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# ZIONISM

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

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## SUMMARIES

### THE HISTORY OF THE ZIONISTS AND THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS

by David Vital

While the Zionist movement is now a century old, it is only comparatively recently that the historiography of Zionism has shown substantial signs of rigour and scholarship, as opposed to special pleading and polemics. It is, perhaps, for this reason that it is only now that the difficulties inherent in the subject are beginning to be fully apparent. These are partly technical in nature, having to do, for example, with the daunting size of the archives and the many languages needed to make full use of them; partly analytical; and partly, but crucially, bound up with the problematics of Jewish history in general. Precisely because Zionism represents a *departure* from what might be termed the Jewish norm, a close analysis of the movement's rise and evolution and the terms in which the historian finally assesses it will necessarily hinge to no small degree on the view he takes of the Jewish people and their history as a whole. The importance of the subject is thus substantially greater than its specific content might suggest.

### MYTH AND SOLIDARITY IN THE ZIONIST THOUGHT AND ACTIVITY OF MARTIN BUBER

by Uriel Tal

Zionism, according to Buber, is to be realized in two rather different frames of reference, biblical tradition and bi-national cooperation. The former is structured in forms of mythic intuition, experience, thought and faith, the latter constitutes a covenant of socio-political and cultural solidarity. The question of the compati-

bility of these two frameworks seems to have been at the core of Buber's Zionism.

The mythic nature of Zion is reflected in the primordial relationship of Man (*adam*) and the earth (*adama*), indicating the inextricable interrelationship between the destiny of man and the dispensation of the earth. Hence only a moral way of life can purify the defiled land (*Lev. XVIII*), while the return to Zion constitutes the restoration of both Israel the people and the land as manifested in their holy union. At this point Buber felt a deep affinity with the organic teachings of the Maharal of Prague, A.D. Gordon and Abraham Isaac Kuk. Buber of course knew very well that such a mythic approach might endanger the integrity of a democratic, free and just society (an essential aspect of Buber's religious thought, often overlooked by scholars), and he kept warning against the "consecration of power and politics" (for example: 1903, 1916, 1925, 1930, 1942, 1946, 1958).

The solidarity with the Arab population in Palestine, preferably as part of the awakened Near East, is, according to Buber, but a necessary result of such a biblical yet restrained Jewish nationalism. In the light of the phenomenology and social thought of Simmel, Tönnies, Schmalenbach and Dilthey, Buber believed that only a true community, a *Lebensverband*, in which the uniqueness of the individuality of each person and nation was held sacred, could offer the proper socio-political framework for the realization of the dialogue between myth and solidarity in Zion.

#### THE CONCEPT OF JEWISH NATIONALISM IN THE THOUGHT OF YEHEZKEL KAUFMANN

by Zvi Medin

Yehezkel Kaufmann's work on Jewish nationalism, although of considerable importance, has not received the same recognition as has his work on the bible. This article deals with the religious aspect of Kaufmann's concept of Jewish nationalism. His point of departure is the clarification of his historiosophical conception, which perceives the historical process as a convergence of various

elements from different domains: nature, economics, culture and so on. But within this conception, the religious element is seen as having a unique historical significance. Religious faith — as distinct from religious institutions — implies values that are absolute in their sacredness, that do not disappear with time, and that manifest themselves in the social framework. The sacredness of these values preserved the Jewish people at a time when the conditions of their existence in exile could have been expected to bring about their assimilation and disappearance. Indeed, the religion of Israel reached a level of universality very early in its history, thus making Jewish existence in exile possible. The religion did not spread, however, because of the political defeat suffered by the Jews.

Kaufmann postulates the “law of religious transformation”, according to which a natural religious transformation can come about only through a real change of faith and not through the influence of external factors. Thus, the cultural and economic assimilation of the Jews did not produce a religious transformation, and the preservation of their religious unity prevented the disappearance of their ethnic unity. Following, existence in exile is perceived by Kaufmann as a socio-ethnic problem, wherein the factor of estrangement is the fundamental element. Social assimilation and a willingness to abandon their national identity developed among the Jews with the shattering of the theocentric world and the advent of secularization. Kaufmann shows that for the Jews of the diaspora a secular culture meant an alien culture impregnated with a foreign national content. He nonetheless maintains that even in the midst of this cultural and national assimilation process, the “law of religious transformation” continues to preserve the ethnic identity as well as the sense of alienation and exile. Of special interest is Kaufmann’s evaluation of religion in the context of the Jewish national movement. He rejects any attempt to make an essential connection between the two, as well as Ahad Ha’am’s idea of a renewed Judaism in a national context. Kaufmann sees the national movement as a redemption from exile, as an ethnic-social problem, and not a cultural-moral one.

## BER BOROKHOV

by Mattityahu Mintz

There were primarily two kinds of Borokhovists: those who accepted his theories in principle and those who considered them useful in practice. The former viewed Borokhov as having successfully integrated Zionism and Marxism and proved that Zionism was an objective social process in the evolution of society towards freedom and socialism. They further saw in his theories the legitimation for a recognized Jewish workers' movement within organized social democracy. The latter, the "pragmatists", praised Borokhov for providing Zionism with theoretical tools for withstanding the pressures of socialist ideology, particularly with regard to the attitude derived from Marx himself in relation to the Jewish question. While they could not be considered Marxists in philosophy or the social sciences, they nevertheless recognized the importance of his theories in these areas and, consequently, Zionism's obligation to adapt to them. For it was incumbent upon the Zionists to deal with nihilist trends that had arisen under the influence of Marxism – with regard to the specific problems of the Jewish people.

Both camps, however, tended to focus their interests exclusively on the "classical" Poalei-Zion period of his work, that is, 1906–1907. But Borokhov's Zionist philosophy actually developed in three historical stages. The first, embracing the years 1901-1905, may be called the stage of *pioneering Zionism* (the "therapeutic" stage); the second, from 1906 to 1914, may be called, by way of generalization, the stage of *proletarian Zionism* (although the term suffers from the same degree of inaccuracy as any generalization); and the third, from 1915 to 1917, the one in which Borokhov attempted to arrive at a synthesis of his previous ideas. His success here was limited to formulating guidelines for the synthesis.

The author presents Borokhov's theories as they developed and changed over the years.



THE ATTITUDE OF THE ZIONIST INSTITUTIONS  
AND LEADERS IN PALESTINE TO JEWISH LABOUR  
DURING THE PERIOD OF THE SECOND ALIYA  
(1904–1914)

*by Dalia Hurwitz*

One of the main problems that agitated Jewish public opinion in Palestine during the period of the Second Aliya was the problem of Jewish labour. It started as a struggle between the young idealistic immigrants, who demanded that only Jewish labour be employed by Jewish employers, and the employers, mainly in the agricultural settlements, who argued against it on economic, social and political grounds. The increasing tension between the two parties, which was accompanied by frequent strikes and acts of violence, caused the leadership of the Yishuv to play a more active role in the dispute.

Those who concerned themselves with this explosive issue included the leaders of the three Zionist institutions: The Palestine Office of the World Zionist Organization, headed by Dr. A. Ruppin; the Hovevei-Zion branch office, headed by Dr. H. Hissin and M. Sheinkin; and the Anglo-Palestine Bank, headed by Z.D. Levontin. Though they were all aware of their responsibility towards the welfare of the Yishuv, they differed as to the means and ways to achieve this goal. This included their attitude towards the problem of Jewish labour.

Amongst those who supported the workers were Ruppin, Hissin and Sheinkin. They considered the workers of the Second Aliya vital to the future growth of the Yishuv and believed that all means should be used to encourage them to establish themselves in the country. Of particular significance was the activity of Ruppin, who initiated the establishment of training farms for the workers, encouraged the investment of private Jewish capital in agriculture, increased the aid to the workers in the old settlements, and helped the settlers in the first collective farms. A similar attitude was adopted by the heads of Hovevei-Zion, who assisted the workers in the old settlements and established new Moshavim.

This did not mean, however, that these leaders fully endorsed the workers' views. They were aware of the economic, social and

political limits that had to be set to their demands. They feared that acceptance in full would further aggravate the relations between workers and employers, and ruin the delicate tissue of relationships between Jews and Arabs. They therefore endeavoured, mainly towards the end of the period discussed, to seek a compromise which would enable workers and employers to sit together as equal partners and iron out their differences. At the same time they tried to mitigate the political effect that the demand for Jewish labour had on the Arab national movement.

The only leader among the heads of the Zionist institutions in Palestine who vehemently opposed the labour movement and its struggle for Jewish labour was Z.D. Levontin, Manager of the Anglo-Palestine Bank. His reasons were ideological, economic and political, and very similar to those expressed by the more extreme employers. These personal views, and the policy of the Bank under his management, which failed to fulfil the expectations of the workers in regard to short-term loans, ruined the relations between them and Levontin. A change of attitude, mutual understanding and cooperation were achieved only in later years.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR ZIONIST INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD WAR I, 1917–1918

*by David Israeli*

Until the end of 1916, under the Asquith Ministry, the British Government had not determined its attitude towards the question of a Jewish Legion.

The situation began to change with the establishment of the Lloyd George–Balfour Ministry. Both were “easterners”. They were in favour of intensifying the campaign in the east, with the object of defeating Turkey and preparing the ground for a decisive blow against Germany.

The attack on the Palestine front had more than military significance. According to Lord Hankey, Lloyd George wanted to have some cards for future bargaining with the enemy, one of which was to be Palestine. On this issue, the British and Zionists saw eye

to eye. A British-protected Palestine was the aim of the Zionist group in Britain, led by Dr. Weizmann, and was intended to serve as the battle-cry of the Jewish Legion planned by Jabotinsky and Trumpeldor.

Lloyd George's position had a decisive influence on Weizmann's attitude towards the question of the Legion. In the first half of 1917, the British undertook a re-assessment of their war aims in the Middle East. In April, the War Cabinet confirmed the recommendation of the Curzon Committee that a British protectorate be established in Palestine after the war. This step, which in effect cancelled the Sykes-Picot agreement, produced an identity of interests between the British and the Zionist leadership in Britain, and prepared the ground for acceptance of the idea of a Jewish Legion which would participate in the occupation of Palestine.

The British High Commission in Cairo, the Arab Bureau, and the command of the British Expeditionary Force under General Allenby, did their best to obscure the Zionist complexion of the Legion. Their object was to prevent the transformation of the Legion into a political factor which would help the Zionist movement realise its aims in Palestine.

## THE 1923 RECESSION AND PUBLIC-SECTOR FINANCE IN PALESTINE

*by* Nachum T. Gross

The economic cycle of the Third Aliya was closely connected with public-sector finance in the Jewish economy. In many other respects it set the pattern for the Fourth Aliya period. In its boom phase, imported private capital and the relatively large number of immigrants were the prominent features, and urban construction (chiefly in Tel-Aviv) played the role of leading industry. Capital imports then began to slacken, while relatively large-scale immigration continued. This was by no means a minor cause of the crisis, which made itself felt by a severe shortage of credit, serious unemployment, and emigration. Nevertheless, the Third Aliya cycle was unlike subsequent ones in the unique role played in it by

the public sector. The budgets of the Government of Palestine and the Zionist Organization were important factors in both the 1920–22 boom and in the subsequent recession. The government budget predominated from the middle of 1920, in particular through its public works outlay and its deficit financing. By 1922, London was tightening the Palestine budget, but at this point Zionist expenditures were stepped up. In 1923, the continuing contraction of government expenditure and deficit, combined with a steep decline in Zionist public expenditure, tipped the balance from boom to recession.

### THE COOPERATIVE BLAU-WEISS WORKS

1924 – 1926

*by* Hanna Weiner

At the end of World War I, Zionist pioneering in Palestine became one of the goals of the German-Jewish youth movement, Blau-Weiss. Hundreds of adult members underwent training in agriculture and technical skills, with a view to settling in Palestine.

In 1922, under the impact of “revolutionary conservatism” in Germany, the Blau-Weiss leadership drew up a “constitution” which gave it unlimited authority and obliged members to take an oath of loyalty, so that they would constitute “an army marching to Palestine” and fulfil a Zionist mission, both practical and political. The leadership envisaged the establishment of a colony of farmers, artisans and businessmen, which would represent an alternative to the socialism and settlement methods of the labour movement.

In pursuance of this plan, the Blau-Weiss established the Cooperative Works in Tel Aviv in the spring of 1924, which attained a high level of proficiency. Applying the concepts embodied in the “constitution”, the directors, who were appointed by the leadership in Germany, managed the Works on authoritarian and hierarchical lines. In the autumn of 1924, they came into conflict with their employees and with the Histadrut (General Federation of Jewish Labour in Palestine), and ordered the members of the cooperative to leave it. The Works thus came to be regarded as a

capitalistic enterprise, antagonistic to the labour movement.

Meanwhile, there was an incipient crisis in the Blau-Weiss in Germany, marked by growing opposition to the principles underlying the "constituion". Newcomers from Germany who joined the Works in 1925 were reluctant to accept the authoritarian and "structured" system, and further conflicts ensued. By the end of the year, the newcomers were able to prevail upon the leaders in Germany to replace the management and introduce a new system. But grave financial difficulties, the general economic crisis in Palestine and the collapse of the Blau-Weiss in Germany spelled the end of this peculiar experiment in Zionist pioneering.

## THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF IMMIGRANTS FROM GERMANY

*by Miriam Getter*

Sixty thousand immigrants came to Palestine from Germany during the 1930s. They had a powerful impact on the character of the Yishuv, brought considerable capital into the country, evolved a new model of agricultural settlement and made a far-reaching contribution to urban development.

Approximately a third of these immigrants were "old Zionists", including the leadership of German Zionism. Yet, they did not attain positions of real influence in the political life of the Yishuv, which had evolved during the 1920s on the basis of the political tradition of immigrants from Eastern Europe. German Zionism, despite its affinity to the labour movement and to Weizmann's political attitudes, was attuned to a very different political mentality, and its leaders were unable to gain a firm foothold in the existing parties. They therefore made several attempts to build up an independent political force, all of which ended in failure. Most of the immigrants were too preoccupied with their own economic problems and had little time to spare for political activities.

Nevertheless, in 1942, a political movement – Aliya Hadasha – was established, with a liberal platform which differed from the platforms of other parties on the political, social and cultural levels.

In particular, it opposed violence of any kind, including active resistance to the Mandatory government.

The party prospered for a time, but declined after 1944. Following the establishment of the State of Israel, several of its leaders realized that it had small prospects as a separate political force, and combined with other liberal groups to form the Progressive Party.

### THE BRITISH COLONIAL OFFICE AND JEWISH IMMIGRATION INTO PALESTINE UNDER THE WHITE PAPER: 1939–1940

*by* Ronald Zweig

The first of two articles dealing with Jewish immigration into Palestine under the restrictions of the White Paper of May 1939, this article discusses the initial attempts to translate the provisions of the White Paper limiting Jewish immigration into operative policies. The result was often chaotic. Given the steady deterioration of the circumstances of European Jewry following the German occupation of Austria in March 1938, illegal immigration into Palestine resumed in earnest, and within one year of the adoption of the White Paper, British officials were despairing of their ability to stop the flow of Jewish refugees. Their greatest fear was that the Zionist movement would come to terms with the Nazis, who would then force millions of Jews out of Europe towards Palestine. Furthermore, the British were especially sensitive to the effective enforcement of the White Paper restrictions on Jewish immigration because of their failure to make any real progress on the provisions concerning an eventual transfer of power and termination of the Mandate. During the first years of the war, Britain's ability to appease Arab opinion rested on its success in preventing illegal immigration into Palestine. As attempts to find another refuge for Jewish refugees failed, the only alternative was to prevent the refugees from reaching Palestine, and arrest those who succeeded in getting through. In the course of 1939–1940, serious differences of opinion emerged between all the official bodies dealing with the

problem. Nevertheless, for political reasons, a Jewish Agency proposal for coordinating the illegal traffic with the availability of legal immigration certificates was rejected. With the outbreak of war and the adoption of a ban on immigration from enemy and enemy-controlled territory, all Jewish immigration from Europe, except from the Balkans, became illegal by definition. The closure of borders in Europe and the shortage of shipping finally brought illegal immigration under control. Although the illegal traffic resumed once more towards the end of 1940, over half of the total of Jewish immigrants (including almost 80% of the illegals) who were to reach Palestine during the five years allowed for Jewish immigration under the White Paper did so in the first twelve months.

#### BRITISH AND ZIONIST POLICIES IN PALESTINE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A JEWISH REVOLT (1942–1944)

*by Yoav Gelber*

At the end of 1942, political initiative with regard to Palestine began to pass to the Zionist side. Zionist negotiations with the State Department brought about increasing American involvement and a renewal of the “Philby Plan”, to the detriment of the British. Nevertheless, the latter still retained most of the keys to the solution of the Palestine problem. The War Cabinet avoided major changes of policy during the war, but agreed on the need of seeking new approaches. With the adoption of the Biltmore Programme by the Zionist Inner Actions Committee in November 1942, the British authorities in the Middle East became increasingly worried by the possibility that the Zionists might resort to force in order to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Their apprehensions were a major factor in the tension which characterized the relationship between them and the Yishuv during 1943. In London, government officials became more sensitive to the possible effects of Zionist pressures in the United States, and unsuccessfully tried to obtain American approval of their Palestine policy.

The Zionist leadership knew very little about British intentions

and diplomatic activities. While Weizmann busied himself in London with the Philby Plan as a last alternative to partition, the leaders of the Yishuv were concerned about the actual situation in Palestine. The friction between Weizmann and Ben-Gurion re-emerged, culminating in the resignation of the latter from the Zionist Executive. The situation changed in early 1944. The Zionist leadership learned that a decision about the fate of Palestine was not as imminent as it had thought. The British were convinced at last that the Jewish Agency would not initiate a Jewish revolt as long as the war continued. At that point, the British and the Jewish Agency found themselves facing a revolt aimed at the authority of both. The campaign of the I.Z.L. and Lehi underground organizations in 1944 had negligible military significance, but it seemingly justified the misguided evaluations made by local British officials with regard to the possibility of a "Jewish revolt". Its most conspicuous achievement – the assassination of Lord Moyne – almost provoked a full-scale British military operation against the Yishuv. Only the special relationship between Weizmann and Churchill, and highly exaggerated British estimates of the capabilities of the Hagana prevented the British from such an action. At the price of cooperating with the British against the "dissident" organizations, the Yishuv escaped a "Black Saturday" at the end of 1944, when its ability to absorb such a blow and recover from it was much smaller than in the summer of 1946.

### HERZL AND ZIONISM IN THE EYES OF MORITZ GÜDEMANN

*by* Mordechai Eliav

The manuscript of Güdemann's memoirs (now in New York) and his letters to Herzl (in the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem) shed new light on the relations between these two personalities.

Herzl first approached Güdemann, the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community of Vienna, after he had formulated the cardinal points of his political programme in the "Address to the Rothschilds" in June 1895. Güdemann was duly impressed, but his favourable



reaction was based on a misunderstanding: Herzl's letters had led him to believe that Herzl wished to help Vienna's Jews with regard to the anti-Semitic attacks against them.

But when the two met in Munich in August 1895, Herzl explained his plan in detail. While Güdemann states in his memoirs that he was utterly astounded, Herzl, according to his diary, was impressed by Güdemann's favourable reaction, believing that he had won a loyal ally. Güdemann's subsequent attitude showed that Herzl was wrong. In Güdemann's eyes, Herzl's national/political plan was a staggering innovation, bound to shatter his most cherished beliefs. When Güdemann's attitude became clear, the friendly relations between the two deteriorated rapidly. Herzl accused Güdemann of yielding to pressure, while Güdemann, who was convinced that Herzl was pursuing an utopian chimera, published a violent indictment against Zionism. This naturally brought about a complete rupture in relations, though in later years Güdemann tried to mend the impression and to justify his attitude to Zionism and its founder. These facts should be borne in mind by readers of Güdemann's memoirs, a chapter of which is published here.

### MAX NORDAU: AN EVALUATION OF HERZL'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (1914)

*by Evyatar Friesel*

The English letter published here was written just after the outbreak of World War I by Max Nordau, who had been a close associate of Theodor Herzl, to Richard Gottheil, former President of the Federation of American Zionists (1898–1904) and friend of both Herzl and Nordau. Since Nordau never changed his basic "political" Zionist position, his very critical comments on Herzl's political activities are all the more telling. The letter includes some hitherto unknown details.

תמצית המאמרים באנגלית