

The meeting of Eastern Europe and Yemen: 'idealistic workers' and 'natural workers' in early Zionist settlement in Palestine

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Abstract

This study questions the customary thesis according to which the dominant status of the *ashkenazim* (European Jews) over the *mizrachim* (Middle Eastern and North African Jews) in Israeli society is to be explained by the earlier arrival of the former in Palestine. It does so by demonstrating that an early wave of Yemenite Jews, who arrived in Palestine simultaneously with the founding fathers, remained in a subservient social position. Archival sources, memoirs, and contemporary newspapers are used to explain the low status of Yemenite Jews by reference to the broader context of the Jewish-Arab conflict as it took shape in Palestine's labour and land markets.

The dominant status of *ashkenazim* (European Jews) in Israeli society is frequently explained by reference to their having been the earlier Jewish settlers, arriving, in a number of waves from 1882 and on, in Ottoman and later British Mandatory Palestine. Massive *mizrachi* (Middle-Eastern and North-African Jewish) immigration took place only after 1948 and by that time the old-timer *ashkenazim*, especially the stratum of organized agricultural workers among them, so the argument goes, had laid the foundations of a new institutional infrastructure of which they simultaneously occupied the commanding heights (see, for example, Deshen, 1978, p. 143). On this interpretation, chronology, regardless of social interests and conflicts, is directly transposed into history.

There was, however, during the Ottoman period of Zionist settlement in Palestine a wave of Jewish immigration from Yemen, breaking the neat chronological division between *ashkenazi* and *mizrachi* immigrants. Studying the First and Second *Aliyot* (wave of

immigration, sing. *aliya*, lit. 'ascent') arriving in 1882-1903 and 1904-1914 respectively, will allow me, therefore, to examine critically the importance of being an old-timer in Israeli society.

In 1911, Shmuel Yavnieli, an agricultural worker from the Second *Aliya*, arrived as an emissary to Yemen to encourage the immigration of Jews to work in the Jewish agricultural *moshavot* (colonies) established by the First *Aliya* in Palestine. As a consequence of his efforts about 800 Jews did so, where they joined about the *same number of ashkenazi* workers. But, while Ben-Gurion, Ben-Zvi, Katznelson, and other *ashkenazi* workers rose subsequently to positions of leadership in Israeli political life, none of the Yemenite Jewish immigrants ever acquired similar prominence. Being an old-timer obviously was not in itself a determining factor of social and political mobility, and we have to look for other causes of *ashkenazi* ascendance. My question in this study is therefore: why did the *ashkenazi* agricultural workers of the Second *Aliya* make history, while the Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers of the same period remained on the margins of that history? Though this article is focused on ethnic relations between *ashkenazi* and *mizrachi* Jews, I will argue that the key to the shaping of intra-Jewish ethnic relations is found in the broader context of the Israeli-Palestinian national conflict.

The central historical process of the *Yishuv*, during the first decade and half of this century, was a protracted labour market conflict between large cross sections of the First and Second *Aliyot*.¹ The Eastern European Jewish planters of the First *Aliya* found in Palestine a large and relatively cheap Arab labour force. It was cheap since the Arab workers possessed some land, housing, and social services as part of their traditional way of life, and sought in the Jewish settlements only seasonal work and supplementary income. The Eastern European Jewish agricultural workers, mostly of the Second *Aliya*, in need of year round jobs as their only source of income, were more expensive, and being urban in origin were used to a higher standard of living. In addition, no more than 5 per cent of the immigrants had ever worked in agriculture, nor were they particularly acquiescent. In consequence, the Jewish planters preferred to employ Palestinian-Arab workers over their co-religionists (Kolatt, 1964; Frankel, 1981, pp. 403-16).

What was the stance of the *ashkenazi* workers *vis-à-vis* their Palestinian Arab competitors?

As a central tool for analysing their responses I will make use of Frank Parkin's Neo-Weberian attempt to build a comprehensive theory of stratification around the concept of 'closure' and Edna Bonacich's Neo-Marxist 'split labor market' approach; two theories which, in actual fact, evince a great deal of similarity. The major mechanism of social stratification, in Parkin's (1979, pp. 44-88) view, is not free competition or class struggle, but social closure, which maximizes rewards by 'restricting access to resources and opportunities

to a limited circle of eligibles'. The advantage of Parkin's approach is in bringing under one umbrella class conflict and intra-class conflict based on ethnic, religious, linguistic and sexual divisions (Murphy, 1984, p. 555). Its comprehensiveness leaves us, however, without an explanation of the reasons leading to the espousal of exclusionary strategies. Where Parkin is too broad, Bonacich (1972; 1979) is just sufficiently specialized.

Her split labour-market theory locates one important type of ethnic or national antagonism in social processes that hurl together, through settlement or importation, distinct labour forces that originate from unevenly developed regions of the world economy. Such groups possess different *resources*, such as standard of living prior to entry into this market, extent of information, and trade union experience; and evince different *motivations* for seeking employment, for example as permanent or temporary, or as a source of regular or supplementary income. As wages reflect historical standards (that are partially based on past bargaining power), the wages of workers with higher resources, usually hailing from the capitalist or proto-capitalist European countries, would be more expensive than the wages of workers from a pre-capitalist economy. If the latter are temporary migrants from rural areas who seek supplementary income, the difference between the two groups' wages would be even larger. In multi-ethnic societies, therefore, different prices are or would be paid for the same work when performed by members of different groups.

As capital naturally gravitates towards the employment of cheaper labour, it threatens the higher paid workers with *displacement*, thus initiating a triangular conflict. In order to protect themselves, higher paid workers are likely to launch a struggle, not against the capitalists, who usually appear too formidable an adversary, but in opposition to the lower paid workers. Though the fundamental social difference is that between higher and lower paid workers, the higher paid workers will attempt to couch it in ethnic or national terms. The two major manifestations of ethnic conflict in the labour market appear antithetical: *exclusion movements* and *caste systems*. In the former, members of one ethnic group are prevented from entering the labour market, or are forced out of it; in the latter, they are confined to the lower rungs of the occupational structure. Both strategies, however, signal the success of higher paid workers. A third strategy is conceivable: *equalization of pay* may do away with both the threat of displacement and ethnic conflict. This solution, however, is rarely attempted by the higher paid workers since it may demand sacrifices that contradict their short-term interests. It is even more rarely carried to a successful conclusion, since the world capitalist system functions like a gigantic multi-layered split labour market, and the equalization of pay in one place may result in the flight of capital elsewhere.

Closure, as we saw in Bonacich's analysis of the labour market,

might be a response to exploitation and displacement, but the likelihood of undertaking it and the potential for legitimating it, in Parkin's (1979, pp. 95-7) opinion, is to be found in prior closure practices. In his view, proletarian exclusion occurs only in the wake of a similar policy, conducted by the state and the employers, which already deprives the group singled out for exclusion from equal access to rights and resources. The formation of an exclusionary or caste based labour market, then, is basically *secondary closure* - a demand for the extension of the state or employer initiated principle of closure. Such a strategy, as Peled and Shafir (1987) assert, is aimed at the state. The reason for the attempt to mobilize the state as an ally of the workers is that the latter cannot prevail upon the capitalist planters or industrialists to favour them over the lower paid native or imported workers and shoulder expenses above the market rate alone. Even if the capitalists did so, they would not be able to compete in the international market with other suppliers of the same product who use cheaper labour. Only the state can redistribute the costs of subsidizing the higher priced workers among all sectors of society and in this fashion hide the responsibility of the employers who, through practices and threats of displacement, initially pitted the two groups of workers against one another. To enlist the state on their side, workers resort to nationalist or racial claims in societies where these resonate well with the exclusionary aims of the state or other forms of quasi-states, such as colonization bodies.

The Yavnieli mission

The early *ashkenazi* workers of the Second *Aliya* tried, for a few months after their immigration to Palestine, to accept the wage level of the Arab worker but quickly realized that they could not make ends meet. In 1905, some of the Jewish workers adopted a new strategy of 'conquest of labor', stating that 'a necessary condition for the realization of Zionism is the conquest of all occupations in Palestine by Jews'. The Hapoel Hatzair (Young Worker) Party that they established was to assist in this objective by articulating it in political and ideological terms. The Jewish workers succeeded only modestly in their exclusionary strategy, except in one area: they gained control of the skilled jobs, such as pruning and grafting in the vineyards, and operating the irrigation pumps in the orange orchards.

Consequently, the aim of the split labour market was shifted from total exclusion to the creation of castes, and concomitantly the slogan was reworded to say: 'A necessary condition for the realization of Zionism is the increase in the number of Jewish workers in Palestine and their fortification in all occupations'. Even skilled jobs, however, gave the *ashkenazi* workers only about 10 per cent of the market, mostly in tasks that were more seasonal than regular agricultural work.

By 1909/10 the workers of the Second *Aliya* understood that the planters would neither yield nor could be forced to prefer Jewish to Palestinian Arab workers. There was no state apparatus yet which the workers could enlist to subsidize such extra-market strategy. It seemed that the workers had reached a dead end, and indeed the largest out-migration of all the Jewish waves of immigration took place in the Second *Aliya*.

These were the circumstances when, at the beginning of 1909, a spontaneous wave of about 300 Yemenite Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine, and found employment in agriculture in the new Jewish *moshavot* of Rechovot, Rishon Letzion, and Petach Tikva. Their entry into the agricultural labour market generated a lively debate about the merits of further Yemenite Jewish immigration. Another contemporary development was the setting up of the World Zionist Organization's office at Jaffa in 1908 under the German sociologist and jurist, Dr. Arthur Ruppin, with the aim of assisting in the practical work of colonization. Yavnieli himself was dispatched by the World Zionist Organization's Palestine Office to Yemen on December 16, 1910, to catalyse new immigration.

Retrospectively, the mission was seen as an act of moral concern, intended to express and promote the solidarity of the Jewish people. Memoirs and historical studies credited *both* the Palestine Office and the Hapoel Hatzair Party with the initiation of the mission and thus left a legacy of historical mystification. (Yaari, 1944, p. 31; Even-Shoshan, 1963, p. 221; Nini, 1982, p. 230) In fact, the Palestine Office never encouraged the immigration of *ashkenazim* actively, and being equipped with only modest resources was unlikely to initiate by itself such a mission among the Jews of Yemen. As far as Hapoel Hatzair was concerned, as we shall see, its majority opposed the introduction of further competitors into the tight market.² Parkin's and Bonacich's theories would predict as much.

I wish to argue, and will substantiate my thesis by archival sources I newly uncovered, that Aharon Eisenberg, the general director of *Agudat Netaim* (The Planters Society), the largest capitalist enterprise during the Second *Aliya*, was the first one to suggest the catalysis of Jewish immigration from Yemen through propaganda initiated from Palestine. Though his role and its rationale may be established with a satisfactory measure of clarity, a modicum of uncertainty still shrouds some of the details of the Yavnieli mission.

The reasons for Eisenberg's interest in the employment of Yemenite Jews had to do with the hybrid character of the Planters Society. Examining the financial accounts of the Planters Society and Eisenberg's letters it can be established that the company cultivated the lands of two distinct congeries of clients. The first was composed of European Jewish shareholders, who usually were among the prominent members of the World Zionist Organization. The second was made up

of local Jewish owners, members of the First *Aliya*. The former joined the company for national sentiments, and therefore supported the employment of higher paid Jewish workers, while the latter were above all concerned with the profitability of their plantations and, in consequence, were more inclined to favour the employment of Arabs.³ These interests were obviously antithetical, casting considerable doubt on the Society's financial prospects. Yemenite Jews seemed to release the Planters Society from its bind, since being Jewish workers who could be paid Arab wages, they were ideally suited to satisfy both nationalist and capitalist interests.⁴

Eisenberg, the employer of most of the spontaneous Yemenite Jewish immigrants, explained his preference for the latter, in a letter to Menachem Ussishkin, the head of the Odessa centred Hovevei-Zion (Lovers of Zion) organization (which inspired and, to a limited extent, financially supported the early Eastern European immigrants). The reasons Eisenberg gave were two:

First, the 10,000 *ashkenazi* workers he had known during his years in Palestine, were an 'artificial' labour force: most had left the country after three years, their one- to two-year-long training coming to naught. Even more significantly, he concluded, 'in no way will the conditions of the *Jewish community* accord with the necessary needs of the [*ashkenazi*] Hebrew worker'. Eisenberg transferred his hopes to a new alternative:

there is but one element capable of being a loyal Hebrew worker who may be trusted to stay in the country, even better – who has to stay and cannot leave the country due to his nature, language, and manners, and who gives hope to ridding us of the Arab worker: and he is the Yemenite Jew!

The second difficulty plaguing Eastern-European Jews also did not exist in the new element, as he had learned from employing 'the majority' of the spontaneous Yemenite Jewish immigrants:

these brothers of ours are contented with little (*chayim bemidat hahistapkut bemuat*), at the level of the Arab, so that they are satisfied with five Francs per week, and they are endowed with supreme moral qualities, are very religious, well-versed in the *Tora* [Pentateuch] and speak Hebrew and Arabic.

Once his plan was adopted by Hovevei-Zion

we will begin in its implementation by turning things in such a way (*lesovev pnei hadavar*) that an awakening (*hitorerut*) will come into

existence there in their place in Yemen, and 10,000 of them, as I have been told by their leaders and sages, will be ready to come to Eretz Israel.

Eisenberg wished to keep his idea of a 'propagandistic awakening' secret. His reason was that if the awakening was too formidable 'and they will only know that there is some hope in store for them in Palestine, then they will come here in thousands, and that is the only reason that it is necessary and obligatory that no responsibility whatsoever will ever fall on us'. To prevent this danger, the 'propagandistic awakening has to come indirectly from the side (*mihatsad shelo beorach yashir*) [*sic*], and it is the thing that has to be kept in utmost secret that is not revealed but to a few', such as Ussishkin himself.⁵

Eisenberg's plan called directly for the employment of Yemenite Jews in the plantations, and was communicated to Levontin, the director of the Anglo-Palestine Company (the WZO's bank), Hovevei-Zion, and the German Jewish philanthropic body, the *Esra*, and influenced both Levontin and Ruppin. The surprising fact in the history of the Yavnieli mission is that close to two years passed between the successful employment of the Rechovot group, and the dispatching of a messenger to Yemen. What could have been the reason for the delay?

As far as the second part of his plan, its propagandistic aspect, was concerned, Eisenberg, as he testified in his letter to Ussishkin, initially did not dare involve APC and Ruppin at all, since he saw the 'propagandistic awakening' as a cause to be concealed. The cold shoulder turned by Ussishkin on this idea probably reinforced his natural caution.⁶ The first time this theme reappeared was in the form of a reference to the sending of an emissary to Yemen in Ruppin's letter to the head of the Zionist Executive on November 9, 1910. In that letter Ruppin justified the Office's decision to take on itself the mission, by the commission (*Auftrag*) received from the estates (*Gutswirtschaften*) and colonies, to find up to a hundred Yemenite families for agricultural employment.⁷ Ruppin's letter, contradicting his subsequent recollection which credited an employee of the Jaffa Office (Yeshaya Redler-Feldman known under the *nom de plume* Rabbi Benjamin) with the initiation of the mission, indicated clearly that he acted on behalf of the planters' interests, and I would speculate at Eisenberg's behest.⁸ It should also be mentioned that as the Jaffa Office and Ruppin's influence on Palestinian Jewish affairs grew, Eisenberg and Ruppin evolved a relationship growing in cordiality and significance.

It is certain, too, that the ideas expressed in Eisenberg's letter to Ussishkin were not just the result of a momentary explosion of enthusiasm. In a letter written four years later by Eisenberg to one of

the subscribers of the Planters Society, he took the role of the initiator of the Yavnieli *Aliya* on himself:

on the basis of a number of years of preparation and work, four years since the idea was born in my heart, we prevailed on (*lipheol al*) the Jews of Yemen to leave their residences there and come to Eretz Israel. And now hundreds of families arrive and we settle them in the existing *moshavot* as workers.⁹

Yavnieli (1952, p. 8) himself also acknowledged in his memoirs Eisenberg's close involvement in his mission.

The hopes attached to the Yemenite workers, however, were not fulfilled and while still in Yemen, Yavnieli was instructed to halt further immigration. The Planters Society, though the major employer of Yemenite Jewish workers,¹⁰ continued to employ a highly stratified labour force of *ashkenazi* and Arab workers as well. (In the spring of 1914, in fact, its plantation in Sedjra was the site of the bitterest strike of *ashkenazi* workers against Arab employment.) One reason for the unsatisfactory results from the employer's viewpoint had to do with the dearth of housing made available to the immigrants by the World Zionist Organization, in spite of a special fund-raising drive that it undertook solely for this purpose. Many of the Yemenite Jews lived in tents or stables, and the mortality rate among them was and remained tragically high: in Rechovot, for example, 40 per cent of them, mostly children, died by the end of the First World War, as compared with 8 per cent among *ashkenazim* (Yavnieli, 1919, pp. 81-2). Fundamentally, however, they failed to replace the Palestinian Arab workers, mostly, it seems, because they were not content with little and were less submissive than expected. Yemenite Jews succeeded no more than the *ashkenazim* in the conquest of the labour market.

The meeting in the labour market

The Planters Society used Yemenite Jews mostly to replace unskilled workers, but since their wage level eventually stabilized somewhere between the Arab and *ashkenazi* wages, in many places they ended up driving out the latter.¹¹ In this social context, *ashkenazi* workers again sought to replace individual competition by what, in Parkin's view, is a 'major mechanism of social stratification': social closure. Which of the closure strategies enumerated by Bonacich were chosen by the *ashkenazi* workers *vis-à-vis* their Yemenite Jewish competitors?

Among the *ashkenazi* workers there was already a growing sense of their own ineffectiveness in monopolizing the labour market. They analysed this failure through a distinction drawn between two kinds of workers. By the term 'idealistic workers', they referred to themselves, since they had chosen to migrate to Palestine and not, say, to the US,

and since they were ready to move from the more developed city life to the country. The other concept was 'natural workers', meaning not experienced agricultural workers, as there were none in any significant number among Jews anywhere, but people who were obliged to become proletarians because they had no alternative income, and were content with little (Druyan, 1981, p. 134). It is identical in essence with the description of a person who comes from a less developed society, and therefore, as Bonacich indicated, will be satisfied with lower wages. Initially the members of the Second *Aliya* praised the 'idealistic workers', who alone seemed to have the tenacity to stay in Palestine in spite of all adversity; but gradually they came to lament the absence of 'natural workers', who could establish themselves firmly in the labour market. After the spontaneous immigration of the Yemenite Jews this dichotomy was used to understand *ashkenazi-mizrachi* relations and to take a position on Yemenite Jewish immigration.

In considering whether they should consent to the employment of Jews for Arab wages, Joseph Aharonowitz, the editor of *Hapoel Hatzair's* paper, wrote: 'First of all, we have to ask ourselves, which tasks do we mean?' If the intention was to introduce the Yemenite Jewish immigrants into the skilled and semi-skilled tasks, that are relatively better paid, then

we are creating a *competitor* more dangerous than the previous one . . . Against [the new] competitor we have neither the permission nor the ability to fight . . . and he renders the existence of youngsters, coming from [Eastern Europe] completely impossible. (Aharonowitz, 1909)

Even the *ashkenazi* workers already in Palestine would have had to leave if they were replaced in the performance of these tasks by Yemenite Jews, since they could not acquiesce in the reduction of their wages. If, on the other hand, the newcomers were intended to be the unskilled and low-paid labourers who were to compete with the Arab workers, then 'we are sinning against the Yemenites, whom we are using as the [raw] material for the realization of our ideals.' (Aharonowitz, 1909)

To safeguard their employment opportunities, the Fourth Congress of the Federation of the Agricultural Workers of Judea, as the southern coastal zone was called at the time, adopted in December 1913 a resolution stipulating that 'it is the duty of the [local] workers' boards to try and bring Yemenites everywhere into all types of work and equalize them in price with the *ashkenazi* workers'.¹² A likely reason for favouring the equalization option was the participation of an uninvited delegation of Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers from Rechovot and Rishon Letzion in the Fourth Congress.¹³ Though we find in the agricultural workers' papers numerous testimonies of

distress over the abject situation of the Yemenite Jewish workers, and anger at the planters' demeaning attitude towards them, the December 1913 resolution was the only such plan for wage equalization, and I found no proof that it was ever acted on. Wage equalization remained a marginal strategy.

The main position was expressed by Zeev Smilansky, another leader of the *ashkenazi* workers, who, in replying to Aharonowitz, argued that:

the Yemenite workers are less capable of performing cultured tasks (*avodot kulturiot*) than the young [*ashkenazi*] workers, most of whom are educated and quick to grasp the tasks which require intelligence (*tvuna*) and attention more than physical strength. (Zeev Smilansky, 1910)

In Zeev Smilansky's response we find an interesting transition: not only an acquiescence to the lower wages paid to their Yemenite co-religionists, but its justification by reference to their allegedly being less 'cultured' or 'civilized'. As long as Yemenite Jews were slated by the employers to compete with Arabs, the *ashkenazi* workers remained outsiders to the process and were able to treat it as natural. Once they began to bear the brunt of the competition, the *ashkenazi* workers rose to meet the new challenge. It is at this juncture that Jewish intra-ethnic differences assumed their cultural, and therefore enduring, character. This shift was articulated by describing the *ashkenazi* workers as a vanguard – as 'quality', and the Yemenites as 'quantity', for Zionism. This perspective was the corollary of the *ashkenazi* workers' self-portrayal as representing a higher level of culture, a perception which, undoubtedly, they evolved in comparing themselves with, and guarding themselves against, the competition of, Palestinian Arab workers. For example, when Menachem Shenkin, the director of the Information Bureau of Hovevei-Zion in Jaffa, raised the spectre of the displacement of *ashkenazi* workers at the General Assembly of Hovevei-Zion, an editorial of *Hapoel Hatzair* reassured him that

we do not think that in order to employ Yemenites, the young [i.e. *ashkenazi*] workers will have to be driven out, since in those [skilled] tasks in which the latter are fortifying themselves – the Yemenites will not be able to be established so quickly, similarly to the Arab who is also incapable of these tasks. (Editorial footnote to Shenkin, 1909)

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the form that it assumed during the Second *Aliya* in the labour market has, therefore, prominently influenced both the 'importation' of Yemenite Jews into Palestine and supplied the labels which could be applied to them.

Ironically, however, not only the concept of 'natural worker' but also the term 'idealistic worker' underwent a mutation. As part of his comparison Zeev Smilansky dismissed the designation of the *ashkenazi* workers as 'idealistic', since it was 'hard to find a person whose idealism will persist'. 'The pioneers', he argued, 'end up shirking work, sooner or later, and turn to more comfortable and pleasant ways of making a living. . . ' – outside of agriculture. As a matter of fact, the consensus at the time seems to have been that a person might persist in being 'idealistic' for at most five years.

Zeev Smilansky's conclusion was that *ashkenazi* workers had abandoned the menial jobs, while the Yemenite Jews were only capable of performing unskilled jobs, and therefore a natural caste system emerged. The dominant strategy favoured by the *ashkenazi* workers was the segmentation of the labour market into two castes: skilled work being their preserve, while the unskilled tasks, performed by the Palestinian Arab villagers, were to pass into the hands of their Yemenite co-religionists. It is more understandable therefore why the *ashkenazi* workers were not opposed to the Planters Societies' plan and why Yavnieli concurred with the World Zionist Organization's Palestine Office by going on his mission.

Of course, obviously not the *ashkenazi* workers but the Planters Society determined who would perform which work. The only leverage over the planters that the *ashkenazi* workers possessed was contingent on the goodwill and national sentiment of the planters, and given the latter's more moderate nationalism this was rather limited. But there was one area in which the *ashkenazi* workers had overriding influence, which they used to the fullest, and it concerned access to agricultural land.

Conflict over access to land

I would like to repeat the initial query with which I approached this study: why did the *ashkenazi* workers move into the limelight of history whereas the *mizrachi* workers remained in its shadow? This time it is possible to sharpen the question: how was the segmentation effected between the two groups in spite of the fact that *both* made only minimal headway in conquering the labour market? This question brings us to the World Zionist Organization, its Palestine Office and its director Dr Ruppin.

The different bodies of the World Zionist Organization never intended to support Eisenberg's plan to displace totally the *ashkenazi* with Yemenite Jewish workers. They were interested, however, in assisting the farmers of the First *Aliya* and saw benefit in encouraging some Yemenite Jews to make *aliya* and work in the colonies as agricultural workers in order to replace the Arab labour force.¹⁴ They consented, therefore, to Eisenberg's plan to set up separate Yemenite

immigrant neighbourhoods, near to the existing agricultural settlements. But the World Zionist Organization undertook at the same time a number of other initiatives, mostly in partnership with Hovevei-Zion, to set up workers settlements (*moshvei poalim*). Its aim was to make the *ashkenazi* workers more competitive by providing them with auxiliary farms and homes in order to compensate them for the very advantages that the Arab workers had over them. The World Zionist Organization also planned to turn two of the *moshvei poalim* into mixed *ashkenazi*-Yemenite settlements. Three such workers' settlements were constructed between 1909 and 1914, and I will examine the last one, in Ein Hai (later renamed Kfar Malal), established in 1914, near Kfar Saba.

At Ein Hai a deliberate attempt was made to provide equal resources to members of both groups. But in June 1914, *Hapoel Hatzair* published an article according to which the Central Zionist Office in Cologne decided to exclude Yemenite Jews from Ein Hai, since they were not expected to find employment in nearby Kfar Saba. In fact, the cancellation was more likely due to anxiety that the opposition of the future *ashkenazi* settlers of Ein Hai to the project aroused in the leadership of the World Zionist Organization's land-purchasing body, the Jewish National Fund. We can learn of the workers' views from a letter written by the Palestine Office to the Federation of the Agricultural Workers of Judea:

We had another opportunity to meet members of the workers's *moshav* Ein Hai and we came to recognize that the *ashkenazim* are unhappy with the association with the Yemenites, and they see no benefit from such partnership, and only their respect for the Board of the Workers Federation restrains the expression of their opposition.

The opinion of the Palestine Office was that 'forcing both sides, the *ashkenazim* and the Yemenites, to make concessions above the ability of both [?!]' might endanger Ein Hai. Although Yavnieli and the leadership of the *ashkenazi* Federation, especially Berl Katznelson, wished for equal distribution of land resources between *ashkenazi* and Yemenite Jews, the rank and file would not have it.¹⁵ Fearing the abandonment of Ein Hai by its *ashkenazi* worker-settlers, the Palestine Office concluded that the Yemenite Jewish candidates should be given generous plots and moved to another workers' settlement.¹⁶ Because of the outbreak of the First World War the part of the plan concerning the Yemenite Jews was not realized.

The most significant innovation for the future of the Second *Aliya* and for Zionist colonization in Palestine took place with the gradual emergence in the Galilee of a new economic system. Here, the failure in conquering labour and establishing a self-reproducing split labour

market gave rise to, after a stormy period of conflict and accommodation between the Palestine Office and the organized *ashkenazi* agricultural workers, a dual economy. The splitting of the entire economy was yet another way of effecting closure. This particular strategy of closure is nonetheless not conceptualized by Bonacich, since it bypasses the labour market altogether. Now an economic sector exclusively employing Jews and under the control of the labour movement, came to be juxtaposed to the prosperous Judean capital-intensive plantation economy which employed a large seasonal, unskilled, mixed, mostly Arab, labour force (both sectors, of course, existed outside the exclusive Palestinian Arab economy). The key to the new sector was the World Zionist Organization. Its first training farm at Kinneret in the southern tip of Lake Tiberias, served as the cradle of the co-operative settlement – the *kibbutz*, which became the cornerstone of the exclusive Jewish sector of the economy.

What the private planters were reluctant to grant, the World Zionist Organization was more willing to concede. Its Jewish National Fund was based on the principle of closure in the land market to be achieved through national ownership of land, and this unique approach made possible its mobilization, by the workers, for the secondary closure of its labour market as well. Article 3 of the Jewish National Fund's Memorandum of Association set clear limits on the allocation of land once acquired, by stating that its object was

to let any of the land or other immovable property of the Association to any Jews upon any terms: provided that no lessee shall be invested with the right of subletting or assigning (whether by way of sale, transfer, mortgage or charge) any interest in the soil of the prescribed region. . . .¹⁷

These legal principles had far-reaching implications. First, at one fell swoop private ownership of land was abolished and replaced by hereditary land leasing. Land purchased by the Jewish National Fund could not be resold, as it was held in trusteeship for the whole nation.¹⁸ Nor could it be sublet in order to ensure that the usufruct would belong to the actual cultivator (Agmon, 1951, p. 45). Concurrently, it once and for all excluded non-Jews from the control of land once that land had been acquired by the Jewish National Fund. The co-operative, and exclusively Jewish, sector of the Palestinian economy came into existence because it was superimposed upon and linked up with this form of closure, instituted by the World Zionist Organization's Jewish National Fund. In general terms, as Parkin (1979, pp. 95–97) asserted, its efficacy rested on its being *secondary closure*.

And, as Peled and Shafir (1987, pp. 1450–1455) pointed out in their critique of Bonacich, closure – since it replaces economic with political and ideological considerations – requires state support in the form of

financial subsidy. This subsidy was provided in this case by the contributions raised among the Jewish masses of the diaspora by the World Zionist Organization, the proto-Zionist state.

Israel Bloch, a founding member of Degania, the first *kibbutz*, set up in 1910 on the Jewish National Fund's land, viewed the problem of the Yemenite Jewish workers in the context of the new venue opened up by settlement. He said at the Second Congress of the Federation of the Agricultural Workers of the Galilee that:

no one thinks here anymore about *conquest of labor*. The question of the *conquest of land* is our main object at present. If we conquer the *moshavot*, but have no new locations, we will have another thousand or two thousand workers. But that is not our national goal. The question of labor in Petach-Tikva will be solved by the *mizrachim* or will not be solved at all.

Joseph Bussel, the ideologue and leader of Degania, presented this new division of labour between *ashkenazi* and *mizrachi* workers in cultural terms:

the *ashkenazim* cannot compete with the Arabs and work for the farmer under difficult conditions. The *ashkenazi* worker that comes from abroad will not remain a lifelong worker and will not work forever for the farmer. The reason is that he aspires to become free and refuses to be enslaved. The above mentioned role will devolve on the *mizrachi* Jews who after a year of learning, will stay in the *moshavot* and do all the 'inferior' tasks. We have to divert our energy from the *moshavot* and not lose our strength in vain.¹⁹

The new approach of 'conquest of land' basically solved the workers' problem by eliminating the worker altogether. Having excluded Arab competition from the training farm and the new settlements, the workers saw no point in introducing Yemenite Jews into them. The Palestine Office therefore met in the Galilee with the adamant opposition of both the workers and their leaders in attempting to mix the two groups. I will examine in this context the predicament of a group of Yemenite Jews at the Kinneret training farm.

In February 1912, a group of eight Yemenite families was sent by the Palestine Office to Kinneret. In reconstructing the events that transpired subsequently I have to rely on only two memoirs and a few articles. In April the agricultural season was over, and, according to the memoirs of the local nurse, Shoshana Blubstein (1943, pp. 31–8), Joel Golde, the agronomist-manager of the farm, announced to the Yemenite Jewish families that they had to leave. In her account, most of the *ashkenazi* workers remained passive and Golde, in her words, 'expelled' the Yemenite Jewish families in May 1912. The *ashkenazi*

workers' indifference is especially striking against the background of the refusal of non-*ashkenazi* Jewish workers from Tiberias to be used to break their strike against the farm's previous director, Moshe Berman.²⁰ In the memoirs of Moshe Smilansky (1953, p. 40), we read that the Palestine Office sent the Yemenite Jews to Kinneret with the intention of turning them into members of the farm's labour force, but the *ashkenazi* workers maltreated them, and the two mediators sent out, seeing the extent of the hostility and fearing bloodshed, decided to have the Yemenite Jewish families removed from Kinneret.

Which of the two versions is more reliable?²¹ Moshe Smilansky was a planter, and therefore had an interest in defaming the workers. But, in this case, it seems to me that there are four good reasons to conclude that his version is more faithful to the actual truth.

(1) We already saw that in the case of Ein Hai the *ashkenazi* workers raised obstacles in the way of ethnically mixed settlement but attributed the responsibility for withdrawing the Yemenite Jewish candidates to the World Zionist Organization.

(2) In the midst of the contention at Kinneret, in April 1912, the Third Congress of the Federation of the Agricultural Workers of the Galilee met in Sedjra, and decided to set up a special committee which, in addition to assisting Yemenite Jews in improving their living conditions, would work towards 'their concentration mostly in the *moshavot*.'²²

(3) The Palestine Office did not give up trying to mix the groups and in its 1914 building programme for Yemenite Jews included houses at Kinneret, Degania and two more locations in the Galilee. The Committee for Yemenite Affairs, which advised the Palestine Office, decided, however, to concentrate all but two houses in Judea. And since that committee consisted of the representatives of the *ashkenazi* workers' parties and the Palestine Office's officials, the impetus for the change could only have come from the former.²³

(4) The same debate between Blubstein and the other workers of Kinneret repeated itself at *kibbutz* Degania a few years later during the First World War. By then, the role of the Yemenite Jews as wage workers was rigidly entrenched in the minds of most *ashkenazi* workers, but a small number of *kibbutz* members demanded that Degania's Yemenite Jewish wage workers be allowed to participate in its decision-making process. They were opposed by the majority of the *kibbutz* and ultimately 'not one' of the supporters of the integration of Yemenite Jews, and maybe of *ashkenazi* wage workers as well, 'remained in Degania or in the *kibbutz* movement' (Vitales, vol. 2, 967, p. 35).

Could it be that the *ashkenazi* workers preferred to exclude the Yemenite Jews because they were not seen to be ready to be part of the close-knit *kibbutz*, based on quasi-socialist principles? I would think that this is but a small part of the reason. Yemenite Jewish

settlers were excluded not only from the *kibbutz* but also from Ein Hai, which was a private small-holding colony, and from the training farm at Kinneret, which was not yet a permanent settlement. The *kibbutz* itself was not based on preconceived principles and its organization remained in the making for many years (Blasi 1987, pp. 239–41; Ben-Avram 1987, p. 245; Tsur 1987, p. 251). It is more likely therefore that the ground for the opposition to include Yemenite Jews and integrate them with Eastern European Jews is to be found in what all these forms of settlement had in common, namely, that they were aimed at 'conquest' of land, not of labour and, therefore, these settlements were exclusively Jewish. The *ashkenazi* workers found protected employment on the land owned by Jewish National Fund, hence they sought to monopolize the precious but limited land resources of the Jewish National Fund. 'Conquest of land' promised them the security and social mobility they never attained in the labour market. The national role of Yemenite Jews was restricted to the less desirable 'conquest of labor', hence their place was seen only in the *moshavot* where the displacement of Arabs was still not realized. The Kinneret incident, then, may be viewed not as exceptional, but rather as paradigmatic of the relationship between the *ashkenazi* workers and leaders of the Galilee and the Yemenite Jews.

The demands and identity of the Yemenite Jews

It is not particularly hard to ascertain that the central demands of the Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers themselves were equal pay and a plot of land. Yemenite Jews in Petach Tikva told one of their visitors:

One thing we have to comment on is the difference in the price of labor. We are one people and one language, and why is it that the smallest [*sic*] of our *ashkenazi* brethren receives 2 Francs, some 2½, and some 3, while we – even the biggest [*sic*] among us – receives 9–10 piasters [one Franc equalled 6.2 piasters] per day?²⁴

David Madar-Halevi (1982, p. 89), one of the Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers, wrote to the Palestine Office that 'we demanded of the farmers the raising of the price [paid] to Yemenites to the same [level] as to the *ashkenazi* workers'. An even more persistent demand of the Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers was 'one small corner and "a bit, only a bit, of land"' (Harizman, 1913). This is not surprising as Ben-Zvi (1936, p. 67) admitted at a later period that the Yemenite Jews' motive for immigration to Palestine was not a desire to become wage labourers for others, but the aspiration to 'reach the level of secure existence from *self-employment* (*avoda atzmit*) as did their *ashkenazi* brethren who immigrated from Europe.'

The lower status accorded to Yemenite Jews in the labour market

and the denial of access to land were the major factors in defining their separate identity in the emerging Israeli society. There were initial cultural differences between the *ashkenazi* and Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers. Nitza Druyan (1981, p. 107) for example, in her superb history of the life of Yemenite Jewish immigrants in Palestine before 1914, emphasizes that given their separate prayer versions 'it was clear from the outset . . . [that] Yemenite Jews will pray separately', and we also find references to the insistence of the immigrants on their traditional rules of ritual slaughter. In their first years in Palestine, she concluded, Yemenite Jews remained 'a separate social unit, whose values and culture were based on the tradition brought by them from their homeland. They were almost unaffected by the Eastern-European environment' (Druyan, 1981, p. 109).

While keeping in mind the importance of the 'primordial' differences, I wish to argue that the segregation of Yemenite Jews from their environment was not just the result of their unique cultural heritage. We may examine the significance of cultural distinctions by considering the different relationships between and within the three language groups: Eastern-European Jewish, Yemenite Jewish, and Palestinian Arab that lived or worked in the Jewish *moshavot*. The most obvious language barrier existed between Jews and Arabs, as the Arabic spoken by the Palestinian Arab population was mastered only by a relatively small number of Jewish immigrants. Nevertheless, conflicts between Jews and Arabs in the *moshava* were rarely due to disagreements over employment; more frequently they took place in regard to questions of land. The barrier was much lower between *ashkenazi* and Yemenite Jews. Though Yemenite Jews spoke among themselves a 'special Arab-Yemenite-Jewish language', the men²⁵ also knew Hebrew which served them in Yemen as the language of ritual, and 'in spite of their different pronunciation the inhabitants of the *moshavot* understood them well' (Druyan, 1981, p. 108). In spite of the common language there was no shortage of conflict between the Yemenite Jews and the *ashkenazi* farmers and workers. It was the two subgroups sharing at least one language, Yiddish, but frequently also Hebrew and sometimes even Russian, that is, the *ashkenazi* farmers and workers, that were locked in the most intense conflict. I would therefore argue that the impact of cultural differences and similarities needs to be examined in the light of other relevant aspects of social relations, which might either strengthen or weaken them, thus giving these their true significance.

Side by side with the Yemenite Jews' desire to preserve some of their distinct religious heritage, we can also find among them expressions of a tendency that favoured their integration into the Eastern-European environment. The Yemenite Jews' condition for diluting their 'primordial' characteristics, however, was to be accepted and treated as equals.

In the resolutions of the 'Assembly of All the Agricultural Yemenites from All the *Moshavot* of Judea', (in fact, they were from the three largest ones: Rechovot, Rishon Letzion, and Petach Tikva), that appear in an undated document, but one certainly originating in the Ottoman period,²⁶ we find a vigorous expression of the aspiration for integration combined with equality. The Assembly elected two bodies: a court of justice, and, more significantly for our topic, 'representatives for worldly matters (*dvarim gashmiyim*)': Israel Ovadia, David Nadaph, Shalom Gluska, Tabib, and Saadia Aphuyi to carry out the following:

- (1) It was decided that every Yemenite will have at least one *ashkenazi* friend.
- (2) Decided that not less than 2000 Francs [will be allocated] for every house, that is, for construction [*sic*].
- (3) Every house [will have] not less than a six dunam plot.
- (4) A well for every settlement with pipes to and faucets in every house.
- (5) A settlement has to be a Yemenite *ashkenazi* mixture (*bilul*).
- (6) Schools and synagogues, and bath-houses, houses for pupils and teachers should be together (*sheyihyu beyachad*).
- (7) Not less than ten Yemenites in every settlement.
- (8) Given the small scale of present Yemenite settlement . . . if land should be purchased nearby Rechovot, its Yemenite residents should be entitled to settle on it.
- (9) It was decided that Yemenite workers will be organized together with *ashkenazi* workers, and the Boards will work together, and that there will be one Yemenite together with the central Board.'

For further emphasis the document ends with the assertion: 'all of the Yemenites of Judea have rendered their opinions to their representatives.'²⁷

Items (2), (3), (4), and (7) of the Assembly's decisions speak to the topic of equality: the same resources should be committed to Yemenite Jewish settlement, for example, 2,000 Francs for a house, in contrast to Ruppin's original plan to spend 2,000 Francs for houses intended for *ashkenazi* workers, and only 1,000 Francs for Yemenite Jews.²⁸ Similarly, a demand for equal shares of land is prominently displayed. The other items - (1), and especially (5) and (6) - point to a

remarkable readiness of the Yemenite Jews of the Yavnieli immigrations to weaken those cultural aspects of their identity which stand in the way of becoming one with their *ashkenazi* brethren. This readiness extends to bringing 'together' schools and places of worship, and while the term used does not speak clearly of amalgamation and the creation of a synthetic Israeli-Jewish identity, it certainly goes a very long way towards implying its desirability from the viewpoint of the Yavnieli immigrants. The demands of equality and assimilation were closely juxtaposed in this document.

As indicated in item (9) above, the *modus operandi* for the realization of these goals was seen as the creation of joint *ashkenazi*-Yemenite Jewish Workers' Boards. As we have seen, representatives of the Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers, though not invited, did participate in the Fourth Congress of the Federation of Agricultural Workers of Judea of their own initiative. On other occasions they repeatedly responded to invitations of *ashkenazi* workers from the *moshavot* of the southern coastal zone to co-operate with them, even though, having been let down a number of times, many Yemenite Jewish workers harboured suspicions as to the real extent of the *ashkenazi* workers' commitment to co-operation (Ben-Zvi, 1913). Indeed, such co-operation during the Second *Aliya* was sporadic and its effects were limited. Without public backing or resources collected abroad, Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers were not able to create viable organizations on their own. Lack of organization was one of the major sources of their weakness, as they themselves and contemporary observers were quick to recognize.

Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers felt hemmed in between the Palestinian Arab and *ashkenazi* groups in the labour market. In a letter from Ness Ziona, typical of their feelings, some of them wrote that:

you gave us work like to the *goyim* [Gentiles], and meager wages. . . . And now we demand of you work for men and women in wages that will be sufficient for eating and drinking. . . We are contemptible and abject in your eyes: and you say to us: dogs, *goyim!*²⁹

The comparison made by the *ashkenazi* employers and workers between Yemenite Jews and the Palestinian Arabs (the *goyim* of the letter) was, I would like to argue, the *major* source of the Yemenite Jews' bitterness. Obviously, the association of Palestinians and Yemenite Jews, leading to a view of the latter as 'Arab-Jews', was first the source and later the rigid cultural consequence of the lower wages paid to the two groups in contrast to the *ashkenazim*. The perpetuation of the Yemenite Jews' low initial price of labour ensured that they were excluded from both the privileges of the split labour market (such as skilled work) and the dual economy (such as safe employment in the

Jewish co-operative economic sector) that accrued to the *ashkenazi* workers, and indicated the splitting of the national movement into modern and traditional wings.

Conclusion

The orienting question of this article concerned the cause of the different fate that befell the Yemenite and Eastern European Jewish immigrants of the Second *Aliya* in Palestine. The two groups arrived in Palestine in the same period and the number of Yemenite Jewish agricultural workers equalled at any time the number of *ashkenazim* engaged in such work (due to the latter's high rate of out-migration);³⁰ yet the Yemenite Jews remained in the background of, and by and large invisible in, Israeli history, while the *ashkenazim* provided Zionism and Israel with many of its prominent leaders. The puzzle is deepened by the fact that as long as the two groups sought employment in the Jewish-owned Judean plantations their fate remained similar. The Eastern-European workers of the plantation agriculture ceased being 'idealistic workers', that is lifetime agricultural proletarians. The Yemenite Jews were never the 'natural workers' that they were expected to be. Therefore neither group was able to displace the Arab workers and 'conquer' the labour market in any significant measure.

Nonetheless, the initial difference between the *ashkenazi* and the Yemenite Jewish workers, which determined their differential wages in the 'conquest of labor' phase, persisted in the exclusive Jewish sector of the dual economy. This surprising continuity can be traced to the actions of the *ashkenazi* workers. While the gap between the employment conditions of the two groups in the *moshava's* labour market was not the making of organized *ashkenazi* workers, they accepted and justified it and were able to expand it by vetoing the World Zionist Organization's plans to make them live together with Yemenite Jewish workers. For proletarians, only secondary forms of exclusion, as Parkin argued in general theoretical terms, may acquire the force of legitimacy. And only access to the state, in this case to the proto-state of the World Zionist Organization provided, as Peled and Shafir stipulated, the subsidies required to make the dual economy strategy economically feasible.

The declining interest in Yemenite Jews as an integral part of the national movement can be traced to the evolution of the alliance between the WZO and the *ashkenazi* workers that allowed the latter to leave the plantations' competitive labour market and enter the extra-market employment sector reserved for Jews. The *ashkenazi* workers who were set up in the exclusive Jewish sector of the economy, as settlers on the Jewish National Fund's land, were transformed into 'quality', while the Yemenite Jewish workers, who remained employed

in the mixed private sector of the economy and engaged in the hopeless struggle for 'conquest of labor', were cast as 'quantity'. *Ashkenazi* immigrants of later waves, most of whom initially entered the private agricultural labour market, could look forward to settlement with the assistance of the World Zionist Organization, while the first Yemenite Jewish settlement, Kfar-Marmorek, was set up only in 1930.

The distinction between the three work forces was hardened by the extension of cultural labels, that were developed by the planters and the *ashkenazi* workers *vis-à-vis* their Arab competitors, to their Yemenite co-religionists. Without access to the privileged resources of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish National Fund, and without the possibility of joining their interests with the *ashkenazi* workers and organizing jointly with them, Yemenite Jews had no access to the new Israeli identity – based on political organization, guard associations, and co-operative settlement, all mechanisms for bypassing the inhospitable labour market – that was forged by the *ashkenazim*. The Yemenite Jews of the *moshavot* were left either to cultivate their traditional religious distinctiveness or to indulge in petty jealousies and disputes over the limited resources allocated to them as a group. Among themselves, they stopped even being just Yemenite Jews and instead, turning their now irrelevant pre-immigration descent from different regions of Yemen into the foundation of present divisions, became *emigrés* of Saana, Heidan, Sharab, etc. (Shprintzak 1952, p. 283; Druyan 1981, pp. 111–12). To outsiders, short of becoming 'Israelis', they remained traditional Jews.

The *ashkenazi* workers assumed a modern national Israeli identity while the Yemenite Jews remained restricted to their traditional religious Jewish identity. The *ashkenazi* workers, enjoying access to the World Zionist Organization's proto-state and to the land resources of the Zionist movement and the mobilizing lever of a modern identity, evolved into the makers of Israeli history, while the Yemenite Jewish workers, cut down to a lumpenproletariat and defined by a pre-modern identity, remained on the sidelines of that history.

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Notes

1. Both *aliyot* included many traditionalist immigrants who moved to Jerusalem and the other holy cities of Palestine. I am using the terms First and Second *Aliya* not in the

broad chronological but in a more restricted sociological sense that includes only the settlers in the *moshavot* and Jaffa.

2. According to the version favoured by the labour movement's historians, Shmuel Yavnieli drew the Palestine Office's attention to himself by publishing a two-part article 'The Work of Renewal and Eastern Jews: Parts I & II,' on the pages of *Hapoel Hatzair* (vol. 3, nos. 16 & 17, 7 & 22 June 1910). Though that was probably true, Yavnieli did not suggest in his articles the displacement of the Arab labour force in Palestine through the employment of Yemenite-Jews in agriculture. In fact, his stated purpose was to counter the assimilationist influence of the Paris-based *Alliance Israélite Universelle's* schools among the Jews of Northern Africa, Persia, and Turkey, by calling for a network of Zionist bookstores, that would spread Hebrew literature in these countries.

3. Though the company cultivated close to 800 acres in 1909 and had yearly orders of 300,000 French Francs (by 1914 the corresponding figures were over 4,100 acres and 1.3 million Francs) it was deeply in debt, and after the First World War went into receivership. See Joseph Katz, *The Settlement Activity of the Private Zionist Companies and Associations in Palestine between 1900–1913*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1983, pp. 267–308, (Hebrew).

4. The Board of Rechovot, where the headquarters of the Planters Society was located, decided in regard to the spontaneous Yemenite Jewish immigrants that 'it is right and just to employ them and their wage will be paid the same as to Arabs – 6.20 piasters per day'. Protocol of the Meeting of Rechovot's Board, January 7, 1909, quoted in Pinchas Kapara, *From Yemen and in Shaarayim*, Rechovot, published by the author, 1978, p. 56, (Hebrew).

5. Letter of Aharon Eisenberg, Agudat Netaim, to M. M. Ussishkin, Odessa, March 21, 1909, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem [hereafter CZA] – A24:63/15/1. Copy of this letter is in A208:7.

6. Letter of M. Ussishkin, Odessa, (no. 728) to Eisenberg, April 14, 1909, CZA – A208:16.

7. Letter of Ruppim, Palestine Office, Jaffa, to President of Zionist Executive, Cologne, November 9, 1910, CZA – Z2:635.

8. Letter of Ruppim, Palestine Office, Jaffa, to President of Zionist Executive, Cologne, November 9, 1910, CZA – Z2:635; and letter from Board of Rechovot to Jewish National Fund, Cologne, October 4, 1909, CZA-KKL3:142, quoted in Nitza Druyan, *Without a Magic Carpet: Yemenite Settlement in Palestine (1881–1914)*, Jerusalem, Ben Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East, 1981, p. 118, (Hebrew). Rechovot, Eisenberg was wont to boast, was his 'company town.'

Already in February 1909, there was obvious co-ordination in the drawing up of the plans submitted for the housing of the anticipated immigrants in Eisenberg's letter to Ussishkin, to the *Esra* philanthropic association of German Jews, and in the plans submitted by the WZO's Anglo-Palestine Co. to *Esra*, and by the Palestine Office to the Jewish National Fund. Furthermore, the APC plan mentions the commitment of Agudat Netaim and Menucha Venachala, the founding company of Rechovot also directed by Eisenberg, to guarantee the employment and repayment of the housing loans of a few Yemenite Jewish immigrants. Copy of letter from Eisenberg to Turrof, Berlin, February 14, 1909 in CZA – A208:7; copy of letter by Z. D. Levontin, APC, Jaffa, to Dorn, Central Committee of *Esra*, Berlin, February 15, 1909 in CZA: Z2:1638; and letter of Arthur Ruppim, Palestine Office, Jaffa, to the JNF, Cologne, February 23, 1909 in CZA: Z2:633.

9. Copy of letter from Aharon Eisenberg to Itzhak [Peckler], February 29, 1912. Copybook no. 6. Quoted in Ro'i, Vol. II, p. 194, fn. 70.

10. Saadia Masswari, in his memoirs, Zecharia Redai and Jepheth Masswari in their oral histories, report having worked for the Planters Society. ('Memoirs of Saadia Masswari', in Nitza Druyan (ed.), *The Pioneers of Immigration from Yemen, 1882–1914*, Jerusalem, Shazar Center, 1982, p. 105, (Hebrew); Oral histories of Jepheth Masswari and Zecharia Redai, recorded on July 4, 1977, (Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Oral

History Division, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)). Other sources indicate that private farmers did not take to the employment of Yemenite-Jews, and they were concentrated in the Society's plantations. ('Chronicle', *Haachdut*, vol. 5, no. 36, July 3, 1914; Parzel, 'Hadera', *Hapoel Hatzair*, vol. 6, no. 37, July 4, 1913.) In Rechovot and Hadera, the two *moshavot* where the Planters Society's plantations were concentrated, the Yemenite-Jewish population exceeded that of the farmers.

11. It was reported towards the end of the first year after the arrival of the spontaneous immigration that in Rechovot 'the Yemenites always have work even when the *ashkenazi* workers are idled' (J. Even-Moshe, 'Letter from Rechovot', *Hapoel Hatzair*, vol. 3, no. 3, November 12, 1909). After the Yavnieli immigration in many places either the wages of *ashkenazi* workers were reduced to the level of wages paid to Arab workers, or they were outright replaced by Yemenite Jews. (For Rishon Letzion, J.R., 'Notes', *Hapoel Hatzair*, vol. 4, no. 19, July 11, 1911; for Ein Ganim, 'Chronicle', *Haachdut*, vol. 3, no. 5, November 13, 1911; for the smaller colonies, A. M. Koller, 'From Inside the Camp: Part I', *Hapoel Hatzair*, vol. 6, no. 40, July 25, 1913.
12. 'The Resolutions of the Fourth Congress of the Workers of Judea', *Hapoel Hatzair*, vol. 7, no. 12, December 26, 1913.
13. Zerubavel, one of the leaders of Poalci Zion Party, wrote in a telling review of the Congress that 'only recently has the attitude [of the *ashkenazi* workers] toward the Yemenites began to change. And the reason is obvious: what in fact happened is that the cheap and pliant Yemenite competes not with the Arab, but with the *ashkenazi*. The farmers understood this very well, and they began to introduce the Yemenites to occupations that were always in Jewish hands, but in result the [*ashkenazi*] workers wages were also reduced. Hence the necessity of equalizing the Yemenites with the *ashkenazim* in work, and following this reality came also the decision of the congress. . .', Zerubavel, 'The Congress of the Judean Workers: Part I', *Haachdut*, vol. 5, no. 14, January 23, 1914.
14. Copy of letter by Z. D. Levontin, APC, Jaffa, to Dorn, Central Committee of *Esra*, Berlin, February 15, 1909 in *CZA*: Z2:1638; and letter of Arthur Rupp, Palestine Office, Jaffa, to the JNF, Cologne, February 23, 1909 in *CZA*: Z2:633.
15. Letter of B. Katznelson, Board of [Federation of] Judean Workers, to Palestine Office, March 19, 1914, *CZA* - L2:66/II. The opposing attitude of the leadership and the rank and file may also be discerned from the fact that in the February meeting of the 'Committee for Yemenite Affairs' of the Palestine Office, in which a representative of the Ein-Hai settlers participated, the project of joint settlement was stalled, while in the June meeting, in which only the national leaders were present, there was anger expressed at the JNF's decision to cancel the construction of housing for Yemenite Jews. It is also revealing that since the future settlers of Ein-Hai could not reach agreement with the Yemenite representative over the choice of the settlers, these negotiations were taken over by the Federation of the Judean Workers. Memorandum [of Committee for Yemenite Affairs] Concerning the Setting Up of the Workers *Moshava* at Ein Hai, February 5, 1914, *CZA* - L2:66/II & Meeting of the Committee for Yemenite Affairs, June 7, 1914, *CZA* - KKL3:142.
16. Letter of the Palestine Office to Shifris, the Board of the Federation of the Agricultural Workers of Judea, June 22, 1914, *CZA* - L2:66/II.
17. Memorandum of Association of *Jüdische Nationalfonds*, Incorporated April 8, 1907, London, Lewis & Yglesias, *CZA* - Z2:608.
18. The proposal submitted to the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903, which effectively founded the JNF, included the right to resell land purchased by the JNF, supposedly to allow exchange of plots. This clause was voted down. see Agmon, 1951, pp. 45-6.
19. 'Meeting of the Agricultural Workers in the Galilee', *Haachdut*, vol. 3, nos. 16 & 17, January 26 & February 2, 1912.
20. B[erman] brought *sephardim* but, after the [*ashkenazi*] workers explained to them that it is forbidden to work here, the *sephardim* demonstrated their feelings of

- solidarity, and returned to Tiberias saying that even if they were paid ten bishliks a day [about two and half times the daily rate] they would not work here'. Worker, 'Letter from Kinneret', *Haachdut*, March 15, 1911.
21. There is an attempt to contradict Smilansky's version by Ben-Zion Israeli, a member of the Second *Aliya* who was one of the workers at Kinneret. Israeli, however, was not present in February-May 1912, and he confused the group discussed above with another group of Yemenite Jewish wage labourers who lived in the adjacent *moshava* of the Jewish Colonization Association carrying the same name. This was the first group of Yemenite Jews to be settled in Kfar-Marmorek, its own *moshava*, in 1930. Ben-Zion [Israeli], 'Concerning the "Yemenite" Affair in Kinneret', *Alon Kinneret*, 1953, in *Archive of Kinneret*, file 41.
 22. 'Council of the Agricultural Workers of the Galilee', *Haachdut*, vol. 3, no. 27 & no. 28, April 23 & 29, 1912.
 23. 'Bau von Yemeniter-Häusern 1914' and Protocol of the Committee for Yemenite Affairs, June 7, 1914, *CZA* - L2:163.
 24. 'Chronicle', *Haachdut*, vol. 4, nos. 24/25, April 6, 1913.
 25. Jewish women were not regularly taught Hebrew in Yemen.
 26. The currency referred to in the document is still the French Franc, the foreign currency of the Ottoman era, which was replaced with the Palestinian and British Pound in the British Mandate.
 27. 'Meeting of All the Agricultural Yemenites from All the *Moshavot* of Judea', *Labor Archives*, Tel Aviv - 402IV:3.
 28. Letter of Arthur Rupp, the Palestine Office, Jaffa, to the JNF, Cologne, February 23, 1909, *CZA* - Z2:633.
 29. 'Chronicle', *Haachdut*, vol. 4, no. 22, March 14, 1913.
 30. In the census of Federation of the Agricultural Workers of Judea in 1914, there were 803 respondents. *CZA* - L2:75/II. The Palestine Office's census, taken during the First World War, counted 1,297 agricultural workers in all of Palestine. (Gorni, 1970, pp. 205-6)

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