

**TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY  
THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES  
THE INSTITUTE FOR ZIONIST RESEARCH  
FOUNDED IN MEMORY OF CHAIM WEIZMANN**





# ZIONISM

STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT  
AND OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN PALESTINE

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# SUMMARIES



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## THE RISE OF JEWISH NATIONALISM IN CENTRAL AND WESTERN EUROPE

*by* Yosef Salmon

This article traces the rise of Jewish nationalism to Central and Western Europe rather than to Eastern Europe, where, because Jewish folk culture and feelings of solidarity were stronger than in the West, a Jewish national movement might more logically be expected to have begun. By following the careers of three central figures in the process of Jewish national awakening – Zvi Hirsch Kalisher, Perez Smolenskin, and David Gordon – the article finds a consistent pattern in which Jews from Eastern Europe encounter Jewish life in the West and reject its tendency to seek integration with the surrounding society. This observation serves as the exordium for a model of the Jewish nationalist in the early stages of the movement, a model embracing Eastern European background, rejection of traditional Eastern European Jewish life, and a similar rejection of the ways of Western European Jewry. Nationalism thus presents itself as a third force standing between the two poles of the left and the right, or perhaps even as a sort of radicalism of the centre.

## STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASHKENAZIC OLD YISHUV – TWO APPROACHES TO MODERNISATION

*by* Israel Freidin

This article reexamines the view prevailing in the historical literature for the past forty years that Israel David Frumkin, publisher of *Havazelet*, and Yosef Rivlin, secretary of the General Council of Kolelim, were promoters of modernisation in the Old Yishuv. It does so by analysing the by-laws of organisations set up by Frumkin and Rivlin in Jerusalem in the 1870s and by asking

whether and to what extent these by-laws reveal a departure from accepted traditional models in a more modern direction.

The by-laws of Rivlin's organisation, *Knesset Israel*, founded in 1873, show features of the traditional era on one hand while departing from that era on the other. These departures, however, are not in the direction of modernisation: they include a rise in the status of the rabbis as against that of wealthy lay leaders and removal of opportunities for public expression of criticism. This retreat from traditional social values was a conscious one rooted in fear of the modernisation that had begun to penetrate the Palestinian environment during the 1870s. Such a defensive posture implied a transition from traditional society to conservative orthodoxy in the Old Yishuv.

Frumkin himself noted that his organisation, *Tiferet Yerushalayim*, was founded along the lines of other Jewish charitable societies that had been established in Europe in the eighteenth century and that had become centres of modernisation. In its organisational structure, electoral pattern, and social stratification this organisation did not deviate from the accepted norms of traditional society. Nevertheless, in matters such as social mobilisation, public activity and involvement, sensitivity to public opinion, and opportunities for criticism, *Tiferet Yerushalayim* represented a breakthrough on the road to modern society. Frumkin even broadened and deepened these trends during the 1880s; whereas in the 1870s he was a "maskil" of the type represented by the slogan '*Torah veDerech erez*,' a decade later he stood close to the movement for national revival. Still, like many others, he could not become part of this movement as represented by the first Aliya because of its secularist tendencies.

Nonetheless, the distance between Frumkin and Rivlin and their respective streams in the Old Yishuv with regard to modernisation was great.

## HOVEVEI ZION VERSUS ROTHSCHILD OVER THE CHARACTER OF THE YISHUV

*by Shulamit Laskov*

Around 1900 it became clear to Baron Edmond de Rothschild that the colonies that he was sponsoring in Palestine were not able to sustain themselves. He thereupon transferred their management to the Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA). Beginning from the premise that the settlements' economy should not be based exclusively upon viniculture, ICA reduced the number of vineyards in them and introduced new crops. It also reduced the settlements' population so that the available land would suffice to sustain those remaining in them. All of this led to large-scale emigration of workers and farmers alike and caused a material and psychological crisis among them.

These workers and farmers approached the Hovevei Zion organisation in Russia with a request to intervene with Rothschild and ICA on their behalf. Hovevei Zion decided to send a twenty-man delegation, consisting of their own representatives, as well as those of the Zionist movement, the farmers, and the workers, to meet with ICA and Rothschild in Paris. The delegation prepared a memorandum that included a demand to abolish the system of trusteeship over the settlements and to deliver all support funds directly to the farmers and workers. Ahad Ha'am was the one who saw the root of the problem in the trusteeship system and who was the moving spirit behind the delegation.

The Zionist members of the delegation soon resigned out of apprehension that ICA would make light of the group's efforts. When the delegation finally reached Paris, on 9 May 1901, it consisted of fifteen people, among them Ahad Ha'am and Ussishkin. The delegates assumed mistakenly that ICA was directing matters without Rothschild's knowledge and hoped to win the Baron to their side, but when the Hovevei Zion representatives met with him he defended ICA and turned down their demands. He received the farmers separately in an insulting manner. Nevertheless he announced that he would add land to needy settlements and

establish new colonies for a portion of the farmers driven out of the old ones. On the other hand he promised the workers nothing, even though he expressed appreciation for their work. ICA refused to meet the delegation altogether.

At this point Ahad Ha'am called upon his colleagues to inform Rothschild that his money was no longer desired and to launch a public campaign. However, fearing that the Baron would indeed cut off support for the colonies while Hovevei Zion lacked funds of its own to maintain them, the delegates published a restrained statement about the episode. Ahad Ha'am resigned from the delegation in protest.

The full text Rothschild's words to the farmers is published here (in Hebrew translation) for the first time.

## ZIONISM AS A DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITY – GERMAN JEW AND EAST EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS

*by* Moshe Zimmermann

The westward migration of Jews from Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth century was one of the main reasons behind the awakening of the Zionist idea in Western Europe. The Zionist movement, which crystallised in the middle of the 1890s, can be explained to a significant extent by the massive stream of emigration from Russia that began in 1891. Western European (especially German) Jews began from the premise that the Jews from Eastern Europe should not be absorbed in Germany, so that their own economic and political situation would not be aggravated. The principal alternative destination to Germany was the United States, which was chosen by more than 90 percent of the Jewish migrants. German Jewry, through the German Central Committee for the Jews of Russia, took it upon itself to channel the migration to the United States as efficiently as possible. This involved slowing down the migration from Russia on the one hand and filtering through those most fit for emigration – the healthy and young – on the other.

Immigration to the United States, however, could not be a solution for all Jews, and out of the encounter with the migrants the idea of a nationally-oriented immigration movement to Palestine began to be discussed. This development, together with the fact that at the beginning of the 1890s many German Jews found themselves in a quandry about their own self-definition, provided the impetus for the Zionist solution. Even then there were those in Germany who were thinking about turning the colonisation of Palestine into a tool for strengthening the Jewish consciousness of the Jews in Germany. Those who thought this way, however, did not intend themselves to migrate; on the contrary, they sought to help others migrate to Palestine before they flooded Europe and America.

Thus the Zionist idea sprouted indirectly out of the pressure created by the migration and the search for a solution for Jews in distress. Diverting the migration from places where it was not wanted led to the idea of a new kind of Jewish concentration that could help to strengthen the self-awareness of the Jews in the Diaspora. In many respects this development was a prelude to the role played by Israeli society to this day.

## MIZRAHI IN THE VOTE ON THE UGANDA PROJECT AT THE SIXTH ZIONIST CONGRESS

*by* Mordechai Eliav

For many years Zionist historiography has been harsh on the position of Mizrahi in the vote on the Uganda project at the sixth Congress (1903). Historians have even determined that Mizrahi, as the largest group of delegates at the Congress, decided the issue in favour of the project.

A reexamination of the matter of Mizrahi's vote at the Congress has turned up surprising results and has even made reconstruction of the name list of the Mizrahi delegates who actually took part in the fateful vote possible. This examination reveals that the accepted figure of 200 Mizrahi delegates at the Congress is unfounded.

Of 1,079 delegates elected to the Congress the credentials committee confirmed only 592 as properly elected. It will be noted that a considerable portion of the delegates were elected to more than one seat. An exact count of the Mizrahi delegates who actually voted, according to the voting cards preserved in the Zionist archives, reveals that their number reached 98 at most – about 17 percent of all delegates taking part in the vote. There is no doubt that there was tight cooperation between the Mizrahi delegation and the political Zionists, as the delegate list indicates. Indeed, confirmed political Zionists were elected as Mizrahi delegates even though they were far from being orthodox Jews. There were also delegates at the Congress who moved back and forth between Mizrahi and the political Zionists. For this reason there is doubt as to the affiliation of several delegates. According to the official minutes 295 delegates voted for the proposal and 177 against. A second announcement corrected the number of negative votes to 178. However, in the name list of those voting, which appears in the minutes, there are 292 ayes, 178 nays, and 99 abstentions.

A thorough examination of the voting cards and the names of the elected delegates make possible a reconstruction of the name list that is presented here in complete form. The conclusion is that 63 Mizrahi delegates voted in favour of the project (about 22 percent of all those who voted for it); 14 voted nay; and 21 abstained. There is even doubt about whether six delegates belonged to the Mizrahi delegation. Many of those who abstained in fact opposed the Uganda project but refused to vote against Herzl.

The fact that a third of the Mizrahi delegates refused to vote for the Uganda project attests to the fact that many of them were in a quandry as to how to vote. The delegation as a whole was loyal to Zion. Moreover, the vote of 63 Mizrahi delegates with the majority did not decide the issue.

## THE ZIONIST ESTABLISHMENT AND THE JEWISH NATIONAL LIBRARY

*by* Dov Shidorski

The web of relationships that developed between the Zionist movement and the Midrash Abrabanel Library in Jerusalem during the interval between the first Zionist Congress and 1920 was a complex one. The decision taken by Hibbat Zion to establish a Jewish national library gave rise to debates about the status of such an institution, the course of its future development, and its ownership. This final issue was of concern because Yosef Chazanowicz had donated his collection to the Midrash Abrabanel Library, which had been established in Jerusalem by the local B'nai Brith office and which was intended to form the basis for a Jewish national library.

The decisions taken at the first Zionist Congresses provided for *de facto* recognition of the Midrash Abrabanel Library as the Jewish national library as well as for *ad hoc* financial support. However, the lack of a commitment for ongoing support did not permit the library to develop into a national library worthy of the name. The reluctance of the Zionist Organisation to commit itself unequivocally to the library in Jerusalem can be explained by the controversy over cultural work as well as by Herzl's refusal to permit the Zionist movement to work together with organisations like B'nai Brith.

Heinrich Loewe submitted a detailed proposal to the seventh Zionist Congress in 1905 calling for the establishment of a network of libraries in Palestine centred about a Jewish national library owned by the Jewish National Fund. The Congress, however, adopted a more limited programme that did not include an explicit commitment to link the future library to the one already in Jerusalem. The ensuing debate touched upon the questions of public ownership of the library and of the contributions of Zionists and non-Zionists to the project. In the interval between the seventh and the eleventh Congresses three committees were appointed to tackle these problems, and the negotiations over transferring the library to

the Zionist Organisation produced three formulations of an agreement.

In the end, the language controversy, the decision of the eleventh Zionist congress to establish a Hebrew university in Jerusalem, the subsequent decision of the Zionist Aktionskomitee to set up a separate university library, the renewed prestige enjoyed by the Zionist movement in the wake of the Balfour Declaration, and the changing ideological climate in the Yishuv all helped to convince B'nai Brith in Palestine that transferring the library to the Zionist Organisation would advance the cause of the national library. A decision on transfer, stipulating that the collection was to form the basis for a national library, was finally taken in late Summer 1919.

### THE ABSORPTION OF UNIVERSITY-EDUCATED IMMIGRANTS IN THE 1920s AND HYDROLOGICAL RESEARCH

*by* Nachum Gross

The Zionist attitude towards irrigation was ambivalent from the beginning of modern settlement. On the one hand Zionist leaders recognised the importance of irrigation in Palestine, especially in commercial agriculture. On the other hand the first crops raised – cereals, grapes, and almonds – did not need to be irrigated. The models for the future Jewish peasantry – East European peasants, the local *fellahin*, and even the German Templars who introduced modern mixed farming to the country – also practised dry farming. The one prosperous example of irrigated agriculture in Palestine was the orange groves, a profitable and rapidly growing export sector since the 1870s. These, however, were based on capitalistic, wage labour-intensive business practice, which was considered by many Zionist leaders, particularly socialists, as antithetical to the development of a healthy farming class.

These mixed attitudes towards irrigation were still evident in the 1920s. Although the future importance of irrigated crops for export



was recognised, the Zionist Executive's planners saw mixed farming as non-irrigated and left irrigated single-crop specialisation such as citrus farming to private capitalist initiative. Thus they believed that water for both the household needs of agricultural settlements in the Zionist public sector and irrigation in the coastal orange belt was sufficiently available. The investigation of the country's water resources and of its ground water in particular was therefore left to the personal initiative of the handful of enthusiasts who are the subject of this essay.

Martin J. Goldschmidt came to Palestine in 1923, was employed by the city of Tel Aviv, and on his own began the investigation of ground water in the coastal plain. Leo Picard arrived in 1924 and was soon employed by the Zionist institutions and the Hebrew University. Stefan Loewengart came in 1925 but had greater difficulty finding support from the Zionist establishment. During 1926-1927 Goldschmidt and Loewengart tried to interest Zionist leaders and functionaries in their research on the country's ground water resources but were told that the Zionist institutions could afford only one geologist. Besides budgetary considerations, it seems that the Zionist establishment preferred to deal with Picard rather than the other two, as he directed his early research towards the regions of Zionist-organised agriculture – the Emek, Haifa Bay, and the Jordan Valley. Goldschmidt and Loewengart, by contrast, were mainly concerned with the coastal plain, the region of private capitalist agriculture.

All three should be remembered as the pioneers of Israeli hydrological research.

## THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY DO'AR HAYOM FROM ITS FOUNDING TO THE END OF 1924

by Yigal Drori

On 8 August 1919 a new Hebrew daily newspaper began to appear in Jerusalem under the name *Do'ar haYom*. It was edited by Itamar

ben Avi. Several journalists with pronounced right-wing tendencies gathered around him. *Do'ar haYom* quickly became the mouthpiece of the political right. The positions of the members of this group on political and economic issues were clear and consistent, and although the group did not constitute a party in the accepted meaning of the term, it is appropriate to see it as representing a distinct partisan trend. The group bore a definite right-wing stamp and stood close to the Brandeis circle in the United States.

In fact, *Do'ar haYom* was the organ of four political groups in the Yishuv in the early 1920s – the B'nei Binyamin organisation; a group of right-wing farmers from the older settlements; a section of the Sefardic community; and a right-wing faction of the General Zionist party.

From its founding *Do'ar haYom* was a fighting newspaper. Its first war was fought against the Zionist Commission to Palestine and its chairman, Menahem Ussishkin. The editors of *Do'ar haYom* saw the Zionist Commission as a new set of officials forced upon the Yishuv by the Zionist leadership. *Do'ar haYom* conducted another bitter war against the Provisional Council and later against the Elected Assembly (Asefat haNivharim) and the National Council (Va'ad Le'umi). Its chief complaint against the Assembly was that it did not faithfully reflect the composition of the Yishuv, as it was dominated by the workers' parties through a perverted electoral system. The newspaper's opposition to the Assembly also stemmed from the fear that the existence of such a body might cause the country's Arabs to demand a similar body of their own.

The greatest fear of the *Do'ar haYom* group was left-wing domination of the Yishuv. Thus they vigorously opposed the socialist ideas of the labour movement.

At the end of 1923 the paths of two of the editors of *Do'ar haYom* parted. Alexander Aaronsohn began to work for the establishment of a new movement to replace the Zionist organisation, which he regarded as moribund. In response Ben Avi resigned from the newspaper's editorship.

THE GERMAN INFLATION AND THE CRISES IN ITS  
WAKE (1922–1926) FROM A ZIONIST PERSPECTIVE

by Hagit Lavski

The period of rampant inflation in Germany during 1922–1923 was also the period in which Keren HaYesod began to function as the central institution for financing the creation of a Jewish national home. The Zionist movement in Germany figured out ways not only to reduce the adverse effects of the inflation upon this body's fundraising activities but even to turn the inflation to its advantage. Keren HaYesod was able to convert its so-called tithe campaign into an effective taxation programme as well as to develop active cooperation with non-Zionist economic and financial leaders. It could accomplish these goals because in consequence of the inflation the world Zionist leadership agreed to relinquish central control of monies raised in Germany. This allowed Keren HaYesod to be perceived as a neutral organisation, a perception that bore fruit both in the collection of funds for Palestine and in winning Jewish and non-Jewish opinion for Zionism and the national home. It also allowed the fund to develop special earmarked campaigns in a manner permitting both the effects of inflation and the limitations of the Palestinian settlement budget to be overcome. These strategies continued to be effective following the inflation period as well, so that the German branch's relative contribution to Keren Hayesod's worldwide income was especially great throughout the 1920s.

The deflationary crisis of 1925–1926 caused a temporary setback in the German Keren HaYesod's fundraising campaigns, especially among the non-Zionists. This was because the commercial sector in which the concentration of Jews was high, were hardest hit by the deflation. At the same time the crisis heightened opposition to Keren HaYesod among the leadership of the *Centralverein*, an anti-Zionist organisation. These leaders felt threatened by Keren HaYesod's prestige. Nevertheless, this struggle did not impair cooperation between Zionists and non-Zionists in the organisation and may even have strengthened it. This cooperation survived both the economic crisis in Germany and the echoes of mounting crisis in Palestine

itself during 1926.

Examining the effects of the economic changes in Germany upon Zionist activity in that country confirms an assumption concerning the unique occupational structure of German Zionists. In contrast to the rest of German Jewry, the Zionists were distinguished by the high proportion of salaried college graduates among them.

THE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE (1921-1927) AS A  
BRIDGE BETWEEN THE SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENT  
AND THE WORKERS'  
SETTLEMENTS AND FARMERS

*by* Neil Sherman and Daniella Heller

This article describes and analyses the activity of the Agricultural Committee, which served as an advisory body to the Department of Agriculture and Settlement of the Zionist Executive in Palestine in the years 1921-1927. In this period of expansion of settlement activity by the Zionist Organisation the basic frameworks and patterns of activity of the agricultural settlement system were shaped. Contemporaries attached great importance to the influence of the Agricultural Committee on the activity of the Settlement Department: the Committee played an important role in governing the Settlement Department's relations with farmers on one hand and with agricultural labourers and workers' settlements on the other. It also helped mobilise public political support for the Department's programmes and for the budgetary demands that stemmed from them. Consequently the Committee also served as a central meeting place for representatives of these two constituencies.

Within the framework of the Agricultural Committee sound working relationships between the workers' representatives and the farmers were established, with each side expressing its opinion and contributing its share to clarifying issues about how to deal with the other side's problems. Thus a survey of the activity of the Agricultural Committee places the relations between the farmers and

the labour sector in a different light than has been accepted previously. Until now the historical literature has presented this relationship as one of sharp confrontation focused around the struggle for Hebrew labour.

## DEALING WITH THE ARAB QUESTION IN THE 1920S AND 1930S: INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

*by* Elyakim Rubinstein

Most studies of the attitudes of the Zionist movement and the Yishuv towards the Arab question during the Mandatory period focus on substantive matters. This article, in contrast, treats institutional aspects of the problem, especially the respective roles of the Va'ad Le'umi and the Political Department of the Jewish Agency.

During the 1920s the Va'ad Le'umi, which was a relatively weak institution, tried to claim a role for itself in Arab affairs alongside the Zionist Executive. It attempted to set up political committees for developing contacts with neighbouring Arabs and for encouraging Arab moderates. Izhak Ben Zvi and Pinhas Rutenberg were active in this area.

Under the leadership of Chaim Arlosoroff the Political Department of the Jewish Agency Executive took an active interest in the Arab question, establishing a liaison network in various Arab capitals. Arlosoroff also initiated high-level diplomatic activities; early in 1933 he sent a senior Zionist emissary, Victor Jakobson, on a mission to Arab governments.

Moshe Shertok, Arlosoroff's successor, worked to institutionalise the Zionist diplomatic machinery and to expand the network of contacts in Arab countries. Many of those who served him in these efforts later formed the nucleus of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## THE LOGBOOKS OF IZHAK TABENKIN AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

by Eyal Kafkafi

Unlike other leaders of the labour movement, Izhak Tabenkin, head of HaKibbutz haMe'uhad, did not do much writing. Thus his letters are few. Moreover, words represented as Tabenkin's were often edited by others. This severe lack of historical material greatly increases the value of Tabenkin's logbooks. These were a daily record of Tabenkin's activities as leader of HaKibbutz haMe'uhad. They are kept on restricted status in the HaKibbutz haMe'uhad archives at Yad Tabenkin in Efa'el. This article offers several examples of how the logbooks are important for understanding Tabenkin's attitudes towards events and personalities during two periods – the beginnings of Kibbutz Ein Harod, of which Tabenkin was one of the founders, and the early years of World War II.

For the first period, the logbooks illuminate both the *timing* and the *substance* of the dispute that arose between Tabenkin and the leadership of the Jewish labour movement. Tabenkin called the central leadership's direction into question; he demanded that kibbutz principles be employed in managing the overall body of workers and that the workers as a whole be directed towards settlement.

For the second period the logbooks facilitate the discovery of the connection between Tabenkin's stand on the drive to unite HaKibbutz haMe'uhad and Hever haKevutsot and his attitude towards the Soviet Union in the period of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact. Tabenkin held that in time of danger it is necessary to strengthen the leadership vanguard, which expresses the vital interests of the nation and leads it to the fulfillment of national goals. He did not deny the importance of the values of morality and democracy; however, he held actual socialist national achievement, as embodied in the Soviet Union on the one hand and HaKibbutz haMe'uhad on the other, to be the goal. He saw no alternative but to adjust to the temporary pact with Nazi Germany for the sake of Soviet survival, whereas for the sake of HaKibbutz haMe'uhad's

existence as a vanguard, which was essential for the realisation of Zionism in Palestine, he believed it necessary to give up the fine points of formal democracy.

### ALIYAT HANO'AR, 1932-1939

*by* Yoav Gelber

Aliyat HaNo'ar was one of the main elements in the Zionist movement's response to the crisis that beset German Jewry with Hitler's rise to power. The idea for Aliyat HaNo'ar was first raised in 1932, but it came to be accepted only gradually during 1933 on the initiative of Chaim Arlosoroff and under the direction of Henrietta Szold. The first groups of young immigrants arrived through the programme in 1934 and were distributed among kibbutzim, moshavim, and other institutions.

The special problems inherent in absorbing these immigrants became known gradually. These problems resembled those that beset other immigrants from Germany as well. Aliyat HaNo'ar dealt with them mainly through the medium of education. In addition it was necessary to deal with problems stemming from the isolation of the immigrants from their families, from the apparent conflict between the responsibility of Aliyat HaNo'ar for the young immigrants' welfare and the immigrants' own right to freedom of choice, and from the relations between the immigrants and the institutions that first took them in (mainly kibbutzim).

In its first years, then, Aliyat HaNo'ar should be looked upon first of all as an innovative educational endeavour. Eventually it became necessary to think about the future course of those who completed their initial training under the organisation's auspices. Because of the cessation of pioneering youth immigration, Aliyat HaNo'ar turned into the principal manpower reservoir for the labour settlement movement. The importance of Aliyat HaNo'ar increased even further towards the end of the 1930s, as it was less affected than other immigration programmes by the restrictions imposed by the

Mandatory government. The scope of its activities during 1938–1939 depended mainly upon the financial resources placed at its disposal. Its potential during this period was not fully exploited.

Simultaneously events in Europe forced Aliyat HaNo'ar to expand its scope to the countries annexed by Germany and eventually to Romania and Poland. The organisation became less selective in choosing candidates for immigration. Following World War II the organisation changed its approach entirely and transformed itself into a vehicle for rescuing the children of refugees and survivors.

During the war some Aliyat HaNo'ar graduates joined labour settlements; others enlisted in the British Army or in the defence forces of the Yishuv.

## BEN GURION AND THE HOLOCAUST

*by* Dina Porat

It is widely believed that David Ben Gurion ignored the terrible events that befell the Jews of Europe during World War II, concentrating instead upon the establishment of a Jewish state. However, there is substantial evidence to refute this view.

During the late 1930s Ben Gurion was concerned about both the crisis in Zionist – British relations and the deterioration of the situation of European Jewry. Thus he devoted most of his efforts during the first half of the war to the search for a way to relieve the threatened Jews' distress along political Zionist lines. The Biltmore Programme was a reflection of this concern, for ultimately, in his vision, Palestine was the solution. On the other hand, he believed that immediate material relief for Polish Jews suffering in the ghettos should be the responsibility of the World Jewish Congress, the Joint Distribution Committee, and free world Jewry as a whole.

During 1942 it became clear that European Jewry was threatened with systematic physical extermination. This news undercut the foundations of the Biltmore Programme. Still, Ben Gurion did not



abandon Biltmore, for to do so at that moment would have been tantamount to declaring total despair. Instead he involved himself deeply in mobilising the Yishuv for rescue and in developing specific rescue plans. His involvement was characterised by a careful examination of the limitations within which he could act and by detachment from local public opinion. He opposed the establishment of a powerful rescue committee as well as the allocation of large sums for rescue and mass demonstrations – all of which commanded widespread public support – as long as he did not see realistic possibilities for rescue.

Indeed, rescue possibilities were scarce. Ben Gurion was aware of the Allies' unwillingness to promote large-scale rescue programmes. After the futile Bermuda Conference in April 1943 Ben Gurion, bitterly disillusioned, realised that the Yishuv had to rely on its own meagre resources for carrying out small-scale rescue activities independently. At the same time Ben Gurion was determined to continue with the upbuilding of the Jewish national home. Ben Gurion's opponents looked upon this conclusion, which was in fact a result of his developing grasp of the immediate situation, as if it had been reached a priori: Ben Gurion, they believed, was willing to commit himself only to rescue on a small scale, so as not to hamper the Zionist enterprise, which was more important.

On the whole Ben Gurion kept his feelings about the Holocaust to himself. Thus in the end there is no way to know whether he really fully fathomed its implications, scope, and meaning.

### BEN GURION'S PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE THE GAZA STRIP IN ISRAEL, 1949

*by* Mordechai Gazit

The author describes Ben Gurion's offer in April 1949 to take over the Gaza Strip. His readiness to take over Gaza stemmed from his desire to deprive Egypt of its last military foothold in Palestine. In effect, however, this also meant committing Israel to accepting a very

considerable number of Arabs who had fled the country during the fighting, something that Ben Gurion opposed. Initially the United States did not grasp the import of this offer; nevertheless, it believed that it represented the best hope for a settlement. At the Lausanne meetings with the United Nations Palestinian Conciliation Commission (April-August 1949) the Americans posited that agreement depended on Israel's taking back at least 250,000 refugees. Since the population of the Strip was estimated at 315,000 (250,000 of them refugees), the Americans hoped that Ben Gurion's proposal would appeal to Egypt. The Egyptians, however, objected to the very idea that the return of the refugees could be linked to any territorial concession, describing this as 'cheap barter'. On the one hand, the United States insisted on a commitment specifying how many refugees Israel would take back even if the Gaza idea did not materialise, and on the other it attempted to initiate talks over the Gaza Strip. The United States soon applied pressure upon Israel. When Israel then announced willingness to take back 100,000 refugees, the Americans protested that the Gaza Strip offer had implied Israeli readiness and capacity to accept 2-3 times as many. The Egyptians opposed the American attempt to get the two countries to meet to discuss the Gaza Strip idea, asserting that the United States should know better than to pursue such a disreputable scheme.

The Gaza Strip idea ended badly for Israel. Its relations with the United States came under severe strain, even though it had agreed to take back refugees and would have offered Egypt territory in the Negev in exchange for the Strip.

## POLITICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL FROM MOROCCO, 1949-1956

*by* Michael M. Laskier

Until the creation of the State of Israel immigration from Morocco was confined to small groups, made up mainly of persons holding

immigration certificates issued by the British mandatory authorities in Palestine. Between 1947 and 1949 immigration gained momentum through the assistance of Mossad leAliya Bet, which worked together with Moroccan Zionists. Their activity involved smuggling Jews across the Algerian border to clandestine points on the coast, where Mossad representatives endeavoured to place the would-be immigrants on ships bound for Palestine. This process, however, often proved abortive. Those who were not caught by the Moroccan and French authorities and reached Algeria were given false documents by Mossad representatives, with which they were able to reach Marseilles. There the Jewish Agency organised their immigration, which it could do openly following the establishment of Israel in May 1948.

Late in 1948 and during the early part of 1949 the French authorities became increasingly convinced that they would be unable to prevent the smuggling of Jews out of Morocco. Consequently French supporters of Moroccan Jewish immigration established contact with the French Residency in Morocco. After exhaustive negotiations the French agreed unofficially to permit the Jewish Agency to bring Jews out of Morocco via Casablanca and Marseilles. Despite periodic restrictions imposed by the French, immigration to Israel increased gradually. Although from 1949–1953 it involved relatively small numbers, it became a large-scale phenomenon from 1954–1956.

Among the issues discussed in the article are the attitudes and policies of the French Protectorate authorities and local Muslims towards Jewish immigration to Israel; the changing positions taken by the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency regarding the size and socioeconomic make-up of the Moroccan immigrant contingent; local Zionist involvement in immigration efforts; the attitudes towards immigration of international Jewish organisations active in Morocco; and the statistical significance of the Moroccan immigration.

THE "COMITÉ DES DÉLÉGATIONS JUIVES" AT THE  
PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE AS REFLECTED IN THE  
DIARY OF ALEXANDER ZELKIND

*by Leah Landau-Duchan*

Alexander Zelkind was a physician and one of the leaders of the Zionist movement in Russia. During World War I he was elected president of the Jewish community of Petrograd.

In 1919 he traveled to Paris as a delegate of the Russian Zionist Organisation and took part in the negotiations that led to the formation of the Comité des Délégations Juives at the Paris Peace Conference. Together with other Zionist leaders he was active in endeavouring to secure the legal and civil rights of the Jewish minorities in the countries of Eastern Europe.

Zelkind's diary was written in June and July 1919 during his stay in Paris. It describes the activities of statesmen and politicians during the months following World War I and presents the author's personal impressions of them.

Zelkind had a keen eye and an understanding of people. He followed the events of that period with personal involvement and chronicled the problems, aspirations, and achievements of such Jewish spokesmen as Brandeis, Frankfurter, Weizmann, and Sokolow in their negotiations with leaders of the newly-emerging states of Eastern Europe over Jewish minority rights.

THE YISHUV DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR AS  
REFLECTED IN POLISH DIPLOMATIC REPORTS

*by David Engel*

Two reports on various aspects of the political life of the Yishuv, prepared by the Polish consul-general in Jerusalem, Witold Korsak, in November 1942 and January 1943, present a picture of how Palestinian Jewry and the Zionist movement appeared to an

interested foreign observer. The documents can shed light on, among other things, the response of the Yishuv to the Holocaust and the character of Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War.

# תמצית המאמרים באנגלית