

Arthur Ruppin:
Memoirs, Diaries,
Letters

(1896-1919)

Early Years of the Palestine Office

As soon as I arrived in Palestine, I set to work in an office which Dr. Thon had rented on Bustrus Street in Jaffa. As director of the Palestine Office, I was officially answerable to the Inner Actions Committee, but in reality I was completely independent, as the committee had given me *carte blanche* to direct all Zionist affairs as I thought best and did not interfere with what I was doing. This was in no way detrimental to the cause. Besides my theoretical knowledge of law and economics, I had also acquired practical business experience in Germany. I was sufficiently sure of myself, as far as economics were concerned, to trust my own judgment and accept full responsibility for my actions. When a business opportunity arose, I, as 'the man on the spot', could decide about it immediately on my own responsibility and did not have to run the risk of having a written account of my suggestions misunderstood or the answer to it delayed until the opportunity had been missed. In this respect, I was in a much better position than the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA)* officials in Europe, who had to refer even minor matters to Paris. Thanks to my independence I could sometimes afford to initiate daring enterprises, for which a board viewing the matter from a distance would probably have refused to accept responsibility. I was always ready to risk my neck for any enterprise which seemed necessary to me.

There was no danger that the taste of unlimited power would turn me (like some of the people employed by the Inner Actions Committee or by Baron Rothschild) into a little despot. I was by nature not interested in having power; on the contrary, I shrank from using what power I had over others. Had I been holding a high military rank, this quality would have been a great handicap; in directing the affairs of the Palestine Office, it was very useful to me. Most of the young people then arriving in Palestine (the so-called Second Aliyah), having been brought up as Zionists, had received a comprehensive education, know much more about Jewish affairs than I did and were ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of rebuilding Palestine. They represented the *élite* of the East European Jewish youth, never matched by any other wave of immigrants into Palestine. The officials of the Palestine Office, who came from their ranks and were the first Jewish 'civil servants' of the Zionist Organization, did not have to be encouraged or exhorted in order to serve the Zionist cause to the best of their abilities. They were models of industry and of devotion to their work. I saved myself the trouble of acting as their chief and instead had a pleasantly friendly relationship with them, achieving what I wanted by persuasion, rather than by ordering them about. In return for their loyalty, I protected them from any unjustified attack and always accepted responsibility for everything they did.

In all my activities and my struggles, I had the invaluable support of Dr. Thon, who had arrived in Palestine a few months before me and acquired a useful knowledge of the country and the people. He had grown up close to Zionism, among East European Jews, and while still a student had led Zionist associations. Palestine at once became his natural habitat. His unfailing integrity, his ability to understand people, his tenacity and patience and his knack for finding a solution even to the most difficult problems were

* An association for Jewish settlement, established by Baron de Hirsch in 1891, which founded Jewish agricultural settlements in Argentina from 1900. It also managed the settlements of Baron Edmond de Rothschild in Palestine.

tremendously valuable to me, especially when I first began my work and was baffled by some of the issues confronting me in Palestine. In 1920, he became the director of the Palestine Land Development Company, and he remained my faithful friend and colleague through many vicissitudes.

Apart from Dr. Thon, who acted as my deputy, Meir Wilkansky also worked in the Palestine Office, as Hebrew correspondent. He had come to Palestine in 1905 with the Second Aliyah and had worked and starved as an agricultural laborer in Rehovot. He had an excellent knowledge of the Hebrew language and had already made a name for himself as a writer. For some years, Joshua Radler-Feldmann worked in the Palestine Office, and at times he was sent on its behalf to act as a bookkeeper on the Kinneret farm, where he smoothed out the differences between the manager and the workers calmly and with equanimity. I had already met him in Berlin; later he became known as a writer under the name Rabbi Benjamin. He was the initiator of the scheme of sending an emissary to Yemen in order to encourage the Jews there to emigrate to Palestine. Ulitzy who came from Lodz, acted as a sort of apprentice (at the time he was seventeen years old; later, under the name of Ulitzur, he held an important position in the Keren Hayesod). Most of the letters were at that time written by myself, by hand, and then copied on a copying press. Today, when I look through the books containing the copies, I simply cannot imagine how I managed to find so much time and patience. We were still without a typewriter, and we did not acquire one until 1913.

I had chosen Jaffa as the location for the Palestine Office. At the time, this seemed an almost inevitable choice. Jaffa already contained the head office of the Anglo-Palestine Company, the agency for the Odessa Committee of the Hovevei Zion (Dr. Shissin and Menahem Sheinkin), and the land development corporation Geulah, whose representative at the time was Meir Dizengoff. Also in favor of Jaffa was the fact that it was centrally situated among the largest agricultural settlements (Rishon le-Zion, Rehovot, Petah Tikvah). But even more important, the greater part of the new *Yishuv* [Jewish community in Palestine] had settled in Jaffa; Haifa had a much smaller number of recent settlers, and in Jerusalem the newcomers went unnoticed among the large majority of the old *Yishuv*.

In 1908 Jaffa was a town of about 40,000 inhabitants, 8,000 of whom were Jews. The Jews lived scattered among the Arabs in the center of town or close together on the northern outskirts in two predominantly Jewish quarters, Neveh Shalom and Neveh Tzedek. The two Jewish quarters, as well as the Arab part of the town, were dirty, and the streets and houses looked neglected, which was typical of the small oriental towns of that time. The two residential settlements of the German Templars were an exception. One was called simply the German Colony, the second Walhalla; they consisted of no more than a few dozen houses, all rather primitive, but the streets were clean and the houses and gardens properly cared for. In the areas inhabited by Arabs and Jews, many houses were dilapidated or were still being built, and the rubbish-filled streets were unpaved or the surfaces marked with innumerable holes. There was no drainage, and therefore an unpleasant smell hung everywhere. There was no running water, and as water was obtained from draw wells or pumped up by hand from – frequently heavily

contaminated – wells, every summer there were typhoid epidemics; trachoma and malaria were also widespread. The roads were lined with beggars, men and women (mostly holding children) whose eyes, sick with trachoma, were covered with flies.

The only street in the center of Jaffa with a fairly good surface and pavements on both sides was Bustrus Street, which extended from the Serail (government offices) several hundred meters north. It had been built some years before by a Christian Syrian, Bustrus, to enhance the value of his property, which bordered on the town. He had lined the road with Arab-style houses and shops, which were rented by both Jews and Arabs. The street had thus become Jaffa's main road, where the Jewish institutions had their offices. We opened the Palestine Office there in a four-room, first-floor flat, for which we paid a yearly rent of 800 francs (£32).

Food could be bought either in the oriental-style suk (bazaar) in the old town or in the market in Neveh Shalom. There were no shops selling fresh food until after Tel Aviv was founded. The food, brought into the town by Arab peasant women from the neighboring villages was very cheap: tomatoes, lettuce, eggplant were abundant when in season; chickens, eggs, mutton and yogurt were available all year round. On the other hand, cows' milk and butter and cheese made from it were almost or altogether unobtainable; the Jewish settlements did not produce them, and though the Arabs had large flocks of sheep, they kept very few cows. The chief sources of cows' milk were the settlements of the German Templars, Sarona and Wilhelma. A particularly good cheese was made at the Trappist monastery of Latrun (between Jerusalem and Jaffa), but it was not for sale in the open market. It was a stroke of luck to obtain such a cheese, and it was then shared faithfully with all one's friends.

As the central office for all the activities of the Zionist Organization and its institutions in Palestine, the Palestine Office was, of course, extremely dependent on the post and other means of communication, which were at that time still very primitive and not yet properly organized. Besides the Turkish post office, there were also German, Austrian, French, Russian and Italian post offices in Jaffa, Jerusalem, Haifa and Beirut. All had the right to handle the post between these four towns and with other countries. Naturally, they competed for customers. The Austrian post office was especially keen; it was willing to give large quantities of stamps on credit to Jerusalem institutions which existed on charity and to writers of letters soliciting funds, thereby encouraging this activity, which could hardly have continued to exist otherwise. The Turkish post office was well known to be slow and unreliable; it was not used to send mail abroad, and in the country was used only for letters addressed to places where there was no foreign post office; it was also avoided if there was any alternative and an 'opportunity', that is, a traveler, could be found to deliver a letter.

For telegrams, one had to rely exclusively on the Turkish telegraph offices. The service was so bad that most people hardly ever made use of it after a few days or even weeks. There was no guarantee that it would ever reach its destination at all. Until 1920

there was no telephone communication in Palestine. At that time the British administration introduced an inland telephone service and only many years later was telephone communication with other countries established. Because of the difficulties of communicating over distances, I was obliged to travel a great deal in order to talk over business personally with, for instance, people in Kinneret, Huldah and Merhavyah. I think that during the eight years between 1908 and 1916, I must have spent at least a 1,000 days traveling.

Transportation was in a very bad way. There were only two stretches of railway line in the country: Jaffa-Jerusalem (twice daily in both directions; traveling time, three-and-a-half hours) and Haifa-Tzemah (two or three times a week; traveling time, three hours). As the trains lacked every comfort – for example, washing facilities and lavatories – traveling by train was not very pleasant, but it was incomparably better than traveling on the roads, which actually existed in name only (from Jaffa to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to Jericho and from Haifa via Nazareth to Tiberias). Travel by coach was torture because of the number of holes in the road surfaces, the terrible dust in the summer and the knee-deep mud in the winter. The horses were emaciated and incapable of pulling their load (one of the coachmen jokingly called them his *Udler* [eagles]); there were no facilities for having a meal or for lodging overnight on the way. During the Great War, when the Turks removed the rails between Jaffa and Jerusalem and all traffic between the two towns was restricted to the roads, the journey lasted ten to fourteen hours and sometimes more. Even short stretches of road on which there was a lot of traffic – for instance, Jaffa-Petah Tikvah – were in terrible condition; as a rule, in summer passengers walked the stretches that led across sand and helped the horses to pull the coach.

Occasionally, the ‘coach’ was a hansom cab with two horses that could take three people (two on the back seat and one on a small wooden bench that could be set up), but more often it was a diligence pulled by three horses and had three cross-benches with wooden back rest, leaving room for eight people besides the coachman (usually, however, far more people traveled on it). One day, on the road from Jaffa to Petah Tikvah, the German agronomist Hubert Auhagen and I met a diligence containing the correct number of travelers, that is eight people; he stood rooted with surprise and said: ‘Here comes an empty diligence with only eight passengers!’ The journey by coach from Jaffa to Haifa took one-and-a-half days. In 1912 or 1913, Shmaryahu Levin made the journey from Jaffa to Haifa (changing horses at Zikhron Ya’akov) in one day (without staying overnight at Zikhron Ya’acov); this was considered great progress. The worst journeys were those in the southern part of Palestine (in the vicinity of Beersheba or from Kastina [Be’er Tuviah] to Gaza). Here the coaches regularly got stuck in the wadis, and it took hours of hard work to drag them out.

The first motor car (imported from the United States) appeared in Palestine in 1912; it belonged to Aaron Aaronson. It aroused a great deal of interest, but after a short while it broke down and disappeared from the roads. Shortly before the Great War, a German called Wagner produced a car in his engineering works in Jaffa by fitting an engine into a sort of hansom cab. This car could be rented from him for special journeys.

I used it shortly before war broke out for an urgent journey from Jaffa to Haifa. I paid 105 francs (more than £4) for it and made the journey in five hours, which at that time appeared to be an amazing feat. Cars became the regular means of transportation in Palestine only after the Great War.

The best connection between Jaffa and Haifa was by boat. Steamers made the voyage in no more than four to five hours. Nevertheless, almost nobody went by boat in winter, and even in summer it was rare to find people traveling this way because they shrank from having to get on and off the boat. The approach to Jaffa had a bad reputation because of the rocks and the difficulties of embarking and disembarking there (boats lay two kilometers out to sea) were well known throughout the Middle East. Even Haifa, which was better protected by nature against storms, did not offer an easy landing. Passengers had to jump (or were thrown) from the steamer into a pitching and tossing boat; even people with strong nerves were reluctant to face the screaming of the boatmen and the wild confusion. Between November and April, the worst aspect of the sea voyage was the uncertainty whether or not the weather would allow the steamer to land passengers at Jaffa (to a lesser extent this was also true of Haifa). An acquaintance from Jaffa who sent to Beirut by sea for a day to attend a wedding was unable to land on the return journey and had to go on to Port Said. On the next journey she was again unable to get ashore at Jaffa and had to go on to Beirut. There, however, she decided to go to Haifa, via Damascus, by train and travel from Haifa to Jaffa by road. The journey had taken her almost three weeks instead of three days, and she had traveled 2,000 kilometers instead of 200.

Equally primitive were the conditions under which travelers were put up for the night. Apart from Jaffa and Jerusalem, very few places – for instance, Tiberias, Safed and some of the *Moshavot* [villages] – had Jewish ‘hotels’. People who were obliged to spend the night in one of these inns could be sure of finding many bedfellows. It might have been worth writing an article about Palestine’s ‘bed fauna’. The most basic ‘conveniences’ were lacking. When I asked for the W.C. I was frequently told: *Noch nicht geendigt* [not yet finished], whereas the truth of the matter was that it had never been started or even planned! Once, I was surprised to be told that there was a shower in the hotel. I searched and found it on the roof: a room with a water-pipe hanging down from the ceiling, but there was no door to it!

I was repeatedly surprised (and very annoyed) by the lack of sanitary facilities and people’s indifference to this problem. When I asked the agronomist Bermann, the manager of the Kinneret farm, for the lavatory there, he gestured munificently, as much as to say ‘The whole world is at your disposal!’ He opposed on principle the introduction of such ‘urban’ facilities into agricultural settlements. This attitude changed radically only when Tel Aviv began to be built. While I was working out the details of the plan for Tel Aviv, I got hold of the plan of the newly built, extremely modern town of Heliopolis in Egypt and found that the regulations concerning lavatories played an important part in it. I tried a similar plan in Tel Aviv, and consequently it became compulsory for every house to possess a lavatory. This led to the joke: ‘What is a house in Tel Aviv? A W.C. surrounded by small rooms.’

In the Arab quarters in Jaffa and in the surrounding villages, conditions were, if possible, even worse than among the Jews. The only praiseworthy exception were the quarters of the German Templars in Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem; although their sanitary arrangements were also primitive, at least they existed and were kept clean. The hotels managed by Germans in Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Nablus, Nazareth and Tiberias were the only ones to meet simple European standards. Only after the Great War, when the number of Jewish tourist began to increase, were hotels and boarding-houses for Europeans opened by Jews.

In the beginning, the Palestine Office had very little contact with the *Yishuv*; the Jews did not know what to make of this 'new-fangled' office. Some thought that it existed in order to provide support (subsidies) in the manner of other Jewish institutions; some approached it with fantastic plans for economic enterprises, others to spend gossip and initiate intrigues. When none of them derived any benefit, the circle of clients soon shrank considerably. There remained only a few local inhabitants who came for advice, and the 'tourists', who asked for information about 'the sights'. In order not to have to repeat the same things over and over, I wrote and printed a *Fuherer durch Palastina* ('Guide to Palestine') for them in 1910. The Palestine Office extended its activities only after it founded its own settlements (Kinneret, Ben Shemen, Huldah).

During the early days, after office hours, when Thon, Radler-Feldmann and I went home for 1 beshlik in a hansom cab (we did not indulge in this luxury every day), I frequently asked myself whether we had to show 1 beshlik's worth of positive achievement for that day, and very often I had to give a negative answer. Gradually, I established friendly relations with many of the immigrants of the Second Aliyah who turned to agriculture. After living in great poverty as farm laborers for many years, quite a few of them eventually held leading positions, and the development of the *Yishuv* was very much influenced by them. They seemed strangers to me in many respects: they were predominantly motivated by emotion, tended to hold endless discussions, were unreliable, unpunctual, and inaccurate in their work; but I recognized that more important than all this was their invaluable contribution in regarding agriculture as the foundation of the Jewish National Home and their genuine enthusiasm, which had to be preserved at all cost. It therefore seemed essential that they should be encouraged to help creatively in the settlement program and not be degraded to drudges. In spite of the difficulty of communicating (they did not know much German and I did not know much Yiddish or Hebrew), they realized that I was trying to understand their aims and opinions and that I wanted them to be equal partners in the endeavor to settle the country. This is what brought us spiritually close to each other.

In spite of all the doubts and reservations of the villagers and many influential 'bourgeois' Zionists, I decided to found the Kinneret farm with Jewish laborers, and later the workers greeted the founding of Kvutzat Deganyah with enthusiasm, while the villagers regarded the activities of the Zionist 'shmendriks' with scornful patronage and predicted certain failure. The first experiments in settlement were governed by great caution and confined to narrow limits, corresponding to the ridiculously small amount of

money at my disposal. Nevertheless, I was clearly prepared to follow a new route and to settle the country by means of Jewish labor. After two or three years, a relationship of complete confidence had been established between myself and the workers, and it remained the unshakeable foundation of my efforts to settle the country. Of course, I also encountered opposition and there were many misunderstandings, and during the early days of my life in Palestine I frequently asked myself whether it was not a labor of Sisyphus to battle again and again against suspicion, lack of understanding, inefficiency and lack of money and if it would not be more sensible to relinquish this apparently hopeless struggle before I had been completely worn out by it. In the end, however, my optimism always won, and I remained.

I also came into closer contact with the Yishuv through the *mishpat ha-shalom* [magistrates' court], which was founded at my suggestion and under my chairmanship in 1909. It soon earned the respect of the population and was called upon to settle many disputes. In a report which I wrote on 15 February 1909 for the Zionist Actions Committee in Cologne, I noted: 'This institution arose out of an urgent need, as it became more and more difficult for the Jews in Palestine to pursue their legal claims, because of their various nationalities. The need for a place which could hear and settle legal disputes between Jews became increasingly obvious.' The existence of the magistrates' court was a blessing especially for the small Jewish *Moshavot*, which frequently split into two camps violently opposed to each other and threatening the very existence of the *Moshavot*. The magistrates' court – consisting of five members – was called upon to restore the peace, and it often had to set out for the *Moshavot* in the horrible weather conditions of winter on the terrible roads.

When I immigrated into Palestine, my knowledge of Hebrew was as good as non-existent. Certainly, I was familiar with the Hebrew letters and could read Hebrew with vowels, though not fluently (and not always correctly), but I was very far from understanding written or spoken Hebrew. This was because I had never really been taught the language. In special lessons, Jewish children in Rawitsch and Magdeburg had been taught to read and to have a general idea of what they had read. At the university in Berlin, I had learned a little of the grammar together with my friend Wyneken, who was studying Protestant theology, but that was all. Later on I did not have the opportunity to add to my knowledge; on the contrary, I had forgotten the great part of what little I had known. Not until 1905, when I met Dr. Thon, who spoke and wrote Hebrew fluently, did I begin to take a renewed interest in the language.

In Palestine, the importance of the Hebrew language was brought home to me for the first time when I visited a Hebrew nursery school on my first journey to Jerusalem and discovered that the children heard, between them, thirteen different languages at home. Under these circumstances, how could the next generation grow up homogeneously? How could a nation arise if its members did not have a common language? I realized that no European language could ever become the common language of all, because this would have led to an endless struggle between the local supports of French, German, English and Russian, and the struggle would also be taken up by the European power, who wanted to use the Jews as a means of extending their

sphere of influence. I was convinced that national considerations made it essential to introduce Hebrew into the schools, even if, from a utilitarian point of view, it would have been better to introduce some European language.

At the time, I was hoping that this conviction would not remain a mere theory and that I myself would soon be able to acquire a complete command of Hebrew. Thon suggested that I ask the writer Czaczkes (S.Y. Agnon) to give me lessons. Since then, Agnon and I have been good friends, but as a pupil I disappointed him. He took a great deal of trouble over me. For a while he even lived with me in order to give me a lesson whenever I had time to spare; but the work at the Palestine Office made such demands on me that I did not get very many lessons. Throughout my career, I was so overwhelmed with Zionist work that I was effectively prevented from studying Hebrew systematically. There were also other reasons, however. I did not have a keen ear (although it was many years before this manifested itself as deafness) and could learn languages only by visual, rather than aural, means. In addition, in contrast to the East European Jews, who are really bilingual from birth, in Germany I had been completely adjusted to German and found it extremely difficult to adapt to another language. I finally managed to read Hebrew fluently and understand what I read, but I find speaking improvised Hebrew difficult to this day. I was not able to overcome the inhibitions which arose from the fact that the German language was for me what a Stradivarius violin is for a violinist, while Hebrew was a children's violin on which I could not completely express what I wished to say.

I have regretted this short-coming all the more because I admired the clear, almost mathematical structure of the Hebrew language, and I became increasingly aware of the disadvantages which my incomplete command of the language entailed. I know that the Hebrew language would have a hard fight against utilitarian interests and against the flood of immigrants speaking other languages, and I did not want to aggravate the matter by speaking German in public and setting a bad example to others. In consequence, I avoided appearing in public as much as I possibly could, or I made the enormous effort necessary to speak Hebrew, even if I could not do it well. I often had the feeling that by giving up the German language I lost a great deal of my personality and of the influence which I had on public affairs. My lectures at the university were not spontaneous talks; I read them from a prepared script, and even then not always without problems. I remember that I gave my inaugural lecture in 1926 after David Yellin gave his; his Hebrew was excellent and served to emphasize my short-coming to both myself and the audience. What displeases me most is that I have a foreign accent – one might call it the Magdeburg accent – in every other language, and especially in Hebrew. This was made particularly clear in the following episode.

Mr. Leo Simon, a member of the Jewish Agency, had invited Hausmann, a Prussian district governor and a Christian friend of Zionism, to visit Palestine. In Jerusalem, the two men attended a meeting at which only Hebrew was spoken. Hausmann patiently suffered all the speeches, although he could not understand a word, and did not move, but when I began to speak in Hebrew, he was surprised and became restless. Finally, he could not keep quiet any longer, turned to his neighbor, Dr. Hantke,

and said: 'What's going on, eh? That sounds very familiar to me! I can almost understand him! That man doesn't by any chance come from Magdeburg? He himself came from Magdeburg and had recognized the local accent in my Hebrew!

Agricultural Settlement

When I arrived in Palestine, the Jewish National Fund [JNF] owned four areas in the country: Hittin, Dalaikah with Um Juni (today Kinneret and Deganyah), Beit Arif (today Ben Shemen) and Huldah. They had been bought on various occasions between 1905 and 1907. It was my duty to find some use for these areas in order to safeguard them against the threatened *mahlul* [expropriation by the government if the land had not been worked for three years], but this was far from easy. Hittin had been acquired very carelessly in 1905 by a commission of 'experts'. The area, embracing 2,000 dunams, consisted of several hundred separate large and small lots; moreover, it was without water and was, in view of these factors, entirely unsuitable for any sort of settlement, at least for the time being.

The second area consisted of 6,000 dunams in Dalaikah (Kinneret) and Um Juni (Deganyah), which had been acquired for the JNF in 1905 by Mr. Haim Kalvariski, then an official of ICA. This area had the advantage of being all of one piece and possessing an ample water supply, but one thing was lacking: money to cultivate the land. Although the Zionist Organization had established the JNF in order to buy land, it had in no way provided for the land to be settled after the purchase. I therefore had no choice: in order that this valuable area should not devolve on the government or the surrounding Arab population, in the summer of 1908 I established the first Zionist farm, Kinneret.

Ben Shemaen was the site of Israel Belkind's agricultural school for the orphans of the Kishinev pogrom. It was already in process of closing down for lack of funds, but was nevertheless enough to safeguard the area and to protect it from being taken over by the neighbors. Moreover, the land included a well about fifty meters deep which provided it with sufficient water. On the other hand, the situation of the 2,000 dunams in Huldah was all but hopeless. The land had been bought in 1905 through the good offices of Mr. Sapir, assistant director of the Anglo-Palestine Bank. Sapir knew the country better than most people, was extraordinarily frugal and worked untiringly for the Zionist cause, but he was not an expert on the subject of settlement and was satisfied to have acquired 2,000 dunams for the Jewish people. The question of what was to be done with the land lay outside his province. The problem was difficult to solve because Huldah was very poorly situated. It could be reached from Ramble by coach in about on-and-a-half hours, but the road was extraordinarily bad. The worst drawback, however was that Huldah had no water. Throughout the entire history of the place, extending over almost thirty years, the question of water has been of decisive importance. At the time there was only the well belonging to the Arab village of Huldah which the Jews had the right to use.

The worst thing was that this well contained very little water and dried up completely during the summer months, so the water had to be brought in barrels from a great distance.

Under these circumstances, it was very difficult for me to decide how to cultivate the 2,000 dunams in Huldah. Apart from the JNF, the Zionist Organization had at its disposal only the so-called *Oebaumspende* [donations for olive trees], which at that time, if I remember correctly, amounted to 50,000 marks. I decided to use this fund to plant the Herzl Forest in Huldah. When it became known that I intended to bring Jewish workers to Huldah for this purpose, I was confronted with a great deal of opposition to this 'squandering' of national resources, especially from the settlers in the nearby *moshavot* of Ekron and Rehovot. They maintained that if I were to entrust them with the planting of these trees, they would be able to do the job better and more cheaply than I with my Jewish labor force. Nonetheless, I was under the impression that it would be impossible for the settlers, who were after all, living about ten kilometers away, to plant the Herzl Forest, and I also thought that it would afterwards be necessary to have it guarded by Jews. (At the time, it was still taken for granted that Jewish property should be guarded by Arab watchmen.) I also doubted whether the settlers would employ Jewish laborers to plant the trees, and in any case I wanted to rule out a whole series of difficulties that could be foreseen in the respect. In spite of all the objections, I decided to bring a number of laborers into the district and entrust them with the planting of the forest. The agronomist Brisch presented me with a plan for a modest dwelling house, at a cost of 5,000 francs (£200). That I thought this a lot of money may serve to indicate how limited our resources were at that time. In the end, we had no choice but to build this house, which is still standing at the former site of Kvutzat Huldah, and a group of Jewish workers settled there as hired laborers.

I then tackled the problem of water. I had just heard a contractor in Beirut had imported a modern drilling machine from America which was capable of reaching a depth of 200 meters, while the method which had been used in Palestine until then could reach at most 100 meters. A drilling previously done at Huldah had to be abandoned when it had reached ninety-three meters. I made contact with the American contractor in Beirut and engaged him to continue the drilling. As is usual under the circumstances, I agreed that the cost of the drilling would increase with each additional meter. As I had such limited means at my disposal, I found this drilling an extremely exciting enterprise. When it had advanced to a depth of 120 meters without striking water, I was confronted with the question of whether to call it off or to continue for another twenty meters. The same question continued to arise, and I found the decision more and more difficult. When the drilling showed no result at 140 and 160 meters I persisted because I could not decide to write off the money which had already been spent as a complete loss, and a real miracle occurred: when the drilling had reached 180 meters it struck water.

The relationship between the Jewish group and its Arab neighbors suffered because the Arabs begrudged the group even the small amount of water it took from the common well. Shortly after the British occupied the country, the British district governor visited the Arab villages and the Arabs complained to him about the Jews, pointing out

the site of the Jewish settlement, which, with the Herzl Forest, already looked green and formed an oasis in the otherwise tree-bare region. The governor asked the Arabs, 'How long have you lived on this land?'

'Since time immemorial, probably for 1,000 years.'

'And for how long' he asked, 'have the Jews been here?'

'The Jews,' they said, 'came no more than ten years ago.'

'Well,' said the governor, 'why have you not planted a single tree in 1,000 years, while the Jews have already created a forest in ten?'

To this the Arabs had no reply.

This is not the place for me to enlarge upon the subsequent checkered history of Huldah. It went through so many phases that it would make the subject of a separate book. The settlement has been maintained by the sweat and blood of some of our best people, of whom I will mention only Ephraim Tschisik, who fell in the defense of Huldah during the disturbances of 1929. From an economic point of view, the settlement had little to recommend it. It was difficult to find groups prepared to settle there, and ones which dared to do so frequently left again after a year or two. This led to a steady decline of the farm. Not until a group from the youth movement Gordonia went to live there in 1930 did the economic position improve, after the water problem had been more or less satisfactorily solved through laying a pipe from the neighboring settlement Na'an. In 1937 the settlement left the old buildings, erected almost thirty years previously, and built new ones in another spot which was in a better position from an economic point of view.

As I have already mentioned the only funds at my disposal for establishing the settlement Kinneret were the £5,000 share capital which had been subscribed to the newly founded PLDC. Certainly, I had grave doubts about using the money for this purpose. First, it would have prevented the PLDC from undertaking, for instance, the purchase of land on behalf of individuals; second, I doubted whether the settlement would be profitable, that is, whether it would produce for the shareholders the dividends, which the prospectus of the PLDC had promised them. I mentioned my doubts to the agronomist M. Bermann, who had once been an agricultural inspector in Russia. He had been recommended by his brother-in-law, Dr. Selig Soskin, to Professor Warburg, who, as the president of the Palestine Department of Zionist Organization, had sent him to Palestine in 1906. Bermann then showed me an estimate containing all the details of the probable income and expenditure (even the food for the watchdog at 25 francs). It showed the farm as making a net profit of eleven per cent during its first complete working year, but I remained skeptical and asked Bermann to have the calculations checked by Dr. Soskin, who was at that time – beside Aaron Aaronson – the only agricultural expert in the country. Dr. Soskin confirmed the calculations by appending his signature.

I engaged Bermann as manager, at a monthly salary of 200 francs and free accommodation, and authorized him to establish a farm with all the necessary buildings, buy the stock for it and accept Jewish workers. About thirty workers, led by Zvi Yehudah, arrived at Kinneret and work began. In the beginning, the relationship between Bermann and the workers was excellent; their enthusiasm about the first Jewish farm in

the Galilee prevented manager and workers from becoming daunted by any difficulty, especially the many cases of malaria. After the honeymoon period, however, the relationship deteriorated. Bermann was accustomed to the large social gulf which existed between manager and workers in Russia and to blind obedience on the part of the workers. He had a four-room house built for himself and his family, while the workers lodged four or six together in one stuffy room. The workers frequently found fault with his management, and rather than listen to their opinions, he roughly rejected all their criticisms. He did not mince words in his dealings with the workers, and this caused a great deal of bitterness.

It was to Bermann's great advantage that he was not a theorist, but a practical farmer, a magnificent horseman and conversant with every job in agriculture. With his tall, muscular figure, black beard and sparkling eyes, he was the ideal embodiment of the '*Muskeljude*' [muscular Jew]. But he could not do sums. All his estimates of the capital investment needed and of the profit to be expected turned out to be wrong, and the first working year closed with a large deficit. Bermann also lacked enough theoretical knowledge to understand how to adapt the experience he had acquired in Russia to conditions in Kinneret, and he managed the farm as he would have done in Russia. Knowing nothing at all about agriculture, I had to leave things to him. As he was 'the man on the spot' and the one who was directly responsible, he had to be given a free hand to begin with. I started to interfere only after I began to have growing doubts about the wisdom of his management. Certainly, it was far from easy for me. It took almost a week to make the journey from Jaffa to Kinneret and back, so I could not afford to make it more often than once every few months. Before I managed to supervise him more closely, however, he had already spent large amounts on buildings, equipment for the farm, an irrigation works and wages.

Although I could speak only German, I succeeded once or twice in talking Bermann and the workers out of a quarrel. On the third occasion (February 1911), however, the animosity was already so far-reaching that the workers proclaimed a strike. I received a telegram from Bermann stating that I must come to Kinneret at once, 'by land or by sea'. When I got there I was in an extremely difficult position. I could see that Bermann was at least as much to blame for the quarrel as the workers. Therefore, the only fair solution seemed to be to dismiss both Bermann and the workers and to engage both a new manager and labor force. This was not easy to do. I was obliged to remain in Kinneret for more than two weeks and was almost stung to death by the flies, mosquitoes and fleas (Although I had given up smoking ten years before, at that time I took it up again as a protection against the mosquitoes.)

I invited the agronomist Golde to come to Kinneret, and he arrived after about a fortnight. Berman left the farm, as did some of the workers and work began anew; but as far as its profitableness was concerned, the results were no better than before. Bermann, guided by his experience in Russia, had introduced grain as the main branch; I was forced to draw the conclusion that it was not profitable and that another, more intensive branch

of agriculture would have to be found. As a result of Y. Wilkansky's experiments in Ban Shemen since 1911, mixed farming was gradually introduced.

On the occasion of the first strike in Kinneret (1909) I had several long discussions with the workers (including Berl Katzenelson, who was to become editor of the labor newspaper *Davar*). They repeatedly made the point that the manager, with his salary and personal expenses on journeys, etc., was an intolerable burden for the farm. His bourgeois standard of living, in contrast to the miserable accommodation and food of the workers living on the same farm (who were mostly better educated than he), created a social gulf which Bermann had further aggravated by his domineering behavior and which, in the long run, made harmonious cooperation impossible. To solve this problem, the workers suggested that the manager should be eliminated and the management of the farm be placed in the hands of a committee which they would choose leaders from among themselves. They referred to the success of a similar experiment one or two years before on the ICA farm Sejera.

I was very impressed by the seriousness and the sense of responsibility with which the workers stated their case. Although I refused to hand the whole Kinneret farm over to them, because it seemed too much of a risk to begin with, I agreed to let six specially chosen experienced workers manage independently, in a sort of share tenancy, the area of Um Juni on the opposite bank of the Jordan. Until then, Um Juni had been worked as a farmstead from Kinneret without any success. During a discussion out of doors I drew up a brief contract (in German!) on the spot, and the six workers and I signed it. At the same time, the six workers suggested two of the group as managers of the undertaking, and I confirmed their appointment in writing.

Thus the first Kvutzah [collective settlement] was founded. Although I did not fully realize the importance of this event for the future development of the country, I rather thought that major consequences might follow from this minor beginning, and I wrote about it to the PLDC in Berlin, on 10 December 1909, saying, among other things:

“During his recent stay in Kinneret, the undersigned has succeeded in establishing the planned settlers' cooperative. The cooperative consists of six of the most capable workers in the Galilee. They have been in Palestine for several years and have a good knowledge of agriculture. They are living in a barrack which we have had built in Um Juni, and this year they will cultivate approximately 1,300 dunams.

With regard to the legal arrangements concerning the cooperative, we had to take into consideration that the workers are entirely without means, as there was no time to collect the few workers in Palestine who have some financial resources. We thought it inadvisable from a business point of view to grant credit to workers who have no means of their own and have therefore decided upon a system by which the entire farm will remain our property. On the other hand, we have granted the workers a great deal of independence and a stake in the farm through arranging to pay them a high percentage of the profits and through appointing the manager to pay them a high percentage of the profits and through appointing the manager responsible for the enterprise from among the workers, according to their own suggestion.

It is the express wish of the members of the cooperative that public attention should not at once be drawn to this first modest experiment of a cooperative settlement in Palestine, but that it should be allowed to proceed in private, at least during the first year. Therefore, we ask you for the time being not to publish anything about this matter in the newspapers. As soon as we will be able to give you further details about this enterprise and its results, we will of course inform you at once.”

In the autumn of 1909, the seven workers (a woman, Shifrah Sturman, had joined the six men) settled in Um Juni, which they later called Deganyah. In the beginning, they lived in miserable conditions in a barrack and in mud huts which had been left there by the former Arab owner. When I saw that the people were doing their work intelligently and with tremendous industry and showed a profit at the end of the first working year, my confidence grew and I decided to renew the contract. Although the experiment continued, the workers who had been chosen specially for Um Juni from various groups, were replaced by others who had already worked in Petah Tikvah and Hederah as a community of hired laborers.

When I founded the cooperative in Deganyah, it seemed to me that this was actually a realization of the 'cooperative settlement' advocated by Franz Oppenheimer* at the [Sixth] Zionist Congress in 1903, though the constitution of the Deganyah cooperative was a little different from the one Oppenheimer had proposed. It seemed to me that what mattered was that the settlement should be a cooperative; everything else was of secondary importance. The JNF, however, which was at that time headed by Dr. Bodenheimer in Cologne, as well as Franz Oppenheimer, were against this identification. They did not object to the founding of the Deganyah cooperative, but they considered it a separate matter and not an adequate substitute for Oppenheimer's cooperative settlement. Deganyah differed from Oppenheimer's plan for a cooperative settlement in two respects, which he considered decisive: the employment of an expert manager; and the scale of payment which the members received should depend upon their work.

On these two points, I could not fulfill Oppenheimer's demands. After their experiences with Bermann, the members of Deganyah so profoundly distrusted any agronomist or manager that it was hopeless to try to persuade the community to accept one. On the second point, I tried to convince Oppenheimer that the workers, who had formed the Deganyah cooperative of their own free choice, thereby considered themselves equally capable of making their contribution. To pay them different wages would lead to envy and bitterness between them and destroy the feeling of comradeship on which the future success of the farm depended. The question was raised at a meeting of the members of Deganyah in 1911. It had been intended to found a cooperative settlement at Merhavyiah, and Oppenheimer had appointed the agronomist S. Dyk as manager. Although work had already begun there, Dyk now suggested that the cooperative should be founded at Kinneret (which was at the time cultivated by hired laborers under the management of the agronomist Golde) and that the neighboring Deganyah and its members should become part of this cooperative settlement.

In fact, the cooperative settlement was not moved from Merhavyah to Kinneret and the cooperative in Deganyah continued to develop successfully. Gradually, however,

* Franz Oppenheimer, a well known Jewish economist and sociologist, published a comprehensive work in 1896 on the problem of producers' cooperatives. He was thereafter invited to speak on his ideas at the Sixth (1903) and ninth (1909) Zionist Congresses, and the latter decided to bring his program to fruition. Toward that end, a settlement company and special cooperative fund were established, and the JNF placed 3,500 dunams of land at Merhavyiah, purchased in 1910, at the disposal of the project.

changes occurred in its legal and social structure. Originally, the workers cultivated the land as share tenants and were guaranteed a minimum wage. This changed, especially after the Great War, until the group of workers cultivated the farm as an independent cooperative on its own account and at its own risk (without a guaranteed minimum wage). From the farming point of view, definite progress was made when the cooperative changed over from extensive to intensive farming.

Soon after the Great War, a second community (Deganyah Bet) was founded in the area, and later there was also a third (Deganyah Gimme). Each of the three communities had twenty to thirty members and about 1,000 dunams of land. Much of the land was irrigated, thus introducing the type of 'mixed' farming (with dairy farming, fodder crop, poultry farming, vegetable gardening, tree nurseries, etc.) which has continued until this day.

During the first few years of its existence, Kvutzat Deganyah lost several of its most valuable members through treacherous murder or through accidents. On 26 November 1913, I received a telegram from the community: 'MOSHE BARSKY DEGANYAH MURDERED SATURDAY. YESTERDAY WORKER JOSEPH SALZMANN KINNERET MURDERED. COME.' Moshe Barsky had been a young lad of eighteen who was generally liked because of his cheerful disposition. His tragic end came as a profound shock to us all. His father showed that the spirit of the Maccabees is still alive in Israel. When he received the news of his son's death, he decided to send his other son to Deganyah to replace his brother. News of this attitude soon spread. A particularly heavy blow for the community was the death of Joseph Bussel, who drowned in Lake Kinneret in 1918. For the previous five or six years, Bussel had been not only the conscientious farm manager, but also the spiritual leader of the community. He had a gift for leadership and a unique personality. He laid the foundations for the change from extensive to intensive farming, and his sense of responsibility and knowledge of farming established the good name Deganyah has since enjoyed even in circles (especially the neighboring ICA colonies) which had until then looked down upon the work of the community.

I followed the development of Deganyah with particular interest and became more and more convinced that in many instances the conditions of the country made the *Kvutzah* the most suitable means of cultivating the soil. I therefore entrusted other communities with the preparation of newly acquired land (e.g., Merhaviyah). While the workers in Palestine greeted the establishment of the first cooperatives with enthusiasm, middle-class people, who were in the majority on Zionist boards and at the Zionist congresses, regarded them as adventurous and expensive experiments which reeked of socialism or even of communism. I was neither a socialist nor a communist, but I would not have considered it a fault if the experiments had displayed these tendencies. The truth of the matter was that I had established the community out of purely practical considerations. I was looking for the best and cheapest way of making young Jews familiar with Palestinian agriculture and believed that the *Kvutzah* offered the solution.

Sir John Campbell, a member of the Commission of Experts which had been sent to the country by American Zionists and other Jews, published a report in 1928 which stated:

From personal observations, and from a series of conversations with colonists who have worked for years in Kevotzoth, and who are now in moshav settlements, I have come to the conclusion that the moshav settlement is unquestionably better, as an economic organization [page 444]... My advice would be to take a formal decision that no more kevotzoth should be established... The kevotzoth, the establishment of which was begun in 1927 should, I think, be abandoned... [Page 495].

We had a hard struggle with the opponents of the Kvutzah; their special champion was S. Kaplanski, who was my successor in the Colonization Department of the Jewish Agency. We successfully resisted the dissolution of the communities founded in 1927 and have the satisfaction of knowing that they have developed into the prosperous settlements of Ramat David, Sarid, Gevat and Mishmar ha-Emek. In 1927 it was still possible to regard the communities as a doubtful or unsuccessful experiment, but I feel that the subsequent years have undeniably proven their positive value.

Sir Arthur Wauchope, High Commissioner for Palestine from 1931 to 1938, was a close friend of the settlements and frequently visited them. He was an admirably noble and humane man and showed a profound understanding of the enthusiastic idealism and the endeavor to create a better society which found its expression in the Kvutzot.

Matters which had been the concern of the Zionist organization before the establishment of the Palestine Office also became part of our responsibilities, as, for example, the supervision of the agricultural school at Beit Arif (Ben Shemen). In 1909 this school was closed because of lack of funds. Belkind fought against its closure and tried to raise money for the school in all sorts of ways, but failed. Thus arose the question of what was to be done with the buildings and the 2,000 dunams of land belonging to the JNF. At about this time, Yitzhak Wilkansky came to Palestine. He had completed a course in agriculture at the University of Königsberg, and though he was without any practical farm training and was not very good at figures, his seriousness and quick grasp of problems gave me confidence in him. As we could not leave the land lying fallow, I decided to establish a farm at Ben Shemen and to appoint Wilkansky as its manager. The JNF, which was, willing or not, obliged to see that its land was cultivated, provided the necessary means; the Association for Oelbaumspende [donations for olive trees] also made a contribution, so that a second Herzl Forest, of olive trees, could be planted there.

Under Wilkansky's management, the farm at Ben Shemen developed into an 'experimental farm' and had an influence on all our future settlement activities. Wilkansky, who had studied agriculture under German professors soon made contact with the German settlement Wilhelma, which was near Ben Shemen. There he became familiar with the experience which the efficient and industrious Templars had gained in the course of many years of farming in Palestine, and in consequence he introduced 'mixed farming' centered on milk production, which had been ignored by Jews until that time. He combined it with poultry keeping for the sake of egg production.

It was not easy to establish such a farm successfully with Jewish workers. The Germans farmed with cheap hired Arab labor, and in many respects it was not possible to follow their practices. Also, some of the traditional German methods were, in the light of modern science, out of date. Wilkansky experimented with new fodder crops; imported valuable milk cows from east Frisia, Damascus and Beirut; cross-bred them with the local breed, etc. He also tried to improve the breed of poultry and built for this purpose modern chicken-runs, which became popularly known as 'chicken Tel Aviv'. He suffered many setbacks, however. The experience of Ben Shemen, together with those of Huldah and Kenneret, convinced me that the establishment of agricultural settlements was a difficult task. That I did not despair, but nevertheless stubbornly persisted with the work once it had been begun, was entirely due to the enthusiasm and the devotion of the Jewish workers, which continued to carry me along.

Everything I did in Palestine seemed infinitesimal compared with the task which still lay ahead of me. At that time, there were barely 70,000 Jews in Palestine and 50,000 of them belonged to the old *Yishuv*, which was unproductive and indifferent or hostile to the national movement. Also, of the 29,000 new settlers, only about 1,000 families were engaged in agriculture, and their circumstances were very unsatisfactory. It was important to extend this small beginning as quickly as possible if the work in Palestine was to be taken seriously, but all my attempts to extend the settlement activities were hampered by the fact that the Zionist movement lacked the necessary means.

As this was the state of affairs, I tried desperately to raise private capital for agricultural and urban settlements, and in 1909 I wrote and published two pamphlets: *Land Purchase in Palestine* and *Establishing Plantations in Palestine*; they were also published by Boris Goldberg in Russian (Vilna). At that time, plantations of almond trees were very profitable in Palestine, and there was a boom in almonds, similar to the one in oranges twenty years later. My pamphlets recommended the purchase of land to be planted with almonds, olives or oranges and suggested the formation of companies of planters, for which the name 'Ahuzah' was adopted. In fact, as a result of this suggestion and of the propaganda I spread personally on my two visits to Russia (1913 and at the beginning of 1914), several such companies were founded by wealthy people: in Bialystok, Lodz, Kiev, Yekaterinoslav, etc. Among other, there was also one in Chicago, founded by an enthusiastic Zionist, Simon Goldmann. The companies established plantations (in Kfar Saba, Kerkur, Bir Adas, Kfar Uriah, Poriah, Ruhamah, etc), but unfortunately, most of them failed, mainly because many of the members were unable to pay their yearly subscription during the Great War and the plantations lacked the means to keep going. In addition, the managers appointed by the companies were not always equal to the task or did not make sufficient allowance for the climatic conditions in Palestine. Thus in Poriah, 2,000 dunams of almond tree were killed by *kpuodis* because they had been planted on ground unsuitable for them. In a number of cases however (for example, Kerkur and Kfar Saba), new, healthy settlements arose out of the plantations. The question of Jewish farm laborers in the Moshavot was closely connected with agricultural settlement. Since the beginning of the Second Aliyah, many young people had come to Palestine determined to become farm workers. By this time, the immigrants

of the First Aliyah (the Biluim), who had come to Palestine in 1882, already regarded farming as their natural occupation; but the Biluim had gradually become accustomed to employing Arab labor and being satisfied with managing their farms. The young people of the Second Aliyah, influenced by the socialist movement, which had become prominent in Russia, brought with them the conviction that the employment of hired labor was an unjustifiable exploitation of human beings and that the Jewish immigrants should perform all the work on the soil with their own hands. They also thought it essential, from the point of view of Jewish nationalism that the Jewish National Home should be built by the Jews themselves. They went into the moshavot and tried to find employment as laborers – first, in order to learn farming, about which they know nothing; second in order to earn a living. They had hoped that the Jewish villagers would be willing to employ and instruct them, but they suffered a great disappointment. The villagers were not able to train them because frequently they themselves were unfamiliar with actual farm labor, or they were unwilling to employ beginners who would be unable to do much work considering the abundance of experienced and capable Arab laborers. Moreover, it was impossible for the Jewish immigrants to work for the low wages received by the Arabs.

This dilemma caused profound animosity between the villagers and the Jewish workers. The workers reproached the villagers, saying that although they considered themselves to be ‘idealists’ and accepted the help of Jewish circles interested in the development of Palestine, in reality they were only looking after their own material well-being and ignoring what was in the national interest. The colonists maintained that their own income was so low (this was at the time of the slump in wine) that they were unable, with the best will in the world, to employ Jewish workers, who asked for high wages and were not capable of doing much work. Having come to Palestine with so much enthusiasm and such high hopes, the workers were in despair. A fierce quarrel arose, upsetting the *Moshavot* and becoming increasingly bitter. The workers were undisciplined and the villagers who were of an older generation and were used to a patriarchal society, regarded them as insolent young socialists with whom it was impossible to come to terms, while the Arab workers were docile and made no trouble.

Under the circumstances, the establishment of the first Zionist farms and settlements – Huldah, Ben Shemen, Kinneret, Deganyah and Merhavyah – in which Jewish workers were employed, was welcomed by the workers with enthusiasm, as they saw in them a solution to their hopeless situation. But the farms could employ at most hundreds, while thousands were eager to work. Therefore, it was necessary to find still other solutions. I sought to solve the problem in several ways:

1. By making it cheaper for the Jewish workers to live, so that it would be easier for them to compete with the Arab workers. To this end, the Palestine Office, with money from JNF, built large hostels (for unmarried workers) with communal kitchens in Petah Tikvah and Hederah.
2. By building small houses with one dunam of land for married workers. These houses cost about 1,000 francs and were intended to provide the workers with cheap and healthy accommodation and enable them to grow

vegetables for their own use. They were built in Petah Tikvah, Hederah and Rishon le-Zion.

3. Through the formation of groups of workers to undertake work in the plantations on a contractual basis.
4. Through attracting Yemenite Jews who were used to a hot climate and had a lower standard of living.

These measures were moderately successful in any case, Jewish workers, none of whom had previously worked in the wine and the orange plantations, gradually began to be taken for granted there. In 1913, I was able to inform the [Eleventh] Zionist Congress that the number of Jewish farm workers had risen from a few hundred to more than 1,000. Almost a quarter of a century has passed since then, and by 1938 the number of workers employed in the Jewish villages had risen to more than 10,000; but it would not be true to say that the Jewish farm worker has by now become firmly established in the *moshavot*. At the time of the disturbances, when gangs of Arabs attacked the Jewish settlements, Jewish workers replaced Arab ones for security reasons, but as soon as peace was more or less restored, many of the villagers again preferred the cheaper Arab workers to the Jews.

As early as 1882, a few Jews had emigrated from Yemen via Aden to Palestine. They spoke Arabic (many of the men also spoke Hebrew), had the lifelong habits of the Arabs, made few demands on life and –thanks to their contentedness, industry and intelligence - had firmly established themselves in Palestine. They were undoubtedly the most cultured and industrious among the oriental Jews. Boris Schatz, the founder of the Bezalel School, valued them highly because of their skill in silver and copper work, employed many of them as workers in his school workshops and started a course to train them as stonemasons. Most of the Yemenite immigrants had settled in Jerusalem (a few in Tel Aviv and Haifa), but some of them had also gone to Petah Tikvah, Rishon le-Zion, Rehovot and Hederah. Because of their lower living standards, I saw in the Yemenites a group which had a better chance of holding its own in the *moshavot* against the competition from the Arabs. The question was how they were to be brought to Palestine in large numbers, Radler-Feldmann (Rabbi Benjamin), who was in touch with the Yemenite Jews, gave me the idea of sending an ‘emissary’ to Yemen in order to tell them that they could earn their living as workers in the agricultural colonies in Palestine. We found a young worker, Shmuel Yavnieli, who was enthusiastically prepared to undertake this task, which was connected with many dangers and hardships. For many months, we heard nothing from Yavnieli and feared the worst, but he returned after a year. The Jews in Yemen had received him with enthusiasm, and the mission had been extremely successful. Until the Great War, 2,000 Yemenite Jews emigrated to Palestine, and most of them found work in the Moshavot. By 1940, their number had risen to 15,000.

One day in 1910, Bezalel Jaffe called on me at the Palestine Office and introduced me to a shy young girl; her name was Hanna Meisel (she later married Eliezer Shochat, one of the founders of Deganyah and Nahalal, and thereafter called herself

Hanna Shochat-Meisel). She had just qualified as an agronomist at a French university and had come to Palestine in order to devote herself to training girls in agriculture. Until that moment, when colonists had been chosen for agricultural settlements in Palestine no one had thought of the wife of the future farmer. Nothing had ever been done to train women in agriculture, and therefore, apart from a few exceptions the wives in the Jewish settlements were a burden rather than a help to their husbands. In the German settlement Sarona, the wives did a great deal of the farm work, and did it well. One of the settlers once told me shortly after I arrived in Palestine: 'You Jews will never be able to make a success of farming. Even if you manage to turn your men into farmers, that is only half the battle; the help of the women is absolutely essential, and your women will never get up at dawn in order to milk the cows.'

Those words found a ready response in me. In an article published in *Ha-Po'el ha-Tza'ir* on 27 November 1911, I discussed the situation of the Jewish farm worker and stressed the necessity for also training girls in agriculture, as the success of settlement depended upon the women knowing something about farming and being able to help. Thus in theory, Hanna Meisel's intentions had my full sympathy and support, but at first it was impossible to see how I could help her put her plans into practice. She could not carry out her intentions without having a farm at her disposal, and I had no means whatsoever to establish one for her. I was not willing to give the idea up, however, and in the end I succeeded in obtaining a few rooms and a small piece of ground on the Kinneret farm and the Verband Jüdischer Frauen für Kulturarbeit in Palästina in Berlin provided a little money to establish and maintain a school there. In the spring of 1911 Hanna Meisel was able to move to Kinneret and begin the training of ten girls.

She was far from welcome in Kinneret. Bermann, who was still the manager there when she arrived, had been most reluctant to agree to the experiment and was convinced that it was bound to fail. Once, when I was walking with him across the fields in Kinneret, where the girls were working in city cloths entirely unsuitable for farm work, he pointed to them: 'Look at them playing! One tomato produced by them will cost one medshidy' (a Turkish coin worth 20 piasters). This hostility put poor Hanna Meisel in a difficult position. Things improved when Bermann left the farm, but then the financial situation became more and more difficult. However, Hanna Meisel possessed the necessary patience for farm work in Palestine and did not relinquish the idea to which she had dedicated her life. She knew that she still had a lot to learn, and continued to learn untiringly.

I also remained undeterred by all the difficulties and did my best to provide Hanna Meisel with money to keep the school going. In the newspapers, I repeatedly drew attention to the fact that the wife of a settler needed to have some training in agriculture. Hanna Meisel persevered and finally received her reward. The Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) regarded the training of girls in agriculture as its main task and provided Hanna Shochat-Meisel's school with financial security.

The Purchase of Agricultural Land

As soon as the Palestine Office had been opened a great many agents, Jews and non-Jews, turned to it as the representative of the JNF and the PLDC with offers of all sorts of real estate in both urban and rural areas. Most of these agents were completely unreliable and did not really understand the legal intricacies of land purchase. After the first few attempts, I realized that it was useless to negotiate with them. The purchase and attempted purchase of land were accidental and sporadic. They had always concerned only small areas (a few thousand dunams at most), since the money at our disposal was not sufficient to buy large areas at a time. The systematic acquisition of land for agricultural settlements is inseparably linked with the name of Yehoshua Hankin. He devoted his whole life to this task, which was among the most difficult and most important of all the work done in Palestine.

Hankin became active in this field in 1890, when he was no more than twenty-five years old. The laws concerning real estate were among the most intricate of the Turkish regime, and they persisted for much of the period of British administration as well. A land register, in the European sense, did not exist. The requisite information for one was lacking, as the land had not been surveyed. An area had therefore to be 'identified' by very unreliable landmarks (wadi, hillock, tree, fence), and its dimensions almost always differed from those stated. The legal title (kushan) issued to the purchaser by the land-registry office (tabu) was no guarantee that the purchaser was not the legal owner. It was not more than a certificate that the seller had transferred his rights to the buyer, who was thereafter always vulnerable to the plea that the seller on one of the previous owners had had no legal right to the property and was therefore not able to transfer it. Consequently, disputes concerning boundaries occurred quite frequently. A buyer always had to pay the closest possible attention to avoid being cheated by the seller or his agent.

Hankin developed land purchase into a fine art, and when I came to Palestine he was known as the greatest expert in the field. He was completely obsessed by a passion to increase the area of land owned by the Jews. There have been many such single-minded people who have made a decisive contribution towards the development of the Jewish National Home, and a much greater one than the cautious and calculating businessmen and critics among the Zionists, whose criticism was negative and frequently destructive. In an article published on the occasion of Hankin's sixtieth birthday in the *Jüdische Rundschau* on 18 November 1926, I wrote the following about him:

Yehoshua Hankin has the appearance of a tranquil man, and this impression is enhanced by the fact that he is not very talkative. He is surrounded by an aura of mystery. His hair, which has never been cut in his life, recalls the ancient Nazarites, whom he also resembles in his tendency towards asceticism, a renunciation of all the pleasure of this world. This apparent tranquility and rejection of the world, however, is only the outer shell, concealing a kernel of burning excitement, terrific energy and extreme intelligence. Through using words sparingly and renouncing everything which is outside the province of his life's work, Hankin manages to concentrate on his work and to put all his energy and ability 100 percent at the disposal of his one and only purpose. Life in Palestine has brought me into contact with many people, but I know of no one else who has perfected this art of concentrating on one single purpose to quite the same extent as Hankin. He will wait patiently for weeks and even months, if he considers it necessary to wait in order to complete the purchase of a piece of land, and not a single outward sign will betray his internal excitement;

but he will become impatient and annoyed within a quarter of an hour if time has to be spent on anything not connected with this purpose.

Hankin detests slowness; for him, everything connected with his work is extremely urgent. He is a past-master in the art of traveling quickly and occasionally it seems that he is capable of performing the miracle of being in several places at once. This haste arises out of his preference for doing, or at least supervising, everything himself, but it is also the consequence of his belief that in the matter of land purchase, every moment is precious. He was the first to foresee that the small country of Palestine can only put a limited amount of land at the disposal of Jewish settlement, and that the acquisition of areas of land will become more difficult with the increase in Jewish immigration. Therefore, he has everywhere expounded the view that it is necessary to buy as much of the land as possible, and to buy it quickly. Today, this thought is commonly accepted, but it must not be forgotten that even a few years ago many people rejected it, maintaining that there was plenty of time for buying the land, because the land would always be there.

When I arrived in Palestine, Hankin was buying land on behalf of ICA. In his capacity as an official of this organization, he negotiated the purchase of 9,000 dunams in Fule (today Merhavyah) in the Jezreel Valley. When the opportunity arose to close the deal, Hankin snatched it, although he had not yet been authorized by ICA to do so. When ICA refused to ratify the deal, it placed Hankin in a very difficult position, as he did not want to break his word to the Arab client. He then came to me as director of the PLDC and offered the land to us. The PLDC had very little capital and was not prepared for such offers – it was a matter of paying 40 francs per dunam, i.e., 360,000 francs (£14,400). But I saw the importance of gaining a foothold in the Jezreel Valley, and after tremendous difficulties I succeeded in raising the necessary sum of money. (About a third of it came from the JNF, which bought 3,500 dunams for the Oppenheimer collective settlement). A young agronomist called Elias Blumenfeld also came to my aid by offering the cash to buy 1,000 dunams.

It was still necessary to overcome the objections of the Turkish authorities to the deal. The competent authority, the Kaimakam in Nazareth, was a fanatic Young Turk, said that he would never allow the deal to be entered in the land register, without which it would not be legally valid, and he ignored all the legal directives and orders from his superiors. Hankin had to appeal to his friends in Constantinople, who finally succeeded in having the deal registered by the competent minister. Thus the first Jewish position in the Jezreel Valley was secured. After this first purchase, Hankin continued to work for the PLDC. It was an extra-ordinary stroke of luck that Hankin and the PLDC found each other. Between 1910 and 1940, this collaboration has been responsible for most of the deals involving the purchase of large areas of land for the JNF and for private individuals; for instance, for the acquisition of the large areas in the Jezreel Valley, the plain of Acre, Emek Hefer, the Huleh Valley, etc.

The acquisition of the legal title for Fule was not the end of the troubles and difficulties there. It was still necessary to take possession of the land, on which the former tenants and laborers were still living. A few of the workers we sent there, including the indefatigable Sa'adiah Paz, spoke Arabic and were experienced in dealing with Arabs. Advised by Hankin, and with the help of considerable donations, they succeeded in persuading the Arabs to leave the land peaceably and installed themselves

in the buildings – most of them miserable mud huts – which belonged to the seller. Some time later, however, an unfortunate thing happened. A quarrel arose when a group of our workers and a group of Arabs met in the fields of Fule. In the fight which ensued, one of the Arabs was shot dead and two of the Jews were wounded. The death of the Arab aroused great excitement throughout the region, and during the following week shots were fired at dusk into the huts where the Jews were living. The police from Nazareth arrested seven of our people and imprisoned them in Acre where they remained under appalling conditions for several months. After expending a great deal of trouble and money, we succeeded in convincing the authorities that it had been a matter of self-defense, and the prisoners were released. The case served as a warning to me and made me more cautious in all subsequent purchases. Hankin and I agreed that quarrels with former tenants had to be avoided at all cost, even if it meant spending a great deal of money.

Jewish settlement in Palestine would not have survived its early years without the help of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, whom I met several times both in Paris and Palestine. He was always ready to discuss Palestine and usually did most of the talking. On one occasion he told me that his settlements by Lake Huleh were very much affected by malaria.

‘How does malaria arise? He once asked me.

‘It is carried by the Anopheles mosquito, which breeds in the stagnant water of Lake Huleh.’

‘Only in stagnant water?’

‘Yes.’

‘Can the water not be kept in motion?’

‘How?’

‘For instance by means of a steamer with large paddle-wheels which continually moves about?’

‘Well then, we will just have to use several steamers!’

Baron Rothschild visited Palestine in February 1914. It was, of course, very important for the future of our work to gain the Baron’s support for it. His local officials were not very pleased that the Baron had made contact with the Zionists, who were at that time still regarded condescendingly as intruders and Kabtzanim [beggars] by ICA. Nevertheless, I succeeded in talking with the Baron several times through the good offices of his confidant Henri Frank, who was a gentleman and believed that he ought not to refuse my request to meet the Baron. Once we met at the settlement Kinneret and I talked to him about our work. The Baron was delighted to hear that he was not alone in spending money for agricultural development in Palestine and promised to help us. News of this aroused great pleasure among the workers of Kinneret and others who had collected there from the neighborhood. In the evening, they lit a large bonfire, sang Hebrew songs, and Shmulik Hefter – now a member of Tel Yosef – and some others performed the Arab sword dance. Naturally a great many speeches were made to celebrate the Baron’s connection with the Zionists as an epoch-making event.

While Baron Rothschild was staying in Palestine and his yacht was anchored off Jaffa, Julius Rosenwald visited the country. He was the head of the firm Sear, Roebuck & Co. of Chicago and was reputed to be one of the richest Jews in the United States. There was such a shortage of capital in Palestine at the time that whenever a Jewish 'millionaire' appeared there was tremendous excitement: will we succeed in making him take an interest in Palestine? It was, of course, very important to me to speak to him and to persuade him to make a capital investment. He came to Jaffa accompanied by Aaron Aaronson, who had met him previously in the United States and persuaded him to contribute money to his Agricultural Experiment Station at Athlit. I received a message from Aaronson that Mr. Rosenwald wished to speak to me at his hotel that evening. This put me in a dilemma. I was offended by the way in which the invitation was issued; it seemed to me that the millionaire thought himself entitled to summon me, the representative of the Zionist Organization, as if I were an underling. On the other hand, I was afraid that if I declined I would lose the chance to talk to him, which I had been looking forward to very much. Finally, I decided to answer that I would not be available that evening but that I would be at Mr. Rosenwald's disposal the following morning at the Palestine Office.

The meeting took place, and I was delighted to find that Rosenwald was easy to talk to, intelligent, and listened with interest to everything I told him. It occurred to me that it might be useful to introduce Rosenwald and Baron Rothschild to each other. I thought that the Baron's personality and his enthusiasm for Palestine would be more likely to influence Rosenwald than my most polished speeches. Rosenwald readily accepted my suggestion to meet the Baron. I enquired whether the Baron would like to receive Mr. Rosenwald on his yacht, and when he agreed Rosenwald and I went on board. The Baron (his wife was also present), always ready to proselytize for Palestine, was extremely charming and talks with Rosenwald about all sorts of things. Finally, the talk turned to the 'Sprachenstreit [language dispute] which was current at the time.*

Within a few days, there was to be a meeting in Berlin, at which the governing body of the newly established Technion in Haifa was to decide definitely whether Hebrew or German was to be used as the language of instruction. The Baron was in favor of Hebrew, perhaps because he felt that the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden in Berlin, which dominated the governing body of the Technion and advocated the use of German as the language of instruction, was, consciously or unconsciously, acting as a tool of

* The so-called language dispute arose out of the controversy over the language of instruction at the Technion in Haifa, due to be opened in the spring of 1914. At a meeting of the governing body in October 1913, it was decided, on the suggestion of the management of the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden and despite the objections raised by the Zionist representatives, that German was to be the language of instruction. The Zionist representatives withdrew in protest, and a protest movement of strikes by pupils and teachers against the schools of the Hilfsverein arose throughout Palestine. Numerous Hebrew schools were established and financed by the Zionist Organization. As a result of this movement and of the objections raised in other countries, especially in America, in February 1914 the governing body accepted a compromise solution by which Hebrew was to become the language of instruction within four years, while some subjects were to be taught in Hebrew immediately. During the first few months of this dispute, Dr. Ruppin was abroad.

German politics in the Middle East. Rosenwald, who had probably until that moment known nothing about the whole matter, agreed with the Baron, either out of politeness or because he accepted his arguments. It occurred to me that it might help the cause of Hebrew language if the Baron and Rosenwald were to send a telegram to the meeting in Berlin expressing their preference for the introduction of Hebrew. My suggestion was accepted and the telegram was sent. I sent an account of my meetings with the Baron and Rosenwald to the Inner Actions Committee in Berlin, saying, among other things:

I am able to inform you (this is of course to be treated as strictly confidential) that the Baron has been extraordinarily satisfied, indeed delighted, by what he has seen in Palestine. It is of particular interest to us that he regards Zionist activities as being largely responsible for the development of Palestine and has repeatedly expressed his satisfaction and gratitude for this cooperation. The immediate result of the Baron's journey is that he agreed to the purchase of large areas of land in the Jezreel Valley and in the region between Hederah and Zikhron Ya'akov in a discussion with him and two of his officials, Frank and Rosenheck, on the evening before he left Kinneret. He wishes to keep some of these areas for himself, especially those which will not be difficult to irrigate, with the intention of settling smallholders to grow early vegetables. Concerning other areas, he only made the condition that the PLDC should then sell the land. I said that the PLDC would accept this responsibility if the buyers were asked to pay no more than thirty per cent of the purchase price immediately and the remaining seventy per cent in seven equal annual instalments of ten per cent. The Baron agreed to this. Altogether, the purchase of these areas will require a sum of six million francs. I had the impression that the Baron would be prepared to continue to buy in excess of this sum.

It is interesting that the Baron reprimanded the representatives of Rosh Pinah, whom he met in Kinneret, for employing Arab labour. He also reprimanded the rabbis of Tiberias for doing nothing for the development of the town and for observing the letter, not the spirit, of the Torah. In connection with this, he later asked me to see to the reorganization of the halukah.* It was a pity that the large amount of money sent to Palestine as halukah bore so little fruit there. My answer to this was that, in my opinion, this situation could only be improved by introducing those now living on halukah, especially in Jerusalem, to agriculture and by establishing settlements in the vicinity of towns for this purpose. The Baron told me that he would instruct his officials to buy as much land as they possibly could in the vicinity of Jerusalem, to cultivate the land and afterwards to let the cultivated land on lease to the Jews of Jerusalem.

Just before I accompanied the Baron to Migdal, I heard that the meeting of the governing body of the Haifa Technion had decided in favour of Hebrew. When I told the Baron, he was very pleased with the news and reminded me that he had given Rosenwald permission to send a telegram to Berlin saying that he (the Baron) was also in favour of Hebrew. He then added that, like all the other national minorities in Turkey, the Jews would have to have their own language. Without it they would not be able to become one (separate) nation with its own culture.

Urban Settlement

In July 1907, during my first visit to Palestine, I was sitting one evening in the Hotel Kaminiz in Jerusalem, tired after an exhausting day, when a man came up to me

and introduced himself as the watch-maker Akiva Weiss from Jaffa. He began to tell me about the unbearable conditions under which the Jews in Jaffa were living. The streets were extremely dirty, and the flats which could be rented from the Arabs lacked everything that was, according to European standards, considered essential for health and comfort. Therefore, sixty Jews, most of them businessmen, teachers and intellectuals, had come together to form a company called Ahuzat Bayit for the purpose of establishing a modern Jewish quarter outside Jaffa (one the road to Petah Tikvah). They were already considering a certain tract of land. The Hebrew grammar-school had received money for a building from a Zionist patron, Jacob Moser of Bradford, and intended to erect a building on the land to be bought.

I liked the quiet, impressive story, asked Weiss how much money the sixty people had available to realize their plan and was expecting the answer I always received when people came to me with their plans: 'Money! We don't have any money. We have this plan; the money has to be found by someone else.' Much to my surprise, however, he answered that the sixty people were prepared to contribute 100,000 francs of their own. When I asked Weiss if he could bring me some proof of this, he showed me a statement that 50,000 francs had indeed been deposited with the Anglo-Palestine Bank and said that the people would raise the remaining 50,000 francs with a short time. Certainly, 50,000 francs or even 100,000 francs (2,000 or 4,000 pounds in gold) were not exactly an enormous sum, but nevertheless, it was money. I asked him how much money the company would need in addition to the 100,000 francs, and he answered 300,000 francs. This would be sufficient to allow sixty people to raise mortgages of 5,000 francs (200 pounds in gold) each. Any additional money needed would be found by the people themselves. As I was planning to go to Jaffa on the following day, I promised Weiss that I would go with him to have a look at the tract of land under consideration and that, if I thought it suitable, I would put his request before the JNF.

On the following morning, Shmaryahu Levin and I took the train to Jaffa. As I have already mentioned, I had felt unwell while I was still in Jerusalem and Jaffa Shmaryahu Levin, without my knowledge, sent for a doctor. The late Dr. Kahan came to the hotel and after a brief examination told me that I was ill and would have to go into hospital at once. I told him that I was willing to go, but that first I would have to keep a promise, namely, to look at a certain tract of land together with the watch-maker Weiss. Dr. Kahan objected, but I insisted; Weiss was already waiting for me, and the two of us rode out to the tract on donkeys.

The road was a Turkish one (that is, it was full of holes and unsuitable for all vehicular traffic), but I thought the position favorable, as it was between Jaffa and Petah Tikvah and also relatively close to the sea. After Weiss had satisfactorily answered my questions concerning the constitution of the Ahuzat Bayit Company, I decided to write to the JNF as soon as I returned to the hotel and recommend a loan of 300,000 francs, on certain conditions. I sat down to write but was no longer able to hold the pen. Therefore, I asked the late Mrs. Emma Trietsch, who was at that time working at the Anglo-Palestine Company, to come to my room and dictated to her the following letter to the JNF:

Jaffa, 21 July 1907

To the Head Office of the Jewish National Fund
Cologne

Ahuzat Bayit (Jaffa Building Company). You will have received some time ago a request from this company for a loan. It seems to me that this is an extremely important matter, and this is why I should like to draw your attention to it. The Ahuzat Bayit Company consists of sixty members, all of them well-to-do people living in Jaffa and its surroundings. The company has been established for the purpose of erecting houses for its members in a self-contained quarter of the town. It is already considering a suitable 222-dunam tract of land which offers space not only for the sixty dwellings to be built now for the present members, but for a total of 200 houses. Of the capital investment of 400,000 which will be required to buy the site and build the sixty houses, the members already have 50,000 francs in cash and 50,000 in promissory notes deposited at the Anglo-Palestine Bank here. The present time is particularly propitious for building houses in Jaffa because all building enterprises have come to a standstill in Jerusalem owing to the water shortage, and labor and building materials are therefore particularly cheap at the moment

I consider it extremely important that there be a Jewish quarter both in Jaffa and Jerusalem which will stand comparison with the quarters of other nations and, in regard to hygiene, will not suffer from the shortcomings of the present Jewish quarters in these towns. The narrow streets, the dirt and the monstrous style of architecture in the present Jewish quarters are a downright disgrace to the Jews and discourages many worth-while people from settling in this country. It is extremely important to provide good, healthy housing for the Jewish middle classes in Jaffa. I do not think that I am exaggerating when I say that the creation of a self-built Jewish quarter will present the most important step towards the economic conquest of Jaffa by the Jews. Apart from the 100,000 francs in its possession, the Ahuzat Bayit Company requires a further sum of 300,000 francs, which it hopes to raise as a loan. It asks the Jewish National Fund to lend it these 300,000 francs. This transaction entails not risk for the Jewish National Fund, because the loan would be made not directly to the Ahuzat Bayit Company but to the Anglo-Palestine Bank, which would then lend the money to Ahuzat Bayit but would itself remain liable to repay the money to the Jewish National Fund. The Anglo-Palestine Company is able and willing to take this risk, as the tract of land and the buildings will be registered in its name and as the members of Ahuzat Bayit are solvent. The investment is to be repaid over a period of eighteen years, and the Jewish National Fund is to be guaranteed four percent interest on its capital. If necessary, the company would be satisfied with a loan of 200,000 or 150,000 francs, as the Anglo-Palestine Company has promised, if necessary, to loan it 100,000 francs or 150,000 francs for one year, and the company hopes to be able to raise a long-term loan for this amount elsewhere during that time.

I wish to stress that I am not alone in thinking that this is a matter of extraordinary importance. Everyone with whom I have discussed the project is agreed on this: it is not one of those enterprises which flourish only for a day. Therefore, I ask you to give this matter your most serious consideration.

Some weeks passed. One day, as I was lying in hospital and running a high temperature Dr. Kahan came and brought me a telegram from the Hague (the [Eighth] Zionist Congress was then in session there) stating that the JNF granted the Ahuzat Bayit Company a loan of 300,000 francs. Of course the company was delighted with the telegram, but more than a year was to pass before all the formalities had been completed and the loan was actually made. The building of the first houses was begun in the summer of 1909. Ahuzat Bayit received only 250,000 (4,200 francs per house); the remaining 50,000 francs were used to finance the building of ten houses in Haifa. These were the first Jewish houses on the slopes of the Carmel, where the Jewish district Hadar ha-Carmel is located today.

The development of Tel Aviv was hampered by the general lack of money. With the help of a loan from the JNF, people might manage to build their own little house, but there was no money to spare for all the other expenses which inevitably arise when a town is being established. The whole development was influenced by this lack of money.

The first houses in Tel Aviv were built by the members of Ahuzat Bayit, which commissioned the surveyor Josef Treidel to design the layout of the streets and the division of the 220,000 pics which were originally available into lots. But all the land which was subsequently bought was shared out not by this company or by the Tel Aviv Committee, which later replaced it, but by the Palestine Real Estate Company, which bought the additional land through the Technical Department of the Palestine Office. Of course, the network of streets which already existed was taken into consideration, but it was not always possible to match it perfectly. For instance, Allenby Street, today Tel Aviv's main thoroughfare has a bend in it for which there is no topographical reason. When we wanted to buy the next piece of ground, which would have allowed the existing street to be continued in a straight line, we encountered some unexpected difficulties, so the street had to be continued over the neighboring piece of ground, which happened to be for sale.

Difficulties in the planning also arose out of the fact that buyers to whom we offered plots of land were either unable or unwilling to pay large additional amounts for paving streets. There was constant conflict between the interests of the buyers and those of the emerging town. A storm was provoked when the engineer Joseph Loewy, the head of the Technical Department of the Palestine Office, suggested that Allenby Street, the main traffic route from east to west, should be thirty meters wide (until then no street had been more than twelve meters wide at most). How were the poor buyers of the plots of land going to pay for such an area and for having it paved? And who was going to be able to pay for the upkeep of such a wide street? But I insisted; the street was built thirty meters wide and is therefore still adequate for traffic now that the town has a quarter of a million inhabitants. I also had to overcome a great deal of opposition in connection with the public playground on Nahlat Benyamin Street.

Tel Aviv became the training ground for Jewish skilled and unskilled laborers in the building trade. Although there were a few bricklayers among the Jews, coming as they did from Eastern Europe, the only building material they were used to were bricks, while the usual building material in Jaffa was a rough, porous sand stone (debbish). The Arabs had been familiar with this stone for generations and knew how to use it. Therefore, until Tel Aviv began to be built, it was the rule in Jaffa (and also in Jerusalem and Haifa, where blocks of hard sandstone were used for building) that all the masonry was carried out by Arabs. It was extremely difficult to introduce Jewish laborers into the building trade. Today it seems perfectly natural that Jews should be engaged in all branches of the building trade in Palestine, but at that time this prospect appeared more or less impossible. The Arab laborers were not only cheaper; they were also familiar with the stone used and therefore far more experienced and skilful in building with it. The Jews, on the other hand, had to acquire this skill like apprentices in the course of the years.

Most of the small houses in Tel Aviv were built without the help of an engineer or an architect. The builder, whether or not he knew what he was doing, concocted some sort of plan together with the man for whom he was building, who knew even less about the field. It is hardly surprising that many monstrous houses were produced in this way, especially as the lack of money made it necessary to build as cheaply as possible. Real progress in the field of town planning was made only after the Great War. In 1920, when we were about to settle the Jezreel Valley, I was cautious to avoid a repetition of the ugliness in the layout of the old settlements and invited to Palestine Richard Kauffmann, a town-planning engineer and architect who was at that time working in Christiana. It was a happy choice. He worked out the plans for the settlements in the Jezreel Valley – first for Nahalal and Kfar Yehezkel and later for many other settlements – and also created a certain style for the layout of our communities.

It is impossible to imagine present-day Tel Aviv without its beach; but in its early years, Tel Aviv was separated from the sea by a kilometer of Arab land. This land consisted of dunes, and anyone who walked across it to reach the sea sank into sand above his ankles. Therefore, when the inhabitants of Tel Aviv wished to reach the beach, they chose the long way round through Jaffa. I realized that Tel Aviv would have to be extended, at all cost, as far as the beach, and I tried to get in touch with the Arabs who owned the land by the sea. Albert Antebi from Jerusalem acted as the go-between in this matter. All the ‘experts’ with whom I discussed this purchase considered it absurd to buy land beside the sea as long as there would continue to be a wide strip of Arab land between the beach and Tel Aviv. They pointed out that living even in Tel Aviv, where there were, at the time, only about 100 houses, was extraordinarily inconvenient because it was poorly connected by road. How would Jews acquire plots of land and build houses on the beach, to which the approach was even more difficult?

If the money then at my disposal had been sufficient to buy the whole region from the beach to Tel Aviv, the problem would have been simple to solve; but I could not afford to do this, and what made it all the more impossible was the fact that the land adjacent to Tel Aviv was already fetching high prices, namely 2-3 francs per pic. On the other hand, it was possible to buy 220,000 pics by the sea for 55 centimes each. This was roughly the entire capital of the Palestine Real Estate Company, which had recently been established. I decided to invest the capital of the real estate company in these 220,000 pics by the sea because I knew it was essential for Tel Aviv to be able to extend down to the beach and was convinced that if we wanted to buy the land adjacent to Tel Aviv, we would have to pay the Tel Aviv price for it.

Soon afterwards I handed half this land over to a group of workmen who had formed a cooperative to build houses there. I had a plan drawn up for the division of the remaining 100,000 pics into lots and took it with me to Russia in 1913. It was published together with an explanation and a Russian translation on 25 October 1913 in the journal *Rasviet*. The Russian Zionists, who had never before seen a proper blueprint for the division of Palestinian land into lots, did not hesitate long before deciding to acquire plots offered to them in a business-like manner- with a printed contract. Many who paid 1,000

rubles (including the cost of building a road) for a plot and for whom those 1,000 rubles were a paltry sum, had no idea that five or six years later after they had lost all their possessions in Russia as a consequence of the revolution, this land would be all that was left to them. They were destitute when they arrived in Palestine, vaguely remembering that they had once paid me a small sum for a piece of land and hardly expecting anything in return for their money. They were all the more surprised and pleased to hear from me that their land was waiting for them and was worth two or three times as much as they had paid for it. For many, this became the foundation of a new existence in Palestine.

This action- which many Zionists at the time regarded as unpardonably irresponsible, almost as a squandering of national capital – proved to be the right and necessary one. Following the first purchase, further tracts of land were bought by stages right up to Tel Aviv. Twenty years later the land by the beach which I had acquired for 55 centimes (about 2 piasters) was worth 200 or 300 times as much.

In 1907, when I was in Haifa for the first time, there were about 3,000 Jews living scattered all over the town. Most of them lived in primitive rooms rented from the Arabs, but a few had found more adequate accommodation in the houses of the Templars in the German Colony, which, because of its cleanliness and gardens, contrasted very favorably with the dirty town center. At the eastern end of Haifa, near the railway station, was the 'Yehudi' district, where Sephardi Jews lived in a few dozen, neglected houses built in the oriental style.

In 1907, Dr. Paul Nathan, the business manager of the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden and an extremely energetic man, came to Palestine. His mission was to prepare the way for establishing a technical secondary school within the framework of the general educational activities undertaken by the Hilfsverein for the benefit of the Jews in the Middle East (as a counterpart to the French schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle). He recognized Haifa's key position and decided to buy a suitable piece of ground there for the school.

When work began on the school buildings in 1909, the slopes of the Carmel were quite untouched and there were no other buildings there. I realized that this would soon be the site of a commercial center, which would increase the value of the surrounding land. Moreover, it was not desirable that the school stand entirely isolated in the midst of Arab land. Therefore, I endeavored to acquire this land for the Jews as fast as I possibly could. I turned to Professor Warburg in Berlin with the suggestion that a Palestine Real Estate Company be established for the purpose of buying land in Haifa and Tel Aviv; its capital of 100,000 marks should be raised among German Jews. Professor Warburg, who was always open to suggestions, and his adviser, Abraham Avadiovitz, agreed and succeeded in raising the capital in a relatively short time. This made it possible for me to acquire additional plots of land in the vicinity of the technical school.

On the Hadar ha-Carmel, as in Tel Aviv, the interests of the people who bought the individual plots conflicted with the interests of future district. I asked the purchasers to accept certain obligations or restrictions in the public interest; for instance, to

contribute to the cost of building the streets and maintaining a public park, not to build shops on their land, to build within five years, etc. This discouraged some prospective buyers and made it more difficult for me to succeed in my endeavors, but I was constantly aware of the future needs of the district and used all my powers of persuasion to convince the buyers that in the last analysis their private interests and those of the district were identical.

In the beginning, the development of Hadar ha-Carmen the building and maintenance of the streets, provision of drinking water, etc. was administered by the Palestine Office (representing the PLDC) and the Palestine Real Estate Company. As the number of inhabitants increased, however, especially during and after the Great War, I thought that the time had come to hand the administration over to the inhabitants themselves. I went to Haifa, convened a meeting of all the landowners on the Hadar ha-Carmel and suggested they elect a committee which would be responsible for administering the district. My suggestion was not as favorably received as I had expected, however. Apparently, people were satisfied to be administered by the Palestine Office and shrank from taking the responsibility upon them selves. Finally, a compromise was reached and the PLDC agreed to send some representatives to the committee and thus continue to be partly responsible. After a time, this condition was forgotten and the committee became accustomed to standing on its own feet. Under the chairmanship of Samuel Pevsner, it gradually became very active in extending and beautifying the district.

In connection with the first land purchases in Haifa, there is an interesting episode dating from 1910 concerning the Berlin grain merchant Reinhold Pinner and his son Dr. Ludwig Pinner. It is worth mentioning here because it is typical of the attitude of assimilated German Jews to Palestine and to Zionism at the time. In a letter of congratulation which I wrote to Dr. Pinner in January 1940, on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday, I recorded the episode, as he had been my colleague in the Land Development Department, as follows:

Long before I ever met you, when I was the head clerk of a firm of grain merchants in Magdeburg, I was acquainted with the firm of Reinhold Pinner & Co., in Berlin, which belonged to your father. The firm was so well known in the German grain trade for its large imports of American 'mixed' maize that the idea of maize became firmly associated in my mind with the name Pinner. I had close business relations with the firm and therefore with your father, but lost sight of him when I left the grain trade in 1899. In 1909, when I had already been in Palestine for two years and was living on the road from Jaffa to Saron, I received, much to my surprise, a visit from you and your father. Your father explained to me the reason for his visit: you, his son Ludwig, on whom the whole future of his business depended, had suddenly been infected by Zionism. He had not objected to this, as long as you had confined yourself to giving Zionist lectures and belonging to Zionist associations. But now you had decided to emigrate to Palestine, and all his exhortations that this was madness had no effect. So he had decided to go to Palestine with you in order to demonstrate on the spot that there was no place for you here, and he asked me to help him talk you out of your intention. I was known to him from our previous connection in the grain trade as a reasonable person, and he trusted me not to give his son advice which would lead him to take the wrong path and ruin his future.

I told your father that I valued his confidence in me and that we would discuss the matter further after he had spent a few weeks getting to know the country. I walked with you and your father from my house to the nearby site on which the first houses of Tel Aviv were just beginning to be built. Surprised,

your father asked me what they were building on this sand, into which we sank up to our ankles. I told him that this was the beginning of a large town, which would stretch from here to the sea-shore and showed him what was already drawn in the blueprint: the future street to the sea, the site for the building of the grammar-school, and the sites of several public buildings. Your father shook his head and found the whole prospect fantastic. Nevertheless, it seemed to me that he was impressed by it all.

We went to look at the country. I showed him Haifa, where the Technion and the first houses of Herzliyah were being built on what is today the Hadar ha-Carmel, and we then continued our journey to Kinneret, where a swim in Lake Kinneret gave the old gentlemen the greatest pleasure. Our farm Kinneret was then still in its beginning stages, but he was obviously impressed by the very facts of a Jewish manager, namely the agronomist Bermann, who sat his horse very well, and Jewish workers cultivating the land. They seemed to make him realize that Zionism consisted of more than literature and included real pioneering work. We returned to Haifa and again visited the area of the present Hadar ha-Carmel, on which there were only a few miserable Arab huts, so that it gave the impression of being completely deserted. When I told your father that we were buying all the land right up to the top of the Carmel and wanted to build a large Jewish district but lacked sufficient funds, he nodded sympathetically. In the hotel he took me aside and apparently a little ashamed of his own enthusiasm, admitted to me that he was interested in the plan for a Jewish district in Haifa and was prepared to invest in it. He put a sum of 50,000 marks at my disposal to buy land. You and your intention of coming to Palestine were hardly mentioned again between us. Apparently the journey and his introduction to the beginnings of our activities had caused your father to modify considerably his idea of Zionism and of Palestine.

The period during and immediately after the Great War provided me with the opportunity to buy the first tracts of land on the Carmel plateau and to realize the dreams I had cherished since 1907, when I had visited the German consul, Keller. In 1917, when I was in Constantinople, I received a letter from Grasovsky, manager of the Haifa branch of the Anglo-Palestine Bank, stating that many Germans in Haifa wished to sell their land on the Carmel. I suggested that the Anglo-Palestine Bank make 25,000 Turkish pounds available to buy this land. The Anglo-Palestine Bank agreed, and Grasovsky succeeded in buying several thousand dunams of land on the Carmel at a price of 10 to 30 Turkish paper pounds per dunam. Prices were low because the Carmel was considered not a residential area, but only agricultural land (and poor agricultural land at that). After the war, the PLDC continued to buy the land, although prices were already rising, until almost the whole of the Carmel finally belonged to Jews.

At first, the development of the Carmel into a residential quarter went slowly. In 1930 there were still fewer than 100 houses and about 600 inhabitants. Since then, however, and especially since the immigration of Jews from Germany, who had a particular liking for the tree-covered Carmel, the development proceeded much more quickly, and by 1941 there were already about 600 houses with 6,000 inhabitants.

Professor Patrick Geddes, an extremely original man who had made a name for himself in England as a town-planning engineer, was living in Palestine just after the Great War. We sought his advice in connection with the development of the land we owned in Haifa and on the Carmel. One day, after roaming through the entire district surrounding Haifa, he came to inform me that he had found on the so-called 'Red Carmel' (east of Haifa) a beautiful, almost level plateau of about 1,000 dunams, which was for sale at £8 pounds per dunam. He advised us most strongly to buy this tract of land. I discussed it with the people I knew in Haifa, and they advised me most strongly against buying. The tract of land was some distance away from the Jewish settlements, it

lacked water and there was no road to it from the town. No Jew would dare to build a house in this wilderness; to build an approach road and lay a water-pipe to it would cost a fortune. For many months I could not make up my mind. But then fifty people in Haifa, attracted by the low purchase price, formed themselves into a group and offered to pay some of the money for part of the land. I decided to take the risk and buy, although most of the fifty buyers were quite poor and unable to cover the financial demands. Settling the land was extremely difficult during the first few years, and large sums were consumed in building the road and laying the water-pipe. But the first settlers persevered, full of enthusiasm because of the beautiful view, and today several thousand Jews live in the large and beautiful district of Neveh Shaanan.

It was difficult for the officials of the Anglo-Palestine Bank to find suitable housing in Jerusalem. The director of the Anglo-Palestine Company in Tel Aviv, Z.D. Levantine, asked the director of the Jerusalem branch, Dr. Isaac Levy, to look around for some land near Jerusalem which could be bought to build houses for officials. Dr. Levy found a tract of land which he liked south of Jerusalem, on the way to Bethlehem, but it was much too large for the needs of the officials. The Anglo-Palestine Bank did not want to buy more land than it needed for its officials; on the other hand, the owner did not want to sell a part of it. I went with Dr. Levy to look at the land, and I liked it because of its open position and the low price (about 1 franc per pic). I was hoping that I would be able to sell it again, after dividing it into separate building sites, through the Palestine Real Estate Company (which had just been founded in Berlin) and offered to buy the land that was not wanted by the bank officials. Dr. Levy was thus able to sign a contract for all the land, thereby taking the first step towards the establishment of a modern Jewish district near Jerusalem.

After the Great War, the Greek patriarch in Jerusalem needed large sums of money to pay its debts and therefore offered to sell some pieces of land from its vast complex of holdings there. Today, this ground is covered by the district of Rehavia, Ben Yehuda Street, the commercial center and Romat Rahel; at the time, these areas were wild and inaccessible. The PLDC was interested in buying, but as we were also negotiating large purchases in the Jezreel Valley at the time (192/2), I thought it impossible to sign contracts for the pieces of land in Jerusalem, which were to cost £220,000. On the other hand, I did not want to let the chance go, especially as the Sendsheriah area (today Rehavia) seemed to be excellent for a residential district. We finally succeeded in persuading the JNF to lend us £80,000 to buy these pieces of land. On the strength of the loan, I decided to risk it. After lengthy negotiations, in which the intrigues and greed surrounding the patriarch played a large part, in 1922 Dr. Thon and I marched into the residence of the patriarch in the Old City, and after drinking coffee with him I signed on behalf of the PLDC the bill of sale committing us to pay £220,000 in the course of eighteen months. We were unable to fulfill our obligation towards the patriarch in time, but he, or rather a commission which had meanwhile been appointed to administer his finance, showed some consideration and repeatedly postponed the date of payment. I believe that we did not pay the final installment until 1934, when Ben Yehuda Street and the commercial center were already well established and Rehavia already had 2,000 inhabitants.

Selected Quotes

31 December 1911

A whole year in which I did not leave the soil of Palestine! A difficult year, especially the first half, during which there was continuous excitement for me over the purchase of Merhavyah (Fule) and the subsequent killing of an Arab, which left me physically and mentally exhausted. During the second half I had time to recover, and

although today I cannot look back upon the year as a whole with satisfaction, I am also not exactly dissatisfied. Apart from the land at Merhavyah (about 9,500 dunams), we also bought about 6,000 dunams in Jemama (southern Palestine). Further purchases are being negotiated, and I hope that they will soon be carried through. In Haifa, land is about to be bought for a Jewish district; the Bezalel School for arts and crafts has grown; the development of our farms has been quite good. That is roughly what the year looks like. Nothing compared with what remains to be done, but nevertheless; only tremendous effort and work have made these small results possible. Now I dream of creating a Jewish center by Lake Kinneret, of making Lake Kinneret 'Jewish'. Actually, this is not such a difficult problem, as the two larger towns, Tiberias and Safed, are already Jewish. It would be enough to establish ten to twenty settlements on 100,000 to 200,000 dunams near Tiberias and provide the Jews of Tiberias and Safed with an assured income by introducing arts and crafts in order for them to gain the upper hand. I would like to live to see at least that much, even if I am resigned to not seeing the whole of Palestine as a Jewish land. That task will remain for our children and grandchildren!

The second edition of my book *The Jews of Today* has been published. Strangely enough, it has found an apostle in Professor Werner Sombart in Berlin, who has given several lectures following very similar lines. The book still has some faults, but it is the first attempt to assess the Jewish problem sociologically and the first scientific exposition of Zionism. It is now to be translated into English and Hebrew

Since I have completed the book I have had very little to do, apart from my work at the Palestine Office. I made use of the time to read a few new books on the subject of heredity and to learn Hebrew. At last – with a great deal of trouble- I have reached the stage of speaking and understanding the language. I have even recently dictated an article in Hebrew on the question of farm laborers in Palestine which has been published in the newspaper Ha-Po'el ha-Tza'ir.

15 July 1912

A Review of the Past and the Future Outlook

Five years have gone by since the Eighty Zionist Congress decided that so-called practical work should be undertaken in Palestine. What is the purpose of this practical work? The strengthening of the Jewish elements. This strengthening may be quantitative, in that Jews are brought to Palestine from the rest of Turkey and from other countries, and it may also be qualitative, in that the Jews in Palestine and become more firmly established economically, culturally, nationally and politically.

The Past and Its Results

The main support of the Palestinian economy is agriculture. Therefore, we are concerned primarily with consolidating existing agricultural settlements and with establishing new ones. Although five years ago the development of Palestine had already

been going on for a quarter of a century, there was as yet no tradition which might have served as a reliable indication to the future. Complaints were being voiced on all sides; there was not one single village in which conditions encouraged the establishment of settlements based upon its example. Although in the meantime the wine crisis has been overcome capital has been invested in Petah Tikvah, the harvests in the Galilee have been satisfactory and conditions in the moshavot [villages] have improved, these settlements still have not reached the stage at which their technical and economic levels guarantee their continued existence and all we have to do is establish new moshavot based upon their pattern. In short there does not yet exist the type of economically secure settlement that can serve as a model for future settlement. First of all, we must discover this type.

These are the principles on which farm management must be based: the settler must work with his animals all the year round; he must not impoverish the land but return to the soil (by means of stock farming) what he takes out of it (through growing grain); the food for his family and the fodder for his livestock must, to a large extent, be produced by the settler himself, and as he pursues various branches of farming he will be able to balance a deficit in one branch with a surplus in another.

Because it is so difficult to buy land in Palestine, it is generally not possible to establish Jewish agricultural settlements in or near the old moshavot, and they can be built only in newly acquired areas. This demands tremendous physical endurance and a thorough knowledge of farming.

Those who are already too old or are unwilling to undergo hardship to prepare themselves by means of several years of hard work cannot hope to succeed in becoming settlers, unless they have sufficient money to take over a farm which *has already been established* and already yields a profit.

It is a serious mistake, and frequently the reason why a settler fails is that his wife and children ignore the subsidiary branches of agriculture (dairy farming, poultry farming, and vegetable gardening).

Paris, 1 January 1914

In order not to break my old habit, I want to put down at least a few words on New Year's Eve, although I am dead tired and it is already a quarter to two in the morning.

It seems to me that the significance of the year 1913 for the record of my life is this: in the past, my personality has been concealed behind my work; now it has against

my will been pushed into the limelight and become, so to speak, a factor in the Zionist Organization. Suddenly people are for or against me, seeing me as a personification of the good or the bad principle of our activities in Palestine. This became particularly apparent at the [Eleventh] Zionist Congress in Vienna, when I gave an account of the work in Palestine. I would have preferred to stay away from the congress altogether, but this was impossible. The Zionist Organization is still too small and intimate to allow a leading official in a key position to remain anonymous and unknown, so to speak. People wanted to see and to hear the director of the Palestine Office in person, and I realized that it might be bad for my work if I did not satisfy this demand and refute the attacks on our work personally, to the best of my abilities. I was able to do this with a clear conscience, as it was obvious that all my opponents were more or less unfamiliar with the entire problem of settlement.

This criticism of our past activities worries me much less than the future development of our work. We want to create in Palestine a Jewish community with its own culture. To do this, the Jewish population will have to be in the majority, and its economic circumstances will have to be sound. For the time being and in the foreseeable future, sound economic circumstances in Palestine will require an agricultural foundation. We will therefore have to acquire the greater part of the land in Palestine and direct our immigrants into agriculture. This is very difficult and will take a long time even if all goes well; on the other hand, we do not have much time. Now that the war between Turkey and its neighbors is over, Asiatic Turkey will gradually become European – either with the help of the Turkish government or with the help of the European Great Powers – and it will then be much more difficult for us to gain economic and cultural ascendancy. We should work with great energy now in order to make full use of the present transitional period. For this reason, I have twice gone to Russia, preaching the need for quick and generous action. Although I found people everywhere ready to listen, I did not find anyone ready to reach into his pocket (apart from some who bought building sites). The only person prepared to spend substantial amounts of money on Palestine is Baron Edmond de Rothschild, with whom I had another conversation in Paris only four days ago. Even he is hampered in his actions by his surroundings. Because I cannot raise the money necessary for energetic and generous activities, I am very worried about the discrepancy between our aim and the means at our disposal, which can no longer be ignored.

11 December 1917

During the last few weeks, the recurrent announcement that Jerusalem has been captured by the British has turned out to be false, but today it is finally true. The German ambassador, Count Bernstorff, whom I visited this morning, confirmed the news to me. The situation in Palestine has therefore changed fundamentally. All my friends, with the exception of Thon, have remained in Jerusalem.

The ambassador, by the way, was completely outspoken when discussing political questions with me. The main purpose of today's visit was to ask him to arrange an interview for Dr. Becker with the Grand Vizir. At this interview the Grand Vizir is to comment favorably on Zionist aspirations. After Balfour (and recently also Count Czernin in a conversation with Dr. Hanke) had expressed their goodwill towards Zionism, Turkey and Germany are to do the same. Count Bernstorff approved of the suggestion and promised to talk to the Grand Vizir. In fact, I have already received a phone message to say that the Grand Vizir is expecting Dr. Becker tomorrow afternoon.

31 December 1917

At last objective circumstances (for which we strove for so long in vain) will make it possible to work for the large-scale settlement of Palestine. Now it is a question of exploiting them properly. The work will not be easy. First of all, there is the Arab question; then there is the difficulty of convincing Jewish townsmen to develop the country agriculturally; finally, there are internal oppositions: the religious against the irreligious, the capitalists against the workers, the East Europeans against the West Europeans, those who looked to England for support against those who looked to Germany and so forth. It will be a huge task to ensure the progress of settling and developing the country in spite of all these difficulties. The first twenty to thirty years will be the most difficult because the composition of the immigrants will be so heterogeneous. Only when the generation born in Palestine will have matured and developed a sense of community through the land and its schools, will things become easier.

Whatever the future may hold, however, this much is certain: in our wildest dreams we did not imagine that the Great War would leave us with so much. My old conviction that every honest effort will eventually receive its reward has once more been proven true. I think that I am not being immodest when I say that the practical work done in Palestine under my direction has contributed a great deal to our accomplishments.

1 March 1919

The day before yesterday Sokolow and Weizmann presented our demands concerning a Jewish Palestine to the peace conference in Paris. The outcome of their presentation is not yet known, but it can hardly be doubted that the essence of our demands will be granted. Then we will face an enormous amount of work in order to develop Palestine into a true Jewish National Home. Sometimes I dread the amount of

work. In a pamphlet printed for private circulation only [*Jüdische Zukunftsarbeit in Palästina*], I wrote that we would have to settle 20,000 people a year during the first decade, 40,000 a year during the second and 60,000 a year during the third. I thought that even these numbers would be very difficult to achieve, but now I am being attacked by Trietsch and others who say that this is not nearly enough, that we must immediately begin to settle 100,000 people a year. Many believe that a mass exodus of Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine is imminent, so that the immigrants will arrive whether we can prepare suitable conditions for them or not. It is important for us not to lose immigrants, to make it really possible for them all to live in Palestine. The question is how. Until now there have been only 60-70,000 Jews in the country. How can we accommodate five times this number within a few years? It is an extremely difficult problem.

I found it rather difficult to write my book on Jewish settlement in Palestine. The chapter concerning the new social order held me up for a long time, but I have now finished it and the first part is already being printed.

8 November 1919

... At the meetings in London it has been decided that a commission of eleven members, to be lead by Ussishkin and myself, is to direct all Zionist affairs in Palestine. I said that I did not know whether it would be possible for me to work as a member of such a commission, as I had been used to making my own decisions until now; but I provisionally accepted the arrangement until the next Zionist Congress and said that I would like to leave for Palestine as soon as I received an entry permit. Weizmann then contacted the British Foreign Office and Field Marshal Allenby in connection with my entry permit, and at a celebration of Jacobson's fiftieth birthday he announced that he had succeeded in securing my entry into Palestine. Although it is already the beginning of November, however, I still have not received my entry permit. On the contrary, I have learned indirectly that for the time being my journey is still being prevented by difficulties, which Weizmann is hoping to overcome soon. But what does 'soon' mean? And what does 'hope' mean? It may mean that I will have to sit here for another few weeks, months or even a year without being able to do any reasonable work. A very unpleasant state of affairs. I find it depressing that I am constantly growing older and no longer have an unlimited number of years of work at my disposal. I am also finding my stay in Berlin unpleasant because I am obliged to carry on a written and verbal feud with Davis Trietsch and his adherents. Trietsch is dissatisfied with the program of settlement I have described in my book *Der Aufbau des Landes Israel* [The Colonization of Palestine]. Not 30,000 Jews as I have suggested, but 300,000, they claim, should immigrate into Palestine every year. I consider this demand utopian; because economic considerations make it impossible to absorb this number of immigration no less than the others, so I carry on the controversy – for national reasons – against my own desire. Of course, I get no satisfaction out of this debate, and anyway, I dislike the polemics of nation assemblies.

17 December 1919

The entry permit for Palestine has still not arrived here. It is therefore already out of the question that we will leave on 1 January; I shall be glad if we get away on 29 January. In the meantime, Weizmann has sent me a telegram from Jerusalem stating that he will arrive in Trieste on 28 December and would like me to meet him there.

The London Office wrote and asked me to prepare a memorandum on the organization of the Faculty of Political Economy and Social Science for the conference on the university. Consequently, I had a discussion with the local economic committee, which is composed of young Zionist political economists, and have sent an exposition to London. I wonder if I will finish my life as a lecturer in this faculty. I wonder if I will finish my life as a lecturer in this faculty.

(Evening) A long letter from Weizmann which arrived today has put me into a very pessimistic frame of mind. He makes it apparent that the British officials in Palestine are indifferent or even hostile to our aspirations, that the opposition of the Arabs is growing, that strong economic pressure (the purchase of land) is threatening from Egypt and the Jews in Palestine are rather confused and without leadership. Now that Balfour has been replaced by Lord Curzon, it seems that the British government cannot be expected to come out energetically in our favor and encourage large-scale immigration. For the moment, we must beg for months for the smallest economic concessions (leasing land or factories, entry permits for 6-700 workmen). Added to these difficulties is the devaluation in Eastern Europe; as £1 is today worth almost 1,000 rubles, ninety percent of the Russian Zionists have next to no money to bring with them to Palestine. Therefore, if the economic situation of the immigrants is to be consolidated, it will have to be done through the general Zionist funds. Where is the money to come from? Only the American Zionists might be able to raise it, but the key to the American coffers has not yet been found. The relationship between the Americans and the other Zionists is very tenuous, and it seems that the Americans are aiming at breaking away completely. It is a mystery to me how, under the circumstances, the annual conference can be expected to produce useful results. I am afraid that we will be confronted with a period of black depression, for which our Zionists, after the preceding period of rejoicing, are not at all prepared. In any case, Trietsch's illusion that we will be able to bring hundreds of thousands of Jews to Palestine from the start cannot even be discussed. I am afraid that it will be extremely difficult to bring even tens of thousands into the country each year.

Trieste, 31 December 1919

I have just been attending a reception given for Weizmann by the local Zionists. He gave a favorable account of his impressions of Palestine. Afterwards I sat with him, his brother Yehiel and an American Zionist named Mohl in the lobby of the Savoy Hotel. It is now 19:30 p.m. I am sitting in my hotel room and want to follow the old custom of balancing the accounts of the past year. As far as my work is concerned, it has not been a satisfying year. I wrote *Der Aufbau des Landes Israel*, which may indeed represent a landmark, but it is the only one. The rest of my work has been minor, disjointed and unsatisfactory. Much time was wasted in traveling. I went to The Hague, Denmark several times, England and now finally Italy and Trieste, not to mention shorter journeys to Frankfurt, Magdeburg and Wickersdorf. Just as there has been no satisfaction for me in my personal work, no progress has been made in Zionist work as a whole. Quite the contrary: after the Balfour Declaration, the entry of the British into Palestine and the actual end of the war, one would have thought that major Zionist activity in Palestine would begin at once, but the British authorities in Palestine have obstructed even minor activity. Only during very recent weeks has the negative attitude of the authorities apparently changed for the better. So I am hoping that if I leave for Palestine with my family on 29 January, as intended, I will be able to do some real work there.

S.S. Helowan, 1 March 1920

Three hours ago we (i.e., Hanna, the two children, Lisa and I) left Trieste. The sea is calm and the boat excellent. Traveling with us are Weizmann and his son, Dr. Bruenn and his family and a few other Zionists. At last I am again on my way to Palestine!

Although we have achieved important things politically – thanks to Weizmann and Sokolow – I had the impression that financially we are still ill prepared for the great task ahead. The speech on settlement and finance made by Simon on behalf of the Executive was tailored to suggest that we should expand the Jewish Colonial Trust as a holding company and raise £2 million for it. This seemed to me entirely unsatisfactory. We need not only bank and business capital, we need enterprises to settle and develop the country. To finance is not the same as to settle. A lot of the settlement expenditure cannot be repaid, nor will it yield interest. As the second expert, I had to contradict Simon's suggestion. It was decided to set £25 million as a national target and send our best people to America to raise funds there. Apparently the American Zionist leadership is not yet ready for such large-scale plans, and I very much doubt whether we will even come anywhere near this sum. Furthermore, I do not know how we are to make it possible for tens or even hundreds of thousands of Jews to immigrate if we lack the necessary means. £30,000 of the money I had earned for the organization in Constantinople was put at my disposal for cooperative loans. This will be enough for a few months and will enable me to get the work going again, but what will happen in the future? I am full of ideas, but without money settlement is not possible. My main idea now is to enable the Jewish workers to compete with the Arab workers by means of cooperatives (Workers' Bank), contracts with groups of workers at fixed prices and the acquisition of the best machines, so that people will employ them because it will be an

economic advantage to do so, not, as has been true until now, out of a sense of national obligation. Large builders' and planters' cooperatives are to be established in order to create new opportunities for work.

It seems that the most difficult problem before us is our relationship with the Arabs. Without a friendly arrangement with them, all our work in Palestine is built on sand, and this continues to cause me nightmares. On the other hand, we are not at all sure that such an arrangement is possible or how it is to be achieved.

Jerusalem, 2 July 1920

Today the members of the Zionist Commission* (Eder, Leib Jaffe and I) were received by Herbert Samuel at his headquarters in the Augusta Victoria Sanatorium on the Mount of Olives. For more than an hour, we discussed all the topical questions and the future work in Palestine and found that Samuel thoroughly appreciated all we wanted. He thinks of himself as a Jew and a Zionist and – with all due respect to the Arabs – wants to establish the National Home of the Jews in Palestine. The reception made a particularly strong impression upon me because Jemal Pasha exiled me from Palestine on 11 September 1916 in the same place (I had not been on the Mount of Olives since then). At the time Jemal told me that I would *never* be allowed to return to Palestine. Today he has been sentenced to death and is in exile; as a member of the Zionist Commission, recognized by the British government, I have been received by the High Commissioner, who is himself a Jew and a Zionist! Indeed, the most vivid fantasy could not have imagined a greater change! Although we have not yet reached the goal, and our work is only just beginning, this very beginning signifies colossal progress!

Jerusalem, 10 July 1920

On 7 July I was one of 300 people invited to the Mount of Olives where High Commissioner Herbert Samuel read a message from the king concerning the British administration of Palestine and a statement on the policies he is to pursue. Samuel, with his fine Sephardi face, looked very handsome in his white uniform (only the *pince-nez* he put on for the reading spoilt the total impression). He read the English text, which was then translated into Arabic and Hebrew. The scene, which lasted from four until about five o'clock, made a deep impression on all the Jews, including even myself, though generally I am not as impressionable as other Jews. Until now, pronouncements about a Jewish National Home and the decisions at San Remo** had been only words on paper; but now they rose before us embodied in the person of a Jewish High Commissioner. The king's message that the Jewish National Home was to be established by stages in Palestine, delivered by Samuel in this banquet hall in the presence of the highest officials

* Name of the Zionist Executive in Palestine from 1918 to 1921.

** To include the Balfour Declaration as an article of the peace treaty with Turkey and to grant Great Britain a Mandate over Palestine.

and dignitaries from all ranks of the population, sounded like a fanfare to wake the dead. Many of the Jews present had tears in their eyes. After the ceremony, tea was served in the yard of the sanatorium (where eight years ago I spent time with Selma and Ruth and which arouses so many memories). Samuel exchanged a few friendly words with everyone. I had the impression that even the non-Jews were pleased with him. I hope that we may one day be able to say of this day what Goethe said in 1792; today in the beginning of a new epoch (if not of world history, at least of Jewish history).

Jerusalem, 11 September 1920

On 18 August Ussishkin returned from London, and his account is very depressing. It shows that the Zionist Organization is incapable of action for its leaders are largely influenced by vanity and personal friendships and enmities. The American Zionists, who are almost the only ones to give money and therefore have the last say, expressed strong opposition to Ussishkin and, according to Ussishkin's report to me, I was too much of a 'theorist' and 'sold on the workers'. In spite of this opposition, Ussishkin was elected to the Executive; but it was a Pyrrhic victory. In my opinion, Ussishkin ought to have resigned at once, and I asked him to resign now together with me. Although he does not want to, I have remained firm in my decision: a few days ago I informed the Executive in London of my resignation. For the time being, I am continuing to work until Weizmann and Simon arrive here in October. Then I shall have two alternatives: either I shall continue, with the approval of the Executive, to direct those companies (PLDC, Palestine Real Estate Company, industrial syndicate, etc.) which I have developed until now, expand them and thus create a sort of economic section of the Zionist Organization; or if understanding is lacking and I do not get sufficient support, I may go to Australia and America for six to nine months – in other words, begin my long-planned journey around the world and wait to see what the situation is like on my return. The present situation cannot last long. Ussishkin wants to fight for his position, but I do not like fights in which one must flaunt his achievements. I believe that my time will come of its own accord.

Jerusalem, 5 May 1921

The excitement and the disturbances in the country are continuing. Today the Arabs attacked Petah Tikvah, and three Jews and eleven Arabs were killed.

This afternoon and evening I talked to Herbert Samuel. The Arab nationalist group has handed him a number of demands, including the temporary suspension of Jewish immigration. He has been frightened by the events in the country and is inclined to acquiesce, whereas we argue that by yielding he would not appease the Arabs but only incite them to further demands, while dealing Zionism a deadly blow. Apparently our arguments have convinced him.

Until now, Herbert Samuel has been the idol of the *Yishuv*. Now, however, it is incensed against him and accuses him of weakness. It is true that his policy towards the Arabs has been one of consistent appeasement and that he has hoped to win them over by means of appointments and amiability. Many experts on the country say that this is the wrong policy to take towards the Palestinian Arabs, who can be convinced only by means of a 'strong hand'. It is possible that these people are right and that a strong regime would have prevented the present incidents. But I can well understand that such a regime – such a policy of fear and force – is impossible for Samuel, who is a liberal, a European and a very pure man. I feel thoroughly in sympathy with him in this matter. Perhaps for this reason both of us are unsuited to Palestinian politics.

They are now quite openly demanding his resignation. On the other hand, the Jews have been extremely embittered by the prohibition on immigration, which has so far resulted in many hundreds of Jewish immigrants being sent back from Palestine to Trieste. Herbert Samuel, who was a sort of God to the Jews in Palestine only yesterday, has not become a traitor to the Jewish cause in their eyes. I do not think that he will be able to hold out much longer between Scylla and Charybdis. He will have to go, and the Jewish High Commissioner of Palestine will soon belong to history 'and legend'. Most certainly, the new High Commissioner will not be a Jew; I do not even think it necessary that he should be. It is too difficult for a Jew to hold this office. A truly British High Commissioner with a Jewish under-secretary of state for Jewish affairs seems to be a far better solution.

Berlin-Charlottenburg, 20 June 1921

On a whole, life in Germany gives the impression of being much healthier than it was a year and a quarter ago. The trains run punctually; the railway and the post-office officials are polite and wear neat uniforms; the trains, streets and public buildings are clean. It is indeed surprising how the German people manage to keep going. Once more I had the impression that his people can be divided into two groups: the rulers and slaves. The large majority tends to be orderly, disciplined and submissive, and this explains the industry of the people and why they are so easily organized.

Prague, 17 July 1921

Today the meetings of the Zionist General Council have at last come to an end. The week has been extremely tiring; I cannot bear to sit for a long time in a closed room listening to long speeches. I myself had to talk for one-and-a-half hours on the work in Palestine. Trietsch opposed the suggestion that I (and Jabotinsky and Lichtheim) be included on the Executive. I demanded that his be voted on, but no vote took place at the time, and today our membership on the Executive was confirmed, during my absence, without debate.

Most exciting was the debate on Jabotinsky's proposal to establish new Jewish battalions in Palestine. Ussishkin and I spoke against it, the other members of the Executive were in favor and finally the proposal was adopted by a large majority. I doubt if it will be to our advantage, however. I am afraid that it may be the beginning of militarism and power politics. For the time being, I take comfort in the thought that the decisions will most probably remain on paper, as the British government will not give its consent.

London, 11 August 1921

In Harzburg I suddenly received a telegram from Weizmann stating that I should come to London at once to attend a conference on settlement.

On Mount Brocken, 18 August 1921

The conference in London concluded with the decision to establish a settlement of 500 people on irrigated soil with intense farming (five dunams per settler). I think it probable that such a settlement near Haifa will succeed, but I doubt whether many such settlements will be possible as it still seems uncertain that they will be able to dispose of their produce.

*22 February 1922***

The weakest point in all the work we are doing in Palestine is our relationship with the Arabs. The Arab policy we have here is less than nothing. When Dr. Eder was here he took a lot of trouble over this problem, but he cannot change his point of view to that of an oriental, and I have the feeling that the work does not suit him. Kalvariski is also very active, but I am not at all sure he is doing the right thing, and perhaps we will have to pay heavily in the future for the temporary advantages he is striving for. It might be a good thing if Sokolow came here and took charge of this important branch of our work. Apart from Sokolow, I cannot think of anyone who would have sufficient authority and ability to bring about a change here, unless it would be possible to consider you yourself. Furthermore, I should like to emphasize what we have until now called our Arab policy does not at all deserve the name. It is only a local section of a much larger problem, which is to make contact with the entire Arab world. It is not possible to pursue this Arab policy in Palestine; it must be pursued in the real centers of Arab politics, that is, in Baghdad, Cairo and Damascus in the wider sense and have enough familiarized ourselves with the Arab problem in the wider sense and have enough vision to imagine the awakening of the Arab world. I have become more and more convinced that we will not be able to maintain our position in Palestine if we cannot secure friends and an understanding of our cause in the Arab world.

Helowan, 29 April 1923

I shall need strength. The next three months in Palestine will be terribly difficult, as people will be demanding money from me on all sides and I do not have any. In the meantime, however, I have become a little less worried. For one thing, I have a plan in mind which may enable the PLDC to get one from the Anglo-Egyptian Bank in Jerusalem (a non-Jewish bank) through an issue of bonds. A second reason for my greater, I might almost say philosophical, calm is that after my lengthy absence from Palestine I am less inclined to take the daily needs there all too seriously, and it seems to me that I am gradually outgrowing Zionism altogether. I have the impression that Zionism has been only a stepping stone for me to a far more important task, the revival of culture in the Near East. I have always been opposed to 'political' Zionism.

I joined the Zionist movement under the slogan 'against political Zionism (i.e., Herzl's idea of a charter) and for practical work in Palestine'. I wanted to base the right of the Jews to come to Palestine not on some 'political' agreement or concession, but only on their historical and racial connection with Palestine, and I wanted them to earn the rights in Palestine for themselves through their work there. No charter can establish their rights or create new ones. What was true of Herzl's charter was actually also true of the Balfour Declaration. I have confronted it from the beginning with mixed feelings, and at the Annual Zionist Conference in Prague (1921), when Jabotinsky demanded the formation of the Jewish Legion in order to safeguard the rights granted by the Balfour Declaration, if necessary by force, I spoke quite definitely against this idea. The Balfour Declaration will be a curse to us if we believe that it 'establishes' our right to Palestine. I believe it is only acceptable as an acknowledgement of the already existing historical right of the Jews to return to Palestine and to become again a part of the population of the Near East, where they originated.

I do not see this return as an end in itself, however. A 'Jewish state' of one or even several million Jews (within fifty years) would be nothing more than another Montenegro or Lithuania. There are enough states in the world. If the Jews work only for the establishment of their own national state and do not achieve an organic relationship with the surrounding nations, they will provoke the hatred of their neighbors and within a short time will be defeated in their struggle with such an overwhelming majority. This must also be taken in to consideration. Their function will have to be to raise the cultural level of the entire Near East, including Syria, Palestine and perhaps also Asia Minor, and establish a progressive cultural community together with their neighbors.

European capitalism has not yet arrived in Palestine; therefore, nothing will have to be destroyed before anything can be built (the Soviet system), and positive construction can begin at once. A new and more just social order will issue from Palestine. The three great revealed religions continue to survive only *per vim inertiae*. None of them is effectively energetic. Might not a new society in Palestine also be able

to bring about a religious revival and a better relationship between the generations than the corroded and mendacious one of Europe?

Franzenbad, 22 August 1923

The congress is over. It ended no better than it began. The personal quarrel between Weizmann and Ussishkin dominated it, and I had the impression that the dispute over the possible inclusion of non-Zionists in the Jewish Agency was merely a camouflage for the personal struggle. Neither Weizmann nor Ussishkin fought chivalrously. Gossip, tale-bearing and party politics all played important roles. I kept out of all this squabbling. The Standing Committee asked me if Ussishkin was responsible for the economic failure in Palestine, and I answered that I alone was responsible. I made use of the opportunity to tell the Standing Committee that I would have to be released from the Palestine Executive for a year or two. I told the same thing to the Executive. At Weizmann's insistence, we reached a 'gentlemen's agreement' to the effect that I will remain for the time being but will be able to leave after my journey to America. During the last hour of the congress, it seemed as if we might have found a successor for me in de Lieme. At the very beginning of the congress, I had asked Hoofien to sound him out; he would not give a definite answer. I harangued him in my speech. On the last day of the congress, the American delegates discussed his candidature with me, and I discussed it with Weizmann, who agreed to it. For the time being he and I are to work together on the Executive and later he will continue on his own. But we could not get hold of de Lieme, and when later he appeared in the evening Weizmann had just 'resigned' and was no longer available.

The final result is that the Palestine Executive will remain as before and that Ussishkin will withdraw. Weizmann finally managed this. In fact, Ussishkin's withdrawal is no great loss. We shall miss him only as a speaker on ceremonial occasions. He did nothing as the director of the Education Department, and his views on economics are backward. In one respect, however, he was more gifted than anyone else: he has a sure instinct about the emotions of the Jewish masses in Eastern Europe. At a banquet given in his honor in Jerusalem, I once said that he possesses all the good and all the bad qualities of the Jews magnified: tenacity, loyalty to tradition and enthusiasm, on the one hand, and vanity, suspicion of other people and self-confidence, on the other. One must either admire or smile at him, depending on which side is in evidence. Fortunately, he apparently does not intend to obstruct the new Executive in Palestine.

Jerusalem, 31 December 1924

Apparently, my work in America is gradually bearing fruit, as the Palestine Investment Corporation – which changed its name to Palestine Economic Corporation – published its prospectus last week and intends to raise \$3 million. Felix Warburg,

Herbert Lehmann, Louis Marshall, Samuel Untermyer, Morris Wertheim, Bernard Flexner – that is, the best names – are on the board.

What continually worries me is the relationship between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine. Superficially, it has improved, inasmuch as there is no danger of pogroms, but the two peoples have become more estranged in their thinking. Neither has any understanding of the other, and yet I have no doubt whatsoever that Zionism will end in a catastrophe if we do not succeed in finding a common platform. Next year, I want to see if it is possible to bring together a small circle of eminent Jews and Arabs who are willing to work, towards such an understanding.

Jerusalem, 26 February 1926

The day before yesterday I talked to Schocken and Ussishkin about the PLDC, which needs £30,000, in order to meet its commitments. The problem would be solved if it could sell land to the value of this amount. Ussishkin says that he is prepared to buy land for the JNF, but is has no money. Schocken thinks that the PLDC is too impulsive in its land purchases and always confronts the JNF the a fait accompli. Its policy would be confirmed only if help were readily forthcoming now. Apparently he would like to keep Thon and Hankin in suspense for a while. Anyway, he also lacks a source of funds. Even the best of the Zionists from abroad regard matters unilaterally and from a theoretical point of view. If Thon and Hankin were good bureaucrats and madly cautious, the PLDC would indeed not need these £30,000, but 200,000 dunams of land would not have been bought during the past few years; and which is the more important?

Dr. Elias Strauss from Munich has been here for six weeks. At the congress in Vienna I suggested that he come here in order to manage the PLDC, but he is about to return without having decided whether to accept the offer or not. Our people are too cautious; they do not want to give up anything in Europe in exchange for something new in Palestine. This is frequently a mistake, for one must take risks.

Jerusalem, 26 May 1928

This afternoon I talked to Hans Kohn and Hugo Bergmann about the Brit Shalom. Both are dissatisfied that it is apparently not doing anything and insist on some 'action'. Kohn wants to publish a monthly magazine in English to deal with general humanitarian questions, in which the Arabs are as interested as we are. Apart from this, they also demand that the Brit Shalom adopt a stand in favor of a constitution for Palestine in order to show the Arabs that there are also Jews who support this plan (The local Jewish press is against it.) I am rather embarrassed by these demands. As I am apolitical by nature, I did not want the Brit Shalom to become concerned with the political questions of the

hour until we had defined the principles of our future association with the Arabs. In my opinion, the Brit Shalom ought to be a study or discussion circle and begin by drawing up a concrete program. I am rather isolated in my point of view; however, all the other members are impatient, especially as the Revisionists are making lively militant propaganda, which is bound to incite the Arabs.

The conversation also revealed in other respects how difficult it is to balance the realization of Zionism with general ethical considerations. It left me rather depressed. Is Zionism really to end up as shallow chauvinism? Is it impossible to provide the ever-growing number of Jews in Palestine with a field of activity without oppressing the Arabs? I see a particular difficulty in the limited amount of land. Before long, the time will probably come when no vacant ground will be available, and every Jew who settles will cause the removal of a fellah (except in the coastal region, where a fair amount of land suitable for plantations remains). What will happen then?

*Jerusalem, 30 May 1928**

In the light of our last exhaustive conversation concerning the Brit Shalom and your letter of 28 May, it seems advisable that I clarify in writing my basic attitude to your suggestion and to the work of the Brit Shalom in general.

1. In founding the Brit Shalom, I was guided by the consideration that there is no parallel in history to the aim of Zionism – to settle the Jews peaceably in a country which is already inhabited. Such an entry by one nation into the country of another is known in history only by means of conquest; so far, no nation has ever been willing to tolerate another nation settling beside it and claiming complete equality and national autonomy. In my opinion, the uniqueness of this case made it impossible to tackle the problem according to the usual constitutional ideas. It demanded a very special approach. The Brit Shalom was to become the forum to consider and discuss the problem.

2. As I have emphasized in my speeches at several congresses, Zionism has not taken the Arab question sufficiently seriously. In the beginning, the very existence of the Arabs was ignored. Later on, people deceived themselves about the difficulty of the Arab problem by relying on threadbare hopes. Even the Balfour Declaration presupposes that the Jews will be able to establish a National Home in Palestine without in any way encroaching upon the rights of the country's other inhabitants. As opposed to this, I believe that there exist several very serious conflicts of interest between the Jews and the Arabs. At this moment I cannot see how these conflicts of interest can be solved to that the Jews will have the possibilities of unrestricted immigration and unrestricted economic and cultural development in Palestine, which are absolutely essential to Zionism, and will nonetheless not encroach upon the interests of the Arabs.

* From a letter to Dr. Hans Kohn.

3. During our last conversation, you yourself quite rightly said that all the Palestine Arabs are opposed to the Zionist movement and will remain our opponents as long as we are not able to suggest a satisfactory solution to the conflicts of interest. Under the circumstances, a constitution deserving of the name must inevitably lead to a situation in which the Arabs will make use of the rights which the constitution has granted them as the majority to prevent any economic progress of the Jewish minority. That would quite simply mean the end of the Zionist movement.

4. If what is being considered is not a constitution which really grants the Arab population a considerable say in the future development of the country, but only a pro forma constitution – which in itself has no real power but leaves this power to agencies outside its control – I think this will arouse much more bitterness among the Arabs than the absence of a constitution. In your letter of 28 May you suggest a formula to explain the Brit Shalom – that in principle we welcome a constitution and a representation of the people of Palestine. It seems to me that this will founder the moment we have to explain to the Arabs how we imagine this constitution in detail. The term constitution in itself does not, of course, mean anything. What matters is the contents, and with regard to the contents we do not, as far as I can see, have any suggestions which guarantee us the absolutely essential right to unrestricted immigration and unrestricted economic and cultural development in Palestine and grant the Arabs the rights they expect from a constitution. Therefore, I am afraid that the statement that we are ready for a constitution will for the time being be an empty gesture. Moreover, if the hopes which this gesture may arouse among the Arabs for a *real* constitution are not fulfilled, we may easily be accused of deceit and increase their bitterness. My conscience tells me that we must know of exactly what the constitution is to contain before we agree to it in principle.

5. I have my doubts whether one can immediately apply to Palestine the principles of democracy, which have not exactly yielded magnificent results even in the developed European countries. As long as the majority of the Arabs remain illiterate, the crowds will blindly follow a few leaders, and presumably those who know best how to fan their religious and national fanaticism against the Zionists. It is therefore fairly easy to predict what sort of people will represent the Arabs.

6. Because of all these considerations, I question whether it would serve our purpose to welcome a constitution at this moment, while we are still in doubt about its contents and the Arabs are united against any sort of Zionist activity.

7. Finally, as far as the Brit Shalom – and not only the problem in general – is concerned, I am very much afraid that if we let the association enter topical politics before it has formulated its policy concerning the contents of the constitution, it will be compromised for ever afterwards. On the other hand, I do not believe that a statement of general principles by the Brit Shalom, such as you suggest, will in any way serve to appease the Arabs. The first article to appear in an Arab newspaper demanding a statement from the Brit Shalom on the contents of the constitution would at once reveal to the Arabs that the constitution we envisage and which is essential for our survival can

be no more than a fiction of a constitution in their eyes, and this will do more harm than good.

8. I also wonder whether it would not be breaking faith with the *Yishuv* to address a statement above its head directly to the Arabs. It seems preferable to insist on a discussion in the Va'ad Le'umi. Certainly, some opposition would be expressed there, but we could see to it that our point of view would be adequately represented.

9. Considering that only a small number of the members of the Brit Shalom are resident here, it is difficult to reach a decision on your suggestion here in Palestine. Therefore, I suggest that we ask the opinion of a few people close to the Brit Shalom who are living abroad.

Jerusalem, 21 October 1928

During the past week, the press and the whole *Yishuv* have been almost exclusively concerned with an incident which took place by the Wailing Wall on Yom Kippur. The Jews had erected a wooden partition there to divide the men from the women. The Arabs had complained to the authorities, arguing that the Jews have no right to erect buildings. Thereupon, the authorities had the police remove the partition during the Yom Kippur prayers, and the Jews who tried to prevent this were beaten. This was obviously an extreme blunder on the part of the British; the removal of the partition could have waited until after Yom Kippur. Some Jews regard this as an intentional provocation; I do not think so. It is a pity that the anger of the Jews is directed not only against the local government agencies but also against the Arabs, thus intensifying the antagonism.

The Brit Shalom, of which I am still the chairman, has issued a second pamphlet. It was received very unfavorably by the *Yishuv*. We are being reproached for carrying on a lazy policy of compromise – with regard to the ‘constitution’ demanded by the Arabs – and with wanting to gloss over natural differences. I had a discussion with Kohn and Bergmann; I reproached them for welcoming a ‘constitution’ prematurely, without having decided what it is going to look like and what guarantees it will contain so that we will be able to continue our Zionist work. Also, I do not think that the Brit Shalom should negotiate with the Arabs as long as we are still undecided about our policy with regard to the constitution and have not acquired Jewish support for it. Kohn and Bergmann agreed that we must first of all work out a policy towards a constitution and that we shall, to begin with, address our propaganda only to the Jews – especially the Jewish youth, who are being influenced by Jabotinsky in the fascist direction – for a peaceful settlement with the Arabs.

Miss Hertha Mendlovicz from Breslau arrived here with a German youth group. She is a great-granddaughter of Zvi Hirsch Kalischer and knew that I am interested in the

Kalishcher family tree. She has inherited the material which an ancestor had already collected, supplemented it, and brought it all to me. The information dates back to the 1600 and shows among my ancestors many famous rabbis, including Mordechai Jaffe (who wrote *Livush Malkhuf*). Even Rabbi Yehuda Löw of Prague seems to belong among my ancestors. Perhaps it was, after all, not by chance that I found my way back to Judaism, in spite of my assimilated background in Magdeburg.

Jerusalem, 20 April 1929

Max Warburg is here together with his brother, Felix. They arrived a few days ago and invited me to call on them the day before yesterday. He is particularly interested in a new economic ethics, as the old capitalism is hollow at the core. So far he has seen little of Palestine but is extremely enthusiastic about what he has seen. Until now he has been considered a pronounced anti-Zionist in Germany...

In March, at the request of the Executive, I wrote a memorandum on the Arab question. I demanded a bi-national Palestine and a parliament, or upper chamber, in which the Jews and Arabs are equally represented, so that neither side will be in the majority. If the administration should revive Samuel's old plan for a legislative council, however, we would have to accept it, with a few minor changes. Accepting the plan is, after all the lesser evil.

I have read a little in Herzl's diaries. They have confirmed my previous opinion of Herzl: he was obsessed by an idea and faithfully clung to it against a hostile and scornful world. His ideas, however, were based on very shallow foundations. The whole diary is superficial, too much like feuilletons. How could Herzl have spent years dealing with all sorts of Levantine adventurers and chased the shadow of an audience with the sultan? I am also repelled by his vanity and his tendency to boast, perhaps because I see my own faults mirrored here. But my sense of reality stops me from spending years in a fantasy world, as Herzl did. He would have suffered the most serious disappointments if he had not died at the critical moment.

Charlottenburg, 5 September 1929

It has been a painful week. Every day there has been fresh news of people killed in Palestine; the whole Berlin press reported on it with sensational headlines. People were killed not only in Hebron and Jerusalem, but also in Safed and Tel Aviv, among them the son of Y.L. Goldberg. Altogether, the number of Jews killed amounts to 110, and about eighty Arabs also died. The government has moved several warships and a few thousand soldiers from Egypt to Palestine, and for the last three days everything

seems to be quiet. We received a telegram from my in-laws saying that they and all our relations are well. The Revisionists are making political capital out of the events and point out that they have always stated that Palestine police force was not sufficient to guarantee the safety of the Jews. Their claim is justified, but they forget that this has led them to demand not a stronger military occupation but a Jewish police force and a *Jewish Legion*. Through making these and similar demands – for instance, inflating the question of the Wailing Wall to a question of national prestige – they have aroused the national and religious passions of the Arabs. If they had not let young people lead a flag-bearing demonstration through the Arab part of the Old City on Tisha be-Av, the present disturbances would not have broken out. It is certainly possible that something else would have caused them later on, as the Arabs are opposed to the Balfour Declaration and to Zionist immigration; but if we had confronted the chauvinism of the Jews and the Arabs in the spirit of the Brit Shalom, these clashes would not have become so extreme and would have been carried out in the press, as are other conflicts between nationalities.

I would quite have like to remain in Waren, but the disturbances drove me on from there on Sunday morning. Once in Berlin, I immediately went to the Zionist offices and arrived just in time for a large meeting of the central council of German Zionists on the events in Palestine. I was also asked to speak, although there was nothing much new to say. The *Jüdische Rundschau*, which is edited by Robert Weltsch, a supporter of the Brit Shalom, has already said everything that can sensibly be said. In the meantime, the British Government has decided to send a commission of enquiry to Palestine. I shall cut short my stay in Europe and return to Palestine in two weeks.

Charlottenburg, 15 September 1929

It was very hot in London and the meetings, which often lasted until after midnight, were very tiring. The news from Palestine indicates that all is quiet there now, after a total of about 130 Jews and 100 Arabs were killed during the disturbances. The conference of the General Council in London passes resolutions about the demands which will have to be put to the administration to ensure future security. On the whole, the speakers expressed the opinion that the administration was to be blamed for everything, as it had failed to provide the country with sufficient protection. The Revisionists again demanded our own Jewish militia. Many of the speakers attacked the Brit Shalom.

As soon as the Jewish conference in Zurich closed, Louis Marshall fell ill, and the news that he had died burst in the midst of our deliberations like a bomb. An extraordinary tragedy! And a heavy blow for the Jewish Agency, as he was almost the only one who would have been able to win the Americans for the Agency.

Jerusalem, 17 October 1929

I have spent the greater part of the past two weeks reading through the enormous amount of literature on the disturbances which has been accumulated by the Zionist Executive and questioning many eyewitnesses of the disturbances about their impressions. There seems to be no doubt that the Arab mob, incited by quite unfounded rumors that Jews had broken into the Mosque of Omar, behaved abominably in Hebron and Safed and even killed small children. On the other hand, there were also isolated cases in which the Jews went beyond plain self-defense in a shameful manner. There is an extraordinary degree of animosity on both sides. The executive has decided to appoint a committee for the Arab question, but this committee will now only be able to do long-term work. I very much doubt that immediate results can be achieved in view of the present animosity.

I attend the Executive from eight to twelve o'clock and try to familiarize myself with the Settlement Department. The Executive continues to be rather anarchical; there is still no close cooperation. Sacher is occupied with politics (lawsuits, Commission of Enquiry); Kisch with questions of security; Berlin with relief to such an extent that they hardly have time for any other problems. Many important questions of principle therefore remain unsolved. Sprinzak is the most active; Miss Szold is still in America.

I have searched out my browning revolver, which has been lying undisturbed in my writing desk for ten years; now it lies on my bedside table. After all, one can never be sure that nothing will happen.

Jerusalem, 5 May 1926

Yesterday, the funeral of Max Nordau took place in the Tel Aviv cemetery. Beginning in the morning, the ceremony continued until late in the afternoon. I attended only the ceremony at the municipality at two o'clock, and at three o'clock I went home with Mrs. Jaffe.

Jerusalem, 2 January 1927

Unfortunately, the New Year began with a death. Very early this morning, Rosa telephoned us from Tel Aviv to report that Ahad Ha-am died during the night. I saw him on his deathbed; his face was yellow and pointed, the nose unusually large and sharp. All the relations from Haifa, as well as Hillel from Benyaminah, were there. The funeral took place at two o'clock. An enormous number of people (it was terribly crowded) and many speeches. I returned to Jerusalem at five o'clock.

I valued Ahad Ha-Am for his pure character. His writings did not really appeal to me; I do not get very much out of them, perhaps precisely because we looked at life in the same way and what he had to say was old and familiar to me.