

## IMMIGRANTS AND IDEOLOGIES

The financial urgency could hardly have been exaggerated. Although the population of the Yishuv had fallen to 55,000 by war's end, the numbers were replenished almost immediately in 1919—at a time when Palestine was not yet open officially to immigration. This influx was to be known as the “Third Aliyah,” and it was more appropriately titled than any of its predecessors, for it poured in from eastern Europe at the rate of 1,000 a month by 1920, and ultimately reached a total of 37,000 newcomers between 1919 and 1923. Most of the immigrants were simultaneously fleeing revolution, counterrevolutionary pogroms, and civil wars. Many came under the illusion that a Jewish state was about to be established. All of them, in any case, regarded postwar eastern Europe as a dead end.

They were not wrong. To be sure, the Russian Revolution of March 1917 and the overthrow of the tsarist regime initially ended all Jewish disabilities, removed the shackles on Zionist activity in Russia, and even led briefly to an unprecedented sunburst of Russian Zionist enthusiasm and growth. By early autumn the movement embraced some 1,200 local groups and a membership of 300,000. Yet if 1917 was Russian Zionism's golden opportunity, it was foreshortened by the Bolshevik Revolution in November of that year. The new Communist regime in its early stages placed few limitations on Zionist activities. Palestine emigration bureaus at first functioned without interference in the major cities, and during 1918 some 4,000 Jews managed to depart Russia for Palestine. In December, however, the Yevsektsia, the Jewish section of the Communist party, began to denounce the “counterrevolutionary essence” of Zionism, and in February 1919 Zionist offices were closed and Zionist periodicals banned. Soon a full-scale anti-Zionist crusade was unleashed in the Ukraine and in other Jewish centers. Like the vindictive Jewish Yevsektsia members themselves, the Communist leadership took the official position that Zionism denied the primacy of the social revolution, that it rejected the solution of the Jewish problem on Russian soil, and, most important, that it threatened the Communist party with an unacceptable competition for Jewish loyalties. Periods of intermittent relaxation in the anti-Zionist campaign were followed by renewed bannings, arrests, even trials and imprisonments. By 1923 Zionist organizational activity had all but expired in Russia.

Despite this Bolshevik repression, curiously enough, and parallel with it, an unusually effective Zionist emigration organization sprang up, and was allowed to function on Russian soil in the early 1920s. It was known as HeChalutz (the Pioneer), and its formal training program in Russia itself infused the Third Aliyah with a practical dynamism unique in Zionist history. While mooted as early as 1915, the notion of

advance agricultural experience was first propagandized widely by Joseph Trumpeldor. The famed one-armed officer had returned to Russia in February 1917. At the outset, his intention was to recruit a Jewish legion for the liberation of Palestine. Yet the following year, when the Bolshevik Revolution aborted this plan, Trumpeldor immediately issued another call to his admirers: “If we cannot be an army, let us be pioneers, let us sow the seeds a handful at a time, until we conquer the Land of Israel.”

Trumpeldor warned his listeners and readers, however, that it was not enough simply to depart for Palestine to become workers or farmers. After all, the pioneers of the Second Aliyah had followed this course, certain that they would build a utopian society by sheer force of tenacity and willpower. They had failed. Profiting from the setback, Trumpeldor instead urged Jewish youth to equip themselves in advance for the tasks ahead. They must train while still in Russia, he declared, cultivate the soil adjacent to their own villages, learn from the farmers about them. To that end, he himself and a number of close associates traveled throughout western Russia organizing HeChalutz groups and establishing training centers in Minsk and Simferopol. Tens of thousands of young men and women joined the organization during the summer and autumn months of 1918. Enthusiastically they took up the study of agriculture on purchased or rented tracts of land, closely following the advice of Jewish, and occasional Russian, instructors. The Bolsheviks, meanwhile, tolerated this activity for a purely functional reason. It attracted badly needed American Jewish philanthropic funds.

Simultaneously, other HeChalutz groups were established in Lithuania, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, in Austria and Germany. In 1921 a World HeChalutz Organization was founded at Carlsbad, and a central office was opened in Berlin—later transferred to Warsaw. By 1925 HeChalutz membership had reached 33,000 and by 1933, 83,000. As early as 1919, however, the first HeChalutz youngsters began arriving in Palestine. Their routes often were circuitous. Those departing from eastern Europe—by far the majority—usually arrived through Turkey, Italy, or Egypt. Not a few made their way from Siberia via China and Japan. In August 1919, Trumpeldor himself returned to arrange facilities for the expected influx of chalutzim. A half year later he was killed in an Arab attack on his kibbutz, Tel Chai. Yet news of his death merely provided additional incentive to other HeChalutz members waiting to set out for Palestine. Seized by the urgency of circumstances in the Yishuv, they departed Europe in unprecedented numbers.

The mass immigration caught both the Zionist Organization and the Palestine government unprepared. The youngsters were pouring in like a tidal wave, and in their enthusiasm were almost completely indifferent to the lack of accommodations in

Palestine, the certainty of hardships awaiting them. It was the Nebi Musa violence, we recall (Chapter VI), that convinced Sir Herbert Samuel that Arab disquiet could best be appeased by qualifying the principle of unlimited Jewish immigration. At that juncture, in August 1920, the mandatory government issued an ordinance restricting the number of Jewish immigrants to a maximum of 16,500 annually; and, at that, only to those for whom guaranteed employment was waiting. In the wake of the Arab riots of May 1921, Samuel went further, briefly halting all Jewish immigration. Finally in 1922, the Churchill White Paper additionally stipulated that immigration should not exceed Palestine's absorptive capacity. At this point the mandatory government adopted the system of issuing permits by categories—laborers, farmers, capitalists, and others. The restrictions imposed no severe hardship on Jewish immigration during the early years of the mandate. What was ominous to the Zionists, rather, was the precedent established for conceivably more drastic limitation in the future.

Of equal significance was the impact of these quotas upon the political coloration of the Yishuv. As it happened, the British granted the Zionist Executive effective control (within the numerical limits) over the distribution of immigration certificates. The allocation of these permits abroad, therefore, became a cause for impassioned struggle among the numerous Zionist factions. Eventually an agreement of sorts was reached among them to operate by the “party key”—that is, to distribute the certificates on the basis of the respective strengths of the various parties in the Zionist Organization. Yet, under the terms of the Organization's charter, double weight was accorded Zionist votes cast in the Yishuv, and thus the strength of the parties in Palestine itself soon became crucial. Those parties were oriented increasingly toward Labor Zionism, and by the mid-twenties, as a result, immigrants of similar affiliation in Europe were given priority.

It was in the early 1920s, then, that the political composition of the Yishuv—and with it, increasingly, of the Zionist Executive—took on its decisively leftist stance. The bulk of the newcomers was provided by HeChalutz, and although this pioneering organization was nominally apolitical, in fact it was overwhelmingly influenced by the doctrines of Labor Zionism; most of its followers in Europe were committed to one or another of the Labor Zionist parties. The largest numbers of the immigrants belonged to the Poalei Zion. A smaller proportion gave its loyalty to the Zeirei Zion, a collection of youth groups that, while not formally Socialist, expressed intense social concern and advocated the nationalization of land. After the war the Zeirei Zion split into two factions, and the more leftist branch eventually joined with the Poalei Zion in an enlarged Achdut HaAvodah, or Union of Labor (see below). By then the ideological differences between Poalei Zion and HaPoel HaZair, the party of A. D. Gordon and the “religion of labor” (Chapter IV), had narrowed considerably. At a conference of Labor

Zionist groups in 1919, members of both factions began exploratory discussions on the idea of merging their organizations. These talks led to the formation of the unified Achdut HaAvodah. At the last moment, however, the leadership of HaPoel HaZair refused to join the new group. Gordonians by philosophy and moderates by temperament, they were repelled by the aggressive class activism of men like Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi. On the other hand, this decision to stay clear of Achdut HaAvodah led to a gradual atrophy of HaPoel HaZair's political influence within the Yishuv.

HaShomer HaZair—the Young Watchman—meanwhile took a curiously lone stance of its own, independent both of the doctrinaire socialism of Achdut HaAvodah and of the gentle Gordonianism of HaPoel HaZair. The movement had first developed in Galicia in 1915, and many of its followers subsequently came from Polish and Lithuanian middle-class families. Deeply romantic, they were influenced partly by the German Wandervogel youth movement and were in revolt, as they saw it, against the vapid and decadent Jewish bourgeoisie of the Pale. In their endless debates and theorizing, HaShomer HaZair projected a collectivist vision of the Jewish National Home more radical than anything conceived even by the Poalei Zion. For them, the kvutzah—the collective settlement—was more than an economic goal; it was an opportunity to abolish the family as a social unit, with all the tyranny of elders this organism had represented for them in the Old World. Children would even be housed separately from their parents. Inasmuch as politics was irrelevant to the utopian community envisaged by HaShomer HaZair, however, the group failed to become a political force in the Yishuv. Its impact was entirely social and, at that, limited to the kibbutz movement (this page).

Actually, none of the various trends and factions really considered themselves essentially political. They were all “movements” in the broadest sense, encompassing entire philosophies and societies within their ambit and including specialized youth groups—Gordonia, Dror, HeChalutz HaZair, and others. They lived and worked among themselves and organized their own clubhouses and choral and sports associations, often their own school systems. For all their dedication to a just, laboring society, they shared an equal commitment to maintain their ideological “purity.” It was this relentless, doctrinaire factionalism that set the tone for the emergent political character of the Yishuv, of the Zionist Organization, and ultimately of the State of Israel itself.

## A NEW UTOPIA ON THE SOIL

For the newcomers of the Third Aliyah, the initial priority clearly was to find employment. Here the mandatory administration was willing initially to offer a certain limited help, by providing scattered job opportunities in road building. Arab workers

generally were hired out by their sheikhs; the Jews preferred to seek work through Achdut HaAvodah and HaPoel HaZair employment offices. Moreover, some of the youthful HeChalutz immigrants already had brought a plan with them from Europe for group employment. It was known as the G'dud HaAvodah, the Labor Battalion, and its rationale had been provided by the incomparable Trumpeldor in 1917. Trumpeldor's conception was of an austere and disciplined body, organized on collectivist lines, its members prepared to work in any region of Palestine and, if necessary, under the most trying circumstances. "We need," he declared,

people ready to serve at any cost at whatever task Palestine requires.... The metal, whatever is needed to forge anything, whatever the national machine will require. Is there a wheel lacking? I am that wheel. Nails, screws, a block? Take me. Must the land be dug? I will dig it. Is there shooting to be done, are soldiers needed? I will enlist. Policemen, doctors, lawyers, teachers, water-carriers? If you please, I am ready to do it all. I am not a person. I am the pure embodiment of service, prepared for everything. I have no ties. I know only one command: Build.

Trumpeldor himself did not live to see his scheme put into action. But in August 1920, six months after his death, a group of his HeChalutz followers arrived in Palestine from the Crimea, determined to breathe life into the project. Their numbers grew from 40 to 560 by the following year. While animated in part by the Gordonian vision of "conquering labor," the early G'dud HaAvodah members also intended to socialize the Yishuv by force of sheer willpower and example. Nor would they limit their efforts to agriculture. Their plan was to introduce Jewish workers into every sphere, including road construction, swamp drainage, and railroad building. By acquiring strategic positions for the laboring class in the Yishuv's economy, they intended ultimately to transform Palestine into a nationwide commune of Jewish workers. On this basis, then, they hired themselves out for public works projects. By 1921 "detachments" of the Battalion were found throughout Palestine, clearing swamps, building roads, living in tents, deprived even of the most elementary facilities of accommodation or leisure. Their work was the hardest, the most dangerous and backbreaking in the country. It was also the most egalitarian. All workers, irrespective of their labor, turned over their income to a central committee.

Near a work camp in the Emek of Jezreel, moreover, the young workers founded a kvutzah, Ein Charod, to provide themselves with food and shelter. And it was on the issue of Ein Charod's future that the Labor Battalion eventually foundered. Many of the group preferred to stay on at the kvutzah and develop it into a model of collective farming. Others insisted that Ein Charod was merely a way-station to the broader goal

of a “nationwide commune.” The vision was utopian certainly beyond the most extravagant dreams of the earlier Labor Zionist pioneers, and it touched off an angry dispute among the workers. Eventually, in 1929, the G’dud HaAvodah disintegrated in acrimony and recrimination. Several dozen of the “extremists” broke their ties with Palestine altogether, returning to the Soviet Union. There, in the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, they were liquidated to the last man. Those who remained in Palestine, settling down to a more “normal” life, in the end became a kind of political aristocracy. As late as 1954 almost half the leading politicians of the Mapai party, and a third of all senior officials in government and in the Histadrut labor federation (this page), could boast that in the 1920s they had been pioneer members of the G’dud’s exalted little brotherhood.

The majority of Third Aliyah immigrants in fact were not eager to work as hired laborers at all. Their Socialist convictions ran too deep for that. Most, rather, were intent upon founding collective villages of their own. A tiny handful of kvutzot actually had survived the war, but their total membership of 660 was hardly impressive. The largest kvutzah, Kinneret, possessed fifty-eight members, and several of the rest fewer than a dozen. Nor did these pioneer Socialist farmers nurture a well-defined concept of their future experiment—until the early 1920s. It was the Third Aliyah that revived collective farming and provided it with an idealized image as the emergent trend of Jewish agriculture in Palestine. Once again, Arthur Ruppin was the catalyst of change. As director now of the Zionist Executive’s settlement department, Ruppin viewed the task of absorbing the “sweepings of the ghetto” as a personal crusade. Moreover, he persuaded the postwar Zionist Congresses that collective farming offered the Yishuv its most substantial hope for a viable agriculture. The kvutzah required only a modest initial investment, he pointed out; it allowed greater flexibility on a smaller tract of marginal land and was more capable of defending itself in isolated and vulnerable regions of Palestine. In any case, Ruppin added, no other method of farming would have been acceptable to the impassioned new Socialist immigrants.

The G’dud HaAvodah pioneers who remained on at Ein Charod also had much to do with the emergent lineaments of collective settlement. In establishing this farm, and its sister colony, Tel Yosef, they dramatized the advantages of a large-scale collective—that is, a kibbutz—over the more intimate kvutzah. In 1921 the two villages supported a joint membership of three hundred, an unprecedented number for communal farming. The social advantages of a more variegated population were matched economically by an increased, and hence more productive, specialization of labor. It soon became clear that the large kibbutz offered a vital key to the Yishuv’s agricultural growth. By 1927 Ein Charod had grown by another two hundred and had been joined by a number of smaller

“satellite” kibbutzim. In that year, too, delegates from these colonies organized a federation, HaKibbutz HaMe’uchad (the United Kibbutz), which rejected the exclusivity of the smaller kvutzah settlements in favor of larger-scale immigrant absorption. The example was indeed followed with growing frequency, and in the 1930s members of HaKibbutz HaMe’uchad went so far as to permit their settlers to accept employment outside their own villages, in road gangs and quarries and on fishing and maritime assignments.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, nevertheless, there still remained communal settlements that insisted on guarding the highly personal, familylike character of the little kvutzah (although “kibbutz” soon became the generic term for all collective settlements, large or small). The original pioneers of Degania were among them. So were the Third Aliyah founders of Geva, Chefziba, Ginegar, and a handful of others. In 1925 these elitist communities organized an association of their own, Chever HaKvutzot (the Kvutzah Group). It appeared at first, too, as if Chever HaKvutzot were destined to become the least vigorous branch of the kibbutz movement. As other groups expanded, Degania, Kinneret, Geva and Ginegar stagnated, failing to develop economically or to absorb new immigrants. This deficiency was partially remedied in the 1930s, however, by the arrival of a well-organized Polish Jewish youth group, Gordonia, devoted to the ideals of its namesake, A. D. Gordon. In 1933 Chever HaKvutzot and Gordonia merged, and the federation of smaller kibbutzim was given a new lease on life—even as its individual communes slowly enlarged themselves. HaShomer HaZair (this page) similarly experienced a revival of sorts. In 1927 the four settlements established by this intensely utopianist movement organized the Kibbutz HaArtzi (National Kibbutz) federation. In subsequent years, its collectives were to be known as the most ideologically committed and intellectually active in Palestine. Yet, while preserving much of the old radical idealism, Kibbutz HaArtzi also began enlarging its individual villages and gradually abandoning the older mystical notion of a familylike commune.

In many ways, the 1920s were a crisis period in the development of the kibbutzim. The collectives did not grow spectacularly during these years, and their economic position remained precarious. As new settlements were established, old ones would collapse. Deficits rose more rapidly than profits. But in the 1930s a new wave of immigration brought additional members and a resurgence of hope. Indeed, the reputation of the kibbutz movement throughout Europe provided a kind of built-in dynamism. By 1939 the newcomers of the Fifth Aliyah (Chapter VIII) had raised the kibbutz population to 25,000 living in 117 collective settlements, or 5.2 percent of the Yishuv.

Why did so many of the immigrants choose the collectivist alternative? As late as the 1930s, after all, kibbutz life was grim and colorless, harsh and demanding in labor and sacrifice, in lodgings, diet, and recreation. Yet, as we recall, collectivism was the result not simply of an ideological blueprint. It developed rather from the concrete needs and demands of Jewish farm life. Straitened in land and capital, isolated in remote outposts, Jews found the technique of joint sharing the most functional method of survival, both economically and physically. There were other advantages, too, well beyond the emotional compensation of returning to the soil. By agreement reached in democratic village meetings, parents were spared the responsibility of family duties, from the education, even the care, of children. Women, assigned to communal tasks—in the garden, the nursery, the clinic, the schools—were emancipated from the drudgery of routine domestic chores. Men and women alike, for that matter, enjoyed more time for cultural activities, for group discussions, debates, and lectures. This was a crucial inducement; kibbutz dwellers were far from the stereotype of lethargic peasants. Rather, in high school and youth movements, their children were reminded continually that they were nothing less than the vanguard of Israel's redemption. The appraisal was widely shared throughout the Yishuv. It explained the disproportionate influence of kibbutz members in the emerging Labor parties, in the Histadrut and the Va'ad Le'umi, in the growing Jewish defense movement, and ultimately, as shall be seen, in the government and public institutions of the State of Israel.

Even at its apogee, however, the kibbutz movement by no means dominated Jewish agriculture. Throughout the prewar years there were farmers, Socialists among them, who decried the collective's lack of family privacy. An initial effort to develop a somewhat less radical alternative at Merchavia failed. But afterward, in 1919, Eliezer Yoffe, himself a veteran of the Second Aliyah, outlined a plan for a "moshav ovdim," a workers' cooperative, in which farmers would settle on JNF land, buy their equipment and sell their produce cooperatively, maintain their village services cooperatively—but live with their families on their own plots and keep for themselves the income they earned with the sweat of their brows. The idea appealed to many settlers. With the help again of Ruppin, who provided a tract in the Emek of Jezreel adjacent to Nazareth, a group of nineteen veteran farmers established a moshav, Nahalal, which they operated on cooperative lines. The village eventually grew to ninety families. It was joined by other moshavim in the Emek, in the Chefer Valley, and the central Sharon plain.

The cooperative farms proved successful, by and large. For one thing, most of their members had acquired experience in earlier agricultural communities. Solid family people, they were less interested than were the kibbutz members in absorbing untrained immigrants. As a result, their village turnover was much lower than that of the



collectives. In 1931, when the number of kibbutz dwellers was 4,400, the moshavim were not far behind at 3,400. In 1936, as the kibbutz population rose to 16,400 members, the cooperative villages still boasted a respectable membership of 9,000. Subsequently, in the 1930s, the kibbutzim forged ahead more dramatically. The moshav movement, less ideological, hardly bothered to recruit in Europe or to develop youth groups. As late as 1940 its federation, the T'nuat HaMoshavim, lacked a compulsory membership tax or even a loan fund. Yet the advantages of cooperative endeavor, of initiative, privacy, and family life, were in the long run to become the wave of the agricultural future—not in the Yishuv, to be sure, but later, in the State of Israel.

During this same period of kibbutz and moshav growth, the older capitalist farms, specializing increasingly in citriculture, experienced a major revival of their own. By 1927, Rishon l'Zion comprised over 1,800 inhabitants, Rehovot 1,200, and Petach Tikvah fully 6,000. Other citrus groves were purchased and became the nuclei of new villages on the Sharon plain, among them Ra'anana, Magdiel, B'nai Brak, Ramatayim, Herzlia, Pardess Channa, Tel Mond, and Netania. By 1936 the number of capitalist villages had reached forty, almost double their prewar total. The value of their output, in citrus products, grape wines, and occasional other mixed crops, exceeded that of the moshavim and kibbutzim combined. Nevertheless, their landholdings and population fell behind those of the others. Nor was their political influence even remotely as far-reaching. Both cooperative and collective settlements maintained extensive ties with political parties and with national federations. Their leftist social views animated virtually all the major institutions of Jewish Palestine. This was hardly the case for the bourgeois colonies. Their national organizations, Hitachdut Halkkarim (the Farmers' Association), and Pardess (the Citrus Growers' Association), enjoyed neither cohesion of purpose among their highly individualistic members nor any wide degree of political sympathy among the Yishuv. As a result, by the end of the first decade of the mandate, the once powerful capitalist farmers of Petach Tikvah, Rishon l'Zion, Rehovot, and G'dera had become a fading influence in the public affairs of the Jewish National Home.

## THE VOICE OF CHALUTZIUT

Nowhere was the mood of the postwar settlers more apparent than in the literature of the Third Aliyah, with its emphasis on self-sacrifice and national revival. One of the Yishuv's authentic voices in these years was Avraham Shlonsky. An east European immigrant, a member of the G'dud HaAvodah, Shlonsky had labored to drain the malarial Emek, and the ordeal of that grim crusade, its fixation with chalutzit

(pioneering idealism), resonated through his poetry. So, too, did a kind of divine sanction for the feverish ecstasy of rebuilding:

O lead me thou, Lord, And let me bear the measure of seed  
On the ploughed fields of spring.... O, let me bear the measure of seed  
On my little parcel of land— Till my last day is weaned and stands before you  
Like a slender stalk That has bent its head full with grain: “Cut me, scythe, for the time has come.”

The stormy longings for a new life and country animated virtually all the important Hebrew poets of the Third Aliyah, among them Yitzchak Lamdan, Avigdor Hameiri, Uri Zvi Greenberg, and Yehuda Karni. Their Palestine was not the biblical idyll, the groves and vineyards of First and Second Aliyah poetry. It was the barren desert and lurking menace, the anguish and fanaticism of the Labor Battalion and of the early kvutzot.

In this genre, Yitzchak Lamdan’s epic poem Masada was the distilled incarnation of postwar chalutzit. A fortress in the Judean wilderness overlooking the Dead Sea, Masada in the first century was the site of a climactic Hebrew resistance against the legions of conquering Rome. Eventually Roman power triumphed here as elsewhere in Palestine, but only after the Hebrews had devoured the cream of General Flavius Silva’s army, then put themselves to the sword. Lamdan understood well the fanaticism of those ancient Hebrew warriors. He had come from the Ukraine with the Third Aliyah, and he was writing of the people he knew, the youngsters who had returned to the Holy Land on a prayer and a herring skin, with empty pockets, famished bellies, and in their hearts a dream of the secular Utopia they would create in the Jewish National Home. For Lamdan, then, the epic of Masada was the epic of the Third Aliyah.

The poem began with Lamdan’s own biography, a composite of his entire generation. His mother was perishing in flight from her ruined home. His brother lay murdered somewhere along the roads of the Ukraine. And he himself was fleeing at midnight for Masada. Others, the partisans of the Bolshevik Revolution, sought to dissuade him, warning that he was abandoning all hope of social progress on native soil for a chimera in the wilderness of Zion:

Behold, the Red Curtain has been lowered  
Upon the stage of mighty changes, As  
an intermission between the acts; Be strong, comrade,  
Until the curtain be raised  
And the tempest calmed.... Masada will not rise! She will not withstand  
The storm of great battles; Nor will there be a resurrection  
For this host of desperate ones,  
The weak within her.

But the poet strove on, arriving at last in Palestine in 1920. There he joined a G'dud HaAvodah work gang that had been assigned to leach brome and potash from the wastes of the Dead Sea. Masada brooded above their labors in the crippling purgatorium of the Judean salt desert.

Bear it—bear it, My aching back! A man of Israel, Too proud am I To go and seek another refuge, And salvation!... Beneath this orphaned shrub In the desert of refuge, This is not the cast-off son of the Egyptian— Here faints from thirst Isaac, seed of Abraham and Sarah!

And here, ultimately, infused with the spirit of Masada, the Third Aliyah would triumph.

The identical passion fired the writings of Lamdan's contemporary, Uri Zvi Greenberg. The son of a prosperous Galician Jewish family, Greenberg had served in the Habsburg army during the war, then in 1922 and 1923 lived briefly in Warsaw and Berlin, where he edited a Yiddish expressionist journal. He reached Palestine in 1924, where soon he achieved the reputation of "poet of the chalutzim." As a journalist in Tel Aviv, Greenberg did not physically share the sufferings of the pioneers. Yet no one captured better than he the scorched tenacity of that postwar generation. His God was remorseless, as bleak and demanding as Yahweh of old. A pall of melancholy enveloped the task of reclaiming even the most sacred of God's ancient shrines:

But to me, the body of my dismembered mother is Jerusalem: every rock shattered or severed, and the Blood ever dripping, invisible blood of the soul.... A wall encircles your woe—a fearful ring; darkness Covers your stones, and your silence has become a Shriek heard by the possessed and sainted ones in their Death.

In Lamdan's fortitude, Greenberg's vehemence, Shlonsky's harsh, granulated imagery, the élan of the Third Aliyah was the spirit neither of pastoral awakening nor of rapturous self-assurance. It was one rather of fevered anguish, of despair mingled with a bitter and cynical hope that a new society ultimately could be resurrected out of a desolated land and a ruined people.

## THE GROWTH OF URBAN SETTLEMENT, THE STRUGGLE FOR LABOR UNITY

The postwar immigrants of the 1920s were by no means all impassioned Socialist pioneers. As early as 1922 and 1923 the numbers of the middle class among them began to increase, and this trend was further augmented in 1924 by an unexpected and sizable influx of Polish Jews. They came essentially as economic fugitives. The Warsaw

government, intensely chauvinistic, regarded all of its non-Polish minorities with unqualified distrust. Yet it was Poland's 3 million Jews who were uniquely vulnerable to successor-state xenophobia. A Polish senator phrased the issue succinctly: "If the aboriginal nation reaches economic maturity, the immigrant nation must step aside." During the 1920s, this formula was implemented by the government's finance minister, Wladyslaw Grabski, who nationalized those branches of industry and commerce in which Jews were most heavily represented, then dismissed Jewish employees in favor of Poles. As a result, fully a third of the nation's Jewish merchants were driven to bankruptcy, and emigration soon became their only hope. Between 1924 and 1928, 70,000 of them made their way to Palestine. The arrival of this "Fourth Aliyah," which also included some 8,000 Jews from the Caucasus and the Middle East, raised the Jewish population of Palestine from 84,000 in 1922 to 154,000 in 1929.

Few of the newcomers were animated by Labor Zionist or even agricultural ideals. Having rescued a few thousand zlotys from their doomed little shops in Poland, the Fourth Aliyah immigrants generally gravitated to the cities and towns, where they set up pathetic duplicates of the enterprises they had left behind. During Palestine's economic slump in 1927 many of these erstwhile businessmen were wiped out. Weizmann had regarded their arrival with misgivings from the outset. In a speech of October 13, 1924, he warned:

When one leaves the Emek and comes into the streets of Tel Aviv, the whole picture changes. The rising stream of immigration delights me.... Nor do I underrate the importance of this immigration for our work of reconstruction. Our brothers and sisters of Djika and Nalevki [typical ghetto districts of Warsaw] are flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. But we must see to it that we direct this stream and do not allow it to deflect us from our goal. It is essential to remember that we are not building our National Home on the model of Djika and Nalevki.

If the mercantile refugees were less than pioneers, however, their contributions to Jewish Palestine were substantial. It was in fact the newcomers of the Fourth Aliyah who laid the basis for the Yishuv's urban economy. Within five years they doubled the Jewish population of Jerusalem and Haifa. By the same token, their immigration was largely responsible for making a city out of Tel Aviv. As late as 1921 barely 3,600 Jews inhabited this miniature "garden suburb" of Jaffa. The numbers tripled in April of that year when Arab riots in Jaffa emptied the port community of its last remaining Jews. But it was essentially the influx of the mid-1920s that swelled Tel Aviv's population to 16,000 in 1924 and to 46,000 five years later. From then on, growth produced its own momentum; Tel Aviv boasted 160,000 inhabitants by 1939—all Jews. The rise of this

and other urban communities offered a new insight into the Yishuv's emergent demographic profile. Unquestionably the presence of 33,000 Jews on the soil by 1931 was an impressive figure. Indeed, the proportion of Jews in agriculture climbed from 14 percent in 1914 to 23 percent in 1931, and to 29 percent in 1939. As early as the 1920s, nevertheless, it became clear that the largest numbers of Jewish settlers were moving into the towns and cities.

The 1920s witnessed the beginning of Jewish industry in Palestine. In 1921 a brick factory was constructed in Tel Aviv. That same year a Russian Jewish engineer, Pinchas Rutenberg, obtained a concession from the mandatory government to build the first electric power station in Tel Aviv, and soon afterward to build power stations in Haifa and Tiberias. From 1922 on, private Jewish capital established a salt works, a large flour mill, and the Shemen oil and soap factory in the Haifa area. In 1925 the Neshet cement factory was opened near Haifa, together with several textile plants. The contribution of most Polish Jewish immigrants during the 1920s was hardly this impressive, of course. By and large their "industrial" enterprises consisted of little more than small workshops with a handful of workers. Even so, it was their arrival by the thousands that stimulated the Yishuv's single most important industry, construction. By 1927 as many as 45 percent of the workers of Tel Aviv were employed in the building trade, and the lineaments of a sizable Jewish urban working class were visible for the first time. The Labor Zionist leadership watched this development closely. It was persuaded by then that in the cities, as on the soil, labor's task was to conquer the Palestine Jewish economy and shape it altogether in its image.

In fact, rudimentary workers' organizations had appeared in the Jewish colonies as far back as the 1880s and 1890s, but the PICA directors had managed to stamp out most of them. The effort to create labor unity was revived only in the decade before the war. Although essentially political in character, HaPoel HaZair and the Poalei Zion functioned as incipient trade unions and even supplied a certain rudimentary medical care (this page). During the war, food shortages led to the establishment of a consumers' cooperative, HaMashbir HaMerkazi (the Central Provisioner). In varying degrees, these struggling societies were predecessors of the Histadrut, the Jewish Labor Federation of Palestine. Yet the essential postwar impetus for the Histadrut was supplied by the two political factions, Achdut HaAvodah and HaPoel HaZair. While the latter refused to join the former in an all-embracing union of the Left (this page), both groups agreed that they could submerge their differences in an "apolitical," purely labor, federation. On that basis the Histadrut was founded in Haifa, in December 1920. From the outset, its membership was open to "all toilers who live by their own labor without exploiting others."

It was significant that a majority of the Histadrut's early members belonged to kibbutzim and moshavim, and that the federation placed its heaviest emphasis on creating work opportunities for Jews on the land. But while the likeliest potential jobs for new immigrants appeared for many years to be in the citrus groves of the coastal belt, as late as 1930 no more than a few hundred Jewish workers secured employment on the capitalist plantations, working cheek by jowl with several thousand Arab laborers; and this at a time when growing numbers of Jewish immigrants were camping in tents on the beaches of Tel Aviv, waiting vainly for jobs of any kind. The Histadrut accordingly began to organize strikes against planters who refused to give work priorities to Jews. Not infrequently picketers used strong-arm tactics to "induce" Arab workers to return to their homes. In resorting to these methods, the Histadrut operated on the assumption that the Arab economy was self-contained. To the newcomers from eastern Europe, on the other hand, employment in the Jewish-owned orchards was a matter of life or death. The issue eventually was resolved in favor of Jewish labor (Chapter IX). It did nothing to improve Arab-Jewish relations, however.

Nor were the planters the only Jewish capitalists in Palestine who exploited their workers. In the cities, hundreds of minor entrepreneurs recruited Jewish laborers from the streets with the promise of little more than a free lunch and a mattress for sleeping. With the bulk of Jewish manpower pouring into the cities, too, the Histadrut increasingly turned its attention to the urban areas. Indeed, it organized unions not simply among manual laborers, but among clerks, technicians, even doctors and lawyers. Labor exchanges were set up for job applicants, and collective bargaining was undertaken on their behalf. Slowly, opportunities were opened for Jewish workers in the building industry, even in the British-controlled railroads, in the post offices, and in other key sectors of the urban economy.

The Histadrut's function was by no means limited to that of a bargaining agent for workers. Its trade union purposes were combined both with the Zionist ideal of rebuilding the country and with the Socialist aim of "establishing a Jewish workers' society in Palestine." In fulfilling these goals, the Histadrut in 1923 established a central economic corporation, the Chevrat Ovdim (Workers' Association), to serve as a holding company for a wide variety of independent undertakings. Among these was HaMashbir HaMerkazi (this page), revived in the mid-1920s as a cooperative wholesale society to buy the products of the kibbutzim and moshavim and, in turn, through its chain of retail stores, to sell these farm villages foodstuffs, clothing, and industrial goods. In 1926 the Chevrat Ovdim organized a marketing outlet, Tnuva, for kibbutz and moshav dairy products; then a workers' bank (Bank HaPoalim) as its major credit instrument for the farm settlements and labor enterprises in the cities. The Chevrat Ovdim's housing

company, Shikun, provided workers with flats at the lowest, nonprofit rentals; even as a wide network of cooperative endeavors—fully a thousand of them by 1939—was established in other areas, ranging from bus transportation to hotels and restaurants.

In forestalling the worst of the Yishuv's economic inequalities, however, and in minimizing cutthroat competition, one of the Histadrut's most important innovations undoubtedly was its program of universal medical coverage. Known as the Kupat Cholim (Sick Fund), it had been launched as far back as 1911, with some 2,000 participants on the eve of the war. By 1930 its membership had climbed to 15,000, a number that would double five years after that. By then, too, the Kupat Cholim maintained not only the largest registry of physicians and nurses in Palestine, but its own clinics in five cities and fifty-three rural centers, as well as two hospitals and two convalescent homes. In the absence of a compulsory medical insurance law in Palestine, the growth of Kupat Cholim was a tribute to the organizing skills of the Histadrut. So were yet other institutions of the workers' commonwealth. These included an autonomous Histadrut school network, established in 1921 and functioning under the supervision of the Va'ad Le'umi. By 1934 the 135 Histadrut schools in Palestine represented 44 percent of all schools in the Hebrew educational system (the other two networks were operated by the General Zionists and the Mizrachi). Additionally, the Histadrut sponsored a broad network of adult education courses, together with related programs in literature, art, music, and drama. In 1925 the Histadrut founded its own dramatic company, Ohel, and began publication of its newspaper, *Davar*.

Finally, to broaden the employment market by any and all means, the workers' federation launched a number of its own industrial companies. The enterprises served the dual function of offering jobs to Jews and of fulfilling the kind of Zionist public services—drainage of swamps, building of settlements—that private entrepreneurs, and certainly the British government, would not have undertaken on their own. The most important of these firms was Solel Boneh (Paving and Building), established initially as a semi-independent contracting agency for road laying and, later, public construction. Within two years, Solel Boneh was handling over P£1 million in contracts from private investors, from the Zionist Executive, even from the mandatory government. It drained swamps in the Jezreel and Chula valleys, built roads, erected housing and office buildings; and in the process it opened up thousands of new job opportunities, creating the working class whose interests it then defended. As early as 1930, then, the multitude of these activities drew into the Histadrut fold three-quarters of the Jewish working population of Palestine. Nearly all phases of a man's life, and the life of his family, were embraced by the vast canopy of the workers' organization. By the eve of World War II, the Histadrut had become much more than a powerful institution in Jewish Palestine.

For a majority of the Yishuv, the Histadrut was all but synonymous with Jewish Palestine itself.

As it developed, labor unification was a political no less than an economic achievement. The federation had little alternative but to operate on two levels, for by 1929 a new series of Arab riots and the growing coolness of the mandatory regime (Chapter VIII) revealed the urgent need for Jewish political consolidation within the Yishuv. The leaders of Achdut HaAvodah, Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi, and of HaPoel HaZair, Yosef Sprinzak and Chaim (Victor) Arlosoroff, sensed that the issues uniting the two labor factions were more important than those dividing them. In January 1930, therefore, the membership of both groups voted approval for a merger. The ensuing united party was known thenceforth as Mapai (Mifleget Poalei Eretz Israel), the Land of Israel Workers' party. In large measure the guiding spirit of the new body was Berl Katznelson, an authentic giant of the Palestine labor movement. A ruggedly built, tousle-headed man, a veteran of the Second Aliyah, Katznelson founded the newspaper Davar in 1925 as the organ of the Histadrut and remained its editor until his death in 1944. From the mid-1920s, the entire cultural program and doctrinal orientation of Jewish labor strongly reflected his influence. It was chiefly Katznelson's genius that steered Mapai away from the traditional theorizing complexities of Zionist politics and concentrated instead on pragmatic gains for Jewish workingmen and the Jewish National Home.

By 1933, as a result, this judicious blend of nationalist idealism and Socialist gradualism ensured Mapai control not only of the Histadrut (the reservoir of its strength in all future years), but also of the National Assembly and of the Jewish Agency's political department. From then on it was Mapai that led the Yishuv through the mandatory period, and that eventually became the largest single party in Zionist Congresses. The international situation favored Labor Zionism, as well, for the economic crisis of the 1930s popularized leftist causes everywhere. It is of interest, moreover, that despite the larger numbers and the more intensive radicalism of the Third Aliyah, the Yishuv's vast labor apparatus remained essentially in the hands of the prewar Second Aliyah: of such experienced veterans as Katznelson, Ben-Gurion, Ben-Zvi, Sprinzak, David Remez, and Yitzchak Tabenkin, most of them born in the 1880s. More than any other, this would be the group that would shape the ideology and the institutions of the Yishuv, and later of the State of Israel itself.

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## THE ARABS OF PALESTINE

As late as 1882 the Arab population of Palestine barely reached 260,000. Yet by 1914 this number had doubled, and by 1920 it had reached 600,000. Under the mandate the figure grew even more dramatically, climbing to 840,000 by 1931, and representing 81 percent of the country's inhabitants. Approximately 75,000 of the Palestine Arabs were Christian, heavily impacted in the urban areas, comparatively literate, and widely employed at the middle and lower echelons of the mandatory administration. The Moslem Arabs—the majority—were much more backward. Fully 70 percent of them lived on the soil, mainly in the hilly northern and central regions of the country, where they raised grains, vegetables, olive oil, and tobacco. A 1922 census revealed that a third of the Arab farmers were fellahin—tenant sharecroppers—whose average plot rarely exceeded 100 dunams (25 acres). Endlessly indebted to their landlords, to whom they paid a rent of from 33 to 50 percent of their crops, they lived with their families of five or more children in mud-brick huts, possessed virtually no sanitary facilities, and suffered chronically from amoebic dysentery and bilharziasis. Submarginal as these conditions were, they were immeasurably better than those of Moslem Arabs elsewhere in the Middle East. The statistics of Arab population growth were revealing: in Palestine the increase between 1922 and 1946 was 118 percent, a rate of almost 5 percent annually, and the highest in the Arab world except for Egypt. It was not all natural increase. During those twenty-four years approximately 100,000 Arabs entered the country from neighboring lands. The influx could be traced in some measure to the orderly government provided by the British; but far more, certainly, to the economic opportunities made possible by Jewish settlement. The rise of the Yishuv benefited Arab life indirectly, by disproportionate Jewish contributions to government revenues, and thereby to increased mandatory expenditures in the Arab sector; and directly, by opening new markets for Arab produce and (until the civil war of 1936) new employment opportunities for Arab labor. It was significant, for example, that the movement of Arabs within Palestine itself was largely to regions of Jewish concentration. Thus, Arab population increase during the 1930s was 87 percent in Haifa, 61 percent in Jaffa, 37 percent in Jerusalem. A similar growth was registered in Arab towns located near Jewish agricultural villages. The 25 percent rise of Arab participation in industry could be traced exclusively to the needs of the large Jewish immigration. Nor were the Arabs unaware of the advantages to be reaped from Jewish settlement. Indeed, left to their own, the fellahin conceivably might not have become intensely anti-Zionist. It was simply that the 1920s and 1930s did not allow for tolerable and genial intercourse. During the military regime, Generals Allenby, Money,

and Bols were openly hostile to Zionism, fearing the Jewish National Home's potentially disruptive influence among the Arabs. Until May 1920, therefore, no official British reference to the Balfour Declaration was circulated in Palestine. British officers also played a role in the founding of the Moslem-Christian Association, the first postwar Arab organization in Palestine. Even under Samuel's civilian government, a number of key officials remained inflexibly opposed to the Jewish National Home. Among these were Colonel Ernest Richmond, the assistant chief secretary of the political department. "In matters relating to the participation of the Arabs [in the legislative council then planned]," admitted Raghib Bey al-Nashashibi, in 1923, "the High Commissioner is guided by the advice of Richmond, who makes all cooperation with the Jews impossible." On several occasions, British opposition torpedoed promising joint discussions between Jewish and Arab leaders. In the early months of 1922, for example, a series of unofficial Arab-Zionist meetings took place in Cairo. They were attended on the Arab side by prominent Syrian nationalists, including Sheikh Rashid Rida, president of the central committee of the Syrian United party, Riad al-Sulh, later to be prime minister of Lebanon, and Emile Ghorri, a Palestinian editor of al-Ahram, the leading Egyptian newspaper. Representing the Jews were Dr. Montague David Eder, of the Zionist Executive, and Asher Sapir, a man with extensive connections in the Arab world. At each discussion the usual amenities were exchanged, the pious references to a "common Semitic revival" in the Middle East. In the initial conference on March 18, the Arabs renewed their proposals of January 1919 (this page). One was for the Jews to cooperate with the Arabs in evicting the French from Syria. Another was for the Zionists to repudiate the Balfour Declaration and deal with the Arabs "nation to nation." Acceptance of the first proposal clearly would have been an embarrassment to London. Acceptance of the second would have made the Jewish National Home dependent upon agreement with the Arabs rather than upon British protection. Hearing of these offers, the Colonial Office asked the Zionists to postpone all further discussions until the mandate had been ratified. The Jews acquiesced. Further Jewish-Arab meetings were resumed in April 1922, however, and soon appeared to bear fruit. A résumé declared that each side would actively cooperate with the other. The Jews promised to supply their Arab neighbors with economic and political help, while the Arabs undertook to cease all anti-Zionist propaganda and to establish a mixed Christian-Moslem-Jewish commission in Palestine. Most important, it was agreed that future Jewish dealings with the Arabs no longer would be related to the Balfour Declaration or the mandate, while the Arabs, for their part, would not invoke their 1915 treaty (the Hussein-McMahon correspondence) in negotiations with the Jews. Nor did this modified Arab stance apparently require a Zionist repudiation of the Balfour Declaration, simply a willingness to avoid reference to the document as the major basis for Arab-Jewish cooperation.

Weizmann approved the understanding in principle. The British did not. Again, the Colonial Office ordered an immediate stop to the discussions. Meetings scheduled later between Weizmann and Sa'ad Zaghlul Pasha, the Egyptian nationalist leader, and between Weizmann and Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, were summarily canceled by the British. There would be no agreement reached between Arabs and Jews independently of the mandatory power. Yet it was by no means British obstructionism alone that undermined cooperation between Arabs and Jews. The exigencies of Palestine Arab politics were also decisive. Under the Turks, Arab political life had been quite rudimentary and had consisted largely of maneuvers for civil office among rival effendi families. No organized nationalist movement whatever came into being until after the Armistice, when Moslem-Christian Associations were founded in various Arab towns to protest the impending Jewish National Home. This opposition, too, was at first essentially a projection of Syrian nationalism; it followed the lead of Arab politicians in Damascus during the unsuccessful 1919-20 effort to establish an independent Syrian kingdom. Accordingly, the collapse of Feisal's regime in the summer of 1920, and the transfer of nationalist headquarters from Damascus to Jerusalem, played a critical role in the development of an authentic Palestine Arab nationalism. It did not escape the Arab leadership, especially those who formerly had devoted their energies to the Hashemite cause in Syria, that the Zionists, as a minority settlement, were surely more vulnerable to concerted resistance than were the French or British. In December 1920, therefore, the Moslem-Christian Associations sponsored a convention in Haifa, a gathering that subsequently transformed itself into a Palestine Arab Congress. Here at last the demand was expressly submitted that Britain institute a national—that is, Arab—government in Palestine. The Congress afterward proceeded to elect an Arab Executive, a body that from 1921 on implacably opposed the British mandate and the Jewish National Home. While the Executive's hostility to Zionism was rooted at least partly in suspicion of Jewish free labor and collective agriculture, and the ideas these innovations might plant in the minds of the fellahin, it reflected more basically a fear of the political consequences of Jewish immigration. Centuries of exile in Europe clearly had westernized the Jews and enabled them far to exceed the Arab community in their intellectual and technological accomplishments. The Arab leaders were genuinely alarmed by the influx of these "overbearing and truculent" newcomers, and warned that the European Jews, with apparently limitless energy and financial backing, someday would engulf the whole of Palestine. Initially, attempts by the Arab Executive to press its case in London or before the League of Nations in Geneva were rebuffed. Despite these setbacks, the Palestine Arab Congress managed to broaden its influence within the nation's Arab community at large. Its delegates were chosen by the Moslem-Christian Associations, serving as local branches of the national movement in the towns. The

selection procedure even appeared likely for a while to develop into a form of representative spokespersonship— thereby matching the emergent Jewish quasi-government. If this early promise was not fulfilled, it was largely because the nationalist movement came to be the virtual monopoly of the Husseini clan. Wealthy landowners in southern Palestine, the Husseinis had provided thirteen mayors of Jerusalem between 1864 and 1920. One of them, Musa Kazem al-Husseini, who had been dismissed by the British for his role in the Nebi Musa riots, presided over the Arab Executive and the several Palestine Arab Congresses and led the Arab delegations to England. The family's influence was enhanced subsequently by its grip on the religious affairs of the Islamic community. Even before the war, the leading figure among Palestine Moslems was the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, a jurisconsult who issued decrees on Koranic law. As it happened, the office of Mufti became vacant with the death of Kamal al-Husseini shortly after Samuel arrived in Palestine, and to the high commissioner fell the prerogative of appointing a new incumbent. In April 1921, determined to keep the honors balanced between the Husseini and Nashashibi families—traditionally competitors for nearly every public office in the country—Samuel approved the dubiously honest election of Haj Muhammad Amin al-Husseini (who in fact received less votes for this position than did three other candidates). Born in 1893, Amin al-Husseini had been educated in a government school in Jerusalem, and at al-Azhar University in Cairo. He had served as an Ottoman officer during the war, then had returned to Jerusalem immediately after the British occupation to become politically active in Arab life. While a teacher in the Rashidiya school in Jerusalem, Haj Amin had incited the crowds during the Nebi Musa riots of 1920; upon fleeing to Transjordan, he was sentenced in absentia to ten years' imprisonment. Soon afterward, however, he was amnestied by Samuel, and returned to Jerusalem in 1921, where almost immediately he became Mufti. He was not the happiest choice. Although disarming in appearance and demeanor, with mild blue eyes, neatly trimmed red goatee, and gentle, ingratiating manner, Haj Amin was soon revealed as an impassioned Arab xenophobe, a preacher of venom and destruction against his nation's and his family's enemies. The danger Haj Amin presented to the mandate actually resided less in his office of Mufti than in his far more influential presidency of the Supreme Moslem Council. In December 1921 the British had authorized the establishment of this institution to direct the religious affairs of the Palestine Moslem community; it was intended as a counterpart of the Rabbinical Council of the Jews. Yet the Moslem Council also exercised virtually unlimited rights of patronage and control over the Islamic religious hierarchy of Palestine, over Moslem schools, religious courts, and waqf (religious) trust funds. In 1922 Haj Amin was elected president of this Council by a remnant of the Moslem property owners who had voted in the last election for the Ottoman Parliament. Thereupon, exploiting to the full his triple position as religious

head, national leader, and senior government official (the post of Mufti in effect was a state office), Haj Amin began to mobilize the loyalties of the Islamic population for his own highly developed personal and nationalist ambitions. At first, during the 1920s, the Mufti's campaign against the mandate and the Zionists was only partially effective. Resentful of Husseini power and patronage, a number of disgruntled Arab mayors, gentry, and businessmen grouped themselves around Raghib Bey al-Nashashibi in the "National party," intended as a counterpoise to the Moslem-Christian Associations. For nearly five years this rivalry helped keep the nationalist movement in abeyance. So did the firm personality of Viscount Plumer, Samuel's successor as high commissioner. A tough and respected general, Plumer made it clear that he would tolerate no disorders. As a consequence of economic recession in Palestine, too, Jewish immigration declined somewhat between 1925 and 1927, and this partially allayed Arab fears of Jewish domination. Indeed, Plumer was sufficiently encouraged by the absence of unrest to disband the Palestine and British gendarmerie, even to reduce the military garrison to a single squadron of armored cars. In 1928, finally, the Seventh Palestine Arab Congress displayed an uncharacteristic moderation. Rather than present its usual demand for an outright end to the Jewish National Home, the members simply requested parliamentary institutions on the basis of democratic majorities. The new high commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, was impressed by this seeming flexibility. Before leaving for his vacation in June of 1929, he promised to consult London on the chances of reviving a "more acceptable" (to the Arabs) version of a legislative council.

**FAILURE OF PERCEPTION, A RENEWAL OF VIOLENCE** If the high commissioner was shortsighted in failing to detect the simmering volcano of Arab hostility, the Jews were hardly less obtuse. During the immediate postwar period they gave scarcely more attention to the Palestine Arabs than during all the years since the birth of Zionism. The Arab negotiations that mattered most to Weizmann were those with Feisal and the leaders of Syria and Egypt, not with the Arabs of Palestine. Once the former's goodwill was won, nothing else mattered. Typically, Ussishkin could dismiss the Palestine Arab community as a "negligible quantity." This illusion was not dispelled at first even by the Nebi Musa riots; the bloodletting was regarded as a mere transitory outburst, and provoked, at that, by British equivocation. It was the violence of 1921 that first brought the Zionists up short and offered sobering evidence of possibly grave dangers ahead. George Landauer, a German Zionist leader, pleaded with the Twelfth Zionist Congress that year for renewed efforts at Arab-Jewish accommodation. Writing from Jaffa in May 1921, Chaim Arlosoroff warned that the Arab nationalist movement would have to be taken seriously; a program of reconciliation was the only answer. But as quiet returned to the Holy Land during the mid-1920s, Zionist policy toward the Arabs remained lethargic and unimaginative. It was the prevailing view that, once Jewish immigration

gained momentum, the backward native population would accept the Jewish National Home as a *fait accompli*. For the Labor Zionists, particularly, the economic benefits of Jewish settlement appeared to be the decisive response to Arab nationalism. Berl Katznelson, otherwise an incisive and sophisticated intellect, was convinced that the fellahin, exploited by a rapacious feudal plutocracy, soon would appreciate the importance of economic solidarity with the Jews. For Ben-Gurion, “only the narrow circles of the Arab ruling strata have egotistical reasons to fear Jewish immigration and the social and economic changes caused by it.” The Arab masses, at least, would understand that Jewish immigration and colonization brought prosperity. In the view of the Labor leadership, it behooved the Jewish laboring class to form an alliance with its Arab counterpart. “Can there be any doubt,” asked Ya’akov Chazan, a respected leader of HaShomer HaZair, “that only the organized help of the Jewish worker can bring about the self-development of the Arab working class?” Yet if the effendis, in the Zionist scheme, were the authentic enemies of Zionism, it was significant that few of the leftist parties bestirred themselves to make common cause with Arab workers and farmers. In 1927 the Third Histadrut Convention provided for the establishment of a Confederation of Palestine Labor, a kind of roof organization for all workers of Palestine. Several common unions were in fact organized among government employees, particularly the railroad and telegraph workers. Despite its 1927 resolution, however, the Histadrut continued notably uninterested in encouraging joint Arab-Jewish unions within the broader labor sector. Effendi dislike of Socialist practices unquestionably was a factor in Arab hostility. Yet it was one factor only, and by no means the predominant one. The living standard of Arab farmers and workers was rising, to be sure; but the Arab leadership noted only that the Jewish standard of living was rising much faster. One of the bitterest Arab complaints, moreover, related to the sale of land to the Jews, and to JNF policy in ensuring that Jewish land, once acquired, could never be resold to Arabs nor opened for non-Jewish employment. This surely was not an “effendi” complaint. On the contrary, it was from the effendis that the JNF purchased their tracts—at exorbitant prices. In fact, the “class” approach to Arab nationalism was bankrupt from the outset, as was every other effort to qualify or minimize the depth of this sentiment. Perhaps the one Zionist faction that took the Arab problem seriously from the outset was Revisionism, although the latter’s solution was hardly that of appeasement or compassion (this page). The truth was that neither Arab resentment nor the Mufti’s ambitions were likely to be placated by Zionist reassurances. The Arab Executive’s seemingly mild proposal to Sir John Chancellor bespoke a change of tactics, not of purpose. By the summer of 1929, too, Jewish immigration was rising again. The establishment of the Jewish Agency in August of that year promised yet additional financial support to the Jewish National Home. While no major disturbances had

erupted between Arabs and Jews since 1921, festering emotions were merely awaiting their spark. As it happened, violence was to be ignited in an unlikely venue, the Old City of Jerusalem, where Arabs and Jewish pietists had been living in close proximity for several centuries. There, abutting the Haram es-Sharif complex of mosques, was the venerated Jewish Western Wall (often called the “Wailing Wall”), a remnant of the Hebrew Temple of antiquity. The Wall belonged to the Moslem community. By tradition extending back at least to the Middle Ages, however, the Jews enjoyed an easement to the strip of pavement facing the historic buttress and the right of prayer at the Wall itself. In 1928, shortly before the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur, which fell on September 24, the Jewish sexton at the Wall placed a screen on the flagstones to separate men and women, according to Orthodox Jewish practice. The Arabs immediately complained that the status quo had been violated. The British authorities agreed and ordered the screen removed. The Jews remonstrated, but to no avail. Subsequently the entire Yishuv, religionists and nonobservant alike, expressed indignation at the “wanton interference” with Jewish freedom of worship. The Zionist Organization submitted protests to London and Geneva. The Arabs meanwhile appealed to the Moslem world, charging that the Jews intended to seize control of the venerated al-Aqsa Mosque, within the Haram area. At the initiative of the Mufti’s Supreme Moslem Council, Arab workers set about building operations in the neighborhood of the Wall, to interfere with Jewish worship, even as an especially cacophonous Moslem religious ceremony was launched to disrupt Jewish prayers there. Months of protests and counterprotests followed. On June 11, 1929, after prolonged equivocation by the mandatory government and repeated consultations with legal officers of the Crown, the high commissioner notified the Mufti that the Jews were entitled to worship without disturbance. The building operations might continue, provided “no disturbance is caused to Jewish worshipers during the customary times of their prayer.” Neither Jews nor Moslems were satisfied with this decision. On August 16 a right-wing Jewish youth group sought permission to conduct a peaceful march on the Wall. In the absence of Chancellor, who had departed for London to submit the Arab Executive’s proposal on the issue of a legislative council, the British acting high commissioner, Sir Harry Luke, acceded to the youth group’s request. Immediately, then, the Moslem leadership organized a turbulent counterdemonstration near the Wall, delivering inflammatory speeches and provoking minor skirmishes. During the subsequent week Moslem agitators traveled throughout the country, exhorting the peasantry to “protect al-Aqsa against Jewish attacks.” Finally, on the night of August 23 and the next morning, crowds of Arabs armed with weapons poured into Jerusalem. The newcomers gathered near the mosque courtyard to be harangued by the Mufti. Then, at noon, the mob attacked the Orthodox Jewish quarters, and violence spread rapidly to other areas of Palestine. In the

late afternoon Arab bands descended on the Orthodox Jewish community of Hebron, murdering sixty and wounding fifty inhabitants. Other assaults were carried out in Haifa and Jaffa, even in Tel Aviv. Numerous Jewish agricultural villages were similarly attacked. The RAF contingent in Amman was inadequate to restore order, while the Arab police were sympathetic to the rioters. The acting high commissioner was obliged to telephone Egypt for military assistance, but the main body of troops did not reach Palestine until three days afterward, and order was not restored until August 28. By then 133 Jews had been killed, 399 wounded. The Arabs had suffered 178 casualties, 87 of them dead. Chancellor, rushing back from England, issued a proclamation on September 1 that furiously condemned the Arab atrocities; he then proceeded to levy heavy collective fines on Arab towns and villages. But the effect of these measures was soon dissipated. No sooner had the Mufti protested Chancellor's "brutality" than the high commissioner issued a second proclamation a few days later, stating that an inquiry into the conduct of both sides would be held as soon as possible. Whereupon the Jews, appalled at the implication that the murderers and their victims were somehow on a common level, turned to London for redress. THE AFTERMATH OF VIOLENCE At this critical moment in the Yishuv's fortunes, the Zionists learned to their dismay that they no longer enjoyed the backing of a sympathetic government in England. The Baldwin cabinet had fallen in midsummer of 1929, and the Laborites under Ramsay MacDonald had returned to office. Leopold Amery, the last of the wartime group that had sponsored the Balfour Declaration, was now replaced as colonial secretary by Sidney Webb—shortly to be appointed Lord Passfield. Notwithstanding the large Jewish minority in its ranks, the Labor party had developed no affirmative views on Zionism. MacDonald had himself visited Palestine in 1922 and returned declaring that British promises to Jews and Arabs were contradictory. Weizmann soon discovered which way the wind was blowing upon reaching London. For the first time in his experience, the Zionist leader encountered a chill atmosphere in Westminster; he was unable at the outset to secure an interview with Passfield. The colonial secretary's wife, Beatrice Webb, on meeting Weizmann, commented only: "I can't understand why the Jews make such a fuss over a few dozen of their people killed in Palestine. As many are killed every week in London in traffic accidents, and no one pays any attention." When Passfield finally received Weizmann, he bluntly declared himself opposed to mass Jewish immigration into Palestine. Other shocks were in store. The political ramifications of the violence would continue for a year and a half and encompass a torrent of controversy that threatened the very future of the Jewish National Home