



BRITAIN IN PALESTINE, 1838-1882: THE ROOTS OF THE BALFOUR POLICY

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In order to understand what happened in Palestine in the early twentieth century, and more specifically how the Palestine conflict was imposed on the Near East (for this conflict did not arise in the region itself but was planted there from the outside), we must delve into the foundations of European policy in the "Holy Land." These foundations were laid in the nineteenth century.

Writing history can easily turn into a historiography of success—the story, that is, of successful movements. In these cases the history of the "clever" is dealt with more intensively than usual, and success takes on an appearance of inevitability.

Yet up to the end of World War I, the exclusive control of the "Holy Land"—as Palestine was called until the establishment of the British Mandate—by a single European power seemed unthinkable. From the opening of the "Holy Land" to Europe's political and religious-cultural penetration

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during the Egyptian domination of Syria and Palestine from 1831 to 1840, the European powers—and chiefly England, Russia, France, and Prussia (Germany)—all endeavored to build up and expand their presence in Palestine. This they did particularly through religious-cultural means, including the “protection” of religious minorities. Toward this end, each energetically supported the philanthropical, cultural, and missionary activities of its own citizens.

European interests in nineteenth-century Palestine can be discussed on two levels: on the level of politics among the European governments, and on the level of the nongovernmental and social aspirations, trends, and movements in the context of which nineteenth-century European policy on Palestine developed. Among the latter must be counted both the notion of a “Peaceful Crusade,” which was widespread on the continent, and traditional Christian and Jewish interests in Palestine, especially the English chiliastic concept of the “restoration of the Jews.” Demands for European colonization of Palestine, often connected with the aforementioned trends, were tied to efforts of European Jews even before the rise of Zionism.

A study of European interests in Palestine would thus show that the Zionist movement represented only *one* of many European movements during the nineteenth century that were dedicated to the “reclamation” and colonization of Palestine. The Zionist movement did not appear in its institutional form until relatively late in the game. Moreover, until British mandatory domination was established, it was by no means certain that the Zionist movement would triumph over rival aspirations.¹ The fact that it did triumph was not the result of the skill of Zionism’s representatives or the magnanimity of individual British politicians. Rather, it was the consequence of the constellation of World War I powers and a partial convergence of interests of British imperialism and the Zionist movement. The English “Gentile Zionists” of the nineteenth century, the forerunners of the non-Jewish supporters of Zionism, had carried out the ideological advance work for this convergence.

The point of departure for all these developments was the opening of the “Holy Land” to Europe’s political and religious-cultural penetration, which began during the period from the end of the 1830s to the Crimean War. In 1831, Muhammad ‘Ali, ruler of Egypt, sent his army, commanded by his son Ibrahim, against his sovereign, the sultan in Constantinople. He conquered the entire geographical region of Syria, which included Palestine. To secure the goodwill of the European powers, especially England, in the face of his expansionist policies, Muhammad ‘Ali did two things. First, he eliminated all forms of open discrimination against the members of non-Muslim religious communities in the areas he had conquered. As subjects of the new ruler, these people had the same rights as the majority and even became to some degree privileged. Second, he facilitated political and religious-cultural penetration by the Europeans by permitting them to open consulates in the interior, and to expand and institutionalize religious missionary activities.

The most important event in Palestine in this connection was the establishment of a British consulate in Jerusalem in 1838. Because the Ottomans had to continue with Muhammad 'Ali's policy even after the Egyptians were expelled in 1840, Jerusalem witnessed the entrance of still other European consuls² and religious dignitaries. As a result, the European public's interest in the "Holy Land" markedly increased. Thus, Palestine fell into that whirlpool of opposing European interests: the Great Powers' "Eastern question" of the nineteenth century. Once the "Holy Land" had come into view, inordinate desires were awakened, plans were devised, and visions were given free reign. None of these, however, was politically feasible, despite the fact that the sultan would not have been able to drive the Egyptians out of Syria and Palestine without European (primarily British and Austrian) help.

Given that European intervention was undertaken for the sake of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire (Britain's Middle Eastern policy in particular held the conservation of the empire's core as an urgent goal), there could be no question of partitioning Ottoman territories. The problem—the nineteenth century's "Eastern question"—was how much of the Ottoman Empire had to be preserved, and in what form, in order to protect the interests of the European powers. Since European penetration could not take the form of territorial control, then, it could only be a matter of influence. One of the most important vehicles through which the European powers tried to exercise their influence was the "protection" of non-Muslim minorities in the Ottoman Empire.

The Establishment of the English Presence and European Cultural-Religious Penetration

In England's view, Russia and France had taken the lead in the race to gain influence by means of "protecting" minorities. The former was the traditional "protecting power" of the Orthodox Christians, while the latter held the same position for Catholic Christians, both in Palestine and in the Middle East generally. It was high time that this lead was narrowed. But as heads of Europe's Protestant powers, England and Prussia first had to find (or, more exactly, create) their own protégés: Jews and Protestants. They recognized that, just to set foot in Palestine and exercise any right to be involved, they would to some extent have to contest the "natural" strong points of Russia and France. This resulted in the appointment of a British consul for Jerusalem in 1838. At the outset, he was supposed to form a counterweight to the feared expansion of Russian influence.³ Thus the first step in a systematic European penetration of Palestine was made in the context of European rivalries concerning the "Eastern question." This rivalry continued to be the most important factor in the period under consideration.

But Protestantism still had no institutional base in the "Holy Land" from which it could compete with the religious institutions of the Orthodox and the Catholics. This base was created with the establishment of an Anglo-

Prussian Episcopal See in Jerusalem in 1841, and the building of a Protestant "cathedral": Christ Church, dedicated in 1849.⁴ The installation of a Protestant bishop resulted from the activities of British missionary societies (primarily the Church Missionary Society, founded in 1799, and the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, founded in 1809),⁵ as well as from the political interests of the British government and the Prussian church policies carried out under Friedrich Wilhelm IV.

In England, the idea of a Protestant episcopate in Palestine was not new; it had been especially promoted by the influential Earl of Shaftesbury. Hence, an understanding with Prussia quickly materialized, particularly since the Anglican church had greater influence. The bishops would be appointed alternately by the English and Prussian crowns, but would always be ordained by the archbishop of Canterbury. Both Prussia and England would contribute equal shares for their support.

The choice of the first bishop—the converted Jew, Michael Solomon Alexander⁶—was influenced by the goal of creating a nucleus around which a Protestant community could crystallize. Another determining factor was the "restoration of the Jews," the conversion of the Jews, which was supposed to receive its decisive impulse from Jerusalem.⁷ Before the appointment of a consul, the missionaries of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews had been the most important British representatives in the "Holy Land." The chief task of Bishop Alexander was therefore supposed to be the conversion of Jews; he still had to create a Protestant congregation out of converted Jews. It was also the representative of the above-named London Society who, without the permission of the authorities, had already begun—in 1839—to build a Protestant church. It was not until 1845 that the sultan's *firman* conclusively granted approval for this. Christ Church was finally dedicated in 1849.

The rate of conversion of the Jews was, to be sure, minimal; their resistance seemed insurmountable. For this reason Alexander's successor, Samuel Gobat⁸—who in accordance with the turn-taking agreement was appointed by Prussia and sent to Jerusalem in 1849—set this original goal aside. He directed his missionary zeal primarily toward the native Orthodox Christians. In conjunction with this shift in the political line and the proselytizing activities of the episcopate, the Jews of Palestine were placed under the amplified political protection of England.⁹ Young, the first British consul, had been directed in 1839 to attend to the general protection of the Jews as an important part of his official duties, and when his successor, Finn, entered government service there in the spring of 1846, he also was enjoined to carry out this task. He was supposed to take all Jews under his wing, whether they were British subjects or not. Young wrote in an 1839 report that two groups would doubtless demand a strong voice in the future concerns of Palestine: the first were the Jews, to whom God had originally given ownership of this land; and the second were the Protestant Christians, their legitimate successors. Great Britain would be the natural protector of both groups, which

henceforth would form a common front to realize their aspirations for Palestine.¹⁰

In 1850, the Protestants were recognized as an official religious community in the Ottoman Empire, and thus a secure basis for the exercise of this protecting function was in place. A Protestant episcopacy had been founded in cooperation with Prussia, Jerusalem had an evangelical "cathedral," and England had assumed the protection of all the Jews in Palestine (especially those who desired it). All the hopes and strivings of a political nature that turned on this, however, were doomed to remain the stuff of dreams.

Throughout Europe, projects and demands for "taking possession" or controlling Palestine surfaced during the "Eastern crises" of the 1830s and the beginning of the 1840s, especially in connection with the European powers' support of the sultan during the expulsion of the Egyptians from Syria. In 1841, for example, a call was issued from English missionary circles not to waste this golden opportunity offered by the retreat of the Egyptians, when the fate of the territories belonging to the "disorganized empire of the Turks" would be decided. The circular demanded that Europe ask the Porte to unify Palestine with Christendom so that it could be transformed into an independent, self-governing, Christian territory under the auspices of the Christian sovereigns' of Europe and Asia. A sovereign should be installed who would be agreeable to all the Christian nations and whose kingly authority they would fully recognize. The sultan would doubtless agree to this, the circular added, since this Christian kingdom would be a protective barrier against the expansionist efforts of the ruler of Egypt.¹¹

This "opportunity" slipped by unexploited. And while European politics in the Near East acquired a new quality at the beginning of the 1850s through the forced economic penetration of the country, cultural-religious penetration of the "Holy Land" continued to be more important in European policies there. Certainly, the cultural-religious zeal, which accelerated after 1856, was amalgamated with political claims and demands for a "reconquest," that is, colonization. These aspects of the thinking on the future of the "Holy Land" carried even more weight at the end of the 1870s and the beginning of the 1880s, after Europe had intervened in the region directly and after the Schwabian Templars had succeeded in maintaining for some time their colonization enterprise (established in 1868). Territorial claims were asserted and hypothetical spheres of interest were marked off. But as long as the existence of the Ottoman Empire was not fundamentally called into question by the Great Powers, demands of this kind could not be realized, neither in the phase after the Crimean War, nor in the years after the British occupation of Egypt in 1882.

Thus, even when England's policy toward the Ottoman Empire changed in the late nineteenth century, England had to rest content with its role as a special protecting power for the Protestants and the Jews and with the promotion of its trade. Likewise, France had to be satisfied with the energetic promotion of Catholic interests in Jerusalem, within the framework of its

claim to a religious protectorate over all Catholics in the Middle East and within the context of its Syria policy. Russia, whose primary interest was focused on Constantinople and the straits, pursued its policy, more defensive than assertive, of preserving the Orthodox presence and resources in Palestine. Finally, Germany limited itself to forging commercial links and to building up its presence through Christian charitable works: even the "German settlements" in the "Holy Land" were not allowed to endanger the development of ties with Constantinople, especially after the 1880s.¹² Indeed, in a certain sense the German Empire even took over England's position as the principal guardian of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. This constellation was only broken by the Zionist movement, which sought one of the Great Powers as a partner, and by the possibilities that World War I opened up in this regard.

It was thus that from the outbreak of the Crimean War up until World War I, the Western European consuls in Palestine had been instructed to discontinue anything at their posts that might harm efforts to "regenerate" the Ottoman Empire and undermine its integrity. But at the same time, the European powers were loudly and frequently calling for a "Peaceful Crusade," this "effective takeover of the Holy Land." The large Mediterranean shipping companies now called at the Palestinian ports regularly and brought crowds of pilgrims and travellers into the country. During the holiday seasons there seemed to be more pilgrims crowding the streets of Jerusalem than there were residents in the city. Religious and biblical-archaeological interest in the "Holy Land" was supported by national associations that had confessional, scientific, and political orientations and, in some cases, publishing houses. Missionaries, pilgrims, and "Palestine explorers" produced a mass of literature that could not be overlooked. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Europeans could get more detailed information about Palestine than they could get about any other non-European area. The European public was more convinced that they had "rights of ownership" in Palestine than in any other non-European territory.

In the climate in which Europe's Palestine politics developed, the nongovernmental efforts, movements, and demands functioned both as a stimulus and as ideological legitimization. Only to a limited extent were these aspirations in Palestine "peaceful." Indeed, during the "Eastern crisis" of the nineteenth century, they often turned into aggressive demands for European occupation and rule of Palestine.

"The Restoration of the Jews"

It was in the 1840s that England's "Gentile Zionists" broke into everyday politics with their notion of the "restoration of the Jews"; such notions were worked out at the level of foreign policy. In 1840 Palmerston, under the influence of Lord Shaftesbury, tried to win the sultan over to the idea of a "return" of the Jews, arguing that they should be encouraged to settle in

Palestine. On the one hand, the sultan and the empire would profit from the riches that "a great number of wealthy capitalists" would give to Palestine. On the other hand, the Jews there would form a barrier against any future ambitions of Muhammad 'Ali. During the 1840s many British journalists, clerics, politicians, colonial officials, and officers were more direct: they demanded, in one form or another, Jewish colonies or even a Jewish state under British protection, to fulfill the goal of the "restoration of the Jews" and to protect British strategic and commercial interests in the region.¹³ Equally pressing demands for direct occupation or control of Palestine by England were made later on, first during the crisis years around 1880, and then during World War I.

The chiliastic concept of the "restoration of the Jews" was rooted in Britain's intellectual history. Developed by Anglican messianism and evangelism, the doctrine had already been completely worked out by the beginning of the nineteenth century;¹⁴ hardly a single new thought was added to it in the voluminous literature during the following hundred years. According to this doctrine, the fulfillment of the prophecies about the Last Day was indivisibly linked to the return of the Jews to the land of their fathers, to which they had an inalienable right. Their physical and religious "restoration"—that is, the end of their diaspora, their gathering in Palestine, and their acceptance of the Christian gospel—was conceived of as an essential component of the divine plan for human redemption and as a prerequisite for the advent of the Kingdom of Christ. The question often was raised of whether the conversion of the Jews must take place before their restoration or whether it could only occur in Palestine.

Interpretations of the "signs of the times"—which proclaimed the "restoration" and with it the advent of the Last Days—led again and again to "correctable errors." In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, evidence of a collapse of papal and Islamic power (i.e., Ottoman power) was interpreted as such a sign. Of necessity, one's conclusion about which nation or ruler would be singled out to be the tool of divine providence and take charge of the "restoration" varied depending on the power constellation. When Napoleon landed in Egypt and then even marched toward Palestine (1799-1801), he appeared to have been chosen to carry out God's will. But in subsequent years the true doctrine sorted itself out from such errors more clearly in the eyes of its champions; they saw that this role had gone to England.

These notions had a broader impact when they were reinforced by the evangelical revivalist movement of the nineteenth century. Every "Eastern crisis"—at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century; at the end of the 1830s and the beginning of the 1840s; during the Crimean War; and at the end of the 1870s and the beginning of the 1880s—triggered a wave of these kinds of chiliastic sermons, pamphlets, books, projects, and political demands. The conclusions that people drew from such "fundamental knowledge" varied with each crisis; in other words, they were tailored to suit the realities and exigencies of day-to-day politics.

"Britons rejoice!" said a pamphlet during the Crimean War. "It will fall to you to lead the long dispersed members of the neglected race of Judah back to their beautiful land and, by planting in their homeland a colony (whose bond to its protector cannot be doubted) put another obstacle in the path of the menacing intruder [i.e., Russia]." That the conversion of the Jews to Christianity represented a truth that had already been predicted, under divine inspiration, by the prophets was self-evident and hardly had to be emphasized again. But the conversion need not take place before the return to the "Holy Land."¹⁵

One author who lived in Palestine during those years was less enthusiastic. Where is the statesman, he asked skeptically, who could bring about the rebirth of the Jewish nation, the establishment of a "regenerated kingdom, supported by Christian swords and scepters against the now rightful possessors of an inheritance once so hallowed; supported, indeed, against itself, while the impurities which caused its destruction remain unchanged. . . ."? He consoled himself, however, with the thought that this would occur through "an open manifestation of creative power at the decreed time."¹⁶

The Ottoman bankruptcy of 1875 and the year-long crisis that resulted from it brought forth still more "signs of the times." "All Christians . . . should rejoice at the decline of the Ottoman Empire," preached Hoare, "because the ruin of the Muslims is the hope of the Jews, and the return of the Jews will be the blissful herald of the triumphant advent of the glorious kingdom of Jerusalem." Palestine would be freed from the blight of Turkish misgovernment and "its lawful owners, the descendants of Abraham, the nation to whom God gave it, will thus become a country once again in which milk and honey flow."¹⁷ But ". . . it would be a very poor blessing to [the children of] Israel if they were restored to their home, but not brought back to God."¹⁸ The conversion would not happen, however, until after the return.

James Neil, who had lived in Palestine from 1871 to 1874, confirmed that the "signs of the times" did indeed point to the impending "restoration." He cited in particular the growth of the Jewish population of the country resulting from the increasing number of "returning" Jews. But at the same time he also warned against short-term expectations, especially since the papacy and the Greek church had settled in Palestine on a massive scale and would not give ground so quickly.¹⁹

Naturally, the doctrine of the "restoration of the Jews" did not become a general conviction for the population of Great Britain. But the authoritative assertion that Palestine was truly the God-given home of the Jews, to which they sooner or later would return, gained wide currency. In this restricted sense the idea of the "restoration" became a commonplace bit of knowledge. Like a self-evident fact that one mentioned only to confirm, it permeated the English literature on Palestine in the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁰ In association with the "Peaceful Crusade" that was being preached on the continent, appeals were even made for a crusade that would pave the way for the Jews.

"[I]f persuasive eloquence was my particular gift," wrote Walker after a sojourn in Palestine, "I would preach throughout Christendom a new crusade—of the plough and the pruning-hook—for the obliteration from the sacred soil of Palestine of every trace of the grass-destroying hoof-prints of the Moslum spoiler." These "miserable, ignorant, half-wild Arabs, with their dirty villages and wretched hovels" cannot be the "fit successors and rightful heirs of the millions of intelligent, refined, highly-civilised, and well-governed subjects whom David and Solomon ruled over in the days of Israel's glory"! If one were to preach a violent crusade to rescue Palestine from the unbelievers, one would hope that it would be possible to get better results than those produced by the holy war of the Middle Ages. But those times were gone, and one could no longer have recourse to these means, since "... it has become a recognised duty of powerful and prosperous nations to interfere for the protection of oppressed peoples, and the better ordering of ill-governed lands"—both by diplomatic means and through "extra-diplomatic pressure." More than that would not be necessary in the case of Palestine—nothing more than what the public opinion of the Christian world would sanction. Only the Jews had a legitimate right to Palestine, however; whoever created order there would have to do this in order to "prepare it for the re-occupancy of its rightful owners." The task of the "organizing power" would be fulfilled as soon as the Jews were ready, as a nation, to take over their country themselves. Until then one could only prepare them for the responsibilities of an independent national existence.²¹ Reflections of this kind were radically formulated; the link between the Crusade motif and the concept of "restoration" was not an everyday, commonplace thing. But in light of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, one cannot dismiss them as absurdities.

Toward the end of the 1870s the idea of "restoration" was joined even more strongly with imperialist tendencies and was linked with all kinds of projects.²² Edward Cazalet, the British industrialist, called for the establishment of a British protectorate over Palestine in 1878-79, with the goal of leading the Jews back to Palestine and creating a lasting bond between the country and England.²³ Charles Warren, one of the well-known activists of the Palestine Exploration Fund, in the face of the Ottoman bankruptcy proposed that the "Holy Land" be placed under the supervision of a company—modelled after the East India Company—for twenty years. The company would guarantee to pay the government in Constantinople a sum equivalent to the current tax income of Palestine and would pay the government's creditors a portion of the interest that was due. The company's task would be to settle Jews in the country, step by step, so that Palestine would ultimately come under their ownership and control. Certainly the question might arise of what would happen to the Arabs of Palestine. Warren said, "I ask in turn: Who are the Arabs?" This was his entire contribution to the solution of this problem.²⁴

Conder, the popular director of the Survey of Western Palestine, knew of something, at least, that could be done with the inhabitants of the country. In his view, no one was better suited to take charge of the regeneration of Palestine and instruct its present population in the discipline of agriculture than its rightful owners, the Jews, who were energetic, industrious, and tactful by nature. To be sure, the native peasants were "terribly ignorant, fanatic, and above all inveterate liars" but they also had qualities "that, if developed, would make a useful population out of them. . ."—useful, that is, for the owners of the country.²⁵

Once stripped of its chiliastic wrappings, the doctrine of the inalienable right of the Jews to Palestine, their restoration, and the role that Britain thereby acquired, became a commonplace in the English literature on Palestine. It was an essential component of the British understanding of Palestine. Increasingly, the image of the conversion of the Jews to Christianity was lost. At the onset of World War I the doctrine was still effective in this form. The fascination of the concept in its secularized form, as it were, was mixed with the political considerations of war and the imperial strategy that gave birth to the Balfour Declaration in 1917. When Balfour expressed his conviction in 1919 that Zionism was "of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit the ancient land [Palestine],"²⁶ he was doubtless expressing the innermost thoughts of the majority of the English population. The goal of the "restoration of the Jews" had imperceptibly been equated with the goals of Zionism; in the context of imperialist policy, the "restorationists" identified themselves with the Zionists.²⁷

Colonization Projects

A number of suggestions and plans for a colonization of the "Holy Land" were mentioned in connection with the religious-political strivings and aspirations for Palestine endemic in the nineteenth century. The call for European colonization became especially loud after the middle of the 1860s. It was consolidated in the form of more or less realistic projects and practical endeavors.²⁸ The "need" for colonization in order to "improve the country" became a fundamental element in the European understanding of Palestine.

Anyone who is in some measure familiar with matters as they are, and who devotes any thought to the question of how this country may be helped once again, quickly comes to the conclusion that it is only through the culture brought by the Christian world that this will happen and that a substantial immigration from Christian, civilized lands is required in order to prepare the way for new and better conditions.

This is how Schick formulated the issue in 1881.²⁹ To the extent that the Arab inhabitants of the country were paid any notice at all, the role assigned to them was by no means enviable.

"It is very much to be desired," the *Heilige Land* explained to its readers, "that many foreign colonists settle there. The famous fertility of the oasis of

Jericho, the plains of Saron [*sic*] and Esdrelon [*sic*], and many other places in Palestine, once under the hands of industrious and intelligent colonists . . . would once again gladden the eye and the heart of the pilgrim and would richly reward the colonists for their labor."³⁰ It would be an easy thing to set up European settlements; the *fellahin* (peasants) would gladly sell their land to Europeans and in return would expect "bread and protection" from them. The colonists could then make use of the "natives" as agricultural workers.³¹ Despite the unencouraging experiences of individual families and groups, the *Heilige Land's* writers would not give up the idea of "stimulating interest in colonization in Palestine"; they especially hoped for "Catholic colonies." They recognized that the settlements of the Templars, which so far were the only known success, were "an indirect tool of providence, a social factor, and a means of mutual stimulus which was very much needed, especially in Palestine."³²

Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, called for the founding of an International Society for the Renewal of the Orient in 1866. Its primary goal would be the mass colonization of Palestine under the protectorate of Napoleon III. The undertaking would nevertheless have an international character and would lead to the neutralization of Palestine. As part of the project, particular thought would be devoted to settlement by Jews, a task which the Jewish financial magnates of Europe should assume. Perhaps the French emperor could later think about whether to take over the ultimate sovereignty of "a small Hebrew state" in Palestine which, although under European protection, would be dependent on France. The Jews could carry on the civilizing mission of France and England in Asia. The most important outcome of the European colonization of Palestine would be the liberation of the "Holy Land" from the yoke of the Turks, the peaceful termination of the rule of Islam.³³ These ideas, and the international society that would arise from them, preoccupied the Europeans who were interested in Palestine until the mid-1870s; however, no tangible results were achieved.³⁴

A specifically Catholic colonization project, brought to life in 1876 in France in which the well-known architect and writer about Palestine, Pierrotti, received the blessing of Pope Pius IX, was also no great success. The goal of the project was to establish Catholic colonies in the "Holy Land" and promote Catholic pilgrimages.³⁵

Shortly before the founding of the first Templar colony near Haifa, the Viennese geographer Kuhlmann,³⁶ who previously had spent two years exploring the terrain in the Middle East, urged the Teutonic colonization of Palestine on the basis of a chauvinistic, racist sense of Teutonic mission, which viewed the entire Middle East as its field of action. His project was no more distinguished by a seductive logic than that of Dunant. On the one hand, Kuhlmann depicted for his readers a Palestine that was to a great extent empty of people. On the other hand, he warned that the immigrants could not establish themselves one by one, but must be settled "always in

large bands with at least a thousand men able to bear arms," so that they could hold their own against the Muslim population.³⁷

In Zionist literature, it is especially the colonization project of Oliphant, a Scottish diplomat, political activist, and (Christian) mystic, that is described as "proto-Zionist."³⁸ On the eve of the first wave of Jewish immigration, and with the support of the British government, Oliphant was pursuing the plan for a Jewish colony in the Balqa', on the other side of the Jordan; however, his endeavors ran afoul of Constantinople.³⁹

It was not true that, when pursuing such proposals, the colonization enthusiasts simply did not perceive the problem of the existence of a native population. Whereas Kuhlmann proposed a military solution, plain and simple, Oliphant wanted these elements of the Transjordanian population who did not give up a nomadic way of life to be put in reservations, like the Indians of North America. As far as the sedentary agriculturalists were concerned, they would "make a valuable labor force which could be employed by immigrant capitalists."⁴⁰ He also clearly revealed his mindset when he reported that, with regard to the fertile Hula plains, he wished to imitate the example of the men of Dan: in earlier times, they had driven out the peasants living there. One had to do this in a "modern way," however; a joint stock company could be founded, the owners of the land could be compensated and retained as laborers, and a profitable business in the Hula region could be set up.⁴¹

Conder, too, believed that one could make use of the native population and turn them into "hewers of wood and drawers of water."⁴² In 1872 his colleague Tyrwhitt Drake, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, wrote bluntly:

I can only say that it would be a most splendid thing if the [Ottoman] government could overcome its aversion to selling land to foreigners. With the right guarantees, a great portion of this land [Palestine] would find a favorable market, and then the peasants now there would either be cleared away or transformed into useful members of society, while the increased income of the Turkish government would be very considerable.⁴³

In comparison with this, the conclusion reached in 1882 by the director of the Templar Society, Hoffmann, could actually be described as refreshing: "The Arabs certainly cannot be driven out, for they are the overwhelming majority and the rightful owners of the land. What is more, they are not defenseless; the militarily well-organized force of the Turks would be able to frustrate any act of violence against the indigenous inhabitants." For European colonists the protection of a European power would be indispensable.⁴⁴

In general, however, the potential colonists were not overly concerned about the indigenous population. Either they fell back on platitudes of an unpopulated Palestine or they offered simple, ready-made solutions. Thus, there was an overarching continuity in thinking, extending from the conceptions of individual propagandists who promoted the "restoration of the Jews" in the 1840s, to the colonization enthusiasts of various derivations in the last third of the nineteenth century, and up to the Zionist conceptions of the

twentieth century. In 1845, Mitford (a "restorationist") had the idea that room could be made for Jewish immigrants by resettling the Muslim population in Asia Minor.⁴⁵ And in 1918 Ballod still believed that, "The least of our difficulties would be the Arab *fellahin*. They . . . would gladly leave Palestine if they were offered better conditions somewhere else, for example, in northern Syria or Babylonia, if it were restored through broad-scale cultural activities."⁴⁶

But of the many colonization projects and enterprises, only two had any success: the settlements of Templars since 1868 and those of Jewish immigrants since 1882. The Templars, a pietistic sect from Württemberg, had set for themselves the goal of "bringing together the people of God" in Jerusalem. They had declared their basic principles in a proclamation of 1861: "The mind of the German nation should be directed toward the building of the [T]emple in Jerusalem and the occupation of Palestine . . . we must strive to create a central German authority that pursues this goal."⁴⁷ They believed that the "people of God" (in other words, they themselves) had an inviolable right to occupy the "Holy Land." The way to realize their goal was emigration to Palestine. After lengthy difficulties in getting started, the Schwabian "people of God" founded four settlements between 1868 and 1873, and three more were added in the years 1902-1907. The masses of people who were expected to transform the "Holy Land" failed to appear, however. The number of Templars settled in Palestine never exceeded a maximum of 2,200 souls.⁴⁸

The imperial German government had never elevated settlement activities to the level of policy, however. For this reason it showed relative caution with regard to the German colonists. It seemed that the Templars, constantly quarreling with the local authorities and even going so far as to evade paying taxes, were an extraordinarily disruptive element for German-Ottoman relations.⁴⁹ The Porte naturally had fundamental misgivings. Despite the law of 1867, which conceded to foreigners the right to acquire real estate in the Ottoman Empire, the Porte opposed the granting of property titles to the Templars for a long time, fearing that they would make themselves independent of the national authorities—as the German representative of the foreign office in Constantinople reported. For the same reason, Keller, the German consular agent in Haifa, was initially refused recognition; it was feared that he would become a kind of governor of a small German state.⁵⁰ Therefore the Templars were not viewed by the imperial government as an important bridgehead in the Middle East, nor were they sheltered and promoted accordingly, as they had hoped, especially after their original religious zeal had flagged. It was more important for the construction of a German position in Palestine to promote German Protestant and Catholic institutions and create a "German-Jewish" clientele. This last factor played a significant role, especially after the 1870s.⁵¹ As far as the "protection" of the Jews was concerned, England had grown into a serious rival of the German Empire. Thus the historical role of the Templars was reduced to having proved to

their successful competitors and heirs, the Jewish settlers, that European colonization in Palestine could actually succeed. The Jewish settlers tried to learn from the experience of the Templars.

On the eve of the first wave of Jewish immigration (the first *aliya*) only 24,000 Jews were living in Palestine. The great majority of them lived in the "holy cities" of Jerusalem, Safad, Tiberias, and Hebron (although Hebron had only a relatively small Jewish community). The many-faceted European aspirations concerning the "Holy Land" and increasing contact with and knowledge of Palestine gave new impetus to the Jewish Colonization Association, and promoted the interest of European Jews in Palestine and in the situation of the Jews living there—the "old Yishuv."

Parallel to the Christian colonization projects, there were also Jewish enterprises of this kind. For example, in 1860 a Dr. Lorje founded a "Colonizations Union for Palestine" in Frankfurt on the Oder which was well-received by the Austrian consul general in Jerusalem. Its immediate goal was to found "a large Jewish agricultural colony in Palestine" while its long-term goal was the "restoration of the Jewish state."⁵² Philanthropists such as the Englishman Sir Moses Montefiore or organizations such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle supported improvement of the living conditions of their coreligionists in "Eretz Israel," especially by creating incentives for industrial and agricultural production activities. This led to the first major attempts by Jews to settle on newly acquired land in Palestine. The Alliance Israélite Universelle established a school for agricultural economics in Jaffa (Mikveh Israel) in 1870, and in 1878 Jews from Jerusalem founded the first agricultural settlement (Petach Tikva); it was abandoned in 1881.⁵³

All these were precursors, however, and it was only after 1882 that actual Jewish colonization began, a colonization that ultimately was to change the face of Palestine.

NOTES

1. For an example of retrospective periodization, see Hammad, pp. 8-13, who proposed that the Palestine question began with Montefiore's visit in 1849.

2. These included a Prussian consulate (1842), a French and a Sardinian consulate (1843), an American consulate (1844), and an Austrian-Hungarian consulate (1849).

3. On this point see especially Vereté, "Why was a British Consulate Established in Jerusalem?" pp. 316-45. Vereté refutes not only the claim by Tibawi (*British Interests*, pp. 2, 27, 34ff.) that the appointment of a British consul was due to the demands of English missionaries, but also the direct link, frequently made in the Zionist literature, between this measure and English efforts for "a return of the Jews" under British protection.

4. On the founding of the episcopate and the Anglican and German Protestant activities in Palestine in the nineteenth century, see Greaves; Tibawi, *British Inter-*

ests; Hajjar, *L'Europe*; Schmidt-Clausen; Hertzberg; Hanselmann; Mahafiza, pp. 40-70; Sinno.

5. On this point, see de la Roi, III, pp. 172-203; and Hammer.

6. See Corey.

7. Friedrich Wilhelm IV's position on this question is discussed in Sinno, pp. 32-40.

8. See Carmel, *Christen als Pioniere im Heiligen Land*, chapter 3. (This book is a history of the activities of the pilgrimage mission of Basel in Palestine.)

9. In this connection, see Hyamson, *The British Consulate in Jerusalem*. In 1856 there were 697 people under British protection in Palestine, of whom 192 were British subjects. As far as their religious affiliation was concerned, 448 of them were Jews and only 56 Protestants: ISA-BCJ, J22/6 (General Return of all Persons enjoying British Protection within the Jurisdiction of Her Majesty's Consulate at Jerusalem, 21 July 1856). In the year 1879 the indigenous Protestant congregation

in the sanjaq of Jerusalem numbered 603 people: PRO-F.O. 195, vol. 1264 (Jerusalem, 1 October 1879).

10. Hyamson, *The British Consulate in Jerusalem*, I, p. 4.

11. *Circular of a Project for the Erection of Palestine into an Independent State*, 1841.

12. Until recently the only works on the German policy for Palestine in the nineteenth century were essentially Roth's work and Carmel's "*Die deutsche Palästina-politik 1871-1914*." Carmel deals with the problem as an example of the imperial government's relationship with the Templars. Roth's book is a popularized description without exact source references. Furthermore, Roth is somewhat overwhelmed by his material, since he gives way to the completely misguided observation that, in the age of Kaiser Wilhelm II, "Palestine had long been the home base of widespread German activity which concentrated on sources of raw materials, capital investments, consumer markets, stocks and dividends, positions of political power, and their protection by military means" (p. 238). Palestine as the home base of German imperialism?! At any rate, we now have studies by two Arab historians: Mahafiza, chapters 1 and 2, and especially Sinno, *passim*. Sinno's work is the most comprehensive and most differentiated portrait to date.

13. See Hyamson, *British Projects*, pp. 5-21; Kobler, pp. 58-81; Hajjar, *L'Europe*, pp. 325-40; Sharif, pp. 127-32.

14. See Kobler and, especially, Vereté, "The Restoration of the Jews."

15. *The Final Exodus*, pp. 14 and 25.

16. Dupuis, I, pp. 156ff.

17. Hoare, *Rome, Turkey, and Jerusalem*, pp. 48 and 103.

18. Hoare, *Palestine and Russia*, pp. 22 and 27.

19. Neil, pp. 8-11, 36ff., 41, 73-77, 109.

20. For a description of the parallel millenarianism in the United States, the Protestant evangelical revivalist movement, and its relationship to Palestine, see Levine.

21. Walker, pp. 39, 255-76, 283-85, 293ff.

22. See Hyamson, *British Projects*, pp. 22-36; Sharif, p. 133.

23. See Hyamson, *British Projects*, pp. 33ff.; Kobler, p. 96.

24. Warren, *The Land of Promise*, pp. 5ff. Regarding English rule over Palestine, he writes: "That the Englishman will eventually find it necessary to establish himself in the country, I do not, myself, in any way doubt." Warren, *Underground Jerusalem*, p. 448.

25. Conder, "The Present Condition of Palestine," pp. 8ff.

26. Quoted in Sykes, p. 5.

27. For example, see Sidebotham, pp. 173ff.

28. See the overview in Schick, "Studien über Colonisirung," pp. 37-39, 58-61, 80ff., 90-100; Schick, "Zur Colonisations-Frage;" Schick, "Der gegenwärtige Stand der Colonisations-versuche."

29. Schick, "Studien über Colonisirung," p. 37.

30. *HL X* (1866), p. 162.

31. "Der Ackerbau in Palästina," *HL XVI* (1872), pp. 117ff.

32. "Gedanken über die politische, soziale und religiöse Frage Palästinas," *HL XIX* (1875), pp. 149-53.

33. Dunant. For information on Dunant's collaborative work with the Schwabian Templars, see Carmel, *Die Siedlungen*, pp. 19-21 and 25; Brugger, pp. 42ff.

34. See Roulliet; *Die Warte*, 17 February 1870; "Gedanken über die politische, soziale und religiöse Frage Palästinas," *HL XIX* (1875), pp. 147ff.

35. *La Terre Sainte* [The Holy Land] 1876/6/7/8, pp. 261ff., 426ff., and Supplément No. 1.

36. The Templars met with Kuhlmann in Vienna and spoke with him on their way to Palestine; see Brugger, p. 45.

37. *Palästina als Ziel und Boden germanischer Auswanderung und Kolonization*; quotation on p. 35.

38. The characterization of Oliphant as a "proto-Zionist" can be found in: Israel Pocket Library, *Immigration and Settlement*, p. 14, note 12.

39. Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead*, especially XIII-XXXVII, pp. 284-304, 502-38; Henderson, pp. 203-12; PRO-F.O. 195, vol. 1263 (Beirut, 14 May 1879).

40. Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead*, p. 286.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

42. Conder, "The Present Condition of Palestine," pp. 8ff.; see also Conder, *Tent Work*, II, pp. 327ff.

43. Quoted in SWP, *Samaria*, p. 256.

44. *Die Warte*, 11 May 1882.

45. See Kobler, p. 77.

46. Ballod, p. 30.

47. Quoted in Brugger, p. 39.

48. Concerning the Templars, see especially Carmel, *Die Siedlungen*; see also Paulus; Brugger; Seibt; Imberger.

49. The documents about the continuous disputes over taxes and tributes fill volumes in the archives of the German consulate in Jerusalem; see ISA-DKJ, A.XIII.1.S., vol. 1; A.XXII.1.a.4.; A.XXII.1.d.; A.XXII.1.e. Bd. 1; A.XXII.10.a; A.XXXVI.1., in particular. This might also be a reason why Münchhausen, the consul for Jerusalem, had nothing good to say about the Templars. He wrote to Keller in Haifa on 2 May 1879 that the needy colony would receive no support from the foreign office. The emigrants had harmed the German state by depriving it of property and productive forces; therefore they could expect no help. Münchhausen suggested that the Templars be resettled in Cyprus, where they could cultivate vineyards under English protection! (ISA-DKJ, A.XXXI.7.) He had already written brusquely to Murad in Jaffa on 27 July 1874, saying that allowing the Templar community to become a state within a state could not be tolerated. (ISA-DKJ, A.XXXVI.1.)

50. AA-I.A.B.q. (Turkey), p. 126 (Pera, 29 November 1877); on the real estate question, see also the Acts of AA-Konst., GEN.76.K.18.d.

51. See Eliav, *Die Juden Palästinas*; Eliav, "German Interests."

52. A dossier for this can be found in HHSTA-Archiv Jer., Fasc. 46 (1862/3).

53. See Chouraqui, pp. 357-63, 451-56, 494ff.; Margalith, pp. 42-45.

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- AA = Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Bonn [Archives of the German Foreign Office, Bonn]
- HHSTA = Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien [Austrian State Archives, Vienna]
- HL = *Das Heilige Land* [The Holy Land]
- ISA = Israel State Archives, Jerusalem
- ÖMO = *Österreichische Monatsschrift für den Orient* [Austrian Monthly Magazine for the Orient]
- PRO = Public Record Office, London
- SWP = *The Survey of Western Palestine*

Unpublished Sources

Israel State Archives, Jerusalem

- DKJ = Files of the German Consulate, Jerusalem.
- BCJ = Archives of the British Consulate in Jerusalem.

Public Record Office, London

- F.O. 78 = Foreign Office, Series 78 (1853-1883).
- F.O. 195 = Foreign Office, Series 195 (1856-1882).

Archiv Jer., Fasc. = Consular Archives, Jerusalem, Political and Administrative Files, fascicles 38-62: correspondences 1856-1882; fascicle 127: economic files.

Archiv Konst., Konsulatsberichte = Inter-nunciature Archives, Constantinople, third consular reports and instructions, older series 1861-1880, recent series, Beirut, 1880-1894, and Jerusalem 1881-1896.

I.A.B.q.(Turkey) 108 = Correspondence with the delegation in Constantinople, and with other embassies and foreign cabinets about the internal situation and conditions of Turkey, 16 volumes (1874-1878).

Konst., GEN.76.K.18.d. = Embassy files, Constantinople: The Württembergian colony-Hoffmanian in Palestine (Templar communities in Jaffa, Haifa, and Jerusalem) 1868-1880.

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