CHAPTER IV THE GROWTH OF THE YISHUV

ZIONISM AFTER HERZL

It seemed unlikely that the void opened in the Zionist Organization after Herzl's death could be filled by individual leadership alone. Nor was the moment opportune for a renewed and indefinite prolongation of high-echelon statecraft. The confrontation between the "politicals" and the "practicals" remained unresolved, after all, with neither diplomacy nor physical settlement in Palestine offering evidence of dramatic success. As a result, the Seventh Zionist Congress, meeting in Basle from July 27 to August 2, 1905, was obliged to give urgent attention to its future stance. In overwhelming numbers, the delegates rejected any colonizing activities outside Palestine, and voted unequivocally in favor of emigration and settlement there, with active encouragement of Jewish agriculture and industry. It was a less than oblique rebuke to the Herzlian fixation with purely governmental negotiations. So was the choice of a new president. Nordau was the one man of stature who had been most closely identified with Herzl. Accordingly, he was offered the presidency, but chose to disqualify himself on the grounds that his wife was a non-Jew. He sensed, too, however, that as a "political," he would not have been assured the full-hearted support of the Russian Jewish majority. Eventually the choice fell on David Wolffsohn, who represented a compromise between the two factions. A genial, stocky man of forty-nine, Wolffsohn almost ideally linked the ethnic and the ideological components within the Zionist organization. Born in Lithuania, the son of a rabbi, he had settled in Cologne at the age of twenty and had achieved success in the lumber business. He had been a prominent member of the German Chovevei Zion when the *Judenstaat* appeared, and from then on rendered Herzl invaluable service as the latter's "emissary" to the Russian Jews.

It was a role Wolffsohn intended to continue upon assuming his new duties. To be sure, the glamour and excitement inspired by Herzl never returned. The high diplomacy of earlier years faded; negotiations with the Turks all but ceased. Although markedly inclined to the "politicals," Wolffsohn felt himself constrained to shift steadily toward practical work, and it was here, indeed, that he fulfilled the responsibilities of his office with much competence. Even before Herzl's death, he had organized the Anglo-Palestine Company for work in Palestine and had encouraged the establishment of the Jewish National Fund for land purchase. Now, during his own incumbency, Wolffsohn made it increasingly clear that he was charting a course of routinized consolidation in Palestine, an approach the Easterners repeatedly had advocated.

These compromises notwithstanding, at the Tenth Congress in 1911 Wolffsohn was displaced from his leadership in favor of a presidium heavily weighted with east Europeans. Actually, the shift was less a repudiation of the man's policies than evidence of the functional, day-to-day spadework Zionism had become. It was also at the Tenth Congress, for example, that the Organization voted to approve the extensive land-purchasing activities of the Palestine office in Jaffa, under Dr. Arthur Ruppin (this page). At Weizmann's insistence, too, the Congress resolved that Hebrew from then on should be recognized as the official language of the Zionist movement, and its teaching intensified in the Diaspora. The body similarly endorsed the participation of distinct Jewish blocs in parliamentary and local elections, and notably in the Habsburg Empire, thus underscoring the existence of specifically Jewish national interests in multinational states.

If Zionism did not gain dramatically from this commitment to the seemingly pedestrian, neither did it lose thereby. The structure of the Organization took on shape and order. Congresses were meeting biennially, the number of their delegates growing continually. Local federations were becoming stronger now. In Russia, Zionists participated as a bloc in the initial Duma elections of 1905, returning five of the fourteen Jews who were elected (the number fell sharply in 1906, during the Stolypin reaction). In Germany, membership in the Zionist Federation grew from 1,300 in 1901 to 8,000 in 1914; and while the figure hardly compared with that of the burgeoning Russian Zionist movement, participants included at least several of Germany's most distinguished Jewish figures, among them Otto Warburg, Kurt Blumenfeld, and, later, Albert Einstein. One of the most influential of the early members, Martin Buber, born in Vienna of Galician parents, captivated hundreds of German and Austrian Jewish students with his neomystical vision of Zionism reuniting a holy people on holy soil.

By 1914, then, 127,000 Jews throughout the world were paying the "shekel" of Zionist membership. Zionist associations were functioning even in South Africa and North and South America. Hebrew schools were being organized. Zionist literature was being translated into many languages. The little blue-and-white Jewish National Fund box could be found in growing thousands of Jewish homes and hundreds of synagogues. Thus it was that *Gegenwartsarbeit*—"work in the present," practical Zionism—embracing both colonization in Palestine and cultural activity in the Diaspora, became a meaningful Jewish force.

THE GROWTH OF ZIONIST PARTIES

It was a testimony to Zionism's emergent strength, too, that a variegation of approaches and philosophies within the movement began taking political form. From 1902 on, individual doctrinal organizations, among them the Mizrachi and the Poalei Zion, existed side by side with national federations and transcended national boundaries. We recall, for example, that Zionism drew much of its emotional commitment from religious messianism. Yet, in addition, a specifically religious Zionism, a conscious blending of Orthodoxy and Jewish nationalism, also played an important minority role within the

Congresses. Its inspiration was provided by Rabbi Samuel Mohilever, an erudite Lithuanian talmudist who was impelled into practical Zionist labors by the tsarist reaction of the 1880s, and who became one of the early stalwarts of Chovevei Zion. Mohilever's decision to continue in the movement, cheek by jowl with avowed secularists like Herzl, reflected his intention of working pragmatically to induce his fellow Zionists into religious observance. Thus, in his message to the First Zionist Congress, Mohilever affirmed that the revival of the Land of Israel was one of the most important commandments of the Torah, but emphasized that "Torah-true" Judaism was not less obligatory upon Zionist settlers if the Holy Land were once again to be the arena for Jewry's "spiritual" mission.

As early as 1893, Mohilever had founded a society for promulgating his views. It was called the Merkaz Ruchani (spiritual center), or simply "Mizrachi." It was not until the organizational efforts of Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines, however, one of the authentic giants of Zionist history, that the Mizrachi became a conscious political movement within Zionism. An unusually eclectic personality, Reines had made it a point to introduce secular as well as religious studies into his yeshivah in Swintzan, Russia. He too became an early partisan of the Chovevei Zion, then subsequently of Herzl's political Zionism, and eventually in 1902 he restructured the Mizrachi organization as a faction within the Zionist movement. Yet Reines's accommodation with Jewish nationalism was the outer limit of his flexibility. Both as a delegate to successive Zionist Congresses and as an author of numerous books on religious philosophy, he preached a form of dual redemption: of the Land of Israel and of the Jewish spirit. Neither could be accomplished, he argued, except within the precepts of strict Orthodoxy. The Mizrachi party seldom returned more than a dozen representatives to the various Zionist Congresses before the war (its membership grew dramatically afterward). Nevertheless, its ideological rigidity was the despair even of the "cultural" Zionists, followers of Achad HaAm. The latter, in turn, underestimated the degree to which the Mizrachi made Zionism palatable to traditional elements within Jewish life, those who otherwise would have been alienated not merely by Zionist secularism but by an emergent and powerful new strain of Zionist socialism.

The roots of this "Labor Zionist" movement could be traced directly to the circumstances of Jewish life in eastern Europe. While Marxism was a formidable influence altogether during the early years of Russian industrialization, it elicited a particularly devoted response from Russian Jewry. No nationality in the tsarist empire suffered quite so bitterly from the combined impact of economic change and Romanov oppression. The Russian census of 1897, for example, indicated that more than half the country's Jewish population had become proletarianized, working in textile, metal, building, and other, lighter, industries. Impacted by the May Laws into the cities of the Pale, this Jewish working class was economically marginal at best, and was being reduced daily to a state of virtual pauperization. A Jewish demographer, Jacob Lestschinsky, has left a graphic account: "poverty and privation, need and hunger … sweating-system … sick and tubercular lungs—these are the conditions under which the Jewish worker had to fight for social reform, and for the future ideal of

socialism."

As literate and sentient as they were oppressed and impoverished, Jewish working-class families hurled themselves into the Socialist movement with a passion born of desperation. Indeed, nearly half the delegates to the Second Russian Social Democratic Party Congress of 1903 were Jews. It was true that the party conducted its activities in the Russian language, and that there was nothing specifically Jewish in its tone. But the imbalance apparently was rectified by the emergence of a separatist Jewish Social Democratic party—the Bund—which offered itself as a vehicle both for the class struggle and for the assertion of Jewish communal rights. During the Russian revolutionary epoch, between 1904 and 1906, 30,000 Jews were dues-paying members of the Bund, and tens of thousands of others were active or passive sympathizers. Obsessed as they were with the campaign to achieve political and economic liberation on Russian soil, they tended to regard Zionism as a kind of "bourgeois utopianism." For them, Zionism implied dependence upon the goodwill of the reactionary Turkish sultan and of other rightist governments, and upon the endless largess of Jewish capitalists. Worse yet, Zionism seemed to ignore the political and economic aspirations of Jews within Russia proper. An outraged Bundist leader could shout at a Zionist gathering: "Pack your belongings! Turn your backs on our life, on our struggle, on our joys and sorrows.… Well, leave [us] in peace. Don't show your generosity by throwing alms … [to us] … from the window of your rail carriage." Weizmann, in turn, could describe the Bundists as "poorly assimilated as regards Judaism, degenerate, rotten, lacking in any moral fibre."

The competition between Zionism and socialism was waged with particular ferocity for the minds of Russian Jewish students at Western universities, the intellectual elite of European Jewry. In a letter to Herzl on May 6, 1903, Weizmann lamented the growing inroads of "radicalism" among Russian Jewish youth. "Our hardest struggle everywhere," he admitted, "is conducted against the Jewish Social Democrats." It was a tragic confrontation; for both groups, the Zionists and the Socialists, were often equally committed in their Jewish loyalties, equally driven by the need to build a Jewish society grounded in freedom and justice.

LABOR ZIONISM

Although efforts to reconcile Zionism and socialism were launched a number of years even before the first Zionist Congress, it was Nachman Syrian in 1898 who first mounted a serious intellectual attempt to bridge the gap. The son of a middle-class Russian Jewish family, Syrkin was a university student in Berlin when he embarked on the effort to achieve a synthesis of the two ideologies. He outlined his scheme initially before a Zionist group in Zurich in 1898, then later published it as an essay, *Die Judenfrage und der Sozialistische Judenstaat*. "Socialism will solve the Jewish problem only in the remote future," he declared. Anti-Semitism was a fact of life that would not immediately be cured by normal Socialist evolution, "and in any case the class struggle can help the Jewish middle class but little if at all." A Jewish state was therefore the one decisive

answer to Jewish oppression. “The *form* of the Jewish state,” Syrkin argued,

> is the only debatable issue involved in Zionism. Zionism must be responsive to the opinion of the Jewish masses, for, without them, the movement will be stillborn.... Zionism must of necessity fuse with socialism.... Contemporary political Zionism is striving for a Jewish state based on the right of private property.... For a Jewish state to come into being, it must, from the very outset, avoid all the ills of modern life.... Its guidelines must be justice, national planning, and social solidarity.

Yet Syrkin’s manifesto and his later writings aroused little response among either Socialists or Zionists. The former had only contempt for his espousal of utopian Socialism over orthodox Marxism. One Bundist mocked him in verse:

> Half-Marxist and half-Herzlian,
>
> Half-savage and half a lout,
>
> Half-donkey—but he soon will be
>
> A whole one without a doubt.

Syrkin thoroughly alienated the non-Socialists, on the other hand, by playing the role of *enfant terrible* at the Zionist Congresses. Persistently heckling the “rabbis” of Zionism, needling the “bourgeois” seekers after royal goodwill, he ensured that socialism remained a dirty word among the middle-class majority in the Organization. But his most fatal decision was actively to support the “Uganda” plan. The moment Herzl submitted the East Africa proposal to the Sixth Zionist Congress, Syrkin greeted it joyously and immediately launched into a denunciation of “romantic attachments” to arid Palestine under the patronage of reactionary sultans, tsars, and kaisers. A partner later with Israel Zangwill in the Ugandist “Jewish Territorial Organization,” Syrkin never recovered his brief, if limited, influence even among the Zionist Left.

This lapse notwithstanding, Syrkin’s career reflected a growing instinct toward accommodation between Zionists and Socialists. Even as he was conducting his propaganda in Berlin, isolated Labor Zionist groups were surfacing intermittently in Russia under the name Poalei Zion (Workers of Zion). At first, these cells appeared spontaneously in different communities, and their only questionable divergence from other Zionists at the turn of the century was their essentially working-class membership. Some experimented with more original formulations of Zionism along national lines. Others, in Austria, preferred to structure the movement territorially, while a few in southern and central Russia were fixated by classical Marxism. Among this latter group, however, the city of Poltava, a kind of exile center for revolutionary agitators, nurtured an unusually active Labor Zionist branch. It was here that Ber Borochov, a twenty-five-year-old university student, already expelled from the Social Democratic party for Zionist “deviationism,” formulated his unique theory of Marxist Zionism.

Tortuously working through a synthesis of the two ideologies, Borochov in 1905 appeared before the Poalei Zion leadership in Poltava and for three hours read through his (Yiddish-language) essay “The National Question and the Class Struggle.” The party

executive committee instantly seized upon the document as their long-awaited philosophical rationale. Borochov's approach was structured in terms of dialectical materialism, and brimmed over with conventional Marxist formulae on labor, capital, prices, and wages. It was within this determinist context, Borochov pointed out, that the Jews as a landless nation were incapable of adapting effectively to a foreign system of economy. Perhaps the Jewish bourgeoisie had managed the adjustment, but the Jewish proletariat hardly could duplicate the feat. The latter was concentrated for the most part in secondary industries that were distant from natural resources, from basic communications, from the tools of heavy production; and it was unable as a result to organize properly against its exploiters. As Borochov described it, then, the shortcomings suffered by the Jewish proletariat would be eliminated only by departure of the Jews to a land of their own. Only on its own territory could the Jewish working-class movement develop finally under normal conditions. Only from such a base could Jews mount their class struggle and achieve their social revolution.

As a Marxist, Borochov did not justify the choice of Palestine along romantic, nationalistic lines. Rather, he argued that Palestine was a site dictated exclusively by "stychic" (automatic, ineluctable) factors. In other nations, he explained, the absorptive capacity for immigration was limited. What was needed was a land in which Jews could freely enter all branches of the economy, where Jewish workers could participate in basic industries and agriculture. The land must be semiagricultural and thinly populated. Such a country, in fact, was Palestine, for Palestine alone was lacking in a national tradition of its own, in attraction for European immigrants, or in significant cultural and political development. Only in Palestine, therefore, "parallel with the growth of [Jewish] economic independence will come the growth of [Jewish] political independence."

From the contemporary vantage point, Borochov's formulation may seem riddled with inconsistencies. But for the intensely class-conscious Jewish proletariat of early twentieth-century Russia, it appeared as if he had devised a theory of Zionism that evolved deductively, almost mathematically, from Marxist premises. And precisely for this reason Borochov made Zionism intellectually respectable at last among tens of thousands of Socialist Jewish youth. Yitzchak Avner (later Ben-Zvi, the second president of Israel), who collaborated with Borochov in the early Poltava days of Poalei Zion, recalled that Borochov was "the teacher" of a whole generation of Zionists. One must add, too, that Borochov's own latent *Judenschmerz* probably reflected the unconscious Jewish romanticism of even his devoutest Marxist supporters. Fleeing to the United States after the collapse of the 1905 uprising, Borochov did not return to Russia for twelve years, until the March Revolution of 1917. Then, hurrying back—to attend a Poalei Zion convention—he was felled suddenly by pneumonia and died in Kiev in December 1917 at the age of thirty-six. It was during his American interregnum, however, that Borochov began to write of a full partnership of "all Jewish groups" in Zionism, of Palestine as a home for the "entire Jewish people." In his essays there reappeared such forgotten terms as "the Jewish masses," rather than simply the "proletariat," and even the ancient phrase "Eretz Israel"—the Land of Israel. Avner's

fiancée, Rachel Yanait, like other thousands of her Socialist generation who admired Borochov, felt as if she "were reliving the Jewish past, stepping at the same time into the Jewish future." Inadvertently, but typically, she too revealed a thoroughly non-Marxist obsession with Palestine when "suddenly, in the spirit of one trying … 'to hasten the coming of the Messiah,' I asked [Avner]: 'And *when* is the inevitable stychic process going to start?' "

THE SECOND ALIYAH

Until the revolutionary epoch and its failure, even the Poalei Zion had been unwilling to "hasten the coming of the Messiah." Ben-Zvi's (Avner's) response to his fiancée was typical: "In his deliberate manner," she recalled, "[he] explained that according to Socialist theory, it was essential first to reform the Turkish feudal regime and then to strengthen the organization of Jewish labor—also it was still a long way…." This seemed a fair appraisal of the circumstances in Palestine. At the turn of the century, we recall, both the "old" Yishuv and the "new" Yishuv still depended mainly on outside help—Chalukkah charity for the old, Rothschild or Zionist philanthropy for the new. Although more than 50,000 Jews were living in the Holy Land by then, only 5,000 were to be found in the twenty rural colonies. The First Aliyah had been less than successful in producing the "new" Jewish farmer. Arriving in Palestine in 1907, Arthur Ruppin witnessed a dismal sight. As he wrote later:

> There are few things sadder to imagine than the state of mind of the old colonists…. The older generation had grown weary and sullen with the labor and toil of a quarter of a century, without the faintest hope for the future or the slightest enjoyment of the present; the younger generation, brought up in French schools, wished but one thing, namely to leave agriculture, which could not provide their parents with a secure living, and to find a "better" occupation in the outside world.

The "inevitable stychic process" began in earnest with the failure of the Octobrist Revolution of 1905. The upheaval was suppressed in a nationwide chain reaction of pogroms. For the Jews, in fact, the attendant political and economic oppression was the grimmest yet in their modern experience. Their survival as a people now literally hung in the balance. Accordingly, a massive new Jewish emigration overseas resumed, and gained momentum each year until the outbreak of World War I. Yet those who departed for Palestine—only a small minority of the total exodus—were affected not simply by the course of events in Russia, nor even by Labor Zionist ideology. Ben-Zvi's generation was powerfully moved as well by an appeal issued in 1907 from the Yishuv itself; and specifically by one Yosef Vitkin, a schoolteacher in a remote Galilee farm colony. Departure for Palestine, Vitkin insisted, should neither be determined by mere doctrine nor be inhibited by earlier failures in the Holy Land. What was required now was simple courage, a mighty joint effort of "chalutziut"—of pioneering. Vitkin wrote:

> The major causes of our blundering are our search for a shortcut, and our belief that the attainment of our goal is close

> at hand. Out of this belief we have built castles in the air … and have turned aside with contempt from the longer and harder road, which is perhaps the surest, and, in the end, the shortest.… Awake, O youth of Israel! Come to the aid of your people. Your people lies in agony. Rush to its side. Band together; discipline yourselves for life or death; forget all the precious bonds of your childhood; leave them behind forever without a shadow of regret, and answer to the call of your people.…

It was an eloquent plea, and it reached the mark in the postrevolutionary ferment of eastern Europe. Indeed, it was virtually memorized by Poalei Zion orators and endorsed even by such non-Socialist writers as Yosef Chaim Brenner (this page) and A. D. Gordon (this page). Ben-Zvi, traveling from one Poalei Zion meeting to another, suddenly asked himself the question posed by thousands of other young Russian Zionists: "Why am I here and not there? Why are we all here and not there?" The vision of becoming chalutzim—pioneers—suddenly exerted a new and compelling attraction. Not all those who made the commitment for emigration were idealists. Some intended to evade tsarist military conscription; others envisaged Palestine simply as an alternative refuge from Russian oppression. But for a majority of the 30,000 Jews who departed for Palestine in the Second Aliyah years between 1905 and 1914, Labor Zionism, ignited by Vitkin's pioneering challenge, was the catalyst.

The circumstances awaiting the newcomers were bleak. Rachel Yanait wrote later that in each of the farm colonies she visited the identical complaints were heard: of exhaustion, lack of jobs, and resentment at the sheer harshness of life. In the largest Jewish village, Petach Tikvah, the attitude of the established capitalist planters was distinctly unfriendly, even hostile. Israel Shochat, a young immigrant, recalled that the main task of the Petach Tikvah farmers

> was to ensure that the Arabs worked properly.… In the market in the center of town, all the produce came from Arab villages in the area, and was sold by Arabs. Before dawn, hundreds of Arab laborers daily streamed into Petach Tikvah, to look for work, and mostly they found it. Then there was the matter of language; the villagers all spoke Yiddish. To speak Hebrew was regarded as absurd, as a Zionist affectation. And the most serious thing was that Jews were considered virtually unemployable.

The farmers' dislike of the newcomers was influenced not only by the immigrants' lack of experience but by their Socialist theories. The orange growers' journal (later entitled *Bustenai*) warned that the new "Jewish workers aren't just interested in work and food. … They want power, economic and social dictatorship over the agricultural domain and those who own it." Faced with this antagonism, the immigrants wandered from settlement to settlement, in rags, on the edge of collapse from malnutrition. David Ben-Gurion, a nineteen-year-old former student, succumbed to malaria and nearly perished. A doctor urged him to return quickly to Europe. "My well-meaning friends all pointed out that this was hardly a disgrace," Ben-Gurion wrote afterward. "Half the immigrants who came to Palestine in those early days took one look and caught the same ship home again." Indeed, more. Possibly 80 percent of the Second Aliyah returned to Europe or continued on to America within weeks or months of their arrival.

If perhaps 2,000 of the chalutzim hung on, it was the little necklace of Jewish farm colonies that often made the difference. Limited as these villages were as a source of employment, they provided more jobs at least than the Biluites had found during their ordeal in the 1880s. Companionship, too, was a factor. In somewhat larger numbers than during the First Aliyah, the new immigrants were able to meet at night, in Jaffa or Petach Tikvah, crowding into small rooms where they articulated their dreams and theories. "They would assemble for a few hours," recalled Shmuel Dayan, father of the general, "engage in discussion and debate, and go their several ways again, reinvigorated and with renewed determination to strive for a solution to the main problem of our existence—the 'Conquest of Labor.' " Almost from the moment they reached Palestine, in fact, the immigrants organized Poalei Zion groups, declaring themselves "the party of the Palestinian working class in creation, the only revolutionary party of the Jewish worker in the Ottoman Empire." In a platform worked out at a gathering in Ramie in 1906, Ben-Zvi, Ben-Gurion, and other Labor Zionists emphasized the centrality of the class struggle, and later added to their ideology a full-blown, if somewhat meaningless (for arid, impoverished Palestine), demand for "public ownership of the means of production." It was evident that these were not the usual kind of colonists, not even within the older Zionist tradition of the nineteenth century. Their notion of pioneering was a kind of secularized messianism.

THE CONQUEST OF LABOR

They had come, too, not merely to establish a Socialist commonwealth but to rebuild their nationhood, their very manhood, by the sweat of their brows. The emphasis of the Second Aliyah was upon physical labor on the soil of Palestine. The youthful visionaries who fled the misery of the Pale evinced a genuine sense of guilt for having been alienated from the land. It was a Russian, no less than a Jewish, reaction. Slav writers, from the populist Narodniki to the universally venerated Tolstoy, had been accustomed to extol the peasant as the repository of all virtue; and notwithstanding the Slav muzhik's affinity for pogroms, the Jewish intelligentsia subscribed to this romanticized image. Their obsession with the soil also expressed unconscious resentment at the creeping industrial revolution in eastern Europe, a social transformation that dislodged the Jews economically and confronted them with the new and more vicious anti-Semitism of the urban lower-middle class. Agriculture alone, then, would make the Jews independent. As members also of the Poalei Zion, the newcomers appreciated that Socialist thinkers from Marx to Lenin had cited the absence of a Jewish peasant class as evidence that the Jews were not a nation, but rather a peculiar social or functional entity. It was this assertion that had now to be disproved.

It was significant, at the turn of the century, that virtually all the influential Zionist writers shared a common antipathy to the rootless, marginal existence of the Diaspora. As early as 1894, Chaim Nachman Bialik, the greatest of the Hebrew poets, captured the anguish of a people deprived of its soil:

> Not my hands formed you, O ears of corn,
>
> Not my hands fostered your growth;
>
> Not I have spent my strength here,
>
> Not I will enjoy your harvest.

The newly awakened reverence for physical labor was shared by Bialik's contemporary, the Hebrew essayist and novelist Micah Joseph Berditchewski. A Nietzschean, Berditchewski loosed a series of withering blasts against a Judaism that had sapped his people's capacity to act. In his biblical criticism, he glorified Joshua at the expense of Moses. His preference was for the earliest Hebrew tribes, those barely removed from heathenism, who at least had exhibited a primordial instinct for action, violence, even sexual libertinism.

This disdain for a purely cerebral Judaism was amplified by Yosef Chaim Brenner, the first of the literary figures whose writing career spanned both the Pale and the Yishuv. Born in the Ukraine in 1881, Brenner early identified himself with the Socialist movement, was imprisoned for his revolutionary activities, then escaped to London, where he briefly edited a Hebrew paper. In 1909, at the age of twenty-eight, he made his way to Palestine. There he became a part-time teacher in a Jewish high school, and an essayist of considerable influence in the Yishuv. His following was the more remarkable for his caustic indictment not only of the doomed Pale, but of many of the Second Aliyah pioneers. The latter, in his articles, were exposed as naïve and windy idealists, given to Marxist rationalizations of their newborn attachment to the soil. For Brenner, on the other hand, labor was exclusively an act of self-preservation. "I, a Zionist," he wrote,

> can have no truck with this prattle about a renaissance, a spiritual renaissance.… We are not Italy. My Zionism commands: "The hour has struck for … the Jewish people to end their sojourn among non-Jews and their dependence upon non-Jews"…. The Jewish spirit? Wind and chaff. The great heritage? Sound and fury.… It is time for an honest self-appraisal: we bear no value, we command no respect. Only when we will have learned the secret of labor and committed to memory the hymn of those settled on their own soil shall we have deserved the title Man.… We have sinned through not working: there is no statement except through labor.

Without manual skills himself, Brenner nevertheless accompanied the Zionist work gangs across the land as a Hebrew teacher, sharing their tent life, their illnesses and hunger, often lecturing and presiding over group discussions. He was killed in the Arab riots of 1921 (Chapter VI).

It was the added dimension of individual commitment that transformed Brenner's contemporary, Aaron David Gordon, into the foremost prophet of the "religion of labor." Unlike Brenner or Berditchewski, certainly unlike Syrkin or Borochov, Gordon was the practitioner of his own message. Russian-born, educated in Orthodox Jewish schools, he had followed the classical Haskalah path, teaching himself Western languages and history. In adulthood he took, and held for twenty-three years, a comfortable position as financial manager of the rural estate of Baron Horace de Gunz-

burg. It was during his leisure hours that Gordon immersed himself in the writings of Nietzsche and Tolstoy and began to develop his own unique philosophy of Zionism as an act of personal redemption. When the Gunz-burg estate was sold in 1903, leaving Gordon without employment at the age of forty-eight, he made a soul-searching decision that was not unlike Tolstoy's flight to Yasnaya Polyana. He departed for Palestine. There he was offered an office job at Petach Tikvah, but shunned it in favor of manual labor in the orange groves. Afterward he worked in various farm settlements. A contemporary recalled of him: "There were many in the Second Aliyah who exceeded [Gordon] in labor and worked with great devotion. But in their labor one felt their efforts to excel and to prove that the Jews, and not only the Arabs, knew how to work. The work of Gordon was of another sort entirely. It was a kind of worship, a pure prayer."

For Gordon, as for Berditchewski, nationhood was the wave of the Jewish future. Yet, as Gordon saw it, the vital element in nationhood was creativity, and labor was the bedrock of creativity. Without labor, the Jews would remain an island in an Arab sea. "The land will not be ours and we shall not be the people of the land. Here, then, we shall also be aliens." Gordon's concern transcended the political, however. Work alone was the force that unlocked the individual—and ultimately the national—energies of a struggling race. In "Some Observations," perhaps his best-known essay, Gordon developed this theme:

> A living people always possesses a great majority to whom labor is its second nature. Not so among us. We despise labor. … There is only one path that can lead to our renaissance—the path of manual labor, of mobilizing all our national energies, of absolute and sacrificial devotion to our ideal and our tasks.… Our people can be rejuvenated only if each one of us recreates himself through labor and a life close to nature.

Gordon's exhortation far transcended the written word. Indeed, his literary efforts ordinarily were restricted to candlelight in the small hours of the morning. His days were the proving ground of his ideology, and these were spent with the young pioneers in the field. Until the last weeks of his life, he dwelt among the immigrant workers, sharing a room and tilling the soil with them, participating in their communal life. An aged and beloved figure, with his great Tolstoyan beard, he was an unquenchable source of encouragement to younger men who faltered. His wife, who came to share his life in Palestine, died of malaria before the war. His only surviving son died in postwar Russia. Afflicted with cancer, he rejected pity. To those who visited his bedside, he insisted merely on preaching his faith in the redemptive significance of labor.

It was surely Gordon's magnetism alone that transcended the class dogmas of the Poalei Zion. He himself scorned Marxism as an appeal to "the herd instinct in man," one that "diverts him from seeking his power within himself.…" During his years in Palestine, he fought bitterly the establishment of schools based on party ideology and class consciousness. To combat this sectarianism, his followers organized themselves in 1905 as HaPoel HaZair—the Young Worker. An ideological society more than a political movement, it disdained to match the Poalei Zion in organized activities or propaganda.

Yet even the most doctrinaire Socialist immigrants found an unspoken communion of purpose with Gordon. Respect for work and the worker, after all, had similarly been inherent in the First Aliyah of the 1880s and 1890s. It was simply that in those earlier decades physical exertion had been equated with the pastoral ideal of a return to the Land of Israel and had been fused with a biblical glorification of life "under one's own vine and fig tree." Only in the years before World War I did the concept of work as social redemption become imperative. Like Gordon, the post-1905 immigrants insisted on earning their bread as hired workers, and shunned occasional easier livelihoods that came their way. They dressed as Russian peasants, lived on the simplest food, despised luxury, scorned the "materialism" of the veteran capitalist farmers. Their common goal, Gordonian no less than Borochovian, was well expressed in a pioneer folk song of the time: "Anu banu Artza, liv'not u'l'hibanot ba"—We've come to the Land of Israel to build, and to be rebuilt, here.

THE COLLECTIVE SETTLEMENT

The onset of the Second Aliyah coincided with a growing momentum of Jewish agricultural settlement in Palestine. It was helped in considerable measure by Baron Rothschild's PICA. New colonies included Sejera, Mescha, Menachemia, and Yavne'el founded in 1901–02, and Beit Gan in 1904. Later Mizpah (1908) and Kinneret (1909) were added. The settlers initially were farmers or sons of farmers from villages that previously had been under the baron's administration. By and large, they were capable agriculturists. With land and loans supplied by PICA, the new colonies eventually showed modest profits. Substituting mixed farming for viticulture, meanwhile, the older plantation villages in the coastal zone became economically viable for the first time. In Petach Tikvah and elsewhere on the Plain of Sharon, citrus fruits became an increasingly lucrative crop. The fact was, however, that the PICA administrators were less interested in fostering employment for newcomers than in "productivizing" established villages, often by taking fullest advantage of cheap Arab labor. Had this trend continued, the survival of the tenuous Zionist enclave would have been unlikely.

Well within Herzl's lifetime, the Zionist Organization recognized that more active encouragement would have to be given to the settlement effort in Palestine. That help first materialized in 1903, with the establishment in Jaffa of a subsidiary of the Jewish Colonial Trust. Known initially as the Anglo-Palestine Company, later as the Anglo-Palestine Bank, it granted loans at low interest to merchants and manufacturers, to farmers and building societies. In the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, moreover, the promise of a liberalized Ottoman administration encouraged the Zionist Organization to open its first Palestine Office in Jaffa. From these headquarters, it was anticipated that Jewish National Fund properties would be administered and additional land purchases negotiated. The office's first director was a thirty-two-year-old German Jew, Dr. Arthur Ruppin. A graduate of the Universities of Berlin and Halle, Ruppin had earned a wide reputation for his sociological writings on contemporary Jewish life and as director of the Bureau of Jewish Statistics in Berlin. Before taking on the new Zionist

assignment, Ruppin spent five months in Palestine investigating settlement possibilities there. His conclusion, incorporated in a memorandum to the Zionist Smaller Actions Committee, observed that the Yishuv was not yet ripe for an autonomous existence within the Turkish Empire. A Herzlian vision of that magnitude could be realized only when Jews formed a much larger proportion of the inhabitants and owned substantial amounts of land in Palestine. The immediate task, therefore, was to create employment opportunities for thousands of new immigrants. And to that end, Ruppin now proposed buying up to 2 million dunams of land in Judea and Galilee (as JNF funds became available), to sell them on easy terms to Jewish immigrants, and to train farm workers on "auxiliary" farms before settling them on the soil.

These recommendations were accepted. In theory, all activities of the Palestine Office fell within the scope of the Zionist Organization. In practice, Ruppin showed much initiative and flexibility in interpreting his mandate. Thus, upon embarking on his assignment, he launched immediately into urban housing and agricultural development. With a JNF loan of £10,000, he organized an estate company, Achuzat Bayit, to establish a modern Jewish quarter on the town limits of Jaffa, and a Palestine Land Development Company to purchase and populate tracts in the countryside. With the help of a veteran Jewish land buyer, Joshua Chankin, who had developed a special knack for doing business with Arabs and Turks, the PLDC acquired extensive holdings in Judea and Galilee, prepared them for cultivation, and divided them into modest plots suitable for farmers. In this fashion the company added to the Yishuv nine new villages in six years, and land acquisitions totaling 50,000 dunams in various parts of the country. Immigrants were given shelter and agricultural training at farms in Kinneret, Ben Shemen, and Chulda. Ruppin's program occasionally was audacious in the liberties it took with JNF and other funds. But in justifying his expenditures to the Zionist Congress in 1913, the young sociologist emphasized to the business-minded delegates that "our farms must, for the time being, serve other and larger purposes than the production of a profit.... Instead of dividends [the farms] will provide us with something more necessary: men."

This was the vision, too, that Ruppin applied in fostering one of the Yishuv's most noteworthy social innovations, the kvutzah—the collective settlement. In fact, there had been prefigurations of collectivism well before Ruppin's arrival. It is recalled that the Biluites went through a passing collectivist phase before their efforts were stamped out by the Rothschild administration. Afterward, too, even non-Socialist immigrants managed to survive only by pooling their funds and sharing common staples. Other Jewish pioneers hired themselves out on a group basis to work in the citrus groves and vineyards. These contracting "cooperatives" also appeared in the towns. When Tel Aviv was founded in 1909, for example (this page), one group assumed the task of leveling the sand dunes, another graded roads, another cut stones, yet another built the houses. Cooperative laundries, kitchens, and bakeries sprang up in many places. In the end, however, it was oppressive labor conditions on the PICA farms that drove the youthful immigrants of the Second Aliyah into an urgent quest for other alternatives. "They could not become individualist farmers, planters, exploiters of others," wrote one of their

members, Manya Wilbuschevitch (afterward Manya Shochat); "their Socialist principles forbade that. And they could not continue their competition with Arab labor.... For my part, I had never believed in the Conquest of Labor through adaptation to the Arab standard of living."

In the winter of 1907–08, Manya Shochat and several of her comrades persuaded the director of the PICA training farm at Sejera, which chronically ran a deficit, to let them operate the tract on their own responsibility. Thereupon, with livestock, seed, and equipment advanced (against earnings) by the PICA, the fourteen young men and four young women launched the venture on a purely collectivist basis. They arranged their own division of labor, organized a communal kitchen, and shared a common period of rest and reflection and a common determination to rely exclusively upon the sweat of their own brows, and under no circumstances to hire Arab labor. It was a backbreaking life, but the little group was charged with the mood of excitement and pioneering. Eventually their numbers reached fifty, including several Yemenite Jewish immigrants. After a year and a half, the Sejera farm harvested an adequate crop and repaid the PICA loan with a fifth of its produce. "We demonstrated once and for all," wrote Manya Shochat, "that a collectivist economy was a possibility." Having made their point, the original eighteen youths returned the tract to the PICA. They envisaged their role as that of an advance guard for the permanent settlers who would follow.

The problem henceforth was to secure additional land. Here Ruppin's support was crucial. In 1909, on behalf of the JNF, he had acquired a 1,200-dunam stretch of uncultivated land, Um Juni, on the shores of Lake Galilee. Shortly afterward, he funded a group of immigrants who proceeded to work the tract along conventional lines. They failed. A year later, however, thirty-six members of HaPoel HaZair—disciples of A. D. Gordon—asked permission to farm Um Juni on a collectivist basis. It was a measure of the sheer functionalism of collective settlement that even non-Marxists were drawn to this approach. Once more Ruppin approved, this time providing the farmers with a rather larger stretch of land adjacent to Um Juni, complete with two mud-brick "dormitories," some basic farm equipment, and a half-dozen mules. The experiment was a grim ordeal; the Jordan Valley was an inferno, and malaria took a heavy toll of the little group. Nevertheless, discipline and organization saw the farmers through. An elected leadership committee decided each day who went into the fields, who manned the night watch. The women shared the housework, cooking, laundering, and feeding of the animals. Fullest equality was maintained between the sexes. It was straightforward collectivism, and it worked. The farm brought in a decent harvest in 1911, and its members purchased additional livestock. By then, they had given the little kvutzah the name of Degania—Cornflower. Its fame spread rapidly. Shmuel Dayan, who joined Degania the following year, was thrilled with his first taste of an independent existence. He wrote later:

> To work in freedom! The words seemed to convey a deep breath, in contrast to the servitude of the [capitalist farms]. There is a feeling of creativity in the work performed by the worker himself, even in the services, in administration, and in the very thought of work.... We are free employers and overseers.... We are responsible to ourselves.

Inspired by the success of Degania, other groups moved onto JNF land to found collective farms of their own. Numbering between ten and thirty, these little bands established kvutzot (the plural of kvutzah) at Merchavia and Gan Shmuel. On this basis, too, the moribund old Chovevei Zion settlement of Beer Tuvia was revived. By 1914, there were fourteen such farms, half of them barely more than outposts, but all dedicated to collectivism as the proper ideological approach to the Conquest of Labor. It was perhaps the most functional approach, as well. The kvutzot returned a somewhat higher per capita income than the existing capitalist small farms. The return may have been pitiably meager by any Western standard, but if the kvutzah members were poor, none was poorer than his fellows. All regarded themselves as equal owners of the farm and responsible for it. They shared an awareness of moral superiority, too, as pioneers of a venture dedicated to equality and social justice. Perhaps they were not wrong. The collective was to become Zionism's most innovative and influential experiment in human relations.

THE GUILD OF WATCHMEN

In September 1907 ten young men gathered in the attic of Yitzchak Ben-Zvi's rooming house in Jaffa. Addressing the group, Israel Shochat reminded it that the Conquest of Labor also necessarily embraced the Jewish right to self-defense. For several months, in fact, Shochat had been traveling through the Yishuv, entreating his fellow agricultural workers to assume responsibility for guarding the lands they were plowing. It was unthinkable, he insisted, to maintain the baneful practice of hiring Arab or Circassian guards to protect Jewish property and lives. This was no way to revive a Jewish nation. On the contrary, the guards themselves were hardly more than bandits masquerading as watchmen, holding the Jewish settlers in contempt, blackmailing them, extorting from them. The future of a Jewish nation was at stake, Shochat warned. If the Jews were capable now of farming their land, should they not be capable of defending it? Back in Russia, for that matter, in Shochat's native Homel, the Poalei Zion had been effective in organizing self-defense units against tsarist pogroms. The precedent in reinforced self-esteem had been crucial. In Palestine later, a number of informal meetings had taken place before the decisive gathering in Ben-Zvi's attic. Now, finally, in September 1907, a program was drafted for a secret society of Jewish watchmen, to be called Bar-Giora, after the celebrated Jewish warrior of antiquity. The founding members pledged themselves to accept employment as guards wherever the opportunities arose. They resolved as well to speak only Hebrew, and to live together whenever possible on a collectivist basis—for the Labor Zionist goal remained basic to their outlook. It was significant, for example, that the Bar-Giora members were among the first to pioneer the embryonic kvutzah at Sejera.

It was at Sejera, too, that the would-be Jewish guards requested jobs as watchmen from the manager of the neighboring PICA farm school. When the man proved skeptical, the young activists proceeded to steal a mule from under the nose of the hired Circassian and to return it the following morning. The director was convinced. From then on, the

PICA farm remained under Jewish protection. The little Bar-Giora group subsequently offered itself out to other, neighboring villages. The gesture was not without its risks. By late 1908, in the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution, Ottoman authority had loosened in Palestine and Arab bandits roamed the countryside at will. Nevertheless, the Jewish village of Mescha (later Kfar Tabor) ventured to dismiss its Moroccan watchmen and hire two of the Bar-Giora group. The Jewish youths thereupon proceeded to offer Mescha the best protection it had yet known, accompanying workers to the fields on horseback, rifles slung, an effective deterrent to interlopers.

With two villages won over by 1909, Shochat and his friends recognized that a small, clandestine society no longer was adequate. Additional watchmen were needed to offer protection elsewhere throughout the Yishuv. To achieve that goal, Bar-Giora was reincarnated under a new title, HaShomer—the Watchman. Its new charter laconically defined the guild's purpose as the formation of a society of Jewish guards. Nothing was said about quality. Even so, requirements for admission were so inflexible that after two years the original group of eight increased to only twenty-six. The training program was exceptionally rigorous. Candidates were drilled in night maneuvers, scouting, direction finding, and conversational Arabic. Those few who were accepted into the society were known as exceptional horsemen and crack shots. Mounted, armed, brawny, and confident of bearing, they evoked respect among the Arabs, who described them as "Moscoby"—Russians, brave men and good hunters. Often, in fact, the exploits of the Jewish watchmen provided themes for Arab folklore, tales that subsequently were embroidered and exaggerated upon each repetition.

Soon all Lower Galilee came into HaShomer's fold—Yavne'el, Beit Gan, Menachemia, Sarona, Mizpah, Kinneret. By 1911 the guild had acquired a foothold in Samaria. From there its fame spread to Judea, then to the coastal plain, where the large capitalist plantation villages invited HaShomer to take charge of the watch. Few settlers ever regretted their choice of protection. Despite repeated Bedouin attacks, the Shomrim (guards) kept security tight. Other villages subsequently were added to their clientele: Rishon l'Zion, Ben Shemen, Beer Ya'akov. By 1914, the watchman's guild operated four squads in Judea alone, one hundred men throughout Jewish Palestine, all on instant call whenever danger threatened.

By then, the Yishuv was demanding more guards than the Shomer could supply, and the guild's three-man executive agreed that Jewish self-defense would have to be deprofessionalized; in time of danger all farmers and workers should be capable of bearing arms. Although the training program could not be enlarged significantly before the outbreak of the World War, the pattern of self-defense nevertheless was accepted by growing numbers of farm colonies. There was wide recognition, too, that the achievement of the watchman's guild was more than simply functional. It was at once an embodiment of Socialist doctrine, of self-defense, of communal living, and of nationalist solidarity. By the eve of the war, HaShomer's legend of valor had dramatically raised the morale of the Yishuv. No longer did the Arabs flout the Jews as "children of death." The Zionist pioneers had before them at last a tangible inspiration for future cohesion and self-sacrifice.

During the prewar years, a crucial linguistic framework was similarly being established for the Zionist redemptive effort. It was altogether as impressive an achievement as the Conquest of Labor, for Hebrew educational facilities were virtually nonexistent in Palestine until the twentieth century. Indeed, until the late 1870s, the handful of Jewish schools operating in Palestine were almost entirely religious, and conducted in the Yiddish language on antiquated Orthodox lines. The Lämel School (Chapter II), founded in Jerusalem in 1856, taught its courses in German and Yiddish. In the network of elementary and vocational schools sponsored by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, French remained the principal language of instruction for the—essentially—Sephardic youngsters. It developed, then, that the emergence of modern Hebrew, a language capable of secular, vernacular use, awaited the heroic achievements of a sparrow-chested little Russian Jewish philologist, Eliezer Perlman—better known by his adopted surname of Ben-Yehuda.

Born of Orthodox parents, the recipient of a parochial religious education, Ben-Yehuda joined other thousands of his generation in turning from pietism to Haskalah secularism, and then to Zionism. Although he was an enthusiastic student of Hebrew literature, his vision of language as the decisive component of modern nationhood awaited his years as a student at the Sorbonne, when he became acutely conscious of the role of literature in the growth of French nationalism. “I have decided,” he wrote his fiancée in 1880, “that in order to have our own land and political life it is also necessary that we have a language to hold us together. That language is Hebrew, but not the Hebrew of the rabbis and scholars. We must have a Hebrew language in which we can conduct the business of life.” The following year, Ben-Yehuda, aged twenty-three, married his fiancée, aged twenty-seven, and they departed for Palestine. From the moment they boarded ship, they vowed thenceforth to speak no other language but Hebrew. We are told that the pledge was never broken.

The couple’s next years in Palestine were as agonizing in their poverty as any endured by the early farmers of Zionist settlement. In Jerusalem, Ben-Yehuda earned a wretched pittance teaching Hebrew for an Alliance school. His every free moment was devoted to editing a succession of Hebrew-language newspapers, the circulation of which in the early 1880s rarely exceeded two hundred. There were occasions when he and his growing family were evicted from their room for lack of rent money. At times they nearly starved. Nor did Ben-Yehuda ease his circumstances by his incessant attacks on the Orthodox: for their opposition to the use of Hebrew and to secular labor, and for their “social crime” of fostering a Chalukkah community. The outraged pietists retaliated, stoning his office, denouncing him to the Ottoman authorities for “treason” (once he was briefly jailed), placing him under a rabbinical ban of excommunication. When Ben-Yehuda’s wife died of tuberculosis in 1891, leaving behind five children, the Orthodox refused her burial in the Ashkenazic cemetery.

Nevertheless, Ben-Yehuda’s proselytizing efforts began to have their impact. Virtually all the agricultural colonies subscribed to his newspapers and purchased his textbooks.

He became a power in the Yishuv, and eventually in the Zionist world at large. By the turn of the century he was well launched on the project that would absorb the remainder of his life, the creation of a modern Hebrew dictionary. Pursuing his research with books and other materials sent him by disciples in Europe, he relentlessly tracked down the Semitic roots of words that ultimately he incorporated into a contemporary vernacular. In 1904, modestly endowed at last by grants from the Zionist Organization, from Baron Edmond de Rothschild, and other Jewish sources, Ben-Yehuda published the first volume of the dictionary. It was virtually a thesaurus—indeed, an encyclopedia—of the Hebrew language, a monumental work of scholarship. He would complete three more volumes before his death, and afterward the undertaking would be expanded by his successors into a seventeen-volume series, the definitive basis for a revived spoken and written medium.

In putting Hebrew to vernacular use, moreover, Ben-Yehuda counted heavily on the Yishuv's teachers. At the turn of the century the largest number of these was employed by the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden. By 1914, the Hilfsverein operated a network of fifty schools throughout the Yishuv, from kindergartens through secondary institutions, providing instruction for 7,000 youngsters. Although German was used predominantly as a second language, it was due mainly to Ben-Yehuda's efforts that the Hilfsverein laid renewed emphasis upon Hebrew studies. The Alliance schools, too, were conducting the major portion of their instruction in the Hebrew language, as were the schools in the Zionist agricultural colonies. Additionally, sixty Zionist schools in the towns and outlying farm colonies, comprising 2,600 pupils, were using Hebrew as their sole medium of instruction. This program was decisively augmented by the iron willpower of the Zionist settlers themselves, and notably the immigrants of the Second Aliyah. Plainly it was an excruciating ordeal for Yiddish- and Russian-speaking Jews to employ Hebrew as their daily idiom at home and in the field, when every instinct cried out for relaxation. But they submitted to this discipline as tenaciously as they faced the other hardships of life in Palestine. Most of the Zionist farmers and workers by then had accepted fully Ben-Yehuda's contention: a nation was its language, no less than its sweat and blood. The teachers in the various schools shared the little philologist's sense of commitment. In 1903 they organized themselves into a Hebrew Teachers' Association, which instituted its own qualifying examinations for instructors.

Ironically, it was Germany's *Drang nach Osten*, an imperialist expansion into the Middle East during the last years before the World War, that threatened the impressive progress of this Hebraization. As conscious or unconscious agents of German influence in Palestine, the directors of the Hilfsverein schools began offering a number of courses taught exclusively in the German language. Examinations were conducted increasingly in German. Yet the issue of Hebraism versus Germanism did not become urgent until plans were laid to establish a Haifa Technical Institute. Funds for such a "Technion" (or Technikum, in German) had been made available by the estate of Wolf Wissotzky, the Russian Jewish tea magnate. The JNF supplied the land in Haifa, with the Hilfsverein and individual philanthropists contributing additional sums. As the administering agency, the Hilfsverein was determined that the Technion should be the very capstone

of the Yishuv's educational structure—and also, not incidentally, a spectacular example of *Deutsche Kultur*. In recognition of this goal, the German foreign undersecretary, Dr. Arthur von Zimmermann, personally sought and obtained Constantinople's approval to erect the school's first building, which was completed in 1913. Meanwhile, the German Jewish members of the Technion's board of governors proposed that all technical subjects be taught exclusively in the German language. More than national pride animated this recommendation. German was widely recognized as the lingua franca of science. Hebrew, by contrast, was woefully deficient in technical vocabulary.

The decision nevertheless produced a wave of indignation among the Zionist settlers. Ben-Yehuda was all but apoplectic. "Blood will flow on the streets," he warned the Hilfsverein's director. At Ben-Yehuda's instigation, too, protest meetings were organized by Jewish students and teachers throughout the Yishuv. In October 1913, the Hebrew Teachers' Association proclaimed a strike in all Hilfsverein schools, and students demonstrated outside the German consulate in Jerusalem. Like the East Africa issue a decade earlier, the Technion crisis seemingly threatened the entire Hebraic nature of the Zionist renaissance. Aware of what was at stake, then, the Zionist Organization immediately set about establishing more than a dozen new Hebrew-language schools for Palestine and launched a worldwide campaign for additional funds. At last, four months later, in February 1914, the language controversy ended when the board of governors reconsidered the matter and agreed that all Technion courses thenceforth would be taught exclusively in Hebrew.

From then on, the commitment to a Hebrew vernacular for the Yishuv was never in doubt. In the aftermath of the Technion battle, the Hebrew Teachers' Association, subsidized by the Zionist Organization, founded a board of education to administer the curriculum and establish teaching guidelines for all Jewish—non-Orthodox—schools in Palestine, including the Hilfsverein network. By 1916, the fulfillment of Ben-Yehuda's dream was in sight. A census that year indicated that 40 percent of the Yishuv's population (outside of the old Orthodox community) spoke Hebrew as their first language. The little philologist's accomplishment was in every way as formidable as Herzl's, and as widely recognized. When Ben-Yehuda died in Jerusalem in December 1922, 30,000 people escorted his body to its grave, and Palestine Jewry observed three days of official mourning.

THE YISHUV STRIVES FOR POLITICAL IDENTITY

One of the Zionist settlers' fondest hopes was to prove themselves worthy of Ottoman toleration, and thereby to overcome the government's endless legal obstacles to immigration and land purchase. With the best of intentions, however, the Yishuv failed to accommodate itself to the political realities of the country. To begin with, Palestine was disjointed under Turkish rule into separate administrative units. Individual governors in Beirut and Jerusalem wielded all but unlimited powers and issued decrees that often conflicted. In both provinces, to be sure, administrative councils included leaders of the various religious communities, together with a handful of elected local

citizens. Yet the capacity of these bodies was purely advisory. After the 1908 Revolution, the inhabitants of Palestine were entitled to send representatives to the Ottoman Parliament, and the country did in fact return five such deputies. Again, their actual powers were negligible. By the same token, municipal councils were based on a restricted property franchise and wielded no visible influence.

Whatever the limited theoretical opportunities for representation in government, these applied to the Jews hardly at all. Few Jews were Ottoman citizens; from the outset, they had learned that they were better off as foreign nationals remaining under the capitulatory protection of the European consuls. Elections to the Ottoman Parliament took place virtually without Jewish participation, as a result. The Sephardic Chief Rabbi, the Chacham Bashi, sat in the administrative council of Jerusalem, a smiling ornament. In 1912 a provincial council was established for the sanjak (district) of Jerusalem; the Jews failed to return a single one of the thirteen elected members. With voting rights restricted to property owners, municipal councils had few Jewish members. In Jerusalem, for example, where Jews constituted a majority of the city's population, only three of their number were included among the ten representatives on the municipal council in 1910. In 1912 there were four Jews; in 1914, one.

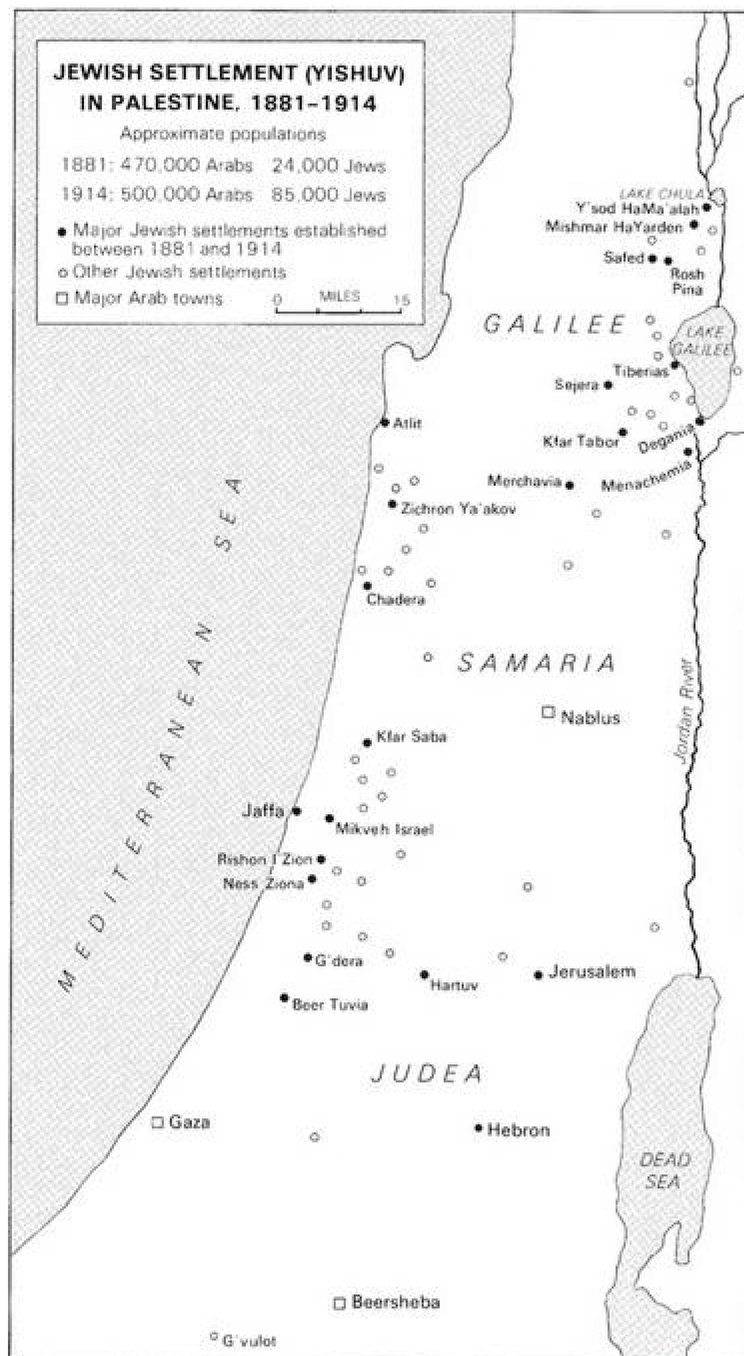
Yet, among themselves, at least, the inhabitants of the Yishuv appreciated the need for some form of collaboration that would protect their uncertain tenure in the Holy Land. The main stumbling block was the heterogeneous nature of the Jewish population, divided as it was into Ashkenazim, Sephardic-Orientals, pietists, secularists, and various political factions among the Zionist immigrants. Even so, an initial effort to organize a representative body was launched in the agricultural villages, where communal life was fractionally more active than in the cities. Through the efforts of Achad HaAm, who visited Palestine in 1900, several hundred Jewish farm workers elected a delegation with the intention of petitioning Baron Rothschild to loosen PICA's grip on Jewish rural life. The appeal failed. Three years later a "Congress of Palestinian Jewry" was "elected"—by a meager 2,157 Jews from all parts of the country. This group, too, soon dissolved, as a consequence of the East Africa episode.

On the other hand, among the newcomers of the Second Aliyah were to be found large numbers of individuals with experience in the organized (Jewish) communal life of eastern Europe. In 1907 several hundred of these immigrants founded a Palestinian Council, with the intention of coordinating the work of the Zionist agencies in the Yishuv. The Council met on a haphazard basis during the ensuing two years, then splintered into factionalism; the Sephardic majority in Jerusalem and Safed was uninterested in joint ventures with the Russian Labor Zionists. The organization expired in 1908. This series of failures notwithstanding, Jewish interest in communal affairs persisted. It was evidenced in the large number of political parties, clubs, and unions that continued to surface in the Yishuv well after the Young Turk Revolution. Thus, in 1913, journeying by horseback through the Yishuv's towns and villages, Israel Belkind renewed the effort to establish a Jewish representative body. Once more the response was favorable. In the spring of 1914 the plan was discussed and endorsed by the Executive Council of the Federation of Judean Colonies (below). The outbreak of the

war doomed the scheme.

Nevertheless, a certain rudimentary self-government developed on the local and regional level. Villages frequently consulted each other on matters of joint interest, such as the building of synagogues or the drilling of wells. At the opening of the century, the inhabitants of the PICA colonies assembled in town meetings to issue occasional local regulations that would fill the vacuum of effective Turkish government. And in the last years before the war, two regional federations of colonies actually were organized. One of these, the Federation of Judean Colonies, concentrated on establishing marketing societies, acquiring modern farm implements, organizing a livestock insurance company, hiring a veterinarian, and circulating agricultural information. In 1913 the farm communities of lower Galilee joined in a federation of their own to cope with the danger of marauding Arab bandits. Unlike its Judean counterpart, this body survived the outbreak of war, appealed to the government for police protection, helped the needy with loans, and evacuated Jews from areas threatened by heavy fighting.

Despite the absence of formal structure, therefore, the lineaments of a distinct, self-aware, and increasingly assertive Jewish community were plainly visible on the eve of the World War. It was also a community that was growing more rapidly than at any time since the rise of the Zionist movement. During the first six months of 1914, no fewer than 6,000 Jews immigrated into Palestine, while the flow of emigration back to Europe slowed appreciably. By then, too, some 85,000 Jews were living in the Holy Land, a higher Jewish ratio to total population than in any other country, and enjoying a far wider occupational diversity. New snipping services and railroad lines offered hope of accelerated economic growth for Palestine. So did the first Jewish workshops and small industries, including a cement and brick factory, a sugar beet refinery, and engineering workshops. Jaffa, with its port facilities and access to Europe, was now an important Jewish cultural and administrative center for Zionist enterprises. There the first Hebrew schools were established and the first workers' federations opened their offices.



It was also from Jaffa, with its 6,000 Jews, that a new suburb emerged that was destined ultimately to become the metropolitan center of Jewish life in Palestine. The port city was squalid, and largely Arab. For some years Ruppin had been intrigued by the notion of building an all-Jewish satellite community. With the endorsement, then, of the Eighth Zionist Congress, the director of the Palestine Office agreed to lend JNF funds to a private development company, the Achuzat Bayit. The latter in turn sold individual plots, in both Europe and the Yishuv, to future Jewish settlers. In 1909 construction began on the sand dunes outside the Jaffa town limits, and by 1914 a modest garden quarter had grown up, encompassing 139 houses and 1,419 Jewish inhabitants. The community was named Tel Aviv (Hill of Spring), from a site mentioned in the Bible, and used by Nachum Sokolow as the title for his Hebrew translation of Herzl's *Altneuland*. Jewish agriculture matched this urban growth. The villages founded by the original nineteenth-century Chovevei Zion immigrants had recovered, especially the plantation settlements along the coastal lowland. Citrus and grapes of profitable quality and

quantity were being cultivated. By 1914, the Jewish rural population had climbed to 12,000.

How far, then, had the return to Zion materialized? Far enough so that by 1914, only three years before the Balfour Declaration, the notion of a Jewish homeland was worth taking seriously in European governmental circles. The awakening was made possible not merely by the growth of the Zionist Organization, nor by the agencies of that body, the Jewish National Fund and the Anglo-Palestine Bank. It was accomplished, too, by the presence of a rather considerable Jewish enclave in Palestine, 14 percent of whose settlers were living in farm villages, many of them speaking Hebrew, their hands on their own plows, even on their own guns. Had the "practical" approach of building the Yishuv not been followed, had the Zionist movement worldwide been allowed breathlessly to await a miracle of future statecraft, there is little doubt that the redemptive effort in Palestine would have died of inanition. It was between 1905 and 1914, therefore, that the foundations of the Jewish National Home were laid and its ideological configuration charted. "Above all," reflected Weizmann, "we got the feel of things, so that we did not approach our task after the Balfour Declaration like complete beginners."