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On the image and reality of Palestine throughout the ages

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INTRODUCTION

The natural starting point for a study on the image and reality of Palestine throughout the ages begins with the notion of Palestine as it exists in most people's minds—that Palestine was nothing but a backwater void of all signs of a healthy and promising life. I began an inquiry of the country with questions pressing on my mind such as: What did the people of Palestine do after the Jews left other than crucify Jesus and repel the Crusaders? What was Palestine like when the Jews began filtering into the country during the second half of the nineteenth century? Could Palestine reasonably be compared with the Arab country most familiar to me, my own country, Iraq?

One of the essential advantages the *Homo sapiens* enjoys over the rest of the animal kingdom is the way his eyes are placed, making it possible to see both sides of an object simultaneously and place it in true perspective. Alas, nature did not extend the same favor to our minds, and we are scarcely aware of the two or more aspects of mental questions we encounter. For example, because parliaments, universities, industries, modern hospitals, etc., did not exist in Palestine, we unmistakably brand the country as barbarous! The first task of the researcher must be to create a second mental eye. The data accumulated in this study is, I hope, a photocopy of what this mental eye has registered during the arduous months of research. The other eye perusing the known aspects of Palestinian life was by no means closed during the process, but the emphasis, a legitimate prerogative of writers, was put on the former. This is the only fair way to rectify an erroneous, one-sided picture which prevails in the mind.

The reader will discover, as I did, that Arab Palestine emerges as one of the brightest spots in the Afro-Asian world. This is not all that emerged, however. A master mind lurks behind the forces which focus attention on the shortcomings of life in Palestine, namely, the brain of the imperialist camp which justifies the ruthless suppression of millions of peoples by the rationale that they are "backward." This subject, which can no longer be ignored is the theme of the first chapter. No human effort is vigorous enough in denouncing the seemingly academic postulations put forward for the purpose of exploitation, expulsion, or annihilation of entire nations.

Palestine's position, history, and ethnic composition through the ages well illustrates that the culture, civilisation, and prosperity of any country is nothing but the end product of various contributions and factors made available by many nationalities and countries which come into contact with it. We must, therefore, follow the fortunes of Palestine over the span of the last three or four thousand years to arrive at an accurate picture of its civilisation. The present work is not

a history book nor is it an account of a civilisation; it is intended to point out a serious error in a certain picture, to be a sketchline setting with, I hope, the correct directions, contours and perspective which should have decided that picture.

I

CALCULATED MISCONCEPTIONS

Land of Israel Only?

"In the beginning was the word," and playing with the word became an art of the disciples of the word. Everything falls into place in the mind of the Western listener as soon as the word Judea is substituted for the word Palestine in the perfect verbal jigsaw puzzle, "Arabia for the Arabians and Judea for the Jews."

Thanks to biblical literature, the glory of Palestine is associated in our minds with the stories of Solomon and David, the Temple of Jerusalem, and the struggle of the Israelites against the idol worshippers. A scholar has only to find the Hebrew name of a town or site in Palestine to associate it in our minds instantly with the history and heritage of the Hebrews. During the nineteenth century, it became a popular pastime for European travellers and surveyors to trace the biblical names of such Palestinian localities. The people of Salt, to the English traveller and entrepreneur, are the sons of Esau, their town is Ramoth-gilead, the Jebel Kafkafa is Ramoth-mizber where Jacob raised the heap, and so on.[1] Everything becomes a shadow of the ancient Jewish commonwealth. The voluminous survey of Western Palestine prepared by the Palestine Exploration Fund during the nineteenth century followed the same track of mind in its reports. One of its publications on hygiene and diseases in Palestine dealt with nineteenth century health conditions and then bounced with one leap to biblical Palestine, deliberately ignoring all other peoples in the intervening period. The Palestine Oriental Society almost completely ignored the centuries-long Graeco-Roman period; for the years 1920-1927, only one article on the contribution of that culture to the story of Palestine could be found in its journal. The few articles on the Arabs were generally confined to their present day folklore, customs, and burial practices.

It took only a few seconds for Dr. L. Loewe and his companion, Sir Moses Montefiore, the Jewish financier and benefactor, to discover during their visit to the Holy Land in June 1839 that the stones of the Hebron Mosque and the Church of Athlit were stolen from the Western Wall of the Temple.[2] After the establishment of Israel, archaeology became the art and science par excellence

(1) Oliphant, L., *Land of Gilead,* London, 1880.

(2) *Diaries* of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore, London, 1890, pp. 184, 187.

of the people, and its most extremist politicians like General Moshe Dayan have acquired some fame in this industry. Everyone began digging in the hope of finding some faint evidence of the Hebrew grandeur.

The highly nationalistic books of the Old Testament, nostalgic about the days of national security and mercantile expansion of the tenth century B.C., painted a very colourful picture of the first kingdom and its civilisation. After the disappearance of other historical accounts and literary records, the Hebrew books became the only primary chronicles of the history of Palestine accepted as authentic, objective and, most of all, as sacred. This brings us to the universal question regarding the purpose and message of religious texts: were they written to alleviate sorrow, overcome weakness, inspire hope and guide the people, or to record daily news, police reports, and other everyday events?

Through the teachings of other religious authorities, the Hebrew highly exaggerated stories became factual accounts to the larger masses of mankind. Consequently, both European and Arab scholars looked at the cultural and urban achievement of Palestine as results of the work of Hebrew hands. Thus we find the Medieval Palestinian historian, Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali, back dating many emblems of urban development in Palestine to the period of Jewish rule. Ramla, which was built by the Arabs and reached its prominent place under the Umayyads as a capital of their empire at one time[3] was described by al-Hanbali fallaciously as once a great city in the days of Bani Israel (Sons of Israel).[4]

For what happened to that former glory we have also relied on Jewish tradition. God cursed the land by turning it over to destructive heathens. "...The great prosperity of the Hebrew nation cannot be dismissed as so much Oriental braggadocio. It must be accepted as a faithful account of historical fact. The soil had been a basic source of Palestine's wealth and had been so during all the ages until the hand of a barbaric and improvident race fell heavy upon it and robbed it of its fertility." Thus wrote W.B. Ziff, the extremist Zionist writer.[5] Two myths were conveniently constructed, one glorifying the Hebrew contribution to the history of Palestine and the other suppressing the contributions of the Arabs in particular, and other nations in general. Luckily for the Zionists, this was an exceedingly easy task, in fact a task already undertaken by gentile colonialists.

Enters European Colonialism

The relevance of those accepted conceptions of Palestinian life to the story of Zionism was made tangible by the development of colonialism and imperialism. One of the earliest annals in this respect came from the pen of an English "pilgrim" who went to the Holy Land during the reign of Queen Elizabeth in

(3) See Chapter 3.
(4) Al-Hanbali, *Al-Uns al-Jalil (The Greatest Pleasure)*, Vol. II, p. 416.
(5) Ziff, W.B., *The Rape of Palestine*, London, 1948, pp. 2-3.

the sixteenth century. As we read his letters we recognise him as one of numerous pioneers of British colonialism who roamed the world in various guises and under different titles, looking for markets, treasures, and raw materials from the days of the good queen onwards. The mercantile nature of his pilgrimage may be seen from his industrial observations. One of his amusing discoveries was a method in which the Arabs supposedly hatched eggs on burnt camel dung placed in special holes of 4000 eggs capacity per twelve days.

"Thus have you the secret of hatching eggs by heat artificial at the town of Philbits in the land of Gozan, which I think were in vain to be practiced in England, because the air there is hardly ten days together clarified, neither is there any camels' dung, though they have dung of other beasts every way as hot."[6]

This gentleman was arrested as soon as he reached Jerusalem because the people there, to his anger, had heard neither of his country nor his queen. He was released with the advice that if ever an Englishman happened to come again to Palestine he would serve his purpose better by simply saying that he was a Frenchman, "for the Turks know not what you mean by the word 'Englishman.'" During his sojourn, he made a note on the availability of bitumen by the Dead Sea and sent a sample of it to London. He carefully studied the defence of the country, the walls and fortifications of Jerusalem, and the conditions of the roads and distances between the various towns, and reached the conclusion that "Palestine, a good fruitful country" could be taken easily by a surprise attack. From his letters, one feels inclined to sympathise with his gaolers' suspicion that he might have been a spy.

However, the relevance of his accounts approach our subject of inquiry as we read the summation of his pilgrimage:

"My opinion is that when it was fruitful, and a land that flowed with Milk and Honey, in those days God blessed it, and that then they followed his Commandments, but now being inhabited by Infidels (that prophane the name of Christ, and live in a filthy and beastly manner) God cursed it, and it is made so barren that I could get no bread when I came near it."[7]

This set the key for the Protestant school of Western imperialism which preached that Palestine was a rich country flowing with milk and honey under the kingdom of the Old Testament only to be ruined by the infidel Arabs from whom the country must be rescued and restored to its former prosperity. More eloquent and convinced in this regard were the European Protestants because of their emphasis on the Old Testament on the one hand, and their leading role in imperialism on the other. Another English pilgrim who came to Palestine in 1831 made exactly the same point:

"Had the Genoese and Sardinian territories above-mentioned, rich and smiling as they are now, been subjected to a ruthless and continuous tyranny of

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(6) *A Strange and True Account of the Travels of Two English Pilgrims, Two Journeys to Jerusalem,* London, 1683, p. 27, (a copy of the book is in the British Museum).

(7) *Ibid.,* p. 63.

eighteen centuries, such as has pressed its withering arm upon these vineyards of Ephraim, I have no doubt they would present the same sterile and desolate appearance."[8]

The hypocrisy of these devout people is best exemplified by this particular pilgrim who visited Palestine. A contemporary of Napoleon Bonaparte and his Palestine campaign, he made anti-native observations wherever he happened to stop. He stopped at the Jaffa site where Napoleon ordered his messengers of Western civilisation to mow down four thousand Turkish and Arab prisoners of war in complete cold blood, and said nothing about the ruthlessness and tyranny of European culture. It is, therefore, not surprising to find him attributing the minaret of the Ramla mosque and the olive groves of Jaffa, Ramla and Jerusalem to the civilising work of the Crusaders, who are known in history as being responsible for the burning and cutting down of hundreds of trees cultivated by the Arabs. Of the various facts omitted from the calculations of these learned men is that a large proportion of the people of Palestine were Christians, but they were lumped together with the infidels (who revered, not profaned the name of Christ) for imperialist convenience.

Only one step away from this stand is the Zionist position proper, i.e. that the desolate land of Palestine can only be revived by the descendants of those who gave it its milk and honey in yonder days. This step was taken by another devout Protestant and arch reactionary, Lord Ashley, the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, who wrote to Palmerston urging him to revive the Holy Land by putting "the sons of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob" there.[9] Lord Ashley was living at the threshold of high capitalism when the maximum exploitation of wealth had become, under the teachings of the Puritans, an actual religious duty and when the rising population of Europe made the opening of new lands an imperative necessity. This, the gentile Zionist school argued, can only be achieved in Palestine by inhabiting it with the only people who loved the country and blessed it with the wealth and prosperity mentioned by the Jewish biblical historians before its fall in the ruinous hands of the Arabs.

Jewish tradition, and the misconception of the Palestine history associated with it, are nevertheless only incidental and a helpful lever in the representation of the colonial issue by the colonialists. Bible or no Bible, Jews or no Jews, the natives are always bad, misruling their country, misusing its resources and ruining its fortunes. The words applied against the Palestinians are generally the same as those applied against the Indians, Chinese, Africans, etc. This is particularly typical of the Anglo-Saxons notable for their moral hypocrisy and rather sensitive conscience. Instead of making a daylight robbery as the continental imperialist used to do, the Anglo-Saxons prefer, as George Bernard Shaw remarked, to hit at some ingenious formula which gives them a divine justification

(8) *Three Weeks in Palestine and Lebanon,* London, 1833, p. 19.

(9) Cited in Hodder, E., *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury,* London, 1887.

for the disposal of other people's lands. The all-purpose universal formula is that the infected and barren land should be saved from its natives—never that the natives should be saved from an infected and barren land.

Here the natives become little more than animals which populate the territory; the Anglo-Saxon gentile dealing with and patronising care for the natives may also be part of the Anglo-Saxon love of animals. In India, the *memsabs* (wives of the English officers) frequently asked their Indian men servants to come into the bathroom and scrub their backs for them, while American farmers hired their able-bodied negro slaves to other farmers to fertilise their negresses for them. The primary accounts of sexual relationships between white masters and the negresses often put this association on the same footing as that of sheer buggery.

Colonial terminology is rich with animalism and beast imagery, and Zionists literature is no exception. Ample examples can be quoted from W.B. Ziff's book cited above. It is often mentioned with wonder that Dr. Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, failed to allude to the indigenous population in his momentous tract, *The Jewish State*. This is rather unfair to him, and the picture should be modified by remembering the one lengthy passage on the native inhabitants of the projected Jewish state:

"If we wish to found a State to-day, we shall not do it in the way which would have been the only possible one a thousand years ago. It is foolish to revert to old stages of civilisation, as many Zionists would like to do. Supposing, for example, we were obliged to clear a country of wild beasts, we should not set about the business in the fashion of Europeans of the fifth century. We should not take spear and lance and go out singly in pursuit of bears; we should organise a large and lively hunting party, drive the animals together, and throw a melinite bomb into their midst."[10]

Those who doubt the metaphorical meaning of the passage and its relevance to subsequent Zionist history, have only to remember the full details of the Deir Yassin "large and lively hunting party."

Travelling in the country of apartheid, Herzl's successor at the helm of the Zionist movement, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, toured the great South African game reserve where he saw how the wise animals expelled an ageing good-for-nothing bull and gave his place to a younger, more energetic successor. The reserve evoked in his mind the Palestine problem and its Arabs. "As for myself, I could not help reflecting about something else; here were these wonderful animals with a beautiful home reserved for them, with trees, water, grass, food, going about unmolested, as free citizens, establishing their own laws, habits and customs, ... Here they were, I thought, in their home which in area is only slightly smaller than Palestine."[11] A reserve for the Palestinian Arabs on the

(10) Herzl, T., *A Jewish State,* London, 1934, p. 26.

(11) Weizmann, C., *Trial and Error,* London, 1950, pp. 428-430.

west bank of the River Jordan, in the style of South Africa's Bundestan, became a prominent slogan in Israel, advocated first by E. Allon after the 1967 war.

The Zionist view of the Middle Eastern peoples is given its full scope of expression in a secret report prepared for the Israeli Intelligence by Robert Rodney, the head of the Israeli espionage ring captured in Baghdad in 1951 by the Iraqi Security Police. The report written under the heading "The Social Structure of Iraq," states that seventy-five percent of the people of that country "may be counted with their animals. They have no semblance of the human race except in image, but even this image is also blurred."[12] How such views affected the political thinking of the Jewish nationalists is revealed by another Zionist who happened to come from the same region of the Middle East. Elie Kedourie, a Zionist Jew of Iraqi origin, wrote that the independence of Iraq and the whole Middle East, was one of the great blunders committed by Britain because the inhabitants of that region are scarcely fit to rule themselves.[13]

The same position was echoed in the writing of James Parkes. In an attempt to decide "Whose Land" is Palestine, Parkes prepared his ground by attacking the misdeeds of the Arabs who, according to him, converted the Christian churches to stables, wreaked destruction on the face of the Holy Land and left the Christian sacred places "lay in ruin" with the "intolerance of Islam and the savagery of the local inhabitants." In another passage he denied the existence of any former Arab civilisation. The Arabs, according to him, were neither creators nor communicators of any civilisation, but merely the inheritors of the culture of others.[14] Having asserted that, he found it simple justice that the land must belong to the Jews. In this, the Reverend J. Parkes was in keeping with the old Protestant imperialist tradition of our sixteenth century English pilgrim.

The imperialists and the Jewish nationalists shared between themselves the task of justifying the conquest of Palestine by belittling the contributions of the indigenous people and denigrating their contemporary state. Thus we read the British Consul in Jerusalem's writing of the Palestinian "barbarian peasantry."[15] The British Consul in Damascus reported to the Foreign Office the appointment of the ruthless tormentor of the populace, Khusref Pasha, as a commander of the Gendarmerie. He sketched out his biography and described him as a former brigand, quite illiterate, brutal and rough and concluded by saying, "... considering the lawless and turbulent character of the people with whom he had to deal ... he was probably the best man obtainable for the post."[16] Often, the prejudice against the Arabs was no different from blatant racism of

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(12) Fahmi, A., *Sumum al-Af'a as Sohiuni (The Zionist's Venom),* (A compilation of the espionage trial), Baghdad, 1952, p. 402.

(13) Kedourie, E., *Chatham House Version,* London, 1970.

(14) Parkes, J., *Whose Land?,* London, 1970, pp. 257, 315.

(15) Jerusalem Consulate to Foreign Office, April 1857, F.O. 78/1294/11. (This and the following British Consular documents are in the Public Records Office, London.)

(16) 7 January 1904, F.O. 196, No. 1, 2165.

the Nazi type. Lawrence Oliphant, to whom the Zionist enterprise in Palestine owes no small debt, considered the Circassians at one stage as possible inhabitants of the Holy Land and explained why. "Their fair complexions, blue eyes, and red beards, seemed to establish a sort of kinship with our own race; and in the manly and somewhat defiant expression of their handsome faces, it was impossible not to feel that there was something sympathetic."[17] A peculiar passage in a British Government Report turns the Arab history in Palestine upside down in its reference to Petra as a prosperous ancient city which fell into ruin after the Arab conquest.[18] The truth, of course, is that Petra was itself an Arab city and capital of the Nabataean northern Arabs and was destroyed by the Roman Emperor Trajan in the beginning of the second century A.D., about five centuries before the rise of Islam.

Another element which prevented a fairer assessment of the conditions prevailing in Palestine over the centuries was the confusion in the Western mind vis-a-vis the inhabitants and rulers of the country. As they failed to allow for the different cultures which acted their parts on the Palestine stage in ancient times, they likewise showed a similar misunderstanding in regard to the contemporary indigenous people; sometimes they called them Arabs, sometimes Turks, and sometimes Moslems. When Theodor Herzl was talking to Hohenlohe in 1898 about the inhabitants of Palestine, the Reich Chancellor asked him naively, "Who are these?" Herzl's reply was even more characteristic: "Arabs, Greeks, the whole mixed multitude of the Orient."[19] The inhabitants of the area did not lessen this confusion, for they used the word "Arabs" to refer to the inhabitants of the desert, the nomads, semi-nomads or the peasantry. This is not a recent development in Arabic terminology, but an old usage going back before the days of the Prophet, when the people of Mecca and Medina applied the term of the nomads around them.[20] In fact, both "Arab" and "Hebrew" originally meant "nomad" in the opinion of Professor Margoliouth.[21] Thus a European traveller could easily hear from a Nabulsi or a Hebronite that the country was ruined by the Arabs or that he should not venture at night deep into the Jordan Valley for fear of the Arabs, referring to a certain Bedouin tribe in the vicinity and with the same tone that must have been used by the dwellers of the Canaanite cities when referring to the sons of Abraham still roaming the semi-desert parts of Palestine.

In the days before the development of nationalism, Turkish despotism, corruption and misrule were treated as inherent parts of Palestinian life, for aren't

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(17) Oliphant, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

(18) Report on the Syrian Railway prepared for the General Staff of the War Office, London, 1905, H.M. Stationery Office, A. 1003.

(19) Herzl, T., *Diaries,* Vol. II, p. 702 f.

(20) See, for example, *The Koran,* verse, "The Arabs are most blasphemous and hypocritical."

(21) Margoliouth, D., *The Relations between Arabs and Israelites Prior to the Rise of Islam,* London, 1924.

they all Moslems? The centralisation and form of Turkish administration and division of the country made this outward appearance an obvious fact to the foreign observer and traveller.

The Zionists Take a Leaf from Imperialism

The publicists of the Zionist movement enlarged the anti-native opening made by messengers of Western colonialism and imperialism. One of the earliest documents in this context was the appeal issued by an anonymous Jew to the French Government in 1798, calling for the redemption of Palestine by liberating it from native robbers who were profaning the Holy City. Established in their place should be a prosperous Jewish autonomy under the protection of France.[22]

During the United Nations debate on the partition of Palestine, Moshe Shertok (later Israeli Prime Minister Sharett) rejected the Lebanese delegate's suggestion that the Yishuv (the Jews in Palestine) should become part of the Middle East and live with the Arabs in peace. He argued that the idea was impossible because the Arabs were a "primitive" people centuries behind the Yishuv.[23] Shertok's argument was, in fact, no more than a confirmation of the official position adopted by the Zionist Organisation towards the Arabs from the very beginning. During his negotiations with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain over the British offer of Al-Arish in Sinai, for the establishment of a Jewish home, Theodor Herzl told the British Minister that his organisation was disposed to accept the offer provided that it was clearly understood that the Jews were going to place themselves under British, not Egyptian rule.[24] Ziff called in evidence the case of South Africa and called for the treatment of the Palestinian Arabs as the blacks of South Africa were treated by their white masters.[25]

The racist contempt with which the natives were held found its clearest expression in the hermetically-sealed development of the Yishuv in isolation of the native population and in the official and popular stand adopted towards the language question. The first was a subject on which most students of the Arab-Zionist relations have dwelt with at great length. The separation was regrettably recognised by most committees and commissions of inquiry. Indeed, the spokesman for the Jewish Agency justified the partition of the country at the United Nations, thus: "It did not seem to be generally realised to what extent partition had become a political and economic reality. For years, there had been a large degree of separation between Arabs and Jews and the Assembly had recognised this separation."[26] Once more we have here the old colonialist prejudice given in Zionist terms.

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(22) Text in Sokolow, N., *History of Zionism,* Vol. II, Appendices, London, 1919, p. 222.
(23) *U.N. Official Records,* First Committee, Second Special Session, 27 April 1948.
(24) Herzl, T., *Diaries,* Vol. IV, p. 1473.
(25) Ziff, *op. cit.*
(26) *U.N. Official Records, op. cit.,* 22 April 1948

The language issue was another manifestation. As soon as the colonisation of the Jewish National Fund (the financial arm of the Zionist Organisation) started, the question of the future language of the Yishuv erupted. The orthodox East Europeans expected Yiddish to become the everyday language; the intellectuals led by Ahad Ha'am campaigned for Hebrew and the Central Europeans insisted on German. Schools financed by the British Jewry taught in English and the schools of the Alliance Israelite Universalle taught in French. None even considered the possibility of Arabic, although it was the nearest living language to Hebrew, the language of the indigenous population, and the language in which the great Medieval Jewish scholars wrote their books, including the Jewish classic *The Guide for the Perplexed* by the Andalusian Jew, Maimonides. But the Zionists went further and denied Arabic even as a second or third language. While grooming himself as a public figure in the political life of Palestine, David Ben Gurion, like most of his colleagues, learned Turkish, not the language of the population.[27] On one or two occasions, the Zionist Organisation recommended that some attention be given to the learning of Arabic, but very little came of it. In 1926, only seventeen Jewish students out of 26,832 went to the Government schools which taught in Arabic.[28] The department which taught Arabic in the Hebrew University was called the Department of Oriental Languages, although it taught no other language than Arabic. Even the practical needs of the settlers were overruled by the inner dislike of anything connected with the backward Arabs. Such was the conclusion reached by the Zionist scholar, Noah Nordi, who accepted Arabic as "the most logical language for communication between Jews and Arabs," and regretted the fact that the Jews made no effort to learn it for lack of motive and contact.[29] Up to the present time, the Israelis of European origin are as ignorant of Arabic as they are eloquent in European languages despite the Semitic proximity of Hebrew and Arabic. This harvest is the fruit of the racial superiority inherent in Zionism and expressed blatantly by Vladimir Jabotinsky in 1925: "'We Jews are Europeans, and we are not only pupils but also co-creators of the European culture. What do we have in common with the Orient?'"[30]

Whenever the position of the Arabs was invoked, the apologists of Jewish nationalism made free play with the backwardness, laziness, and destructiveness of the existing population.[31] Even such liberal and broad-minded Zionists as Arthur Koestler gave this incredibly slanderous picture of the Arabs:

"... the old ones will tie a mattress and a brass coffee-pot on the donkey,

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(27) Ben Gurion, D., *Destiny and Rebirth of Israel,* The periodical of the Zionist Federation in England reported that the Zionists were ready "to acquire the Turkish language as well as their own Hebrew." *The Zionist,* November 1911.

(28) *Report of the Executive to the XV Zionist Congress,* 1927.

(29) Nordi, N., *Education in Palestine,* London, 1945, p. 165.

(30) Citation in his biography, Schechtman, J.B., *The Jabotinsky Story,* New York, 1961, pp. 323-324.

(31) Kishtainy, K., *Verdict in Absentia,* Beirut, 1969, pp. 48-49.

the old woman will walk ahead leading the donkey by the rein and the old man will ride on it, wrapped in his kefiye, and sunk in solemn meditation about the lost opportunity of raping his youngest grandchild."[32]

The eminent writer of world renown must have taken leave of his intellectual integrity, under the intense influence of Zionist enthusiasm of Tel Aviv, while giving this description of a tragic exodus of the Palestinian peasantry. The mass of Arabic literature was even denied existence by another Zionist writer. With all his wide knowledge and culture, W.B. Ziff assured his readers that the Arabs left no literature to speak of. And the only story he knew from the famous classic, *One Thousand and One Nights,* is the one telling of a Jew(!) who offered a woman to his overnight Moslem guest who soon plotted against his host by sending him on a false errand to bring him gold.[33] Of course, to a Jewish nationalist, a story without a Jew deserves no recognition. Sindbad the Sailor who killed only giants and monsters, no Jews, will never be taught in an Israeli kindergarten.

Being such a primitive people with nothing to dream of except raping their own grandchildren, the Palestinians must be removed to make room for a better nationality. "If only an indolent administration and a lazy and retrograde population are replaced by capable national elements," wrote Nahum Sokolow,[34] president of the Zionist Organisation repeating the theme of civilising Palestine and bringing industry and economic prosperity to the Holy Land through the capable hands of the Jewish settlers.

The same theme was pronounced by the Poale Zion memorandum of 1919. Taking note of the fashionable discovery of the right to self-determination, popularised by the idealism of President Wilson, the memorandum ridiculed the application of the principle to the Palestinians as a "vulgarisation" of the right. Self-determination, it said, should be based on a sound economic basis. Palestine was left empty and must now be populated by some nine million souls. The barren lands should be reclaimed by new energetic people. It is in the interest of the world that the country should be opened to the Jews to increase its productive potentialities. The former inhabitants, therefore, must forfeit any right of opposition.[35]

Arthur Koestler pursues the same line of the "underpopulated area of deserts and swamps" ruined by the "primitive" Palestinians and puts forward the following thesis:

"For the Marxist dialectician, it is the replacement of a medieval feudal structure by a modern socialist one, and hence in accord with the laws of historic process."[36]

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(32) Koestler, A., *Promise and Fulfilment,* London, 1949, pp. 199-200.
(33) Ziff, *op. cit.*
(34) Sokolow, N., *History of Zionism,* London, 1919, Vol. I, p. 229.
(35) *Jewish Labour Correspondence,* 1919.
(36) Koestler, *op. cit.,* p. 22.

There are many kinds of abuses hurled on Marxist dialectics, but this is certainly the most perverted indulgence.

The Jewish nationalists are also influenced in this context by some of the judgements and prophesies of the Old Testament. This matter is closely linked with the old guilt complex and depressive neurosis of the exiled Jews, a subject which falls outside the scope of the present inquiry. It will suffice to point out that part of this neurosis is the concept of the punishment wreaked on the land for the wickedness of Israel:

"And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down;

"And I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned or digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

"For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgement, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

"In mine ears said the Lord of hosts, of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant.

"Yet ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah."[37]

Ezekiel prophesied against the houses and the walls which God was to bring down in retribution. The land was then to be delivered to the beasts and enemies of Israel to lay it waste and desolate. "If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoilt it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts."[38] Indeed, there is a great deal of parallelism between the imagery and vocabulary of the prophesies and the Zionist literature on the state of Palestine and its population. The denial of the desolation of Palestine, after the dispersal of the Jews is therefore tantamount to blasphemy. The redemption of the land by any people other than the Jews is another blasphemy, according to the nationalist interpretation of the texts. The Zionists are actually acting a part in a sacred drama.

The White Man's Burden

Yet the economic and cultural miracle which the hard working and clever Zionists were intent on conjuring up in the country, was not only projected as a selfish laissez-passer economic development, but also as a great civilising work

(37) Isaiah 5:5-10.
(38) Ezekiel 14:15.

which was to save the poor half men-half beast coloured peoples from their barbarity. Here the Zionist publicists took another leaf from the imperialist manual under the sub-heading of the "white man's burden." Sokolow assured his Anglo-Saxon readers, "The Jews are the only qualified intermediaries for the great work which is to begin with the civilizing of the peoples of Asia."[39] This time not only Palestine but the whole Asia from Japan to Turkey and from Ceylon to the Soviet Union, were included in the group of barbarians. In his visionary novel *Old-New Land,* Dr. Herzl described how the Arabs learned to drain the swamps and keep their homes clean from the Jewish settlers whose homes, in reality and not in fiction, proved to be hardly a good example for anyone. The grand diplomat, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, was the chief bearer of the "white man's burden" as an acknowledged disciple of British politics. He spoke frequently, very often on the behest of his British contacts, on the important task of taking the Palestine Arabs along with the Jews on the long road of progress.[40]

In 1923, the Zionist Congress called in Carlsbad for collaboration with the Palestinian population "to continue systematically and with perseverance the work of enlightment in the Near East among the Arab people."[41] The revisionists drew again on the experiences of the imperialists by moving that a happy partnership between the two communities should be hammered out; the industry and technology of the country should be left in the hands of the Jews and the Arabs should restrict themselves to the production of agricultural staff.[42]

The living denial of the messianic role of Israel is, of course, the strict separate development of the Jewish community. The so-called great experiment of the kibbutzim, to which European and American tourists are daily taken, have been kept out of bounds for the Arabs. In 1968, the Israeli authorities decided to make a beginning when the Histadrut arranged for one hundred fifty Jews to meet Arab families in their homes to try to learn about their life and understand their mind.[43]

Nevertheless, there emerged a small group of intellectuals and socialists who took the mission of Israel really seriously. They included such men as Dr. Judah Magnes, Hans Kohn, H.M. Kalvarski and other bi-nationalists who wasted a lot of effort, time, and money as a result of their failure to understand the essence of Zionism.

Notwithstanding, the Zionists were not embarrassed in repeating the claim that they meant to civilise the Arab population and actually succeeded in helping them towards that goal. The expulsion of Palestine peasants from lands pur-

(39) Sokolow, *op. cit.,* Vol. I, p. 190.

(40) Cf., his address to the Annual Zionist Conference of July 1920 in the *Zionist Bulletin,* 9 July 1920.

(41) *Resolutions of the Zionist Congress XIII,* 1923.

(42) *The Ten-Year Plan,* New Zionist Organisation.

(43) *Times,* 14 October 1968.

chased by the Jews was presented as a great help to him. Colonel Wedgwood, the Zionists' man in the British Parliament, told the House of Commons that this would help the peasant to have cash in his hand and enable him to work in town instead of in the fields.[44] *New Judea* pointed to the great help given to the Palestinian Arabs as a result of the Zionist project by making an absurd comparison between the economy and financial position of Palestine with that of the Amirate of Transjordan.[45]

The cultural rivalry between Asia and Europe is not new, but it was put to unlimited use during the age of imperialism in the service of rising capitalism. Only with the rise of socialism, emphasis on folklore, and respect to all nations great and small, did Europe recognise the different cultures of Afro-Asia and take note that there was more than one way to live. Before then, a thirty-years war which leaves not one human being to milk an agonised cow was considered superior to a night raid by a starving Bedouin tribe; giant monopolies buying whole sections of congressmen was deemed nobler than policemen taking a few shillings from foreign tourists. This prejudice was particularly revealed in Spain where the arts of Andalusia were suppressed even by force of law. The decorative and Arabesque were superseded by the gothic and baroque, the melodic by the polyphonic, the fandango by the bolero. Not until the emergence of the Spanish revolutionary movement and the great work of Lorca and his literary colleagues was there any serious revival of the great haunting songs of the Cante Jondo of Andalusia.

Whatever existed in Palestine was looked at with the same eye of detestation. The lively folk songs of Syria and the pulsing rhythm of the dabka that have produced the enchanting songs of Fairouz were brushed aside as uncouth, barbaric, and humdrum. The colourful costumes of the peasants were considered primitive, crude, and unnecessary extravagances. The Zionist position here is understandable as part and parcel of the imperialist position. Where the Zionists overreached their mentors was in their contradictory claim that they were going to civilise Palestine, not only as a European superrace, but also as orientals and lawful heirs of the ancient Palestine culture.

Having dealt with the false allegations and long standing prejudices which have misrepresented the Palestinians since the turn of this century, it behoves us now to examine the cultural development of Palestine and the people who are the *true* image and reality of Palestine.

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(44) *Hansard,* 24 March 1936, p. 1087.

(45) *New Judea,* September 1930.

II

PALESTINE IN ANTIQUITY

The Seeds of Civilisation

For nearly three thousand years, humanity has accepted the version that civilisation in Palestine started with the Hebrews, reached its highest stage of development at their hands and crashed into oblivion and mediocrity with their dispersion. The scientific research and archaeological excavations since the nineteenth century have torn away one veil after another to reveal staggering facts which have shaken the very foundations of people's religious beliefs. Jerusalem, which was accepted to mean the "city of peace" built by the Hebrews, is neither a city of peace nor was it built by the Hebrews. We know from its history, that the city was destroyed eighteen times, that it was no city of peace, and that its name has no connection with the Jews either. Abba Eban's assertion that Palestine had been universally recognised as the "land of the Jews" until 70 C.E.[1] is another fallacious claim.

The splendour of Solomon's temple and palaces as examples of Hebrew engineering and artistic talent is another fallacy. Even the originality of that genius shining in the wealth of poetry and literary invention of the Old Testament is also exposed now by the finds in Babylonia and Egypt. The most serious threat to the Jewish myth is that far from raising Palestine to a high level of prosperity, exhuberance and splendour, the Hebrew people actually gave it its first taste of misery, and inflicted heavy damage on its course of development.

Palestine was known to ancient history as the land of the Jews for only a very short period. At the dawn of history when Palestine and Mesopotamia belonged to the same people, a very ancient culture in Palestine was known to the Babylonians and Egyptians as Amurru, during the third millennium B.C. It was the Amorites who built Jerusalem and called it Jerus, the city of the Amorite God Uru. The name Jerusalem, applied later on, meant the House of Uru.[2] In the second millennium, the Canaanites (canaanite meant merchant) known also as the Phoenicians appeared on the scene and embarked on farming the valleys and trading with other peoples of the area. They were followed by the Philistines who came from a highly advanced Mediterranean direction and gave the area the name Palestine. The Canaanites occupied the interior and the north, and the

(1) Eban, A., *My People,* New York, 1968, p. 375.

(2) "The Amorite name of Jerusalem," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society,* October 1920.

Philistines occupied the coastal strip to the south. Between the two nations, the country reached a high stage of civilisation and prosperity.

The Hebrew tribes who came to the land towards the end of the second millennium B.C. were still living in the Bronze Age, while the country was already progressing in the Iron Age with all the cultural and urban manifestations associated with it. The nationalistic braggadocio of the Zionists that "the Hebrews entered Palestine as an educated people" bears no relation whatsoever to the facts. Even more astonishing is this piece of sheer extravaganza: "Recent archaeological research brings us to the more reasonable conclusion that the people who wrote the Bible were a race who lived in a high state of civilisation, not inferior in many aspects to that of the present day."[3] Even without the archaeological evidence, one can shake the foundations of such chauvinism by confining oneself to the Bible alone. The writer, however, went on to call his archaeological witness, the Egyptian chronicler Sinuhe, who described the prosperity and progress of Palestine,[4] or Amurru as it was known to Egypt. Sinuhe lived in the twentieth century B.C., a time when no one had even heard of Abraham, Jacob, Jews or Hebrews in Palestine or anywhere else.

The Books of Kings, Judges, Samuel and Joshua give ample examples of the backward stage in which the Israelites found themselves on the threshold of the land of Canaan. The Iron Age into which the Canaanites had entered was characterised by a dense population, large walled cities, large scale dependence on the wheel and the use of iron implements. Deprived of all these characteristics of a more advanced culture, the Hebrew tribes could not even dream of entering the land. Like shy guests or timid intruders they stayed in the rugged semi-desert hills as shepherds, waiting for opportunities to penetrate gradually; they made no spectacular conquest of the land as the Assyrians or the Babylonians had done before, or the Greeks and Arabs were to do in days to come.

The houses and "chariots of iron" which the Canaanites mobilised in their warfare spread havoc and dread among the donkey riders of the Israeli soldiers, as is repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament. When Joshua called upon his men to march on the Canaanite valley because the hill was no longer enough for them, they were frightened to move because of the chariots of their enemy.[5] The Israelites raised their hands to God in lamentation because King Jabin of Canaan had nine hundred chariots of iron.[6] When David defeated the Aramaens at last and captured from them many chariots and horses, he did not know how to use them. His successor on the throne, King Solomon, learned that art, became infatuated with its novelty, and bought a great many chariots, but he did not know how to fight and the chariots remained a useless acquisition.[7]

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(3) Ziff, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 3.
(5) Joshua 17:16.
(6) Judges 4:3.
(7) Noth, M., *The History of Israel*, London, 1958, p. 209.

The Philistines, on the other hand, brought with them the industry of iron smelting and welding which put the Israelites at a disadvantage whenever there was a trial of strength, as they had to go to the Philistine cities to have their weapons sharpened. The Philistines, the Old Testament relates, kept their technical know-how a closely guarded secret. The Bible also tells us that when the Israelites wanted to fight the Philistines, they could not find one smith in the land:

"Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, 'Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears'; but every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plough share, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle. So on the day of the battle, there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan."[8]

The Hebrews continued for a long time to buy from the Philistines all their iron implements which included daggers, swords, axe-heads, spear-heads, plough shares, knives, sickle-blades and iron nails, of which samples have survived in Tell al-Fara and Megiddo. The Philistine metallurgy reached a very high level as evidenced by an interesting bronze standard with openwork decorated with two seated figures on each of the four sides, as was discovered at Megiddo.

The Canaanites, on the other hand, were a people of many skills. As farmers, they introduced the use of the plough and filled the country with trees and greenery. Most of the fruits familiar in Palestine ranging from pomegranates to figs, were planted by them. The land of milk and honey was not the land of the Jews, but the land which the Jews were exhorted to take as the Bible clearly states. The Canaanites, as craftsmen, excelled in ivory carving and monopolised this industry in the whole area. The Hebrews continued to purchase the Phoenician ivory works without ever learning this craft. The Canaanites were also good potters and left sufficient examples indicating the rich variety and inventiveness of their jars, jugs, bowls, lamps and other vessels. Glass making, reputedly first discovered near Aqaba, was one of their famous industries, together with the cultivation and weaving of silk. As traders they mastered the seas, learned shipbuilding, and introduced the advanced alphabetical characters. The Philistine culture competed with that of the Canaanites. Apart from their metallurgical skill, the Philistines introduced new forms in pottery and the element of the decorative and colourful.

The Hebrew Kingdom

With the exception of perhaps Mesopotamia and Egypt, no civilisation on earth is completely original. Almost all ancient civilisations started by a primitive or backward people conquering a new land, or coming into contact with it, learning its established arts and sciences and producing a new civilisation. The criterion for assessing any particular civilisation is in the amount of value added.

(8) I Samuel 13:19.

We have here the worst example in the Ottomans and the best example in the Greeks. The Hebrews come closer to the former category in the material and industrial contributions to the culture and closer to the latter in the spiritual and the abstract.

The Hebrews emerged from a semi-nomadic stage into one of trade and agriculture. As traders, they had to rely on the achievements of their Arab Semitic cousins who developed the desert means of communication by domesticating the camel and adapting it to transportation, and on the knowledge of the Canaanites in ship building and navigation. They also learned writing from the settled people. The use of the wheel, as pointed out above, was adopted from their enemies. For the art of administration and government, they accepted what imprint Egypt had left on the land during its rule. In legal matters, they and the rest of the inhabitants heeded Babylonian thoughts on justice and good business.[9] Little did the Hebrews add to any of the above. They never succeeded in becoming good sailors and their lack of imagination and insight in statecraft led them to disastrous catastrophes—indeed to their final destruction.

Towards the end of the second millennium, the Hebrews went to Samuel and asked him to give them a king "like other nations." Samuel warned them against the rule of kings:

"And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

"And he will take your daughters to the confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

"And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

"And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

"And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

"He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

"And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day."[10]

The people, however, insisted on copying what governments the surrounding nations had, and Saul was made king. Yet, the elementary feature of a stable monarchy, i.e. a clean-cut hereditary system, had not evolved and the final say was left to rebellion and intrigue. During the two centuries of Israeli political life, nineteen kings were on the throne.

As the Hebrews wanted to copy other nations by being ruled by kings, the

(9) Noth, *op. cit.*

(10) I Samuel 8:12-18.

Hebrew kings wanted to copy other kings by enjoying the same splendour. This was fatal as Palestine could not afford the splendour that Egypt and Mesopotamia could. The glory of Solomon was established on borrowed money and the king had to cede twenty towns in Galilee to the King of Tyre for the hiring price of a few skillful talents.[11] He also burdened the people with heavy taxation which started the impoverishment of the peasantry and the break up of his kingdom after his death. Professor Noth's remark about him is descriptive: "In fact Solomon represented the decadent successor who has entered upon a great inheritance."[12]

Henceforth, the ruin of Palestine began with the impoverishment of the country and the continuous internal and external warfare brought about by the Hebrews' tribal strife and extreme nationalism. Like today's Israel, the ancient kingdom lived beyond its means. The wars consumed one generation after another of its toiling hands. The defeats raised taxation for the payment of heavy tributes, and at the same time caused most of the professional and skilled labour to be taken into captivity to Assyria and Babylon. According to Assyrian accounts, Sennacherib took away 200,150 Jews to serve his throne in 701 B.C. Jerusalem was sacked many times, the first occasion by the Egyptians in 920 B.C. Nor were the disasters coming from foreigners only. The intermittent fighting between Judah and Israel resulted, during the eighth century B.C., in the battle of Beth-Shemesh when the King of Israel defeated Judah, captured Jerusalem, pulled down the city walls and sacked the treasures of its temple and royal palace.

The trees planted by the Canaanites were cut down to serve the machine of war. The destruction wreaked on Israel and Judah by their conquerors was vividly described in the Bible and requires no mention here. Jeremiah was put in prison for his strong warnings against the hazardous policies followed by Judah's nationalists and adventurous rulers. The economic depression was also described in many passages of the Old Testament, sometimes in the form of history and other times in the form of prophesy. "Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away."[13]

Perhaps one delicate reason for the turmoil and trouble of Israel was its inherent contradiction regarding aliens. The Hebrews had to rely on the knowledge, institutions, skill and markets of their neighbours. Yet, they insisted on leading a strict racial and exclusive life. The two kings who endeavored to give Israel a semblance of an up-and-coming state were Solomon and Ahab; both depended on the technical know-how of the Canaanites.

For Solomon's greatest architectural monument, his Temple, he employed foreign experts, mainly Canaanites, for the design and building. The plan was "in the Syrian-Palestine style"; it was a long building with Adyton raised at the

(11) Eban, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
(12) Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
(13) Hosea 4:3.

rear, and an entrance hall moulded by Mesopotamian influence and incorporating various Egyptian elements as well.[14] The numerous scholars who studied the Temple emphasised the Syrian-Palestine character of the Temple in particular, and of Israeli architecture in general.[15] Among the craftsmen contracted from King Hiram of Tyre were carpenters, masons, metallurgists and ivory carvers. The palaces built by David and Solomon were in all probability built on the plan of a palace discovered at Tell Ta'yinat. In some of the temples and houses dating back to Solomon's period, naked goddesses, male figures, serpents and lions were discovered.[16] The Book of Kings gives lavish accounts of the imported materials and the payments made to Tyre.

To finance his ambitious designs, Solomon introduced conscript labour and exploited the copper mines of the south. Seagoing in the Red Sea was also one of his innovations. The Canaanites, who had always wanted to link up their Mediterranean trade with the southern shores of Arabia, reached an agreement by which they supplied the expert manpower, sailors and shipbuilding materials against a share in the profits, an arrangement very similar to that which exists in our day between American imperialism and Israel and other similar dependencies.

But the king's reliance on the knowledge of his neighbours did not end here. For administration and court functions he recruited a large army of foreigners of whom many were Canaanite slaves. Solomon was endowed, according to the Bible and the Koran, with wisdom. He understood the position of Israel in its unavoidable reliance upon its neighbours and the practical consequences thereof. He took foreign wives, allowed the worship of foreign cults and cooperated with neighbouring states, even at the expense of ceding back territories captured by David's expansionism, like Edom and Aram. The policy of integration and moderate nationalism angered the aristocracy, and combined with the mass discontent in view of his fiscal and labour policies, led to a series of disorders and insurrection which finally ended in the division of the state.

Years after his death, King Ahab of Israel emulated Solomon's example and aroused similar opposition led by the prophet Elija, who accused the king of participating in the worship of the religion of his Phoenician wife, Jezebel, daughter of King Ethbaal of Tyre. On the usurpation of the throne by General Jehu, the foreign queen and all of Ahab's children of mixed blood were slaughtered. Ahab's diplomatic master stroke was turned upside down by racial chauvinism and the serious rot began.

That King Ahab resorted to employing Phoenician craftsmen in building his palaces in Samaria nearly two centuries after the kingdom was established, in-

(14) Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

(15) Möhlenbrink, K., *Der Tempel Solomos* (*The Temple of Solomon*) (BOWANT, IV, 7, 1932); and Walzinger, C., *Denkmäler Palästinas* (*Monuments of Palestine*).

(16) See Baramki, D., *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Palestine,* Palestine Research Center, Beirut, 1969, pp. 112-113.

dicates that the Hebrews had made little progress in learning the arts and crafts of a civilisation. As a matter of fact, the economical decline of Palestine was also reflected in an artistic decline. Pottery and ceramics were debased to a semi-primitive stage. To begin with, the Hebrews did not know how to use the potter's wheel, and continued to make pots by hand to a very late stage. A large quantity of pots from the Middle Iron Age were excavated in Palestine, presenting an overall picture of definite decline. Grace and good taste were lost, the firing was uneven, and the curves tended to break into angles. A characteristic application of the age was the use of limestone grits in large quantities as a binder. The grits burned into lime during firing and, with the effect of humidity, were slaked leaving pock marks. There was little burnishing and that little was carelessly executed.[17] On the other hand, good pots continued to come from Phoenicia and Cyprus.

The Hebrews produced nothing in the way of sculpture and representational art, and what statues and figures have been found in the ancient sites were entirely of Canaanite and foreign origin. This was the case not because the Hebrews did not worship idols or put them in their houses and temples which they did, but because they did not take to visual arts, influenced to some degree, of course, by the decalogue.

In buildings where no Canaanite masons were engaged, there was a marked lack of pride. The walls discovered at Tell al-Nasbah were built of rubble and no smoothly dressed stones or masonry with irregular marginal drafts were used, as was the fashion elsewhere. Although some variety of ground planning was introduced, actual building accomplishment fell behind. As Professor Baramki explains:

"The masonry used in the early part of the Middle Iron Age was well cut and the surface was very smoothly dressed. In the latter part of the age, comprising the Eighth and Seventh Centuries, the masonry was roughly cut and very crudely dressed. This is no doubt due to the fact that in the important buildings constructed during the Ninth Century, Phoenician masons were engaged as at Samaria and Megiddo. In the following two centuries the kings of Israel and Judah were so impoverished by the heavy tributes paid to the Assyrian kings that they were unable to engage foreign architects and masons to build their important structures for them and most of the buildings were constructed by incompetent local masons."[18]

The True Jewish Glory

The name of Israel did not live by stone, bronze or carved wood, not by Hanging Gardens, Pyramids or Parthenons, but by one simple thing, namely the word. Here is where we must look for the true achievement of Judaism—in its

(17) Baramki, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
(18) *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.

commandments, morality, poetry and the great stories of man's creation, rise, and fall. Few books can be compared in excellence with the Bible, and none in its universal influence.

Our appreciation, however, should never blind us to facts which have come to light since the systematic application of historical criticism of the Bible began in the last century. The excavations in Mesopotamia and Egypt led to far reaching discoveries in this field, of the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Book of Death. The Mesopotamian stories of the creation of the world, the deluge, and the ark, became the unmistakable foundations of the Biblical version, so much so that one can almost say, to use a contemporary term, that they were pirated. Outside the subject matter, the forms, expressions, and figures of speech which have impressed us for two thousand years are also borrowings from the literature of Babylonia and Egypt of the second millennium. The Psalmody was obviously influenced by Babylonian terminology. The Hebrew word for poetry, *Sir,* had its origin in the Babylonian word *Siru.* The famous song of Deborah shows climactic parallelism with the Babylonian and Egyptian metres.[19] Its opening: "Hear, O Kings, Give ear, O Princes! For I to Yahweh, even I will sing"—had its origin in the opening of the Babylonian hymn to Beltili: "O Comrades attend, O Warriors hearken! The Song of the Lady I will sing."

Influences from Canaanite literature also left their marks on the Old Testament. The Ugarit texts which were discovered in 1929 revealed the similarity in vocabulary, metre, thought and structure, particularly in the Book of Job and the Psalms.[20] One of the Ugarit poems deals with the vegetation god Aliyan Baal and his annual resurrection, a story which itself had its origin in Babylonian mythology. The winged cherub of the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant and the whole idea of the Biblical cherubim advanced in many parts of the Old Testament[21] had also their origin in the Syrian sphinx.

The Hebrews must have borrowed a considerable amount of musical forms and idioms from the Canaanites, together with the instruments which they had adopted, like the shofar, the harp, the flute and the drum. From Egypt, they borrowed the lyre, the kinnon (a stringed instrument), and the nebel (a kind of harp). They adopted from Assyria the halil (hallalu—a primitive oboe). The hatzotzrot (a kind of trumpet) which the Hebrews used had been common throughout the Middle East. One legend relates that when King Solomon was getting married, he imported one thousand musical instruments for his wedding from Egypt.[22]

Still more important in impact on mankind is the moral and religious teachings of the Jews. Here we must visualise Judaism as a melting pot of the con-

(19) "The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society,* January 1922.

(20) Patton, J.H., *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms,* Baltimore, 1944.

(21) C.f., for example, II Samuel 22:11, Exodus 25:18-22, Ezekiel: 1 and 10.

(22) Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* Vol. IV, London, 1954, pp. 618-21.

cepts and teachings of the entire Middle East and a funnel for syphoning the content to the world at large. It is generally accepted now that Judaism had produced little that was not known already to the ancient world. The concept, style, and role of the temple and religious institutions were continuations of an Egyptian religious organisation left behind in Palestine after the withdrawal of Egypt in the second millennium. The fertility cult, war dance, ritual sacrifice, circumcision, and ancestor worship were all indigenous ideas which found their way to ancient Judaism. Sigmund Freud goes as far as to assert that the entire teachings of the Hebrews came from Egypt and that Moses himself was an Egyptian prince.[23]

Max Weber, on the other hand, makes a comparison between the moral teachings of the decalogue and ancient Judaism in general with those of the Egyptian Book of Death. The only new elements which were introduced by the Hebrews, he concludes, were the guilt obsession and the banishment of sex.[24] The two, of course, are interlinked. The depressive picture which resulted from the guilt neurosis was bound by its mechanism to diminish the collective libido. Here, we find the origin of the universal taboos on sex and the shame of the naked body, the root of the thousand don'ts. This is the deepest influence which the ancient Hebrews dispersed from Palestine. Even greater than that is the energy and force with which the moral teachings were charged. The compulsive drive, which can only come from the suffering of a tormented soul, is a subject which is completely outside the present enquiry.

Palestine as Part of the Classical Culture

After Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, its upper and middle classes including the craftsmen and artisans were exiled. Most of these struck new roots in Babylonia and refused to return to their former home when Cyrus reconquered it and allowed them to return. The new Jewish autonomy looked doomed from the beginning and produced nothing outside religious instructions and commentaries. Phoenician works continued to make up the bulk of the archaeological finds from this period, in addition to the new products of the Greeks. What important buildings were undertaken belonged to the Persian overlords. The paucity of inscriptions reflects the poverty of the period as there has been hardly any writing discovered which can be safely attributed to it, with the exception of a few letters on coins and jars. The Phoenician cities, by contrast, are rich in epigraphic material which appears on numerous coins and stelae.[25]

The East eventually fell under the magic of the classical culture with the advance of Alexander. The Ptolemies and Seleucids ruled Palestine until it was

(23) Freud, S., "Moses and Monotheism," *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. XXIII, London, 1964.

(24) Weber, M., *Ancient Judaism,* Free Press, 1952, pp. 237-240.

(25) Baramki, *op. cit.,* pp. 138-143.

incorporated within the Roman Empire after Pompey's spectacular victories in Asia Minor. The Hellenistic heritage of the logical, natural, and earthly—in contrast with the Hebrew heritage of the spiritual and psychical—had its golden opportunity in the marked peace, tranquility, and dynamism introduced in Syria by the Roman conquest for about two centuries. Beirut, Damascus and Antioch became influential centres of science and wealth. Great names in the history of the Roman Empire and Roman law, like Ulpian and Papinian came from Syria. Even emperors were chosen from the Syrians as the Phoenician Septimius who became emperor in the year 193 A.D. and Philip the Arab who hailed from the Hauran and was crowned as emperor in the year 244 A.D.

The efficient administration, articulate laws, effective judicature, massive empire market, together with the increased use of monetary means, new coinage, standardised measurements, maritime facilities, and papyrus adoption, brought the Eastern Mediterranean to an unprecedented level of wealth and economic activity. Historical records reflect an incredible prosperity among the peoples of Syria. We are told, for example, that at the celebration of the Daphne games in Antioch, one Syrian patrician had a procession of one thousand slaves carrying silver vessels, none of which weighed less than a thousand drachmae, followed by six hundred pages bearing vessels of gold and two hundred women who sprinkled scented oil on the onlookers from gold pitchers. Close behind them came eighty women seated in litters with gold supports and five hundred women in litters with silver supports.[26]

In the Graeco-Roman period, Lebanon became a center for ceramic and terra cotta products. The development of blown glass in place of cast glass made the Syrian province the main exporting centre of glass products and glazed pottery. The Phoenician merchants monopolised the other flourishing new trade of papyrus of which, on the other side of Palestine, Egypt had become the producing centre.

Palestine does not seem to have shared much of that economic and cultural activity of Greater Syria, for a good reason. The Jews launched a life or death campaign against the Hellenisation of Palestine, a campaign which engulfed the country into endless strife leading to the final destruction of Jerusalem. Under the burden of depression and guilt, the Jewish people were buried deep into themselves and would not respond to any stimulae from the bustling world around them. The bouts of insurrection dotting the unhappy history were symptomatic nervous reactions against the outside attempts to penetrate the withdrawal shell. The Romans were uninterested in what god the Jews worshipped; they were only concerned about the unimpeded flow of the empire's business, a matter in which the Jews did not oblige. Christianity appeared to reform Judaism and harmonise the existence of the Jews with the new order and historical stage. The Jews' question on the new Roman coins and Christ's reply to it, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's,"

(26) Hitti, P., *History of Syria,* London, 1957, p. 278.

are characteristic. The conflict which is usually represented as a conflict between Jupiter and Yahweh, between heathenism and monotheism, was finally resolved when Hadrian could find no alternative but to enforce the new order by the elimination of the Jewish autonomy and the removal of the Jews.

The Romans' engineers always marched at the heels of their army. While archaeologists could find few civil engineering feats attributed to the Hebrews in Palestine, the works of the Graeco-Romans, particularly in roads, irrigation cisterns and aquaducts continued to serve the country to our own epoch. Of such achievements mention may be made of the dual-level aquaducts of Jerusalem which used to bring about one million gallons of water per day to the city. The high aquaduct fell into disrepair, but the low aquaduct remained in use until the year 1901 when a new pipe line system was introduced. The Roman town of Caesarea was also supplied with water from two magnificent aquaducts on two levels extending for eight miles outside the town.

Jerusalem itself owes its skyline to the Arabs who built its mosques and minarets, and its town plan to the Romans. Herod the Great (fourth century B.C.), the successful administrator of Arab birth, Roman upbringing and Jewish confession, built the Antonio Fortress, the citadel and created the temple area whereas Emperor Hadrian, after suppressing the Jewish revolt between 132 and 135 A.D., gave the city its town plan by reconstructing it in a pagan Roman style. He filled the city with baths, theatres, sanctuaries, and statues and opened the main street from the Damascus Gate to the Durg Gate. Henceforth, the city was known as Colonia Aelia Capitolina.

With their new building methods, the Romans were able to construct, as everywhere in the empire, imposing buildings of long duration including temples, palaces, baths, theatres and mausolia. Of these we have only to mention Sebastia with its temple, theatre, hippodrome, and Roman Forum. Large sections of Jerusalem's city walls go back to the same period. New additions to the country were the towns of Caesarea and Nablus, built in honour of Augustus. The building of theatres was, of course, a completely Roman undertaking.

The architraves and flat roofing gave way to the new innovation of the arch and barrel vault, square windows to curved windows, brick and mortar to the solid megalithic masonry. Marble and hard stones became the basic material for the facades of buildings constructed in the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian styles of Greek architecture. Mosaics incorporating classical themes paved the floors of the buildings and public places. The towns were filled with monuments, statues, and temples. Most of the Roman works in this field were destroyed by the Jews during the insurrections and spasmodic independence in accordance with the commandment regarding the graven images and in the heat of anti-Roman zeal. Hence the scarcity of representational pieces in the Palestine excavation.[27]

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(27) Baramki, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

Economic prosperity seeped into the country from the north bringing the number of the population to some two million souls. Many wine presses and olive presses which date back to this period were discovered in Roman sites indicating high industrial activity.

With the adoption of Christianity by the Roman Empire in 312 A.D., Palestine entered into a new stage of development and importance as the birthplace of Christ. One result of the change was the loss of the old heathen temples whose destruction was commanded by the new order. Their loss was offset by new church buildings constructed by the young faith. Constantine first built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem; they were soon followed by a host of churches, chapels and monasteries scattered throughout the country. Empress Eudocia was particularly attached to Palestine and ordered the construction of various buildings including the Church of St. Stephen. Many of these churches were destroyed during the short, but bloody Persian occupation of Palestine. Scholars, some obviously anti-Jewish, attribute the destruction to instigation by Jews who were banished from Jerusalem and returned with their Persian allies.[28]

The Arabs Make Their Debut

Along the semi-desert lands of Syria and Palestine, tribes of Arabs began to appear and settle, during the few centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, after their long line of migration from Southern Arabia where economic depression began to hit. The Nabataeans occupied the southern part, the Palmyrenes and the Ghassanids the north. They quickly adapted themselves to agriculture and trade. Petra, the capital of the Nabataeans, became a capital of a new state on that terrain known to the Greeks as Arabia Petraea, which stretched all along the eastern bank of the River Jordan and the Red Sea from Hauran in the north to Aqaba in the south, including southern Palestine. Its inhabitants commanded the trade routes in all directions in this part of the Arab world. King Harithath III, who defeated the Judean army and then the Roman army under Pompei, opened his kingdom widely, in the first century B.C., to Graeco-Roman culture until his capital, Petra, became a wholly classical city indistinguishable from any typically Hellenistic centre. Of the many public buildings constructed in Petra, the imposing facade of the king's mausoleum is still a wonderful sight.

The Nabataeans were probably the most ingenious people in handling the water question of Palestine. Some historians believe that they were called Nabataeans from *nabat,* i.e. "to draw water" in Arabic.[29] "They seem to have in-

(28) C.f., for example, the article on Jerusalem in the *Islamic Encyclopaedia,* Vol. II, 1927, p. 1097.

(29) Ali, J., *Al-Mufassal fi Tarikh al-Arab Qabl al-Islam (A Detailed History of the Arabs Before Islam),* Vol. III, Beirut, pp. 18-56.

herited the magic rod which had enabled an earlier Semitic wanderer in that territory, Moses, to bring water out of the dry rock," remarked Philip Hitti aptly.[30] They handled the water issue from all angles. They developed a new technique in raising cattle with a minimum water requirement. Simultaneously, they tapped all possible sources, collected and utilised rain effectively, and devised various methods for storing water. Their discoveries and devices became the basis for the subsequent hydraulic policies in Palestine over the centuries.

The Nabataeans also excelled in industry and trade. They exploited the iron and copper mines of the South, and from the Dead Sea they utilised the asphalt deposits and other minerals. Their trade reached as far as China from which they supplied the Roman empire with silk. Spices and myrrh from Southern Arabia, fabrics from Damascus and Gaza, glassware from Phoenicia, pearls from the Arabian Gulf, and henna from Ascalon were some of the products which the Nabataean caravans carried. These early settled Arabs showed exhuberance in nearly every field of activity. Carving temples and other structures out of the rocky hills was one of their architectural discoveries. The decorative art of stucco is also believed to have had its origin in the vaults of Petra.[31] The originality of their genre gave us further examples in their own brand of eggshell thin pottery of reddish buff.

From the foregoing accounts, the reader may begin to visualise a picture in which the Jews left no imprint in the history of Palestine civilisation. This is, of course, a false picture—as contrived as the one produced by the Judeo-Christian historians. The correct view is that the Jews lived in Palestine, and did leave in Palestine marks of their former life, but their contribution to the history of the country's civilisation, outside the world of religion, is so negligible that any writer may, or rather must, omit it from his brief accounts of Palestine's heritage. Jewish remains in the Holy Land are generally confined to graves, cemeteries and a few synagogues built in the style of the surrounding peoples or ruling masters. Throughout the many centuries, Palestine was still without remains of any style or order that could be called Jewish; contrast this phenomenon with the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Arabian styles. Therefore, a writer finds himself compelled not to mention the few score of Jewish synagogues and graves when he finds that in Palestine are some 2500 churches and ruins which date back only as far as the Byzantine period.

In assessing the phenomenon of the typical biblical sites in Palestine known as *tells* (small hills), the archaeologists of the Palestine Exploration Fund reached the conclusion that the *tell* owes its origin to the biblical cycles of destruction and shabby rebuilding leading to an accumulation of earth and rubble. "Of architecture as a fine art there seems good reason to suppose the Jews were ignorant, nor is

(30) Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 377.
(31) *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. XLV, 1941.

there anything in the Bible or in the country to indicate that the towns of the early Biblical period were better built or more important than the present Syrian villages."[32]

In Abba Eban's nationalistic book, *My People,* only six of the thirty pictures illustrating Jewish culture in Palestine up to the rise of Islam were actually the works of the Jews. Nearly all the rest exemplified Egyptian, Babylonian, Phoenician and Graeco-Roman arts and crafts. Eban was unable to reproduce anything going back to the days of Israel and Judah or the glory of Solomon's empire. Even the single piece of pottery had to be a Philistine bowl from Tell Zipor. In Israel's museums, the bulk of relics and valuable finds come from non-Jewish ancient civilisations, and will probably remain so however hard the soldier-archaeologists of Israel may go on digging.

The economic devastation of ancient Palestine also owes its roots, at least in part, to the external and internal strife brought about by the emergence of the Hebrews in Palestine. It appears that the Hebrews as traders needed to make Palestine a great nationalistic centre of an ambitious commonwealth, an aim to which the possibilities of the country did not lend themselves. Ruin and unhappiness were the results of the frustrated ambition, and religion the harvest of that frustration. Today's Israel is following a very similar path with one difference, i.e., its leaders do not seem to be the people who will express their frustration in any religion.

(32) *Survey of Western Palestine,* Palestine Exploration Fund, Vol. II, London, p. 129.

III

PALESTINE UNDER ARAB RULE

Omar Sets Example

In 638 A.D., nomadic Arabs under the command of Abu Ubaydah converged on Jerusalem while sweeping through Syria. Sophronius, the Christian patriarch of Jerusalem, sued for peace to save Palestine from destruction. His wisdom was matched only by the magnanimous response of the Arabs. The two sides struck a deal which made Arab entry into Jerusalem the one spotless conquest in the entire history of the Holy City and one of the brightest in the world. The city had been held in great esteem by the Moslems who for many years, until the fall of Mecca to the Prophet, turned towards it for prayer. The caliph Omar hurried to Palestine to enter Jerusalem at the head of his followers. The city was delivered upon the signing of a pledge to its Christian inhabitants:

"This assurance is given forth from Omar, Amir al-Mu'minin to the people of Iliya (Jerusalem). He grants them security of their lives, properties, churches and crosses; their infirm and their healthy and the whole of their followers. Their churches shall not be inhabited, destroyed, reduced or curtailed in their domains; nor shall the people suffer in their crosses or in any of their belongings. They shall not be forced against their faith or made to endure injury. Nor shall any of the Jews be allowed to live amongst them."[1]

The last provision was obviously granted on the insistence of the Patriarch in continuation of the city's tradition. It had been established since Emperor Hadrian's banishment of the Jews from the city, "not to be suffered in its confines except on the ninth day of Ab (August) for the specific purpose of mourning by the Wailing Wall." The Moslems, however, did not keep this part of the pledge and the Jews were gradually allowed back into Jerusalem under Arab rule.

Austere and simple as Omar's entry was, the occasion was not deprived of great dignity and profound gestures. The caliph was taken by the Patriarch through the town on a conducted tour, around which many legends were formed. The Egyptian historian Eutychius, for example, related that when the time of prayer drew near while the caliph was inspecting the Church of Resurrection, the Patriarch asked him to make his prayer in the great church, an invitation which Omar declined preferring to go out and make his prayers on another spot. Eutychius mentioned that Omar was afraid to pray in the church lest the Moslems

(1) *Political Documents in the Prophet's Era,* (ed.) M. Abadi, Cairo, 1941, pp. 268-9.

follow his example and convert the church into a mosque. As it happened, a great mosque, the mosque of Omar, was soon built where the caliph prayed.

Upon visiting Bethlehem, Omar also surveyed the Church of Nativity and wrote another pledge to its pastors stating that not more than one Moslem might visit the church at any given time.[2] The Moslem leader did not leave Palestine until he established a mosque for his soldiers at the controversial site of the old Jewish Temple.

As a matter of fact, the Arab conquest of Palestine can only be considered a partial conquest. One may not be completely off the mark in calling it a "war of liberation," to use a contemporary term. Although the main centres were in the hands of the Byzantines who dominated the culture of the country, the Arab tribes were just outside the gates of the cities. Arab towns, as mentioned in the previous chapter, arose magnificently on the border of the desert. Arabic was neither a rare language in the Syrian towns where the Arab traders, like the prophet Mohammed himself, came in droves for business without encountering linguistic difficulties. It was by virtue of this fact that we read al-Ya'qubi in the ninth century A.D. writing thus: "The population of Palestine consists of Arabs of the tribes of Lakhm, Judham, Amila, Kindah, Kais and Kinana." Indeed, one reason for the sweeping Arab victories was the help they received from their kin in Syria and Mesopotamia where they rose against their former rulers as soon as they heard the Arab war cry "God is greater" thundering from the horizon.

"The rejuvenation of the Palestine community under Moslem rule was generally swift," commented Abba Eban on the new Arab conquest, to cite a Zionist authority.[3] But Eban disdained to use the word "Arab" in treating this period, yielding to the Zionistic habit of replacing the word "Arab" by "Moslem" whenever an Arab favour or merit is admitted. Another truth about the conquest, or liberation, of Palestine was that it was definitely Arab and only partially Moslem.

The Ghassanids, Tanukhids, Taghribids and Bani Salih were some of the Arab Christian clans who fought for the Arab conquest of Syria side by side with the Moslem clans. The civilisation which was soon to shine from Palestine and Syria was even more a joint enterprise.

The Sun Rises from Syria

After his visit to Jerusalem, Omar laid the foundations for the administration and treatment of the conquered territory. Syria was divided into four districts (*junds*), namely Damascus, Hims (Homs), al-Urdun and Filastin. Al-Urdun included the area east of the River Jordan, its valley and northern Palestine, or roughly the Galilee, to the Mediterranean. Filastin consisted of Palestine south

(2) Muir, W., *The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall,* Oxford, 1891, p. 145.
(3) Eban, *op. cit.,* p. 132.

of the Plain of Esdraelon; Jerusalem was confirmed as the capital of this district. One of the most far reaching measures adopted by Omar was the nationalisation of the lands; it has influenced the course of agriculture and class structure in the Middle East ever since. While he deemed war booty as the prize for warriors, the lands must go to the community represented by the state. Henceforth, the cultivators, whether Moslems or non-Moslems, were only tenants who tilled the land against a *fay* tax paid to the treasury. A direct result of this measure, which had a long indigenous tradition behind it, was that Palestine remained throughout its Arab history free from the feudal system that was known in Europe. There was, in fact, considerable dislocation when the Crusaders introduced the system as they knew it in the Occident and started to sell and speculate in land and serfs in package deals.

In Jerusalem, Mu'awiya proclaimed himself a caliph and moved the capital of the empire from Mecca to Damascus. Palestine became one of the central districts, a few leagues away from the seat of the government. It was, therefore, natural for the governors and caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty to look at this district with particular favour. For Abd-al-Malik ibn Marwan and his two sons, al-Walid and Sulayman, Palestine was the centre of their attention.

In the context of the Zionist-Arab conflict, the Arabs have always stressed the religious importance of Jerusalem to their two faiths, Islam and Christianity. Numerous books[4] are written by Palestinian Arabs in affirmation of the claim and all committees of enquiry have listened to the same repeated evidence by Palestinian witnesses. The basic idea is that Islam looks at Jerusalem as the first qibla (centre of worship) to which Moslems must turn in prayer, and the second holy mosque in their history. As a further development of the Judeo-Christian teachings, Islam held the Holy City, and its associations with the history of Judaism and the story of Christ in considerable reverence, which made the Prophet adopt it as the qibla of the faithful. Some historians believe that the Moslems turned away from it to Mecca only after their political disenchantment with the Jews of Hijaz.[5] A few traditions evolved around this particular position of Jerusalem including the nocturnal ascent of Mohammed to heaven.

Hence, it is expected that Palestine would receive care and attention as the might and wealth of the Islamic empire became greater and greater. Another political disenchantment with Hijaz, when the rebellious ibn al-Zubayr severed Mecca from the rest of the empire, prompted the caliph Abd-al-Malik (685-705) to turn his people's eyes from the centre of insurrection by restoring Jerusalem as the Qibla of Islam. Pilgrimage, henceforth, was to be made to this city and not to Mecca. The political shift of fortunes necessarily entailed a shift in eco-

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(4) C.f., for example, Al-Hussaini, I., *O'roubat Beit El-Maqdis (The Arab Character of Jerusalem)*, Palestine Research Centre, Beirut; Tibawi, A.L., *Jerusalem, Its Place in Islam and Arab History;* Abou-Loughod, T., *Arab-Israeli Confrontation* (in French), Palestine Research Centre, Beirut, April 1969.

(5) *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Vol. II, 1927, p. 1097.

nomic and development fortunes. The caliph began investing generous amounts of money in Jerusalem, starting with the building of its great mosque, the Dome of the Rock, in 691. The mosque, lavishly decorated with mosaic and qashani (glazed tiles), became known as one of the most magnificent pieces of Islamic architecture which gives us a living example of the high artistic and engineering standard enjoyed by the local Palestinian craftsmen and master builders in the seventh century. The Dome of the Rock, constructed on an octagonal plan around the rock from which Mohammed had ascended to heaven, was connected with a smaller dome called the Dome of the Chain.

Yet, there was built by Walid ibn Abd-al-Malik (705-715) a third and no less splendid mosque called al-Masjid al-Aqsa, planned in a basilica style with numerous Corinthian columns. All three shrines, together with a number of sanctuaries and religious public amenities which were added over the centuries, occupied what is now known as Haram al-Sharif measuring some thirty-four acres. The Arabic name, Haram al-Sharif (The Noble Sanctuary) is a most fitting name for a plot of land where once stood Jewish temples, Roman temples and Christian churches of the first order. The two mosques were renovated and repaired on various occasions in their long history. Moslem rulers had always derived great pride from adding to the existing wealth and artistic treasures of the Jerusalem mosques. So much so, that by the time the Crusaders took them over, the accounts of their assets had become legendary. Ibn al-Athir mentions that the Crusaders removed from the Dome of the Rock more than forty silver lamps weighing 3600 dirhams each and more than twenty golden lamps.[6] Ibn al-Athir's record is corroborated by other contemporary authorities. Atabki says that seventy lamps were taken away of which twenty weighed a thousand mithqals of gold each and fifty weighed 3600 dirhams of silver each, in addition to a silver oven weighing forty Syrian pounds.[7]

Medieval Arab scholars wrote lavishly on the wealth and grandeur of the Jerusalem mosques. Both Jerusalemite writers, the geographer al-Maqdisi and the historian Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali dealt extensively with the subject. Al-Hanbali related that when Abd al-Malik embarked on building the Dome of the Rock, he dedicated to it the entire income of Egypt for seven years.[8] Ibn Battuta gave in his *Voyage* detailed accounts and measurements of the Aqsa Mosque which he described as "one of the wonderful, splendid and exceedingly beautiful mosques."[9] Mu'jam al-Buldan, in its excellent description of the Aqsa Mosque, says that this mosque was built on marble columns of different colours and with mosaic which came second to none in the world, "not even in the Mosque of Damascus."[10] The encyclopedia work claims that when the mosque was destroyed

(6) Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil,* Vol. X, Brill, 1864, p. 194.
(7) Atabki, *Al-Nujum al-Zahira* (*The Shining Star*), Vol. V, Cairo, p. 149.
(8) Al-Hanbali, Mujir al-Din, *Al-Uns al-Jalil,* Vol. I, pp. 241-242.
(9) Ibn Battuta, *Rihlat Ibn Battuta* (*The Voyage of Ibn Battuta*), Cairo, 1938, p. 33.
(10) Al-Mamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan* (*Dictionary of the Countries*), Vol. L, pp. 166-7.

by an earthquake during the reign of its builder, Abd al-Malik, the caliph called on all army commanders and amirs to rebuild the mosque, each aisle by one of them, which they did.

Ibn Abd Rabbih listed 1500 lamps, fifty doors and 684 columns in Beit al-Maqdis. The Dome of the Rock had 464 lamps and the Aqsa had 600 lamp chains, four pulpits and fifteen domes. All the roofs of the mosque, domes and minarets were covered with gold foil.[11] Detailed description of the Dome was also given in Surat al-Ard (chapter of the Koran).[12] Ibn al-Faqih and Ibn Jubair had likewise dealt with this mosque in their accounts.

The position which Beit al-Maqdis occupied in the hearts of the Moslem rulers is depicted by al-Hanbali who related how al-Melik al-Muthaffar used to sweep the floor of the mosque with his own hands and wash it with rose-water. Saladin took pride in transporting stones on his own horse for the re-building of the walls. Many minarets, domes, mihrabs (altars), water tanks, gate-ways and porticos were built in or around the Haram al-Sharif. Of the most precious pieces added to the Dome of the Rock was the pulpit commissioned by Sultan Saladin from Syrian artists.

New Wave of Buildings

In the city itself, some thirty-four mosques and fifty-six schools were built at different times.[13] Of the famous schools (*madrasat*) mention may be made of Madrasat al-Jurahia built by Al-Malik al-Adil, Madrasat al-Salahia, Madrasat al-Khanthaniya and Madrasat al-Ma'munia, all built during Saladin's reign. Al-Hanbali gives a long list of sixty-six Jerusalem schools existing in his days. One of the Fatimid academic contributions to Jerusalem was the famous Dar al-I'lm (House of Science). The Mamluk rulers of Egypt who followed the Ayyubids left a long chain of buildings behind them in Palestine including many mosques, palaces, schools, mausolea, souks (market) and fortifications. Not less than ninety-eight houses were built in Jerusalem alone during their tenure of office. The Palace of Sitt Tunshuq al-Muzzaffaria is one of the Mamluk buildings still in existence in the city. So are the schools of al-Tushtumuria, al-Tankizia and al-Mu'azzamia in Bab al-Silsila Street. Mamluk buildings were characterised by elegant portal entrances leading into open courts and by various colours of masonry on different levels of the many coloured walls.[14]

One of Sultan Qaitbay's additions to the city was Madrasat al-Ashrafia built in 1475. In the opinion of al-Hanbali, who gives a lengthy description of this school, it is next only to the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in its splendour.[15] According to his accounts, the schools of Jerusalem were paved

(11) Ibn Abd Rabbih, *Al-Iqd al-Farid (The Rare Necklace)*, Vol. IV, Cairo, 1962, pp. 263-4.
(12) Ibn Haukal, *Surat al-Ard*, Vol. I, 1938, p. 171.
(13) Al-Husseini, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.
(14) Baramki, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-5.
(15) Al-Hanbali, *op. cit.*, pp. 659-661.

with marble slabs of many colours, supported on lofty marble columns and provided with promenades lined with marble walls. There were lamps of exquisite beauty, woodwork covered with gold leaf, glass panels, and arches resting on marble pillars. The Jerusalemite historian seems to be highly pleased with the city buildings: "As for the building in Jerusalem, it is extremely sound and well executed. It is all done with white chiselled stones and vaulted ceilings. There is neither brick in the walls nor wood in the ceilings. Travellers have said that they could find no buildings better built or finer in appearance in the whole kingdom than the buildings of Jerusalem. The houses of the town of Khalil (Hebron), may peace be upon him, come near to them but the Jerusalem building is more perfect and sound. The building of Nablus is close enough."[16]

Christian Churches

When the Arabs became rulers of Palestine, there were already churches sufficient for the inhabitants and noble enough for the birth place of Christianity. The main task was to preserve them in good condition, an undertaking which Omar had begun and was carefully kept by the successive rulers, with the exception of the mad Fatimid ruler, Hakam. Although the caliphs spent little or nothing from the public treasury on the maintenance of the churches, they did not interfere in the income or properties of the Christian foundations. Harun al-Rashid permitted Charlemagne to carry out the work of renovating the cathedrals and chapels of the Holy Land.

The Church of Resurrection was rebuilt under the Fatimid rule in the eleventh century and enlarged by the Crusaders by adding a nave and aisles in the first half of the twelfth century. Nasir Khusru visited the church and wrote the following interesting description:

"At the present day the church is the most spacious building, and is capable of containing eight thousand persons. The edifice is built, with the utmost skill, of coloured marbles, with ornamentation and sculptures. Inside, the church is everywhere adorned with Byzantine brocade, worked in gold with pictures. And they have portrayed Jesus — Peace be upon Him — who at times is shown riding an ass. There are also pictures representing others of the Prophets, as, for instance, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob with his sons — Peace be upon them all! These pictures they have overlaid with varnish of the oil of Sandaracha; and for the face of each portrait they have made a plate of thin glass which is set thereon and is perfectly transparent. This dispenses with the need of a curtain, and prevents any dust or dirt from settling on the painting, for the glass is cleaned daily by the servants. Besides this, there are many other churches, all very skillfully built, but to describe them all would lead into too great length. In the Church (of Resurrection) there is a picture divided into two parts, repre-

(16) *Ibid.*, p. 406.

senting Heaven and Hell. One part shows the people of paradise in Paradise, while the other shows the people of hell in Hell, with all that therein in; and assuredly there is nowhere else in the world a picture such as this. There are seated in this church great numbers of priests and monks, who read the Evangel and say prayers, for both by day and by night they are occupied after this manner."[17]

"This is one of the wonders of the world," was the feeling expressed by al-Idrisi in his accounts of the church and its treasures. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, originally built by Constantine, was also described by the same Arab traveller. "In Bethlehem, there is a fine building of a church, well planned, spacious and lavishly decorated. I could not see any church equal to it in its construction. It is put on a low ground with a door opening to the west. It has many columns of marble all pleasant to the eye. In the northern corner of the sanctuary is the grotto in which Christ the Master was born. Underneath the alter, there is the manger in which He was born. As you leave Bethlehem and look to the east, you behold the church of the Angels who brought the tidings of Christ's birth to the shepherds."[18]

Al-Hanbali also visited the church and noted fifty columns of hard yellow stone in addition to the other stone pillars. The floor was paved with marble and the roof was well covered with lead.[19]

The mosques, churches and citadels thus accumulated over the centuries reached their dramatic, pictorial crescendo at the close of the Arab Golden Age and gave Jerusalem its present familiar panorama well depicted by the English pilgrim at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

"The panoramic view is magnificent. Below, about the distance of musket-shot, separated only by the deep and narrow ravine of Jehosphat, Mount Moriah rises steeply from the brook Kedron, crowned by the celebrated Mosque of Omar, usurping the site of its more august predecessor. Behind, the domes of the Sanctuary of the Holy Sepulchre and other churches, convents, mosques and minarets, rising in succession, exhibit a very striking appearance — the Holy City lying so completely exposed to view."[20]

As the writer focuses his line of vision with a close-up of the mosque, he writes:

"Great labour must have been required to smooth the natural inequalities of the ground. It is planted with cypress and other shrubs and beautifully kept, affording a delightful promenade to the followers of the Prophet, many of whom were seen walking up and down apparently in meditations deep; though it is doubted whether a Turk is really given to profound thinking."![21]

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(17) Citation in Guy le Strange, *Palestine Under the Muslims,* London, 1890, pp. 205-6.

(18) Cited in Khalidi, *Ahl al-Fadl* (*The Gracious Ones*), Amman, p. 92.

(19) Al-Hanbali, *op. cit.,* Vol. II, p. 414.

(20) *Three Weeks in Palestine and Lebanon, op. cit.,* p. 47.

(21) *Ibid.,* p. 71.

The Umayyads Build Ramla

One of the Umayyad caliphs who was particularly fond of Palestine was Sulayman ibn Abd al-Malik (715-717) who began his political career as a governor of Filastin. Sulayman built the town of Ramla near the Lud, dug up wells for it and connected it with the new Barada Canal. The story of Ramla is very much like the story of Tel Aviv, without any of the publicity fuss and miracle claims. Where there was only sand (the name Ramla means the sandy place) a new prosperous metropolis emerged full of fine buildings, surrounded with orchards and greenery and lavishly supplied with water. In only a few years, Ramla became one of the main exporting centres of fruits, dried figs in particular. Yaqut al-Hamawi mentioned Ramla as the best town in the country in abundance of water tanks and fruits.

Most Arab historians and geographers gave accounts of the building and development of this city. Khusru reported that most of the buildings were made of marble of different colours with ornamental carvings. A prosperous picture came from the pen of al-Maqdisi with such words:

"It is a fine city and well built; its water is good and plentiful; its fruits are abundant. It combines manifold advantages, situated as it is in the midst of beautiful villages and lordly towns, near to holy places and pleasant hamlets. Commerce here is prosperous and the markets excellent. ..... the bread is of the best and the whitest; lands are well favoured above all others, and the fruits are of the most luscious. This capital stands among fruitful fields, walled towns, and serviceable hospices. It possesses magnificent hostelries and pleasant baths, dainty food and various condiments, spacious houses, fine mosques and broad roads."[22]

Sulayman built his palace in Ramla together with Dar al-Sabbaghin and the famous White Mosque which became the third most important mosque in the whole of Syria, with the largest mihrab known in the Islamic world of the period. The town was made the administrative capital of the jund of Filastin and remained so under Arab government. In addition, it became an intellectual centre which produced many names in the history of Islamic thought, like Abu Khalid al-Ramli and Musa ibn Sahl al-Ramli. A leading Sufi school was likewise established in this town.

The Umayyad caliphs fondness of the desert and its sport, hunting continued. In the semi-desert parts of Palestine, they built a series of palaces and lodges. The most famous of these, the Mashta (the winter residence) was built by Walid II (743-4) in the shape of a square building some 157 yards long with towers, pointed arches and portico on marble columns. From an ornamental fountain in the middle of the forecourt, a jet of water rushed towards the ceiling of a dome lavishly adorned with colonettes and arches. The Mashta had a magnificent facade ornamented in friezes of which a considerable part was given by Sultan

(22) Citation in Le Strange, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

Abd al-Hamid to Kaiser Wilhelm II. The building incorporated many architectural designs which became typical of later Islamic art, like the column-flanked niches and depressed pointed arches.

Qusayr Amrah, another lodge built by Walid I (705-15) near the Dead Sea, is notable for its representational art. Inside are four figures of Caesar, Chosroes, Nagashi and Roderick, the sovereigns of the four empires subdued by the Arabs—Byzantia, Persia, Abyssinia and Spain. There are also other figures of dubious identity. The entire bathing chambers are adorned with paintings which have miraculously survived. A nude bathing woman, nude male figures and a portrait of the caliph throw important light on the attitudes of early Islam towards art. There are also allegorical paintings depicting the fall of Adam and Eve and the ages of man.[23]

At Khirbat al-Mafjar, some three miles north of Jericho, are the remains of a winter palace built by Hisham (724-43) which contained other series of painting and sculptural works including a statue of a woman carrying flowers and a panel representing a group of dancing girls. Animals, birds and flowers enriched the walls and niches. Numerous other palaces including the Muwaqqar built by Yazid II (720-24) were badly destroyed, mostly by earthquakes.

An important monetary measure taken by Abd al-Malik was the introduction of minting Arabic coins, among other places, in Tiberias and Amman with Arabic Kufic inscription. The picture of the caliphs wearing their Kufah headgear was later added to the composition of the golden dinar. The noteworthy point here is the willingness of the Umayyads to incorporate representational pictures, including nude female figures, in their works, whether on coins, on palace walls or in statuettes. Nasir Khusru saw in Ramla many carved figures in buildings. This attitude drastically changed in the following century when the painting and sculpting of animate objects were treated as sinful activities usurping the work of the creator. This change of attitude, in the opinion of Philip Hitti, is due to the influence of views held by new Jewish converts to Islam.[24]

The Intellectual Life

The great revival which the Arabs infused in the intellectual life of the medieval world around the Mediterranean shores and which directly influenced the birth of the European renaissance and modern civilisation, is a subject well accepted and treated by all historians of those four or five centuries. In that Golden Age of Arab civilisation, Damascus, Baghdad, Cordoba and Cairo became the main centres of learning. Though Palestine did not attain such a position, it became nevertheless the stage for a host of intellectual activities and the stop-

(23) For fuller accounts of these murals see Brockelmann, C., *History of the Islamic Peoples*, London, 1946, pp. 94-96.

(24) Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

ping place for many eminent scholars. Perhaps a Zionist historian may be a better authority in summing up the cultural position of Palestine under Arab rule:

...Throughout the early period, until the invasion of the Crusaders, it was an important place of art and learning; and while the Ommayed dynasty held rule in Damascus during the seventh and eighth centuries, it took a commanding position in the religious and scholarly life of both the Arabs and Jews. Jerusalem had its university together with Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo ... some hundreds of years before the oldest universities of Europe."[25]

Ibn Battuta gives a lengthy list of writers and scholars whom he met in Palestine during his brief visit. The first name which is associated with Palestinian Arabic literature, of course, is Shams al-Din Abu Abdulla al-Maqdisi al-Bashari, the great geographer of Islam well known for his book, *Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim* (The Best Specifications in the Knowledge of Territories), illustrated with some of the earliest medieval maps. Abu Abdulla al-Maqdisi was born in the year 985 in Jerusalem, as his name indicates. An important feature of his intellectual make-up is that his father was a master builder responsible for many building projects in Palestine, some of which remained to our own era. Al-Maqdisi's comments on the architectural styles and building conditions in the Holy Land and elsewhere are therefore considerably valuable, and his description of the ingenious planning and construction of the port of Acre carried out by his father and adopted by successive engineers both in Europe and the East, is immensely useful.

Another Jerusalemite writer, Ibn Hilal Jamil al-Din al-Muqaddasi wrote in 1351 *Muthir al-Gharam ila Ziyarat al-Quds wa al-Sham* (The Stimulant of Love for Visiting Jerusalem and Damascus). From Nablus came the traveller, Sufi and author Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi (1641-1731). The famous theologian and founder of the sect known after his name, al-Shafi'i, hailed from Ghaza. Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali served many researchers, including the present writer, with his book on life in Palestine *Al-Uns al-Jalil fi Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Sham* (The Great Pleasure of the History of Jerusalem and Damascus) written in 1495. The School of Jerusalem had also attracted many scholars to the carpeted floors and carved pulpits of the Haram al-Sharif. The extensive library attached to the mosque added another attraction for the seekers of knowledge. Al-Ghazali spent a long time lecturing in the Aqsa Mosque towards the close of the eleventh century, and published later on the collection of his lectures in the Jerusalem Tract. Rabi'a al-Adawiya, the famous Sufi woman, spent her life in the Holy City.

The numerous shrines and Moslem mausolea found everywhere in Palestine now are evidence of the great number of Islamic figures who lived or died in this land. The graves of Ubada and Shaddad, the companies of the Prophet, are two examples.

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(25) Bentwich, N., *Palestine,* London, 1934, p. 35.

Under the Crusaders

One of the remarkable features of Arab rule in Palestine is that for about five centuries Jerusalem remained completely free from any political or military disaster for the first time and experienced none of the destruction, burning or looting to which it was frequently exposed in the preceding periods, particularly under Jewish rule. This peace came to an end with the invasion of the Crusaders in 1099. The capture of the city was accompanied by a brutal massacre in which, according to Arab sources, seventy thousand Moslems were slain, and the treasures of the mosques taken away. However, comparative respect was shown to existing buildings and the Crusaders confined their work, in general, to converting some of the mosques including the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa to churches.

Arab sources naturally described the rule of the Crusaders in black terms, but the fact remains that, notwithstanding their bloody massacres and burning of valuable books, they added a great deal to the development of the country. They opened new roads, organised the taxation, customs, ports and administration of the country; they also introduced a few new industries, including sugar milling, some of which still exist in Acre and Jericho. The Crusaders' motivating aim was to capture the trade with Asia. During their first period of rule which lasted eighty-seven years, the centre of the country enjoyed comparative peace, enough to allow for planning and building, especially during the reign of King Fulk.

The Franks founded new cathedrals of which the Cathedral of Caesarea came in the fore. Remnants of their palaces in Acre, Gaza, Hebron and Ramla bear witness to lofty buildings with slender, clustered columns, sturdy arches, ribbed groins, capitals with sharp relief of foliage, and cornices with intricate designs. For the defence of their kingdom, the country was filled with castles, towers and fortifications. By this time the east and the west had come into direct contact which led to the regeneration of Europe. It was during this period that Western civilisation became indebted to the Arabs of Palestine for the example they had set in the Holy Land. From the Syrian leper houses, Europe learned the building of hospices and hospitals. History books dwell extensively on the arts and industries learned by the Crusaders during their sojourn in Palestine.

Saladin restored Palestine to the Arabs in 1187 and the Ayyubid rule ushered a new era of development. Al-Atabki mentioned that Saladin dedicated the whole income of the province to rebuilding the Holy City and contributed two thousand dinars from his own treasury to the renovation of the Haram al-Sharif.[26] The walls and moats of Jerusalem were rebuilt. The Bimaristan was opened and supplied with free drugs. The convent of St. Anne which the Franks had built was converted to a school.

Despite the Ayyubid interval, the Frankish invasion left deep scars on Palestine from which it did not completely heal. The fierce battles which were

(26) Atabki, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 305.

fought between the two adversaries resulted in the destruction of large parts of the country. Forests were burnt, mosques and synagogues destroyed and towns with military advantages were demolished for fear of invasion. The prosperous part of Jaffa, for example, was destroyed, rebuilt and redestroyed. Contemporary travellers reports are therefore contradictory and the researcher has always to ascertain the date and circumstances before making any attempt to evaluate the reports. In the 1330's Jaffa was described to be in ruins, but Ludolph von Suchem found it in 1340 as a "fairly peopled" and "an exceeding ancient and beauteous city." Subsequent travellers who visited it after 1345, when Sultan Nasr al-Din Muhammed demolished it after hearing of a new impending landing, found it in shambles.[27]

When called upon by his officers to destroy Ascalon for military treason, Saladin uttered the touching words which may indeed sum up the feelings of typical Arab rulers who made their debut in history, "It is sweeter to me to lose all my sons than to destroy one brick of the town."[28]

Palestinian Nationalism

It is adventurous to talk of nationalism when dealing with precapitalistic societies. Yet within the reference of medievalism, it is possible to trace a parochial form of nationalism evidenced by a peculiar attachment and partiality to one's country and jealousy in defending it. With the exception of one brief spell of political independence and insurrection, the Palestinian Arabs behaved as loyal citizens to the caliphate recognising their country as a part of a larger whole, a healthy concept which brought prosperity to the Holy Land whenever it was faithfully accepted and protected, whether under the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Romans or Arabs.

Within that concept, we find an unmistakable nationalist sentiment expressed by the Palestinians pointing to their sense of national identity. The same author of *Ahsan al-Taqasim,* Abu Abdulla al-Maqdisi, was a leading ideological spirit in this field. His accounts of Palestine must always be treated with caution and reserve on that account. One of the passages in his monumental work, often repeated by many writers, including Yaqut, is still worth recording here:

"I was once in the majlis of al-Qadi al-Mukhtar Abu Yahya Bahram in Basra. They went on discussing Egypt until I was asked what country was the greatest. I answered, 'Our country.' They said what country was the nicest? I answered, 'Our country.' They said what country was more favoured. I answered, 'Our country.' They said what country was finest. I answered, 'Our country.' They said what country was more fruitful. I said, 'Our country.' They said what country was the largest. I said, 'Our country.' They were filled with astonishment and said, 'You are a partial fellow and have claimed what cannot be accepted

(27) *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society,* Vol. V, 1925, pp. 2-3.
(28) Atabki, *op. cit.,* Vol. VI, p. 46.

from you. Your example is as that of al-Hajjaj and the man with his camel.' I said as for my claim that my country is the greatest, it is because therein it combines this world and the world of the hereafter. Therefore, those who are living in this world and want to seek the hereafter may find their aim in it; those who are living with the hereafter but their souls urge them to taste the luxuries of this world may find it in it. As for its nice weather, it has no bite in its cold and no harm in its heat. As for its being the finest, you can find no better buildings, cleaner country or better mosque than its mosque. As for its abundance, God has gathered in it the fruits of the valleys, plains and mountains and all things of opposite nature like the almonds, dates, nuts, figs and bananas. As for favour, it is the land of resurrection from whence we dispersed and thither we shall gather. The favour of Mecca is merely by the Qa'ba and the favour of Medina in only by the Prophet on whom may be peace; and both towns will be wedded to Jerusalem on the Day of Resurrection so that it may embrace the whole favour. As for its size, all mankind will be gathered in it on the Day of Judgement. What land is larger than that?"

Needless to say, they agreed with him. One Palestinian writer went on writing chauvinistically on the virtue of his country, its Holy City, its mosques, etc. Some seventeen names applied by the Arabs to Jerusalem were counted by al-Zarkashi as a result of such preoccupation. Like al-Maqdisi, al-Hanbali also goes to great lengths in stressing the singular importance of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.[29] Among other pedestrian episodes of patriotism, he mentioned that Abd al-Malik allocated for the building of the Dome of the Rock seven years of Egypt's income. The allocation was far too generous in that there was a balance of 100,000 dinars left over on the completion of the work. The architects informed the caliph of the result, whereupon Abd al-Malik awarded them the money. The two architects wrote back thanking him and stating that far from accepting the money, they were prepared to sell the gold of their wives to spend it on the mosque. "Spend it on the nearest thing to your heart," they suggested to him. Abd al-Malik ordered that the dinars be melted and cast on the dome. "And none could keep his eye on it for the gold over it." The story goes on to claim that felt material was tailored so as to clothe the dome and protect it in winter![30]

The dazzling gold must have certainly caught the eye of Ibn Battuta as he approached the town from the south with the sun casting its light on the lofty mosque before he wrote his accounts of the Dome: "Inside and outside, it has arches and elaborate work which defeat all description. Most of it is covered with gold which makes it radiate with light and shine like lightening; the eye of the beholder is perplexed with its beauty and the tongue of the observer falls short in portraying it."[31]

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(29) See Al-Hanbali, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 201 ff.

(30) *Ibid.*, pp. 241-2.

(31) Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

The patriotic attachment showed its dimensions during the wars with the Crusaders. Saladin could never have defeated the Franks without the selfless sacrifice and determination of the Palestinians and the logistic dependence of the populace. The villagers were all too eager to provide him with supplies and intelligence. Of course, the obvious evidence of what Palestine meant to the Arabs was revealed in the stubborn determination to rid it of the invaders regardless of time or cost, in contrast to the other parts of the Islamic Empire to whose losses the Arabs were indifferent.

Arab chronicles give dramatic accounts of the horror and jubilation which swept over the entire country on the loss and reconquest of Jerusalem. The Moslems broke their fast, interrupted their prayers and went out into the streets wailing on hearing the report of its fall. Women who had never left their homes went out into Aqsa Mosque, cut their hair and tore their clothes. Peculiar enough, the same exodus of 1948 was enacted in 1099 with the roads choked with refugees in every direction, leaving their properties and kinsmen behind.[32] Whatever town they had to abandon, the Arab defenders hastened to make sure of its reconquest by destroying its walls and defences, a sharper presence of mind and determination than anything shown in 1948 or 1967.

The Jews under Arab Rule

It is universally accepted that under Arab rule the Jews had their first chance of rest and exhuberance since the disintegration of Solomon's kingdom. The highly Zionistic accounts of M.I. Dimont explains the position of the Arab Jews as follows:

"The image modern man holds of the Jew in the Islamic Age in no way corresponds to reality. He differed from the Biblical Jew as much as the New York 'Café Society' Jew differs from the ghetto Jew. A renaissance — a reawakening — had transformed the Biblical Jew into a totally new individual, bearing little resemblance to the past. In this age he was a hedonist and philanderer, a *bon vivant* and sophisticate, a worldly philosopher and a scientist, a secular writer and poet."[33]

Although Jerusalem was reopened for the Jews by the Moslem caliphs, the Jews were more attracted to the thriving commercial centres of Baghdad, Basrah, Aleppo, Cordoba and Cairo. Yet, small communities gathered over the years in Jerusalem, Safad, Tabaria, and Hebron. According to al-Hanbali, some of the Jerusalemite Jews were engaged in work connected with the Aqsa Mosque and were exempted from the poll tax *(jizyah)*. These communities were reinforced with new blood coming from the Jews expelled from Spain after the fall of Granada to the Christians. Under permission negotiated with the caliph, a large

(32) Atabki, *op. cit.*, Vol VI, pp. 244-5.
(33) Dimont, M.I., *Jew, God and History*, New York, 1962, pp. 197.

number of the Mourners of Zion *(Karaites)* gathered in the Holy City and established a new Jewish Academy of learning which remained until the Crusaders entered the city. Tiberias became a centre of exegesis and Hebrew studies which helped in the preservation of this language. Similar scholastic institutions were set up in Gaza, Ascalon and Haifa.[34]

Tragedy hit the Jews with the invasion of the Crusaders who inaugurated their regime, according to al-Atabki, by gathering the Jews together in the synagogue and burning the lot. The Franks were distinctly harsher on the Jews than on the Moslems, and the reason is not difficult to divine. The Crusaders conquest was a trade enterprise and the Jews were the competitors of the rising European merchant class. Thus, when the medieval Jewish traveller, Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela went to Palestine in the twelfth century, he could count only 1900 Jews in the Frankish domain. Their miserable state and utter poverty contrasted sharply in his reports with the conditions of the Jews under Moslem rule.[35]

(34) Eban, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

(35) Conder, C.R., *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,* London, 1897, p. 244.

IV

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNDER ARAB GOVERNMENT

1200 Years of Rule or Misrule?

Notwithstanding the comments of nearly all historians, including Zionist historians, on the Golden Age that was ushered in with the rise of Islam in Arabia, Zionist propagandists and apologists continued to disseminate the lie of the decline of Palestine under Arab management. Thus we read the American Zionist sympathiser, Mr. Lowdermilk, affirming the opposite to all that is recorded on the Arab world:

"Particularly, during most of the past 1200 years, lands of the Middle East have been gradually wasting away; its cities and works have fallen into neglect and ruin; its people also slipped backward into a state of utter decline."[1]

It is even more shocking to note how this sweeping statement embraced Abbasid Iraq and Fatimid Egypt as well as Palestine. Perhaps the best accounts on the state of life in Palestine just before the Crusaders and the Mongols plunged the country into a dark shadow of wars, may be found in the reports of the Crusaders themselves; their frequent references to the vineyards, olive groves, orchards, corn fields and watered gardens prove the Zionist claims false. "In outer Jordan, the roebuck wandered among the glades of oak by running brooks, and hid also in the copses of carmel. The hills of Palestine were covered with brushwood, the plains of Caesarea dotted with oak. In the more open lands, wheat and barley, oats, Indian corn, durrah, rice, millet, lentils, beans and sesame were grown. Cotton, and flax and indigo were cultivated in the plains, and in the Jordan valley. Madder grew at Tripoli, and Damascus. The flax of Nablus was as good as that of Egypt."[2]

Arab sources are full of satisfactory accounts on the economic conditions of Palestine. The invading Arab tribes settled peacefully without expelling or dispossessing the existing inhabitants. The absence of reference to famine, unemployment, shortage of provisions, or lack of water is noteworthy. Ibn Haukal described the country as one of the most fertile lands of all times and the most abundant in Syria,[3] a claim in which he was supported by al-Istakhri, not to mention the Palestinian historians. Both al-Bakri and al-Idrisi thought Jericho to be the best town in Syria.

(1) Lowdermilk, W.C., *Palestine: Land of Promise,* London, 1944, p. 19.

(2) Conder, *op. cit.,* pp. 239-240.

(3) *Surat al-Ard,* Vol. I, pp. 171-2.

Scanty figures which were left enable us to form a more precise picture of the actual economic conditions of Palestine. Ibn Khaldun included in his famous work an entry which he copied from the Book of Jirab al-Dawla (The Purse of the State), containing the revenue of the treasury during the caliphate of al-Ma'mun[4] from the various provinces. The following are some of the entries made:

Ahwaz	25,000,000 dirhams
Faris	27,000,000 dirhams
Khurasan	28,000 dirhams
Damascus	420,000 dinars[5]
Jordan	97,000 dinars
Palestine	310,000 dinars and 300,000 ratls of oil
Egypt	1,920,000 dinars
Libya	2,000,000 dirhams
Hijaz	300,000 dinars
Yemen	370,000 dinars
Africa	26,000,000 dirhams

During the reign of Harun al-Rashid, al-Jahshiyari wrote the Book of Ministers for al-Rashid's minister, Yahya al-Barmekide in which he included the income of Syrian provinces:

Kinnasrin and al-Awasim	470,000 dinars
Hims	320,000 dinars
Damascus	420,000 dinars
Jordan	96,000 dinars
Palestine	310,000 dinars
Total income of Syria	1,616,000 dinars

In all of these state fiscal figures, Palestine emerges as a rich country competing with the most prosperous areas of the empire. Indeed, Ibn Khurdadbih puts in his *Book of the Roads and the Provinces* the income of Palestine as higher than all of the Syrian provinces:

Kinnasrin and al-Awasim	400,000 dinars
Hims	340,000 dinars
Damascus	350,000 dinars
Palestine	500,000 dinars[6]

Ibn Khurdadbih's figures show an increase in the Palestine revenue by more than sixty percent from the dating of al-Jahshiyari's book (about 800 A.D.) to the year of 884 A.D. on whose receipts Ibn Khurdadbih based his calculations. The steady rise in the economic prosperity of the Syrian provinces is marked by

(4) *Tarikh Ibn Khaldun (The History of Ibn Khaldun)*, Beirut, 1956, Vol. I, pp. 322-324. On further examination made by Guy le Strange, it transpired that Ibn Khaldun was at fault in dating his figures. The account concerned should refer to the caliphate of Al-Mahdi, just around 780 A.D.

(5) The dinar is 15 dirhams and was valued at 59½ grains Troy.

(6) In Le Strange, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

a leap of the state income from 902,000 dinars in the year 820 to 2,600,000 dinars in the year 908. In view of the fixed system of taxation of the caliphate and its characteristic stability, the rise seems to have come basically from increased production. There was little sign of inflation or rising prices in Palestine and al-Maqdisi was more than pleased, and on more than one occasion wrote about the reasonable prices and abundance of food in the Jerusalem shops. Writing on the conditions of his contemporary society of the tenth century, he quoted the price of cheese in Palestine as no more than the equivalent of a fourth of a penny per pound.

Commerce and Industry

Palestine has never been an industrial centre in the Middle East because it lacks raw materials. Apart from sulphates, the only mineral found there is a limited amount of copper of precarious commercial value. Most of its manufactured goods were therefore based on craftsmanship and industries complementary to agriculture. Textiles reached a high level of perfection in Palestine, and Syria in general, at the hands of the Arabs. While Damascus and Lebanon acquired world fame for their silks, Palestine concentrated on cotton looms. One of the main markets of Jerusalem called Souq al-Qattanin (market of the cotton dealers) bears an Arabic inscription stating that the souq was renovated in 737 A.H. by Sultan Muhammad Ibn Qalawun. During his time, Palestine was a small centre for cotton cultivation and weaving; the munayyin and the bal'isiyah produced in Kadas were in great demand.

Ropes were also made in Jerusalem and Kadas, but the most important Arab introduction to the cotton market was the manufacture of paper; known in the Middle Ages as *charta damascena,* it used to be made in Tiberias. A wide range of carpets were also woven in Tiberias as well as in other textile centres. Both Khusru and al-Idrisi mention the *samania,* a kind of reed mat produced around the lake of that name; al-Idrisi praised it highly as something beyond compare.

Shipbuilding and repair was concentrated around Acre, which became the leading naval base of the early Umayyad empire. Pottery and glass were brought to a higher level of beauty and workmanship by the Arabs. In addition to the ceramic pots of the Byzantine era, they now added the art of glazed pottery which had its home in Mesopotamia. Intricate geometrical shapes, stylised floral and scale patterns, sometimes painted and sometimes incised, characterised the lavishly decorated pottery of Arab Palestine. New shapes were likewise popularised from the early days of the Umayyads.[7] The new techniques in glass manufacture also found scope in a few towns. The best mirrors, according to al-Maqdisi, were made in Jericho. Pilgrim bottles with multi-collar neck and handles filled the shops. A few glass factories dotted the suburbs of Jerusalem and Hebron.

(7) See Baramki, *op. cit.,* pp. 213-4.

At Sujil, some thirty-seven kilometers north of Jerusalem, a rough and folkloric type of pottery achieved widespread fame. Lamp making became the livelihood of many people in Palestine, and some exquisite examples still remain in the mosques and churches.

Olive oil production tops the list of the processing industries. The quantity of oil the caliph received from Palestine as shown in the state revenue quoted by Ibn Khakdun confirms the fact that the Holy Land must have been the first oil producing centre. Nablus, of course, was and remains the principal soap producing centre of the Middle East. The treacle known as "dibs" was made in Baisan and the muri sauce, esteemed for its medicinal values, in Jericho. Jerusalem honey was famous because of the abundance of thyme in the vicinity. The wine produced in the country was described by such authorities as Ibn Harma and Udai Ibn al-Raqqa as the best in the market.[8] Al-Qalqashandi mentions that sugar cane was another manufacturing crop raised in Palestine. Tanning was a profession which had specially attracted the Jews. Quarrying and cutting of white stones and marble was carried out in the hills of Judea and Samaria, particularly at Beit Jabril. Salt powder was collected from the Dead Sea and sulphur from the Ghaur. The Arabs also put the asphalt of the Dead Sea to extensive use as a pesticide.

Throughout its history, Palestine's commercial importance lay in its location rather than its production. The trading route under the caliphate, however, ran further to the north and swelled the traffic between Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus and the Mediterranean. Heavier demands, therefore, were put on the productive capacity of Palestine, taking advantage of the thriving and bustling empire market extending from Central Asia to Western Europe.

Apart from the typical commodities of soap and olive oil, also available for export were such items as kerchiefs, cotton material, mixed silks and cottons, ropes, carpets, etc. Al-Maqdisi mentions the celebrated types of raisins known as aynuni and duri, together with dried figs, blankets, mirrors, lamps, needles and saucepans, as some of Palestine's exports. From Tiberias, according to his accounts, paper and clothing were sold abroad; from Amman came grain, sheep and honey; from Jerusalem, ropes, textiles, mirrors, pine nuts and lamp jars; from Jericho, indigo and muri sauce.

During this period, Jerusalem became a thriving trading city full of shops and bazaars. "It has numerous markets and fine buildings," observed Yaqut.[9] Nasir Khusru noted a special market founded in Jerusalem for each profession, a tradition which has survived in this city to our own period. The main trade outlets for Palestinian products were Damascus, Egypt, and the desert Bedouins.

Roads and Ports

The trading position of Palestine, of course, could only be maintained with

(8) *Yaqut al-Hamawi (The Sapphire of Hama).*
(9) Hamawi, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 166-7.

efficient communications and secure roads. There is little record of brigandage threatening the trade caravans travelling to and from Jerusalem. The roads network itself was largely laid by the Romans, and the Arabs had only to maintain the network for the users and diversify it according to the needs of the times. A few highways still bear the names of the Arab rulers who built them, for instance the main coastal road linking Acre with Tyre and Beirut, which has an Arabic inscription near Naqura giving the name of al-Malik al-Dahir and the year of 870 A.H. (1294 A.D.).[10]

Reference to the other main road connecting Jerusalem with Damascus occurs in many works. This highway which passed below Lake Tiberias where it crossed the valley with a long bridge, was well built and supported on twenty arches, according to the description of Yaqut; it is probably the same bridge which al-Maqdisi mentioned earlier.

Al-Malik al-Dahir, the man known for bridge construction, left many bridges in Palestine including the remarkable Lydda Bridge which served the Cairo-Damascus highway. This was a sixty-mile long and thirteen-mile wide bridge built on three pointed arches. Its masonry work included a stone with an exquisite sample of thirteenth century Arabic inscription giving the name of the builder and the date of Ramadan—771 A.H. (1273). The inscription is flanked on both sides by quaint bas reliefs of stylised lions (the heraldic emblems of al-Malik al-Dahir) attacking two small animals.[11]

Ibn Battuta writes with wonder about the undulating mountain roads of the Jordan Valley. Along these roads regular postal services introduced by Abd al-Malik ran in relays of horses.[12] The enormity of the communications network can be visualised from the number of city gates. In al-Maqdisi's days, the Arab geographer counted eight iron gates for Jerusalem. This figure grew to ten in al-Hanbali's days. The conditions of the urban roads are described by Khusru thus, "It (Jerusalem) has high, well built and clean bazaars. All the streets are paved with slabs of stone; and wheresoever there was a hill or a height, they have cut it down and made it level, so that as soon as the rain falls, the water runs off, and the whole place is washed clean."[13]

Al-Maqdisi draws pictures of Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea teeming with little boats carrying merchandise in every direction. The Arab main maritime bulwark in Palestine, however, revolved around Acre. When Arabs fought the Byzantines in combat, they stayed on land as they had no maritime experience. Mu'awiya, as a governor of Syria, sought permission of the caliphate in Mecca to build ships and challenge the foe on water, a matter which was strongly resisted at first. A few ships were hastily built in Acre, and the desert Arabs

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(10) *Survey of Western Palestine,* Palestine Exploration Fund, Vol. I, p. 159.

(11) See pictures and details in *Western Palestine Survey,* Vol. IV, pp. 110-114.

(12) Hitti, *op. cit.,* p. 474.

(13) Citation in Le Strange, *op. cit.,* p. 88.

nearly wiped out the entire Byzantine fleet in one battle. The mastery of the Mediterranean passed into the hands of the Arabs who embarked on a naval expansion program based in Acre where Mu'awiya set up his shipbuilding yards.

Hisham Ibn Abd al-Malik rebuilt the town and organised its port. Greater still was the construction work ordered by Ahmad Ibn Tulun (868-884) and undertaken by the Jerusalemite builder, Abu Bakr. The underwater fortification engineered by Abu Bakr was probably the first of its kind in the world with its massive chain some fifty ells long; it could be raised and lowered mechanically to admit or obstruct incoming vessels. From the port of Acre, the Crusaders adopted many ideas which served the future ports of Europe.

Ibn Tulun also surrounded Acre with its massive walls. Thanks to this development, the town became not only a naval base but also a major industrial and commercial centre for the whole of Syria. Yaqut described it as one of the finest and most prosperous coastal towns. Ibn Jubair compared it as second only to Constantinople and described it as "the meeting place of Moslem and Christian merchants of all lands." Khusru also dwelt on the description of Acre and added that the towns on that coast had similar ports. The Moslem traveller of inland Persia was fascinated by the novelty of the port: "A place for the housing of ships. It resembles, so to speak, a stable, the back of which is toward the town, with the side walls stretching out into the sea."

Ascalon, nicknamed as the Bride of Syria, was one of the coastal towns which grew and increased in importance under Arab rule. The busy coast of Palestine alluded to by Khusru, was given this picture by Maqdisi:

"All along the sea coast of Filastin are the watch stations, called ribat, where the levies assemble ... And in each of these ports there are men who know the Greek tongue, for they have missions to the Greeks, and trade with them in diverse wares. At the stations, whenever a Greek vessel appears, they sound the horns; also if it be night, they light a beacon there on the tower; or, if it be day, they make a great smoke. From every watch-station on the coast up to the capital (ar-Ramla) there are built, at intervals, high-towers, in each of which is stationed a company of men. On the occasion of the arrival of the Greek ships the men, perceiving these, kindle the beacon on the tower nearest to the coast station ..."[14]

Water Projects

As a country dependent on agriculture and with rain falling less than an annual average of twenty inches, plus a perculating surface of limestone, hydraulic inventions occupy the foreground in man's thinking. The Nabataeans offered the most ingenious devices in water economy, and the Romans performed the greatest engineering feats in water conveyance. The Arabs kept the Roman aquaducts in good repair and carried on the hydraulic traditions of the country.

(14) Citation in Le Strange, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

Two main contributions to the hydraulic network of Palestine were made by the early caliphate. To the two water reservoirs in Jerusalem, known to Arab historians as Birkat Bani Israel and Birkat Sulayman, was added a third, Birkat Iyad, made by Iyad ibn Ghanm who accompanied Omar in the entry of the Holy City. With the underground water tanks of the Haram al-Sharif, Jerusalem solved all its water problems. Yaqut quoted a common saying in his time: "There is nothing more abundant in Jerusalem than water and the call for prayer." He also noted that one could not find one house without one, two or three water tanks.

Nasir Khusru asserted that it was the duty of each person to store the rain-water coming down from his roof so that not one drop was wasted. "They have constructed leaden conduits for carrying down the water, and the rock cisterns lie below these, with covered passages leading down thereto, through which the conduits pass to the tanks, whereby any loss of water is saved, and impurities are kept therefrom."[15] Khusru also gave further details on the streams which carried rain water from the hills to the water tanks.

The building of Ramla was associated with another important hydraulic scheme implemented by the Arabs. The great cistern of Unaiziya carried an Arabic inscription giving the date of Thu al-Hijja, 172 A.H. (789 A.D.), or the period of Harun al-Rashid. The imposing roofed structure, with a series of parallel barrel vaults carried on arches, known as Birkat al-Unaiziya, was first constructed, however, by Abd al-Malik. It was under the government of Sulayman ibn Abd al-Malik that the lavish schemes of well drilling and canal building started around Ramla Successive caliphs allocated annual sums in their budgets for the maintenance of the Ramla waterworks.

Nablus was another town which impressed Arab historians with its water supply. But even Amman, in the midst of the desert, was a green haven as we read in *Mu'jam al-Buldan*. "On the sword edge of the desert stands Amman with its villages, farms and Balqa' plantations. It is the granary of wheat and cattle and has many rivers and flour mills driven by water."[16]

Numerous wells, dug and maintained by regular budgetary allowances, dotted the country, with various devices for drawing the water. Of the most ingenious contrivances was the one applied at the well of al-Saturah in Safad, some one hundred ten ells deep, and described by al-Dimashqi—two wooden casks attached to a single rope in a manner that when one is at the mouth of the well, the other is at the surface of the water, and vice versa. "What sets the casks in motion is a piece of machinery with cords and wheels, whereby the rope with the casks is made to work continually over the mouth of the well backwards and forwards, to right and then to left. For there are trained mules, who keep the machine in motion, pacing round it. And when the mule that has gone round hears the

(15) Le Strange, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198.

(16) Hamawi, *op. cit.*

rushing of the water and the rattle of the chain, it turns round and goes back towards the starting place, turning the machine in the opposite way by walking in the other direction, till it hears again the rushing of water and the rattle of the chains; then it turns back again and goes over its former way, backwards and forwards, ceaselessly."[17]

Agriculture

All the travellers who visited western Syria were impressed by its agrarian success. From their accounts, there emerges a picture of a land covered with trees and greenery. Although Arab travellers and chroniclers were understandably accustomed to the Middle East desert landscape, and the barren lands were usual sites calling for little or no comment. Yet the absence of reference to wastelands and abandoned fields in Palestine cannot be dismissed out of hand.

Al-Maqdisi gives the extent of cultivation around the town of Hebron thus: "All the country round Hebron, for the distance of half a stage, is filled with villages and vineyards and grounds bearing grapes and apples; it is even as though it were all but a single orchard of vines and fruit trees." Ibn Haukal also mentions Hebron as a town situated in a valley surrounded with hills thick with trees.[18]

Nablus emerges as a great agricultural centre in the historical records of the period. Al-Dimashqi described it as a palace surrounded by gardens. "It is a great city," wrote Ibn Battuta, "full of trees and flowing rivers; it is one of the best olive producing areas in Syria. Oil is carried from it to Egypt and Damascus and the halwa of Carob is made in it for export to Damascus and other cities ... The melons which bear its name come from it, and it is a wonder of fine flavour."[19] Al-Maqdisi also praised the rich olive trees of Nablus and referred to the numerous flour mills driven by its stream.

Al-Dimashqi mentioned the area of Safad to the north as "full of vineyards, olives, carob and terebinth trees." Rich harvests of rice and cotton were gathered from the depression of al-Hula, where many villages, according to Yaqut, thrived on agriculture.

The main Arab contribution to the agrarian future of Palestine was certainly the introduction of citrus trees. Under the caliphate, the fertile crescent was suddenly covered with orange, lemon and citron orchards which proved to be very suitable to the Palestine soil. According to al-Mas'udi, the Arabs brought the orange trees from India first to Oman and then to Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Egypt.[20]

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(17) Le Strange, *op. cit.*, pp. 524-525.
(18) *Surat al-Ard*, p. 172.
(19) Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 35.
(20) Mas'udi, *Muruj al-Dhahab (The Golden Plains)*, Vol. II, p. 438.

The vast *laissez passer* empire established by the Arabs facilitated the exchange and transplantation of many species of animal and agricultural genes. Lake Tiberias benefited from the importation of new kinds of fresh water fish brought from Iraq, particularly the carp. Yaqut described the lake as "surrounded with a continuous line of villages and palm trees, covered with boats and teeming with fish."

Bananas were another novelty in Palestine receiving this amusing description from al-Maqdisi, "...which same is a fruit in the form of a cucumber but when the skin is peeled off, the interior is not unlike the water melon, only finer flavoured and more luscious."

The fine quality of the Palestine crops was recommended by many a writer. Al-Maqdisi put the weight of the ordinary Palestinian apple as reaching as much as one hundred dirhams (ten to eleven ounces). Pest control was applied on an extensive scale; one of the means used and described by Nasir Khusru was the application of asphalt to the trunks of fruit and olive trees which inhibited the insects from climbing the trees.

Pilgrims of Three Religions

The tourist attraction of the Holy Land which we associate with the name of Palestine began its records with the symbolic tour of Jerusalem made by Omar and his entourage. The city's gates were soon opened to the Jews and with its importance to the faith of Islam, it became the centre of pilgrimage for millions of monotheistic peoples from all over the world. Nasir Khusru described the droves of Mohammedan, Christian and Jewish pilgrims crowding the city of Jerusalem and mentioned that twenty thousand visitors arrived in the city in one year.

The Arabs of Palestine, some of the earliest pioneers in tourism cherished the three main attractions of Jerusalem. For the Moslems, they built the Haram, for the Christians they maintained the Holy Sepulchre, and for the Jews they developed, in agreement with the concordat between the Mourners of Zion and the caliphate, the Jewish interest in the Wailing Wall. The open-door policy of tolerance allowed the faithful of all religions to visit the Holy City, regardless even of political considerations. The country was also helped by the Moslem pilgrimage for which Palestine was a halting station. From Central Asia, Turkey, Europe, Syria and Iraq, pilgrims congregated in Damascus to begin their long journey southward. This column was wont to meet in Ma'an the other column of North African pilgrims coming via Gaza. Many pilgrims stopped in Jerusalem to visit Islam's first qibla. In a short time, the profession of *muzawwireen* (guides) became an up-and-coming career and the resourceful inhabitants made every stone and tree a sacred historical site to be kissed and paid for. The often repeated complaints of contemporary tourists are not new at all. There was a common Arab proverb which said, "Thou canst find a spot in the Holy Land wherein no prophet or saint had knelt."

The Moslem rulers rose to the occasion by building a series of *khans* (inns) along the travellers' routes and in the towns, by providing new sources of water, opening new baths and organising the health resorts and spas. Harun al-Rashid was one of the Abbasid caliphs who built a number of hostels in Jerusalem. The development program of Saladin included also two hotels in the city. Sultan Baybars added another *khan* to its amenities in the year 1263. There were also a few *zawaya* (religious hostels for Moslem worshippers) dedicated to various pilgrims and maintained by special endowments. Each *zawiya* had its mosque, kitchen, wash room and sleeping quarters. Thus, in Jerusalem was al-Zawiya al-Naqshabandia for visitors from Pakistan, Zawiyat al-Hinud for visitors from India and al-Zawiya al-Qadiria for visitors from Afghanistan. Jerusalem had a special place in the hearts of the North African Moslems who hastened to set up their own quarters for the Maghariba. The towns were also supplied with a number of *sabil* (drinking places) which were usually connected with mosques and shrines.

Hebron also enjoyed a share of the tourist industry which brought a vast income to the inhabitants, according to Nasir Khusru who drew attention to the numerous rooms prepared for the visitors. Al-Maqdisi referred to a public house for feeding the poor pilgrims. He said anyone could call on the house and receive bread, a dish of lentils and olive oil, of which the eminent scholar availed himself and found most satisfying. Khusru, who also mentioned this institution, said that flour mills turned day and night to provide flour to the slave women who worked from sunrise to sunset baking bread for the alms house. Hebron known to the Arabs as Madinat al-Khalil (the City of the Friend, i.e., the friend of Allah, Abraham) is where Abraham was buried. The alms house which al-Maqdisi described as one of the best charity houses in the land of Islam, was kept open in memory of Abraham's proverbial hospitality by means of perpetual endowments. Abu al-Qasim al-Zayyani, the Moroccan traveller who visited the house in the late eighteenth century, pointed out that eating from it had become a religious blessing.[21]

With the passage of time the *manzil* and *madhif* (free guest houses) cluttered the highways of the country. Burckhardt who visited Palestine in 1812 wrote that "A peasant can travel for a whole month without expending a para." He counted more than thirty *manzil* in Feik alone, near Tiberias, on the road between Hauran and Acre. In these houses a man could have room and board for himself and fodder for his animals free of charge. The owner of the *manzil* was rewarded by the government with tax allowances and sometimes direct grants to defray his expenses,[22] a tradition which is probably unique in the world. The provisions of the pilgrims' convoy from Damascus to Mecca was also made the

(21) Zayyani, Abu al-Qasim, *Al-Turjumana al-Kubra* (*The Greater Translator*), Rabat, 1967, p. 266.

(22) Burckhardt, J.L., *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*, London, 1822, p. 280.

responsibility of the wali of Syria who was helped with a vast grant towards that task. The economic benefits reaped from the pilgrims' route became an element in the Zionist design for Palestine and the imperialist squabble over it.

The Christian churches also maintained monasteries and hospices for the Christian pilgrims by endowments and by gifts sent from all over the Christian world. But religious visitors were not the only category of tourists hailing to Palestine. The mineral springs of the country attracted substantial numbers of people who held the medicinal qualities of their waters in great esteem. *Mu'jam al-Buldan* mentions twelve hot springs in the area of Tiberias alone, frequented by people for medical treatment. They included such famous baths at the time as Hammam Lulu, Hammam Damakir and Hammam Minjada. These baths were carefully walled and organised with different amenities for men and women, etc. Nasir Khusru, who visited Tiberias, drew attention, among other things, to the pleasure houses built over the lake on columns of marble rising out of the water.

In Palestine, one of the earliest tourist countries, souvenir shops appeared in most major towns, particularly in Jerusalem, with a few workshops specialising in this handicraft. The tourist industry, however, not only brought business to the people but also provided substantial income to the state. Al-Maqdisi who complained of the heavy taxes imposed on the hoteliers mentioned the annual income of the treasury derived from the hotel tax in Syria as follows:

Jordan	170,000
Palestine	259,000
Damascus	400,000
Total	829,000

It is unquestionable that Palestine, under Arab rule, had more than its share of that great wealth and culture associated with the Golden Age of the Caliphate. For many generations the Arabs built on the work left by the Graeco-Roman civilisation; the magnificent mansions built in Palestine became the altar around which many roofs were raised by generations that have passed on this land up to this very day—the same mansions through which the Crusaders went from one door and came out of the other illuminated by the rays of civilisation that have blinded mankind in this century of ours.

V

NEW REVIVAL

Chaos Is Come Again

No sooner did Palestine recover from the Crusaders' wars, than a new and certainly more devastating peril appeared from the east. The Mongols, under the command of Holaku, conquered Syria after leaving Baghdad in ruin. They marched on Palestine after forming a new alliance with the Latin government in Antioch. There was nothing to stop Jerusalem from the same fate of Baghdad and Aleppo but for the formidable stand the Egyptian army made at Ein Jalut near Nazareth in 1259. They inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mongols which led to their final expulsion from Syria. It is interesting to reflect on the significant fact that the Arabs were quite content to abandon one territory after another, including the jewel of Andalusia — but not Palestine. Their most determined resistance showed its dimensions in their fight at Jerusalem against the Crusaders, at Nazareth against the Mongols, at Acre against Napoleon and in their present combat against Israel.

Holaku was soon followed by Tamerlane and the Holy Land was twice exposed to the ravages of the Mongolian hordes until it was finally added to the rising Ottoman Empire in 1517 by Sultan Salim I. He inaugurated his rule over Jerusalem with extensive restoration work in the Mosque of the Rock. The promising gesture, however, was not matched by any parallel measure in administration and public works under the Turkish sultans. The Ottomans, unfortunately, could not produce that spark which makes empires flourish and excel. The Moslem world, and with it Palestine, sank deep into the dust bins of history. The Turkish sultan made the fatal mistake of wearing, or probably pretending to wear, the mantle of the last Arab caliph. The sultans were contented to do nothing but implement the same administration and legal propositions inaugurated centuries before, with perhaps one addition, i.e. an increase in taxation. The anachronism of Turkey became the butt of European friends and foes alike in the nineteenth century.

Not only did the actual amounts of taxation deal heavy punishments to the economy of Palestine, but the manner of its collection was even more damaging. Despite its depotism, or rather because of it, the Ottoman Government was one of the most feeble governments ruling the Middle East. Unable to collect his own taxes, the Sultan was forced to give it in tender to local speculators. These were naturally uninterested in long-term fiscal measures and the maximum

amount collected, regardless of drought, famine or war was their only aim. Taxes were also levied collectively, fixed sums being demanded from the villages, regardless of the dwindling or increasing number of inhabitants or the volume of their crops. The industrious were invariably punished by the burden of more taxes and obligations to the governor in the form of gifts and hospitality. Volney, one of the most intelligent and informed travellers who visited the country (between 1783 and 1784), found that the fellahin were growing less wheat than they were able for fear of the Turkish governor's avarice. In Gaza, they abandoned their new sugar cane plantations when the Pasha demanded his share of the crops.[1]

The customary habits of the governors to engage in business on their own account was another procedure which depressed the economy of the province. It was not unusual for them to use unfair means, including joining in with brigands and smugglers, to beat the competition of the local merchant or cultivator. Whenever the native population hit upon a successful enterprise, the Pasha declared it a state monopoly, i.e. his own monopoly. For example, the Gaza people developed a profitable soap industry with the help of Bedouins who started extracting alkalis by burning a certain desert plant. The Bedouins, at least, began to earn a stable living by selling their alkalis to the soap factory. The governor of Gaza stepped in and gave himself the monopoly of this manufacture. The Bedouins found his prices ridiculously low and decided to return to their former raiding way of life while the soap makers closed their plant.[2]

Abandoning their fields did not save the villagers from the tax collector's knock at the door. They were forced, in the end, to abandon the village itself and seek refuge in the hills, where they formed bands of rebels or brigands disrupting what was left of the economy. The surveyors of the Palestine Exploration Fund made frequent references to such deserted villages gradually falling into decay. Escape from military conscription for the European wars which meant nothing to the Palestinians became another motive to abandon homes and fields.[3]

Added to the weakness of the government, this form of rule could only result in a serious breakdown of law and order. The insecurity of the country was the first feature which struck travellers to the Holy Land. The consular reports also abound in criticism of the lawless state of the country. The courts, it was mentioned, were quite correct in administering justice and punishing the guilty, but there was no executive power which could actually carry out any judgement. So chaotic was the state of informal security that the house of one English lady was burgled eight times during the year of 1900.

The ever-starving Bedouins naturally stepped up their raids, encouraged by the governors. Whenever they captured a consignment of goods, the Pasha, under the pretext of blockading the thieves, put a ban on private dealing in the stolen

(1) Volney, C.F., *Travels through Syria and Egypt,* Dublin, pp. 454, 460.
(2) *Ibid.,* p. 462.
(3) *Survey of Western Palestine,* Palestine Exploration Fund, Vol. I, 1881, p. 196.

merchandise. The Bedouins were then forced to sell their loot at cheap prices. The Pasha would then furnish the market at a higher price in the name of the government. Eventually the villagers found it wiser to pay tribute to the local Bedouin tribe rather than suffer its ravaging raids. They were thus paying one tax for the greed of the Pasha and another for the peace of the Bedouins. In addition to insecurity of the towns were the frequent outrages of the Janissaries, the Turkish soldiery, who vented their wrath on their government whenever it was in arrears of their salaries, which was often, by attacking the natives and ransacking their towns.

The province had only one purpose for most of the Sultans — namely to supply them with extra cash. During his short occupation, Napoleon estimated that one quarter of the revenue of the province was earmarked for Istanbul. Probably more than that went into the pockets of the officials. Napoleon's estimate, however, was, in fact, considerate to the Turk. In the fiscal year ending 13 March 1905, the sum total of the revenue of the sanjaq of Jerusalem was 220,043 Turkish pounds, of which £T92,669 was remitted to Istanbul. It is no wonder that the road between Haifa and Acre remained closed for months because the authorities could not find between ten and twenty pounds to repair the small bridge over the Mokatta.[4] The municipal council of Jerusalem had a chronic deficit reaching £T 2000 in 1900.[5] So depressing was the effect of the Ottoman administration on Palestine that a British secret agent who went to Gaza found its people clamouring in anger for the expulsion of the Turks and praying "day and night that the Egyptian boundary may be again to Asdod as it originally was."[6]

Notwithstanding, two points must be accredited to the Turks. The first was the maintenance of the splendour of Jerusalem with all its mosques, churches and citadels. Second, though to a lesser degree, the continuation of Omar's policy of religious tolerance which preserved Palestine as the common centre of the three monotheistic faiths.

One allowance must also be made for the Turks. The depression of the Middle East, like so many economic phenomena in history, was occasioned by an unlucky shift of trade. The discovery of the maritime route to India and the Far East around the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama in 1497 and the rounding of South America and reaching Asia from the east by Ferdinand Magellan in 1520, eclipsed the commercial importance of Syria as the halting stage to Asia. The Arab traders, in turn concentrated on the overland route to Asia by shifting the traffic to the north, enhancing the importance of Aleppo and Alexandretta and affecting Beirut, Damascus and Palestine adversely.[7]

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(4) Report of the British Vice Consul of Haifa, F.O. 195, No. 9/2165, 28 January 1904.
(5) Report of the British Consul of Jerusalem, F.O. 195/2084.
(6) Secret Report dated 14 May 1906, F.O. 195/2225.
(7) The establishment of Israel and the subsequent disruption of the Suez Canal and world communications have already begun to show signs of the same experience, counteracted for the time being, only by the oil supply of the Middle East.

It is the repeated claim of the Zionists and the imperialists that Palestine was revived only through the enterprise of the Zionist Movement and the Middle East in its totality through the civilising work of the Mandates and the imperialist direct rule. The story of the Arab Revival, the Arab Awakening, extending back to the mid-nineteenth century, undermines the logic of this claim. But the Arab Revival, on the other hand, must be attributed, at least in part, to the impact of Napoleon's campaign in Egypt and the Western missionary and educational projects in Syria. Palestine, however, provides us with evidence that the Arab world was on the verge of throwing off the mismanagement of the Turks and forging a new life for itself, years before any serious contact with the Western world. In the course of the following story, a distinct upward movement is unmistakable, pointing to universal liberation and glory of man in all lands which broke out during this epoch of social upheaval.

Before we attempt to depict this regeneration of Palestine, a cartographic picture of the country under Turkish rule must first be delineated. The province of Syria, governed by the Turks, was comprised of the districts of Aleppo, Tripoli, Damascus and Acre (or Sidon earlier). Jordan belonged to the district of Damascus. Palestine was divided into two parts by a line north of Jaffa; the northern part belonged to the district of Acre and the southern part was an autonomous district on its own. The interesting feature in this organization is the special position given to Palestine as a district independent from the provincial government and responsible directly to Istanbul. It often had governors of its own residing at Gaza. The special treatment given to Palestine was again reiterated in 1887 when the reorganisation of Sultan Abd-al-Hamid made the Sanjaq of Jerusalem the direct responsibility of the Sublime Porte.

In the middle of the eighteenth century in northern Palestine, Zahir al-Umar, a Bedouin and camel driver, emerged as ruler. He was just one of a long line of shrewd and singular Bedouins who came from the semi-desert plains of Palestine and rose to great heights as successful rulers of the country. In 1737, Zahir became the ruler of both Safad and Tiberias. This was followed by the submission of Nazareth and Nablus. In 1750, he put an end to the chaos in Galilee by taking possession of Acre with the help of his Bedouin tribes. There, he hastened to establish a civil government which embarked on a sober program of development. He started by assuring a lasting security for the town by building city walls and fortifications. Once strong at the base, he began to put the surrounding tribes under control by the traditional two-pronged policy of the sword and marriage. He encouraged the fellahin to cultivate more lands, and the nomads to settle down. Volney, who visited Acre in this period, wrote: "The fame of Zahir spread through Syria, and Mahometan and Christian farmers everywhere despoiled and harrassed, took refuge, in great numbers, with a prince under whom they were sure to find both civil and religious toleration."[8] In one

(8) Volney, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-8.

instance while riding by the Church of the Virgin Mary in Nazareth, he dismounted from his horse, knelt and vowed to keep an oil lamp burning in the church.

Among his public works in Acre were the first drainage system and a number of gardens and public buildings. He opened a few new schools including a college in Safad where Mutuwali doctors taught. Particular emphasis was put on the commerce of Acre which began to receive a larger share of the region's trade with Europe. From Volney we hear of the first European "settlements" growing under Zahir's protection. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the annual income from the port, customs and trade of the district reached a thousand purses. The tribute of Acre to the imperial treasury was 750 purses per annum plus 750 purses in contribution towards the pilgrimage convoys.[9] In the estimation of the French scholar, who was as near to the objective facts as his time allowed, Palestine compared favourably with the rest of the Syrian districts. The following was his estimation of the total revenue received by the Sublime Porte, taking all the forms of payable taxes and tributes into consideration:

Aleppo	2,000 purses
Tripoli	2,000 purses
Damascus	10,000 purses
Acre and Palestine	10,000 purses
Total	24,000 purses[10]

Jazzar Pasha in Acre

In 1798, Napoleon invaded Egypt and turned toward Palestine early the following year. His ambition was best reflected in his peculiar attempt to carry favour with all sections of the Palestine community. He solicited the help of the Christians as a fellow Christian; declared himself the protector of Islam and issued a proclamation to the Jews that he was coming to restore their ancient kingdom. All three section of the Palestinian people treated his words with contempt. With an exhausted army, he reached the walls of Acre where he met decisive opposition. The route of the French army was initiated under the command of Ahmad Jazzar Pasha who had succeeded Shaykh Zahir as Pasha of Acre.

Taking note of the extensive development of the town as carried out by Zahir, Jazzar Pasha moved the capital of the district from Sidon to Acre. He enlarged on the work already done by adding many fine buildings which stand to this day as landmarks in the city. The spacious mosque which bears his name comes first to mind. Another building which was also named after him, Khan Jazzar Pasha, was built at the port area with vaulted galleries supported

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 367.
(10) *Ibid.*, p. 473.

by columns in red and grey granite and majestic capitals. A covered bazaar and a public library with a fountain attached to it were some of his other monuments.

Repairing the damage inflicted on the district by the French invasion, which included the destruction of the water supply of Acre, took many years. The army was reorganised and a small fleet was formed to patrol the coastal towns. A police force was created to maintain security along the outlying roads and villages.

In Jaffa, the broken pieces after Napoleon's brief spell were picked up by the local governor, Abu Nabbut. He rebuilt the city walls and towers, repaired the city mosque and finished the main bazaar. Jaffa was brightened up with an ornamental fountain and a promenade all along the sea front. The port was cleared of dangerous rocks and a new breakwater made the mooring safer. An inn on the road to Jerusalem still bears the name of its builder, Abu Nabbut.

Although Jazzar Pasha was a sadistic despot, the people under his rule enjoyed a fair measure of prosperity and progress. Christians flocked to his domain from many parts of Syria fleeing the misrule of the Turks. Under his government and that of his predecessor, Shaykh Zahir, Palestine became the centre of attention in the Middle East pointing unmistakably to the new spirit which was to stir in Lebanon, Damascus and Cairo a few years later. What is admirable in the revival of Acre is its spontaneity and native genre not actuated by foreign inspiration as was the case in the rest of Syria and Egypt. This early history of Arab Revival is usually called the false dawn by historians, with the implication, of course, that the regimes and reforms which followed World War I were the real thing.

The Egyptians in Jerusalem

In 1831, Syria was occupied by the Egyptians under the administration of Muhammad Ali Pasha and the military command of his son Ibrahim Pasha. Most historians mark Muhammad Ali's accession to office as the beginning of the Arab Awakening and the first foundation stone in the temple of Arab nationalism. The new administration in Cairo introduced extensive reforms, set up effective public monopolies and initiated the industrialisation of the country. It was therefore natural to see the same development affecting Palestine under the same government.

The logistics of the Egyptian army in Syria necessitated the building of an extensive network of roads and bridges. This was also essential for the economic operations of the state which put heavy demands on Syrian agriculture. Masses of raw materials were transported to feed the machines of industry in Egypt, and the traffic was by no means one way. More lands were brought under the plough throughout Syria, mines and minerals were exploited, seeds were distributed to the fellahin; and new trees were planted. In the area of Acre only some 150,000 saplings were planted. In a letter to his father, Ibrahim Pasha reported

that out of 1,008 villages in Syria, 237 were "under reconstruction."[11] The power of the feudalist lords was broken and their practices were prohibited, together with the widespread habit of protection money. Tourism was encouraged by exempting visitors and pilgrims from tax. The hot baths of Tiberias were repaired and embellished. Education was encouraged, new schools were built, and the teachers of the foreign missions were welcomed. Books printed in Cairo began to appear in the shops of Jerusalem, probably for the first time. The increase in the import of paper during this period may be taken as an indication of the rising emphasis on learning.

Yet the more lasting effect of the Egyptian administration resulted from the administrative and legal innovations introduced into the country. The age-long commercialisation of state taxation through the farming of tax collection was abolished. Henceforth, tax collectors and petty governors were salaried officials directly answerable to the central government. The chaotic regulations were replaced by a more logical system that was easier to understand and less difficult to apply. Equality between Moslems and non-Moslems was enforced by a series of proclamations and governmental instructions. Christians and Jews were allowed to sit on local councils years before they were permitted to do so in Europe. A building license was issued for a new Anglican church in Jerusalem and the first European consul established his office in the city in 1838.

The political appreciation of the Palstinian people expressed itself during this period. It is on record that as soon as the Palestinians heard of the march of Ibrahim Pasha on their country, they sent a delegation to welcome him and opened their city gates to the Egyptian troops. One of the contributing factors to the crushing defeats he inflicted on the Turkish army was the aid and provisions of the fellahin. The jubilation soon turned sour when Ibrahim Pasha's hand fell heavy on the fellahin by the introduction of new taxes, particularly the *farda.* Military conscription added more fuel to the masses' dissatisfaction until they revolted in 1834. This episode is one of the most interesting developments in the political history of modern Palestine; the revolt was a genuine mass insurrection waged by the peasantry. Commenting on their resort to arms, Nevill Barbour wrote, "... They had shown that there existed a sort of peasant nation in Palestine who, though ordinarily obedient enough, would fight an alien government if it pushed them too far."[12] Although they had cut Ibrahim Pasha's forces to pieces and occupied Jerusalem for a short duration, they were finally suppressed by heavier troops. Their consorted action, however, was not completely forgotten. In 1843, a similar resort to arms was made when Kamil Pasha, the Turkish governor, allowed the European institutions to hoist their national flags on their buildings.[13]

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(11) Tibawi, A.L., *A Modern History of Syria,* London, 1969, p. 87.

(12) Barbour, N., *Nisi Dominus,* London, 1944, p. 8.

(13) Arif, A., *Masjid al-Sakhra (Dome of the Rock),* p. 38.

In 1908, the fellahin resorted to arms again when Zionist activities began to take an embryonic political shape. This time the fellahin foreshadowed the post-World War II international liberation slogan of a double-edged struggle against foreign colonialism and native reaction. The Palestinian fellahin of 1908 attacked the properties of both the Zionist colonisers and the native feudalist lords, in a revolt in which a Christian, Najib Khuri Nassar, emerged as a fiery leader.[14] These successive revolts have great significance as a pointer to the level — political, economic, educational and social — of the general masses of the nineteenth century Palestinian. A revolutionary situation cannot materialise below or above a certain standard. The Prometheus will of man withers when man falls to utter poverty and ignorance or soars to the heights of intellectual sophistication and economic affluence. The political understanding of the lowest of the Palestinians was revealed in many little episodes. The surveyors of the Palestinian Exploration Fund were attacked in the 1880's by a group of fellahin and ordinary labourers who suspected that they were planning a new Suez Canal in Palestine. This, they feared, was going to result in the takeover of the country as it happened in Egypt. "You will have to fight for it; we will not give it up without struggle," they told the surveyors.[15]

Ottoman Slow Reforms

In 1839, England, jealous of Egypt's rising power, consorted with the Turks and expelled Muhammad Ali Pasha from Syria. Partly to heed the advise of the British government, and partly in the face of the modernisation process already set in motion, Sultan Abd al-Majid issued the edict known as Khatti Sharif, promising reform of taxation, guarantee of the rights of Jews and Christians, adherence to law, and legality and equality of all citizens. Military service was extended to all subjects regardless of their religion. In 1840 the penal code was promulgated along the contemporary principles of justice and judicial procedures. These *tanzimat* (organisations), as the new reform measures were called, were enlarged and reaffirmed in the edict of Khatti Humayun issued in 1859. The church authorities were granted in this edict autonomy in running most of their own religious affairs.

Sultan Murad proclaimed, in July 1876, the introduction of constitutional life in the empire. The constitution itself was promulgated two years later by his son, Sultan Abd al-Hamid II, with an announcement for a general election. The constitution, however, was suspended and its author, Vizier Medhat Pasha was dismissed and later made a wali of Syria. His dismissal was the empire's loss and Syria's gain as his rule inaugurated sweeping reforms and developments in the province of Syria.

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(14) Mandel, N., "Turks, Arabs and Jewish Immigration into Palestine, 1882-1914"; *Middle Eastern Affairs*, No. 4, St. Antony's Papers, No. 17, Oxford, 1965, p. 93.

(15) *Survey of Western Palestine*, Vol. VI, p. 442.

The struggle for democratic rule continued until 1908 when the revolution of the Committee of Union and Progress, in which Syria played no small part, restored the constitution. Arab politicians, including deputies from Palestine, sat in the new Ottoman parliament in which the Jerusalemite member, Yusuf Dhiya al-Khalidi, distinguished himself as a courageous opposition spokesman. The newly won positions did not meet all of the aspirations of the Arabs in general and the struggle continued through a number of secret societies with branches in many places. "Al-Arabia al-Fatat," one of the most notable societies in this field was formed in 1911 by a few conscientious middle class representatives including Awni Abd al-Hadi and Rafiq al-Tamimi from Palestine.

The regeneration of Palestine and the Middle East in general became unmistakably clear. There were factors which forced this regeneration beyond the control of the Turk, the Arab, and the European. The loss of the British colonial possessions in North America after the American War of Independence turned the eyes of England to the East. There was the deadly imperialist competition to reach the Indian sub-continent by shorter and still shorter routes. Such were some of the developments which sent Napoleon to the walls of Acre, Viscount de Lesseps to the desert of Sinai, the Kaiser to the Holy Sepulchre and the British Royal Engineers to the Port of Jaffa. To translate the historical development into arithmetic terms, we may note that in the year of 1814 only, the plague took the lives of a quarter of the population of the Syrian province. Yet the population of Jerusalem increased from an estimated total of barely five thousand souls towards the end of the eighteenth century to 35,000 people in 1880. The slow tempo with which the development began gained momentum throughout the nineteenth century. It is very clear that Palestine was not revived because the Zionists went to it, but rather that the Zionists flocked to Palestine because the country was reviving. Their early literature on the promising future of Palestine and its rising commercial importance bears witness to this claim. In the next chapters is found a closer examination of the economic and social aspects of this revival.

VI

ECONOMIC BOOM

Once More a Centre of Communication

As France emerged as a major imperialist power with a bustling Mediterranean port looking towards the east, and the other maritime power, England, lost its American colonies, commercial importance returned to the Middle East. The invention of the steam engine brought about two successive developments. The introduction of steamships relegated the old overland route and brought traffic once more six degrees down to the south, in the direction of the Red Sea. A few years later, the locomotive put another weight on the scale by showing the possibility of tapping the commerce of the Indian Ocean through a railroad extending from Syria to the Yemen or from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. The regeneration of the Middle East as a result of such shifts in world commerce was bound to leave its imprint on the economic development of Palestine. It is therefore useful to begin by looking for the advances made in the field of communications.

It is evident from the previous chapter that the early pioneers of the Palestine economic revival, namely, Shaikh Zahir al-Umar and Ahmad Jazzar Pasha, appeared on the scene at the important harbour of Acre to concentrate the bulk of their activities on providing trade and transport facilities at that port and to maintain security on the carriageways.

The building of the Suez Canal (1859-69), of course, established the trading importance of the southeast corner of the Mediterranean beyond any doubt. The related activities in Palestine were reflected in the development of the port of Jaffa where a lighthouse and a landing place were constructed in 1864. This was accompanied by the building of a carriageway between Jaffa and Jerusalem (opened in 1867). Another road was built in 1870 between Jerusalem and Nablus. Road building and paving was carried out in Jerusalem in 1863 and then in 1885. The Galilee saw many new good roads linking Acre with Lebanon in the north and Safad in the east.[1] Jerusalem was connected by a telegraphic service with Istanbul and Europe in the sixties and an international postal service was already in operation from the city.

With the extension of the European railway network to Anatolia, Palestine, Syria and Iraq became the setting for endless competition between the interna-

(1) *Survey of Western Palestine,* Vol. I, p. 159.

tional railway companies. In the seventies, Britain began to consider the prospect of connecting Haifa with Baghdad and converting the Bay of Haifa into a naval base. France and Germany soon appeared as aspirants to the railway communications of Palestine. The "Société Ottomane de Chemin de fer Damas-Hama et prolongements" (Ottoman Society of Damascus-Hama Railways and Extensions) eventually constructed the Aleppo-Damascus line going south to the Transjordan border. It was hoped to connect this line with Jerusalem and Jaffa but in reality only the Jerusalem-Jaffa piece was completed (in 1892). Sultan Abd al-Hamid ordered the building of the more important line destined to connect Damascus with Medina, with a branch line from Der'a to Affula and Haifa. Work on the Hijaz line was completed in 1905.

The story of the Palestine railways examplifies imperialist obstruction rather than encouragement of progress, as there were many ambitious projects halted by the jealousy and suspicion of the great powers and their companies. An Egyptian financer, Lutfi Bey, projected a line to connect Egypt with the Palestine system, but he was prevented by the British who made it part of their Middle East strategy to prevent anyone having easy military access to the Suez Canal. The project was taken up later by Turkey but British military advisers, including the Military Attaché in Istanbul and Kitchener in Egypt, warned against it. France, on the other hand, insisted that Turkey refuse the building of any more railways in Palestine before considering its application for a loan. In an earlier negotiation, the French moved that Turkey should not put any economic rates on the Der'a-Haifa line which might compete with the rates on the Mezerib-Damascus, Beirut line.[2]

During the second half of the nineteenth century, all of the maritime powers' ships called frequently on the Palestine ports. Two English shipping lines made regular monthly calls on the port of Jaffa, the most important port in the country. The following is the total tonnage of ships visiting the port:

Year	*First Quarter*	*Second Quarter*	*Third Quarter*	*Fourth Quarter*
1901	191,226	149,337	146,645	145,625
1902	201,321	132,662	112,932	68,172
1903	143,492	147,362	143,518	154,877
1904	195,647	186,683	195,902	76,415
1905	259,692	166,142	178,656	214,488[3]

The effect of the railway on the country is described by the British Consul in Jerusalem thus:

"Towards the end of 1892 ...., the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway was opened to traffic, and since then the size, population, and trade of this city have attained to almost double what they were, twelve or fifteen years ago. British goods,

(2) Frischwasser-Ra'anan, H.F., *The Frontiers of a Nation,* London, 1955, pp. 50-51.

(3) Based on figures given in the reports of the British Consul in Jerusalem filed under the *Foreign Office Records* of F.O. 195 for the individual years concerned.

wholesale and retail, are now everywhere met with in the market; English tourists flock to the Holy City in hundreds at least twice a year, in the autumn and spring; and Missionary and Benevolent establishments, notably the very fine Collegiate Buildings and Church of the Anglican Bishop — have sprung up in considerable numbers both in Jerusalem and the surrounding districts under my jurisdiction."[4]

It is important here to note the absence, in this dispatch, of any reference to the Jewish colonisers or their economic impact on the country. This remains the case in nearly all documents which deal with the state of the country in general. It is important to keep this point in mind while perusing the various documentation below wherein no conscious attempt was made to suppress any reference to the contrary. In the following year the British Consul dealt with the same subject again, but this time highlighted the integral position of Palestine as part of the Arab World in its revival:

"I have the honour to add that the magnificent progress which of late years has been made by Egypt, as shown in the report recently published by His Majesty's Agent and Consul General at Cairo, has attracted to that country, during the winter, a large number of visitors, and the 'season' this year has been, from all accounts, exceptionally good in Egypt. In addition to the special excursions to the Holy Land organised by the Committee of the Anglo-American Sunday School Convention, a number of English and other tourists who had been wintering in Egypt have visited this city, and Jerusalem has never been so full of Europeans as it has been since the beginning of the present year."

The effect of these activities on the standard of living is described in the next passage:

"The influx of such a vast concourse of strangers of the better class from Europe has no doubt been the means of circulating a considerable amount of coin throughout the country, and hotel proprietors, the Railway Company, shopkeepers, horse and carriage owners, dragomans, etc., have all done a good trade; but on the other hand the prices of almost everything, but particularly the luxuries of life, have risen very greatly. During the time the members of the Convention were in the city, as much as a dollar was demanded for a drive of less than a mile in a cab and horse hire rose to three or four times what it ordinarily is."[5]

Exact figures on the number of tourists who visited the Holy Land in this period are scarce and approximate. The French consul put the number of pilgrims who visited Jerusalem by the Jaffa railway in 1895 at about fourteen thousand.[6] By then, Thomas Cook and Son were already organising conducted tours to the Holy Land. The total number swelled to an annual figure of about forty

(4) F.O. 78/5285, 4 November 1903.
(5) F.O. 195/2175, No. 29, 30 April 1904.
(6) Tibawi, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

thousand in the years just preceding the outbreak of the Great War.[7] The visitors to the Holy Land were by no means Europeans. The new Hijaz Railway increased the volume of Moslem pilgrimage and made it possible for more Arabs to seek treatment at the hot spas of Palestine and visit the holy mosques and churches of Bayt al-Maqdis, Madinat al-Khalil, Bethlehem and Nazareth.

Industry

The olive tree remained the national tree of Palestine around which the industry of the country, oil pressing and soap manufacture, revolved. Volney mentioned a number of soap factories including three in Gaza, one in Ramla and another in Hebron.[8] The real centre for this industry, however, was Nablus which gave its name to the quality soap throughout the Middle East markets. In 1799, this town exported nine thousand qintars of this product. Egypt, Greece, Anatolia and Iraq were some of the countries which were regularly supplied with the Palestine soap. When the Jewish National Home was declared at the end of World War I, there were not less than fifty soap factories producing more than eight thousand tons a year.[9] Nablus alone produced soap to the value of £240,000 per annum during the twenties.[10]

Glass and textile factories established during the Arab caliphate continued to be produced. Volney estimated the number of cotton weaving looms in Gaza at some five hundred.[11] Hebron was and remains to this day the centre of the traditional Arabian glassware in its typical characteristic colours. The fashion shops of Istanbul used to stock varieties of the coloured glass trinkets and ornaments imported from the Hebron factory. Volney noted the glass factory of Hebron as the only one he had seen in the whole of Syria. The first windmill in the Middle East was installed in Ramla in 1784 to add a new variation to the scores of water mills dotting the valleys of Galilee. The traditional industries of tanning, pottery, weaving and carpet making continued.

The pilgrims boosted the traditional crafts associated with the souvenir trade. The typical Syrian works of mother-of-pearl gave employment to nearly fifteen hundred craftsmen. This and other trades encouraged a number of Palestinians to go abroad to market the products of their country, resulting in the establishment of small Palestinian emigrant communities in America and Europe. The movement was reciprocal as Western businessmen began to settle in the Holy Land for no other motive than business. As early as the middle of the eighteenth century, Volney counted seven French factories in Syria, of which one was in Acre and another in Ramla.

(7) Badran, N.A., *Al-Ta'lim wa al-Tahdith* (*Education and Modernization in Palestine, 1918-1948*), Palestine Monographs No. 63, P.L.O. Research Center, Beirut, 1969, p. 43.

(8) Volney, *op. cit.*, pp. 451, 458, 461.

(9) Badran, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

(10) *Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development*, Cmd. 3686, 1930.

(11) Volney, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

Money was also sunk into building new hotels in Jerusalem and other holy cities. The mineral baths of Tiberias were reconstructed and modernised. The Jewish financer and philanthropist who visited the Holy Land six times during the nineteenth century described in his memoirs one of these baths as a handsome building with special rooms for the bathers commanding an excellent view of the lake and the distant mountains, and provided with regular service. The large bath was designed in a circular shape wide enough to accommodate one hundred bathers.[12]

There was little industry worthy of note in the metallurgical field for obvious reasons. The total amount of coal imported to the sanjaq of Jerusalem in the early twentieth century averaged some 3500 tons per annum. Of this quantity 1100 tons went to the Jerusalem-Jaffa Railway and about one thousand tons to the new water pumps of the Jewish colonies.[13] The normal fuel for the public was charcoal, wood and brushwood. Among the Bedouins brushwood fires were used for lighting also. Petroleum fuel, of course, was introduced at the turn of the century.

Trade

From the reported tonnage of ships calling on the port of Jaffa (see table above), we see an upward curve in trade with the outside world. The total value of the export/import trade of the three major ports of Gaza, Jaffa and Haifa increased from £360,000 in 1886 to £645,000 in 1900 and £2,060,000 in 1913. The following is a more detailed breakdown of the Jaffa sample of Palestine trade in the years 1901-1905 (in sterling pounds):

Year		*First Quarter*	*Second Quarter*	*Third Quarter*	*Fourth Quarter*
1901	(Export)	85,650	116,650	57,285	84,115
	(Import)	64,130	50,585	97,550	147,980
1902	(Export)	87,610	22,220	35,210	54,350
	(Import)	138,680	141,360	71,060	54,450
1903	(Export)	83,205	59,490	68,700	110,940
	(Import)	106,620	93,765	99,250	140,140
1904	(Export)	109,210	53,600	57,850	74,640
	(Import)	92,220	93,000	140,110	142,990
1905	(Export)	114,170	66,100	84,850	102,700
	(Import)	86,200	133,350	114,800	129,650[14]

The opening of the shipping line with Liverpool in 1892 consolidated the already strong commercial position held by England. The table below gives the return of all shipping at the port of Jaffa for the quarter ending 30 June 1906:

(12) Montefiore, *The Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore,* London, 1890, p. 173.
(13) British Consul in Jerusalem, 19 February 1904, F.O. 78/5352.
(14) Based on *British Consular Reports* under F.O. 195.

Nationality	*Number of Vessels*	*Tons*
British	44	61,175
French	22	44,550
Austro-Hungarian	17	28,246
Italian	15	27,671
Russian	21	26,679
Ottoman	100	5,053
German	3	4,700
Netherlands	2	1,266
Greek	1	1,001
Norwegian	1	466
	226	200,807

The next table is a breakdown of the imported goods unloaded also at Jaffa port during the same period, the quarter ending 30 June 1906:

			Tons
Cotton goods	Bales	2,300	69,000
Coffee	Tons	57	22,000
Sugar	Tons	640	9,120
Rice	Tons	1,120	12,250
Coal	Tons	750	1,125
Iron bundles and brass girdles	Tons	590	4,600
Paint and linseed oil	Tons	38	1,200
Zinc, tinplate and sheets	Tons	12	400
Caustic soda	Tons	110	1,100
Salt	Tons	800	3,200
Petroleum	Cases	33,500	9,215
Hardware	Cases	1,700	10,800
Fancy goods	Cases	178	950
Cloth	Cases	16	1,450
Tobacco and tombake	Cases	1,120	10,750
Flour	Sacks	4,570	4,220
Wines and spirits	Cases & barrels	840	1,470
Timber	C. meters	1,823	4,300
Tiles and bricks	Number	8,000	600
Machinery	Tons	14	1,000
Bedsteads	Packages	452	400
Other articles			6,200
	Total Tonnage		155,550

According to the same consular reports, the bulk of Palestine's exports were agricultural products, of which a great quantity, including oranges, tomatoes,

cucumbers and water melons, went to Egypt. Between October 1898 and April 1899, some 338,000 boxes of citrus containing about five million oranges were shipped from Jaffa. While this port nearly monopolised the citrus export, Gaza handled the bulk of the grain export which had its centre in Hebron and Beersheba. Wool was another important item which went to the European textile markets reaching a net weight of 166,000 kilos in 1900. Below is a comparative table giving the return for exports from the port of Jaffa for the year 1898:

Produce	£
Wheat	14,000
Maize	3,000
Olive oil	4,500
Sesame	28,000
Soap	62,000
Wool	3,360
Oranges	82,500
Colocynth	1,400
Hides	8,100
Beans	1,800
Lupins	18,600
Bones	420
Wines and cognac	20,500
Watermelons	24,850
Other articles	33,750
	306,780

The growing trade called for the opening of a few European banks in the country, with the Deutsche Palaestina Bank (opened in 1899) topping the list with branches in most of the major towns.

The Native and the Entrepreneur

Despite the way many history books present the case, the native Palestinian did not react passively to the wind of change blowing toward his country. Nor was the progress which resulted the exclusive work of the European entrepreneur. Indeed, native initiative was often obstructed by the power of foreign enterprise. It was stipulated, at least in one project, that the work must be left under the control and supervision of European engineers only. The application of a native Jerusalemite to start a steam tramway between Bethlehem and Jerusalem was turned down in Istanbul in 1904 with the same spirit.[15] The Chief Engineer of Syria, Yusef Elias Effendi, managed to secure a concession for building a railway to link Haifa with Damascus in the eighties, but he was unable to get any credit from the foreign banks and was eventually forced to surrender his concession to

(15) F.O. 78/5352, 1 November 1904.

a British construction company.

Sir John Hope Simpson made the ironical comparison of the British Government paying an expert £300 per annum to advise the silk industry, and refusing, at the same time, to lend the people of Nablus £100 to open a silkworm plant, of which they probably knew more than the government expert.[16]

Less unfortunate was the case of the Jordan-Dar'a railroad in which the native contractors were able to participate. Moslem enterprise seems to have played a considerable part in the building of the famous, albeit ill-starred, Hijaz Railway. Because it was to be the new pilgrimage route to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the Moslems took great pride in subscribing capital and contributing labour in the building of this project. According to Dr. Tibawi's accounts, only the top railway consultant engineers were recruited from Europe, mainly Germany and Italy.[17]

The agricultural reclamation work attributed generally to the endeavour of the Zionists was in fact pioneered on a large scale by local financiers. The valuable jewel of Jewish agricultural colonisation, the Valley of Esdraelon, was, in fact, first opened for cultivation by a member of the Sursuq family, who purchased in 1872 Marj Ibn Amir for £18,000, and settled a few hundred cultivators on it, to bring him more than that sum as a net income every year. Here is what Sir Hope had to say on the vale: "It is a mistake to assume that the Vale of Esdraelon was a wilderness before the arrival of the Jewish settlers and that it is now a paradise ... It is, however, unjust to the poverty stricked fellah who has been removed from these lands that the suggestion should continually be made that he was a useless cumberer of the ground and produced nothing from it. It should be quite obvious that this is not the fact."[18]

Arab entrepreneurs coming from the Salaam and Beyhum families of Beirut were able after 1908 to secure the tenure to drain, reclaim and cultivate 50,000 dunums of swampy lands belonging to lake al-Hulah. The reclaimed lands were to be distributed among the fellahin in return for reasonable fees, and a joint stock company was formed for that purpose. After the end of World War I the authorized representative of the company had to fight a legal battle with the British government in order to confirm his title deed. Zionist pressures were intensified towards the double end of "persuading" the holders to rid themselves of the concession in return for lucrative sums of money or exposing them to all kinds of obstacles with the tacit encouragement of the British administration. Finally, the Zionists met with success. Their money was far greater for the holders of the company than what they could get from the honest or dishonest management of the area. Hence, the concession was sold to the Jewish National Fund in 1934, under the pretext of mounting expenditure and the danger of having to lose the concession upon the nearing date of expiration. The new

(16) Cmd. 3686, p. 105.
(17) Tibawi, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
(18) Cmd. 3686, 1930, p. 17.

railway tracks brought life to many areas and on both sides of the line, green stretches of lands appeared with settled farmers of Bedouin stock.

The Fellah and his Burden

Yet, the lot of the Palestinian worker and fellah did not show any appreciable improvement to be recorded by the chronicler of the period. Oliphant made a pointed juxtaposition in his description of the village of Jifna in the vicinity of Jerusalem:

"It was remarkable for its fertility and excellence of the cultivation. The hillsides were carefully terraced and thickly planted with vines and olives, and the floor of the valley was a mass of gardens and waving crops. In spite of this seeming prosperity we found the villagers in an extreme state of poverty and destitution. . ."[19]

The same English writer gave the following prices as an indication of the standard of living in the eighties:

Weekly Wages	
Male worker	£0-5-6
Female worker	£0-3-0
Young girl	£0-2-0
Purchase Price	
Horse	£8 -£10
Camel	£20-£30
Ass	£3 -£6
Mule	£12-£15
Ox	£8 -£15
Sheep	£0-10-0 -£0-16-0[20]

The budgetary accounts and consular reports point to a real prosperity in the country, so it should have been. The income from the sanjaq of Jerusalem jumped by over sixty per cent in three years, from £T135,713 in 1903 to £T220,881 in 1906. The report of the British Consul was therefore not far from the truth in asserting that "the state of the revenue shows the country to be in a fairly prosperous condition."

His predecessor at the Jerusalem Consulate who dealt not with the revenues of the district but with the people concerned put his finger on one root of the trouble in an instructive report worthy of some lengthy quote:

"Various causes contribute to this depression. The drain of nearly all the able-bodied men for the late war, scanty harvests, insufficient rain, high prices

(19) Oliphant, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-9.

(20) *Ibid.*, p. 299. Actually these prices do not compare too badly with the wages paid in England during the same period. While the Palestinian woman was receiving only three shillings per week, her sister in sweated labour in England used to receive 5/3 for a 72-hour week. (Burnet, J.A., *History of the Cost of Living*, London, 1969, p. 249).

and the ruinous loss inflicted on hundreds by the stoppage of the payment of the interest on Turkish Government Securities, have produced their natural consequences in widespread destitution and industrial and commercial stagnation. Wheat and grain are double their normal prices; this year's crops are again meagre; of the 12,000 conscripts and Redif who were sent to seat of war from this Liwa, probably not more than a quarter returned. Thus the prospect of better times coming in the natural course of things is unpromising in the extreme.

"Instead of combatting these evils by remedial measure, the conduct of those in authority greatly aggravates them. The corruption and endless abuses in every branch of Turkish provincial administration are too well known to your Excellency to need any description from me. These are as rife as ever. The greatest sufferers thereby are incontestably the Mussulman rural population, the bone and sinew of the country, and whose numbers, as compared with that of the new Mussulman inhabitants, is as four to one. Whilst every other community can, and does, in case of need, appeal to the protection and sympathy of powerful advocates, the Mussulman has no one to look to."[21]

The British Consul in Beirut, whose authority covered the area of Acre and Haifa, spotlighted the Ottoman misgovernment in this part of the empire by analysing the tax returns for 1878 and 1879. In the one-fifth of the province which he surveyed the amount of tax collected from the people had increased fifty per cent or conversely, from £T61,500 in 1878 to £T92,680 in 1879. This meant an overall increase from £T180,000 in 1878 to £T270,000 in 1879. Yet the expected corresponding increase in the people's income did not happen at all. In fact, the production of the province slumped by thirty per cent during the same two years. The explanation was in the tax system which was based on farming the tithes to speculators who competed among themselves in the exploitation of the fellah. The sum total of the tax collected did not depend eventually on the extent of land cultivated or the crop yielded by the land, but rather on the energy and ruthlessness in extracting the last *para* from the fellah. The same British Consul had actually to step in by himself and stop one of the hard tax speculators from including the area of Sidon in his domain.[22]

Yet the Ottoman administrators were no worse than the representatives of the Western civilisation whom these consuls represented, for the other root of the trouble was the protection and exemption which the European powers extended not only to their nationals but also to all the crafty rascals who managed by draft or trickery to secure the protection of the foreign consul. England was the worst abuser in this regard by virtue of its extension of the privileges to such foreigners as the Russian Jews who neither spoke English, professed Christianity, nor carried British passports.

Such foreigners were allowed to seek the protection, jurisdiction and representation of the foreign consul whenever they were in conflict with the less

(21) F.O. 195/1264, No. 10, 30 July 1879.
(22) F.O. 195/1264, No. 61, 16 August 1879.

protected natives.[23] Still more serious, they were allowed to import goods without custom duties and conduct business often without paying taxes. In October 1904, the foreigners protested a new tax of twenty paras on railway tickets because they were not exempted. Needless to say, a native merchant did not stand a chance against such competition from the foreigner. Oliphant's observation on the better conditions of the non-Moslem population as a result of this preferential treatment is apt.[24] The peculiar case of the Society for the Relief of Persecuted Jews shows how foreign groups expected preferential treatment. The Foreign Office wrote to its Consul in Jerusalem asking him to represent the Society with the aim of exempting its activities from taxes. The Consul wrote back stating that the members of the Society were known to be engaged in purely commercial activities and selling their products to foreign markets; therefore it was impossible to treat the Society as a charity organisation according to the law.[25] The Consul was probably accused of anti-Semitism!

The fellah's impoverishment was due to a large extent to the high interest rate he had to pay on his debts, usually to foreign lenders. This rate reached as high as four per cent per month. The Wali of Syria revived in 1862 an old firman by instituting a commission with powers to examine the accounts of the money lenders and force them to reduce their rate of interest. The British Consul obviously prodded by the protected money lenders, requested the Ambassador to seek a special ministerial order exempting the British subjects and British protégés from the scope of the commission. He based his argument on the claim that the high interest rate was "accepted by custom" which overruled the official firman. In his confidential report to the Ambassador, he disclosed that the claims of the British subjects and protégés on the fellahin exceeded the claims of all other money lenders put together.[26]

Another notable case is the outcry over the new surtax imposed in 1906, amounting to two paras per kilo of barley exported from the country. As the tax was earmarked for the general public works and development projects often demanded by the foreign businessmen, the law did not exempt the foreigners. The diplomats of most of the European missions were angered, and after considerable haggling, the British suggested that the envisaged schemes should then be given to foreign companies, or at least foreign engineers should be employed on the job if foreigners were expected to pay the tax "...The essential point is that the contractors should be foreigners, or that at least the engineer employed should be some well known foreigner."[27]

With rich, bourgeois foreigners excluded from taxes, the fellahin were left

(23) The number of those protected by the British Consul in the sanjaq of Jerusalem in 1870 was 735 people, according to the consular returns.

(24) Oliphant, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

(25) F.O. 195/2175, No. 14, 22 February 1904.

(26) Tibawi, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-8, quoting consular dispatches dated 10 July and 27 October 1862, F.O. 78/1670.

(27) F.O. 195/2225, No. 37, 16 June 1906.

to bring the total sum collected to its predetermined limit, without receiving any tangible service in return. From the revenue of £T220,881 collected in the year ending 13 March 1906, the sum of £T100,705 went to Istanbul. The following account gives a picture of the distribution of the expenditure—how much was spent on the country and on the bureaucracy and how much transferred to Istanbul for the year ending 13 March 1905:

	£T
Magistracy	2,898
Local expenses, treatments, etc.	9,510
War	30,857
Marine	402
Gendarmery	8,582
Havalés (transfers)	4,660
Consignments in cash to Constantinople	92,669
Warrant payments from Constantinople	34,369
	183,947
Non-encashed taxes	36,096
	220,043

But the Ottomans and the foreigners were not the only robbers of the fellah. The local quasi-feudalists[28] were another scourge to the economy and the well-being of the people. Well into the twentieth century, the Abd al-Hadis owned seventeen villages, the Jayusis owned twenty-four villages and the Barghuthis owned thirty-nine villages.[29] Between the three forces of evil, the greatest daylight and daily-committed thievery went on unreported. That the Palestinian fellah continued to till the ground is a tribute not only to his resilience but also to the will of survival and inner strength of human beings.

The Jewish Settlers

Both Nahum Sokolow and Norman Bentwich quoted such figures as given above to impress their readers with the favourable impact of Jewish colonisation on the flourishing trade of Palestine at the turn of the century, failing to mention, of course, the natural and inevitable growth which was stirring the country as far back as the middle of the eighteenth century. A closer examination of the statistics reveals a different picture. Taking the population statistics as a guide we find that the population of Haifa, which was an Arab town, increased fourfold between 1880 and 1915. Jerusalem, which was more frequented by Jews, only

(28) Feudalism in the true sense of serfs belonging to the land, and lands belonging to the prince and princes providing soldiers to the kings did not exist in Palestine.

(29) Badran, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

doubled its population during the same period:

	1880	*1915*
Jerusalem	35,000	80,000
Jaffa	10,000	40,000
Haifa	5,000	20,000[30]

The export returns indicate a similar story. The value of the winter crops for 1905 was distributed as follows:

	£T
Beersheba	20,466
Gaza	17,808
Jaffa	12,140
Jerusalem	11,539
Hebron	10,223
	72,167[31]

The bulk of crops totalling £T58,497 came from the strictly Arab areas of Gaza, Hebron and Beersheba. The ports of Haifa and Acre handled an annual tonnage of Arab-grown wheat amounting to 62,000 (71,000 according to the prospectus of the Beirut-Damascus Railway), not to mention other products.[32] Jewish exports depended on oranges and wines shipped from Jaffa; the average annual export from this port was only about 50,000 tons at the turn of the century. Oranges and wines made up only a moderate proportion of the Jaffa port business as may be seen from the following breakdown of exports returned for the quarter ending 30 June 1896:

Articles	*Quantity*	*£T*
Wari seed	6,300 quarters	6,200
Barley	380 quarters	340
Beans	490 quarters	760
Lupins	4,000 quarters	3,720
Sesame seed	120 tons	1,600
Wool	222,850 pounds	4,000
Calocynth	35,000 pounds	1,480
Hides	88,000 pounds	2,850
Scrap	1,520 tons	38,700
Bones	20 tons	80
Oranges	39,650 cases	13,800
Religious articles	800 cases	7,900
Wines and spirits	520,000 kilograms	6,200
Water melons		1,000
Other articles		5,400
		94,030

(30) Badran, *op. cit.*, p. 41, citing figures in Ruppin, A., *Syrien als Wirtschaftsgebiet*, Jaffa, 1916, p. 186.
(31) F.O. 195/2199, No. 31, 31 July 1905.
(32) *Report* by Major Law on Railways in Asiatic Turkey, 1896.

Furthermore, the Jewish portion of the citrus export amounted to only twenty-four percent in 1913.[33]

These figures are reflected in the documentary comments related to the period. The British Consul in Jerusalem wrote a report on 30 July 1878 on the economic activities carried out by foreigners; only casual reference was made to the existence of some Jewish settlers who apparently left no impression on the Consul. Another report from the Vice Consul of Haifa dealt with the Jewish colonies in 1900; he found most of the colonies empty, "with the exception of one small, unprosperous and unhealthy colony of Russian Jews called Khirdera," their industry a failure and their vines infected with disease. Any good work done there was performed by hired fellahin.[34] In 1902, the Foreign Office wrote to the Consulate inquiring about the commercial potentialities of the Jewish settlements and their possible needs for tins. Consul Dickson sent back an apologetic dispatch promising to look for "any opening that may occur for British trade enterprise." In another dispatch dealing with the question of tins he said that the quantity required was "a trifling quantity owing to the continual decrease of the export of fruit."[35]

A few years later, Consul Blech discussed Zionist industry and agriculture and reached this conclusion: "There was little inducements for the colonists to labour for the benefit of the colony; they received fixed stipends, with a portion of which they hired fellahin to do their work. The industries such as glass manufacture and spinning failed, and the Jew is not very successful at agriculture pursuits."[36] Dr. A. Ruppin, the agricultural expert of the Zionist Organisation, corroborated the above cited reports and added that it had become customary for the Jewish settler to farm his land to the fellah for a share in the produce. "Thus a farm barely sufficing for the upkeep of one family had now to provide for two."[37]

Nor were the Jews eminent in industry. A. Ruppin mentioned that, in 1908, there were only two hundred labourers among all the Jewish settlers.[38] The article on Jerusalem in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* dealt with the development of the city during the nineteenth century and mentioned the effect of increased tourism, without making any reference to the activities of the Jewish immigrants. Jerusalem attracted the largest number of these immigrants, but their effect on its conditions was far from being salutary, as will be discussed in Chapter 8.

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(33) Badran, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

(34) F.O. 195/2075, No. 8, 5 February 1900.

(35) F.O. 78/5208, Nos. 10 and 42, 17 May and 2 July 1902.

(36) F.O. 371/356/40321, No. 62, 16 November 1907. This citation is included in Hyamson's *British Consulate in Jerusalem*, Vol. II, London, 1941, p. 569.

(37) Ruppin, A., *Agricultural Colonisation of the Zionist Organisation in Palestine*, London, 1926, p. 51.

(38) Ruppin, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

VII

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MILK AND HONEY?

How Green Was Palestine?

In a comprehensive assessment of the vegetation in Palestine in the 1880s, Claude R. Conder of the Palestine Exploration Fund took his lead from the biblical description of ancient Palestine.

"For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey."[1]

Having made his extensive survey of the country, he commented on the two verses like this: "First of all, it may be remarked that no expression in the passage quoted is inapplicable to modern Palestine."[2] Conder proceeded to examine the various regions of Palestine and found that Samaria was better utilised under the husbandry of the contemporary Arabs than it had been when the Bible was written. "Samaria — the direct north of Shechem receives little illustration from either the Bible or the Talmud. Yet it is now the richest part of the country."[3] On Hebron, he reached these two conclusions:

1. The character of the wooded growth is unchanged.
2. The district covered by 'wood' have on the whole materially decreased.

The areas hit worst were Galilee and Sharon, between Jaffa and Carmel. These were the battlefields of the devastating wars with the Crusaders and the line of Napoleon's advance. The destroyed irrigation system which Conder found in this area reminds us of Napoleon's instructions to destroy the water supplies to Acre. The disrupted canals and choked drainage clogged the land and produced the disease-infected swamps. The forest of Sharon, which continued to flourish under Arab rule, was called the forest of Assur when Richard I occupied the area. Condor concluded by pointing out that the change was a matter of "degree not kind," and that "the curse of the country is bad government and oppression."

Another expert who confirmed this opinion took note of the "beautiful gardens and palm trees" surrounding the towns of Ashdod and Ascalon. "I would draw attention to I Kings 5:25: 'And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man

(1) Deuteronomy 7-8.
(2) "The Fertility of Ancient Palestine," *Survey of Western Palestine,* Vol. V, p. 195.
(3) *Ibid.,* p. 201.

under his vine and under his fig tree'. This, of course, is a poetical expression, but as at the present day, during a portion of the year, the natives actually do live under trees or in booths."[4]

One common misconception of the Palestinian fellah as an ambitionless farmer must be credited to people who had no knowledge of the land of Palestine. Some Europeans, while touring the country, saw areas not developed and assumed laziness to be the reason since the European type of agriculture needs no irrigation networks and requires only limited man-made drainage. In the Middle East, however, agriculture cannot exist without constant irrigation and drainage, a task which can only be tackled on a state level; individual effort on a small scale is of little use. The Palestinian fellah could not construct whole aquaducts or drain the swamp of al-Hula independently. But where he could utilise an independent cistern, a well or a running canal, he hastened to improve the land, cut terraces, layer the hill and cultivate as far as the water could go. The travellers' descriptions of such localities leave no doubt about the industriousness of the Palestinian fellah which probably singles him out as the most hard-working and determined cultivator in the Middle East.

As for his methods and capabilities, we have the testimony of a British expert, Sir John Hope Simpson, on the subject:

"The fellah is neither lazy nor unintelligent. He is a competent and capable agriculturalist, and there is no doubt that were he to be given the chance of learning better methods, and the capital, which is a necessary preliminary to their employment, he would rapidly improve his position." The British Commissioner goes on to cite the authority of the Zionist agriculturalist, Dr. Wilansky, who, after criticising the archaic implements in the hands of the fellah, remarked:

"But the ploughing of the fellah is above reproach. His field, prepared for sowing, is never inferior to that prepared by the most perfect implements, and sometimes it even surpasses all others."[5]

The odds against the endeavour of the fellah were not confined to bad government. The question of taxation has already been dealt with above. The only way to pay his taxes, if he did not want to abandon agriculture altogether, was to borrow money. The shackle of exhorbitant interest, charged mostly by the foreigners under the protection of the European consuls, was an additional burden on the agriculturalists of Palestine. Keeping the Bedouins in good humour by paying them regular tributes to prevent their crops from being destroyed was another demand on the fellah's purse. In addition, the fellah, only a tenant, had to make his first payment to his landlord.

Travellers' Accounts

As we have just referred to the civilisation which the French Army promised the country under Napoleon's command, two contrasting pictures of Palestine

(4) *Survey of Western Palestine*, Vol. VI, p. 441.
(5) Cmd. 3686, p. 66.

as described by French officers are relevant to quote here. The troops approached Jaffa on 3 March 1799, and there a French officer sat down to enter in his diary:

"Jaffa is situated by the Mediterranean shore, on top of a hill shaped like a sugar loaf. Midway up this cone, it is enclosed by a wall, flanked by towers, so that the city inside it rises like an amphitheatre above the walls... The left and centre are ... covered with a large grove of orange, lemon, lime and almond trees."

Six months later the French were in retreat. They made their way into Haifa at night in an entrance recorded by another officer:

"We hoped that we should no longer have before our eyes the hideous sight of dead and dying men ... when, as we entered Haifa in the dark of the night, we saw about a hundred sick and wounded who had been left in the middle of a large square. Those poor, desperate people filled the air with their screams and their curses; some were tearing off bandages and rolling in the dust."[6]

The state of agriculture in Palestine in the first half of the nineteenth century received various mentions in the diaries of Sir Moses Montefiore who was particularly interested in acquiring lands for agrarian development. Starting from the north to the south, the area of eastern Galilee as found in May 1839, was described thus:

"There are groves of olive trees, I should think, more than five hundred years old, vineyards, much pasture, plenty of wells and abundant excellent water; also fig trees, walnuts, almonds, mulberries, etc., and rich fields of wheat, barley and lentils."[7] He described the road between Safad and Tiberias: "We passed through a beautiful country, a very long descent, winding round hills covered with olives, figs and pomegranates."[8]

The area around Dja'ouna was described as "a lovely country of mountains, hills, valleys and plains, all truly splendid and in the highest state of cultivation ... the inhabitants were good farmers and possessed horses, cows, oxen, sheep and goats in great abundance. There were also olive and mulberry trees of very great age, apparently many centuries old and there was more skill displaced in their cutting than we had hitherto noticed in the Holy Land. It was a complete garden." Sir Moses made the bold claim, "I have never seen any country so rich and beautiful."[9]

The existence of these very old olive trees also drew the attention of the French traveller, Volney, who depicted a picture of Jaffa as a town surrounded by orchards and olive trees "as large as walnut trees." In an earlier trip made in 1827, Sir Moses passed with his entourage from Ramla to Jerusalem, "The road was stony, rough and steep, but no precipices; on the sides of the mountains

(6) Herold, J.C., *Bonaparte in Egypt*, London, 1963, pp. 273, 305.
(7) Montefiore, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 167.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 169.
(9) *Ibid.*, pp. 175-6.

were olives and fruit trees, the valleys well cultivated, the plain sandy."[10] The remarks on the skill and effort of the fellahin, their vine terraces, and cultivation technique are noteworthy. Wherever the Montefiores travelled, they left records of similar nature and tendency.

Later accounts were no less appreciative of the efforts made by the cultivators. In Hamma, the hot water from the sulphur springs, Oliphant mentioned in his statement to the Palestine Exploration Society, was utilised to grow early plants and make the valley "a tropical paradise" with some two hundred palm trees and eighteen different kinds of trees and shrubs, in addition to turning three water mills at one hundred degrees Fahrenheit.[11] Oliphant mentions also Ajlun, surrounded with plantations, as a place where they were growing *kali* from which potash was extracted for the manufacture of soap. The valleys opposite the Dead Sea are described as jungles of terebinths, almonds, fig trees, poplars, willows, hawthorns and oleanders.[12] Indigo was another organic chemical widely grown in Palestine. It was considered a high quality product, priced twenty percent higher than the indigo produced in Egypt.[13] The cultivation of gum Arabic, however, was disappearing.

The areas of Hebron and Nablus were praised for their greenery and rich harvests. During the eighteenth century, Volney asserted that the people of Nablus were the richest in the whole of Syria and their source of wealth depended on the crops of wheat and olives. The reports of the Palestine Exploration Fund surveyors contained frequent references to the trees and fruit trees which they had found in their assigned areas. The section on western Galilee singled out the plain east of Ras al-Naqura as a highly cultivated land wherever water could be obtained. "In these cases, it is turned into a garden of fruit trees and vegetables of every common description common to the country." Al-Bahia orchards to the north east stood out as the best "beautifully laid out and watered" gardens.[14] To the south, the area around Jenin was noted as "remarkable for its fine gardens."[15]

It is not without significance that baptism evolved in the Holy Land. Where there was water, there was life and the struggle between blessing and damnation became simply a matter of obtaining and preserving water. References have already been made to the ancient attempts to meet the country's needs for this necessity. On the coastal settlements, the Canaanites collected rain water from roof tops and stored it in cisterns; they supplemented this water supply by tapping submarine springs by sinking over them huge inverted funnels to which leather hoses were attached.[16] The Nabataeans were even more ingenious in their hydraulic economy.

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(10) *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 43.
(11) Text in *Survey of Western Palestine,* 1877, Vol. IV.
(12) Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead,* 1880, p. 292.
(13) Burckhardt.
(14) *Survey of Western Palestine,* Vol. I, p. 143.
(15) *Survey of Western Palestine,* Vol. II, p. 45.
(16) Hitti, *op. cit.,* p. 83.

The devices of the past continued their tradition well into modern times. The writer of *Three Weeks in Palestine and Lebanon* recorded how the people used to maintain a sink at one corner of their houses to collect rain water and carry it to a well below where it was preserved clean and clear.[17] Public tanks for drinking and cultivation were built in the diverse places in need of water. Oliphant cited accounts of some of the tanks found in the semi-desert parts. At Um Rashash, there were three large tanks, one of which was 30 by 18 yards "and very deep." At M'seitbah there was one 13 by 14 yards and 30 feet below the surface. "Not a bit of desert or barren land was visible in this panorama, and the camels, sheep and goats marked the whole sweep of the grass with patches." At Ziza was built a tank of solid masonry of perfect construction some 140 by 110 yards. Another fine one was spotted at Medeba, with the dimensions of 120 by 120 yards. "Everywhere is some artificial means of retaining the occasional supplies of rain water."[18]

The archaeologists of the Palestine Exploration Fund put on record detailed accounts of the water tanks, wells, and cisterns still in regular use. In the Haram area, some thirty-seven tanks and cisterns were listed with varying sizes reaching as much as 60 feet in depth and 130 feet in length.[19] Other water reservoirs examined in central Palestine included Birket al-Sultan measuring 592 feet long, 220 feet wide and 40 feet deep; Birket Mamilla measured 316 feet long and 19 feet deep; Ein Silwan was served by an aquaduct from Ein Um al-Diraj and measured some 55 feet by 18 feet with a depth of 20 feet.

In Galilee, reservoirs were constructed around the fast-moving rivers or springs for the double aim of irrigation and water mills as in the case of Ras-al-Ein. Wadi Jishur was also harnessed for dual service. The Galilee was, in fact, dotted with these water mills whether around the Wadi al-Kurn, Wadi al-Tawahin (the Valley of Mills) or the Lejjun River.[20]

Most of the old aquaducts were still in operation. The whole existence of Jerusalem depended on their service and on the tanks connected with the city water supply. The Bahia gardens so praised by the British surveyors drew their water from al-Kabri aquaduct tapped at many places along its extensive stretch.[21]

The Question of the Trees

One of the vexing questions in the history of Palestine is erosion and forestry. A hilly country with torrential showers of rain sandwiched between long spells of dry, hot weather such as Palestine, is always threatened by erosion and the loss of valuable and irreplaceable topsoil, if the vegetation balance is tampered

(17) *Three Weeks in Palestine, op. cit.*, p. 34
(18) Oliphant, *op. cit.*
(19) See *Survey of Western Palestine*, Vol. VI, pp. 215-225.
(20) *Survey of Western Palestine*, Vol. I, pp. 45, 148, 209.
(21) *Ibid.*, p. 143.

with adversely and carelessly. Palestine has experienced this tragic phenomenon on many parts of its countryside.

Once the top soil was washed away, rain water began percolating through the lower layer, which is limestone rocks. In the process, some of the limestone was carried away with the subterranean water and then out onto the surface through springs and cisterns adding a new unfavourable element to the ground and making agriculture more difficult. The fewer the shrubs on the slopes, the faster the rain rushed, the deeper the stream cut, the more good soil was removed, finally yielding fewer shrubs on the slope. This vicious circle was interlocked with yet another vicious circle. Biblical Palestine had been known as a pasture land to which the Hebrews first came as shepherds. As the decreasing foliage was overgrazed, there was nothing left to eat but roots and undergrowth. While sheep could not eat this, a goat's mouth can pull the roots from the ground. Shepherds, therefore, switched from sheep herds to goat herds. The less grass was grown, the more goats they raised, the more roots were pulled out, the less chance for grass to grow, and of course, the more land threatened with erosion. The frequent references to goats in the Old Testament give some indication for the dating of the process.

The American conservationist, W.C. Lowdermilk, postulated such an opinion, i.e., that the Holy Land was once a richly fertile land covered with forests and foliage, but the cutting down of the trees and destructive exploitation of the soil and pasture lands allowed the rain to move away the goodness of the earth and dump it into the sea. Some scientists even believe that the change is due to some climatic transformation in the Middle East.

It is difficult to say precisely how green Palestine was but the Biblical reports refer to King Solomon already ordering his timber from Lebanon. The growth of the Iron Age townlets, the increased population after the entry of the Hebrews and the subsequent wars, must have created greater demands for building materials of which timber, of course, was an essential item.

The warfare which accompanied the establishment and continuation of the Hebron rule introduced an ominous element in the affairs of Palestine agriculture. Cutting down trees was found by the Hebrews to be a satisfying manner of revenge and warfare. In the aftermath of the battle with the Moabites, the Judeans under King Jehoshaphat vented their wrath on the forests and fields of Moab, "and they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water and felled all the good trees."[22] Rendering the good cultivatable pieces of land uncultivatable by filling them with stones is a peculiar method of spreading destruction and ruining a country. Interfering with water sources by destroying wells completes the picture. Joshua resorted to the same deeds and so did the bulk of the Israelite commanders.[23] Having described the land as flowing with milk and honey just

(22) II Kings 3:25.

(23) C.f. Joshua 17:15, II Kings 3:19, 19:23.

before the entry of the Hebrews, the Old Testament delivers a second picture of the land after a few generations of Hebrew administration. Joel cries to heaven:

"O Lord, to thee I will cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

"The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness."[24]

Gilead, famous for its trees which yielded balm and liquid resin merchandised by the Ishmaelites, became so impoverished botanically, according to Oliphant, that when Alexander the Great occupied Judea, a spoonful was all that could be collected in a summer day. In a plentiful year, the great Royal Park could yield only one gallon. The balm became so expensive that it sold for double its weight in silver. According to Oliphant's story, the emperors Vespasian and Titus carried the trees away to Rome; Pompey also boasted of that deed.[25]

The soldiery discovered how vulnerable Palestine was to this scourged earth warfare, and very few of them resisted the temptation. The present writer could find no record that the Arabs had ever attempted the same method under the caliphate. From the information given by the chroniclers of the period, it appears that Palestine became greener and more endowed with trees. In his *Safarnama,* Nasir Khusru mentioned that he found Palestine full of olive groves whose abundant fruits the inhabitants had to store for export in wells and tanks. Al-Hanbali described most of the Palestinian towns including Jerusalem, Ramla, Ascalon and Nablus as cities surrounded with trees, woods and plantations. Amusingly enough, he mentioned that in Jerusalem there had been only one palm tree before the Arabs came. After their conquest they increased the number to three.[26]

This is a subject closely linked with the psychological attitude of the Arabs towards trees — a form of ambivalence. As desert people, green valleys and majestic trees looked quite heavenly to the Arabs, and the Moslem heaven is depicted as a place full of trees and flowing rivers; plants became the symbol of life and immortality. Al-Khidr (the Green) became the immortal hero in Islamic thought.[27] Who so many otherwise deserted places have trees, or often one single tree in Palestine, is explained by the shrines which stand next to them, as it has become customary to plant a tree as a sign of life wherever a beloved or a holy man in buried. The grave itself may be neglected but a new tree is planted as soon as the old one dies.[28] On the other hand, the desert Arabs are healthy people and come from a dry country free of the infections and ailments

(24) Joel 1:19-20.

(25) Oliphant, *op. cit.,* p. 186.

(26) Al-Hanbali, *op. cit.,* p. 401.

(27) This is discussed by Dr. C.G. Jung in his *Origin of the Hero,* Collected Works, Vol. V.

(28) "Mohammadan Saint and Sanctuaries in Palestine," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society,* Vol. IV, Nos. 1-2, 1924.

associated with damp climates. Therefore, they reacted sharply whenever they thought that vegetation was threatening their well-being. Woodlands were thus destroyed in certain areas of North Africa, for example, for that reason. Palestine, fortunately, did not share such treatment.

We begin to hear of cutting and burning trees once more during the Crusaders' invasion. There is a record left by al-Atabki that when the Franks entered Ascalon, they burnt the town and felled its trees.[29] Al-Hanbali also mentioned that Ramla was destroyed by the Crusaders in a similar manner. The Ottoman rulers found the same measure easy to apply against any village which rebelled against their authority.[30] Palestine was not spared this destruction under the government of Muhammad Ali Pasha either, but it was responsible for the planting of hundreds of new trees as narrated above.

Nevertheless, the Holy Land was by no means a barren desert when our modern era dawned. We have this expressive description from Oliphant of the area around Ajlun as he climbed to its highest spot some 3500 feet above sea level:

"... A magnificent view over the vast wooded tract which stretched to the west and north west, broken into valleys, containing streams flowing into the Jordan. In the opposite direction our view was over an undulating forest country, almost on our own level. We were, in fact, crossing the highest part of the chain; and soon after, turning south west, commenced a descent down a romantic gorge, where the oaks and terbinths overshadowed the gigantic rocks amid which they grew. Suddenly we turned a corner, and a prospect as unexpected as it was beautiful burst upon us. The glen widened into a lovely valley, where fields and olive groves mingled with the forest, and wreaths of blue smoke indicated the presence of a larger population than we had yet seen. A lofty conical hill rising above those which surrounded it, and crowned with a large square castle, which in the distance bore no appearance of being a ruin, formed a most striking background to the picture. It was such a view as one would expect to find rather in the Black Forest than within twenty miles of the great Arabian desert, and filled us with delightful anticipations."[31]

Burckhardt's earlier accounts on this region confirm Oliphant's picture. The oak wood which he saw there struck him as the largest he had ever seen in Syria. On the other side of the Jordan, Burckhardt[32] noted Mount Tabor as a mountain with woods inhabited by lynx and wild boars. Volney drew a similar panorama of Mount Carmel rich with vineyards, olive groves, oak and fir trees which served as retreats for the wild boars and lynxes.[33] Similar accounts were given in the voluminous Survey of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Near the village of

(29) Atabki, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 149.
(30) Tibawi, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
(31) Oliphant, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
(32) Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 265.
(33) Volney, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

Shafa Amr in the Galilee, a forest of oaks some forty square miles was spotted. The Plain of Sharon is mentioned as the home of another oak wood extending eight square miles.[34]

Referring once more to the balanced report of Claude R. Conder's article on the "Fertility of Ancient Palestine," we cannot but agree with his conclusion that the cultivation of the country, despite all odds, was changed in degree and not in kind, that in the beginning of the nineteenth century was a slightly diminished, but by no means an extinguished afforestation.

A series of events, some natural and some of man's evil doing, followed one another since Napoleon's invasion, and brought the afforestation of the country to a serious decline. Of the natural causes, we must mention the extraordinary locust plague of 1886 which destroyed nearly all the olive groves in the area; this horrible insect had always brought seasonal disasters to the countryside. M. Volney witnessed one of the annual attacks during his sojourn and gave it this vivid description:

"The quantity of these insects is incredible to all who have not themselves witnessed their astonishing number; the whole earth is covered with them for a space of several leagues. The noise they make in browzing on the trees and herbage, may be heard at a great distance, and resembles that of an army foraging in secret. The tartars themselves are a less destructive enemy than these little animals; one would imagine that fire had followed their progress."[35]

The Turks made little effort to replace the destroyed plantations and most of the able-bodied villagers were either drafted or had deserted the land. The Turkish answer to the inhabitants' insubordination was obliteration of their fruit trees. The devastation was crowned during the Great War by cutting down trees to use as fuel for the Syrian railway when the country ran short of coal and oil. So little wood remained for the people's normal winter consumption that contemporary consular reports referred to the serious shortage of heating material by mentioning that the fellahin were forced to dig out the roots of the old trees for fuel. The sudden importance which Palestine acquired after the end of the eighteenth century and which aided its revival and its central location also proved to be its ruin in another respect—it became a battlefield of the various competing powers.

Yet, this would not have been as serious in a country other than Palestine. The Holy Land is a comparatively dry country and the sparce precipitation it receives is unevenly distributed and without any apparent rhythm. December, January, February and March get nearly all the annual rainfall, while June, July, August and September get practically nothing. Rainfall is geographically uneven as well; Jerusalem, for example, has a mean annual fall of about 26.5 inches but the ratio drops by about twenty-five per cent a few miles away in the maritime

(34) *Survey of Western Palestine*, Vol. II, p. 39.
(35) Volney, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

plain. The temperature is also high, reaching in the plains a mean maximum of 96.4 degrees F. in the shade during the hottest months and 112.5 degrees F. in the Jordan Valley.[36] The dry wind of Sirocco (Sumum) which comes from the desert loaded with fine dust works as a potent vegetation killer making leaves turn yellow and drop within hours. The Arabs aptly called this wind Sumum (poisons).

Nevertheless, Palestine agriculture was preserved in all its varieties and began to show life by the response it gave to the stimulus of the world around the country. More lands were brought under the plough despite the adverse pull in another direction. The widest large scale scheme here, the plantation of the Valley of Esdraleon, was acquired from the Turkish Government by the Sursuqs in 1872 at the price of £ 18,000. In a short time, twenty villages emerged with a total population of some 4000 souls producing a net profit to the owners of about £ 20,000 a year. Even the dwellers of the desert terrain did not escape the trend of their time and were "gradually abandoning their nomadic life and commencing to cultivate the lands."[37] The new railway stations situated in the outlying areas attracted the nomads to its shade, wells, and water tanks. Some began working for the iron machines and steel rails while the others were contented to till the land as far as the water would reach. Medhat Pasha, the Turkish wali of Syria and renowned reformer, examined the possibilities of a reclamation project on the lines advanced by Oliphant for the cultivation of Jordan and settling the Bedouin inhabitants. The Turks had another motive for the move, i.e., to tame the wild Bedouins and bring them under control, as it was found that the fellahin were less troublesome to the government. The objective, in itself points to the wind of change blowing over the country. Of the most immediate results of taming the Bedouins was to insure peace and security for the existing agricultural villages, including the Zionist settlements of the Choveve Zion pioneers.

(36) The averages mentioned are based on the figures for the years preceding the preparation of the *Survey of Western Palestine,* i.e., the mid-nineteenth century.

(37) British Council in Beirut, F.O. 195/1263, No. 37, 14 May 1879.

VIII

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The Voice of the Palestinians

The series of *tanzimat* which were announced by the Turkish Government after 1839 set the stage for various haphazard administrative reforms with which the path of nineteenth century Palestine was strewn. Although the country was far from democratic in the Western sense, the influential middle class was by no means left completely high and dry in the running of its country's affairs. That Palestine lacked all political experience, an assumption which justified the British Mandate and denied any representative legislative council to the Palestinians, is an exaggeration.

The opinions of the middle class and the semi-feudalist landlords were conveyed and applied through two principal channels; the first was the traditional Islamic *shura* (consultation) by which the ruler was under moral, customary obligation to solicit the opinions of the subjects and heed their warnings, advice, and appeals. The *ashraf* (noblemen) of the town, the heads of the clans and aristocratic families (e.g. the Husaynis, Khalidis, Jayusis, Abd al-Hadis and Barghuthis), the merchants and businessmen, and the heads of the religious communities had all enjoyed direct access to the walis and district governors. These self-appointed representatives of the people kept their ears well to the ground and felt the pulse of the general public — although they rarely shared their aspirations or misfortunes. When their advice failed to direct the course of the local administrator, they voiced their opinions in petitions and direct representation at the Porte and saloons of the central government in Istanbul. Within this framework of the public opinion mechanism, a number of cables were telegraphed to Istanbul in 1911 protesting against the permission for Jewish immigrants to buy lands.[1] Such cables were published locally and in Istanbul, causing considerable political discussion. Quite frequently, a local administrator was removed from his post as a result of objections the Palestinians took against him. The *Mutasarrif* of Jerusalem, Ahmad Rashid Bey, was removed from his post in 1904 when the people protested against his slack policy towards Jewish immigration. So was the *Mutasarrif* Muhdi Bey in 1912, as a result of similar pressure.

This situation was made more possible by the special position of Jerusalem

(1) Stein, L., *The Balfour Declaration,* London, 1964, p. 89.

and the religious character of the Ottoman Empire wherein the sultan assumed for himself the title of caliph and protector of the faith. With Islam as a secular religion and codification of laws, the shrewd *ashraf* never found it difficult to present any issue in the guise of religion and in the name of Allah. The sultan rarely had any choice but to succumb to their opposition on such grounds. This being the position, it was natural for this collective voice to be more successful in the negative role than in the positive and constructive task. The *ashraf* could inhibit or obstruct rather than initiate or build, a quality which unfortunately characterised Palestinian politics for a long time. The status quo became the cornerstone for any solution, and the Crimean war was fought and was resolved by the great European powers and Turkey upon no other formula than the preservation of the status quo of Jerusalem.

The effectiveness of the Palestinian voice in the high circles of the Ottoman Government may be measured by the extent to which it influenced the official policies towards the Zionist project and the question of Jewish immigration to Palestine. Sultan Abd al-Hamid was dead against the establishment of any form of Jewish National Home in Palestine, although the financial offers of Dr. Herzl were tempting. When the question of Jewish immigration was raised, the Zionist Organisation was informed that they could send their settlers anywhere in the empire but not to Palestine. This policy was slightly modified after the 1908 revolution of the young Turks who began to open the doors of Palestine wider to Jewish immigration. The switchover brought reaction from the Palestinians strong enough to sober up the new rulers in Istanbul and the clamp was again tightened against Jewish immigration and purchase of lands.

The second channel for Palestinian participation in the running of their country's affairs was the official and Western method of organised representation. The *tanzimat* provided for the setting up of a *Majlis Idarat* (administrative council) of twelve members of whom six were Moslems, two non-Moslems and four liable to election. The council was presided over by a president who was assisted by a chief clerk and a cashier. In 1900, all members served free, the president was paid a monthly salary of 1200 piasters, the chief clerk 600 piasters and the cashier 400 piasters. Attached to the council also were three clerks who received 300 piasters each, a chief inspector and an engineer receiving 600 piasters each and a doctor paid 900 piasters. The council had a special allocation from the provincial budgetry revenue, but it was nearly always in deficit.[2] After the 1908 constitutional reform, Palestine was represented in the new Turkish parliament by its own deputies chosen in a manner of election. Through the initiative of such representatives, a number of heated debates were forced upon the Turkish chamber concerning the danger of Zionist immigration, and the Government was forced to retreat.[3]

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(2) FO 195/2084, 1900.

(3) Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 89; also Antonius, G., *The Arab Awakening*, London, 1955, p. 259.

Such debates were reported and quoted in the local newspapers and journals which began to appear in the Holy Land. From its early days the Palestine press revealed a strong nationalistic and anti-Zionist stand. Of these we have to mention the daily newspaper, *Palestine* (Filastin), which was eventually banned for its strong attacks on Zionism and sarcastic comments on the Turkish government and its officials. *Al-Karmal* (Carmel) was published in Haifa by the nationalistic rebel, Najib Khoury Nassar, whose name was associated with the mass revolt of 1908 and the opposition to the Zionist scheme. *Al-Karmal* was suspended twice and its editor put on trial. *Al-Asma'i* appeared in Jaffa and stamped the Zionists as foreign interlopers. Humorous weeklies with adapted caricatures bolstered up the political campaign of the intellectuals, together with more vociferous circulars distributed secretly. In Jaffa, articulate politicians organised themselves in Al-Hizb al-Watani (The Patriotic Party), and in a number of anti-Zionist societies which emerged in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Jaffa just before the beginning of World War I.

This brings us to the question of Palestine nationalism, the actual depth of its penetration and its level of articulation. From a worthy study which Neville Mandel made from a somewhat Zionist angle on the Arab position towards Zionism between 1882 and 1914, we discover that the Arab nationalists have added scarcely anything new over nearly a whole century to the ideological position adopted by the Palestinians at the close of the nineteenth century. The Arabs are friends of the Jews but not of the Zionists; Jewish immigrants are welcomed as individuals but not as pioneers of a political movement; the Zionists are bent on displacing the Arabs and making them homeless; Zionism is a spearhead of European capitalism and colonialism; an *entente* between the Jewish agricultural settlements and the Arabs for the revival of the country and attainment of independence is desirable and necessary, but compromise and negotiation with political Zionism are treason. The present deadlock over direct Israeli-Arab talks was foreshadowed in 1914, when Nahum Sokolow tried to hold a Zionist-Arab conference. After painstaking effort, the attempt failed because no one could find ten Palestinians ready to enter into negotiations with the Zionist organisation. Most of these opinions were expressed by another Christian Arab nationalist, Najib Azoury, who published in 1904 the manifesto, *The Arab's Country to the Arabs,* widely distributed in Palestine in both French and Arabic. A year later he published in French *Le Réveil de la Nation Arabe* (The Waking of a Nation), in which he put the case of Arab Palestine. While still in Paris, Azoury continued to publish a journal called *L'Independence Arabe,* before his return to Jaffa where he stood as a nationalist candidate.[4]

The leading Palestinian politicians, however, seem to have been more engrossed in the fate of the Arab nation as a whole, and viewed the Zionist danger as one of the calamities threatening the Arab world as a result of its subservience

(4) Mandel, *op. cit.,* p. 91.

to foreign rule. Awni Abd al-Hadi and Rafiq al-Tamimi, both from Nablus, became founding members of "Al-Arabiyya al-Fatat Society," while Ali Nashashibi went to the "Qahtaniyya Society," the two secret societies which appear in the history of the Arab Revival Movement.

Postal and telegraphic services inaugurated on a state level during this period helped the process of news dissemination and wider enlightenment. The judicature was also reformed and the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of citizens were made less easily practiced. The penal code first promulgated in 1840 along the principles familiar in French law, was followed by the *Majalla,* the comprehensive code of civil law, land regulations and land registration *(tabu).* A great part of these laws continued to rule under the British Mandate and formed the working basis of the Jewish National Home. The courts were also reorganised into *Shari'a* courts dealing with personal status, probate and *waqf* (religious trusts) and *bidaya* courts (early courts). These were organised into civil and criminal courts with a high court of appeal as the supreme court.

Education

Political consciousness, of course, is closely related to the level of education existing in the country. We witness here the same picture of the Arab East, or Syria more particularly, engulfing Palestine as part of a larger unit. At first glance, Jerusalem stood as a city deprived of universities and institutions of higher education. Yet roughly fifty miles to the north of Acre, there was the American University of Beirut opened in 1866 and the University of St. Joseph opened in 1875. Only the narrow outlook of the Zionists towards Palestine as an island insulated from its surroundings makes such comparisons necessary. Without Zionism, the comparison between Palestine and Lebanon or Syria is as absurd as the claim that ignorance prevails in Cornwall and Kent in England because they have no universities.

One of the insurmountable obstacles blocking a precise assessment of the actual standard of learning in this area of the Middle East is the scarcity of reliable statistical data and official information. One fact, however, emerges from the numerous records and history books, projecting Palestine as a centre of intensive competition in the field of education: new missionary schools were added to the traditional institutions of learning, and then later were added modern state schools. As the missionary schools belonged to different Christian churches, a competitive spirit emerged among them which verged on the ridiculous at times. At first glance at the records, the country, in some cases, appears to have reached a point of saturation with schools. One Protestant missionary went as far as to protest against the establishment of a new school in his village by the state on the grounds that he had already established a school there.[5]

In the district of Jerusalem there were fifty-seven schools in 1887 under the

(5) FO 195/1581, No. 29, Consulate of Beirut, 22 July 1887.

administration of British missionary societies, with the following number of teachers and students:

Female students	*Male students*	*Native teachers*	*Foreign teachers*
1048	1184	92	3[6]

In addition, there were seventeen more schools in Palestine run by British missions under the Consulate of Beirut, with twenty-three native teachers and six foreign teachers.[7] These missionary schools were not completely financed by foreign sources as they used to receive, according to the same consular report, governmental grants-in-aid and public buildings for the school premises. An interesting feature of the quoted statistics is the overwhelming proportion of the native teachers in these schools which spotlights the available educated manpower in the country. Germany, France and Austria also operated schools. In 1902, there were twenty-six benevolent institutions in Jerusalem and three in Jaffa maintained by Germany.[8]

The missionary schools had won no converts from the Moslems and only a few from the Jews. But their increased activities caused serious consternation among both the Moslem and Jewish communities, and more pronouncedly among the latter group. The positive reply was naturally found in combating their work by opening other schools teaching the Koran or the Torah. The Moslem community had thus opened the "Society of the Maqasid al-Islamia" in Jerusalem. By the academic year of 1921-1922, there were forty-two private Islamic schools and one hundred thirty-nine private Christian schools. Under the impetus of modernisation, the old Islamic schools were found too traditional and limited. Sultan Mahmud II laid the foundation for a parallel system of education based on more modern schools, which were given the name of *rushdiyya* (maturity). The first rushdiyya school in Palestine, opened in the 1860s in Jerusalem, was soon followed by others. The education program received its greatest stimulus under the administration of Madhat Pasha who became a wali of Syria between 1876 and 1882. By the year 1914, the number of primary schools in the district of Jerusalem reached ninety-five with three rushdiyya schools accommodating 234 teachers and 8248 students, of whom 1480 were girls. There were, in addition, 379 traditional schools accommodating 417 teachers and 8705 students.[9] The rushdiyya schools taught modern science, hygiene, arithmetic, etc., in addition to the traditional teaching of religion and language. Thus it was possible for the British Consul in Jerusalem to assert to the Foreign Office that "Jerusalem is more plentifully endowed with schools than, perhaps, any other town of equal size in the Ottoman Empire."[10]

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(6) FO 1581, No. 8, Consulate of Jerusalem, 5 March 1887.
(7) FO 1581, No. 29, Consulate of Beirut, 22 July 1887.
(8) FO 195/2127, No. 24, Consulate of Jerusalem, 8 July 1902.
(9) Tibawi, A., *Arab Education in Mandatory Palestine,* London, 1956, p. 20.
(10) FO 195/1514, 4 December 1885.

The old libraries attached to the mosques, churches and Torah schools multiplied after the introduction of printing in Palestine and Egypt. Arif al-Arif counted, in the Arab part of Jerusalem, eighteen public and church libraries, some of which went as far back as the year 1551 A.D.[11] Yet the standard of learning could by no means be called a satisfactory one. The ratio of literacy did not reach twenty per cent by the beginning of the Great War and the number of people attending school was less than five per cent. But compared with the educational standards of the Afro-Asian world where countries did not have even one per cent literacy, Palestine was certainly one of the most advanced countries outside Europe and North America.

Health Conditions

The most serious problems which seem to have disturbed the minds of the foreign observers in particular were health and security questions, because they affected them and their imperialist activities more than did other indigenous troubles. The breakdown in security and public order was the direct result, not of the miscarriage of justice and corruption of the gendarmerie, but of the general despair to which the Bedouins and fellahin were driven. The desert inhabitant was left with nothing to live on except what he could steal or receive in tribute from the intimidated fellah, a subject which has been treated above. An interesting comment, however, came in one of the consular dispatches telling that, despite the apparently lawless conditions of the country, an English person could walk by himself to any distance outside the town without fearing trouble once he knew how to behave towards the Palestinians.

The health hazards were even more terrifying to the foreign visitor and the native alike. Periodic epidemics of cholera, smallpox, and plague used to kill off thousands of people within a few days in Palestine, as anywhere else in Asia. The plague of 1814, it was estimated, carried off one quarter of the entire population of Syria. During the cholera epidemic of 1902, a total of eight hundred thirty people perished in just one week in October[12] out of the small population of the district of Jerusalem of some quarter million souls. Less shocking but more murderous to both the people and the economy, was the prevalence of malaria. During the nineteenth century, it was found that malarial parasites existed in the blood of 40.5% of Jewish children, 31.1% of Moslem children, 16.4% of Christian children and 7.2% of European children.[13] Tuberculosis was another disease which took its heavy toll from the people.

We can trace the spirit of modernisation creeping into this field as well. Campaigns were launched against malaria by closing numerous cisterns and pouring petroleum over stagnant waters. Mass anti-smallpox vaccination was

(11) Al-Arif, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

(12) FO 78/5208, Consulate of Jerusalem.

(13) Masterman, E.W.G., *Hygiene and Disease in Palestine,* Palestine Exploration Fund.

introduced, together with hospitals for the isolation of infectious patients and quarantine for travellers during epidemics. A water carriage system and main drainage were laid, and the ancient sewer conduits were reopened and utilised. The International Health Bureau set up a Pasteur Institute in the city of Jerusalem, and the major European powers opened their own medical missions and surgeries to the public. By 1914, Britain had eleven medical establishments operating in Palestine. With all the improvisations and inefficiencies of the Ottoman Empire, the main epidemic killers were actually brought under control. The last plague was experienced in Palestine during the first half of the nineteenth century and cholera became rare in the second half of the century.

Yet another adverse trend nearly cancelled all the good effects of the reform trend. The steady flow of foreigners into the country, the Jewish immigrants coming in the fore, generally led the social conditions of the towns to a serious decline. This was made apparent enough in the question of the Jerusalem water supply. The public works in the city were gauged to accommodate the existing population together with the normal rate of growth. The population of Jerusalem, however, leaped from 35,000 souls in 1880 to 80,000 in 1915. A large portion of this increase was due to the influx of Jewish immigrants who preferred to live in this busy city rather than go to the rural settlements. The water supply was suddenly insufficient and the problem reached a preposterous length at the turn of the century when water was sold by the gallon for exorbitant prices until a modern water scheme was finally inaugurated by the government.

The other adverse result of congestion was the ruin of public roads. The limited funds of the local council were completely used for the wear and tear of the city, with nothing left for the maintenance of social services.[14] The consular report of 1 July 1900 had only this crisp sentence to put down under the subtitle of "Roads": "There is nothing to report." Even then, the council was running a perpetual deficit. The immigrant Jews of Jerusalem could not offset their demands on the city services with proportional taxes because a large number of them were non-productive elements living on charity, others dwelt under the tax exemption and protection of the foreign consulates, and the rest preferred to pay bribes rather than taxes to the government officials. A report written in November 1900 by the Medical Superintendent of the English Mission Hospital stressed the ill effects of the rising congestion in Jerusalem on the standard of public health, the shortage of water supply, and the overflow of sewage particularly in the valley leading to Siboam. The writer went on to draw this odorous picture of the overpopulated streets:

"As regards those things patent to all, the streets are kept in a state of constant filth, with perhaps the exception of one or two of the carriage roads; piles of vegetable and animal substances in a rotting condition are allowed to accumulate in every corner and are left there for days and often even months.

(14) FO 195/2084, Consulate of Jerusalem, 1900.

In the Jewish quarter especially, being the largest and poorest of all, the state of things is deplorable when, as is their custom on Fridays, the Jews clean out their houses, the house refuse is poured freely into the roads and we can testify that often it is left there uncleaned for many days. On the Jewish Sabbath the accumulated dirt in the streets is most objectionable."[15]

The second offender against public health, the medical officer found, was the Turkish soldiery. The omission of reference to the Arab inhabitants is noteworthy in his list of offenders. The above cited passage does not seem to be confined to the little ghetto streets of Jerusalem nor to the early phase of Zionist colonisation only. Well into the twenties, under the established order of the Jewish National Home, Dr. Ruppin, the agricultural officer of the Zionist Organisation, lamented the dirt, squalor, flies and repulsive sights existing in the Zionist agricultural colonies.[16] Other foreign observers who visited Palestine and managed to penetrate behind the postcard facades of Zionist propaganda recorded similar ugly scenes reminiscent of the old European ghettoes.

The adverse effect of Jewish immigration on public health was alluded to also in the report of the Palestine Exploration Fund already mentioned. Its writer attributed the increase in tuberculosis to the influx of the Jewish immigrants among whom a large proportion were already suffering from this disease before their arrival in Palestine. Consumptive European Jews were advised by their doctors to quit their cold and damp ghettoes and run to the sun of the Middle East in Palestine.[17]

The Social Scene

Although it is not the intent of this work to delve into the social composition of Palestine, its classes, or its life, three features of the Palestinian society struck the present writer during his quest. The first was the preoccupation with beauty shown by the Palestinians of nearly all classes. The living example of this aspect is perhaps best illustrated by the fine buildings, mosques, churches, private houses and their contents. On the rural side, the costumes of the village women with their splendid colours and skillful embroidery, are undoubtedly among the prettiest ever worn by women of any race or time. So captivating was the impression these folkloric pieces created that Zionist spokesmen attributed all their difficulties to the magic effect which the costumes of the Palestinian villagers had on the British administrators and international commissioners who came to the Holy Land to examine the problem; they were swiftly won over to the Arab side. What is particularly intriguing is the rich variety and variation which we behold in this field within the comparatively small area and limited population

(15) FO 195/2084, Consulate of Jerusalem, 13 November 1900.

(16) Ruppin, A., *Agricultural Colonisation of the Zionist Organisation in Palestine,* London, 1926, pp. 124-126.

(17) Masterman, *op. cit.*

of Palestine. Although the distances between Hula, Nazareth, Jericho, Bethlehem, Beersheba, Safad, Battin, Shu'fat and Daburia are no more than a score of miles from each other, each locality has its own complete style of attire.[18] A long tradition behind the beauty consciousness of the Palestinian woman can be traced to the ancient epochs of history.[19] The aesthetic appreciation of this people reaches its climax in the city which they built over three thousand years ago to embody the quintessence of their artistic flair and to remain a fountain of inspiration for their children.

The visual creativeness has its counterpart in many other fields like dancing, singing and puppetry. An amusing puppet play of the "Punch and Judy" type is quoted in Arnita's book satirizing the Western woman who overfed her little dog with lamb chops, bathed him in eau de cologne and hugged him to her bosom while the children of the country were starving. Awwaz manages to have his fill by masquerading as a dog, and inspires his older brother, Karakuz, to repeat the same trick, but being a clumsy big boy, Karakuz only gets the stick.[20]

Another striking feature is the comparatively narrower gap which separated the various sections of society. There was nothing in Palestine which could be compared with the economic gap which separated the rice growers of the Iraqi swamps and the cotton growers of Egypt from their shaykhs and pashas. In consequence, smaller allotments of land and independent farmers living on a few olive trees or vines were also more familiar here than elsewhere in the Middle East. Hence we find that patriotism and national liberation were more commonly shared in Palestine, and less of an upper and middle class affair than the case in Iraq or Egypt where the fellahin had seldom taken part in any nationalist effort without the strict instructions of their overlords.

A similar phenomenon may be discerned in regard to the social position of women, particularly in the countryside where it was a familiar sight to see women working side by side with their menfolk during the day and dancing the dabka with them in the evening. The Danish traveller, Carsten Niebuhr, who visited the country in 1766 left us with this record of an encounter in the semi-desert parts:

"In this area we found various wells where the cattle were watered by young girls from the surrounding villages. They did not wear veils like the women in the towns. They were well developed, sun tanned beauties. When we dismounted and greeted them, they brought us drinking water in their clay pots and also watered our horses. Previously in other places I had experienced the same sort of kindness, but here it made a particularly deep impression on me, because Rebecca, who also belonged to this district, had shown kindness

(18) Details are given in Arnita, Y.J., *Al-Funun al-Sha'bia fi Filistin* (*The Folklore of Palestine*), Palestine Research Centre, Beirut, 1968, pp. 225-245.

(19) Baramki, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

(20) Arnita, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-186.

in the same way to travellers. Perhaps I had even drunk from the very same well where she drew water."[21]

The writer went on to describe his surprise, upon entering Jerusalem, to find himself entertained by church music played for him on the organ. The extent of emancipation in any society, it was often suggested, can be ascertained from the position of its women. More recent sociologists have also concluded that the position of women in any society may be revealed from the extent and character of prostitution in that society. The present writer could find nothing on record to suggest that Palestine had ever suffered from a serious prostitution problem during this period. A voluminous report of the League of Nations from the twenties confirms this fact. Furthermore, the figures available to authorities had shown that more than half of the prostitutes were not Palestinians.[22]

Neither did education of girls lag behind to a great extent. In the academic year of 1919-1920, there were 2243 girls attending government schools as compared to 8419 boys, or roughly a ratio of more than one to four, which is not a bad ratio, considering the times. This gap closes almost entirely in the missionary schools. The 1887 figures quoted previously give the number of boys as 1184 and girls as 1048.

A great deal of the comparatively mellow contrasts in Palestinian society is conceivably due to the effect of the various sects and religions preaching a variety of ways of living. The great medieval Arab poet of Syria, Al-Ma'arri, put the mental sceptism arising out of this atmosphere in this verse:

> "In Lattakia, there is a conflict between Muhammad and Jesus,
> This with a bell tolls and that from a minaret calls
> O' my muse, which is the truth?"

Islamic modes of life were thus incorporated in the fibre of the Christian and Jewish life and vice versa. In spite of the open feuds and jealousies between the church and the mosque, there was a considerable measure of tolerance, understanding and comradeship between the sons of the three monotheistic faiths, at least until the intrusion of imperialism and the protection and privileges which it showered on one section of the community against the other. The often mentioned Moslem persecution of the Jews and Christians is just another case of overemphasis on the outward appearances and misinterpretation of details. The breakdown of security and public order had nothing to do with the cross and everything to do with the plough. The starving nomads raided the nearest village with strict observance of religious equality and indiscrimination. If the victim was found to be a Mohammedan village, it was brushed aside by the European visitor as another instance of oriental lawlessness. But there would be a mighty outcry against religious persecution if the villagers were Christians.

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(21) Hansen, Thorkild, *Arabia Felix,* London, 1964, p. 340.

(22) *Report to the Council by the Commission of Enquiry into Traffic of Women and Children,* League of Nations document, C/849, M. 393. 1932, IV, p. 86.

In fact, the most frequent and tragic targets of the Bedouin raids were the Moslem pilgrim caravans travelling to and from Mecca.

Burckhardt made some interesting observations on the measure of religious tolerance which he witnessed in Palestine as compared with what he found in Damascus, for example. At Tabarias, he wrote, "I have seen Christians beating Turks in the public bazaar."[23] During the fighting in Palestine, he noticed that the people used to hold their fire whenever they saw a Frank coming within the firing range. On the position of the Jews he wrote: "The Jews enjoy here perfect religious freedom, more particularly since Sulayman, whose principal minister, Hayim Farhi, is a Jew, has succeeded to the Pashalik of Akka." Burckhardt was impressed by their standard of living and was even shocked by their sense of permanent security: "Their conduct, however, is not so prudent as it ought to be, in a country where the Turks are always watching for a pretext to extort money; they sell wine and brandy to the soldiers of the towns almost publically, and at their weddings they make a very dangerous display of their wealth. On these occasions they traverse the city in pompous procession, carrying before the bride the plate of almost the whole community, consisting of large dishes, coffee pots, coffee cups, etc., and they feast in the house of the bridegroom for seven successive days and nights."[24]

The measure of communal understanding is reflected in the mutual cooperation which existed. It was a common habit for Moslems to choose their accountants, solicitors, doctors and representative agents from the midst of the Jewish or Christian communities. The Christians, on the other hand, did not object to appointing a Moslem as guardian for the church properties of Nazareth. The interdenominational dispute over the keys of the Holy Sepulchre was finally resolved in the days of Omar by entrusting them to the care of a Moslem family, which remained so to our present day. Humerous episodes are told of shaykhs who sat in the confession box for indisposed Christian priests and of priests who did the minaret prayer calls for absent shaykhs.

Another aspect of the socio-religious idiosyncrasy of Palestine is that the tribal and national ties were stronger than the religious ones. Volney noticed during his stay in Bethlehem that the Christians and Moslems who belonged to the Yemeni clan were more united as such against other Christians or Moslems who belonged to the Qaisi clan. As Yemenites, they fought together the Qaisi Christians and Moslems. When the question of the national liberation arose, the differences between Christians and Moslems were submerged with ease by the common national effort in which, in fact, the Christian was more of a pioneer and an extremist.

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(23) Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-323.

(24) *Ibid.*, p. 327.

The Position of the Jews

As mentioned before, the Arabs broke their promise to the Christians and allowed the Jews to enter and dwell in Jerusalem. Over the following centuries, small Jewish communities lived in the four cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Safad and Tiberias. Most of these Jews lived as middle class burghers or on charity sent from abroad. Practically none of them engaged in agriculture and very few in crafts and industry. Those who lived on charity were either straightforward beggars and destitutes, or religious scholars spending their lives on the studies of Judaism, meditation, and worship. Their contributions to the story of Jewish learning are debatable; their squabbling over the distribution of the incoming charity funds was most unedifying. They opposed Zionism without hesitation and stood in front of the Wailing Wall to make prayers for the Jews of the diaspora until the coming of the Messiah. The middle-class Jews, on the other hand, prospered under the Turkish administration and amassed considerable wealth—as was the case of the Farhi family—thanks to their knowledge of languages and accountancy and their cosmopolitan business contacts. Many of them served in the civil service, often reaching the rank of state secretaries. Such was the oriental Jewry of Palestine, integrated and hardly distinguishable from the rest of the people. In 1885, some eighty-eight Jewish schools taught 1924 boys and 360 girls of their children. But the great majority of these schools could hardly be called even primary, as they taught little more than the Bible, the Talmud, and commentaries thereon.[25] They were, in fact, a Jewish version of the Mohammedan "Koran."

After the Suez Canal opened, another totally different community began to emerge, its main source lying across the sea in Eastern Europe. Its number began to increase over the span of the nineteenth century as Palestine continued to attract labour and capital. The Zionist settlers were by no means the only newcomers to the country. Armenians, Circassians and Arabs from the surrounding countries also poured in during this period. Between 1620 and 2080 houses were occupied in Palestine by Moslem immigrants from Eastern Europe alone during the period 1879-1900.[26]

The number of Jews swelled, at the turn of the century, to some 40,000 souls of whom only a few indulged in agriculture, or added much to the productive output of the country. As they became not only a political danger but also an economic burden, the Turkish authorities hastened to clamp down on the indiscriminate immigration of undesirable settlers. In this measure they were, for once, supported by the representatives of the European powers. The British Consul wrote to the Foreign Office suggesting the refusal of visas to Jews who could not prove their financial capability and also the cooperation with the

(25) FO 195/1514, Consulate of Jerusalem, 4 December 1885.

(26) FO 195/2225, No. 4.

Turkish authorities in the expulsion of undesirable immigrants from Palestine. In this dispatch, he made the following comments:

"Of late years the city of Jerusalem has almost been encircled by a series of almhouses inhabited by infirm and indigent Jews and the Jewish population has increased to nearly 40,000, most of whom are without occupation, notwithstanding the efforts of the Alliance Israelite, the Anglo-Jewish Association and other benevolent institutions to encourage industry and labour among immigrant Jews by the foundation of technical schools and colonies in the country.

"Under such circumstances, the Turkish authorities would seem to have some excuse to prevent the immigration on the grounds of overcrowding or of detriment to public health."[27]

A similar finding was expressed by the Consulate in 1887 when it mentioned that the Jews who were coming to Palestine were poor, "jeopardising the public health and are also the cause of death."[28] The Vice-Consul of Haifa dealt with the agricultural career of the immigrants in a different dispatch:

"The Samarian Jews seem to be mostly from Gallicia and Poland. They are supposed and said to work habitually in the vineyards, but personal observation inclines me to think that very little manual work on the land is done by any of them. The native fellaheen are employed for the purpose."[29]

Among other things mentioned in the same dispatch is the complete destruction of 15,000 dunums of vineyards cultivated by Baron de Rothschild as a result of the phylloxera which raged in the new Jewish colonies. In fact, the surveyors of the Palestine Exploration Fund counted some one hundred Jews in all working in Bukeiah, and made the passing comment: "This is the only place where the Jews cultivate the ground."[30] Therefore, the figures given by the Zionist authorities on the number of Jewish settlers working on agriculture before World War I (claiming some 2960 souls in 1890, 4500 in 1899, and 7500 in 1914) may well serve as an example of the easy falsification of statistics.

Nevertheless, despite the employment of native labour for the hard work and easy money coming from the diaspora, half of the Jews who had come to the country before the Great War left by then—according to the Zionist sources. The miserable conditions of the early Jewish immigrants were described by Burckhardt who finished the picture with this touch:

"Led by the stories of the missionaries to conceive the most exalted ideas of the land of promise, as they still call it, several of them have absconded from their parents, to beg their way to Palestine, but no sooner do they arrive in one or other of the four cities, than they find by the aspect of all around them, that they have been deceived."[31]

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(27) FO 78/2084, No. 71, Consulate of Jerusalem, 29 December 1900.
(28) FO 195/1581, No. 9, 5 March 1887.
(29) FO 78/5479, 5 February 1900.
(30) *Survey of Western Palestine,* Vol. I, p. 197.
(31) Burckhardt, *op. cit.,* p. 328.

Zionist immigration brochures, however, continued to carry photos of the smiling agricultural settler, singing and dancing. More than a century later, David Ben Gurion, while casting a look back at his early years in Palestine, wrote: "It was as a stable worker at Sejerah that I learned not to expect too much out of life in general and life in Palestine in particular."[32]

(32) *Zionist Record,* 24 January 1958.

IX

DEBIT AND CREDIT

Revival: Ultimate Destination

From the preceding narrative of the nineteenth century, Palestine and the entire Middle East emerge as a land verging on a great revival, expressed in the dreams of its poets and writers, and indicated in the statistics of the socio-economic experts. Some of the fruits of this forward surging movement have already appeared in such countries as Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Jordan, the countries adjacent to Palestine; there is no reason to suppose that Palestine alone was going to lag behind. There was enough history, tradition, knowledge, social basis, economic organisation and willpower to thrust Palestine into the twentieth century orbit.

The question of whether the Zionist enterprise helped or hindered this process is one of the worst acrobatic exercises on the "ifs" and "might-have-beens" of history. Too many factors must be taken into account. Without the Balfour Declaration, Palestine might have achieved independence earlier; it might have joined Syria and Lebanon in a united Arab state as envisaged by the Arab nationalists. The country would have escaped all of the destruction and strife which has accompanied its history since 1920. Haifa was made a terminus for the Iraqi Petroleum Company pipeline, a position which was torpedoed with the establishment of Israel. More pipelines might have been laid from Kuwait, Iraq and Saudi Arabia were it not for the Zionist presence. The benefits which the Suez Canal was bestowing on the land east of Sinai were also demolished and the canal itself was relegated because of its successive closures resulting from political developments. The trade and communications position was also wiped out. The Jewish National Home attracted Jewish capital on nationalistic or religious grounds; how much capital could an Arab Palestine—independent or united with a larger Arab state—have attracted on solid economic grounds? Such are some of the possibilities and crossroads of history. The Zionists have undoubtedly an alternative list of possibilities.

Certain developments, however, are a matter of historical records. Early Zionist colonisation did more harm than good to the country. As pointed out in preceding chapters, the Jewish immigrants were more of paupers, penniless ideologists, and impractical intellectuals than anything else. Far from improving the

health of the natives, they brought with them diseases which were raging in the crowded streets of cold, damp Europe, particularly diseases of the respiratory system. They also brought with them the scenes of dirt, rubbish, and decay known to the history of the medieval Jewish districts of Europe. With the sudden congestion they caused in the small towns of Palestine, the sewage, rubbish disposal and water supply organisation broke down. The limited funds of the local authorities were thus diverted to the more immediate menace of health hazards. Road building, education and general development were thus denied to the rest of the community.

Apart from a few hundred people, the whole Jewish community that emerged from the Zionist project led an economically unproductive life. The charity money was naturally not meant to give them a luxury life which could overflow with some fringe financial benefits to the natives. So we can presume here that these people not only lived as parasites on the diaspora but also on the Arab people as well. The colonisation organisations, of course, bought land and paid handsomely for it, causing in the process some appreciation in the price of land. Most of the bulk purchases were made with absentee landlords, like the Sursuqs, who naturally used the money outside the country, little of it reaching the Palestinians. On some of these lands, the fellahin were left to till the fields as cheap labour; in other cases they were simply evicted and valuable expanses of land were left fallow. In 1930, 114,329 metric dunums out of 270,000 dunums held by the Jewish National Fund were left uncultivated.[1]

For centuries, the Jews were barred from agriculture in Europe. As a result, when they came to Palestine, they had not the slightest notion of how to dig a canal or transplant a seedling. After the establishment of the Jewish National Home, they improved their position by importing agricultural specialists from Western Europe and America and sinking vast sums in machinery and equipment. From this, the Arabs learned something by example, a fact which was pounced on by the Zionist publicists as evidence of the benefits the natives gained from the Zionist work. Nothing is mentioned of the other side of the picture. The basis of Zionist agriculture in Palestine was the agricultural skill of the fellah. The early colonisers had to learn everything from him; ask him what could and could not be done, where to plant vegetables and where to sow wheat, what cattle were most suitable, etc. The fellah, according to the records, was even more generous with his advice to his future tormentors than with his hospitality. To get a picture of the difference in agricultural skill, management and forthrightness, the case of the Montefiore plantation serves as a good example. Sir Moses bought a plantation from the Palestinian Arabs. It was a

(1) Cmd. 3686, 1930.

thriving orchard, a total number of 1407 trees, with this wide range of fruits:

721	oranges
129	sweet lemons
60	lemons
24	citrons
279	pomegranates
42	apples
29	peaches
41	almonds
11	dates
6	apricots
9	mulberries
13	pears
6	figs
2	bananas
12	wild trees
23	vines

After a few years under Jewish management, the number of trees fell to only 900 in 1875.[2] The fiasco was discussed at some length in the diaries, and the biographer of the Montefiores observed: "Knowing that similar gardens and fields in possession of the natives were very profitable, he (Sir Moses) was rather surprised at the result."[3] This is by no means an isolated case. In 1930, Sir John Hope Simpson mentioned that a number of villages bought by the Jews began paying less tithes than before when cultivated by the Arabs. In addition, some 30,000 dunums in the Vale of Esdraelon were converted, not to green fields blossoming with flowers and crops, but to derelict lands covered with weeds and teeming with hordes of destructive mice—since they had been bought from the Arabs.[4]

The Profits and Losses Account

No one, of course, wants to claim that less land has been cultivated since the Balfour Declaration or that the agricultural standard has declined. What is essential to remember is that a decline in agriculture and standard of living would have resulted in Palestine due to the Zionist influx and its uneconomic enterprise, were it not for the presence of another factor, namely the fantastic capital investment. Money offered as a sacrifice to a nationalistic altar kept the show going. When the swampy lands of the Hadera (totalling some 30,000 dunums) were bought, the fellahin warned the Jews of its unsuitability for agriculture and of the endemic malaria threat. "We needn't take our cue from bar-

(2) *A Narrative of a Forty Days Sojourn in the Holy Land,* address given by Sir Moses Montefiore, London, 1877, pp. 67, 68.
(3) Montefiore, *op. cit.,* Vol. II, p. 68.
(4) Cmd. 3686, 1930, p. 17.

barians," was the reply of the confident colonisers. Within a matter of months, the landscape was littered with tombstones of the Jewish settlers and the colony was as good as abandoned. SOS calls were sent to Baron de Rothschild who opened his purse once again to provide funds to tempt Arab labour to tackle the job of draining off the swamps. "The draining of the marshes was due not to the superior skill of the Jewish colonist as compared with the existing 'barbarians,' but to the aid of their superior funds," wrote N. Barbour on the episode.[5]

Statistics on the cost of Zionist colonisation, the budgets of the Jewish Agency and the aid given to Israel, are the stock-in-trade of most books dealing with the Palestine question. Arab sources in particular have amassed volumes of information on this subject. It suffices here to quote a few of the salient facts as an indication. Until the end of 1941, the bill of the Jewish colonisation in Palestine reached five hundred million dollars, according to Dr. Chaim Weizmann.[6] During the Millionaires' Conference held in Jerusalem in August 1967, Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir stated that the financial aid received by Israel between 1946 and 1966 amounted to seven billion dollars, i.e., more than half the total value of the Marshall Plan of thirteen billion dollars, extended for the recovery of Western Europe between 1948 and 1954, or, conversely, each Israeli received twenty times what each European received.

Such is the picture of the money sunk in the small plots of land reclaimed by Israel. If the accounts were submitted to any banker or company director, he would think the world was going mad and the science of arithmetics had been thrown overboard. If the same accounts were summarised to any citizen of the deprived world where famine and disease are raging for lack of everything, he would simply call it a sin. Israel, which represents only one per mille of the population of the developing world, was receiving ten per cent of the entire aid given by the developed world to the developing world. Politicians of Israel took a short cut in answering the puzzled economist by affirming that economic laws did not apply to Israel when it was found that the heavily financed and mechanised Jewish farms were producing crops far more expensive than those produced by the Arabs, Dr. Ruppin, the agricultural manager of the Jewish Agency, advised the Jewish farmer not to sell his products but to eat them himself! "They have greater value than the money which he will obtain for them." This was why mixed farming was found to be the most convenient.[7]

According to the reports of the Executive to the Zionist Congresses, only one or two of all the settlements managed to balance their accounts. In 1930, Sir Hope found only Kfar Yeheskiel, with 59 families, really self-supporting after sinking some £133,329 into the colony. Kiryath Anavim, which was claimed as a great success having made an annual profit of just £164, was discovered to

(5) Barbour, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
(6) *Foreign Affairs*, January 1942.
(7) Ruppin, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

have most of its men actually working as wage earners in Jerusalem bringing in a total of £1,080, paying back nothing for debts or rents, and still sustaining a deficit of £5,115.[8] The English agricultural experts found the outlay of the Zionist colonies so lavish and "over-capitalised" that it was essential to write off a considerable amount of the outlay.[9]

The sheer waste entailed in the Zionist revival of Palestine caused a number of serious rifts in the Movement. The story of Justice Brandeis and his American supporters who broke away from the Zionist Organisation in the twenties on this particular point is one episode. The World Zionist Organisation was constantly subjected to a barrage of criticism on this account throughout its history.[10] Max Nordau, Herzl's companion and successor, was critical throughout of the agricultural Jewish colonisation and was certain that it would never be viable.[11] S. Klinger of the Revisionist faction wrote: "This monstrous costliness of Jewish colonisation is not only preposterous—it is deadly."[12] According to his figures, the cost of the settlement of the Greek refugees was £30 per head, the Armenian refugees £40 per head, but the figure for the Jews was £400 per head. In southern Russia where the Soviet government was settling Jews in agriculture with generous help from the Joint Distribution Committee, the cost of settling an entire family was £150-£200 with 82.25% of the expenses returnable.[13]

The story of waste is not confined to the agrarian scene. The numerous housing units with no occupants, the factories which continuously ran at losses, and the overstaffed administration and academic institutions are facts which keep coming to life whenever they cross the barrier of scandals or jokes. One can only refer the reader here to the daily press and periodicals. Far from the alleged picture of excellent management and ingenious revival of the desert, the Zionist enterprise is actually the biggest white elephant ever bred by a rich maharajah. The Jews have often impressed the world with their ways of turning dust into gold; in Israel they are showing how to turn gold into dust. *The Jewish Chronicle* commented on the economic management of the enterprise in the thirties with these words: "The crux of the present situation is that Palestine has too much money and does not know how to use it now."[14] If we take the total cost including armaments, war damages, disruption of the economy and communications of the Middle East, maintenance of Arab refugees, settlement of Jews, and the reclamation of the small swamp and barren lands, we cannot fail to consider the so-called Zionist revival of Palestine as a major economic disaster in the history of man.

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(8) Cmd. 3686, 1930, pp. 45, 47, 48.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 42.
(10) *Cf.* Ruppin's reply in the *Zionist Review,* September 1921.
(11) *Zionist Bulletin,* June 1914.
(12) Klinger, S., *The Ten-Year Plan for Palestine,* New Zionist Organisation, No. 4, 1938.
(13) Cmd. 3686, 1930.
(14) *Jewish Chronicle,* 28 July 1933.

Arab Share of the Zionist Revival

The Zionist Jews are free, of course, to do with their money what they like and whatever revival they have managed to procure in Palestine should be still credited to their work. The difficulty here is that it was not their money. The bulk of funds sunk into Palestine came from the taxpayers of Germany, Britain, the United States and every country which sends aid to Israel, provides troops for the peace operations in the area or allows Jewish contributions to be calculated against income tax. To the peoples of such countries and to the internationalists who look at the mass of mankind as one family, the Zionist waste is a terrible setback.

Yet, Zionist enterprise in Palestine was not only carried out at the expense of the world at large but also at the expense of the Palestinians. We have seen how the influx of the Zionist settlers affected the rest of the community and caused the breakdown of public services in the previous century. The parasitical existence of the Jewish settler on the rest of the community continued well into this century. Considerable governmental sums were spent on providing for the new Zionist settlements. In 1929, the government had to write off loans amounting to £75,619 advanced to the township of Tel Aviv. A memorandum of the Treasury on the subject explained the reasons: "The state of the affairs of the township is due to unsound finance on the part of the Council in embarking upon works, largely unproductive, and services in excess of its means ... ."[15] The Arabs felt very bitter and made no secret of their opinion. The Zionists replied that they were paying taxes, and allegedly more taxes per capita than the Arabs. The Arabs, on the other hand, were denied access to the valuable state lands which were reserved for and distributed to the Jewish settlers under the heading of promoting the Jewish National Home. Had such lands been distributed to the fellahin, they could have developed them as easily with a bit of foreign aid or credit. The industrial side was completely denied to the Arabs. The fate of this field was determined in 1922 when the whole hydraulic sources of the country were given to the Zionist entrepreneur, Pinhas Rutenburg, under the scheme which bore his name, behind the backs of Arab, British, and international financers who were considering the project. The Arabs who wanted to interfere in the matter were threatened with deportation.[16]

The Jewish National Home was also built on the sweat of Arab labour and experience. We have mentioned how the early colonisers took their first lessons from the fellahin. The hazardous and strenuous tasks were given to Arab workers not only from Palestine but also from other Arab countries. The draining of the Hadera swamps, for example, was carried out by Egyptian fellahin specially imported for the task. Sudanese workers were also contracted for work in other

(15) *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances,* Cmd. 3530, 1930.

(16) Hansard, *House of Commons,* 4 July 1922. The story of this affair is discussed in Jeffries, J.M.N., *Palestine—The Reality,* London, 1939.

difficult projects. Once the bare foundation was established, the Zionist Organisation stepped in to call for the boycott of Arab labour. This policy was pursued ruthlessly between the two world wars, but Arab labour was employed here and there, not where and when the Arabs were desperate for employment but when and where their employment was advantageous to the Jews. This was also true after the 1967 war when refugees from Gaza were employed in various building projects at lower prices, arousing the protests of the Israeli trade unions.[17]

Not only did the Zionist pioneers learn how to work the land from the fellahin, but they also established the whole future of Israeli economy on what the Arabs had built. Apart from the main item of charity, tourism, and the citrus trade are the two primary sources of income for Israel. Both were introduced and promoted by the Arabs under the caliphate. A great deal of the Arab folk arts, including dancing and decoration, were adapted by the immigrants or incorporated into other genres of art to produce what they now call Israeli art. The popular dishes in the so-called Israeli restaurants of New York, London or Paris are the "hummus" and "falafil," the two Arab dishes of ordinary folk. Indeed, Israeli cuisine is simply old Arab Palestinian cooking.

The Palestinians, on the other hand, learned practically nothing from the Jewish immigrants in such matters. Dr. Ruppin admitted that the settlers had no appreciation of aesthetic things and went as far as to doubt that they could ever attain a sense of beauty.[18] Arthur Koestler derided the hotch-potch jumble of buildings which he saw in Israel. At best, he could only describe the manner of building with functionalism. The lack of elegance, nice appearance, pleasant clothes and graceful manners so revolted many European visitors and British officials that the Zionists attributed the anti-Zionist attitudes of such people to the ugly appearance and ill manners of the settlers. Even now, when Israelis are reminded of this aspect, they shrug their shoulders indifferently. This is all the residue of the squalid conditions endured for centuries in the ghettoes of eastern Europe. Aesthetic background was not the only aspect transplanted from the Russian Pale of Settlement to Palestine. The characteristic psychology of the ghettoes with its persecution mania, self-centredness, suspicion, isolation, egoism and scores of neurotic obsessions associated with that life was also transplanted to Palestine. Psychological maladies are known to inflict more disorientations and ill effects on the surrounding people than probably what is suffered by the subject himself. It is very difficult to assess the extent of the changes which the Zionist colonisation affected on the mental make-up of the Palestine society since its beginning. The backward looking mind of the Zionist, as evidenced in resurrecting an ancient language, an archaic alphabet and a forgotten history and in inflicting clericalism and traditionalism on society, may also prove detrimental to the health of the Arab peoples in the whole area of the Middle East.

(17) See, for example, *Ma'ariv*, 8 February 1970.
(18) Ruppin, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-126.

The Zionists may counter such arguments by the material benefits which their project bestowed on the Palestinian Arabs. They find themselves here on firmer ground. After repeating the same case of Palestine as an empty country infested with malaria and ruined villages whose population had died from disease, Mr. Koestler went on to hold the same comparison between the standard of the Palestinians before the Jewish National Home and after. It is shown that their income had increased by a faster rate than that of the Arabs in the neighbouring countries. The Arabs here reply by producing figures which show a faster increase in prices of consumer goods in Palestine than in the same neighbouring countries, but they have difficulty refuting the Zionist claim altogether. It is logical to expect that a portion of the vast sums of money reaching the Jews must have seeped through and reached the pockets of the Arabs.

Another standard used in assessing the civilising effect of Zionism on Palestine was the increase in the population of the Arab townships and the country as a whole. Indeed, one of the repeated criticisms in the nineteenth century was the fact that the country was empty, which the Zionists took literally. This is, of course, part of the capitalist concept of heaven as a land teeming with a million million inhabitants buying angelic drapery of ten yards of terylene each. The European travellers were looking for markets and the country which had no market was no country. In his famous memorandum to Palmerstone, Lord Ashley simply dismissed Palestine as a worthless country because it had very few people. Apparently to these gentlemen, it was more criminal to allow a land to be without people, than to see a people without a land.

This chapter must remain incomplete. The Zionist enterprise is less than a century old. Israel has lived only a score of years. The conflict is gaining momentum from day to day, moving gradually away from periodic war stages to more serious business. Both sides are thinking in nuclear terms and both camps, socialist and imperialist, are becoming more deeply and deeply involved. Will the history of twentieth century Israel be any different from that of the tenth century B.C. Israel? Can the country escape the repetition of the same ruin, destruction and suffering which accompanied the history of ancient Israel? Will the present shrines and temples of the former civilisations escape the tragic waves of destruction, like the acts of the lunatics of whom the fire raiser of the Aqsa Mosque was one? This will really be a miracle, even in a land of miracles.

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