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SUMMARY

THE TREATY WITH THE GIBEONITES

by I. M. Grintz (pp. 69–84)

A detailed comparison is made between the Biblical account of the Treaty with the Gibeonites and other treaties of that period, known from the archives of Bhogazkoi, Ugarit etc. The author concludes that the Hivite treaty was a Protectorate Treaty, which (as is known from many texts of Alalah, Mari, etc.) was as a rule accompanied by a special rite, called in the Bible “the cutting of a Berith(ברית)”, and by an oath. In this case, Joshua performed the rite while the “chiefs” took the oath, a similar oath being apparently taken by the “elders” of the Hivite Confederation.

The negotiations leading to the treaty were conducted by the “Men of Israel”. These were not, as commonly supposed, the ordinary people, but the dignitaries or chiefs (Nesi'im), a not uncommon connotation. As a rule, the Canaanite city-king was known as “the Man awilu of N”, as were the “elders” of tribes and peoples in Hittite territory.

Similarly, “Edah” (עדה) does not signify the people as a whole, but all those on active service and entitled to vote in the General Assembly of the tribal confederation. The term has no religious significance but is rather of a socio-political and military character.

The preliminaries of a treaty were generally arranged by the chiefs (Nesi'im, 'Ish Israel) but its terms were usually submitted to the “Edah” for ratification. Like other treaties, the pact with the Hivites probably had a twofold objective: military support lent by the Hivites to the Israel Army in exchange for defence of the Hivite Tetrapolis by the Israelites. Only later, after disclosure of the fraud, was the active military service reduced to a more passive and degrading form. The Gibeonites became a kind of “sappers” instead of an allied army. At first they served in the “Edah”, but when the first great wars were over and the Settlement had become a fait accompli their service was transferred to the Common Sanctuary in Shiloh.

BENJAMIN PEIXOTTO'S MISSION TO RUMANIA

by E. Lifshitz (pp. 85–102)

Benjamin Franklin Peixotto, a young scion of the famous Seixas family and a lawyer, Jewish community leader and former president of B'nai B'rith, was appointed by President Grant in 1870 as the American Consul to Rumania. The appointment was made at the request of leaders of the American Jewish community and for the sole purpose of alleviating the hard civil and economic conditions of Rumanian Jewry. Peixotto was to serve without remuneration. American and European Jewish benefactors and such organizations as the B'nai B'rith were to provide adequately for the consul and his consulate. Peixotto's mission was acclaimed by the masses of Rumanian Jewry whose official spokesman he became. He was opposed by the very rich who were afraid of the anti-semitic repercussions which his daring attitude would create in Rumanian governing circles. The American Government was informed that Peixotto had solicited money improperly from rich European Jews and that he had induced indigent Rumanian Jews to leave Rumania. The latter charge was substantiated by the American Consul in Berlin. Peixotto defended himself in letters to the President and to the State Department. He was attacked by the German-Jewish, Anglo-Jewish, and American-Jewish press for his proposal for a large scale Jewish emigration from Rumania. His proposal was defeated in the hastily convened Brussels conference of October, 1872, in which leading Jewish personalities participated. He was encouraged and defended by the Hebrew press with the exception of the American “Hatzofeh Baaretz Hakhdashah”. Among his defenders were also such prominent

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people as Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer. Though Peixotto's belief in large scale Rumanian Jewish immigration to the United States did not diminish, he could not openly oppose the leading Jewish organizations in Europe and in America, and therefore confined the activities of his later years to the education of the Rumanian Jewish youth. The opposition of the then acknowledged Jewish leaders to mass emigration from Rumania heightened the interest of some Rumanian Jewish circles in the colonization of Palestine. Peixotto left Rumania in 1876, and served later as American consul in Lyons, France.

This paper is based mainly on Peixotto's Consular Letters, some of which are published here, and on other State Department material which is to be found in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. .

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PALMACH

by Yehuda Bauer (pp. 103-131)

During the first years of the War (1939-1941), the Zionist Institutions made great efforts to get as many Jews as possible into the British Army. Less attention was paid to the Haganah, because of its presumed helplessness in case of a German attack. The Haganah commanders and some of the left-wing organizations thought differently. They regarded the development of the Haganah as the best guarantee for the security of the Yishuv. In 1940, the Jewish Agency secured cooperation between the SOE — a British Intelligence organisation — and the Haganah, and in 1940 and 1941 plans were drawn up for sabotage and intelligence work, first in the Balkans and then in the Middle East. Intelligence work was actually carried out in Syria which was occupied by the Vichy government. Staff work was carried out on sabotage plans and an Investigation Bureau set up in Haifa. Thus the Haganah became an active partner in the war effort. In the spring of 1941 the gravity of the military situation in the area enhanced the need for reunification with some of the right wing elements of the Haganah which had left it in 1940. The Haganah's assignment was to act against diversionary sea or air-borne landings or simultaneous Arab risings.

All these factors help to account for the Haganah's decision, on May 19th, 1941, to set up special Commando Forces (Palmach) as part of a general reorganization of its forces. The men were recruited from units previously trained by SOE, members of communal settlements and Haganah reserves in the cities. Command was vested in Y. Sadeh. Owing to local sentiments, a certain lack of thorough-going centralization made itself felt.

Before the Palmach had been properly set up, 23 men were sent on an unsuccessful mission to blow up the Tripoli refineries. This is commonly regarded as the first Palmach exploit. On June 8th, 33 men were sent out to guide Australian troops across the Syrian border.

In the summer and autumn of 1941 the Palmach underwent a severe financial crisis. In December, however, when the German threat again became acute, SOE suggested Jewish participation in planned anti-German actions in Palestine. Accordingly the Palmach was reorganized on a new and more permanent basis.

AN ASHKENASIC STORY ON THE CONVERSION TO JUDAISM OF AN ARAB KING

by Joseph Dan (pp. 132-137)

A composition is found at the head of Ms. Oxford 1567 from the Bodleian Library, apparently written by Rabbi Judah the Pious (d. 1217), in which an Ashkenazic-Hasidic theological argument is clothed in the form of a literary discussion, a form used by R. Judah Halevy in his book "The Kusari". The author puts his arguments in the mouth of the prota-

gonists in a discussion between a king and three Jewish sages, in the course of which the king and all his sages and people become proselytes to Judaism. It is to be noted that the king is described as an "Arab" king, his sages as "Arabs" or "Sons of the Orient", and that the discussion apparently takes place in Spain. It thus appears that in Germany there was a current tale of the conversion of a Moslem Spanish king to Judaism, possibly following Rabbi Judah Halevi's book. On the other hand direct influence of Rabbi Judah Halevi seems unlikely, since the differences in form and content of the composition show that the author did not know the Kusari at first hand. It should likewise be noted that the term "philosophers" is here used as a synonym for sages, while in the writings of R. Eliezer of Worms, R. Judah the Pious' disciple, this term received a derogatory meaning, apparently as a result of the controversy concerning the Rambam's writings.

AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ISRAEL

Meeting of the Board of the Society

On 19th March, 1961, a meeting of the Board of the Society was held. Owing to the illness of Prof. Dinur, the Chairman of the Society, and the absence abroad of the Deputy Chairman, Professor Halpern, the Board decided to elect three of its members as a temporary Board of Directors, viz.: Professor J. Katz, Professor A. Fuks and Dr. H. H. Ben-Sasson.

The interim balance sheet for the period 1.4.60—31.1.61 as well as the estimate of the income and expenditure for the financial year 1961/62 were presented to the Board. It was pointed out that despite the numerous efforts made to mobilise various sources of income the Society's balance sheet still shows a considerable deficit.

The Public Relations Committee submitted to the Board a proposal to hold a country-wide convention during Hannuka 1961, devoted to the subject: "Historians and Historical Schools of Thought in Israel and among the Nations". The Board approved the proposal in principle and charged the Public Relations Committee with the task of organising the Convention along the lines suggested.

Study and Research

During the months March—June 1961 four meetings were held by the Study Circle in Jerusalem, at which the following subjects were discussed:

- Balthasar Becker, The Ghosts and Spirits Affair at the Beginning of the Period of Enlightenment — Miss Eleanore Bernheim.
- The Colonial System of Genua on the Isle of Chios — Dr. David Jacobi
- Some Institutional Factors in Russian Political Thought at the End of the 18th Century — Prof. Marc Raeff.
- The Palestine Partition Plan of 1943 and its Failure — Dr. Yehuda Bauer and, in cooperation with the Hebrew University:
- The Philosemitic Movement in XVIIth Century Europe — Prof. Hugh Trevor-Roper.

Publications

The Yitzhak F. Baer Jubilee Volume is still on sale to members at the Secretariat of the Society, at a discount of 30%. Non-members may acquire the book through the Rubin Mass Publisher, P.O.B. 990, Jerusalem.

Some of the previous volumes of "Zion" are also still available.