

The Terms "Old Yishuv" and "New Yishuv": Problems of Definition

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THE terms "Old Yishuv" and "New Yishuv" are widely used in source material, literature, political writings, and journalism dealing with the Jewish community in Palestine from the 1800s onward. It is important to define these terms, for their varying implications are liable to confuse those who study the history of that period. We shall attempt to examine the various meanings and usages of these terms as they appeared in contemporary sources and in Zionist historiography.

The expressions originated within the Jewish population of Palestine in the 1800s, and their usage soon became widespread. The terms were usually applied to one or another of the population groups, particularly with regard to the relationships between the two main segments of the Jewish community. At times, especially at the beginning of this period, equivalent expressions such as "receivers of *ḥalukka*," "the ancient yishuv," "the old generation," and the "new generation," were used.¹ These terms were quite common and appeared with increasing frequency as the conflicting concepts took root from 1890 onward. We shall deal here with the sources in which the expressions "Old Yishuv" and "New Yishuv" bear the meanings noted above.

The Old Yishuv

Judging from the Jewish periodicals of the 1890s and the early twentieth century,² the Old Yishuv may be defined as the community which was founded on a philanthropic base and depended upon the allocation of *ḥalukka* money. Jerusalem was the center of the Old

1 For a selection of similar expressions, see A. Druyanow, ed., *Documentary History of Hibbat Zion and the Settlement of Palestine* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv, 1925), II, pp. 350, 657, 741; J. Rivlin, *Joseph's Story: A Selection of Articles* (Hebrew), N. Katzburg, ed., (Ramat Gan, 1966), p. 160; M.L. Lilienblum, *On the Road to Emancipation* (Hebrew) (Warsaw, 1899), p. 6; Central Zionist Archives (hereafter cited as CZA), Eisenstadt Archives A 25/13, p. 349, cols. 18-19; *Ha-Meliz*, 1885, no. 16; 1889, no. 82-86. M. Freedman notes in his *Society and Religion: The Development of Non-Zionist Orthodoxy in Palestine, 1918-1936* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1977), that the terms were developed as a result of the distinctions drawn between traditional Jews and the modern Jewish community, that were current among members of the Enlightenment movement. I am indebted to the author for having brought his findings to my attention.

2 These Hebrew newspapers and periodicals include the labor organs *Ha-Aḥdut* and *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir*, as well as more general periodicals such as *Ha-Zevi*, and literary journals in Hebrew and Yiddish appearing in the Diaspora, mainly in eastern Europe.

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Zion and the Jewish Story: A History of the Jewish People, On the Road to the Land of Israel, ed. as CZA), 1. Freedman, 1918-1936 own between members of the Jewish attention. *ha-Za'ir*, as appearing in



Street peddler, Mea Shearim

Yishuv, but there were also other Old Yishuv towns such as Safed and Tiberias (known as “holy cities”) in the north. Jews in these towns belonged to the religious, orthodox community and their lives centered around *yeshivot*, *kolelim*, and *halukka* distribution. They formed the majority of the Jewish population in Palestine.³

Besides these general, objective definitions, a decidedly negative connotation attached to the term Old Yishuv when used by members of the New Yishuv. This was partially due to the ill feeling left by many years of bitter recriminations between the two camps. The Old Yishuv was seen as a continuation of Diaspora life, while the New Yishuv aspired to “renewal” and a severance of bonds from the Diaspora and all it stood for.

The Jewish community in Jerusalem which formed the majority of the city’s population, was therefore seen by the New Yishuv as nothing but a “Diaspora ghetto.”⁴ This mental image gave birth to further imputations:

- 3 *Ha-Ahdut*, 1910, no. 2; 1911, no. 34, 36, 38; 1912, no. 1-2; 1915, no. 1-2; *Ha-Shilo'ah*, 1897, p. 440; *Ha-Olam*, 1908, no. 27; *Ha-Moriyya*, 1912, no. 170; *Ha-Herut*, 1910, no. 38. See also, below, n. 26.
- 4 *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir*, 1909, no. 20-21; J. Aaronovitz, *Writings* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv, 1940), p. 152. R. Yana'it, in *On the Threshold: an Anthology Concerning Life and Literature* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1918), pp. 6-7: “The Jewish community as it is presently constituted, cannot serve as a model for the future. The Old Yishuv of Jerusalem, Tiberias and Safed, in its current form, is but a continuation of the Diaspora.” She argued that even the New Yishuv was, in essence, not new.

Most of the Old Yishuv does not work and depends for its livelihood upon unproductive labor; the people of the Old Yishuv are still held in the bonds of sleep and are immersed in a life of idleness which destroys their body, weakens their will, and forces them into the arms of a Diaspora-type existence which is an insult to man and to the Hebrew in him.⁵

The fact that some of the inhabitants of the "holy cities" were old people who had come to spend their remaining years in the Holy Land led to the generalization that the Mount of Olives was the desire and goal of anyone who came to Old Jerusalem. It is, therefore, no wonder that people spoke of the Old Yishuv as stagnating and incapable of any independent action.⁶ The members of socialist movements, and especially the people in the Socialist Zionist (Po'alei Zion) Party, who were influenced by Russian revolutionary terminology, denounced the "black forces of the Old Yishuv" and even employed the expression the "Jerusalem Black Hundreds."⁷

The epitome of insult was reached in the words of the writer Yosef Haim Brenner.⁸ In a controversy with the newspaper *Ha-Zevi* which claimed that the Old Yishuv was a strong organizational entity and was the most powerful group among the Jews in Palestine, Brenner displayed his known talent for sarcasm. He asked how *Ha-Zevi* dared to provoke the New Yishuv by comparing it with the Old Yishuv which is based upon

laziness, idleness, flattery, fraud, abasement, violence, selling their birthright for a mess of pottage, stealing pennies from the poor, intrigue, ... are you not aware, dear sirs, of the social and political state of affairs among the broken shards, the ever-receiving *shtreimlakh*, the vicious barons of the *kolelim*?⁹ All of the Old Yishuv is torn, divided and disintegrating.¹⁰

5 See *Ha-Ahdut*, 1912, no. 43-44, and also 29-30, which comment on "the Old Yishuv which continues in its rebellious way and does not want to abandon its age-old habits of idleness." Rabbi A. Y. Kook, *Letters* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1922), p. 186, notes the "lethargy" and "painful spirit" prevalent in the Old Yishuv. See also *Ha-Ahdut*, 1912, no. 1-2; 1914, no. 26, where the reference is to the farmers in the settlements who do not work their fields themselves.

6 *Ha-Olam*, 1908, no. 17. Among some groups, the negative image of this *aliya* was such that Palestine seemed like a "land of graves." In contrast, the young, vibrant *aliya* was seen as attempting to make it a "land of rebirth." See *Der Yidisher Arbeiter*, 1908, no. 11. J.A. Segal Weiss denounced the distortions inherent in this view in his memoirs, *At Your Gates, Jerusalem* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1949), p. 108, n. 2. See also *Ha-Zevi*, 1890, no. 6; *Ha-Ahdut*, 1911, no. 15; *Ha-Herut*, 1914, no. 219.

7 *Ha-Ahdut*, 1913, no. 46; *Der Umfang*, 1907, no. 1.

8 J. H. Brenner (1881-1921) was one of the most important modern Hebrew writers. He was active in the left-wing labor movement and was a frequent contributor to its press.

9 *Shtreimlakh* = a broad, flat hat, generally of fur-trimmed velvet, worn by some groups of Orthodox Jews from eastern Europe. *Kolelim* = groups which subsisted on funds collected for their support in their countries of origin. The money collected for this purpose, as well as the organization of the funding, was known as *halukka*.

10 *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir*, 1909, no. 10. The article was signed by Joseph Haver, and was a response to issue no. 102 of *Ha-Zevi*.

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A worker of the New Yishuv buying soap from a street vendor

Such was the negative image of the Old Yishuv, as portrayed by the caustic pen of Brenner who managed to include in one paragraph all of the derogatory and sneering expressions used against this community.

The New Yishuv

When, according to its own self-image, did the New Yishuv originate? While it did not proclaim its inception at the time, 1882 came to be regarded as its beginnings. In Zionist circles, 1907 was celebrated as the semi-jubilee of the beginning of the New Yishuv in Palestine. Five years later, the thirtieth year of the New Yishuv was designated as a time to re-evaluate its accomplishments in the light of its declared goals. It was claimed then that Jewish aliya, in its true sense, began only 30 years before,¹¹ although a few voices were heard expressing a different view.¹²

11 Text of the invitation to the semi-jubilee celebration of the founding of the New Yishuv, dated 1 Tammuz, 5667 (CZA A/25/59); *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir*, 1909, no. 1. For the various periods of the New Yishuv, see *Ha-Me'ir*, 1912, no. 2, p. 93. See also *Ha-Ahdut*, 1911, no. 44-45; 1912, no. 7; *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir*, 1911, no. 14-15; M. Sheinkin, *Words of Peace and Truth: An Open Letter to the Jewish Communities of Turkey* (Hebrew) (Jaffa, 1911), p. 7.

12 See Y. Kaniel, "The Controversy Between Petah-Tiqva and Rishon Lezion Concerning the Primacy of Settlement and its Historical Significance," (Hebrew), *Cathedra* 9 (October 1978).

What exactly did the New Yishuv renew or create? What were its aspirations? Who represented it? Contemporary sources shed light on these questions. The name New Yishuv was often applied to the institutions which came into being as a result of the Hibbat Zion movement and which were mainly founded by Baron Rothschild and by several public groups. The first colonists were the pioneers of the New Yishuv; their task—national revival. It was hoped that they would lay the foundations for the rebuilding of the nation, for a great, vibrant, and authentic national movement. The New Yishuv projected a youthful image and advocated a new value system based on order and discipline, with internal rule in the colonies, and free of the stamp of the Diaspora.¹³

According to sources of the pre-war years, the New Yishuv was founded with Zionist backing. It was to create and strengthen the economic foundation of the Jews in Palestine, and to supply work and a livelihood to the masses of the people, thereby tapping their own individual and community initiatives and energies. "The New Yishuv is a vibrant body which will bring forth fruit to those who labor for it," wrote *Ha-Ivri*, the organ of the religious-Zionist Mizrachi party in 1912, on the occasion of a visit by a delegation of colonists to Baron Rothschild in Paris to repay a 400,000 francs loan.¹⁴ Jewish farmers and agricultural workers, as well as urban artisans and merchants who lived "modern, productive lives," were included in the New Yishuv. And so, a new *working yishuv* was spoken of. Alongside the agricultural settlements which were to be its mainstay, were the cities of the New Yishuv, Jaffa and Haifa. The influence of the New Yishuv was not felt in the older towns. "The angels of the New Yishuv touched Jerusalem only with the tips of their wings."¹⁵ Such was the self-portrait drawn by the New Yishuv.

The Old Yishuv saw things differently. They disagreed heartily with the glowing description the New Yishuv accorded itself. At times, their appraisal of the New Yishuv was negative indeed. "The rabble-like New Yishuv, which for several years has been flooding our Holy Land, still clings to its old ways and haughtily tramples upon the commandments of the Torah," wrote the *Havazzelet* in 1909, apparently referring to the young people of the Second Aliya.¹⁶ When they compared their own ways of life with that of the farmers in the settlements, the Old Yishuv suffered no feelings of inferiority. On the contrary, they felt superior. *They* knew how to manage under difficult conditions. The sums which the settlers of Zikhron Ya'aqov or Rishon Lezion spent "on clothing and for

13 *Ha-Zeman*, 1907, no. 86. A.D. Gordon, *Nation and Labor* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1952), pp. 107-108, writes that "for the time being, the entire enterprise of building the new Jewish homeland rests on the shoulders of the members of the New Yishuv." See also *Ha-Ahdut*, 1911, no. 2-3; *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir*, 1913, no. 1.

14 *Ha-Ivri*, 1912, no. 48.

15 *Havazzelet*, 1907, no. 34; Labor Party Archives (hereafter cited as LPA), M. Sheinkin Archives, V105/12. His definition appears in a speech about the Jews of Palestine before the war. See also *Ha-Ahdut*, 1914, no. 22-23, and no. 25 on the importance of the work of Baron Rothschild. In this context, it is interesting to note that the old agricultural settlement of Peki'in is included in the New Yishuv. See *Ha-Shilo'ah*, 1897, p. 353: "Although Peki'in is not a new colony and was not spawned by the ideology of the New Yishuv, the lifestyle of its members so closely resembles that of the New Yishuv that it deserves to be included in it." *Ha-Ahdut*, 1911, no. 38; 1912, no. 1-2, mention Jaffa and Haifa as "cities of the New Yishuv."

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their daughters, would suffice to support us for an entire year. Want and suffering will not leave their mark upon us. They are our abiding companions. Our forbearance is great, and we work as faithfully and as hard as any Jewish farmer,"¹⁷ the *Havazzelet* declared in 1895.

Towards a Redefinition

Thirty years or so after the beginning of the modern settlement period, social and intellectual changes began to emerge within the Jewish community. The old frameworks gradually weakened, and fierce rivalries, bitterness, and anger gave way to a sober reevaluation of positions. Ideas were changing in keeping with newly evolving interests. It became increasingly evident that the divisions between the Old Yishuv and the New Yishuv were no longer valid. We can see this change reflected in the documentary material of the period.

The Socialist Party members of the Second Aliya expanded the term Old Yishuv to include the farmer-settlers with whom they differed both ideologically and pragmatically, settlers who lived in

colonies in which the farmers' attitudes are slowly coming to resemble those of the communities of Jerusalem and Safed. These very same farmers and communal leaders believe it is possible for Jewish settlement to develop without the use of Jewish labor. This Old Yishuv of ours is totally defective.¹⁸

Pronouncements such as these point to a transition to a more flexible definition of the terms Old Yishuv and New Yishuv. However, farmers and communal leaders who were tagged with a specific label did not necessarily live according to the mores and traditions of that group. Often these labels were applied as a protest against the inaction and shortsightedness of the oldtimers and the Zionist establishment.

The need for redefinition was felt by all levels of society. The Old Yishuv resented being labeled an enemy of the Jewish community and of Jewish self-labor. Its members began to understand that the new settlers were not as antagonistic to religion and tradition as they had been led to believe. There were many, even among the workers' movement, who called for the unification of both groups, and the creation of a single community of Jewish laborers.¹⁹

17 *Havazzelet*, 1895, no. 22, 49. This view was later accepted by members of the Second Aliya: "The new Palestinian Yishuv, like the old, is supported in its entirety by charity funds and is completely corrupted by its solicitation." See *Ha-Ahдут*, 1912, no. 14-15, which reports on the sessions of the second convention of Po'alei Yehuda.

18 *Ha-Po'el ha-Zair*, 1911, no. 18; see also *Ha-Shilo'ah*, 1905, p. 484: "Our New Yishuv is already 25 years old. The title 'new' is no longer appropriate, both because of its age and because of its character and content. It already smells of old age. The label 'new-old' coined by one of our communal leaders at the Zihron conference, is in truth beginning to fit."

19 *Ha-Moriyya*, 1913, no. 330; 1914, no. 402; *Havazzelet*, 1896, no. 13; *Ha-Herut*, 1913, no. 309; *Ha-Ahдут*, 1911, no. 2-3; *Ha-Ivri*, 1911, no. 10. See J.H. Brenner's reactions to this article in *Ha-Ahдут*, 1911, no. 24.

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As Seen in Zionist Historiography

No definition was given for the term Old Yishuv in Izhak Ben-Zvi's book on the Jewish settlement in Palestine under Ottoman rule. When discussing the influx of immigrants—both Ḥasidim and Perushim—at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, he emphasized the role of the latter group. The Ḥasidim settled mainly in the Galilee—in Tiberias and Safed—while the Perushim, followers of the Gaon of Vilna, were concentrated in Jerusalem where they played a decisive role in the life of the city. "They laid the foundations of the Old Ashkenazi community in the city, and succeeded in impressing their stamp upon it." Elsewhere, Ben-Zvi refers to the Old Yishuv as being the urban populace in the country, especially in the four "holy cities."²⁰

Three different methods of classification enter into the definition of the Old Yishuv:

1. *The time factor.* The Old Yishuv coalesced as a community at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as a result of the aliya of the Perushim and the consequent foundation of the old Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem. Although Ben-Zvi credits the Perushim with its formation, the term Old Yishuv was broadened to include the Ḥasidim as well. Since no distinction is made between Ḥasidim and Perushim when discussing the Old Yishuv, we can assume that the origins of the Old Yishuv are to be found in the ḥasidic aliya of the end of the eighteenth century.²¹ That aliya marked the renewal of Ashkenazi immigration in organized groups which did not dissolve upon arrival in the Holy Land, but coalesced, took root, and laid the foundation for the expansion and growth of the Jewish community in Palestine.

2. *The ethnic factor.* The expression Old Yishuv refers only to the Ashkenazi Jews. The Sephardi Jews who were a majority of the Jewish population until the 1880s,²² were not included in that term. Accordingly, "Old Yishuv" did not indicate chronological priority or earlier settlement in Palestine, since the Sephardi community was older and more rooted in the country.

3. *The geographical factor.* The Old Yishuv is defined as the Jewish communities of the four "holy cities"—Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias.

Accepted Zionist historiography views the period starting in the 1880s as the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the Jewish community in Palestine. The motivating factors behind the First Aliya (1882-1904) were different from those of the previous immigration waves. The First Aliya was characterized by a strong national and political ideology whose goal was the creation of a healthy, new foundation—both social and economic—

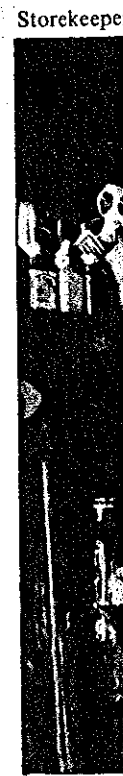
20 I. Ben-Zvi, *Palestine and Its Settlement During Ottoman Rule* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem, 1963), pp. 306, 413.

21 Y. Klausner, *A Nation Awakened* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem, 1962), ch. 1, dates the beginning of the Old Yishuv to the immigration of the Ḥasidim and Perushim. M. Eliav, *Love of Zion and the Hod Kolel* (Hebrew), (Tel Aviv, 1971), p. 9; A.R. Malakhi, *Chapters in the History of the Old Yishuv* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv, 1971), introduction. See also M. Eliav, *The Development of the Old Yishuv in the Nineteenth Century: Chapters in the History of the Jewish Settlement in Jerusalem*, (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1973) I, p. 45; idem, *Palestine and its Jewish Community in the Nineteenth Century, 1777-1917* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 75-76.

22 J. Ben-Arye, "The Growth of the Jewish Community in Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century," *Perakim* 1:108, fig. 1; M. Eliav, "Intercommunal Relations within the Yishuv at the end of the Ottoman Period," *Offprint from the International Conference on Jewish Communities in Muslim Lands* (1973), p. 8.



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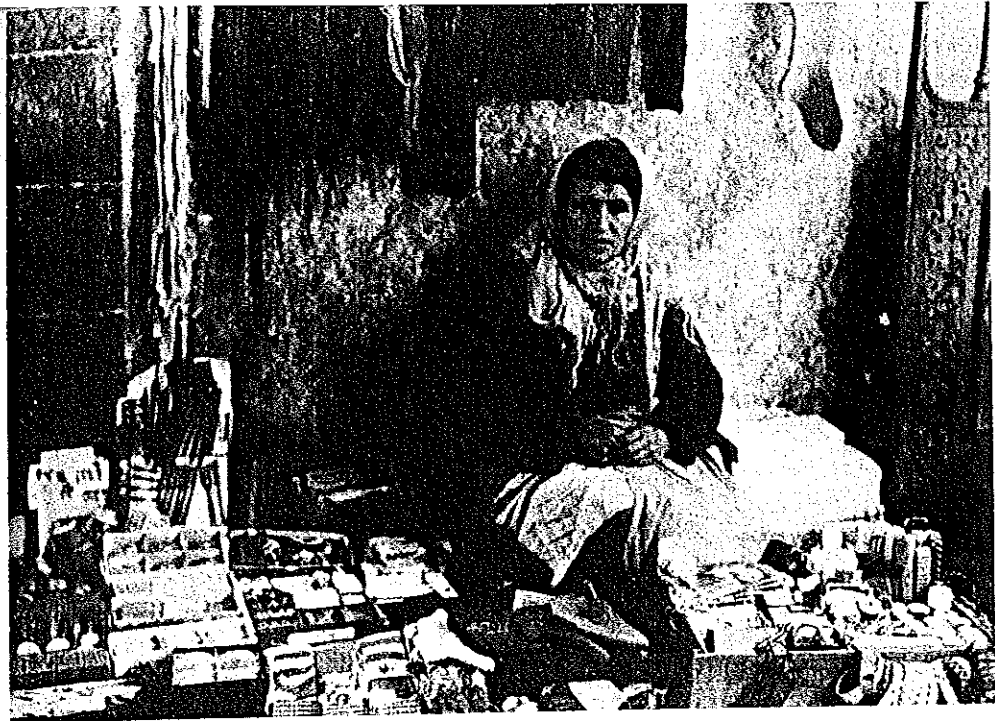
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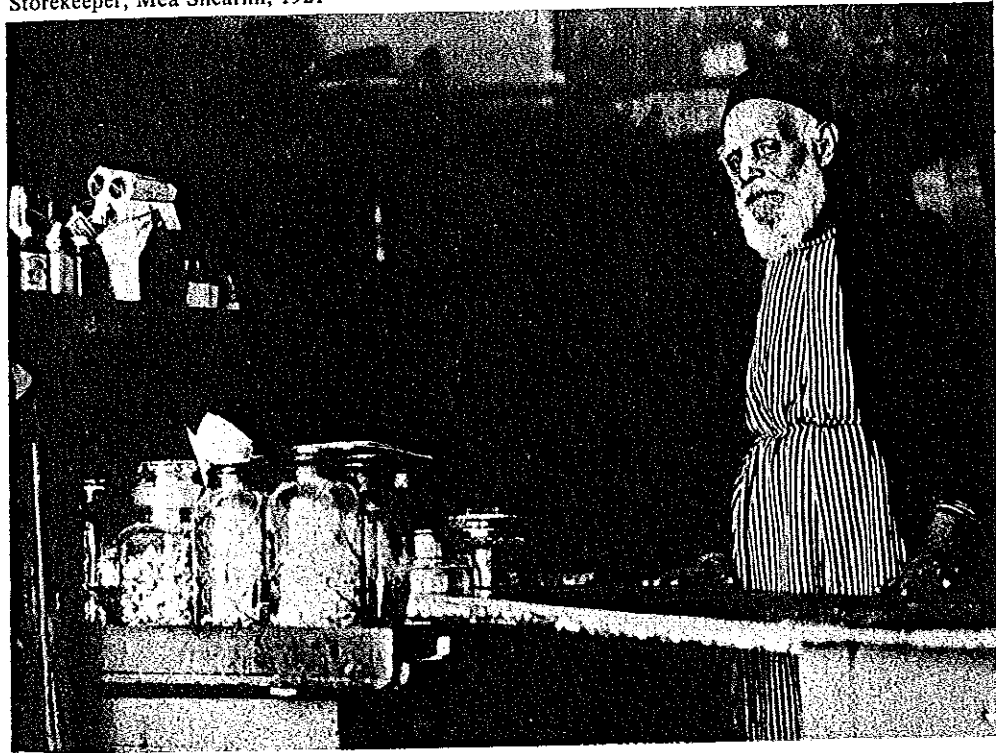
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Storekeeper, the Old City of Jerusalem, 1931

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for the Jewish community in Palestine.²³ Therefore, those Jews who were in the country before 1880 are considered as belonging to the Old Yishuv; the New Yishuv consists of Jews who came to the country thereafter.²⁴

Methodological Difficulties in Determining Group Identification

While it might seem that the expressions Old Yishuv and New Yishuv can be defined most clearly in terms of chronology—the Old Yishuv antedating the 1880s when the New Yishuv had its beginnings—these definitions are inadequate and present many difficulties when applied to the First and Second Aliyot (1882-1914), and especially when attempting to understand the relationships (usually conceived as being highly antagonistic) between the two groups during this period.

Moreover, while the generally accepted images of the Old and the New Yishuv reflect a certain reality, they are too general and overly simplified. They do not provide sufficient information for answering specific questions. For example: did a given social, cultural, or economic activity take place within the framework of the Old Yishuv or the New? Did it have any bearing upon the relationship between the two groups? To answer questions of this sort, a more specific definition for each group is required. The following are some of the methodological difficulties of determining who belongs to which group.²⁵

1. Immigration to Palestine after the 1880s was not homogeneous and was not comprised solely of New Yishuv people. It is difficult to ascertain how many of the immigrants were imbued with the new nationalistic spirit, although they undoubtedly are the ones who set the tone. It is clear, however, that the Old Yishuv continued to grow after 1882, not only through a natural increase in the population, but because of a steady stream of new immigrants. It seems that a large percentage of the immigrants joined the Old Yishuv rather than the New; the Old Yishuv continued to be the majority of the Jewish population in the country.²⁶

23 B.Z. Dinur, ed., *History of the Hagana*, vol. I, pt. I (Tel Aviv, 1965), p. 28. For the uniqueness of the First Aliya, see M. Breslavski, *Workers and Their Organizations in the First Aliya* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv, 1961), p. 13; A. Yavnieli, *The Hibbat Zion Era*, (Tel Aviv, 1961) I, pp. 13-14.

24 See G. Yardeni, *The Hebrew Press in Palestine, 1863-1904* (Tel Aviv, 1969). The first part of the book covers the period until 1882 and is entitled "The Era of the Old Yishuv." See also J. Slutzki, *Introduction to the History of the Israeli Labor Movement* (Tel Aviv, 1973), p. 123; M. Freedman, "The Structure of Communal Leadership and the Rabbinate in the Old Ashkenazi Community in the Wake of Ottoman Rule," *Perakim* I, p. 274. The author notes that the term "old" has significance only in relation to the term "new."

25 Similar methodological difficulties were noted by A.M. Lifschitz in an article "The Old Yishuv," in his collected *Writings* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem, 1957), 3, pp. 141-154. They are also discussed by I. Kolatt, "The Organization of the New Yishuv and the Consolidation of its Political Consciousness Prior to World War I," (Hebrew) *Keshet* 48 (summer 1970):22.

26 For the importance of immigration as a counterbalance to the natural decline in the population, see A. Schmeltz, "Singular Trends in the Demography of the Jews of Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century," *Perakim* 3, pp. 52-76. Prior to World War I there were about 45,000 Jews in Jerusalem, of whom more than 27,000 belonged to the various *kolelim* and received *halukka* money. See *Ha-Shilo'ah*, 1911, p. 271; *Ha-Olam*, 1913, no. 17 (a printing error, "no. 16," appears on page 16). *Ha-Ahdut*, 1911, no. 36, notes that in Tiberias there is an old Jewish community "which is two-thirds of the total population." See n. 3, above.

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2. During the period under discussion, the four "holy cities" had the largest concentration of Old Yishuv people, but influential centers of the New Yishuv also developed in those cities. On the other hand, members of the Old Yishuv lived in New Yishuv towns such as Jaffa and Haifa. In other words, the cities were heterogeneous, and geographical location is therefore not a reliable indicator. The agricultural settlements were undoubtedly populated by people from the New Yishuv, but even there it was difficult to define the groups.

3. The Old Yishuv was purportedly a dependent society, supported by *halukka* monies, charity, and donations from abroad, and recipients of *halukka* were required to live according to the social norms of the Old Yishuv. But can "recipients of *halukka*" really be considered as a definition for the Old Yishuv? We find that some of the people who were allocated *halukka* money were members of settlements!²⁷ Did they belong to the Old or to the New Yishuv? It can be argued that the money these settlers received was only a tiny sum, and that the vast portion of their earnings derived from their own labor. But the sums which were distributed by the *halukka* in most of the *kolelim* were always very small. This was especially true during this period when the Old Yishuv grew rapidly, but the money available did not increase proportionately. In most instances, the *halukka* was barely enough to pay rent, and did not provide for even bare necessities.²⁸ The Old Yishuv population looked for other sources of sustenance, a fact clearly expressed by one of the Bilu members:

In Russia it is thought that the *halukka* recipients do not work but rather sit in the synagogue saying Psalms. They forget that the maximum *halukka* distribution is 15 to 20 roubles a year, a sum insufficient for minimal existence. But one must eat and drink even in the Holy Land. And so Jews are beginning to work in all the professions and trades.²⁹

Dependence on outside support also existed in the New Yishuv. Some of the new settlements were supported by Baron Rothschild, others by the Hovevei Zion movement, and later, by the Zionist organizations. There is a difference between the two groups insofar as the members of the New Yishuv worked for the money they received and viewed this financial assistance as temporary, while *halukka* was an established, ideologically justified institution. Still, references were made to the "new *halukka*" and to "charity." The workers' movements of the Second Aliya spoke of the farmers and

27 See, for example, LPA 105V/18, Sheinkin Archive, report dated 23 Sivan 5671, on the recipients of *halukka* in the Galilee settlements. It should be noted that the practice, though not widespread, was prevalent enough to arouse attention.

28 A.S. Herschberg, *The Way of the New Yishuv* (Hebrew), (Vilna, 1901), p. 8; *Ha-Shilo'ah*, 1911, p. 273.

29 Druyanow (above, n. 1), p. 551. A.M. Lutz, *Palestine Almanac* 4 (Hebrew) (1899), p. 163, notes that "almost nine-tenths of Jerusalem's populace are employed and working in various crafts and trades." On this, see S. Avizur, "Economic Shifts and Transitions to a Working Lifestyle in the Old Yishuv," (Hebrew) *Keshet* 13 (spring 1971):102-124.



Yemenite rabbi and *heder* children, 1912

leadership of the First Aliya as "*halukka* Jews," thereby comparing them to the Old Yishuv.³⁰

The desire to achieve a strong economic base was shared by both groups, although the New Yishuv was more successful in realizing this goal. Some sectors in the Old Yishuv wished to forego the *halukka*; to set up "companies" to establish new settlements and to work the land; to be productive; to leave the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem; and to build and develop Jewish urban centers. These initiatives mitigate the negative image of the Old Yishuv, an image which stemmed to a large degree from the Zionist concept which viewed labor on the land as the true expression of a new, full, Jewish life.

Thus, although the Old Yishuv is usually equated with the recipients of *halukka* money, the *halukka* itself and the term "people of the *halukka*" referring to those receiving financial assistance from the Diaspora do not, by themselves, constitute a sufficient definition of the Old Yishuv. Nor is the absence of *halukka*, or the presence of a

30 *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir*, 1914, no. 35; *Ha-Ahdut*, 1911, no. 2-3. At a Po'alei Zion council meeting, J. Zerubavel said: "For decades, philanthropic funds have been flowing here from all corners of the earth, not only to the Old Yishuv, but to the New and Young Yishuv as well. And we stand around and hope... maybe the Baron... the Zionists... and we're not overcome with revulsion and it doesn't even upset us. Is it possible that this *yishuv*, even the new one, cannot create anything by itself?"

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productive livelihood based on industry or commerce, in itself, a valid definition of the New Yishuv.

4. Neither can strict observance of religious law and a traditional Jewish way of life be used to define either group, for many of the farmer-settlers and residents of Jaffa and Haifa identified completely with the Old Yishuv. It is commonly assumed that the extreme stand taken on the Sabbatical year was characteristic of the Old Yishuv; indeed, they were accused of using the Sabbatical year as a weapon to destroy the New Yishuv. But there were farmers in the settlements who were careful to implement the most demanding and strict rabbinical prohibitions concerning the Sabbatical year. Were they part of the Old Yishuv or the New?

The old-style orthodox educational system (the *heder*) is also held to be characteristic of the Old Yishuv. However, many settlers answered the call of the Old Yishuv in Jerusalem and sent their children to learn in *heder*-type schools which were set up in the settlements by the Jerusalem Shomrei Torah ("Guardians of the Torah") organization. These schools met with considerable success and were the cause of many disputes between orthodox and secular members of the settlements.

A coalition was formed by people from the Old Yishuv, the settlements, and the towns, who viewed with alarm the spreading secularism of their time.³¹ This regrouping of the religious community led to the creation of a new religious trend with a different image. Here was further proof that adherence to religion was not a mark of the Old Yishuv alone.

5. It is generally assumed that the founders of the Old Yishuv viewed their immigration to Palestine as a religious act; they wished to dedicate themselves to Torah study. On the other hand, the image of the New Yishuv is that of a group aspiring to national revival and the creation of a new and productive way of life for the Jew. But within the second and third generation of the Old Yishuv, particularly in the period under review here, the goals of the original immigrants had faded. These goals still provided the formal guidelines and the ideological basis for the community, but many people were unable, or unwilling, to pattern their everyday lives on them, and the younger generations already looked beyond Torah study for sources of livelihood in productive occupations.³²

6. The Old Yishuv was not a monolithic, homogeneous body. It included people of many opinions. Some strove to acquire a moderate, secular education; others wished to liberalize the Old Yishuv from within. It is difficult to decide if these symptoms and manifestations were *bona fide* Old Yishuv characteristics, or if they were the result of the influence of the New Yishuv. Or perhaps the boundaries between the two were indistinct.

31 As examples, we might mention the struggle against the B'nei Moshe Society in the 1890s. It was waged not by the members of the Old Yishuv, but by orthodox nationalists led by Y.M. Pines. Similarly, the dispute between the laborers and farmers of Petah Tiqva, though socio-religious in nature, was viewed by the laborers as a struggle against the forces of reaction and the *halukka* regime.

32 LPA 105V/12. Sheinkin notes that the middle-aged and young people of the Old Yishuv already sought employment in commerce and crafts, and strove for a life of creativity through labor.

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There were persons such as Yehiel Michal Pines whose activities placed them in the New Yishuv, while their mode of life and their refusal to accept the New Yishuv's ideology identified them with the Old Yishuv.

7. The negative image of the Old Yishuv presents a picture of religious fanatics handing out edicts of excommunication. But it is always the more extreme elements in a community who make themselves heard, and, at times, they force their doctrines upon the community at large through the use of social or other sanctions, while more moderate opinions are suppressed.³³

8. Some of the problems which existed between the two groups were simply a normal result of the friction between established settlers and new immigrants. During this period, the original Old Yishuv was constantly and successfully absorbing large numbers of new immigrants. However the New Yishuv types which now appeared on the scene were an alien and antagonistic element.

9. We have seen how the term Old Yishuv was usually applied to the Ashkenazi Jews. But what about those Sephardim who, on the whole, were self-supporting? Not receiving *halukka* money, they joined or worked in the new settlements, and generally supported the nationalist aspirations of the New Yishuv.³⁴ Were they part of the New Yishuv or not? Clearly it is necessary to examine each individual incident or statement under consideration in order to decide.

10. The images of both groups, and especially the negative image of the Old Yishuv, were to a great degree the result of the journalistic literature of the period. Fiery denunciations portrayed the Old Yishuv as parasitic, populated by the powers of darkness, whose corrupt leadership was determined to halt any social progress and whose main goal was to destroy the New Yishuv.³⁵ On the other hand, the loud accusations

33 Rabbi Mohilever, for example, in summing up his visit to Jerusalem as head of the Hovevei Zion delegation in 1890, similarly emphasized the moderation he found in the city: "We discovered thousands of wholesome, God-fearing people in the city, learned in the Torah, modest and moderate, who are not part of the religious fanatics. They are tolerant, self-effacing and fine human beings." See his report, "The Purpose of My Trip to Our Holy Land," *The Book of Samuel* (Hebrew), ed. by J.L. Ha-Cohen Fishman (Jerusalem, 1923), p. 48.

34 I. Bartal points to the integration of the Sephardi community into the new and modern economic processes as an expression of the New Yishuv within that community. It also seems that the *values* of the New Yishuv were similarly present within groups of that community. However, the matter requires further investigation and clarification.

35 This tendency was noted, in brief, by B.Z. Gat, *The Jewish Community in Palestine, 1840-1881* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1963), p. 7. Contemporary scholars have sometimes been similarly influenced by this approach. See, for example, G. Yardeni (above, n. 24), p. 248, "the many hornets' nests in Jerusalem"; on pp. 145-146 she describes Jerusalem officials in a somewhat ridiculing and biting manner. See also G. Kressel, *The Planters of Hope* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1976), p. 60, where the author criticizes one of the Torah scholars because his stance is so sharply opposed to our own nationalistic point of view. Rabbi Joseph Rivlin, one of the leaders of the Joint Kolelim Committee, in remarks made to a visiting delegation of Hovevei Zion in 1890, made note of the negative image of the Old Yishuv which was presented in the press and periodicals: "They stripped them of their human dimensions and instead projected the image of a wild animal, an animal with mouth agape for the purpose of devouring *halukka* and philanthropy, screaming unceasingly, 'Give! Give!'" See H.M. Mikhlin, *In the Mirror of the Generations* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv, 1950), pp. 58-59.

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about the New Yishuv abandoning the faith of their fathers, especially in the settlements, were exaggerated. And the image of the First and Second Aliyot, depicted as waves of idealistic immigrants coming to revive the Jewish nation and ready to sacrifice all, were, despite a core of truth, exaggerated.

In summation, when using the terms "Old Yishuv" and "New Yishuv," it is important to specify and define the particular characteristics pertinent to the discussion. Simplistic generalizations can only be misleading.

The following three characteristics help identify groups or individuals as belonging to the Old Yishuv during the period of the First and the Second Aliya:

1. A spiritual attachment to the values that guided the founding members of the Old Yishuv.
2. An organic association with *kolelim*.
3. Attachment to the way of life (including clothing and external appearance) and customs developed in the four "holy cities" prior to the 1880s, which was preserved during the period of the New Yishuv.

Those who met all these criteria may be considered as belonging to the Old Yishuv. Those who did not fit within this framework may be identified as belonging organically to the Sephardi community or to the New Yishuv, whose members included all ethnic groups within the Jewish population of Palestine.

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