Hotels, Immigrant Houses, and Special Neighborhoods
Global Mobility, Nation Formation, and Ethnonational Partition in Jaffa-Tel Aviv, ca. 1908–1927

Felicitas Remer

The interwar period – coinciding largely with British mandatory rule – was key to the idea of the 'nation' taking hold in Palestine. The rather vague concept of the nation is invoked here deliberately to signify both the nation as an imagined community of people and as a socio-spatial unit of political identification that replaced empire, but continued to coexist and compete with other geographical scales, such as the region and the city, but also the globe.[1] Thus understood, the idea of the nation is a conceptual prerequisite for related and more strictly defined terms such as nationality, nationalism, and the nation-state. The existing historiography of the encounter between the North Atlantic region and the Middle East during the interwar period has strongly emphasized the transfer of the nation-state into the partitioned Ottoman territories in the aftermath of the First World War.[2] In this context, the case of Israel-Palestine has received the most scholarly attention, no doubt because – as the hyphenated expression indicates – the absence of a state for the Palestinian nation and long-lasting violent national conflict most clearly betray the grievous consequences of British imperial intervention. It is thus also the clearest case in point for a narrative that constructs the import of the national idea into the ex-Ottoman territories as an original sin, causing a seemingly perpetual spiral of sectarian conflict and national strife or even ethnic cleansing, forced population transfers, and territorial partition along ethnoreligious lines. It thus obliterated, the story goes, non-national modes of conviviality that had existed in Ottoman Palestine, where

1 For the nation as an imagined community, see Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities. Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). For the nation as a spatial scale in the Middle East, see Cyrus Schayegh: *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 1–26.

2 See, for instance, James Barr: *A Line in the Sand. Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011); David Fromkin: *A Peace to End All Peace. The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Holt, 1989).

until nationalism transformed "permeable boundaries […] into rigidly patrolled national cages"[3] members of all three monotheistic religions had "lived side by side in plural, multifaced coexistence."[4]

This narrative contains some obvious nostalgia, which is perhaps more concerned with the present than with historical accuracy, yet it also reiterates another problematic paradigm at work in research on the relationship between the Middle East and the North Atlantic:[5] The model of the imperial diffusion of ideas, which denies the colonized actors intellectual independence and agency and reduces them to passive objects of an all-powerful, imperial encroachment. As Baruch Kimmerling expressed it in the case of the Palestinians: "If one wants to single out one major factor that shaped and built the Palestinian collective identity and made the Palestinians into a people […] we can point to the role of the British Mandatory power."[6] Beyond the reproduction of the ideological perspective of the colonizer, another problem with this approach lies in its historical oversimplification, because it limits itself to a generalizing answer to the question of 'what' happened, but rarely initiates in-depth or locally anchored studies of the precise 'how, when, and why' particular ideas such as the nation took hold in places far removed from their alleged geographical origins. However, in seeking to overcome, as this volume does, the one-dimensional historiographical emphasis on imperial intrusion and the unidirectional transfer of ideas in favor of showcasing the more varied and complex encounters and exchanges between both regions, it is essential to develop alternative perspectives.

This chapter therefore attempts to provide a new angle on both the evolution of the national idea and its ultimate culmination in the fateful practice of territorial partition along religious, ethnic, and national lines in early 20th century Palestine. It seeks to reorient our point of view by zooming out and comprehensively engaging existing literatures on the global history of the universalization of the national idea, nation formation, and ethnonational partition, on the one hand, and zooming into the local, urban history of Jaffa-Tel Aviv, on the other. By bringing into conversation the scholarship on ethnonational separatism and partition and the approach of

3 Mark Mazower: *Salonica. City of Ghosts. Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950* (London: Harper Collins, 2004), 22–23.

4 Mark Levene: "Harbingers of Jewish and Palestinian Disasters. European Nation-State Building and Its Toxic Legacies", in: Amos Goldberg/Bashir Bashir (eds.): *The Holocaust and the Nakba. A New Grammar of Trauma and History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 45–65, here 61.

5 Will Hanley: "Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies", in: *History Compass* 6:5 (2008), 1346–1367.

6 Baruch Kimmerling: "The Formation of Palestinian Collective Identities: The Ottoman and Mandatory Periods", in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 36:2 (2000), 48–81, here 64.

global intellectual history, I show that the consolidation of the national idea in Palestine cannot be explained without paying attention to the mutual co-constitution of modern globalization and nation formation, and that it involved an interaction between global and local forces that cannot be reduced to the imperial encounter with Britain during the Mandate period.[7] In a second step, the application of these findings is tested on the case of Jaffa-Tel Aviv. Jaffa-Tel Aviv presents an ideal setting, not only because it was a site where interactions between the global and the local were particularly strong. What is more, Jaffa-Tel Aviv presents a microcosm of a larger set of processes, since it is commonly assumed that Tel Aviv introduced the national idea and its specific forms of spatialization into the previously non-national environment of Ottoman Jaffa and that this led, ultimately, to the de facto partition of both cities along ethnonational lines.[8]

Using a close reading of the local Arabic and Hebrew press of the period between 1908 and the 1920s, this chapter therefore proceeds to ask how the national idea arrived in Jaffa-Tel Aviv and how exactly this led to the separation of the two cities. With regard to the Hebrew press, it draws most substantially on the Jaffa section of the Jerusalemite Sephardi newspaper *ha-Herut* and the Labor Zionist paper *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, which was published in Jaffa. They are chosen not only because of their extensive coverage of Jaffa and Tel Aviv, but also because they represent two opposite ends of the Palestinian Jewish and Zionist ideological spectrum, with *ha-Herut* being published by Palestinian-born Sephardi Jews and *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir* representing the voice of Labor Zionist immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. The study of the Arabic press must by necessity remain limited to the Christian Orthodox newspaper *Filastin*, which was published in Jaffa from 1911 onwards and soon turned into Palestine's most widely read Arabic newspaper. It is, unfortunately, the only newspaper continuously covering both the period under study and Jaffa specifically that is still available to historians.

The lens of the urban press, the perspectives and everyday experiences reflected in it, as a view 'from below', sheds light on how a growing but uneven consciousness, among both Jewish Zionists and Palestinian Arabs, of the deterritorializing influences of increased mobility and global integration caused a turn towards localized, reterritorialized forms of attachment – such as Zionism, Arab nationalism, Palestinianism, and Ottomanism – and that this was already manifest during the final years of Ottoman rule. Increased mobility and migration had changed not only debates on local attachment, identity, and communal belonging, but had already be-

7 See Antony G. Hopkins: "Introduction: Interactions between the Universal and the Local", in: Antony G. Hopkins (ed.): *Global History. Interactions between the Universal and the Local* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1–38, here 11.

8 Mark LeVine: *Overthrowing Geography. Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine, 1880–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

gun to have a momentous impact on the spatial configurations of the city and its intra-urban boundaries. Tel Aviv, which was incorporating into itself the European Jewish experience of being an 'uprooted' minority in an increasingly ethnically defined majority nation, had already begun to separate itself from its mother city Jaffa.

The advent of the British Mandate did not constitute an immediate or radical break with this existing trend, but rather, as an imperial actor, it operated within that same dynamic. Existing realities, discourses, and agency – 'local' vis-à-vis the new British rulers, yet already conditioned by an experience of the global – thus influenced both British perspectives on Palestine and its decision-making. British imperialism, then, did not act as an all-powerful diffusor of ideas or the exclusive channel through which Jewish Zionists and Palestinian Arabs engaged with globally circulating concepts. The British Mandate government did, however, hold the political power to order and regulate both deterritorializing processes – for instance migration and mobility – and reterritorializing processes, such as urban border-drawing, town planning, and housing construction.

Literatures in Conversation: Imperialism, "Lausanne Wisdom", and the Global Intellectual History of the Nation

Due to the dwindling feasibility of the two-state solution, hopes for peaceful coexistence in Israel-Palestine are increasingly placed in alternative models – models that fundamentally challenge the dominant assumptions about the nexus between state, nation, territory, and sovereignty that has shaped the post-World War I international order. Scholars are attempting to recast concepts of political liberation and self-determination "away from the telos of the nation-state" and, importantly, transcending the notion of territorial and demographic partition.[9]

This line of political thought opens a space of historical inquiry: How and why did it come to pass that the notion of national partition become the single most obvious means of solving intercommunal conflict? And, more fundamentally, when and how exactly did the nation become the dominant framework when thinking about identity and politics in the first place? For both of these questions, broader historiographies exist into which the Israeli-Palestinian case has so far rarely been or only just begun to be included – likely out of fear that such a contextualization would run

9 Leila Farsakh: "Introduction: The Struggle for Self-Determination and the Palestinian Quest for Statehood", in: Leila Farsakh (ed.): *Rethinking Statehood in Palestine. Self-Determination and Decolonization Beyond Partition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 1–25, here 2. On Post-Zionism see, for instance, Uri Ram: "National, Ethnic or Civic? Contesting Paradigms of Memory, Identity and Culture in Israel", in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 19 (2000), 405–422.

the risk of denying it its complex singularity. Yet whether one is looking for possible courses of action in the present or for historical depth and accuracy, if this hesitance leads to a perpetuation of the paradigm of imperial diffusion, which denies agency to the local communities, it is doing us a disservice.

No matter how integral a part of the conventional wisdom of conflict resolution partition might be today, it was not the only, logical, or inevitable trajectory for most of the actors involved during the British Mandate. The British treated Palestine as a single polity; its draft constitution included the country's different communities equally, recognized Arabic, Hebrew, and English as official languages, and issued a single nationality to all of Palestine's inhabitants.[10] While territorial separatism had been an aspect of Practical Zionist strategy from its inception, and partition or cantonization had been discussed in conversations between Zionist leaders and among British officials from at least 1929 onwards, it was only in 1937 that it was first raised in the official, public debate by the proposal of the Peel Commission.[11] Zionist leaders accepted the idea of partition in principle and convinced the 20th Zionist congress to agree to the proposal as a basis for future negotiations.[12] Bi-nationalism, however, continued to influence future visions of a shared state outside the Zionist mainstream between the 1920s and 1940s.[13] The Arab Higher Committee, in turn, condemned the Peel proposal in 1937, and the Palestinian intellectual and political leadership continued to reject partition or any other form of Zionist sovereignty over Palestine as a violation of their rights well into the 1970s.[14]

---

10 Leila Farsakh: "Alternatives to Partition in Palestine. Rearticulating the State-Nation Nexus", in: Leila Farsakh (ed.): *Rethinking Statehood in Palestine. Self-Determination and Decolonization Beyond Partition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 173–191, here 174–175. For more detail on the Mandate's nationality law, see Lauren Banko: *The Invention of Palestinian Citizenship, 1918–1947* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016). On the institutionalization of communal difference by the Mandate government, see Leila Farsakh: *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

11 Palestine Royal Commission: *Report presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty, July, 1937* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1937), 380–393. On deliberations on partition prior to 1937, see Penny Sinanoglou: "British Plans for the Partition of Palestine, 1929–1938", in: *The Historical Journal* 52:1 (2009), 131–152; Gideon Biger: "The Partition Plans for Palestine – 1930–1947", in: *Israel Studies* 26:3 (2021), 24–45.

12 Benny Morris: *One State, Two States. Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 60–64; T.G. Fraser: "A Crisis of Leadership: Weizmann and the Zionist Reactions to the Peel Commission's Proposals, 1937–38", in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 23:4 (1988), 657–680.

13 Shalom Ratsabi: *Between Zionism and Judaism: The Radical Circle in Brith Shalom, 1925–1933* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Adi Gordon: "Rejecting Partition: The Imported Lessons of Palestine's Binational Zionists", in: Laura Robson/Arie Dubnov (eds.): *Partitions. A Transnational History of Twentieth-Century Territorial Separatism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 175–202.

14 Laura Robson: *States of Separation. Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 119; Joel Beinin: "Arab Liberal Intellectuals and

The genesis of the partition proposal cannot be understood without contextualizing it within what Mark Levene has called "Lausanne wisdom".[15] What this expression refers to is a new logic of internationally legitimized and formalized ethnonational separatism that emerged out of the post-World War I peace treaties and was decisive in shaping the post-war world order. Arising out of the experience of the mass displacements and genocidal atrocities shaping the collapse of the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Russian Empires, "Lausanne wisdom" entailed that nation-states had to be ethnically, religiously, and linguistically homogenous in order to prevent conflict and sustain political stability, and that the measures of forced population transfers and partitions – the "unmixing of peoples" – provided legitimate means to achieve this homogeneity.[16] The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which concluded the war between Greece and Turkey and provided for the Greek-Turkish population exchange, entailing the movement of about 1.5 million people, formalized the "state-authorized expurgation of ethnoreligious difference." It was cited as a precedent in the partition proposal of the Peel Commission.[17] The League of Nations and its minorities treaties, on the other hand, were designed to protect and monitor the treatment of minorities in ethnically and religiously mixed territories such as those formerly belonging to the Ottoman Empire. Yet, as Laura Robson has recently argued, they not only legally enshrined certain principles regarding the question of the treatment of national, ethnic, or religious minorities by majority societies but simultaneously reformulated older principles justifying imperial intervention.[18]

This new international order, and the League of Nations overseeing it, were doubtlessly shaped decisively by imperialism. However, characterizing the circulation of the idea of ethnonational partition as a process of genesis, dissemination, and transformation, as much of the literature does, runs the risk of reiterating

---

the Partition of Palestine", in: Laura Robson/Arie Dubnov (eds.): *Partitions. A Transnational History of Twentieth-Century Territorial Separatism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 203–223.

15 Levene, "Harbingers of Jewish and Palestinian Disasters", 56.

16 See the contributions by Panikos Panayi, Ian Talbot, Mark Levene and Matthew Frank in Panikos Panayi/Pippa Virdee (eds.): *Refugees and the End of Empire. Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

17 Renée Hirschon: "'Unmixing Peoples' in the Aegean Region", in: Renée Hirschon (ed.): *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the Consequences of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003), 3–12; Levene: "Harbingers of Jewish and Palestinian Disasters", 46. See also Asli Iğsiz: *Humanism in Ruins. Entangled Legacies of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

18 Laura Robson: "Capitulations Redux: The Imperial Genealogy of the Post-World World War I 'Minority Regimes'", in: *The American Historical Review* 126:3 (2021), 978–1000. See also Susan Pedersen: *The Guardians. The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

the outdated paradigm of a powerful, linear imperial diffusion.[19] What is more, by positing the Zionist movement as one of the causes of this "dissemination" rather than an outcome, it fails to grasp the complex routes by which ethnonationalist separatism travelled – it was, after all, the ethnonationalism of the European heartlands that posited European Jews as a minority within a majority nation, defined by blood and ancestry, that sparked the Zionist movement.[20] As Jacqueline Rose puts it: "Israel inscribes at its heart the very version of nationhood from which the Jewish people had to flee."[21] Mark Levene therefore stresses that contextualizing the case of Israel-Palestine within this "Lausanne wisdom" makes it "more understandable within a wider process of historical development heralding the genocidal birth pangs of the contemporary international nation-state system." In other words, he understands Zionism itself, which regarded nation-state formation as a process of Jewish "normalization" and a means to shed the Jewish minority status and thus solve the "Jewish question", to have been conditioned by that same emerging international order premised on ethnonational separatism.[22]

It is important to differentiate, therefore, between understanding the emergence of this new global order as premised on imperial diffusion or grasping it as a complex process, in which certain concepts and ideas became universalized on a global scale. An in-depth inquiry into this process of the universalization of ideas, which the field of global intellectual history has tasked itself with, allows, crucially, for the distinctiveness of non-European thought and thus for local intellectual agency. The simplifying model of imperial diffusion, understood by global intellectual history to be the "colonist's model", is countered by two basic claims. *First*, that it disregards the complex local intellectual genealogies already in place and interacting with newly arriving ideas, and that even these "local" genealogies of thought had already been impacted by global connections – unless one supposes an essential "epistemic frontier" separating the West from the rest prior to the 19th century. *Second*, that even concepts that seemingly originated in Europe and were inextricably tied to Europe's own local intellectual history were conditioned by global interactions, and thus have their own global history and cannot be understood to

19 For this understanding, see Laura Robson/Arie Dubnov: "Introduction. Drawing the Line, Writing Beyond It: Toward a Transnational History of Partitions", in: Laura Robson/Arie Dubnov (eds.): *Partitions. A Transnational History of Twentieth-Century Territorial Separatism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 1–27, here 26.

20 See Gerard Delanty: "Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism: The Paradox of Modernity", in: Gerard Delanty/Krishan Kumar (eds.): *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Sage, 2006), 357–368, here 361–363.

21 Jacqueline Rose: *The Question of Zion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 83.

22 Levene, "Harbingers of Jewish and Palestinian Disasters", 47, 59.

be exclusively local in their context of origin.[23] As a consequence, imperialism is denied its function as the sole mediating force through which locals experienced and grappled with global interconnection, making room for more nuanced and complex accounts of the interplay between local intellectual traditions and globally circulating ideas.

The global universalization of the concepts of the nation, nationalism, and the nation-state has perhaps received most scholarly attention with regard to this issue.[24] The work of Benedict Anderson, whose understanding of nations as imagined communities has become conventional wisdom, considered nationalism to be "modular" and thus "available for pirating". He thereby claimed that European nationalism could simply be adopted, mimicked, and transplanted to different localities in the world – implying both a hierarchical order between origin and copy and a linear, teleological process of diffusion.[25] This view has been subject to profound criticism, especially for its tendency to homogenize the particularities of various nationalist movements.[26] Much attention has also been given to non-Western imaginings of alternative world orders that were developed in the context of decolonization and transcended the framework of a global system of nation-states.[27]

The most detailed and elaborate critique stems from Manu Goswami, who seeks to develop an alternative to Anderson's modularity, paying tribute to both the specific and particularist content of different nationalist movements without losing sight of "the transnational and global production of the local." She insists that the nation form became "transposable" towards the late 19th century not least because of the lure of its doubled character: Nationalisms, she elaborates, developed at once

23 Andrew Sartori: "Intellectual History and Global History", in: Richard Whatmore/Brian Young (eds.): *A Companion to Intellectual History* (Chichester: Wiley, 2015), 201–212. See also Andrew Sartori/Samuel Moyn: "Approaches to Global Intellectual History", in: Andrew Sartori/Samuel Moyn (eds.): *Global Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 3–30.

24 See Sophie-Jung Kim/Alastair McClure/Joseph McQuade: "Making and Unmaking the Nation in World History: Introduction", in: *History Compass* 15:2 (2017), 1–9.

25 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4; Manu Goswami: "Rethinking the Modular Nation Form: Toward a Sociohistorical Conception of Nationalism", in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44:4 (2002), 770–799, here 779.

26 See, for instance, John Breuilly: "Reflections on Nationalism", in: *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 15:1 (1985), 65–75; Prasenjit Duara: *Rescuing History from the Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Partha Chatterjee: *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

27 See, for instance, Cemil Aydin: *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia. Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Frederick Cooper: *Citizenship between Empire and Nation. Remaking France and French Algeria, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). See more broadly Adom Getachew: *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

into the most accepted means to express local particularisms in their specific content – while embracing an outward, global universalism in their abstract form. In her words, "nationalist claims of particularity and the imagined singularity of national formations only become intelligible against and within a global grid of formally similar nations and nation-states."[28] Against the backdrop of the deterritorializing influences of imperial and capitalist expansion, nations thus presented "still points in a turning world."[29] By positing such a new global space-time and the desire to assert local, collective identity against this as one of the foundations of nation formation – both in Europe and elsewhere – Goswami echoes global intellectual history's approach of capturing the global circulation of ideas without reducing it to imperial diffusion. In this light, European imperialism appears as a crucial driver of capitalist and imperial expansion, though not as the blueprint for nation formation around the globe, because the same context of modern globalization had itself conditioned European nation formation.[30]

While today, then, globalizing processes are ironically often regarded as eroding the nation as a unit of identity and the nation-state as a political framework of sovereignty, their very emergence was in fact historically deeply intertwined. Global flows of capital, goods, people, and ideas, rather than merely making borders permeable, identities more flexible and flattening the world into a "global village", simultaneously entailed counter-processes creating new and redefined borders and identities. Globalization thus rescaled the world territorially rather than merely compressing it into one single whole. Accordingly, globalization is much more accurately understood as a process of continuous deterritorializations and reterritorializations, interacting closely with each other.[31] Often those sites where the deterritorializing influences of globalization were experienced most intensely were also the arenas where redefinitions of often rigid spatial and territorial borders and cultural or social boundaries emerged most clearly. Such sites, where flows, connections, and networks become most tangible and new forms of their regulation, ordering, and assertions of particularism occur most vividly, such as

28 Goswami, "Rethinking the Modular Nation Form", 785.

29 Ibid., 789, quoting Stuart Hall: "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity", in: Anthony D. King (ed.): *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity* (Binghamton: State University of New York Press, 1997), 19–40, here 22.

30 Paul James: "Theorizing Nation Formation in the Context of Imperialism and Globalism", in: Gerard Delanty/Krishan Kumar (eds.): *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, 369–381, here 374–376.

31 Matthias Middell/Katja Naumann: "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to Critical Junctures of Globalization", in: *Journal of Global History* 5:1 (2010), 149–170.

metropolises, international conference venues, or port cities, have been theorized by global historians as "portals of globalization".[32]

Late Ottoman Jaffa as a "Portal of Globalization": Mobility, Migration, and Urban Separatism

At the turn of the 20th century, Jaffa was Palestine's most globalized, diverse, and mobile city. Despite its relatively small size, it was Palestine's second largest town and its most important port – second only to Beirut in the whole region. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it had developed into a regional hub of international trade and commerce, with imports through Jaffa port increasing almost tenfold and exports almost fivefold in the years between 1875 and 1913.[33] At the same time, with international travel becoming cheaper, safer, and hence more available, Palestine became an attractive destination for the "modern tourist pilgrim".[34] Travelers from England, the United States, Germany, Argentina, India, or Japan arrived at Jaffa port and continued their journeys from there, transforming the city into a center of tourism, full of facilities such as hotels, restaurants, and branches of travel agencies.[35]

Apart from trade and tourism, however, Jaffa also evolved into the 'gateway' of migration to and from Palestine. The biggest group of migrants was, without a doubt, European Jews of the Second Aliyah, with the local Socialist Zionist newspaper *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir* reporting 4553 new arrivals and 2169 departures between February of 1913 and March of 1914.[36] On the eve of World War I, already about 44 percent of Jaffa's Jews had immigrated from outside of Palestine.[37] In addition,

32 Ibid., 153, 162–163; Claudia Baumann/Antje Dietze/Megan Maruschke: "Portals of Globalization – An Introduction", in: *Comparativ* 27:3/4 (2017), 7–20.

33 Haim Gerber: "Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Palestine: The Role of Foreign Trade", in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 18:3 (1982), 250–264, here 258–259. For detailed accounts of imports and exports between 1885 and 1913, see the tables in Shmuel Avitzur: *Namal Yafo be-Ge'uto u-bi-Shki'ato* (Tel Aviv: Avshalom Institute, 1972), 41, 47.

34 Kobi Cohen-Hattab/Yossi Katz: "The Attraction of Palestine: Tourism in the Years 1850–1948", in: *Journal of Historical Geography* 27:2 (2001), 166–177, here 169; Doron Bar/Kobi Cohen-Hattab: "A New Kind of Pilgrimage: The Modern Tourist Pilgrim of Nineteenth-Century and Early Twentieth-Century Palestine", in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 39:2 (2003), 131–148, here 134.

35 "Mawsim al-Siah fi Filastin [The Tourist Season in Palestine]", *Filastin*, 29 June 1912, 3.

36 "Ha-Shavu'a [The Week]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 13 May 1913, 21; "ha-Shavu'a [The Week]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 20 June 1913, 16; "ha-Shavu'a [The Week]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 21 November 1913, 2; "mi-Hayei Yafo [From Life in Jaffa]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 15 May 1914, 14; Ruth Kark: *Jaffa. A City in Evolution, 1799–1917* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsvi, 1990), 144.

37 Ruth Kark: *Jaffa. A City in Evolution, 1799–1917* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsvi, 1990), 144.

young men from Afghanistan and Morocco had begun to work as guards in the citrus orchards surrounding the city.[38] Significantly, after the Young Turk government lifted restrictions on international emigration from the Ottoman Empire in 1908, Jaffa port also became the point of passage for those Palestinians who emigrated to the Americas as part of what has become known as the Syrian emigration.[39]

In line with the model of "portals of globalization", however, this experience of increased mobility and global integration not only led to more flexibility or fluidity in terms of the communal organization or the narratives of belonging available to Jaffa's residents. It also sparked a process of redefining and redrawing urban boundaries – between the city's various ethnoreligious communities and their spatial organizations in the urban landscape. Before the First World War, Jaffa was a mixed city, whose inhabitants – Christian and Muslim Arabs as well as Jews – fostered close economic, social, and cultural contacts. In recent years, historical scholarship has done important work to excavate the many instances of friendly neighborly relations, shared holidays and public celebrations, mixed schools, and business cooperation between Arabs and Jews. They have rediscovered Jaffa and other late Ottoman cities as worlds where identities were multilayered and liminal, not yet subjected to the rigid boundaries of the nation, describing them as cosmopolitan or "Levantine".[40] Notwithstanding these findings, however, an analysis of the local press also reveals strong anxieties concerning Jaffa's increasingly mobile and diverse population, which in many cases led to the sharpening and redefinition of existing communal boundaries in increasingly national terms.

While the Arab-Christian newspaper *Filastin* took pride in Jaffa's economic status and demanded funds for the expansion of the local port from the Ottoman government on several occasions, the issue of migration became a central theme in the newspaper between 1911 and 1914.[41] Initially, its primary concern was the emigration

38 "Al-Magharibah wa-l-Afghan [The Moroccans and the Afghans]", *Filastin*, 13 November 1912, 3; Evelin Dierauff: "Global Migration into Late Ottoman Jaffa as Reflected in the Arab-Palestinian Newspaper Filastin (1911–1913)", in: Cyrus Schayegh/ Liat Kozma/Avner Wishnitzer (eds.): *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality, and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 165–174, here 168–169.

39 Kemal H. Karpat: "The Ottoman Migration to America, 1860–1914", in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17:2 (1985), 175–209, here 180; David Gutman: "Travel Documents, Mobility Control, and the Ottoman State in an Age of Global Migration, 1880–1915", in: *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3:2 (2016), 347–368, here 364.

40 LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography*; Menachem Klein, *Lives in Common. Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Abigail Jacobson: "Alternative Voices in Late Ottoman Palestine. A Historical Note", in: *Jerusalem Quarterly* 21 (2004), 41–48; Adam LeBor: *City of Oranges. An Intimate History of Arabs and Jews in Jaffa* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

41 "Marfa' Yafa [Jaffa Port]", *Filastin*, 7 October 1911, 3; "Ila Ruhi Bey Khalidi [To Ruhi Bey Khalidi]", *Filastin*, 27 December 1911, 3; "Ila Hafiz Bey Sa'id [To Hafiz Bey Sa'id]", *Filastin*, 3 January 1912,

of large numbers of Palestinians through Jaffa port to the Americas. It regularly informed its readers about Ottoman travel regulations.[42] More importantly, however, it regularly warned its readers of the dire travel conditions for migrants to the Americas as well as the dangers of fraud and human trafficking, dedicating long editorials to the topic and publishing open letters by migrants recounting the stories of their misery and disappointment and how they wished to return to Palestine but lacked the financial means for the return journey – a clear attempt to deter others from pursuing the same endeavor.[43]

The issue increasingly became a "patriotic" (*waṭanī*) one: On the one hand, many articles lamented the fact that the emigrants left behind their families and their rootedness in their homeland – reminding them of their obligation to send remittances to their relatives at home.[44] On the other, the newspaper itself, which had subscribers in the Americas, constituted an important means to retain close ties with the emigrants in the *maḥjar* (diaspora). It stressed that as long as remittances were being sent, emigration could be an act of patriotism and proudly reported on instances of Syrian political loyalty overseas, especially during the Ottoman Empire's war with Italy between 1911 and 1912.[45]

Without a doubt, the emergence of a Palestinian diaspora overseas was one crucial factor in creating a consciousness of being Palestinian or Syrian, and this dynamic would intensify throughout the interwar years.[46] Yet, at this point, attachment to the geographical units of Palestine and Syria, alongside Ottoman patriotism, appeared as loyalties that were easy to reconcile. While parts of the

---

3; "Risa'il felah [Letters of a Peasant]", *Filastin*, 6 January 1912, 1; "Nurid Marfa' [We Want a Port]", *Filastin*, 6 August 1913, 1.

42 "Qanun al-Basabort al-Jadid [The New Passport Law]", *Filastin*, 13 September 1911, 3; "Qanun al-Basabort al-Jadid [The New Passport Law]", *Filastin*, 23 September 1911, 4.

43 "Zafra min Liverpool [A Sigh from Liverpool]", *Filastin*, 23 July 1913, 1–2; "Arhamhum Yarhamkum Allah [God Have Mercy on Them]", *Filastin*, 15 October 1913, 1; "Darra al-Milh 'ala al-Jurh [Salt in the Wound]", *Filastin*, 25 November 1911, 1; "Fi Sabil al-Muhajira [Concerning Emigration]", *Filastin*, 15 October 1913, 4; "'An al-Muhajira [About Emigration]", *Filastin*, 24 January 1912, 1–2; Isa al-Isa: "Kalima fi al-Muhajira [A Word on Migration]", *Filastin*, 21 September 1912, 1; "Al-Muhajir Yantazallamu [The Migrant Complains]", *Filastin*, 15 January 1913, 2.

44 "'An al-Muhajira [About the Migration]"; Gibran Matar: "Kalima ila al-Muhajirin [A Word to the Emigrants]", *Filastin*, 25 May 1912, 3.

45 "Aqwal al-Suhuf [Newspaper Statements]", *Filastin*, 3 April 1912, 3; "Al-Muhajirun wa-Ikhlasuhum [The Migrants and Their Loyalty]", *Filastin*, 26 June 1912, 3.

46 For the role of the American diasporas in Syrian and Lebanese nationalist activism, however, see Stacy Fahrenthold: "Transnational Modes and Media: The Syrian Press in the Mahjar and Emigrant Activism during World War I", in: *Mashriq & Mahjar* 1:1 (2013), 30–54; Stacy Fahrenthold: *Between the Ottomans and the Entente: The First World War in the Syrian and Lebanese Diaspora, 1908–1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Palestinian urban elite supported the nascent project of Arab nationalism, including its demands for Ottoman decentralization, and opposed the Young Turk regime's Turkification policies, the majority, including *Filastin*'s editors, remained firmly loyal to the Ottoman Empire and specifically to its emergent "imperial citizenship project".[47] The last years of Ottoman rule were, then, a time when political loyalties and frameworks of identification in Palestine were in flux and often overlapping, where being Ottoman and Arab, Palestinian, Muslim, Christian, or Jew was easy to reconcile. Nonetheless, new and redefined forms of local and particular attachment, such as Arab nationalism, Zionism, Palestinianism, or Ottomanism, were on the rise – albeit without universally agreed upon boundaries and without being understood as mutually exclusive.

Yet when it came to the issue of Ottoman migration restrictions, *Filastin* took on a decidedly local, Palestinian perspective, and the parliamentary representatives of the Jerusalem district, which encompassed the *qadā'* (sub-district) of Jaffa, Ruhi al-Khalidi, and Sa'id al-Husayni, were often called upon to lobby for Palestine's interests in the Ottoman capital. In 1908, the new Young Turk regime had granted all Ottoman citizens freedom of mobility. Already in 1910, however, the subsequent increase in emigration and the loss of military aged men had prompted the government to partially revoke this policy.[48] *Filastin*'s articles criticized the inefficiency of the Empire's new regulations, arguing that in order to stem emigration flows it was much more important to improve Palestine's living conditions, lower taxes, and invest in economic development, so that the poor would no longer be compelled to seek a better future elsewhere.[49] In *Filastin*'s discourse, then, there was an inextricable link between the issues of increased emigration and mobility and their deterritorializing influences – and the theme of local attachment, patriotism, and local economic development.

It was also in the context of migration regulation and local economic development that the topic of the Palestinian emigration became connected to increasing apprehension towards growing Zionist immigration from Europe. Indeed, within

47 Michelle Campos: *Ottoman Brothers. Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth Century Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011). On the emergence of the Palestinian national movement out of this context, see Rashid Khalidi: *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern Nationalist Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Yehoshua Porath: *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918–1929* (London: Cass, 1974). On *Filastin* specifically, see Evelin Dierauff, *Translating Late Ottoman Modernity in Palestine. Debates on Ethno-Confessional Relations and Identity in the Arab Palestinian Newspaper Filastin (1911–1914)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 94–105.

48 Gutman, "Travel Documents", 363–368.

49 "Al-Muhajira [Emigration]", *Filastin*, 21 September 1912, 1–2; "Arhamhum Yarhamkum Allah [God Have Mercy on Them]", *Filastin*, 15 October 1913, 1; Al-Muhajira 'and al-'Arab [Emigration Among the Arabs]", *Filastin*, 26 July 1913, 1–2.

just over three years of its publication before the outbreak of the First World War, *Filastin*'s attitude towards Zionism underwent a decisive change – from a neutral or even cautiously positive stance to staunch opposition.[50] In Jaffa, the large number of new Jewish arrivals from Europe were made responsible for the starkly rising costs of living, which were interpreted as one of the causes of Arab emigration. While Jewish immigration had facilitated commercial progress and economic prosperity, which *Filastin* applauded, the newspaper also accused the Jews of having separated their economic life from that of the Arab population. "We see that our immigrant Israelite brothers have established for themselves special neighborhoods, special markets and special conventions." While for Jews, then, expenses and income had increased equally, the Arab population had not shared in the new profits, but nonetheless suffered from heightened costs of everyday commodities.[51]

In addition, the combination of increased Jewish immigration and growing Palestinian Arab emigration appeared as a daunting prospect, and *Filastin* began voicing fears that it would be the Zionists rather than the "sons of the homeland" who would build and construct Palestine, taking over the lands deserted by the emigrants.[52] The newly instated Ottoman passport regulations became subject to criticism not only because of their inefficiency, but also because of their effect on regulating and policing Arab migration – while allowing the misuse of the so-called "red note", a three-month residence permit given to Jewish immigrants upon arrival in Palestine. Describing the scenes unfolding at Jaffa port and comparing the treatment of Zionist arrivals and Palestinian returnees, *Filastin* concluded: "Whereas you see the Zionist immigrants entering safely, you will find the indigenous (*waṭanī*) migrants, for their part, subjected to contempt, ill-treatment and severe scrutiny."[53] Indeed, alongside several local controversies – regarding, for instance land sales or the mutual exclusion of the Jewish and Arab Muslim and Christian communities from employment or education – concerns about Zionist immigration vis-à-vis Palestinian emigration and the emergence of separate economies proved crucial in making *Filastin*'s editors perceive Zionism as a "danger" (*khaṭar*). In the process, the terminology differentiating *ṣahyūnīyyūn* ("Zionists", as political movement) from *isrā'īlīyyūn* ("Israelites", bearing a solely religious connotation) and *yahūd* ("Jews", implying a layer of racial and national identification in Arabic) became less and less distinct.[54] In other words, Jewish immigration from Europe and local economic and

50 Samuel Beška: "Filastin's Changing Attitude toward Zionism before World War I", in: *Jerusalem Quarterly* 72 (2017), 86–101.

51 Isa al-Isa: "Al-Muhajirun wa-Ghala' al-Ma'isha [The Immigrants and the Cost of Living]", *Filastin*, 29 May 1912, 1.

52 "Arhamhum Yarhamkum Allah [God Have Mercy on Them]", *Filastin*, 15 October 1913, 1.

53 "Rifqan b-il-Muhajirin [Mercy on the Emigrants]", *Filastin*, 25 October 1913, 3.

54 Beška, "Filastin's Changing Attitude", 98.

communal separatism also gradually led *Filastin* to view the Jews as a national community rather than as a religious group. What is more, their national character was conceptually distinct from indigenous forms of local attachment, the terms *qawmī* and *waṭanī* being used to signify this difference. Warning of Jewish mass immigration, a 1913 editorial in *Filastin* warned that the "national life" (*al-ḥayah al-qawmiyya*) of the immigrants would cause the "imminent death of the [Palestinian] patriots" (*waṭanīyyūn*).[55]

On the one hand, then, in the years between 1908 and 1914, the Ottoman imperial framework remained firmly in place, and alternative, nationalized forms of local attachment did not yet appear to present insurmountable obstacles to this imperial project. On the other hand, however, the interplay between the experiences of local political representation within the framework of the Ottoman constitution, the Syrian emigration, Jewish immigration, and Zionist separatism had already gradually begun to spark assertions of an identification with the geographical unit of Palestine as such. Ottoman Palestine thus underwent a dynamic process of rescaling identities and geographical and political frameworks of attachment in light of the deterritorializing experiences of geopolitical upheaval and mobility, migration, and global integration. The outcome of this process was unclear yet, but it would continue to gain traction in the following years and especially in the wake of the empire's collapse.

The epitome of Jewish immigration and communal separatism, and one of the "special neighborhoods" *Filastin* lamented above, was Tel Aviv. It had been founded in 1909 at the initiative of some of Jaffa's leading Jews as an attempt precisely to tackle the problems of increased immigration and high living costs. Housing shortages, overcrowding, and the poor quality of the apartments and perceived lack of hygiene and orderliness in Jaffa had been Tel Aviv's founders' main arguments when lobbying for support from the World Zionist Organization (WZO).[56] Alongside unemployment, lack of proper housing was seen as one of the main reasons for Zionist return migration to Europe through Jaffa port – an issue that caused widespread concern in the Hebrew press.[57] The port city was a point of passage for many Jewish emigrants from all over Palestine, and this function as a gateway and the "mobile" image it endowed the city with were bemoaned in the press: "In recent days, the exodus has increased to the extreme, different people of different types […]. The migration frenzy stretches to all four corners of the world, some to Australia, some to America and

55 Al-Watani: "Al-Khatar al-Sahyuni [The Zionist Danger]", *Filastin*, 27 December 1913, 1–2.

56 Arthur Ruppin: *Briefe, Tagebücher, Erinnerungen*, edited by Shlomo Krolik (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1985), 216.

57 "Le-Havatat ha-Matsav [For the Improvement of the Situation]", *ha-Herut*, 8 May 1911, 3; "Yafo [Jaffa]", *ha-Herut*, 19 May 1911, 3; "Yafo [Jaffa]", *ha-Herut*, 30 June 1911, 3; "Yafo [Jaffa]", *ha-Herut*, 16 August 1911, 3.

even to Russia […]. The talk of the day in Jaffa is 'when and where will you travel?'", as the Jerusalemite *ha-Herut* reported. The Labor Zionist newspaper *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir* even went as far as describing Jaffa as a "hotel" for those Jewish arrivals who had not found the means to settle permanently yet or who were planning their departure.[58]

Increased mobility and migration thus also caused concern throughout the Hebrew press, and there was likewise closely tied to the desire to foster local attachment, patriotism, and Zionist nationalism – in other words, to reterritorialize the Jewish immigrants upon their arrival in 'Eretz Israel'. Tel Aviv, besides remedying housing and employment shortages, was also founded with the concrete intention of permanently settling and thus firmly rooting the Jewish migrants in Palestine. This much deeper desire inscribed in the process of Tel Aviv's foundation and urban development is best expressed by an article that appeared in one of the first issues of *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, when Tel Aviv was still known as "Ahuzat Bayit" (lit. "housing estate" or "homestead"):

> There are new ghettos for Israel everywhere. There is neither a shortage of building associations conspiring to [profit from] speculation, but our country is one in the movement of 'Ahuzat Bayit'. This is the desire of the people of Israel [*bnei ha-arets*] to attain a home, in a worldly homestead [*la'aḥuz ba-bait, be-aḥuza 'olamit*]. This is the feeling that we are building here no temporary apartment, no 'place to stay the night,' but a permanent apartment *for generations*. […] The 'millennial' wanderer slowly, slowly removes his satchel from his shoulder and tries to stand on his land, in his home.[59]

Condensed in this quote is the rich Zionist intellectual tradition of thinking about exile, uprootedness, and the city in their interconnection – and the special place Tel Aviv, as the first Hebrew city, occupies within it. Whether in the thought of Max Nordau, the creator of the concept of "muscular Judaism", or Aharon D. Gordon, one of the intellectual leaders of the Second Aliyah, ruralism and agriculturalism, physically working the soil, were seen as the essence of the redemption (*ge'ula*) of both the land and the people of Israel.[60] The city and urban life, in turn, and especially the European ghetto, epitomized exile, the dwelling space of the overly intellectual, uprooted, weak, even physically and mentally degenerated urban Jew, a *luftmensch*. For many Zionists, therefore, the negation of exile (*shlilat ha-galut*) necessarily also en-

58 Avi-Ephraim: "Korespondatsiyot [Correspondences]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 31 August 1908, 13–14.

59 Even Binyamin: "Min ha-Ereg [From the Construction]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 23 October 1907, 14; emphasis in the original.

60 See, for instance, Aharon D. Gordon: *Ha-Uma ve-ha-Avoda* [The Nation and Labor] (Tel Aviv: Haifa Labor Council and the Zionist Library, 1957), 466; Max Nordau: *Degeneration* (London: William Heinemann, 1895), 35.

tailed the negation of the city and urban life.[61] In Palestine, where the great majority of Jews lived in cities, the conditions of European exile appeared to be reproduced by the mixed, mobile, Levantine cities, and the Jews inhabiting them were regarded as cosmopolitan strangers to the country, who, instead of establishing authentically Jewish environments, blended in with Levantine urban culture.[62]

The urban history of Tel Aviv, and the urban discourses, imaginings, and myths surrounding it, can only be understood against this backdrop. Its planning and building were defined by a search for a new Hebrew urbanism that could overcome the images of both the European and the Palestinian city. Tel Aviv, from the outset, functioned as an urban flagship for the Zionist project and as such its urban image and appearance became subject to a previously unknown degree of regulation and control.[63] Planned according to the progressive town planning scheme of a garden city, Tel Aviv sought to mitigate the urban shapes modern capitalism had created in Europe and retain a degree of pastoralism and attachment to nature for its residents.[64] At the same time, rectangular planning, detached houses, wide streets, and sanitation were meant to introduce the ideas of European modern urban order and distinguish Tel Aviv from its Palestinian surroundings. Most importantly perhaps, Tel Aviv was to be built by Jewish workers, a proof of Jewish strength and revival, thus negating the European exile and giving it a thoroughly Zionist national character: "Its population will be 100 percent Hebrew, Hebrew will be spoken there, where purity and cleanliness will reign and where we will not follow the ways of the gentiles", as one advertisement put it.[65] Accordingly, the new suburb was praised by the Hebrew press for its beauty and order, and it was viewed as the crown jewel of the new *Yishuv* and an instance of Zionist pioneering – a place where immigrants settled for good, and became, once again, firmly attached to the

61 See Joachim Schlör: *Das Ich der Stadt. Debatten über Judentum und Urbanität, 1822–1936* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005); Erik Cohen: *The City in Zionist Ideology* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Institute of Urban and Regional Studies, 1970); S. Ilan Troen: *Imagining Zion. Dreams, Designs, and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

62 Ernst Müller: "Eindrücke von Stadt und Land in Palästina [Impressions from Town and Country in Palestine]", *Die Welt*, 5 February 1909, 123; LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography*, 156.

63 As Barbara E. Mann has pointed out, "Tel Aviv began to construct for itself a coherent narrative describing and explaining the meaning of its origins to its citizens", creating an image for itself "as a kind of artifact to be studied and explored by its residents" (Barbara E. Mann: *A Place in History. Modernism, Tel Aviv, and the Creation of Jewish Urban Space* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 78, 88).

64 See, for instance, Tal Alon-Mozes: "Rural Ethos and Modern Development: The Emergence of the First Hebrew Town in Modern Palestine", in: *Planning Perspectives* 26:2 (2011), 283–300.

65 "Prospectus of the Ahuzat Bayit Society", as quoted in: Ilan Shchori: *Halom she-Hafakh le-Krakh. Tel Aviv, Leyida ve-Tsmiha. Ha-'Ir she-Holid Medina* [From Dream to City. Tel Aviv, Its Beginnings and Growth. The City That Gave Birth to a State] (Tel Aviv: Avivim, 1990), 23.

local.[66] Its aim was to re-root the migrants in the soil and to create an independent and sovereign Hebrew polity with proto-national citizens via urbanism, and one necessary precondition for this was its separation from its mother town, Jaffa.[67]

Tel Aviv's separatist aspirations did not go unnoticed by Jaffa's Muslim and Christian Arab population. Throughout September 1911, the pages of the Jerusalemite Sephardi newspaper *ha-Herut* were filled with debates sparked by an open letter presumably sent by a Muslim Arab resident of Jaffa. Hafiz Ben Omar accused the Tel Aviv Town Committee, which functioned much like a municipal government in the suburb, of boycotting local Arab labor in the building of the Nahalat Binyamin neighborhood. He called the boycott a "first sign of war" and directly connected it to Jewish immigration from Russia through Jaffa port, pointing out, "it would be enough if the Arabs would not let guests of this kind off the ship, and then we will see how strong the power of Tel Aviv's people will be."[68] In October 1913, an open letter sent to *Filastin* by "a patriot" (*waṭanī*) warned of a separate judicial system being established in Tel Aviv in shape of the Jewish communal courts.[69] Around the same time, *Filastin* provided the platform for debates over whether the Netter Agricultural School, run by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, excluded non-Jewish students – counter to Ottoman law.[70] By March 1914, suspicion of Tel Avivian separatism ran high, and a comparatively small incident led to an uproar not only in the local but also in the regional press. A Jewish resident of Tel Aviv was attacked and lightly injured with a knife by an Arab, the reason for this being unclear to the press. The crowd that had gathered at the scene stopped the Arab culprit and detained him in the Hebrew Gymnasium of Tel Aviv until the police arrived and transported him to Jaffa's government house. This temporary seizure of executive power by Tel Aviv's residents for the first time caused the widespread and explicit accusation that Tel Aviv had erected a "government within a government" for itself.[71]

---

66 For instance, Ben Avraham: "Ahuzat Bayit be-Yafo [Ahuzat Bayit in Jaffa]", *ha-Herut*, 25 June 1909, 3; A. Raznik: "Yafo [Jaffa]", *ha-Herut*, 16 July 1909, 4; "Ha-Yishuv be-Erets Yisra'el bi-Shnat 1910 [The Settlement in Eretz Israel in the Year 1910]", *ha-Olam*, 26 January 1911, 3–5.

67 Yael Allweil: *Homeland. Zionism as a Housing Regime, 1860–2011* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 76.

68 Hafiz Ben Omar, "Dvarim ha-Ra'uyim Lehishame'a [Things That Are Worth Being Heard]", *ha-Herut*, 13 September 1911, 3.

69 "Al-Mahakim al-Sahyuniyya [Zionist Courts]", *Filastin*, 22 October 1913, 3.

70 "Madrasat Netter al-Zara'iyya [The Netter Agricultural School]", *Filastin*, 4 September 1912, 1; "Ghayrna Yatakallamu [Others Speak]", *Filastin*, 25 September 1912, 3; "Madrasat Netter [The Netter School]", *Filastin*, 2 October 1912, 1–2; "Madrasat Netter al-Zara'iyya [The Netter Agricultural School]", *Filastin*, 5 October 1912, 3.

71 The debate is summarized in a review of the Arabic press: "Ba-'Itonut ha-Aravit [In the Arabic Press]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 16 March 1914, 11–14. On *Filastin*'s observations of Tel Avivian separatism, see also Ilan Pappé: "The Framing of the Question of Palestine by the Early Palestinian

Already before the First World War, then, globalization and migration led to a strengthening and a redefinition of existing forms of local attachment and reterritorialization in Jaffa-Tel Aviv. In the Arabic press, existing local attachment to the geographical unit of Palestine, evident already in *Filastin*'s choice of name, was fortified by local representation in the Ottoman parliament as well as the experiences of Palestinian emigration to the Americas and Jewish immigration, and thus constructed between the global and the local. The terms *waṭan* (homeland), *waṭanīyya* (patriotism) and *waṭanī* (patriot) were used with increasing frequency in the press, but could refer to Palestine, Greater Syria, or the Ottoman Empire as a whole. Yet voices demanding the Ottoman government improve local conditions and take care of local Palestinian interests grew louder. Zionist immigrants increasingly appeared as strangers who did not adapt to and integrate into local society but instead formed a separate milieu. In turn, as the Hebrew press shows, the Jewish immigrants of the Second Aliyah were infused with national aspirations and the desire to reterritorialize and settle permanently in Palestine after the experience of exile, minority status, and migration. The planning and building of Tel Aviv were pervaded by the desires to remedy the precarious conditions Jews had experienced in East and Central Europe, and its new Hebrew urbanism was thus premised on the notion of ethnonational separatism. In spatial terms, this meant that years before the territory of the Israeli nation-state was defined by partition, Jewish immigrants in Palestine strove to construct and delimit a national, Hebrew urban environment, thus beginning to reconfigure the socio-spatial makeup of late Ottoman Jaffa.

Urban Disengagement and Partition under British Rule: The First Hebrew City as a Laboratory for National Independence

In 1917, a single document altered Palestine's existing discourse on the nation and the national unequivocally. The Balfour Declaration and its central statement that "his Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object" is regarded as the foundational document of the later Israeli state. From a broader perspective, however, the Balfour Declaration was also a crucial part of a global moment of national definition and demands for national self-determination sparked by the upheavals of the First World War and the transition

Press: Zionist Settler-Colonialism and the Newspaper Filastin, 1912–1922", in: *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies* 14:1 (2015), 59–81, here 68–73.

from empire to nation – "what it meant to be a nation" at the end of World War I was unclear and up for debate among the imperial policy-makers.[72]

The very same question was also debated in Palestine itself, and the Balfour Declaration introduced a new vocabulary into the discourses surrounding collective identities, communal relations, and belonging that had been underway since the last years of Ottoman rule. Opposition and protest were ubiquitous in the Palestinian press. When Winston Churchill, the newly appointed British Secretary of State for the Colonies, visited Jaffa in 1921, increasing tensions took on a distinctly local and urban shape: *Filastin* called its readers to a mass protest, and, after this was prohibited by the British government, asked Jaffa's residents and shopkeepers to boycott the visit, printing the English words "down with the Balfour Declaration" and "down with the Jewish national home" in bold, capitalized letters.[73] The Arabic translation of the "national home for the Jewish people," *al-waṭan al-yahūdī al-qawmī*, contained both the concept of *waṭan* and that of *qawm*, whose congruence in this expression implied that the Palestinian homeland (*waṭan*) was being promised to the Jewish nation (*qawm*).[74]

When, only about two months after the local boycott of Churchill's reception, the "Jaffa riots" between Jews and Arabs broke out in the mixed neighborhood of Manshiyyah, which lay at the border between Jaffa and Tel Aviv, leaving 48 Arabs and 47 Jews dead, it seemed clear to the British administrators that the Balfour Declaration and its implications for Jewish immigration lay at the root of the conflict. In fact, Palestine's Muslim-Christian Associations had already made it clear in 1919 that the Balfour Declaration had transformed the situation into a zero-sum conflict between homeland and exile: "We will push the Zionists into the sea – or they will send us back into the desert."[75] In 1921, Jaffa's Arab rioters directly targeted a symbol of Jewish immigration, the building known as "Immigrant House", which provided shelter to new arrivals and lay in Jaffa's mixed Muslim-Christian neighborhood of Ajami. "It would have been wise, perhaps, to have found room for it in Tel Aviv, which is an exclusively Jewish quarter", the report of the British commission of inquiry later admitted. It thus demonstrated the new government's understanding that Tel Aviv, rather than mixed Jaffa, was the appropriate location for the new Jewish immigrants

72 Maryanne A. Rhett: *The Global History of the Balfour Declaration. Declared Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 3–5.

73 "Al-Muzahara al-Samita wa-l-Ihtijajat [The Silent Demonstration and the Protests]", *Filastin*, 30 March 1921, 1–2.

74 For one of the first usages in *Filastin*, see "Nahum Sokolov [Nahum Sokolov]", *Filastin*, 26 March 1921, 3.

75 Report on evidence given to the American Section of the Inter-Allied Commission on Mandates for Turkey, June 1919, Central Zionist Archives L4/794.

to settle – prefiguring later convictions that only partition could lead to a peaceful solution of the conflict.[76]

In the immediate aftermath of the riots, British High Commissioner Herbert Samuel wrote a gloss of the Declaration. He noted that "it is possible that the translation of the English words 'the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine' into Arabic does not express their true meaning" – attributing the protests to mere mistranslation. Their true meaning, according to Samuel, was

> that the Jews, a people who are scattered throughout the world, but whose hearts are always turned to Palestine, should be enabled to found here their home, and that some among them […] should come to Palestine in order to help by their resources and efforts to develop the country to the advantage of all its inhabitants.[77]

Significantly, this rephrasing did not contain the word "national" but simply spoke of a "home" (nonetheless translated in *Filastin* as *waṭan*) for the Jewish people. It emphasized, on the other hand, the Jewish right to reterritorialize in Palestine after having lived "scattered" throughout the world.

This watered-down version of the Declaration's text did little to appease *Filastin*'s editors. Refuting the claim that their opposition was only caused by mistranslation, the editors clarified that the true meaning of the Declaration was revealed not in its wording, but in British policies, and it listed precisely those that to them constituted the very essence of a Jewish national home in Palestine: The British consultations with the Zionist Commission, the recognition of Hebrew as an official language in Palestine, the facilitation of Jewish immigration while stemming regional migration flows from Syria, financial support that only benefited the economic endeavors of the Jewish immigrants, and the Municipal Law, which favored Jewish local governmental institutions. "Do not all of these things […] indicate the true meaning of the national home in all languages of the world?" the editors asked.[78]

Such questions were indeed perennial features of *Filastin*'s approach to migration and the nation throughout the Ottoman *and* British Mandate eras: Just as in late Ottoman times, it was Jewish immigration, combined with the perceived preferential treatment of strangers vis-à-vis locals as well as economic, social, and cultural separatism of the immigrants and the first stirrings of local self-government

76 *Reports of the Commission of Inquiry with Correspondence Relating Thereto. Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty, October, 1921* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1921), 26; Tom Segev: *One, Palestine, Complete. Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), 173–190. In addition, immigration was temporarily suspended after the riots and the 1922 White Paper confirmed that it needed to be limited in accordance with the economic absorptive capacity of the country.

77 "Hawl al-khitab al-Mandub al-Sami [About the High Commissioner's Speech]", *Filastin*, 11 June 1921, 1.

78 Ibid.

that lay at the heart of *Filastin*'s understanding of the Jews as a 'national' community. Now, however, there was one crucial addition – British imperial partiality towards Zionism vis-à-vis Palestinian nationalism. Wartime promises of support for an Arab state, *Filastin* often stressed, had been betrayed by the British to the benefit of the "foreigner" (*al-ajnabī*) and the "intruder" (*al-dakhīl*) – two designations that were now increasingly replacing the previously common and more neutral term "Zionist immigrants" (*al-muhājirūn al-ṣahyūnīyyūn*).[79] In turn, this perceived alliance between the British administration and the Jewish immigrants was confirmed by the reception of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate by Palestine's Jewish community – and Tel Aviv's residents specifically: Churchill's arrival, while boycotted by Jaffa's Arab Palestinians, who closed their shops on the city's main commercial artery, Bustrus Street, was celebrated by the Jews of Jaffa and Tel Aviv. On Bustrus Street and Sderot Binyamin (today's Rothschild Boulevard), Jewish shop owners and tenants decorated lanterns, balustrades, windows, and shop fronts with double national flags – the British on the one side and the Zionist flag on the other.[80]

Due in part to its vagueness, the Balfour Declaration provided but little concrete direction for British policy in Palestine. One aim of the British administration was, however, Palestine's colonial development, and the enlargement of municipal powers as nuclei of self-government in Palestine, was viewed as a crucial step in this direction. As Anat Kidron observed for the case of Haifa, the British had "a certain blindness" to the fact that this agenda often led to the preferential treatment of Jews, especially in shared urban spaces: "The Zionist movement shared the desire for modern European development with the British administration, but made modernity a national symbol." Hence, the developmental cooperation of the British with the Zionist economic and institutional establishment ultimately also helped to "establish the notion of a 'national home'."[81] A similar argument can be made for the case of Jaffa-Tel Aviv, where British policies supported the growth and increased independence of Tel Aviv vis-à-vis Jaffa by way of immigration, as well as the reterritorialization and 'nationalization' of those immigrants and the new Hebrew city. This also implied, probably unintentionally, the disengagement of the two cities and a process of urban partition along ethnonational lines before the tools of partition and transfer entered official discourses on British Palestine policies.

Yet British policies were largely influenced if not determined by the preexisting realities encountered and interpreted by local officials. British government reports

79 "Hadith Qadim wa-Biyan Jadid [Old Talk and a New Statement]", *Filastin*, 9 March 1921, 1.

80 "Ha-Vezir Churchill ve-Bnei Leayah be-Yafo [Secretary Churchill and His Delegation in Jaffa]", *Do'ar ha-Yom*, 1 April 1921, 3.

81 Anat Kidron: "When Colonialism and Nationalism Meet – But Speak a Different Language: The Case of Haifa during the British Mandate", in: *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 2020 (e-publication, ahead of print), 1–21, here 20–21.

demonstrate that Jaffa and Tel Aviv were understood as two distinct and separate urban units, one an "Oriental city" and the other of European appearance – as had been the explicit agenda of Tel Aviv's founders. To British eyes, Jaffa's old town was "a labyrinth of narrow streets, winding among masses of picturesque old buildings, [lying] close packed behind the quay[.]" And while the Muslim-Christian Ajami quarter seemed "modern" to British observers, "Tel Aviv [was] a well-built quarter with a town hall and a municipality of its own, and is not unlike a small modern Continental suburb", separated from Jaffa by a "sandy space".[82] In other words, then, the founders' aim to clearly demarcate and delimit Tel Aviv from Jaffa, to establish a base for urban self-rule, and to create a proto-national urban environment fell on very fertile ground with the British administrators.

Tel Aviv's efforts to achieve greater governmental autonomy came into full force in the aftermath of the war. As early as 1919, articles began to appear in the Hebrew press arguing for the municipal separation of Tel Aviv from Jaffa. The coexistence of the Jewish Town Committee of Jaffa (*va'ad ha-'ir*), which represented Jaffa's Jews within the governing structure of that municipality, and the Tel Aviv Committee (*va'ad Tel Aviv*), which considered itself the municipal government of Tel Aviv, was deemed inefficient and a double burden to Tel Aviv's residents – who were taxed both by the municipality of Jaffa and the Tel Aviv Committee.[83] It was argued that the Town Committee should pull out of Jaffa's municipal affairs in favor of a purely Hebrew municipality because the former did too little for the benefit of Tel Aviv's residents. Going much further, an article in *Do'ar ha-Yom* even stressed that while the modernization brought by the Jewish immigrants was, in principle, intended to benefit all of Palestine's population, it was not the *Yishuv*'s objective to build modern urban quarters, educational institutions, and the like for everyone. Rather, these were explicitly part of the project of building a Jewish national home and thus required separation from the country's other communities.[84]

Press debates over this issue intensified over the course of 1920 and early 1921, and Tel Aviv's first mayor, Meir Dizengoff, brought up the issue directly with Herbert Samuel on the occasion of the latter's visit to Tel Aviv in June 1920.[85] Ultimately, British recognition of Tel Aviv's "unique nature and wishes to make its independent development" led the High Commissioner to abide by the suburb's demands and endow it with the status of an independent township with the right to determine its

82 *Reports of the Commission of Inquiry*, 18.

83 M. Gatz, "Tel Aviv le-Yuval Shnat ha-Eser [Tel Aviv at its Tenth Jubilee]", *Do'ar ha-Yom*, 14 December 1919, 2.

84 Id., "'Iriya 'Ivrit [A Hebrew Municipality]", *Do'ar Ha-Yom*, 8 January 1920, 2.

85 "Ha-Natsiv ha-'Elion be-Yafo [The High Commissioner in Jaffa]", *Do'ar ha-Yom*, 30 July 1920, 3; David Izmujik: "Tel Aviv – 'Iriya [Tel Aviv – Municipality]", *ha-Arets*, 21 November 1920, 2; "Be-'Ed u-ke-Neged Tel Aviv 'Iriya [For and Against Tel Aviv Municipality]", *ha-Arets*, 1 December 1920, 2.

own budget, collect taxes, raise loans, make contracts, and pass by-laws in May 1921 – at exactly the same time as the Jaffa riots. Whether there was any direct connection between the two events remains unclear, yet doubtlessly the status as an independent township, and the powers thereby gained, strengthened existing animosities between Jaffa and Tel Aviv.[86] To *Filastin*, Tel Aviv now symbolized the status of Jewish immigrants as foreigners and intruders and their ambitions for self-rule and national autonomy more clearly than ever, and the paper did not miss an opportunity to criticize the workings of Tel Aviv's "municipal government". It claimed, for instance, that residents of Tel Aviv and Manshiyyeh had petitioned the Tel Aviv Committee to not be included under its jurisdiction out of fear of the exorbitant taxes it was administering, mocking "how poor would Palestine be if it came under Zionist rule?"[87]

Even though, from 1921 onwards, the Tel Aviv Town Committee was regularly referred to as a "municipality" in Arabic (*baladīyya*), Hebrew (*'iriyah*), and British sources, it actually gained this official status only in 1934. Nonetheless, the Tel Aviv Township Order, one of the first enacted by the newly instated British Mandate, had far-reaching consequences. It was due to the autonomy granted by the Order that Tel Aviv became known as the "laboratory of independence"; as others have argued, it was by no means a coincidence that the foundation of the state of Israel was proclaimed in 1948 in Tel Aviv rather than Jerusalem.[88] In addition, the Order gave Tel Aviv a unique status: Throughout all of Palestine, it was the only purely Jewish township, yet until 1926 residents of Tel Aviv still had the special privilege of being eligible to vote in Jaffa's municipal elections, despite the fact that they were not taxed by that city.[89] In other words, the Order very much corroborated and confirmed Tel Aviv's special status as a Hebrew city. Not least because of its autonomy, Tel Aviv developed into the center of the *Yishuv* throughout the early 1920s and housed its most important political and civic institutions – as its founders had already intended in late Ottoman times.

The significance of the 1921 Tel Aviv Township Order must also be understood in connection with increased Jewish immigration and planned urban expansion. While, by the end of 1909, Tel Aviv had only been home to some 500 people, by 1925 its population had risen to 34,200, and by spring 1934 it had doubled again to 72,000.

86 Herbert Samuel: "Tel Aviv Township Order", *Palestine Gazette*, 1 June 1921, 5–6; Tamir Goren: "Tel Aviv and the Question of Separation from Jaffa, 1921–1936", in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 52:3 (2016), 473–487, here 474; Segev, *One Palestine*, 173–190.

87 "Baladiyyat Tel Aviv [Tel Aviv Municipality]", *Filastin*, 29 April 1921, 5.

88 Ita Heinze-Greenberg: *Europa in Palästina. Die Architekten des zionistischen Projekts 1902–1923* (Zürich: GTA, 2011), 107.

89 Samuel, "Tel Aviv Township", 6.

Its built area had increased seventy-fold in the meantime.[90] With this rapid urban growth, which went hand in hand with rising land prices, poor workers and immigrants erected overcrowded quarters of makeshift housing such as tents or wooden barracks throughout the city, which were perceived as a threat to the clean, modern, and progressive image of the city and its function as a symbol for the nation that was to be built.[91] It caused a "hunger for land", as members of the Tel Aviv Committee called it, a dire need for ordered urban expansion by the means of town planning. Jaffa had been declared a town-planning area by the High Commissioner in 1921, and the status of independent township was decisive in increasing the power of its local town-planning commission to expropriate lands for the construction of roads and housing.[92]

As a consequence, land purchases, planning and construction increased, and European standards of modern town planning and architecture became another means of demarcating the Hebrew city of Tel Aviv from Jaffa and constructing it as an ideal Hebrew nation-space.[93] In 1925, the Scottish architect Patrick Geddes, who had been hired by the Tel Aviv Committee, presented his master plan for the expansion of the city northwards.[94] The building area of the Geddes Plan eventually became what is today known as Tel Aviv's "White City" – a dense conglomeration of residential buildings in the architecture of the International Style, which scholars agree served

90 Yossi Katz/Liora Bigon: "Urban Development and the 'Garden City': Examples from the Late Ottoman Empire and the Late British Mandate", in: Yossi Katz/Liora Bigon (eds.): *Garden Cities and Colonial Planning. Transnationality and Urban Ideas in Africa and Palestine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 144–166, here 149–150; Yossi Katz: "Ideology and Urban Development: Zionism and the Origins of Tel Aviv, 1906–1914", in: *Journal of Historical Geography* 12:4 (1986), 402–424, here 415–416; Walter Preuss: "Tel Aviv – 25 Jahre Alt [Tel Aviv – 25 Years Old]", in: *Palästina* 17:6/7 (1934), 217–233, here 217; 222.

91 A Citizen: "Mi-Hayyei Yafo [From Life in Jaffa]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 18 September 1921, 19–21; "Yafo Yom Yom – Binyanim [Jaffa Everyday – Buildings]", *Do'ar ha-Yom*, 8 August 1919, 4; Ish Gamzu: "Yafo Yom Yom. Le-she'elat Shakhar ha-Dirot [Jaffa Everyday. On the Question of Rents]", *Do'ar ha-Yom*, 19 August 1919, 3; "Le-She'elat ha-Dirot be-Yafo [On the Apartment Question in Jaffa]", *Do'ar ha-Yom*, 1 September 1919, 2; Abraham Granovsky: *Land Problems in Palestine* (London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1926), 5–6; Alfred Bonné: "Das Wohnungsbauproblem in Palästina", in: *Palästina* 17:10 (1934), 401–412; Allweil, *Homeland*, 116–17.

92 Mark LeVine: "Conquest through Town Planning: The Case of Tel Aviv, 1921–48", in: *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17:4 (1998), 36–52, here 39–41.

93 For the concept of the nation-space, see Joanna C. Long: "Rooting Diaspora, Reviving the Nation: Zionist Landscapes in Palestine-Israel", in: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34:1 (2009), 61–77, here 61.

94 See Volker Welter: "The 1925 Master Plan for Tel-Aviv by Patrick Geddes", in: *Israel Studies* 14:3 (2009), 94–119; Noah Hysler Rubin: "The Celebration, Condemnation and Reinterpretation of the Geddes Plan, 1925: The Dynamic Planning History of Tel Aviv", in: *Urban History* 40:1 (2013), 114–135.

as a national Hebrew building style not least because of its negation of the 'Orient'.[95] In the 1920s, then, the immigration, municipal, and town-planning policies of the British Mandate saw Tel Aviv flourishing as a modern Hebrew metropolis, housing thousands of new Jewish immigrants. Politically, it had become all but autonomous from its mother city of Jaffa, and its development had often occurred at the latter's expense.

By early 1929, revisionist Zionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky was able to comment, echoing and yet not fully endorsing "Lausanne wisdom",

> Tel Aviv is an example and a lesson as to how two nationalities, destined to live in one and the same country, can and should dwell side by side without stepping on each other's toes. This is, perhaps, the most "discussed" feature of Tel Aviv; to me, the most valuable. Two men of different habits may keep friendly for ever if each one has his own apartment, provided the walls are of sufficient thickness; but they are bound to lose their tempers if forced to room together. The rule should not be extended so as to cover whole countries or districts; but within the limits of one village or township, racial homogeneity is a great asset of peace.[96]

Later that year, after another outbreak of violence, as British officials observed, "Jewish shopkeepers moved from Jaffa to Tel Aviv. In every respect the schism between the two peoples was now open and undisguised[.]" In 1937, by the time of the Peel Commission's report, the partition of Jaffa and Tel Aviv and the conflicts at their border were cited by the British officials as further proof of the necessity of partition on a country-wide level.[97]

The case of Jaffa-Tel Aviv shows that the role of the British Mandate in the nationalization of Palestine (and later Israel) was much more complex than the narrative of a forceful imperial transfer of a North Atlantic concept into the Middle East would have it. When the British Mandate gained power in Palestine, it did not encounter an empty, malleable space but was confronted with preexisting local realities. British imperialism was not and did not suddenly turn into the only channel through which either Jewish Zionists or Palestinian Arabs conceived of their local and global surroundings or their own specific places within them. Rather, as shown above, even before the war, globalization had gone hand in hand with a large degree of localization, i.e., the strengthening of attachment to the geographical units of Palestine and Greater Syria. In addition, the Zionist movement, premised on the European 'minority experience' and its xenophobic ethnonationalism, had already begun to enforce the principle of the nation in its spatial politics at the local level. This resulted

95 Alona Nitzan-Shiftan: "Contested Zionism – Alternative Modernism: Erich Mendelsohn and the Tel Aviv Chug in Mandate Palestine", in: *Architectural History* 39 (1996), 147–180.

96 Ze'ev Jabotinsky: "The Meaning of Tel Aviv", *The Palestine Bulletin*, 8 April 1929, 2.

97 *Palestine Royal Commission*, 70.

in a simmering conflict over incompatible forms of (re-)territorialization caused by different aspects of geopolitical upheaval and global integration. With the establishment of the Mandate, however, the British gained much of the authority to privilege one competing form of reterritorialization over another, and British policies regulating migration, urban planning, and construction supported and exacerbated the partition of both cities and what some scholars call Tel Aviv's "conquest of Jaffa".[98]

From a global perspective, this privileging of Zionist forms and claims of reterritorialization by the Mandate is paralleled by the Mandate's restrictive policies concerning the naturalization of members of the Palestinian diaspora. In late January of 1926, Tel Aviv and other cities throughout Palestine opened their first "naturalization offices".[99] Article 7 of the Mandate had obligated the British to enact a nationality law in Palestine, and the Palestinian Citizenship Order in Council came into force on 1 August 1925. As had been stipulated by the Treaty of Lausanne, it provided that all those who had been "habitually residents" of what was to become Palestine would "become ipso facto" nationals of that territory. Immigrants, in turn, were allowed to naturalize after having permanently resided in Palestine for the relatively short period of two years.[100] The Hebrew press provided its readers with detailed information on how to naturalize and called them to do so at one of the offices.[101] Throughout the Arabic press, however, the Palestinian Citizenship Order again raised the issue of the Palestinian emigration and the diaspora in the Americas: By 1927, it had become clear that for many of the Palestinians living abroad, it was impossible to naturalize under the conditions laid out by the British administration.[102]

Again, *Filastin* began to publish open letters by emigrants, only that this time they were not narrating the risky and often grievous migration experience – but rather their failures to naturalize as Palestinians despite having been born there, having family there, and owning property lying within its territory.

---

98 LeVine, "Conquest through Town Planning"; LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography*.

99 "Le-Tsumat Lev ha-Mit'azrachim [To the Attention of Those Who Naturalize]", *Davar*, 27 January 1926, 1.

100 M.P.A. Hankey: "Palestinian Citizenship Order 1925", *Palestine Gazette*, 16 September 1925, 460–466; "The Palestine Mandate", in: *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp#art7 (accessed 6 August 2021); Mutaz M. Qafisheh: *The International Law Foundations of Palestinian Nationality. A Legal Examination of Nationality in Palestine under Britain's Rule* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2008), 45–75.

101 M. Rosental Ben-Shalom: "Pkudat ha-Hit'azrachut ha-Erets Yisr'elit (Sof) [The Erets-Israeli Citizenship Order (End)]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 4 December 1925, 9–11; "Hora'ot la-Hit'azrachut [Instructions for Naturalization]", *Do'ar ha-Yom*, 7 March 1926, 4.

102 Nadim Bawalsa: "Legislating Exclusion: Palestinian Migrants and Interwar Citizenship", in: *Journal of Palestine Studies* 46:2 (2017), 44–59. See also Banko, *The Invention of Palestinian Citizenship*.

> The strange thing is that every Jew of whichever previous nationality […] receives naturalization as soon as he sets his foot in our country, but the native of Palestine […] is considered non-Palestinian and is eligible for the "award" of Palestinian citizenship only under preconditions and restrictions.[103]

Just as when it addressed the unequal treatment of Jewish immigrants and returning Palestinian migrants at Jaffa port during the period of late Ottoman rule, the Jaffan newspaper *Filastin* contrasted Jewish and Arab access to reterritorialization under the new regime that ordered it, criticizing the privileges Jewish migrants enjoyed over Palestinian Arabs. What is more, the above excerpt from an open letter from an emigrant residing in Mexico demonstrates Palestinian resistance to the regime itself and the fact that the British were the ones invested with the imperial power to "award" Palestinian nationality.

Conclusion

By taking a large step back and engaging with the rich literatures on the intellectual history of ethnonational partition and the global intellectual history of the nation, this chapter has aimed to draw attention to the limits of the paradigm of imperial diffusion. I have argued that neither global nation formation nor the emergence of ethnonational separatism and ultimately partition are adequately grasped by the assumption that these were disseminated by imperial powers from the core to the periphery. Rather, they constituted new forms of reterritorialization in face of the deterritorializing impacts of increasing globalization, and thus stemmed from an interaction between local and global forces that was not exclusively shaped by the imperial encounter. New forms of localized attachment, bounded identities, and their spatializations had already begun to emerge in Jaffa-Tel Aviv at the close of Ottoman rule – both in the shape of an emerging sense of Palestinian Arab *waṭanīyya* and in the shape of Zionism's ethnonational separatism, most clearly embodied in Tel Aviv, which was itself conditioned by the experience of exile and of minority status in majority societies increasingly defined in ethnonational terms.

Interestingly, Palestinian forms of local attachment and identity were linguistically distinguished from the threat of the Zionist claims to the land, with the Zionist immigrants increasingly being understood as a *qawmī* community undermining the interests of the *waṭan*. Neither term, *waṭanīyya* or *qawmīyya*, was entirely new at the time. Nowadays, both would be translated as "nationalism" but for the period under study *qawmīyya* is mostly rendered as "nationalism" while *waṭanīyya* is translated as

103 "Mushkilat Jansiyyat al-Muhajirin [The Problem of the Emigrants' Nationality]", *Filastin*, 23 April 1927, 1; Abdullah Abu Shawaria: "Mushkilat al-Jansiyya al-Filastiniyya [The Problem of the Palestinian Nationality]", *Filastin*, 30 August 1927, 2.

"patriotism".[104] This distinction is, as others have pointed out, flawed, because it implies a conceptual distinction stemming from European languages that is unlikely to reflect local conceptual realities. In addition, *waṭanīyya* was used much more widely than *qawmīyya* by many Arabic-speaking national movements without this implying that they were patriotic rather than nationalist in character.[105] The distinction made in *Filastin*'s usage at the time nonetheless appears to be meaningful, both because of the systematic way the terms are used and in view of their respective etymologies. Whereas *qawm* derives from the Bedouin term for a group that a person is born into and thus denotes loyalty to the nation as a people, *waṭan*, the homeland, is defined first and foremost by being a person's place of habitation, and thus carries spatial and geographical connotations. Historically, it was most often used to differentiate residents from aliens (*ajnabī*). By the late 19th century, however, its meaning also began to incorporate the dimension of an aboriginal homeland, fatherland or *patrie*, and was thus ethnicized.[106]

Recognizing the Zionist movement's national aspirations, the Arabic press referred to them as *qawmī* – as the term *watanī* was reserved for the patriotic/nationalist movement of the (original), locally attached residents of Palestine and thus stood in conceptual opposition to the Zionist movement. While this does not necessarily mean that Palestinian Arab nationalism may not also have been understood as *qawmī*, it proves beyond doubt that Zionism and *waṭanīyya* appeared to be mutually exclusive concepts to contributors to the Arab press. In Zionist discourse, meanwhile, while it was common to refer to its own movement as national (*le'umi*, a term that also derives from the idea of a nation as a people, *uma*), when the emergent 'Arab question' was addressed, it was rarely spoken of using the same vocabulary. Rather than designating it as a *le'umi*/national movement, it was referred to as the

104 From the mid-20th century onwards, *waṭanīyya* was also used to refer to individual nation-state nationalism in the Arab Middle East, while *qawmīyya* designated (pan-)Arab nationalism. See Geoffrey D. Schad: "Competing Forms of Globalization in the Middle East: From the Empire to the Nation-State, 1918–1967", in: Antony G. Hopkins (ed.): *Global History. Interactions between the Universal and the Local* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 191–228, here 204–205.

105 Eliezer Tauber: *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 245–246.

106 Ami Ayalon: *Language and Change in the Arab Middle East. The Evolution of Modern Political Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 52–53. In Butrus al-Bustani's well-known dictionary *Muhit al-Muhit* (Beirut: s.n., 1867–1870), *waṭan* is defined as the place in which a person dwells, regardless of whether they were born in it. The dictionary does not include an entry for *waṭanīyya*. There is an entry, however, for *qawm*, as a group of people, and a short one for *qawmīyya*. See also Brigit Schaebler: "Writing the Nation in the Arabic-Speaking World, Nationally and Transnationally", in: Stefan Berger (ed.): *Writing the Nation. A Global Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 179–196. For a good overview of the usages of *qawm* and *waṭan* by Arab intellectuals throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, see also Sylvia G. Haim: "Islam and the Theory of Arab Nationalism", in: *Die Welt des Islams* 4:2/3 (1955), 124–149.

Arab or the Palestinian movement and the Arabs' strong attachment to their homeland (*moledet*) was often emphasized with concern.[107]

The way the two national movements perceived each other involved a complex negotiation of their different relationships with mobility and rootedness, de- and reterritorialization, and implicitly addressed the ongoing process of a rescaling of belonging and their differing positions within it. Zionism, having emerged out of the context of European ethnonationalism, incorporated many of the ideal-type, defining elements of nationalist movements, including the ambition to ultimately make an ethnically homogenous nation and congruent state.[108] Palestinian Arab *waṭanīyya*, on the other hand, its geographical boundaries remaining as yet unclear, and not (yet) explicitly calling for a Palestinian state congruent with a Palestinian nation, does not match neatly with European-centered definitions of nationalism. For long, this has led to debates over the movement's authenticity. Yet Palestinian Arab *waṭanīyya* undoubtedly constituted an authentic form of a redefined, localized attachment that had emerged in the face of experiences or fears of deterritorialization. Transcending the modular model of nationalism and replacing it with the notion of a transposable nation form, *waṭanīyya* appears as a possible alternative version *of* the nation form rather than a radical alternative *to* it. In this light, it becomes obvious how the notion of nationalism's modularity and the tradition of doubting the Palestinian movement's authenticity are discursively intertwined and how both of them, in fact, obscure Palestinian intellectual agency.

The growing tensions among the residents of both Jaffa and Tel Aviv can therefore be interpreted as a competition between two nation forms within the space of a single city: One based on a lived rootedness in place, albeit gradually redefining the boundaries of collective, national (*waṭanī*) identity when faced with deterritorialization in the shape of both globalization and Jewish immigration; the other based in an understanding of existing national (*qawmī*/*le'umi*) unity and the ambition to recover that aboriginal rootedness after having undergone a profound experience of uprooting, deterritorialization, and exclusion. Returning to Goswami's claim that it was the doubled character of the nation form that accounted for its global lure, Palestinian *waṭanīyya* can be understood as a form of reterritorialization whose particular, internal, local content appeared obvious and authentic but whose abstract, outward, universal form was still under negotiation – leaving open the questions of state and territory, for instance. The Zionist movement, by contrast, had consciously

107 See, for instance, Moshe Smilansky: "Mi-'Inyanei ha-Yishuv [From the Concerns of the Settlement]", *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, 5 January 1908, 5–10, reacting to the famous article published by Yitshak Epstein: "She'ela Ne'elma [A Hidden Question]", *ha-Shiloah* (July–December, 1907), 17 and putting into doubt this paradigm of the Arabs' attachment to their homeland, referencing the Syrian emigration.

108 Ernest Gellner: *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1–3.

adopted the universal, outward shape of a nationalist movement out of the desire to 'normalize' their status, yet was still engaged in the endeavor to fill this abstract form with concrete, localized content – making the creation of an authentic, national Hebrew character a precarious and shaky endeavor and thus premising it on separatism and exclusion.

The arrival of the British, therefore, did not herald the beginnings of thinking about the nation, nationalism, or ethnonational separatism in Palestine. Rather, with the establishment of the Mandate, the doors were opened for British imperialism to regulate both deterritorializing and reterritorializing processes. In other words, the British government now held the power to interfere in the already ongoing conflict between competing forms of reterritorialization and versions of the nation form, and it used this power – partly intentionally, partly compelled by existing realities – to privilege Tel Aviv vis-à-vis Jaffa.

This was not only a result of the British commitment to the establishment of a Jewish national home and the facilitation of Jewish immigration. Its primary cause was rather British complicity with the very form of reterritorialization and spatial organization epitomized by Tel Aviv, which appeared to be in line with globally spreading, modern, and progressive urban and territorial orders as well as British efforts towards colonial modernization. It was, however, based on the exclusion of the local Arab population, to whom the British de facto denied the status of a nation by speaking only of the "civil and religious rights" of Palestine's "non-Jewish communities" in the Balfour Declaration. The power to "award" nation status and, by extension, nationality now lay with the British Empire, as the criticism contained in the letter from the Palestinian emigrant in Mexico highlighted. British imperialism thus played a decisive role in nation formation and the creation of ethnonational separatism in Palestine, but it did not serve as the decisive vehicle to 'export' these ideas. Rather, the British Mandate government, by regulating migration and citizenship as well as local socio-spatial organization, served as a mediator and arbiter of globalization in Jaffa-Tel Aviv. It ruled, in other words, over who had access to and was included in a universalizing global regime of mobility and settlement, of national territorialization and, not least, its highly localized, in this case urban, materialization.