and one rifle among them to settle among foreign and strange people." They noted that they had been taunted for their foolishness: "Aren't there enough graves in Jaffa?" And they expressed a clear sense of the fear they felt from "all of our neighbors who hate us, from behind and from ahead . . . And our hearts will ache from hearing that we will have war also with those who hate us, for we still have to make war for our existence in the holy land!"[28]

Haim Hisin, who later joined his Bilu comrades in Gedera, had vivid experience of this antipathy when attending the funeral of a respected elder from Qattra. While observing the proceedings,

> suddenly I felt a blow on my head. I looked around and saw that I had been struck by one of the Arabs with the banner he was carrying, and that he was about to strike again. I stepped aside and then he fell upon my friends.
>
> "What's the matter?" I asked one of the Arabs. "Is he crazy?"
>
> "No, he is an *ouly* [Man of God]. It is not he who strikes you, but the prophet Mohammed himself, because he feels that the air is being polluted by the presence of infidels."[29]

Warned by some of the Arab villagers that they might be killed if others saw that "the Prophet" was attacking them, the Gedera settlers raced away on the run with the *ouly* in hot pursuit.

Earlier on, the settlement had a serious confrontation over the erection of a chicken coop with no building permit. Given the lack of housing, the coop was also used to shelter one of the couples among the settlers. When one of the settlers caught and pummeled a Qattra native stealing grain from the threshing floor, the sheikh of Qattra led a force of some 70 to confront the 12 men of Gedera armed with hoes, their only weapons. When the sheikh noticed the new chicken coop, he ordered his men to destroy it: "After all, the government ordered us to make sure you do not build." Only the heroic stand of Lulik Feinberg ("Who's first?") stopped the attack and forced the villagers to retreat.[30]

In retaliation, however, Qattra cut off access to Gedera's only source of water at the time, a stream in a nearby gully. The Gederans managed to buy water for a time from another Arab village and from Mazkeret Batya (Ekron), though this imposed great inconvenience.

ATTACK ON PETAH TIKVA

Petah Tikva saw itself as "mother of the colonies" by virtue of its establishment in 1878, even though that effort was abandoned and had to be resurrected in 1882. In any event, it was the site of the first Arab mass attack on a Jewish settlement of the New Yishuv, in March 1886. Petah Tikva had faced ongoing Arab hostility since its first founding. One of the founders recounted later that "at night we did not take off our clothes, at any moment we expected an assault."[31] Another spoke of fights with "villagers near the settlement who would attack from time to time and seize animals, and sometimes even strip farmers (in the field) naked."[32]

This hostility derived in part from the fact that much of the land of Petah Tikva had formerly belonged to the village of al-Yehudiya. Part of the land had been sequestered for nonpayment of taxes, and part was taken over by two Arab merchants of Jaffa after debts were defaulted. The villagers continued to farm the land, however, as tenant farmers, which served to confirm their sense of entitlement by customary rights of usage. This did not change immediately when the settlers of Petah Tikva bought the land from the Arab merchants (who claimed the right to sell the entire tract). The first settlers were hard pressed and as noted were ultimately forced to abandon the site, in the meantime continuing to lease the land to its former owners. To add to the confusion, Rauf Pasha as district governor refused to ratify the land sales, leaving the legal situation in limbo.[33]

After Petah Tikva was reestablished in 1882, the tenant farmers were initially allowed to continue cultivating the disputed land. But by early 1886 the settlers were ready to reclaim the land and demanded that the tenants vacate the fields. The Arab villagers then invoked a prevailing local custom that tenant farmers who had worked a field in the summer were also entitled to plant and harvest winter crops (generally more profitable) there as well. The villagers were also, no doubt, encouraged in their position by the fact that the land sale had not yet been ratified by the Ottoman government. In order to establish their presence on the land, the villagers plowed the fields, in the process plowing up a road that the Jewish settlers had been using. When a settler tried to cross the field on the former trail, al-Yehudiya villagers seized his horse. In retaliation, the settlers seized several donkeys that were grazing on Petah Tikva land. When the

villagers came to “ransom” their animals, the two sides were unable to come to terms and parted on a bitter note.

The following day, rain made the fields too muddy to be worked, and most of the men of Petah Tikva went to Jaffa. Seeing that it was basically undefended, some 200 (or more, according to some accounts) villagers of al-Yehudiya, armed with clubs and stones, attacked the settlement—in which only the women, children, and about 10 mostly elderly men remained. Hannah-Leah Frumkin, then a young girl, later recalled that “several hundred Arabs fell upon us suddenly, with deadly weapons in their hands, and invaded the entire settlement to destroy, to kill, and to obliterate.”[34]

Hannah-Leah’s father, Rabbi Aryeh Leib Frumkin, one of the founders of the colony, had built his own house as a fortress against such an eventuality; it was closed on all four sides with a front gate. Rabbi Frumkin gathered women and children into the house but then found himself on the wrong side of the gate as the mob descended on him: “On coming to the gate, those on the parapet, and among them my wife and children, hurried forward to rescue me. I warned them not to open the gate lest our enemies burst through to assault them, and I stood despairing of escape when I recalled the small coop that I had built last year behind the cowshed, through which I could save my life.”[35]

Rabbi Frumkin was able to escape, though he was wounded seriously enough to require a long recovery; in all, five mostly older settlers were wounded, with one woman (elderly and in poor health) dying soon afterward. The settlement suffered widespread destruction, vandalism, and looting, including the loss of all its animals and the uprooting of newly planted trees.[36] To settlers who had only recently fled from murderous mobs in Russia, the attack seemed all too ominous. The men returning home from Jaffa at the end of the day found their homes “in a state reminiscent of a *shtetl* (Eastern European Jewish village) after a pogrom.”[37] The attack on Petah Tikva was a major shock throughout the Yishuv and among Hovevei Tsion supporters and sympathizers everywhere. Was the rebuilt Jewish community in Erets Yisrael simply to repeat the historical Jewish experience of tenuous survival among a hostile host population?

Ottoman authorities did arrest some of the villagers and returned stolen farm animals to Petah Tikva, but they were clearly reluctant to pursue severe punishment of Muslim citizens for hostile actions against foreigners whose presence they had tried to curtail from the outset. This same foreign status was, however, the most useful tool for the colonists, many of whom could and did appeal to their consuls for support. The German, Austrian, and British consuls all intervened on behalf of their own nationals in Petah Tikva, without which little would have been done.[38] Even with this pressure, the villagers escaped serious punishment and the colonists eventually felt impelled to agree to a *sulh* (reconciliation) in which some one-fifth of the disputed land reverted to the villagers of al-Yehudiya.

For the Jewish settlers in Palestine it was critical, however, to deny that the confrontation at Petah Tikva signaled a deeper antipathy to the growing Jewish presence. Shmuel Hirsch, director of the Mikveh Yisrael school, immediately wrote a letter to the Hebrew newspaper *HaMelits* making the point that it was common for “the inhabitants of one village to attack the inhabitants of a second village, even though all are Ishmaelites [Muslims], and they will beat and rob each other.” The attack on Petah Tikva, Hirsch reassured his readers, was not an expression of religious or national hatred.[39] Such conflicts had local and particular triggers, and if these causes

were removed, the clashes would not recur. Yehoshua Ossowetzky, the baron's administrator in Rishon LeTsion, expressed a similar view of the Petah Tikva attack in a letter to Leon Pinsker, the Hovevei Tsion leader in Odessa: "We all know that this incident as well did not derive from any religious hatred or national jealousy, but is the result of conflicts such as happen between private persons and also between brothers."[40]

The settlers themselves were anxious to convey the message that the attack did not reveal a serious obstacle to their undertaking. Mordechai Lubman, Rishon LeTsion settler and educator, responded to a critical article in *Voskhod* by writing in Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's *HaTsvi* that "the incident in Petah Tikva did not scare us and did not discomfort us even though we were saddened by it." Yet at the same time Lubman hinted at an underlying reality that made the attack appear as something more than a common neighborly quarrel: "The Arab will reject and refuse willing agreement that his ancestral land be permanently handed over to the Jews and that he no longer even have access to it."[41] In other words, as Lubman and some others were beginning to realize, Arab residents of Palestine were instinctively hostile to what they saw as alien encroachment in their lives and property.

In drawing a sharp line between the "incident" at Petah Tikva and classic persecution in Jewish history, one key settlement activist even blamed the settlers themselves for having provoked their Arab neighbors. Eliezer Rokeah was a Jerusalem-born supporter of the early settlements who was at this time serving as secretary of the Hovevei Tsion executive committee in Jaffa. Writing to Zalman David Levontin, who was in Russia at the time, Rokeah asserted:

> Our brother colonists were to blame. Our brothers from Russia, who did not know and understood nothing about the essence of freedom, emerged suddenly from darkness to light, and drained the cup of liberty until they were drunk. They do not consider the fellahin to be human, and for any trivial reason beat them and flail them with rods, and many of the weak-minded in Petah Tikva play tricks on their Arab neighbors, taking their animals even if they did not enter Jewish fields but only came close to them. And in response to this, the victims struck back and broke some windows, and no more.[42]

Rokeah's intention, like that of most others in the Jewish Yishuv, was to downplay the significance of the Petah Tikva attack and to reject any similarity to the pogroms that had pushed Jews to return to Zion in the first place. But his formulation, though showing remarkable willingness to criticize his own community, was no less an indication of basic conflict between the two sides. Wherever the blame might be laid, Jews and Arabs in Palestine were embarked on separate paths as rivals for land and bearers of clashing destinies.

ATTACKS ON GEDERA

Clashes between Gedera and the Arab village of Qattra, it will be recalled, had forced the Gederans to look elsewhere for a source of water. Finally in 1887 a well was built, with help from the baron (about the only help he extended to the Biluim, of whom he was highly distrustful). This reportedly helped to improve relations temporarily with the hostile neighbors in Qattara, after they were invited to use the well without charge.[43] But this improvement proved to be illusory.

The fundamental relationship remained hostile, as is clear from Hisin's diary. In April 1887, he writes: "Our Arab neighbors, seeing that we are poorly clothed, live under poor conditions and still have no houses, throw their heads back and insult us at every step. They tear great

chunks of land away from our borders, and we can do nothing about it for there are many of them and we are only a few people and have neither the men nor the money to turn to the Gaza administration for help."[44]

In Hisin's mind, the relationship with Arabs was deteriorating not improving. He writes that "the *hutzpah* [gall] of the Arabs has become so great that they have even begun to beat us up. But we must repress our pain and bear it humbly, especially since there are never more than ten of us here." This marks quite a change from the diary entries of two or three years earlier in which Hisin had taken pride in Jews beating up Arabs. But the developing narrative of Jewish self-assertion to gain respect soon makes a reappearance. In the same diary entry, he records that after one comrade returned home badly beaten, the settlers determined to make a stand. Three of them set out and attacked six Arabs in the fields; both sides were reinforced and a general battle ensued. Eventually village sheikhs intervened to stop the fighting, and the Jews withdrew bloody but unbowed and with dignity restored. With the help of a little baksheesh, the authorities actually arrived on the scene and arrested some of the villagers.[45]

A few months later, in April 1888, another serious clash erupted when residents of Masmiya, another neighboring Arab village, stole four bulls from Gedera's fields. Two of the settlers gave chase on horseback and managed to retrieve the bulls, and, for good measure, take some of the villagers' stock for ransom. This involved a physical fight that left one of the villagers wounded, leading to the arrest of the Jewish settlers. Rabbi Y. M. Pines from Jerusalem, as always the patron of the Gedera settlers, was able—perhaps with the help of a little judicious baksheesh—to secure the acquittal of the settlers at their trial.[46]

In October of the same year a similar incident had a more serious outcome. Villagers from Qattra waylaid Yosef Feinberg and took his horse; once again a rescue party managed to retrieve the horse and to capture one of the thieves as well. The captive was locked in the synagogue pending his delivery to Turkish authorities in the morning, but during the night a large force from Qattra launched a surprise attack on Gedera in order to free the prisoner. In Yisrael Belkind's account, the men gathered all the women in a protected house and then "set out to war" even though "they numbered only fourteen, including two elderly men. . . . The number of Arabs was five or six times as many. Some thought the Arabs numbered as many as a hundred."[47]

For two hours the battle raged, fought mainly with stones as the settlers set up a barrage to keep the villagers from penetrating into the settlement. The women came out of hiding to gather stones for the men. Eventually shots were fired—the first apparent use of firearms in these confrontations—though initially more to intimidate than to actually injure. But one of the settlers finally managed to get close enough to the attackers to shoot and wound one of them, leading the Arabs to withdraw.[48]

On the following day the settlers, fearing a renewal of the attack, sent word to nearby Jewish settlements. In response, 20 men from Rishon LeTsion, and another 10 from Mazkeret Batya, all armed, arrived as reinforcements. This appearance of what was probably the first collective defense among the Jewish colonies was celebrated by Belkind in a ringing declaration of the new heroic spirit that it represented: "new Jews, Jews who do not hide in cellars or in attics when an enemy approaches, but fighting Jews, Jews who stand tall, who defend their honor, Jews who help each other in the hour of danger, courageous heroic Jews who are not hesitant to confront

their enemies at the gate."[49]

The Gederans and their allies deployed for war and some shots were fired, but at this point Turkish forces arrived and the Qattra villagers returned home. Several of the villagers, as well as the prisoner, were arrested by the Turks to await trial. In the eyes of Belkind, and as later recorded in "official" chronicles of Gedera, this clash was the last serious incident between the settlement and its Arab neighbors. The villagers of Qattra and other Arab localities, in this telling, had learned that the Jews were determined to strike down roots and could not be dislodged, so they (the Arabs) would have to live with them.[50] This fit the emerging narrative of the "heroic period" in early settlement history when Jews learned to stand up for themselves and thereby put Arab opposition to rest. But while this narrative may be plausible to some extent in local situations such as Gedera, at least for a while, it does not, of course, take into account the development over time of Arab resistance on a collective or national level—as we shall see in later chapters.

Nor did it, in fact, mark the end of all problems in Gedera's relations with its neighbors. In July 1890 one of the settlers standing watch was shot and killed in circumstances that were never fully clarified. The upshot was that Gedera decided to take on hired Arab guards, both as a means of reducing pressure on their own manpower and also in the belief that Arabs would be more effective against threats from their own people. The problem was that control of the arrangement was in the hands of the sheikh of Qattra, who "looked down upon [the settlers of Gedera] and scorned them in his soul."[51] This seemingly practical gambit of "setting a thief to catch a thief" was to prove increasingly problematic over the years as the hired guards exploited their positions and even collaborated with the thieves. But in this earlier stage in settlement history, it became the common pattern in nearly all the settlements since it seemed to serve the double purpose of providing needed security and affording mutual benefits at the same time.

That same year (1890), Yesud HaMa'ala had a narrow escape from the same kind of massive clash that had taken place in Petah Tikva and Gedera. By that time, the land disputes had finally been worked out adequately—again with the baron's assistance—so that the settlers could do more planting including more fruit trees. But a brawl broke out when three mounted horsemen from the neighboring village of Teleil rode into the settlement's tree nursery and trampled some of the saplings. Though the damage may have been unintentional, it led to violent words and a physical fight, with one of the villagers suffering wounds from which he died. This was classic grounds for a blood feud, and the villagers, armed and far superior in numbers, advanced on Yesud HaMa'ala set on vengeance. Only intervention by a village elder averted what could have been a disaster for the small and still shaky colony. Again, the sulh (reconciliation) that ended the crisis included the appointment of two Teleil villagers as watchmen for the settlement, an arrangement that the settlers had no choice but to accept.[52] As noted, this hiring of Arab guards was becoming an integral part of the security system that the Jewish settlements were developing in response to the challenges of an unfriendly environment.

ORGANIZING FOR DEFENSE

The frequent clashes with Arab neighbors led Jewish settlers to a firm belief in the need for strength. In fact, they believed that their perceived weakness was at the root of the hostility, that they were seen as an easy target to be taken advantage of. Above all, it was important to them to

feel that they were writing a new history and not repeating past patterns of submission to others. As for trying to adjust to the new cultural surroundings, they had little interest in, or respect for, the Arab culture they encountered—especially when introduced to it in a hostile setting. They felt both that they represented a more advanced civilization that would in the end bring benefits to the local population and that knowledge of local customs was important only in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

As the leading study of the settlers' attitudes toward Arabs concludes, most of the Jewish colonists believed that, in the light of experience, "there was no possibility of basing relations with the Arabs on abstract values alone, because the Arabs interpreted that as a sign of weakness." The justice had to be backed up by the use of force.[53] The use of force thus became a central theme in the new Jewish Yishuv, long before full-fledged military forces of any kind were established.[54]

The settlers initially saw the need of force as a localized matter because they tended to see the clashes as local and specific, rather than as indicators of a broader hostility. The conflicts were blamed on the dealings of crooked Arab land dealers, or on Ottoman authorities encouraging local populations to create problems, or on unintentional cultural faux pas committed by the settlers, or on the intoxication of the settlers with their new assertiveness.[55] They could argue that such local conflicts were just as frequent among the Arabs themselves, given the prevailing weakness of governmental authority.[56] So while the need for self-defense was strongly asserted, this was not interpreted as evidence that the Jewish settlements faced an inherently and inevitably hostile Arab population. The settlers needed to believe that this was not a replication of the Diaspora, where an unfriendly and threatening environment had long been a basic fact of life. If they were merely creating another Diaspora, then how did the Return to Zion represent a radical shift in Jewish history?

The prevailing view was expressed by Yehiel Michel Pines, supporter of the Biluim, who wrote that the fellahin "submit and accept the dominion of those who know to establish dominion over them. . . . Avoiding depredation, therefore, depends only on the Jewish residents themselves."[57]

But even though the causes of the clashes were seen as local and specific, all of the settlements needed defense and they naturally began to work together. This was particularly true of the four located near Jaffa, in Judea, constituting a fairly coherent bloc (Rishon LeTsion, Mazkeret Batya, Nes Tsiona, and Gedera). As illustrated in the 1888 attack on Gedera, these settlements were able to send assistance to each other when one of them was threatened. Consequently, they were also able to be more assertive in comparison to more isolated settlements (Zikhron Ya'akov, Rosh Pina, Yesud HaMa'ala) that tended to be more conciliatory.[58]

Initially, the typical response of nearly all the settlements was to hire Arab guards. The settlers themselves had little experience in such work: they were already overburdened with becoming farmers, the use of Arab guards fit into the conception of developing a mutually beneficial relationship, and Arabs presumably knew the region and the threats better. Often this was handled by arrangement with a nearby village sheikh, who received a set sum each month for providing guards for night duty.[59]

From the beginning, however, the colonists also felt the need to master some of the arts of self-defense. In the bylaws of the Biluim, for example, there was a call to teach the youths "to shoot arrows and draw a bow, very necessary skills for inhabitants of the ancient land."[60] When Arab herds and flocks intruded on Jewish fields, the men were called to duty and mobilized to defend their land by force if necessary. There was, as noted, great pride in the image of Jews defending themselves and subverting the Diaspora image of meek submission. And as time went on, reliance on Arab guards became more problematic. As relationships between the two sides deteriorated, the attitudes of the guards sometimes became overbearing and scornful, and in some cases they were suspected of collaborating with the thieves and trespassers they were hired to confront. In any event, over time Jewish guards replaced the hired Arab watchmen.

Rishon LeTsion, by mid-1885, had organized rosters for inner and outer guard duties and was especially successful in seizing Arab animals in Jewish fields and holding them for ransom; Belkind wrote, "Within one month the 'national guard' of Rishon LeTsion gathered seventy *medjidiye* in penalties for herds seized and taught the shepherds of the area a lesson so they would keep their distance from the land of Rishon LeTsion."[61] Rosh Pina, following the confrontation over the accidental killing at a wedding, required all its members to fulfill guard duty. The Bedouin hired to guard the fields were replaced, and the new guards were led by two settlers who assumed the outward appearance of Arab guards, riding horseback and in full Arab dress (this was a pattern with many of the early Jewish guards, indicating perhaps their martial image of Arabs). This did not, however, eliminate the need for the continued employment of some Arab guards.[62] In Zikhron Ya'akov, the settlers organized a guard group that reportedly struck terror into would-be thieves and intruders by its rough treatment of them.[63]

The sense of pride in these first glimmerings of organized military defense is captured in the memoirs of David Haviv-Lubman, of Petah Tikva, recalling how the colonists there responded to the call for mobilization against those who threatened them:

> I jumped onto my horse by the well where the entire defense force was summoned: armed cavalry and infantry. Military discipline was imposed and officers appointed to be ready for any incident or trouble. . . . On a noble steed sat the commander-in-chief, ordering the camp in an imposing voice, this was Yehoshua Shtampfer, one of the leading founders. We got into formation. The armed cavalry was in front, and behind the infantry with its primitive weapons: clubs, truncheons, pitchforks, and the like. In the heat of day we approached the site of the campaign in tight rows. From every side and corner we saw Arabs following their cows and camels and plowing Jewish land. Our commander gave the order to drive the plowers back, to break their plows, to seize bulls and donkeys and take them captive back to Petah Tikva and to trample the plowed and seeded land. First came a confusion of blows, grappling, screams, brawling, and fists. . . . With what we had at hand we lashed them mercilessly. The intent was to strike hard blows and to display firearms visibly only in order to instill fear.[64]

The fact that neither side made great use of firearms during these early years was due, at least in part, to fear of igniting a blood feud. This was a deeply entrenched constraint in Arab society, and Jewish settlers soon learned that it was something to be avoided at all costs. To some extent this was reinforced by the interest of both Ottoman authorities and Arab notables in avoiding incidents that would invite foreign intervention, and by the localized character of disputes that seldom escalated beyond the level where personal relationships might contain the violence. In any event, the confrontations during these years left many wounded but very few killed. Such constraints would not, however, endure indefinitely.

One striking aspect of the new Jewish assertiveness was the emergence of "muscle men,"

settlers known for their strength and ferocity in physical confrontations. One of these figures was Yehoshua Shtampfer of Petah Tikva, as described in David Haviv-Lubman's account above. Most of them came from humble backgrounds, from social ranks not prominent in Jewish life in the Diaspora. But they came to the fore in the new conditions of the first settlements in Erets Yisrael. As the standard history of Jewish defense forces states, "Men like this were found in every settlement at its beginning, and they taught the Arabs to behave with respect toward their new neighbors."[65]

Another noted warrior was Yisrael (Lulik) Feinberg, the younger brother of one of the founders of Rishon LeTsion, who arrived at the beginning of 1885. Yisrael Belkind recounts that "this 'baby' was really only 17 years old, but tall and brawny and with strong hands, and woe betide the person on whom those hands landed." When provoked by an Arab in Jaffa, Feinberg slung the offender over his shoulders and carted him off to a foreign consul's office. But Rishon LeTsion was far from the consuls, and so there "he taught manners in an entirely different way to those who tried to enter the settlement to steal or with other bad intent." In the settlement Lulik was given the important title of "Conqueror of the Beasts."[66]

Others in this warrior class at Rishon LeTsion included Ze'ev Greenstein and Shaul Elzner, who had been students at the Mikveh Yisrael agricultural school. According to Biluim leader Belkind, "They taught the farmers of Rishon LeTsion fieldwork and together with that also how to deal with the Arabs who came to graze their herds in the fields of Rishon LeTsion." And no less a figure in teaching "good manners" to the Arabs was Greenstein's wife, Mrs. Esther, from whom "Arabs who were suspected of thefts or other crimes against the settlement received not just one slap in the face."[67]

THE EMERGING NARRATIVE

The narrative that came to be adopted for the entire first *aliya* was thus taking shape during this period, which was later labeled the "heroic period."[68] In brief, the first colonists were adopting a common story line: the Arabs harassed us, we fought back with spirit, they came to respect us, and now relations are stable and generally peaceful. This perspective served the first settlers well in two important respects. First, it expressed a clear break with the Diaspora image of Jews as hopeless victims of their tormentors; this was a new kind of Jew who fought back. Second, it interpreted relations with Arabs as a transitory problem, as an obstacle that could be overcome and would not stand in the way of long-term success. The first wave of settlers, few in number and with many other weighty obstacles that they could hardly hide, had every motivation to minimize difficulties with their neighbors and to attribute them to specific localized irritants that could be overcome. As Yosef Gorny puts it in his overarching history of Jewish-Arab relations, the first *aliya* settlers saw clashes with Arabs as a continuation of traditional Arab Muslim harassment of Jews and not as a confrontation on the national level.[69] This, of course, became increasingly difficult to maintain over time. What the early colonists saw as achievement of peaceful normality, after some initial turbulence, turned out to be the lull before the storm, as the conflict moved from the local to the national level.

But for the moment, colonists could persuade themselves that the script was being followed. Haim Hisin, writing from Rishon LeTsion in early 1883, was satisfied that "at last the Arabs have come to understand that there is no good in fooling with us, and they have begun to keep as

far away from our fields as possible." The 18-year-old Hisin was convinced that he and his fellow pioneers, by standing up to the Arabs, had opened a new page in Jewish history: "Watching the settlers during the skirmishes with the Arabs, I often thought: 'Can it be that these are the same Jews who in their native land put up with every kind of insult and humiliation without so much as a murmur?' Where was their so-called 'natural' cowardice now, the cowardice that even many Jews thought they had detected in their own people . . .? The next generation will, undoubtedly, not even believe how submissive their ancestors have been."[70]

This refrain was repeated in practically every one of the new settlements. In Petah Tikva, for example, a sympathetic account of the very first settlers proclaimed that "in clashes with their neighbors they showed heroism and wisdom, and now they are respected by them, generally."[71]

Though Arab relations were not yet a major issue in Jewish public debate, signs of differing nuances in approach were beginning to appear. The ideologue and journalist Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, from his vantage point in Jerusalem, felt along with many others that a clash was inevitable and that Jews would simply have to prevail. This was still not considered insuperable, or even one of the more difficult obstacles. But one of the Biluim, Menashe Meirovich, was already beginning to make a case for a more flexible approach. Writing in 1886, Meirovich—who was to become a leading advocate of Jewish-Arab reconciliation—argued that in dealing with the Arabs, "if we approach them with fairness and with justice, then enemies will become friends."[72]

It should be noted, however, that these differing hard or soft nuances, at this time, shared a common basic assumption; that the solution to relations with the Arab population lay in the success of the settlement enterprise itself. Whether by harder or softer methods, when the Jewish presence became dominant Arabs as individuals would have their place in the new order and would benefit from it. But in the meantime, there was no felt need to deal with Arabs as a national counterpart, as a collective group with whom to bargain—or for that matter as an enemy to be faced with organized armed forces, something that still seemed unimaginable.

Continued successful settlement would, in other words, create a new reality in which there would be no Arab issue. As Meirovich put it, "If many people come and settle and the Sons of Judea learn to take up the bow against wild attackers, then *Erets Yisrael* will be an unwalled city and lance and spear will no longer be seen." Behind this, for Meirovich no less than for those who emphasized strength, was again the natural deference of the less advanced to representatives of European civilization: "They will admire and honor the European because awe of him is instilled in them."[73]

Among themselves, representatives of the first *aliya* put the basic aim very clearly: creating a Jewish majority. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda wrote already in 1882 that "only on this land . . . can our nation live . . . [and] only if we succeed in increasing our numbers here until we are the majority." This majority could be achieved, Ben-Yehuda believed, by a quiet program of land acquisition and settlement: "In it there are now five hundred [thousand] Arabs, without great power, from whom we can easily take the land, if only we do it with deliberation and discretion, without attracting to ourselves their hostility before we have become the many and the strong."[74] Ben-Yehuda later recounted that the thousands of Russian Jews who crowded the streets of Jaffa during periods of peak immigration made it difficult to act "with discretion" and led to the Ottoman efforts to stem the influx.[75]

Similar thoughts were expressed by the young Bilui, Ze'ev Dubnov, writing to his brother (the historian) Shimon:

> The final purposes or *pia desideria* are to take possession in due course of Palestine and to restore to the Jews the political independence of which they have now been deprived for 2000 years. Don't laugh, it is not a mirage. The means to achieve this purpose could be the establishment of colonies of farmers in Palestine, the establishment of various kinds of workshops and industry and their gradual expansion—in a word, to seek to put all the land, all the industry, in the hands of the Jews. . . . Then the Jews, if necessary with arms in their hands, will publicly proclaim themselves masters of their own, ancient fatherland.[76]

Despite the reference to arms, the use of organized armed forces was not part of the narrative at the time. Jews needed to stand up to hostility: that much was basic to their frame of mind and their instinctive response to threats in the new environment. But resort to arms for self-defense did not mean an army, which would have seemed inconceivable to the small population of poorly armed Jewish newcomers living under Ottoman authority in the 1880s. When the settlers spoke of "conquest," they meant conquest of the land, that is, a settlement process that would take place (they hoped) peacefully and would in the end create an overwhelming Jewish presence. Then, so they thought—to the extent they thought of it at all—the other inhabitants of the Land of Israel would come to accept the new order, given the advantages that it would bestow on them.[77]

This conception relegated the Arab rural population that the settlers engaged to the role of passive objects of Jewish initiative rather than actors in their own right. It also saw the Arabs as almost totally local in their outlook and the scope of their activities. Neither of these assumptions would stand the test of time. The society, economy, and political structures of the Palestinian districts were undergoing fundamental transformation, as outlined in chapter 1. Villagers in these areas could hardly be unaffected by these changes or fail to respond to them. They were aware of their interests and active in protecting them, as demonstrated by the many petitions submitted by villages to Ottoman authorities, often on a collective level.[78] Even though conflicts between Arab villages and Jewish settlements were waged primarily locally during this period, there were already repercussions on a regional level.

Furthermore, patterns of conflict set in early years tended to persist, despite the belief that "heroic" Jewish determination and perseverance had forced Arab neighbors to come to terms. New land purchases sparked new battles over borders and the eviction of tenant farmers. Violent confrontations over a wide variety of issues—grazing, water, theft, vandalism—persisted long after such clashes could be attributed to lack of familiarity with the other side's customs.

"THE HEROIC PERIOD"

By this time, perhaps, it would have been clear to a neutral observer that there was something deeper here than the specific issues of the clashes. In retrospect, "something more fundamental was at stake, which contributed to maintaining, and even enlarging, the chasm between the two populations."[79] This is seen in the persistence and sharpening of these supposedly isolated events. It is also apparent in the arresting comparison of Jewish settlements to the experience of the German Templer colonies, which went through a remarkably similar pattern in relations with Arab neighbors. As Ben-Bassat concludes, "European settlement activity in itself, regardless of its origin and motivation, created suspicion and resentment among the Arab population of

Palestine."[80]

The settlers, of course, had every reason to minimize their hostile relations with Arab neighbors, and especially to deny the inevitability of a fundamental conflict between the two communities. They had enough hurdles already; for their own sanity, they had to believe that none of these obstacles were insuperable. Their success hung on convincing others to follow them to Palestine—not an easy mission, as seen in the fact that over 97 percent of the Jews who emigrated from Eastern Europe in 1880–1914 did in fact end up elsewhere (see chap. 2).

The Jewish settlers shared the prevailing belief in Europe and America that modern (i.e., Western) civilization was the march of history and that they were playing a constructive role in modernizing Palestine to the benefit of all its inhabitants. Thus any frictions that might occur in initial contacts with the existing population were no more than growing pains due either to cultural mismatches that would disappear in the course of time or to localized and specific issues that would be resolved.

In this frame of mind, repeated Arab incursions to graze herds and flocks on Jewish fields were not seen as a sign of hostility to their very presence—that is, to Jews as Jews—but rather as a clash between traditional Arab customs and modern property rights. When these encroachments took place in cultivated rather than fallow fields, they were regarded as, at most, everyday acts of aggression trying to take advantage of newcomers who were simply tempting targets in an insecure environment. Their vigorous response to the intruders, the settlers told themselves, would in the end establish long-sought respect for Jews and help build peaceful neighborly relations.

Though security in Ottoman Palestine had vastly improved by the late nineteenth century, new Jewish settlements lived in fear of violence in various forms: assaults, robbery, theft, and vandalism. Were these no more than "normal" threats that existed also among the Arabs themselves? The settlers for their part certainly felt that, as a foreign presence, they attracted more hostile attacks. Europeans were apparently a more legitimate target for malefactors whether the motives were criminal or cultural/political.

These clashes were aggravated, of course, by very real cultural misunderstandings and inevitable confrontations over scarce resources: cultivable land and water. The dispossession of tenant farmers from land to which they were tied by customary rights of usage went right to the core issue of each side's claims to the land as a people. But with the passage of time, rather than fading away as particular cases were resolved, the confrontations moved more to the level of collective engagements between Jewish settlements and Arab villages.

This was brought home dramatically by the attack of al-Yehudiya villagers on Petah Tikva in 1886. For some in the Jewish world, this was all too reminiscent of the pogroms from which most of the settlers had only recently fled. Was Erets Yisrael to be simply another extension of the Diaspora, with a fearful Jewish minority living in dread of a hostile host population? Obviously, for the settlers this was an unacceptable conclusion. This situation had to be different, even if it involved blaming the Jewish colonists of Petah Tikva for creating the specific (and thus avoidable) triggers that had set off the attack. A similar pattern could be seen when Gedera was attacked in 1888.

Though not yet at the stage of establishing regular military forces, Jewish settlers gave more and more attention to organizing strong defenses. Only the readiness to use force, they reasoned, would bring the depredations to an end. Since the confrontations were local, the focus initially

was on organizing individual settlements to provide their own security. But already in the 1888 Gedera case, the settlements were beginning to work together in a kind of collective defense when one of them was threatened.

Though it seems ironic in retrospect, in the beginning the settlements typically hired Arab guards, given the limited Jewish experience with arms. But in the course of time colonists began to take special pride in developing their own martial culture, even to the extent of imitating military models. A new breed of warrior—the "muscle men"—began to make their mark in the settlements. At the same time, since the use of firearms in the skirmishes was still limited (due in part to fear of blood feuds), the role of sheer brawn was especially celebrated.

At this point settlers could still tell themselves that, in overcoming local challenges, they had put relations with Arabs on a peaceful footing. They did not anticipate that the confrontation could and would move from local to regional or national levels. It was still possible to subscribe to the emerging narrative of the "heroic period" in which they had shown that there was in fact no "Arab problem."

There were already different nuances of approach between those who advocated more conciliatory or less conciliatory stances toward the Arabs of Palestine. But whatever the nuances, there was consensus that this population did not constitute an invincible obstacle to the achievement of their visions.

NOTES

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77. Shapira, *Land and Power*, pp. 40–41, 51.
78. Ben-Bassat, *Local Feuds or Premonitions*, pp. 33, 313. See also Ben-Bassat's study of petitions to the Ottoman government: *Petitioning the Sultan: Protests and Justice in Late Ottoman Palestine 1865–1908* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013).
79. Ben-Bassat, *Local Feuds or Premonitions*, p. 308.
80. Ben-Bassat, *Local Feuds or Premonitions*, p. 286.

chapter five

TRUTH FROM THE LAND OF ISRAEL

JEWISH FLIGHT FROM RUSSIA IN the late 1880s followed a familiar pattern: renewed persecution brought renewed emigration. There were few pogroms after 1884 and the number fleeing dropped, falling to under ten thousand a year. As before, most of these emigrants headed to Western destinations, not to Erets Yisrael/Palestine. The continuing infusion of new immigrants, necessary to the survival of the struggling settlements, was gravely threatened. Given the high rate of attrition among would-be settlers, without reinforcement the colonies would very likely wither and die.

But once again the persecutors came to the rescue. A series of new restrictions, added to ever-stricter interpretations of the 1882 May Laws, pushed out a new wave of embittered emigrants, many of them now ready to consider the Return to Zion as a solution to Jewish vulnerability and victimhood. In 1886 a heavy tax was imposed on the families of young men who failed to report for military service—often because they had (illegally) left the country. In July 1887 admission of Jews to secondary schools and universities was severely slashed and rigid quotas were reinstituted, hurting precisely those (the *maskilim*) who had most relied on this access to integrate into Russian and European society. In 1889, Jewish admission to private legal practice was almost totally cut off. Over the years, pressure mounted to expel Jews who had managed, during the period of Alexander II's reforms, to gain permission to live in areas outside the Pale of Settlement. Most dramatically, in early 1891 the new governor-general of Moscow—Grand Prince Sergei Alexandrovich, brother of Tsar Alexander III—decreed the expulsion of most of the Jews who had achieved the hard-fought right to live in the capital city, forcing out some twenty thousand.

Fortuitously, this heightened push from Russia coincided with a temporary softening of Ottoman restrictions on Jewish entry into Palestinian districts. After Jewish businessmen were barred from entry in 1884, under the claim that Palestine was not a commercial zone, only Jewish pilgrims were legally permitted to enter the *Mutasarriflik* of Jerusalem, and only after making a monetary deposit to guarantee their departure within 30 days. But European powers constantly pressed the rights of their citizens under the capitulations and other Ottoman commitments, and in 1888 the sultan's government agreed to allow Jews to settle in Palestine, provided they did so individually and not as groups.[1] Another factor was the legalization of Hibat Tsion in Russia; the organization had operated without legal sanction, and thus with extreme caution, until this point. But in early 1890 it was recognized by the Russian government

as the Society for the Support of Jewish Farmers and Artisans in Syria and Palestine (known informally as the "Odessa Committee") and was able to publicize and mobilize its cause more openly.[2]

By the end of the decade Jewish emigration from Russia had tripled, and in 1891 it tripled again, to almost one hundred thousand within one year.[3] As before, most found their way to Europe and the Americas but again some, deeply disillusioned in the seemingly false promise of assimilation, were drawn to the idea of a reconstituted Erets Yisrael as a solution of the Jewish dilemma. For a few months, one source claims, the number arriving in Palestine "almost matched" the number going to America![4]

During this same period the label applied to those favoring the Return to Zion was changing. Those previously known as "Palestinophiles" became known as "Zionists," and their movement as "Zionism." The first use of the word was apparently by Nathan Birnbaum in his journal *Selbst-Emanzipation* in 1890. Initially more of a cultural than a political term, it came into public use as a description of the political movement by early 1892.[5] From this point on, it is no longer anachronistic, historically, to refer to the Jewish settlers and their organizations as "Zionist."

"THE PANIC IMMIGRATION"

The sudden influx of thousands of shaken refugees overwhelmed the strapped resources of Hibat Tsion and its field office in Jaffa. Not surprisingly, the immediate result was confusion and contention throughout the New Yishuv, the existing network of new settlements. This particular passage would become known in later chronicles of the period as "the panic immigration" (*ha'aliya hamevuhelet*).

Within three years, seven new settlements were added to the eight established in the early years of the decade. By and large, these new outposts expanded the existing clusters of settlements in south central Palestine (near Jaffa), on the north coast south of Haifa, and in the upper Galilee. Three minor settlements were established in 1889. **Kastina**, seven miles south of Gedera, extended the most important cluster of settlements south and east of Jaffa. It was established on land bought by Baron Edmond de Rothschild, but only five families accepted the onerous conditions that the baron imposed on the colonies he supported. Like other new settlements, Kastina had unresolved boundary disputes and was subject to harassment and attack from Arab neighbors; this, combined with the common problems of disease, inexperience in farming, and internal conflicts, led to its gradual demise. By 1891 it had dwindled to a small farm, with most of the land leased to neighboring Arab farmers. In 1896 it was reconstituted as **Be'er Tuvia**.

Bat Shlomo and **Meir Shfeya** were founded in 1889 as "daughter" settlements of Zikhron Ya'akov, south of Haifa. They were located to the east of Zikhron Ya'akov, which continued to supply their communal services. Population growth in Zikhron Ya'akov had led to a shortage of land and the purchase of these additional lands; the settlers were bachelors and graduates of a farming school in the mother colony.

In 1890 a group of Polish Jews, seeking to establish a settlement independent of Baron Rothschild, bought the land that became the town, and later the city, of **Rehovot**. Many of the early settlers were members of *B'nei Moshe*, a Jewish fraternal organization founded by one of the more remarkable figures in Zionist history, Ahad Ha'am—of whom we will hear much more

shortly. Rehovot extended the bloc of settlements clustered in the coastal plain south of Jaffa. As was often the case, the land was bought from an absentee owner and some of it was being cultivated by Arab tenant farmers.

The bloc of settlements in the upper Galilee was strengthened by the addition in 1890 of **Mishmar HaYarden**, just south of Yesud HaMa'ala in the Jordan Valley, and by the founding of **Ein Zeitim**, just north of Safed in the following year. Mishmar HaYarden had begun as a private Jewish farm but was then bought by settlers, many from Safed, with financial support from Hibat Tsion. Settlers from Minsk belonging to a second pioneering organization, *Dorshei Tsion* (Seekers of Zion), formed the core of the settlement at Ein Zeitim, but financial hardships soon forced the new colony to place itself under the stewardship of Baron Rothschild's administration.

Also in 1891, Hibat Tsion settlers from Lithuania and Latvia established the agricultural colony of **Hadera**, which would eventually become a major city. Located on the coast halfway between Jaffa and Haifa, this new settlement added to the cluster forming around Zikhron Ya'akov. The Hadera land purchase was the largest purchase by a Jewish settlement group to that date, though most of the land was swampy and of poor quality. Like most of the early settlements, Hadera had problematic relations with its Arab neighbors.

Another settlement effort at the time took place on the Golan Heights, east of the Sea of Galilee. At the time this area was simply another province of the Ottoman Empire, and thus Jewish settlement there did not differ legally or politically from settlement in the Galilee. The only difference was that the Golan was administered from Damascus, while the Galilee was ruled from Beirut. (Settlement in the *Mutasarriflik* of Jerusalem, ruled directly from Constantinople, was, of course, another matter.) In later years there was frequent discussion of possible Jewish settlement east of the Jordan, in the Damascus province.

Jews from Safed, therefore, attempted in 1886 to buy land and settle on the Golan Heights, establishing the settlement of **B'nei Yehuda**. The new colony faced the usual hardships and tribulations, intensified by its isolation, and even moved from one site to another—but in the end, it was abandoned. David Shub, the founder of Rosh Pina, later recounted an incident indicating that hostility of the local population was a key part of this story: "There was a family there [in B'nei Yehuda], a woman and two sons who worked the soil, and robbers among the village's neighbors attacked them and killed the mother and one son, while the other son fled and was saved by a miracle."[6]

"ONE OF THE PEOPLE"

By the end of the first decade of modern Jewish immigration to Palestine and interaction with Arab neighbors, some observers were beginning to see the relationship in broader terms, beyond the frictions that accompanied the first encounters. One such observer was Haim Hisin, the former Moscow gymnasium student and member of Bilu who had settled in Gedera. Hisin had returned to Russia in 1887 and excerpts from his diaries (often quoted in previous chapters) were published in the Russian Jewish journal *Voskhod* in 1889. The interest of *Voskhod* grew, at least partly, out of its general opposition to emigration to Palestine; the negative aspects of Hisin's account, including the hostility of the native population and authorities, fit the message the journal was promoting. Be that as it may, in early 1890 *Voskhod* sent Hisin back to Palestine to report further on developments in the Jewish colonies.

In his account from this trip, Hisin recorded a rather remarkable conversation with one of the veteran settlers of Rishon LeTsion, where Hisin himself had spent time. His former comrade was up in arms about the "interference" of Baron Rothschild's administrators in the settlers' behavior toward Arabs of the vicinity: "You remember how they feared us in the first years! They would shake when facing us, and never dared to utter an offensive word. The Arab needed to know that the Hebrew was *hawaja* [master], that he needed to behave toward him with the utmost respect, and otherwise he would be dealt with in the most severe way. But now it isn't even possible to hit the Arab; he immediately complains to Bloch [Alphonse Bloch, regional administrator of the colonies supported by Baron Rothschild], who has the settler summoned and often even fines him."[7]

Hisin had himself been a part of the earlier interactions, and his attitude toward Arabs, at that time, was more or less the same as the settler he was quoting (see above, chap. 3). But his perspective had shifted with time and distance, and he now found more virtue in the approach that the baron's representatives were trying to inculcate:

> I definitely support the policy of the *pekidut* [the Baron's officials] toward the Arabs. Punishing the Arabs with a strong hand seemed necessary in the first years of settlement, when they were treated like animals. It is now time to admit that these instances of inhumane attitudes are out of place. . . . It is much more reasonable to familiarize the Arab with justice . . . it is far better that the settler get accustomed, in some way, to the thought that he is no longer lord . . . we need to try to erase the gap between the Hebrew farmer and the Arab and to establish more friendly relations.[8]

Returning to his former base in Gedera after an absence of three years, Hisin found the settlers still in a state of depression and fear of Arab attack. Recall that Gedera, because of its location and size, was more vulnerable to such threats than most of the other colonies. These fears had been fanned by the recent death of a settler shot on night guard duty, seen as a possible signal of a larger impending threat. It turned out the settler had been shot accidentally by another guard, but this only became clear later, and in the meantime panic prevailed.[9] This picture of the state of mind in Gedera was confirmed the following year by another visitor, Dr. Hillel Yaffe, an important figure in the history of the yishuv who later served as representative of Hibat Tsion in Palestine and who was a major contributor to the eradication of malaria in the country. Yaffe arrived in 1891 from Paris, where he had earned his medical degree. Visiting Gedera, he put the Arab threat in the context of the colony's romantic history as an overcoming of tribulations, in line with the prevailing narrative: "How it pleased me to visit them in the field and at home and to hear the stories of all that they had gone through in the last eighteen years. The awakening of spirit, the *aliya* [immigration] to the Land, hope and despair, despair and hope, the communal days, the Arab attack, the Jewish blood shed on the land of Gedera, the defense of the women and children and so on and so on. It has not yet been ten full years for *Bilu,* and already these years are like the years of a full generation."[10]

Although we tend to focus on Jewish-Arab relations around the newly established agricultural settlements, the situation in towns and cities was also changing rapidly and creating new patterns. The Jewish population of Jerusalem almost doubled between 1881 and 1891, and a substantial Jewish community appeared in Jaffa where almost none had existed previously. Many of the new Jewish neighborhoods in urban areas were, essentially, part of the New Yishuv rather than the Old Yishuv, since they were demographically and ideologically linked to the immigration that had begun in 1881–1882. The presence of large numbers of Jews in centers like

Jaffa could hardly pass unnoticed by Arabs living there, especially when Jewish crowds gathered to welcome each arriving ship with its new immigrants. Some of this was beginning to translate into a general uneasiness about the settlers as a group and not just over specific issues. Eliyahu Lewin-Epstein, one of the founders of Rehovot, records being told in 1891 by a leading Arab figure in Jaffa, Muhammad Efendi, that the Jewish newcomers were stirring up resentment because "we . . . are doing everything that occurs to us as if we did not know at all that there is a government in [Palestine], or that there are certain laws prevailing in the country which we are all obliged to respect."[11]

The most notable Jewish visitor to Palestine during this period, especially as an observer on Jewish-Arab relations, was Ahad Ha'am, who had emerged as one of the leading thinkers among the Palestinophiles (as advocates of Jewish settlement in Erets Yisrael were then labeled in Russia). Ahad Ha'am was a classic *maskil*—follower of Jewish Enlightenment—steeped in knowledge of Jewish tradition but an eager consumer of Western secular thought. He was destined to become both a leading ideological figure and a gadfly in the movement, later representing an alternative to the political Zionism introduced by Theodor Herzl. For some he became Zionism's leading intellectual, whose writings were studied by his disciples like Talmudic texts. But his austere and unsparing judgmental style suited him best for the role of the movement's most incisive internal critic.

Ahad Ha'am was born, as Asher Ginzberg, into a well-to-do Hasidic family on a leasehold near Kiev, and was connected to two Hasidic dynasties through his mother and his wife (who was the niece of the Lubavitcher rabbi). By the age of 17 he had read the complete Talmud, but like many of his background and generation he also consumed *maskilic* (secular) works. He was also married at the age of 17; over time, his wife gradually adjusted to his secular leanings.

Ginzberg's father lost his leasehold under the May Laws of 1882 (see chap. 2), and wanted to move to Palestine. In his sister's account, it was Asher himself who demanded that any move to Palestine be conditional on working the land with their own hands.[12] In 1885 Asher moved his family to Odessa, where he became active in Hibat Tsion circles led by Leon Pinsker. His first important publication, the article "This Is Not the Way," appeared in 1889 in *HaMelits*, the newspaper published in St. Petersburg that became the unofficial organ of Hibat Tsion.[13] The young Ginzberg signed his article as "One of the People," "Ahad Ha'am" in Hebrew, and this became his pen name for the rest of his life.

The article established him as a severe critic of the prevailing mode of settlement during the first decade of Zionist (or proto-Zionist) activity. In his view, the Return to Zion that began in 1882 was premature, disorganized, and inadequately conceived. His report of his 1891 trip belongs, first and foremost, to the general thrust of this critique first laid out two years earlier. Above all, in his view, the movement needed unity, better organization, better leadership, better preparation both morally and materially, and the application of intelligence in both senses of the word. To further these aims, Ahad Ha'am founded a fraternal order within Palestinophile circles, called B'nei Moshe (Sons of Moses), that was dedicated to bringing greater order and purpose into immigration to Palestine. Regarding the impact on the existing population, B'nei Moshe (like the few others who gave serious thought to the issue) subscribed to the theory of benefits: "The immigration of Jews was not considered by them to be harmful to the [Arab] population. The opposite was the case: it would improve its situation."[14]

It was the affairs of B'nei Moshe that drew Ahad Ha'am to make his first trip to Palestine. B'nei Moshe members were deeply involved in the Jaffa committee that was trying to deal with the "panic immigration" in 1890–1891. Serious conflicts had broken out within the committee, whose members turned to Ahad Ha'am as arbiter.[15] Taking with him the future Zionist leader Menahem Ussishkin, he left Odessa in February 1891 and returned at the end of May after having dealt with B'nei Moshe business in Jaffa and toured almost all the existing Jewish settlements. (He did not, by his own account, meet with Arabs at any point.) His observations on the state of Jewish settlement in Palestine appeared under the title of "Truth from the Land of Israel" as a series of five articles in *HaMelits*, very soon after his return.[16]

The article is a milestone in Zionist thought and in Ahad Ha'am's own role in the movement, and even more notably as the first analysis within the Jewish settler movement of "the Arab issue" that was eventually to dominate the history of Zionism and of the state of Israel.

Given Ahad Ha'am's predilections and the inevitable chaos accompanying any sudden mass movement of people, his hopes of finding matters to his liking were doomed to disappointment. The "panic immigration" had brought about his journey, and he experienced the worst of the chaos that it had produced. Not surprisingly, Ahad Ha'am was appalled by the vicious infighting among the Zionists themselves, the proliferation of profiteers both Jewish and non-Jewish, the skyrocketing price of land, various agricultural fiascoes, and above all by the inability of the new settlers to free themselves from dependence on outside charity (principally the support of Baron Rothschild). "I was not able," he reports, "to locate a single person living from the fruit of his land alone."[17] In Ahad Ha'am's mind, the greatest threat to the New Yishuv was that it was beginning to look a lot like the Old Yishuv, subsisting on support from abroad and assimilating to its (non-Jewish) environment.

This damning reality is juxtaposed, in his mind, with the scandalous activities of "charlatans" promoting the Holy Land as "a new California" with an easy life. What results is "a motley mixture of gold-diggers and indigent exiles" who are an easy target for Ahad Ha'am's scathing sarcasm. Describing one "Hebrew middleman" who declares that unsuccessful settlers can "go to hell," and another who brags of tricking a settlement society out of a tract of land, he notes that "even the most sublime idea can be emptied of any integrity when molested by such hands." As an intellectual whose worldview nevertheless put a premium on practicality, Ahad Ha'am is at his most effective in puncturing the balloons of the various get-rich-quick schemes that he encountered, whether the much-heralded wine industry ("where will all this flow of wine back up?") or the short-lived cultivation of silkworms: "I will not be at all surprised if I soon hear in the papers the glad tidings that in some city [a silkworm cultivation] society has been born—mazaltov, Bless the Lord, and may it prosper—and then not many days will pass before the one society will sire another ten societies in its own image, and instead of vines and wine we will hear, all day, old wives' tales about mulberries and silk."[18]

Most references to the article today, however, do not relate to its importance either in Zionist ideology or in Ahad Ha'am's own thinking and career. Its most frequently quoted passages are those dealing with the Arab issue. This is because it stands as the first, and for some time as the only, serious commentary with at least a glimmer of recognition that relations with the Arab population was more than a temporary inconvenience. The article sparked some immediate and sharp disagreement on the Arab issue but not a lasting full-scale debate; this began only with the

publication of Yitshak Epstein's article "A Hidden Question" in 1907 (see chap. 7). In this context, Ahad Ha'am's warning in 1891 is evidence that while Zionists of the first *aliya* may not have focused on the issue, some were at least aware of it. It is taken as the first premonition of the issue's importance and (by Israel's critics) as proof that early Zionists (or at least one of them) were aware of injustices imposed on the Arab population.

In view of its landmark status on both sides, therefore, it is startling to discover that, apart from a few incidental references, only two paragraphs in "Truth from the Land of Israel" actually address the issue of relations with the non-Jewish population there. The truth about "Truth" is that the Arab issue is not a major concern.

To be sure, in 1891 Ahad Ha'am did see beyond what others saw. He saw the Arabs not simply as passive objects of manipulation by others but as actors with their own desires and aims ("From abroad we are accustomed to believe that the Arabs are all desert savages, like donkeys, who neither see nor understand what goes on around them. But this is a big mistake."[19]). He recognized a collective dimension to Arab identity; their hostility to foreign intrusion was not simply a matter of local or isolated frictions but potentially part of a general pattern of resistance that Zionism would one day face ("If the time comes when the life of our people in *Erets Israel* develops to the point of encroaching upon the native population, they will not easily yield their place."[20]). He also never claimed that Erets Israel was "an abandoned land" (*erets azuva*), a phrase that occurs with regularity elsewhere in Zionist writings of the period, sometimes even from those living in the clearly nonabandoned land.

In fact, Ahad Ha'am's perceptions are in some respects well ahead of the perceptions and attitudes of early settlers who were actually in contact with the Arab population. As we have seen, when Arabs appear in the diaries and letters of first *aliya* pioneers, it is usually as a nuisance or a threat. Yet the history of early settlements shows that they existed in a state of friction, if not conflict, with their Arab neighbors. The standard interpretation was that such frictions were "normal" and did not have a larger political importance, being similar to conflicts among the Arabs themselves. This was, apparently, a matter of no small ideological significance to the first settlers; to admit that they found themselves among a hostile population that harassed them on an ethnic, religious, or political basis would be to admit that Jewish settlement in Erets Yisrael merely duplicated the basis problem of the Diaspora. To this the settlers countered with the standard narrative already described: the Arabs harassed us, we fought back bravely and successfully, and now they respect us and leave us in peace. The fact that Arab hostility grew over time was thus conveniently swept under the rug, despite an occasional observer—such as Ahad Ha'am—with a compulsion to peek under carpets.

In other respects, however, Ahad Ha'am's response to the presence of Arabs in Eretz Israel did not depart significantly from the received wisdom. As the in-house monitor of the movement, he naturally targeted the empty optimism and fantasies that characterized much of early Zionism and took upon himself the role of forcing attention on the unpleasant realities and imponderable problems that others tried to ignore. In his list of obstacles and hardships that were being ignored, the Arabs are simply another item to be checked off, and not the main one at that. The Arabs come after the problem of land scarcity and before the problem of the Turkish government. They were an active rather than a passive force but still basically an obstacle to be overcome rather than an opposed party that Zionism must either accommodate or else mobilize to defeat by force.

In other words, for Ahad Ha'am the Arabs, while possessing a collective interest that others did not see, still did not constitute a *political* problem. Political issues were to be dealt with on the level of the Ottoman government (where Ahad Ha'am, like others, grossly underestimated the extreme improbability of the Turkish government, under siege from Europe for centuries, voluntarily introducing into its territories another assertive minority tied to the West). This is hardly a surprise; for decades to come the Zionist movement would try to settle political issues with outside forces—the Hashemite dynasty, mandatory Britain—rather than deal with the Arab community in Erets Yisrael/Palestine as a political entity. It is true, as numerous analysts have pointed out, that Arab nationalism had not yet made its appearance. But this does not mean that Arabs in the area of Zionist settlement were incapable of perceiving a collective interest in blocking foreign—especially European—intrusions; that is to say, of having political instincts and aspirations. To ignore this is to ignore the historical evidence of hostility to alien penetration into their midst and to overlook the basic us-versus-them dimension of human relations.

But Ahad Ha'am saw the immediate problem simply in terms of behaving decently and humanely toward the local population. In this he was more willing than many others to recognize the continuity in Jewish history and to link the issue to the traditional Jewish concern over stirring up hostility in a host population: "There is certainly one thing we could have learned from our *past and present* history: how careful we must be not to arouse the anger of other people against ourselves by reprehensible conduct [emphasis in original]."[21] But this is not a matter of coming to some kind of mutual adjustment; it is rather part of the overall strategy for reducing obstacles to the desired end. Ahad Ha'am recognizes that this will not make the problem go away and that over time Zionist success will provoke hatred, but he declares that "this is nothing" because in the end the Arabs will simply be overwhelmed: "By that time our brothers would be able to secure their position in *Erets Israel* by their large number, their extensive and rich holdings, their unity and their exemplary way of life."[22]

Finally, it should also be noted that Ahad Ha'am's attitudes toward the Arabs as a backward non-European people did not set him apart from the early Zionist settlers in an age when the superiority of European culture and institutions was taken as a given. In the first paragraph of "Truth from *Erets Israel*" he already mentions in passing the "indolence" of the Arabs; later he notes that they "do not like to exert themselves." He assumes, no less than other early settlement advocates, that the introduction of European methods and mores into a benighted area of the world will in the end be of benefit to all, even if he is not so naive as to think it will eliminate opposition to alien intrusion in the short run.

Ahad Ha'am thus subscribes in the end to the basic assumption about "the Arab problem" that differentiates this earlier period from the later era that began, roughly, with the second *aliya* (1905–1914) and the 1908 Young Turks' revolt (which brought Arab nationalism to the fore). Stated baldly, this assumption is: no solution is needed apart from success in the Zionist enterprise itself. This being the case, there is no need to analyze the issue apart from the established Zionist program, nor to offer specific proposals or compromises of one kind or another directed to dealing with the roots of Arab hostility, nor (if compromise is impossible) to mobilize as required for a decision by force of arms. Thus while his talent for puncturing balloons led to recognition of a larger problem than others saw, even Ahad Ha'am did not see its real dimensions. His essay is, in essence, the exception that proves the rule.

AHAD HA'AM'S CRITICS

"I know full well," Ahad Ha'am admits in passing, "that my words here will infuriate many against me."[23] They certainly did. Previous reports on the new Jewish settlements had usually stressed the positive, as would be normal for the pioneers of any new idealistic enterprise. Readers or the Palestinophile press were accustomed to hearing mainly encouraging words, and they were not ready for such disparaging remarks from one of their own.

HaMelits printed numerous attacks on his article, some from close associates in the movement. The controversy did abate after a while, only to be stoked again by a similar series of articles following Ahad Ha'am's second trip to "the colonies" in 1893.[24] The result of the first article, however, was to isolate Ahad Ha'am within the movement at a time when he was emerging as, potentially, its natural leader; the cost of "Truth" may have been the loss of any chance to implement his own ideas from a pinnacle of power.[25]

Ahad Ha'am's fellow Palestinophiles reacted ferociously to his portrait of deeply troubled Jewish settlement in Palestine. They feared serious damage to the settlement enterprise, and to their entire movement, inflicted by a leading figure who should be promoting their achievements rather than belittling them in such scathing terms. Moshe Leib Lilienblum and other leaders of Hibat Tsion were quick to contest every negative observation made by Ahad Ha'am, including, of course, his warning about impending conflict with the Arab population.

But just as this had constituted a small part of Ahad Ha'am's critique, it played a correspondingly minor role in the rebuttals. The movement's defenders focused, as had Ahad Ha'am, on his claims regarding land speculation, corruption, faulty planning, faddish notions, and above all the overbearing patriarchal system. The issue of a possible larger conflict with Arabs was one that they preferred not to add to the ledger of already existing undeniable problems, so the less discussion of it, the better. Simple denial that there was a problem was the course of least resistance.

A case in point was Menachem Ussishkin, a founder of Bilu and later head of the Jewish National Fund, who had actually accompanied Ahad Ha'am on the 1891 journey. Ussishkin's diary from the trip contains but one significant mention of Arabs, when he quotes the doctor in Zikhron Ya'akov explaining why the land could support a (Jewish) worker: "The poverty of the Arab *fellah* does not serve as an example. First, the *fellah* is lazy, and second, his work tools are primitive."[26] After the publication of Ahad Ha'am's withering review, however, Ussishkin responded with one of the most vociferous refutations, contesting every single one of Ahad Ha'am's arguments and challenging the basic accuracy of his observations. Included in this was a flat denial that there was an issue with the Arabs, a subject not mentioned in his diary: "Up to this day the Arabs live in peace with our Jewish brothers and fear the Christians more than the Jews." But Ussishkin was also quite ready to fall back on the final defense that Ahad Ha'am had himself deployed: "And when our people is firmly rooted in the land and flourishing as loyal citizens then their power will be very great and they will not fear from clashing with a people such as the Arabs."[27]

As for Ahad Ha'am's criticisms of Jewish violence toward Arabs, Ussishkin unhesitatingly took the side of the settlers and saw in the use of force a liberation from the humiliation of Jews over the centuries. His view was, in fact, in perfect accord with the narrative that the settlers had themselves constructed: "And I rejoiced to see my brothers, who trembled from the sound of a

falling leaf and kissed the whip with which their enemies lashed them, upon their return to the land of the Maccabees, taking a manly resolve to strike them, and no one will maliciously challenge their honor."[28]

By and large, however, the Arab issue appeared as an afterthought among the critics of "Truth from the Land of Israel." Ahad Ha'am had briefly raised the issue, his detractors had briefly dismissed it as a nonissue, and neither felt impelled to belabor a subject that seemed to all of them more speculative than actual. In his reply to the attacks on the article, Ahad Ha'am did not return to the subject.[29] Nor did he mention the issue in his second "Truth from the Land of Israel," following his second trip there in 1893–1894, apart from recording his depression at seeing Arab laborers harvesting crops in Jewish settlements.[30] Ahad Ha'am's negative observations on this trip did not differ significantly from those on his first tour of the Land of Israel, nor did the reactions of his critics, but neither found it necessary to revive the debate over the possibility of mobilized Arab opposition to future Jewish settlement.

In fact Ahad Ha'am did not return to the subject in any depth for almost two decades. In 1902 he wrote a scathing review of Theodor Herzl's utopian novel *Altneuland* that included criticism of Herzl's facile assumption of Arab eagerness to accept a Jewish state.[31] But only in 1908 did he return to the question of a possible Arab-Jewish *national* struggle for Palestine. The Young Turk Revolution of that year had unleashed a torrent of new forces in the Middle East, foremost among them a fully visible Arab nationalist movement that had previously smoldered underground (see chap. 1).

The threat of a competing national movement in 1908 was no longer the theoretical specter that Ahad Ha'am had conjured in 1891; by then it actually existed. Ahad Ha'am took a stoic view, quite consistent with his bottom line in 1891: "We have nothing to say to the Arabs until we are the majority in the Land [of Israel]."[32] By this time most Zionists had at least become aware of potential conflict with Arabs on the collective level, and were beginning to discuss the issue seriously (see chap. 7). For Ahad Ha'am, in particular, it became a central concern following another trip to Palestine in 1911 where he came into closer contact with the new forces at work.[33]

ARAB PROTEST, OTTOMAN RESPONSE

The surge in new Jewish immigrants to Palestine at the end of the decade was made possible by the 1888 change in Ottoman policy, noted above ("The Panic Immigration"), allowing Jews to enter as individuals though still not as groups. But as Jewish numbers grew, both Arab residents and Turkish authorities noted the renewed flood and reacted to it. When stopping in Constantinople in 1891 to get his medical license, before continuing on to Palestine, Dr. Hillel Yaffe met with the minister of police, who—despite the recent "liberalization"—expressed the traditional Ottoman attitude of hostility to Jewish settlement in the sultan's Palestinian provinces.

The Turkish government, said the minister, was as always ready to welcome Jewish refugees and even to give them land, anywhere in the empire's reaches—except Palestine. There were, he continued, two reasons for this exception. First, the sultan "was apprehensive that this immigration [to Palestine] would create a new Armenian problem"; in other words, another geographically concentrated non-Muslim minority oriented toward the West. Second, there was the problem of the capitulations: the protection of minorities by foreign consuls "would create

unpleasantness and conflicts, and especially in Palestine, with the eyes of all governments upon it."[34]

But it was protest coming from Arabs in Palestine that pushed the Ottoman government into again tightening restrictions. On June 24, 1891—ironically just as Ahad Ha'am's words of warning were being published in Russia—a group of perhaps five hundred Arab notables in Jerusalem sent a telegram to the grand vizier, the head official under the sultan, demanding that the government prohibit the entry of Russian Jews and also end land sales to those already in the country. This was apparently the first organized Arab protest against Jewish immigration. It could be regarded, in fact, as the beginning of conflict between the two communities on the national level, though apparently with a strong element of feared economic competition as well.[35]

The Jewish community in Jerusalem immediately reacted to this threat with alarm. The Jewish newspaper *Ha'Or*, published by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, reported that both Muslim and Christian notables had signed the petition but added hopefully that some Muslim leaders had declined to sign it. On the other hand, it must have been disturbing to read the claim in the telegram that "the Jews take all the lands out of the hands of Muslims and take all the commerce in their hands, and bring much damage to the country and its inhabitants."[36] The urgency felt in the Jewish community was reflected in an emergency meeting held in the home of the chief rabbi, in which representatives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, religious institutions, and others met to discuss a joint response to the challenge. In a rather unusual show of unity in the fragmented Jerusalem community, "they rejoiced because *Sephardim, Ashkenazim, hasidim, maskilim*, old and young had united to face the danger."[37] However, a meeting of key leaders with Jerusalem's Turkish governor, Ibrahim Haki Pasha, gave them no comfort; the Pasha stated that in the future it was likely that a special license from Constantinople would be required to settle in the Jerusalem district. The newspaper ended its report with a plea "from our brothers coming from Russia . . . to refrain from anything that would anger the natives of the land."[38]

The response from Constantinople was unusually swift, given the accustomed pace of Ottoman governance. Only four days after the telegram was sent, the sultan received a memorandum on Jewish immigration to Palestine. On the side of the memo he reportedly wrote: "We cannot permit processes that are likely to result in the future in a Jewish government in Jerusalem, by admitting to the lands of the [Ottoman] kingdom all those who are expelled from everywhere. They should be sent to America . . . Why do we need to admit those, whom the civilized Europeans rejected and expelled from their lands?"[39]

Only days later, the grand vizier sent a telegram to the Jerusalem governor ordering him to stop Jewish settlement in the district, to keep Jewish visitors from remaining there past the expiration of their permits, and even to stop Russian and Greek Jews from coming ashore in Jaffa.[40] However, as usual there was confusion over government edicts that were vague or conflicted with each other. For example, later in the same month the Ottoman government responded to a question from Beirut regarding policy on Jewish immigration by saying that no decision had been made, but it was now decided not to let Jews enter the empire—a position that would have gone well beyond traditional Ottoman policy.[41] And yet, in the following month, August, it was reported that the sultan had ordered the grand vizier to prepare a decision on

Jewish immigration from Russia since there was still no final resolution of the issue.[42]

What is clear is that by mid-August the Ottoman government had decided to close the entire Ottoman Empire to Russian Jewish immigrants, and that in October this closure was extended to all foreign Jews.[43] Such draconian measures, as before, evoked tremendous pressure from the powers (including, by this time, even Russia) and were also, as before, undermined by the usual subterfuges: entry as pilgrims, entry by way of other Ottoman provinces, intervention of foreign consuls, or simple bribery. But clearly the Turkish authorities in Constantinople were in tune with the opposition to Jewish immigration that had been expressed by Arab leaders in Palestine.

The measures adopted by the Ottoman authorities put the new settlements at risk. Yehoshua Eisenstadt (later Barzilai), who had arrived in 1887 and was a key figure in B'nei Moshe, wrote to his colleagues on September 16 that "the prohibition of entry is in force and is very severe," adding that "the general certificates are not valid and everyone who wants to stay in the country needs to receive official protection."[44] This was affirmed by Yehuda-Leib Binshtok, a Russian Jewish educator and agricultural expert who arrived in Jaffa the following year to head the Jaffa committee of Hibat Tsion, following the shake-up of that committee during Ahad Ha'am's visit. Binshtok wrote that "now the decree on the entrance of Russian Jews has been severely tightened, and every arriving ship is the occasion of heart-breaking scenes. Although there are now no masses of immigrants from Russia to *Erets Yisrael*, for all that each ship brings five to ten people, and until they manage to enter the gates of paradise, Jaffa, where they can perish from hunger, they pass through fires of hell to which no description can do justice."[45]

To reinforce yet further the obstacles placed on Jewish settlement, Ottoman authorities in November 1892 ordered the governor in Jerusalem to stop the sale of state land to Jews. Since most of the land in Palestine was state land, this would have brought Jewish land purchases practically to a halt. Furthermore, the new restriction was to apply also to Ottoman Jewish citizens. This was in violation both of a commitment made by the Ottoman Empire regarding the right of foreigners to buy property and of its promise of religious nondiscrimination within the empire. The Great Powers reacted vigorously, pushing the Turks to accept a compromise, in 1893, that restored the right of foreigners and Ottoman Jews to buy land in Palestine, provided that they did not allow nonlegal residents to live on the land or establish new settlements on them.[46] Essentially, however, the situation remained as before: the Turks tried to close the door, foreign consuls fought to keep it open, and Jewish settlers tried to find their way inside any way they could.

UNNEIGHBORLY RELATIONS: REHOVOT

While struggles on the diplomatic level were being waged, frictions and battles on the local level continued. Some lessons had been learned from the fights of the first settlements, and those founded later tried to avoid "gratuitous" clashes—misunderstandings over customs, unintended insults, and so on. But in the end the newer settlements were no more successful than their predecessors in avoiding troubled relations with Arab farmers and villagers in their vicinity. In Hadera, for example, the grazing issue reemerged in all its dimensions as Jewish settlers struggled to keep Arab herds and flocks off their land. When settlers tried to seize the trespassing animals as hostage for payment of damages, physical fights broke out. In one case, an Arab shepherd attacked the Hadera settlers with a *nabut*, described in the Jewish account as "a short

and thick club with a knob at end, sometimes with nails." The use of such weapons, the account continues, often intimidated a "European man" in such brawls. But in this instance the settlers shot the attacker with an arrow, wounding him and throwing the case into court.[47]

The encounters of Rehovot were especially notable. Based on the experience of previous settlements, the buyers of the land for Rehovot made every effort to establish clear and recognized borders with their neighbors. The earlier settlements, after all, had suffered no end of "border disputes" on almost every contestable property line. Most of the land purchased was uncultivated, which presumably made it easier to draw clear borders. The founders brought in a surveyor to establish property limits according to official documents, and then consulted with landholders on all sides, getting their signatures on the agreed map.[48]

The precautions proved to be of limited value. When settlers dug trenches along the supposedly recognized borders, Arab farmers covered them up. In addition, there was a small Bedouin community (the *Suteriya* or *Arab Abu al-Fadl* tribe) living as tenant farmers on a small part of the land. Though not the legal owners, they had occupied the land for "many generations" and petitioned the sultan several times to prevent their displacement as a result of the transfer of ownership: "We have no other choice but to submit this petition to beg for the issuance of an exalted order to let us stay in our place of birth where we reside, based on the current arrangement and not to let the Jews chase us away and prevent us from cultivating the land in a way which will guarantee their and our rest and benefit; or else issue an exalted order to allocate us land from the imperial property, which would be sufficient for our livelihood and the sustenance of our families and children."[49]

This confrontation was yet one more example of a clash between settlers who had made a legal purchase of land, and resident farmers who had often cultivated that land for generations and considered that they had rights of usage under prevailing law and custom. But in truth the law had changed, as Ottoman land law had moved closer to Western concepts of private land ownership (see chap. 1). Jewish settlers had come with the explicit purpose of farming the land themselves, not presiding over tenant farmers as absentee landlords (hiring Arab workers was a different matter; (see chap. 6, "Arab Labor"). The dilemma in which they were placed was clearly expressed by Eliyahu Lewin-Epstein, the central figure among the founders of Rehovot:

> We understood that after we bought the land, paid the price, and received title-deeds from the government, we were the land's sole owners and no one else was relevant. Thus we did not want the Beduin, with their wives, children and animals, to occupy our land. We had planted vineyards, which we did not want their herds to destroy. We asked them to leave, but they claimed that they had leased the land for two years, and had so far only sowed it once, with summer crops, and therefore had the right to sow it once more with winter grain crops, which would take through summer to harvest, and then they would leave. . . . Thus we compromised with the *Beduin*: provided that they removed their tents from our land, they could come and cultivate the land they had leased until the harvest of the winter crops.[50]

In reality it took much longer before the *Suteriya* Bedouin were totally removed from Rehovot's land, and during that time the conflict was to erupt in much more threatening ways.

Thanks to the work of Ya'akov Ro'i, we have a fairly nuanced picture of the interactions of Rehovot and its Arab neighbors throughout the pre–World War I period, based on documents in the settlement archive. Rehovot provides a characteristic case study of Jewish-Arab relations on the ground during this period. For one thing, Rehovot like the other colonies tried to regulate these relations in minute detail, adopting regulations to fix the wages of Arab workers, to control

land prices, and to avoid competition among the colonists in all their economic dealings with their neighbors. They set up their own "judicial" bodies to rule on disputes with Arabs (for example, if an Arab was accused of theft). Interestingly, the Arabs themselves sometimes appeared as plaintiffs in these proceedings, preferring the Jewish "courts" to those operating in the unwieldy Ottoman system. The range of issues handled by these unofficial judicial bodies demonstrated the spectrum of problems that plagued relations between the two communities: the ever-present grazing issue, as well as cases of theft, vandalism, violence, and verbal assaults.[51]

The problematic relationship with neighboring Arab villages and towns was a key motivation in pulling the early Jewish settlements into closer cooperation with each other. Rehovot had the advantage of being a relatively large settlement, and thus less vulnerable to random assault. It was also a part of the largest emerging bloc of settlements, in the area to the east and south of Jaffa (Rishon LeTsion, Petah Tikva, Nes Tsiona, Mazkeret Batya, Gedera, and Kastina). It was natural for these settlements to come to each other's aid in times of troubles, and over time these practices became institutionalized.

Rehovot did have fewer border disputes, thanks to the precautions taken by its founders, but it still had its share of violent conflicts. The grazing issue was of special concern; whatever the traditional custom of the region, the colony's agriculture was based on vineyards and orchards, and newly planted trees and vines were especially vulnerable to the depredations of Arab sheep, goats, and cattle. The conflict erupted into violence already in March 1892, when settlers seized animals belonging to the neighboring village of Zarnuqa and held them for ransom. This was by that time a standard response to a standard transgression, but this time it went off script. When the village sheikh came to redeem the animals, he reacted fiercely to a perceived insult, and rushed in great anger back to Zarnuqa to mobilize his village and march on the colony. What happened next is described by Moshe Smilansky, who had arrived in the 1890 "panic immigration" and was to become a leading literary figure in the yishuv. Smilansky, a disciple of Ahad Ha'am and an advocate of conciliation with the Arabs, wrote in his history of Rehovot: "And when [the sheikh] realized that there were no men in [Rehovot], he called to the young men who were with him . . . and the young men streamed after him, armed with clubs and staves, and attacked the colony, breaking the windows and throwing stones into the houses and on the people on the street . . . The colony's bell sounded, and from all sides the farmers came running with their hoes in their hands, but before they could get to the colony, the Arabs fled."[52]

The attack on Rehovot caused anxiety throughout the yishuv, as had previous attacks, and for a time it gave the Rehovot settlers a reputation for being faint-hearted. The lesson learned by all was that the colonists had to make the Arabs fear them. Colonists everywhere began collecting weapons, even firearms, and began conducting military training and drills.[53] Lewin-Epstein summarized it in this way: "Every colony has had such an incident . . . and now also comes our turn and this same bad event takes place, and now we have to frighten the Arabs and cast terror upon them and they will no longer do us harm."[54]

At about this time Yehoshua Barzilai (Eisenstadt), one of the leaders of B'nei Moshe and thus close to the Rehovot settlers, began publishing periodic reports on the settlements under the title *Mikhtavim Me'Eretz Yisrael* (Letters from the Land of Israel). In his very first issue, which appeared in May 1893 immediately after the second attack on Rehovot, he recorded that the settlers had decided to sell part of their land in order to house Jewish workers who would add to

their numbers for purposes of defense "because they truly want and need to increase the number of residents in the colony, since the larger the number, the greater the impact on the *beduin*, who will stop picking fights."[55] Rehovot was also proud by this time to claim its own "muscle men," who struck fear in the hearts of the attackers. One was Shalom Goldstein, reputedly a thief and criminal in his native Bessarabia, who thrived in the violent confrontations and enjoyed the high respect of his comrades. Another was Dov Rosenblum ("Berele"), who led the charge against the invaders in the second battle.[56]

Rather strikingly, the Russian consul stepped in as protector of the Russian émigrés in the settlement. By this time, the Russians had also come to appreciate the advantages of intervening on behalf of their nationals: "a considerable community of protégés—even Jews—would serve as a useful additional card in furthering its claims and special privileges in the holy land."[57] Upon the consul's advice, a case against the village was brought in the Ottoman court, where it took a year and much money to pursue and brought no return. Rehovot finally declared a *herem* (boycott) against the village, which lasted two years and was more effective by depriving Zarnuqa of income from trade and workers' wages.

Meanwhile, Rehovot's dispute with the *Suteriya* Bedouin had not gone away. The Bedouin had received compensation for the end of their lease of some of Rehovot's land, but they continued to demand a part of that land as well. In Moshe Smilansky's words, "they had no legal grounds for their claim, so they decided to use force."[58] The Bedouin began with smaller acts of harassment, bringing their herds into newly planted fields, uprooting trees, and generally trying to wreak havoc in the colony. Then in early 1893 they launched a total assault on the colony, recorded once again by Smilansky:

> They came on horseback and on foot, men, women, and children, with clubs and swords. Before they reached the settlement, the bell rang loudly, and from every side the colonists came running with thick sticks and iron rods. The women hurried behind the men, and on their way gathered stones in their aprons. . . . And the iron rods and the sticks collided with the clubs and swords and the Hebrews gained the advantage, and the *Beduin* ranks flinched and began to retreat . . . and on the road from Rishon LeTsion appeared a troop of Jewish horsemen.[59]

Smilansky adds that he was among the riders who came from Rishon LeTsion, and, as a result of that experience, he decided to settle permanently in Rehovot—where in fact he remained for the rest of his life.

Not all the interactions between the Rehovot settlers and their neighbors were violent. Living in close proximity with many occasions both for conflict and mutually beneficial transactions, relations were complicated. One particularly complex issue was access to water, which according to local custom was always available to all. This made it difficult for Jewish colonies, after they had invested much time and money in digging wells and installing pumps, to deny access to others. But Arab farmers and shepherds would come to the water source with their entire herds and flocks, threatening grave damage to orchards and fields in the vicinity. In the case of Rehovot, this was a particularly difficult issue with the *Suteriya* Bedouin who had lived on the land and used its available water for decades.

Rehovot, like the other new settlements, also had to contend with the issue of Arab workers, who were much needed, especially during harvest seasons. As noted Rehovot tried to regulate the wages of these workers to avoid competition among its own members. The wage was

generally higher than the prevailing wage in the Arab sector, which created another source of hostility, namely the Arab employers who lost workers. Often the Arab workers actually outnumbered the settlers, raising other issues. The settlers came to prefer hiring Arabs from distant locations, given the problems with their immediate neighbors, but this raised the issue of housing these workers within the settlement. Rehovot tried to disperse those living in the settlement, to avoid creating an "Arab neighborhood," and to supervise them to prevent the infiltration of nonworkers. But having an Arab population at night as well as during work hours became a chronic security concern, with the potential of thefts and other damages. Documents in the Rehovot archive record instances in which Arab workers felt secure enough to attack settlers verbally and physically. On the other hand, firing Arab workers was also complicated because of the fear of acts of retaliation.[60]

The need for security required all the colonies to deploy guards, especially at night. Initially Rehovot, again like other settlements, tried to share this duty among members by rotation. But it quickly became apparent that the settlers could not work the fields during daytime and then spend a good part of the night on guard duty. Arab guards were hired, but this inevitably raised the problem of Arabs with arms having full access to the settlement day and night, a reality that caused much discomfort. In some cases, guards from neighboring villages were known to collaborate with their friends in thefts of settlement property.[61]

Even in this early period, the employment of Arabs also raised broader concerns about the impact on the settlers' way of life and, more basically, on their basic rationale for the Return to Zion. If this return was also to be a "return to the soil," then how was this consistent with Jews becoming merely property owners who hired others to actually work the soil?

There were also cases where the new landowners were unable, for various reasons, to farm the land themselves, even with hired labor. The problem was that land not being cultivated could, by law, revert to the government. The easy recourse in this case was to lease the land to local Arab farmers—in many cases the same farmers who had worked the land previously. But this also created the expectation that the previous system, with tenant farmers working land they did not legally own, was a natural order that would continue indefinitely. It would be doubly difficult to reclaim the land for Jewish farmers when the time came, and it made it harder to control the tenant's tendency to graze his herds on other parts of the settlement's land.[62]

The settlers of Rehovot, like Jewish colonists elsewhere, came to believe that relations with their Arab neighbors depended on showing strength and earning respect. But Rehovot, in particular, sought to combine this tough posture with a measure of reconciliation, with an appeal to decency and morality. Many of the settlers, like Eliyahu Lewin-Epstein, were followers of Ahad Ha'am and members of his fraternal society B'nei Moshe. They took to heart his admonition against unfair and brutal treatment of Arabs. Among the regulations of Rehovot, for example, was one forbidding the settlers from striking Arabs. And the "courts" that the settlers operated within the settlement were generally respected for their fairness, even in issues between Jews and Arabs—so much so that the Arabs often preferred them. Lewin-Epstein even recounts "cases where two Arabs in a quarrel would come to us and ask that we decide between them. I often asked them to take the case before their own sheikh, but they declined, saying that with the sheikh, baksheesh would simply settle the matter."[63]

THE FIRST DECADE

The second decade of the Return to Zion began much as the first decade had begun, with a renewed wave of refugees driven by renewed persecution in their native land. Like their predecessors, these embittered refugees came determined to escape the historical cycles of Jewish history by building a new society that would be entirely theirs, even if it fell unavoidably under another formal sovereignty. They would not have to adjust to, nor be subject to, the culture and mores of another people. In Erets Yisrael, they would be entirely Jewish.

In this frame of mind, interest in Arabs and Arab culture was incidental. They were not essential to the task at hand and could even be a diversion. Furthermore, though they came as refugees from Europe, the newcomers came with European attitudes toward non-European peoples and cultures. They would be the teachers, not the students, as they brought progress to an area mired in backwardness. Thus almost a full decade passed before anyone within the settlement movement offered a serious statement that the Arabs could not be regarded simply as passive objects of manipulation and that the settlers needed to deal with them with humanity and respect.

But even Ahad Ha'am dealt with the issue within the existing paradigm. He rejected the "heroic narrative" by which Jewish settlers made Arabs fear them, but he also rejected assimilation of Jews to Arabs or Arabs to Jews. He recognized a collective Arab interest and predicted that Arabs would someday rise against the Jewish presence, but he also felt this would be a manageable problem. In the end, the superiority of European civilization, and the benefits that it would bring on all sides, would create a modern Jewish society to which the Arabs would have to adjust.

No one yet put much weight on the fact that local clashes between the new colonies and their Arab neighbors continued, despite the claims of the heroic narrative. This was illustrated especially in the new settlement of Rehovot, despite all the efforts at avoiding the kinds of "preventable" misunderstandings that had marked the early history of other settlements. Complications related to employment of Arab labor and Arab guards continued and led some settlements to look for ways of dealing with this dependence.

There was growing belief in the Yishuv that the solution lay in separation, in reducing dependence on the Arab sector, as necessary as it was in the early days of settlement. The colonies had to build their own institutions.

Ahad Ha'am, on his second visit to Erets Yisrael, had his own observations on the situation in Rehovot. Arriving in the settlement with the largest concentration of his own devotees, he was struck by the sight of Arab workers harvesting the crops. It was, he recorded in his journal, "very sad."[64] Even the advocate of fair treatment of Arabs remained devoted to Jewish independence and self-sufficiency.

NOTES

1. Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 7.
2. David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 175.
3. Vital, *Origins of Zionism*, pp. 179–183.
4. Eliezer Be'eri, *Reshit HaSikhsukh Yisrael-Arav, 1882–1911* [Beginning of the Israel-Arab Conflict, 1882–1911] (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim and Haifa University, 1985), p. 72.
5. Walter Laqueur, *History of Zionism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p. xiii.
6. David Shub, *Zikhronot LeVeit David* [Memories of the House of David] (Jerusalem: Dfus Erets Yisrael, 1936–1937), p. 49.
7. Haim Hisin, *Masa Ba'Arets HaMuvtahat* [Journey in the Promised Land] (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and HaKibbutz

HaMeu'had, 1982), p. 125.

8. Hisin, *Masa Ba'Arets HaMuvtahat*, pp. 125–126.

9. Hisin, *Masa Ba'Arets HaMuvtahat*, p. 197.

10. Hillel Yaffe, *Dor Ma'apilim* [Generation of Immigrants], 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: HaSifriya HaTsionit, 1971), pp. 19–20.

11. Eliyahu Lewin-Epstein, *Zikhronotai* [My Memoirs] (Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at HaAhim Lewin-Epstein, 1931–1932), p. 255, quoted in Mandel, *Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, p. 39.

12. Esther Ginzberg-Shemkin, *B'veit Horav shel Ahad Ha'am BaKfar Hofchitsa* [In the House of the Parents of Ahad Ha'am in the Village of Hofchitsa] (Haifa: Hotsa'at Zikhronot, 1941), pp. 69–70.

13. Ahad Ha'am, "Lo Ze HaDerech," *HaMelits*, 12 Adar II, 5649 (March 15, 1889), repr. *Kol Kitvei Ahad Ha'am* [Collected Writings of Ahad Ha'am] (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1947), pp. 11–14.

14. Israel Kolatt, "Mavo: Ha'am HaYehudi VeRayon HaYishuv HaLe'umi Be'Eretz-Yisrael" [Introduction: The Jewish People and the Idea of the National Settlement], in *Toldot HaYishuv HaYehudi Be'Eretz-Yisrael me'az Ha'Aliya HaRishona*, pt. I: *HaTekufa Ha'Otomanit* [History of the Jewish Yishuv in the Land of Israel since the First Aliya, pt. I: The Ottoman Period], ed. Israel Kolatt (Jerusalem: The Israel National Academy of Sciences and the Bialik Institute, 1989–1990), p. 67.

15. Ahad Ha'am's followers dominated the "Executive Committee" in Jaffa; his consequent fear of being blamed for a collapse of settlement efforts may have helped impel him to a more severe critique of the overall situation. See Yosef Goldstein, "LeToldot Masa'o HaRishon shel Ahad Ha'am: Emet Me'Eretz Yisrael?" [On the History of Ahad Ha'am's First Trip: Truth from Eretz Yisrael?], *Katedra*, no. 46 (December 1987): 91–108; and Goldstein, *Ahad Ha'Am: Biografiya* [Ahad Ha'Am: Biography] (Jerusalem: Beit Hotsa'at Keter VeHots'at Zagagi, 1992), pp. 122–132.

16. Ahad Ha'am, "Emet Me'Erets Yisrael" [Truth from the Land of Israel], *HaMelits*, June 19–30, 1891, repr. *Kol Kitvei Ahad Ha'am*, pp. 23–30; English translation in Alan Dowty, "Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha'am's 'Truth from Eretz Yisrael,' Zionism, and the Arabs," *Israel Studies* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 154–181. The title of the article is a biblical allusion to Psalms 85:12: "Emet me'erets titsmah" [Truth will spring forth from earth].

17. Ha'am, "Emet Me'Erets Yisrael," p. 173.

18. Ha'am, "Emet Me'Erets Yisrael," pp. 164, 165, 167, 169–170.

19. Ha'am, "Emet Me'Erets Yisrael," p. 162.

20. Ha'am, "Emet Me'Erets Yisrael," p. xxx

21. Ha'am, "Emet Me'Erets Yisrael," p. 175.

22. Ha'am, "Emet Me'Erets Yisrael," p. 178.

23. Ha'am, "Emet Me'Erets Yisrael," p. 165.

24. Ha'am. Titled by the author as "Emet Me'Erets Yisrael" [Truth from the Land of Israel], pt. II, *HaMelits*, August 15–17, 1893, repr. Kol Kitvei Ahad Ha'am, pp. 30–34.

25. Steven J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'Am and the Origins of Zionism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 63–65; see also Jacques Kornberg, ed., *At the Crossroads: Essays on Ahad Ha'Am* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

26. Menachem Ussishkin, "Masa Erets Yisrael (MeReshimot Derech MeShanat 1891)" [Journey in Land of Israel (From Journal of 1891)], in *Sefer Ussishkin* [Ussishkin Papers] (Jerusalem: HaVa'ad LeHotsa'at HaSefer, 1934), pp. 34–35.

27. Menachem Ussishkin, "Bli Mara Sh'hora Yetera" [Without Excessive Gloom], *HaMelits*, July 17, 1891, repr. *Sefer Ussishkin*, p. 20.

28. Ussishkin, "Bli Mara Sh'hora Yetera," p. 22.

29. Ahad Ha'am, "Bilbul De'ot" [Confused Ideas], *HaMelits*, August 18, 1891, repr. *Kol Kitvei Ahad Ha'am*, pp. 35–37.

30. See note 24; Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet*, p. 95.

31. *HaShiloah* 8, no. 60 (December 1902): 566–578, repr. *Kol Kitvei Ahad Ha'am*, pp. 313–320.

32. Ahad Ha'am to Mordechai Ben Hillel Hacohen, October 1908, *Igrot Ahad Ha'am* [Letters of Ahad Ha'am] (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1956–1960), vol. 4, p. 147, in Be'eri, *Reshit HaSikhsukh Yisrael-Arav*, p. 76.

33. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet*, pp. 200–201, 246–247.

34. Yaffe, *Dor Ma'apilim*, p .17.

35. Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office Archives 195/1727 (no. 25), John Dickson to Edmund Fane, Jerusalem, July 16, 1891, in *The British Consulate in Jerusalem in Relation to the Jews of Palestine 1838–1914*, ed. Albert M. Hyamson, vol. 2 (London: Edward Goldston for the Jewish Historical Society of England, 1941), p. 461; Mandel, *Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, pp. 39–40. The number of five hundred is reported in one contemporary source, *HaMelits*, July 22, 1891, cited by Yuval Mond, "'HaYehudim Mevi'im Neshek La'Arets': LeShe'elat HaMeha'a Ha'Aravit HaMe'urgenet HaRishona neged Aliyat Yehudim Le'Erets Yisrael" ['The Jews Are Bringing Weapons to the Land of Israel': A New Reading of the First Organized Anti-Immigration Protest by the Arabs of Palestine], *HaMizrah HeHadash* 53 (2014): 236–237.

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37. *Ha'Or*, July 10, 1891, quoted in Be'eri, *Reshit HaSikhsukh Yisrael-Arav*, p. 77.

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39. David Farhi, "Documents on the Attitude of the Ottoman Government in Palestine after the Revolution of the Young Turks 1908–1909," in *Studies in Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, ed. Moshe Maoz (Jerusalem: Magnes and Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, 1975), p. 192; Be'eri, *Reshit HaSikhsukh Yisrael-Arav*, p. 78.

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44. Barzilai to B'nei Moshe Society, Jaffa, September 19, 1891, in *MeYamim Rishonim* 1, no. 11 (April 1935): 335.

45. Binshtok to Menashe Margalit, July 29, 1892, *MeYamim Rishonim* 2, nos. 5–6 (October–November 1935): 203.

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47. Yehoshua Barzilai, *Mikhtavim Me'Erets Yisrael* [Letters from the Land of Israel], 1, no. 1, 1 Iyyar 5643 (May 8, 1893), Central Zionist Archives (CZA) 20850.

48. Ya'akov Ro'i, "Rehovot's Relations with Its Arab Neighbors, 1890–1914," *Zionism* 1 (1975): 337–382.

49. Basbakanlik Osmanli Arsivi, Hariciye Nezareti (BOA. HR. TO.) (Official Ottoman Archives, Foreign Office, Translation Bureau), December 15, 1890, in Ben-Bassat, *Petitioning the Sultan*, p. 165.

50. Lewin-Epstein, *Zikhronotai*, p. 240.

51. Ro'i, "Rehovot's Relations with Its Arab Neighbors." A fuller picture, extending beyond Rehovot, can be found in Ro'i, *Yahas HaYishuv el Ha'Aravim, 1880–1914*.

52. Moshe Smilansky, *Rehovot* (Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at Omanut, 1928–1929), p. 23; Arieh L. Avneri, *The Claim of Dispossession: Jewish Land Settlement and the Arabs 1878–1948* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1984), p. 92; *Sefer Toldot HaHagana* [History of the Hagana], vol. 1, *MeHitgonenut LeHagana* [From Self-Defense to Defense], ed. Ben-Zion Dinur (Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at Ma'arakhot, 1954), p. 99.

53. Dinur, *Sefer Toldot HaHagana*, pp. 98–99.

54. Lewin-Epstein, letter to unidentified recipient, March 29, 1892, CZA, A216/1.

55. Barzilai, *Mikhtavim Me'Erets Yisrael*.

56. Dinur, *Sefer Toldot HaHagana*, p. 99.

57. Carmel, "HaYishuv HaYehudi," p. 113.

58. Smilansky, *Rehovot*, pp. 31–32; Dinur, *Sefer Toldot HaHagana*, p. 99.

59. Smilansky, Rehovot, pp. 25–26.

60. Ya'akov Ro'i, "Yahasei Rehovot im Shachneiha Ha'Aravim, 1890–1914" [Rehovot's Relations with Its Arab Neighbors, 1890–1914], *HaTsionut* 1 (1970): 156–158.

61. Ro'i, "Yahasei Rehovot," pp. 158–159.

62. Ro'i, "Yahasei Rehovot," p. 160.

63. Lewin-Epstein, *Zikhronotai*, p. 260.

64. Goldstein, *LeToldot Masa'o HaRishon*, p. 163.

chapter six

THE ARENA EXPANDS

THE PERIOD FROM THE MID-1890S to the First Russian Revolution of 1905 seems at first glance to be a relatively quiet passage in the history of the new Jewish Yishuv. With Jewish immigration officially banned, and in practice severely curtailed, there were fewer newcomers and, correspondingly, fewer direct Arab reactions to their arrival. The existing settlements, some now in their second or even third decade, fell into routine patterns, largely guided by the bureaucratic administration of "the well-known benefactor," Baron Edmond de Rothschild, which tended to discourage far-reaching political aspirations. On the whole, there was less ideological fervor compared to the visions that had guided the Biluim and other early pioneers.[1]

Violent local clashes over specific issues tapered off in the older settlements in the 1890s. This seemed to confirm the prevailing narrative of the settlers themselves: they challenged us, we fought back, now they respect us, and all is well (at least on this front). As we will see, this perception was not really accurate. Also, it tended to obscure the larger reality that both sides were moving toward broader collective expressions of their identities and interests. The conflict was moving from localized clashes to confrontations on what could be called a "national" level; that is, to conflict between Jews and Arabs as peoples with different understandings of their collective identities, their collective relations with each other, and their collective visions for the future of Erets Yisrael/Falastin. On the Jewish side, the emergence of a highly visible worldwide Zionist movement superseded the piecemeal program of Hovevei Tsion; the new organization openly proclaimed the goal of a Jewish homeland as a national aspiration, something that would inevitably impinge on the national aspirations of its Arab inhabitants. On the Arab side, there were signs of growing consciousness of the implications of Jewish settlement for Arabs on the collective level and not just as clashes over specific issues with alien intruders.

"THIS WILD AND DESTRUCTIVE PEOPLE"

During these years another 12 Jewish agricultural settlements were established in the three "Palestinian" districts of the Ottoman Empire. The first settlements near Jerusalem—which itself had a Jewish majority since the mid-nineteenth century—were established in the hills west of the city: Motza in 1894, on land that had actually been purchased four decades earlier, and Hartuv in 1895. The upper Galilee bloc, in the Jordan Valley north of the Sea of Galilee, was expanded with the addition of Metula in 1896 and Mahanayim in 1898.

The purchase of a large tract of land south and west of the Sea of Galilee—more on the

controversy surrounding this later—made possible the creation of a new bloc of colonies in the eastern part of the Jezre'el Valley: Sejera (1899), Mas'ha/Kfar Tabor (1901), Yavne'el (1901), Menahemia (1901), and Beit Gan (1903). The coastal bloc centered on Zikhron Ya'akov was enlarged with the founding of Atlit and Givat Ada, both in 1903. Finally, the southern bloc expanded with the addition of Kfar Saba (1904), just north of Petah Tikva. This made a total of 28 rural settlements set up during what is conventionally labeled as the "first *aliya*," or first wave of Jewish immigration. Of course, the majority of Jews in Ottoman Palestine were still in the cities, including all of the Old Yishuv (pre-Zionists or non-Zionists) and much of the New Yishuv as well. One can, however, question the sharp distinction between the "old" and "new" Jewish communities; the line becomes increasingly blurred over time. By the same token, the difference between the first *aliya* and the second *aliya* that began in 1905 has often been overstated.

Certainly the population of the new settlements remained modest as a part of the whole. At the First Zionist Congress in 1897, the estimate for the 16 colonies then existing was a total of 3,372.[2] At the Second Congress the following year, Leo Motzkin—an emerging Zionist leader who had witnessed the 1881 pogrom in Kiev and fled to Berlin—presented a commissioned report on the Palestinian Jewish community. Motzkin's best estimate was 4,350 settlers in 19 rural communities, still less than 10 percent of the 45,169 Jews, citizens and noncitizens, living in all the Palestinian districts—with 28,254 of this total, or 63 percent, in Jerusalem.[3] This total figure largely coincides with a later estimate by professional Israeli demographers that there were 42,900 Jews in Palestine in 1890.[4] Population figures based on official Ottoman records are significantly lower. In 1893—the only year for which Ottoman data on noncitizens exists—there were about 19,000 registered Jewish citizens and (including all of the Beirut province) 8,199 registered resident foreign nationals, meaning at most a total official Jewish population of less than 28,000.[5] This does not, of course, account for Jewish immigrants who neither took out citizenship nor registered as resident foreigners. By 1905 there were over 27,000 registered Jewish citizens;[6] assuming a similar ratio of registered Jewish residents would put the total around 40,000, again not counting unregistered immigrants.

Among the relatively recent arrivals during the 1890s were two new close observers of the settlement movement, Yehoshua Eisenstadt (Barzilai) and Yehuda Grazovski (Gur). Both were members of B'nei Moshe and close to Ahad Ha'am. Both, like Ahad Ha'am and many others of that generation, had a solid grounding in traditional Jewish learning but had joined the ranks of the maskilim—the "enlighteners"—and had then been shaken by the apparent collapse of the assimilationist option. During the height of the "panic immigration," Barzilai was at the center of the storm in the Palestinian office of Hovevei Tsion in Jaffa. Gur worked first as a teacher of Hebrew but became one of the most prolific journalists in the emerging literary scene. Together, Barzilai and Gur edited—and largely wrote—a monthly *Letters from the Land of Israel*, sponsored by B'nei Moshe and published during the 1893–1895 period.

The *Letters* of Barzilai and Gur reflected continuing faith, despite contrary signals, in the benefits of Jewish settlement to the Arab population and in eventual Arab acquiescence in the new order. The first issue complained of recent Turkish bans on land sales and building permits and even expressed the belief that Arabs had a common interest in canceling such decrees "since the matter deeply touches the Arabs themselves and many land dealers and building contractors

are losing out, and are doing all in their power to cancel the ban."[7] In a later issue, Barzilai and Gur presented a classic statement of the "benefit theory," even suggesting—despite the hostility of the first decade—that both Turkish rulers and Arab residents would soon begin to appreciate the valuable contributions bestowed by the new Jewish immigrants: "Indeed Palestine is a relatively unpopulated land, numbering only about a half million inhabitants, most of them in a lowly position both materially and spiritually. And by virtue of the extent of good and fertile land it could easily absorb one hundred thousand families . . . who not only will inflict no damage on the country's citizens but will bring them great benefit, will strengthen and fortify their spiritual and material position, and will be a great aid to them in realizing the potential inherent in the land."[8]

When Ahad Ha'am founded the monthly journal *HaShiloah* in 1896, *Letters from the Land of Israel* was discontinued and replaced by a regular column "From the Land of Israel" in the journal. Barzilai and Gur contributed most of the columns, which became a major source of information and ideas among B'nei Moshe and Hovevei Tsion circles both in Palestine and elsewhere. The expectation that Arabs of Palestine would come to appreciate the modernizing mission of Jewish settlement in their midst remained a central theme in *HaShiloah*, as elsewhere. As late as 1903, Barzilai would still be writing that "many of the Arab notables recognize full well the benefit of the *yishuv*. Many of them understand the extent to which its expansion is essential for the general progress of the Land."[9]

Some of the Jewish pioneers went even further. Among those who had been in Palestine long enough to realize that the Arabs could not be ignored, a few sought to find common ground and look for paths to integration, even if it meant adaptation for Jews as well as Arabs. In 1894, Yisrael Belkind, the early Bilu leader, traveled extensively throughout the land, on both sides of the Jordan River, and concluded that most of the native population was descended from Jews: "The great majority [of Arabs in Palestine] are descended from Jews who did not leave the land but endured their political and spiritual exile in it. Will we continue to identify them as Arabs . . . simply because they speak Arabic? . . . We are brothers in race, brothers from one nation."[10] Belkind advocated a partnership with Arabs, bringing European skills but adjusting to local customs and folkways as well.

This approach attracted some followers in the New Yishuv, especially among younger colonists who adopted elements of Arab dress and style; for example, in copying the appearance of Arab mounted guards when they began assuming these functions themselves. By connecting Arabs to the ancient Jewish past, Belkind offered a romantic notion of re-creating a common identity for Arabs and Jews, an idea that would surface periodically in the history of the Yishuv.

This "naïve assimilationism"[11] inspired, for example, Rabbi Binyamin (Yehoshua Radler-Feldmann), journalist and later advocate of binationalism, who wrote of his attraction to the "melancholy melody of this relative of ours, the great Arab nation," a melody that was "inherently related to this environment."[12] Another ardent supporter of Jewish-Arab assimilation later reflected that "we never asked how Europeans would suddenly shed their skin and become *Beduins*."[13]

Another expression of this during the 1890s was the appearance of a literary movement, mainly of young translators from Sephardic backgrounds, who made works in Arabic available

to Hebrew readers. The intent was to move away from "Europeanness" or "Russianness" and to emphasize the "Orientalism" of the Jewish people and to reconnect with the Palestinian origins of the Jewish people by learning more about the Arabs with whom Jews shared this origin. Among the contributors to this literature were David Yellin, the future educator whose mother was Sephardi, Yosef Meyuhas, and Avraham Shalom Yehuda. Most of the literature consisted simply of translations of Arab legends, folklore, and proverbs, or descriptions of traditional Arab or Bedouin culture, but often these were put in the context of efforts to emphasize the common roots. Meyuhas, for example, declared that "the two people are one people, and these two branches are one race, and the more we persevere in tracing the roots of the Arab people and its character, its language, and its literature, the more we discover Israel and the secrets of its language."[14]

The appearance of Sephardi assimilationism is hardly surprising, given the ambivalence of native Middle Eastern Jews to European Zionist dicta that denigrated and dismissed the culture of which they were a part. Throughout this period, Sephardim were torn between the attraction of Zionism as an affirmation of their Judaism and their Middle Eastern cultural identity.[15]

A serious effort to integrate would have involved learning Arabic, the native language of all other segments of the population including non-European Jews. In the first conference of Hebrew teachers, it was pointed out that "the natives of the land respect no one who does not speak Arabic."[16] But at the same time, giving Arabic a high priority threatened to reproduce the Diasporic reality of Jews living on the margins of another culture. It would undercut Zionism's crucial aspiration of creating a self-contained society not dependent on a host country. In short, "Palestine seemed to offer a unique setting . . . a culturally virgin soil on which a new national culture could become the definitive, ultimately hegemonic, cultural force of a new metropole."[17]

The first settlers, being few in number in an Arabic-speaking environment, had of necessity acquired at least a survival level of spoken Arabic through frequent interactions with their neighbors. Their first schools generally included Arabic as a required subject. But as their numbers expanded and interactions were concentrated more within settlement blocs, Arabic became less essential. Also, there was enormous pressure to teach and use Hebrew as a spoken language, which for most of the colonists was almost equivalent to learning a new language. Should their children be forced to study both Hebrew and Arabic simultaneously? The priority, in the minds of most, was the revival of Hebrew as an essential component of the revival of Jewish national life. In fact, as Yehuda Gur reported in 1897, the settlers in Gedera did not even favor Arabic as a second language. When they adopted Hebrew as the language of instruction, the Gederans pressed for instruction also in a European tongue "because they could not and should not be so 'cruel' as to bind their children helplessly to this land, which they could not leave, and in their opinion it is impossible to live and exist without a European language."[18]

Given these priorities, it is no surprise that the ability to communicate in Arabic declined over time. A teacher who began teaching Arabic in Rehovot in 1911 commented that "the older generation in Rehovot acquired a small vocabulary through conversations with the Arab workers; among the young generation there were few who acquired a working knowledge of the language and could conduct free conversations in Arabic."[19]

Would better acquaintance with the dominant language and culture have helped to moderate tensions between Jewish newcomers and Arab natives? An interesting test case is Mishmar

HaYarden, in the Jordan Valley north of the Sea of Galilee, whose founding members were mostly native-born Jews from Safed and elsewhere. Accordingly, "the people of Mishmar HaYarden maintained good relations with their neighbors—a phenomenon that was attributed to the fact that the settlement's members were mostly natives of the land and 'know the conditions of the locale better than the members of all the other settlements.'"[20] Of course, there is more to this than sharing a common language and showing cultural sensitivity; more to the point, the settlers of Mishmar HaYarden were not seen by their Arab neighbors as alien Europeans threatening their culture and way of life. A similar pattern developed in Hartuv, an isolated settlement in the hills west of Jerusalem founded by Sephardi Jews from Bulgaria. As settlers familiar with Ottoman rule, Hartuv's founders managed to maintain reasonable relations with both Turkish officials and Arab neighbors.[21]

Similar differences in the attitudes of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews can be found elsewhere. In his first regular report "From the Land of Israel" in *HaShiloah*, Yehuda Gur underlined this in describing the stark divide between the two communities in Jaffa: "Most of the *Sephardim* live in the city among the people of the land and speak their language and learn many of their customs and their practices, and they dislike their *Ashkenazi* brothers, saying that from the day the latter began to multiply, their own situation worsened." In the same report, Gur shows more understanding of the European perspective, praising the tendency of the Ashkenazim to live in their own neighborhoods and suburbs, "since in the lands of the East there is nothing better for our brothers than to live far from the people of the land, and their children will not learn from the bad practices of this wild and destructive people."[22]

The belief in the superiority of European culture was reinforced by the attitudes of officials in Baron Rothschild's administration, who viewed indigenous agricultural practices with great disdain. One visiting expert reporting back to Paris in 1899 wrote that "the native system of farming, almost static if not retrograde for thousands of years, is absolutely insufficient, it goes without saying, to meet the needs of a civilized population. In addition, it is clear a priori that, given the conditions that one finds in Syria, colonization can only have a chance to succeed through the improved methods brought by the immigrant."[23]

The negative view of Arabs among Jews from Europe seems to be as prevalent in the second decade of the New Yishuv as it was in the first. Even a faithful follower of Ahad Ha'am like Yehuda Gur paints a harsh portrait of the native population: "The city-dwellers are completely arrogant and evil, swindlers and rogues . . . and you can't trust them even if they swear in the name of God and their prophet, since swearing falsely comes very easily to them and is not considered a sin. . . . The fellahin are not evil by nature; they all welcome guests, but to deceive, to steal, to swear falsely—is not a sin to them. Most of them are cunning and they do not have that same innocence that in other lands is considered a special quality of peasants."[24]

Underneath these negative images lies the clash of civilizations that was deeply felt on both sides. For Jews, the easiest and most palatable explanation was simply that the Arabs hated foreigners. One might think, wrote Gur, that this was another instance of historical Jew-hatred. Not so, he hastens to explain: "The Arab hates everything foreign, every son of a different people who does not believe in Muhammad, his prophet." The problem was that the Arabs could not vent their anger toward other peoples—Greeks, Armenians, Druzes—who were protected by the Ottoman government, and so consequently this anger was directed against the foreigner who was

not protected: “the unfortunate Jew, the son of this wretched people.”[25]

CONTINUING CLASHES

Against this background, contention between Jewish settlements and Arabs in their vicinity continued. All the new colonies remained targets for constant threats of depredation to property, crops, and livestock. All faced the need of deploying armed guards, especially at night, to deter would-be thieves and vandals from an unfriendly neighborhood.

During the first days of the new settlement of Hadera, a force of five experienced “muscle men” from Rishon LeTsion, including the renowned Yisrael Feinberg, arrived to provide temporary protection. Over the course of time, the Haderans resorted to the common practice of hiring Arab guards for night duty, given the difficulty of the settlers performing both as farmers and as night watchmen. The question then became the classic dilemma posed in antiquity: who will guard the guardians? The settlers established a committee of three to supervise the guards, but this also proved problematic. By the end of the first decade, all management and execution of guard duties were carried out by Arabs hired for that purpose.[26]

Rehovot, being dominated by the followers of Ahad Ha’am, was particularly committed to good relations with its Arab neighbors. The regulations of the community even forbid the striking of Arabs, something that Ahad Ha’am had expressly denounced during his first visit to Erets Yisrael. Nevertheless, as recounted (chap. 5) the colony had endured two violent attacks in its first years.[27] Eliyahu Lewin-Epstein, the colony’s principal founder, later recorded his own appraisal of a workable strategy for peaceful relations; his reading of the situation was somewhat more nuanced than Ahad Ha’am’s admonitions: “If you approach them in friendship, they will see this as weakness on your part and will say that it is because you fear and dread them. But if you stand up to them and return blow for blow, they will treat you with respect, and if after all that you deal with them justly, they will understand that you are not doing that out of fear, but out of honesty, and will become your comrades in heart and soul.”[28]

Like the other new settlements, Rehovot found itself forced to deploy heavy protection. A store of weapons was assembled, ready for use in any emergency. By the end of the 1890s, the younger members had organized themselves into a fighting force, with a more formidable arsenal and serious military training. One new member was Moshe Smilansky, who later became a major literary figure and a leading advocate of peaceful relations with the Arabs, writing some of the first stories and sketches, in Hebrew, of Arab life in Palestine. Smilansky arrived in Rehovot in 1893 as an agricultural worker and became a close observer of Rehovot’s attempt to arm and defend itself. He later described the mobilization in Rehovot in colorful terms:

> The young men also acquired good weapons—Greek army rifles—and taught themselves to hit the target; they acquired swift horses and became good riders. . . . and they were ready at any moment to come to the aid of the small neighboring settlements. If a frightened alarm should come from one of the settlements, whether by day or by night, the young men would immediately leap on their horses with lightning speed and fly with their arms to the place of danger. Once a dreadful message arrived from distant Kastina [Be’er Tuvia] in the middle of the night, and an avenging band of young men from Rehovot flew there, passing like a storm by all the Arab villages along the way.[29]

Elsewhere, the usual frictions and clashes continued despite the prevailing narrative of acceptance by the native population. Haim Hisin, on his 1894 visit to the colonies as an observer

for *Voskhod*, noted that Mazkeret Batya (Ekron), commonly regarded as a model of peaceful relations with its neighbors, had found itself facing an unusual issue that was the reverse of the common pattern. While Arab herds and flocks on Jewish lands were a constant source of conflict, in this case it was an Arab village that refused to allow Jewish livestock to pass through its lands to reach Jewishowned pastures. Though the issue was one of simple passage and not grazing in the other side's fields, the villagers in this case refused to honor the same customs and traditions often cited in defense of Arab grazing rights on uncultivated (or sometimes cultivated) Jewish land.[30]

A worse case was Be'er Tuvia, formerly Kastina, which had been resettled and renamed in 1896. As had often happened elsewhere, the sheikh of a nearby village had laid claim to some of the settlement's land. In this case, the mufti of Gaza, brought in as mediator, had actually ruled that the sheikh's case was baseless. But the following day, the sheikh and 50 armed villagers stormed the disputed area, filling in a border trench, uprooting newly planted trees, and attacking Jewish settlers who tried to intervene. By this time firearms were not uncommon in such battles, and consequently one Arab was shot and died later of his wounds. This, of course, raised the unwelcome prospect of a blood feud.[31]

To avoid this dreaded possibility, a number of important figures in the Yishuv sought to mediate, including Dr. Hillel Yaffe, then the Hovevei Tsion representative in the country, and Eliezer Ben-Yehuda. After much negotiation and much maneuvering—and judicious dispersal of much cash—the worst was avoided. One Jewish colonist left the country, neutralizing the possibility of a blood feud, and leaving only the grubby issues of land and damages for the colonists to deal with. As Yaffe reported, "Thus, we were promised that the sheikh would be punished, and the family of the man killed would be satisfied with suitable compensation and would not seek revenge on the Jews."[32]

But the most intractable collision involved Metula, in the far north of the Jordan Valley near Mt. Hermon. Metula was in an especially exposed and isolated situation, surrounded by a hostile population. As an emissary of the Jewish Colonisation Association (JCA), an organization founded earlier by a prominent Jewish philanthropist (Samuel Hirsch) that had previously focused on Jewish resettlement outside of Palestine, reported, "This colony is in contact not with the peaceful fellahin, but with populations of an aggressive character, such as the Druzes and the Metawalis [Twelver Shi'a Muslims]."[33] As we have seen the fellahin were not always peaceful toward Jewish settlements, but the minorities in the Mt. Hermon area had a particularly fierce reputation for martial prowess and resistance to authority; by some accounts, Turkish rule there was largely theoretical. Metula—the village and its lands—had been inhabited by Druze tenant farmers, but during a Druze rebellion that broke out in 1895 the tribal leaders had been exiled. The Christian owner of the lands, who had trouble collecting payments and feared trying to evict the tenants, offered to sell everything to Baron Rothschild. With the Druze residents in a weakened position, the deal was concluded.

Even before the purchase was finalized, there were signs of impending trouble. Yitzhak Epstein, a settler in Rosh Pina, recounted: "When I went with a settlement official to see the village land for the first time, the young Druze men gathered in the courtyard of their prayer-house and called to us: 'If you dare to buy Metula we will slaughter you.'"[34] But with the help of the Turkish army engaged in suppressing the rebellion, the baron's officials were able to

pressure the remaining villagers, with generous compensation, to vacate their homes.

When the rebellion ended and the exiled leaders returned, however, the entire purchase was challenged anew. From their temporary shelter in a nearby Druze village, the former residents waged a determined campaign to force the Jewish settlers to leave. In Epstein's account:

> They continued to besiege the settlement and to threaten it and also fired into one of the houses. Once at night they fell upon a Jew who was sleeping on his threshing floor and killed him. And once in broad daylight they robbed a farmer plowing his field of his yoke of oxen. Many times rumors spread that on a certain day the Druze would assault the settlement and destroy it, and the fear of death would seize all the settlers. The men would arm themselves and not get undressed, and when shots would be heard at night around the settlement they would run in panic to the spot where they expected to find the evildoers—and they would find no one. Hundreds of nights like this passed on Metula, and it could be said that for five straight years the settlement was permeated with terror and hysteria.[35]

One of the many terror-filled nights that passed during this period was later described by a settler in graphic terms:

> The night before there had been an assault on the settlement, and several farmers, including my husband, had been lightly injured. We expected an even bigger assault this night, and all of us were standing watch. . . . At midnight we heard the sound of shots from different directions. The men, including the wounded, took up their arms and ran outside. They were swallowed up in the night and the darkness. In the entire settlement there remained only women and children, and the shooting grew minute by minute, and this continued hour after hour, and every minute seemed like an eternity to us. From the site of the battle we received no news, and the power of imagination worked energetically and filled us with foreboding. Every wife saw in her imagination her husband drenched in blood and expiring . . . At last our patience snapped. We took whatever came to hand and ran to the field. But we met our men as they were returning from the battle. The matter ended well. In the end only one of our men was wounded, and only two or three of our animals were stolen.[36]

In an effort to counter the Druze threat, the Metula colonists turned to the Metawalis, a Shi'a sect that despised both the Druzes and the Jews. But this "protection" proved to be both overbearing and extortionist, and when the baron's officials tried to end it, the protectors turned hostile. When grain in the fields was beginning to ripen, "our Metawali neighbors took their herds and flocks into the grain without hindrance," and when harvest time arrived, "there was no way to stop these brutes, and they stole and destroyed to their heart's content, without hindrance."[37]

The Druze threats also reemerged as the protection of the Metawalis was withdrawn, and eventually the colonists had to invite the protectors back, at the usual high price. It was only in 1904, after years of legal battles and complicated maneuvers on all levels, that the Druze claims were finally withdrawn for an enormous sum of money. Metula finally gained some calm, "if it is possible to be calm under the necessary protection of the gang of murderers that dominates this district."[38]

In light of the Metula conflict, it is no surprise that a large land purchase in the lower Galilee that began in 1899 sparked considerable resistance. The large tract of land, which eventually became the base for five new settlements, was purchased from absentee landowners in Beirut and included several villages of Arab tenant farmers. Eviction proceedings began in 1901, by which time Baron Rothschild's administration and support had been superseded by the JCA. When JCA agents tried to evict the tenants, they met strong and even violent resistance. One agent, Joshua Ossowetsky, was shot at and troops had to be brought in to restore order. At this point a figure who was to become prominent in Jewish-Arab relations, Haim Margalit-

Kalvarisky, became active in trying to resolve the crisis. Kalvarisky was a trained agronomist and also a member of B'nei Moshe who arrived in Palestine in 1895 and had settled in 1898 in Mishmar HaYarden as representative of the Rothschild administration. After this administration was transferred to the JCA, he was put in charge of the lower Galilee area. At the time of the 1901 crisis, according to Kalvarisky himself, "Feeling ran high and the situation became critical. I accordingly cabled to the JCA in Paris requesting authority to intervene and arrange matters myself. In less than three weeks order was restored in the Tiberias District. . . . This was made possible by the just treatment of the tenants and the payment of compensation to them."[39]

In this case, however, there were signs of deeper issues that went beyond the usual fights over the legalities of land purchases, property lines, and eviction of tenants. "It was then," Kalvarisky later recounted, "that, for the first time, I came in contact with Arab nationalism." The land being sold amounted to over half the territory of the Tiberias subdistrict (*kaza*), and the local governor (*kaimakam*), the Druze emir Amin Arslan, opposed the sale and did everything in his power to have it annulled, despite the approval of his Ottoman superior. Arslan, as Kalvarisky put it, "resisted the de-Arabization of the district." He was influenced in this position by an emerging spokesman for Arab national sentiments, Najib Nassar, who later became the editor of one of the first Palestinian Arab newspapers, the fiercely anti-Zionist al-Karmil. Nassar told Kalvarisky that "the Emir did not do what he did out of hatred of Jews, but because he sees Zionism and Jewish settlement as a danger to the Arabs."[40] This sense of an Arab national interest, and opposition to Jewish immigration on national grounds and not just as a reaction to foreign (European) penetration, was still confined to relatively small circles of urban intellectuals. But it was clearly a premonition of a development that a few Zionist thinkers, such as Ahad Ha'am, had foreseen.

Payment of compensation to evicted tenant farmers did not, in any event, even resolve all of the immediate issues. Problems of demarcation of property lines remained, just as they had complicated the early histories of other settlements. The new colony of Sejera had boundary disputes with four nearby Arab villages that persisted for years, with a number of violent encounters. When settlers began in 1903 to plow up land that had previously been leased to tenants in a fifth village, there were numerous raids and one of the settlers was murdered. Conflicts in fact continued until the end of the Ottoman period.[41]

The experiences of Metula and the Tiberias area did impress on some Zionist leaders a sense of the potential minefield in such issues. When the sale of another large land tract (Afula) in the Jezre'el Valley was being discussed in 1903, Theodor Herzl, head of the World Zionist Organization (see "Zionism Gets Organized," below), opposed the transaction because, among other things, "we shouldn't evict poor Arab farmers from their land."[42] In this respect Herzl foreshadowed the strong argument made against eviction of Arab tenants, two years later, by Yitzhak Epstein (see chap. 7). But Herzl's opposition was fiercely condemned by Menachem Ussishkin, emerging as a key figure in land purchases. Ussishkin not only saw land purchases from absentee landlords and evictions of tenants as legitimate and necessary but even argued against Herzl's drive for a charter from the sultan that would authorize Jewish settlement. If Jews received an official right to buy land, he claimed, "the Arab would have no reason to leave the place he occupies, to sell his land and to move to another of Turkey's countries," because he would expect Jewish settlement to improve his conditions and the value of his land.[43]

Meanwhile, clashes in the established settlements also broke out periodically. Hadera was particularly vulnerable because of its small size and location next to a Bedouin encampment, and it suffered a long string of robberies and violent clashes. In 1901, one of the settlers shot an Arab in an encounter, evoking fear of a blood feud. Shortly thereafter a group of about one hundred Arabs staged a night attack on the settlement, inflicting considerable damage and injuries and seizing the livestock. Only with the help of Zikhron Ya'akov settlers, and the Turkish police, were order restored and the livestock returned. Even one of the older settlements, Rishon LeTsion, recorded a steady incidence of thefts and damage in the early years of the new century, over 20 years since its founding.[44] Only in Petah Tikva, apparently, was the security situation better, mainly because it was under the able command of someone who was well acquainted with the language, customs, and residents of the vicinity.[45]

The official history of Jewish defense forces actually describes this period as one in which security on the local level broke down in many places and blames the Rothschild administration for forbidding violence against Arabs. Only with the advent of the second *aliya*, the account argues, were "heroic" measures and security restored.[46] But this picture is overly simplistic.

By and large the frictions between the rural settlements and Arabs in their vicinity remained localized and largely tied to specific conflicts of interest, aggravated by cultural animosities. The fact that the Jewish settlements still constituted only a tiny part of the population—perhaps no more than 1 percent—meant that most of the Arab farmers and villagers were relatively untouched by this influx of alien settlers. The conflicts that occurred, being local in nature, were by and large contained in the vicinity, and being specific in nature they could theoretically be resolved. Arab opposition was unorchestrated and largely unarticulated. Enough of the Jewish settlements had overcome these immediate conflicts to make "the narrative" of heroic resistance and gradual grudging acceptance seem plausible. On this level, it is possible to speak of a modus vivendi that prevailed in the countryside toward the end of what is conventionally defined as the first *aliya* period (1882–1905).[47] However, as noted, new forces were gathering that would reshape this seeming stability.

These new forces were somewhat more visible in the towns and cities. In the cities—especially Jerusalem with its Jewish majority and Jaffa where the immigrants disembarked—the growing Jewish presence was more noticeable. Arabs in the cities, better educated and more exposed to new ideas and trends, were more aware of both the new Jewish nationalism and the emerging Arab nationalism that was now reaching Palestine. By the turn of the century, "the question of nationality" had become very prominent in the city, with Jewish sources reporting Arab fears that "the Jews came to impose a foreign Government on them."[48] And in 1903, a young Arab in Jerusalem—reputedly not known as an extremist—said to a Jewish acquaintance that "we shall pour out everything to the last drop of blood rather than see the Dome of the Rock [the Jerusalem mosque comprising part of the third holiest site in Islam] fall into the hands of non-Muslims."[49] Clearly the stakes of the conflict, at least in the eyes of some, had moved beyond questions of grazing rights and blood feuds.

ARAB LABOR

Few things were more controversial in the early history of modern Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel/Palestine than the issue of hiring Arab workers. In this case, the idealization of self-

reliance and manual labor—which predated Zionism and contributed much to it—clashed with the project of a mutually beneficial relationship with the existing population and, often, with the simple need for more hands.

In some of the early agricultural settlements, however, the dependence was not limited to hired labor but involved the leasing of lands to Arabs in return for a share of the crop. In 1892 Yehuda Leib Binshtock, the head of the Hovevei Tsion committee in Jaffa, carried out a survey of the existing colonies. He reported that in Petah Tikva there were 56 families who owned plots, and that 26 of them leased their land to Arab farmers, freeing many of them to work for the Rothschild administration in the baron's winery (in Rishon LeTsion) or in other capacities. Those who did not lease their lands nevertheless often employed Arab workers to help work them. Leasing of lands to Arabs was not on the same scale in other colonies, but it was clearly a common practice in this period.[50] Over time the leasing declined, but employment of Arab labor continued to grow, and in many cases Arab families settled within the colonies.

Among those raising the alarm over the extent of dependence on Arab labor was Yehuda Gur. Already at the end of 1889 he had written to Yehoshua Barzilai (then in Odessa) in rather agonized tones:

> Seven years have passed . . . and what has been done in that time? Who knows if our building is not a new ruin? In Rishon LeTsion there are now forty Hebrew families, and most of them live at the expense of the benefactor [Baron Rothschild]. But have you taken to heart, my friend, that against these forty more than four hundred Arab families have settled in the vicinity of the colony? The village of Sarifand to the south was a ruin . . . and now it has become a large and extended village . . . Up to a thousand Arabs work daily during the winter in Rishon, and in the other colonies how many? We ourselves are giving a polished and forsaken sword to those who hate us.[51]

The use of Arab labor is central to the denigration of the early settlers by those who came later. Some have even denied them the status of "pioneers" (*halutsim*), since they did not hebraize the soil, their own bodies, or their speech by working the land themselves and speaking Hebrew. In the words of Boaz Neumann, "Settlers of the First Aliya did not bond with the land by working it with their own hands. . . . They viewed the land as 'business,' and they had no interest in creating a new Jewish body or establishing Hebrew as a native language."[52] This image goes back to immigrants of the second *aliya* (1905–1914) who were strongly critical of the shortcomings of those who had preceded them.

The early settlers themselves would surely have objected strenuously to this description of their orientation. In their own minds, they clearly felt strong ties to the land, to the importance of productivization in reshaping Jewish life (see chap. 2), and to the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language. But under the circumstances, as they saw it, there was no escape from the need for hired labor, and Jewish workers were hard to find during this period, given the Ottoman restrictions on immigration. Jews were less accustomed to agricultural labor and needed to be paid more. Also, the early settlements came to rely more on plantation-style operations, under the guidance of the baron's experts, rather than field crops. This required more intensive labor, especially seasonal labor during peak periods. It was hard to bring in Jewish workers for seasonal labor, since there was no employment for them in the off-seasons, whereas Arab farmers in the vicinity fell back on their own resources. For the same reason, Jewish workers required housing, while the temporary Arab workers usually lived in nearby villages.[53]

In addition there were special projects, such as preparing new fields or constructing

buildings, for which reliance on local Arab resources and contractors was inescapable. In any event, by the turn of the century the number of Arabs working in the Jewish settlements is estimated at several thousand. The Rothschild administration appeared to be the largest employer of Arab labor, though it appears that the baron himself favored hiring Jews whenever possible, judging from comments he made during his visits to Palestine.[54] When the baron's support ended and the colonies came under the JCA, the plantation system was further rationalized and became even more dependent on Arab labor.[55]

There were positive aspects to this relationship, as some observers then and later pointed out. A mutually beneficial arrangement could be expected to increase understanding and moderate resentments, at least those rooted in cultural misunderstandings. Haim Kalvarisky, later to become a strong supporter of Jewish-Arab rapprochement, argued: "There was a great demand for working hands, and from where would they come? The few farmers could not manage, there were no Jewish workers then in the land, they could not be brought from abroad, firstly because the mass entry of Jews to the country was prohibited, and secondly: who before Herzl thought about the Land of Israel? And thus they invited Arabs to work and the employers and the workers learned to know each other . . . Little by little bolder ties were forged between the settlement and middle-class Arabs."[56]

Contrary to the prevailing image, Jewish settlers of the first *aliya* were not indifferent to the implications of hired Arab labor. From the outset there was vigorous debate on the issue and considerable opposition to the practice from within the settler community (as seen above in Gur's letter). Some of the colonies resisted the appeal of hired labor or tried as well as they could to minimize or regulate it. The Biluim who founded Gedera were particularly committed to "Hebrew labor" and during their early years struggled as best as they could to rely only on themselves. But by the 1890s they were also forced to turn to hired Arab labor, particularly after they followed other colonies in moving from field crops to vineyards and orchards. This left, at the time, Rehovot as the one settlement that could continue to afford the "luxury" of relying only on the labor of its own members.[57]

Even this could not last for long. When Haim Hisin visited Rehovot during his 1894 visit as journalist for *Voskhod*, he reported finding some 50 Arab workers alongside the 200 "Hebrew workers." Eliyahu Lewin-Epstein, founding father, had indeed insisted on Hebrew labor as much as possible. At the time, Hisin noted, "the people of Rehovot, who were still in the idealistic period typical of all the colonies in their first years, were willing to sacrifice something for the principle. Hebrew labor was still the fashion, and employing Arabs was condemned." But eventually the same pressures that had operated elsewhere came to bear: "they calculated and found that it was preferable to hire Arabs as the Jew is less accustomed to [agricultural] work, not as strong, and what's more needs to be paid more."[58] To this should be added the simple absence of Jewish agricultural workers during this period. And again, the decision to resort to hired Arab labor coincided with the transition to plantation-style cultivation with its intensified demand for more workers.

Hadera adopted a regulation aimed at limiting and regularizing the growing number of Arab workers actually living in the settlement: "Arab residence in our settlement is not permanent residence but temporary residence. That is, it is always dependent on the approval of the employers and of the members of the settlement; every Arab, whether new worker, daily worker,

or regular, must take out a card from the settlement's office certifying his right of residence." The regulation added that the colony's members "would try not to burden the Arabs."[59] Similar measures were taken in other settlements.

Though the idealization of "Hebrew labor" remained in the background as an ideological construct, after Jewish colonists had surrendered to economic realities the debate shifted more to the practical problems of employing Arabs. There were complaints of thefts or destruction of property, involving the need for constant supervision. There were ever-present concerns about security, especially as Arab workers came to live within the settlements and especially during periods of tension with neighboring villages. Were Arab workers acting as spies, identifying targets for potential thieves or marauders? There were also fears of disease or other ills assumed to be prevalent in the area, and concern that penetration of Arab culture into the settlements would be a bad influence on the settlers themselves, particularly the younger generation.[60]

The broader implications of reliance on Arab labor did still disturb some observers. In 1893, Rothschild administrators had found it necessary to order the settlers of Zikhron Ya'akov not to employ house servants—interestingly, not only because of the threat to the work ethic but also because of complaints from the Arab side about the corrupting influence on those employed. In the same edict, the settlers were told to do their own housework, to dress simply, and to wear a *tarboosh* ("the Ishmaelite turban").[61]

When Haim Hisin visited Zikhron in 1894, he was dumbfounded by the indifference and indolence that he reportedly found. When Zikhron like other colonies focused on vineyards, the proprietors began to behave as absentee landlords: "The settler does nothing but supervise the [Arab] workers in his vineyard." But even this duty, Hisin noted, had not always been fulfilled responsibly: "They didn't find it necessary even to supervise their workers. Most of them never went to the field, because they preferred their own side ventures." In the end the baron's officials had to crack down, threatening heavy fines on those who did not properly supervise their vineyards.[62] Apparently this did not guarantee good Jewish-Arab relations; in 1900, a veteran settler, in a letter to Dr. Hillel Jaffe, lamented that despite close contacts—economic interdependence, mixed housing, etc.—relations with Arab neighbors in the region were "distressing."[63]

In 1899–1900, Ahad Ha'am made his third visit to the yishuv, writing a detailed report (as Asher Ginzberg), together with the agronomist A. Zussman, on the state of the colonies at the time. Needless to say the degree of dependence on Arab labor ran contrary to Ginzberg/Ahad Ha'am's fixation on self-reliance, and the report lamented that such a situation "could only have a bad influence on the morals of the colonists." The report paid particular attention to Zikhron Ya'akov, where up to one thousand Arabs were doing work that the settlers could very well do themselves. The two visitors were also alarmed to see Arab children carrying fertilizer (i.e., manure) to the fields while the Jewish children were in school; they even suggested scheduling school sessions so that the settlers' progeny could gain useful work experience. Their general conclusion for all the settlements: "The colonist needs as much as possible to reduce the employment of Arabs, *whose participation in the Hebrews' labor cannot be desirable in any way whatsoever*."[64] They also repeated the bad news that Motzkin had stressed in his report two years earlier: the best land was already under ownership and cultivation by Arabs. In addition, the cultural gap between Jews and Arabs did not bode well but was likely to be the source of

great jealousy and hatred in the future.[65]

Though Ahad Ha'am had been prominent in his condemnation of unfair treatment of Arabs, he was no proponent of closer ties between the two communities, let alone the kind of melding that some more romantic souls (Belkind, Yellin) envisioned. Apparently still drawing on observations from his latest (1899–1900) visit, Ahad Ha'am complained in his journal *HaShiloah* in 1901 that the behavior of Jewish schoolchildren in Jaffa was abysmal and wild, and he had a ready explanation: "The influence of the Arabs on the pupils born in the country is felt, and among them are some whose crudeness of manners stands out and who have a malicious influence on their friends."[66]

The following year Ahad Ha'am applied the same caustic critique to settlements in the Galilee, where employment of tenant farmers was still widely practiced (especially in Rosh Pina and Yesud HaMa'ala). The tenants and their families, he stated, were often housed in sheds on the settlement and treated no better than the farm animals, "and whoever has not seen this ugly drama could not understand the depth of moral corruption it embodies." Again, he lamented that the settlers' children were "learning from the Arab children the same debased traits that they exhibited." This was particularly problematic, he noted, in a place like Yesud HaMa'ala, where 32 Jewish settlers were surrounded by about 50 Arab families.[67] In this period there were, in fact, "mixed populations" not only in the cities but also in many or most of the new Jewish settlements established to promote revival of a "national" Jewish presence in the historic homeland. The implications of this were yet to be worked out.

ZIONISM GETS ORGANIZED

When Ahad Ha'am concluded his acidic review of the new Jewish settlements following his first visit in 1891 (see chap. 5), he declared that there was only one likely solution to the prevailing chaos: "What remains is to turn to our brothers in the West. . . . These people, who are accustomed to an ordered life and who know what modernity is, and who have the necessary means, should found a large national company for the settlement of *Erets Yisrael*."[68] As it turned out, Ahad Ha'am's wish was granted and then some—though not in a way that earned the approval of Zionism's hard-to-please internal critic.

The unlikely Western figure who put Zionism on the world map was a 35-year-old assimilated Viennese Jewish journalist and sometime playwright who knew little about Judaism or Jewish settlement efforts in Palestine. Theodor Herzl was representative of Jews in Western Europe who, like many in Russia, had counted on assimilation into modernizing European societies, only to be stunned by the new nationalist and racial antisemitism of the late 1800s. As a journalist, Herzl in 1894–1895 covered the wrongful conviction and degradation of French Jewish army officer Alfred Dreyfus, and the virulent attacks on Jews that attended this event are often credited with turning him to the idea of a Jewish state. But the public phase of the Dreyfus affair, and the revelation of the forged documents on which Dreyfus's conviction was based, began only in late 1896, over a year after Herzl had returned to Vienna. It was in Vienna that he was truly shaken by the rising tide of Jew-hatred in his own city.

In Vienna the rabidly antisemitic Karl Lueger won dramatic victories in municipal elections in May 1895 and, after the Austro-Hungarian government refused to confirm him as mayor, again in September. Herzl returned in the middle of this turmoil, convinced that if antisemitism

could triumph in Paris and in Vienna, the only solution was the creation of a Jewish homeland. Already in June he spent a feverish two weeks composing a "new solution" to the Jewish problem in the form of an "Address to the Rothschilds," to whom he planned to turn for support. The Rothschilds, notwithstanding Baron Edmond's support of Jewish settlements in Palestine, were unresponsive. At the same time Herzl began keeping a political diary in which, on June 12, 1895, he put down his first recorded thoughts on the implications of a Jewish state in Palestine for the existing population:

> When we occupy the land, we shall bring immediate benefits to the land that receives us. We must expropriate gently the private property on the estates assigned to us.
>
> We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country.
>
> The property owners will come over to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.
>
> Let the owners of immovable property believe that they are cheating us, selling us something far more than they are worth.
>
> But we are not going to sell them anything back.[69]

At this stage Herzl clearly had no grasp of the dimensions of the issue. It would be enough, he imagined from Vienna, to buy out the property owners, even paying more than the property's value, and to find employment for the landless workers elsewhere. He obviously had no idea of the role that Arab labor was playing in the settlements that had been established; in fact, it is not clear how much he even knew about these settlements. His diary makes no mention of Hovevei Tsion until November of that year (1895).[70] It was around this time, spurred by Lueger's second electoral victory, that Herzl reworked his "Address to the Rothschilds" into a pamphlet, *The Jews' State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, and published it in February 1896.[71]

Though Herzl was unaware of the earlier Zionists and their ideas, his argument brought these ideas together in dramatic style and took them one step further. Herzl argued that:

1. Antisemitism is inevitable, even in supposedly enlightened countries.
2. Assimilation is therefore doomed to failure, and Jewish life will remain deformed.
3. The only logical solution is a Jewish state; even antisemites should support the idea.
4. For this to happen, there must be broad international support (Herzl was not impressed by the small-scale "infiltration" into Ottoman Palestine).
5. The "present possessors" of territory set aside as a Jewish state would benefit from its development into a modern society.

In essence, Herzl was arguing for the integration of Jews into world history—but as a nation, not as individuals. Jews would achieve a normal existence only when they enjoyed equality with other nations that had achieved independent statehood. Clearly Herzl did not recognize any serious conflict of interests with other parties; existing states, native populations, and even antisemites would all gain from the venture. Nor did he put forward the idea, recorded a few months earlier in his private diary, about transferring a part of the population to other lands. The entire transaction could, Herzl believed, be achieved cooperatively and without coercion, and consequently the Jewish state would have modest need of military forces—a subject to which he devoted only two sentences in his treatise.

Herzl's little pamphlet was one of those landmark historical documents whose impact derives

not from their content but from their success in striking the right chord at the right moment. Within eight months *The Jews' State* appeared in 17 different editions in nine languages and had an explosive impact on both Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. This was the breakthrough that brought Zionism to the world's attention.

Herzl exploited the momentum created to organize the World Zionist Organization (WZO) at a conference in Basel, Switzerland, in August 1897, bringing together most of the disparate groups loosely organized previously in Hovevei Tsion. In the intense discussions leading to this First Zionist Congress, the question of relations with the existing population played almost no role. The focus, again, was on access to the territory, and for this the address at the time was Constantinople. Interestingly, shortly before the congress, Herzl did meet with Mustafa Kamil, the prominent Egyptian nationalist, who happened to be in Vienna. Herzl expressed support for the Egyptian national movement, seeing no conflict with a Jewish national movement; both movements sought self-determination for their own people, though the Egyptians were more concerned about British domination than about Ottoman authority that no longer existed in Egypt.[72]

The First Zionist Congress set as a goal "to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law." The emphasis on "public law" reflected Herzl's insistence on working openly within the existing state system; the designation of "Palestine" reflected the fact that most Zionists could not conceive of a Jewish state anywhere but in the ancestral homeland. The specification of "home" rather than "state" reflected sensitivity to the fact that Palestine was already part of a state (the Ottoman Empire) whose government was openly hostile to a secessionist threat in its heartland.

While the congress did discuss the situation in the existing Jewish settlements in Palestine, there was little mention of the Arab population. Delegates deplored the need for bribes in dealing with Ottoman officials, they regretted the need for outside support, and they criticized the "French" atmosphere that existed in some colonies (by virtue of the Rothschild connection). Attention was paid to financial problems and agricultural issues—but not to issues of relations with Arabs on a collective level like those that had been raised by Ahad Ha'am six years earlier.[73] And the general attitude of European disdain for the peoples and cultures of the Middle East was clearly expressed in a speech by Willy Bambus that focused on non-European Jews in Palestine: "The Jew in the Land of Israel is not suited in all respects to the European spirit. This is correct and this is related to the past of the Jews there. They do not know European culture. There is, therefore, a critical need for European Jews to go there in great numbers. The energy of the Western European Jew is very essential."[74]

The thought that this great cultural divide might itself be the source of the greatest future dilemmas and collisions was not yet part of the discourse.

The Second Zionist Congress, held also in Basel a year after the First Congress, paid a little more attention to Jewish-Arab issues. Leo Motzkin, emerging as one of the leading Zionist activists, presented a detailed report on the settlements that touched on several aspects of the relationship. Motzkin began by stressing a reality not acknowledged by some who, not encumbered by actual firsthand knowledge, talked of an "empty" or "barren" land: "One must admit that the population density is not such as to gladden the hearts of those traveling in the Land of Israel. In many adjoining areas there are large Arab villages one after another, as in the famous Jezre'el Valley." But even though the more promising lands are in Arab hands, Motzkin

continues, there is still room for more people, particularly if one looks at the more sparsely populated territories east of the Jordan River.[75]

Motzkin also took notice of the frequent clashes that had received little attention outside of Palestine, though he did not differ from the standard narrative that saw these clashes in localized terms or as a matter of the lack of law and order. He also echoed this narrative in its applause for the stalwart resistance of settlers against Arab assaults: "Many wars between Jews and Arabs broke out in recent years, inspired by Arab sheikhs or other rulers or out of a craving for robbery and plunder, and in most of these clashes the Jewish farmers behaved magnificently, and some of them—really heroically. I must mention one of the clashes in Katara [Gedera], whose outnumbered residents stood their ground against Arab attacks that lasted for days."[76]

Finally, Motzkin shared the concern expressed by other European Zionists regarding the possible "Arabization" of the settlers. This was not, he said, a matter of learning Arabic; in fact, it was "a pity" that the language was not more widely known among them. It was, rather, a matter of "a certain regression in the level of morality, which is inevitable with a Jewish minority in the midst of a huge Arab population."[77] Once again, leaders in the new worldwide Zionist network, from their distant vantage point, regarded cultural rapprochement with Arabs of Palestine not as a positive contribution to their ultimate success but as an actual threat to that success.

RESPONSES TO ZIONISM

The Zionist Congresses and the founding of the World Zionist Organization did not pass unnoticed in Constantinople. As noted (see chap. 5) the Turkish government, under pressure from European powers exerting their rights under the capitulations, had softened the harsh restrictions imposed in 1891–1892 on entry and land sales in the Palestinian districts. Individual Jewish settlers were permitted to enter, still under strict conditions, and foreign Jews who were legal residents were allowed to buy land upon the condition that they did not allow "illegal" Jews to live there. But soon after the first Zionist Congress, in mid-1898, Turkish officials again began turning back Jews disembarking in Jaffa. This culminated in a decree forbidding the entry of any Jews except pilgrims, and these only for a period of 30 days and with a hefty monetary deposit to guarantee departure. The measure was so extreme that it roused strong protest from all the European powers, objecting not only to violation of their privileges under the Capitulations but also to breach of solemn Ottoman commitments on these issues.

After a period of turmoil and confusion, the Ottoman government in January 1901 finally regularized the status of Jews "long resident" in Palestine and gave them the same status as other Ottoman subjects, as well as eliminating the monetary deposit for pilgrims. Instead pilgrims were given a residence permit for three months (known as the "Red Slip") but were required to surrender their passports pending their reporting for departure by the end of that period. It was apparently assumed that this would impel the foreign consuls to help keep track of the "pilgrims." At the same time, the new regulations left no legal framework for Jewish immigrants to become Ottoman citizens.[78]

Nevertheless, Ottoman officials continued to have trouble cutting off the flow completely (no one knows, of course, what the influx would have been had there been no obstacles). Tevfik Bey, governor (*mutasarrif*) of the Jerusalem district (*mutasarriflik*) from 1897 to 1901, recounts in his

memoirs his efforts to enforce the restrictions dictated from Constantinople but admits his lack of success and blames his superiors for their lack of clear guidance and support.[79] Resid Bey, governor from 1904 to 1906, also laid blame on Constantinople's lack of response to his messages on the issue but complained more vigorously about the intervention of foreign consuls who contested the expiration of residence permits or found other grounds to delay deportation. Resid himself did not believe that the Jewish project had a great chance of success but thought that at least restrictions should be tightened further and "illegal" Jews deported. If not, then some way should be found to make the Jewish presence serve Ottoman interests.[80]

In response to the growth of Jewish and other non-Muslim communities, the Ottoman government resettled Muslim refugees from elsewhere—Bosnia, Circassia, North Africa—in Palestine. Sultan Abdul Hamid later reflected that "we cannot view Jewish immigration favorably. We could only open our borders to those who belong to the same religion as we do."[81] The sultan claimed that he was aware of Zionist's "evil projects" as early as 1895, which was even before the WZO existed. He thought that the Zionists—certainly Herzl himself first and foremost—were naive to think that he would want to create a "Jewish Question" to add to his other tribulations. The last thing that the sultan needed at the time was another restive non-Muslim minority like the Armenians, who were already a critical issue for the Ottoman Empire. To the Turks, the Jews seemed like a similar case.[82] Clearly the sultan believed that the Jews were a nation, or could become one, and he opposed them as such.

In the meantime, Herzl made his one and only visit to the Land of Israel in October–November 1898, shortly after the Second Zionist Congress. Though he spent only 10 days there, it was his one chance to get a firsthand view of relations between the Jewish settlements and their Arab neighbors. Clearly, however, this issue did not register with him at the time; his mind was focused on planning from the top rather than examining the grassroots. On the way to Palestine by sea, he noted in his diary that Alexandria "shows how a clever European administration can draw a habitable, comfortable city even out of the hottest soil." And once in Palestine, his diary records only four incidental mentions of Arabs, including a reference to a "countryside neglected in Arab fashion," and on another occasion "a mixed multitude of Arab beggars, womenfolk, children, and horsemen."[83] Simply put, Herzl, like those before him, did not see the Arabs as a problem; if Zionist visions were realized, they would be among the primary beneficiaries.

Herzl's main focus, as before, remained fixed on obtaining a "charter" from the Ottoman sultan that would permit large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine. He remained unimpressed with the "infiltration" of the small Jewish settlements with their few thousand colonists, even after having seen them. When his attempts to approach the Ottoman government directly led nowhere, he had turned to European governments with influence in Constantinople. His visit to Palestine was, in fact, timed for a meeting there with Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, by then Constantinople's major ally, in hopes that the Kaiser would press the sultan to grant the coveted charter. But the Kaiser, whose own visit to Palestine exposed him to the depth of Ottoman hostility to Zionism, abruptly shifted from what had been sympathetic noises about Zionism to a cold antipathy.

Zionist leaders at this time still did not consider Arab hostility to be a major problem, so thoughts of relocating the Arab populations receded into the background (to be revived at a later

stage of the conflict). Herzl's brief diary entry in 1895, when he was only beginning to immerse himself in these issues, was not repeated, and his declared position was that no one would be forced to leave. There was one public expression of support for the idea from Nachman Syrkin, one of the founding fathers of socialist Zionism, who wrote in an 1898 pamphlet that "Palestine, very thinly populated, and in which the Jews are already ten percent of the population, should be evacuated for the Jews."[84] Neither Syrkin in 1898 nor Herzl in 1895 was burdened, of course, with any real exposure to the situation on the ground in Palestine; Syrkin's entire public career, in fact, unfolded outside the country. Like Herzl in his diary entry, he seemed to assume that such massive population movements could be implemented voluntarily so long as the inducements were sufficient; again, the focus was on the individual interests and welfare of the inhabitants. The idea of collective identity and interests had not yet penetrated, save in a few instances such as Ahad Ha'am's 1891 article.

Finally, in May 1901, Herzl was granted his one and only audience with the sultan. His idea was to arrange the consolidation of Ottoman debt through Jewish financial houses in return for his long-sought charter for Jewish settlement in Palestine. The sultan was interested in reducing his financial obligations to European powers but not in opening the gates of the Holy Land. Herzl therefore left empty-handed but somehow with the impression that a deal was still possible. In the following months he pursued several fruitless endeavors, including a proposed Jewish-Ottoman Land Company that would offer to exchange plots of land "of equal size and quality" elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire for land in Palestine.[85] This was apparently Herzl's one effort to implement some kind of voluntary population transfer.

The idea of inducing or pressing Arabs to move elsewhere remained a minor note in the early Zionist movement, however, for the simple reason that dominant discourse simply denied the existence of a problem. Arabs as individuals would profit from Jewish development, and Arabs as a competing nationality were not yet visible. To the extent that they considered the issue at all, Zionist luminaries were confident that Arabs would willingly, and even gratefully, accept their role as non-Jewish beneficiaries in a Jewish society—with, in time, a Jewish majority. This was the prevailing narrative, which Herzl shared and to which he returned in his major statement on the issue, in his utopian novel *Altneuland* (Old-New Land).

Herzl published *Altneuland* in 1902, when his diplomatic endeavors were floundering, as a means of reviving flagging enthusiasm for the cause. Set 20 years into the future, the novel lays out the most complete version of his vision for the Jewish homeland. In this context, he could hardly avoid dealing with the place of Arabs in this society—though, tellingly, it is a relatively minor aspect of the story. Arabs are equal citizens in this future utopia, and their perspective is represented by the character of Reschid Bey. In his brief appearance, Reschid is challenged by the novel's protagonist, Kingscourt: "Were not the older inhabitants of Palestine ruined by the Jewish immigration? And didn't they have to leave the country?" Reschid's response is a total denial of these claims: "Nothing could have been more wretched than an Arab village at the end of the nineteenth century. The peasants' clay hovels were unfit for stables. The children lay naked and neglected in the streets, and grew up like wild beasts. Now everything is different. They benefited from the progressive measures of the New Society whether they wanted to or not, whether they joined it or not."

Kingscourt continues to press his challenge: "Don't you regard these Jews as intruders?" Reschid continues his staunch defense of the harmony wrought by the building of the Jewish

homeland: “Would you call a man a robber who takes nothing from you, but brings you something instead? The Jews have enriched us. Why should we be angry with them? They dwell among us like brothers. Why should we not love them?”[86]

The mutual acceptance in this new society, and presumably with its neighbors, is so complete that there is no need for an army. But Herzl does allow discordant voices to be heard, at least on the Jewish side. A racist rabbi (to be sure, an anti-Zionist) is heading a party in upcoming elections running on a platform of making the Land of Israel solely for Jews. Needless to say, the racists are decisively defeated in the election, as the old-new society makes a decisive statement in defense of equality, nondiscrimination, and what today would be called multiculturalism. In this respect Herzl was moving slightly ahead of many others, signaling acceptance of Muslims as a group within a pluralized society.[87]

Herzl’s idealistic vision of Arab acquiescence in a prosperous Jewish society did not, of course, go unchallenged. On the Jewish side, as could have been predicted, it drew the scorn of Ahad Ha’am, who had registered his unease over a decade earlier. “What a fantasy,” he wrote caustically, calling attention once again to the fly in the ointment: “Only it is hard to understand how the New Society was clever enough to find enough land for the millions of Jews who returned from exile, if all the land that the Arabs farmed previously, i.e., most of the arable land in Palestine, remains in their hands as before.”[88] This is not to say that Ahad Ha’am had by this time realized the full extent of the conflict, but he was at least one step ahead of Herzl.

Burned out within a few years by his frenetic pace, Herzl died in 1904 at the age of 44, without having achieved his charter or having significantly advanced actual Jewish settlement in Palestine. He left behind, however, a mass movement that had galvanized the hopes and dreams of Jews everywhere, but especially the increasingly desperate masses in Eastern Europe. He also left behind an organizational framework of much greater visibility to the world at large and to those most directly affected by its program.

The increased visibility of the Zionist movement also expanded and complicated its relations with other parties in or near Palestine. An interesting expression of this came in 1903 from Bedouin tribes on the Egyptian border, who offered a tract of land for sale while proposing an alliance to end Turkish rule. Herzl asked Zalman David Levontin, as a veteran settler, for advice, and was told by him that open revolt against the Ottoman government was a bad idea for the weak and vulnerable Yishuv.[89] The rise of Zionism also cast a shadow over relations with the German Templers, who had in some ways served as a model and with whom cooperation had often been possible (see chap. 1). Jewish settlement now eclipsed the Templers’ numbers by far, and the Zionist program set out in 1897 seemed to challenge their own aspirations at the core. Relations deteriorated badly, with the Templer newspaper resorting to antisemitic tropes. In an attempt to improve relations, Zionist leader Otto Warburg in 1904 wrote a sympathetic article on the Templers in the major Zionist newspaper. Though basically conciliatory in tone, the overture was angrily rejected by Templer leaders who felt they were being patronized, and by Jews at that.[90]

Another expression of the expanding arena was the first attempt to unite the New Yishuv into a common framework with a “national” character, and to pull into this framework as much of the Old Yishuv—the preexisting Jewish population of Palestine—as possible. Meeting at Zikhron Ya’akov in 1903, a “Land of Israel Federation” was founded. Though it did hold together for

long, and did not succeed in bringing the Old Yishuv into the fold, the attempt was a clear sign of things yet to come.[91]

NATIONAL CURRENTS AMONG ARABS

Jews in Palestine and Zionists abroad were well aware of the hostility of the Ottoman government to their cause, but they could hardly ignore the Turks since they were the governing authority in Palestine. They did, however, ignore or minimize the opposition of Palestine's Arab residents by describing conflicts with them as localized, based on specific issues, or simply understandable cultural miscommunications. By the turn of the century, however, this became harder to argue as Arab leaders and officials began to exhibit signs of a "national" focus in their relations with Jewish settlements and residents. Associated with this was the *nahda* (renaissance or reawakening) that took place in Arab intellectual circles in the late nineteenth century. Beginning in Beirut and Damascus (see chap. 1), this movement for assertion of Arab identity also emerged strongly in Cairo and Alexandria after British occupation of Egypt in 1882 had ended Ottoman censorship there. The first Arab newspapers appeared in these cities, and a number of new literary and cultural journals reached Arabic-reading audiences throughout the region. Among these were Arab intellectual and literary circles in Palestine, located between the linked centers of this reawakening.[92]

As Jewish nationalism emerged in the form of an international movement with a defined program, those attracted to a sense of Arab national identity and interests could hardly fail to take note. In fact, even before 1897 Arab notables in official positions began to take a more "national" stance toward the growing Jewish presence, focusing less on arcane issues of landownership and grazing rights and more on the threat posed to the character of the country. One of these was Muhammad Tahir al-Husayni, mufti of Jerusalem and scion of a Jerusalem family that had long filled top religious posts under the Ottomans. As head of a commission on land sales, al-Husayni was, from at least 1893, trying to block all land sales to Jews, even Ottoman citizens, in the Jerusalem district. This was contrary to official Ottoman policy at the time, leading to the involvement of foreign consuls on behalf of their citizens. The German consul described the mufti as "one of the leading representatives of the fanatic faction" among local Muslims, and defined his aim as "a comprehensive ban on sale [of land to Jews]."[93] In trying to move Ottoman policy in this direction, al-Husayni was clearly reacting to broader implications of Jewish settlement. By 1897 the mufti's efforts appear to have succeeded in stopping land sales to Jews for several years.[94]

Two years later al-Husayni went a step further in his across-the-board opposition to any strengthening of the Jewish presence. By this time, of course, three Zionist congresses had been held and emerging nationalist sentiments among Arab elites had been further aroused. When the Administrative Council of the Jerusalem district discussed a tightening of restrictions on Jewish entry, the mufti proposed that new Jewish immigrants be terrorized as a step toward the eviction of all foreign Jews who had entered since 1891 (the year of a large wave of immigrants).[95] The governor of Jerusalem at the time, however, did not accept this idea and instead proposed to Constantinople that Jews be allowed to settle on condition that they become Ottoman citizens. Of course, even this was difficult to enforce, as has been noted.

At about the same time, another major Arab leader brought the issue to the attention of

Theodor Herzl himself, shortly after Herzl's return from his one trip to Palestine. Yusuf Zia al-Khalidi, from one of the notable families of Jerusalem and three times mayor of the city, was an early precursor of Arab nationalism (see chap. 1). Al-Khalidi had long followed the course of Zionism with growing concern. He was a well-educated scholar, even learning some Hebrew, known for his liberal views; in fact, because of these views he was at the time living in Constantinople under close surveillance of the Ottoman government. In early 1899 he wrote a candid letter to the chief rabbi of France, Zadoc Kahn, whom he knew to be close to Herzl and the Zionist movement. Kahn passed the letter on to Herzl for a response.

Al-Khalidi began by stressing his positive view of Jews: "I truly consider them to be relatives to us, the Arabs, for us they are cousins." He also expressed appreciation for Zionism in the abstract: "The idea in itself is completely natural, beautiful, and just. Who can contest the rights of Jews regarding Palestine? My God, historically it is clearly your country!" But, he quickly added, unfortunately nations are not governed by abstract conceptions: "The reality is that Palestine is now an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, and, what is more critical, it is inhabited by others who are not Israelites. . . . What material forces do the Jews possess for imposing their will, they who are 10 million at most, on 390 million Christians and 200 million Muslims?"

None of the Great Powers, al-Khalidi declared, would furnish the necessary means for Zionism to achieve its goals. It was "pure folly" for Dr. Herzl to believe, even with the consent of the sultan, that they could capture Palestine. It would only arouse the hatred of fanatics, who existed in Turkey and Palestine as elsewhere. In conclusion: "It is therefore necessary for the well-being of Jews in Turkey that the Zionist movement, in a geographic sense, stop. Let there be found a place somewhere for the unhappy Jewish nation, nothing is more just and equitable. . . . But, in the name of God, leave Palestine in peace."[96]

Herzl's response was a classic statement of the "benefits" theory backing Jewish settlement in Palestine. He had, by this time, digested prevailing Zionist claims about the advantages the Jews would bring to the existing population. He began by recalling how the Ottoman sultan had welcomed Jewish refugees from Spain four centuries earlier and declared that "the Jews were, are, and will be the best friends of Turkey." He referred briefly to the "new resources" this would open up to the Empire—a reference to potential Jewish help in consolidating Ottoman debt—and turned al-Khalidi's point about Jewish weakness into a defense of Zionism. Since there was no foreign power behind the movement, and Jews were "completely pacific," then "there is absolutely nothing to fear in their immigration."

As for the current residents of Palestine, Herzl repeated the standard argument that they would prosper as individuals from the new Jewish presence: "You see another difficulty in the existence of the non-Jewish population in Palestine. But who would think of sending them away? It is their well-being, their individual wealth that we would increase in bringing our own. . . . This is what the natives must understand, and they will gain excellent brothers as the Sultan will gain good and loyal subjects who will make this province, their historic homeland, flourish. . . . One should be the friend of Zionism when one is the friend of Turkey."[97]

Interestingly, the day before dispatching this letter to al-Khalidi, Herzl had met with Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and recorded in his diary: "I learned from him quite a bit about the sentiment in Turkey toward Zionism." Ben-Yehuda, known as a hard-liner, told Herzl that "in the Orient everybody was afraid of everybody. The people are a wild animal that could be unleashed, but also could be steered in any direction." Accordingly, Ben-Yehuda raised the idea of publishing a

newspaper in Arabic to create a more favorable climate of opinion. Herzl inquired about the cost and promised to consider the idea, but nothing came of it.[98] Neither Ben-Yehuda or Herzl, it seems, yet considered Arab opinion of Zionism to be a pressing issue.

As Arabs in Palestine were being drawn into the new currents of Arabism from both sides, leading Arab thinkers in this movement were also beginning to take note of the rise of Zionism and Jewish settlement in the heart of the Arab world. One of the first to do so was Muhammad Rashid Rida, a seminal religious and political thinker who advocated unity and reform in the Islamic world in order to revive its past glory and contend with Western intrusion. Rida was born in what is now Lebanon, but like many other "Syrian" intellectuals moved to Cairo to be able to write and publish more freely. He founded a weekly, *al-Manar,* in 1898, and in one of the first issues he addressed the issue of Jewish migration to Palestine, based on a factual account published in another journal (*al-Muqtataf*). Rida saw the fact that Jews sought refuge from European persecution in the Ottoman Empire as proof of Muslim moral superiority. But at the same time, he saw Jewish success in Palestine as a challenge to Muslims that ought to arouse them to reform and modernize before they became dominated by others: "You complacent ones, raise your heads and open your eyes. Look at what peoples and nations do. Are you happy to see the newspapers of every country reporting that the poor of the weakest peoples [the Jews], whom the governments of all nations are expelling, master so much knowledge and understanding of civilization methods that they are able to possess and colonize your country, and turn its masters into laborers and its wealthy into poor?"[99]

After a hiatus of four years, Rida returned to the subject of Zionism in a 1902 article. By this time he was aware of the World Zionist Organization—not mentioned in his first article—and was much better informed about the movement and its leaders, though he still got some facts wrong, confusing Israel Zangwill with Theodor Herzl and reporting that Zangwill had recently completed the purchase of Jerusalem! Rida was also by this time more impressed with the strength of Jews as a people, describing them as a mighty nation rather than "the poor of the weakest." But his appreciation of Jews as a people is still mixed with apprehension about their ultimate goals in Palestine:

> We heard about the Zionist Organization for the first time about five years ago. It is a political organization whose goal is to take possession of the Holy Land to make it the place of their kingdom and the seat of their ruler. . . . At first, it did not show its demand for a realm, but pretended that it desired to transfer poor Jewish emigrants and refugees to Palestine to revive her and to live in safety under the rule of the Sultan. It seems that now it is confident in its strength and it no longer needs to pretend.[100]

The growing evidence of consistent Arab hostility to Zionist settlement was pushing Jewish figures in the Yishuv, where such opposition could not be ignored, to find better explanations that still did not indict their entire enterprise. It was no longer possible to put the onus on specific issues like disputed land claims or cultural antipathies that could be overcome. But it was still important to deny that there was a basic conflict that was unavoidable or a basic hatred toward Jews that was intractable. The cause of this antagonism had to be something that Jewish settlers could, at least in the course of time, work to moderate and eliminate. It had to be something relatively superficial, not something inherent to the reality of Jewish settlement itself. One explanation along these lines was offered by Eliyahu Sapir, a teacher and pioneer in Petah Tikva with roots in the Old Yishuv of Jerusalem.

Sapir grew up in Jerusalem's orthodox religious community but was unusual in having close contact with Arab language and culture as well as a solid grounding in traditional religious studies. His father, a noted rabbi, was credited with the "discovery" of the Jews of Yemen, and the young Eliyahu himself learned Arabic from the educator David Yellin at the alliance school. He married into a family that settled in Petah Tikva (whose founders had come from Jerusalem), and moved to Petah Tikva where he served as teacher of Arabic and Hebrew for 11 years. During this time he clearly became alarmed by growing hostility to Jews in Arab publications that were then emerging, and he published an article in *HaShiloah* in 1899 that was the most important attempt to come to grips with the issue since Ahad Ha'am's 1891 article.

Sapir was not ready to concede that the expressions of hatred coming from Arab journalists and essayists were basic to Arab culture or history or were in any way an expression of the struggle between two peoples over one land. The causes he identified were more superficial or artificially induced and thus could be countered with appropriate education and good will. Muslims and Arabs had not been notably hostile to Jews historically, though he did allow that Arabs "tend to suspect any and every stranger who comes to their land." This, however, was not an adequate explanation; something external had to have introduced this new form of hatred into Arab discourse. So where did it come from? In Sapir's eyes, it came from the West and, in particular, from a specific source of Jew-hatred of European origin:

> But the main source of hatred aimed at Israel in these lands is:
>
> The Catholic Church. Members of this church are numerous in Syria and in the Land of Israel and also in Egypt and are powerful in their influence and actions on the land and the people. . . . They are our sworn enemies and set us obstacles and traps, and from the day that the many Jesuits were added, their evil actions multiplied. . . . In the Jesuit literature they strain to throw hatred, anger, scorn, and shame on Israel, against the law of the land and the government's justice.[101]

It is not clear exactly what stimulated Sapir's focus on Catholics and on the Jesuits in particular. Apparently he was reacting to the emerging expressions of Arab nationalism in the literature he was reading, and many of these early authors were in fact Arab Christians. But Sapir drew the wrong conclusions. Arab Christians were prominent in the rise of Arab nationalism for obvious reasons: identity as "Arabs" made them an integral part of a rising nation united by language and culture from Morocco to Mesopotamia, while identity as Christians left them as small islands in an Islamic ocean. They did not need Jesuit tracts in order to connect the dots. Arab nationalism led them to view Zionist aspirations in the center of the Arab world as a dire threat.

Sapir's article demonstrates the desperate need for an explanation of Arab hostility that put the blame on transient or incidental causes that could be countered (his own solution was an alliance with Muslims against the Christians). Clearly any countercampaign based on this analysis would not have gained much traction. But, at the same time, Sapir demonstrated that hostility to the Zionist project in the Arab press was already a factor to be taken into account, and it presented a long-term problem (though one that he considered soluble). Sapir also called for Zionists to acquire better knowledge of Arabic and of Arab culture and to make better efforts to be good neighbors. His admonition could be considered the first expression of the "integrative-altruistic" approach that came to form one pole of a debate dividing Zionists into warring camps.[102]

This debate had not yet taken shape. But, by 1903, the "Uganda" Congress—the Sixth

Zionist Congress—opened up an entirely new realm of disputation that had been shoved into the background. This was the congress that considered a British proposal to set aside part of their African colonial domain (actually in present-day Kenya) for Jewish settlement. Herzl favored the move as a means to provide an immediate haven for the multitudes of hard-pressed Jews in Eastern Europe, but he met vehement opposition to any "Jewish homeland" outside of Palestine. Only by evoking his tremendous standing as founder of the movement was he able to secure agreement simply to investigate the matter. But one result of the fiery debate was to unleash, among the "Uganda" proponents, a strong incentive to expose all of the problems with Palestine that had been studiously minimized previously. Was a Jewish state in Palestine even possible? All the suppressed doubts came to the fore. Above all, the sporadic discussion and self-reassurance about the Arab presence there gave way to full-fledged debate.

Feeding into this was a growing sense that Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine, contrary to the standard narrative, were getting worse. With the end of Baron Rothschild's direct support, some of the colonies seemed to be losing ground as younger settlers left. The smaller colonies, in particular, seemed in danger of becoming protectorates of powerful local leaders (like Metula at an earlier stage). The prevailing narrative no longer seemed adequate, as matters were clearly headed for confrontation on a higher level.[103]

NATION TO NATION

By 1905 Jewish settlers in Erets Yisrael had forged a new reality. They had created a new social structure and culture independent of traditional Jewish life in the cities. They had founded planned settlements in the European mode, built infrastructure and public institutions, introduced new agricultural techniques, devised an educational system, and initiated the use of Hebrew as a spoken language. But they had not resolved tensions with the population among whom they now lived.[104]

By this time it was becoming clear that resolving clashes between Jewish colonies and their neighbors did not put an end to the underlying confrontation. Peace might be restored in a given locale, but new conflicts erupted elsewhere. More importantly, opposition to Jewish settlement was emerging as a "national" issue for an Arab community that was beginning to express its common identity and common interests. New voices were being heard on the issue: Arab officials in the Ottoman administration, public figures, intellectuals, and protonationalists both in Palestine and elsewhere.

Jewish settlers and their supporters responded by looking for a convenient explanation, meaning one that did not imply intractable conflict and preferably one to which ready solutions were attached. For example, it was tempting to blame foreign influences that had corrupted the natural affinity between Arabs and their Jewish cousins. Arabs did not really hate Jews, but Catholics or others had infected the region with European antisemitic prejudices. As with any disease, one simply had to eradicate the infection.

Others were willing to look more at themselves for an explanation. We did not do enough, they argued, to integrate into the neighborhood. If Arabs and Jews are indeed cousins, separated by historical happenstance, then we should be able to forge a common Semitic identity. This would involve not only sharing with the Arabs some of our own European heritage and skills but also adopting some of their culture—beginning with the Arabic language. This argument found special resonance among native Sephardi Jews who were very critical of European assumptions

of superiority and European insistence on separation.

Assimilation was not, however, an attractive vision to most of those fleeing the failure of Russianization as the path to Jewish salvation. The refugees who chose Erets Yisrael over other destinations were committed, at the core, to building a distinctive community and way of life that would not be dependent on others. It is true that the model they had in mind bore the stamp of Europe all over, but they saw it nevertheless as a model that promised Jewish self-reliance and independence. They would no longer need to adjust to a host culture; indeed, in theory their model could be set down anywhere. In this frame of mind, Arab culture not only was of little relevance but could actually be a threat to the integrity of their own project.

Even when forced by circumstances to rely on Arab labor, by this time the leading Zionist voices were clearly looking for a way out of that dilemma.

If the Arabs were not essential to their undertaking—if they were in fact irrelevant or even potentially detrimental—then why not arrange their peaceful transfer to separate territories? Some Zionists had thoughts along these lines, but at this time most did not consider such wrenching options to be necessary. Arabs would be the incidental beneficiaries of the restoration of Jewish life. Of course this was likely to work only for benefits on the individual level; it would be difficult to achieve on a collective level, if and when Arabs moved to reassert their identity as a people.

From the Arab perspective, the Jewish insistence on forming a separate community within Palestine was precisely the issue. In an era when resistance to European penetration was gathering momentum, this would be viewed not only as a foreign implantation but also as a civilizational challenge like the Crusades or European colonialism. Sephardi Jews could in theory be encompassed in the emerging "Arabness" of the new nationalism, just as Christians were (often as founders). But there was no place for those who clung to their Europeanness, with the protection of foreign consuls, their privileged passports, and their resistance to local language and culture.

Bridging the gap between Jew and Arab was, perhaps, conceivable. Bridging the gap between Europe and the Orient, at the same time, was an entirely different proposition.

NOTES

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16. Protocol of the First Conference of the Association of Hebrew Teachers of Palestine, 1903, second session, 6, Aviezer Yellin Archives of Jewish Education in Israel and the Diaspora, 9.1, box 1, quoted in Saposnik, *Becoming Hebrew*, p. 70.

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chapter seven

BATTLE LINES

THE FINAL PERIOD OF OTTOMAN rule before World War I was a time of consolidation in both camps. The lines that would define the future conflict were clearly emerging. The first notable manifesto of Arab nationalism, written by a publicist who had served in the Ottoman Palestinian government, made its appearance. Its influence was limited at the time, but it signaled the direction in which Arab intellectual currents, Palestinian or others, were headed. More pertinent in the short term was the advent of organized campaigns of general opposition to Jewish settlement in Palestine, in contrast to past ad hoc reactions to specific cases. By the end of the period, there were also the first stirrings of serious and sustained efforts by Arab thinkers and public figures to analyze and understand Zionism as part of an anti-Zionist program and strategy.

On the Jewish side, there was the beginning of a more explicit recognition of a long-term and critical "Arab problem," going beyond the warnings of Ahad Ha'am and others. Many if not most continued to maintain that it was not really such an insuperable obstacle, but it was at least the beginning of a debate and of serious argument about the implications for the future of Jewish settlement. Schools of thought that were to become the major poles of future debate were now visible, and the arguments being introduced would look familiar to future generations.

In the meantime, the situation on the ground was also evolving. Estimates of the Jewish population in Palestine at the outbreak of World War I (1914–1915), toward the end of the Ottoman period, vary from sixty thousand, based again on Ottoman records,[1] to ninety-four thousand according to later studies by Israeli demographers.[2] The problem is not only estimating the number of unregistered Jewish residents but also accounting for how many left after having entered. The figures for Jewish immigration are slippery enough, but estimates of the outflow—noted by many contemporary observers—are even more difficult to pin down. In 1915, Dr. Arthur Ruppin, a German-trained demographer who became head of the Palestine Office of the Zionist movement and directed land and settlement efforts, published a study, based on available records, that later became the point of departure for British Mandate record keepers. Ruppin estimated the overall population of the three Palestinian districts as 689,275, of which about 85,000 were Jewish. He also arrived at a figure of 12,020 for the 43 Jewish agricultural colonies that existed by that time.[3]

A JEWISH DEFINITION: YITZHAK EPSTEIN

Growth in the Jewish population during the 1905–1914 period came from a new wave of immigrants, conventionally labeled as the second *aliya*. Their numbers are estimated as anywhere from eighteen thousand to forty thousand, given the inadequacies of the records, with recent estimates mostly in the thirty thousand to thirty-five thousand range.[4] This wave of new settlers was distinctive in ways that will be discussed, but in basic respects it was a continuation of the first *aliya*. Most of those entering Palestine came from Russia, and most were propelled by recurring persecution in that unstable land.

A new wave of pogroms had erupted beginning in Easter (a favored time of year for pogromists) of 1903 in Kishinev, the capital of Russian Bessarabia. Unbelievably, it was sparked by revival of the medieval blood libel: Jews were accused of killing two small children in order to use their blood to make matzo for Passover. The widespread death and destruction ended only on the third day. There was a second Kishinev pogrom in 1905, by which time the violent attacks on Jewish communities had become widespread throughout Russia.

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 contributed greatly to the unrest and turmoil in Russia. The war was a humiliation for the tsarist regime, further weakening its position against growing revolutionary currents. A general strike was called in the fall of 1905, forcing the government to issue a manifesto that promised reform and the establishment of a legislature (the "First Russian Revolution"). But violence reached new levels, with right-wing extremists attacking supposed revolutionaries. Once again Jews, as supposed instigators, were major targets, and once again the police and army intervened little and late in their defense as hundreds of pogroms swept the country. Once again Jews fled primarily westward to Europe and the Americas, but with a small number turning to the emerging Yishuv in Palestine.

Most of those arriving after 1904 thus shared a common background with most of those who had arrived during the preceding two decades. They also shared and expressed the belief that what they intended to build in Palestine could only benefit all the land's inhabitants, Jewish or non-Jewish. But there were two important differences, in degree if not in kind.

First, the recent experience of attacks on Jews had been especially searing, and while still in Russia, Jews had begun to organize and to fight back. In a number of Russian cities, assailants had been shocked at encountering armed and angry Jewish fighters who exacted retribution. Those who reached Palestine came with strong assertive attitudes about the need to arm and mount a strong defense against any and all threats. Of course, the earlier settlers had also taken pride in their liberation from Jewish helplessness and their pitched battles with Arab marauders. But the newcomers added to this an emphasis on organizing and arming on a collective level—and less reliance on hired Arab guards.[5] There were even hints that armed force might one day be a factor in broader political struggles.

The second difference was also related to changes in Russia during the intervening years. Two decades later, in the atmosphere attending the First Russian Revolution, the nation was awash in revolutionary ideas, for instance, socialism, agrarianism, and idealization of manual labor. Again, earlier settlers had imbibed many of these notions (consider the Bilu), especially agrarianism and a return to the soil. But the second *aliya* (over time) elevated these doctrines almost to a new orthodoxy. This was especially critical regarding the issue of Arab labor. Many of the newly arrived settlers needed work as laborers, since they lacked the capital to buy into existing settlements, but they found themselves at a disadvantage against the Arab workers who outnumbered them. More broadly, the ideal of self-reliance and manual labor was one that new

colonists could invoke against veterans who often preached the same ideal but failed to practice it.

The new wave of settlers coincided with a relative lull in new settlement activity (1903–1908), which aggravated the labor conflict. There were fewer opportunities, especially for those without means, and thus intense competition for employment—something rare in new settlement communities. Jewish workers in 1905 organized their first workers' movement, *HaPo'el HaTsa'ir* (the Young Worker) and embarked on a "Conquest of Labor" (*Kibush Ha'Avoda*) to replace hired Arab laborers with Jewish workers. Their program drew on existing partiality for agrarianism and a return to the soil, but it added elements of class conflict and socialism drawn from the Russian experience.[6]

In the Palestinian context, this meant that class conflict and ethnic conflict were fused, putting the socialists in the front line of confrontation with Arabs. This prominence of the "left" in the conflict was to endure for some time. Jewish workers, as noted (see chap. 6), were disadvantaged in this competition because of the lower wages, relatively fewer needs, agricultural experience, flexibility, and amenability of Arab workers from nearby villages. Initially, the strategies adopted to "conquer the labor" despite these handicaps were either to lower Jewish wages to the Arab pay scale or to monopolize the skilled positions in a stratified labor market.[7]

By 1908 both of these expedients had failed. Joseph Vitkin, one of the *HaPo'el HaTsa'ir* leaders, declared at the party convention that year: "Many of the workers have begun to abandon the work: both those who possessed the physical vigor required for the work, and those who excelled in their work on account of their dedication to the ideal. Stealing away ashamed, they have begun to give way. Most of the former have left work and country simultaneously, and the latter began to search for intellectual work. . . . The workers have ceased to think about remaining mere agricultural workers for ever."[8]

But if the campaign to replace Arab workers had succeeded, what would have been the implications for Jewish-Arab cooperation? The employment of Arabs by Jewish settlements was in fact the major—some might say the only—pillar in the prevailing benefit theory that had been realized up to that time. If the income that neighboring Arab villages earned were cut off, the incentive to maintain peaceful relations would certainly be undercut.

As it happens, this campaign coincided with the first clear recognition of the centrality of relations with Arabs to the entire Zionist enterprise, and the beginning of serious debate within the movement. The background to this was the Uganda issue that dominated the Sixth and Seventh Zionist Congresses in 1903 and 1905 (see chap. 6). When the Zionist movement divided in the early 1900s over the idea of founding a Jewish homeland outside of Palestine, those who favored such an option—the "territorialists"—naturally began to find numerous flaws in the Palestinian option that had previously been studiously minimized. Near the top of the list was the presence of an Arab population. Israel Zangwill, English Zionist and territorialist spokesman, told large Zionist audiences in New York and Manchester that "we must be prepared either to drive out by the sword the tribes in possession as our forefathers did, or to grapple with the problem of a large alien population, mostly Mohammedan and accustomed for centuries to despise us."[9] Since Zangwill did not consider the expulsion of Arabs to be a real option, he came down heavily on the side of building Zion outside of Zion. But the Uganda option was firmly and

finally rejected at the 1905 Zionist Congress, leading Zangwill and his followers to withdraw and found a different movement, the Jewish Territorial Organization.

In response to the Arab issue raised by the territorialists, the defenders of "Zionism in Zion" were forced to consider possible answers. Interestingly, these answers moved beyond the platitudes of the benefit theory and actually entered the domain of strategic calculation and the role of force. Some argued for an alliance with the Turks, arguing that the emerging Arab unrest offered the opportunity to prove loyalty to the Ottoman regime and win its favor. Others urged precisely the opposite: ally with Arab nationalists, help end Turkish rule, and in the process earn gratitude—and dominion in Palestine—as a reward. Finally, some of the younger Zionists of Zion suggested that Jews might be able to prevail by force unaided by a strategic alliance, despite the absence at the time of any kind of organized armed force in the Yishuv.[10] None of these answers seem very realistic in retrospect, but the fact that defenders of Zion felt impelled to offer them shows that they were beginning to acknowledge the existence of a problem.

In fact, it was a speech at this same 1905 gathering in Basel, Switzerland, that finally moved the Arab question, briefly, to center stage in the movement. The speaker was Yitzhak Epstein, a Russian-born teacher and writer who immigrated to Palestine/Erets Yisrael in 1886 and settled in Rosh Pina, the first Zionist settlement in the Upper Galilee. Most of his public activity was in the educational arena rather than in politics. Epstein spoke before a meeting of the cultural association *Ivriya*, convening simultaneously with the Zionist Congress. His provocative presentation stirred considerable debate and was published two years later in *HaShiloah* [A Hidden Question], the journal founded by Ahad Ha'am.[11] The article is remarkable in several respects: as a more sensitive analysis of Arabs in Palestine than previous Zionist writings, as a projection of the ultimate dimensions of the issue decades before these dimensions took final shape, and as a provocative statement that was instrumental in framing the debate within the movement.

Epstein exhorted Zionists to be more realistic about the Arab issue, but his own idealism was as innocent as the untested optimism of early Zionists who proclaimed there was no problem. In light of the subsequent century of bloodshed, Epstein's proffered solution—a Jewish state and a strengthened Arab community in the same place—seems touchingly naive. Was it ever possible, as Epstein projected, that the Zionist presence would be such a blessing to the Arabs that they would regard the day the Jews came "as a day of salvation and redemption" and that "hundreds of villagers will come to request the Jews to take over their land"?[12] Epstein was still wedded to the notion that material benefits would win the Arabs over; he differed only in arguing that this would only happen if the thrust of the whole Zionist program were radically altered.

Epstein's thinking was also permeated by paternalistic visions of Jews as carriers of Western civilization and Arabs as grateful students: Palestine "is now living in the sixteenth century," and the task is to "prepare the inhabitants and make them ready for our community (*yishuv*)."[13] Behind this was an assumption of moral purity that jars on modern sensibilities: "We are guileless, we have no alien thought of subjugation and of diluting the national character of our neighbors; with a pure heart we come to settle among them in order to better them in all respects.[14]

But whatever the naiveté in his solution, Epstein was ahead of his contemporaries in seeing that there was a problem that required a solution. He recognized, as had few others apart from

Ahad Ha'am, that Arabs were not isolated and passive individuals subject to manipulation by others but members of a common culture that was a major actor in history. Unlike Ahad Ha'am, he evinced considerable knowledge of, and even empathy toward, the actual content of this culture. Based on what must have been a searing personal experience, Epstein portrayed the eviction of the Arab tenant farmers who had lived on the land of Rosh Pina: "The lament of Arab women . . . still rings in my ears today. . . the valley was filled with their lamentation. As they went they stopped to kiss the stones and the earth."[15] Other lyrical passages depicted the hard life of the Arab farmers, or fellahin, in vivid terms.

At the same time, he saw the Arab people as a potentially formidable enemy, characterizing them as "great, resolute, and zealous," and as loving their homeland as much as the Zionists did. Recognizing the collective dimension of Arab identity and interest, he laid down as one of his two basic principles that Zionists must respect not only individual rights but also "national rights." In this respect, Epstein was some 70 years ahead of the Zionist consensus.

If Arabs were recognized as a nation, then conflicts with them had to be worked out on the national level. This ran against the grain of previous thinking, which dealt with Arab claims only on the individual or local level and thereby reduced the issue to another in the long list of environmental obstacles to be overcome. Arab hostility was a hardship, like aridity or malaria, not a political problem pitting one people against another. For Zionists the address for political problems was Constantinople (later they turned to other outside parties, the Hashemite dynasty or Great Britain). This will not work, said Epstein; Zionists would have to deal directly with the Arabs of Palestine: "Up to now we had the wrong address . . . we negotiated with all the in-laws, but forgot about the groom himself."[16]

How could Zionists for so long have failed to recognize a problem that "outweighs all the others"? Epstein charitably attributes this obliviousness not to intentional avoidance but to lack of knowledge about the country and its inhabitants (even among those settled in Palestine) and to a certain lack of political and human sensitivity. He does not address the pressing need in early Zionism to present a positive portrait of the land, and to minimize all problems, in promoting what was by any objective standard a daunting struggle against heavy odds. The need to believe was too strong, and the full truth too threatening, for most in the movement, as the earlier reaction to Ahad Ha'am's essay had shown.

Epstein squarely identified the core of the problem: conflict over land. Purchases of large tracts of cultivated land, while perfectly legal ("we are completely righteous"),[17] usually led to the eviction of tenant farmers who had often cultivated it for generations. This was not only morally dubious but also undermined Zionism's future by unnecessarily making this mighty people into an implacable foe. In illustration, Epstein dwelled in some detail on the purchase of Metula, his neighboring village in the Upper Galilee, and the extraordinary difficulties and bitterness involved in removing its Druze inhabitants (see chap. 4).

Recognition of this core conflict brought Epstein to the basic and unprecedented conclusion that success in the Zionist program, as then formulated and implemented, would not in itself resolve tensions with the Arab population. Implicitly this forced the Zionist movement to choose between two courses of action: either to revise its settlement policies radically in order to obtain Arab consent to sharing the land or to impose its will on the Arabs by force. Epstein never considered the second option. Jews were "a people without an army and without warships,"

while Arabs in Palestine were part of a people who dominated the entire region.[18] Again, Epstein's apprehension of an Arab world united against Zionism was remarkably ahead of its time; he is thankful that "no Arab movement in the national and political sense" had yet emerged but argued that no movement was needed because the Arab people had never ceased to exist. In any event, he warned, "we must not provoke the sleeping lion!"[19]

The use of force being unimaginable, Epstein argued for a historic compromise with Arabs that would so enlarge the benefits to them, while eliminating the sources of friction, that they would not only accept but even welcome the Jewish presence. Epstein did not question the validity of Jewish claims in Palestine, but, as the Arabs also had rights there, he felt: "Our historical claims may not avail us."[20] He posited as a guideline that no one should be worse off because of Zionist settlement; consequently new settlement would have to focus on previously uncultivated and uninhabited areas, except where improved farming methods (a key Zionist bargaining chip) could create room without the dispossession of tenants.

Epstein advocated a historic covenant (*brit*) with the Arabs of Palestine, written not on paper but on hearts and minds and actualized not only in the sharing of land but also in the opening of all Zionist institutions, from schools and hospitals to banks and theaters, to Arab participation. Nor was this entirely one-way paternalism: Jews would also become better acquainted with Arab culture, language, and daily life.

Epstein's forthright advocacy of a historic compromise helped to polarize the debate by galvanizing those who believed such a compromise to be either heresy or fantasy, or both. Opposite Epstein's integrative pole soon appeared fuller formulations of the separatist or confrontational pole, arguing that Zionism must maintain its distance from alien cultures to achieve its historic vision and that in any event a clash of interests with the local population was inevitable.

Moshe Smilansky, later to become a leading advocate of Jewish-Arab coexistence, was not ready at this time to go as far as Epstein. Shortly before Epstein's speech, Smilansky had written that "the Arabs are not wild people to be left out of consideration," underlining the (by now common) observation that they farmed almost all the tillable land and concluding that gradual redemption of the land, and not force, was the answer: "We do not have the will nor the capability to defeat the inhabitants of *Erets Yisrael* with our sword and our bow."[21] But he reacted vociferously to Epstein's article: "Our main objective should be to become the majority in our country. Any act which goes counter to this aim is a national betrayal." Rather than forming a partnership with the Arabs, Jews should keep their distance: "Let us not be too familiar with the Arab fellahin lest our children adopt their ways and learn from their ugly deeds. . . . Let us be as strong as they and even more so."[22]

In publishing Epstein's speech, *HaShiloah* editor Joseph Klausner noted dismissively that the topic "is not outdated even now" (i.e., after two years) and, further noting his disagreement with it, promised a response. This was duly published a few months later, in the form of a three-page article by the writer Nehama Pukhachewsky that attacked every single one of Epstein's premises.[23] Epstein did make the Arab issue more visible, but few agreed at the time that it was "a question that outweighs all others."

INTEGRATION OR CONFRONTATION?

Despite Yitzhak Epstein's speech in Basel that year, it was still possible in 1905 for Zionists to ignore or minimize the existence of an "Arab problem." Apart from the Uganda controversy, attention was less focused on Palestine than on the First Russian Revolution and its impact on the movement. When non-Russian Zionist leaders issued a statement in early 1905 supporting the earlier formation of the religious Zionist movement *Mizrahi* by Russian Zionists at Vilna, they strongly supported colonization as opposed to Herzl's diplomatic approach—but made no mention of the Arabs.[24] When Richard J. H. Gottheil published his influential entry on Zionism in the Jewish Encyclopedia in 1905, he described the sultan's opposition to Jewish immigration—but made no mention of the Arabs.[25]

An impartial observer still could, at this point, attribute existing tensions between Arabs and Jews to the usual quarrels among neighbors, perhaps with a touch of cultural antagonism added. The quarrels did seem to be pervasive wherever European Jewish settlers established themselves among an Arab population, but they could be described as localized, due to particular issues, and bearing no broader significance. This became the standard narrative in later retellings set down after the conflict had, undeniably, assumed broader significance. Typical was Jewish Colonisation Association agent Haim Kalvarisky, who said of the entire first *aliya* period: "There were sometimes clashes over borders, but these battles are also found everywhere between the [Arab] villagers and their neighbors. There were also assaults by remote *beduin* for plunder, but the *beduin* plunder and pillage their own people as well. This was not an assault specially aimed at Jews. Generally in the veteran settlements the relations between Jews and Arabs were good enough."[26]

Even Ahad Ha'am, despite his strictures on fair treatment of Arabs, did not yet regard the issue of sufficient importance to require special measures. As late as 1908, he reacted to (yet another) suggestion for a Zionist newspaper in Arabic with sarcasm: "What shall we say to the Arabs? That we want to settle in Palestine? And what will they answer? 'Good! Let us work and live together'? . . . How long shall we delude ourselves with empty phrases?"[27]

Arab nationalism was beginning to emerge, but it was not yet so visible that Zionists were forced to pay attention. Those who did notice its advent could tell themselves that it was directed against the Turkish overlords, not the pitifully small Jewish Yishuv. The real obstacles facing the Zionist movement, in their mind, were Ottoman opposition, Muslim and Christian prejudices, and—admitting something clear to the early settlers—xenophobia.[28]

As has been noted (see chap. 2), modern Hebrew literature in its first few decades also paid almost no attention to the Arab surroundings in which most of this literature was written. One of the few exceptions to this was Moshe Smilansky, the Rehovot settler who had condemned Yitzhak Epstein for suggesting integration with Arabs (see preceding section). Despite this initial reticence, in 1906 Smilansky began writing short stories on Arab life that demonstrated at least an effort to understand this culture. His stories highlighted Arab—often Bedouin—folkways and their exotic features, sometimes with a tragic dimension. They portrayed the role of anger, revenge, honor, fatalism, and superstition but also conveyed a certain respect and included positive models. There is little on interactions with Jewish settlers save for one story ("Latifa") that describes the hostility of a village sheikh, reflecting a prevailing notion that it was the "effendi" class that fomented hatred of Jews.[29] The bottom line is that even Smilansky, who became a great champion of Jewish-Arab rapprochement, did not see the Arabs as equals but as

recipients of benefits in a one-sided relationship.[30]

A new variant in the integrationist camp came with the surge in socialist ideology. Central to this was Ber Borochov, who came from a Ukrainian maskil background close to Hovevei Tsion but was also influenced strongly by socialist revolutionary movements in Russia. In 1905 Borochov published a landmark manifesto, *The National Question and the Class Struggle*, that synthesized Marxism and Jewish nationalism—no small achievement since Marxist socialism generally dismissed nationalism as artificial. Borochov was one of the founders of Po'alei Tsion, a Marxist Zionist party that began in Russia but became central to Labor Zionism in Palestine.[31] In 1907 he moved to Vienna to edit the party newspaper.

Borochov dealt with the Arab question in two articles he wrote during this period. In the first, interestingly, he invoked racial kinship along the same lines as the "naive assimilationists": "It is clear that the racial difference between a Diaspora Jew and the Palestinian *fellahin* is no more significant than the difference between Ashkenazi and *Sephardi* Jews."[32] By the following year he had shifted to a solution based on common class interests, more in line with his basic ideology: "The Jewish immigrants will guide the development of the productive forces of *Erets Yisrael* and the local population will assimilate in the course of time, both economically and culturally, to the Jews."[33] In other words, common class interests would overcome ethnic division. In both cases the solution lay in assimilation, in erasing the difference, whether in race or in class. In either case Arabs would do most of the adjusting; Borochov would, however, grant *cultural* autonomy to Arabs who did not become part of Jewish society.[34]

Both integrationists and separatists were still operating within the "benefit" paradigm; Arabs would gain from Jewish settlement in either case. But increasing evidence of Arab resistance led to greater focus on the practical dimension. New settlements would be built, over opposition if necessary, with the expectation that Arab acceptance would come naturally in the course of time. The figure who embodied this shift was Arthur Ruppin, a university-trained economist and demographer from East Prussia, who in 1907 was sent by the WZO to report on settlement issues and was then appointed in 1908 as head of its Palestine Office. Ruppin preferred creating facts on the ground to "diplomatic" Zionism. His model for the development of the New Yishuv was influenced by Prussian colonization in Polish regions near his home city of Posen, where the emphasis was on putting people on the land in less-populated areas rather than displacing Polish inhabitants.[35] Applying this to Palestine, he wrote in his 1907 report: "I see it as absolutely necessary to limit, for the time being, the territorial aim of Zionism. We should strive to attain autonomy not in the whole of *Erets Yisrael*, but only in certain districts."[36] Based on existing population patterns, Ruppin proposed concentrating on joining the coastal settlements to those in the Jordan Valley and Sea of Galilee region through the Jezre'el Valley, creating an N-shaped bloc of settlements that would be solidly Jewish.[37]

Others were beginning to stake out more hard-line positions, arguing that if Arab hostility was inevitable, it should be recognized, confronted, and overcome. Among these was Joseph Klausner, literary scholar and public figure, who had succeeded Ahad Ha'am as editor of *HaShiloah*. Klausner was born near Vilna, but his family settled soon after that in Odessa. Like Ruppin, Klausner earned a doctorate from a German university, and in the same year as Ruppin (1902). He was eventually to master fifteen languages and publish over a thousand articles and

forty books. Though he moved to Palestine only in 1919, his position as editor of *HaShiloah*, until its demise in 1926, gave him a platform to oppose any melding of Jewish and Arab cultures.

For Klausner, rapprochement with the Arabs was not only unnecessary but actually a distraction and a menace to the rebuilding of Jewish life. As he wrote shortly after the publication of Epstein's landmark article: "But I certainly would not want . . . the Jews to imitate the Arabs and the *beduin*, that is, to be influenced by a primitive culture. . . . We, the Jews, who have dwelt two thousand years and more among cultured peoples, cannot and must not descend again to the cultural level of the semi-barbaric peoples. . . . Is the change of center to be only this, that we leave the exile of Edom for the exile of Ishmael?"[38]

Klausner was later to become sympathetic toward Revisionist Zionism, the militant movement that opposed "territorial compromise" and advocated mobilization of the Jewish community for armed struggle. His grandnephew, the Israeli author Amos Oz, recalls the presence of a bust of Revisionist founder Vladimir Jabotinsky in Klausner's living room.[39]

As it happens, Jabotinsky also made his first mark on the scene during this period. Born in Odessa to an assimilated family, at the age of 17 he began publishing articles and was sent as a journalist to Bern and Rome. He returned to Odessa in time to help organize Jewish self-defense units even before the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, turning toward Zionism and toward the need for armed resistance. As a delegate at the 1905 Zionist Congress, Jabotinsky drew attention in a speech that was interpreted as a call to arms.[40] A leading territorialist rebuked the young firebrand: "We still do not have a single decent colony in Palestine . . . and in comes Jabotinsky, stands at the rostrum of the Congress, and proclaims that we shall take Palestine by force."[41] Seizing Palestine by force seemed hopelessly delusional at the time, but Jabotinsky's fervent words were a harbinger of much yet to come.

THE ARAB NATION AWAKES

When he delivered his warning message in 1905, Yitzhak Epstein was relieved "that at the very least there is for now no Arab movement in the national and political sense of that term."[42] He was apparently unaware of a book published only a few months earlier that is often considered the first significant manifesto in the campaign for Arab independence and statehood. Oddly enough this treatise did not appear in Arabic but was produced in Paris, in French. The author, Najib Azuri, was a Maronite Christian born in what is now Lebanon. He had studied in Paris and in Constantinople before securing an appointment as an assistant to Kazim Bey, governor of Jerusalem, in 1898. After falling out with the governor, Azuri fled to the relative safety of British-controlled Cairo in 1904 and began a press campaign against Kazim Bey. Consequently, he was condemned to death in absentia by his nemesis, but by then he had moved on to Paris where he published *Le Reveil de la Nation Arabe* (Awakening of the Arab Nation) in January 1905.[43]

Azuri's experience in Palestine is reflected in the first few pages of his book, where he begins with condemnation of "the universal Jewish peril," promising to publish a second book on this particular menace in the near future (no such book ever appeared). Azuri warns that "our movement comes just at the moment when Israel is so close to succeeding" in its quest for universal domination. Palestine, in his eyes, serves as a "miniature" version of the future Arab empire that he is championing, and the Arab movement comes just in time to defeat the nefarious

Jewish designs.[44] The fact that the notorious forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* had been circulated by the Russian secret police just two years earlier may have some bearing on this, though Azuri makes no direct reference to this antisemitic landmark.

At a time when the parties themselves scarcely recognized that they were involved in a conflict, Azuri was ready to ascribe to the emerging confrontation a significance far beyond the immediate arena: "Two important phenomena, of the same nature yet opposed, which have not yet attracted anyone's attention, are evident at this moment in Asian Turkey: these are the awakening of the Arab nation and the veiled effort of Jews to reconstitute on a very large scale the ancient monarchy of Israel. These two movements are destined to fight continually until one vanquishes the other. The fate of the entire world will depend on the final outcome of this battle between these two peoples representing two contrary principles."[45]

Azuri's invocation of a world-shaking struggle between two opposed forces is strikingly reminiscent of Alexis de Tocqueville's famous prophecy, in 1835, of a future global confrontation between the United States and Russia. One wonders whether the young Arab's studies in Paris included the noted French political thinker. Be that as it may, clearly Azuri took the Zionist project, which he witnessed during its Herzlian phase, very seriously. In fact he seriously overestimated its success, claiming that there were two hundred thousand Jews—and an equal number of Arabs—in Palestine, at a time when Jews were scarcely more than 10 percent of the population.[46] Thus his projection of a future conflict, while seemingly farsighted if a bit overstated, turns out to be based on rather faulty premises. Perhaps it was simply a means of mobilizing support for his major project of Arab unity and independence. In any event, it is surprising that after the dramatic presentation of the issue in his first few pages, it scarcely recurs in the rest of the book, apart from brief mentions of how the presence of foreign consuls and other factors create favorable conditions for Zionists.[47]

The major thrust of Azuri's tract is a blistering attack on the Ottoman Empire and on Turkish rule, with Kazim Bey and the sultan as prime targets. He sees Arabs as superior to Turks, blames the Turks for the desolation of Palestine, and calls for an independent Arab state unifying all Arabic speakers (excluding, at this time, Egypt and North Africa). All of this is presented in a geopolitical framework, analyzing the role of outside powers in the region country by country. Azuri sees France as the likely future sponsor of an independent Arabia, helping to explain why the book is published in Paris and in French. In fact it is not aimed primarily at an Arab audience. In a colonial age, it seemed clear that European powers would determine what would become of the crumbling Ottoman Empire—and as matters turned out, this was not entirely incorrect. So it was logical for Azuri to write for European consumption, including touching base with powerful antisemitic forces in a France still possessed by the Dreyfus affair.[48]

As a Western-oriented Christian Arab intellectual, Azuri was appealing to the French (and the British) to help Arabs realize their dream of nationhood. This helps explain the omission from his design of North Africa, where these powers had established colonial interests.[49] In any event, Arab historians have minimized the influence of Azuri and his book, at the time, on the emerging Arab movement within the Arab world itself. George Antonius, in his classic study of Arab nationalism, notes that a campaign "from a foreign capital and in a foreign language" had "negligible" effect and "never reached the heart of the movement."[50] Its impact was to come

later, during the peak period of Arab nationalism after World War II, when pan-Arabists were investigating the roots of their movement.[51]

But whatever its immediate impact, Azuri's treatise was at the least a clear demonstration that the assertion of Arab identity, in any form, was not likely to be compatible with assertions of a Jewish presence in the same territory. Some Zionists were beginning to notice emerging Arab nationalism and to worry about its implications. A review of *Le Reveil de la Nation Arabe* appeared in *HaShiloah* soon after the book's publication, noting that the Arab movement was "a much more dangerous enemy" than the territorialists.

The reviewer, A. Hermoni, recounts Azuri's preoccupation with "the Jewish peril" but adds that "this is not the place to argue with the haters of Israel." Given the current strength of the Ottoman regime and the weaknesses of the Arab movement, Hermoni continues, "the danger posed to Zionism by the Arabs is not yet so close." But it is a great potential threat: "If the Arab movement grows and develops into a nation and popular movement . . . it will become a danger for Zionism" because of the Arab majority in Palestine and its dominant landownership. For a solution, however, Hermoni does not go beyond what might be described as the Ahad Ha'am formula: continued settlement "little by little and by all possible means," and fair treatment of the Arabs to avoid arousing resistance: "We must not stir up jealousy and hatred in the hearts of the land's inhabitants."[52] The possibility that settlement might itself be the source of hostility was not entertained.

Palestinian Arabs may indeed have been mostly unaware of Azuri's call to arms, which understandably was not freely circulated in the Ottoman Empire. But they were not unaware of the rising tide of Arab resentment of Turks, calls for a greater Arab role in the empire, and even advocacy of autonomy if not independence. They could read the writings of figures who laid the foundation for pan-Arabism; these figures included not only Rashid Rida (see chap. 6) but also Abd ar-Rahman Kawakibi (1855–1902), a Syrian Arab nationalist who like Rida moved to Cairo to publish his calls for Arab preeminence in the Muslim world. Kawakibi and Rida dealt with the issue on a larger scale and thus were not as concerned about Zionism as was Azuri. Nevertheless, the implications for the future of two competing nationalisms were clear enough.

Jewish immigration to Palestine was still the immediate focus for Arab opponents of Zionism, and it caused increasing friction. The Jewish refugees from Russian oppression who arrived after 1905 were notably more assertive and expounded more revolutionary notions. The British and German consuls in Jaffa both reported a growing bitterness in the city toward recent Jewish arrivals, who were "turbulent and aggressive, saturated with socialistic ideas."[53] *HaPo'el HaTsa'ir*, their organ, was noted for its militant tone. Added to this more explosive situation was the fact that many of the newcomers were actually workers who came into direct competition with Arab laborers in Jewish settlements. Thus Arab fellahin who had benefited from the Jewish presence found their gains threatened, and their response "helped to shape the first systematic expressions of anti-Zionism in Palestine and the Arab world."[54]

By this time, the educated middle class and urban elites of Arab Palestine had also greatly expanded as educational opportunities had multiplied over the previous 50 years. These groups were tied in with new intellectual currents, and among them a rising alarm over increasingly visible Zionism. The new class of urban notables, embodied in such figures as Yusuf Zia al-Khalidi (see pp. 208–209), had taken on the role of intermediaries between the Arab population

and the Ottoman government (in which they also often served). They were increasingly active on an official level to opposition to both Jewish immigration and land sales to Zionists.[55] From Cairo, however, Rashid Rida in 1908 predicted that Zionism would fail because of Jewish dispersion throughout the world, lack of experience in war and agriculture, and focus on nonproductive pursuits. Jewish weakness was, in Rida's view, divine punishment for their infidelity.[56]

Arab leaders in Palestine were, however, constantly pressing Turkish authorities to take more effective steps against the Zionists. This was not easy to do; an instructive insight into the travails of Turkish rulers is provided by a fascinating document left by Ekrem Bey, Turkish governor of Jerusalem 1906–1908. The document is a petition to the grand vizier in Constantinople, written approximately in June 1907. It is entitled "The Jews and Their Immigration to Palestine," which is labeled "the most well known problem of this office."[57]

Ekrem Bey begins by recounting the history of modern Jewish immigration to Palestine, calling attention to the hypocrisy of foreign powers (particularly Russia and Austria) forcing the Ottoman government to accept refugees who had fled their own persecution: "The policy . . . was to offer their protection in the Ottoman Empire to those same Jews whom they banish from their own territories and whom they abandon in their own lands as worthy and vulnerable to all kinds of persecution." But the foreign powers brought such pressure in Constantinople that, Ekrem Bey reported, he was instructed "not to allow the measures to reach the state at which complications with the foreign embassies might be created." This, he pointed out, "means nothing else but employing no measures at all."[58]

Ekrem Bey explained why the system of "Red Slips," allowing a three-month stay, was ineffective. It was almost impossible, he said, "to have the police force, whose size in the district is only sixty men strong, run after thousands of Jews with red notes." Second, Ekrem Bey added, with a certain delicacy, even if the police force were to be seriously reinforced and reformed, "the Jews will increase their generosity in offering money." It was simply not possible, in the prevailing situation, to implement the prohibition of Jewish immigration as intended by Constantinople.[59]

Constantinople itself, however, was about to enter a period of great turmoil that, for the moment, pushed such issues into the background.

YOUNG TURKS AND ARABS

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 transformed the setting for Jewish-Arab contention in Palestine. In July, young officers in the Ottoman army, embittered by the empire's decline, mutinied and forced Sultan Abdul Hamid II to restore the constitution of 1876, which he had suspended only two years later. The sultan was deposed less than a year later after attempting a countercoup. In the meantime, the regime's authoritarian controls were lifted: the press was opened up, the secret police was curbed, and elections to a new parliament were held at the end of the year. The dominant force in the new order was the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the Unionists, who wanted to restore the empire to its former glory through extensive reform and forging a common "Ottomanist" identity among its constituent ethnic and religious entities.

The early days of the revolution were filled with great popular enthusiasm and shows of

reconciliation among the various peoples of the empire. As Rida's newspaper reported from Cairo, "The Muslim shook hands with the Christian, and the Kurd reconciled with the Armenian, and the Turk hugged the Arab."[60] Jews also participated in the celebration and the comradeship; a Jewish correspondent in Constantinople wrote: "And taking part are the Turk, citizen of Istanbul [Constantinople], and his brother the Jew, and they all dance out of joy. . . . And so it is in the houses of prayer and the mosques—we are all brothers: as Jews, as Turks, as Greeks we will live in peace and tranquility and we will work for our land and for our sultan!"[61]

But while Jews quite reasonably expected to gain from the liberal aspects of the new order, this was not so clear for the Zionists among them. Greater freedom might give Zionists more room in which to operate, and some CUP leaders seemed more accessible than the ancien régime had been. But it quickly became clear that the Unionists, committed to restoring Ottoman power, were no more eager than their predecessors to favor a national minority that invited foreign interference and antagonized the Arabs. The WZO representative in Constantinople wrote to Arthur Ruppin in Jaffa that "[the Young Turks] do not wish to let people enter who 'will create a new Armenian question' for them."[62] The CUP branch in Jerusalem invited four Jews to join—on condition that they not be members of the Zionist movement and would distance themselves from it.[63]

In the parliamentary elections in November 1908, the three representatives chosen from the Jerusalem district were all from leading notable Arab families: Ruhi al-Khalidi, Sa'id al-Husayni, and Hafiz al-Sa'id. Al-Khalidi was the nephew of Yusuf Zia al-Khalidi, the former mayor whose letter protesting Zionism had occasioned Herzl's response (see pp. 208–209). All of the Palestinian delegates elected (including those from the two "Palestinian" districts of the Beirut province) supported liberal reforms and a greater Arab voice in the framework of Ottoman loyalty and—for the time being—an "Ottomanist" identity. All were also opposed to Zionism and expected the new regime to be more effective in curbing Jewish immigration and land purchases than the sultan's administration had been.

Despite the initial expressions of brotherhood among Ottoman peoples, the advent of the Young Turks is usually seen as the event that sparked the open emergence both of Arab nationalism and of an open Jewish-Arab conflict on the political level. Hostility on the local and popular level, and episodic interventions of notables, merged to create a sustained, organized public campaign as an indelible part of the political landscape. What had begun with such high hopes in the heady days of 1908 was to become increasingly fragmented by the time World War I erupted in 1914, for both Arabs and Turks and Arabs and Jews.[64]

The Palestinian deputies in the new Ottoman parliament were quick to raise the issue there. In June 1909, Hafiz al-Sa'id submitted a question challenging Zionism's compatibility with Ottoman interests and demanded that Jaffa be closed to Jewish immigrants.[65] Soon after that, the other two deputies from the Jerusalem district also expressed their opposition through interviews in, of all places, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's newspaper *HaTsvi*. Sa'id al-Husayni repeated the standard Ottoman trope that Jews should be given refuge anywhere in the empire *except* Palestine.[66] Ruhi al-Khalidi was yet more forthright. He denounced European Jews for their refusal to integrate, and opposed the establishment of Jewish colonies: "The Jews have the financial capacity. They will be able to buy many tracts of land, and displace the Arab farmers

from their land and their fathers' heritage. However, we did not conquer this land from you. We conquered it from the Byzantines who ruled it then. We do not owe anything to the Jews. The Jews were not here when we conquered the country."[67]

At about this time the use of the term "Palestine" in a political sense, and not just a geographic expression, was taking hold. Najib Azuri, who had devoted a chapter of *Le Reveil de la Nation Arabe* to the history and physical attributes of Palestine, proposed that the restored Ottoman parliament put the "Palestinian" districts of Beirut province together with the Jerusalem district in a new political entity that would correspond to prevailing conceptions of historic Palestine.[68] In the years that followed, the labels of "Palestine" and "Palestinian" were increasingly used by the emerging press and by the new institutions and organizations that appeared.

The debut of a Palestinian press was central to this development. Before the Young Turk Revolution, the only Arabic-language newspaper in Palestine was a government-issued gazette. But between 1908 and 1915, 34 new newspapers or journals in Arabic were founded in the Palestinian areas, 15 of them in 1908 alone.[69] Most of these publications were short-lived, and those that survived for long often appeared irregularly and had tiny readerships. Nevertheless, the proliferation of new outlets was testimony to the long-term suppression of diverse voices before this, even if the rush to print was not matched by the financial or human resources necessary to sustain the effort. One observer commented that "the majority of [Arabic] newspapers are like water bubbles, rising to the surface once, then dying out, or like the rooster's egg, appearing once in a lifetime."[70] But the newspapers that did survive provided lively commentary on "the Zionist issue" that greatly expanded the field of combat.

The most important of the Arab Palestinian newspapers included three founded soon after restrictions ended in 1908: *al-Quds* (published, as the name indicates, in Jerusalem), *al-Asma'i* (Jaffa), and *al-Karmil* (Haifa). In 1911, *Filastin* (Arabic for Palestine) was founded in Jaffa. All of these newspapers were established and edited by Christian Arabs, reflecting the leading role played by Christians in the early history of Arab nationalism.

From the outset, these newspapers (and nearly all Arab publications) actively opposed Zionism. *Al-Asma'i*, already in its early days, leveled a searing indictment of European Jewish settlers in Palestine: "They harm the local population and wrong them, by relying on the special rights accorded to foreign powers in the Ottoman Empire and on the corruption and treachery of the local administration. Moreover, they are free from most of the taxes and heavy impositions on Ottoman subjects. Their labor competes with the local population and creates their own means of sustenance. The local population cannot stand up to their competition."[71]

Al-Karmil was the most vehement and consistent opponent of Zionism; it was, in fact, a central focus of the newspaper. The editor was Najib Nassar, a Protestant Christian who had been born in a Greek Orthodox family in Tiberias. Nassar had actually worked for the Jewish Colonisation Association as a land agent but had left that position in disputed circumstances, leading him to embark on a campaign against Jewish settlement not only in the pages of *al-Karmil* but in other venues as well. His aim overall, in the eyes of a Jewish observer, was "writing against the Jewish newcomers in Palestine so that the Arabs would not continue to sell land to the Jews."[72]

A recurrent theme in the Arab anti-Zionist press was the failure of European Jewish settlers

to integrate, or even to bother learning Arabic. In the spring of 1909 *al-Asma'i* published an article by a young poet from a prominent family, Isaf an-Nashashibi, who admonished that Jews "should help in reviving this [Arabic] language after its destruction." An-Nashashibi also urged that they "rid their hearts of those empty aspirations like the question of Zionism or governing Palestine," since there was no chance of achieving such hopes. "If the Jews want to live a good life with us," the young poet continued, "they should unite with us in respecting this beautiful language. . . . They should imitate our brothers the Christians, who are founding schools and teaching this beautiful language."[73]

In the meantime, intensified public attention to Jewish settlement was beginning to have an impact in Constantinople. The Ottoman governor of Jerusalem who had replaced Ekrem Bey in late 1908, Subhi Bey, had actually begun his term by softening some of the restrictions on land sales, allowing Ottoman Jews to buy land (contravening a 1904 decree) and setting aside the provision that no immigrant Jews be allowed to settle on such land. But following the question raised in the new parliament (see p. 237), the Young Turk government conducted its first review of the matter in the summer of 1909. As an interim measure all transfers of land to Jews were suspended, and previous restrictions restored, pending consideration of a new proposed law that would prohibit all Jews, Ottoman and foreign, from settling in Palestine. The law was never implemented, since it would have violated the rights of Ottoman Jews and invited more unwelcome intervention by outside powers. But a year later, a new governor of Jerusalem, Azmi Bey, left no doubt about his government's position: "We are not anti-Semites; we value the economic superiority of the Jews. But no nation, no government could open its arms to groups making proclamation everywhere and aiming to take Palestine from us. The political domination of the Jews in this country belongs to the realm of childish dreams. . . . Were they to abandon these utopias and give proof of their Ottomanism, then all these difficulties and restrictions would fall away like magic."[74]

Interest in the issue also began to extend beyond the Arabic press in Palestine. In October 1909, the Cairo newspaper *al-Ahram* sent a correspondent to Palestine to investigate claims that "constant immigration creates fear and anxiety for the country is now almost in the hands of foreigners."[75] By the summer of 1910, major Arab newspapers in Beirut and Damascus, perhaps influenced by the drumbeat of Najib Nassar's campaign in *al-Karmil*, were also regularly publishing anti-Zionist critiques.[76]

From Cairo, Rashid Rida and his organ, *al-Manar*, soon joined the chorus. Rida embraced a theory, then making the rounds, that the Jews and the Freemasons had fomented the Young Turk Revolution. The intent, supposedly, was to create chaos that would impel the great powers to intervene and protect Jewish interests, including the Zionist project. Rida thus became a devotee of the narrative of a global Jewish conspiracy, making Jews responsible for the French Revolution and the 1905 Russian Revolution as well as the Young Turks. Jews already controlled France, so Ottoman citizens should act forcefully to prevent a similar fate for their own land.[77] In the months that followed, Rida continued to expound this doctrine, warning that Jews planned to expel Christians and Muslims from the Holy Land and that they wielded immense power over the CUP, the dominant force in Constantinople.[78]

But while Rida and other savants may have been exercising their imaginations on a cosmic scale, more mundane battles were taking place on the ground. In mid-1910 negotiations were

concluded for a huge Jewish land purchase in the Jezre'el Valley (outside the Jerusalem district), embracing the Arab villages of Fula and Afula. Two telegrams of protest were sent to Constantinople and were publicized in the press there: one was from Arab notables in Haifa, the other from the heads of all the religious communities in Nazareth (the tract lay between the two cities). At the core was, once again, conflict between tenants who considered their rights of usage valid no matter who the owner was, and purchasers who wanted full use of the land no matter who had been farming it. The villagers of Fula also submitted a petition to the grand vizier against the seller of the land, making a strong argument that the Zionist purchasers were not Ottoman subjects. The conflict led to violent encounters that were widely reported in the Arabic press.[79]

At the end of the year, a former governor of Nazareth and future member of the Ottoman parliament, Shukri al-Asali, made his appearance as one of the leading antagonists of Zionism and champions of Arab nationalism. Under the resonant pseudonym of "Saladin," he published a sharp assault on Zionism in an Arabic-language newspaper in Constantinople.[80] To Najib Nassar's *al-Karmil* he contributed an open letter, addressed to a leading Ottoman general then engaged in putting down unrest in what is now Syria. Al-Asali's forceful missive is notable for marshaling the critical elements of what most disturbed leading Arab Palestinians about the growth of the Jewish Yishuv:

> They do not mix with the Ottomans, and do not buy anything from them. . . . They have deceived the Government with lying and falsehood when they enroll themselves as Ottoman subjects in the registers, for they continue to carry foreign passports which protect them; and whenever they go to the Ottoman courts, they produce their passports and summon foreign protection; they settle their claims and differences among themselves with the knowledge of the administrator, and do not turn to the Government. . . . If the Government does not set a limit to this torrential stream, no time will pass before you see that Palestine has become a property of the Zionist Organization and its associates or of the nation mentioned above [the Jews].[81]

For an emerging Arab nationalist like al-Asali, what ultimately made Jewish immigration unacceptable was the refusal to integrate. The Jews who came were foreign and European, and they showed every intention of remaining that way rather than assimilating to the Middle Eastern Jewish community that had an established place in Arab culture. They intended, by all appearances, to build a state within a state. And nothing symbolized this rupture between two points of departure more sharply than the foreign passport that the newcomers held on to. As a German correspondent in Constantinople later commented, "The Jewish immigrants from Russia persisted in clinging to their foreign nationality after settling in the country. . . . How then could the Turks [or the Arabs] have sympathized with an immigration that constantly created increasingly an additional source of friction?"[82]

CONSOLIDATING ANTI-ZIONISM

The campaign against Zionism was gathering momentum in the Arab press and other public venues during this period. Rashid Khalidi has surveyed ten Arab newspapers for the period 1908–1914: five in Beirut, two in Palestine, two in Cairo, and one in Damascus. During these years the ten papers published over 600 articles on Zionism, with more than 450 of these appearing in 1911–1913, and 286 in the peak year 1911.[83] Clearly the subject had become a major concern of the Arab reading public both inside and outside Palestine.

In April 1911 a telegram protesting Jewish immigration and land purchase was signed by 150 Arabs and sent to the grand vizier and the parliament in Constantinople as well as various newspapers. Inspired by the Fula controversy, the signatories protested the disguised purchase of land by foreign Zionists, using Ottoman citizens as a front.[84]

In mid-May, Palestinian deputies in the Ottoman parliament again raised the issue. Ruhi al-Khalidi outlined at some length the history of Jews and Zionism, reflecting his own interest and personal research that would lead to the first extensive Arab work on the topic (see the following section). Describing himself as an anti-Zionist but not an antisemite, al-Khalidi nevertheless expressed great alarm at the threat that he saw: "The Zionists' aim is to settle numerous Jews in Iraq and Syria to form a Jewish kingdom having Jerusalem as its center." This was seconded by the other representative from Jerusalem, Sa'id al-Husayni, who warned that "the Zionists' aim was to create a Jewish state extending from Palestine and Syria to Iraq."[85]

Shukri al-Asali, now a Palestinian deputy from the Damascus province, repeated many of the urgent warnings he had issued in his open letter a few months earlier (see above, "Young Turks and Arabs"). The Zionists had their own stamps (which he displayed), their own flag, their own anthem, their own postal service, even their own courts. They fully intended, he admonished, to construct an alien entity within the Ottoman state with the ultimate aim of independent statehood. The government's response, he protested, had been too weak.[86]

The third deputy from the Jerusalem district, Hafiz as-Sa'id of Jaffa, had apparently not participated in the debate. But another Hafiz in parliament had dismissed the Zionist menace as "imaginary," and the Jaffa newspaper *Filastin*—which had just been founded—mistakenly attributed the comment to their own deputy and took him to task, in an open letter, for his presumed apathy. The letter was attributed to "The Ottoman National Party," a sign that the anti-Zionist movement was taking organizational form. The dread expressed in the censure, at a time when Zionists were still vastly outnumbered, is quite remarkable: "[Zionism] is the danger which encompasses his homeland; [Zionism] is the awful wave which beats his shore. It is the source of the deceitfulness which we experience like a flood and which is more frightening than walking alone at the dead of night. Not only this: it is also an omen of our future exile from our homeland and of departure from our homes and property."[87]

One of the founders of the Ottoman National Party was Sheikh Suleiman at-Taji al-Farouqi of Jaffa, who was to make a mark as a writer and poet. Shortly after the open letter to Hafiz as-Sa'id, al-Farouqi contributed a long editorial to the Beirut newspaper *al-Mufid* in which he set out the objectives that the new party had formulated. These included stopping Jewish immigration by strict enforcement of the Red Slip, prohibition of land sales, census and registration of Jewish Ottoman citizens, prevention of unauthorized meetings, and land surveys to clarify property issues.[88]

But Najib Nassar of *al-Karmil* remained the most tireless activist in anti-Zionist circles. In June 1911 he published in his newspaper an open letter to other editors in the Arab press, proposing they form a common front to oppose Zionism. This drew favorable responses and may help explain the number of articles that appeared during the year.[89] He also published during the year the first book in Arabic on Zionism, a 64-page pamphlet that pulled together pieces that had appeared in *al-Karmil*.[90] The book, entitled *Zionism: Its History, Purpose, and Importance*

(excerpted from the Jewish Encyclopedia), was, as forthrightly stated in the title, largely a translation of the authoritative entry on Zionism by Richard J. H. Gottheil that had appeared in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* in 1905 (see above, "Integration or Confrontation?"). By relying on an impeccably Jewish source, Nassar clearly intended to boost the credibility of his exposé. But his translation was in fact incomplete, painting a more vivid picture of the Zionist threat by omitting or minimizing opposition to Zionism among Jews, splits within the movement, or proposals for settlement outside Palestine.[91]

Nassar ended with a short essay that emphasized the very real threat that Zionism posed, in his eyes, to the very fabric of Arab civilization and to the project of Ottomanism that the Young Turks were promoting:

> Let our men arise and let them begin by forming societies for Ottomans which will strive for Ottomanism and which will teach economy and implant the principle of not letting the capital of Ottomans enter the pockets of the settlers who will fight us for our existence. . . . Why do we, who have spent centuries suffering tragedy and misery, not become men and go on the way of freedom and live for our patrimony and for ourselves, so that we shall not invoke upon ourselves the curses of our ancestors and our sons by losing the country which [our] ancestors acquired with their blood?[92]

Growing preoccupation with Jewish/Zionist inroads was also reaching the literary world. A few months after Nassar's pamphlet appeared, what is apparently the first Arab fictional work on Zionism was also published. The author was Ma'aruf al-Arna'ut, a 19-year-old Beirut resident embarking on a literary career who would eventually become a member of the Arab Academy in Damascus. Al-Arna'ut's novel, *The Maid of Zion*, was an allegorical tale in which Moses (the Jewish people) tries to force himself on Esther (the Land of Israel), with tragic consequences. The implications were not difficult to discern.[93]

The Arab press campaign against Zionism continued in full force during the period leading to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Often the picture of Zionist ambitions and achievements went well beyond what even the most fervent Zionists might have claimed for themselves. Exaggerated numbers were claimed for Jewish immigration and Jewish domination of the economy was taken as a fait accompli; one newspaper reported that Zionists would make Hebrew the official language of the country.[94] Once again, Arab adversaries of Zionism insisted that it was the refusal of European Jews to assimilate to local culture and language that was the root of the problem. Haqqi Bey al-Azm, secretary of the Decentralization Party (major opponent of the CUP), wrote that the gates would be open to Jews if they adopted Arabic, ended their economic exclusivity, became genuine Ottoman citizens, stayed out of politics, and showed respect to the Arab people, which "today or tomorrow is bound to rise again."[95]

This was echoed by Raghib an-Nashashibi, from another of the notable families, who wrote that he was only opposed to foreign Jews; to be accepted, a foreign Jew "must accept Ottoman nationality and must learn the language of the country." When the foreign subject "comes to fight us with the weapon of his foreign nationality and despises our sons and brethren," then, said an-Nashashibi, "I will dedicate all my energies day and night to remove the harm and danger." This did not apply, he added, to "the rights of our Ottoman [Jewish] brethren."[96]

Clashes on the local level also continued. In July 1913, for example, the villagers of Zarnuqa and nearby Arab villages submitted a petition to the sultan complaining that Jewish colonists "attacked the people of our village, robbed and looted our belongings, killed, and even violated

families' honor." The colonists, the petition complained, "do whatever they want as if they have a little government of their own inside the country."[97] The dispute apparently originated in accusations of thefts from Jewish fields, leading to a series of violent clashes between Rehovot and the village of Zarnuqa in which at least one person on each side was killed.

In the meantime, Arab resistance to the CUP policy of "Ottomanism" had been growing. To many Arabs reasserting their own identity, it seemed that Ottomanism was simply cover for imposing Turkish nationalism. The Turks, as it happened, were also rediscovering *their* national identity. During a brief interval, July 1912 to January 1913, the CUP had been replaced by the Liberal Union, a party that in theory favored greater autonomy for Arabs and other national minorities—and better enforcement of the restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchases. But very little changed, and Arabs, including Palestinians, began plotting their own separate course.

In June 1913 the First Arab Congress convened in Paris. From this platform Arab nationalists demanded equality between Turks and Arabs in the Ottoman Empire, autonomy as a nation, and recognition of Arabic as an official language. Several Palestinians attended the congress, and seven telegrams of support were sent from Palestinian groups, with strong support as might be expected from Christian Arabs.[98] The congress did not, however, pass any resolutions on the Zionist issue, given its focus on achieving either greater powers within the Ottoman Empire or independence from it.

By this time Arab nationalism had found its voice, with all that implied for the future of Jewish visions for Erets Yisrael. Typical was a speech delivered in April 1913 by a Muslim Arab student before a literary club in Constantinople: "We are Arabs before everything else. Muslims are Arab, and Christians are Arab. . . . If we are Arabs before being either Muslims or Christians, then is it surprising that we are Arabs before we are Ottomans?"[99] At almost the same time another young Arab student in Constantinople, the 20-year-old Arif al-Arif from Gaza—later to become mayor of Jerusalem and a major Palestinian historian—was making a more direct link to the grave threat that Zionism posed to the Arab future. Writing in *Filastin*, he warned: "If this state of affairs continues . . . then the Zionists will gain mastery over our country, village by village, town by town; tomorrow the whole of Jerusalem will be sold and then Palestine in its entirety."[100]

Shortly after the First Arab Congress had met, *al-Karmil* proposed another congress to combat the "Zionist threat" specifically.[101] The proposal gained the support of a number of other Arab newspapers and young Palestinians in Constantinople, but it never occurred. In its place came the formation of an anti-Zionist land society—the Palestine Patriotic Company—to buy available land before Zionists could acquire it. The society was apparently established in Nablus, a city known for its resistance to Zionism (only one Jewish settlement existed in the Nablus subdistrict).[102]

Given the role of poetry in Arab culture—and politics—it was only a matter of time before verse would be mobilized in the confrontation. What is apparently the first Arabic poem addressing the Zionist threat appeared at the end of 1913, written by Sheikh Suleiman at-Taji al-Farouqi, one of the founders of the Ottoman National Party (see p. 242). The sheikh made use of anti-Jewish images that were common in the Middle East as well as elsewhere:

Jews, sons of clinking gold, stop your deceit;
We shall not be cheated into bartering away our country!
Shall we hand it over, meekly,
while we still have some spirit left?
Shall we cripple ourselves?

The Jews, the weakest of all peoples and the least of them,
are haggling with us for our land;
how can we slumber on?

Feeling that the sultan, who was also caliph of all Muslims, had betrayed his fellow Muslims in his feeble resistance to the Zionist challenge, al-Farouqi directly addressed his ruler in concluding:

And you, O Caliph, guardian of the faithful,
have mercy on us, your shield. . . .
Bearer of the Crown, does it please you
that we should witness our country
being bought from us, wrenched from us?[103]

Given the growth of Arab-Turkish antagonism, it was natural that some would think that Zionism could make common cause with one or the other. The possibility of an Arab-Zionist entente was actually broached in early 1913 by the New Decentralization Party, an Arab movement dedicated to autonomy within the empire. But a government dominated by the CUP, newly restored to power, made concessions to the Arab Congress assembled in Paris, and interest from the Arab side faded. In 1914 proposals for an Arab-Zionist meeting in Lebanon were stillborn. Not surprisingly, not a single prominent Palestinian Arab was ready to attend. In addition, it was clear that minimal conditions on the Arab side would include a stop to Jewish immigration and settlement—hardly something that anyone on the Jewish side could sign on to.[104]

In early 1914 *Filastin* issued a circular that again put the civilizational gap and resistance to assimilation at the center of the impasse: "Ten years ago the Jews were living as Ottoman brothers loved by all the Ottoman races . . . living in the same quarters, their children going to the same schools. The Zionists put an end to all that and prevented any intermingling with the indigenous population. They boycotted the Arabic language and the Arab merchants, and declared their intention of taking over the country from its inhabitants."[105]

True to the thesis that it was European Jews who created the conflict, the circular differentiated between "Zionist" and "Jew," referring to the native-born Jewish community as a "fraternal Ottoman element." The problem came from an immigration of "German revolutionaries, Russian nihilists and vagabonds from other nations." They spoke only Hebrew, "which is useless to the world except as a weapon of Zionism."[106]

The idea of appealing to Arabs on the basis of racial brotherhood might have had traction with Sephardi Jews who shared their culture and language. But when it came to immigrant Jews who clung to Europe, such appeals were worthless. As one WZO official reported, in this case Arabs "do not care a rap about the 'common Semitic spirit'" that some Zionists had invoked.[107]

The incompatibility of the two sides could also, by this time, be framed as a clash between two national movements in which only one could emerge as victor (actually, this had been

foreshadowed by Najib Azuri in 1905). One emerging figure in Arab circles who took this view was the young Khalil as-Sakakini, a Christian educator in Jerusalem who would become one of the leading Palestinian intellectuals. Writing in his diary in early 1914, as-Sakakini put the conflict into stark terms that would make sense to later generations: "What I despise is this principle which [the Zionist] Movement has set up, which is that it should subjugate another [national movement] to make itself strong, and that it should kill an entire nation so that it might live. . . . What will the Jews do if the national feeling of the Arab nation is aroused; how will they be able to stand up to [the Arabs]?"[108]

An interesting exchange took place around this time in the pages of *al-Muqattam*, an Egyptian newspaper that, alone in the Arab press, printed many pro-Zionist as well as anti-Zionist articles. The paper's Palestinian correspondent was Nisim Malul, a Jew of Egyptian origin who also worked with the Jaffa office of the World Zionist Organization. In April 1914, Malul interviewed Nahum Sokolow, a prominent member of the Zionist Executive, who was visiting Palestine as part of a delegation whose agenda, at long last, included Arab-Jewish relations. Sokolow responded with a standard rendition of the benefit theory: Zionists were Jews "returning home" with acquired European skills that would advance the common good of all inhabitants. But he added to that some assurances that demonstrated familiarity with Arab protests. Jewish schools would teach Arabic, and Jewish financial institutions would offer low-interest loans to Arabs as well as Jews.[109]

To this Rafiq al-Azm replied that teaching Arabic in the schools was not enough. Zionists would have to go much further, actually integrating into the existing culture and society. Sokolow's words were fine, but actions spoke louder than words.[110]

Anti-Zionist organizations and initiatives continued to proliferate and adopt an increasingly fervent tone. From al-Azhar University in Cairo came news that Palestinian students had founded a Society for Resisting the Zionists. Their manifesto promised to oppose Zionism "by all possible means" and to propagate their program "among all classes of the Arab nation in general and in Syria and Palestine in particular."[111] In July *al-Karmil* published a "General Summons to Palestinians" that asked, "Do you wish to be slaves to the Zionists who have come to kick you out of your country, claiming it is theirs?" The summons called on Palestinians to boycott Jewish businesses, to "scatter the land agents and revile them," to stop immigration "by all means you can," and to make Arabic the language of instruction in (presumably all) schools.[112]

In Cairo, leading ideologue Rashid Rida followed a similar trajectory toward a call to arms. As late as March 1914 he was still among those considering the possibility of an agreement with the Zionists, in order to prepare for the day—which he sensed was near—when Turkish rule would end. The Arabs, he argued, must either reach such an accommodation or unite and defeat the Zionists by all means, including force if necessary.[113] When he met in June with Nisim Malul, the Jewish Palestinian correspondent of *al-Muqattam* (see above), Rida still seemed hopeful that an entente could be reached, and Arabs and Jews could share Palestine.[114]

But by August, Rida had turned decisively against Zionism, following his reading of an Arabic translation of excerpts from Menahem Ussishkin's *Our Program*, a key Zionist treatise that emphasized acquisition of land as the path to success. Rida interpreted the document as evidence of an intention to expel all Muslims and Christians from Palestine, which would be

extended to biblical borders on the Euphrates (present-day Iraq). He condemned compromise and urged the use of force, now the only remaining option. It was time to organize for military combat.[115]

Haqqi al-Azm, the Decentralization Party leader who had first proposed negotiation with the Zionists (see above), also sharply reversed his position. In June he sent a vigorous message in a private letter, rejecting the proposed Arab-Zionist meeting and advocating the use of force: "By pushing the Arab population into destroying [the Zionist] farms and setting fire to their colonies, by forming gangs to execute these projects, then perhaps they will emigrate to save their lives."[116]

As the atmosphere grew increasingly belligerent, Ottoman authorities made another of their periodic moves to tighten up entry. In the summer of 1914 they returned to the formula of three-month visas, for visitors only, enforced by cash deposits to guarantee departure. They also tightened entry at Haifa, where some Jews disembarked to avoid the controls at Jaffa. After the Ottoman Empire entered World War I in November 1914 on the side of the Central Powers, efforts were made to deport Jews from Russia, an enemy state. The Zionist movement was able to block most such efforts by bringing pressure through Germany, an Ottoman ally.

An interesting postscript is a comment attributed to the deposed Sultan Abdul Hamid II, from his exile in 1911. The sultan regretted that, under his rule, the Zionists had succeeded in establishing a foothold that could serve as the nucleus for a Jewish state. As he remarked to his private physician, "I am sure that with time they can and will be successful in establishing their own state in Palestine."[117]

YOUNG TURKS AND JEWS

The Young Turk Revolution, and the breakthrough of Arab nationalism that it inspired, forced Zionists in Palestine to abandon, finally, their soothing self-conviction that there was no "basic" conflict between them and the Arabs of Palestine. But this realization did not dawn on them suddenly; it was a gradual process of adjustment to reality.

The initial reaction of Jews to the restoration of the constitution, and other heady events during the early days afterward, was one of shared celebration with other Ottoman subjects. For Zionists, in particular, it seemed that opening up a cumbersome autocracy could only benefit the movement, giving it greater freedom to act and removing obstacles. Gad Frumkin, later a judge on the Israeli Supreme Court, recalled his own reaction to the Young Turk Revolution: "What will be our role, as Jews, in the liberation movement of the various peoples in the Ottoman Empire? . . . Will the Jewish *Yishuv* in *Erets Yisrael* be able to safeguard the freedom of movement and action that it needs, like air to breathe, for the work of revival and reconstruction? Will we be able to free ourselves from the many restrictions on us, as Jews, regarding immigration, land purchases, building and settling of colonies?"[118]

The hopes that the Young Turks would look more charitably on Zionist ventures were, as we have seen, soon to be disillusioned. But there were other advantages to be gained, and most in the Jewish community sought to make use of them. There were renewed calls for Jews in Palestine to become Ottoman citizens in order to strengthen the Jewish voice in the new system. Arthur Ruppin, head of the WZO office in Jaffa, reported on these calls favorably.[119] Also, journalist and linguist Eliezer Ben-Yehuda often repeated his long-held position that Jews should

adopt Ottoman citizenship, despite his generally hard-line positions toward Turks and Arabs.

Ottoman Jews outside of Palestine urged WZO leaders to make it clear that the movement posed no threat to the integrity of the empire. In response, David Wolffsohn, who had succeeded Theodor Herzl as president, wrote: "I know that in Turkish circles, even the most enlightened, Zionism is known in the form of a movement that wants to found a Jewish state in Palestine, with separatist aspirations. . . . In my capacity as president of the Executive Committee of the ZO, I affirm completely and officially that Zionism does not have anything to do with these tendencies, which from our point of view not only are unrealizable but by no means correspond to the real interests of the Jewish people."[120]

This clarification certainly would have surprised anyone whose conception of Zionism was based on a reading of Herzl's *Der Judenstaat*. Be that as it may, the advent of the new order was welcomed and celebrated in most sectors of Jewish Palestine. The *haredim* (ultra-Orthodox) in the Old Yishuv referred to the restored constitution as a "new Torah," and the Sephardic community was especially excited. In Hebron, a center of the Old Yishuv, popular celebrations featured a flag decorated with the Ten Commandments on one side and "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" in Hebrew and Arabic on the other.[121]

Sephardi Jews had a special historical connection with the Ottoman Empire, going back to the sultan's welcoming of their ancestors as refugees following the expulsion from Spain (*Sepharad* in Hebrew) in 1492. Mention has already been made of the efforts by David Yellin and his students to bridge the cultural gap by providing Hebrew readers with material on and from local cultures (see chap. 6). Yellin himself was an enthusiastic participant in events marking the revolution, even speaking at Arab nationalist mass rallies.[122] Needless to say he lent his full support to the project of Ottomanism and the devaluation of ethnic and religious identities: "Justice comprises all of the Ottomans without difference to their rites or religions, and has turned them into one people henceforth in its progress and advancement."[123]

Sephardi Jews in Palestine were torn between their native association with Middle Eastern civilization and the appeal of Zionist visions. But Sephardim elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire were less likely to favor a movement that potentially complicated their own position. There were four elected Jewish members of the new Ottoman parliament from outside Palestine; three of them declared in 1909 that they "oppose with all their abilities the Zionist movement."[124] This earned them a rebuke in the pages of *HaHerut*, a Sephardic Palestinian newspaper that was generally supportive of Zionism but was also sensitive to the rise of anti-Zionism among Arabs and the impact that had on Jews generally. The Jewish deputies, said *HaHerut*, were turning their backs on thousands of Jews in need.[125]

Needless to say, the appeal of Ottomanism to Ashkenazi Jews from Europe, and particularly to the more radical and socialist workers who came after 1905, was practically nonexistent. The organ of the newcomers, *HaPo'el HaTsa'ir*, derided the notion that the differences between Jews, Christians, and Muslims could be so easily effaced and also criticized any distinction between Ottomans and non-Ottomans within the Jewish community.[126] Although Eliezer Ben-Yehuda favored Jews becoming Ottoman citizens, his newspaper was very wary of mass rallies —the same rallies in which David Yellin spoke—that were largely Muslim gatherings with a distinctly pro-Arab nationalist flavor.[127]

As noted all three parliamentary representatives elected from the Jerusalem district were Muslims, and all were openly anti-Zionist. Since the city of Jerusalem itself had a Jewish majority, there was some discontent about the result; even support for moderate Arabs had failed. Of course, many Jews were not citizens, and in Jerusalem the franchise was limited to payers of property tax, from which Jews in the Old City were exempt by custom. So the Jewish part of the electorate was very small, not enough to significantly influence the result, and this evoked concern about future power relations. What would happen, for example, when "Ottomanism" led to demands that all peoples of the empire including Jews be subjected to conscription?

Ottoman authorities were themselves well aware of divisions among Jews and were quick to blame European Jews, backed by intrusive European governments, for the deterioration in relations. During the 1911 parliamentary debate (see above, "Consolidating Anti-Zionism"), the grand vizier declared that "Jewish Ottoman citizens who have never deviated even one inch from Ottomanist convictions will not be suspected of sharing views and fantasies of a few witless Zionists whom they themselves consider to be madmen."[128] These "madmen" were, of course, coming from a civilization that had little respect for Turks or Arabs, and they were also fleeing from brutal persecution that impelled them to respond vigorously to any and all perceived threats. Many of them had been active in the self-defense forces that Jews had organized to repel the pogromists.

As relations with both Turks and Arabs continued to deteriorate in the years after the revolution, Zionists clung as long as possible to the comforting belief that the problem was not "national hatred" but had more particular—and therefore more correctable—causes, such as economic competition, cultural misunderstandings, or the usual quarrels among neighbors. Illustrative of this process was the correspondence of Arthur Ruppin, from the WZO Palestine Office. Beginning in 1908, with focus on specific causes, Ruppin moved to explanations based on Turkish-Arab conflicts, to seeing Muslims as natural opponents, and to final recognition by 1913 of the "Arab movement" as the central problem for Zionism.[129] A similar trajectory was taken by another immigrant of this period, David Ben-Gurion, though he was later to return to denial of an essential conflict in his public statements.

It became increasingly difficult to explain away the evidence of growing hostility to Zionism and, sometimes, to Jews generally. *HaHerut*, which paid particular attention to the Arab press, lamented by mid-1910 that "the days of joy and delight have passed, the days of noisy parades have changed, the voices of 'Long live liberty, brotherhood, equality!' have vanished, and here and there began to be heard voices of incitement against the Jews."[130] The shock of discovery was reported rather breathlessly a year later by the Palestine correspondent of *Ha'Olam*, the official WZO newspaper: "The greatest force in Palestine is the Arabs . . . We forgot altogether that there are Arabs in Palestine and "discovered" them only in recent years. . . . We paid no attention to them; we never even tried to find friends among them. They are afraid lest the Jews should drive them out of the country. We should have been prepared for such an attitude."[131]

Haim Kalvarisky, the settlement agent, later repeated these sentiments and also echoed Yitzhak Epstein's criticism (see above, "A Jewish Definition: Yitzhak Epstein") of negotiating with the rulers rather than with the actual inhabitants: "We always join hands with the power that rules Palestine by virtue of its armed forces, and disregard the real inhabitants of the country. Before the Great War we opened an office in Constantinople to negotiate with the Turks but

never did anything to win the friendship of the Arabs."[132]

An integral element in the changing landscape was the decline of the plantation model of Jewish agriculture, the introduction of cooperative and collectivist models, and controversy over the role of Arab labor. When the Jewish Colonisation Association took over the colonies supported by Baron Rothschild in 1900, the plantation system was faltering because of its monocultural vulnerabilities and heavy overhead. It was also, of course, severely censured for dependence on Arab labor. Jewish workers who arrived in the second *aliya* after 1905 were sometimes asked to work for the same low wages paid to Arabs, or ways were sought to subsidize their higher wages. Neither expedient worked well. Consequently, they campaigned for the Conquest of Labor, relying on Zionist solidarity to secure work in competition with Arab laborers.

The radicalism of the new Jewish workers, organized in *HaPo'el HaTsa'ir* and *Po'alei Tsion*, and competition with Arab workers, pushed them toward more militant positions on issues of Jewish-Arab relations. This was a concern to at least one emerging Labor Zionist, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi—future president of Israel—who wrote "we have embarked on our course not against the Arab worker but to protect ourselves and our weak position . . . in general, we have to be careful, that the question of labor will not assume a chauvinistic character."[133] A possible example of what Ben-Zvi feared might have been an article by Moshe Smilansky's brother, Ze'ev, who wanted Arab workers replaced because "the youth of the settlement, in spite of themselves, learn the ugly habits, strange grimaces, and hideous vices and gesticulations of the semi-savage Arabs, and get used to the deceptions, false oaths, cheating, stubbornness and savage egoism, that are a mark of many of the lower-class Arabs."[134]

The Conquest of Labor did not, in the near term, succeed in replacing most Arab workers. Attempts to bring Jewish workers from Yemen were also a failure. But after 1909, new settlements were established on a basis of mixed farming and cooperative or collectivist organization.[135] These new models, the moshav and the kibbutz, would become the dominant form of land settlement in the future. Being dependent on the labor of their members, their establishment led to "bifurcation" of the labor market and the eventual decline of Arab labor in the Jewish sector.[136] This was also tied in with the model of settlement being promoted by Arthur Ruppin, with territorial concentration on the coast and in the inland valleys. It was essentially a strategy of separatism, which involved less Arab labor and less territorial reach; as Gershon Shafir concludes, however, "separatism is a strategy for managing conflict, but not for eliminating it."[137]

Guard duty in the settlements was also becoming a Jewish job. In Rehovot, for example, a 1913 contract specifies that only Jews (of whom two-thirds must be Ashkenazi!) were to be hired as guards.[138] In general, as newer immigrants pressed for work and invoked the prevailing ideology of self-reliance and "Hebrew labor," the integrated labor market of the first period gave way to a largely separated market. In some ways this was contradictory to the tenets of socialism that were, paradoxically, gaining momentum at the same time, and according to which the common interests of workers should override their national and ethnic differences. In addition, if the benefit theory had merit, then providing employment to Arabs was the one sphere where such benefits could best be demonstrated. Even Ahad Ha'am, who on an earlier trip had bemoaned the

sight of Arabs harvesting Jewish crops, now felt that "Hebrew labor" should not go too far: "It will no longer be possible to uproot trees planted by Arab laborers and demand highhandedly that all the work be given to Jews only."[139]

While these issues were being played out nationally, local conflicts continued to erupt. In fact, the Young Turk Revolution had sparked a wave of disorder throughout the empire. There were attacks on Jewish settlements in November 1908 and an attempt to seize Jewish land near Tiberias.[140]

In April 1909, serious clashes took place in the vicinity of Sejera, part of the new bloc of settlements near Tiberias. One Arab and two Jews were killed, leading to court proceedings that dragged on for two years. According to some reports, the Arab attacks were instigated by outside parties seeking to discredit the new order, adding a new dimension to conflicts that had been primarily local.[141] This incident also spurred creation of *HaShomer* (The Guard), the first community-wide organized defense force in the Jewish colonies. A small secret guard society, *Bar-Giora*, had been organized at Sejera two years earlier. In the heat of the 1909 battles, *Bar-Giora* leaders rolled their organization into a larger force intended to defend all Jewish inhabitants. The founders of *HaShomer* came predominantly from recently arrived socialist Zionists infuriated by attacks on Jews in Russia; tellingly, their slogan was: "By blood and fire Judea fell; by blood and fire Judea shall rise." Their initial style copied the most martial image at hand, that of the armed Bedouin on horseback.[142]

The fellahin living near Jewish settlements were certainly aware of the surge of anti-Zionism in the press and among the urban elite. And as new settlements popped up, more Arabs became neighbors to Jewish outposts and were sensitized to the broader issue of European Jewish immigration into Palestine. In any event, the stream of physical assaults, theft, vandalism, arson, and encroachment continued. These minor incidents were punctuated by major confrontations at Kfar Saba in 1910 and at Merhavia, Hadera, and Mesha in 1911. In the last of these cases, a Jewish newspaper reported that the governor of the Tiberias subdistrict, noted for his anti-Zionist animosity, had said to an Arab crowd "that it was permissible to steal from the Jews and that he did not care if the Jews' herds were stolen or even the Jews themselves."[143]

Two years later, following attacks in which two Jewish watchmen and one Arab had been killed, the residents of Rehovot called a meeting to discuss (apparently for the third time) establishing a federation of settlements in Judea "that would represent all the colonies and improve the relations between us and the people of the country."[144] The "Union of Judean Colonies" was founded, and consequently several of the settlements that had previously declined the help of *HaShomer* were now ready to welcome Jewish guards. As two of the founders wrote to Menahem Ussishkin, "Our situation in Palestine has become dangerous. Our enemies are organizing, and seek to swallow us alive."[145]

By this time conflict in urban centers was beginning to catch up with the intensified rural clashes. The governor of the Jaffa subdistrict had already written the Jerusalem governor, Ekrem Bey (see p. 235), in 1907 to warn him that "a foreign body is now conquering the Jaffa region. . . . These are the foreign Jews." The Jews intend, declared the governor, "to create a base of thieves and swindlers, and afterward to found here in a short time, after enough have come, an independent government."[146] The governor was particularly concerned about Jewish

acquisitions of state land, some of which would soon become the site of the new city of Tel Aviv. Clearly, the level of tension in Jaffa was on the rise, especially with a concentration of young radicalized Jewish workers who, in the name of Conquest of Labor, marched armed through city streets openly intimidating the Arab population.

In early 1908 a brawl between Jews and Arabs led to a police raid on two hotels where Jews had taken refuge—gunfire was exchanged and 13 Jews wounded, some of them seriously. The incident generated much more attention in the Jewish world than most such clashes; since most of those involved were Russian citizens, it was reported widely in the Russian Jewish press—and, inevitably, labeled as a "pogrom." To Jewish opponents of Zionism, the incident showed that Jewish settlers were simply duplicating the realities of the Diaspora: a beleaguered Jewish community living at the sufferance of a hostile host society. Zionists were put on the spot to show how and why this would be different.[147]

As battle lines were being drawn, the position of Sephardic Jewish Palestinians also became increasingly tenuous. The posture of "straddling Ottoman universalism and Jewish particularism"[148] became increasingly untenable as Ottoman Turks themselves turned more to Turkish particularism, fueling nationalism among both Arabs and Jews. Shimon Moyal, from one of the leading Sephardic families, made a valiant effort to bridge the gap in 1912, calling a public meeting to discuss means of curbing Arab hostility. As Moyal saw it, "Our Hebrew national ambitions do not oppose [the Arabs'] own ambitions and we have the ability to work with energy and a devoted spirit for the shared homeland and for the foundational level of the Ottoman people under whose umbrella we live."[149] Shortly after this, the Moyals, together with other Sephardic leaders including Nisim Malul, formed an organization called *HaMagen* (The Shield) to respond to Arab press attacks and to foster a better relationship. The group's platform called for a shared homeland between Arabs and Jews, something that mainstream (European) Zionist leaders were hardly ready for.[150]

By this time, in fact, matters had moved in an entirely different direction, with the founding of a new, all-Jewish city on the outskirts of Jaffa. From early first *aliya* days, in the 1880s, Jews had begun building on plots outside Jaffa. In part, this was inspired by the successful Templer model of building on the perimeters of existing cities, and, in part, it reflected fashionable notions about "garden suburbs." In 1906 prominent Jews in Jaffa founded the *Ahuzat Ba'it* society and sought suitable land for an urban settlement. Due to governmental opposition and delay the founding of the settlement, now named Tel Aviv, did not take place until April 1909.[151] (Among those at the founding ceremony was Haim Hisin, whom we have followed since his Bilu days in 1881.)

The founding of Tel Aviv only increased enmity toward Zionism. Apart from the usual charges of Jewish social and commercial exclusivity, Zionism was still suspected of serving as a base for foreign (European) influence. Above all, Tel Aviv was taken as evidence that Jews were building "a state within a state."[152] Since some of the purchased land had been farmed by tenants, as in other settlements, Tel Aviv had the same problems as other settlements in evicting occupants who claimed rights of usage. The result was the usual plague of theft and vandalism: "In this atmosphere of hatred and enmity . . . Tel Aviv began its life. . . . It had to fight a continuous war, a daily war for its strength and growth."[153] Tel Aviv was also swept into the

ongoing struggle between Jewish and Arab labor, with serious fights and serious injuries. But by 1910 the neighborhood had replaced all Arab guards with Jews.[154]

Intensified conflict did lead to occasional thoughts about transfer of Arab residents to other locations. Arthur Ruppin, perhaps the pivotal figure in settlement policy, suggested the possibility on at least two occasions. In a 1911 memorandum to the Zionist executive, he proposed a "limited population transfer" of Arab farmers to Syrian districts.[155] He repeated the same idea in a letter to a member of the Zionist Executive in 1914.[156] Another major Zionist figure, Leon Motzkin, proposed in a 1912 German Zionist conference that Arabs be encouraged to sell their lands to Jewish settlers and be resettled on lands purchased in neighboring Arab lands: "The fact is that around Palestine there are extensive areas. It will be easy for the Arabs to settle there with the money that they will receive from the Jews."[157] These ideas were not, however, part of the mainstream conversation.

More indicative of the main thrust of Zionist thinking at the time was Ahad Ha'am, no longer so far in advance of his colleagues. Ahad Ha'am paid his fifth visit to Erets Yisrael in late 1911, where he was fully exposed to the new winds of Arab nationalism and anti-Zionism. Moshe Smilansky met him at the Jaffa port with a warning of the "pogrom-like atmosphere" in the town. The Arabs, Smilansky explained, were now absorbed in their own nationalist goals and saw the Jews as an impediment. "It's just like in Russia," Smilansky added. Ahad Ha'am's own conclusion was that "the Jews were now in fear of Arabs" both in Jaffa and in the colonies.[158] It was not an auspicious beginning.

Ahad Ha'am was now ready to put the Arab issue at the center of his concerns, and not just as an additional problem in the long list of complications. Even before the trip, he recalled his foresight in 1891 while at the same time admitting how he had underestimated the matter: "True, I had always thought that in the end this conflict would break out and I said so explicitly twenty years ago . . . but I never thought that it would occur so soon when our power in our country is still so limited and hardly felt." Nevertheless, Ahad Ha'am still clung to the faith, shared by many others, that the success of Zionism, in and of itself, would in the end overcome the natural resistance of those to whom it was bringing a new dawn.[159]

The emerging debate over Arab relations is nowhere better demonstrated than in the split between two major literary figures who, despite their friendship, found themselves on opposite sides of the divide. Yehoshua Radler-Feldman, known by his pen name as Rabbi Binyamin (though he was not a rabbi), was a prominent intellectual voice who combined political progressivism with religious Zionism. Yosef Haim Brenner was an aspiring author who became one of the best-known Hebrew novelists in Palestine. Rabbi Binyamin and Brenner had become fast friends when they met in London in 1906, before either had made their way to Palestine. They worked together on the important literary journal *HaMe'orer*. And after Rabbi Binyamin immigrated in 1907, he lent his passport to Brenner—who was having difficulties gaining entry—for the latter's immigration in 1909.

But Rabbi Binyamin was drawn to the integrative solution to conflict with Arabs. He went beyond Yitzhak Epstein, urging not only cooperation and partnership but even assimilation of the two communities, to the point of supporting intermarriage. This was too much for Brenner, who came to believe that Arab hatred was an immutable reality. In 1913 he launched a fiery attack on his erstwhile friend in the pages of the journal *Revivim*: "Rabbi Binyamin, what is the point of

speaking of love for our neighbors, the inhabitants of this land, when we are sworn enemies, yes, enemies? What point is there in introducing ideals into the relations between nations when it is utterly useless to do so?"[160]

AN ARAB DEFINITION: RUHI AL-KHALIDI

As Jewish analysts were taking relations with Arabs more seriously, Palestinian Arab leaders were similarly moving from instinctive opposition to a framework of confrontation and conflict over the future of Palestine/Erets Yisrael. Najib Nassar's articles in *al-Karmil*, and his small book on Zion ism, have been singled out. But the most complete statement on Zionism from an Arab perspective in this period is a manuscript written on the eve of World War I by Ruhi al-Khalidi, the nephew of Yusuf Zia al-Khalidi who had corresponded with Theodor Herzl in 1899 (see pp. 208–210). Though this manuscript remains unpublished, it is a striking testimony of the realization among Palestinian Arab notables that the two national movements were on a collision course with grave implications.

Ruhi al-Khalidi had both a traditional Islamic education and wide exposure to Western intellectual currents. He studied not only at several schools in Jerusalem—including the Jewish Alliance school—but also in Nablus, Tripoli, Beirut, Constantinople, and Paris. An accomplished scholar, he published works on history, literature, and linguistics. In 1898 he was appointed consul general of the Ottoman Empire in Bordeaux, and after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution he returned to Jerusalem where he was elected as one of three deputies to the restored Ottoman parliament from the Jerusalem district (see p. 236). He was reelected to this post in 1912 and, as noted, was an outspoken opponent of Zionism in parliamentary debates.[161]

During this latter period al-Khalidi drafted a 120-page manuscript on *Zionism or the Zionist Question* that was being transcribed for publication at the moment of his untimely death in Constantinople, in 1913, at the age of 49. The manuscript then lay forgotten until rediscovered among family papers, much later, by historian Walid Khalidi, who published a full description of the work in Arabic.[162] More recently, Jonathan Marc Gribetz has analyzed the original text in depth as part of his study of how Zionists and Palestinian Arabs thought about each other in the late Ottoman period.[163]

Al-Khalidi used many Jewish sources in researching the topic: the Bible, an explanation of the Talmud in Arabic, and especially Richard Gottheil's *Encyclopedia Judaica* article on "Zionism," which had been translated in Najib Nassar's book. Like his uncle, Ruhi al-Khalidi does not question the historical link of Jews to Palestine, and extensively quotes biblical and Talmudic passages on the yearning for Zion. In fact, this yearning is what, in his eyes, constitutes a challenge to the Islamic presence: "Among the rabbis of the Jews, there are those who believe that the Messiah the son Joseph will collect the Children of Israel around him and march with them to Jerusalem, and he will gain mastery over the power of enemies and will restore the religious worship in the Temple, that is, the al-Aqsa Mosque, and establish his dominion."[164]

On what grounds, then, did Arabs or Muslims oppose the return of the Jews to their homeland? Ruhi's uncle Yusuf, in his exchange with Herzl, had cited the practical political impossibility of such a massive rearrangement of human demographics. Ruhi al-Khalidi, however, raises a much more fundamental objection, arguing that Jews could no longer claim to be a nation. He cites the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelsohn (1729–1786), progenitor of the

Jewish Enlightenment or Haskala (see chap. 2), as the key to this transformation. Mendelsohn had argued for separation of religion and state. On these grounds, Khalidi, stated, Mendelsohn "separated the Mosaic religion from Jewish nationalism and abolished this nationalism. It obliged the Jews to acquire the citizenship of the countries in which they were born." For al-Khalidi this became a binding precept for Jews: "It is not permitted for a Jew who was born in Prussia or Austria or France, for example, to consider himself anything but a Prussian or Austrian or Frenchman. . . . He does not have the right to call for Jewish nationalism. . . . It is not permissible to consider his nationality to be Jewish nationalism, nor his homeland Palestine."[165]

From this perspective what Zionists have done is to revive a national identity that had been invalidated by the course of Jewish history. But this revival draws upon "the excitement, intimidation, fascination, warning, promise, and threats" connected to Zion in the Jewish Bible. In this account, the promised revival includes becoming master of others in the Promised Land: "Religious happiness [in the Old Testament] is in possessing and ruling [Zion], and using foreigners to cultivate its land and herd its livestock, and eat its general riches, and lord over their magnificence, and multiply in it through procreation and so on."[166]

Here al-Khalidi also adds a classic negative image to the description of what "religious happiness" is for Jews: "The holiest duties, for them, are two: the first is increasing descendants and children, and the other is the acquisition, accumulation, and increase of money."[167] These negative traits help account for racial hatred toward Jews in Russia, al-Khalidi says, while still describing his own position as anti-Zionist and not anti-Jewish.[168]

Finally, al-Khalidi surveys the Jewish colonies at the time—some 28 in number—and speculates on their plans for expansion "such as the purchase of the Beisan Valley or taking a concession in the colonization of the Jordan Valley and the nearby vast, fertile lands and plains."[169] The message is stark: Zionism must be stopped, or Palestine will be lost.

Al-Khalidi was a serious scholar who tried to comprehend a new phenomenon that few before him had taken as seriously. His perspective was deeply influenced by his own religious tradition and also, marginally, by exposure to European antisemitism of the period (like Najib Azuri, he lived in France during the vituperative Dreyfus era). What he wrote, while not made public at the time, represented a considered view from the more sophisticated sector of the Arab community. In this view, just as in the view of Yitzhak Epstein on the Jewish side, the conflict was now a reality.

DELINEATING BOUNDARIES

During the last period of Ottoman rule leading thinkers of both sides concluded that Arabs and Jews in *Filastin*/Erets Yisrael were headed for inevitable conflict. They recognized that the aims and present courses of action of the two sides, as then defined and pursued, were incompatible. Only changes in these aims and programs could avert a fateful clash of nation against nation.

The period began and ended with significant statements marking this recognition. At the outset, Yitzhak Epstein took Ahad Ha'am's recognition of Arab collective identity one step further: Arabs were a nation not only to be taken into account but also to be taken on as a partner—a junior partner, but a full beneficiary—in the Zionist enterprise. An outcome agreeable to both sides was possible, but only with radical change in the Zionist approach (and Arab willingness to accept a junior role). This entreaty did not move most Zionists at the time, but in

the decade that followed, they were forced to recognize the reality of escalating Arab hostility and deal in one way or another with the "hidden question" that Epstein had exposed.

As it happened, this period also coincided with a wave of Jewish refugees who were even more tied to their own program, rather than accommodation—let alone assimilation—with indigenous people and culture. These newcomers, fleeing violence, were also more inclined to take up the sword in self-defense and less inclined to view the hiring of Arabs as a way of spreading the benefit of Jewish settlement to the host population. At the same time, Jewish settlement was itself moving more to a pattern of territorial concentration with cooperative or collectivist communities based on the labor of their (Jewish) members. In other words, expansion of Jewish settlement went hand-in-hand with a tendency toward greater separatism.

Yosef Sprinzak, an emerging leader of Labor Zionism, put his finger on this development: "Our style of life, which is becoming an increasingly prominent reality in Palestine, mandates a delineation of boundaries between the two nations." When the Zionist presence was sparse and scattered, Sprinzak reasons, then—paradoxically—it was possible to take the context for granted. But with the development of coherent settlement blocs and emergence of the Yishuv on a national level, it becomes necessary to recognize and deal with—as a separate entity—"an additional national body."[170]

Among Arabs, the antipathy and clashes on the local level merged into a general campaign, in the new Palestinian press and other public forums, against the growing Zionist presence. As Arab nationalism gained strength and visibility, it provided the ideological framework to define this opposition. Key to the Arab perspective was the differentiation between Ottoman Jews—generally meaning Jews absorbed into Middle Eastern societies—and "foreign" Jews who refused to assimilate and seemed determined to establish a European preserve in the heart of the Muslim and Arab world. The importance of this distinction is also clear in the ambivalent position of the Ottoman (Sephardi) Jews, many of whom initially welcomed the prospect of "Ottomanism" after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and criticized the separatism of their Ashkenazi brethren. Some of the European Zionists also challenged the drive to build a new society without reference to human and cultural context, beginning with Epstein but, by 1914, including a reconstructed Moshe Smilansky: "In thirty years we did not learn the language of the land . . . After thirty years we, close to the Arabs in race and religion, remain alien to them."[171]

The end result was that, by the end of this period, both parties are beginning to speak openly about the use of force. This was more evident on the Arab side since they were presumed to have the advantage should it come to a test of arms. The Jews were still vastly outnumbered and most observers, on either side, found the idea of Jewish military forces still very hard to imagine, even though armed Jewish self-defense was already becoming a reality. All in all, an eventual decision by clashing forces, like that foreseen by Najib Azuri in apocalyptic terms, was no longer quite so unimaginable.

NOTES

1. Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 24.

2. Roberto Bachi, *The Population of Israel* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, 1976), p. 5.

3. Arthur Ruppin, *Syria: An Economic Survey*, trans. and abr. Nellie Strauss (New York: Provisional Zionist Committee, 1918), pp. 6–8, 29–31. The overall figure for the Jewish population is derived by subtracting Jews in "non-Palestinian" districts (30,000) from the 115,000 for the Beirut and Damascus provinces (*vilayets*) and the Jerusalem *mutasarriflik* taken together. The

figure for the population in the colonies is simply the addition of separate estimates for the 43 settlements. In the original version published in German, the figure for the colonies is stated explicitly as 12,000: Ruppin, *Syrien als Wirtschaftsgebiet* (Berlin: Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, 1917), p. 11.

4. Gur Alroey, *An Unpromising Land: Jewish Migration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), pp. 110–111.

5. Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 30–31.

6. Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1882–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 46, 59–60.

7. Shafir, *Land, Labor and Origins*, pp. 58–59, 64–65.

8. Joseph Vitkin, "Conquest of Land and Conquest of Labor," *HaPo'el HaTsa'ir* 1, no. 10 (June–July 1908), quoted in Shafir, *Land, Labor and Origins*, p. 74.

9. Israel Zangwill, "Zionism and England's Offer," *The Maccabean* 7, no. 6 (December 1904): 281.

10. Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 46–47.

11. Yitzhak Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama" [A Hidden Question], *HaShiloah* 17 (July–December 1907): 19–206, translated in Alan Dowty, "'A Question That Outweighs All Others': Yitzhak Epstein and Zionist Recognition of the Arab Issue," *Israel Studies* 6, no. 1 (2001): 34–54.

12. Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama," p. 49.

13. Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama," p. 52.

14. Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama," p. 50.

15. Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama," p. 41.

16. Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama," p. 51.

17. Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama," p. 41.

18. Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama," p. 50.

19. Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama," p. 43.

20. Epstein, "She'ela Ne'elama," p. 50.

21. Moshe Smilansky, "LeShe'elot HaHityashvut Be'Erets Yisrael" [On Questions of the Settlement in Erets Yisrael], *HaShiloah* 14 (Tammuz-Kislev 5665 [July–December 1904]): 295, 296.

22. Moshe Smilansky, "Me'Inyanei HaYishuv" [Affairs of the Yishuv], *HaPo'el HaTsa'ir* 1, nos. 4–5 (Adar I 5668 [February–March 1908]), quoted in Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882–1948* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), p. 50.

23. Nehama Pukhachewsky, "She'elot geluyot" [Open Questions], *Hashiloah* 18 (January–June 1908): 67–69.

24. *Al Davar Matsav HaTsionut* [Concerning the Situation of Zionism], April 11, 1905, Yehoshua Barzilai Papers, CZA A25/262.

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27. Ahad Ha'am, *Kol Kitvei Ahad Ha'Am* [Collected Writings of Ahad Ha'Am] (Jerusalem, 1923), vol. 4, p. 27, quoted in Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs*, p. 59.

28. Eliezer Be'eri, *Reshit HaSikhsukh Yisrael-Arav, 1882–1911* [Beginning of the Arab-Israel Conflict, 1882–1911] (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Po'alim and University of Haifa, 1985): 25–26.

29. Smilansky's first series of stories was published in 1911 as *B'nei Arav* [Sons of Arabia]; a modern edition was published in 1966 by the Department for Education and Culture in the Diaspora, World Jewish Organization (Jerusalem).

30. Fania Domb, "The Arab in Fact and Fiction as Reflected in the Works of Moshe Smilansky," *Jewish Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1982): 3–7.

31. Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), pp. 140–141.

32. Ber Borochov, "LeShe'elat Tsion VeTerritoria" [On Zionism and Territory], in Borochov, *Ketavim* [Writings], vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: HaKibuts HaMe'uhad: Sifriat Po'alim, 1955), p. 148. Originally published in *Yevreiskaya Zhizn*, nos. 6–10 (June–October 1905).

33. Borochov, "HaPlatforma Shelanu" [Our Platform], 1906, in Borochov, *Ketavim*, vol. 1, p. 283. Originally published in *Yevreiskaya Rabochaya Kronika*, nos. 1–3 (April–June 1906) and *Molot*, July 1906.

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EPILOGUE

WHEN DID "THE ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT" begin? Some discussions tend to revolve around the issues created by the 1967 war, though that conflagration makes no sense without considering the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. But the events of 1948 make no sense without looking at the British Mandate before that. Hillel Cohen, in his recent study of the tragic events of 1929, makes a strong case for that year as "Year Zero" of the conflict, and that makes sense using the definition that he employs.[1] Others might choose to designate the beginning of the Mandate, with the first clear delineation of the parties and their opposed goals.

But there are, of course, earlier roots. A certain consensus has singled out the 1905–1914 period, when Arab nationalism and the more assertive (and by some standards more important) second *aliya*, or wave, of Jewish immigrants entered Palestine. This was when, some say, the real opposing national political aims were first set out explicitly and sharply. The implication is that clashes between Jews and Arabs during the quarter century before that, from the time large-scale Jewish flight from Russia began, were not "national" or "political" in nature. "They did not have," says one historian, "any bearing on political relations between the Arabs, as a national body, and the veteran Israeli settlers and residents, as a part of another national body."[2] The argument is made that clashes between Jewish settlements and their Arab neighbors were no more frequent, and no more serious, than the frequent conflicts that these neighbors had among themselves, given the weakness of Ottoman rule. This assertion has, however, apparently never been tested in any rigorous quantitative comparison.

We do know that the earliest settlers themselves firmly believed that they had reached a modus vivendi with their neighbors. According to their own narrative, their firm self-defense had earned the respect of would-be marauders, and after a period of testing they achieved relative stability. Had it not been for the advent of Arab nationalism and the pricklier settlers of the second *aliya*, in other words, it is quite possible that the Arab-Israel conflict would never have come about. Thus, in this account, it is quite reasonable to date the beginning of the real struggle to this epoch, 1905–1914. In support of this thesis, it does seem that some of the earlier colonies had achieved a situation of relative local security by the beginning of this period.

But this overlooks the reality of constant clashes, if not everywhere then almost always around new settlements. The standard narrative, moving in uniform fashion from confrontation to grudging acceptance and even friendly relations, simply does not fit most cases. In the words of a pioneering study of these clashes, the "linear path of development often described in Zionist historiography" is not accurate: "Rather, aspects of cooperation and confrontation between the two populations existed simultaneously throughout the period examined."[3] The cases examined here confirm this picture.

The standard narrative also overlooks the overwhelming evidence of hostility to foreigners

from European lands. From the outset, a vast chasm between the Muslim world and Europe runs through the story. There were moments when this chasm was bridged, and there were parties (primarily Sephardi Jews) who sometimes served as bridges, but by and large Arabs (and Turks) viewed Jews from Europe as infiltrators from an adversarial civilization. One could label this antipathy as "cultural" or "civilizational" rather than "national," or simply dismiss it as "xenophobic," but that does not make it less real.

Jewish settlers had a tremendous incentive to minimize all their obstacles, including the inconvenient hostility of the existing population. They were quick, therefore, to look for local or specific sources of friction that in theory could be eliminated. They also clung to the basic self-assurance that they were doing good for the unenlightened inhabitants of the land. This "benefit theory," of course, closely fit in with their certainty of the superiority of European civilization and the virtue of its worldwide diffusion. It led to the comforting assumption that the success of Zionism would in itself be sufficient to establish a stable order that would be acceptable to all parties. There would be, in this view, no need for negotiation with the Arabs—who in any event were not seen initially as a collective body with collective interests—nor any need for armed forces on a national level. Anyway, political issues on a national level would be taken up with the Turks, not the Arabs.

It was also vitally important in the Return to Zion to make a clean break with a Jewish past seen—in the eyes of proto-Zionists—as tragedy and humiliation. The restored Zion could not be simply a duplication of the Diaspora, where Jews were never masters of their own destiny but lived under terms set by the host population. Jews would no longer meekly accept their fate; there was in particular a fierce pride in fighting back and shattering the image of the defenseless Jew. Force on a national level might not be relevant (at least not yet), but assertive self-defense in everyday relations with neighbors was a hallmark of the New Yishuv.

Recognition that "the Arab question" might dominate the Yishuv's future came slowly and in stages. Ahad Ha'am saw Arabs as a people; Yitzhak Epstein argued that negotiation with Arabs as a people was essential. Debates over their landmark statements, in 1891 and 1905, reveal the divisions that would eventually shape competing Zionist approaches to the conflict. Separatists/nationalists rejected the need or desirability of compromise or negotiation in the Zionist program. The liberal/practical school heeded Ahad Ha'am's call for good relations in the framework of continuing Zionist work that would in itself overcome resistance. Integrative/altruistic thinking, brought to life by Epstein and with much support from Sephardic spokesmen, argued for accommodation that would require a basic change of direction; a variant of this was the socialist model of Ber Borochov and many young second *aliya* workers (such as a young David Ben-Gurion) who believed that common class interests could overcome national divisions. These variant approaches are a key to the future political map of the Jewish community under the British Mandate and in the state of Israel.[4]

Arab reaction to the New Yishuv was largely localized at first, since only a small part of the Arab population came into direct contact with the few and scattered Jewish settlements. In addition, the hiring of Arab labor did provide some benefit that may have helped to mute opposition to the new colonies. But opposition did exist from the outset, with clashes that clearly reflect hostility to what were seen as European outposts in the midst of Muslim and Arab society. With the expansion of the settlements came growing awareness of the implications on a broader scale and the merger of local hostility with anti-Zionist campaigns in the press and among the

urban elite. By the end of the period, Arab opposition to Zionism had become as articulated as had the various Jewish formulations for dealing with this opposition.

In this perspective, what happened in the 1905–1914 period is best understood as a continuation, and intensification, of what began a little over two decades earlier. The clash was inherent in the basic structure of the situation. Let us take note of the elements of this structure that make any other outcome seem highly unlikely:

Changes in nineteenth-century Palestine made foreign access easier, but also strengthened the existing antipathy to European penetration among both Arabs and Turks. Hostility to the West was deeply rooted in the Muslim world, and the "opening up" of Palestine only made European intrusions more visible and more resented. From a Middle East vantage point, Russian Jews were, first and foremost, Europeans (especially when they insisted on being Europeans).

Most of the Jews who entered Palestine after 1882 were refugees by commonly accepted definition. Most came from Russia, fleeing persecution based on religious and racial bigotry. Like refugees of any place or era, they came with an embittered sense of having been forced out of their native land, and with a determination that the experience would never be repeated—explaining why this small part of the refugee outflow chose Palestine instead of other possible havens.

Despite having been persecuted in their native lands, Eastern European Jews who fled these lands still strongly identified with European civilization as an ideal. The refugees tended to belong to the sector of Jewish society that had most strongly attached itself to European culture and thought. If Russia failed them, it was because Russia was not sufficiently European. At a time when Europeans took the superiority of their civilization as a given, European Jews shared that consensus. Like other Europeans, they also had little respect for Middle Eastern cultures.

The early Jewish settlers set out to construct their own society, with little or no reference to the society among whom they settled and no intention of assimilating to it. The appeal of Palestine, simply put, was that this was the one spot in the world where Jews would not be obliged to adjust to others. Yosef Gorny has spelled out the concrete implications of this determination: territorially concentrating Jewish settlers, creating a Jewish majority within that framework, building a self-sufficient society, and reviving an independent Jewish culture. This inevitably pushes the new society in the direction of separatism, with no obvious or natural role for another population in the same area.[5]

To the extent they thought about relations with the Arab population of Palestine, Jewish settlers fell back on the "benefit theory." Like other purveyors of European progress, they saw their role as a "civilizing mission." Thinking in terms of benefits also focused attention on individuals rather than on Arabs as a national counterpart, which in turn made it easier to see the Turks as the address for "political" issues. Given the strong incentive to minimize problems, clashes with Arabs were not considered to be political or national in nature.

The "civilizational divide" runs through the entire history of Jewish Zionist activity in Ottoman Palestine. To both Arabs and Turks, the Jewish settlements were foreign European transplants, and the use of foreign protection by the settlers only verified this. The importance of clashing civilizations is expressed in many small vignettes connected to the conflict: in hostility to German Templers and Ashkenazi Jews before Zionism, in greater acceptance of settlements with "local" and/or Sephardi Jews, such as Mishmar HaYarden and Hartuv, in the critique of Zionists by Sephardi Jews, and in repeated Arab demands that Jews learn Arabic and otherwise

assimilate.

Given these points of departure, it is hard to see how the conflict could have evolved much differently. The rise of Arab nationalism and the more assertive second *aliya*, after 1905, did serve to consolidate and intensify the impending collision. But the basic elements were already in place, playing out in an almost stately and implacable progression. There were some pleas to rethink the longer-term implications of a separatism that could only end in battle, but it was too little, too late. The die was cast.

NOTES

1. Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929*, trans. Haim Watzman (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2015).

2. Michael Asaf, *HaYahasim bein Yehudim Ve'Aravim Be'Erets-Yisrael, 1860–1948* [Relations between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, 1860–1948] (Tel Aviv: Mifalei Tarbut VeHinukh, 1970), p. 37.

3. Yuval Ben-Bassat, *Local Feuds or Premonitions of a Binational Conflict? A Re-examination of the Early Jewish-Arab Encounter in Palestine at the End of the Nineteenth Century* (PhD diss., University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 87.

4. Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs 1882–1948: A Study of Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), pp. 40–77.

5. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs*, pp. 2–3.

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