

THE OTTOMAN POLICY TOWARDS JEWISH IMMIGRATION AND
SETTLEMENT IN PALESTINE: 1882-1920

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes the characteristics of the Ottoman policy towards Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine during the period between 1882 and 1920. When the waves of the Jewish immigration to the Ottoman Palestine started in 1882, the Ottoman government put restrictions on it as some of the Jewish immigrants were motivated by Zionist idea and had political aims in Palestine. However, despite the Ottoman restrictions, a Zionist presence emerged in Palestine. In this respect, this research undertakes to examine the factors that prevented the Ottomans from pursuing a restrictive policy towards Zionist movement. The aim of this research is to indicate that the popular beliefs concerning the Ottoman policy towards Zionism at present are mistaken and the issue is more complex. This thesis will also seek to answer the questions such as how the foreign Jews were able to go and settle in the Ottoman Palestine while questioning the capability of the Ottoman system to manage the control of its regulations. In this framework, the interest of the Ottoman leaders in the Zionist movement in Palestine will also be questioned.

Keywords: Jewish immigration and settlement, Ottoman policy, Palestine, Zionist movement

ÖZ

1882-1920 ARASI OSMANLI FİLİSTİNİ'NE OLAN YAHUDİ GÖÇ VE İSKANINA YÖNELİK OSMANLI POLİTİKASI

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Bu çalışma, 1882 ve 1920 yılları arası Osmanlı Devleti'nin Filistin'deki Yahudi göç ve iskanına olan politikasını incelemektedir. 1882'de Osmanlı Filistin'ine Yahudi göçü dalgası başlayınca, bazı Yahudi göçmenler Siyonist düşünce ile Filistin'de siyasi amaçlar güttüklerinden, Osmanlı Hükümeti Filistin'e göçü yasakladı. Fakat, Osmanlı yasaklarına rağmen, Filistin'de Siyonist bir varlık oluştu. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Osmanlıların Siyonist harekete karşı kısıtlayıcı bir politika izlemesini engelleyen faktörleri incelemeyi taahhüt etmektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı günümüzde Siyonizm'e yönelik Osmanlı politikasıyla ilgili popüler düşüncelerin yanlış olduğunu ve bu konunun çok daha kompleks olduğunu göstermektir. Bu tez Osmanlı Hükümetinin ne ölçüde Filistin'deki Yahudi hareketini kısıtlamak istediğini sorgularken, aynı zamanda yabancı Yahudiler'in Osmanlı Hükümeti tarafından uygulanan birçok yasağa rağmen nasıl Osmanlı Filistin'ine gidip yerleşebildiği gibi sorulara da yanıt aramaktadır. Bu çerçevede, Osmanlı liderlerinin Filistin'deki Siyonist Hareket'e olan ilgileri de sorgulanacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yahudi göçü ve iskanı, Osmanlı politikası, Filistin, Siyonist hareket

To My Mother

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIU	Alliance Israelite Universelle
AJA	Anglo-Jewish Association
CUP	The Committee of Union and Progress
JCA	Jewish Colonization Association
JCT	Jewish Colonial Trust
JNF	Jewish National Fund
PLDC	Palestine Land Development Company
WZO	World Zionist Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Having suffered from decades of anti-Judaism, the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine emerged among the European Jewry as a consequence of the brutal Russian pogroms of 1881-1882 when anti-Semitism as a racial fervor reached its peak. The pogroms marked the beginning of the waves of organized Jewish migration – *Aliyah*¹ – to Palestine. However, Palestine at that time was a part of the Ottoman State which was ruled by Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909). In 1882, even though the Ottoman sultan accepted Jewish immigrants in the Ottoman territory, he closed the doors of Palestine to Jewish immigration and settlement as the flow of thousands of foreign Jews motivated to move to the Holy Land was regarded as a threat to Ottoman territorial integrity.

Today, the popular belief in Turkey concerning the issue of Palestine and the Zionist movement particularly during the Abdulhamid period is that the Sultan engaged in the issue and never made a concession about Palestine. But, was this really so? Is it really possible to form a definite description of the official attitude towards the Zionist movement?

When one searches for “Zionism and Abdulhamid” in Turkish on Google, she or he may be surprised at the findings as there are a variety of different websites with the titles “the State of Israel, Zionism, and Abdulhamid.” In August 2014, on a Turkish TV channel, a television program, *Tarih Atlası*, was showed with the title *Siyonizm Sorunu ve Abdülhamid Gerçeği* (The Question of Zionism and the Reality of

¹ Aliyah: the Jewish migration to Palestine, ‘literally an ascent.’ MarkTessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Indiana University Press, 1994, p. 42

Abdulhamid). The presenter opened the program by saying, “Here we are with a current issue,” and continued by mentioning Israel’s attacks on Gaza.² It is quite interesting to open a program—which is going to deal with a historical event—with a current issue and then relate Israel’s policies at present to the Abdulhamid period or vice versa. The objective of the program almost seemed to be that “Israel was a bad state, and Abdulhamid was already hostile to the Zionists.” The point is that those who under the illusion of today’s anti-Zionist sentiments in Turkey are, in essence, glorifying the Ottomans’ restrictive policy with regard to the Zionists. Contrary to popular opinion, the issue was more complex. At this point, this thesis aims to indicate that there were a variety of factors which influenced the Ottoman policy towards the Zionist movement and which mostly prevented the Ottomans from implementing the prohibitions on it.

As the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue have had wide media coverage in Turkey, the historical references to relate to the present is being used. Besides, and related to this, other issues are also being falsified and therefore will also be addressed. For example, those who wanted to touch upon the “imperial” economic power of the Rothschild family from past to present, calls the Rothschilds, particularly Baron Edmond de Rothschild³, who subsidized the Jewish settlements in Palestine during the First Aliyah, as one of the main supporters of the Zionists or even a Zionist himself at that time⁴, even though it was never be the case. It was not the same yesterday as it is today. The need to be able to look at the period in its own time is important at this point.

When the rule of Abdulhamid was replaced by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP government), the state policy towards the Zionist movement in Palestine changed. The official policy to the movement has been falsified by some anti-CUP

² ‘Siyonizm Sorunu ve Abdülhamid Gerçeği’, *Tarih Atlası*, on tvnet, August 2, 2014, published on the internet on August 8, 2014, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40HbeR_9Fas (accessed on August 21, 2014)

³ See in detail in page 23

⁴ İsmail Tokalak, *Paranın İmparatorları, Rothschild’lerin Küresel Gücü*, Ataç Yayınları, Mayıs 2014, pp. 95-96

circles in Turkey that the Turkish ruling elite supported the Zionist movement and allied with its leaders. Even it is claimed that some members of the CUP government were Zionists. However it was not the case. The Turkish government was not in cooperation with separatist movements. If some of its members had a positive attitude towards the Zionist movement, it was brought about by the belief that Zionism not was equal to separatism. It will also be observed that the Young Turk leaders also followed a restrictive policy towards the Zionist project in Palestine.

Regarding the Zionist movement in Palestine and the Ottoman restrictive state policy towards the movement both during the rule of Abdulhamid II and the Second Constitutional Period, the general argument in Turkey is that the Ottoman State gave considerable significance to the issue of Palestine related to Jewish immigration and settlement. Especially, the attitude of Sultan Abdulhamid towards the Zionist influx in Palestine has been glorified for the most part, based on the idea that “he did not sell Ottoman land to the Zionists.” However, the question of whether the Zionist issue occupied too much space in the agenda of the Sultan, given the other troubles the Empire had to deal with can be asked here. It was also the case for the Second Constitutional Period. Since the end of the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire had been a declining power. With the impact of the French Revolution, non-Muslim minorities began to feel nationalist sentiments; and by the mid-1800s, the nationalist movements and their separatist claims left the Ottoman State in a difficult position. After the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War, it lost Palestine. The unimportance of both the Zionist movement and the territory of Palestine during the peace negotiations held at the end of the war will also be indicated. This study will underline that the Jewish immigration and settlement were not considered to be overly important by the Ottoman State in each period.

Even though the Ottoman government put bans on the Jewish immigration and settlement in the Holy Land, there were some other factors that should be analyzed, as they prevented the implementation of the restrictions imposed on the Zionist movement. First, as a weakening power, the Ottoman system was vulnerable to the intervention of the European powers that pressured the Ottoman government on behalf of the Zionists. Secondly, as a result of the division of authority, the state

policy at a governmental level was not effectively implemented at the local level. In addition to the problems the Ottoman State faced, the rights given to foreigners under certain capitulations and the issue of corruption, constituted impediments to pursuing an effective policy towards the Zionist movement. What is more, there were contradictions in the policies of the Ottoman State. Analysis of these factors may prove to be of importance in observing the complexity of the issue of the Zionist movement in Palestine for the Ottoman State.

In all of these, what will be observed is that contrary to the popular belief of today in Turkey, the Ottoman policy (at local level) was not as strict as thought towards Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine and there were weaknesses in the coherence of this policy.

Throughout this study, only relevant sources to the goals of my research will be included. I have undertaken mainly secondary research and analyzed existing data which is based on historical analysis. In addition to the books, articles, and internet resources, I have also utilized the Ottoman archives, the Diaries and Writings of Theodor Herzl, and some media tools with a particular focus on the conditions of the Zionist movement and the Ottoman policy towards it.

There are some additional points that should be touched upon. In this study, I will try to give reliable estimates concerning the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine. In this sense, it is worth to mention that, as Bachi says in his study, the information as to the numbers involved mostly rough estimates. Bachi emphasizes that the population estimates for the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were rather approximate compared to the estimates of the Jewish population of the British Mandate of Palestine.⁵ Although I give a variety of references for the number of Jewish immigrants for different periods, I have tried to give the figures that seem the closest to the reality: during the First Aliyah approximately between 20,000-30,000 Jews, and during the Second Aliyah 35,000-40,000 Jews went to Palestine including the departures.⁶ According to the sources giving the highest

⁵ Roberto Bachi, 'The Population of Israel', C.I.C.R.E.D. Series, 1974, p. 78

⁶ Most of the immigrants of the First Aliyah left Palestine after a short time.

estimates, the Jewish population was approximated at 90,000 in the region (including the pre-1882 estimates) when the World War I broke out, which is an exaggeration. Bachi stresses that if the total number of Jews who had entered Palestine between 1881 and 1914 is to be counted, an estimate of 100,000 could be given if the number of departures was included in calculation.⁷ Conversely, McCharty gives the minimum estimate among the sources I have reviewed: he estimates that the number of immigrants between 1895 and 1914 was approximately 33,000, and he does not take the departures into account.⁸

It is also important to note that there is a distinction between the Jewish immigration and the Zionist movement. The phrase 'Jewish immigration' is a broader concept which also included the Zionist movement. In other words, not all immigrants were motivated by the Zionist thought. In fact, most of the Jewish settlers went to Palestine for religious purposes and distanced themselves from Zionism. In this study, the focus will be on the Zionist movement which was a minority movement at this period but worthy of being studied.

Another point is related to the limit of the scope of this research. Ilan Pappé argues that after Palestine was defined as the most suitable place for the Jewish national revival, Zionism turned to be a colonialist movement.⁹ Nevertheless, as to scrutinize Zionist colonialism implies looking into a large period and the literature to that regard would require an analysis of different subjects unrelated to the focus of this study, colonialism will not be emphasized. For the same reasons, only the actors and events related to the Zionist movement and the Ottoman policy on it will be mentioned. In this sense, relations between the Jewish settlers and the local

⁷ Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, p. xxiv

⁸ Justin McCarthy, 'Jewish Population in the Late Ottoman Period', pp. 375-398, in Levy, Avigdor (ed.), *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, The Darwin Press, Inc. Princeton, New Jersey, 1994, p. 383-395

⁹ Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 33

population and the impact of the Zionist movement on Palestinian Arabs will not be discussed.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Following this introduction, in the second chapter, before plunging into the Ottoman policy towards Jewish migration to Palestine, the motivation of the *Aliyot*¹⁰, and the factors that made thousands of Jews migrate to the Holy Land will be touched upon. How the idea of Zionism emerged and what led to the flow of immigrants to move to Palestine are the first questions to be answered. Secondly, I will analyze the Ottoman policy under Abdulhamid towards the Zionist movement. The primary focus will be on the restrictive policy of the Ottoman government and the motive behind it. The political and diplomatic efforts of Zionist leaders and organizations will also be discussed. The activities of the Lovers of Zion will be touched upon to examine the beginning of the settlement in Palestine in practice. The diplomatic contacts of Herzl and his idea of a Jewish state will also be discussed, in order to examine the Jews' persistence about the Holy Land to be settled. Yet, the critical part will include the review of the negotiations between the Zionists and the Sultan. In order to challenge the common image on Abdulhamid's stance on Zionism, the meaning of his meeting with Theodor Herzl will be questioned.

In order to look at the complexity of the issue, the foreign interventions in favor of the Zionist movement will also be analyzed, since they directly influenced the Ottoman restrictive policy towards the Zionist movement in Palestine. Foreign intercessions with the aid of capitulations will play a crucial role in terms of pressuring the Ottoman officials as well as enabling the foreign Jews to enter Palestine. At this point, how the European powers as anti-Semites will support Jewish settlement in the territory of another state will also be observed.

In the last part of this chapter, the focus will be on the factors that produced sufficient circumstances for the Jewish settlements in Palestine and rendered the Ottoman restrictions on the Zionist movement ineffective. It will be observed that Ottoman policy as to the Zionist movement contradicted itself; therefore, the

¹⁰ The plural of Aliyah.

prohibitions were neither effective nor feasible in character. Moreover, the restrictions issued by the central government were not always implemented at the local level due to corruption and lack of coordinated effort. In this section, the factors that enabled the Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine will be analyzed in detail, as those factors continued to be effective during the Second Constitutional era and even until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. While the Ottoman government was unable to implement the restrictions due to several internal factors, the foreign intervention and Zionist activities that provided assistance to Zionist settlers served to negate the implementation of the limitations imposed by the Ottoman government. Put another way, the negative factors from the Ottoman perspective and the positive factors from the Zionist perspective will be the topics of this section.

In the third chapter, the Ottoman policy of the Second Constitutional Period towards Jewish settlements in Palestine will be examined. Even though the Second Aliyah had already started in 1903-1904, I will not separate the chapters in accordance with the *aliyot*. In this third chapter, it can be observed that with the Young Turk Revolution, different variables that had an impact on the policy making with regard to the Zionist work in Palestine emerged. The impact of the developments at this time on both the Ottoman policy and the Zionist discourse will be analyzed. In this section, how different perceptions of Zionism were formulated and how those considerations directly impacted decision-making of the Turkish rulers about the Zionists and their movement will also be explained. Negotiations between the Zionist and Ottoman leaders as well as the related discussions among Ottoman officials will have a considerable place in this section in order to observe the different opinions about Zionism. In addition to them, the role of the change in Ottoman policy, which may have been influenced by the change of Zionist discourse in the facilitation of the Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine until the WWI broke out, will be discussed. This period also experienced continuities in the factors that enabled the Zionist movement in Palestine. Additionally, in order to observe the ability of Zionist immigrants to settle there, it is of great value to address the Zionists' activities in the

Ottoman Empire. At the end of the chapter, therefore, the conditions of the Zionist movement will be examined.

The last chapter will address the Ottoman policy towards the Yishuv¹¹ during the First World War. The impact of the war on the Zionist presence in Palestine will be a focus here. In this chapter, the effect of the rivalry between the European powers and their interests in the Ottoman territory as regards to both the Zionist movement and the Ottoman policy on it will be analyzed. The fact that the war led to a division within the Zionist leadership will also be touched upon. Despite rivalries and divisions, it will be observed that the European powers made considerable contributions to the protection of the Zionist presence in the region. As the course of events during the war continued in favor of the Allies, Zionist leadership increased the extent of its contacts with the British. In addition, the British government began to make plans for the post-war period. The agreements of the British with the French, Arabs, and the Zionists will be discussed in detail to define the British interests in the region. While Britain's interests played a crucial, game-changing role in Palestine and with regard to the advancement of the Zionist movement, the power of the Zionists' efforts to be granted international recognition for the Jewish presence in Palestine will be underscored. As a result of the war, the Ottoman Empire collapsed. In this section, the attitude of the Turks towards Palestine will be defined. Having observed the developments that put an end on the Turkish rule in the region and the start of a new era in Palestine, the events of the post-war period will constitute another field of study.

The fifth chapter will be the conclusion, composed of an overview of the thesis and the major findings of this research.

¹¹ Yishuv: (settlement) The Hebrew name of the Jewish residents in Palestine. While the Zionists constituted the new Yishuv, the religious and unorganized Jewish residents before the *aliyot* were called the old Yishuv.

CHAPTER 2

OTTOMAN POLICY TO THE JEWISH IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN PALESTINE: 1882-1908

In this chapter, I will discuss the Ottoman policy under Abdulhamid II towards immigrants of the First Aliyah and Second Aliyah while focusing on the Zionist movement. Nevertheless, before dealing with the Ottoman policy towards Jewish immigrants and the ineffectiveness of its restrictions, it is important to discuss the evolution of Zionism and the emergence of the idea of a Jewish homeland. Therefore, in the first section, the factors that led to the emergence of political Zionism and the developments that made the Jews move to the Holy Land in order to build a homeland will be analyzed.

After that, the Ottoman attitude towards Jewish newcomers and the reasons behind its restrictive policy to their entrance to and settlement in Palestine will be discussed. Concerning Zionist activities, the activities of the first settlers in Palestine under the umbrella of the Lovers of Zion movement will be analyzed. Subsequently, the World Zionist Organization was established under the leadership of Theodor Herzl. Herzl's diplomatic efforts on behalf of the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine are crucial for this study in the sense that he engaged in critical contacts in Istanbul in order to guarantee a Jewish homeland there. The most significant contact was his meeting with Sultan Abdulhamid II. Here, I will try to analyze the meaning of this meeting in order to challenge its general misinterpretation in Turkey. I will also try to indicate the interests of both parties.

Even though Abdulhamid put bans on Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine, more than 50,000 Jews were able to come settle in the region. In this sense,

the factors that facilitated the Zionist movement and the opportunities that provided the circumstances for those newcomers to enter Palestine and settle there will constitute a considerable part of this chapter. In the last section, the factors that enabled the Jewish immigration and settlement will be analyzed in detail as those factors continued to be effective during the Young Turk era and even until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. First, the assistance of foreign powers to the Zionist movement in Palestine will be touched upon. The concessions granted to the foreigners under the Capitulations facilitated the immigration of the non-Ottoman Jews, who were under the protection of the foreign Powers, to Palestine. Secondly, the contradictions in the Ottoman policy towards immigrations made the restrictions impracticable. Additionally, corruption as a weakness of the Ottoman administration enabled the Jewish settlers to enter and purchase land in Palestine.

This chapter will conclude by emphasizing the conditions of the Zionist movement in Palestine. During this period, it can be observed that the Jewish colonization of Palestine through the Zionists activists began.

2.1 Emergence of Zionism

Before examining the Jewish immigration to Palestine and the Ottoman policy towards it, it is of great value to deal with the background of the events that led thousands of Eastern European Jews to migrate to the Ottoman land of Palestine. The Jewish immigration to Palestine was not an abrupt movement. It was the result of increasing anti-Semitism which led to the emergence of the idea that 'homelessness' In this context, I will discuss the factors that led to the rise of Zionism and that made the Eastern European Jewry migrate to Palestine.

The Jewish migration of 1881-1882 to the Holy Land was not the first migration of Jews from one part of the world to another. In fact, subsequent to the Roman

conquest of Jerusalem and destruction of the Second Temple¹ in 70 A.D., the Jews went in exile, as their exodus from Palestine started at the end of the Jewish revolt against the Roman rule.² Having been on the move for centuries, Jews were deported from England in the 13th century and from France in the 14th century. From the 13th century to the 16th century, thousands of Jews migrated from the Western Europe to the East (Eastern Europe, Central Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and other Muslim states)³ Until the 19th century, Jews had been exposed to “massacres, persecution, and social ostracism”⁴ for centuries and, therefore, had to move eastward.

Over centuries, Jews of Europe and the Muslim world had resided in ghettos⁵ in the cities and towns. Outside the ghetto, their participation in public life was limited, and they were exposed to degrading treatment and indignities in their relations with the non-Jews. Throughout ages, small numbers of Jews went to Palestine to visit or settle, but they had no concept yet of “the realization of political or nationalist objectives” or “reconstruction of their national home in Palestine.”⁶

In fact, in the first half of the 19th century, Jews in the West began to have some social and judicial rights as a consequence of the demand from emancipation. With the spread of the ideas of the Enlightenment, many reforms were carried out; the economic status of Jews improved as they began to be emancipated in Western Europe and were now “out of the ghetto.”⁷ The French Revolution with its

¹ Temple in Jerusalem or Holy Temple: an important religious place for Judaism which is located in the Old City of Jerusalem.

² Tessler, op. cit., pp. 12-13

³ Ali Arslan, *Avrupa'dan Türkiye'ye İkinci Yahudi Göçü*, Truva Yayınları, Nisan 2006, p. 15-17

⁴ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, Tauris Parke Paperbacks, Third Edition, 2003, p. 3

⁵ For the ghetto life, see Paul Johnson, 'Getto', in his book, *Yahudi Tarihi*, Translated by Filiz Orman, Pozitif Yayınları, pp. 295-378

⁶ Tessler, op. cit., pp. 20-21

⁷ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 3

principles of equality before the law⁸ and full partnership removed several restrictions that had prevented Jews from joining the national life outside the ghettos. Throughout the 19th century in many European countries, full citizenship was granted to the Jews. This new political and ideological climate brought significant changes in the Jewish thought and gave rise to modern political Zionism. By the end of the 18th century, a modernist movement called *Haskalah* or “Jewish enlightenment” started with the advances of emancipation. This movement was motivated by reducing the cultural and behavioral differences between the Jews and non-Jews through “assimilation and the un-restricted integration of the Jews into the European society.”⁹

During the 1850s and 1860s, individual Jews began to increase their wealth, and a Jewish middle class emerged in Europe.¹⁰ In order to become undifferentiated individuals in the world, the middle-class Jews in Western Europe began to advocate the integration of Jews into the European society—in other words, their assimilation,¹¹—since emancipation was regarded as assimilation by Jews at that time.¹²

There were also Jewish political organizations in the European countries with which the Jews gained legal emancipation, such as the Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA) and Alliance Israelite Universelle (AIU). These were intended to improve the situation of un-emancipated and persecuted Jews living in Russia, Romania, and the

⁸ In the ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen’ at the French National Assembly (August 26, 1789), it was stated that all men were free and equal in rights and that no one could be harmed for his opinions, even as such as are religious, as long as the expression of these opinions did not violate the public order in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew In The Modern World: A Documentary History*, Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 1995, pp. 114-118; for the process of the emancipation of the Jews in France also see this book.

⁹ Tessler, op. cit., pp. 25-27

¹⁰ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 25

¹¹ Tessler, op. cit., p. 27

¹² John Rose, *The Myths of Zionism*, Pluto Press, London, 2004, p. 102

Ottoman Empire.¹³ The first international Jewish organization, the Alliance Israelite Universelle, was founded by French statesman Adolphe Crémieux in 1860. Its objective was to improve the self-development and self-sufficiency of the Jews, who were homeless, through education.¹⁴ In 1871, the Anglo-Jewish Association was formed in order to promote the social, moral, and intellectual development of the Jews and also to protect those suffering because of “being Jewish.”¹⁵

However, although the Jews began to have rights that had been denied for centuries, Judaeophobia was so rooted among the non-Jewish people in Europe that Jews could not enjoy equal rights with non-Jews and were still exposed to anti-Judaism. The German-Jewish *Haskalah* caused many Jews to leave Judaism. The Orthodox Jews began to worry about de-Judaisation and the Christianization of the synagogue.¹⁶ Mainly after the financial crisis of 1873, the anti-Jewish campaign sharply rose against the prosperous Jews, especially in Germany and spread all over Europe. The religious motif of Judaeophobia turned into anti-Semitism. Since anti-Semitism equated to the total rejection of the Jews, the advocacy for assimilation ended.¹⁷

Nevertheless, anti-Semitism in Western Europe was not as racist and brutal as it was in Eastern Europe. There were several figures of the Russian *Haskalah* who were in favor of assimilation and who advised the Russian Jews to “be a Jew in your home and a man outside,”¹⁸ though there was no emancipation in Eastern Europe. Their living conditions were miserable therefore, they migrated to the West. In Russia and

¹³ Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Israel in History; The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective*, Routledge, 2007, p. 135

¹⁴ Arslan, op. cit., p. 44

¹⁵ Anglo-Jewish Association, Jewish Encyclopedia, unedited text on <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1525-anglo-jewish-association> (accessed on October 22, 2013)

¹⁶ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 17

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 28-30

¹⁸ Tessler, op. cit., p. 31

Prussia, the Jews were still living in the Pale of Settlements¹⁹ and deprived of civil rights. Therefore, the Jewish intellectuals of Eastern Europe were against assimilationists and emphasized Jewish specificity along with protection of the Jewish values. In this sense, Tessler differentiates the Eastern *Haskalah* from Western *Haskalah*.²⁰

“There is a very evident and essential link between the failure of progress to solve the Jewish problem in foreseeable future, the emergence of modern anti-Semitism, and the birth of the Zionist idea.”²¹ By 1880s, the Jews understood that assimilation was not a solution for anti-Semitism; it had come to mean total rejection of the Jews, not only in Russia but also in other European countries including Germany and France.²²

As Maccoby states, “the chief Jewish response to the growth of racist and nationalist anti-Semitism was to develop their own nationalism in the form of Zionism.”²³ Although Zionism as a political ideology, which aimed to achieve the Jewish national revival and establish a Jewish state in Palestine, emerged by the end of the 19th century under the leadership of Theodor Herzl, the idea of returning to Palestine came to the agenda of the Jewish community beforehand. Before Zionism was politicized via the Russian pogroms of 1881-82 and rise of anti-Semitism, several rabbis (Jewish religious men), politicians, and Jewish intellectuals had supported a large-scale migration of Jews to the Holy Land along with their

¹⁹ Pale of Settlements: The region, which stretched from Lithuania in the north to the Black Sea in the south, and from Poland in the west to Russia and Ukraine in the east, where the Jews were settled. In the Pale, the Jews were placed through the hostile policies of the Tsars of Russia in Rose, op. cit., p. 98. The concentration of the Jews in the Pale facilitated their exposure to the pogroms which occurred at various times.

²⁰ Tessler, op. cit., pp. 30-32

²¹ Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948*, Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 6

²² Laqueur, op. cit., p. 30

²³ Hyam Maccoby, *Antisemitism and Modernity: Innovation and Continuity*, Routledge Jewish Studies Series, 2006, p. 29

resettlement in Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel)²⁴. For instance, in 1799, after he invaded Syria and Egypt, Napoleon called the Jews to gather under his flag and promised them a return to their ancestral lands.²⁵ In 1839, an English Jewish banker and philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore²⁶, negotiated with Muhammad Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt (1805-1848), and also the ruler of Syria, the Levant, and Palestine (1833-1839),²⁷ in order to establish an autonomous Jewish region in Palestine. The negotiations were not successful.²⁸ Moreover, in the same year, Montefiore also mentioned the necessity of establishing a Jewish state under British protectorate.²⁹ However, the return to Palestine was still not viewed as a realistic objective at that time.

²⁴ For the support of the societies in Europe to the Jewish colonization in Palestine, see Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism*, Ktav Publishing House, Inc., New York, 1969 (First Published in 1919)

²⁵ See 'The Letter to the Jewish Nation from the French Commander-in-Chief Buonaparte' (translated from the Original, 1799) in Ben Weider, 'Napoleon and the Jews', International Congress of the International Napoleonic Society, Alessandria, Italy, June 21-26, 1997; also see Chapter XI, 'Napoleon's Campaign in the East', in Sokolow, op. cit., pp. 63-66

²⁶ Sir Moses Montefiore built the first Jewish neighborhood in Jerusalem in 1860. He financially supported the industry, education, and health of the Jews in Jerusalem. 'Mishkenot Sha'ananim' on the website of Jewish Virtual Library, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/geo/mishkenot.html (accessed on February 8, 2014)

²⁷ Albert Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, Oxford University Press, 1946, p. 29

²⁸ Ilan Greilsammer, *Siyonizm*, translated by Işık Ergüden, Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, Birinci Baskı, Ankara, Mayıs 2007, p. 14; Sir Moses was a friend of Mehmed Ali who promised to provide every assistance to the endeavours of Sir Moses. However, after Mehmed Ali left his position, the realization of the scheme became impossible. Sir Moses wanted the realization of the colonization of Palestine and wanted to acquire the British support to this. 'Chapter XXII: Sir Moses Montefiore', in Sokolow, pp. 118-119. Sokolow in this respect, states that Sir Moses attempted Zionism: 'Zionism was undoubtedly the greatest and noblest of Sir Moses's aspirations.' in *ibid.*, p. 120

²⁹ Arslan, op. cit., p. 54

2.2 Start of the Aliyah to Ottoman Palestine³⁰

When the first Aliyah began in 1881-1882, there was already a Jewish community in Palestine. As Tessler mentions, most of the non-European Jews were living in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century.³¹ Between 1800 and 1840, 5,000 Jews came to Palestine. According to a rough estimate, 25,000 Jews migrated to Palestine between 1850 and 1880,³² and they became known as the people of the “old Yishuv,” which consisted of traditional Jews who had not represented an integrated and self-sufficient community in the region.³³ It is estimated that the number of the Jews of the old Yishuv reached 24,000 in 1880. However, the motive behind the migration of those Jews was not political but religious at that time.³⁴ Therefore, the Jewish population was mostly domiciled in the city of Jerusalem. In 1833, there were 3,000 Jews living in Jerusalem; within a decade, Jews became the largest religious group in the city.³⁵ According to a well-known estimate, in 1880, 13,900 of the Palestinian Jewish population lived in Jerusalem.³⁶

³⁰Ottoman Palestine: The region that we call Palestine of the late Ottoman period in this study consisted of the Mutasarrifate or *sanjak* (district) of Jerusalem (which became an independent district to be directly ruled by the central government in 1841 and was composed of *kazas* (subdistricts) of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jaffa, Gaza, and Beersheba in Figure 1.3 in Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem 1872-1908*, BRILL, August 2011, p. 78; the *sanjak* of Acre, composed of Acre, Haifa, Safad, Tiberias, and Nazareth, and the *sanjak* of Nablus. Each *sanjak* was ruled by a governor, and each subdistrict was governed by a mayor in Figure 1.4, ‘The Ottoman Political System During the Hamidian Period’ in *ibid.*, p. 79.

³¹ Tessler, *op. cit.*, p. 25

³² Bachi, *op. cit.*, p. 77

³³ Tessler., *op. cit.*, p.58

³⁴ Greilsammer, *op. cit.*, p. 13-14

³⁵ Tessler, *op. cit.*, p. 20

³⁶ Uziel O. Schmelz, ‘Some Demographic Peculiarities of the Jews of Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century’, in Ma’oz, Moshe (ed.), *Studies On Palestine During The Ottoman Period*, The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1975, p. 120

That old Yishuv in Palestine had emerged throughout immigration of the European Jews to the region during the first half of the 19th century. In this sense, it is also worth it to repeat here that the Jewish migration of 1881-1882 was not the first migration of Jews to Palestine. By the 1830s, the Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe began to migrate to Palestine. In Palestine, they were mostly dealing with worship and education.³⁷

By the start of the Russian pogroms of 1881-82 which led to the migration of Jews to Palestine, the ideas of Zionism began to be carried out in practice. The pogroms of 1881 defeated the hopes of the Russian Jewry for gradual integration into Russian society and led to “soul-searching” among them.³⁸ Vital says that “the pogroms broke, once and for all, the deeply ingrained immobilism and fatalism of the Jews.”³⁹ The year of 1881 changed the way the Jews considered emancipation.⁴⁰

According to Penslar, in the late 1800s, after the conditions of the Jews in Eastern Europe worsened and they moved towards the West, the Jews of Western and Central Europe were on their own to deal with the problems of anti-Semitism as they had throughout centuries.⁴¹ It was the pogroms of 1881-1882 causing Jews to look for a home that gave rise to the European Jews or Zionists beginning to understand that the solution to the Jewish Question should be achieved immediately and in practical terms. The need for Jews to move from circumstances of undesirability and homelessness made them to choose feasible places in which they could settle around the world. Of the 20,000 Jews who left Russia in 1881-82, the majority went mainly to the U.S., while some left for Britian. And, a few hundred of them went to

³⁷ Joseph A. Adler, *Restoring the Jews to Their Homeland: Nineteen Centuries in the Quest for Zion*, Jason Aronson Inc. Publishers, 1997, p. 179

³⁸ Laqueur, op. cit., pp. 64-68

³⁹ Cited in Rose, op. cit., p. 101

⁴⁰ David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism*, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 65

⁴¹ Penslar, op. cit., p. 135

Palestine.⁴² This migration to the Holy Land started the immigration waves to the region and constituted the first stage of the First Aliyah. The differences of the First Aliyah following the expulsion of Jews from Russia were that it started the politically organized migration and marked the emergence of Modern Zionism.

There are two main reasons behind the organized migration of Jews to Palestine. The first includes the directives of the Zionist thought which emerged as a response to anti-Semitism. Sokolow⁴³ speaks of the main principles of Zionism: “1. The Homeland of the Jewish people must be in Palestine. 2. Palestine can and must be made capable of fulfilling its function by the method of patient colonization. 3. The security of public law – that is, of the recognition of the rightful claim of the Jewish people to regenerate Palestine and itself through Palestine- is a necessary condition of success.”⁴⁴ Zionism, he says, equates to “the rebirth of Jewish civilization.”⁴⁵ and its real purpose was the “regeneration of the Jewish people in physical, economic and moral terms.”⁴⁶ Rotenstreich states two main objectives of Zionism: “to retreat from the environment of the non-Jewish world, and to have roots in the real world.” By “real world,” he means not the corners of the ghetto, but in the realm of the Jewish people.⁴⁷ As mentioned above, the Jews began to become aware of their need to have a homeland. In other words, they were not willing to migrate to other countries and be lost. Even though the majority of the Jews moved to the U.S., they also desired to be equal with other nations through having their own homeland. In other words, they wanted to achieve an independence existence characterized by

⁴² Laqueur, op. cit., p. 77 ; ‘Palestine Royal Commission Report’, *Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty*, London, July 1937, p. 12

⁴³ Nahum Sokolow (1860-1936) was one of the important figures of post-Herzlian Zionism. He was also one of the leaders of the Zionist Organization in London. In Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz, *Israel in the Middle East, Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, pre-1948 to the Present*, Brandeis University Press, 2008, p. 30

⁴⁴ Sokolow, ‘Chapter LIII: The Principles of Zionism’, op. cit., p. 307-308

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 310

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 313

⁴⁷ Nathan Rotenstreich, *Zionism: Past and Present*, State University of New York Press, 2007, p. 67

the usual attributers: land, language, culture, state, etc.⁴⁸ In Europe, anti-Semitism existed; therefore, the emancipation should be in somewhere out of Europe. Those who believed in having a nation state in Palestine went there and strived for this purpose.

The second reason, according to Judaism, is that Palestine was the Holy Land called Eretz Yisrael or Land of Israel, which was promised to the Jews by God for them to have their state there.⁴⁹ The Temple Mount, called Zion in Hebrew, in Jerusalem is the most holy place in the world for Jews. According to Jewish doctrine, the Jews had been in exile for centuries waiting for returning of the Messiah, which would lead to the restoration of world Jewry to the Holy Land ultimately, their eventual return.⁵⁰ The Jews in Diaspora had always had ties with the Holy Land. Don Peretz in his book touches upon the historical ties of the Jews in exile to the Eretz Yisrael and states that this linkage was “more intense and deeper” than that of the Muslims and Christians. Jewish religious literature implies that the deserts of Palestine were always preferable to the palaces abroad.⁵¹ In this sense, Zionism was rooted in Judaic tradition although it was a nationalist movement of the Jews.

Nevertheless, it is worth it to mention that, despite the special relationship between the Jewish people and the Holy Land based on religious tradition, the Zionists were not religious in terms of their goals. Leo Pinsker,⁵² while emphasizing a national solution (a nationhood) to the problems that the European Jews faced, wrote: “...the belief in the Messiah, in the intervention of a higher power to bring about our political resurrection, and the religious assumption that we must bear patiently divine punishment, caused us to abandon every thought of our national liberation, unity and

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Tessler, op. cit., p. 7

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 17

⁵¹ Don Peretz, *The Government and Politics of Israel*, Westview Press, 1979, p. 13

⁵² See pp. 19-20 in this chapter.

independence.’’⁵³ As Kimmerling states in his book, *Zionism and Territory*, Zionism was “‘an essentially secular revolution’’⁵⁴ as it was a kind of rebellion against the social structure of traditional-religious Judaism.⁵⁵ In practice, as can be seen from the settled areas, the Zionist colonies were mostly concentrated in the cities of Jaffa, Haifa and Tiberias, not the holy cities for the Jews which were Jerusalem, Hebron and Safed⁵⁶ to where many Jewish immigrants went and stayed.

Piterberg undertakes three main articulations of the Zionist foundational myth. First is the negation of exile representing the “continuity between an ancient past, in which there was Jewish sovereignty over the land of Israel, and a present renewing it in the re-settlement of Palestine.” He underscores that Jews constituted a territorial nation in the old days and that, without territory, their existence must be “abnormal, incomplete and inauthentic.” In exile, they constituted a partial and volatile presence while waiting for the coming of the Messiah to return to the land of Israel. Second is the very return to the land of Israel for which the exilic Jews, living as potential or proto-Zionists, yearned. The return represented the recovery of the home by its people and a normalization of Jewish existence. Zionist ideology defined the land of Israel as empty—not because the Zionist leaders or settlers ignored the Palestinian Arabs, but because without Jewish sovereignty over the land, Israel was in lack of a meaningful history; a return of the Jews would mean the salvation of the land. The Zionist slogan expresses this sentiment: “A land without a people (Palestine without Jewish sovereignty), a people without a land (Jews in exile).” The last articulation was the return to history. Nations are subject to having political self-expression in sovereign nation states. Therefore, exilic Jews as a nation without a homeland was, in a sense, outside of history; only if they gained sovereignty over the soil of their

⁵³ Leo Pinsker, ‘Auto-Emancipaton’, October 17, 1882, in Rabinovich, Itamar and Reinharz, Jehuda (eds.), *Israel in the Middle East, Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, pre-1948 to the Present*, Brandeis University Press, 2008, p. 14

⁵⁴ Baruch Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics*, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1983, p. 204

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Kramer, op. cit., p. 113

homeland could they enter history. In other words, the return of exilic Jews to the land of Israel, as their homeland, equated to their return to history.⁵⁷

While the immigrants from Eastern Europe migrated to various places around the world to escape from brutal anti-Semitism, for the Zionists—if the Jews were to build their own state—it would have to be in Palestine. As for their moving to the Holy Land, the motivation of the Jews was not only to migrate or to escape. Ben Gurion, later Prime Minister of Israel, in his *Memoirs* states that his adherence to Zionism was not brought about by anti-Semitism. He says that he himself was never attacked by anti-Semitic cruelty in Poland, where there was no anti-Semitic persecution. Even though he says Poland sent thousands of Jews to Palestine, the Jews including himself did not migrate to Palestine (he went to the Holy Land at the age of 20.) in order to escape, but to have a homeland in Palestine.⁵⁸ This statement shows us that, in addition to anti-Semitism, the intentions of having a national home and the same status with other nations were also reasons behind the Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Notwithstanding, at this point, it is worth mentioning that most of the Jewish immigrants in Palestine did not have pro-Zionist tendencies. They were not motivated by separatist objections when they had been moving to Palestine.⁵⁹ The majority of immigrants wanted to escape from persecution in their foreign homeland and went to Ottoman Palestine in order to live freely and with respect. They settled in the holy centres in Palestine for Judaism and distanced themselves from the Zionist settlers. According to the estimates given for the Jewish population of Jerusalem, it can be argued that thousands of the Jewish immigrants settled in Jerusalem.⁶⁰ After the organized migrations began at the end of the 19th century,

⁵⁷ Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel*, Verso, 2008, pp. 94-95

⁵⁸ David Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, The World Publishing Company, 1970, p. 37

⁵⁹ See pp. 98-99 of this thesis.

⁶⁰ According to some figures, the population of the city increased by 15.000 between 1880 and 1895 and by more than 30.000 between 1880 and 1914, in Schmelz, *Demography of Jerusalem Jews*, in Ma'oz (ed.), op. cit., p. 120; also see Table 1: Population of city of Jerusalem from late Ottoman era to

Jews started to constitute the absolute majority in Jerusalem.⁶¹ Unlike the settlements of the Zionist colonies, the immigrants resided primarily in other holy cities of Judaism: Safed, Hebron, and Tiberias.⁶²

2.3 Zionist Project in Palestine

During the period between 1882 and 1908, the Zionist movement stood out with regard to the Jewish activity in Palestine. The movement was comprised of the activities of the Lovers of Zion (Hovevei Zion) and later by the Zionist Organization led by Theodor Herzl. Their work was different from other organizations like Alliance Israelite Universelle and Anglo Jewish Association, in the sense of aiming to establish a homeland in Palestine and realistically purchasing land there. Grailsammer states that, for some, Zionism began with Theodor Herzl and the First Zionist Congress of 1897, and the Hovevei Zion movement was the early stage of the development of Zionism; and, for others, the birth of Zionism emerged with the Hovevei Zion movement.⁶³

*Lovers of Zion or Hovevei Zion*⁶⁴

Laqueur claims that the members of the Lovers of Zion were the forerunners of Zionism.⁶⁵ It was a movement of Eastern Europe, mainly Russia, which established

British census 1922. Roberto Mazza, *Jerusalem: From the Ottomans to the British*, Tauris Academic Studies, New York, 2009, p. 37

⁶¹ Tessler, op. cit., p. 20

⁶² Margalit Shilo, 'Old Yishuv: Palestine at the End of the Ottoman Empire', Jewish Women's Archive, <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/old-yishuv-palestine-at-end-of-ottoman-period> (accessed on February 8, 2013)

⁶³ Greilsammer, op. cit., p. 16

⁶⁴ The name of their movement is Hibbat Zion. Yet, it is widely called as the name of its members: the Lovers of Zion or Hovevei Zion.

⁶⁵ Laqueur, p. 74

branches in different places of Eastern Europe during the period between 1881 and 1882.⁶⁶ Those branches urged the Jews to migrate to Palestine.⁶⁷ Briefly, it can be said that thousands of Jews with nothing to lose migrated to Palestine of their own accord.

The movement was in favor, in practice, of a means for the Jews to settle in Palestine. The priorities of the proponents of the practical Zionism involved work towards having a Jewish homeland in Palestine via establishing agricultural settlements and having a gradual development of a sizeable Jewish presence in the region. The idea behind this was that, as a result of these practical means, it would be unavoidable that the Jews gained a political claim over the land. In fact, they believed that this practical work would lead to political achievements.⁶⁸ The practical Zionists also felt that to gain the support of the Western powers towards the Jews having a national home in Palestine, a part of Ottoman land, was important enough that the European powers would pressure the Turks into giving Palestine.⁶⁹

The movement was established in the light of the ideas of a Jewish physician from Odessa, Leo Pinsker (1821-1891), for whom anti-Semitism began to seem an incurable illness, and who felt that the problems of Jews could not be solved throughout assimilation, integration, or emancipation but only by their settlement in their own home.⁷⁰ Pinsker wrote his pamphlet *Auto-Emancipation*, which was published in September 1882, in response to the Russian pogroms. His pamphlet is acknowledged as the first articulation of political Zionism as a solution to the Jewish Problem.⁷¹ According to Pinsker, as the lack of statehood was the key reason behind

⁶⁶ Öke, op. cit., p. 34

⁶⁷ Taner Aslan, 'Osmanlı Dönemi'nde Filistin'e Yahudi Ziyaretleri ve Buna Dair Bir Belge', TSA/YIL 16 S:2, Ağustos 2012

⁶⁸ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 137

⁶⁹ Öke, op. cit., p. 34

⁷⁰ Sokolow, op. cit., pp. 224-225

⁷¹ Rabinovich and Reinharz, *Israel in the Middle East*, op. cit., p. 12

the Jewish Question, the Jews should find a place on the earth which would be their own land. He did not specify the place for the Jewish statehood. He did not insist on the reestablishment of Palestine, “but of the Jews’ own land.”⁷² Because of this, Klier states that “*Auto-Emancipation* was not Zionist.”⁷³ In this sense, it can be said that Pinsker was not Palestinophile.⁷⁴ Pinsker’s proposal had also a political character. He stated that the perpetual existence of the Jews in their own land should be guaranteed by the governments.⁷⁵ His emphasis on the urgent need for a national solution to the international Jewish Problem in the form of a homeland was crucial as his analysis brought practical ends by the activities of the Lovers of Zion.

With the goal of coordinating the activities of different local Lovers of Zion groups, a conference was held in Kattowitz in Upper Silesia in 1884. During the conference, a central organization was established, and Pinsker was elected as the president. In addition, two executive bodies emerged: one in Warsaw, the other in Odessa, which remained until the start of World War I as the “main centre of Zionist activities in Russia.”⁷⁶ Laquer states that the Conference was one of the crucial moments of Zionist history, as the delegates there reached a consensus that Zionist activities should be improved in Palestine, despite some shortcomings in economic terms especially.⁷⁷

The First Aliyah commenced the Jewish settlement in Palestine, and it was the Lovers of Zion who organized and dealt with their activities there. The first group

⁷² Pinsker, op. cit., p. 15; He writes that “We must not attach ourselves to the place where our political life was once violently interrupted and destroyed. The goal of our endeavors must be not the ‘Holy Land’, but a land of our own.” in *ibid.* Yet, he was not against Palestine. He also says that the Holy Land might again become theirs in *ibid.*

⁷³ John Doyle Klier, *Russians, Jews and Pogroms of 1881-1882*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 317

⁷⁴ Klier in his book calls the Jewish press in Russia, consisting of Jewish writers and thinkers who supported the reconstruction of the Jewish life in Palestine, ‘Palestinophile’ in Klier, op. cit., pp. 298-306

⁷⁵ Pinsker, op. cit., p.p 15-16

⁷⁶ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 77

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77

under the name Bilu that came to Palestine in 1882 consisted of university students in Russia whose purpose was cultivating the land of Palestine and making it a home to live.⁷⁸ These pioneers of the immigrants were wholly “well-wishers and sympathizers.”⁷⁹ Tessler states that the arrival of this group to Palestine is considered to be the initial date of the waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine as well as the efforts of modern Zionism to colonize Palestine.⁸⁰ By the Jewish immigration in 1882, the new Yishuv began to emerge. Compared to the existing Jewish community in Palestine, the Zionists were much more organized, self-sufficient, and politically motivated.⁸¹

The first wave of Aliyah started by the Bilu group in 1882 and ended in 1903.⁸² This period represents a two-tier immigration when most of the Jewish immigrants went to Palestine: between 1882 and 1884, and between 1890 and 1891.⁸³ Under the leadership of the Bilu group, the members of which were influenced by the idealism of Russian revolutionaries, had a secular outlook and desired to establish a modern society in Palestine⁸⁴, around 55 settlers came to Palestine in two years following the first arrival in 1882. Though more than the half of those young settlers left Palestine in 1884, by the time of 1903, the Jewish population in Palestine (both the old Yishuv and the Zionists) had reached 50,000.⁸⁵

Another important aspect of the Bilu group was its political motivation. In 1881, a Bilu delegation had applied to the Ottoman government for the purchase of

⁷⁸ The Bilu group wanted “a state within a larger state.” See *The Manifesto of The Bilu* (1882) in Sokolow, op. cit., p. 333

⁷⁹ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 77

⁸⁰ Tessler, op. cit. p. 42

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 58-59

⁸² Tessler, op. cit. p. 42 ; Up until the Second Aliyah in 1904, more than 20,000 Jews came to Palestine during the First Aliyah, See Shafir, op. cit, p. 232; Bachi, op. cit., p. 79

⁸³ Greilsammer, op. cit., p. 34

⁸⁴ Shapira, op. cit., p. 56

⁸⁵ Tessler, p. 43

Palestinian land, but this was not accepted.⁸⁶ The fact that the migration and settlements were endeavored deliberately and with political purposes can be seen in the sentiments of the first settlers motivated by working the land and making it their home: “We want a homeland in our country granted to us by God. We will ask it from the Sultan. If not possible, we will want under the protection of a great power, an autonomous state.”⁸⁷

In fact, the most of the emigrants from Eastern Europe went to Palestine with no prior preparation or organization. They were confused and disoriented immigrants. Yet, among them, there were also immigrants who went to Palestine for ideological reasons and who designed their *aliyah*.⁸⁸ Those immigrants helped to the establishment of small agricultural settlements which were led by the supporters of the Lovers of Zion movement as the pioneers of the immigration as well as the well-off Jerusalem Jews.⁸⁹

The aim of the Lovers of Zion was to create Jewish farmers rooted to their land and to establish *moshavot* (colonies) – Jewish national rural settlements in Palestine.⁹⁰ The pioneers of the first settlement were three *moshavot*: Rosh Pinnah, Zikhron Ya’akov, and Rishon le-Zion which all began to function in 1882.⁹¹ In 1883, the *moshavot* of Yesud ha-Ma’alah and, in 1884, Mishmar ha-Yarden were founded in Galilee.⁹² The Lovers of Zion also attended to the migration and financing of the

⁸⁶ Isaiah Friedman, *Germany, Turkey and Zionism, 1897-1918*, Transaction Publishers, 2008, p. 39

⁸⁷ Fahri Türk, ‘Yahudi Devleti’nin Demografik Temelleri: Birinci Dünya Savaşı’na Kadar Osmanlı Devleti’nin Filistin Siyaseti’, *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Aralık 2007, Cilt 9, Sayı 2, p. 69-104, p. 77

⁸⁸ Yossi Ben-Artzi, *Early Jewish Settlement Patterns In Palestine, 1882-1914*, The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1997, pp. 17-18

⁸⁹ Schama, op. cit., p. 61

⁹⁰ Ben-Artzi, op. cit., p. 18

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 21 also pp. 61-63

⁹² Laqueur, op. cit., p. 76. (Other *moshavot* were also established. For example: Rehovot (1890); Moza and Hadera (1891); Metullah and Hartuv (1896)). For the *moshavah*-type settlements for this period, see also Ben-Artzi, op. cit., pp. 33-52 and pp. 61-64

settlements in Palestine. The main target of the Lovers of Zion movement was the purchase of land in Palestine.⁹³ However, they lacked money.⁹⁴ In this respect, they managed to gain the financial support of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, the head of the Rothschild banking house in France (1845-1934)⁹⁵ and Baron Maurice de Hirsch (1831-1896), another Jewish banker. While the latter began to concentrate on the Jewish colonization in Argentina,⁹⁶ Rothschild, having tested the quality of the labour before he became involved in the business of the Jewish settlement in Palestine,⁹⁷ assumed patronage of *moshavot* in Palestine⁹⁸ through his officials. With the help of his support, the existing *moshavot* survived, and two other *moshavot* were founded by his financial aid.⁹⁹ During the First Aliyah, Rothschild reorganized colonies in accordance with the French agricultural colonization methods.¹⁰⁰ As Dan Giladi states in his article, the Baron's administration, through introducing new crops and work methods, led to an immediate change in the agricultural face of the colonies. It also introduced a new way of life which influenced the youths' morale and work spirit. Rothschild brought a system of patronage in that he provided the incentives to the farmers, who became the recipients of his doles.¹⁰¹ After the arrival

⁹³ Greilsammer, op. cit. p. 31

⁹⁴ Wealthy Russian Jews were unwilling to support the Zionist enterprise, and the Lovers of Zion had a poor financial showing. In Laqueur, op. cit., p. 77

⁹⁵ Edmond de Rothschild was influenced by anti-Semitism in the French public life and politics, which became apparent after the Dreyfus Affair which will be touched upon below. Unlike the French Jewish elite, he was apprehensive about the Jewish future. Simon Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1978, p. 45; for his business in the Holy Land, see in the same book, pp. 88-136

⁹⁶ Laqueur, op. cit., pp. 77-78

⁹⁷ Schama, op. cit., p. 63

⁹⁸ By 1883, *moshavot* of Rishon le-Zion, Zikhron Ya'akov, Rosh Pinnah and Ekron came under the patronage network of the Baron's administration in Ben-Artzi, op. cit., p. 24

⁹⁹ Laqueur, pp. 77-78

¹⁰⁰ Penslar, op. cit., p. 65

¹⁰¹ Dan Giladi, 'The Agronomic Development Of The Colonies In Palestine (1882-1914)' pp. 175-189, in Ma'oz, Moshe (ed.), *Studies on Palestine During the Ottoman Period*, The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1975, p. 177, the colonies rescued by the Baron can also be seen in *Ibid.*, pp. 175-189

of the second wave of the First Aliyah, in 1890-91, more land was purchased, and two colonies were founded, one of which was located between Jaffa and Haifa. Before the end of the century, 21 agricultural settlements had been established with a population of 4,500, the majority of whom were employed in agriculture.¹⁰²

The Rothschild banking dynasty¹⁰³ had purchased 450,000 *dunams*¹⁰⁴ of land and around 10,000 Jews were settled there.¹⁰⁵ While the associations of the Lovers of Zion were able to provide 87,000 pounds sterling to the Zionist movement in Palestine, Edmond de Rothschild spent more than 1.5 million pounds sterling in the years between 1883 and 1899.¹⁰⁶

The substantial contribution of Edmond de Rothschild to the Jewish settlements in Palestine is undeniable. As Simon Schama says in his book: “...if Edmond de Rothschild was to be the making of a Jewish Palestine, it was equally true that Jewish Palestine would be the making of Edmond de Rothschild.”¹⁰⁷ Notwithstanding, this kind of assistance does not denote that Edmond was a Zionist. The intent, rather, seems to underscore the significance of his activities in both the Jewish presence and the Zionist progress in Palestine. In Turkey, similar to the exaggeration of the policy of Abdulhamid towards Zionism, the support of Rothschild to the Jewish presence in Palestine has also been misinterpreted. For example, İsmail Tomalak, looking past from the present and confusing Rothschilds with each other, in his book, *Paranın İmparatorları, Rothschild’lerin Küresel Gücü*, implies that Rothschilds were willing to obtain Palestine from Abdulhamid. He also argues that Rothschilds were the main supporters of the Zionist leader Theodor

¹⁰² Laqueur, p. 78

¹⁰³ Piterberg, p. 78

¹⁰⁴ The Turkish dönüm: one square metre dunam is approximately 1000 m². Roy S. Fischel and Ruth Kark, ‘Sultan Abdulhamid II and Palestine: Private Lands and Imperial Policy’, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 39, 2008, (pp. 129-166), p. 132

¹⁰⁵ Telliöglü, Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Filistin Sempozyumu, TTK

¹⁰⁶ Öke, op. cit., p. 36

¹⁰⁷ Schama, op. cit., p 53

Herzl.¹⁰⁸ Here it is important to note that, despite the support of Jewish bankers for a Jewish presence in the Holy Land, they were not in favor of Zionism.¹⁰⁹ As Rothschild said, quoted by Weizmann, “Without me, the Zionists could not have accomplished anything; without the Zionists, my project would have died.”¹¹⁰ As Penslar states Rothschild’s activities in Palestine were philanthropic, not entrepreneurial or political. He did not see himself as a political figure trying to create ‘an autonomous, self-sufficient entity that could become a Jewish homeland.’¹¹¹ He considered himself not a capitalist developer but a private individual doing good for the Jewish people.¹¹² Rothschild made a distinction between the Zionists and himself. As it will be explained further below, he supported the adoption of Ottoman citizenship by the Jewish settlers in Palestine and felt that his company was privileged in subsidizing the Jewish colonies in Palestine. What is more, as will be touched upon, he would refuse to reach a consensus with Theodor Herzl as to the mass Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine and did never ally with the Zionist leader.

In 1891, the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) was founded by Baron Maurice de Hirsch in order to settle the Jewish immigrants in Argentina and other regions.¹¹³ In 1896, the JCA began to be active in Palestine.¹¹⁴ With regard to the Jewish activities in Palestine during the period of First Aliyah (1882-1903), Shafir’s work is

¹⁰⁸ Tokalak, op. cit., pp. 95-96

¹⁰⁹ Sokolow states in his book that Baron de Hirsch was not a Zionist and even not a national Jew in Sokolow, op. cit., p. 252; see ‘Chapter XLV: An Attempt to Solve the Jewish Problem’, in *ibid.*, pp. 252-257.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14

¹¹¹ Derek Jonathan Penslar, ‘Zionism, Colonialism and Technocracy: Otto Warburg and the Commission for the Exploration of Palestine, 1903-7’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 25, No. 1, January, 1990, (pp. 143-160), p. 145

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims; A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001*, Vintage Books, New York, 1999, p. 18

¹¹⁴ Penslar, *Israel in History; The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective*, p. 139

important, in the sense of describing the method of colonization and its results. During this period, approximately 20,000-30,000 Jews came to Palestine. The settlers first wanted to establish colonies with the existing Arabian agricultural methods of the Arabs. However, the Arabs' low wages did not meet the Jews' standard of living. In the land purchased by the Rothschild company, the local Arabs who accepted lower wages became more attractive compared to the Jewish labour force. Small segments of the Jews were employed with lower wages; therefore, many left Palestine and were replaced by Arab workers.¹¹⁵

As mentioned above, many of the first settlers of the First Aliyah left Palestine from 1884 up until 1903. However, given the fact that the Jewish agricultural settlements were revived in Palestine by 1903, compared to that of early 1880s, it cannot be argued that the Lovers of Zion movement ended in a dead failure. Despite a lack of vision or genuine leadership¹¹⁶ and their inability to systematize colony settlement, their movement was able to start Jewish colonization in practice and prepare the conditions for colony settlement in a better way. Even though the subsidies of the Baron Rothschild made a considerable contribution, the venture, power, and endeavor of the settlers and workers also played a crucial role.¹¹⁷

2.4 Protégé System and the Interests of the Foreign Powers in the Jewish Immigration and Settlement

When Zionists began their activities in Palestine, Palestine as a region and the Jews as a people were already at the center of attention of Western powers. However, with the internationalization of the Jewish Question by Herzl's activities and with the rise

¹¹⁵ Gershon Shafir, 'Zionism and Colonialism: A Comparative Approach', in Barnett, Michael N. (ed.), *Israel in Comparative Perspective, Challenging the Comparative Wisdom*, State University of New York Press, 1996, (pp. 227-242), pp. 232-233

¹¹⁶ They are the reasons for Laqueur to call it a failure in *ibid.*, p. 80

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137

of competition among those powers in the Middle East, they became the protectors of Jewish immigrants.

The foreign powers were motivated by increasing their intervention in the domestic life of the Ottoman Empire as they had political interests in the Ottoman territory. In this sense, they were in competition with each other to have more influence in the Ottoman Palestine. In fact, by the late 1800s, the European Powers had come to consider that the civilization and colonization of Asia, Africa and Middle East were the burden of the white man.¹¹⁸ At this point, the Holy Land was considered to be of strategic importance as it was located on crucial trade routes, and was always in the interest of the Powers (Britain, Russia, Germany and America).

The Western countries wanted to act as the protector of their coreligionist minorities in the Ottoman Palestine, thus the foreign nationals were enjoying many concessions. They were subject to the jurisdiction of the Consular Courts in both judicial and commercial matters. The European powers had their own schools, courts, and religious institutions. Therefore, the Christian and Jewish communities there had autonomy in their religious, educational, and commercial activities. In Palestine, the English established two missionary associations in 1840, and built schools, hospitals and libraries. In Jerusalem, they had a church. The Germans, with the approval of Abdulhamid II, were able to build a Protestant Church, as well as schools and hospitals. The Russians had their own society in Palestine, named Orthodox Palestine Society.¹¹⁹

Moreover, by the 18th century, both the foreigners and the Ottoman subjects owing foreign nationality in the Ottoman Empire benefited from the capitulations. Through the protégé system they were given the right to acquire citizenship of a foreign state. As a result, they began to live in the Ottoman State under the protection of a foreign power, and benefited from the economic and judicial concessions that were put in

¹¹⁸ Lorena S. Neal, 'The Roots of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: 1882-1914', Illinois Wesleyan University, History Research Honors Project, May 1995, p. 8

¹¹⁹ Öke, op. cit., p. 62

place under the capitulations. Under the protégé system, a foreign state was able to protect a national from any other foreign state,¹²⁰ which allowed the Jews coming from Eastern Europe to become citizens of a European state, and thus benefit from its protection in Palestine.

The Western powers also protected the Jews settled in Palestine or moving to Palestine by the mid-19th century. In fact, the Western Powers took strong interest in the Ottoman Jews, especially after the Damascus Affair of 1840 highlighted the importance of protecting Jews living under Ottoman rule.¹²¹ In 1840, a Christian monk was murdered, and members of the Jewish community in Damascus were wrongly blamed for it. All of the members of the community were imprisoned and many of them died of torture.¹²² In this regard, both Sokolow and Rodrigue underline the role of the Damascus Affair on the formation of Jewish media and public opinion in Europe.¹²³ Affected by the Jewish propaganda, Britain began to protect the Jews in the Ottoman State in 1841. Britain's objective was to take advantage of a possible power vacuum in the Middle East in the case of dissolution of the Ottoman State, and therefore to broaden its sphere of influence in the Ottoman territory.¹²⁴ Additionally, in 1847, England declared that if any home country did not protect its Jewish citizens living in the Ottoman State, the British consulates would take over responsibility for their protection. That prompted the other powers to enforce their protection of Jews

¹²⁰ Öke, op. cit., p. 60; Belkıs Konan, 'Osmanlı Devleti'nde Protégé (Koruma) Sistemi', AÜHF, Dergiler, Cilt 57, Sayı 1, pp. 169-188, p. 171

¹²¹ Öke, op. cit., p. 92; also see the Letter by the Elders of the Jewish Community of Damascus to the Elders of the Jewish community of Constantinople, March 1840, in Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz, op. cit., pp. 313-315; the Damascus Affair prompted the political consciousness of Western Jews and made them aware of the necessity of communal solidarity on behalf of general Jewish interests, and also led to the establishment of the Alliance Israelite Universelle in Ibid., p. 315-316

¹²² Sokolow, op. cit., p. 110; Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1912*, Indiana University Press, 1990, p. 1

¹²³ Sokolow, Chapter XXI, England and the Jews in the East, pp. 110-114; Rodrigue, op. cit., p. 3

¹²⁴ Öke, op. cit., pp. 92-93

living in the Ottoman State, and to give certificates of protection to those moving to Palestine by 1882.¹²⁵

By the time of the 1880s, being under the protection of foreign countries was so advantageous for the newcomers to Palestine that remaining subject to Ottoman jurisdiction (even if they were given equal status with the Muslim subjects of the Ottoman State) was not preferable for the Jews moving to the Ottoman territory. Through consular protection, the foreigners were to be immune from local taxation, and had many other privileges.¹²⁶ Therefore, most of them continued to enjoy consular protection, and the foreign countries continued to let them do so.

Britain and the Jewish settlement in Palestine

One of the countries that gave protection to the Zionist immigrants was Britain. Britain, in the case of dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, had the desire to be one of the shareholders of the Ottoman territory.¹²⁷ In fact, Britain had already begun to have dominance over the Ottoman territories; after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, the administration of Cyprus¹²⁸ and Egypt were taken over by British control.¹²⁹ Having granted protection to the Jews in any other country in 1841, Britain gave full citizenship to them in 1890.¹³⁰ Even before the pogroms of Russia and the start of the Jewish *Aliyot*, the British government approved a project regarding the Jewish settlement in Palestine. The project was drawn up by a member of the Conservative and Unionist Party, Oliphant, and ratified by the Prime Minister

¹²⁵Arslan, op. cit., p. 55

¹²⁶Friedman, op. cit., p. 43

¹²⁷Öke, op. cit p. 92

¹²⁸Georgeon, op. cit., p. 144

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 260

¹³⁰Tessler, op. cit., p. 25

and Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹³¹ After Oliphant presented his proposal (offering a Jewish settlement in the Sanjak of Belka in Palestine) to Abdulhamid II in 1879, it was rejected on the ground that a Jewish presence in a specific region would mean a state within a state.¹³²

After the second wave of immigrations started in 1890, the British Government assigned its ambassador in Istanbul, Sir William Arthur White, to arrange the settlements of the Russian Jews in Palestine.¹³³ In 1891, the charge d'affaires of the British ambassador sent a note to the Ottoman government regarding the protection of Russian Jewish families in Palestine and Syria. As a result, Sir White expressed thanks to the Sultan,¹³⁴ which suggests that the Ottoman government took the note into account.

Russia and the Jewish Settlement in Palestine

In addition to the British efforts to facilitate the Jewish immigration to Palestine, Russia also played an important role. Russia, as the most brutal anti-Semitic country of that time, wanted to increase its domination over the Holy Land. Since the number of Slavs in Palestine was very few, the Russian government began to protect the Jews in order to gain ground in the competition for control over the Holy Land.¹³⁵ In this sense, the first protest to the prohibition of the Jewish immigration to Palestine was declared by the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, Nelidow, in 1882.¹³⁶ Russia

¹³¹Arslan, op. cit., p. 55

¹³²Yıldız Sadaret Resmî Maruzat Evrakı, Y.A.RES., 5/58, 29.Ca.1297; This rejection to a Jewish settlement in Palestine remained the official policy of the Ottoman government from that date forward.

¹³³Yıldız Sadaret Hususî Maruzat Evrakı, Y. A.HUS, 248/85, 26.Za.1308

¹³⁴Yıldız Parakende BaşKitâbet Dâiresi Marûzâtı, Y.PRK. BŞK.,24/27, 20.R.1309

¹³⁵Öke, op. cit., p. 96

¹³⁶Friedman, op. cit., p. 40

also raised objection to a provision of the Ottoman government which required that Russian Jews become Ottoman subjects.¹³⁷

As Öke states, the support of Russia and Germany to the Zionists were also brought about by their intention to put an end to their domestic problems. The exodus of Jews from those countries, which regarded socialist organizations as a threat, would leave the socialist parties with a lack of supporters. In addition, the anti-Semitism which caused opposition to their governments would cease to exist.¹³⁸ Given the fact that anti-Semitism was widespread in European countries, Gabriel Piterberg mentions Arendt's argument that according to Herzl, an anti-Semitic man could more appreciate the advantages of the mass migration of Jews from Europe.¹³⁹

While the Western countries were expelling Jews from their soil, they all supported the Zionists in regard to the Jewish settlement in Palestine. With regard to this, Abdulhamid asked "how could the civilized states having expelled the Jews from their countries protest our refusal to accept Jewish settlements in Palestine?"¹⁴⁰

2.5 Ottoman Restrictive Policy towards Zionist Movement

As is understood, Palestine was significant for the Zionists, yet, it was a part of the Ottoman territory. Until 1882, the Ottoman State had made no restrictions on the Jewish settlement in any part of the Ottoman land including Palestine. However, when a few hundred Jews arrived in Palestine, the Ottoman government took measures. In June 1882, entry of foreign Jews to the Ottoman territory and their purchase of land were forbidden.¹⁴¹ However, soon after in July, the Ottoman authorities declared that Jews could settle in any part of the Ottoman state except for

¹³⁷ Hariciye Nezareti İstişare Odası, HR.HMŞ.İŞO, 156/12, 18.Ke.1305, 1888

¹³⁸ Öke, op. cit., p.94

¹³⁹ Piterberg, op. cit., p. 8

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 99

¹⁴¹ Friedman, op. cit., p. 39

Palestine, on the condition that the newcomers adopt Ottoman nationality and obey Ottoman law.¹⁴² In addition, they were to trickle in and settle dispersedly,¹⁴³ that is to say that the Ottoman State accepted Jewish immigrants but closed the doors of Palestine to them.

Nevertheless, the entrance of the foreign Jews continued. Frustrated by the foreigners' enjoyment of extra rights, the Ottoman Government decided to take some additional measures. As a result, the Ottoman government prohibited entrance of the foreign Jews to Palestine and land sales to them in the region. In 1882, it had already been declared that only pilgrims were allowed to go to Palestine. However, until 1884, those who alleged to be pilgrims were able to gain entrance. The entry of Jewish visitors who did not have travel visas authorized by the Ottoman consulates in their country of origin was prohibited in 1884.¹⁴⁴ The Ottoman Government wanted its consuls to confirm that the Jews were coming for pilgrimage, not for trade or residence,¹⁴⁵ and the time for pilgrimage was limited to one month. By a decree, the duration of stay of the Jewish visitors in Palestine who were under the protection of foreign powers was extended to three months.¹⁴⁶ When those visitors came, officials were taking their passports and giving them the red card as a permit for their three-month visit.¹⁴⁷ After three months, their visas would be invalid and they would be expelled from Palestine.¹⁴⁸ In 1900, the entry of the Russian Jews with the aim of residence or trade to Palestine was forbidden again, and visitors were only allowed to

¹⁴² YPRK. BŞK., 6/77, 04.Z.1299

¹⁴³ Friedman, op. cit., p. 40

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 84

¹⁴⁵ Friedman, op. cit., p. 44

¹⁴⁶ Meclis-i Vükela Mazbataları, MV., 31/65, 21.Ş .1305

¹⁴⁷ The application of the red card system, which began to be implemented in 1900, was always criticized by the Zionists as a contradiction to law provided through constitutional system and as a humiliating exercise. See Arslan, op. cit., p. 110-117

¹⁴⁸ Dahiliye Mektubi Kalemî, DH. MKT., 1456/41- 02.S.1305

stay for a month.¹⁴⁹ According to the decree of 1893, the purchase of land in Palestine for the Jewish immigrants in Jerusalem was forbidden.¹⁵⁰ In following April, the sale of land in Palestine was prohibited to all Jews.¹⁵¹ Whether these restrictions did work will be observed in the following parts of this chapter.

There were two main purposes of the Ottoman government behind the formulation of a restrictive policy to the Zionist movement in Palestine. First, the foreign Jews were being able to enter and settle in Ottoman Palestine through the protection of the European powers under the capitulations. Therefore, by the restrictions, the Ottoman government was also willing to prevent the foreign powers from interfering in its domestic affairs and the foreign subjects from deriving benefit from the capitulations.¹⁵² Friedman attributed the binding character of the capitulations and the protégé system to the restrictive Ottoman policy towards Jewish settlements. The Ottomans wanted the Jews to understand that they had to get Ottoman citizenship and wanted to prevent the foreign Powers from protecting them.¹⁵³ Secondly, the Ottomans wanted to avoid a Jewish nationalism in the Ottoman land, which could have turned into a separate movement.¹⁵⁴ Here, it would be essential to elaborate on the Ottoman State's concerns and interests which had an impact on its policy towards Zionist movement.

The Ottoman Empire had been weakening since the end of the 17th century as it was losing territories in the wars. By the beginning of the 19th century, the main concern of the Ottoman ruling elite was the territorial integrity of the Empire. In this sense, the Ottomans issued many reforms as called Tanzimat reforms in order to ensure the loyalty of the non-Muslim Ottoman subjects to the Ottoman State and to prevent

¹⁴⁹DH.MKT., 2250/22, 1900

¹⁵⁰DH.MKT., 2043/94, 29.C .1310

¹⁵¹ Öke, op. cit., p. 89

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 60

¹⁵³ Friedman, op. cit. p. 36

¹⁵⁴ Öke, op. cit., p. 60

them from engaging in nationalist movements and constituting a threat to the Ottoman State.

The Tanzimat period (labeled by Tessler as a “modernist revolution”¹⁵⁵), starting with the Imperial Edict of Reorganization of 1839 and ending by the First Constitution in 1876, is important in the sense of understanding the Ottomans’ perception of threat at the time the Jews migrated to Palestine. During this period, the Ottoman government carried out crucial reforms concerning non-Muslim subjects and citizenship: guarantees for the security of life and property of all Ottoman subjects (1839) and a rule equating to legal equality before the law for both Muslims and non-Muslims (1839).¹⁵⁶ In 1839, citizenship was given to the Ottoman Jews.¹⁵⁷

By giving legal equality to the Ottoman subjects including non-Muslim, the Ottoman government wanted to please the European Powers who were concerned with the conditions of the Christian subjects of the Empire. The main purposes under the reforms were integration of the ethnic and religious communities into Ottoman society and centralization of the power of the State in order to guarantee that its full control over its provinces could be preserved. Yet, since before Tanzimat, the religious communities were autonomous in their activities, they were not in favour of centralization which “eroded their communal autonomy.”¹⁵⁸

After the Crimean War of 1854-1856¹⁵⁹, the Ottoman government decided to create more reforms in favor of the non-Muslims, including Jews. By the Reform Edict of

¹⁵⁵ Tessler, op. cit. p. 25

¹⁵⁶ Moshe Ma’oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861: The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 22

¹⁵⁷ Tessler, op. cit., p. 25

¹⁵⁸ Rodrigue, op cit., pp. 31-32

¹⁵⁹ Crimean War of 1854-1856: The war broke out after the dispute between the Catholics backed by France and the Orthodox over the protection of the holy places in Jerusalem. However, the underlying reason was Russia’s intent over the Straits, a goal which was contrary to the interests of Britain and France. Therefore, the British and French supported the Ottomans against Russia; and, as a result, Russia was the losing side. François Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, Translated by Ali Berkay, Homer Kitabevi, 2006, p. 32. The Crimean war is important for two reasons: the Ottoman Empire carried out reforms for the non-Muslims; and, after the war, the Ottomans became indebted to the European

1856 (Islahat Firmani of 1856), the Sultan acknowledged the equality of all Ottoman subjects including non-Muslims before the law.¹⁶⁰ However, the non-Muslims were adopting the nationality of a foreign country while enjoying capitulations as other countries were increasing their influence over the Ottoman state. France was protecting the Catholics; the Protestants were relying on the protection of Britain, and the Orthodox and Slavs were backed by Russia. Additionally, in Palestine, Britain, Russia, France, Italy, Spain, and Germany were backing their co-religionists.¹⁶¹ Therefore, the judicial equality granted to non-Muslim Ottoman citizens did not seem to be attractive for the foreign nationals to become an Ottoman subject. What is more, according to the Treaty of Paris of 1856, the capitulations would continue to be enforced. As a result, the objectives of the Ottomans to have non-Muslims become Ottoman subjects and to prevent their homeland countries from intervening in their internal affairs were not achieved. The London Conference of January 1871 and the Treaty of Berlin of 1878 also reaffirmed the binding character of these capitulations.¹⁶² As mentioned above, when it came to the 1880s, the foreign powers (mainly Britain, France and Russia) and foreigners in the Ottoman Empire were enjoying the rights mandated by the capitulations. The Jewish immigration to Palestine would extend the area of influence of the Western powers in the Holy Places. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire attempted to forbid any Jewish immigration to Palestine because the presence of foreign Jews in the region would invite further foreign intervention in its internal affairs.

What is more, the Empire, as a declining power, lost its territories in the Balkans (Serbia, Montenegro and Romania) after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878.

countries in *ibid.*, pp. 32-34. The Ottoman State was forced to take on a great amount of credit, which resulted in a huge amount of Ottoman debts in Maoz, *op. cit.*, 28. For the impact of the war on the Palestinian Jews see 'Chapter XXVIII: The Crimean War', in Sokolow, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-154

¹⁶⁰ Rodrigue, *op. cit.*, p. 14; Maoz, *op. cit.*, p. 27; see the Islahat Firmani (Hatti Humayoun) of February 1856 in Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, Bedford/St. Martin's, Seventh Edition, 2010, Document 1.2, p. 46-48

¹⁶¹ Mim Kemal Öke, *Siyonizm ve Filistin Sorunu: 1880-1923*, Kırmızı Kedi, İkinci basım, 2011, pp. 61-62

¹⁶² Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 34

Furthermore, at the end of the 19th century, disturbances in the Balkans continued, especially in Macedonia.¹⁶³ In North Africa, the Ottoman Sultan had troubles with Egypt and Tunis.¹⁶⁴ In the East, rebellions by the Armenians and Arabs in Yemen constituted disturbances for the Ottoman Empire¹⁶⁵. The loss of territories along with the nationalist disturbances the Ottoman State had to deal with might have had two main outcomes with regard to the Zionist movement in Palestine and the Ottoman policy towards it. The nationalist movements, particularly the Armenians in the East and the Bulgarians in the Balkans, caused the Ottomans to be sensitive to nationalist movements of the non-Muslims in its own territory. For example, in this regard, Abdulhamid II himself said that he did not want to have a second ‘Bulgarian question’ in Palestine. According to an official document, the government decided that, while the Armenian disorder was in existence, the immigration and settlement of the Jews in the environs of Jerusalem could not be accepted.¹⁶⁶ A possible autonomous Jewish region could have encouraged other nations to engage in separatist activities on Ottoman territory. Therefore, these negative developments from the Ottoman perspective had a direct effect on carrying out prohibitions towards the Zionist movement. However, on the other hand, they might also have had an indirect effect. While the Ottoman Sultan was against the Zionists’ political objectives in Palestine due to fear of another upheaval or a nationalist problem, the very existence of those troubles in other parts of the region (in addition to the other political and economic problems of the Empire) might also have had a negative impact on its former policy. The Sultan pondering over other difficulties might have not pursued sufficient policies towards the Zionists. These problems of the Empire could help us to answer the questions such as why the Ottomans could not manage to control the implementation of the restrictions it had mandated with regard to Jewish

¹⁶³ Georgeon, op. cit., p. 419

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 249-260

¹⁶⁵ For more on the nationalist disorders in the Ottoman territories, see Georgeon’s book, *Sultan Abdulhamid*.

¹⁶⁶ Öke, op. cit., p. 77

immigration and settlement. All of these variables may help us argue that certain troubles might have prevented the Ottoman government from concentrating on the Zionist movement in Palestine, and that this may have contributed to the advancement of the Zionist work in the region.

It is important to note that the Ottoman government carried out restrictions not because of being anti-Semitic, as it accepted the Jewish immigration to other parts of the State. Also important to emphasize is that the Ottoman government or officials did not pursue an anti-Semitic policy that the Jews were exposed to in Europe.¹⁶⁷ According to a document of the Ottoman Council of Ministers, Ottoman government condemned anti-Jewish publications of the Bulgarian newspapers and the factors that led to emigration of many Jews in undesirable situations. The government warned the Commissariat in Bulgaria that the necessary actions should be taken in order not to have a Jewish Question in future.¹⁶⁸ After a blooder wave of anti-Jewish pogroms of 1903-1906 occurred in Russia, the Sultan declared that the Ottoman Jews who wanted to subsidize their co-religionists in Russia who were suffered and helpless would not be prevented.¹⁶⁹ In this study, it can be seen that the Ottoman attitude towards Jewish migrations was anti-Zionist oriented and brought about by a security-minded perspective, due to the fact that the Zionists' political objective over Palestine, the Ottoman territory, was regarded as a threat to the security and sovereignty of the Empire.

¹⁶⁷ The absence of anti-Semitism as a state policy does not mean that there was no anti-Semitism in the Ottoman Empire. In the 19th century, the nationalist revolts in the Balkans against the Ottoman Empire resulted in the massacres of thousands of Jews and Muslims in the region, who were loyal to the Ottoman rule, by the Greeks, Serbians, Romanians and Bulgarians. Because of the anti-Semitic attitude, thousands of Jews took refuge in the Ottoman Empire. For the Christian Anti-Semitism to the Ottoman Jews as well as the role of the Ottoman Empire in providing refugee to those suffered Jews see 'Hristiyan Milliyetçiliğinin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Yahudileri Üzerindeki Etkileri', in Stanford J. Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, Translated by Meriç Sobutay, Kapı Yayınları, Eylül 2008, pp. 294-323

¹⁶⁸ MV., 83/62, 30.B.1312 (1895)

¹⁶⁹ İrade-i Hususiye, İ.HUS., 137/1323, 03.Za.1323 (1906)

2.6 Theodor Herzl, His Diplomatic Contacts and the WZO

It is beneficial to put the Theodor Herzl's activities under a separate heading—not because for many scholars and historians he is the father of Zionism or modern Zionism, but because of his internationalization of the Jewish Question and his critical negotiations at the diplomatic level. Moreover, his visits to Istanbul and contacts with the statesmen there, including the Ottoman Sultan, Abdulhamid II, distinguish him from other Zionists. In this regard, his attempts to make the Sultan agree to his projects are also worth mentioning.

Laqueur says that the publication of Herzl's book, *The Jewish State* (1896), started modern political Zionism.¹⁷⁰ For Herzl, Zionism was the political expression of an old idea. Even though the objective was to solve the Jewish question through modern means, the main aim was intrinsically to realize the ardent desire to return to the Zion¹⁷¹ as can be seen from his own words:

I am not bringing them a new idea, but a very ancient one. Yes, it is a universal idea, and therein lies its power; it is as old as our people, who have never, even in times of direst misery, ceased to cherish it. This idea is the creation of the Jewish State.¹⁷²

By the time of the Dreyfus Affair, Herzl had begun to think about and work on the Jewish Question. In the fall of 1895, a French staff officer, Alfred Dreyfus had been imprisoned by French authorities on a charge of espionage on Germany's behalf.¹⁷³ Even though Dreyfus was innocent and it was an unfair case, anti-Semitic public opinion began to emerge in France. Herzl considered the position of Dreyfus to be a

¹⁷⁰ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 84

¹⁷¹ Friedman, op. cit., p. 78. (Zion is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the most holy place for the Jews.)

¹⁷² Theodor Herzl, 'The Solution of the Jewish Question', February 21, 1896, *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, Translated from the German by Harry Zohn, Herzl Press, New York, 1973, p. 20

¹⁷³ Pappe, op. cit., p. 36

symbol of all Jewish people in the world who were exposed to virulence and held in abomination by non-Jews.¹⁷⁴ Herzl was to say that the Dreyfus trial made him turn into a Zionist.¹⁷⁵ According to Herzl, Jews as a nation had the abilities and opportunities to establish their homeland¹⁷⁶ which, in turn, would provide them equal treatment with other nations. As long as the Jews remained homeless, their presence would not be desired.¹⁷⁷ An exodus of Jews from Europe would also put an end to anti-Semitism in Europe.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, for him, the Jewish state was a world need.¹⁷⁹ The Jewish Question was a problem for all Jews, and only a political solution was a necessity: an independent state with the support of the European powers.¹⁸⁰ Since it was an international problem, he commenced his activities at the international level. His policies were important, therefore, in the sense of internationalization of the Jewish question.¹⁸¹

Since putting his plan into action was proving to be difficult, Herzl needed the support of Jewish leaders in Europe, as well as that of Jewish bankers and businessmen. However, the people he negotiated with did not show a warm reaction to his proposal.¹⁸² In June 1895, Herzl attempted to win over the great Jewish bankers Hirsch and Edmond de Rothschild, but they could not reach a conclusion.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁴ Finer, Harry, 'Dreyfus Case and the Zionist Movement', Jewish Magazine, May 2009, http://www.jewishmag.com/133mag/dreyfus_herzl/dreyfus_herzl.htm (accessed on October 20, 2013)

¹⁷⁵ Rose, op. cit., p. 113

¹⁷⁶ Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, Filiquarian Publishing, 2006, p. 24

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 57

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 15

¹⁷⁹ Laqueur, op. cit., 90

¹⁸⁰ Greilsammer, op. cit., p. 44

¹⁸¹ Sokolow in his book states that 'Herzl helped to make Zionism a world-wide movement, with an appeal not only to the Jewish people but also to other nations.', in 'Chapter XLVII: Modern Zionism', Sokolow, op. cit., p. 265

¹⁸² Pappe, op. cit., p. 36

¹⁸³ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 89

After meeting with Rothschild in Paris, he left disappointed; Herzl says in his diary that Rothschild could not understand him. Herzl's plan was to enact an organized immigration of the Jewish masses to Palestine. For Rothschild, control of the masses was a governmental issue, and could be blocked if immigrating Jews were informed of housing shortages and unemployment in Palestine. Herzl even offered to allow Rothschild to direct the entire enterprise of the Zionist work, but the Baron refused.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Herzl did not abandon hope. In Eastern Europe, he was warmly received by poor and persecuted Jewish communities who had been divested of their social and political rights. In his speeches at conferences, he received enthusiasm from crowds in Russia, Poland and Romania.¹⁸⁵ According to Herzl, the poorest Jews were the ones who would lay the foundation for the Jewish state. Since the poorest Jews were hopeless and desperate, he believed that they were the ones who would be willing to go through fire and water for his cause.¹⁸⁶

Herzl thought that Palestine was one of the suitable and preferable place for the Jews to live. Had the Jews protected the Holy Land, the Jewish Question might have ceased to exist. But Palestine was a part of the Ottoman territory. What is more, the Ottomans had been pursuing a restrictive policy towards Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. Therefore, he was thinking of the possibility of bargaining with the Ottomans: the Jews would pay the Ottoman debts, and in return, the Ottoman Sultan (Abdulhamid II) would give Palestine to the Jews.¹⁸⁷

When Herzl was on his way to Istanbul by train in the summer of 1896, he negotiated with some Ottoman officials. As Herzl mentions in his diary, he told his plan of exchange to an Ottoman diplomat, Ziya Pasha, in a railway car on June 17, 1896. When Herzl spoke of an independent Jewish state that they wanted to have in Palestine, he was told that even in exchange for financial aid - which seems attractive

¹⁸⁴Marvin Lowenthal, *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, The Dial Press, New York, 1956, p. 188, 18 July 1896; also see Schama, op. cit., pp. 137-147

¹⁸⁵Pappe, op. cit., p. 36

¹⁸⁶ Herzl, op. cit., p. 93

¹⁸⁷Laqueur, op. cit. p. 95

- the offer was contrary to state policy, and they would not relinquish any part of the Ottoman territory.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, Herzl was not discouraged.

Herzl was initially in favor of political Zionism, which advocated the necessity of having political concessions on the land of Palestine before its colonization. As he emphasized, without a political agreement with the Ottoman State, the Jews' practical work in Palestine could not be successful, given the insufficient resources and absence of a guarantee for the protection of their investments of men and money.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, Herzl's difference from the early colonists, the Lovers of Zion, was his emphasis on the priority of diplomatic activities rather than colonization of the land.¹⁹⁰ The First Zionist Congress was held under the leadership of Herzl in Basel in August 1897.¹⁹¹ At the Congress, the Zionist Organization (WZO) was founded and the objectives of political Zionism were decided. The main decision was to take positive steps in order to realize a Jewish homeland in Palestine which would be secured by public law. Two of the policies to achieve this goal were the settlement of farmers, artisans and laborers in Palestine, and to acquire governmental consent.¹⁹² Besides the decisions, the Zionist Congress drew the attention of diplomatic circles.¹⁹³ What prevails here is that the Zionist Organization under the leadership of Herzl was not against the Jewish settlement, but wanted to combine it with universal consent.

As the Zionist Organization began to organize the Jewish settlement in Palestine, in 1900, Rothschild transferred the administration of his colonies to a section of the Jewish Colonization Association, the Commission Palestinienne (CP). In fact, at its

¹⁸⁸Lowenthal, *the Diaries*, op. cit., p. 141

¹⁸⁹ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 137

¹⁹⁰Shafir, op. cit., p. 231

¹⁹¹ See the 'Opening Address at the First Zionist Congress' delivered in Basel on August 29, 1897 in Herzl, *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, pp. 132-138

¹⁹² See The Basel Program in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, op. cit., p. 540 and also in Smith, op. cit., p. 52

¹⁹³ Friedman, op. cit., p. 58

beginning, the administrative body of the JCA was comprised of both the opponents of and advocates for the colonization of Palestine. Until 1906, the proponents of the colonization, Zadoc Kahn and Narcisse Leven, prevailed upon the board of the Association. Both Kahn and Leven were Zionists. Leven and Emil Meyerson, the director of the CP, prepared projects for colonization and assigned Joseph Niego, the representative of JCA in Palestine, to purchase land in Galilee.¹⁹⁴ However, the Zionist Organization under the leadership of Herzl was against land accumulation, as its priority was to gain political support for Jewish colonization. This policy was an obstacle for Jews who were willing to become small landowners.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, during Herzl's leadership, Zionist institutions were being created to carry out the purchase of land, settlement, and colonization of Palestine as can be seen in the functions of the Zionist Organization that will be touched upon below.

In the Second Zionist Congress of 1898, the necessity of colonization of Palestine was emphasized. In the Third Zionist Congress of 1899, to negotiate with Abdulhamid II for obtaining land for the Jews in Palestine was determined. Herzl hoped to convince the Ottoman Sultan by offering consolidation of Ottoman debts, and to put pressure on him by obtaining support from the European countries,¹⁹⁶ as he says in his own words: "What lover of peace and of Turkey could have any objections if a province of the Caliph were made to flourish?"¹⁹⁷

In 1898, Herzl met Grand Duke of Baden and was able to convince him of his project. The Grand Duke became one of his supporters in the diplomatic scene. He came to think that Jewish colonization in Palestine would benefit the economy of the Ottoman Empire (since Germany was not in favor of dissolution of the Ottoman Empire) and Germany in its policy in the Orient as well.¹⁹⁸ Herzl also gained the

¹⁹⁴ Penslar, op. cit., p. 139

¹⁹⁵ Shafir, 'Zionism and Colonialism: A Comparative Approach', in Barnett, Michael N. (ed.), pp. 232-233

¹⁹⁶ Pappé, op. cit., p. 37

¹⁹⁷ Herzl, *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, (from *Die Welt*, December 31, 1897), p. 210

¹⁹⁸ Friedman, op. cit., pp. 57-59

support of the former Prussian Minister of War and of the German Ambassador in Vienna, Eulenburg. With their support, he hoped to benefit from the good terms of Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany with the Ottoman Sultan, and pursue the German Emperor to convince the Sultan of giving Palestine to the Zionists.¹⁹⁹ On October, 18, 1898, Herzl was able to negotiate with Wilhelm. They agreed that Wilhelm would intercede with the Ottoman Sultan in order to obtain a concession for a Chartered Company for Palestine under German protection.²⁰⁰ However, the Ottomans had no intention of giving concessions over Palestine. After Kaiser attempted to talk about Palestine with the Sultan, the Sultan sent him a message saying that they were willing to have good relations with Germany and therefore Wilhelm should not be insistent on this subject.²⁰¹ The Ottoman Foreign Minister, Ahmed Tewfik told Wilhelm that the Sultan had ‘nothing to do with Zionism and an independent Jewish land.’²⁰²

2.6.1 A Critical Review of ‘the Meeting’ and Abdulhamid’s standing on Zionism

Herzl managed to meet Abdulhamid II on 19th May of 1901. At the beginning of the meeting, he expressed thanks to the Sultan (Herzl refers to the Sultan as ‘the master’ in his diary) for his protection of the Jews in his country. At the end of the meeting, the Sultan wanted Herzl to prepare a project for the consolidation of the Ottoman debts.²⁰³ However, Herzl couldn’t talk about Zionism as he had been advised not to mention his projects with regard to Palestine by some Ottoman officials before the meeting. It can be understood that he did not want to disconcert the Sultan in the beginning, and risk leaving his projects dead in the water.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 57-62

²⁰⁰Lowenthal, *The Diaries*, op. cit., p. 272; Friedman, op. cit., p. 74

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 77

²⁰² Ibid., p. 79

²⁰³Lowenthal, *the Diaries*, op. cit., pp. 339-343

Abdulhamid II, on the other hand, was aware of the fact that Zionists had political objectives in Palestine. Therefore, he was against Jewish settlement there. However, in most of the pro-Ottoman and pro-Abdulhamid sources in Turkey, this standing of the Sultan on Palestine is exaggerated, and it is often emphasized that he did not sell this part of the Ottoman territory. A good example of this exaggeration is a book written by Mustafa Armağan. Mentioning his interpretation of Abdulhamid's policy towards Zionists is crucial in the sense that among pro-Ottoman circles in Turkey, Armağan seems to be one of the more popular figures who was giving speeches on 'Abdulhamid's struggle with Zionism' in TV programs and glorifying his standing on the Zionist movement. Having pro-Abdulhamid and Islamist readers in Turkey who felt hostility towards the State of Israel today, Armağan claims in his book that with respect to Zionism, Abdulhamid II resisted the pressures of the Great Powers for the establishment of the State of Israel.²⁰⁴ As will be discussed below, the Great Powers did put pressure on the Ottoman government for free Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine, not for the creation of an independent state during the reign of Abdulhamid. In his book, Armağan also does not go into the particulars of the meeting between the Sultan and the Zionist leader.

In Turkey, there are also many speculations made by some pro-Ottoman and nationalist circles concerning the Ottoman Sultan's behaviour towards Herzl and the Zionists. While some argue that the Sultan rejected negotiations with Herzl, some others claim that Abdulhamid adopted an attitude of misconduct towards the Zionist leader. Contrary to these claims, it was not a terrible meeting. For instance, Abdulhamid offered a cigarette to Herzl and they smoke together, while Ibrahim Pasha, the translator in the room, was not allowed to smoke.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴Armağan, Mustafa, *Abdülhamid'in Kurtlarla Dansı*, UfukKitapları, 2006, p. 164; in brief, he means that Abdulhamid prevented the creation of the State of Israel. He seems intent on calling it 'the State of Israel' not a Jewish homeland or an independent Jewish state in order to capture the attention of his readers.

²⁰⁵For the details of this meeting, see. Lowenthal, the Diaries, p. 339

In a book entitled *Siyasi Hatıratım* (Sultan Abdulhamit's Memoirs), which was not written by Abdulhamid II himself but has been attributed to the Sultan,²⁰⁶ it is stated that Abdulhamid expressed his value to the Jews, yet emphasized that he was dead set against the demands of the Jews over Palestine.²⁰⁷ Whether the statements attributed to Abdulhamid are reliable is dubious, but it can be asserted that with regard to the migrations and settlements of the Jews in Palestine, the key point for the Ottoman government and the Sultan seems to be territory. For instance, Abdulhamid II responded to a memorandum submitted to him on the question of Jewish immigration to Palestine (on June 28, 1891) by saying that the acceptance of those Jews having been expelled from the Imperial Countries might lead to the creation of a Jewish government in Jerusalem. After a few days, he directed his Military Supervising Committee that the settlement of Jews which might result in an issue of a Jewish government was harmful. Nevertheless, as the Jewish immigration from Russia continued, Sultan thought of the settlement of those emigrants from Russia, who had a deep hatred for Russia, in Eastern Anatolia and of enlisting them with the Ottoman Jews in the Army for defense against Russia. In April, 1893, Sultan presented this offer to Moshe Levi, the Chief Rabbi. Even though the offer was approved by the Rabbinical members of the *millet* council, the Council of Ministers rejected the matter based on the assumption that it might raise objections of the other non-Muslim communities²⁰⁸ The restrictions were made so as to prevent the establishment of the Jewish colonies in Palestine. In other regions of the Ottoman land, there was no restriction. The restrictions were carried out since the Jewish settlements were regarded as having political objectives in one part of the Ottoman soil. On the other hand, giving Palestine to the Jews as an autonomous or

²⁰⁶Birinci, Ali, 'Sultan Abdülhamit'in Hatıra Defteri Meselesi', *DİVAN İlmî Araştırmalar*, sy. 19, 2005/2, pp. 177-194, in this article it is strongly argued that the words in this book was written by Süleyman Nazif in *ibid.*, p. 192

²⁰⁷Sultan Abdülhamid, *Siyasi Hatıratım*, Dergah Yayınları, 2010, p. 77 (the book attributed to Abdulhamid)

²⁰⁸David Farhi, 'Documents on the Attitude of the Ottoman Government towards the Jewish Settlement in Palestine after the Revolution of the Young Turks, 1908-1909', in Ma'oz, Moshe (ed.), *The Magnes Press, Jerusalem*, 1975, pp. 192-193

independent land was impossible for the Ottoman State. Giving it by consent could have set an example for other ethnic or religious communities, and more importantly, it was not customary to give a particular land in the Ottoman Empire's history. The statement of Sultan Abdulhamid II also indicates the value of Palestinian territory for the Empire. As read from the Diaries of Herzl, the Sultan had told Newlinski (working in the Austria-Hungarian Embassy in Istanbul and the intermediary between the Sultan and Herzl) that he would never give away any part of the Ottoman territory belonging to the Ottoman nation.²⁰⁹

The talk between Newlinski and Abdulhamid is displayed in the Turkish film, *II Abdulhamid Han-Miras* (Abdulhamid Khan II- The Heritage), in which the Sultan is played by one of the key actors in Turkey, Altan Erkekli, but the film never shows a meeting between Abdulhamid and Herzl. In the film, Newlinski tells Abdulhamid that the Jews were ready to pay the Ottoman debts in exchange for a part of the Ottoman territory, and asks him: "What is your answer to this offer, My Sultan?" In response, the Sultan in the film responds: "The country does not belong to me, but to my people." He taps on the table and says: "territory can only be given by blood!"²¹⁰ It is very interesting that in the film there is no reference to the meeting between Herzl and Abdulhamid, as if the story ended there.

Why does the film exclude the meeting? Is it for underestimating it or ignoring it? Would that not be a falsification of reality? Those who have watched the film might think that Abdulhamid was hostile to the Zionists and even the Jews. However, when the Sultan met Herzl, Abdulhamid told the Zionist leaders that he had been a friend to the Jews, and emphasized that he mostly gave credence to them and the Muslims.²¹¹ What kind of aggressive behavior could have been displayed following such an expression?

²⁰⁹Lowenthal, the Diaries, op. cit, p. 152, 18 June 1896

²¹⁰ *II Abdülhamid Han: Miras*

²¹¹Lowenthal, the Diaries, op. cit., p. 339

In fact, the significance of the Sultan's willingness to meet Herzl and his interest in his project cannot be underestimated. The main reason behind the Sultan's consent to negotiate with the Zionist leader was the financial straits that the Empire had to deal with. In this respect, David Farhi states that on the one hand, the economic situation of the Empire was worsening and on the other hand, despite the inhibitions, the Jews were moving to Palestine. It was under these circumstances that Herzl went to Istanbul and managed to be accepted by the Sultan.²¹² Therefore, in the beginning, Herzl's offer for the consolidation of the Ottoman debts seemed to be attractive to the Sultan. As is known, the Europeans were controlling the state finance of the Ottomans. After the Ottoman government fell into public debt by more than a thousand million dollars in 1875, the Sultan had to issue a decree in 1881 and the European administration was settled on the Ottoman public debt. A council was established to control almost one-quarter of the Ottoman revenues. It was given extensive authority over the custom duties on basic items. The Porte lost governance over its own Treasury.²¹³ Öke underlines that the Sultan was worried that if the Ottoman debt remained unsettled, he would experience the same misfortune as Egypt, which had been occupied by the British in September, 1882. Nevertheless, concerning the project of Herzl, the order of priorities of both sides did not match: the Sultan gave priority to the consolidation of debts by exact proposals, while Herzl preferred colonization. In this regard, Öke makes a different argument. He states that Abdulhamid did not regard Herzl as the leader of the Zionists, but as an intercessor who could establish links between wealthy Jewish bankers and the Ottoman government for the consolidation of its debts. He means that Abdulhamid did not take the colonization of Palestine into account. Öke confirms that the Sultan was interested in the consolidation of debts part of the Zionist project. He claims that for Abdulhamid, becoming indebted to the Jews would not cause any disadvantages in political terms.²¹⁴ When Herzl was recalled to Istanbul in February 1902, he was

²¹² Farhi, op. cit., p. 193

²¹³ David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace, The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, New York, 1989, p. 47

²¹⁴ Öke, op. cit., pp. 55-56

offered concessions for the exploitation of mines: the establishment of a pro-governmental bank and the foundation of a land company for the Jewish settlement.²¹⁵ However, the land settlements included in the concessions did not include Palestine. This was not acceptable for the Zionists, and Herzl rejected the concession. In March 1902, Herzl learned that the Sultan had made an agreement with the French about consolidating the Ottoman debts.²¹⁶ At this point, Mustafa Armağan claims that Abdulhamid, a smart game player, used Herzl in his bargaining with the French so that he could be given a suitable offer by them to consolidate the debts of the Ottoman Empire.²¹⁷ What I can observe is that it is difficult to determine whether Abdulhamid did consider receiving financial aid from the Jews without recompense. If Herzl had come to the Sultan with a satisfactory offer, whether the Sultan would have given permission to the colonization of Palestine seems debatable. If Herzl had been able to arrange enough money,²¹⁸ they might have reached an agreement, and there would be a different story to talk about today.

Both Mandel and Lowenthal had similar conclusions with those of Armağan. According to their points, Herzl realized that he had been used by the Sultan as a foil to other projects for the financing of the Ottoman debt.²¹⁹ In this sense, David Farhi underlines different interpretations and argues that more extensive research should be done on this matter. First he mentions the corroboration of a second meeting and an

²¹⁵ For the offers and debates concerning the company see Walid Khalidi, 'The Jewish-Ottoman Land Development Company: Herzl's Blueprint for the Colonization of Palestine Author(s)', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Winter 1993, pp. 30-47

²¹⁶ Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 359

²¹⁷ Armağan, op. cit., p. 171

²¹⁸ The Ottoman debts totalled £85 million and Herzl noticed that he could not raise this amount in Kimmerling, op. cit., p. 10

²¹⁹ Neville J. Mandel, 'Ottoman Policy and Restrictions on Jewish Settlement in Palestine: 1881-1908', Part I, in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, October 1974, (pp. 312-332) , p. 320; Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 359

explanation of it; secondly, he touches upon the conversation of the Sultan with his doctor on this subject.²²⁰

In June 1902, Theodor Herzl again applied for a meeting. In most of the Turkish sources on this matter, it is emphasized that a second meeting did never take place by claiming that Abdulhamid rejected to see Herzl. David Farhi in his article states that in some sources as of Abraham Galante and Sami Günzberg, Herzl was received in a second meeting with the Sultan. Sultan received Herzl with the Chief Rabbi unofficially. More importantly, it is argued that the second meeting occurred in a different manner as Herzl talked about Zionist Project unlike the previous meeting. Concerning this interview, it was maintained that Herzl offered to give any requested amount for the payment of the Ottoman debts, if the Jews would be free in their immigration to Palestine. He also wanted Palestine to have a special status according to which it would have a local assembly, special law and a local army, although it would remain a province of the state. He underlined that the Jews would have ‘unconditional loyalty to the Sultan and the State.’²²¹ Abdulhamid replied that he had to reject this proposal. Yet, he also added that if he would pass the proposal to the Council of Ministers, it would work to give it a practical form. Galante defines the answer of the Sultan as a negative consent.²²²

In the end, Herzl’s attempts in Istanbul resulted in nothing, and his contacts with Istanbul ceased to exist. After that, Herzl established critical contacts with other governments that would put pressure on the Ottoman Sultan to allow Jewish settlement in a particular part of the Palestinian territory. However, it is worth mentioning here that for Herzl, the priority was to obtain the consent of the Ottoman government and to reach a political agreement with the Ottoman State as the ruler of Palestine. As Smith states, when the Zionist program was being set out in Basel, the

²²⁰ Farhi, *op. cit.*, p. 195

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194

²²² *Ibid.*, pp. 193-194

words were picked and chosen so as not to alarm the Ottoman Sultan: “homeland” instead of “state”; “public law” rather than “international law.”²²³

Farhi claims that the conversation of Abdulhamid with his doctor, Atif Hüseyin gives the impression that the Sultan was uncertain of his rejection of Herzl’s offer.²²⁴ In the last years of his rule, Abdulhamid told the doctor that the Zionists wanted to purchase a part of land in Jaffa and Jerusalem. Sultan said that now they could reach to this objective. He talked about Herzl and called him a man of knowledge and said that quite a while ago, the rich Jews had sent him to Istanbul in order to negotiate their demands. After that, Sultan said, he laid down some conditions. However, “the man (Herzl) died and the revolution broke out and the matter remained incomplete.”²²⁵ After the doctor asked how the foreign powers could support this project, the Sultan stated that it could be done through the power of money. In one day, the Zionists would reach their goal.²²⁶ David Farhi also refers to his own interview with the dentist of the Sultan, Dr. Sami Günzberg on January 1, 1965. Günzberg told him that the Sultan, in fact, had a tendency to help Herzl, but the Zionist leader cooperated with “undesirable people.” The doctor also added that Sultan had expressed his concern about the rise of masses and he had to reject Herzl’s proposal.²²⁷

What is more, in addition to the impact of the troubles of the Ottoman State, there were no further measures imposed on the Zionist movement other than Abdulhamid’s rejection of Herzl’s project until his dethronement. Abdulhamid related to Zionism no more, and did not strengthen the official policy during the last years of his rule.

²²³Smith, op. cit., 52

²²⁴ Farhi, op. cit., p. 195

²²⁵ Enver Ziya Karal, *Birinci Meşrutiyet ve İstibdad Devirleri (1876-1907)*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, On Üçüncü Dizi, Ankara, 1962, p. 486, also in Farhi., p. 195

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 193; the undesirable people remained unknown.

In Turkey, as a result of the falsification of history by some writers and historians, many periodicals and programs have been published with the claim that Abdulhamid struggled against Zionism, and even had a war on Zionism. On Google, if 'Zionism and Abdulhamid' is written in Turkish, many websites can be seen with these kinds of titles. The 29th issue of a periodical, *Derin Tarih*, which was published in August 2014 begins with the title *Abdülhamid'in Siyonizmle Savaşı*, (Abdulhamid's war with Zionism) written by Mustafa Armağan.²²⁸ As can be seen, these periodicals run counter to the developments explained above underlining that Abdulhamid has not waged a war on Zionism.

2.6.2 Herzl's Diplomatic Talks in Europe

Herzl believed it was important to have the support of European leaders for his project. Even though Herzl could not obtain considerable support from European powers for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, the critical meetings he was able to achieve are important to mention.

Herzl considered turning to the British Government and the Rothschilds in order to receive their aid in the creation of the Jewish Eastern Company and acquire a region for colonization near the Sanjak of Jerusalem.²²⁹ He believed that Britain was the only country where the Jews were not subject to anti-Semitism.²³⁰ In fact, the Fourth Zionist Congress was held in London in August 1901. It is important to note that after the pogroms in Russia, there were Jewish migrations from the East not only to Palestine but also to Europe and America. The public opinion in Britain began to turn as people worried about whether the Jewish immigration would result in higher unemployment for English citizens.²³¹ In 1902, Herzl began to negotiate with the

²²⁸Mustafa Armağan, 'Abdülhamid'in Siyonizmle Savaşı', *derin tarih*, Sayı 29, Ağustos 2014

²²⁹Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 373

²³⁰Laqueur, op. cit. p. 112

²³¹ Ibid., p. 119

British. On October 22th, he met Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary (1895-1906) who did not decline the idea of creating a ‘self-governing Jewish colony’ in the northern part of Egypt.²³² The negotiations resulted in the formation of the Anglo-Palestine Bank in 1903. Needless to say, after Herzl’s negotiations with the Ottomans over Palestine resulted in failure, he looked for other places for the Jewish settlement that could be offered by the British. The places offered by the British in October 1902 were the Sinai Peninsula and El Arish area in Egypt. The offers evoked debates among the Zionist leaders. However, the Ottoman Sultan had sovereignty over those regions, and the Egyptian government rejected the idea, so it was never realized.²³³

Another proposal was the East Africa which is known as the Uganda Controversy in the Zionist historiography.²³⁴ Herzl wanted the Zionist Organization to carry a vote in favor of the Uganda Project offered by the British colonial secretary Joseph Chamberlain as an alternative to Palestine. When Herzl expressed his favor to the offers of the British at the Sixth Zionist Congress of August 22th, 1903, held in Basle, even Herzl’s associates suspected that he was making concessions over Palestine. In order to convince his colleagues, he declared that the Uganda project was an auxiliary colonization on a national and state foundation. However, he insisted that Palestine was to remain the permanent goal.²³⁵ It seems that Herzl never gave up his ambition over Palestine. As Friedman states, Herzl negotiated with the British concerning those places in order to “acquire at least a neighborhood of Palestine.”²³⁶ At the Congress, Herzl declared that “If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand wither.”²³⁷ In fact, 295 votes were in favor of considering the Uganda

²³²Lowenthal, *the Diaries*, op. cit., p. 377

²³³ Friedman, op. cit., pp. 103-104

²³⁴ Shapira, op. cit., p. 9

²³⁵Lowenthal, *The Diaries*, op. cit., p. 407

²³⁶ Friedman, op. cit., p. 104

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 105

proposal, while 177 votes opposed it.²³⁸ Despite his insistence, the other Zionist leaders (mostly the delegates from Russia) were concerned that the Uganda project would lead to the abandonment of Palestine for the Jewish homeland.²³⁹ Those who voted against it threatened to leave the World Zionist Organization. In the end, Herzl prevented the dissolution of the unity of the Organization by giving up the project.²⁴⁰

The offers of the British were crucial in the sense that some master figures of Britain (one of the Great Powers) gave support and recognized the necessity of Herzl's project. Herzl's close assistant, Leopold Greenberg, wrote in a letter dated 7 June, 1903, that East Africa was not a valuable place for their people, but the proposal of the British was of great value.²⁴¹ Therefore, it was regarded by the Zionists as a political achievement, and in fact it was.

With regard to the devotion of the Zionists to Palestine, Cohen states that even though the Zionist movement was based on a secular inclination, the Zionist thought did not isolate itself from the religious matrix of Zionism. Cohen attributes the dependency of Zionism on religious tradition to the rejection of the British offers by the Zionist leaders at the Seventh Zionist Congress of 1905 in Basle, despite the presence of an immediate need to find a refuge for the persecuted Jews of Russia.²⁴²

Herzl met with the Russian Minister of Interior, Vyacheslav Plehve on August 8, 1903, and managed to convince him that an independent Jewish state in Palestine would serve Russian interests. Ultimately, the Minister stated that Russia was in

²³⁸Lowenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 412

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 407

²⁴⁰Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *op. cit.*, p. 549; at the Seventh Zionist Congress (July 17-August 2, 1905), (the first congress after Herzl's death), the means of all colonising activity outside Palestine was rejected and the fundamental principles of the Basel program were re-emphasized: "the establishment of a legally-secured, publicly recognized home for the Jewish people in Palestine." In order to achieve this, the methods of exploration, promotion of agriculture and industry and acquisition of concessions were adopted in principle, in *ibid.*, pp. 548-549

²⁴¹ Friedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104

²⁴² Naomi W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, Brandes University Press, 2003, p. 3

favor of an independent Jewish state, and declared that they would protect the Zionist emissaries to the Ottoman Government and facilitate the work of emigration societies.²⁴³ It was repulsive for Herzl to shake the hands of the Russian Ministers, the people responsible for the Kishinev Pogroms of 1903. However, as Friedman reveals, he had to do so to gain diplomatic support of the Russian Government against the Sultan and permission for the Russian Jews to emigrate from Russia.²⁴⁴

2.7 Ineffectiveness of the Restrictions

As stated in Shapira's book, the Jewish settlers of the First Aliyah, who had been the members of a small minority in their countries of origin with despotic and autocratic regimes, found themselves in a 'wild freedom' in Ottoman State as they became lord and master in their private life in Palestine unlike their conditions in their country of residence.²⁴⁵

It is not easy to make a clear division among the factors that made the restrictions on the Zionist movement in Palestine ineffectual. The factors include those brought about by the Ottoman system itself, as well as external factors such as foreign intervention on behalf of the Zionist work and Zionist activities in the Holy Land. For example, even though foreign intervention can be seen as an external factor that enabled the Zionist movement in Palestine, the Ottoman system also contributed to the facilitation of foreign intervention. These factors indicate that the implementation of prohibitions on the Zionist movement was difficult for the Ottoman government.

²⁴³ Friedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-109

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105

²⁴⁵ Shapira, *op. cit.*, p. 59

2.7.1 The Role of the Foreign Powers on the Jewish Settlement in Palestine

Herzl, in September 1898, said to the German Ambassador, “as Zionism existed, one Power or another sooner or later espouse it.”²⁴⁶ The interference of the West played an important role in the sense of removing the bans on the Zionists immigration and settlement. Aside from the protégé system which was mentioned above, the Western powers made the restrictions ineffective through diplomatic ways in some cases.

In 1888, when foreign Jews were prohibited to settle in Palestine, the British, French, German, Russian and American consulates objected. In response, the Ottoman Government notified the consulates that the decision was legal.²⁴⁷ However, as Öke mentions, when the countries of those consulates disputed the restrictions, the Ottoman government had to render its decision void. If a Jewish immigrant was not allowed to enter the country at the ports of Haifa, Jaffa or Beirut, he or she sent a complaint to the nearest representative office of his or her country of adoption. After that, the ambassador of that country lodged a complaint to the Ottoman Government. In case of an answer in the negative, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of that country moved on the issue. Yielding to this international pressure, the Ottoman government sent notification that the Mutasarrıfs or the governors would not make difficulties for the nationals of the concerned states.²⁴⁸

In June of 1900, the Ottoman government, having Jewish settlements in Palestine despite several restrictions, sent a memorandum to the Great Powers and wanted them to give directions to their navigation companies so that they would not issue tickets to the Jews willing to go to Palestine. In addition, the government asked the companies not to permit the Jews to go into the city (Istanbul) in order to prevent them from reaching Palestine by land. However, the Powers overrode the wishes of

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 61

²⁴⁷ DH.MKT, 1505/53, 20.Ş. 1305

²⁴⁸ Öke, op. cit., p. 97

the Ottomans.²⁴⁹ What prevails here is that the Ottoman government opposed only to those Jewish immigrants who intended to go to Palestine.

Even though the foreign Jews were prohibited to enter in Palestine, the European citizens without distinction of religion were allowed to go to Palestine. So, the Jews departing from their countries would stop in European countries, adopt their citizenship, and then arrive in Palestine as foreign nationals.²⁵⁰ According to an Ottoman document, the Jewish immigrants were able to move in Palestine in different ways until 1910. Hundreds of Jewish brokers helped immigrants get new passports by taking them to European or Russian consulates, and gave new passports to Jewish families arriving by ship. Some Jewish immigrants, after the three-month visit, did not return to customs (the immigrants entered Palestine through the ports of Beirut, Haifa and Jaffa) and did not take their passports from the officials. According to a report of the Archives of the Mutasarrif in Jerusalem (in the Israel State Archives), at one time there were 3.478 abandoned foreign passports belonging to people whose duration of time in the country had expired.²⁵¹ Some other Jews took their passports from the officials by claiming that they were leaving to their countries, yet returned again to Palestine soon after. Still others adopted another method to enter in Palestine; some were claiming to be local residents of Jaffa or other places in Palestine, while some others coming from the Balkans or other regions registered their names as Ottoman citizens.²⁵²

The limitation on land sales was also removed in the case of foreign intervention. In 1893, the Mutasarrif of Jerusalem declared that there would be no land sales to the Jews. However, the foreign nationals complained of this restriction to their

²⁴⁹Ibid., p. 99

²⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 84-85

²⁵¹Of these passports, 2.274 were Russian, 705 Austrian, 108 American, 99 Rumanian, 77 British, 76 Persian, 56 Bukharian, and the rest French, German, etc. Paul A. Alsberg, 'The Israel State Archives as a Source for the History of Palestine during the Period of Ottoman Rule', in Ma'oz, Moshe (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1975, p. 537

²⁵² YPRK, BŞK, 80/55, 29.Z.1327, 1910

consulates, and the European countries protested Constantinople's attitude by claiming that it was a violation of the rights of ownership and of emption granted by the capitulations. Thereupon, the Ottoman government permitted the sale of land to foreign Jews on the condition that they would not establish Zionists colonies.²⁵³ When the Grand Vizier told the Sultan on the 5th of September, 1893, that the company of (Edmond) Rothschild had settled many Jewish immigrants in Haifa, Abdulhamid II simply instructed them to take more precautions in order to prevent the Jewish presence from turning into a Jewish Question.²⁵⁴ As there was no enforcement on those who had able to acquire land, the measures on the purchase of land had no deterrent effect on the newcomers, which meant that the Ottoman Empire was not able to restrict land sales to the foreign Jews in Palestine and also did not carry out considerable measures. I suppose that this fact also enabled the Jewish settlement in Palestine.

Germany and the Jewish Settlement in Palestine

Friedman, in his book, asserts that survival of the Jewish community in Palestine was provided by Germany's interference with the Ottoman government. Öke states that in Europe, the country which mostly favoured Zionism at that time was Germany.²⁵⁵ As Herzl wrote in his diary, the Kaiser of Germany believed that some among the 'people of Herzl' would be useful citizens if they invested and settled in the region.²⁵⁶ Before their meeting, Kaiser, in a letter dated 29 September 1898 to the Grand Duke of Baden, said that the settlement of the prosperous and hard-working people of Israel in the Holy Land would develop the region and lead to the revival of the Ottoman State, saving it from bankruptcy. This was to remain the German point of view until the end of the WWI. He expresses his sympathy to the Zionists and his

²⁵³Öke, op. cit., p. 98

²⁵⁴Arslan, op. cit., p. 95

²⁵⁵Öke, op. cit., p. 78

²⁵⁶Lowenthal, *The Diaries*, op. cit., p. 268, 18 October 1898

intention to give protection to them upon request.²⁵⁷ Germany also had economic interests in the Jewish presence in Palestine. After Herzl prepared a memorandum on 21 September 1898 consisting of the benefits of Zionist presence in Palestine to the German interests in the region, the Kaiser was convinced. He stated that the idea of Zionism excited his interest and he was prepared to associate with the promoters of the idea. In memorandum, Herzl noted that Zionists would help the Germans in their Berlin-Baghdad Railway Project by building the road from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.²⁵⁸ Jewish merchants in Palestine were also crucial in importing German goods, further suggesting that they would be useful allies in the future.²⁵⁹

2.7.2 Ottoman Nationality Law²⁶⁰ & Issue of Citizenship

One of the conditions put in place by the Ottoman government on the immigrants who entered and settled in Palestine was the adoption of Ottoman citizenship. This could be seen as an opportunity for Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine, even though only a small number²⁶¹ of the Jewish immigrants adopted Ottoman citizenship, because of the given advantages of the capitulations.

²⁵⁷ Friedman, p. 66

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 65

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ In 1869, the Ottoman Law of Nationality granted equal status for all Ottoman residents and legislated that all subjects of the without distinction of religion were to be Ottoman. Michelle U. Campos, '*Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine*', Stanford University Press, 2010, p. 61

²⁶¹ According to McCarthy, between 1890 and 1908, around 13.000 Jews adopted Ottoman citizenship. When we compare this number with the number of immigrants, which was estimated more than 45.000 for this period in Piterberg, op. cit. p. 65; Bachi, op. cit. p. 79; Öke, op. cit., p. 89; for McCharty this number was approximately 33.000 between 1895 and 1914, in McCarthy op. cit., pp. 375-398. McCarthy gives the maximum numbers with regard to the number of Ottoman Citizen Jews, while giving minimum numbers concerning the number of immigrants when compared to other estimates. Even the number of immigrants of the Second Aliyah (1904-1914) was more than 35.000. In addition, Krämer states that in 1905, total number of Ottoman citizen Jews was around 14.000 in Palestine. Gudrun Krämer, '*A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel*', Princeton University Press, 2008p. 38. Therefore, the percentage of foreign Jewish residents in the total number of Jews was much more than that of Ottoman Jews.

According to the Law of Nationality, issued in 1869, people living in the Ottoman territory could adopt Ottoman citizenship. A child whose Ottoman father adopted a foreign citizenship remained an Ottoman. With regard to the adoption of Ottoman nationality by foreigners, according to the law, an adult immigrant could take citizenship only after five years of residence. People born in Ottoman lands also could become Ottoman citizens three years after entering maturity. These policies all indicate that Ottoman citizenship was universal and equal.²⁶² Ottoman Law of Nationality could also be considered an opportunity for Jewish immigrants: according to the Law, they were allowed to take Ottoman citizenship, which would enable them to immigrate and settle in Palestine.

Moreover, for the Jewish immigrants, the condition of five years of residence was removed and their adoption of the Ottoman citizenship was encouraged by the Ottoman government. They hoped this would discourage a settlement in Palestine by the foreign Jews who would want to benefit from the special privileges and rights granted to other foreigners through the Capitulations. Even the Zionist leaders advised the immigrants to adopt Ottoman citizenship, since the Ottoman citizens were allowed to go to Palestine and purchase land, which would make Ottoman citizenship advantageous. In this respect, the French magnate Baron Edmond de Rothschild - who sponsored the Zionist settlements and land purchases during the First Aliyah - as well as the directors of his company wanted the first settlers on the early agricultural colonies to become Ottoman citizens.²⁶³

Here it can be argued that Ottomans themselves gave the right to foreign Jewish immigrants to go and settle in Palestine by forcing them to adopt Ottoman citizenship. It can be seen that it was not the high numbers of the Jewish immigrants moving to the Ottoman land that concerned the Ottoman government, or their Jewish identity. Its concern was about their foreignness. If they adopted Ottoman nationality, that problem would be solved.

²⁶²Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 61

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 204

With regard to the migrations and settlements of the Jews in Ottoman soil, it seems that the Ottoman government and the Sultan paid a lot of importance to nationality. For instance, the Jewish immigrants with the Ottoman citizenship were to be allowed by the local authorities under the direction of the Minister of Interior to build houses and to have vineyards, particularly in Galilee where the restrictions were fewer compared to those in Jerusalem. Furthermore, in 1886 *Caimakam*²⁶⁴ of Safad (a city in the north of Palestine) observed that he did not impose any restriction against the colonists under the Ottoman nationality.²⁶⁵ What is significant here is that the Jews having Ottoman nationality were never forbidden to settle in Palestine. Even though their purchase of land was forbidden in 1893, this decision was reversed a short while later.

Nevertheless, as Friedman mentions in his book, the number of Jews who embraced the Ottoman nationality was few²⁶⁶ - even though those who wanted to be settled in Palestine were only in need of permission from the Government according to the decree issued by the committee representing the government in 1888.²⁶⁷

2.7.3 Contradictions in the Ottoman Policy towards the Zionist Immigration and Settlement

There were discrepancies in the policies of the Ottoman State towards Aliyah which impeded the implementation of the restrictions towards Jewish immigrants. Firstly, despite the limitations to the migration and settlement, those who had come or settled were not sent to the country they came from. Secondly, while the Jewish settlement in Palestinian territory was prohibited, the sale of land could not be prevented. In addition to these, it can be observed that there was a lack of communication between

²⁶⁴ Caimakam: official charged with governing a provincial district.

²⁶⁵ Friedman, op. cit., p.43

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ MV., 31/65, 21.Ş.1305

the central government and local officials, as well as abuse of authority and corruption among the local governors.

No Enforcement to the Settlers Once They Were in Palestine

Meanwhile, as can be seen in the Ottoman archives, the Jews who were not officially allowed to come and settle, but still managed to arrive in some part of the Ottoman land including Palestine, were never subjected to persecution or obligation to go back by the Ottoman authorities. For instance, according to a decree in 1887 in the Ottoman archives, 272 Jews from Romania and two others from America settled in Palestine would face no intervention, but those who were coming should be prevented from settling there.²⁶⁸ As stated in another Ottoman document dated two years before, when the migration was already prohibited to Palestine and only the pilgrims were allowed to visit Palestine (despite the Ottoman decree with regard to prevention of Jewish migration to Palestine) hundreds of Jews from Romania succeeded to settle in Haifa and own land.²⁶⁹ According to an Ottoman document dated 03/N/1308, the Jewish immigrants coming from Russia were able to settle in Palestine outside Jerusalem and Acre.²⁷⁰

On the other hand, those who somehow were able to reach the Ottoman territory were not send away but were rather placed in other cities of the Empire. As stated in the document of the Ministry of Interior in 1893, the settlement of the Jewish immigrants staying in Istanbul to other cities except Palestine was ordered.²⁷¹ In 1887, eight families were settled in the Province of Hüdavendigâr (consisting of today's Northwestern Anatolia). In 1892, seventeen Jews and forty five others having temporarily settled in Istanbul were sent to İzmir; 426 others were sent to Mersin and Adana from Istanbul. Since the Government directed the migration to Izmir and

²⁶⁸ DH. MKT. 1399/83, 19.Ca.1304

²⁶⁹ HR.HMŞ.İŞO., 219/74, 28.Ni.1302

²⁷⁰ MV., 64/15, 03.N.1308

²⁷¹ DH.MKT., 1981/45, 08.M .1310

Salonica, the population increased in two cities. For instance, in 1892, 1500 immigrants went to Salonica. Arslan states that Abdulhamid II himself ordered the Ministry of Interior to find suitable places for the settlements of the immigrants.²⁷² Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that despite the restrictions, no violence or use of force took place between the Jewish settlers and the Ottoman authorities during the First Aliyah.

Land Purchase

Besides the migration and settlements, immigrants were able to purchase land in Palestine as well. There were various methods carried out to own lands: the Ottoman Jews and those with foreign nationality were purchasing land on behalf of Jewish settlers;²⁷³ the local Palestinians were selling their lands in exchange for money, and the public land was purchased through bribery as will be mentioned below.

Alan Dershowitz, (while arguing that the number of Arabs displaced by the Jewish land purchases was small), touches upon the land sales to the Jewish immigrants. He states that when those Jews migrated to Palestine, the region was under populated and the Zionists bought land from absentee²⁷⁴ landlords.²⁷⁵

Besides many legal reforms throughout the Tanzimat period, the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 was also significant in the sense that it provided the Russian Jews with a way to buy land in Palestine and to settle there after the First Aliyah.²⁷⁶ The law required registration for the ownership of the land, but it was sometimes falsified or manipulated. Since registered ownership required payment of tax, the village

²⁷²Arslan, op. cit., pp. 86-88

²⁷³Öke, op. cit, p. 88 and p. 98

²⁷⁴ Who had no connection to the land as they owned the land but did not work it.

²⁷⁵Alan Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel*, Hoboken N. J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2003, p. 23

²⁷⁶Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labour and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914*, University of California Press 1989, p.8

residents or peasants, the owners of the land, avoided registering. Given no measurement of how much land there was, landowners usually did not register their property and they only registered when they wanted to sell it. Moreover, the lands were registered in the name of a few individuals or in the name of one person. Land owners were able to sell the land of local residents to Jewish immigrants.²⁷⁷ When the Ottoman government banned the purchase of land in 1893, a few settlements were established by registering land that was purchased in the name of European Jews and by giving *bakshish*²⁷⁸ to the local officials.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, the land code of 1867, which granted the right to own land to foreigners as long as they paid taxes on it,²⁸⁰ did not include any provision to discourage the Jews from buying property in the Holy Land. According to the second article of the code, the foreign nationals, like the Ottoman citizens, had right of ownership and of land purchase.²⁸¹

According to the land purchase records, many absentee landowners were living in Beirut and Damascus, and some were tax collectors and merchants living elsewhere. The Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) and Jewish National Fund (JNF), which will be discussed in the following parts of this chapter, bought land from them, as did some wealthy Jews and immigrants. Moreover, in later years, it was argued that the quantity of the land offered for sale was more than the quantity that the Jews were able to purchase.²⁸²

Additionally, concerning land purchases, there was a discrepancy between the rules and their practice. Ömer Telliöglu underscored the concessions given to the Rothschilds by the Ottoman authorities. He stated that the company of Baron Rothschild was not exposed to legal obligations while buying land on which to settle

²⁷⁷Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Bribe which includes money and other means of tipping.

²⁷⁹Laqueur, op. cit. p. 76

²⁸⁰ Smith, op. cit., p. 21

²⁸¹Öke, op. cit., p. 87

²⁸² Ibid., p. 25

the foreign Jews in Palestine. Moreover, even though the company was required not to settle foreign Jewish immigrants in the purchased land, those Jews were settled. What is more, despite the conditionality, there was no enforcement on those settlers by the Ottoman authorities.²⁸³ This case could be considered an example for both contradictory policies and absence of enforcement on the Jewish settlements.

Furthermore, there was no prohibition on the purchase of land in other regions outside Palestine. Therefore, the Jewish settlers began to purchase land in the surroundings of Palestine. As a response, the Ottoman government prohibited settlements of the foreign Jews and land sales to them in Beirut and Syria on 27 January of 1897.²⁸⁴ However, a large amount of territory was bought by Jewish settlers until that time. In 1893, the Jewish immigrants obtained around 18.000 dunams land, 1410 tracts and 119 residences in the Kefer region of Beirut.²⁸⁵ According to the parliament decision of 1901, the land sales were allowed to the Jews in Beirut, Jerusalem and surroundings on the condition that on those lands, Jewish immigrants were not to be settled.²⁸⁶

The foreign Jewish settlement in Palestine was also one of the motives of the Sultan to purchase private lands in Palestine. Increase of the land purchase by the foreigners in Palestine, especially the Jews, made the Ottomans withdraw strategically important lands from the market by making them private property of the Sultan. The purchase of five tracts of 104.651 square metredunams in Rafah in 1904 by Sultan indicates that the motive was to protect the land from foreign involvement as the land was not useful for agricultural purposes.²⁸⁷ Nevertheless, it is worth to mention that

²⁸³ Ömer Tellioglu, 'Filistin'e Musevi Göçü, Arazi Satışı ve Kolonileşme Sürecinde Uygulanan Yöntemler (1880-1914)', *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Filistin Sempozyumu*, Hall B, Session III, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 29 November 2013 (He is from İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü)

²⁸⁴ Arslan, op. cit., p. 99

²⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 97

²⁸⁶ MV., 101/11, 15.C.1318

²⁸⁷ Fischel and Kark, op. cit., p. 155

while purchasing private lands in Palestine, Abdulhamid was also motivated by economic and strategic interests.²⁸⁸ In fact, Abdulhamid himself purchased land in Palestine especially during the period between 1883 and 1902. His private lands covered about 832.222 square metres in his estate in Palestine.²⁸⁹

Nevertheless, between 1883 and 1900, the total land purchased by the Jews is estimated to be 196.000 dunams.²⁹⁰ Until 1908, this number reached to 400.000 dunams. More importantly, the most prominent Arab families (Nashashibis, Husseinis, al-Alamis of Jerusalem, Dajanis of Jaffa, Abd al-Hadis of Nablus and Jenin and Shawas of Gaza) were among those who sold land to the Jews.²⁹¹

2.7.4 Corruption

Simon Schama in his book says:

It has long been a truism of Zionist history that behind the forbidding mask of the Turkish Empire there was an expression of leering venality, together with an itching palm or an indicative forefinger on the lapel. To be sure, the practice of *bakshish* was an integral part of public life under the Ottomans, and perquisites, both official and unofficial, were anticipated by functionaries whose more regular sources of remuneration were pitifully inadequate. ...Had the governor been especially accommodating, or especially corrupt, then the practical effect of the official prohibitions might have been negligible.²⁹²

Unlike Mim Kemal Öke, who denies the factor of corruption, in the literature, there are widespread writings on the importance of *bakshish* on facilitating the Jewish

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 147

²⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 132-135

²⁹⁰ Table 2.1, 'Estimated Jewish Land Purchases in Palestine', 1882-1947, in Kimmerling, op. cit., p. 43

²⁹¹ Morris, op. cit., p. 38

²⁹² Schama, op. cit., p. 76-77

immigration.²⁹³ In addition to this, there are reliable sources with regard to the corruption during the *Aliyot*. Even in the Ottoman archives corruption among the Ottoman officials is partly mentioned. Realistically, the corruption among the Ottoman authorities contributed to the Jewish colonization in Palestine to a great extent. In this study, therefore, I consider the issue of corruption to have had a real historical effect.

Friedman, underlying the German impact on the settlements, also mentions the corruption issue that facilitated the colonization of Palestine. He says that in the Ottoman Empire, “the gap between principle and practice was always wide.”²⁹⁴ The Ottoman authorities were easily suborned by *bakshish* and by the influence of some persons who had weight with the foreign consulates, like the officials of Baron Rothschild or Jews of Austrian origin in Palestine. The authorities had a tendency to side with the Jewish colonists in their disputes with the local residents.²⁹⁵ Rothschild also stated that some issues could be solved with money at the local level, without needing to present it to the Government in Constantinople.²⁹⁶

Despite the restrictions of the Ottoman Government with regard to the passports of the immigrants, the Ottoman officials or some intercessors sold false passports to the Jews on ships and helped them to enter in Palestine.²⁹⁷ The local judges and administrators were also pursuing their own law.²⁹⁸ According to the document dated May of 1888 of the Ottoman Government, the stay of duration for the Jewish visitors was extended by the local officials, contrary to the decree.²⁹⁹ In early 1900, it was

²⁹³ Neville Mandel, Isaiah Friedman, Anita Engle and Simon Schama who mention in their books that the Ottoman officials received bribes from the Zionists or others and bribery facilitated the Zionists activities to some extent in Ottoman Palestine. Öke argues that these claims were not supported or proven by trustworthy resources in Öke, op. cit., p. 106

²⁹⁴ Friedman, op.cit., p. 41

²⁹⁵ Shapira, op. cit., p. 59

²⁹⁶ Ben-Artzi, op. cit., p. 41

²⁹⁷ Friedman, op. cit., p. 41

²⁹⁸ Ben-Artzi, op. cit., p. 41

²⁹⁹ Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası, HR.TO.148/76, 17.5.1888

reported to the Ottoman government that despite the prohibitions against Jewish settlement in Palestine, the local officials neglected their obligations.³⁰⁰ The Mutasarrif of Jerusalem, Mehmed Rauf Pasha³⁰¹ (1878-1889), was himself complaining that bribery was common among the officials.³⁰² Ömer Telliöglu mentions the list of the bribes that Osman Kazım Bey, the Mutasarrif of Jerusalem (1902-1904), received.³⁰³

With regard to the land sales, the local authorities helped the settlers as well. The public land and the lands of which the owners were dead or absent were sold by local officials in exchange of bribes. In 1893, when land sales were forbidden, it was ordered that recorder officers should be divested of their authority to give certificate of land title.³⁰⁴ Divesting the officers of their authority indicates their misuse of official position. Since the decision was temporary and had no enforcement, it did not work. In the same year, it was reported that the Mutasarrif of Jerusalem, Ibrahim Pasha (1890-97), allowed land sales to the Jews in exchange for bribes.³⁰⁵ In 1894, according to another document from the Ottoman archives, Sadık Pasha, Mutasarrif of Acre; Mustafa Efendi, the Mayor of Haifa; Ali Efendi, the Mufti of Acre; and NecipEfendi, the Member of the Administrative Council in Acre, sold lands to the Jews from Romania and Russia and provided their settlements in exchange for bribes despite government inhibitions.³⁰⁶ As the bribery continued, land sales to the Jewish settlers could not be restricted by the Ottoman government. All of these indicate that

³⁰⁰ Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Arzuhal ve Journaller, Y.PRK.AZJ., 40/34, 29.Z.1317

³⁰¹ Rauf Pasha was regarded as intractable by the Zionists and when he was replaced in May 1889, it was stated that his successor (Reshad Pasha) was a more amenable governor in Ben-Artzi, op. cit., p. 30

³⁰² Ben-Artzi, op. cit., p. 41

³⁰³ Telliöglu, Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Filistin Sempozyumu, TTK

³⁰⁴ DH.MKT, 2043/94, 29.C.1310

³⁰⁵ BEO, 42/3143, 06.M.1310

³⁰⁶ Y.PRK.AZJ., 27/39, 02.S.1311

despite the restrictions, corruption provided opportunities to the Jewish immigrants to evade them, when the restrictions were in effect.

2.8 The Zionist Progress until 1908

Until the Young Turk Revolution, the foreign Jews were able to enter and settle in Palestine not by the consent of the Ottoman government which was attempted to be achieved through the diplomatic efforts, but by the help of the factors mentioned. When the Young Turk Revolution happened, the Second Aliyah was continuing and the Zionist movement had already begun to be institutionalized in Palestine. The main objectives of the Zionist Organization (WZO) were the increase of the extent of the Jewish immigration to Palestine, and acquisition of land. The first bank of the Organization, the Jewish Colonial Trust (JCT), was founded in London in 1899. The trust was a stock company supported by tens of thousands of Jews.³⁰⁷ In 1900, the Jewish Colonization Association opened office in Beirut.³⁰⁸ At the Fifth Congress of the Organization in 1901, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) was formed with the aim of purchase and improvement of land for Jewish settlements in Palestine.³⁰⁹ In 1901, the WZO began to nationalize land in Palestine through the Jewish National Fund which bought land from the local people and other landowners.³¹⁰ The land purchased by the Fund was not to be sold to or worked on by non-Jews, as part of the policy of nationalization of the land.³¹¹ In 1903, the bank established 'the Anglo-Palestine Company' to carry out the land purchases and imports in Palestine. The

³⁰⁷Tessler, op. cit., p. 53

³⁰⁸ Smith, op. cit., p. 41

³⁰⁹Tessler, op. cit., p. 54

³¹⁰Shafir, op. cit., 234

³¹¹ Smith, op. cit., p. 32

Company had branches in Jerusalem, Beirut, Hebron, Safed, Haifa, Tiberias and Gaza, and provided long-term loans to the Jewish farmers in Palestine.³¹²

Around the time that Herzl died, a new and more extensive wave of pogroms started in Russia. During the Russian pogroms of 1904-1905, 810 Jews were killed and hundreds were injured in the riots of western and southern Russia.³¹³ Between 1903 and 1906, the years of the worst pogroms, 400.000 Russian Jews left for the U.S.,³¹⁴ while around 30.000 other left for Palestine.³¹⁵ The Second Aliyah continued until the outbreak of World War I. Until 1908, the Jewish population of both the old Yishuv and new Yishuv reached to 80.000.³¹⁶

The settlers of the Second Aliyah included young people who were the proponents of revolutionary organizations in Tsarist Russia. After being disappointed by the unsuccessful Russian revolution of 1905-1906, many left to Palestine to realize a more egalitarian society, and with their socialist orientation launched Labour Zionism.³¹⁷ Notwithstanding, it is crucial to state that like the immigrants of the First Aliyah, not all the immigrants of this period were Zionists. Those young people motivated by the Zionist ideology were a minority group estimated at several thousands.³¹⁸ Despite this, their work cannot be underestimated.

Tessler calls the Second Aliyah “as a watershed in the development of the Yishuv and in the translation into reality of Zionism’s abstract vision.”³¹⁹ He says by the arrival of the immigrants of the Second Aliyah, a much more integrated, modern and

³¹² ‘Zionism: Jewish Colonial Trust’, on the website of the Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/jct.html> (accessed on November 15, 2013)

³¹³Tessler, op. cit., p. 63

³¹⁴ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 60

³¹⁵Piterberg, op. cit., p. 65

³¹⁶Öke, op. cit., p. 89

³¹⁷Tessler, op. cit., p. 63

³¹⁸ Shapira, op. cit., p. 62

³¹⁹ Ibid., p. 61

transformed polity began to emerge in Palestine. The Jews having come with the Second wave of immigration were able to benefit from some opportunities; the practical assistance of the Lovers of Zion and the Zionist Organization and the experience of the early comers.³²⁰ Moreover, the settlements by the Second Aliyah were carried out by both practical and political Zionists. As mentioned above, the plantation of colonies became more successful when a new method of agricultural colonization was adopted by the Jewish settlers of the Second Aliyah. The new method was based on a homogenous colonization with nationalist exclusiveness; the land was nationalized and Palestinians (Arabs) were totally excluded from the labour force.³²¹ In 1905, the Jewish Colonization Association bought land in Lower Galilee from the Arabs, and in 1908, the Fund established a national farm on this land.³²² Additionally, in January 1908, the Palestine Land Development Company (PLDC) was established to train Jewish workers to settle on land purchased by the Fund and the Association.³²³

After Herzl died in 1904, the leadership of Zionism passed to the practical Zionists for whom the slogan was that the more Jewish presence in Palestine, the easier to have a claim on it.³²⁴ In other words, after Herzl's diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman officials failed in order to have political concessions over Palestine, the practical Zionists, for whom settling colonies in Palestine should be the priority, prevailed in the Zionist Organization. Between July 27th and August 2nd, 1905, the Seventh Zionist Congress was held in Basle. At the Congress, the undivided loyalty to the Basle Programme was declared and the impossibility of a solution without Palestine was re-emphasized.³²⁵ Wolffsohn replaced Herzl as the leader of world

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Shafir, op. cit., p. 234

³²² Tessler, op. cit., p. 64

³²³ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 153

³²⁴ Ibid., pp. 136-137; Smith, op. cit., p. 31

³²⁵ Friedman, op. cit., p. 121

Zionism. When he was young, Wolffsohn was an adherent of the Lovers of Zion movement and became one of Herzl's collaborators.³²⁶ He maintained the contacts established by his predecessor; his meeting with Rothschild in Paris was fruitful.³²⁷ Wolffsohn visited the Jewish communities in South Africa and Palestine where he received an enthusiastic welcome in the autumn of 1906.³²⁸

Nevertheless, the practical Zionists also became aware of the importance of establishing diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman leaders. Friedman argues that the unwillingness of Kaiser Germany to address the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine as it was opposed by the Ottoman Sultan caused the Zionist leaders to think that as long as the attitude of the Ottoman Empire did not change, the powers of Europe would not play an active role in their cause. Arminius Vambery, a Hungarian Jew (1832-1913), suggested to Wolffsohn that more intervention of other powers with the Ottoman government on behalf of Zionists would only cause more damage. Since the Ottoman state was in a deep economic crisis, it was better for the Zionists to negotiate again with the Ottomans, he believed. Bahor Efendi, who was a Jewish Ottoman parliamentarian, said to Dr. Wellisch, a Zionist and the Director of the Health Department at the Ministry of the Interior of the Ottoman State, that if the Zionist Organization offered some economic assistance to the Ottomans, the latter would feel a kind of responsibility to remove the restrictions on Jewish immigration in Palestine.³²⁹

As a result of this advice, Wolffsohn went twice to Istanbul before the Young Turk revolution of July 1908. During his first visit, he attempted to convince the Ottoman government to remove the restrictions on Jewish immigration, and also offered to found a Turkish-Jewish immigration committee.³³⁰ In October 1907, Wolffsohn went

³²⁶ Ibid., op. cit., pp. 121-123

³²⁷ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 139

³²⁸ Friedman, op. cit., p. 124

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 139-140

³³⁰ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 139

to Istanbul and presented a plan to the Ottoman government. According to the plan, 50.000 Jewish families would be settled in Palestine outside of Jerusalem; they would adopt Ottoman citizenship, be loyal to Ottoman jurisdiction, and the men would be liable to military service, but they would be free from taxation. The settled areas determined by the Ottoman administration would be distributed to the Jewish colonizers through the Zionist Organization. In exchange for this, two million sterling was offered to the Ottoman State, while the Ottomans wanted 26 million for the consolidation of their debt.³³¹ The Ottoman government did not ratify the project but allowed the Zionists to establish a bank in Istanbul. The bank was founded under the name ‘Anglo-Levanten Banking Company’ which would be the representative organ of the Zionists in the Ottoman capital.³³² In 1908, Wolffsohn sent Victor Jacobson, a Russian Zionist and the director of the Anglo-Palestine Bank branch in Beirut to the Ottoman capital, to act as an executive representative for the bank.³³³ In 1908, the Zionist Organization established an unofficial office in Istanbul under the leadership of Victor Jacobson so as to lobby the Ottoman government (for Jewish autonomy in Palestine) and to manage the Zionist mobilization within the Empire. However, the movement failed to achieve these goals under Abdulhamid.³³⁴ And while his bargaining with the Turkish authorities was continuing, the Young Turks brought about their revolution.³³⁵

What is apparent is that Abdulhamid never compromised over Palestine. The Sultan never did allow Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine, and did not send Jewish immigrants to Palestine by consent. With regard to the restrictions of the Ottoman State, the key point is that there were two things the Ottoman government and the Sultan paid a lot of importance to: nationality and territory. While they were welcome to new subjects, to give a part of Ottoman territory away was out of the

³³¹ Ibid., p.140 ; Öke, op. cit., p. 59 ; Friedman, op. cit., p. 140

³³² Öke, op. cit., p. 59

³³³ Friedman, op. cit., p. 140

³³⁴ Campos, op. cit., p. 204

³³⁵ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 140

question. However, despite its restrictions, it cannot be argued that the Ottoman State pursued a strict policy towards Jewish immigration in general, and their settlements in Palestine in particular. The strict policy seemed to be aimed at preventing the establishment of an autonomous Jewish presence in Palestine. Those who managed to settle in Palestine and own land were never exposed to sanctions or enforcement by the Ottoman State. The lack of sanctions and enforcements might not have discouraged Jewish immigrants to go and settle there.

When Abdulhamid II left the throne, the Second Aliyah was still going on and during the last years of his reign, the Zionist institutions were established to colonize the Palestinian territory. When it came to 1908, the Jewish Colonization Association, the Colonial Trust, National Fund and Banking Companies and Land Development Company, most of which had branches in various cities in Palestine, were in operation. Institutionalized and much more organized, the Zionist settlements became much stronger in the last years of Abdulhamid II's rule compared to the early years of Aliyah. As Shafir and Tessler also mentions, the organizational or systematic colonization started by 1908.³³⁶

Contrary to the implications of the present that “the Zionists were separatist and Sultan waged war on their movement,” the issue was not based on Sultan's position on Zionism. Ottoman policy towards Zionist movement was much more linked to the attitude of the local officials to the newcomers which was not restrictive completely. During that period, as can be seen, the relationship between the Jewish settlers and the Ottoman officials was not based on animosity. What is more, through the contradictory policies of the Ottoman government, it can be seen that the official attitude did not play a disincentive role on the Jewish settlement. In addition, as underlined, there were many factors which prevented the implementation of the official restrictive policy.

³³⁶Shafir, *op. cit.*, p. 234; Tessler, *op. cit.*, p. 61

Under the rule of Abdulhamid II, 55.000 Jews went to Palestine and more than 30 colonies were established.³³⁷ Even though the Zionists didn't achieve their goal of creating a Jewish homeland in Palestine during the reign of Abdulhamid, they did manage to gain a considerable amount of influence in the region. For a variety of reasons, the Jewish immigration and settlement as well as the Zionist work was able to make progress. The intervention of foreign powers in the limitations imposed by the Ottomans against immigration, bribery and corruption among Ottoman officials, and the concessions granted to foreign subjects all oiled the wheels of Jewish settlement in Palestine. Ultimately, the anti-immigration efforts of the Ottoman government were a flash in the pan, and were not enough to stem the migration of foreign Jews into Palestine.

³³⁷Öke, op. cit., p. 89; Türk, op. cit., p. 78

CHAPTER 3

1908 ONWARDS: THE OTTOMAN POLICY TOWARDS ZIONIST MOVEMENT IN THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD

In this chapter, my focus is on the Ottoman policy towards the Zionist movement in Palestine during the period between the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and the outbreak of the World War I. As new ruling elite emerged in the political arena, the official attitude towards Zionists will be highlighted in a different context from the Abdulhamid period.

The new rulers of the state, the members of the Committee of Union and Progress (the CUP), intended to destroy the cornerstones of the absolutist regime based on a monarchist system. They wanted to annihilate the political system of the pre-1908 period in which the central government had allied with local governors who, akin to a feudal system, enforced its authority over the country's territories.¹ The Committee's fundamental objective was the restoration of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 which had been suspended by Abdulhamid II.² The revolutionaries promised to establish a constitutional monarchy based on the rule of law. They took up their revolution under the motto of *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Justice*, and intended

¹ Aykut Kansu, 1908 Devrimi: The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey, translated by Ayda Erbal, İletişim Yayınları, 1995, pp. 155-156, pp. 217 – 218

² Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914*, Hurst Company, London, 2010, p. 8. Issam Nassar asserts that the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 was a product of the Tanzimat period, as it reenacted the Ottoman constitution, which had been suspended by Abdulhamid II. Issam Nassar, 'Jerusalem under the Young Turks: a study based on local sources', in *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*, edited by Yuval Ben-Bassat and Eyal Ginio, London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011, p. 128

to replace the age-old institutions of the monarchist regime with a parliamentary democracy. They advocated for a new fraternal Ottoman identity to band together against the European powers' intervention in the domestic affairs of the empire. They spoke of free press and nearly boundless freedoms.³

It is crucial to emphasize that, with the positive atmosphere (at least during the revolution's early days) which emerged with the Constitutional Era, Zionist leaders at this time began to carry out their activities openly, in order to improve their position and influence in the Jewish community as well as in the daily public life of the Empire.⁴ During this period, we see continuity in the Zionists' contacts with the Ottoman or Turkish ruling elite and Ottoman Jewish leaders, as their negotiations constituted a considerable part of Zionist activities in the Empire. What is more, the Zionist leadership, which had been won over by the practical Zionists, began to change its discourse, no longer demanding an independent Jewish homeland in Palestine. In this respect, it is crucial to address the Zionist leaders' negotiations with the Ottoman statesmen and examine their statements. The moderate discourse contributed to different perceptions of Zionism among the Turkish statesmen and may have led some Turkish officials to believe that Zionism did not pose a threat to the Ottoman State. As a result, in the early period of the post-revolutionary era, the Turkish government followed a favorable attitude towards the Zionist movement in Palestine. Therefore, one of the aims of this chapter is to show that different perceptions of Zionism among the ruling class played a pivotal role in affecting the state's official policy towards Zionists.

What prevails here is that this favourable attitude has been misinterpreted by the conservative and pro-Abdulhamid circles in Turkey at present. It is important to touch upon the assertions of some writers and historians, who criticize the policies of

³ Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Palestine*, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 150

⁴ Yaron Ben-Naeh, 'The Zionist Struggle as Reflected in the Jewish Press in Istanbul in the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution', 1908-18, pp. 241-158, in Ben-Bassat, Yuval and Ginio, Eyal (eds.), *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*, London: New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011, p. 245

the CUP in Turkey, that the Young Turks were freemasons and allied with the Zionists. Even some writers exaggerate that since Abdulhamid rejected any concession over Palestine in return for the consolidation of the Ottoman debts, the Zionist leaders wanted to overthrow the Sultan and for this purpose the Young Turks helped them.⁵ Through the characteristics of the restrictions that put on the Zionist movement by the CUP government, it will be observed that those claims are irrelevant. The Turkish ruling circles had a consensus of opinion that there could be no permission for a political autonomy in Palestine. This can be seen from the declarations, statements, and interviews of the Ottoman leaders.

Moreover, it became apparent over time that few of the promises of the Revolution would come to pass since some developments influenced the characteristics of the state policy towards Jewish immigration and settlement. The Zionist movement realized that the Ottoman government was neither adhering to their promises of freedom and equality nor following a liberal policy.

In fact, during this period, the restrictive policies of the Ottoman government towards the Zionist movement in Palestine continued. The attitude of the Ottoman leaders during the early days of the Young Turk rule towards the Zionist movement in Palestine wound up becoming more restrictive as a result of certain events. Therefore, it is important to touch upon those events: the developments in the Balkans, the coup d'état of 1909, and the opposition of Arabs and of some official circles that influenced the Young Turk policy towards Jewish immigrants and settlers. Additionally, since the Young Turk Movement was directed against Abdulhamid's rule, proponents of the Sultan remained in opposition to the Young Turks and blamed the new ruling elite for allying with the Jews and Zionists despite the restrictive policy at the governmental level. Although such accusations did not reflect the truth, they will also be touched upon in order to indicate their pressure on the government.

⁵ Kadir Mısırlıoğlu, *Bir Mazlum Padişah, Sultan II. Abdulhamid*, Sebil Yayınları, İstanbul, 2007, p. 362

However, even then, no consensus of opinion was reached among the Ottoman leaders concerning the Zionist movement. Therefore, it will be observed that the Ottoman leadership could not formulate a feasible plan with regard to the issue. As the country was already in a weakened state due to a variety of problems, such as in the Balkans and the Jewish settlement in Palestine; hence, Ottoman leaders did not have much time to think about Zionism. Other policy issues prevented the government from concentrating on what was occurring in Palestine. As discussed above, some politicians chose to ignore the strength of the Zionists and were of the opinion that there was “no need to argue.” All of the above contributed to the fact that the Ottoman leaders lacked a unique policy towards Zionists and their movement. In this sense, the inability of the Ottoman politicians to reach a decision about Zionist activities in the Empire will be observed.

What is more, the restrictions were either not put into practice nor became inefficient to prevent the Zionist progress in Palestine. Therefore, in the last section, I have included the achievements of the Zionists in Palestine, achievements which occurred despite the policy changes and the bans of the Ottoman government.

During that period, the Second Aliyah, having started in 1903-1904, continued. Around 30,000 immigrants of the Second Aliyah had already gone to Palestine up until 1908; during the six-year period until 1914, the Young Turk period, the number of those who arrived at Palestine was around 10,000. (As such, the total number of immigrants during the Second Aliyah was approximated at a maximum of 40,000) Campos states that there are no reliable statistics for Jewish immigration and settlement for the period between 1908 and 1914, but adds that about 2000 Jews arrived annually in Palestine in order to stay.⁶ In the majority of the resources I have examined, by 1914 approximately 60,000 foreign Jews went to Palestine⁷—and, by the time World War I broke out, the total Jewish population was around 85,000 in the

⁶ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 297

⁷ Around 25,000 immigrants during the First Aliyah, and 35,000 during the Second Aliyah, in Laquer, *op. cit.*, p. 278, Tessler, *op. cit.*, p. 43

region.⁸ Even though the number of immigrants was less in contrast to the Abdulhamid era, during the Second Constitutional Period, it can be observed that Zionism, as an organized movement in the Empire and particularly in Palestine, began to be institutionalized and increased the number of its proponents.

3.1 Zionism and the Ottoman Ruling Elite in the Post-Revolutionary Period

Although the Jewish settlement in Palestine was not purely dependent on the permission of the Ottoman government⁹, for the Zionist circles to prevail upon the Ottoman government to consent to the Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine was important so that they could be free in their activities. Therefore, during the first period of the Second Constitutional Era, the Zionists began to work towards this aim.

The Jews of the Empire, particularly in Salonica, where the Jews constituted the majority, celebrated the Revolution. The Jews in Palestine also welcomed the new movement, but with different consideration. What Gad Frumkin, a former member of the Supreme Court of Palestine under the British mandate, thought about the Revolution could be a good example of how the thinking on the matter evolved. Frumkin mentions that he considered the Revolution:

...mainly from the national-Jewish angle. What ought to be our role, as Jews, in the liberation movement? Would we know how to take advantage of the opportunity and achieve the right to live an autonomous life and be free of foreign intervention in our internal affairs...? Would the Jewish community in Palestine acquire freedom of movement and action for the work of revival and reconstruction? Would we be able to be free from the restrictions imposed on immigration, land purchase and settlements?¹⁰

⁸ Bachi, op. cit., p. 79; Piterberg, op. cit., p. 65; Öke, op. cit., p. 89

⁹ As argued in the previous chapters, without official permission or even despite the restrictions, the Zionists were able to immigrate and settle there through other means.

¹⁰ Farhi, op. cit., p. 197

In fact, many positive developments occurred which favoured the Zionists as a result of the Young Turk Revolution. After the CUP came to the power, it established good relations with the Jewish elite when Haim (Chaim) Nahum became the Chief Rabbi of all Ottoman Jews¹¹ (the successor of Moshe Levy, who had resigned in order to show his loyalty to the Sultan¹² or was forced to resign¹³). In the parliamentary elections of 1908, four Ottoman Jews, Vitali Faradji (Istanbul), Emmanuel Carasso (Salonica), Nissim Matzliach (Izmir) and Hazkiyal Sason (Baghdad) managed to gain seats in the Parliament.¹⁴

Moreover, through positive statements of the leaders of the CUP, the Zionists grew very optimistic regarding the official policy towards Jewish ambitions in Palestine.¹⁵ Zionist leaders were focused on obtaining a role in the political life of the Empire and gaining the support of the Ottoman government for their own goals.¹⁶ To this end, the Zionists began to establish contacts with members of the Ottoman ruling elite. Subsequently, in the post-revolutionary period, the Zionist leaders continued their diplomatic efforts.

What is more, the Zionist leaders did not employ a separatist discourse in their negotiations with the Ottoman ruling elite, in order not to disconcert them. The Zionist leadership, dominated by the proponents of practical Zionism after Herzl

¹¹ Feroz Ahmad, 'The Special Relationship: The Committee of Union and Progress and the Ottoman Jewish Political Elite, 1908-1918', in Levy, Avigdor (ed.), *Jews, Turks, Ottomans, A Shared History, Fifteenth Through The Twentieth Century*, Syracuse University Press, 2002, (pp. 212-230), p. 215

¹² Öke, op. cit., p. 170

¹³ Rodrigue, op. cit., p. 123

¹⁴ Walter F. Weiker, *Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, A History of the Jews in Turkey*, The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, The University Press of America, 1992, p. 233

¹⁵ Ben-Naeh, op. cit., p. 245

¹⁶ Farhi, op. cit., pp. 197-198; A number of young Zionist men in Palestine went to Istanbul for their higher education, in order to be able to be active in Ottoman politics and to reach their national objectives; David Ben-Gurion, later Prime Minister of Israel; Izhak Ben-Zvi, later President of Israel; Moshe Sharet, second Prime Minister of Israel, and later Minister of Foreign Affairs were of the Palestinian Zionist youth in *ibid.*, pp. 197-198

died, chose to shelve the idea of creating a Jewish homeland in Palestine,¹⁷ as their primary concern was to secure immigration and settlement in Palestine (practical Zionism). Whether the Zionist movement was motivated only by an autonomous structure under the Ottoman rule, or if it was inherently separatist yet without wanting to disconcert them is in question; in their negotiations with the Ottoman officials as well as in other platforms, the Zionists did not request an independent or autonomous entity within defined boundaries (unlike the political Zionists headed by Herzl). As Wolffsohn stated at the Ninth Congress of the Zionist Organization on 26 December 1909: ‘We can find no incompatibility between Ottoman interests and Zionist ambitions... The integrity of the Turkish State, its position as a world Power, its welfare and prosperous development fully accord with the very postulates of our work... We consider its new liberal Constitution as adequate guarantee for our personal and national security.’¹⁸ Because of this, some Ottoman officials did not believe that Zionism constituted a threat to the Empire. For many Ottoman Turkish intellectuals and officials, Zionism was different from other separatist nationalist movements as it lacked underground committees and posed no armed struggles. Furthermore, some Ottomans were favorable towards Zionism as a reaction to the perceived domination of the European powers and Christian culture.¹⁹

When Dr. Jacobson, the head of the Anglo-Levanten Banking Company, went to Constantinople in the autumn of 1908, his objective was to negotiate with some Ottoman statesmen in order to establish contacts for the development of Zionist cause.²⁰ Jacobson began to be aware of the favourable sentiment regarding Zionism among the Ottoman authorities. In September 1908, the Foreign Minister Tawfik Pasha and a prominent Young Turk leader Ahmed Rıza made favorable statements

¹⁷ Esther Benbassa, ‘Zionism at the End of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Century’, *Studies in Zionism*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1990, p. 129

¹⁸ Friedman, op. cit., p. 147

¹⁹ İlber Ortaylı, ‘Ottomanism and Zionism During the Second Constitutional Period, 1908-1915’, pp. 527-538, in Levy, Avidor (ed.), *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, The Darwin Press, Inc. Princeton, New Jersey, 1994, p. 532

²⁰ Mandel, op. cit., p. 60

with regard to Zionism and expressed their desire for removal of the bans towards the Zionist movement in Palestine in an interview held by *Ryetch*, a Russian publication.²¹

Additionally, the Zionist leaders negotiated with several Pashas: Ahmet Rıza, Enver, Talat, and Nazım, all of whom believed that the Jewish migration to the Empire would be beneficial for the development of the country. Ahmed Rıza, after elected as President of the Parliament, stated that the Jews were very good at science, industry, and commerce; he told Nahum that, as long as the Jews would support Ottoman industry and agriculture with their capital, they could be settled in the Ottoman territory without any restriction. The Grand Vizier Hussein Hilmi Pasha was another in favour of settlement, telling the Chief Rabbi that faithful Jews who became conspicuous among the Ottoman minorities with their hard work ethic, knowledge, and expertise were expected to serve the Ottoman government and state.²² More importantly, the restrictions (including application for a red card and with regard to the purchase of land) imposed by the Ottoman government on the Jewish settlements in Palestine were removed by the Grand Vizier.²³ What prevails here is that in the early period of the Constitutional Era, the Jews were allowed to migrate and settle in Palestine, something which had never been accomplished during the Abdulhamid period by government consent.

However, even though the restrictions were removed, during the early period of the Young Turk rule, there was no consensus about the Zionist movement among the Ottoman leaders. There were also important figures expressing anti-Zionist sentiments. Ekrem Bey, the Former Governor of Jerusalem (1906-1908) stated in an official memorandum that the Russian Jews were dangerous people who constituted a threat to the Empire. A few days later, Ibrahim Hakki, the Minister of Interior (1908) told Jabotinsky, a correspondent for a Russian paper in Istanbul, that the

²¹ Friedman, op. cit., p. 141

²² Öke, op. cit., p. 112

²³ Ibid., p. 113

Ottoman government was unwilling to permit further Jewish immigration to Palestine. All of this eventually caused Jacobson to write Wolffsohn in October 1908, stating that the Young Turk regime would not have a different attitude towards Zionism. Nevertheless, despite Jacobson's statement, no negative decision was made by the Ottoman government regarding Zionists or Jewish settlements until the summer of 1909.²⁴ In the aftermath of the Revolution, the government as well as the CUP would contend with many problems, and the Jewish immigration and settlement did not hold priority among those issues. Important to note is the fact that the government did not take visible action to reinstitute the regulations on the Jewish immigration until 1909. There is no evidence before the revolution that there had been an appointment of several members of the Council of State to address the issue of Jewish immigration and settlement.²⁵

Without losing hope, Jacobson enhanced his contacts with the Turkish politicians. In addition, he also negotiated with Said al-Husayni and Ruhi el-Khalidi, two Arab deputies to the Parliament from Jerusalem, and told them that the Jews were willing to, as well as supposed to, work towards good relations with the Arabs as their opposition could undermine the Zionist cause.²⁶

An alliance between the CUP and the Zionists?

The relationship between the Ottoman Jewish officials who were members of the CUP before or after the Revolution and the ruling circles has sometimes been exaggerated that the CUP leaders were directed by the Zionists. The favorable attitude of the CUP leaders towards Zionist movement is even sometimes interpreted that those Turkish leaders were freemasons and Zionists. The relationship between the Young Turks and the freemasonry is not what this study has aimed to analyze.

²⁴ Friedman, op. cit., pp. 141-142

²⁵ Farhi, op. cit., pp. 199-200

²⁶ Friedman, op. cit., pp. 141-142

Yet, it is worthy to underline that even though the CUP regime had a ‘lukewarm dialogue’²⁷ with the Zionists, it will be observed that the Turkish government was not pro-Zionist as it is understood today and did never cooperated with the Zionists.

First, the Young Turks opposed any secessionist movement on the Ottoman territory. The CUP leaders were nationalist men; their primary concern was to protect the integrity of the Ottoman territory and prevent the foreign countries from intervening in the domestic affairs of the Empire.²⁸ They were in favour of the policy of Ottomanism which aimed to achieve the unity of all religious and national communities living in the State under the Ottoman identity. It was believed that in a system without oppression, this political ideal could help the survival of the Empire.²⁹ Therefore, it was unthinkable to assume that the Turkish ruling circles were dominated by the Zionists and began to rule the country in favor of their interests.

The Zionists’ use of moderate discourse also indicates that, for the Young Turk government, loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and its territorial integrity was crucial. Although the freedom of political activity in this period led to the reorganization of the Zionists in the Empire and the Zionist leadership had easier access to the CUP leaders compared to their access to Sultan Abdulhamid,³⁰ the Turkish leaders wanted the Jews to serve for the development of the Empire, not to have a ‘state within a state.’ For instance, behind the election of the non-Muslim deputies to the Ottoman parliament, the idea of the Unionists was that those deputies would make important contributions to the Ottoman cause. The Unionists also wanted them to introduce and pass the legislation in order to modernize the country and revive its economy. What is more, the non-Muslim deputies were not limited by the Jews, there were also

²⁷ Farhi, op. cit., p. 205

²⁸ Mim Kemal Öke, ‘Young Turks, Freemasons, Jews and the Question of Zionism in the Ottoman, 1908-1913’, *Studies in Zionism*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1986, pp. 199-218

²⁹ Hanioglu, Şükrü, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak ‘Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti’ ve ‘Jön Türklük’*, Cilt I: 1889-1902, İletişim Yayınları, p. 627

³⁰ Ibid., p. 206

Greek and Armenian deputies. Therefore, to have representatives in the parliament was not special to the Jews.³¹

Second, even the stance of the Ottoman Jewish figures was not different than that of the ruling circles. As will be discussed in following sections, the Ottoman Jewish officials did never support any separatist ideal including Zionism.

What is more, as a result of some developments, the Turkish rulers began to pursue nationalist/Turkification policies. Its outcome for this study was that the favorable attitude of the Ottoman leaders which was composed of permission for Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine did not last long and the official policy became more restrictive towards Zionist movement in Palestine. In time, hostility towards Zionism would increase among the Turkish ruling circles.³² Yet, before dealing with the change of the policy, it is also crucial to deal with the contacts between the Zionist leaders and the Ottoman Jewish officials in order to see that there was not a friendship even between the two sides.

3.2 The Contacts between the Zionist Leadership and the Ottoman Jewish Officials

In the aftermath of the Revolution, Zionist leaders sought to establish a role for their movement in the political life of the Empire via the Ottoman Jewish officials. In this regard, the Ottoman Jewish figures represented an important priority if the movement was to reach its goals.³³ Therefore, in the post-revolutionary period, Zionist leaders continued to establish contacts not only with Turkish officials, but also with prominent Ottoman Jews such as Jewish deputies, Jewish governmental advisors, and Jewish representatives of several communal organizations. What

³¹ Ahmad, in Levy (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 215

³² Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 148

³³ The movement wanted to have concessions from the Ottoman government for free mass immigration and settlement along with the development of a Jewish cultural center, which would constitute a vital step towards the creation of an autonomous structure in Palestine.

prevailed is that, during their negotiations with those Ottoman Jewish figures, the Zionist leaders spoke of the Zionist objectives which were to be more acceptable for the Ottoman government.³⁴ They were unwilling to incite the Ottoman Jewish officials, since the latter were also Ottomanist. Thus, the Zionists expressed demands which were limited to the lifting of bans on the immigrations to Palestine and a creation of a Jewish cultural center under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Sultan. They avoided asking for autonomy or independence.³⁵

Jacobson placed importance on the Zionists receiving the support of the Ottoman Jewish elite. On 8 February 1909, he wrote Wolffsohn that the support of those Ottoman Jews would play a significant role in convincing the Turks into having a moderate attitude towards the Zionist movement in Palestine, but their opposition would damage them. Jacobson also made considerable effort to prevent the idea he had rejected: that Zionists were pursuing separatist interests and, thus, threatening existence of the Ottoman state which was the basis of some Ottoman individuals' opposition to Zionism as a whole. Jacobson also sought to establish good terms with the leaders of non-Zionist Jewish organizations in the state, namely the Alliance Israelite Universelle and the ICA.³⁶ His attempts resulted in some favourable outcomes as a moderate statement began to emerge among the Ottoman leaders concerning the Jewish settlement in Palestine. In this sense, Friedman highlights the positive impact of the prominent Jews in Salonica, where 80.000 of the total population of 173,000 were Jews.³⁷

Jacobson was able to gain the support of three important figures among the Salonica Jews, Carasso, Mazliyah and Russo. Emmanuel Carasso, a lawyer, was elected as a parliamentarian from Salonica in, 1908 and 1912. He had been a member of the CUP before 1908. He did not become a member of the CUP's central committee, yet he

³⁴ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

³⁵ Ben-Naeh, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

³⁶ Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Israel (Files of the Central Zionist Office, Cologne), Z 2/7, Jacobson to Wolffsohn, 30 Nov., 21, 31 Dec. 1908, 19 Jan. 1909 in Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 142

³⁷ Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 142

was close to the Unionists and a confidant of Talat Pasha.³⁸ For him, the leadership of the CUP was not as opposed to Zionism as was claimed, but he felt that the Zionists should make their objectives more acceptable to the CUP.³⁹ Nissim Russo was also from Salonica. Before the Revolution, he had served under Huseyin Hilmi in Macedonia and had been an active member of the CUP.⁴⁰ Mazliyah was elected from Izmir in the three assemblies. Huseyin Hilmi Pasha, the Inspector-General of the provinces of Salonica, Kosovo and Manastir before 1908, had consulted with Mazliyah about the problems related to international law. This kind of relationship might have made Mazliyah think that Hilmi Pasha could support Zionism.⁴¹

In December 1908, they told Jacobson that they decided to support the Zionists and to establish an Ottoman branch, so long as the Zionists agreed not to follow a separatist policy. They advised the Zionist leaders to gain first the support of the CUP, then Parliament, and as a result of that, the Government.⁴²

After negotiations with Jacobson, Carasso, Russo and Mazliyah approached several leaders of the CUP, such as Huseyin Hilmi, Ahmad Riza, Nazım Bey and Talat Bey, whom they viewed as sympathetic towards Zionism.⁴³ They were willing to convince the Turkish authorities that to oppose Zionism would be a wrong idea.⁴⁴ To this regard, they considered Hilmi Pasha in the Ottoman Parliament to be the most influential mediator in their dealings with the Ottoman statesmen for the Zionists.⁴⁵ Huseyin Hilmi Pasha assured Russo that he would not oppose Jewish immigrants

³⁸ Ahmad, in Levy (ed.), op. cit., p. 216

³⁹ Fishman, op. cit., p. 106

⁴⁰ Ahmad, in Levy (ed.), op. cit., p. 218

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 217

⁴² Friedman, op. cit., pp. 142-143

⁴³ Ibid., p. 145

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 143

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 142-143

willing to establish settled areas in Palestine.⁴⁶ Early in February 1909, Carasso even prepared a proposal to establish an Ottoman Immigration Company in Palestine to disprove the notion that Jews were motivated to create a political autonomy in a single territory.⁴⁷ Nazım Bey, a leading member of the Unionist Central Committee, expressed that he was in favor of the presence of more than six million Jews in Turkey, since he regarded the Jews as the “most reliable” people in the Empire; he also stated his support for the idea of the Immigration Company proposed by Carasso. In contrast, however, he also stated that the number of Jewish settlers in Palestine should not extent beyond two million as, for him, the presence of millions of Jews there would be hazardous.⁴⁸

In addition to the Jews of Salonica, there were other circles in Istanbul who painted a promising picture. Haim Nahum, the Chief Rabbi of the Empire, accepted that the Young Turk rule was in favour of the Jewish settlement in Palestine, even though it would not allow the Jews to create autonomy there. He argued that the Turks had to ally with the Jews in order to deal with the Greeks and Armenians. Although he was an Ottomanist, Nahum expressed his willingness to support the Zionists as long as they would not be separatists. Behor Efendi, an Ottoman Jewish parliamentarian, thinking that it was the best time for Zionists to take action, advised Jacobson to concentrate on the efforts towards colonization which were to be carried out at administrative level.⁴⁹ There were also cautions in addition to the favourable statements that were also raised by some Jewish figures. Vitali Faradji, a leading lawyer who was elected to the Ottoman parliament in 1908 and 1912, placed emphasis on the thought that the Zionists should refrain from asking for special demands and autonomy in Palestine.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, for Faradji, establishment of an

⁴⁶ Mandel, op. cit., p. 63

⁴⁷ Friedman, pp. 143-144

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 145

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 141

⁵⁰ Ibid.

intellectual centre in Palestine was significant for the world Jewry and underscored an important fact: “the absence of anti-Semitism in Turkey made the idea realizable,”⁵¹ which might also have had a role in the ability of the Zionists to create settlements in Palestine.

Wolffsohn had convinced Russo and Mazliyah that the Zionist movement had little in common with the premises threatening the Ottoman Empire’s territorial integrity and that the Zionist ambitions were, in fact, in line with its interests: the Jewish immigrants would adopt Ottoman citizenship and contribute to the industrial and agricultural development of the Empire.⁵² Sokolow, the General Secretary of the Zionist Organization, also rejected the claim that the Zionists’ objective was to create an independent Jewish state; he stated that, in the Basel Program, there was no mention of it.⁵³ Zionist leaders’ efforts to assure the Ottoman Jewish officials of Zionist loyalty to the Empire indicate that this same loyalty was crucial for the Ottoman Jewish leaders as well. As can be seen above, for any backing of the Zionist movement, these Ottoman Jews stipulated that the Zionists should not pursue separatist policies. The Ottoman Jewish leaders shared the government’s opinion that the territorial integrity of the empire, the loyalty of the foreign Jews or Zionists to the government, and Ottoman patriotism were the things about which no concessions could be made.

What prevails is that the Jewish intellectuals and the Jewish political activists in the Empire were Ottomanized and also supported the ideals of the Second Constitutional Period. In the parliaments of this period, the Jewish delegates were effectively represented as they actively supported the CUP. Unlike other national groups, the Jewish parliamentarians did not enter the elections in this period with their own nationalist agendas.⁵⁴ Mazliyah, for instance, was ‘a committed Unionist and was

⁵¹ Ibid., op. cit., p. 143.

⁵² Ibid., p. 144

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ortaylı, op. cit., pp. 529-530

much respected in the CUP.⁵⁵ It was not his Jewishness but his position made him representative of Izmir for three times.⁵⁶ Sason, who was elected from Baghdad in 1908, did never give any support to Jacobson and was called by the latter as “an Arab patriot.”⁵⁷ Fishman also calls Carasso, Russo and Mazliyah as Ottoman loyalists, since for them loyalty to their Ottoman homeland did not contradict Zionism⁵⁸ They did not support separatist ambitions and even were against any such demands. As Feroz Ahmad says the Jewish elite like Nahum and Carasso were loyal to “the Ottoman ideal.”⁵⁹

3.3 Zionism and the Ottoman Jewry in the Post-Revolutionary Period

The Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire welcomed the revolution since it helped the non-Muslims acquire their constitutional rights. Additionally, in the newly-created free environment, the Jews expected to have more privileges in the daily public life of the Empire. As the government rescinded the censorship on media and restrictions on political life, the different organizations, including the Jewish associations, managed to increase their spheres of influence.⁶⁰

Another impact of the revolution on the Zionist movement was that the Zionist leaders intended to gain Jewish support for the movement and improve Zionist public relations in the Empire. In the post-revolutionary period, the Zionist leaders continued their efforts to provide Zionist mobilization among the Ottoman Jewish community as the Revolution brought about a more liberal atmosphere. In this

⁵⁵ Ahmad, in Levy (ed.), op. cit., p. 217

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Friedman, op. cit., p. 158

⁵⁸ Fishman, op. cit., p. 106

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 227

⁶⁰ Ibid.

framework, whether Zionism was appealing to the Ottoman Jewish community or not is worth to mention.

At this point, Aron Rodrigue argues that Zionism began to gain considerable support from the local Jews by the time of the Revolution in 1908. About this, Rodrigue touches upon the rise of Zionism among the Jewish community in the Ottoman State, while he is indicating its negative impact on the Alliance Israelite Universelle in the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution. His conclusion is that as a result of the Zionists' activities, the impact of the ideas and institutions of Zionism on the Ottoman Jewish increased.⁶¹

In order to show the concerns of the members of the Alliance about the rising influence of the Zionist movement among the Ottoman Jews, Rodrigue gives some examples. For instance, the president of the Regional Committee of the Alliance reported that 90 percent of the Jewish youth became Zionist in the Ottoman Empire in 1911. After 1911, it was claimed that the Zionists began to have the majority in the parliaments of the Jewish assemblies. It was also stated that, even though all of the Ottoman Jews were not Zionist and those assemblies did not represent all of the Jews in Istanbul, the Zionist movement emerged as a political force popular among the Ottoman Jews during the period between the Young Turk revolution and the outbreak of the World War I.⁶² The point is that the emergence of Zionism in Istanbul and its rising influence were exaggerated by the Alliance. What is more, Rodrigue seems to have become mistaken as he seeks to analyze the rise of Zionism in the Empire from the point of view of the Alliance.⁶³

Feroz Ahmad, on the other hand, claims that the Ottoman Jewish community kept itself distanced from political Zionism and the Zionist propagandists could not

⁶¹ Rodrigue, op. cit., p. 126

⁶² Ibid., p. 127

⁶³ Rodrigue in the beginning of the related chapter of his book has a sentence that 'It is impossible to enter into details of the history of the Turkish Zionism here.' in *ibid*, p. 126. If there was a Turkish version of Zionism, it would not sound as something separatist as he makes a distinction from European Zionism.

receive support from their coreligionists in the Empire. He says that the Zionist idea which projected the return to the Palestine was advocated only by a minority of the Jews in the world, including Turkey. His argument is that Turkish Zionism seemed to be cultural not political. And he defines the reasons behind the appeal to cultural Zionism. First, since other religious communities were maintaining their own national identities, the Ottoman Jews also searched for a national identity at that time. Second, those Ottoman Jews wanted to ‘break the hold of the community’s notables who were closely associated with the Alliance Israelite Universelle.’⁶⁴ He says that these developments in the Jewish community of Istanbul did not have repercussions in the Turkish press. The Turkish political classes were aware of European Zionism and the flowering of Zionism in the local Jewish community, yet they were thoughtless of the matter. He explains this by saying that perhaps because those political classes were to deal with “bigger problems,” or because they did not consider the rise of Zionism among the Jewish community as a threat to the Empire.⁶⁵ As Ortayli asserts, some Ottoman bureaucrats were influenced by the anti-Semitism in Europe directly or indirectly; however, if we want to make a generalization, the educated Ottomans held no prejudice against Zionism or Judaism.⁶⁶ Disregarding of this issue by the Turkish politicians indicates that Zionism did not politically influence the Jews in the Empire.

For Zionists, the use of the press was thought to be crucial for the spread of Zionism in the Empire. In addition to his diplomatic contacts, Jacobson was also working towards spreading the awareness of Zionist thought. With the goal of disseminating information, he took ownership of several Jewish newspapers and provided financial assistance to several others hoping to make them vehicles for Zionist propaganda.⁶⁷ To this regard, Ben-Naeh touches upon the Zionists’ use of the media for propaganda

⁶⁴ Ahmad, in Levy (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 213

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Ortayli, *op. cit.*, p. 532

⁶⁷ Aharon Cohen, ‘Israel and the Arab World’, London 1970, p. 73

via the founding or financial support of publications. Although his conclusion is that the use of the press was not of much use in the realization of Zionist aims and improvement of Zionist relations with its opponents in the Jewish community and state authorities, he notes that the press made the Jewish public more aware of the Zionist thought.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, Ben-Naeh also points out the factors that led to Zionist mobilization efforts and the predominance of Zionist propaganda. According to him, Jewish religious consciousness and self-identity contributed to the rise of national consciousness: the increasing population of Ashkenazi Jewish in the Empire and immigrants from Eastern Europe and the foundation of clubs, charitable societies, and other organizations in Istanbul promoted Zionist activities. Moreover, through the political and economic support of the Zionist activists from the Zionist Organization, the Zionist movement gained a foothold among the Jews in Istanbul, Salonica, and most important communities in the Empire⁶⁹

In a similar way, Campos underlines that compared to the Abdulhamid period, between 1908 and 1914, the Jews at that time in the Ottoman territory held a different Zionist thought than their counterparts in Europe. They regarded Zionism as a cultural form of nationalism which did not conflict with their loyalty to the Ottoman state.⁷⁰ Campos also mentions the dilemma that the Empire's Jewish community, also called the Sephardi Jews, faced. While they were Ottoman subjects and enjoyed the benefits of Ottoman nationality, they were also subject to Zionist ideas and institutions. They were in a position to determine their role as being an Ottoman and also being a Jew. The Sephardim differentiated Zionism from the European Zionism, which had both territorial and political objectives on the Ottoman soil. For some Sephardi Jews, Zionism had unjustifiable ambitions and was viewed as a betrayal to the Ottoman state and, therefore, to the relations of the Sephardim with the Ottoman government. For some others, Zionism was seen as defending the

⁶⁸ Ben-Naeh, *op. cit.*, p. 254

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-255

⁷⁰ Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 105

legitimate objectives of Jews and also felt to be beneficial for the revival of the economy as well as the development of the empire.⁷¹

Nevertheless, despite the rise of Zionist propaganda, it seems that Zionism was not appealing to the Ottoman Jews as Feroz Ahmad states that the Jews of Anatolia was committed to Ottomanism.⁷² In general, it was clear that the Sephardim, in comparison with the Ashkenasi, distanced themselves from Zionism. For Dr. Arthur Ruppin, the local representative of the Zionist Organization and the head of the Palestine Office in Jaffa, the Sephardi Jews did not have enthusiasm for Zionism in the public demonstrations after the revolution, but rather favored Ottoman fervor. Their assimilationist tendencies and oppositional stand to Zionism worried the Zionist leaders and intellectuals. The official Zionist organ in Hebrew, *Ha-Olam* alerted the Zionists that the Ottomanist attitude of the Sephardim could lead to unpleasant, if not disastrous outcomes for the Zionist movement.⁷³

3.4 Ottoman Attitude towards Settlements: Restrictive Policy

In time, the official policy became more restrictive in contrast to the first years of the Young Turk rule. In this section, I will work to discuss the developments that put pressure on the Ottoman government to reinstitute its regulations on the Zionist movement.

During the early period of the Revolution, both the government and the CUP adopted a unique policy towards the Zionist movement in Palestine: all restrictions towards it were removed. However, the favourable climate of opinion regarding Zionism of the early period of the Young Turk rule changed as a result of several things. First of all, the fear of separatist movements rose among the Young Turks. In October 1908, Bulgaria declared its independence. On 6 October, the Austro-Hungarian Empire

⁷¹ Campos, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198

⁷² Ahmad, in Levy (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 227

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202

declared the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁷⁴ On that same day, Crete declared its decision to unite with Greece.⁷⁵ In the elections held in November and December of 1908, each national group (the Bulgarians, the Greeks and the Armenians - unlike the Jews)⁷⁶ had prepared its election campaign based on its national goals, contrary to the Young Turks' expectations that the constitutional environment would unite all different communities and save the Empire from dissolution.⁷⁷ The voting pattern of the Arab, Armenian, and Greek deputies of the Ottoman Parliament who opposed the government disappointed the Young Turks.⁷⁸ Additionally, the subsequent losses of territory resulted in the rise of the voices from internal opposition. Therefore, the Young Turk leadership wanted to appear distant from the Zionists, who were thought to be inherently desiring a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In this sense, we see a change of attitude towards Jewish settlements from time to time.

Furthermore, some Ottoman statesmen began to have concerns about the Zionist objectives in Palestine. In 1909, Jacobus H. Kann⁷⁹, a Dutch member of the Zionist Executive, published a book in which he expressed his desire for an autonomous Jewish state in Palestine which would be under the sovereignty of the Sultan, but independent in carrying out all of its affairs. This book increased the concerns of the

⁷⁴ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany, 1902-1969*, New York, A. A. Knopf, 1959-69, p. 330; Öke, op. cit., p. 113. The annexation of Bosni-Herzegovina was accepted by the Young Turk government in exchange for financial assistance, while it threatened Russia's prestige as the protector of Serbia in the Balkans.

⁷⁵ Friedman, op. cit., p. 145

⁷⁶ Ortaylı, op. cit., pp. 529-530

⁷⁷ Öke, op. cit., p. 114

⁷⁸ Friedman, op. cit., 146

⁷⁹ Jacobus Henricus Kann: the founder of the Zionist Organization in Holland and one of the founders of the Jewish Colonial Trust. Jabotinsky, the head of the Zionist press in Istanbul, sharply criticized Kann's book *Erez Israel –The Jewish Land* as the demand for an autonomous home rule for Jews in Erez Israel would damage the Zionist movement politically in the Ottoman capital and this demand was sufficient to disconcert the Ottoman statesmen. Kann, Jacobus Henricus, on the website of Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud00020011010696.html> (accessed on March 29, 2014) The book demanded a Jewish majority in Palestine, a significant place both economically and strategically; a Jewish army and police force; and an autonomous government to Jewish secular leaders. The Zionist representatives in Istanbul regarded the statements in the book as political blunders in Mandel, op. cit., p. 94

CPU members, for whom the dependence of the Zionists program on the public law was compatible with the claim of an autonomous state, contrary to Ottomanism and also unnecessary under a constitutional regime.⁸⁰

In addition, the second Young Turk coup of April 1909, which occurred following a revolt by the opposition headed by Abdulhamid, changed the climate of opinion. The central committee of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in Salonica established an army and occupied Istanbul on 23-24 April, 1909. The CUP wanted to remove the corrupt regime led by Sultan Abdulhamid. The National Assembly founded in Yeşilköy proclaimed that Abdulhamid would be deposed and replaced by his brother Mehmed Reshad, who would remain under the influence of the CUP. The ratification of this decision by Şeyhülislam “marked the end of the counter-revolution.”⁸¹ On 27 April, a delegation headed by Talat Pasha went to the palace and informed Abdulhamid that the committee of the CUP had taken the lead. On 5 May, Husein Hilmi Pasha was reappointed as Grand Vizier.⁸² The CUP as a political party became the leading power in the Empire; it began to dominate the administration and, therefore, strengthened its position.⁸³ The promises of equality, freedom, and liberty to all Ottoman subjects were renounced, and the Ottoman Empire became a centralized state.⁸⁴ The coup of 1909 put an end to the period of adjustment between the ruling circles and the non-Turkish and non-Muslim nationalities. Nationalist sentiments began to prevail in the CUP administration.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Öke, op. cit., p. 116

⁸¹ Ahmad, in Levy (ed.), op. cit., p. 40

⁸² David Kenneth Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2006

⁸³ The Young Turk Revolution led to the emergence of a radically new type of regime: a one-party rule, Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Palestine*, p. 151

⁸⁴ Friedman, op. cit., p. 145

⁸⁵ Before the revolution, the national and religious communities had several privileges despite being excluded from the administration. Yet, with the new regime, those privileges were abrogated. At this point, Aykut Kansu states that the Ittihadists did not only change the political system, but also aimed to establish a new social order in which all people would be granted equality before the law. To that

In this regard, Friedman highlights the impact of this atmosphere on the Zionists movement. The Alliance Israelite Universelle particularly began to criticize the Zionist ideology (which was supported by the Turkish press.) Even some Ottoman Jewish leaders rescinded their favourable attitude towards Zionism. In June, Wolffsohn and Sokolow went to Istanbul with the goal of having the restrictions removed, which they hoped to accomplish by convincing Ottoman officials that the Zionists were not separatist. They negotiated with the Husein Hilmi Pasha, the Grand Vizier, Ahmad Riza, the President of the Chamber, and a number of ministers and parliamentarians. However, this attempt came to naught. Wolffsohn wanted Palestine and its neighboring countries to be designated as the place for Jewish immigration while the Ottomans insisted on the unacceptability of a specific reference to Palestine. Consequently, the Grand Vizier rejected the removal of the prohibitions, which meant that Palestine was legally excluded for the Jewish movement.⁸⁶

On June 20, the whole matter of the Jewish settlements in Palestine was reviewed in the Cabinet for the first time since the Revolution of 1908 after Hafez Bey al-Said, a deputy from Jaffa, raised the Zionist issue in Parliament by asking the meaning of Zionism and questioning the compatibility of it with the interests of the Empire. The Cabinet acknowledged the complexity of the issue as, on one hand, the Zionist movement was contradictory to their policy of Ottomanizing the Empire. In addition to that, the Arabs both in Palestine and beyond were much more sensitive to the Zionist movement. On the other hand, according to the capitulations and the Land Code of 1867, the foreign Jews had privileges. What is more or in addition, the Ottoman Jews had constitutional rights to buy land in Palestine. The Mutasarrif of Jerusalem was consulted for his views since there were a variety of opinions between the state departments on this issue. Suphi Bey, the new Mutasarrif of Jerusalem (1908-1909), believed in positive outcomes of the Jewish immigration to Palestine; he also emphasized the necessity of separate locations for the immigrants in the

regard, Kansu argues that this objective was brought about by a perception of citizenship which was against the classification of the people living in the same country in accordance with their ethnic and religious identities. Kansu, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 146

empty places and their adoption of Ottoman citizenship. The Mutasarrif also argued that the new Minister of Interior Ferid Pasha was in support of the Arab opposition to the Jewish settlement in Palestine. Ferid Pasha was wholeheartedly against the Jewish settlement in Palestine and, therefore, was in favour of prohibiting both settlement and land purchases. Pasha also recommended that the foreign Jews be deprived of the rights to purchase land given to them under the Land Code.⁸⁷ The Council of Ministers, having been informed that 50,000 settlers in Palestine were foreign Jews, decided to prohibit land sales to the foreigners in Palestine in June, 1909.⁸⁸ However, the required legislation against the Jewish land purchases was not promulgated, as it would violate the constitutional rights of the Ottoman subjects.⁸⁹ In September 1909, Talat Pasha, who replaced Ferit Pasha as the Minister of the Interior, as an interim measure, ordered that certain restrictions (reimplementation of the red card system, limitation of visiting to three months, and prohibition of land sales to all foreigners) be imposed under Abdulhamid rule.⁹⁰

After the restrictions were reinstated, the Zionist leaders began to try to convince the Ottoman circles that they were not asking for an independent Palestine for themselves. Jacobson, the Zionist representative in Istanbul, attributed their demand for an autonomous Palestine under the protection of European powers during the Abdulhamid era to the uncertainties about the lack of guarantees in its unconstitutional system and announced that the Zionist leaders were no longer willing to obtain Palestine. Under the constitutional protection, they were only seeking the protection of the Ottoman government for Jewish immigrants and settlements in Palestine.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Mandel, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73

⁸⁸ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 117; MV., 128/69, 24.Ca.1327

⁸⁹ Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 105

⁹⁰ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 118; Arslan, *op. cit.*, p. 155-117; Mandel, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74

⁹¹ Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75

Furthermore, in May, after his meeting with the Grand Vizier, Jacobson wrote to Wolffsohn that the Vizier was unconcerned about Zionism. In July at a lunch in London, Riza Tevfik said to Sir Francis Montefiore, the Honorary President of the English Zionist Federation, that the political aspirations of the Zionists could not be accepted by the Ottoman government, as it first had to address many internal political problems. After Hafez Bey posed his question in Parliament, Jacobson was told by the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Finance, and the President of the Chamber that they hardly had time to think of Zionism.⁹²

Jacobson also met the Minister of Finance, Cavid Bey. However, the Minister told him that the general opinion was that the Zionists desired to establish an independent state in Palestine, and the Ottoman government had no intention of bargaining with separatist groups.⁹³ He also negotiated with Hamada Pasha, the Minister of Charitable Foundations Properties, as well as Talat Bey, to both of which he expressed the Jews' historical and religious commitment to Palestine.⁹⁴

In fact, the perception of the Young Turks with regard to the Jews and Palestine was not different than that of Abdulhamid. Jacobson, in this sense, stated that the Young Turk leaders were not against Jewish immigration into the Ottoman Empire at large; however, they were concerned about the fact that Zionism as a national movement might have separatist ambitions.⁹⁵ It can be argued that, like Abdulhamid, the Turkish rulers were not anti-Semitic, but rather anti-Zionist. The Young Turk government wanted to avoid a nationality problem in Palestine. Moreover, since the Capitulations were still in effect, and the Jewish immigrants were unwilling to adopt

⁹² Mandel, op. cit., p. 75

⁹³ Öke, op. cit., pp. 118-119. Later, Cavid Bey would be blamed for supporting Jewish capitalists and their agents by the opposition. Louis Fishman, 'Understanding the 1911 Ottoman Parliament debate on Zionism in light of the emergence of a 'Jewish question'', in Ben-Bassat, Yuval and Ginio Eyal (eds.), *Late Ottoman Palestine: the Period of Young Turk Rule*, London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011, (pp. 103-123), p. 109

⁹⁴ Friedman, op. cit., p. 147

⁹⁵ Farhi, op. cit., p. 199

Ottoman citizenship, the Ottoman government had concerns about the Zionist movement in Palestine.⁹⁶ Additionally, they did not want foreign powers to intervene in the internal affairs of the Ottoman state.

Yet, on the other hand, as İlber Ortaylı says, the activities of the Zionist movement implemented in diplomatic, political, and economic terms were not lumped together with other separatist nationalisms of Greeks, Bulgarians, and Armenians by all of the Ottoman statesmen. Therefore, Zionism did not receive much reaction from the Ottoman ruling elite.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the Ottomans were in need of financial assistance as well. In this sense, the Jews could be considered as an economic resource for the implementation of reforms and the development of some of the underdeveloped regions of the Empire. Therefore, the Young Turks declared that there could be some facilitation towards Jewish immigrations and accepted them on the same conditions entailed by Abdulhamid: that they would settle dispersedly and accept the Ottoman nationality, and that their immigration would not be concentrated on Palestine. Also, self-government or autonomy was adamantly prohibited. The government planned to allow the Jewish settlements particularly in two places: in Macedonia, where the Jewish settlement would save the region from separatist movements; and in Mesopotamia, where the Jews would provide economic development⁹⁸ in a region that was of the fundamental importance to the competing powers. Here, it can be said that the Ittihadists seemed to have been impressed by the Zionist leadership's insistence on the loyalty of Zionists to the Ottoman Empire. However, the Zionist leadership sought the removal of all bans regarding Palestine. Because of this, Jacobson went to Istanbul in early 1910 yet, he again failed to gain the support of the Ottoman authorities for such demands.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 148

⁹⁷ Ortaylı, op. cit., p. 532

⁹⁸ Öke, op. cit., p. 120

Claims of the Opposition

It is certain that the Young Turks were not in favor of an independent entity for the Jews in Palestine. Despite this, the CUP officials were attacked by their opposition on the claim that the CUP government was in alliance with the Zionists. The circles from the opposition began to criticize the characteristics of the restrictions and the extent of their implementation, and also argued that the advancement of Zionist movement in Palestine was not being prevented.

After the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, Fishman says the ‘Jewish Question’ emerged⁹⁹ following the rise of anti-Semitic expressions in the Ottoman parliament. For the Muslims in Istanbul, Zionism was a nationalist-separatist movement that constituted a danger to the future of the Ottoman state. This perception forced the Jewish community to reassess their presence in Ottoman lands. Influential Jews of that era defined Zionism as a movement of Jews to Turkey, preferably to Palestine, which would contribute to the development of the country as well as provide security for the Jewish immigrants. In fact, according to the Ottoman Jews, who were in support of mass immigration and close to the political elite, such as Moiz Kohen and Nissim Russo,¹⁰⁰ Zionism would not damage their loyalty to the Empire and its territorial unity. However, between 1910 and 1911, the claims of the opposition that the Young Turk Revolution was led by the Jews and that the opposition’s blame regarding the government’s “positive attitude” towards Zionists began to create pressure on the CUP and the Jewish deputies in the Parliament. As a result, the influential Jews separated themselves from the CUP party. (Emmanuel Carasso was one of them as he resigned in October.)¹⁰¹

Moreover, in this respect, the opposition was supported by the British embassy in Istanbul. At that time, European power politics also began to be interested in the Zionist movement in the Holy Land, and the rivalry among the European powers

⁹⁹ Fishman, op. cit., p. 104

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 106

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 109

influenced the internal debate about Zionism among the Ottoman statesmen. The German influence in the Ottoman Empire was rising at the expense of British and French. Since Herzl from Vienna and Wolffsohn from Germany directed the Zionist activities in the Empire, the British saw the Zionist movement as a tool used by Germany to increase its domination over the Empire. As a result, the British representatives started a propaganda campaign in Istanbul early in 1911, saying that the CUP was dominated by Freemasons in order to discredit the Germans. The Chief Dragoman at the British Embassy, G.H. Fitzmaurice (an Irish Catholic) adduced that the Ottoman government was pro-Zionist. Around the same time, the French Consul assisted writer Kazim Nami in Salonika, so he would publish anti-Zionist articles in which he attacked the Zionists for having separatist policies and blamed them for helping the European powers intervene in the internal affairs of the Empire. Mandel states that the British and French propaganda prevented the Germans from supporting the Zionists publicly.¹⁰²

As mentioned before, there is no doubt that the government never wished to sell Palestine to the Jews or any part of the country to others. The presence of the opposition to the Zionist movement and the blame placed on government policy for being moderate towards Zionist work in Palestine do not indicate that the Young Turk leaders were cooperating with the Zionists. As Mandel says, those who claimed that the Ottoman government agreed to sell Palestine to the Zionists whenever the government negotiated with a Jewish bank for a loan or a Jewish secretary was appointed by a minister were “malicious troublemakers.”¹⁰³ The thought that the government did not pursue a discouraging attitude towards Zionist activities was also brought about by its ignoring the warnings of the opposition with regard to those activities.

¹⁰² Mandel, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-97

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 100

3.5 Arab Opposition to the Jewish settlements and Its Impact on the Ottoman Policy

In addition to the developments in the Balkans and the changes in the ruling elite, the Arab opposition also contributed to the change from the former attitude towards the Zionist movement in Palestine. Regarding the attitude of Arabs towards the Zionist movement there, Benny Morris notes in his book, *Righteous Victims*, that, before the Young Turk Revolution, Arab resistance to the Zionists was mostly local and specific; however, after 1908, Arab resistance became more nationalist in character.¹⁰⁴ From the period of the Young Turk Revolution up until World War I, as new political tendencies emerged among the Palestinian Arabs, they began to become increasingly more worried that the Zionist ambitions might threaten their political objectives. Tessler asserts that most of the anti-Zionist sentiments from the Arabs, sentiments which would later become more well-known, were stated in the years before the World War I.¹⁰⁵ Yet, he also notes that popular opposition to the Jewish presence in Palestine increased gradually.¹⁰⁶ The Jews aware of the anti-Zionism among the Arabs sought to establish cooperation with them. Additionally, Arab organizations in other regions had ties with the Zionists in Palestine for a time. Despite all, during the period before World War I, an open Jewish-Arab conflict emerged.¹⁰⁷ In the Arab newspapers, the hostility against the Zionist presence in Palestine could be seen. *Al-Asmai*, published in Jaffa, complained about the privileges given by the Capitulations provided by the Ottoman government. *Al-Karmil*, founded in 1908, was militantly anti-Zionist, mainly in economic ways, and defended the synthesis of Ottoman loyalism and local patriotism. *Filastin*, established in 1911, launched a campaign to establish a Palestinian Patriotic Society by Arab notables, with the aim to buying State land to prevent it from Jewish

¹⁰⁴ Morris, op. cit., p. 59

¹⁰⁵ Tessler, op. cit., p. 123

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

ownership.¹⁰⁸ Between 1909 and 1913, Arabs killed twelve Jewish guards, and Jewish settlers began to take notice of Arab antagonism. Morris attributes the search for organized armed units by the Jewish settlers in 1909 to this “Arab hatred.”¹⁰⁹ The year of 1909 was the year that the settlement sought to have firearms, and Wolffsohn allocated some money to buy weapons. *Hashomer* which was composed of Jewish guards was also founded in the same year. Morris argues that the Revolution of 1908 led to the intensification of the Arabs’ national feelings in the Levant, and that this presented in the form of Arab attacks on the Jewish settlers in Palestine. After Ben-Gurion was attacked by an Arab robber, he wrote that his experience was a result of the Revolution of 1908.¹¹⁰ Mandel states that, despite all, the Arabic press did not represent a strong body against Zionism; and, at that time, it was not impossible to speak of an Arab Revolt in Palestine.¹¹¹

In May of 1910, a group of Arab deputies from Beirut, Aleppo, and Jerusalem asked for the prohibition of land sales to the Jews and Jewish immigration. Therefore, instructions were sent to the authorities in Beirut and Jerusalem accordingly. The new Mutasarrif of Jerusalem Azmi Bey stated that if Zionists were to have political-separatist aims, their economic advancement would not be tolerated. If they were to give up their dreams about Palestine and prove their loyalty, all restrictions would be removed. The Council of State reconfirmed the existing restrictions and emphasized the bans on land sales. To this regard, instructions were sent to the Vali of Beirut and the Ministers of Justice and Foreign Affairs in September 1910. Additionally, the Minister of Cadastre ordered the conversion of lands on the periphery of Jerusalem

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 129

¹⁰⁹ Morris, op. cit., p. 59

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 59-60

¹¹¹ Mandel, op. cit., p. 125

into national domain (*miri arazi*¹¹²). Nevertheless, Mandel does not consider these regulations to be “meaningful.”¹¹³

By 1911, the Arabs’ protests against the land sales to Jews increased. The Zionists’ attempt to buy a large amount of land in the Jezreel Valley around the village of Fula from the Sursuq family of Beirut was deprecated by Palestinian notables under the leadership of Shukri al-Asali, the Caimakam of Nazareth. Despite this, the Fula land sale was completed in February 1911.¹¹⁴ The *Vali*¹¹⁵ of Beirut emphasized the legality of this sale of land. The Vali stated that it had been important to take the constitutional rights of the Ottoman subjects into account as the land was purchased in the name of an Ottoman Jew.¹¹⁶ As a result, anti-Zionist sentiments began to be heard in the center in Istanbul as well. The Arab deputies called for prohibitions on Jewish immigration and settlements as they were afraid of displacement of Arabs, who were powerless compared to the Jews, with their foreign citizenship, tax exemptions, and other advantages as a result of their European culture and capabilities. Furthermore, in March 1911, while fifty Arab notables from Palestine quarreled about the Jews being able to buy territory, they claimed that those Jews were using Ottoman Jewish citizens for their activities.¹¹⁷

The debate on Zionism in June 1909—at the end of which, the draft law was dropped—and the Fula land sale in February 1911 reveal to us that, in order not to violate the constitutional rights of the Ottoman Jews, the government did not prevent Zionist activities and, moreover, it actually contributed to their advancement, as it was clear that the Ottoman Jews were buying land for the Zionists. It is also worth

¹¹² *Miri arazi*: ‘the land that was de facto owned by its seller and cultivator but de jure by the government.’, in Kimmerling, op. cit., p. 35

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 104-105

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 106-107

¹¹⁵ The local governor in the Ottoman administration.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Morris, op. cit., pp. 62-64

repeating here that, in contrast with the Abdulhamid period, the Ottoman Jews were allowed to purchase land during the Young Turk rule.

By 1911, the Arab opponents of the CUP began to assert that the Committee was pro-Zionist.¹¹⁸ In Haifa, Najib Nassar, the editor of *al-Karmil*, published the first Arab book, *Zionism* in 1911. Nassar felt the strength of the Zionists should not be underestimated; they were willing to have dominance over the country and own the sources of it. Moreover, the CUP was not hindering them; furthermore, the Ottoman Jews were helping them.¹¹⁹ Yet, Nassar was in support of the CUP. He felt that Zionism constituted a threat to the territorial integrity of the Empire as well as to the Arab presence.¹²⁰ Muhammad Kurd Ali, the editor of a publication which was not in favor of the policies of the CUP in Damascus, argued that the CUP, “which was composed of Jews and Dönmes,” was willing to sell three million dunams of land in Palestine to the Zionists. Yet, Palestinian noble Shukri al-Asali warned the Parliament, and the land sale was not realized. Mandel, with regard to the attitude of the Arab press, makes a distinction that, while *al-Karmil* and *Filastin* in Palestine had a local interest and were rather pro-CUP and anti-Zionist, most of the Arabic press in the surrounding provinces were more motivated by party politics in their position towards Zionism and were, instead, more anti-CUP and anti-Zionist. During and after the spring of 1912, the CUP abolished many anti-CUP Arab publications. Therefore, articles on Zionism which attacked the CUP government for supporting Zionism fairly disappeared in Beirut and Damascus.¹²¹

As Mandel mentions in his book, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, there were also Arab notables who opposed the Zionist activities in Palestine, mainly the land sales to the Jews. They regarded Zionism as a secessionist movement; yet, their opposition to Zionism was brought about by their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. In

¹¹⁸ Mandel, op. cit., p. 129

¹¹⁹ As cited in Mandel, op. cit., pp. 108-111

¹²⁰ As cited in Morris, op. cit., p. 64

¹²¹ Mandel, op. cit., pp. 129-131

fact, the Arab notables were Ottomanist and mostly supported CUP. Hafez Bey al-Said might be regarded as one of them, since his question sought to find out whether Zionism was compatible with Ottoman interests.¹²²

Öke also touches upon the Arab reaction to the Jewish settlements in Palestine. He mentions two publications in Palestine that were opponents of Zionism, underscores the warnings of three Muslim Arab parliamentarians to the Ottoman parliament with regard to the Jewish settlements in Palestine (which, for them, would threaten the conditions of the local Arab people), and expresses the opposition of several Arab nationalists to the Jewish settlements and Zionism.¹²³ He emphasizes that the argument of those Arab nationalists was that the close relations of the Young Turks with Zionists led to the Zionist colonization of Arab land; hence, they used this claim as a tool to garner opposition against the Young Turks government.¹²⁴ But like, Fieldhouse, Öke never defines these reactions within the framework of an Arab nationalism, saying instead that the Arab nationalists constituted a small minority group during the Young Turk era.¹²⁵

Mandel, on the other hand, makes a division among the Arab opposition to the Zionist work in Palestine. The first side, that he calls “local patriots,” was composed of Arab loyalists whose opposition was only directed towards the Zionist immigration and settlement in Palestine. The second group was comprised of Muslim Arabs mainly from outside of Palestine, who began to get involved in the campaign against the CUP by 1911, on the premises of both hostility to Zionism and a general opposition to the CUP. Lastly, there were the Arab nationalists, who had rather a broader pan-Arab policy and who were divided in opinion concerning the Zionist activities as we mention below.¹²⁶ The anti-Zionism of the latter was derived from

¹²² Ibid., p. 78

¹²³ Öke, op. cit., pp. 142-148

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 145

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 147

¹²⁶ Mandel, op. cit., pp. 79-80

their Arab nationalism. Some of the anti-Zionist Arab nationalist leaders were Shukri al-Asali, Rafiq al-Azm, and Abd a-Hamid al-Zahrawi—all of whom dealt personally with the Zionists in Palestine and elsewhere in 1913 and 1914.¹²⁷

Even though Talat Pasha, in a parliamentary session of February 1911, (also discussed in the following section), stated that all foreigners had been prohibited from settling and purchasing land in Hedjaz,¹²⁸ Shukri al-Asali, an Arab nationalist, blamed the Ottoman government for allowing the Zionists to establish their own state within Ottoman territory. Ittihadists became annoyed at these accusations, and Ittihadist Hafız İbrahim Efendi would soon say that discussing such issues was a waste of time. Therefore, the parliamentary session was closed. For Öke, these accusations were irrelevant. However, he also notes in his book that, following those accusations, Ministry of the Interior Halil Bey stated that new regulations were to be issued. In the end, another law was prepared, according to which Jewish immigrants would be prohibited from settling in Beirut, Damascus, and Jerusalem and forbidden to settle en masse. Öke interprets these restrictions as an indication of the continuation of Abdulhamid's policy towards the Zionists.¹²⁹ However, the decision to put bans on Zionist work seemed, rather, to have been more of an outcome from the pressure of the Arab opposition in Parliament. To that regard, Mandel shows that the real reason for the bans was not pressure from the Arab deputies, but something else. The Secretary General of the CUP told Ahmed Agayev, a pro-CUP journalist close to the Zionist representatives, that the draft law could only be explained through the party politics. Mandel states that the draft law was the reply of the CUP to its opponents who were claiming that CUP was pro-Zionist (as discussed below). Furthermore, as a result of the intervention of the members of the foreign missions in

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 84

¹²⁸ Öke, op. cit., p. 149; also in the Meclis-i Vükela document dated 13.Ca.1328, no: 140/51) (also in Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası document, 3819/286355, dated 1/Za/1328; It was ordered to the Vilayet of Beirut, Damascus and the Mutasarrifate of Jerusalem that within the territory included in the borders of Hedjaz, Jews and non-Muslims should not be allowed to settle)

¹²⁹ Öke, op. cit., p. 149

favor of the Jews, the draft law of February 1911 was to be dropped in January 1912.¹³⁰ In this regard, Zionist diplomat Lichtheim, during his visit to Istanbul in April 1911, stated that, in fact, the Jewish situation in Istanbul was not uncomfortable. Nevertheless, the Ottoman government feared the Arabs and did not regard itself strong enough to maintain a pro-Jewish policy for any length of time.¹³¹

In the following section, the lack of a unique attitude towards the Zionist movement, inefficiency of implementing restrictions, and the failure of Arab pressure in the second Parliamentary debate will be discussed.

3.6 No Consensus on Zionism among the Ottoman Statesmen

Even though the Arab pressure or opposition to the CUP led the Ottoman government to prepare restrictive legislation in February 1911, there was no common policy towards the Zionist movement in Palestine as can be seen from the discussions at the parliamentary level. Those debates on Zionism indicate the lack of consensus on the movement. In the CUP, there were both Muslim and Jewish members with different perceptions regarding the Jewish immigration and settlement. Recurring theme is that, even among the Muslim Ottomans, there was no common opinion with regard to the Jewish immigration and Jews in general.

There were many reasons behind the fact that Ottoman statesmen could not define a common policy towards Zionist movement. First of all, there was opposition to the Zionists activities in general, and to Jewish settlements in particular. Additionally, among other Ottoman statesmen, while the real ambitions of Zionism were not truly understood as they were not clear; also, in contrast to those who were strictly opposed to the Zionist work in Palestine, the strength of the Zionist movement was underestimated by those who had a favorable attitude towards the Zionists or who had no idea at all.

¹³⁰ Mandel, op. cit., pp. 118-119

¹³¹ Farhi, op. cit., p. 199

In late 1910, The Governor of Pera and Chief Rabbi Nahum stated that the hostility towards Zionism among the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul was rising. Young Turk leader Nazim Bey expressed to Jacobson his opposition to the separatist ambitions, despite being in support of the Jewish immigration to Palestine.¹³²

Those officials who were opposed to the Zionist work among the ruling elite did not stay long in their positions. Various people with differing views on Zionism did come and go from the high positions. Halil Beg, the successor of Talat Pasha who resigned in February 1911 from his position as Minister of the Interior, stated that the government would not make any concessions to Zionism, which was contrary to Ottomanism and state interests. Moreover, he advised the Ottoman Jews to stay away from Zionism. The new Mutasarrif of Jerusalem Azmi Bey (1910-1911), unlike Suphi Beg (1908-1909), also did not believe in the benefits of Jewish colonization in Palestine. He emphasized that the Ottomans were not anti-Semitic, but were against any concessions regarding Palestine; as long as the Zionists had ambitions in Palestine, the government would continue to prevent economic activities of the Zionists in the region. Consequently, the foreign Jews were again prohibited from purchasing land.¹³³

Even among the Ministers of the Interiors the perception of Zionism differentiated. This was also true for the Mutasarrifs of Jerusalem, who were some of the implementers of the regulations issued by the central government. While Suphi Bey did not implement the recommended measures,¹³⁴ due to his favorable attitude towards a Jewish presence in Palestine (like Talat Pasha), his successor was completely against Jewish immigration and settlement in the region (like Halil Bey).

Öke argues that the appointment of Halil Bey as Minister of the Interior and of Azmi Bey as the Mutasarrif of Jerusalem indicates the stiffening of the Ottoman government's attitude towards the Zionist movement in Palestine as a result of their

¹³² Friedman, op. cit., p. 148

¹³³ Öke, op. cit., p. 140

¹³⁴ Ortaylı, op. cit., p. 533

opposition to Zionism.¹³⁵ However, even under their rule, there was no defined policy in the government towards Zionist movement due to the officials' varying perceptions of Zionism. In order to examine this, it is wise to touch upon the claims of the opposition regarding the relationship between the Turkish leaders and Zionists.

The Budget Debate and the Ottoman Parliamentary Debate of 1911

The general budget debate in February 1911 reveals two important things. First, the government and the CUP underestimated and undervalued the power of the Zionists. It can be seen from the statements of some members of the ruling circles during the debate in which the pressure on the Ottoman government became apparent. Cosmidi Efendi, a Greek deputy from Istanbul, claimed that all trade privileges were being given to the Jews. Lutfi Fikri Bey of Dersim went further; he blamed Minister of Finance Cavid Bey for being a Zionist. İsmail Hakki Bey, a deputy from Thrace and the leader of the People's Party, stated that Zionism wanted to establish a Jewish state in Palestine when the Jews represented a majority there. He asserted that the Jews had bought land on a large scale in the region and accused the government of failing to discourage the Zionists who wanted to achieve their goals via conquering the market. Furthermore, Hakki Bey declared that the French Banks, with which Cavid Bey held negotiations for a loan, were all Zionist organs. He also added that Deutsche Bank was also induced by the agency of Zionists to offer loan.¹³⁶ The Grand Vizier responded to those accusations by stating that, even though some European Jews demanded that a Jewish state be formed in Palestine, most of them, along with the Ottoman Jews, trifled with those ambitions. In following his statements, it can be seen that the Grand Vizier regarded those who had separatist aims as a marginal group which would not have the ability to reach their purposes and which also set the Ottoman Jews apart from the separatists. The Vizier saw the Ottoman Jews as realists and felt that they could not be abused by such separatist

¹³⁵ Öke, op. cit., p. 140

¹³⁶ Mandel., op. cit., p. 98

dreams. Here, it can be argued that the Zionist aims were also underestimated or not regarded as separatist by the ruling elite. Yet, it was not abnormal while Wolffsohn was emphasizing the loyalty of the Zionists to the Ottoman Empire and rejected the idea that they were willing to separate Palestine from the Empire at the Tenth Congress of the Zionist Organization held in Basel in 1911.¹³⁷ In order to indicate the policy of the government, the Vizier expressed that the Jewish figures, who were labeled by Ismail Hakki Bey as Zionists, were informed that the government would not permit the Zionists to realize the separatist objectives. He also stated that the banks or financiers approached by Cavid Bey had nothing to do with the Zionist movement. Only one of the French banks was a Jewish house, and the Jews who were associated with the Deutsche Bank were not motivated by Zionist interests, but by economic ones.¹³⁸ As Ottoman parliamentary debate with regard to Zionism in the spring of 1911 ran parallel with the arguments of the opposition, Mandel argues that this first debate on Zionism in the parliament, which consisted of a dialogue between Ismail Hakki Bey and the Grand Vizier, was in fact a pretense to attack the CUP and the Minister of Finance.¹³⁹

Second, as Fishman points out that the 1911 Ottoman parliamentary debate indicates different perceptions of Zionism among various Ottoman parliamentarians. Some members of the parliament, such as Ruhi al-Khalidi and Said al-Husayni—two Palestinian representatives of the CUP from Jerusalem, expressed their opposition to the Jewish immigration to Palestine, despite the fact that they stated that they had a positive view of the Jewish community in Palestine. Fishman argues that the separation of Jewish leaders from the public sphere and the lack of understanding of Zionism among the members of the parliament led the two parliamentarians to make

¹³⁷ See this statement in Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120

¹³⁸ Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 99

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114

an effort to differentiate between the Ottoman Jewish community and immigrant community while stressing that they were not anti-Semitic.¹⁴⁰

For Said Bey, the Jewish settlement in the Empire could be allowed, just not in Palestine. His opposition to the Jewish immigration to Palestine was brought about by his concern over the absorptive capacity of Palestine, which he felt could not support large-scale immigration. Rather, he was in favor of small numbers of Jews who would bring advantages to the Palestinian land immigration. In contrast, Ruhi Bey's concern was about the displacement of the Arabs from their lands due to land purchases by the Jews. Even though he agreed with Said Bey that individual Jews should be free to enter the country, he was against the establishment of Jewish colonies which could lead to the de-territorialization of many Arabs. He was insistent that the Arabs were in Palestine deservedly, and they did not owe anything to the Jews.¹⁴¹

On the other hand, Ebüzzıyve Tevfik, a member of the parliament from 1908, was totally against the Jewish immigration because of his anti-Semitic stance. According to him, the Jewish immigrants would bring corruption and disarray along with them. Jewish parliamentarian Nissim Matzliah rebuffed the Tevfik's claim that the Jews' ultimate goal was to establish an Israelite government in Palestine and, instead, emphasized the loyalty of the Jews to the Ottoman state, emphasizing that the Jewish immigration was not a nationalist movement.¹⁴²

Shukri al-Asali, a parliamentarian from the opposition, argued that the foreign Jews had autonomy in Palestine. He insisted upon the necessity of protecting the region from the Zionists. Ibrahim Efendi, a member of the CUP's Central Committee and a deputy from Ipek in Albania, tried to controvert Al-Asali's points by saying that the Jewish community in Palestine could not be a threat: on one hand, the Jews were very small in number. It, therefore, would not be possible for the Jews to damage the

¹⁴⁰ Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 111

¹⁴¹ Cited in Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 77

¹⁴² Cited in Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-113

existence of the State, with its army numbering more than one million soldiers. Moreover, the Jews who were not Ottoman citizens, he claimed, had no ambition to do damage, as the foreigners had always contributed to the progress of the country.¹⁴³

Mandel states that the Arab deputies did not gain support for their claims. (In 1909, Shukri Al-Asali proposed the adoption of a draft law that would stop the Jewish immigration; however, the law was not accepted.) First, Mandel argues that they introduced their ideas less than cleverly and made several tactical errors. Despite their oppositional stance, Said Bey confirmed that the Jewish immigration was beneficial to the Empire, while Shukri al-Asali stated that the Zionist postal service was setting a model to be emulated.¹⁴⁴ Thus, each conceded that there were benefits to be had from the Zionist movement, despite their opposition to some of its facets. In others words, among those who opposed the Zionist movement, there were some who either confirmed the benefits of Zionism or at least ratified their success, which undermined their opposition to the Zionists. Secondly, when they brought Zionism into question, the Chamber was under-represented, with only by 50 of 288 deputies present; therefore, the discussion was not adequately heard. In addition, while the debate over Zionism was occurring, several deputies complained that the Chamber was wasting its time. Furthermore, the Arab deputies were alone in their offensive since the opponents of CUP had reached most of their purposes subsequent to the first debate as their pressure forced the Ottoman Jewish deputies and the Minister of Finance to resign.¹⁴⁵ Additionally, ‘the Turkish and Greek deputies... had never been genuinely worried about Zionism’ anyway.¹⁴⁶ All of these facets demonstrate that, even under an anti-Zionist Minister of the Interior, a strict policy was not adopted towards Zionist work due to lack of a consensus on the matter.

¹⁴³ Cited in both Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117 and in Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 114; Fishman concludes that, in this parliamentary debate, Zionism and Jewish migration were treated as a ‘Jewish Question,’ while the Palestinian population was left out of the discussion in Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 119

¹⁴⁴ Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 115

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116

What prevails here is that, although at the parliamentary level the Jewish immigration was one of the topics of the discussion, at the end there was no decision made which could be implemented concerning the developments in Palestine. The points of al-Asali during the debate reveal that the debate was about what was happening rather than about what to do or what should be done. This debate, as Fishman says, demonstrates that “Ottoman perceptions of Zionism were multifaceted.”¹⁴⁷ What is more, the uniqueness of these two parliamentary debates on Zionism held in 1911 also reveals us that Zionism itself was not an issue on which adequate time was spent. Furthermore, even the opposition of some leaders to the Jewish settlements and the Zionist activities in Palestine did not turn into applied measures, nor did they result in curtailment of the Zionist work in Palestine or in the Empire.

3.7 Ineffectiveness of the Regulations

There were also factors at practical level as a result of which the immigration and settlement in Palestine continued. First of all, those who adopted Ottoman citizenship did not face difficulties in settling or purchasing of land there. Permission granted for the settlement in Palestine of the Romanian Jews who became Ottoman citizens had no drawbacks.¹⁴⁸ According to a document from the Ottoman archives dated for summer 1911, 200 Russian Jews would be accepted to Palestine for settlement if they adopted Ottoman citizenship.¹⁴⁹ Another document confirms that the Jews who accepted the Ottoman nationality would not be prevented from purchasing land and property.¹⁵⁰

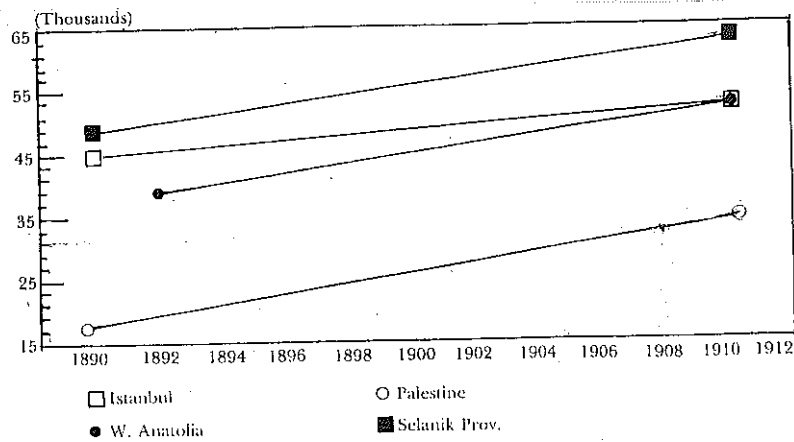
¹⁴⁷ Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 119

¹⁴⁸ DH.MKT, 2736-29, 19/M/1327

¹⁴⁹ BEO, 3763-282181, 03/C/1328

¹⁵⁰ BEO, 3781-283552, 12/B/1328

Table 1: Ottoman Citizen Jews, 1890-1912¹⁵¹



McCarthy asserts that the number of the Jewish Ottoman citizens in Palestine reached 35,000 in 1912 as he shows in the graph. Between 1890 and 1912, he claims that approximately 20,000 Jews became Ottoman citizens. From his estimates, it is understood that around 14,000 Jews of the 33,000 Jewish immigrants in Palestine who arrived between 1895 and 1914 adopted Ottoman citizenship.¹⁵² During the period between the Young Turk Revolution and the outbreak of the World War I, according to the statistics given by McCarthy, around 1,000 and 2,000 Jews adopted Ottoman citizenship.¹⁵³ This number seems small if we take into account the total number of immigrants, which was approximately 10,000 between 1908 and 1914;¹⁵⁴ this helps us to conclude that there was continuity in the reluctance of the Jewish immigrants to adopt Ottoman citizenship, and/or to give up enjoying the protection of foreign countries. What prevails here, nonetheless, is that those Jews who adopted

¹⁵¹ Graph 3, 'Ottoman citizen Jews, 1890-1912', in McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 395

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 383

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 395

¹⁵⁴ Bachi estimates an absolute number of immigrants for this period as more than 14,000, *op. cit.*, p. 79

citizenship, who numbered under 2,000, were to be allowed to buy land and other property according to the official decrees.

For some Zionists, Ottoman citizenship—in addition to its advantages for settlement and land purchase—was also important for the political representation of the Jews in the new constitutional system. Ruppin, the leading Zionist official in Palestine, required Zionist immigrants to adopt the Ottoman nationality after the Jews failed to elect a candidate in the parliamentary elections of 1908.¹⁵⁵

According to the Ottoman Electoral Law, non-Ottoman citizens (in other words, the foreign citizens, including pilgrims, merchants, and non-Ottomanized immigrants), foreign protégés, and women did not have the right to vote. In this sense, there was a wide gap between the number of Jews with Ottoman citizenship and, therefore, with voting rights, and the actual total number of Jews in Jerusalem. In Palestine, a considerable contingent of the foreign-born Jewish community was excluded from voting rights in the parliamentary elections of 1908 because they did not adopt Ottoman citizenship. In 1905, while the Ottoman census counted 13,441 Jews with Ottoman citizenship residing in Jerusalem, the Zionist Palestine Office estimated that more than 45,000 Jews were living in the city.¹⁵⁶ In other words, while the Jews constituted 41 percent of the total population of Palestine, they were grossly under-represented in the political system. Because of this, before the parliamentary elections of 1908, some voices from Jewish communities both inside and outside of Palestine urged the foreign Jews in Jerusalem to adopt the Ottoman nationality and increase the political power of the Jews in the parliament. For instance, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, a Hebrew linguist and immigrant from Russia, called upon the Jews to become Ottomans. Since the drive for Jewish Ottomanization was informal and due to the limitation of time, it was unsuccessful in the 1908 elections, but would become

¹⁵⁵ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 204

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111; yet, this estimate might be an exaggeration as the figure of 45,000 is given for the number in 1914 by Arthur Ruppin in Schmelz, 'Demography of Jerusalem Jews', in Ma'oz (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 120

more timely and pressing during the early months of the World War I.¹⁵⁷ When we look at the number of voters in Jerusalem in the 1908 elections, it is evident that, while Jewish males constituted the 41 percent of the Ottoman males in Jerusalem, 2,300 Muslims had the right to vote compared to 1,100 Jewish men with voting rights. In Jerusalem, the Muslims represented the 58 percent of the Jerusalem voters, while the Jews constituted only 28 percent, despite their majority in the population of the city.¹⁵⁸

Here, it can be argued that the electoral law, which disqualified foreigners from voting rights, mostly did not encourage the foreign Jews to adopt Ottoman citizenship same as the Abdulhamid period. Briefly put, participation in the new Ottoman political system seemed not to be necessary for the foreign Jews. While the Nationality Law constituted an opportunity for the new immigrants to enjoy equal status with the Ottoman residents, the adoption of Ottoman citizenship was set as an obligation by the Ottoman authorities. Nevertheless, neither of them were preferable for the foreign Jews, given the advantages of the existing Capitulations (as during the Young Turk rule, Capitulatory Rights were still in force.) As an example, according to an official document of 1912, the Jews with their British, German, and Austrian citizenship were able to acquire possession of several villages in Safed, Haifa, and Nazareth.¹⁵⁹ The Jewish migrants were more willing to find other ways to be settled and buy land in Palestine, without Ottoman citizenship.

Secondly, as touched upon above, the Ottoman Jews were never prohibited from buying land; in other words, it would not be wrong to say that they were allowed to do so by using the names of the foreign Jews. The fact that the Jews with Ottoman citizenship could purchase land in Palestine gives evidence that the Young Turk government, as with Abdulhamid's, placed importance on nationality.

¹⁵⁷ Campos, *op. cit.*, , pp. 110-111

¹⁵⁸ From Table 3.1. in Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 112

¹⁵⁹ BEO, 3928-294528, 19/Ş/1329

Moreover, we can see from the Ottoman archives, the inefficiencies of the Ottoman bureaucracies and several other reasons which also led to the ineffectiveness of the restrictions. It was reported in 1909 that some foreign Jews had traveled to visit Jaffa and, after having been allowed to stay for a three-month period, did not return home and were allowed to settle there.¹⁶⁰ In another document, it is stated that, even though the relevant authorities had been notified as to the prohibition regarding the settlement of foreign Jews in Palestine, settlement occurred anyway, as a result of the fact that the interdicts were not put into effect.¹⁶¹ It was also reported that the foreign Jews in Palestine purchased large territories, founded villages, and settled there.¹⁶² According to another official report in 1911, some Shari'a judges, called *hükkam-ı şeri*, who were opposed to the central government, gave the foreign Jews the permission slip called *hüccet* to buy lands.¹⁶³ There were also a number of Zionist Jews who cooperated with a group of influential people in order to buy land as well as gain permission for some public works in Jerusalem.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, the Zionist institutions and activists were never prohibited from functioning until the outbreak of the World War I.

3.8 Balkan Wars and Their Impact on the Ottoman Policy

Italy's conquest of Tripoli in 1911 resulted in the process of war with Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece; the conflicts ended with military victory of the Balkan alliance over the Turks in May 1913.¹⁶⁵ Fieldhouse adds that the earlier loss of Tunis and control of Egypt subsequent to the defeat in Tripoli encouraged Bulgaria, Greece,

¹⁶⁰ İ.HUS.,165-1326/Ra-69, 28/Ra/1326

¹⁶¹ BEO, 3583/268718, 18.C.1327

¹⁶² Y.PRK.BŞK., 80/55, 29.Z.1327

¹⁶³ BEO, 3782/283630, 14.B.1328

¹⁶⁴ BEO, 28.C.1328

¹⁶⁵ Holborn, op. cit., p. 340

Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia to take action towards sharing the last piece of Ottoman land in the Balkans.¹⁶⁶ When the situation had worsened in the Balkans before the Balkan War, the Ottoman government came to be led by the Liberal Union, a political coalition in opposition to the CUP.¹⁶⁷ In May-June 1912, a group of officers was formed in Istanbul with the aim of removing the Unionist government, breaking the power of the CUP, holding new and free elections, and returning to constitutional laws. As the situation in Albania was worsening, opposition to the Unionist government increased. First, the Minister of War and then the members of the Cabinet resigned. In July, a new cabinet was formed, and the CUP-dominated parliament was dissolved in August. However, the new cabinet would face problems as the Italian war continued. In October 1912, while peace was eventually reached with Italy, the Balkan states sent their ultimatum, and the Balkan war began.¹⁶⁸ In January 1913, the CUP staged a coup, and this time a new cabinet was formed with Said Halim as the Grand Vizier and Talat Pasha as the Minister of the Interior.

Liberal Union

During the period between January 1912 and January 1913, therefore, the Liberal Union was in power. When they had been in the opposition, the members of the Liberal Union had been blaming the CUP for supporting Zionism. Yet, the stance of the Liberal Union on Zionism was, in fact, no different than that of the CUP. There were several factors that hindered them from taking “a more restrictive action than the CUP against the Zionists.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Fieldhouse, op. cit., p. 15

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 17

¹⁶⁸ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 223-224

¹⁶⁹ Mandel, op. cit., pp. 133-134

During the administration of the Union, which would face both internal and external problems, the Ottoman policy towards Zionists was headed by Muhdi Bey, the Mutasarrif of Jerusalem.¹⁷⁰ Muhdi Bey, an Albanian who became the Mutasarrif of Jerusalem in 1912 after the Liberal Union Cabinet was formed, stated that the Ottoman considered the Jews to be uninterested in politics, but motivated by peaceful living; he also stated that the Ottomans were in favor of their work, and that they should be loyal to the Ottoman state. Another time, he expressed that, despite the Ottoman government's rejection of political Zionism, it acknowledged both the Jewish people and their historical ties with Palestine. If the Jews adopted Ottoman citizenship, they would not be prevented from realizing their cultural work in Palestine.¹⁷¹ Friedman observes that, according to the evidence he has pointed out, it is safe to assert that the opposition of the Young Turks rule with regard to Jewish colonization had vanished by this time.¹⁷² During his inspection of the Jewish settlements in Jerusalem, Muhdi Bey told the Zionists that there was no need for the government's opposition of Zionism, and that, in fact, the government was satisfied with the developments in Palestine. In return for adoption of the Ottoman nationality, the Mutasarrif allowed the Zionists to establish their own militia forces, elect presidents in the colonies, and also promised to provide telephone service between the colonies.¹⁷³ What we can argue is that, despite the bans on and concerns about the Zionist movement, the Ottoman authorities did not employ harsh measures and restrictive practices against the Zionist movement in Palestine during the rule of Liberal Union.

Öke expresses the close relations between the Turkish rulers and the Zionists at that time and asserts that this kind of relationship was a natural result of the Balkan Wars.¹⁷⁴ The Ottoman army, weakened due to the war in Tripoli, did not have the

¹⁷⁰ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 151

¹⁷¹ Friedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 151

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

capacity to fight in the Balkans. The Ottomans retreated as a result of the attacks from Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, and Montenegrin forces. In order to revive the army, the Ottomans needed financial support. However, Britain and France were not in favour of reviving the Ottomans' strength, as it would anger Russia and, hence, bring the Russian and German forces face-to-face. Being afraid of a World War, Britain and France did not provide financial assistance to the Ottomans. As a result, the Ottoman government felt that the Zionists might provide the Ottomans with the needed assistance, provided that it gave some concessions to the Zionists in Palestine.¹⁷⁵ Öke also highlights several negotiations between the Zionists and Ottoman statesmen to this regard. Even before the Balkan wars, the president of the Council of State, then the Grand Vizier (October 1912-January 1913) Kamil Pasha, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Gabriel Noradunkiyan (of Armenian-origin) negotiated with Dr. Jacobson, from whom they hoped to gain financial aid and political support from the Zionists in the Western media. During the Balkan War, Reshid Bey, the Minister of the Interior, asked the Zionists to prepare a document outlining Zionist objectives and activities so it could be submitted to the Cabinet. Meanwhile, as a result of the Zionists' activities, several Western newspapers began to publish in favour of the Turks. However the shuffle of the government by the CUP's coup d'état of January 1913 ended, the Cabinet did not meet and did not discuss the Zionists' demands.¹⁷⁶

During that time, the rapprochement and harmony between the Ottomans and the Zionists might have been brought about by the Zionists' positive impression on the Ottoman administrators as a result of the former's support of Ottoman causes during the war in Tripoli and the Balkan wars.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, the Zionists' attempts to form a group to provide medical assistance to the Ottoman army during the Balkan wars

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 152

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 151-153

¹⁷⁷ On the Jewish contribution to the Ottoman army during the Balkan Wars, see an example given by Feroz Ahmad, in Levy (ed.), op. cit., p. 226

must have helped the Ottomans to feel more favourable towards Zionists.¹⁷⁸ In fact, throughout 1911-1913, the wars in Tripoli and the Balkans required soldiers in the Ottoman army to serve, which had increased pressure on the non-Muslim communities to prove their loyalty to the Empire. Also during that time, the Jewish press *Liberty* emphasized that the Jewish community was willing to be inducted into the Ottoman army to fight for the Empire, which was “its homeland.” (October, 29, 1912)¹⁷⁹

When the CUP returned to power, the Ottoman Empire was still in need of economic support, which could be obtained only from the Jewish bankers; therefore, the Ittihadists were willing to maintain their close relationship with the Zionists who would become the intermediaries in their negotiations with these Jewish bankers.¹⁸⁰ For example, Öke argues that when Chief Rabbi Nahum asked the Ottoman government for the removal of the restrictions on Zionist activities in February of 1913, the government took it as an opportunity to form an allegiance with the Jews and consulted the local governors before making a decision.¹⁸¹ The governor of Beirut and the Mutasarrif of Jerusalem expressed the possible positive benefits that Jewish settlements could have for the Empire.¹⁸² However, as mentioned above, when it came to 1910s, the Arabs, particularly those in Palestine, had indicated their opposition to the Zionist activities. The Arabs were already dissatisfied with the centralization and ‘Turkification’ policies of the Young Turks; this was evident in several Arab publications and seen in the sentiments of some Arab leaders. Unwilling to incite any unfavourable Arabian reaction, Talat Pasha on behalf of the

¹⁷⁸ Ortaylı, op. cit., p. 532

¹⁷⁹ Ahmad, in Levy (ed.), op. cit., pp. 220-226

¹⁸⁰ Öke, op. cit., p. 154

¹⁸¹ Ibid., op. cit., p. 154-155; the Chief Rabbi on 24 February, 1913 called upon the Empire’s Jewish communities to fight for the Empire in a circular titled ‘The Love of the Jews for Their Homeland’; in Campos, op. cit., p. 157

¹⁸² Öke, op. cit., p. 155

Ottoman government asked the Zionists to reach an agreement with the Arabs, as a condition in order to reach their objectives in Palestine.¹⁸³

As Mandel states, the Arab nationalists, though small in number, could not reach a consensus about Zionism as some Arab nationalists felt it was possible to work with the Zionists and reach an agreement with them.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, the proposal of a Muslim-Jewish alliance was adopted by both those Arab leaders and Zionists. The intention of the Jewish side was to convince the Arabs that their objectives in Palestine would not damage the Arabian presence, and could even benefit all residents in Palestine. On the other hand, the Arabs, aware of the significance of the financial support from the Zionists, were willing to curb the ambitions of the Zionists through allying with them.¹⁸⁵ In fact, in May 1913, leaders from both sides prepared an agreement according to which the Arabs would not oppose the Jewish immigration to Syria and Palestine, while the Jews were to support Arab nationalists so long as the territorial integrity of the Empire were not challenged.¹⁸⁶ Consequently, the Ottoman government removed the red card system in Palestine in September 1913.¹⁸⁷ Several other legal constraints were also abrogated as a result of the Chief Rabbi's intervention with influential figures of the government.¹⁸⁸ However, the restrictions on land purchase imposed by the Ottoman government on the immigrants remained in force. The permission to settlement and the right to purchase of land were still dependent upon the immigrants' adoption of Ottoman nationality. However, as it is understood from Öke's book, in practice, the implementations of such edicts were less stringent accordingly.¹⁸⁹ Moreover,

¹⁸³ Ibid., pp. 154-158

¹⁸⁴ Mandel, op.cit., p. 80

¹⁸⁵ Öke, op. cit., p. 159

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 159-161

¹⁸⁷ Arslan, op. cit., p. 124

¹⁸⁸ Benbassa, op. cit., p. 130

¹⁸⁹ Öke, op. cit., p. 163

although in June 1914, the prohibitions on the settlements in Palestine were put into effect, the reason was not the Ottoman government's opposition to Zionism or the importance of Palestine as a special region, but rather the Jews' unwillingness to adopt the Ottoman nationality as they had promised; the Jews did not take steps to provide financial support to the Young Turks; and, the Arabs became much more dissatisfied.¹⁹⁰

With regard to Young Turk-Zionist relations, the Vice Consul in Haifa expressed in May 1913 that several among the Young Turks were sympathizers of Zionism. According to an official Zionist report, the attitude of the Young Turks towards the Arabs was much less favourable than it was towards the Zionists.¹⁹¹ Another assertion with regard to the Turks' perception of Zionism was that the Turkish statesmen, despite their suspicion of Zionist activities, felt more good faith towards them. Talat Pasha, the Minister of the Interior, felt positive with regard to the settlements. He ordered Ottoman authorities to give the Jews special privileges and enlarge their sphere of influence. Aside from immigration, as Friedman notes, throughout Tschlenow's report in the Zionist Council meeting of 23 November 1913 and Jacobson's report of 7 June 1914, the restrictions on the purchases of land were mostly lightened.¹⁹² Ultimately, up until the First World War, more than 6,000 Jews came to Palestine, and both colonization and urban development continued "unhampered."¹⁹³ These factors all help us to conclude that the Young Turks were not very strict in their disposition towards the Zionist movement. Given the lack of a coherent official attitude towards Zionism, all of these variables seem to have worked to the advantage of Zionist activities in Palestine.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., op. cit., p. 169

¹⁹¹ Friedman, op. cit., p. 165

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 166

¹⁹³ Palestine during the War: Financial Report according to a report presented in the Zionist Congress in September 1921, in Friedman, op. cit., p. 166- also see p. 432

3.9 Advancement of Zionism in Palestine

As mentioned in the first chapter, the movement of the Second Aliyah that began in 1904 and continued throughout the Second Constitutional Period had labour and nationalist characteristics. Tessler states that, with the labour Zionist orientation of the Second Aliyah, the construction of the new Yishuv continued in a more concentrated way, as can be seen in the creation of labour exchanges, the formation of a medical insurance program consisting of a network of clinics, and the emergence of new forms of agricultural settlements.¹⁹⁴

As mentioned before, the Jewish National Fund had already started to purchase land from Palestinian and other landowners, and this land became the property of the Jewish people.¹⁹⁵ However, it was not until 1910, when the practical Zionists gained strength in the Zionist Organization, that the Fund seriously began to acquire land for Jewish settlements.¹⁹⁶ With the start of the Zionist Organization's activities in Palestine, the "internal colonization model" based on nationalization which was developed by the Prussian government began to inspire the Zionist colonialists in Palestine in 1909. In 1886, the Prussian government, as a response to the denationalization (Germans were the minority, while Polish had the majority) in the territories annexed to Prussia after the division of Poland in the 18th century, established a Colonization Commission which purchased large parcels of land from big German and Polish landowners and sold them German farmers. The purpose was to dispossess the Polish majority of its ownership of the land and settle Germans while also preventing the employment of the Polish labour.¹⁹⁷

The agents of the implementation of the German model in Palestine were Arthur Ruppin (1876-1943), Franz Oppenheimer (1864-1943), and Otto Warburg (1859-

¹⁹⁴ Tessler, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-195

¹⁹⁵ Shafir, *op. cit.*, p. 234

¹⁹⁶ Krämer, *op. cit.*, p. 115

¹⁹⁷ Shafir, *op. cit.*, p. 234; Piterberg, *op. cit.*, p.79

1938)—all of whom guided the Zionist settlements in Palestine.¹⁹⁸ Warburg was the head of the Zionist Executive Committee and the chairman of the Palestine Land Development Company.¹⁹⁹ In 1903, the Sixth Zionist Congress named Warburg as the Director of the Commission for the Exploration of Palestine (CEP).²⁰⁰ Oppenheimer, an economist and socialist, was also one member of the CEP. He helped the experimental cooperative settlement.²⁰¹ Among the three, Arthur Ruppin played the most crucial role in Zionist movement. Ruppin, a lawyer and economist, was the founder of the Palestine Land Development Company and the head (1907-1908) of the Palestine Office in Jaffa, which had been opened by the Zionist Organization.²⁰² He is regarded as the ‘single most important individual for the Zionist settlement in Palestine’ and is known in Israeli lore as ‘the father of the Jewish settlement in the land of Israel.’²⁰³ At the Eleventh Zionist Congress, Ruppin emphasized the working of their own hands in Palestine, so that the Zionists could have a moral right to the territory for themselves.²⁰⁴ Needless to say, the Zionist work was neither based on creating a Jewish majority nor on dominating the Arabs economically and politically, as the German colonialists had. The Zionist Organization’s primary objective was to create homogenous colonies and a closed Jewish economy.²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, both Ruppin and Warburg never negated the considerable impact of the German model on their project.²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁸ Piterberg, op.cit., p. 60 and in p. 85

¹⁹⁹ For Warburg’s work in Palestine, see the above mentioned article of Penslar: ‘Zionism, Colonialism and Technocracy: Otto Warburg and the Commission for the Exploration of Palestine, 1903-7’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 25, No. 1, January 1990, pp. 143-160

²⁰⁰ Penslar, ‘Colonialism, Zionism and Technocracy’, p. 150

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 152

²⁰² Krämer, p. 115

²⁰³ Piterberg, op. cit., pp. 89-82

²⁰⁴ Friedman, op. cit., p. 133

²⁰⁵ Piterberg, op. cit., p. 86

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 85

As a result of the efforts of the Zionists, cooperative agricultural settlements were established in Palestine. In this sense, one form of settlement was *moshavah*, where the workers individually worked small pieces of land, but carried out their marketing and producing collectively.²⁰⁷ Krämer discusses the first cooperative settlement founded in 1911 under the name Merhavia; it was later transformed into a *moshavah* or communal settlement after the World War I as its earlier conception was not profitable. Merhavia was protected by the *Hashomer* (Jewish guards) and became the target of both Arab attack and debates in the Ottoman parliament.²⁰⁸ The second form of settlement was a national farm where the workers cultivated the land bought by the Jewish National Fund.²⁰⁹ In 1908, the WZO adopted the plan of German Jewish sociologist Oppenheimer; it combined internal colonization, land nationalization, and cooperation efforts towards production. With the support of the PLDC, the *kibbutz* as the third form of agricultural settlement emerged. Since the *kibbutz* were founded on land nationalized by the Fund, “a homogenous Jewish economic sector was created.”²¹⁰

The first kibbutz of Degania was established in the national farm by the JCA in 1908. In 1909, according to an agreement between six workers and the PLDC, the workers would cultivate the land owned by the PLDC, but would not be intervened. Moreover, they would be paid for each month or work and would equally share any profits among each other. Degania increased its size and its number of workers until 1911.²¹¹ Tessler illustrates *kibbutzim*²¹² as something of a symbol for the Second Aliyah and the Labour Zionism’s vision of the new Yishuv. The *kibbutzim* were based on egalitarianism, communalism, and self-sufficiency. On behalf of equality

²⁰⁷ Tessler, op. cit., p. 64

²⁰⁸ Krämer, op. cit., p. 113

²⁰⁹ Tessler, op. cit., p. 64

²¹⁰ Shafir, op. cit., p. 234

²¹¹ Tessler, op. cit., p. 64

²¹² The plural of kibbutz in Hebrew.

and communality, jobs were distributed on a rotation basis; division of labour was not based on gender; other services were carried out by everyone; earnings were shared collectively, and private property was irrelevant. In the name of self-sufficiency, the Jews were content with their own acquisition of property in the *kibbutz*. The *kibbutz* constituted a self-contained community which met the needs of its people and protected itself on its own.²¹³

Friedman in his book says that Degania was the “mother of the collective farms,” also called *kevutzot*.²¹⁴ In Degania, modern methods of irrigation and mixed farming were implemented; it became the model for future farming colonies. He interprets this development as an indication of the fact that Zionism was not a utopia, but also that Palestinian land was cultivable.²¹⁵

Zionist leaders and intelligent elite were mostly Ashkenazic and in favour of strengthening the Jewish presence in Palestine. As such, they turned their attention to the Middle Eastern Jews, who were seen as human resources and as “petrified exemplars of ancient Hebrews”²¹⁶ since they were the least exposed to Western influences. From the beginning of the Zionist movement, the Ashkenazic Zionist attitude towards Jews of the Middle East was prominently colonialist in nature. In this sense, the Yemenite Jews were regarded as natural laborers, since they could compete with Arabs in agriculture.²¹⁷ In 1912, the Palestine Office of the Zionist Organization provided for the immigration (*aliyah*) of some 2,000 Yemenite Jews to Eretz Yisrael. Those Jews became workers on the Knesset training farm.²¹⁸

²¹³ Ibid., pp. 64-65

²¹⁴ Collective settlements and the plural of *kevutzah*.

²¹⁵ Friedman, op. cit., p. 136

²¹⁶ Penslar, op. cit., p. 97

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Krämer, op. cit., p. 117; Penslar, op. cit., p. 97

While the Jewish settlements and Jewish-owned farms were seen by the Arab villagers as opportunities for work, the Zionists were motivated by the goal of establishing exclusively Jewish structures and institutions.²¹⁹ As the new Yishuv land was owned by Jews and the labour force was owned by the Jews as well (conquest of labour), a Jewish working class emerged as planned. This resulted in Jewish-owned productivity and, therefore, in the establishment of autonomous polities.²²⁰ The *kibbutz* became the keystone for integrated economic enterprises and social establishments both owned and operated by the Jews.²²¹

With regard to the agricultural settlements, by 1914, forty agricultural villages were established with 12,000 members; a regional federation of workers was created in both Galilee and Judea; cultivated land exceeded 100,000 acres, and the rise of productivity attracted the Jewry in diaspora to make capital investments.²²²

In addition to agriculture, the construction of new Yishuv ventured forth in other fields as well. In 1909, the Ottoman government permitted the Jews to establish a land college in Jaffa.²²³ In the same year, the city of Tel Aviv was established on the urban land purchased on the slopes of Mount Carmel and north of Jaffa.²²⁴ By 1914, Tel Aviv had 139 residences, and a population of 2,000, while that of Haifa had surpassed 3,000.²²⁵ Friedman states by referring to memoirs of Ruppin that Tel Aviv was founded after the Turkish authorities were convinced of its establishment. Tel Aviv became a trade and cultural centre. It also constituted a model for urban development in other parts of Palestine; for example a modern suburb was

²¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 113-114

²²⁰ Tessler, p. 65

²²¹ Shafir, p. 235

²²² Tessler, op. cit., p. 97

²²³ DH.MKT., 1244/84, 04/Ra/1326

²²⁴ Laqueur, p. 153

²²⁵ Tessler, op. cit., p. 67; Öke, op. cit., p. 141

established in Haifa on the land acquired on the Mount. Tel Aviv had its own national library, theatre, publishing houses, and two Hebrew dailies.²²⁶

According to the information given in a record of the Foreign Ministry, the Anglo-Palestine Bank had opened branches in Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Hebron.²²⁷ In 1910-11, Jews purchased more extensively property in the fertile soil of Marj Ibn Amir.²²⁸ Through the work of the Second Aliyah which was based on collective property, 50,000 dunams of land was bought, and nine new farm and settlements were established between 1908 and 1914.²²⁹ Before 1914, the Fund alone purchased 24,000 dunams of land.²³⁰ In March 1914, Ruppin bought a large property, which was designated for establishing a Jewish university in Jerusalem. On 28 July 1914, when the First World War broke out, the Palestine Office was to purchase 140,000 dunams in the Jezreel Valley south of Galilee. Additionally, private investment was supported both in rural and urban areas.²³¹ Both small- and medium-sized agricultural enterprises were undertaken during the last pre-war years.²³²

Friedman points out the activities immigrants of the Second Aliyah undertook for their security and self-defense. It is important to note that, before the Second Aliyah, the colonists in Palestine, which was regarded as an unsafe place, had been appointing a *sheikh* to protect their property or employing an Arab guardsman; however, the Arab guardsmen were dishonest and usually working with thieves. The leaders of the Second Aliyah placed importance on the security of colonies for the existence of Yishuv. In 1907, the leaders established their own organization of guardsmen which came to be named “the Watchmen” and a satisfactory

²²⁶ Friedman, op. cit., p. 138

²²⁷ DH.MKT. , 2819-13, 29.R.1327

²²⁸ Krämer, op. cit., p. 113

²²⁹ Öke, op. cit., p. 140; Friedman, op. cit., p. 137

²³⁰ Krämer, p. 115 ; this number is 16,000 in Table 2.1 in Kimmerling, op. cit., p. 43

²³¹ Friedman, op. cit., p. 137

²³² Laqueur, op. cit., p. 153

establishment. The watchmen were courageous as well as skillful at weapon-handling and horseback riding. They were able to speak Arabic and established friendly relations with the Arabs. Their intent was less about dealing with any possible attacks, but more about preventing such occurrences. Friedman attributes the activities of the watchmen to the lack of major conflicts between the Jews and Arabs at that time.²³³ In Öke's book, what is described is something different with regard to this. The Zionists established a small army composed of Jewish immigrants in order to provide security for their colonies. The militia forces' ability to use weapons and horses intimidated the Arabs and forced them to immigrate elsewhere. Furthermore, Jewish homes were stocked with arms and ammunition. Furthermore, the Jews were training their children to use weapons and to fight.²³⁴

Krämer defines the defense of the Jewish settlements as an element of the conquest of labor. The first units of Jewish watchmen or *shomer* were formed in Lower Galilee to defend Jewish settlements, vineyards, and possession against Arab attack. In 1909, the Jewish society *Hashomer* (the Watchmen) was established; and, in 1916, its first settlement was founded in Upper Galilee.²³⁵ By 1910, the Palestine Office in Jaffa began to hire *Hashomer* units to occupy and cultivate recently purchased lands before their permanent settlers; therefore, they were called conquest groups. At Rehovot in 1913, teams like the Second Aliyah workers desired the replacement of Arab workers with Jews, the result of which caused some clashes between the *Hashomer* teams and the Arabs. The number of *Hashomer* members was less than one hundred; but, over time, around three hundred Jewish land workers joined.²³⁶ What is more, before the war, the Ottoman authorities tolerated the *Hashomer* guards even though they were not given licenses for possessing the arms they carried.²³⁷

²³³ Friedman, op. cit., pp. 136-137

²³⁴ Öke, op. cit., pp. 141-142

²³⁵ Krämer, op. cit., p. 116

²³⁶ Morris, op. cit., p. 53

²³⁷ Friedman, op. cit., p. 196

Shukri al-Asali, representing the Province of Syria during the parliamentary debate on Zionism in 1911, emphasized the ability of the Zionists to achieve dominance in Palestine while he was making a complaint about the Jewish dominance there. He first mentioned the fact that the Jews, having adopted Ottoman nationality, also held onto their former passports, which they used in legal issues where they refused their Ottoman citizenship. Secondly, he claimed that there was autonomy of the Jewish community in Palestine as they had their own judicial and other services. The foreign Jews were penetrating the villages and were able to administrate them on their own (e.g. three quarters of Tiberias, half of Safad, half of Haifa, and all of Jaffa as well as Jerusalem were filled with Jews). He attributed their ability to dominate those regions to their possession of weapons in their homes. With regard to their armaments, al-Asali said that, when the foreign Jews arrived, they employed local guards and smuggled. They were holding meetings excluded from other regional communities, singing their national anthem, and raising their Zionist flag, he claimed. He also touched upon the effectiveness of the post office of the Zionists.²³⁸

Tessler, in contrast, dwells upon the cultural developments in Palestine during the Zionist movement led by the Second Aliyah. He defines the transformation of Hebrew into the common language in the new Yishuv as the most important development. The common language would unite the Jewish immigrants coming from different regions where various languages were spoken and promote social integration. In addition, the Jewish society in Palestine would have its own language, which would contribute to the autonomous and self-sufficient character of the new Yishuv. They were building an identity. In Yishuv, the number of young people, workers, and people with higher levels of education who began to use Hebrew in their daily lives was growing. In 1908, daily newspapers in Hebrew began to be published.²³⁹ The revival of the Hebrew language was seen in all schools—from kindergartens to the seminaries of teachers and in public life.²⁴⁰ In Jerusalem, there

²³⁸ Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117

²³⁹ Tessler, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68

²⁴⁰ Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 138

were two kinds of Jewish schools: the philanthropic schools (such as the schools of Alliance Israelite Universelle) established by European Jews and the new nationalist-Zionist schools with their more Hebraic agenda.²⁴¹ Primary schools were opened by the sponsorship of the Zionist Organization. In Jaffa, a Hebrew high school, and in Jerusalem, a teachers' training college were founded.²⁴² The Hebrew schools founded in 1912 had around 3,200 students. Construction on a technical university in Haifa began that same year.²⁴³ The new Hebraist schools had risen to 60 institutions in number, with 3,600 students by 1913; and, they did not intend to enroll non-Jewish students.²⁴⁴ In 1912, when Ahad Haam visited Palestine, he was impressed by emergence of a national spiritual centre, "a centre of study and learning, of language and literature, of bodily work and spiritual purification."²⁴⁵

Tessler expresses that, although the new Yishuv in Palestine faced considerable problems, it was finally becoming an effectual polity. It was forging ahead with economic productivity and demographic growth. Backed by a well-organized, international Zionist movement, the new Yishuv had social and political institutions that brought about basic services and strengthened Jewish integration in the daily domestic life in Palestine.²⁴⁶

The Zionists sought to actualize a limited self-government in Palestine which was contrary to Ottomanism. The colonies in the West Bank came under the Federation of Jewish Colonies, and those in the Jerusalem came under the Federation of Galilee Colonies. They created new institutions to address economic and judiciary issues independent from Ottoman authority. Two Ottoman representatives after their visit to Palestine stated that the Hebrew symbols, advertisements, and even the names of

²⁴¹ Campos, op. cit., p. 84

²⁴² Laqueur, op. cit., p. 154

²⁴³ Tessler, op. cit., p. 68

²⁴⁴ Campos, op. cit., p. 84

²⁴⁵ Friedman, op. cit., p. 138

²⁴⁶ Tessler, op. cit., p. 68

streets in Hebrew had caused them great surprise, making it inevitable for them to question as to whether those regions belonged to the Ottomans or not.²⁴⁷

The points of both Laquer and Friedman with regard to the Jews of Second Aliyah give implications to understand the capability of them to colonize the land of Palestine. “No other wave of immigration had such high quality in human material or was so rich in idealism and originality of thought,” Friedman says.²⁴⁸ Laquer states that the new Yishuv were full of vitality and optimism while they were moving to Palestine.²⁴⁹ Most of them had been Socialists, but had noticed that the Russian socialists were anti-Semitic as well.²⁵⁰ The socialist Jews of the Second Aliyah began to think that, even if a socialist revolution occurred in Russia as they dreamed, there would be no end to the persecutions of the Jews. After the Russian revolution and the pogroms, the socialist Russian Jews of the Second Aliyah became Zionists. They were discouraged with regard to Jewish diaspora, Socialism, and even Zionism. For them, the last resort to go was Eretz Yisrael. Most of the immigrants of the Second Aliyah were young and unmarried.²⁵¹ Among them there were craftsmen, clerks, lower-middle-class people, and graduates of universities and rabbinical colleges whose only purpose was to rebuild their own homeland in Palestine.²⁵²

During the Second Aliyah, stimulated by the bloody pogroms in Russia and ending with the outbreak of the World War I, over 30,000 educated, Zionist-inspired Jews migrated to Palestine during the pre-war period, despite Ottoman opposition. According to the estimates in different sources, it can be argued that in the early 1900s, the number of Jews was around 50,000 in Palestine; and, in 1914, it reached

²⁴⁷ Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 134

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135

²⁴⁹ Laqueur, *op. cit.*, p. 279

²⁵⁰ Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 135

²⁵¹ Laqueur, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-279

²⁵² Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 135

approximately 80,000²⁵³ which is yet an exaggeration. During the First and Second Aliyah, the Jewish settlements and Zionist colonies were concentrated in Jaffa, Haifa, Tiberias, and Safad,²⁵⁴ while more than half of the immigrants went to Jerusalem, where the Jews then began to have the majority.

3.10 Concluding Remarks

Between the Young Turk Revolution and the outbreak of the First World War, the CUP government followed a restrictive policy towards Zionist movement in Palestine. Even if sometimes they had positive opinions concerning Zionism, the sympathy of the Ottoman ruling circles as well as the Jewish officials to the Zionist movement in Palestine did not include an autonomous Jewish entity in the region. If not in other issues, on this they had a consensus that Palestine could never be a Jewish homeland. Rather, the sympathy of some officials to Zionism can be explained by their perception of Zionism which, for them, did not constitute a separatist movement and could be an instrument for further Ottoman development.

Compared to the Abdulhamid period, yet, there was no consistency in the official policy of the Turkish government. For this period, it can be asserted that the reoriented policy of the Zionist leadership contributed to the lack of a coherent attitude of the Ottoman leadership towards Zionism. Because of this, there were divergent opinions about Zionism, as some leaders advocated the benefits of the Zionist movement to the country. In fact, the different perceptions of the Zionist movement among the Young Turks led to the lack of a unique policy towards Zionist activities. All of these factors contributed to the ability of the Zionists to clear away

²⁵³ Hashim Khatib, *Palestine and Egypt under the Ottomans: painting, books, photographs, maps, and manuscripts*, London; New York: Tauris Parke, 2003, p.41; Friedman, op. cit., p. 192. It is generally estimated that during the period 1903-1914, 35,000-40,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine. In the early years of the Second Aliya, the number of Jewish residents in Jerusalem reached 35,000 (in 1905) compared to their number of 16,000 in 1882 in Krämer, op. cit., p. 106. By 1914, the number of Jews living in Jerusalem reached 45,000 in *ibid.*, p. 138. This means that more than 10,000 thousand Jews of the Second Aliyah went to Jerusalem.

²⁵⁴ Krämer, op. cit., p. 113

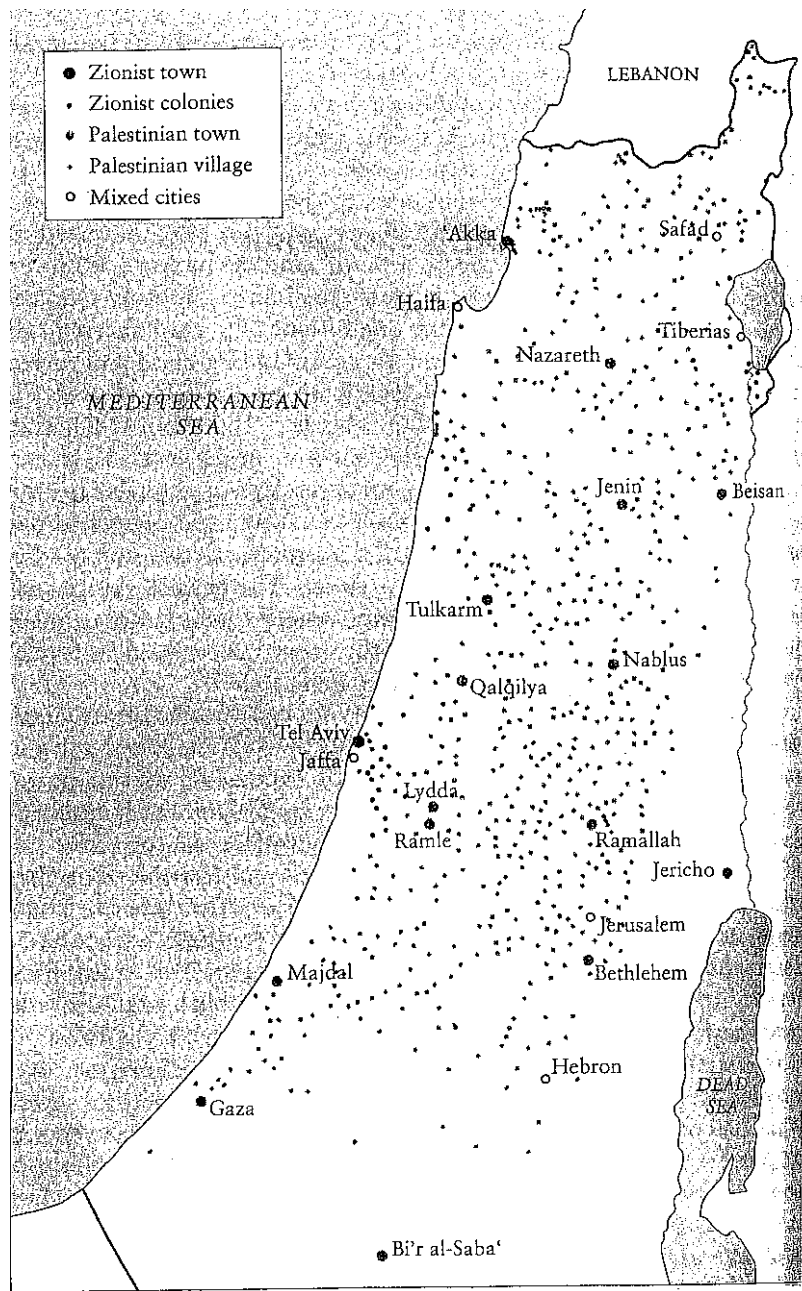


Figure 1: Jewish settlements and Zionist colonies in Palestine, 1882-1914²⁵⁵

the difficulties occurred by the constraints enforced by the Ottomans on their movement.

²⁵⁵ Map 7.1 in Campos, op. cit., p. 226

In his book, Campos touches upon the political preferences of the immigrants of the Second Aliya. For those Zionists, participation in the new Ottoman political system would be desired if it was to be useful in take steps towards persuasion with regard to Zionist separatist ambitions. The newcomers felt a general reluctance towards adopting the Ottoman nationality and had a dogmatic outlook with regard to Jewish nationalism and Zionism; furthermore, they did not support ideological Ottomanism. Campos also states that, despite all, the newly arrived Jewish immigrants with radical separatist aspirations constituted a small faction of the Palestinian Zionist settlers, and estimates their number as less than several thousand. To support this argument, he gives the estimates from the report of the German Consulate in Jaffa according to which, only 247 of the approximately 3,800 Jewish newcomers in 1907-1908, and 88 of the 2,549 immigrants in 1909 went to the Jewish colonies.²⁵⁶ It is not difficult to assert that the majority of those newcomers did not carry out separatist activities as they expressed their loyalty to the Ottoman state. As Morris states, most of the Yishuv felt sympathy towards the Turks.²⁵⁷ Their objectives were limited to a secure Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. They were aware of the fact that the realization of this goal was merely in the hands of the Ottomans. Thus, their motivation was to enhance the Zionist movement and to colonize the Palestinian land, but not to have a political status for Palestine. Therefore, the Yishuv was rather aiming to prevent the obstacles that would damage their activities in the region.

The insouciance of the foreign Jews with regard to the requirement of adopting Ottoman citizenship was not tantamount to being separatists. The fact that they wanted to opt out of becoming Ottoman citizens was rather brought on by the will not to abdicate the opportunities and privileges granted to them by being foreign nationals. Additionally, they desired to protect their Jewish identity and national consciousness. They did not wish to be assimilated, as to do so was no solution to the anti-Semitism still present in Europe. Rather, their intention was to maintain their Jewish identity in the Empire. In this regard, it can be argued that their loyalty to the

²⁵⁶ Campos, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-203; also p. 297

²⁵⁷ Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 84

Ottoman government and lack of separatist policies might have prevented clashes between the Zionists and Ottoman officials, may have enhanced the Zionist movement in Palestine, and perhaps helped to enable Zionists to create their own cultural and economic system in the Holy Land under the Ottoman rule.

Laquer emphasizes that, even though the start of organized economic and cultural activities took some time, the Zionist movement managed to achieve crucial successes by 1914. Jews in Palestine represented a higher percentage of the total population than in any other country. It was understood that the Jews could be farmers and enjoy productive ability and activity. They were also able to create their unique modes of communal life. The Second Aliyah revealed that there were enough Jews who wanted to settle in Palestine.²⁵⁸ The experience of the Second Aliyah, for Laquer, showed that there were enough Jews to settle in Palestine.²⁵⁹ He notes that, although the Jewish newcomers faced many difficulties, during the years before the war, the goodwill of the Turkish authorities gave every opportunity for the Jews to strengthen their movement.²⁶⁰ When it came to 1914, it can be asserted that the Palestinian Jewry emerged in the region.

²⁵⁸ Laqueur, *op. cit.*, p. 154

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 154

CHAPTER 4

ZIONIST MOVEMENT IN OTTOMAN PALESTINE DURING WORLD WAR I AND THE END OF THE OTTOMAN RULE

The entrance of the Ottoman State—the owner of Palestine—into the war led to a change in the attitudes of Ottoman officials towards Jewish immigrants and their settlement as well as a change in the policies of the Zionists movement. In other words, compared to the Second Constitutional Period before the war, during the war the Ottomans began to pursue anti-Zionist policies which led Zionist leadership to look for the support of the European powers for their movement, especially with regard to the Jewish settlement in Palestine.

Zionism had no clear foreign policy orientation before the war.¹ At the beginning of the war, as Morris emphasizes, Zionist leadership wisely decided to remain neutral. However, the Zionist leaders were aware of the fact that the war would create an opportunity for Zionism to gain international recognition and, thus, hopefully help to reach their ambitions in Palestine. As the war continued, the Zionist movement in general and the Jewish settlement in Palestine attracted the European powers who had interests in the Ottoman territory as well. During the war, we see the European intervention in the Ottoman government's policies in support of the Zionists and the Jewish settlers in Palestine. As a result of the alliances between the Zionists and the European powers, the Jewish presence in Palestine endured; and, at the end of the war, Palestine was taken from the Ottomans.

¹ Ibid., p. 143

4.1 Ottoman Policy towards Jews and Zionists in Palestine during the War

In November 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered the war on the German side according to the German-Ottoman Alliance Treaty of August 1914. After that, the Allied Forces declared war on the Ottoman Empire.² In most of the Turkish sources, the Ottoman officials' cruel policies towards Yishuv is either not mentioned or denied. For instance, while Öke in his book emphasizes the diplomatic contacts between the Zionist leadership and the European leaders during the war, he does not touch upon what was occurring in the field. He also rejects that the Ottoman officers adopted tyrannical attitudes towards the Jews in Palestine.³

The Ottomans held the belief that the Jews in Jaffa and Tel Aviv were in favor of an Allied victory. Therefore, they began to be hostile towards the Zionist colonies.⁴ In an interview of an Egyptian publication in March 1914, Hussein Al-Husseini⁵ emphasized the distinction between the Jewish settlements and Zionism; while the first did not constitute a threat to Palestine, the latter was a threat for him. He, therefore, also stressed the importance of preventing land sales to the Jews.⁶

During the war, yet without any distinction, the Jews in Palestine were regarded as foreigners and traitors. The motivation of the Turkish officers was that Jews should

² Krämer, op. cit., p. 142

³ Öke, op. cit., pp. 183-293

⁴ Morris, op. cit., p. 84

⁵ Al-Husseini was the mayor of Jerusalem from 1910 to 1915. He was in favour of preservation of state of coexistence in Jerusalem. To this regard, after he was dismissed from the position as mayor, he became the director of the Red Crescent Society, formed in 1915. The society was composed of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish members in Nassar, op. cit., p. 135. He promoted Arab-Jewish understanding and cooperated with Jews and Christians in order to create a post-Ottoman alternative, in PASSIA, Palestinian Personalities, pp. 94-95, <http://www.passia.org/publications/personalities/Sample/H.pdf> . (accessed on March 29, 2014) Abigail Jacobson states that the Society was the last communal organization in which Jews served voluntarily with Muslims and Christians in support of a national government, in Nassar, op. cit. p. 135.

⁶ PASSIA, Palestinian Personalities, op. cit., p. 94

be expelled for the benefit of the country. Brutal and humiliating measures were implemented. The authorities rounded up men, women, and children from the streets and homes in Jaffa. They were sent to the local ports without being able to pack their belongings or contact their relatives. The declaration of Jihad against people of a different faith also incited the local population in the region. The German consuls in Palestine worked for affecting the Muslims in order to be seen as a part of them.⁷

The Ottoman Government had already abrogated the Capitulations by September of 1914.⁸ As a result of this, the foreign councils lost their power and that of the Allies was soon expelled. Thousands of Jews lost the rights which had been given to them by the Capitulations and they became enemy aliens. Important to note, when the war began, is the fact that most of the Yishuv had sympathy for the Ottomans. What is more, the Yishuv criticized those who publicly held pro-Allied beliefs. They believed that anti-Turkish attitudes would damage the Zionist movement, as Palestine was still in the Ottoman hands. The Jews in Jaffa founded patriotic teams and published pro-Ottoman papers. Some Jewish leaders, including Ben Gurion and Ben Zvi, supported Ottomanization and the military efforts of the Ottomans during the early stages of war, as they thought that these were important for the survival of the Jewish presence in Palestine. Moreover, a group of Zionist activists including Moshe Shertok and Dov Hoz joined the Ottoman army.⁹

However, the Ottoman government reimplemented all anti-Zionist rules once again. Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine were prohibited. Land sales to foreign Jews were forbidden. Zionist activities were curtailed. The government also ordered the deportation of several leading Zionist figures from Palestine. The point here is that the local governors in Palestine went beyond in the implementation of the government's regulations. They pursued more brutal and anti-Semitist policies towards foreign Jews via the order of deportations of thousands of those Jews and

⁷ Anita Engle, *The Nili Spies*, The Hogarth Press, London, 1959, p. 43.

⁸ Krämer, op. cit., p. 142.

⁹ Morris, op. cit., pp. 84-86

this act even put the Ottoman government on the spot. Therefore, the foreign consuls intervened, in the situation and as a result, the Ottoman government tried to prevent the harsh attitude of the local officials towards Jewish inhabitants.

In early October of 1914, Baha ad-Din, a Turkish nationalist and anti-Zionist, went to Jaffa as Caimakam (from Macedonia). He regarded Jewish settlements as separatist and dangerous to the state, and Tel Aviv as a state within a state. He declared his intention of putting an end to colonies, and saw the Zionist movement as a well-organized, separatist movement supported by the foreign powers that would follow Macedonia's secession. He disbanded *Hashomer* and prohibited the use of JNF stamps. He declared Zionist flags and institutions to be illegal and closed all branches of the Anglo-Palestine Company. The Zionists were forced to hand arms over to the Turkish authorities. After the Empire entered the war and with the proclamation of *jihad*, he declared that all Muslims had the duty to kill any infidels (Christians and Jews). It was also promised that the property of Jews would be confiscated and transferred to the Arab peasants at the end of the war.¹⁰ With the support of Jamal Pasha, he ordered the deportations of all foreign Jews from Ottoman land. On December 17, 1914, 700 Jews were sent to Alexandria by Baha ad-Din, then the governor of Jaffa. This expulsion from Jaffa had repercussions which resulted in foreign intervention. As a result, deportations ceased, and Baha ad-Din was removed from his position.¹¹

At that time, the foreign Jews who did not wish to leave were allowed to become Ottoman citizens. However, as Friedman emphasizes, there was a divergence between the orders of the Ottoman government to facilitate their naturalization and their actual implementation. He states in his book that there were crowds of applicants for naturalization in Jaffa; but, because of difficulties, they became discouraged and decided to join the Jewish exiles in Egypt. Hence, in January 1915, approximately 7,000 Jews went to Alexandria.¹² Morris, defines the demand for

¹⁰ Friedman, op. cit., pp. 198-199

¹¹ Morris, op. cit., p. 85; Friedman, op. cit., p. 214

¹² Ibid, op. cit., p. 218

citizenship as “a rush to Ottomanization.”¹³ However, he also confirms that, because of the laxity of the Ottoman officials in their duties as well as the anti-Zionist attitudes, only a few Jews were actually able to acquire citizenship. As a result, by the end of 1915, there were almost 12,300 Jews in Alexandria.¹⁴

From this, it is not difficult to make a comparison between the Abdulhamid era and during wartime with regard to the Ottomanization of the Jews. Under Abdulhamid, the Porte drafted anti-Zionist rules, as foreign Jews had been compelled to adopt citizenship, but the rules had not been implemented by the local officials. Yet, now even though the foreign Jews were willing to become Ottoman subjects (and, therefore, the rules that required them to be naturalized were now favorable to them), the rules were not complied with by the local officials. This also shows that there is a continuity in the disparity between the policies of the central government and the local jurisdictions. However, the obligation to adopt citizenship was still in force. It was reported that the Jews without Ottoman citizenship should be repatriated.¹⁵ Therefore, without citizenship they could not remain in the region.

On the other hand, after entering war, the Empire imposed military rule in the Ottoman Levant under Cemal Pasha in 1915.¹⁶ Those who were seen as a threat to state authority in the region began to be attacked by the military. In fact, when the war broke out, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) began to gain support from the Ottoman Muslims. Cleveland states that, even though there was no anti-governmental movement in Great Syria, the Committee was suspicious of the loyalty of the Arab population in Syria as a result of the activities of the Arab political and cultural societies established before the war.¹⁷ After the Ottomans entered the War,

¹³ Morris, op. cit., p. 86

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ HR.SYS. 7/4/1915

¹⁶ Morris, op. cit., p. 85

¹⁷ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, Second Edition, Simon Fraser University, 2000, p. 150

Enver Pasha, the Minister of War, told Jamal Pasha that according to the news from Syria, there were upheavals and anti-Ottoman activities from the revolutionary Arabs.¹⁸ In order to guarantee the stability and loyalty of the people, the CUP gave the authority of the region to Cemal Pasha. Furthermore, Enver appointed Cemal Pasha as commander of the 4th Army located in Damascus.¹⁹ He acquired both civil and military authorities in Syria and Palestine. At the beginning, his administration seemed to be favorable for the for the inhabitants of the region. He seemed to be in favor of Muslim solidarity. However, after his forces failed in the Suez Canal in early 1915 after an alert defense by the British²⁰, he began to use pressure and force in the Syrian provinces.²¹ Having analyzed the memoirs of Cemal Pasha, Issam Nassar states that Cemal preserved anti-Arab feelings,²² as Pasha called the Arabs insidious traitors. In Syria, he realized his anti-Arab sentiments in a cruel manner through executions of many Arab leaders in Beirut in August 1915, in Damascus in 1916, and also in Lebanon and Palestine including Jerusalem.²³

Looking at Cemal Pasha's policies, it is possible to observe that he also had anti-Zionist tendencies stemming from his perception of Zionism as a separatist movement. For him, Zionism was a separatist movement that should be dealt with accordingly. Moreover, the Turks suspected that the New Yishuv was in favour of an

¹⁸ Nassar, op. cit., pp. 132-133

¹⁹ Cleveland, op. cit., p. 150; Nassar, op. cit., p. 132-133

²⁰ In January 1915, Cemal Pasha sent 80,000 Ottoman troops to the Canal to attack British forces. However, the British forces prevented the Ottomans from passing the Canal and were able to repel the Ottoman troops in Cleveland, op. cit., p. 150

²¹ Cleveland, op. cit., 152

²² Falih Rıfki Atay, who worked as a principal clerk of Cemal Pasha in Syria for four years during the war, in his book, *Zeytindağı*, (in which he indited his war memoirs), talks about Cemal Pasha's animosity towards nationalists and states that the Pasha never forgave those who wanted to damage the unity of the Empire. Atay also implies that Cemal Pasha was ruthless towards the people who were guilty and were to be executed. The writer also touches upon the fear that the Pasha created among not only Arab but also the Turkish officials in Falih Rıfki Atay, *Zeytindağı*, Pozitif Yayınları, 2014, pp. 15-56

²³ Nassar, op. cit., pp. 132-133

Allied victory. Under his rule, the Jewish courts and institutions were shut down. Many Zionist leaders were arrested or interrogated. The Jewish colonies were prohibited from hiding Jewish armed units. In February 1915, a number of Jews were sent to prison.²⁴ In 1915, several Zionist activists began to be deported from Palestine. The Documents of the 7th Branch of the Ottoman Police Department²⁵ deal with some deportations of those Jews. While several were deported from the Ottoman territory (i.e. American Jew Dunyarın Begosil²⁶, Efraim Rasik to Germany²⁷, and the Spira family, who was seen as a spy for Zionists²⁸, some others were sent to Anatolia (Russian Jews: Hangin and Shohat Efendis to Sivas²⁹ and Isak Dragano, who was blamed for cooperating with the British and French Consuls for the sake of Zionist movement), to Ankara.³⁰ Even Arthur Ruppın, after 8-year service in Palestine, was sent to Istanbul.³¹ Ben Gurion and Ben Zvi as Zionist activists were also deported to Egypt in early 1915.³²

Concerning the Cemal Pasha's policies in the region during the war, Mim Kemal Öke refutes the literature that blames Jamal for being cruel and even goes further to

²⁴ Morris, op. cit., pp. 84-85

²⁵ DH.EUM.7.Şb : The 7th Branch of the Security General Directorate (Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti 7. Şube) was responsible for the pursuit of the Zionist activities in Palestine and worked to prevent cooperation and communication between the Zionists inside and outside of the Ottoman Empire.

<http://katalog.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/osmanli/fonbilgisi.asp?kurumkod=DH.&ilgilikurumkod=DH.EUM.7.%DEb>

²⁶ DH.ŞFR. 22.L.1333

²⁷ DH.EUM.4.Şb, 28.Ş.1336

²⁸ HR.SYS., 2/1917

²⁹ DH.EUM.7.Şb, 26.N.1333

³⁰ DH.EUM.KLH, 03.Ş .1336

³¹ HR.SYS, 19.3.1915

³² 'Chapter Four, World War One', Jewish Agency for Israel, <http://jafi.org/JewishAgency/English/Jewish+Education/Compelling+Content/Eye+on+Israel/120/Chapter+Four+World+War+One.htm>, (accessed on May 23, 2014)

say that he was, in fact, a good man. On the one hand, Cemal Pasha accuses the Allied powers of bringing about worse conditions in Palestine as a result of their blocking entry of assistances to the country. On the other hand, Öke says that Cemal had moderate policies and, therefore, that there were not disastrous conditions in Palestine. Here, Öke contradicts himself. In fact, as can be seen, it is undeniable that Palestine was under the direct impact of the war and tyranny; therefore, it does not make sense to claim that Cemal Pasha was not following strict policies. And, in fact, he was doing so. Öke claims that Cemal gave permission for the distribution of aid to the Jews in Palestine by the Zionist organizations, and to the adoption of Ottoman citizenship by foreign Jews. What is more, he attributes these “facilities” to the lack of disastrous conditions in Palestine (though he confirms that Palestine was a war zone.)³³ From that point, however, it is difficult to argue that Cemal Pasha pursued conciliatory policies and not tyranny.

As the war continued, the numbers of refugees as well as the death rate increased. In April 1917, 9,000 Jews became refugees, and many died of starvation and disease.³⁴ Despite all, it is important to emphasize that the impact of the Ottomans’ harsh policies as well as the influence of the war conditions on the Jewish presence in Palestine would become disastrous unless foreign powers showed concern for the Zionist movement.

4.2 Western Powers’ Interest in the Zionist Movement during the war

As the war continued and as the Zionism turned into an international movement, the European powers began to relate to Zionism and its movement in Palestine. There were some reasons behind the European powers’ support for the movement. First, the Zionist movement in Palestine was seen to be in favor of their war policies. Secondly, as the deportations of Jews continued, Zionist officials began to worry

³³ Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-201

³⁴ Frankel, Jonathan, *The Jews and the European Crisis, 1914-1921*, in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, New York: Oxford University Press, Volume 4, 1988, p. 6

about the presence of the Palestinian Jewry. Therefore, they asked for help protecting the Zionist presence in the Holy Land and for support for their movement in Palestine. Additionally, the change in the Young Turk policy towards Yishuv with the outbreak of the war through Cemal Pasha's policies seemed to make foreign intervention on behalf of the Zionists mandatory.³⁵

The European powers' interest in the Zionist movement had also three main consequences. As the powers began to align themselves with Jewish presence in the region, they intervened in the Ottoman policy towards Jews and prevented application of many restrictions with regard to their presence. Secondly, the war's negative impact on the Zionist movement in Palestine was reduced via foreign intercession. Thirdly, as a result of the rivalry between the European powers in establishing alliance with the Zionists, one power, Britain took the lead and held the Zionist movement under its patronage. Therefore, it is important to discuss the relations between the European powers and the Zionists, in order to show the strength of the movement and the support they were granted by Europe in their work in Palestine.

At the beginning of the war, Zionist leadership was placing emphasis on the international dimension of its movement—and, in so doing, declared their neutrality. The war situation highlighted two issues for the Zionists: the question of protection of Jews in Palestine and post-war settlement. Some Zionist leaders thought their objectives, which had failed to be achieved during times of peace, could be achieved with the war. Laqueur states that the Zionist leaders, however, saw themselves as obliged to support their respective home countries during the war.³⁶

Even though the leadership did not want to be regarded as a tool of Germany, the World Zionist Organization was dominated by Central European Jews who believed in German victory.³⁷ For many of the German Zionists, Germany was fighting for the

³⁵ Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 271

³⁶ Laqueur, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173

³⁷ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 190

truth, law, freedom, and civilization. After the war broke out, the conditions of the Jews in Western Russia worsened, and hundreds of thousands were expelled. If Russia won, the persecution of Jews would be harsh, some Zionists argued.³⁸ As Russia was the enemy of the Jews, Germany as the enemy of their enemy seemed to be an ally for the Zionist leaders with German origin.

However, Weizmann, Ahad Ha'am, Jabotinsky, and Nordau were against the pro-German tendency of the Organization.³⁹ What is more, there were also pro-British Zionist leaders in the WZO like Haim Weizmann. However, Britain was the ally of Russia which forced 1.5 million Jews to immigrate, as a result of which Germany started its anti-Entente propaganda.⁴⁰ Therefore, Zionist leadership held a pro-German attitude in the early stages of war. And, even though the Zionist movement had decided to be neutral during wartime, at the beginning of the war, Germany was the main place of the Zionist headquarters.⁴¹ However, as the war continued and as the interest of the European powers—especially Germany and Britain, the leaders of each bloc of the war—in Zionism increased, the division among Zionist leadership became apparent, as will be seen below.

4.3 Germany Asks for the Impossible: to ally with both Zionists and Ottomans?

Germany had interests in the Ottomans' entrance into the war. First, some parts of the Allied forces would be concentrated outside of Europe; secondly, the Straits would be closed; and, therefore, no military or food aid could be sent to Russia; thirdly, as the Ottoman State was the center of the caliphate, declaration of *jihad* by the Ottoman Sultan would have ramifications among the Muslim communities

³⁸ Laqueur, op. cit., pp. 172-173

³⁹ Ibid, op. cit., p. 173

⁴⁰ Öke, op. cit., pp. 190-192

⁴¹ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 176

dominant in the colonies of the Allied powers. According to the Ottoman point of view, a German victory would benefit the Ottomans as, in such a case, the latter could make up for lost ground.⁴²

After the war started, the official German attitude towards Zionism became more positive. Germany, ruled by Wilhelm II, the German emperor, wanted to ally with the Zionists: on the one hand, Zionists in the Allied countries might provide intelligence about their armies; on the other hand, the Zionists, especially in Russia, could demoralize the military and even possibly revolt.⁴³ Moreover, since Jews were representing a pressure group in America, German alliance with the Zionists would also mean support of America during war time, while leadership of Zionism would mean that of world Jewry to Germany. Additionally, the German ruling elite believed their aims to be parallel to Zionist interests. The Jews settled in Palestine by Germany would become tools for German domination in the Middle East. Furthermore, for German nationalists, the Zionist movement would benefit the Ottoman State in the economic sphere.⁴⁴ The Germans thought that as long as Germany backed Zionist interests, Germany would receive the support of the Palestinian Jewry. Germany was one of the European powers that provided financial aid and food to Palestine during the war.⁴⁵

The German Zionists desired real support of Germany for their interests in Palestine and wanted Germans to convince the Ottoman government accordingly.⁴⁶ Bodenheimer, a native German Jew who had been the president of the national organization of the German Zionists between 1897 and 1910 and was the head of the Jewish National Fund at the beginning of the war, along with his colleagues wanted the protection of the Yishuv in Palestine. After Ruppin asked them to receive a

⁴² Öke, op. cit., pp. 185-186

⁴³ Friedman, op. cit., p. 201

⁴⁴ Öke, op. cit., pp. 190-193

⁴⁵ Morris, op. cit., p. 85

⁴⁶ Öke, op. cit., p. 192

guarantee from both the German Ministry and the Ottoman ambassador in Berlin for the protection of the Russian Jews in Palestine from war conditions, Bodenheimer, in August 1914, wanted the Ambassador Mahmud Mukhtar Pasha to use his influence for preventing the Yishuv from being attacked by the Arab population and for preventing the deportation of the Russian Jews. To that end, Bodenheimer tried to convince him that those Jews were already alienated from Russia and that they would adopt Ottoman citizenship if the difficulties on the acquiring citizenship were removed.⁴⁷ While German statesmen refrained from angering the Zionists due to their influence on the Eastern Jewry and the United States, they also urged Ottoman leadership, particularly Talat, to avoid actions that would antagonize the world Jewry. During the war, German representatives sought to interfere with the Turkish leadership on behalf of the Palestinian Jews.⁴⁸ Wangenheim, the German ambassador in Istanbul, worked for the protection of Zionist settlements in Palestine from war conditions and for the easing of adoption of Ottoman nationality by foreign Jews.⁴⁹ In November 1914, he directed the German consulates in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, and Beirut to assure local Ottoman officials of the importance of being lenient towards foreign Jews. Talat Pasha had promised Wangenheim in November 1914 that the Jews in Palestine would remain unharmed and would be given the facilities with which to acquire Ottoman nationality. The German ambassador in Istanbul did not believe that the Muslim population would attack the Jewish settlers in the region.⁵⁰ Also for Richard Lichtheim, the Zionist diplomat who stayed in Istanbul between 1913 and 1917 and who was the editor of *Die Welt*, the central organ of the WZO, the protection of the Palestinian Jews was under guarantee.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Jay Ticker, 'Max. I Bodenheimer: Advocate of Pro-German Zionism at the Beginning of World War I', *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1, Winter 1981, p. 12 and p. 18

⁴⁸ Laqueur op. cit., p. 176

⁴⁹ Öke, op. cit., p. 192

⁵⁰ Friedman, op. cit., p. 200

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 209

The concern of the Germans was that the involvement of Ottomans in a war with Russia would worsen conditions for the Russian Jews in Palestine and would damage the Zionist enterprise there. Therefore, the Germans both in Istanbul and Berlin exerted themselves to the utmost to encourage Jewish settlers to adopt Ottoman citizenship. However, despite the absence of consular protection for the foreign Jews, only a few settlers were able to gain Ottoman nationality⁵² due to the difficulties mentioned above. Dr. (Alfred) Nossig, a pro-German Jew who worked for a secure immigration of Jews to Palestine and who was in favor of a pro-German Jewish state there⁵³, went to Istanbul and negotiated with Talat Pasha, Yusuf Izzettin Efendi, and Halil Pasha in August 1915. Consequently, the German-Jewish-Ottoman Union was created in order to coordinate Jewish immigration to Turkey. In November 1915, the German Embassy informed its consuls in Jerusalem that the German-Jewish organizations would be under German protection so long as they did not violate the Ottoman interests. The German Embassy ordered meeting the conditions for secure Jewish immigration to and settlement in Ottoman territory and advised favorable attitudes towards Zionists and their ambitions.⁵⁴

In the Ottoman Foreign Ministry Report dated April 1915, the hesitation of the Ottomans to sustain the restrictions on immigration could be seen. According to the Report, the immigration of Jews from the enemy countries to Palestine continued. The restrictions placed on immigration by the Ottomans were perceived as a harsh treatment by the Europeans.⁵⁵

The intervention of Germany was mostly on the policies of Jamal Pasha, who intended to expel all Russian Jews from Palestine. When Baha ad-Din, with the support of Jamal, ordered the deportation of roughly half of the Jewish community

⁵² Ibid., p. 192

⁵³ ‘Alfred Nossig’, *Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team*, <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org> (accessed on March 18, 2014)

⁵⁴ Öke, op. cit., pp. 193-194

⁵⁵ HR.SYS. 7/4/1915

from Palestine in December 1914, it was the German ambassador with Morgenthau, the American ambassador in Istanbul, who tried to prevent the deportations.⁵⁶ After Baha ad-Din was removed from his position, Jamal appointed him as his adviser, and they continued their anti-Zionist policies in the region. Therefore, the two ambassadors put pressure on the Ottoman Ministers to intervene. Even Wangenheim spoke harshly with Talat as well as condemned him. Subsequently, Talat promised to recall Baha ad-Din and also made a grievance against Jamal for not being informed as to the closure of the Anglo-Palestine Bank. Talat, the Minister of Finance at that time, assured Morgenthau that implementations beyond his cognizance would be abrogated.⁵⁷ As a result of their efforts, the Ottoman government gave provide convenience to all Jews willing to adopt Ottoman citizenship.⁵⁸ In 1915, central authorities persuaded the local governor in Jerusalem not to disturb the Jewish population.⁵⁹ Here, as mentioned above, there was a division between the policy of the central government and that of the local rulers.

Despite some arrests and Jamal's enforcement of Arthur Ruppin leaving Jaffa for Istanbul, Laquer says that the years of 1915 and 1916 constituted a quiet period for the Jews in Palestine, as a result of the activities of the German Zionists in Istanbul and support of the German government.⁶⁰ In August 1917, the German Foreign Ministry and the Zionists arranged a meeting between Jamal Pasha and Lichtheim. Jamal Pasha guaranteed that Jews having arrived in Palestine would not be forced to leave and promised that a favorable attitude would be carried out towards Jews. Yet, he also emphasized that Palestine was not open to Jews.⁶¹ Regarding this meeting, Laquer notes that Jamal was totally against the idea of a Jewish Palestine.

⁵⁶ Morris, op. cit., p. 85

⁵⁷ Friedman, op. cit. p. 220

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 215

⁵⁹ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 176

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 176

⁶¹ Öke, op. cit., p. 196

Furthermore, during the war, the Ottoman policy towards Zionism would not change.⁶² Jamal also expressed his suspicion that Zionists were under the influence of British. The meeting, therefore, did not result in *ad libitum*. Another negotiation was held between Haim Nahum and the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nesimi Bey. The former tried to convince the Minister that the Ottoman territorial integrity would not be undermined and achieved in doing so.⁶³

Öke states that, although the Ottoman government hesitated to publish a declaration in favor of Zionists, as a result of German intercession, it managed to convince Jamal Pasha to stop persecution of Palestinian Jews.⁶⁴ However, Germany was not in a position to give official support to Zionism. On one hand, some members of the Zionist leadership were establishing contacts with the British and French whose publications were much more positive towards Zionism.⁶⁵ Here, it is possible to talk about a split between the radicals and the moderates within the World Zionist Organization. The moderates, led by Bodenheimer, the chief advocate of the pro-German policy for the Zionist movement, insisted on a mixture of Jewish nationalism and German patriotism. They wanted to integrate Zionist interests into the Germany's imperialist program, as their belief was that in such an integration Germans and Zionists had mutual benefits. They thought that, while the Jewish settlement in Palestine as well as the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was only to be achieved via support of the German government, the Zionist presence in the Near East would be also to Germany's advantage. Moreover, some of moderates disengaged themselves from the mainstream Jewish nationalism, yet remained patriotic citizens of Germany. In addition, they were not inclined to criticize the Turks' persecution of the foreign Jews in Palestine. As for the radical leaders, a pro-German policy of the Organization would undermine the positions of the Zionist

⁶² Laqueur, op. cit., p. 177

⁶³ Öke, op. cit., p. 196

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 195

⁶⁵ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 177

organizations in the territories of the Allied powers. As the chances of the Central Powers, and particularly that of Germany, to win in the war decreased, and as the British took concrete steps in favor of Zionist ambitions, the radical leaders in the Organization became totally distant from the pro-German stance.⁶⁶

On the other hand, Germans were unwilling to undermine their relations with the Turkish government as their ally. They did not want to support Zionism at the expense of alliance with the Turks⁶⁷ which implies that the Turkish government held a strict attitude towards the Zionist movement during wartime. Öke argues that Germany did not see a contradiction between Ottoman interests and Zionist interests.⁶⁸ However, in contrast to Öke's belief, Germany was aware of the Ottoman anti-Zionist policy—and, that is why German officials sought to convince the Ottoman statesmen of being favorable towards Zionism. Nevertheless, eventually, Zionist activities in Germany as well as Germany's policies resulted in failure.⁶⁹ In other words, the Germans' desire to ally with both the Zionists and the Ottomans simultaneously did not work.

4.4 American Contribution to the Yishuv During the War

The intervention of the American ambassador is also worth mentioning. Before leaving for Istanbul, Henry Morgenthau, the American ambassador in Istanbul (1913-1916), was entrusted by American President Woodrow Wilson to provide protection for the Jews from the war. As a German Jew, the Ambassador disliked the Ottomans.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ticker, op. cit, pp. 11-26

⁶⁷ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 177

⁶⁸ Öke, op. cit., p. 194

⁶⁹ Laqueur, op. cit., p. 177

⁷⁰ Öke, op. cit., p. 199

Zionism was gaining ground in America at that time. In August 1914, the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs was established in America. The Committee provided assistance from North and South America to Palestine and sent 100,000 dollars to Ruppin in Palestine through coordination with the Germans.⁷¹ Concerning the Executive Committee, Friedman notes that it was not only a relief organization, but also a political one with the aim of preventing recession in the Jewish settlement in Palestine. The Committee provided loans to the colonists and also financed the Palestine Office and the agency in Istanbul.⁷² In August 1914, Henry Morgenthau, appealed to Jacob Schiff in New York for \$50,000 in aid for 60,000 Palestinian Jews who were devoid of the sources transferred from the European Jewry.⁷³ In October 1914, the American Jews including Jacob Schiff, the well-known American banker, the Zionist Federation of America, and Nathan Straus, an American philanthropist provided financial assistance of 25,000 dollars for emergency purposes to Jaffa through an American by a worship.⁷⁴ During the war, Yishuv was granted approximately \$1.25 million by the U.S. An American ship transferred the Jews who wanted to leave Palestine to Egypt, mainly to Alexandria.⁷⁵ In March 1915, another U.S. ship transferred around \$1.5 million in relief along with 900 tons of food and medicine to Palestine. In November 1914, the Joint Distribution Committee of American Funds for the Relief of Jewish War Sufferers (the JDC) was founded through the merger of two American Jewish relief committees, the Central Relief Committee for the Relief of Jews and the American Jewish Relief Committee. The JDC began to send personal donations to Europe and Palestine where other

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 197

⁷² Friedman, op. cit., p. 195

⁷³ 'History Timeline, 1910s', <http://archives.jdc.org/history-of-jdc/text-only.html#decade-1910s>, (accessed on March 1, 2014)

⁷⁴ Friedman, op. cit., p. 194

⁷⁵ Morris, op. cit., pp. 85-86

agencies could not function due to the war conditions.⁷⁶ As the war continued, more warships (in total, thirteen) and funds were provided to Palestine Jews. Friedman attributes the survival of the Jewish population to those benefits. He adds that the British and French governments permitted the American warships to carry supplies to Palestine.

The British Government was also influenced by the American efforts to supply assistance to Palestine and, therefore, sent money provided by the British Jews. Russia also sent funds through Egypt and Holland.⁷⁷ Morgenthau prevented the application of Jamal's decision of closing the Anglo-Palestine Bank and of prohibiting the Zionists from using their flags, postage stamps, and share certificates. Even though the Ambassador was assured by Talat Pasha that the decision would not be implemented, he also negotiated with Enver Pasha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Minister ordered Jamal Pasha to act in good faith towards Jews.⁷⁸ In December 1916, Talat Pasha met the new American ambassador in Istanbul Abram Isaac Elkus and asked for financial aid on behalf of the Ottoman government. Elkus made flexibility on Jewish migration a condition, one which was not opposed by the Minister.⁷⁹

Despite all, the American government pursued a policy of neutrality towards the Zionist movement and Middle East politics during the early stage of the war.⁸⁰ During the war, the American-Jewish Committee, established to deal with the practical application of the Zionist project in Palestine and of which many American Zionists were part, was concerned about the Jews in Europe. Since Jews in Europe became subject to massacres, for American Jews, the Jewish Question was not in

⁷⁶ 'History Timeline, 1910s', <http://archives.jdc.org/history-of-jdc/text-only.html#decade-1910s>, (accessed on March 1, 2014)

⁷⁷ Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 195

⁷⁸ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 201

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 195

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 198

Palestine, but rather in Russia and Romania.⁸¹ At that time, there was no official declaration by the U.S. in favor of the Jews in Palestine despite considerable pressure on the American government by public opinion to this regard.⁸²

The interventions of both Germans and Americans were important in the sense that they protected many Jewish inhabitants from being deported from Palestine and, therefore, protected the Jewish presence there. Nevertheless, such interventions were limited to preventing the deportations of thousands of foreign Jews. As the position of the Yishuv worsened, the Zionist leaders wanted to gain concrete support from a Great Power for their ambitions in Palestine during wartime. Therefore, another actor came into play: the British.

4.5 British Interests in the Zionist Movement and the Relationship Between the British and Zionist Leaders

Since British intervention in the Zionist movement in Palestine was crucial and, as the alliance between Britain and the Zionists resulted in success at the end of the war, it is necessary to address the British policies towards Zionism in a particular section. Nevertheless, it is impossible to plunge into the relationship between the British and Zionists before mentioning the British policy towards Ottoman land, for this study, particularly Palestine and her interests in it.

4.5.1 British Interests in the Ottoman Territory

As Morris states, British policy towards the Ottoman Empire pre-war changed from one of support for the continued integrity of the Empire to that of its complete demise after the war broke out. With the start of the war, Britain became concerned about the security of the Suez Canal and the security of its communications with

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 204

⁸² Ibid., pp. 198-199

India. Since Palestine was the military gate to Egypt and the Suez Canal, the British idea, as the Foreign Secretary Lord George Curzon stated, was that the Ottoman State should be prevented from controlling Palestine after the war.⁸³ Therefore, in the early days of November 1914, Britain began to discuss division of the Empire overtly.⁸⁴ For this objective, during the war period, the British leaders negotiated with the leaders of Armenians, Arabs, and Zionists in order to gain their support of the Allies against the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁵ Subsequently, British cooperation with them contributed to the realization of the division of the Empire.

As Smith states in his book, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, the British policy towards Ottoman land in the Middle East can be understood substantially in the form of a report called the Bunsen Report presented by the British war cabinet to the Foreign Office of Britain in June 1915. The Report proposed the division of the Ottoman territory among the Allies. Britain was to have control of the regions from Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra to the Sinai Peninsula, while the French would gain control over Syria and Lebanon. In the case of rejection to partition, another proposal was to establish confederation in the Ottoman territories where Anatolia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq would have autonomies. In both cases, Palestine would enjoy neutral and international status.⁸⁶ Although this was not the case at the end of the war as the British and French interests in the region became clear, it is significant to see the places of interests to the British and French.

During the war, Britain was most concerned about the influence of Germany and the Central Power on the Muslims. When the Ottoman Caliphate declared *jihad* to the Entente Powers so as to gather all Muslims around the Ottoman Empire against the latter, it created discontent for the British. The edict of the Caliphate claimed that the Allies were determined to end the Muslim rule in the world and warned that, in the

⁸³ Morris, op. cit., p. 68

⁸⁴ Krämer, op. cit., p. 142

⁸⁵ Öke, op. cit., p. 215

⁸⁶ Smith, op. cit., pp. 56-57

case of absence of Muslims in the Jihad, Islamic rule would come to the end. The entrance of the Ottomans into the war would, thus, result in a Muslim solidarity which constituted a problem for the British. Additionally, declaration of *jihad* would create disturbances to the India.⁸⁷ During the second half of the 1915, the British officials in the Middle East began to consider an Arab revolt against the Ottoman rule.⁸⁸ British authorities, therefore, tried to find a Muslim leader who would damage the prestige of the Ottoman Caliphate-Sultan and cooperate with the Allied powers; they decided on the name Sharif Hussein ibn Ali⁸⁹, the Emir of Mecca. For William L. Cleveland, as the Middle East history of the post-war period was related by the interpretation of the British promises to Sharif Husain, to understand in which context the agreements were held between the Emirate and the British and what were their results is crucial.⁹⁰

At that time, the CUP was suspicious of the loyalty of Hussein and tried to convince him to give support to the *jihad* and contribute money to the Ottoman budget with the taxes he had collected from the notables. However, Hussein was ready to serve at cross puposes.

Hussein-McMahon Correspondence (July 1915- January 1916)

In July of 1915, Hussein sent a letter to the British High Commissioner Sir Henry McMahon. In the letter, Hussein expressed the circumstances in which he could form alliances with the British and rise against the Ottoman Government. Between July

⁸⁷ Cleveland, op. cit., p. 150

⁸⁸ Morris, op: cit., p. 69

⁸⁹ Sharif Husain ibn Ali: The most prestigious Arab-Islam authority was the Emirate of Mecca. The Emir was the protector of the holy cities, Mecca and Medina. Even though the administration and military security were provided by the Ottoman governor of Hedjaz, the protection of two holy cities and the control the security of the pilgrimage granted an autonomous position to the Emir. Sharif Husain came from the Hashemite family and was selected to the Emirate by Abdulhamid II in 1908. Husain did not support the CUP for political and religious reasons. In the first years of his office, he established several alliances to gain more autonomy from Istanbul in Cleveland, op. cit., p. 155

⁹⁰ Cleveland, op. cit., p. 153

1915 and March 1916, the important Husain-McMahon correspondence began. The most highlighted issue concerned the boundaries that Husain demanded to be recognized by the British of an independent Arab state (composed of the Arab Peninsula, Greater Syria including Lebanon and Palestine, and the Iraqi provinces) in response to an Arab military rebellion against the Ottoman Government. However, Britain was also loyal to France's interests. McMahon did not promise to give the Syrian coastal area to Husain as France was asking for this region.⁹¹ Therefore, McMahon excluded the regions of Syria to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo from the Arab kingdom by claiming that those regions were not purely Arab. Kramer says that, for McMahon, Arab meant Muslim; while for the Sharif, Arab meant as it was, and it was understood that Britain had also interests in the regions consisting of non-Muslims.⁹² Moreover, Mc Mahon insisted upon British existence in the Iraqi provinces of Basra and Baghdad. At the end of the correspondence, McMahon promised that Great Britain was ready to recognize and protect the independence of all Arabs in the boundaries offered by Husain, provided that there would be negotiations with regard to Syria after the war and that British existence was to be guaranteed in some Iraqi provinces.⁹³

It is important to note that Palestine was not mentioned in the correspondence. The promised regions to Arabs, George Antonius states, included Palestine, because it was not excluded.⁹⁴ For the Arabs, since Palestine was to the southwest of Damascus (not to the west) and was not explicitly excluded, it was included in the Arab state. The British, including McMahon and the Zionists, claimed that Palestine was implicitly included in the areas outside of the Arab state, despite a minority among

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-156

⁹² Krämer, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-147

⁹³ Cleveland, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-156

⁹⁴ Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 23

the British officials for whom McMahon did not exclude Palestine from the promised Arab kingdom.⁹⁵

Hussein Abides by the Correspondence

Sharif Hussein, in accordance with the promises he gave McMahon, declared rebellion in the name of Islam against the Ottoman sultan-caliph and the Young Turk government in June 1916⁹⁶, and the Arab Revolt started.

The Revolt despite its successes, also sustained failures. While hundreds of Arab men joined the Army of Sharif, the army was not supported by the entire Arab population. Here, it is worth mentioning the division among the Arabs.

As Nassar argues, initially, the rise of Young Turks to power increased the hopes of the non-Turks.⁹⁷ The Young Turk Revolution, with its promise of liberalization, allowed for free press and the foundation of political groups, both of which paved the way for political expression of Arab nationalist feelings. Even Ali Ekrem Bey, the governor of Jerusalem, warned that the local notables could use the environment of freedom to serve anti-Ottoman objectives. However, as the promise of liberalization was not fulfilled, the Young Turk rule in Palestine gave way to rise of Arab nationalism and a rise of local nationalism particular to Palestine⁹⁸ even before the war. Morris states that the Young Turks became as keen as Abdulhamid to protect empire's integrity and sought to guarantee Turkish dominance. The Young Turk government began to pursue Turkification policies as Turkish officials replaced

⁹⁵ Morris, op. cit., p. 69

⁹⁶ Krämer, op. cit., pp. 144-147

⁹⁷ Nassar, op. cit., p. 139

⁹⁸ Morris, op. cit., p. 29; Nassar, op. cit., p. 139

many Arab ones. Turkish became the only language of the government and compulsory in schools.⁹⁹

The war policies made the situation in the Arab provinces worse. As mentioned above, Cemal Pasha was pursuing anti-Arab policies which alienated people from the CUP regime. The despot rule and executions led by Cemal Pasha shocked the Arab population,¹⁰⁰ and convinced Faisal, the son of the Sharif of Mecca, that the Turks had bad intentions towards the Arabs. Ziadeh defines Jamal Pasha's policy in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine as "deportation of people, suppression of nationalism, starvation, and a rule of iron."¹⁰¹ Nassar asserts that the vicious policies of Jamal had a crucial impact on the change of attitudes of the Palestinians, as the inhabitants of Palestine were organically connected to those of Syria and Lebanon, because their positions were related with those of the intellectuals and leaders in those places.¹⁰² As a result, the proponents of Arabism began to convert their attitudes and policies into separatist ambitions.

Following the attacks of Husain's tribal forces to the Ottoman garrisons in Mecca on 10 June, 1916, the Arab rebellion started. Husain wanted the overthrow of the CUP and, to this regard, asked the Muslim Arabs to rebel against the CUP and rescue the Caliphate from the CUP's grasp. Cleveland states that Sharif Husain was, in fact, not an Arab nationalist, but rather wanted to protect his position as the Sharif and Emir of Mecca and, thus, wished to establish a principedom or regency in the region. However, as Cleveland notes, the Arab Rebellion was not a public movement against the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰³ It did not turn into a grand national movement, but rather was limited to a few thousand Hejazi tribesmen.¹⁰⁴ Even when the Sultan Mehmed V

⁹⁹ Morris, op. cit., p. 29

¹⁰⁰ Cleveland, op. cit., p. 152

¹⁰¹ Nicola Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, London, Ernest Benn Limited, 1957, p. 46

¹⁰² Nassar, op. cit., p. 133

¹⁰³ Cleveland, op. cit., p. 152, pp. 157-158

¹⁰⁴ Morris, op. cit., p. 76

Reshad proclaimed *jihad* against the Allies after the war broke out, he received support from the crowds of Nablus, Jerusalem, and Syria. First, the great majority of the Arabs maintained loyalty to the Ottoman government and fought for the empire throughout the WWI.¹⁰⁵ Cleveland attributes the absence of an uprising in Syria to the strict pressures of Jamal Pasha and the continuing loyalty of important prominent Arab people—meaning that some Arabs in the Greater Syria were loyal to the Ottoman Government, while others were intimidated. As a result, an organized separatist Arab movement did not occur in Syria.¹⁰⁶ Second, there was also an opposition to the Arab Revolt due to the Sharif’s alliance with the British. Therefore, despite the harsh repression under Jamal Pasha, the Arab revolt received limited support from the general population.¹⁰⁷ As the war continued, the British also began to realize in time that Hussein’s position in the region was unstable, and his popularity among the Arabs in Syria, Iraq and Palestine dubious.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, in the first year of the Revolt, Hussain with his army captured Mecca, Medina, and Taif.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, it can be stated that, though the Arab revolt was unsuccessful, the “Arab forces” were, by 1918.

Sykes-Picot Agreement (November 1915-March 1916)

Meanwhile, Britain with France as well as Russia were dividing and sharing the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Morris states that, despite the negotiation with the Arab side, by independence, the British meant independence from the Ottoman Empire versus an independent statehood for Arabs.¹¹⁰ The British were not alone in

¹⁰⁵ Fieldhouse, op. cit., p. 19

¹⁰⁶ Cleveland, op. cit., p. 152

¹⁰⁷ Krämer, op. cit., pp. 151-152

¹⁰⁸ Smith, op. cit., p. 74

¹⁰⁹ Morris, op. cit., p. 76

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 70

having interests in the Middle East. France, as her ally, had also desires in the Levant. During the war, one of the most contentious questions was the intensity between France and Britain because of the French claims on Syria. While dealing with the war burden in the west, France was not following its own interests in the Middle East and was also unhappy with the rising control of the British in the region.¹¹¹ Therefore, in order to solve the dispute between them as to what was crucial for the British, France made an agreement with their Allies with regard to the post-war situation in the Middle East. In this respect, as a result of a series of contacts, a secret agreement was reached between French Diplomat François Georges-Picot and the British parliamentarian Sir Mark Sykes, who played a crucial role in making the British policy favorable to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire on January 3, 1916.¹¹² Sazanov, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, also participated in the exchange of correspondence during the negotiations¹¹³

According to this agreement, called Sykes-Picot, France and Britain divided the large part of the Arab Middle East and defined their area of control in the Ottoman provinces in case of a collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the war. While British authority was to be guaranteed in Iraq, Britain was to control the area south of Mesopotamia directly and to have special authority over the region from Gaza to Kirkuk; the French were to have direct control over the territory from South Lebanon to South Anatolia as well as over the Syrian coastline. France was also to have a particular dominion over Syria. The Arab state promised to Husain was to be located between the regions dominated by the British and French control, as a state or confederation of states. And, Palestine was to be governed by an international administration. This treaty, Cleveland says, was the most controversial treaty during the war period, as it violated the promises given to Sharif Husain by the

¹¹¹ Cleveland, *op. cit.*, p. 159

¹¹² Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Hourani, *op. cit.*, p. 44

¹¹³ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 209; (However, after the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, the Russians exposed the treaty.)

Correspondence with McMahon.¹¹⁴ Friedman, on the other hand, argues that there was no contradiction between the Correspondence and the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The demise of the Ottoman Empire planned in the Agreement would help achieve Arab independence. In other words, realization of the promises in Hussein-McMahon Correspondence was dependent upon the realization of the Sykes-Picot Agreement.¹¹⁵

The agreement put the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire under direct British and French control. In the planned Arab State, which was to include interior Syria and the Vilayet of Mosul, Great Britain in Transjordan and the south of the Vilayet Mosul, and France in the interior Syria, were to have authority to carry out enterprises and provide foreign advisors and officials. Furthermore, Great Britain in the Vilayets Baghdad and Basra, and France in coastal Syria from near to Acre (Akka) up to and including Cilicia were to establish direct and indirect administration and authority. French also guaranteed the protection of British interests in the oil of Mosul after the war.¹¹⁶

4.5.2 Alliance between the British and the Zionists

Meanwhile, Britain was also concerned about the influence of Germany and the Central Powers on the Zionists. In the early stages of the war, Britain's ally Russia forced 1.5 million Jews to immigrate, as a result of which Germany started anti-Entente propaganda. The personal interviews between the German and Zionist leaders mentioned above were also regarded by the British as signs that the Ottomans and Germans were in consensus about leading the Zionist movement and hoped to

¹¹⁴ Cleveland, op. cit., p. 159-160. The Russian side, on the other hand, wanted control of East Anatolia and Istanbul in Öke, op. cit., p. 209

¹¹⁵ Friedman, op. cit., p. 76

¹¹⁶ Hourani, op. cit., p. 46

acquire the support of America for this purpose.¹¹⁷ What is more, as mentioned above, Palestine was strategically important for the British interests in the Near East. A Jewish homeland in Palestine under British rule would strengthen the British position in the region¹¹⁸—and, through alliance with the Zionists, Britain could gain control there. Therefore, as the war continued, Zionism became a foreign policy tool of Britain, as the interests of the movement in Palestine were in line with hers.

Even FitzMaurice, who had misconceptions concerning the relations between the Zionists and the Young Turks, as mentioned previously, pointed out that if the British promised the Jews that they would support creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, they would, in turn, receive the support of the Jews which would then help Britain to win the World War.¹¹⁹ Yet, it was Sir Herbert Samuel (the Anglo-Jewish politician, postmaster general in Asquith's cabinet, and later, the first British high commissioner in Palestine) who brought application of Zionist ambitions as an alternative policy to decision-makers in London. From November 1914 onwards, he insisted that his colleagues in London make a Jewish state in Palestine a war aim, as such a state would be “a strategic asset for the British Empire.”¹²⁰ He was an active Zionist, and his idea was that the collapse of the Empire and the establishment of Jewish homeland in Palestine could occur simultaneously. This idea was also welcomed by Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey. Weizmann began to hold negotiations with Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1908-1915), the Foreign Secretary Grey, and one of the leaders of the British Zionists. As a result, the idea of creation of a Jewish state under British authority arose.¹²¹

It is important to note that the alliance between the British and the Zionists was not initiated unilaterally by British officials—far from it. If Zionism became one of the

¹¹⁷ Öke, op. cit., pp. 191-192, p. 197

¹¹⁸ Morris, op. cit., p. 71

¹¹⁹ Fromkin, op. cit., p. 43

¹²⁰ Morris, op. cit., p. 72

¹²¹ Öke, op. cit., p. 210

policies of the Great Britain during the war, it was the product of the Zionists' lobbying activities in the British government. When the Ottoman Empire entered the war, the fate of Palestine was viewed as vague, and the British Zionists began to be concerned about Palestine. Weizmann expresses his concern to his Zionist friend Ahad Ha'am in a letter, stating that their institutions, colonies, and their all in Palestine would be lost. In his negotiation with Balfour in December 1914, Weizmann complained about the disastrous impact the war as having on the Zionist work in Palestine.¹²² Having concerns about the Zionist movement in Palestine, Weizmann was aware of the fact that the need to do something for political Zionism was an urgent one.

It is worth mentioning here that Weizmann led the Jewish community in Britain and, therefore, the alliance of the Zionists with the British rulers. Yet, he was not alone. As soon as the war began, he began to work with the British Zionists, particularly Harry Sacher and Leon Simon, on the Zionist project to be presented at a prospective peace conference. Meanwhile, Weizmann managed to meet the Rothschilds and gain the support from James, Charles and Walter Rothschild regarding the political Zionist objectives in Palestine. James advised Weizmann to influence the members of the British government and gain their support for the considerable objectives in the latter's Zionist project like a Jewish state. Via mediation of the Rothschilds, Weizmann negotiated with the cousin of Balfour, Robert Cecil (the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), Lord Haldane (Lord Chancellor) and Theo Russell (the private secretary of Edward Grey). In November 1914, Weizmann also met Charles P. Scott, the editor of *The Manchester Guardian*, the most popular liberal newspaper in Britain. Scott became one of Weizmann's closest friends during this project. Scott introduced Weizmann to Herbert Samuel, the President of the Local Government

¹²² Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, London, 2010, pp. 154-155

Board and Lloyd George. The Zionist leader, while able to influence George satisfactorily, was surprised at Samuel's support of Zionist ambitions in Palestine.¹²³

In January 1915, Samuel sent Prime Minister Asquith a formal proposal calling for a large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine under British protectorate. According to the proposal, a gradual but steady immigration would lead to a Jewish majority in Palestine which, in time, would be followed by a Jewish state.¹²⁴ However, Asquith, having been influenced by Montagu who was concerned about the opposition of the Muslims in the British Empire and the Jews in Europe, opposed Samuel's project.¹²⁵

Nevertheless, during the early months of the war, the British Zionism led by Weizmann was able to take concrete steps towards influencing the British ruling circles, the decision makers in British foreign policy.¹²⁶ Furthermore, during the period between 1915 and 1916, a pro-Zionist group began to emerge in the British government. By the start of 1916, both in the war cabinet and Foreign Office, officials started to become favorable to Zionism. Those pro-Zionist ministers and officials considered that supporting Zionist demands would be compatible with furthering Arab aspirations. What is more, Lloyd George¹²⁷ became prime minister, and Arthur James Balfour¹²⁸ became the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1916 December. Both held the view that Jews should be granted their rightful place

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 128-135; also see 'Chapter 3, Generating Support for Zionism' in Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman*, Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 73-113

¹²⁴ Morris, op. cit., p. 72.

¹²⁵ Öke, op. cit., p. 211

¹²⁶ Schneer, op. cit., p. 136

¹²⁷ Lloyd George: The Prime Minister of Britain between 1916 and 1922, a British imperialist, in favor of Zionism as it would help to realize British interests in the Middle East in Morris, op. cit., p. 71.

¹²⁸ Arthur James Balfour: the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs between 1916 and 1919 and also the Honorary President of the Zionist Federation of the Great Britain and Ireland, in Krämer, op. cit., p. 149. (The Federation was established in 1899 as an umbrella organization for the Zionist Movement in Britain, in the official website of the Federation, <http://www.zionist.org.uk/about-the-zionist-federation/> (accessed on March 27, 2014))

in the world, since homelessness of the Jews was not humane. Even in March 1916, the previous Foreign Secretary Robert Crewe had insisted that Zionism held, in and of itself, political opportunities. First, by supporting Zionism, the British would get the world Jewry, therefore the U.S. and Russia, to their side during the war. Secondly, they worried that Germany could make a pro-Zionist declaration in favor of Zionism and, thus, counter the Allies.¹²⁹

In this respect, Britain needed the support of the American government. Here, we have an interdependence: for Britain, while Zionists' support was important in order to gain the support of Americans, American backing was crucial for gaining Zionists' support. The British leadership of Zionism would make Britain the protector of the Jews in the eyes of the Americans. On one hand, the British leaders thought that, through alliance with the Zionists, Britain would gain the support of American Jews, which would then put pressure on their government to stand up for the aspirations of both sides in the region. Additionally, it was thought that a Jewish homeland under British rule could replace principle of self-determination defended by American President Wilson. In addition, American support to Britain was also crucial for realizing her imperial interests in Palestine and the Middle East as well as her national interests in Europe. What is more, American backing to Britain with regard to the issue of Zionism was of great importance for the British in terms of making the world Jewry to be sided with the British during wartime.

In September 1917, Lord Robert Cecil, on behalf of the British Government, asked Colonel House whether Wilson was to approve a pro-Zionist declaration. However, the Department of State was not in favor of such a declaration.¹³⁰ As mentioned above, even though the U.S. had a policy of neutrality towards the Middle East and no active policy towards the Ottoman Empire (the U.S. did not declare war against the Ottoman Empire), President Wilson was in favor of the demise of the Ottoman

¹²⁹ Morris, op. Cit., pp. 72-74

¹³⁰ Öke, op. cit, p. 207

Empire. 206) Furthermore, the President himself supported Zionist objectives and the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.¹³¹

The Balfour Declaration

The British Government began to consider publishing a document for Zionists to have a kind of guarantee for their alliance with the British. After Balfour requested a draft of such from Walter Rothschild, the leader of the Jewish community in Britain, during their meeting on June 19, 1917, Rothschild presented a document including the demands of Zionists: recognition of the WZO as the only representative of the world Jewry; acceptance of Palestine as the homeland of Jews; and, the support of Britain to free and secure Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine.¹³²

Balfour's answer, also known as the historical "Declaration of November 2, 1917," said that "His Majesty's government announced its favor for a Jewish national home in Palestine" and that it would utilize all circumstances for facilitating the realization of the achievement of this aim without violating the civil and political rights of non-Jews in Palestine as well as the Jews out of Palestine.¹³³

The role of the Zionist lobbying led by Weizmann mentioned above cannot be underestimated. In this regard, Stein claims that the Declaration was the product of the Zionist lobbying led by Weizmann which convinced the British to send the letter to Rothschild.¹³⁴ However, there were other reasons that made the British issue the Declaration, as also touched upon above. First, Jewish governance in Palestine would mean British control over the region. Secondly, the world Jewry would urge their

¹³¹ Ibid., pp. 206-207

¹³² Ibid., pp. 243-245

¹³³ J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record*, Princeton N. J., Van Nostrand, 1956, p. 26

¹³⁴ Cited in Shlaim, op. cit., p. 8

governments to support the Allies.¹³⁵ Thirdly, as the world Jewry opposed Russian victory because of its anti-Semitism, and as Russia was an ally of the British, gaining the support of the Jews to their side was crucial. Lastly, Britain feared that, since many American Jews were of German origin, it was important to prevent them from siding with the Central Powers.¹³⁶ Charles Smith asserts that the British were concerned about the withdrawal of the Russians from the war as it would leave the French and British alone against the German forces; therefore, they wanted to influence the Russian Jewry so that they would support the Russian war effort. (even though Russian Jews did not support the war effort). Additionally, Britain wanted to be assisted by the Americans in Europe, both financially and militarily, and the support of Zionists to the British would lead the American Jewry to persuade President Wilson to enter the war on the side of the Allies.¹³⁷

There are different interpretations of England's motive in issuing the Declaration. The Balfour Declaration, Khabit argues, was the result of the British imperial interests during the World War I: to have control in the Middle East, and to protect its strategic ties through the Suez Canal and in India.¹³⁸ In this sense, Fromkin, having supporting the same argument, states that Palestine was the missing link that could connect the parts of the British Empire, from the Atlantic to the middle of the Pacific.¹³⁹ According to Cleveland, the Declaration was the product of the British aims to obtain control over the territories around the Suez Canal and to have ties with the American, Russian, and German Jews.¹⁴⁰ Smith, on the other hand, does not limit England's motivation in the declaration to war aims. For him, the Declaration was also dependent upon pro-Zionism among the British statesmen. He states that there

¹³⁵ Krämer, op. cit., p. 149

¹³⁶ Morris, op. cit., p. 73

¹³⁷ Smith, op. cit., p. 67

¹³⁸ Khabit, op. cit., p. 43

¹³⁹ Fromkin, op. cit., p. 282

¹⁴⁰ Cleveland, op. cit., p. 160

were key British statesmen, including Lloyd George, Sykes, and Balfour, who had sympathy to Zionism.¹⁴¹ Avi Shlaim rejects the argument that, while they were communicating the Declaration, British statesmen were motivated by either imperial interests or by Zionism. Rather, he states that the British planners of the Declaration were mainly anti-Semitic.¹⁴² He asserts that it was on the basis of an inflated perception that Zionists were very strong and influential that Britain supported the Zionists.¹⁴³ To this regard, Tom Segev defines the British support to Zionism as “Christian Zionism.” He argues that, for Balfour, Zionism was an integral part of his Christian faith.¹⁴⁴ Segev states that supporting Zionism had nothing to do with the pursuit of the British national interests. He adduces that the British belief that the Jews had a mystical power led them to make misleading observations, and that as a result Britain took crucial steps and issued the Balfour Declaration.¹⁴⁵ Whatever the motive, Britain promised to guarantee the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

In Arab sources as well as in some others, the prevalent opinion is that there was a contradiction between the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence and the Balfour Declaration. It is stated that the promises given by the British to the Jews in November 1917 were derogative to the Arab independence guaranteed to Hussein. However, for the British, the independence of Arabs was not contrary to the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. First, Britain in the correspondence, had committed herself to supporting the independence of Arabs not to an independent Arab state. As Morris emphasizes, the British were motivated by independence from the Ottoman Empire, meaning that they were not willing to give “full-fledged independent statehood.”¹⁴⁶ Secondly, Arabia was a large place, and Palestine was

¹⁴¹ Smith, op. cit., p. 72. Balfour in a Cabinet meeting declared that he was a Zionist, cited in Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*, 2000, p. 41

¹⁴² Avi Shlaim, *Israel and Palestine: Reappraisals, Revisions, Refutations*, Verso, 2010, p. 11

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 10

¹⁴⁴ Segev, op. cit., p. 41

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 43

¹⁴⁶ Morris, op. cit., p. 70

just a small portion/piece of it. They considered that, if Arabs were assured of independence, they would accept Zionist dominance in that small corner of the region called Palestine. There would be no difficulty in reconciling Zionists and Arabs in Palestine and Syria if the administration of Palestine remained in British hands. This would mean that the British believed that the Jews and Arabs would live together peacefully.¹⁴⁷ Most importantly in the Correspondence, according to the British argument, Palestine had been excluded from the Arab regions promised to Hussein.

My argument is that the difference between the two “agreements” was, rather, with regard to their characteristics. The Correspondence was a kind of “gentleman's agreement” based upon mutual promises: independence in return for revolt. On the other hand, in the Declaration, as a sort of bounced check, Britain was giving the promise of a Jewish homeland in Palestine while receiving nothing in exchange.

Outcomes of the Declaration

Regarding the significance of the Declaration for Zionists, Benny Morris says that it was “the most important international statement of support that the Jews had ever received.”¹⁴⁸ Via the Declaration, Zionist ambitions, for the first time, were formally accepted by a Great Power (Britain).¹⁴⁹ Smith says that the Declaration did not meet all Zionist aspirations, but that it “went a long way toward the recognition of a future Jewish state in Palestine.”¹⁵⁰ Öke highlights the outcomes of the Declaration as follows. First, Zionism became a determinant factor in the change of the course of events during the war and in terms of the formation of the peace. Secondly, the world

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 78

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 75

¹⁴⁹ Öke, op. cit., p. 254

¹⁵⁰ Smith, op. cit., p. 67

Jewry began to be united around a common purpose.¹⁵¹ Not only the Zionists in Germany and Austria, but also the Ottoman Jewish community welcomed the Declaration.¹⁵² Concerning the impact on the Jews of the Declaration, Sykes stated that the “the Jews in everywhere are now Zionists.”¹⁵³ Emil Meyerson and Louis Oungre, the director and director-general of the JCA respectively, emphasized the role of the accomplishments of the JCA (in the colonization of Palestine) on having the Declaration. They argued that for many years the WZO had not been concerned with the colonization, due to the limits of political Zionism and the achievement of political Zionism, though the Balfour Declaration was brought about by the colonies the JCA established.¹⁵⁴

On December 21, 1917, the London Bureau of the Zionist Organization declared the Zionist Manifesto in which the Declaration was received with enthusiasm, by saying that it provided the Jewish people with the key to a new freedom and happiness. Addressing the Jewish people, the Manifesto underlined the acts and methods in the way of the fulfillment of the establishment of a national home in Palestine.¹⁵⁵

Invasion of Ottoman Palestine and the Anglo-Zionist Alliance

In a very short time, Britain began to fulfill the promises mandated in the Balfour Declaration and began to conquer Palestine. At the end of October, Beersheba had already been taken by the British. A few days after the Declaration, the British forces entered Jerusalem. On December 11, the British Egyptian Expeditionary Force (consisting of Indians, Australians, New Zealanders, and Egyptians) under General Allenby (who had been appointed as the Commander of the British forces in

¹⁵¹ Öke, op. cit., p. 257

¹⁵² Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, London, 1961, p. 569; Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2007, p. 110

¹⁵³ Cited in Öke, op.cit., p. 254

¹⁵⁴ Penslar, op. cit., p. 139

¹⁵⁵ See ‘Zionist Manifesto’, London Bureau of the Zionist Organization, December 21, 1917, in Rabinovich and Reinhartz (eds.), op cit., pp. 30-32

Palestine on June 28) entered Jerusalem. The Force conquered Sinai, Negev, and Southern Palestine up to Gaza during the first half of November. In the conquest of Jerusalem, the Arab troops were specifically excluded (unlike during the conquest of Damascus in October 1918).¹⁵⁶ When the Allied Forces conquered Jerusalem, it was the mayor of the city, Hussein al-Husayni, who surrendered the city to the British on December, 9, 1917.¹⁵⁷ After Jerusalem was taken by the British, it was reported to the Grand Vizierate that the activities of the Zionist organizations towards the colonization of Palestine via sending Jews there had increased; they had been in financial preparation for this, and were planning to found a state there.¹⁵⁸

There are some figures for whom the British conquest of Palestine had nothing to do with the Balfour Declaration. Krämer and Smith are from this camp. For Krämer, the British were, rather, motivated by strategic interests, as both Palestine and Syria constituted bridges between Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia.¹⁵⁹ Smith confirms that the change in the British cabinet led to a change in the war interests of Great Britain. The British intent to permit Palestine to be internationalized in the Sykes-Picot Agreement was relinquished, and the British wanted to occupy Palestine in order to have control over the Suez Canal. But, since such an occupation would be opposed by the American President, the cabinet decided to support Zionism in order to make the American Jews, who were close to Wilson, convince the American President to support the British conquest.¹⁶⁰ When the British invaded the region, their aims were to defeat the Ottomans and to protect Palestine from the French.

¹⁵⁶ Krämer, op. cit., p. 152

¹⁵⁷ *PASSIA, Palestinian Personalities*, p. 95. The Ottoman officials re-appointed him as mayor before the British forces conquered Jerusalem and sent the message of surrender to him, Nassar, op. cit., p. 138

¹⁵⁸ HR.SYS, 05.09.1917

¹⁵⁹ Krämer, op. cit., p. 152

¹⁶⁰ Smith, op. cit., p. 68

Therefore, they were in favor of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.¹⁶¹ For Cleveland, a Jewish homeland in Palestine was in line with British interests and, having promised the Jews a homeland in Palestine and in support of Jewish settlement in Palestine implicitly, the British had to carry on the invasion of the region, (which would simultaneously be in violation of the promises given to Husain, the Sharif of Mecca, for the Arabs).¹⁶²

Nevertheless, the British intent, to link their occupation with the support of Zionism, might indicate that the conquest was related to the Balfour Declaration. The self-interest of the British behind the conquest does not mean that Britain was not concerned with the realization of Balfour's promises to the Jews. Furthermore, among the British officials, those who supported British occupation of Palestine were Zionists, or pro-Zionists including Lloyd George, Mark Sykes, and C.P. Scott.

What is more, there was a cooperation between the Zionists and the British during the invasion of Palestine. Öke touches upon the contributions of the Zionists in terms of intelligence and manpower to the Allies in general, and to the British in particular during the war. Even at the beginning of the war, Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1880-1940, a Zionist journalist) noted that Jews could support the Allies militarily. In fact, in Gallipoli in 1915, Zionists fought for the Allies in the name of Army of Zion, under the command of John Henry Patterson.¹⁶³ As the idea to open a front in Palestine went to the agenda of the British Chief of Staff, members of Aaronshon family,¹⁶⁴ Sarah and Aaron, began to provide intelligence and espionage to the British forces as well as to the British Representative in Egypt. At this point, the book of Anita Engle , *The Nili Spies*, is very crucial for seeing not only the alliance between the Zionists and the British during the war, but also several other key issues, such as the

¹⁶¹ Segev, op. cit., p. 1

¹⁶² Cleveland, op. cit., p. 160

¹⁶³ Öke, op. cit., p. 235

¹⁶⁴ The Aaronshon family went to Palestine with the settlers of the First Aliyah from Romania in 1882 and were among the founders of Zichron Yaacov, one of the first settlements of modern Palestine, (which was attacked by the Ottomans in January 1915), in Engle, op. cit., p. 17.

corruption among the Ottoman officials, the impact of the war on the Yishuv, and the perception of Turks among those Zionist settlers from Palestine.

Aaron Aaronshon was an agricultural inspector in Palestine. After he became the supervisor of a great estate in Anatolia in his twenties, he began to know well the Turks from the peasants. He learned Turkish and then met government officials. In addition, he saw that bribery was the means of existence of those officials and that corruption was very common, both in the Ottoman army and the government.¹⁶⁵ Aaron, having established close contacts with the Turkish officials¹⁶⁶, was thinking that the revival of Palestine could not be realized if Turkish rule persisted in the region.¹⁶⁷ He founded the Jewish Agricultural Experiment Station and began to work with Absalom Feinberg. The parents of Absalom were from the Bilu group and one of the settlers of Rishon le-Zion.¹⁶⁸ Absalom thought that, like many other young nations, the Jews should get their national rights and freedom. Here, it is important to touch upon his statement: “Why should the Greeks and the Bulgarians have a state, and we who have given so much, cannot get a state?”¹⁶⁹, in order to form an opinion about the point of view of a Zionist in Palestine with regard to the developments in other parts of the Ottoman Empire and their impact on their motivation. Absalom was also adverse to depending on subordination to corrupt officials when the Jews were buying the homeland.¹⁷⁰

Aaron believed that the revival of Jewish reconstruction of Palestinian land could only be realized under the rule of the Great Britain.¹⁷¹ After the war broke out, the

¹⁶⁵ Engle, op. cit., pp. 22-23

¹⁶⁶ Shapira, op. cit., p. 87. Aaron was also able to gain the confidence of Cemal Pasha, in Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Engle, op. cit., pp. 22-23

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 28-30

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 31

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 32

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 40

situation in Yishuv took a turn for the worse. Ottoman authorities ordered the Jewish settlers to hand over all weapons. Yet, unlike the official leaders of the settlers who were paying attention not to irritate the Turkish authorities, the young people of Zichron and Hadera, like Ha-Shomer, did not obey the rule and instead buried their only means of defense. At this point, it is important to emphasize the anxiety among the Jewish settlers. They regarded their weapons as a necessity to defend themselves against a sudden violence. News of the Armenian massacres had been heard in Palestine; the Armenians had also been disarmed before being killed. However, since the Ottoman officers threaten to carry off a number of the young girls of Zichron if armed were not relinquished, the settlers had to hand over their weapons.¹⁷²

When the authorities learned that the people of Hadera were selling wheat to the British in January 1915, before the attack on the Suez Canal, the German Military Governor of Jerusalem sent a group of Turkish soldiers to Hadera to arrest thirteen men, including Absalom who was able to run away.¹⁷³

Aaron Aaronsohn and Absalom Feinberg along with a small number of Jewish settlers founded the NILI underground movement in April 1915 in order to make contact with the British. Aaron himself would lead the network of spying which would contribute to the advent of the British war effort. The organization sent emissaries to Palestine and money to the Yishuv leaders.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 43-44

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 47

¹⁷⁴ 'Chapter Four, World War One', *Jewish Agency for Israel*; Engle, op. cit., p. 52. At this point, to touch upon Aaron's own word is crucial: "Nobody can say we are doing this for money. Leave that for Arab spies; We can't even be sure that the British will have confidence in us. They may think us capable of betraying them, just as we are betraying the Turks; We do it because we hope we are serving our own cause." in Engle, op. cit., p. 53. In October 1917, the activities of NILI were ceased, and suspected members of it arrested and tortured by the Ottoman officials. Sarah Aaronson, the sister of Aaron, an active member of NILI, shot herself in order to escape being arrested and tortured, see Chapter 20, 'The Death of Sarah', in Engle, op. cit., pp. 192-203

Moreover, the colonies in Palestine would become a fighting force for the British against the Ottoman Empire during the war. The Zionist contingent in Palestine, which emerged as a result of large-scale immigration before that time, despite all Ottoman bans, with its strategic position, could help the invasion forces of the Allies during the British offensive.¹⁷⁵

In addition to the Zionist intelligence, the Jews also provided manpower in the British invasion of Palestine. After the Jabotinsky's idea to found a Jewish Legion was accepted by Lord Derby, Colonel Patterson, as with Gallipoli, prepared the Jewish Legion and sent it to Egypt. The Legion constituted one-sixth of all military units of Allenby.¹⁷⁶ In March 1915, Ze'ev Jabotinsky from Russia and Joseph Trumpeldor (who left Palestine due to Ottoman persecution) had joined the forces in Alexandria and formed the Zion Mule Corps, which formed the basis of the Jewish Legion. In November 1917, another Jewish troop, the 39th Battalion of Royal Fusiliers (Ben Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi were its first recruits), was founded in the U.S.¹⁷⁷ The Fortieth Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers constituted the Palestinian Legion, which was established after the publication of the Balfour Declaration and the invasion of the southern part of Palestine by the British.¹⁷⁸ Both the Legion and the Battalion joined the British army in the battles for Palestine against Ottoman forces.¹⁷⁹ According to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry Archives, the Jews in Palestine voluntarily enrolled in the Legion even before it arrived in Palestine.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ Öke, op. cit., p. 214

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 243

¹⁷⁷ 'Chapter Four, World War One', *Jewish Agency for Israel*

¹⁷⁸ Shapira, op. cit., p. 89

¹⁷⁹ 'Chapter Four, World War One', *Jewish Agency for Israel*

¹⁸⁰ HR.SYS. 24.8.1918

Repercussions of the Declaration among the Ottomans

Following Balfour's declaration, the German Zionists asked the Central Powers to make a similar declaration; however Germany was reluctant to do so without the consent of the Ottomans. Therefore, German Zionists insisted that the Ottoman officials make an official declaration similar to that of the British, to discard the British declaration and to regain the support of the Zionists. However, after the Declaration, Talat Pasha told Becker, a German Zionist, that it was unnecessary to make a similar declaration as there had never been anti-Semitism in the Ottoman Empire. The Jewish presence in Palestine was brought about by the tolerance of the Ottomans.¹⁸¹ But, his idea does not mean that the Ottomans were not concerned about the Declaration. As it can be understood from the Ottoman Foreign Ministry Document of November 8, 1917, there was a debate on the formation of a Zionist State under British rule, and on the role of Zionism in the Eastern Policy of the Great Britain. The argument was that Zionists would achieve their ambitions whichever side won. Moreover, the German activities in favor of the Zionists in Istanbul were regarded as beneficial for both the Ottomans and the Germans.¹⁸²

Having lost Jerusalem to the British, Talat Pasha, who was the Grand Vizier at that time, began to hold several negotiations with the Zionist leaders in order to regain the support of the Jews. In Berlin, in January 1918, he told Dr. Nossig (an Austrian Jew) that the Ottoman government had goodwill towards Jews; and, if Palestine was to be under Ottoman rule after the war, all bans would be removed on the Zionist movement. He added that all demands of the Jews would be accepted. Öke notes that, according to the writings of Nossig, Talat charged Carasso to negotiate with the German Zionists in Berlin in order to gather Ottoman and German Zionists together and to establish an association including Zionists. Moreover, in a meeting held among the Zionist communities in Berlin, Talat, having been informed that those Jewish organizations were in favor of a Jewish center under the Ottoman rule, stated

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 255-256

¹⁸² HR.SYS. 2443/8, 8.11.1917

that the Ottomans were not against Jewish immigration to Palestine, but that there were some obstacles to it that should be overcome.¹⁸³ Sachar in his book states that the establishment of the above-mentioned association was accepted by Talat Pasha, so as to develop Jewish presence in Palestine “on an autonomous basis.”¹⁸⁴ Moreover, Talat invited Jewish leaders from Austria and Germany to Istanbul in order to negotiate “the Jewish colonization and autonomy in Palestine.”¹⁸⁵ The Vizier accepted the establishment of autonomous Jewish centers, not only in Palestine but also in different parts of the Empire where the Jews were living, and promised to take the project to the peace negotiations.¹⁸⁶ These negotiations indicate that the Ottoman statesmen believed that Jerusalem could be regained at the end of the war.

What prevails here is that the division continued among the Zionist world. While the British Zionists were in cooperation with the Allies, the German Zionists were still allied with the Ottoman ruling elite in order to achieve their aims. Despite the Allied conquest of Palestine, German Zionists were trying to get promises from the Ottomans in favor of their ambitions in Palestine. In the German Foreign Office, there were also several debates with regard to post-war Palestine. The Formal German Consul in Jaffa, for instance, proposed creation of a Christian state in Palestine under a German Prince loyal to the Ottoman sultan/caliphate. This principedom would allow Jewish immigration to and settlement in Palestine. If Jerusalem was to be regained by German forces, to convince the Ottomans would be easy in such a state.¹⁸⁷ Even though this project remained as a proposal, it is important to note the German interests in the region.

¹⁸³ Öke, op. cit., p. 259-260

¹⁸⁴ Sachar, op. cit., on internet version.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Özlem Tür, ‘Türkiye ve Filistin: 1908-1948; Milliyetçilik, Ulusal Çıkar ve Batılılaşma’, *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, Cilt. 62, No. 1, Ankara/ Ocak-Mart 2007, pp. 223-251 and p. 233

¹⁸⁷ Friedman, op. cit., p. 391

On January 25, Carasso met with some Zionist leaders. He emphasized that all Jewish organizations in Germany should have a consensus of opinion and the Jewish communities of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Austria should support them. All should come together to found a company with the aim of organizing the Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. However, the Zionists did not hesitate to state their opinion that, for them, compared to the steps taken by the British, the promises of the Ottoman Empire were limited.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, before Carasso left Berlin, those German Zionists sent a message to the Ottoman sultan through him. In the message, they asked for free Jewish immigration to and a Jewish autonomy in Palestine and a *firman* by the sultan as an invitation to the world Jewry to Palestine.¹⁸⁹

Dr. Ruppin also joined the negotiations among the German Zionists in March 1918. (Ruppin had been deported from Palestine, but in Istanbul continued his activities and corresponded with the German Zionists.) Subsequently, Nossig and Ruppin prepared a draft according to which a specific land order should be issued in Palestine. Jews would be allowed to purchase land through a particular land law. The Jewish immigrants would be exempted from taxes and military service. Self-government would be granted to the Jews. Hebrew should be the language of education in schools. A Colonization Assembly would be founded to act as a legislative body for making decisions and laws. Carasso discussed with Istanbul what he wrote down at the conclusion of his contacts in Germany. He talked about an Ottoman-Jewish Colonization Society that would regulate settlement and immigration in a Jewish center. It was decided to hold a Congress in Istanbul with the Zionist leaders from different countries.¹⁹⁰

In June 1918, Jacobson noted that Grand Vizier Talat was willing to do something to satisfy Jews; however, due to a variety of factors in the Ottoman political system, he

¹⁸⁸ Öke, op. cit., p. 261

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 262

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 264-266

was not capable of it.¹⁹¹ In Istanbul, after Jacobson and his friends convinced Talat to issue a communiqué, a draft was prepared. In the document, establishment of a Jewish center in Palestine through an organized migration and placement was intended. So long as the sovereignty of the Ottoman State and the rights of the non-Jews were not violated, the Ottoman government was willing to give protectorate to the Jewish center and support it. Moreover, the foundation of the Ottoman-Jewish Colonization Company was guaranteed to be initiated. Additionally, all restrictions on Jewish immigration and settlement would be removed. Öke finds this document similar to the Balfour Declaration. The important thing is that those Zionists, as a result of the meeting in Istanbul, could not achieve a political concession from the Ottomans.¹⁹²

In fact, during the war, the Ottoman state policy towards the Zionist movement was not in favor of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This policy can be understood through a report of March 1918 prepared by the Foreign Ministry. According to the report, Zionism was a separatist movement and constituted the Palestinian part of the enemies' partition plan for Ottoman land. Zionists brought their unacceptable demands to the international platform; they were one of those who fought with the Ottoman soldiers in Gallipoli; and, in Palestine, they had voluntarily joined the British forces. Furthermore, they managed to dominate European politics—both President Wilson and Lloyd George were used as pawns by the Zionists. Additionally, the British intended to use Zionism as a tool to further its imperial interests and to gain control over Palestine. The report predicted that British rule over Palestine would be opposed by other powers which would in turn help the Ottomans regain control of Palestine in diplomatic ways.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Talat had told him that he was prepared to support their demand to the best of his ability, but within the circumstances where Arab Revolt and war were continuing in *Ibid.*, p. 268

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 271-272

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 277-280

Despite the report and the Ottoman perception of Zionism, Talat held negotiations with Zionist leaders after the conquest of Palestine by the Allied forces. According to Öke, the reasons behind the attempts of the Grand Vizier to ally with Zionists might have been brought about by the intentions to damage the influence of the Balfour Declaration on the Jewish world and to regain its support; by the expectation to regain Palestine in diplomatic ways or at least to be backed by the Jews for this purpose in the Peace negotiations after the war or the intention to benefit the economic power of the Jews.¹⁹⁴ At the end, however, the Ottoman-Zionist reconciliation came to naught because, despite the factors that might have led the Grand Vizier to cooperate with the Zionists, there were also drawbacks that made him hesitate to come to an accord with them: the opposition, Ottoman public opinion, and the Arab population. In this regard, Öke says that, even though it was impossible to re-gather Arabs under the Ottoman umbrella, Talat did want to try to do so. In essence, to emphasize, the attempts for rapprochement between Ottomans and Zionists failed.¹⁹⁵

Feelings towards British footholds in Palestine

Meanwhile, satisfaction of the Balfour Declaration were underway. At the annual conference of the British Zionist Federation, Weizmann rendered his thanks to the British government for all of its help.¹⁹⁶ In addition, during the Jewish Congress held in Moscow on May 5-8, 1918, the Declaration was welcomed.¹⁹⁷ It was negotiated

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 283

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 287-288

¹⁹⁶ HR.SYS, 17.4.1918

¹⁹⁷ Stein, op. cit., p. 274. One year ago, at the Jewish Congress held in Petrograd on May 24th, 1917, the following resolutions were carried: first, the Jewish people can create their "...national, cultural and economic life only through the restoration of a national autonomous centre in its historic home, Palestine"; second, the historical and moral right of the Jewish nation to Palestine is "incontestable and irremovable"; third, the Jewish claims on Palestine "fully coincide with the great principle of self-definition, of freedom and independence..." in Sokolow, 'Zionism During the War', (Second part of his book), op. cit., p. 43; it is also important to mention that the Russian Revolution of 1917 brought favorable outcomes to the Zionists in Russia. For example, in Odessa, a Zionist

that the transfer of the control of Jerusalem to the British was a concrete step in the realization of Zionist ambitions in Palestine and decided, upon the dispatch of Jews to Palestine that primarily Galician, Ukrainian, and Romanian Jews were to be transferred there.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, the American support to the promises given by Balfour was crucial.¹⁹⁹ In August 1918, U.S. President Wilson sent a document similar to Balfour's Declaration to the rabbi in the U.S. Theodore Roosevelt insisted that Palestine should be given to the Jews and that Armenians and Arabs should be rescued from the oppression of Turks.²⁰⁰ On December 17, at the American-Jewish Congress, a Jewish homeland under British rule was accepted to be created.²⁰¹ According to the document contents taken from the report of a correspondent of the *Daily News* in Washington found in the Ottoman Foreign Ministry Archives, the American President aimed to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. This was welcomed by the American Jewry who had declared their readiness to fight for America.²⁰²

In April 1918, a Zionist Commission under the leadership of Weizmann arrived in Palestine; the Commission was allowed to operate there by the British. Its purpose was to take actions towards the realization of the Declaration which was supporting the creation of a Jewish homeland.²⁰³ In the spring of 1918, Weizmann negotiated

demonstration took place with the motto: "Liberty in Russia, Land and Liberty in Palestine." See in Sokolow, op. cit., pp. 38-42

¹⁹⁸ HR.SYS. 31.5.1918

¹⁹⁹ For the responses of the senators and representatives of the American War Congress of 1918 to the Balfour Declaration, see Klinger, Jerry, 'American War Congress (of 1918) and Zionism: "The Zionist movement is idealistic", the ideals... forgotten?', http://www.jewish-american-society-for-historic-preservation.org/images/The_Zionist_movement_is_idealistic.pdf (accessed on April, 20, 2014)

²⁰⁰ Öke, op. cit., p. 253

²⁰¹ Ibid.; Robert John, 'Behind the Balfour Declaration: Britain's Great War Pledge to Lord Rothschild', Institute for Historical Review, Winter 1985-86, Vol. 6, No. 4

²⁰² HR.SYS., 2434/34, 1917

²⁰³ Morris, op. c.t., p. 89

with Palestinian notables and Faisal and said to them that Zionists were not willing to create a Jewish government there. Even though it was untrue, this statement could help to alleviate the Palestinians' fears of the Zionist intentions.²⁰⁴ These negotiations would have positive outcomes in terms of creating a good relationship between the Jews and Arabs.²⁰⁵ On June 4, Weizmann met Faisal, the son of Sharif Hussein, and urged him to cooperate with the Zionists. Weizmann convinced Faisal that a Jewish Palestine would be beneficial to the creation of an Arab kingdom. Weizmann's argument was that Faisal was not interested in Palestine; he was, rather, desiring to have the North of Syria including Damascus in his hands.²⁰⁶

However, what made Faisal convinced of the contributions of a Jewish Palestine to the creation of an Arab kingdom may not be explained only through the Weizmann's activities. At that time, British and French representatives were speaking of Arab independence. On January 5th, 1918, Mr. Lloyd George said that, according to the Allied Powers, the areas of Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine had the right of recognition as separate national entities. On January 8th, Woodrow Wilson in his "fourteen points" stated that the Turkish parts of the Ottoman Empire should have sovereignty, while other nationalities should enjoy an autonomous condition.²⁰⁷ In January 1918, the British published another declaration. According to that British statement, as the world Jewry was in favour of a return of Jews to Palestine and His Majesty's Government supported this aspiration, the realization of this objective would not be prevented, so long as this would not undermine the political and economic freedom of the existing population.²⁰⁸ After that, the British officials told Husain (who had been proclaimed King of the Hejaz in November 1916) that Jewish settlement would not damage the political and economic freedom

²⁰⁴ Smith, op. cit., p. 77

²⁰⁵ HR.SYS., 2458/16, 14.9.1918

²⁰⁶ Morris, op. cit. pp. 79-80

²⁰⁷ Hourani, op. cit., p. 48

²⁰⁸ Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 29

of the Arab people in Palestine. Again, on February 8th, 1918, the British Government promised Husain that Great Britain and its allies would decisively support Arabs' desire to have an independent Arab state and to rescue them from Turkish domination. On June 16th, 1918, an officer from the Arab Bureau declared to a group of Arab leaders in Cairo that the British government was in favor of the freedom and independence of the Arab people.²⁰⁹ Also known as the Declaration of 16 June 1918, the British government stated that, in the areas of Arabia independent before WWI and in the areas obtained from the Turks by the action of the Arabs themselves during the war, the Arabs had complete and sovereign independence.²¹⁰ While the war was ending, the officials of the Allied forces made similar statements,²¹¹ or similar promises that were prone to be given up. Even if Britain and France had colonialist plans over Arabia as they had via the Sykes-Picot agreement, by the agency of the Zionists, Faisal thought that he could gain support from American President Wilson for Arab independence; and, therefore, he was in favor of an agreement with the Zionists.²¹²

On the other hand, the conquest of Palestine was continuing. On September 18, British forces began to drive back the Ottoman army from Palestine with the participation of the Battalions of the Jewish Legion, composed of Jewish volunteers from Britain, Palestine, Russia, the United States, and Canada.²¹³ As a result, the whole of Palestine was taken. In other words, the alliance between the Zionists and British resulted in success.

Here, it is worth to touch upon the battle in Palestine in a few words. Falih Rıfıkı Atay's book, *Zeytindağı*, indicates that the battle between the Turkish and British

²⁰⁹ Hourani, op. cit., p. 47

²¹⁰ Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 29

²¹¹ Hourani, op. cit., p. 47

²¹² Abdul Latif Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine: 1914-1921*, London, 1928, p. 334

²¹³ Morris, p. 77; *Album of the Jewish Legion*, Jewish Public Library Archives, p. 2

forces on the Front of Palestine as fierce. He states that the Turkish soldiers fought tooth and nail.²¹⁴ Atay also implies that the human lost in the region during the war was lost for the sake of nothing,²¹⁵ since he connotes that to entering the war on the side of Germans was a wrong decision.²¹⁶

Concerning the failure of the Turkish forces in Palestine, to touch upon the memoirs of İbrahim Sorguç, who was infantry platoon commander in the Turkish army on the Front of Palestine could also be meaningful. Sorguç states that the Turkish forces on the Front had enough man power and weapons but were in lack of food and clothing. He explains the reason behind it by saying that the Turkish soldiers fighting on the Front were deprived of the basic necessities and neglected by the Turkish commanders who were not interested in the fate of the Front. This example indicates the extent of the importance of Palestine in the eyes of the Turkish leaders.²¹⁷

4.6 “The End” of the Ottoman Rule in Palestine

On October 3, 1918, the main body of Arab troops headed by Faisal entered Damascus, (Emir Faisal was commanding the tribal forces of Husain with the help of former Iraqi Ottoman officials and British military advisors, including Lawrence. Faisal governed Damascus until 1920. In this regard, Cleveland asserts that the Arab rebellion ended with a victory.²¹⁸ On October 5, he managed to occupy Beirut.²¹⁹ Haifa fell on September 23, and Aleppo on October 25.²²⁰ In early October, Talat resigned. On October 30, 1918, the Ottomans signed the Armistice of Mudros and

²¹⁴ Atay, Falih Rıfki, *Zeyindağı*, Pozitif Yayınları, 2014, pp. 113-114

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 118

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 96; also see pp. 91-120

²¹⁷ Erdoğan Sorguç, *YD. P. Tğm. İbrahim Sorguç'un Anıları; İstiklal Harbi Hatıratı, Kaybolan Filistin*, İzmir Yayıncılık ve Tanıtım Hizmetleri, Mayıs 1995, p. 43-44

²¹⁸ Cleveland, op. cit., p. 162

²¹⁹ Morris, op. cit., p. 78

²²⁰ Krämer, op. cit., p. 153

war in the Middle East officially ended.²²¹ For this study, the important thing is that the 400 years of Ottoman rule on Palestine ended.

As soon as the Ottoman rule failed in the Middle East, the British came to the table to reach agreements with France on one hand and the Arabs on the other. In the Anglo-French declaration of November 7th, 1918, it was stated that the Allied policy in the East was to provide freedom to the people repressed under Turkish rule and for national governments of their own. Great Britain and France were determined to recognize national governments in Syria and Mesopotamia. They desired to make certain that these governments were functioning in accordance with the free will of the indigenous people and did not want to force an administrative system upon them.²²² Meanwhile, however, the British and French were defining the areas under their mandate rule. On December 1, 1918, Lloyd George and Georges Clemenceau, the Premier of France since November 1917, agreed that the British mandated territories would include Mosul and Palestine²²³, while Aleppo, Damascus, and Lebanon would be under direct French control. Smith argues that the reason behind the British attempt to reach an agreement with Faisal could have been their intent to gain control of Palestine.²²⁴ In the same month, on 11 December 1918, Weizmann again came face to face with Faisal. The latter assured the Zionist leader that he would convince the Arabs of the benefits of a Jewish Palestine, one which would not violate the interests of the Arab peasants in the region. For Weizmann, Faisal had the idea that there was enough land for both the Jews and the Arabs in the region. On January 3, 1919, they signed a formal agreement according to which a constitution was to be established in order to implement the Balfour Declaration. Free immigration and settlement of Jews in Palestine was to be ensured, and the rights of Arab peasants and tenants were to be protected. Faisal stipulated creation of an Arab state for the implementation of the agreement. What prevails here is that, although it

²²¹ Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 78

²²² Hourani, *op. cit.*, p. 48

²²³ Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 81

²²⁴ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 80

was a short-lived agreement between the Arabs and the Jews, as Benny Morris emphasizes, it shows that Faisal was not against Jewish activity and statehood in Palestine.²²⁵ Krämer interprets the agreement by saying ‘‘Faisal promised the implementation of the Balfour Declaration.’’²²⁶

However, this Weizmann-Faisal accord was not to be influential. On one hand, Faisal did not represent the local Arab sentiment, one that was opposed to a Jewish dominance in Palestine.²²⁷ Even the Syrian-Arab Congress of July 2, 1919 repudiated the Weizmann-Faisal agreement: the Zionist claims for creation of a Jewish commonwealth as well as Jewish immigration into Palestine (which was a part of Greater Syria) were rejected.²²⁸ Over time, this made Faisal argue that Palestine should be included in the territory promised to the Arabs.²²⁹ On the other hand, Weizmann and his colleagues were willing to have Palestine as a Jewish homeland, as evidenced during the Peace Conference. In the Conference, Faisal was forsaken, and the rights of Zionists to Palestine were granted further recognition.²³⁰ Furthermore, the delegations of the First Palestinian Congress (held in Jerusalem in February) were prevented from submitting their resolutions to the Peace Conference in Paris and Syrian Congress in Damascus by the British military authorities. As a result, the Arabs from Jerusalem authorized Faisal to represent the Palestinian Arabs in Paris.²³¹

At the Conference, Faisal called for Arab independence and criticized the Sykes-Picot Agreement (the terms of which had already been given up by the Prime

²²⁵ Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81

²²⁶ Krämer, *op. cit.*, p. 160

²²⁷ Tessler, *op. cit.*, p. 153

²²⁸ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 101

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78

²³¹ Tessler, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-156

Ministers of Britain and France in December). He wanted the implementation of the promises given by the Anglo-French Declaration in November which called for the designation of a commission to determine the wishes of the inhabitants in Palestine and Syria.²³² The King-Crane Commission interviewed people in Palestine and Syria and submitted its report to the Peace Conference in August 1919; it found that an Arab state including Syria and Palestine should be created, and that the Zionist program should be curtailed. However, this report was contrary to the British and French interests and, therefore, was not implemented.²³³

On January 14, 1919, Wilson during his meeting with Weizmann told the latter that he welcomed a Jewish homeland in Palestine under the British mandate. On January 18, the Paris Peace Conference was opened. Even before the conference, the Zionist delegation had presented a memorandum to the British asking for recognition of a Jewish National Home in Palestine under British rule where, in accordance with the principles of democracy, a Jewish commonwealth would be created through the Jewish immigration. The Palestinian Jews would be permitted to have a kind of self-government and, under the British rule, would govern the Arab inhabitants.²³⁴ In fact, at the Zionist Congress held in Petersburg in 1917, it was decided to collect the votes of all Jews in favor of the establishment of a Jewish center in Palestine to have a platform in the Peace Conference.²³⁵ During the conference, Weizmann and Sokolow (on January 27) called for the recognition of the organic link of the Jews to Palestine and their right to create their national home there. The national home would be developed into a Jewish commonwealth without undermining the rights of the non-Jewish inhabitants and would be under the British mandate. When the Jews began to constitute the majority via a steady and large-scale immigration, a Jewish

²³² Ibid., p. 155

²³³ Smith, op. cit., pp. 81-82

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 80

²³⁵ HR.SYS.,15/6/1917

government would be created.²³⁶ This statement of demand was crucial in the sense that it was realized during the years of the British mandate in Palestine.

Concerning the Middle East, no decision was made at the Paris Peace Conference. However, in April 1920 at San Remo, the prime ministers of the Allies reached an agreement on the settlement of the Ottoman-ruled territories in the Middle East. In other words, the British mandatory power over Palestine and Iraq and French mandate over Syria and Lebanon were approved. The decisions made at San Remo were documented in the Treaty of Sevres of 10 August 1920. The provisions of the treaty were rejected by the Kemalists, and it was annulled when the Turkish War of Independence began. Signing of an agreement between the Allies and the Turks and also ratification of a peace treaty by the Turks, therefore, were to wait until the end of the Turkish War of Independence or, in other words, until the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923.

During the War of Independence, in the Turkish National Pact (also called Misak-ı Milli) dated January 1920, the Turks determined their peace terms and also the borders of Turkey. For this study, what is important is the first article of Misak-ı Milli, according to which the Turks accepted the plebiscite in the territories which were dominated by the Arab population and were under the invasion of the Allies at the time when the Modros Armistice was completed.²³⁷ Here, it can be asserted that the Turks were recognizing the end of their rule over the region and were in support of independence there, including Palestine. However, a plebiscite was not held in the region. Even though the Ankara Government of the Turkish national movement contested Balfour's claim for making Palestine a British mandate and also expressed its opposition through its delegates (Ferid Bey and his colleagues) in Paris during the discussions in the League of Nations²³⁸, in 1923, the Turks came to the table with the

²³⁶ Ronald Sander, *The High Walls of Jerusalem: A History of the Balfour Declaration and the Birth of the British Mandate for Palestine*, New York, 1983, pp. 642-643

²³⁷ 'Ulusal Ant/ Misak-ı Milli, Istanbul 28 Ocak 1920' on the website of the Türk Tarih Kurumu, Nisan 1914

²³⁸ HR.SYS., 2470/91, 1922

Allies and signed a peace treaty with no reference to Palestine. In addition, when the Arab committee in Europe asked a question concerning the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, the Turkish representatives answered neither favorably nor adversely.²³⁹

In fact, the British rule in Palestine had already begun to be formalized. On June 30, 1920, Herbert Samuel was appointed to Palestine as the High Commissioner. The mandates were ratified by the League of Nations in accordance with Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of January 1920, which defined the terms of the mandatory powers.²⁴⁰ However, the text of the British mandate in Palestine (which was formally approved on 24 July 1922 by the League of Nations) was different, as it had particular provisions regarding the Zionist program. The text of the Mandate for Palestine included the Balfour Declaration and made the British “mandatory” in terms of fostering of the growth of Jewish national home in Palestine. In the text, “the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and grounds for reconstituting their National Home in that country”²⁴¹ were recognized. By the way, as in the Balfour Declaration, it was emphasized that the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine would not be interfered with. The Article 4 is crucial, as it was in favor of the realization of the Jewish national home in Palestine. It contains a premise that a Jewish Agency was to be founded as a political body in order to advise and cooperate with the British Administration in Palestine in social, economic, and other issues as related to the creation of the National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine. The Agency was to be subject to the authority of the Administration and to assist and participate in the development of the country.²⁴² It can be argued that the promises given by the

²³⁹ HR.SYS., 266.793..1, 23/5/1922

²⁴⁰ Smith, op. cit., p. 82

²⁴¹ From the document 2.6, ‘The Mandate For Palestine’, July 24, 1922 in Ibid., p. 104

²⁴² See the full text for the Mandate for Palestine in the ‘Palestine Royal Commission Report’, *Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty*, London, July 1937, p. 34-37, and also the document 2.6, in Smith op. cit., pp. 103-105

Balfour in November 1917 were to be realized through the provisions of the Mandate for Palestine.

In order to convince some members of the Jewish community in Palestine who were anxious about the British policy in Palestine, Winston Churchill made a declaration in June 1922 stating that “His Majesty’s Government” stood firm on the execution of the promises given under the Balfour Declaration. He accentuated the requirement of guaranteeing a Jewish National Home at an international level. Even before the Draft Mandate for Palestine was confirmed by the Council of the League in July 1922, about 16,000 Jews went to Palestine in 1920 and 1921.²⁴³

In November 1922, having worried about the formation of a British mandate, the Palestinian leaders sent a delegation to Istanbul and to the Peace Conference in Lausanne in hopes of gaining the support of the Turks for their demands. They wanted the Turks to stand pat on the execution of the right of self-determination in Article 1 of the National Pact. In Istanbul, the Governor of Istanbul, Rafat Pasha promised the Delegation to support the self-determination of the Palestinians; and, in Lausanne, Ismet Pasha (İnönü), the head of the Turkish delegation in Lausanne, promised to defend the demands of the Palestinians and the representation of the Palestinian Delegation in the Conference.²⁴⁴ Even as the Peace Conference in Lausanne was continuing, the issue of Palestine was discussed in the Turkish National Assembly in December of 1922, following a group of Jews from Istanbul sending a letter to the Turkish delegation in the Conference. In the letter, those Jews were hoping for a Turkish mandate in Palestine. The deputy from Antalya argued that the Jews in Turkey had nothing to do with Palestinian Jews and denied the demands in the letter. As a response, Ali Shukri Bey, the Deputy from Trabzon, accentuated the significance of Palestine for the Turks. He reminded the Assembly of Article 1 of the National Pact and urged that it was their obligation to insist upon the execution of the right of self-determination of their coreligionists in Palestine. After

²⁴³ Palestine Royal Commission Report, op. cit., p. 33

²⁴⁴ Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of Palestinian-Arab National Movement: 1918-1929*, Frank Cass: London, pp. 162-165

Huseyin Avni Bey from Erzurum stated that Turkey was not in a position to be a mandatory country in Palestine and that the fate of Palestine was a complex issue, the discussion was closed.²⁴⁵ However, nothing was done on behalf of the Palestinians or their wishes at the Conference.

To understand why the Turks did not support the Palestinians in the international arena can be seen in the statements of one of the members of the Turkish Delegation in Lausanne. Reshad Bey from the Delegation in Lausanne spoke to the Palestinian Delegation headed by Musa Kazim al-Husayni and Amin al-Tamimi, saying that the Turks would have a neutral attitude towards Arabs as they were on opposing sides during the war. He also stated that the Turks were not in a position to contest British objectives. He added that, having experienced an intense war, the Turks were now to deal with only their national interests. In view of those facts, the Palestinians understood that the Turks would accept the execution of Article 95 of the Sevres Treaty.²⁴⁶

Important to note in Article 95 of the Treaty of Sevres is that the Balfour Declaration was adopted. Furthermore, the British Mandate of Palestine and the French Mandate of Syria and Lebanon were approved. However, it was not the reason behind the rejection of the Turks to the Treaty. According to the Treaty of Sevres, a large part of the Ottoman Anatolia was to be taken from the Turks; the Turkish nationalists opposed this. At the end of the War of Independence which resulted in the victory of Turks despite a significant loss of manpower, the Turks, contrary to the terms in the Sevres Treaty, secured large part of Anatolia and established their nation state. Consequently, the Turks and the Allied Powers signed the Lausanne Treaty. Although the Treaty of Lausanne is considered to be the official recognition of the end of the Turkish rule over Palestine (as its opposite was not mentioned), British rule over the region was already approved by the League of the Nations and had begun to be institutionalized in the region. As Reshad Bey emphasizes, the Turkish

²⁴⁵ Tür, op. cit., pp. 236-237

²⁴⁶ Porath, op. cit., pp. 162-165

representatives did not stipulate self-determination or plebiscite in Palestine as a condition during the Peace Conference in Lausanne. On the other hand, as Öke states, in Lausanne, the Turks were to deal with their own national problems, and it was difficult for them to consider the issue of Palestine.²⁴⁷ What is more, the Zionist leadership now had nothing to do with the Turks.

4.7 The Fate of the Zionist Movement in Palestine

According to the Zionist historians, until the end of the war, the population of Yishuv reduced from 90.000 to 55.000 not only because of the expulsions and voluntary departures but also of war deaths.²⁴⁸ McCarthy asserts that the Zionist writers exaggerated these numbers. He says that less than 4.000 Jews were expelled and that majority of those deported Jews returned to Palestine after the conquest of British.²⁴⁹ According to the Interim Report of the League of Nations of 1920, the total population of Palestine was around 700.000 of which 76.000 were Jews.²⁵⁰

In spite of the deportations of thousands of Jews and harsh measures of the Turkish local governors, the Zionist work was not eradicated within Palestine during the war. As it is understood from the Ottoman archives, the Ottoman government continued to lay down rules and gave orders in order to prevent the Zionists to have lands in Palestine during the war. However, the resolutions of the government indicate that the Zionists continued their activities and their attempts to purchase land on the Palestinian territory. According to the estimates given by Kimmerling, the Jewish National Fund purchased 9.000 dunams lands in Palestine during the war (1914-

²⁴⁷ Öke, op. cit., p. 353

²⁴⁸ Uziel O. Shmelz, 'The Decrease in the Population of the Land of Israel during World War I', in Eliav, Mordechai (ed.), *Under Siege and Trial*, Jerusalem, 1986, p. 38

²⁴⁹ McCarthy, op. cit., p. 223

²⁵⁰ Herbert Samuel, 'An Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine: during the period 1st July, 1920-30th June, 1921', 30th July 1921

1919).²⁵¹ The Jewish discharges from Russia established an organization that would train young Jews as farmers to settle them eventually in Palestine.²⁵² In Stockholm, a Zionist Office was opened in order to raise money for facilitation of the Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine.²⁵³ Swedish Zionists were working for the colonization of Palestine and for enhancing the Jewish immigration to there. Additionally, at that time the Jewish immigration from Russia to the region was continuing.²⁵⁴ In December 1918, the representatives of the Yishuv came together and agreed on the intensification of the Zionist movement: not “a national home” but “a Jewish state.”²⁵⁵

In this framework, Ronald Storrs, the British governor in Jerusalem stated that during the war, compared to the Arabs, the Jews were less vulnerable to diseases and the war was more disastrous for the Arabs.²⁵⁶ As Morris mentions in his book, one historian also claimed that the Jews in Palestine suffered less than any other groups from the harsh measures of the Ottomans between 1914-1918 due to the diplomatic interventions of the U.S. and Germany.²⁵⁷ The fact that the foreign intervention protected the Jews from the measures and war conditions considerably helps to argue that even though the Ottoman state policy was much more restrictive during the war and the Jewish immigrations stopped, the Jews were not influenced dreadfully by the war. Furthermore, an Ottoman archive document may help to claim that the Ottoman government did not have a wildly brutal attitude towards them. In the document, the news of a Jewish news agency that “the Ottomans tyrannized over the Jews and

²⁵¹ Kimmerling, op. cit., p. 43

²⁵² HR. SYS. 17/4/1918

²⁵³ HR.SYS.2/2/1918

²⁵⁴ HR.SYS., 2456/9, 1918

²⁵⁵ Morris, op. cit., p. 75

²⁵⁶ Cited in Morris, op. cit., pp. 83-85

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 87

Talat Pasha prohibited the organization of Zionism in Palestine” is defined as “allegation.”²⁵⁸

As mentioned at the beginning, this thesis ended with the very early years of 1920s. The following years will constitute another area of research as new actors will be involved and new conditions will emerge in this matter. Notwithstanding, the last points could give an overview. In early 1920s, the game changer in Palestine began to operate. The Zionist ambition to have autonomous governance in Palestine was realized by the establishment of the British mandate and the Zionist colonization of Palestine entered upon a new phase. Ottoman Palestine experienced only first two *aliyot* however the immigration waves continued on a large scale during the British mandate. As soon as the war ended, tens of thousands of Jews began to move to Palestine. During the period between the end of the war and establishment of the Turkish Republic (1919-1923, also called Third Aliyah), around 35.000 Jews from Russia and Poland immigrated to Palestine. Between 1924 and 1931, more than 80.000 Jews from Poland and Hungary went to the British Mandate of Palestine.²⁵⁹ Öke states that the British mandate in Palestine was a transition period that laid the groundwork for the creation of the state of Israel.²⁶⁰

For the Jewish side, the doors of Palestine became open to the Jews as the British rule was supposed to work for the ultimate dominance of the Jews in Palestine. For the Turkish side, as the Turks began to see Palestine as a part of the British territory, the issue of Palestine was no more on the agenda of the Turkish government. As an example which supports the acceptance of Palestine as a British territory by the Turks could be seen in an Ottoman Foreign Ministry Document dated 1925 that when Herbert Samuel and his wife came to Istanbul in the summer of that year, it

²⁵⁸ HR.SYS., 2453/41, 1918

²⁵⁹ Arslan, op. cit., p. 200; Bachi, op. cit., p. 79

²⁶⁰ Öke, op. cit., p. 328

was ordered that “the Former British High Commissioner of Palestine should be granted all facilities in their duration of stay in Istanbul.”²⁶¹

In the following years, Turkey became an emigrant country like Russia and other European countries from where the Jews immigrated to Palestine. After the war, the Entente powers gave permission to use of Istanbul which was under the invasion of the British, as a base for the Jewish immigrants in their way to Palestine. The powers provided some places under the Ottoman authority to those Jews to be settled temporarily. The Ottoman government opposed to this implementation but it could not prevent the tentative settlement of the immigrants in Istanbul.²⁶² In order to help the Jewish immigrants composed of Ukrainians coming from Bessarabia and Romania, the Palestine Office was founded in Istanbul in 1920. The office provided assistance to around 4200 Jews until June of 1921. The Office functioned by 1935 when the Turkish Government closed it. Arslan states that the closure of the Office marked the official end of contacts of the Jews in Turkey with Palestine.²⁶³

²⁶¹ HR.İM., 149/69, 1925

²⁶² Arslan, op. cit., pp. 195-197

²⁶³ Ibid., pp. 192-193

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis has tried to analyze the developments starting from 1882 until 1920 regarding the Zionist movement in the Ottoman Palestine. The characteristics of the Ottoman policy on the movement have been observed in a historical perspective. While doing this, the exaggeration as well as the misinterpretation of the issue in Turkey at present has been referred. Throughout three chapters, the motives of the Ottoman policy on the Zionist movement and the trends of the Zionists have been discussed. Consequently, I have arrived at several themes:

First, it has been observed that the popular beliefs regarding the Ottoman policy towards Zionist movement at present are groundless and do not reflect the realities. Compared to the general beliefs, it is quite obvious that the issue is rather more complex and it is difficult to define the Ottoman policy in this respect. It can be said that the Ottoman policy was neither “favorable” nor “strict” towards Zionism. The rejection of Herzl’s project by Abdulhamid as well as the opposition of the CUP government to a Jewish homeland prevented Palestine from becoming a Jewish state but did not impede the emergence of a Zionist presence in Palestine. What is more, it can be observed that despite its progress, the Zionist movement was a minority movement at that time and both Abdulhamid and the CUP leaders were not closely connected with the issue. Therefore, the claims arguing that i.e. “the Sultan fought with Zionism” or “the CUP leaders were in cooperation with the Zionists” should be taken with caution. Given the fact that the Ottomans could not prevent the Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine, even such a popular statement that “the Sultan did not give concession over Palestine” must be questioned as presented in this thesis.

Secondly, because of the internal factors brought about by the weaknesses of the Ottoman system and the external factors composed of both the foreign intervention and the Zionist activities, the restrictions imposed by the Ottoman government remained ineffective. Weakness of the Ottoman system significantly enabled some factors to work in favor of the Zionist movement in Palestine. As a result, despite the restrictions, the Zionist movement strengthened in Palestine. Therefore, it has become apparent that the Ottomans were incapable of managing the control of the regulations that they imposed on the Jewish immigration and settlement.

The weaknesses in the implementation of the restrictions on the Zionist movement in Palestine have indicated that the implementation of the state policy was linked to the practice of the local governors. Given the incoherence of the implementation of policies between the center and the local, it is possible to argue that Ottoman policy as a whole was not so strict towards the Zionist immigration and settlement between 1882 and 1914.

What is more, it is observed that even the Ottoman central authorities were either undecided on or uninterested in the issue. As argued in the previous chapters, the perception of Zionism among the Ottoman statesmen played a crucial role in influencing the state policy towards the Zionist movement from time to time. Through restrictive policy, the Ottomans seemed to have contented themselves with the prevention of the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. As long as the Zionist movement confined its ambitions with the free immigration and settlement, the Ottomans did not take harsh measures on it until the outbreak of the World War I.

When the war broke out, contrary to the pre-war period, the Ottoman authorities began to pursue a strict policy towards Zionist movement in Palestine. Compared to the pre-war years, violent attacks began against the Zionists at local level while the central authorities under the pressure of external powers attempted to diminish the harsh measures taken by the local governors. However, it can be observed that during the last years of the war and at the end of the war, the land of Palestine and the issue of Zionist movement did not concern the Ottoman rulers.

Third, the external powers played a crucial role in contributing substantially to the difficulties to implement the restrictions on the Zionist work in Palestine as well as to the Jewish existence in the region. Before the war, the foreign intervention was able to prevent both legislation and implementation of the inhibition on the Jewish immigration and settlement. As a result, thousands of Jews were able to enter and settle in Palestine. In wartime, despite famine, diseases and especially the deportations, the Jewish presence in Palestine, through the intercession of Great Powers, remained alive.

Lastly, despite weaknesses, it is not difficult to say that the Ottomans both under Sultan Abdulhamid II and during the Second Constitutional Period, did never envisage to render Palestine a Jewish homeland. Palestine under the Ottoman rule did not become an autonomous region unlike what the Zionists demanded. At this point, it is possible to argue that there was a coherence between the concerns of the different governments with regard to Palestine. It is observed that the Ottoman rulers during the years between 1882 and 1914 were against the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Due to this, they prohibited the Jewish immigration, the land sales to the foreign Jews and their settlement in Palestine. Despite all privileges to the foreigners, political concessions were not given to any nationalist movement nor were their autonomy or independence ever established in any part of the Ottoman territory, including Palestine.

There are both continuities and changes between the developments concerning the Zionist movement, the Ottoman policy on it and also the role of the Great Powers. Firstly, it will not be wrong to argue that there was continuity in the Zionist thought and its persistent emphasis on Palestine for the Jewish settlement from the start of the First Aliyah to the end of the World War I. Second, there was also continuity in the restrictive policy of the Ottoman government towards Zionism and its movement in Palestine both under Abdulhamid II and the CUP government as well as in wartime. Third, continuity could also be observed in the role of the Great Powers on the Zionist movement in each phase of the period between 1882 and 1920.

The changes were rather related to the extent of the continuities. In time the Zionist movement enhanced its strength in Palestine. The settlers of the First Aliyah started to revive the land of Palestine while those of the Second Aliyah, on the other hand, institutionalized their movement in Palestine by the work of their predecessors. During the war, despite the expelling of many Jewish leaders by the Ottoman rulers, the Jewish presence endured in Palestine. The Zionist ability to receive an official promise from the British government for foundation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine also shows the unfailing tenacity on the Holy Land to be settled.

A change in the extent of the restrictive policy of the Ottomans has also been observed. The more they perceived Zionism as a separatist movement, the more restrictions they imposed on it. The more they relate to the Zionist leaders and perceived their movement not a separatist movement, the more they were undecided about the official attitude that should be formulated towards Zionist movement in Palestine. During the Abdulhamid period, the Zionist movement headed by Theodor Herzl was speaking of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. It was not possible for the Sultan to recognize such a structure on the state territory. Therefore, at governmental level- at least – there was a unique policy towards Zionist movement in Palestine where the Jewish settlement was completely prohibited. The CUP government on the other hand did not have a consistent policy towards Zionism. Different understandings of Zionism among the Young Turk ruling elite led to the lack of a unique position on the Zionist movement. As the war broke out, Ottoman State dealing with many troubles as a weakening power harshened its regulations on the Zionist presence in Palestine.

There were also changes in the extent of the intervention of the external powers in the Ottoman policy towards Zionist movement. During the Abdulhamid period, the presence of the Capitulations had already allowed foreign intervention on behalf of the Zionist activities in Palestine. What is more, it can be observed that as the restrictive policy diminished on the Zionist work, the role of the foreign powers increased. For instance, during the Second Constitutional period, the foreign powers through their embassies in the Ottoman State counteracted each inhibition on the

Zionist settlements imposed by the Ottomans. Unlike the period between 1882 and 1914 when the foreign powers hesitated to relate themselves to the Zionist movement, after the war broke out, the level of the support of the foreign powers increased both financially and diplomatically. The cruel treatments of the wartime to some extent were prevented to have a considerable influence on the Zionist work in Palestine by the economic as well as political assistance of the Great Powers including Britain, Germany and the U.S.

It is important to note that the restrictions on the Zionist movement in Palestine were not brought about by anti-Semitic position of the Ottoman Government during both the Abdulhamid era and Second Constitutional Period. As a declining power, the Ottoman State, behind carrying out prohibitions on the Zionist activities, had the motive to prevent nationalist movements which had the potential to turn to be separatist in other parts of its territory and also to prevent the Foreign Powers from interfering with the domestic affairs of the Ottoman state under the pretext of protecting the Jewish settlers. The Ottoman leadership at that time was attaching great importance to the territorial integrity of the Empire. Since the Ottomans allowed to settle those foreign Jews in other parts of the Empire, it is not possible to say that the Ottomans were anti-Semite.

Despite the declining power of the state, however, the Ottoman government did not have a policy which advocated giving its territory by consent. Selling a part of the state land conflicted with the state policy. Nevertheless, the Ottomans had many deficiencies in both issuing the injunctions and in their implementation. The new laws to inhibit the Zionist movement became in contradiction with the pre-1882 enacted laws. The capitulations and the protégé system constituted an obstacle to prevent the foreign Jews to enter and settle in Palestine. For instance, even though land code- which enabled the foreigners to buy land- was in force, they intended to prohibit the foreign Jews to purchase land. On the other hand, the operation of the injunctions ended in failure. While the central government inhibited land sales to the foreign Jews, the local officials sold lands or allowed land sales to the foreign Jews in return for bribes. Furthermore, there were unpreventable circumstances. As an

example, the Ottoman Jewish citizens bought land and property on behalf of the foreign Jews. Since it was difficult to understand the intention behind the purchases, many foreign Jews were able to take the ownership of a land by this way.

Last six years of the Second Aliyah coincides with the Second Constitutional Era. The Young Turks' policy towards Zionist movement in Palestine was dependent upon their understanding and interpretation of the Zionist objectives. Unlike Abdulhamid, when the CUP came to power, it accepted Jewish immigration to Palestine. However, after a short period, it changed its mind and prohibited Palestine for the Jewish immigration. Despite this, the CUP did not adopt a unique position to the Zionist movement. By the aid of absence of a consistent policy towards them, the foreign Jews were able to strengthen their work as well as their presence. Here the impact of the capacity and ability of the Zionist movement cannot be underestimated. Additionally, in the aftermath of the Revolution, Zionist movement reconsidered its policy and reoriented its separatist politics during the Congress of Hamburg in 1909, then in Basel in 1911 and began to support expressly the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The moderate expression of the Zionists concerning their ambitions in Palestine also led the Ottoman ruling circles not to have a consensus on the Zionist movement. During that period, contrary to Abdulhamid period, the extent of the Jewish immigration was less. Yet, this is not an indication of the effectiveness of the restrictions. It was rather related to the decrease in the number of immigrants to Palestine. If the advancement of the activities of the Zionist movement (in Istanbul to have a place in the Ottoman political spectrum and in Palestine to have both political and practical power) is taken into consideration during the Second Constitutional Period before the war, it will not be wrong to come to the conclusion that the period between 1908 and 1914 constituted the better years of the Zionist work in the Empire compared to the Abdulhamid era and the wartime.

As the fear that the Ottoman policy and the war conditions could undermine the Zionist presence in Palestine increased among the Zionist circles in wartime, the leaders of the Zionist movement, who were now in quest of separatist aims, began to turn its face to the Great Powers who for them could protect the Jewish presence in

Palestine and support their ambitions in that region. Contrary to the pre-war period, the Zionist leaders headed by Weizmann did clearly define their objectives in Palestine. For the Zionists, since the Ottoman Empire as a weakening power had many troubles in wartime, the Ottoman State was no longer the addressed party to negotiate. As the Great Powers began to have interests in the Zionist movement as well as in the region, it was an opportune moment for the Jews to convince the Great Powers to make Palestine a Jewish homeland. In brief, it was Britain with her interests in the region who could give the opportunity to the Jews for materializing their goals in Palestine. These Zionists goals were publicly supported by the British government through the Balfour Declaration of 1917 during the World War I and were realized at the end of the war.

The period between 1920 and 1923 is a turning point in the sense that Palestine, which was lost by the Turks in 1917 during the war, became a British mandate officially following the ratification of the mandate by the League of Nations. Game changing in Palestine put an end to the contacts between the Turkish government and the Zionists with regard to movement in Palestine, since there was no Turkish official policy towards them at all. In other words, Jewish settlement in Ottoman Palestine - which is the subject of our study –ended to exist.

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MV.: Meclis-i Vükela Mazbataları

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APPENDICES

A.TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu tez, 1882’de Filistine olan Yahudi göç ve yerleşmelerine yönelik Osmanlı politikasını günümüzde yerel anlamda bu konu hakkındaki bilgi karmaşası, yanlış yorumlama ve abartılara değinerek incelemektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, bu konuda Osmanlı politikası hakkındaki popüler görüşlerin yersiz olduğunu göstermektir. Bu bağlamda, Abdülhamit dönemindeki ve İkinci Meşrutiyet dönemindeki yabancı Yahudilerin Filistin’deki Siyonist düşünce çerçevesindeki çalışmalarına yönelik Osmanlı tutumunu etkileyen temel faktörler ele alınarak bu konudaki ‘Abdülhamit vatanın bir karış toprağını dahi Siyonistlere satmadı.’ ve ‘İttihatçılar Siyonistlerle işbirliği içindeydi.’ gibi iddiaların bir anlam ifade etmediği gösterilecektir. Binlerce Yahudi’nin Osmanlı Filistini’ne göç ettiği göz önüne alındığında Abdülhamid vatanı Siyonistlere satmadı demek ne anlam ifade eder? Abdülhamid dönemindeki yasaklara rağmen binlerce Yahudi nasıl Filistin’e girip yerleşti? İttihadçıların uyguladığı benzer kısıtlayıcı politikaya rağmen onların Siyonistlere yardım ettiğini iddia etmek ne kadar gerçekçi olabilir? Hatta Türkiye’deki bazı İsrail karşıtı kesimler tamamen gerçek dışı iddialarda bulunmaktadır: Siyonist olmayan Yahudi bankerlerin Siyonist liderlerin ‘tek destekçisi’ olduğunu veya ‘Abdülhamit Siyonistlere hiçbir taviz vermediği için Siyonistlerin İttihatçılar ile birleşip Abdülhamit’i devirdiğini’ bile yazarlar vardır. Bu çerçevede, bu çalışma, Osmanlı Devleti’nin Yahudi göçüne ve Siyonizme olan politikasını tanımlamak için konuyu bugünün koşullarıyla değil o dönemin bütün boyutlarıyla ele almak gerektiğini belirterek, Osmanlı yöneticilerinin uygulamalarının genelleştirilemeyeceğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu tez beş bölümden oluşmaktadır. Tezin başlangıç noktası ve amacının tanımlandığı giriş bölümünü kronolojik olarak diğer bölümler takip etmektedir: İkinci bölümde Siyonist düşüncenin doğuşu ve Filistin’e olan Siyonist hareketin başlamasının

sebepleri tanımlandıktan sonra Abdülhamid dönemindeki Filistin'deki Yahudi göç ve yerleşmelerine yönelik uygulamalar ve sonuçları ele alınmıştır; Üçüncü bölümde Jön Türk Devrimi ile başlayan İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi'ndeki Osmanlı hükümetlerinin Siyonizme yönelik politikası incelenmiştir. Dördüncü bölümde Osmanlı Devleti'nin Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na girmesiyle değişen politikalar ve sonunda Filistin'deki Osmanlı yönetiminin sona ermesiyle Filistin'deki Siyonist hareketin Türk yöneticiler için bir mesele olmaktan çıkmasıyla tezin incelediği dönem bitmiştir. Beşinci bölüm sonuç kısmıdır.

İkinci bölüm, öncelikle Siyonist düşüncenin doğuşuna ve binlerce Yahudi'nin Filistin'e göçüne sebep olan etkenleri ele almıştır. Yüzyıllardır süregelen dini anlamdaki Yahudi düşmanlığı Fransız Devrimi sonrası milliyetçi anlamda bir düşmanlığa dönüşmüştü. 1881 ve 1882'de Rusya'da anti-Semitizmin doruk noktasına ulaşmasıyla Rusyadaki ve Avrupadaki Yahudi önderler Yahudi düşmanlığının temel sebebinin Yahudilerin diğer uluslar gibi kendilerine ait bir devleti olmamasından kaynaklandığına kanaat getirmişlerdi. Bu nedenle Filistin'i yurt edinme fikri oluşmuş ve Yahudi ulusal hareketi yani Siyonizm ışığında Rusya'dan ve Doğu Avrupa'dan binlerce Yahudi Filistin'e yerleşmek amacıyla göç etmeye başladı. Filistin'deki ilk Siyonist yerleşmeler Sion Aşıkları Cemiyeti'nin yönetimi altındaydı. Bu cemiyete bağlı ilk öncüler Filistin'e gidip orada tarım yerleşmeleri ve küçük kasabalar kurdular. Ancak mali bakımdan zorlandıkları için ve topraklar çok verimli olmadığından Rothchild ailesinin Fransa'daki ayağını temsil eden Baron Edmond James de Rothschild finansal anlamda Filistin'de Yahudi yerleşimlerinin ve kolonilerinin kurulmasına büyük destek verdi. Ancak o dönemde Filistin Osmanlı hakimiyeti altında idi ve Osmanlı Devleti o dönem Padişah II. Abdülhamit tarafından yönetilmekteydi. Bu nedenle daha sonra Abdülhamit'in Yahudi göçüne yönelik devlet politikası ve Siyonist hareket üzerindeki temel kısıtlamalar tanımlanmıştır. Abdülhamit Yahudi göçmenlerin devletin diğer bölgelerinde yerleşmelerini kabul etmiş ancak Filistin'in kapılarını yabancı Yahudiler'e kapatmıştır. Padişah Abdülhamit, Siyonist lider Theodor Herzl'in Yahudilerin yerleşmesi için Filistin'deki bir miktar toprak karşılığında Osmanlı borçlarını ödeme teklifini reddetmiştir. Tezin en önemli çıkış noktalarından biri

Abdülhamit'in bu konudaki politikasının günümüzde övülmesinin ve abartılmasının ne kadar yanıltıcı olduğunu göstermek olduğu için Abdülhamit'in Siyonist lider Theodor Herzl ile olan görüşmesi farklı bir bakış açısı ile anlatılmıştır. Daha sonra Osmanlı Devleti'nin Filistindeki Yahudi göç ve iskanı üzerinde uyguladığı birçok yasağa rağmen yabancı Yahudilerin Filistin'e girmesini ve yerleşmesini kolaylaştıran faktörler ele alınmıştır. Bu faktörlerin bir kısmı Osmanlı sisteminden kaynaklanırken bir kısmı da bazı dış etkenlerden oluşmaktadır. Öncelikle yabancı devletlerin Yahudi yerleşmelerini kolaylaştırmaları üzerindeki rolü üzerinde durulmuştur. Bu devletlerin yabancı Yahudiler lehine Osmanlı kısıtlamalarına yer yer müdahale ettiği görülmüştür. Bu bağlamda, Osmanlılar tarafından kanunlaştırılan kısıtlamalar 1882 öncesinde var olan yasalar ile çelişmiştir. Kapitülasyonlar kapsamında yabancı uyruklulara verilen ayrıcalıklar ve yabancı bir ülkenin koruması altına girme hakkı sayesinde binlerce yabancı Yahudinin Filistin'e girip yerleşmesi engellenememiştir. Bununla ilgili olarak bir başka örnek de Toprak Kanunu'nun yabancı uyruklulara verdiği toprak satın alma hakkıdır. Bu nedenle yabancı Yahudilerin toprak satın alması da engellenememiştir. Daha sonra Osmanlı Devletinin yabancı Yahudilerin Filistin'e yerleşmesi için koyduğu Osmanlı vatandaşı olma koşulunun aslında Yahudi göçü için kolaylık teşkil ettiği belirtilmiştir. Bununla birlikte Osmanlıların Siyonist hareket üzerindeki politikalarının da çeliştiği üzerinde durularak sanıldığı aksine Osmanlı yöneticilerinin Yahudi göç üzerinde iddia edilen aksine çok da kısıtlayıcı bir tutum sergilemediği gösterilmek istenmiştir. Bu bağlamda ilk olarak yasalara rağmen Filistine yerleşen yabancı Yahudiler üzerinde herhangi bir zorlama olmadığı tespit edilmiştir. İkinci olarak yerel yöneticilerin Filistin'de toprak satın almak isteyen Yahudilere ve Siyonist liderlere kolaylık sağladığı görülmüştür. Bu bağlamda, rüşvetin Yahudiler ve Osmanlı yerel yöneticileri arasında önemli ölçüde bir araç olduğu belirtilmiştir. Bütün bu tespitlere ulaşmada Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivi'ndeki belgeler de yardımcı olmuştur. Bunlar dışında önüne geçmesi mümkün olmayan başka durumlar da görülmüştür. Örneğin, Filistin'de ikamet eden ve Osmanlı uyruğunda olan bazı Yahudilerin yabancı Yahudiler adına toprak satın aldığı görülmüştür. Bazı yabancı Yahudiler ise Filistin'e girmek için sahte pasaport kullanmış veya ibadet için geldiklerini söyleyip Filistin'e

girdiklerinde izlerini kaybettirebilmişlerdir. Bu faktörlerin bu bölümde detaylı incelenmesinin sebebi aynı faktörlerin üçüncü bölümün incelendiği dönemde de etkili olmasından kaynaklanmıştır. Bu bölümün son kısmında Siyonist hareketin Filistin'de ilerleme kaydettiği belirtilerek bu konunun sadece Abdülhamit'in tavrına bağlı olmağı gibi genel olarak Osmanlı yöneticileri için bu konunun inanıldığının aksine çok önemli bir mesele olmadığı da gösterilmek istenmiştir. Gerçekte 1908 Jön Türk Devrimi'ne kadar 1881-1882 de başlayan Birinci Yahudi göçü ve 1904-1905'te başlayan İkinci Yahudi göçü ile binlerce Yahudi Filistin'e gidip yerleşmiş, onlarca tarım kolonisi kurulmuş ve Siyon Aşıkları ve Dünya Siyonist Örgütü yönetiminde bölgede binlerce dönüm arazi satın alınmıştır.

Üçüncü bölümde ilk olarak Jön Türk Devrimi sonrası iktidara gelen İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti üyeleri ile Siyonist liderler arasındaki ilişki üzerinde durulmuştur. Siyonist Örgüt'ün İstanbul'da açtığı büronun başkanı olan Dr. Jacobson Osmanlı yöneticilerinin Filistin'deki Siyonist hareketine destek olmalarını ve Osmanlı Devleti içinde Siyonizmin örgütlenmesini sağlamak için görevlendirilmiştir. Talat Paşa, Ahmet Rıza Bey ve Nazım Bey Filistin'de Yahudi yerleşiminin bölgenin gelişmesine yardımcı olacağını düşünmekteydiler. İkinci olarak Siyonist liderler ile Osmanlı uyruğundaki Yahudi yöneticiler arasındaki ilişki ele alınmıştır. Siyonistler davalarında İmparatorlukta Yahudi politikacıların hükümet ile kendileri aralarında aracı bir rol oynayacaklarını düşünmüşlerdir. Osmanlı uyruğundaki bu Yahudi politikacıların başında Nissim Russo, Emanuel Carasso ve Nissim Mazliyah gibi isimler gelmektedir. Ayrıca Osmanlı vatandaşı olan Yahudi halkın Siyonizme olan yaklaşımı üzerinde de durulmuştur. Osmanlı Devleti'nde yaşayan Sefardi Yahudilerinin siyasi anlamda Osmanlı Devlet'nden bir talepleri olmadığı ve bu nedenle Siyonist hareket ile ilgilenmediklerinin de altı çizilmiştir. Bu dönemde, Siyonist liderler Filistin'deki hareketin ayrılıkçı bir hareket olmadığı üzerinde dururken, bazı Osmanlı yöneticileri de Filistin'deki Yahudi iskanının bölgenin kalkınması için önemli olabileceği gibi fikirler beyan etmiştir. Buna ek olarak, İttihatçılar devrimin hemen sonrasında Filistin'e olan Yahudi göçünün serbest olduğunu ilan etmişlerdir. Bu gelişmeleri o dönemde muhalefet, hükümetin Siyonist yanlısı bir politika izlediği şeklinde yorumlamıştır. Aynı şekilde günümüzde de

muhafazakar, Abdülhamit yanlısı ve İttihat ve Terakki karşıtı bazı kesimler İttihatçıların Siyonistlerle birleşip Abdülhamit'i tahttan indirdiğine varan iddialar öne sürmektedir. Bu konudaki abartılara ve gerçek dışı söylemlere cevaben İttihat ve Terakki'nin Siyonistlere yönelik politikası objektif bir şekilde ele alınmıştır. İttihatçıların başlıca amaçlarından birinin Osmanlı toprak bütünlüğü olduğu göz önüne alındığında kendilerinin Osmanlı toprakları üzerindeki hiçbir ayrılıkçı harekete müsaade vermediği görülmüştür. Osmanlı uyruğundaki Yahudi yetkililer dahil bütün yöneticiler ve politikacılar ayrılıkçı bütün hareketlere taviz verilmemesi konusunda son derece kararlıdır. Kısa bir zaman içinde Filistin'deki Siyonist hareketi üzerinde Abdülhamit dönemindeki benzer kısıtlamalar uygulanmaya başlanmıştır. Buna rağmen Siyonist liderlerin Osmanlı yöneticilerini kendilerinin Osmanlı Devleti'ne ve onun toprak bütünlüğüne bağlı olduğu konusundaki ikna çabaları ve Osmanlı uyruğundaki Yahudilerin Siyonizm'e mesafeli olmaları Siyonizm konusunda Osmanlı liderlerinin fikir ayrılığına düşmesine sebep olmuştur. Bazı Osmanlı devlet adamları Siyonist hareket hakkında olumlu düşünmesinin sebebi Siyonizmi ayrılıkçı bir siyasi hareket olarak görmemelerinden kaynaklanmıştır. Bu nedenle İttihat ve Terakki karşıtı olan özellikle Arap milletvekilleri hükümetin Siyonistlere ayrıcalıklar verdiğini öne sürerek eleştirilerde bulunmuştur. Ancak bu tartışmalar bir kaç platform dışında cereyan etmemiştir. Kaynaklara bakıldığında sadece 1911 yılındaki bütçe görüşmelerinde ve meclis toplantısında bu konunun parlamento bazında ele alındığı tespit edilmiş ve tartışmalar sonucunda herhangi bir karar alınmadığı da görülmüştür. Buna ek olarak devrim sonrası hükümet değişiklikleri ve Balkan Savaşları başta olmak üzere İttihatçıların karşılaştığı iç ve dış problemler Filistin'deki Siyonist harekete kanalize olmalarına engel olmuştur. Kısacası bu dönemde Osmanlı yöneticilerinin Siyonizme yönelik belirli ve istikrarlı bir politika geliştirememeleri gözlenmiştir. Bu nedenle Siyonistlerin faaliyetleri devam ettiğinden bu bölümün sonunda Siyonist hareketin kendi içindeki yetersizliklerine rağmen Filistin'de kurumsallaştığı gösterilmiştir.

Dördüncü bölümün yazılmasının sebebi bu bölümde ele alınan 1914-1920 arası dönemde hem Osmanlı Devleti için hem de Siyonist hareket ve Filistin için önemli değişimlerin gerçekleşmesidir. Savaş sonrası Osmanlılar, Siyonistler ve Filistin için

yeni bir dönem başladığından bu çalışmanın araştırdığı dönem bu bölüm ile sona ermiştir.

Bu bölümde Filistin'deki Siyonist faaliyetlere yönelik Osmanlı politikası savaş konjonktüründe incelenmiştir. Osmanlı Devleti savaşa girdiği için hem Filistin toprağı hem de oradaki Siyonist oluşum savaştan etkilenmiştir. Avrupalı güçlerin bölge üzerindeki çatışan çıkarları da hem Osmanlı politikası hem de Siyonistlerin projeleri üzerinde belirleyici rol oynamıştır. Savaşla birlikte Osmanlı yöneticiler Filistin'de bulunan Siyonistlere hiç olmadığı kadar katı kurallar uygulamaya başlamışlardır. Bu nedenle Batılı devletler Filistin'deki Siyonistlerin savaş koşullarından ve Osmanlı yöneticilerinin sert tutumlarından etkilenmemeleri için hem diplomatic anlamda müdahalede bulunmuşlar hem de Siyonistlere finansal anlamda yardım sağlamışlardır. Savaş döneminde Siyonist liderlik de iki kutuba ayrılmıştır. Siyonist liderliğin Almanya kanadı İttifak Devletleri'nin savaşı kazanacağına inanmış ve Osmanlı Devleti'ni ile Filistin toprakları üzerinde taviz almak için temaslarına devam etmiştir. Siyonist liderliğin İngiltere kanadı ise savaş başladıktan sonra savaşın Siyonistlerin Filistin üzerindeki amaçlarına uygun sonuçlar doğuracağı inancındadır. Aynı zamanda Osmanlı komutanlarının Filistin'de Siyonistlere uyguladığı sert politikalar ve savaş koşullarının olumsuz etkisi sebebiyle Filistin'deki Siyonist varlık adına endişe duymaktadır. Savaş koşulları İtilaf Devletleri lehine döndükçe Siyonist liderliğin İngiltere kanadı İngiliz liderler ile Filistin konusunda anlaşmanın kaçınılmaz olduğunu düşünmüşlerdir. Bu konuda İngiltere yanlısı Siyonist lider Haim Weizmann İngiltere'de Sir Edward Grey, Lloyd George and Arthur Balfour dahil bir çok İngiliz devlet adamı ile görüşmüştür. İngiliz liderler ile temaslar sonucu 1917'de 'İngiltere Hükümeti'nin Filistin'de ulusal bir Yahudi Devleti'nin kurulmasını desteklediğini' ilan ettiği Balfour Deklarasyonu ile Siyonistler önemli bir başarı elde etmiş, bundan sonra Filistin'de Siyonist ve İngiliz ittifakı ilerleme kaydetmiş ve Filistin İngiliz kuvvetleri tarafından işgal edilmiştir. Bu konu ile ilgili ayrıca o dönemde bölgede görev yapmış bazı Türk askerlerinin hatıralarına da kısaca yer verilmiş ve Filistin'in o dönemde Türk komutanlar açısından zannedildiği kadar önemli olmadığını da altı çizilmiştir. Sonuç olarak

Filistin toprakları İngiliz hakimiyeti altına girmiş ve Osmanlı Devleti'nin yıkılmasıyla bu bölgede Osmanlı hakimiyeti son bulmuştur.

Nisan 1920'de gerçekleştirilen San Remo Konferansı'nda Büyük Güçler Osmanlı topraklarının paylaşılmasını görüşmüşlerdir. Osmanlı Devleti'nin yıkılmasıyla Türkler için yeni bir dönem başlamış, kendi ulusal devletlerini kurmak için Türkler yeni bir mücadele içine girmişlerdir. Bu nedenle Türkler savaşı kazanan devletler ile barış anlaşmasını 1923'te Lozan Konferansında imzalamışlardır. 1918-1923 arası dönemde İngilizler Filistin'de manda rejimini fiilen kurmaya başlamıştır. Ancak Lozan Konferansı ile yeni kurulan Türk Devleti'nin sınırları resmi olarak kabul edildiğinden Filistin'deki Osmanlı hakimiyetinin resmi bitiş tarihini Lozan Konferansı olarak belirlemenin daha doğru olacağı düşünülmüştür. Savaş sonrası döneme bakıldığında bu araştırmanın temel konusu olan Filistin'deki Siyonist harekete yönelik Osmanlı politikasıyla ilgili gözlemlenen temel nokta Türklerin savaş sonrasında kendi milli davaları ve bölgedeki İngiliz üstünlüğü sebebiyle Filistin topraklarının Türklerin gündeminden çıktığı ve Filistin'deki Siyonist oluşum ile ilgili herhangi bir politika ya da endişe taşımadıkları olmuştur. Filistin'de İngiliz manda rejimi ve Anadolu'da Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kurulmasıyla bütün aktörler için yeni bir dönem başlamıştır. Bundan sonraki dönemler başka bir çalışma alanının konusudur.

Sonuç olarak bu konuda günümüzde Türkiye'deki popüler söylemlerin yersiz olduğu ve gerçeği yansıtmadığı görülmüştür. Genel görüşün aksine Osmanlı Devleti'nin Siyonizme yönelik politikası karmaşıktır ve tanımlanması zordur. Genel olarak Siyonist harekete yönelik Osmanlı politikasının ne çok olumlu olduğu ne de çok katı olduğu söylenemez. Abdülhamit'in Herzl'in projesini reddetmesi ve İttihat ve Terakki Hükümeti'nin bir Yahudi yurdu kurulmasına karşı olması Filistin'in bir Yahudi devleti olmasını engellemiştir fakat Filistin'de Siyonist bir varlığın oluşumuna engel olmamıştır. Dahası Siyonist hareketin kaydettiği ilerlemeye rağmen hareketin bu dönemde büyük bir oluşum olmadığı ve hem Abdülhamit'in hem de İttihatçıların bu konu ile yakından ilgili olmadığı görülmüştür. Bu nedenle 'Abdülhamit Siyonizmle savaştı.' veya 'İttihat ve Terakki liderleri Siyonistler ile

işbirliği içindeydiler ve Siyonist harekete karşı değillerdi.’ gibi iddialara şüphe ile yaklaşılmadılar. Osmanlıların Filistin’deki Yahudi göçünü ve iskanını engelleyemedikleri göz önüne alındığında ‘Padişah (Abdülhamit) Filistin üzerinde hiçbir taviz vermedi.’ gibi popüler söylemler sorgulanmalıdır.

İkinci olarak, Osmanlı sistemindeki zayıflıklardan kaynaklanan iç faktörler ve yabancı müdahale ve Siyonist faaliyetlerden oluşan dış faktörler sebebiyle Osmanlı Devleti’nin göç ve yerleşmeler üzerindeki yasakları sonuçsuz kalmıştır. Osmanlı sistemindeki zayıflık sebebiyle bazı faktörler önemli ölçüde Filistin’deki Siyonist hareketin lehine sonuçlar vermiştir. Sonuç itibariyle, Siyonist hareket Filistin’de güç kazanmıştır. Bu nedenle, Osmanlıların Yahudi göç ve iskanı üzerindeki uygulamaları denetlemedeki yetersizliği aşikardır.

Kısıtlamaları uygulamadaki eksiklik devlet politikasının yerine getirilmesinin yerel yöneticilerin uygulamalarına bağlı olduğunu göstermiştir. Merkez ile yerel arasındaki tutarsızlık göz önüne alındığında, 1882 ve 1914 yılları arasında Siyonist harekete yönelik Osmanlı politikasının genel olarak çok da katı olmadığı söylenebilir.

Buna ek olarak Osmanlı merkez otoritelerinin konu ile ilgili olarak kararsız veya çok da ilgili olmadığı gözlemlenebilir. Osmanlı devlet adamlarının Siyonizm algısı Siyonist harekete yönelik oluşturulan devlet politikasını zaman zaman etkilemede önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Kısıtlayıcı politika ile Osmanlılar Filistin’de Yahudi bir devletin kurulmasını engellemekle yetinmiş gibi görünmektedirler. Siyonist hareket isteklerini göçün ve yerleşmelerin serbest olması ile sınırladığı sürece, Osmanlılar Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nın patlak vermesine kadar harekete karşı katı önlemler almamıştır.

Savaş başladığında savaş öncesi döneme nazaran Osmanlı otoriteleri Filistin’deki Siyonist harekete karşı katı bir politika izlemeye başlamıştır. Savaş döneminde bölgeyi kontrol eden Osmanlı komutanlarının emriyle Siyonistlere karşı şiddetli saldırılar başlamış hatta dış güçlerin baskısı altında kalan merkez otoriteler yerel anlamdaki bu katı önlemleri hafifletmeye çalışmışlardır. Yine de savaşın son yıllarında ve savaş sonrasında Filistin’in ve Siyonist hareketin Osmanlıları çok da

ilgilendirmediği gözlemlenebilir. Ancak bu çalışma Filistin'e girebilen ve yerleşebilen Yahudileri göz önüne alarak Osmanlı politikasını ele almıştır.

Burada belirtilmesi gereken husus Siyonistlerin Filistin'deki bütün başarılarına rağmen hareketlerinin bu incelemedeki dönemde küçük çapta bir hareket olduğudur. 1882 ve 1914 arası dönemde Filistin'e gidip yerleşen yabancı Yahudi sayısı kaynaklarda olduğundan fazla gösterilmektedir. Filistin'e binlerce Yahudi girmiştir ve yerleşmiştir ancak özellikle Birinci Göç ile gelen yabancı Yahudiler'in çoğu bölgeyi kısa bir zaman içerisinde terk etmiştir. Bakıldığı zaman yerleşen Yahudi sayısı ile Filistin'e gelen Yahudi sayısı arasında belirgin farklar vardır.

Üçüncü olarak, dış güçler Filistin'deki Yahudi varlığına olduğu kadar bölgedeki Siyonist çalışma üzerindeki kısıtlamaların uygulanması konusundaki zorluklara ciddi anlamda katkı sağlamada önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Savaştan önce, dış güçlerin müdahalesi yasakların hem kanunlaşmasını hem de uygulanmasını engellemiştir. Sonuç olarak, binlerce Yahudi Filistin'e girebilmiş ve yerleşmiştir. Savaş sırasında da açlık, hastalık ve özellikle de sürgünlere rağmen Filistin'deki Yahudi varlığı Büyük Güçlerin müdahalesiyle hayatta kalmıştır.

Son olarak, zayıflıklara rağmen, hem Abdülhamit döneminde hem de İkinci Meşrutiyet döneminde Osmanlıların Filistin'i bir Yahudi yurdu olarak tasavvur etmediklerini söylemek zor değildir. Osmanlı Devleti zayıf bir güç olmasına rağmen Osmanlı hükümetlerinin devlete ait toprak parçasını rıza ile vermek gibi bir politikaları yoktur. Vatan toprağını satmak devlet politikasına aykırıdır. Siyonistlerin isteklerinden farklı olarak Filistin Osmanlı yönetimi altında özerk bir bölge olmamıştır. Bu noktada, farklı hükümetlerin Filistin konusundaki endişeleri arasında bir tutarlılık olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. 1882 ve 1914 arası dönemde bütün Osmanlı yöneticilerinin Filistin'de bir Yahudi yurdunun kurulmasına karşı olduğu görülmüştür. Bu nedenle Yahudi göçünü, yabancı Yahudilere toprak satışını ve onların yerleşmelerini yasaklamışlardır. Yabancılar verilen bütün önceliklere rağmen, siyasi anlamda hiçbir milliyetçi harekete ayrıcalık verilmemiş veya Filistin de dahil Osmanlı toprağının hiçbir parçasında özerklik veya bağımsızlığın kurulması kabul edilmemiştir.

Siyonist hareket üzerindeki Osmanlı politikası ve Büyük Güçlerin rolü ile ilgili hem sürekliliklerden hem de değişikliklerden bahsetmek mümkündür. İlk olarak, birinci Yahudi göçünden Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonuna kadar Siyonistlerin Yahudi yerleşimi için Filistin üzerindeki devamlı olan vurgularından söz etmek mümkündür. İkinci olarak, hem Abdülhamid ve İttihat ve Terakki dönemi hem de savaş sırası için Osmanlı hükümetlerinin Siyonizm üzerindeki kısıtlayıcı politikalarının sürekliliğinden bahsedilebilir. Üçüncü olarak, süreklilik 1882 ve 1920 arası Büyük Güçlerin Siyonist hareket üzerinde oynadığı rolde de gözlemlenmiştir.

Değişiklikler ise daha çok yukarıda bahsedilen sürekliliklerin derecelerinde gözlemlenmiştir. Zamanla Siyonist hareket Filistin’de gücünü artırmıştır. Birinci Yahudi göçü Filistin topraklarını yaşama döndürürken, ikinci Yahudi göçü öncülerinin çalışmaları sayesinde bölgede Siyonist hareketi kurumsallaştırmıştır. Savaş döneminde, bütün zorluklara rağmen Filistin’de Yahudi varlığı sona ermemiştir. Siyonistlerin İngiliz Hükümeti’nden Filistin’de Yahudi yurdunun kurulması konusunda aldıkları resmi söz Yahudi yerleşimi konusunda Kutsal Topraklar konusundaki hiç azalmayan kararlılığı göstermektedir.

Osmanlıların kısıtlayıcı politikası boyutunda da değişiklikler görülmüştür. Siyonizmi ne kadar ayrılıkçı bir hareket olarak gördülerse kısıtlamaları da o oranda artırmışlardır. Siyonistlerle iyi ilişkiler kurdukları dönemlerde ve hareketlerinin ayrılıkçı bir hareket olmadıklarını düşündükleri zaman bu konuda resmi bir politika belirlemek konusunda kararsız olmuşlardır. Abdülhamit döneminde Theodor Herzl liderliğindeki Siyonist hareket Filistinde Yahudi bir devlet kurmaktan bahsediyordu. Padişah için böyle bir yapıya izin vermek mümkün değildi. Bu nedenle Filistinde Yahudi yerleşimi tamamen yasaklandığından en azından hükümet düzeyinde tek ve istikrarlı bir politikadan bahsetmek mümkündür. Ancak İttihak ve Terakki hükümeti Siyonizm konusunda istikrarlı bir politikaya sahip değildi. Yönetici kesimin Siyonizm konusundaki farklı düşünceleri Siyonist hareket üzerinde temel bir pozisyon oluşmamasına sebep oldu. Daha önce de bahsedildiği gibi savaş başlayınca uygulamaların şiddeti de arttı.

Dış güçlerin müdahalesinin seviyesinde de değişiklikler mevcuttur. Abdülhamit döneminde kapitülasyonlar sayesinde Filistindeki Siyonist faaliyetler lehine dış müdahale kolaylaşmıştır. 1908'den sonra kısıtlayıcı politikaların kısmen azaldığı dönemde yabancı güçlerin kendi elçilikleri aracılığıyla Osmanlıların Siyonist yerleşim üzerinde uygulayacağı her bir yasağın etkisini yok etmeye çalışmıştır. Savaştan önce yabancı güçler Siyonist hareketle ilgili olmazken, savaş başladıktan sonra yabancı güçlerin müdahalesinde ve finansal ve diplomatik desteğinde artış görülmüştür. Savaş sırasındaki kötü muameleler de İngiltere, Almanya ve Amerika'nın destekleriyle bir nebze de olsa engellenebilmiştir.

Bütün bu tespitlerin yanında belirtilmesi gereken önemli bir nokta Osmanlı Devleti'nin Filistindeki Siyonist hareket üzerindeki kısıtlamalarının Osmanlı hükümetlerinin Yahudi aleyhtarı bir pozisyona sahip olmasından kaynaklanmadığıdır. Osmanlı Devleti bu çalışmanın ele aldığı dönemde zayıflayan bir güçtür. Siyonist faaliyetler üzerinde uyguladığı yasaklar İmparatorluğun diğer toprakları üzerinde ayrılıkçı olmaya eğilimli milliyetçi hareketlere ve yabancı güçlerin Osmanlı Devleti'nin iç işlerine karışmasına engel olma isteğinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu dönemde Osmanlı liderleri imparatorluğun toprak bütünlüğüne çok önem vermektedir. Osmanlı yöneticilerinin yabancı Yahudilerin imparatorluğun diğer topraklarına yerleşmesine izin verdiği göz önüne alındığında Osmanlıların Yahudi düşmanı olduğunu söylemek mümkün değildir.

1917'de İngilizlerin Filistin'i ele geçirmeleri, savaş sonrası Osmanlı Devleti'nin yıkılması ve Milletler Cemiyeti'nin Filistin'deki İngiliz mandasını resmi olarak onaylaması bütün aktörler açısından dönüm noktası olmuştur. Filistin'de yönetimin el değiştirmesi, artık Türklerin Siyonistlere karşı hiçbir politikaları olmadığından Türk hükümeti ile Siyonistler arasındaki temaslara da nokta koymuştur. Diğer bir deyişle çalışmamızın konusu olan Osmanlı Filistin'ine Yahudi göçü ve iskanı bitmiştir, çünkü artık Osmanlı Filistin'inden söz etmek mümkün değildir.

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