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Palestine and the Victorian  
Restoration Movement

Dr Brodeur has already told the story of Blackstone and Hechler, Christians who in earlier days worked tirelessly to promote the Zionist cause. (See this JOURNAL, 100(3), 274-298)

Continuing his researches Dr Brodeur has brought together the stories of Jews, and also Christians, who devoted wealth, time and prayer to the cause of Zionism during the decades prior to Hertzl. We are privileged to publish some of his more recent findings.

*The Restoration Movement*

Some say that the English fascination with the idea of a political restoration of the Jews to Palestine was inspired by the Rights of Man of the French Revolution; others simply attribute it to the rise of capitalism, which had such a profound influence upon colonialism. In fact, the political process that achieved the social and political emancipation of the Jews in 19th century England had firm roots that go back at least to 16th century England. Those origins were consistently religious, and predominantly Protestant, a reality that is as puzzling to Arabic scholars of Zionism, like E.W. Said and A.M. Elmessiri, as it was unsettling to socialist commentators on Zionism like Moses Hess and Karl Kautsky.

One of the first Englishmen upon whom the idea of a Jewish return to Palestine, prior to the millennial reign of Christ, forcefully took hold was Thomas Brightman (1562-1607). This sign-of-the-end times view was supported, among others, by Oliver Cromwell, Hugo Grotius, and Puritans and the great Puritan dissenter Roger Williams, founder of the Baptist church in the American colonies. There were also millennialists in France. Issac de la Peyrere

(1594-1676), a French diplomat, went as far as initiating diplomatic negotiations with the Turks for the acquisition of Palestine for the Jews, the first of a long line of French and English statesmen to approach the Sublime Porte on this ticklish matter.<sup>1a</sup> During the 18th century, writers and poets joined the ranks of the Christian Zionists, or millenarian Zionists as Jews sometimes call them, Lord Byron contributing Hebrew *Melodies*. In England, the movement peaked in the 1840's; in the United States, a half century later.

Many of the early Christian Zionists, like those of the present century, desired a return of Jews to Palestine so that they could be converted to Christ — and thus fulfill Christian interpretations of Zechariah in the Old Testament and Romans in the New, others were inspired by humanistic motives; they were revolted by the continued suffering of Jews in the Diaspora and wanted to restore them to the dignity of full nationhood. Perhaps there was also a third, smaller group, Christian, and non-Christian, mystics and romantics who, whether they were aware of it or not, venerated the Greek and Roman classical era which ended, for the Jews of Palestine, with their decimation and dispersal under the emperor Vespasian. Two outstanding examples of such humanistic-mystic gentile Zionists in the 19th century were George Eliot and Laurence Oliphant.

Because most of contemporary writers and scholars of Zionism, Jewish and Moslem, today assume that the paramount if not exclusive motive of Christian support for the Jewish return to Palestine was *proselytism*, the Restoration Movement as it effloresced in England during the early 19th century is worth careful study. For there can be no Islamic, Communist, or Third World understanding of the complex, protean phenomenon that is Zionism without an appreciation of the formidable and continuing impact of biblical Christian support.

Although not all Protestants endorsed the movement, it is broadly true that 19th century English Protestantism more or less held the Restoration Movement on its broad shoulders in the manner that Atlas balanced the world. Few Catholics offered support, the Curia being more concerned with preservation of extraterritorial privileges over its several shrines in the Holy Land than in advancing the cause of the Restoration. And then, there was the long Catholic practice, the so-called 'teaching of contempt' to contend with when more liberal Catholic spokesmen opened an ear to the Zionist petitioner Herzl in 1904.

Among more than a hundred Protestant denominations and cults in the United States and England, the majority of which have actually arisen since the first glimmerings of the Restoration Movement, dozens dismissed the Old Testament Covenant of Abraham and the Davidic Renewal as a dispensation that was totally eclipsed when Christ spoke of fulfilling the law and Paul averred that it was

superceded by grace. However, there remained those, like the Plymouth Brethren, many Methodists, Presbyterians, and others who rejected the 'New Departure' thesis for one that held, as Paul said, that someday the Jews would be grafted back into the fuller faith: "natural branches ... grafted back into their own olive tree" (Rom. 11:24). The secular beginnings of this long process may have actually begun with the first Zionist colonies of just a century ago.

It was in his letter to the Galatians (see esp. 3:17-18) that the vigorous second generation apostle demonstrated how absurd and untenable is the notion, later enshrined for centuries in Christian Church teachings, of the theological rejection of the Jews. Beyond any doubt, as the world witnessed anew in the first four decades of this century, the idea that the Jews were rejected by God and cursed as outcasts contributed significantly to pogroms and to the Hitler Holocaust by preparing undiscerning and ignorant minds for acquiescence and acceptance.

#### *The Oak Tree Grove*

At the turn of the Eighteenth Century, there lived a wealthy, young barrister named Lewis Way, a thoughtful man who was familiar enough with the Scriptures to perceive that the Jews could not be 'rejected'. Informed that a solitary grove of oaks that belonged to a neighboring squire was protected from encroachment by that family's fiat until the Jews had been fully restored to their homeland, Way was prompted to recall a few of the Bible verses his mother had read to him when he was a child. He embarked upon a study of the biblical prophecies relating to the Jews, and became convinced that many of them spoke of a time and condition that matched none in Israel's long past. In 1815, Way took over the debt-ridden London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews, converting his own estate into a college for training Jewish converts for missionary work among their own people.<sup>2a</sup> It was during a visit to one of his missionaries in Russia that Way became aware of the shocking reality of the living conditions of eastern Jews.

Efforts to convert Jews in any great number to Christ, even the best intentioned ones, have never been crowned with much success. And so it was with Way. About 1825, he sold his estate, broke connections with the *Jews' Society*, as it was then called, and moved to Paris where he served as minister to an English congregation. Despite his break with the *Jew's Society*, Way retained his convictions concerning the increasingly popular doctrine of the *premillennial* advent of Christ, the belief based in part upon a passage in Zechariah, that in the end time Jesus would return to Jerusalem to intervene against the decimation of the Jews at Armageddon.

To expound his views about the return of the Jews to Palestine and their crises in the latter days, Way published a widely read series of articles under the pseudonym Basilicus. The articles did much to spread the Protestant doctrine of premillennialism (also known as millenarianism) in England — from whence it spread, in the 1850's and 1860's — to the United States.<sup>2b</sup>

*Victorian Men of Action*

During the first half of the 19th century, English political personalities who included George Gawler (1796-1860), Lord Palmerston (1784-1865), Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885), and military figure Colonel Charles Henry Churchill (1828-1877), wrote, spoke, and agitated on behalf of Jews in Palestine, and for large-scale Jewish migration to that backwater of imperial Turkey.

In the quaint nomenclature of the English, the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, or Lord Ashley, as his colleagues called him, was the very mortal Anthony Ashley Cooper. Although he was born to high privilege, Lord Ashley stands today as one of the greatest social reformers of the 19th century. By the sheer force of his personality and pen he rammed through Parliament, though not a member of that body, much of the industrial and punitive reforms of his day. Self-effacing, he shunned appointment to high office in order to give the widest possible credence to his high convictions.

A student of Biblical prophecy, Shaftesbury was convinced that a return of the Jews to Palestine should go hand in hand with the completed social emancipation of Europe's Jews. A trusted advisor to Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston, the reformer expounded his Zionist views with such fervour<sup>3</sup> that the agnostic Palmerston took steps to assure the former that the Ottoman authorities in Palestine would respect the integrity of the Holy Land's Jews. Encouraged, in 1840 Salisbury submitted to the Foreign Office a plan for settlement of the Jews in Palestine under English auspices.<sup>1b</sup> And to the present day, historians argue whether Salisbury's motives were religious or political.

Very possibly they were both. Balfour Declaration historian Leonard Stein reports that Salisbury, early in his public career, objected "to the removal of political restrictions against British Jews as an 'insult to Christianity'".<sup>4</sup> A member of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews, Shaftesbury evinced concern for Israel by study and mastery of the Hebrew language, a tongue required neither for the conversion of Jews in England nor the practice of English commerce in Syria and Palestine.

Late in life (1875), Salisbury was appointed president of the Palestine Exploration Fund. In his opening address, Ashley advised the fund:

Send out the best agents...to search the length and breadth of Palestine...drain it, measure it, and, if you will, prepare for the return of its ancient possessors, for I must believe that the time cannot be far off before that great event will come to pass...<sup>5</sup>

The language here is unmistakably eschatological, that of the pietistic sentiments of a Christian believer, not that of a colonial strategist.

As a former governor of the desert state of South Australia, Colonel George Gawler, on military assignment in the Lebanon, formulated detailed schemes for Jewish settlement in Palestine, because of that region's strategic location between Syria and Egypt and considerations of "colonial and foreign trade."<sup>4b</sup> However, he had motives of genuine compassion also. Convinced that Jewish blood libel charges in Turkish Lebanon might best be defused by promoting Jewish prosperity in their ancient homeland, Colonel Gawler wrote to Dr. Abraham Benisch, editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* (London), outlining a scheme, similar to Salisbury's, which included Great Power protection of the Jews of Palestine. He contended, "So long as the (Turkish) empire stands, Jewish civilized settlement in Syria (Palestine) would be a strength and blessing to it..."<sup>6</sup>

In the decade that had elapsed between Salisbury's proposals and Gawler's, Prussia, Austria, France and Russia had begun to take a closer look at Palestine; the rivalries of their religious establishments in Jerusalem would, in fact, soon lead to the bloody and useless Crimean War. No longer, therefore, could an Englishman speak of English sponsorship of the Jews in Palestine. And this multi-national 'claim' to a political, rather than purely religious interest in Jerusalem, extends to the present day. However, Prussia no longer exists as a state, and the Russians have political motives that have been entirely severed from their old Orthodox antecedents.

As early as 1845, Gawler urged on England to "Replenish the deserted towns and fields of Palestine with the energetic people whose warmest affections are rooted in the soil."<sup>7</sup> In 1852, he founded the Association for Promoting Jewish Settlement in Palestine.<sup>1c</sup>

Despite their obvious disinterest and even hostility of the Vatican, Italy was not without its Christian Zionists. An Italian philosopher and statesman with the somewhat startling but perfectly respectable name of Benedetto Musolino (1809-1885), urged Lord Palmeston and the Rothschild family to settle Jews in Palestine.

He received no reply. His book *Jerusalem and the Hebrew People* (1851) remained unpublished for a full century, when it finally appeared in Italian.

### *The Millennialists*

Establishing a home for the Jews in Ottoman Palestine received some timely support from a movement that suddenly sprang up among pious Protestants at Plymouth, on the Channel Coast of England. Under the international leadership of their founder, John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), the Plymouth Brethren, as they came to be called, infiltrated the various Protestant sects, including the dominant Church of England, with their conviction that prior to the second coming of Christ a remnant of Jews would be restored to the Holy Land, where they would first prosper, encounter all kinds of troubles, and eventually convert to an eager expectation of the Messiah. Because of their division of world history into several great periods of graduated divine enlightenment known as *Dispensations*, the followers of Darby came to be known as *Dispensationalists*. The new movement spread to America, injecting new life into the rather lifeless Puritan doctrine of the Jewish dispensation at the end of the Church Age. These Dispensationalists (*Darbystes* in France, where they survive as a small Protestant sect) injected new life into the pre-millennialist doctrine of the Second Coming. For they held that a remnant of Jews would return to Palestine *in unbelief* to await the Messiah and the End of the Age. Reinforced by a trans-Atlantic visit (Canada and USA) by the founder, the Darby doctrine was to have considerable influence upon William Blackstone, pioneer in American political Zionism, and his acquaintance Cyrus Scofield whose notes still appear in the almost venerable Scofield Edition of the King James Bible.

Within seven years of the founding of the Plymouth Brethren (1832), the Church of Scotland dispatched two scholars, Andrew Bonar and Robert Murray M'Cheyne, to Palestine to report on the condition of Jews living there. Their commission pointedly referred to Palestine as the land of the Jews — not of the Turks, or Arabs.

After publication in *The Times* of London, the Bonar-M'Cheyne report was widely publicized in Britain, and stimulated many months of speculation on the subject of England helping the Jews to secure Palestine.<sup>8</sup> In the same year, 1841, the P & O Line opened regular steamship service between England and India, by way of the Red Sea. Passengers and goods had to disembark to transfer to camel trains over the isthmus of Suez.

The Christadelphians were one sect that practised philo-Semitism. This Christian fellowship was established by English physician

John Thomas who had been influenced by the teachings of the Plymouth Brethren. Thomas came to America with some followers, and eventually the group became more active in the States than England, becoming popular during the upheavals and crises spun off by the Civil War, when the group adopted its present name. Today, whenever Israel appears to be faced with a severe crisis, the fundamentalist Christadelphians, who are active from Israel to Australia, set up free public lectures in major cities to champion the cause of Israel and the Bible.

*Marvellous Montefiore*

It is doubtful that Rabbi Judah Alkaly of Zemun, Hungary, had ever heard of the Plymouth Brethren, when, in 1837 he proposed to his fellow Jews that they exert every effort to get themselves back to the Holy Land. More likely Alkaly's impetus came from the same source of the legendary English philanthropist and rescuer of the Holy Land's Jews, Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885). That source was the short-lived conquest of Palestine by a rather enlightened and progressive Egyptian adventurer, Mehemet Ali (1769-1849). During his long life, Montefiore made seven trips to Palestine, the first in 1839, just before Ali lost his hold on Syria. From Ali, Montefiore secured a charter for Jewish agricultural settlement in Palestine, proposing to the Egyptian establishment of a joint stock company, with a capital of £1 million, and branches in Alexandria, Cairo, Beirut, Jaffa and Jerusalem.<sup>1d</sup>

The scheme never materialized. Wishing to see a strong and stable Ottoman Empire maintained across the Bosphorus and the Fertile Crescent, to thwart Russia's old ambition for a warm water port in the Mediterranean, the Great Powers, led by England, assisted Turkey in ejecting Mehemet Ali from Syria. Of course, the restored Turks immediately declared Montefiore's charter null and void.

During the course of his ten decades, Moses Montefiore made several more journeys to the Holy Land. On each visit, he played godfather to the destitute Jewish *vishuv*, pleading, with mixed success, with the Turkish authorities to make sorely needed civic and public health improvements in Jerusalem. Invariably, Montefiore would camp out under the stars with his retinue, his large figure bedecked in eastern clothing not unlike that of a prosperous desert sheik. One of his first successes was a small textile plant, established in Jerusalem in 1849. In 1855, he laid the cornerstone for a hospital in the Holy City which, for lack of cooperation from the Turks was not completed. However, the English patron was successful in establishing both a boys' and girls' trade school for Jews. He also persuaded the Turks to relocate the public slaughtering place or communal abattoir out of the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem where



it had been sited since the days of Omar.<sup>9a</sup> Perhaps his most lasting achievement was simply to persuade Jews that the practice of crafts was a respectable occupation!<sup>10</sup>

Montefiore also affected subtle yet innovative changes in the demographic distribution of Jews in Palestine. While he was rebuffed in Safed, he managed to initiate the westward expansion of Jerusalem which continues to the present day. On Montefiore's initiative, Jerusalemite Jews purchased some land in the Judean Hills (1855). It was to wait almost forty years until it accommodated the *mosha* of Motza Tahtit.<sup>11, 1e</sup> In 1860, the great benefactor built a row of almshouses for impoverished residents of the Holy City, on land he thoughtfully acquired during his visit in 1857.<sup>12, 9b</sup> Named Michkenot Sha'anamin, it was able to house up to eighty Jewish families.

The right of nonresident Jews to buy and hold land in Palestine was instituted with the revision of the (Ottoman) Land Code in 1867. This was truly the Magna Carta of the Jewish Return. For while the Sublime Porte, alternately pressured by Arab Nationalists and the Great Powers, suspended this concession several times between 1900 and 1914, it afforded the Zionists their principal means of economic and political penetration of Palestine. It ranks, therefore, with the advent of the Blackstone Memorial, the Jewish Colonization Association (both 1891), and the Balfour Declaration (1917). The first rowhouses, built with Montefiore funds, took place under the Ottoman *firman* (charter) the following year. The settlement was named Nahlay Shiva.<sup>14</sup> It determined the direction of Jerusalem's growth for the next several decades, an expansion fuelled by the influx of the first and second *aliyahs*.

Installation of street lamps, and daily street cleaning, did not come to Jerusalem until 1866, and then only because Montefiore offered to foot the bill.<sup>14a</sup> His energies effected the erection of four more small districts, outside the walls, in 1870.<sup>14b</sup> And in 1878, the year that Jerusalemites attempted to restart Petach Tikva (this time on the Yarkon River near Jaffa) the latter day Moses of the Promised Land set up a last residential community outside the walls. The settlers naming it Yemia Moshe, in his honor.

#### *Christian Workers in Palestine*

Such prodigious activity as Montefiore offered set a fine precedent for Christian efforts to improve the primitive conditions in Palestine: and Montefiore frequently urged Christian philanthropists to work out new schemes. An example was a settlement for Jews promoted, in 1848, by Warder Cresson, later U.S. Consul in Jerusalem. Historian Samuel Katz has described Cresson's

community in the Vale of Rephaim, an effort supported by a Jewish-Christian committee in England, as "probably the first forerunner in modern times of the Jewish agricultural revolution in Palestine..."<sup>8</sup> And Jewish historian R. Fink offers:

Warder Cresson (1798-1860)...would stand with... William E. Blackstone, not only as a friend of the Jews, but as a pioneer Zionist, whose strain of mysticism and religious zeal, like that of Laurence Oliphant, led him to intense absorption into the yearnings and beliefs of the early Jewish pilgrims to the land...<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, until Blackstone began circulating Restoration petitions, both nationally and internationally, Christian support for a return of the Jews to Palestine was in the main philanthropic and based upon spiritual, not upon political considerations. During the period 1838-1841, two things took place in the Holy Land that were to influence strongly the destiny of the Jews there. England, Prussia and the United States took steps to establish permanent consular representatives; and the pioneering American biblical archeologist Edward Robinson discovered that the names of many of the Canaanite and Arab villages were transliterations of the names of sites occupied by Jews in classical and ancient days. However, the full impact of the significance of this discovery was not to be felt for some eighty years, that is, until after the Balfour Declaration.

To a certain extent, the American consuls could rely upon the intimidating power of the British navy when intervening with the Turkish authorities on behalf of persecuted Jews and Christians. Despite Islam's reputation for religious tolerance, the former experienced many a bad moment, particularly those in the exposed 'window' of the Holy City. Fortunately, the American colony in Jerusalem enjoyed a certain amount of respect from the Turks because of Washington's initiative in arranging a commercial treaty with the Ottoman Empire (1830), a step that did not make the aggressive Yankee ship traders very popular in European ports. Prior to the signing of the commercial accord, the United States and Turkey had communicated chiefly through the merchants of Salem, Newburyport and Portsmouth.

### *Jerusalem's Emancipation*

In the settlement that followed the expulsion of rebel Egyptians from Ottoman Syria-Palestine in 1840, England's Munk teamed up with France's Cremieux to squeeze a compensating concession from the Sultan. The result was the *firman* (charter) that recognized that

the *visshu* of Jerusalem had certain civil rights. Turkish approval was also secured for a *bakkam bashi* (chief rabbi sitting in Jerusalem) to represent all Jewish interests in the Ottoman province.

That same year, the Jerusalemite Jews invoked the *firman* obtained by Montefiore when he quelched the ritual murder libel against the Damascus Jews, to combat a similar charge brought against them by the Holy City's Greek Orthodox community.<sup>16</sup> In 1841, the Turks agreed to abolish the quota that permitted only 300 Jewish families to reside in Jerusalem. However, the Jews there still could not own property; they had to rent the most squalid of hovels from Arab landlords. In February, Lord Palmerston authorized the English ambassador to accept Jewish complaints against the Turkish authorities.<sup>17a</sup>

The situation of the Jerusalemite Jews remained dismal. An English lady, travelling through Palestine at this time, wrote:

Nothing is more striking than the accurate fulfillment of the prophecies concerning them. They live in a constant state of fear and insecurity; individuals often come to Mr. Young for protection, as in the cases of injustice or insult they have no redress from the Mussulman authorities.<sup>18</sup>

A more sympathetic portrait of the status of the Jerusalem *visshu* was contributed by a visitor to the Holy City in 1359, who reported:

...holes in the ground which Europeans would not have converted into living quarters even for their cattle. The dampness of the winter and the lack of air in the summer brought upon...them all kinds of aches and maladies...<sup>19a</sup>

This account was augmented by that of a visitor who came to Jerusalem the following year:

The price of living accommodations in Jerusalem is beyond belief, and impoverished Jewish families are paying very high rental fees for horrid homes, the kind which Jews in London would not have rented out for cattle or sheep.<sup>19b</sup>

Such was the price that devout Jews had to pay for the privilege of living in the City of David, for most of the past twelve centuries a squalid Islamic backwater. Like certain elements in Christendom, at heart Islam seemed convinced that the Jews were being punished for some sin, and that the pitiful remnant in the Holy City were little more than a retribution for a divine curse that had snaked its way down the corridor of time.

*Concessions to the West*

During 1844, British and Prussian pressures had wrung two *firmans* from the Ottomans. The first gave minorities the right to practise their religion anywhere within the empire. The other abolished the death penalty for apostasy from Islam.

Therefore, religious tolerance in the Ottoman Empire began to emerge at a time when Jews were being urged to return to the Holy Land by Jewish and gentile visionaries. It was at this time that Czar Nicholas I of Russia remarked to Lords Aberdeen and Palmerston, during a state visit to England, that "Turkey is a dying man. We can try to keep him alive, but he will and must die." Sick men can take a long time to die. Turkey proved to be no exception.

*The Red Cross Founder's Frustration*

A most difficult thing for contemporary Arab scholars of Zionism to comprehend was the phenomenon of selfless Christian men of affairs in the 19th century, who for humanitarian and philanthropic — not colonial — reasons wanted to see the Jews restored to Palestine. Such a man was the Swiss Protestant philanthropist and founder of the International Red Cross Jean Dunant (1828-1910). In the 1860's, Dunant established an association for Jewish colonization in Palestine, advocating the development of Jewish agriculture in the Holy Land, and the development of a Jerusalem-Jaffa railroad which was built some forty years later. Dunant travelled far and wide in this endeavour. Among others, he failed to interest either Moses Montefiore or Adolphe Cremieux, two influential Jews, in his success. In later years, Dunant attributed the failure of his Palestine plan to the remarkable indifference of the Diaspora Jew, an observation that Montefiore himself would uphold. However, Dunant lived to witness one vindication. In the closing speech of his first Zionist Congress (1897), Theodor Herzl referred to the Swiss philanthropist as a true "Christian Zionist."<sup>19</sup>

*Clarion Calls*

Moses Hess (1812-1875) that roty, Bohemian Rhinelander, was the founder of German socialism, the movement that went on, in a number of countries, to attract more than modicum of Jewish leadership and membership in the rank and file. Hess was also what some scholars term a "proto-Zionist", a forerunner of the Piskers, Blackstones and Herzls of the 1880's and 1890's. An assimilated

Jew, with a penchant for French culture, an aspect of his life and existence that he shared with the better known Heinrich Heine, the iconoclastic Hess was a freemason who further disdained convention, and the spiritual tradition of his people, by marrying a French woman of questionable moral character.

When just 29, Hess published *Die Europaeische Triarchie* a bold, imaginative polemic that urged England, France and Germany to enter into permanent political union. Had this brave vision been attainable, it might have conceivably forestalled the War-to-End-All-Wars that broke out in 1914. Hess's most remembered work, however, was *Rome and Jerusalem*. Like the work of Pinsker and Herzl, it was inspired by recent injustices and outrages perpetrated upon Jews. In this case, Hess was reacting to the false accusation of blood libel levelled against Damascus Jews in 1840. At the beginning of the work, Hess confessed that "A thought which I had stifled forever in my heart is again vividly present...the thought of my nationality, inseparable from the inheritance of my ancestors, the Holy Land and the eternal city..."

The Jewish national concept evoked by Hess was based upon a keen understanding of the character of German anti-Judaism. Hess exclaimed: "Even Baptism will not save them from the curse of German hatred. The Germans do not so much hate the religion of the Jews as their race."<sup>20</sup> In light of Germany's eventual adoption of the crackpot racial theories of Renan, Gobineau, Chamberlain, and the Nazi Julius Rosenberg, Hess was prescient to a most disturbing degree! Accordingly, Hess urged his fellow Jews to recognize their nationality in exile, and to strive for a political restoration to Palestine.

Hess felt that the Jewish religion was the only means for preserving the latent nationality of Jews until a state could be established, and the Sanhedrin revived. He correctly guessed that the restoration would be accomplished by a modest number of Jews.<sup>21</sup> Even today, the majority of Jews in the world choose to live outside the State of Israel.

The spiritual successor to Hess was Perez Smolenskin (1840-1885), Russian-born Hebrew novelist, editor, and philosopher of Jewish nationalism. Born into a family that suffered persecution, Smolenskin wandered over southern Russia, and eastern Europe, before finally settling in Vienna, where he was employed first as a teacher of Hebrew, and proofreader. In 1868, Smolenskin founded a monthly, *Ha-Shahar* (The Dawn). In its pages, he exposed Jewish obscurantism as a fraud and a cultural dead-end. He also exposed the pitfalls of assimilation, and other self-imposed traps of European Jewry.<sup>22</sup>

Rabbi Kalisher of Thorn, Hungary, was another spokesman of the practical Jewish future. In 1860, he wrote to Orthodox brethren:

Cast aside the...view that the Messiah will suddenly sound...on a great trumpet...On the contrary, the Redemption will begin by awakening support among the philanthropists and by gaining the consent of the nations to the gathering of...Israel in the Holy Land.<sup>23</sup>

The philanthropy of Moses Montefiore had, as we have seen, already been aroused. However, Rabbi Thorn left nothing to chance. Writing to both Montefiore and Edmund Rothschild, he "urged them to finance colonization societies, buy land, transport immigrants, set those who knew farming on free tracts..."<sup>17b</sup> A few years later, historian Heinrich Graetz would echo Rabbi Thorn's sentiments by observing that "The Jewish people must be their own Messiah."

Somewhat prophetically, the year that he died, Smolenskin argued that *both* the Hebrew language and religion, and not just religion alone, would serve to secure Israel's future in Palestine. He also envisaged Palestine as the cultural and spiritual centre of the world Jewry, a concept later expanded by Asher Ginsberg (Ahad Ha-Am). Toward the end of his life, Smolenskin huddled with England's La rence Oliphant concerning the best way to effect large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine.<sup>24</sup>

### *Temple Christians*

In 1868, the year that Smolenskin founded his influential journal, a body of Wurtemberg State Christians calling themselves Temple Christians, or Lovers of Jerusalem, purchased land at Jaffa and Haifa. Originating in 1851, they became convinced that they could make Palestine once again into a land flowing with milk and honey. Failing to establish a colony near Nazareth (it succumbed to malaria), they finally established themselves at Saronia, near Jaffa, incorporating there in 1872. They then established a second plantation, Wilhelmina, nearby, which was based upon olive and fig culture.

Like many a Zionist of the *aliyahs*, some Templers, discouraged by hardship, returned to their native land. Others pressed on to establish communities in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Ramleh and Haifa. According to De Haas, by 1875 there were over 300 Templers in Haifa, and, by 1883, over a thousand in Palestine. On the eve of World War I, they numbered 1,400 in Haifa, having for several years controlled the wholesale trade of Palestine.<sup>25</sup> Some idea of just how depressed was the economy of Palestine during the last third of the

19th century, on the eve of the influx of Christian and Jewish enterprise, can be gleaned from a French-language guide of the day. The guide reported that Haifa, the best natural harbour on the whole eastern Mediterranean from Alexandretta to Alexandria was a dismal town of 6,000 souls shipping out, from time to time, small amounts of wheat, cotton and sesame. The writer offered that it could be crossed in five minutes.<sup>26</sup>

*Jerusalem: New Agricultural Start*

The Universal Israelite Alliance had been set up in Paris in 1860, a collaborative effort of the aforementioned Munk and Cremieux, to stimulate and encourage Jewish agricultural enterprise in Palestine. The Alliance's most outstanding achievement, perhaps, was the purchase of a tract at Jaffa on which the agricultural training school that was to assist many of the Hibbat Zion pioneers of the 1880's was established (1870).

Despite the steady trickle of holy place tourists that came each year, the economic situation of Jerusalem was hardly more encouraging than that of Haifa. Historian Ernest Renan summed up his impressions (1861) in a letter to Mersellin Bertholet as "...an unrivalled medley of the ludicrous and odious..."<sup>27</sup>

Two firmans issued in 1867 by the Ottomans, under pressure from the Powers, helped the oppressed Jerusalem *vishuv* to begin to improve its lot. One removed the three-century old edict that had confined Jerusalem's Jews to a small, virtually subterranean ghetto situated next to the leper colony, allowing the descendants of Israel to settle outside the Walls of Suleiman, walls which Krupp breach-loading, wire-wound canon had made thoroughly obsolete.<sup>27</sup> The other firman gave the Jews, and other minorities, the right to purchase land anywhere in the empire without becoming subjects of the sultan. Bokharan Jews from what is now Soviet Uzbekistan took advantage of the relaxation to settle in Jerusalem, in 1868. The picturesque quarter that they built, including several synagogues, survives bearing their name.<sup>28</sup>

*The Finns of Jerusalem*

Inspired both by Moses Montefiore and by American Consul Warder Cresson, James Finn and his energetic wife undertook the first successful initiative to liberate Jerusalem's Jews from their grinding poverty by means of an agricultural enterprise. Finn was the colourful Consul of Great Britain to Jerusalem and Palestine, and in

1852 he purchased the tract that he called the Industrial Plantation. Later, he wrote: "The idea of labouring in the open air for daily bread had taken root among the Jews of Jerusalem - the hope of cultivating the desolate soil of their own Promised Land."<sup>29</sup> Funds to defray the wages of Jews engaged in land clearance and cultivation on the Industrial Plantation came from England, the United States, even as far away as India. When work finally got under way on the project in 1854, Consul Finn placed a Polish-born Jew in charge of the operation.<sup>30</sup>

Depending upon the level of remittances from abroad, from five to fifty-odd men and boys were employed on the Finn project. The founder soberly summed up the balance sheet of progress in these terms:

Systematic agricultural training was...impossible under such conditions...Some building, some planting were accomplished; a little wine was made, a little oil refined. Brooms were manufactured...and crops of corn, lentils and fruit were grown. Thus, a few were kept from starvation; and valuable experience and knowledge of the land, crops and seasons was acquired, in hope that some day funds might be forthcoming to enable us to turn this knowledge to account.<sup>30b</sup>

There can be little doubt any more that Finn's long forgotten enterprise helped to arouse overseas and native Jewish interest in scientific farming. It remained a fact of Jewish life in Palestine that most of the Jerusalemite Jews subsisted in a state of semi-starvation. Ultra orthodox Ashkenazai rabbis opposed all schemes for technological progress, including those of Montefiore and Finn.

Thus Montefiore, Cresson, and Finn can be seen as the god-fathers of the moshava, the agricultural village experiments that began with Petah Tikvah, and continued with the first Russian and Rumanian Zionist settlements. One year after the establishment of the Industrial Plantation, Montefiore doggedly tried to establish another rural settlement for local Jews. It failed. The Montefiore biography published on his 100th birthday (1875), assigns blame for the failure of this scheme to the fact that the "Jews considered it was not part of their duty to work or to learn to earn their living, and protested that their task in life was sufficiently filled by prayer and religious exercises."<sup>9b31</sup>

Consul Finn, a scholarly man noted for his work on the remote Jewish communities in China, arrived in Palestine with his wife Elizabeth Ann (1825-1921) in the year 1845. Finn soon discovered that the number of Jews in the Anglo-Prussian congregation was barely 20. They sang psalms in Hebrew, however, and that was a



good forty years before Ben Yehuda arrived in Palestine to start the scientific revitalization of the ancient tongue among his fellow Zionists!

Elizabeth happened to be the daughter of Alex McCaul, executive director of England's Jews' Society, the man who had given Hebrew lessons to Lord Shaftesbury. Immediately, she assumed responsibility for the welfare of many of the destitute Jews of the Holy City, constructing a house, reputed to be the first outside the Walls of Suleiman, and employing local Jews to work the land around it.

According to Israeli historian Ze'ev Vilnay, Elizabeth's "secret purpose... (was)... to convert them to Christianity."<sup>1d, 17c</sup> Historian Barbara Tuchman took a broader view of the situation, noting that:

They organized work projects, not only to give unemployed Jews paid labour, but also to make headway toward land reclamation... though with pitiful results, for most of the beneficiaries were too weak to walk the mile to the field.<sup>17c</sup>

"Enough (supporters) were found, however, to finance purchase of a tract of land, which they named Abraham's vineyard" which she describes as "temporary relief for the able bodied and the destitute." Under various names, the Society for the Promotion of Jewish Agriculture in the Holy Land managed to survive until the British Mandate.<sup>17c</sup>

As the Finns were without funds for transport, the Industrial Plantation, though only a mile or so distant from the Walls of Suleiman, was inaccessible to many of the enfeebled Jews who did not have the strength to walk to and fro from the tract much less perform heavy work. Obviously puzzled by the perserverance of the Finns, fledgling historian Tuchman finally concluded that proselytizing motives were behind these efforts to bring employment to the Jews.

#### *Lazarus Came Forth*

As a member of Parliament, writer, journalist, restless traveller, and steadfast philosemite, Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888) spun out several schemes for Jewish Holy Land settlement in the 1870's and 1880's, one of them a joint proposal with fellow Parliamentarian Edward Cazalet for a commercially-oriented Jewish Palestine colonization. In May, 1882 Oliphant promised help to the Jews of Iasi, in Rumania, organizing for Holy Land settlement; later that year

he headed up a semi-official English committee of enquiry sent out by the Mansion House Relief Fund to investigate the conditions of Russian Jewry in Odessa and its hinterland. Oliphant, whose exuberance often exceeded his ability to deliver meaningful help, had recently published a proposal to settle Jews in the Hauran Plateau (*The Land of Gilead* 1880). While the scheme was never implemented, it may have helped to inspire the trans-Jordan settlement venture of Baron Edmund Rothschild a dozen years later.

Although Oliphant's schemes and Zionist advocacy was condemned by at least one New York Jewish editor as 'Oliphantasy', his writings inspired Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), whose Zionist feelings were aroused and articulated also by another English writer. George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda* had encouraged many a Jew to rekindle hope for a large-scale return to the Holy Land. While not an original thinker,<sup>32a</sup> Emma Lazarus wrote stylishly and prolifically during her 38 years, leaving her eloquence enshrined on the base of the Statue of Liberty. Writing for *Century Magazine*, she dared to assail comfortable, well settled American Jewry for its frequently expressed contempt for the hordes of penniless, eastern European Jews who were streaming through Ellis Island in ever increasing numbers.<sup>33</sup> Her capstone was "An Epistle to the Hebrews", a series of fifteen essays carried by the *American Hebrew* (1882-1883). In Epistle VI (Dec. 8, 1882), Lazarus wrote, with prophetic insight:

The enterprise will succeed if the philosophers do not err who have taught us that violence, crime and injustice are to disappear from this world, to leave room for nothing but virtue and liberty.

Hounded since its inception in 1948, the State of Israel has yet to prove conclusively that it can survive a truly concerted attack from Arab and other Islamic enemies. Lazarus concluded, however, that:

A race whose spiritual and intellectual influence upon the world has been universally accounted second to none, and whose physical constitution has adapted itself to the vicissitudes of every climate, *can be whatever it will.*<sup>32b</sup>

Such provocative talk as that stimulated much discussion among American Jewish intellectuals. The *Jewish Messenger* launched sarcastic attacks upon Oliphant and Lazarus, heaping contempt (Feb 9, 1883) upon "Mr. Oliphant's project of colonizing a strip of land in Gilead" which it termed "a phantasy", and "Miss Lazarus's plea for a separate nationality an unwise echo of that phantasy."<sup>32c</sup> The influential *American Hebrew's* support of Zionism, dating as it did from 1882, may well have stemmed from the persuasiveness of the pen of Emma Lazarus.

*First Jewish Farming Community*

The first Jewish-directed pioneering village of the late 19th century, expressly formed for the purpose of applying principles of scientific agronomy was *Petah Tikvah*, a native effort. As early as 1872, a band of Jerusalem Jews, most of them Orthodox, purchased a large tract in the malarial Jordan Valley not far from the village of Jericho. However, the Turkish authorities voided the sale on the grounds that the purchasers were foreign subjects. It was not until 1888 that Jews would be allowed to purchase land and settle on it — and then only singly.

Six years later, a band of Orthodox Jews from Jerusalem, mostly of Hungarian origin, including a few who had participated in the Jericho venture, purchased land on the coastal plain — probably by bribing the Ottoman authorities — near the Yarkon River. The name *Petah Tikvah* was retained for the settlement.<sup>1f</sup> While the site was only about seven miles from Jaffa, the fairly prosperous port of entry for the majority of those who entered Palestine by sea in those days, the colonists immediately ran into trouble in the form of malaria from the nearby swamps. Then, buildings that were ill-founded simply collapsed during the first rainy season; roving Bedouins harassed the remaining survivors who returned to Jerusalem. The modest Door of Hope seemed to be closed. However, in 1882, only a year after abandonment of the Yarkon site, another Jewish group purchased land in the nearby village of Yahud.<sup>34</sup> In 1883, the year following their arrival in Palestine, a handful of Russian *Bilu* Zionists went to the aid of *Petah Tikvah* to assist in its resettlement. However, finance was non-existent, and the people had no knowledge of scientific farming. Then a remarkable thing happened. Hearing about the plight of the *Petah*, *Rishon le Zion*, and other new settlements, wealthy French Baron Edmond James de Rothschild (1845-1934) came to their rescue with financial aid.

In 1887, four years after he began to send assistance, the baron made the first of several visits to Palestine. That same year, the U.S. Consul to Jerusalem, Henry Gilman, also provided assistance to distressed Jewish settlers,<sup>35</sup> while his successor, Edward Wallace (1893-1898), a Presbyterian Minister, used his office to protect Jews from arbitrary jailing and expulsion by the Turkish authorities.<sup>36</sup>

Edmund Rothschild, the chronological and spiritual successor of Moses Montefiore, was a towering figure whose contributions have been duly acknowledged by Chaim Weizmann who called him the "leading political Zionist of our generation", and David Ben Gurion who admitted that his Zionist contributions were "matchless".<sup>37</sup> Squarely in the tradition of 19th century humanism, the assimilated Rothschild insisted that new communities in Palestine be the spearhead of a

balanced Jewish revival: culture and nationalism. He also agreed with Ben Yehuda that the lingua franca of the colonies should be Hebrew. His methods were autocratic, and his generous subsidies tended to encourage some farmers to neglect their land (these were the pre-kibbutz years). However, without his early (1883) and most generous interventions, Zionism would probably have had many fewer 'facts' on the ground — to employ the favourite term of the latter day generals Sharon and Dayan — before the timely collapse of the Ottoman Empire (1918), and the informal commencement of the British mandate (1922).

Pressured by the irascible Russian agnostic Rabbi, philosopher and dissident Zionist Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginsburg), Baron Rothschild agreed (1900) to terminate his system of direct-patronage-cum-resident-manager, which Ginsburg apparently considered to be demeaning to Jewish self-respect, and to place his charges in the control of the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA),<sup>16b, 38</sup> founded in 1891 by Baron Maurice de Hirsch, the Hungarian Jewish philanthropist with whom Rothschild had briefly co-ventured for the settlement of eastern Palestine in 1893.

In the light of the extraordinary amounts of assistance that political Zionism has received from the Diaspora, and the United States Government, one wonders, in retrospect, what the fuss was all about. Ginsburg and Rothschild had much in common. Both men believed that cultural and religious values were paramount to the success of Zionism. Both were Jewish nationalists; and yet both also accepted the permanence, or at least the continuance, of the Diaspora. Both are reputed to have assisted in promoting passage of the Balfour Declaration whereby England, mostly for political reasons, promised the Jews a "national home in Palestine".<sup>16b</sup> The difference in the two men may have lain in Ginsburg's strong conviction that no Jew should assimilate himself to the point where he could possibly become "Italian", "French", or "English". Now, the Baron was a most cosmopolitan individual. Possessor of an enormous, discriminating art collection, he became recognized as an authority on art. He took his son James, a future M.P., to England to become a British subject. James eventually became his father's successor in administering the 12,000 acres and 30 settlements in Palestine.<sup>16b, 39</sup>

Multi-faceted and ambiguous, Ginsburg has been claimed as a spiritual father by Zionists and non-Zionist Jews alike. Obscurantism such as that, a trait characteristic also of Zionist theologian Martin Buber, could hardly be attributed to Baron Rothschild who visited Palestine as many times as the indefatigable Montefiore. Despite the continuing separatism of his maverick ICA, the Zionist movement showed its gratitude to Rothschild by allowing him to be appointed honorable president of the Jewish Agency a legal entity of the English Mandate, in 1929.

*The Scientific Spying of the Land*

Perhaps the most remarkable scientific event affecting Palestine and its future in the 19th century, overshadowing even Edward Robinson's archaeological discoveries of the Hebrew origin of the land's place names, both occupied and unoccupied, was detailed topographic surveying and mapping of all Palestine west of the Jordan River carried out by English engineers in the 1870's. The instrument of the survey was the Palestine Exploration Fund, founded in 1865, and inspired by an English literary coterie established shortly before in Jerusalem. The Finns were active in the venture. Under the patronage of Queen Victoria, the survey got under way in 1874. It was completed, as it happened, in 1882, the first year of Zionist settlement — in spite of malaria, Bedouin uprooting of markets and monuments — in just eight years. Many of the 26 sheets produced were still in use by the government of Israel until well into the 1950's. One of the surveyors, Lieutenant Horatio Kitchener, even went on to English immortality. A keen Bible student, this career officer volunteered for the work which was well served by his celebrated self-discipline and determination. En route to his 1915 martyrdom at Scapa Flow, the mustachioed, mule-riding surveyor — this pompous, woman-shunning bachelor — lifted the siege of Khartoum and provided the vital iron will necessary for England to overcome Boer insurgents who (for four years) rewrote the books on guerrilla warfare in South Africa.

Somehow, the Palestine Exploration Fund has survived to the present day. It commenced publication of its Annual Report in 1869 — the year the Suez Canal opened — a tome detailing its various activities which included archaeological digs in the Holy Land. The last of these was the excavation of Solomonic Jerusalem, supervised by Kathleen Kenyon, daughter of the distinguished English scientist Sir Francis Kenyon. As a guarded, thoroughly venerable English tradition, the Annual Report still appears, a symbol of the spiritual affinity the British feel for Palestine, a bond that goes back at least to the Crusades of King Richard.

Several of the Palestine Fund surveyors published accounts of their service in the Holy Land. One was Sir Charles Warren who in *Land of Promise* (1875) observed that the productivity "will increase in proportion to the labour bestowed upon the soil, until a population of fifteen million may be accommodated there."<sup>5b</sup> Another Palestine surveyor, Lieutenant Claude Regnier Condor, was equally optimistic about what hard work would do for the land. When he penned his account, there was still not a single mile of paved road in Palestine, and no railroad.<sup>40</sup>

*The First Aliyah*

Credit for the establishment of the first organized Zionist community on Palestinian soil belongs to a White Russian Jewish Zionist, Zalman David Levontin (1856-1940) who, in July, 1882, founded the *moshava* (limited cooperative) of Rishon L'Ytzion (First in Zion) a few miles southeast of Jaffa, on the coastal plain. A scholarly member of an Orthodox family, Levontin was a member of the new *Choveve Zion* and prior to an inspection trip to Palestine established settlers associations in two Eyelorussian centres. Upon his return, he convened a group of Russian and Rumanian settler-association representatives who, in turn, set up the modest organization that enabled Levontin to embark again for Palestine with ten migrants. In spite of financial assistance from a wealthy uncle, and timely help from the British Vice-Consul at Jaffa, within a year after its establishment Rishon was foundering, and Baron Rothschild was persuaded to come to its rescue.<sup>41</sup>

Levontin's brave work notwithstanding, perhaps Rumanian Zionists deserve the greater credit, and not the Russian pioneers, for spearheading the birth of what was later to be called *practical* or *labour* Zionism, in contrast to the Great Power soliciting political Zionism of end of the century Theodor Herzl. The Rumanians started to organize for the return rather early. In 1856, Israel Benjamin of Moldavia, an eastern Rumanian province, published a travelogue in which he advocated Jewish settlement in Palestine. Within a year, a Hebrew library had been established in Iasi, the principal Jewish commercial and cultural centre of Moldavia.<sup>42</sup> As early as 1873, 100 Jewish families from Nicoresti joined those from other communities, including an Iasi contingent, and migrated to the Holy Land. The climax of this stirring came in 1882 when the *Hevrat Yishuv Erez Israel al Yedai Avodat Adamah* (Society to Settle Israel by Working the Land), with chapters in 30 or more communities, began to meet for more comprehensive migration.

*The Rumanian Network*

During February, 1882 when the Russian pogroms were in their second year, the Rumanian Prime Minister declared that his government would support a parliamentary resolution advocating establishment of a "Palestinian" Jewish kingdom. Nothing came of the scheme. Instead, anti-Semitism was fast becoming popular politics in this former Russian province. The major centre of Rumanian anti-Jewish feeling was the city of Iasi (Jassy) close to the border of what is now Moldavia, USSR, and only a few miles northwest of Kishiniev, the provincial seat of Moldavia, where terrible slaughter of the Jews

took place in 1903, converting many German dissidents in the Zionist movement to the Palestine-now faction. The year of the Bucharest governmental resolution witnessed the establishment of a new university at Iasi which immediately became a hot bed of Rumanian nationalism and anti-Judaic feeling — probably because Iasi had a large Jewish merchant class which had over the centuries suffered persecution at the hands of Moslems and Christian Orthodox. Anti-Semitic congresses were held in Iasi in 1882 and 1884. During 1892, 196 Jewish shops were closed down and many tradesmen expelled from the centre.<sup>42</sup>

In this volatile setting of eastern Rumania, the *Avodat Adamah* called together delegates from the 32 Rumanian chapters in January and again in May. The second meeting was addressed by Laurence Oliphant, who happened to be travelling in Rumania. Oliphant, whose Zionist schemes were touched upon earlier, promised the Jewish migrants financial aid from English gentiles. Samuel Pineless, Rumanian Zionist leader, secured the approval of the Turkish ambassador in Bucharest for the settlement of 100 Jewish families in Palestine. The scheme was initially endorsed by the Turkish cabinet, but rejected by the Sultan who was irate over the recent English takeover of his next to last African domain!<sup>43</sup>

The Porte's November, 1881 reaffirmation of its policy to discourage large, organized groups of Jews from permanent establishment in Palestine was probably influenced by Rauf Pada, the *mutasarraf* or leader of the Jerusalem district (i.e. southern Palestine) who fought Jewish immigration tooth and nail from 1877 to 1889.<sup>44</sup> In the face of this opposition, Rumanian Jews, singly and in families, slipped away to the Holy Land even as Pineless was engaged in negotiations with the Ottoman authorities for entry permits for large groups.

Despite the Sultan's refusal, the authorities relented, and in August some 228 Rumanian Jews, comprising 39 families emigrated *en bloc*. The nucleus was from Moinesti. They went on to establish the village of Rosh Pinnah. By the end of 1882, 1,322 Rumanians were settled. The first *aliyah* was under way.

### *The Zionist Bilu Experiment*

On January 21, 1882 an emigration society was founded in the Russian city of Kharkov in reaction to the terrible pogroms of the previous year. BILU (*Beit Ya'akov Lekhu ve-Nelkchah* = *House of Jacob, come let us go*)<sup>45</sup> formed when Israel Belkind invited some young Jews to his home to discuss the crisis state of Russia's Jews. Initially, the group called itself DAVIO, an acronym based upon Exodus.14:15 (*Speak to the Children of Israel that they go forward*). Among the

aims was creation of "a political centre for the Jewish people." Another was to establish "an economic and national-spiritual" presence in Syria-Palestine. Thus we find the complex elements of political Zionist ideology: political (and cultural) centre, nationalism, spiritual centre all expressed over fifteen years before Herzl's first Zionist Congress.

As its seal, the Bilu adopted the Star of David, the old Badge of Shame, now infused with a new hope. The incorporated text read "The smallest shall become a thousand, and the least a mighty nation" (Isa. 60:22).<sup>46</sup> The Bilu had grit, but they lacked resources. Part of the group wanted to head out to Palestine and trust to hard work for their salvation and success. Ze'ev Dubnow, a Bilu leader, wrote: "The aim of our journey is rich in plans. We want to conquer Palestine and return to the Jews the political independence stolen from them two thousand years ago. And if it is willed, it is no dream. We must establish agricultural settlements, factories, and industry...and put it in Jewish hands. And above all, we must give young people military training and provide them with weapons. Then, will the glorious day come, as prophesied by Isaiah in his promise of the restoration of Israel."<sup>46</sup> The reference to weapons was made more than a decade before exigencies forced pogrom-weary Russian Jews to form secret defence units to protect their lives and property.

Dubnow's blueprint for survival in Palestine resembles strikingly Herzl's detailed plans. Yet, the author of *The Jews' State* (1896) professed that he had been completely ignorant of Jewish settlement societies, referring to their oft clandestine Palestinian settlements as a policy of "infiltration".<sup>47</sup> Almost a century later, the regimes of Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin would tolerate, and promote, another kind of *settlement-infiltration* on the occupied West Bank of Jordan, some of which took place even while Israel was negotiating the future of the territory under the Camp David Accords.

Biblical or Orthodox Jews in Russia, Rumania and Poland provided a significant part of the inspiration and membership of these societies, the most successful of which was Russia's *Hibbat Zion* (Love of Zion), and its spinoffs the *Choveve Zion* (Lovers of Zion) and *Shove* (Colonizers of) *Zion* groups<sup>48</sup> that formed in west Europe and the United States throughout the 1880's and into the 1890's, when Herzl's movement and related societies seized the reins of the horses which were gathering momentum now in the push for Palestine. However, it should be quickly pointed out that all sects and schisms in world Jewry were divided, at the very beginning of the modern return, on the goals and propriety of the world Zionist movement, and even on the aims of these humble societies. And so, while the devout Orthodox lifted his face each morning to pray: "Save us, O God of our salvation and gather us together and deliver us from the



nations", with many of them piety and humility demanded that they should act only at the behest of the Almighty. *Next year in Jerusalem* really meant *some day* in Jerusalem...

Soon after its establishment, the Bilu society moved its headquarters from Kharkov to the Black Sea port of Odessa, the embarkation place for Palestine. However, serious schisms arose amongst its members. One branch advocated immediate departure for *Eretz Yisrael*. Another party contended that no settlements should be attempted until official permission and guarantees could be obtained from the Ottomans. Still other factions arose. The result was that the Bilu became too ineffective in order to have any prospect of becoming a powerful influence upon Palestinian settlement. The *political-guarantee-first* splinter hurried off to Constantinople where it consulted with the Oliphant Commission that had come out to investigate ways to alleviate the sufferings of Russia's Jews.

Impatient with bureaucratic delays and nebulous promises of assistance from English fact-finding commissions,<sup>49</sup> the *Palestine-now* Bilu splinter sailed from Constantinople on June 29,<sup>50</sup> reaching Jaffa on July 6. A handful of the tiny group of *Biluyim*, as they styled themselves, immediately offered themselves as labourers at the Mikve Israel agricultural school at Jaffa. Others, encouraged by Charles Netter, a Jaffa resident, a founder of the Universal Israelite Alliance, pressed on to help out at Rishon L'Ytzion, a Russian community established that same month. Unfortunately, Zionist historians are unable to establish an exact date for the establishment of Rishon, whose group, as earlier mentioned, was led by David Levontin.

Zionist historians do not agree on exactly what role Judaism played in the Bilu motivation. Howard Sachar describes them as "all...young men in their teens and early twenties" who "combined Marxist zeal with Jewish nationalist fervour". Yet he acknowledges that the petitioners of the Porte ended an appeal to their brethren with "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One, and our land, Zion, is our only hope." The Palestinian Bilu appealed to the *Cheveve Zion* society for help, but failed to gain steady support. The Russian Bilu withered for lack of interest. And in 1884 the Palestine Bilu numbered just 28 members. However, encouraged by linguist Eliezer Ben Yehuda, with whom they celebrated the Passover that year, the Bilu struggled with Hebrew and sang Hebrew songs. A remnant at Constantinople, petitioners of the sultan who had returned to Russia, moved on to Palestine. Still other Bilu proceeded to the United States.

The Palestine Bilu were given timely assistance by the writer and teacher of religious Zionism Yehiel Pines (1843-1913). With the help of Pines, Gederah, the first all-Bilu community was established, in December, 1884.<sup>51</sup> A native of Belorussia, Pines had

settled in Jerusalem in 1878, persuaded to go to the Holy Land for the Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund which, as mentioned, had built several housing quarters for Jews outside the walls of Suleiman.<sup>52</sup>

In 1882, the year of Rishon-Le-Zion, the total Jewish population of Palestine was barely 25,000, even though Jerusalem claimed to be half Jewish.<sup>53</sup> According to historian Jacob de Haas, some 7,000 Jews settled in Palestine, more than half of these in Jerusalem.<sup>54</sup> In fact, as early as 1844, an Ottoman census revealed that there were 2,000 more Jews than Moslems living in the Holy City.<sup>55</sup> Some portion of the dramatic pre-aliyah increase should be credited to improved public health conditions — to the Christian and Jewish clinics independently established in Palestine after 1860, to the loosening up of oppressive Ottoman regulations (also the work of Christian compassion and enterprise — some of it with political but hardly proselytizing motives), and the stimulus afforded to both Turkish and Jewish development by the wondrous Palestinian topographic survey.

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41. By 1971, Rishon had 2,000 inhabitants, and almond groves and general agriculture had generally superceded the original ambitious viticulture plans. Ref. 1f.
42. *Ency. Jud.*, Vol 9, p. 1293-1294.
43. *Zionism, Jerusalem: Keter*, 1973, p. 193.
44. N.J. Mandel, *The Arabas and Zionism*.p. 3, 39. Quoting *Havazzelet* (Jerusalem), Mandel notes that the Ottoman government announced (Nov. 1881) in response to the approach of a now forgotten Anglo-German group, a policy that "(Jewish) immigrants will be able to settle inscattered groups throughout the Ottoman Empire, excluding Palestine. They must submit to all the laws of the Empire and become Ottoman subjects" (p. 2).
45. *Ency. Jud.*, Vol 4, p. 999-1000.
  
46. *ibid.*
47. *Ency. Jud.*, Vol 16, p. 463.
48. Wm.E. Blackstone. *Signs of Christ's Speedy Coming*. (An address delivered at the Second Annual Conference of the Chicago Hebrew Mission, Chicago, Sept. 30-Oct 2, 1897), Oak Park, III. Reprint by author, (n.d.).
49. H.M. Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History*. New York: Delta, 1958, p. 268.
50. Mandel, ref. 44. p. 5.
51. *Ency. Jud.*, Vol 4, p. 1002.
52. *Ency. Jud.*, Vol 13, p. 535.
53. By 1876, Jerusalem had 12,000 Jews, 7,600 Moslems, 5,470 Christians (see Y Tekoah. *In the Face of the Nations Israel's Struggle for Peace*. N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1976, p. 31.
54. De Haas. *Hist. of Palestine...1934*, quoting U.S. Consular Reports, Oct., 1882 VIII, p. 411.
55. Y. Tekoah. *In the Face of the Nations Israel's Struggle for Peace*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976. According to Mandel, in the decade 1881 to 1891 (when Blackstone made public his celebrated *Palestine for the Jews* at a White House reception), the Jewish population of Jerusalem had increased from just under 14,000 to over 25,000, a number greater than the Arab populace, but not the combined Arab and Christian community (Mandel, ref 44, p. 38).