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MOSHE SHERTOK AND THE ARAB PROBLEM: FIRST STEPS, 1931-1933

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Abstract

Moshe Shertok's nomination in 1931 as secretary of the Political Department and head of its Arab Bureau earmarked him as the Zionist movement's leading figure in regard to the Arab subject.

Shertok built the primary political foundations for the relationships established between the Zionist movement and Emir Abdullah of Trans-Jordan. He laid the groundwork for the Yishuv's intelligence system in the field of running agents and informers. During this period, up to his nomination as head of the Political Department in 1933, Shertok formulated the Yishuv's Arab strategy. He soon became aware that the Mufti's growing power and the rise of the Istiklal party would necessitate that the Yishuv manage the conflict in light of the fact that there was no Palestinian leadership with which any agreement could be reached.

INTRODUCTION

Moshe Shertok was the main figure in the Zionist movement who tended to the Arab issue between 1931 and 1948. He became secretary of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency and head of its Arab Section in October 1931, and head of Department from 1933 until May 1948.

The article focuses on Shertok's "Arab background", examines what prepared him to become the dominant figure in the Labor Movement dealing with this subject, and records his contribution to forming and running the Arab Section. Shertok, in fact, continued to manage the Arab section up to 1939. Only then did the section become a branch of the Department and Damascus-born Eliyahu Sasson was nominated as its head.

SHERTOK'S "ARAB" BACKGROUND

In 1906 Shertok's father Yaakov chose to live in the Arab village of Ein Siniya north of Ramallah. As a twelve-year-old, Moshe learned to speak Arabic. He established close ties with the villagers, especially with "my teacher and mentor Abu Auda, who did not know how to read and write, one of my life's greatest teachers, from whom I learned the Arab

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language, Arab accent, Arab religion and Arab folklore and practical knowledge beyond compare.”¹ In 1908 the family moved to Jaffa. Shertok studied at Herzliya Gymnasium where he continued to learn Arabic, with teacher Ibrahim Abu Nader.² In 1915 he enlisted in the Ottoman Army and graduated from the officers course. He served until May 1916 as an interpreter for Damascus’ chief engineer Gdalyahu Wilbushevitz, a senior adviser to the Turkish commander of Syria and Palestine, Jamal Pasha. For five months he lived in the city’s Jewish quarter, experiencing its culture and life. Throughout his military service in WW I Shertok was among Arabs.³ On his return to Palestine he was nominated as aide to Yehoshua Hankin, head of the Zionist Commission’s land department.⁴ Working alongside him from February 1919 until October 1920 Shertok gained first-hand knowledge of the country, its Arab inhabitants, and the problematic relations of two nations occupying the same land.⁵

Arab affairs were also the concern of the Zionist Commission’s Press Department, headed by Zeev Jabotinsky with the aid of Avraham Almaliach⁶ in charge of the Department’s Arab section. The Committee of Arab Affairs headed by Chaim Margalioth Kalvarisky began to function in 1920.⁷

Shertok worked among officials who dealt with the Arab subject, and knew the central figures dealing with the Arab subject in the Zionist movement who were involved in this field.

In March 1920 Hankin and Shertok signed an agreement (drafted by Shertok) with the Najib Zafer group,⁸ a Lebanese activist close to the Maronite patriarch Abdullah Khoury, which stated that Palestine would be split from Syria and that the Jewish national home would be established in it.⁹ This was one of many attempts by Zionists close to the Arab issue to try to save the Faisal regime in Damascus, which collapsed four months later. Najib Zafer came frequently to Shertok’s office in 1931 and 1936–37

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carrying various proposals for cooperation between the Zionist movement, the Maronite Christians, and the Druze.¹⁰

THE 1929 DISTURBANCES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Between 1922 and 1928 Jewish-Arab relations were relatively peaceful. In these years Shertok studied at the London School of Economics and later became an editor in the *Davar* daily. The Zionist Executive was completely unprepared for the 1929 disturbances. Experts on the Arab problem, Michael Asaf¹¹ and Kalvarisky, thought that one of the failures leading to the disturbances and to the deterioration in Jewish-Arab relations was the lack of a Jewish newspaper in Arabic.

David Ben-Gurion was asked, as secretary of the Histadrut, to participate in a joint meeting of the Zionist Executive and the Zionist Commission to discuss the ways of handling the Arab issue. He strove to have the Histadrut publish the newspaper. It was decided that Moshe Shertok would be the Labor Movement's representative in the committee set up by the Zionist Commission and the Zionist leadership to study the editorial and financial issues involved with the publication of such a paper.

The only one who in those years regularly published articles in the Arab press in Palestine and neighboring countries, as well as in the Jewish press in Arabic, was Sasson who wrote independently and frequently criticized both the Arab and the Jewish sides. In 1928, after settling in Jerusalem, he pushed for the publication of a Jewish paper in Arabic, with the hope of being its editor. Asaf, editor of the Arabic section of *Davar*, called for the need to begin talking with the Arabs, emphasizing the lack of a public dialogue between Jews and Arabs in Palestine.

Kalvarisky, who had headed the Arab bureau of the Zionist Executive, prepared a memorandum on "the Arab question"¹² in which he wrote:

There is not one Arab newspaper in the country which would stand by us ... An organ ... which would explain to the Arabs in Arabic that our goal is not to destroy them ... but to work together with them ... is as necessary as a breath of fresh air. In my opinion, the

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[Zionist] executive should publish a monthly or bi-monthly magazine, ... in which the reader will find Zionism's official view ... It would be good if the paper would be published by Brit Shalom association, which has a good name within well-known Arab circles.¹³

Most probably, the proposal to put the publication of the newspaper in the hands of Brit Shalom made the whole idea irrelevant. Kalvarisky did not regard graduates of Herzliya Gymnasium, such as Shertok, or of the Hebrew Gymnasium in Jerusalem as possible editors, and remarked cynically, "The Alliance yeshivas and schools gave us persons such as Professor Shalom Yehuda and David Yellin, Yosef Meyuchas,¹⁴ and Yoel Yosef Rivlin while the gymnasiums – nothing in this aspect."

Once the Arab question was seriously raised at the Zionist Executive, the Zionist Commission, and the Histadrut Executive, it was only natural that Shertok was considered the Labor movement's representative to deal with the Arab subject, together with Yitzhak Ben-Zvi. At the joint meeting of the Zionist Commission and the Zionist Executive Ben-Gurion urged for new ways to reach out to the Arab public with an emphasis on publicizing the Zionist view in Arabic. Eliezer Kaplan, his colleague in the labor movement, called for issuing a special Arabic paper, perhaps a supplement of *Davar* – a clear hint of who he saw as being in charge of editing the paper. It was decided to set up a special committee to take care of all the relevant questions regarding the Arab problem and mainly with publishing the newspaper in Arabic.¹⁵ The committee members were Yosef Lurie¹⁶ (chairman), Ben-Zvi, Hankin, Yitzhak Shemi, and Shertok.¹⁷ As to the question of who would be the newspaper's editor, Lurie proposed people such as Yehuda Burla or Rivlin, and as their assistants Nissim Malul¹⁸ and Sasson.

Pinchas Rutenberg, the new chairman of the National Council, proposed Shertok for the job, but Shertok preferred to continue his work on *Davar*, because he liked his job and was aware of his importance as editor of the English edition. He was also aware

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of the considerable practical, financial, and political difficulties involved with establishment of such a paper.

The newspaper was never published. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the view of Shertok's friends and of main figures of the Zionist Executive and the Zionist Commission that Shertok was the most appropriate person to run the paper is indicative of the broad esteem with which he was held in regard to the Arab problem.

Unlike Ben-Gurion, who vehemently pushed for the publication of a Jewish newspaper in Arabic, Shertok did not see this as a principal issue. He was reluctant in giving it his support. Shertok assessed that the 1929 disturbances were mainly caused by the financial interests of the Husseini family, which utilized the events for emphasizing the religious element of the conflict thereby elevating the status of the Supreme Muslim Committee (controlled exclusively by the Mufti Haj Amin el Husseini¹⁹ and his family) in the Arab world and weakening their opponents in the Palestinian national movement.²⁰ Ben-Gurion's memorandum to the Socialist International used Shertok's assessment of the 1929 disturbances.²¹

The 1936 disturbances led to a renewal of the demands to establish the newspaper in Arabic, and Ben-Gurion and Shertok were criticized by members of Mapai and of the JAE (Jewish Agency Executive) for not doing so. Ben-Gurion said that "he admits to one sin, that we did not issue an Arabic newspaper."²² Shertok, however, raised his objections, claiming that those demanding the publication of the paper were mainly concerned with satisfying the need in the Yishuv to know that such a paper had been established, while ignoring the grave difficulties of doing so and the very slim chances of its influencing the Arabs.²³ Shertok did not consider this vital or necessary, and clarified that there was nobody in the Political Department who could be given the full responsibility of publishing a newspaper in Arabic.

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SECRETARY OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT
AND HEAD OF THE ARAB SECTION

When Haim Arlosoroff became head of the Political Department in August 1931 he wanted Shertok both as secretary of the Department and as head of its Arab Affairs Section. With a broad education, a member of the labor movement, capable of carrying out both duties, Shertok fulfilled all these requirements but ran afoul of the firm objection of Berl Katznelson, who was unwilling to release him from *Davar*. After two months of deliberations in Mapai Shertok took up his duties in the Department. He soon realized that he was facing several obstacles interfering with the proper functioning of the Arab Section.

The first obstacle was Kalvarisky, previously in charge of Arab affairs until Shertok began his job. He was dismissed by Kisch, head of the Political Department before Arlosoroff, but who now tried to take advantage of the changing of the guard to gain back his position. Arlosoroff reduced his post to half-time. A few months later, disputes between Arlosoroff and Shertok with Kalvarisky led to his dismissal in October 1932.

The second obstacle was the meager budget, which was reduced from £P13,500 in Kisch's time to £P3,500. Shertok was unable to retain the section's personnel and was left only with Aharon Chaim Cohen,²⁴ who was close to Ben-Zvi. Cohen, regarded by Kisch as "young, brave, resourceful, able to infiltrate any Arab gathering and to return with most reliable information",²⁵ soon became Shertok's right-hand-man. From 1929–31 he was the handler of the informer "Naaman", Abdel Rahim Abu Naama from Battir village. When Shertok began his job, Kalvarisky served as an advisor working directly with Arlosoroff, and Cohen was the section clerk. There was bad blood between Cohen and Kalvarisky. Cohen told Shertok what he thought about Kalvarisky's performance. In a testimony given in 1953 Cohen said, "During its existence the combined section spent

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thousands of pounds ... there were wimps in the section. These thieves and crooks ... the information coming in was worthless, most of it was taken from the press, but Kalvarisky, who was not proficient in Arabic, did not notice it.”²⁶

The third obstacle ensued from Ben Zvi's demand to return to the patterns of work prevailing during Kisch's tenure – a joint Arab section for the Jewish Agency and the National Council. The dispute in Mapai whether to release Shertok from *Davar* and the uncertainty created a vacuum. Many vied for the position. Most prominent among them were Kalvarisky and Avraham Almaliach, a new member of the Zionist Commission on behalf of the Sephardi faction, who was responsible for Arab affairs in the Zionist Commission under Jabotinsky's leadership. Ben-Zvi wanted to head the Political Department, but when Arlosoroff was nominated instead, he pushed for having a representative of the Zionist Congress as a joint head of the Arab section, together with Shertok. The natural candidate was Almaliach.

When Shertok took up his post as secretary of the Political Department in October 1931 it was not clear who would head the Arab Section. Ben-Zvi and Arlosoroff agreed that Arlosoroff would be chairman of the joint section, Ben-Zvi would be his deputy, and Shertok together with Almaliach would head the section. Arlosoroff unwillingly accepted this compromise since he preferred not to clash with Ben-Zvi and the National Council. However, he insisted that the section's offices would be situated in the Jewish Agency building to save on expenses, and in this way he ensured, in fact, that control of the Arab issues would be in his and Shertok's hands.²⁷ The compromise did not work well as Arlosoroff and Shertok soon gained exclusive control of Arab affairs. This established Shertok's future as the person who would lead the Arab subject up to 1948.²⁸

Shertok's nomination needs to be understood within the context of the dispute in Mapai, mainly between Arlosoroff and Katznelson. It attests to the esteem in which

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Shertok was held as to his professional abilities. He was also regarded as part of the future movement leadership, but Shertok did not voice his position clearly, although it was known that he very much wanted the job.

Kalvarisky stayed on as a half-time consultant for Arab affairs and still tried to hold the monopoly on formulating the Yishuv's strategy on this subject. At the beginning of his tenure as head of the joint section (1929–31) he managed to recruit two informers, on which most of the Zionist movement's intelligence estimates in the Arab matter were based. One was Tayasir Duagi²⁹ ("Gad"); the other was Abdelkader Rashid el Kawas ("Ovad" or "Ovadia"), a journalist and translator in the Mufti's press.³⁰ He forbade anybody to be in contact with them, thus ensuring almost absolute control of the intelligence information. A third informer working with the joint section was "Naaman", Abdel Rahim Abu Naama, who was run by Ben-Zvi and Cohen.

As Arlosoroff did not allow Kalvarisky to meet with Duagi alone, meetings were held in his presence. After Shertok came to Jerusalem, Arlosoroff made sure that meetings with informers and other Arab personalities would be held "in Shertok's presence of course".³¹ Shertok could not recruit more informers due to budgetary problems although Arlosoroff was aware that his intelligence service was not effective enough.³² Shertok was in charge of an Arab section with limited personnel, an ineffective intelligence service, and an almost nonexistent operational budget. He waged a constant battle between the important and the urgent, in his words.³³

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE PAN-ISLAMIC CONGRESS

Shertok's first task was to frustrate the Mufti's moves to set up a Pan-Islamic Congress in Jerusalem at the end of 1931. The Congress was the pinnacle of the Mufti's long-time political effort to make the Muslim world identify with his policy of defending Islam's holy places in Jerusalem.³⁴ Arlosoroff considered the possibility of disrupting the Mufti's actions by promoting resistance to the Congress in various circles in Egypt and in Syria.

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This task was given to Duagi, who was run by Kalvarisky.³⁵ Shertok was entrusted with setting up a propaganda program vis-à-vis the Arab population, to encourage those in the Arab camp opposed to the Mufti, with meetings with Congress delegates, and with surveillance by Cohen of events held in the Congress.

THE PROPAGANDA STRUGGLE

Shertok was helped in the propaganda struggle by Sasson. In 1931 Sasson wanted to utilize the dramatic changes in the Department in order to involve himself in its Arab affairs. At the time in which the Mufti was involved with the Pan-Islamic Congress, Michael Asaf recommended to Shertok to call Sasson: “He can be useful to you as he knows the *El Hayat* and *Al Jamaa* people well. He is liable to write nonsense and his work needs to be supervised, but he knows how to write to Arabs. His productivity is enormous.”³⁶

Sasson offered to help Shertok with translations from Arabic as well as with writing articles in the Arab press. Another of Sasson’s benefactors was Cohen, who knew him well. Sasson began to update Shertok about publications in the Arab press and wrote articles attacking the Mufti’s claims that there was cooperation between the Jews and the opposition against him. He also wrote that there were Arab forces who objected to the Islamic congress out of internal Islamic considerations unrelated to the Jewish-Arab conflict and that the Mufti tried to involve the Jews in these issues only in order to attack his opponents. Sasson published an open letter to Shertok in *Alalam Alasraeli* in which he seemingly pointed Shertok’s attention to the Mufti’s use of Zionism so as to deflect Arab public opinion against it.

Sasson’s activities were in line with the strategy of Arlosoroff and Shertok that official representatives of the Zionist movement would not publicly be seen to lead the struggle against the Congress. Sasson presented himself as a supporter of an Arab federation that would include a Jewish entity. Following an open letter attacking the

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Mufti published in *Alalam Alasraeli* in September, the Mufti invited him to a personal meeting with the intention of persuading Sasson to moderate the tone of his writing and trying to learn from him about the stance and possible reactions of the Zionist movement to the convening of the Pan-Islamic Congress.³⁷ Sasson met with Arlosoroff and Shertok before going to the Mufti in order to understand the message he was meant to give him. It was decided to adopt Cohen's proposal to distribute a communiqué in Arabic about the holy places to the leaders of the Arab movement in Palestine and to all centers of Islam. Cohen proposed to conduct the same propaganda program as the Mufti's, on the assumption that when the Congress discussed the issue of the holy places, questions and doubts about the Mufti's words would arise.

It was decided that Shertok would edit a pamphlet in the name of the Jewish Agency rejecting the Arab claims that the Jews were plotting to take over the Muslim holy sites, that Sasson would translate it to Arabic, and distribute it throughout the country and the Middle East.³⁸ It reached wider circles than Arlosoroff and Shertok surmised, and caused a big stir in the Arab world. In response, an organization, "Guardians of al-Aqsa Mosque" issued a communiqué to the members of the Pan-Islamic Congress. Copies of the communiqué reached Cohen, who translated it to Hebrew with an explanatory introduction.³⁹ Sasson continued to publish articles in the Arab press as "open letters (*kitab maftub*)" directed at the senior Arab figures intending to participate in the Congress.⁴⁰

ESPIONAGE AND THE RUNNING OF AGENTS

Parallel to the propaganda effort, Shertok operated an intelligence gathering operation to uncover the Mufti's moves. The primary source of information was Rashid. Upon assuming his post Shertok took over his operation. Shertok met frequently with Rashid who supplied detailed information on the Mufti's preparations for the Congress and his actions while it was convened. Apparently most of Rashid's information came from the

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court of Jamal al Husseini, the Mufti's nephew, who was the secretary of the Arab Executive Committee. Thus, the Department learned that on 2 November no demonstrations or riots were expected because a coalition of Musa Kazim al Husseini and representatives of the Nashashibi opposition in the Arab Executive Committee blocked another proposal by Awni Abdel al Hadi.⁴¹ It also learned about Jamal al Husseini's preparations for holding a congress of Arab youth in Jaffa and of the expected moves of the Nashashibis in their struggle with the Husseinis, the Husseinis' reaction, and the intentions of Awni Abdel al Hadi, Subhi al Hadra, and Azat Druza to establish a new party, "the Palestinian Istiklal Party", which in the opinion of Rashid would serve as a cover for a body supporting the Mufti.⁴² The Department also learned from Rashid about the Mufti's moves in Egypt, where he went to recruit support for the Congress, and the countermoves of Fahri al Nashashibi⁴³ who followed him to Egypt in order to frustrate his actions.⁴⁴ Thus Arlosoroff and Shertok had a clear picture of the activity ahead of the Congress and the disagreements between the various camps, but as Cohen put it, "We closely followed what was happening throughout the congress but we had no influence over its moves."⁴⁵

Further information on the Congress was obtained by Kalvarisky and Duagi.⁴⁶ Cohen testified that at the opening of the Congress he stole into El Aqsa mosque and stayed there until 11 pm, when he went still dressed as an Arab to Arlosoroff's house where Arlosoroff, Shertok, Ben-Zvi, and Gershon Agronsky were waiting for his information.⁴⁷ Rashid updated Shertok and Cohen daily. Shertok also met with Egyptian journalist Mahmoud Azmi, an observer at the Congress, who represented the interests of the former Khedive Abbas Hilmi.

THE ARAB STRATEGY

After the end of the Pan-Islamic Congress Arlosoroff, Shertok, and Kalvarisky discussed the strategy the Department needed to draw up on the Arab issue. Kalvarisky thought

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that the Arab Section should support the Nashashibi opposition and its organ *Marat Al-Shark*, whose attacks on the Mufti were unprecedented. Arlosoroff and Shertok considered the Nashashibis as “our (the Husseinis) opponents” and therefore worthy of attention, but far from being friends of Zionism, their newspaper was no less inimical than those of the Husseinis. Shertok thought that Arlosoroff’s view that the Department should try to develop personal contacts with Arabs from different political parties and groups would not bear fruit. In his opinion the Department did not have any chance of developing such contacts and that in any case they would be ineffective unless the Department invested money in articles and advertising in the press, as otherwise no political goal could be achieved.⁴⁸

Lacking a clear and budgeted strategy, the Department’s Arab politics were subject to exploiting opportunities or to the different initiatives of Arlosoroff, Kalvarisky, and Shertok. Arlosoroff strove to implement his view that it was necessary to meet with Arabs from different parties. He met with George Antonius,⁴⁹ an adviser to the Mufti, and with Najib Zafir, a friend of Shertok. Arlosoroff also met with other Arab figures including Emir Abdullah of Trans-Jordan. His meetings with George Antonius and with Awni Abdel al Hadi convinced Shertok that the attempt to forge personal relations with Arab leaders would not succeed. Al Hadi told Shertok and Arlosoroff that there was a fundamental and unbridgeable conflict of interest between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine. When Arlosoroff tried to explain that the alternative to an arrangement would be civil war, al Hadi preferred not to respond.⁵⁰

During 1934 Ben-Gurion held talks with the same Arab figures with whom Shertok met two and a half years previously. Shertok had realized in early 1932 that as long as the Mufti remained the leading figure in the Palestinian public, there was no chance of reaching any kind of arrangement. Ben-Gurion was deluded to think that with

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the help of Istiklal people he would be able to convince the Mufti to agree to his proposed arrangement. He was quickly disillusioned.

After rejecting a proposal to help the Nashashibi opposition and seeing no chance of an agreement with the nationalistic groups such as that of Awni Abed al Hadi, Shertok turned to other paths. Late in 1931 Kalvarisky held talks with Abdel Kader Shibel, an attorney from Acre, a member of the Arab Executive Committee, regarding the possibility of setting up a third political force, alongside the Husseinis who controlled the Supreme Muslim Committee and the Nashashibis who controlled the municipalities. In January 1932 Kalvarisky suggested to Shertok and Arlosoroff to look at the possibility of helping Shibel to organize a conference of villagers in Jaffa. Shertok agreed to consider cooperation with Shibel, who demanded that the Jews consider purchasing land from his father Salah Mahmoud near Shfaram in order to help him fund the gathering of the conference to the tune of £P30. Shertok was only ready for an arrangement by which the Agency would guarantee a loan Shibel would take out from APK Bank, so that the Department would have no immediate monetary expense. For his part, Shibel agreed to Shertok's condition that the conference would make no anti-Zionist decisions, such as a prohibition on selling land to Jews or annulling the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration. On 18 February 1932, the day the conference was about to begin, only seventy people arrived out of the expected 400. It never opened. This political attempt was a resounding failure. So began a process culminating in Kalvarisky's removal from dealing with Arab affairs, until his work was stopped completely in October 1932.⁵¹

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

After the disappointment over their talks with Arab figures and the failure of the attempt to help organize the villages' associations, Shertok and Arlosoroff realized they would not be able to bring about a change in the balance of power in the Arab camp in Palestine by means of the opposition to the Mufti. In any case they lacked the necessary

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funds. The focus of activity in Arab affairs moved to other directions. An effort was made to gather intelligence with the purpose of frustrating the wave of Arab terror in northern Palestine and at the same time to follow the organization of the Istiklal circles and of the rising political power in the Arab arena in Palestine, which had ties with Trans-Jordan, where an option to purchase lands from Bedouin sheikhs and the Emir Abdullah was taken out.

THE INTELLIGENCE EFFORT AND THE INCREASE OF TERROR IN THE NORTH OF THE COUNTRY

During the first months of 1932 a series of attacks on Jews in the north of the country occurred. There was danger that these attacks would spread to other areas. Shertok now concentrated the intelligence effort to exposing the persons standing behind the terror acts. The field work and agent running was delegated to Cohen.

Following the murder of several Jews near Yagur in the summer of 1931 Shertok had sent Cohen to the murder site but he came back empty-handed. He had no sources of intelligence at the time. But he assessed that this was the action of an organized gang. Indeed, this was the beginning of the forming of the gang of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam. Shertok and Arlosoroff wanted to give their utmost attention to understanding the terrorist organization. For this they needed to recruit an informer who knew the people active in the area, so as to collate the intelligence gained by Rashid from his sources in the Palestinian leadership in Jerusalem and information received in Jewish settlements in the area, who reported it to Dov Hoz, Shertok's brother-in-law and close friend, who coordinated this information in the Histadrut Executive.

Cohen managed to recruit Hasni Abed Alali from the village of Atil near Tulkarm. His brother Tawfik, who negotiated with Jews from Zichron Yaakov over purchase of arms, was arrested by the British Police for possessing weapons and was fined £P25. Hasni approached Cohen and asked him for money to release his brother.

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Cohen interrogated Hasni and swiftly learned that he was well-versed in all the political activities in the north of the country and especially those of the Mufti and his people. This was precisely the man the Arab Section needed. Despite the financial problem Shertok agreed that Cohen run Hasni and pay him £P7 per month.

This was in fact the first independent intelligence operation of the Arab Section without the guidance of Kalvarisky or Ben-Zvi. A new era in intelligence operations began, in fact, with the terror acts in March-April 1932. A new agent from outside of Jerusalem was operated, and intelligence began to be shared between the Arab Section, people of the settlements, and the Hagana, with the coordination of Shertok and Dov Hoz. Of Cohen, coordinator in the field, Hoz said: "The secret secretary and Moshe Shertok's secretary for Arab affairs." Shertok and Cohen gleaned the relevant security information from the intelligence supplied by agents of the Arab section and passed it on to Hoz in Tel-Aviv. The Arab Section collated the information supplied by Hasni Abed Alali with that of Rashid, which was mostly political – what political leaders in the north of the country were telling Jamal al Hussein and his group in the Arab Executive and gossip from its corridors.

From Alali the Arab Section learned for the first time about the formation of a national Palestinian committee for fomenting resistance among the Bedouin to Jewish settlements in Wadi Hwawart (Hefer Valley); about arms caches in the villages of Taybeh, Azun, and Tira; and about the cooperation between the Arab governor of the district, the chief of police, and the man responsible for supplying arms to the terror cells. Alali also pointed to Rashid Haj Ibrahim and Subhi al Hadra, heads of the Muslim Association in Haifa, as the coordinators of the terror. When he supplied information of an arms cache in a mosque near Haifa, saying that it came from Syria, Shertok decided to pass it on to the British. This was one of the beginnings of intelligence cooperation

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between the Jewish Agency and the British authorities, which would strengthen during and after the 1936 disturbances.

Arlosoroff reported to the JAE that the Arab Section had information on the organization carrying out terror acts in the north but did not have proof of the perpetrators of the murders.⁵² The Department was concerned about the deterioration of the security situation in the north but had no means of discovering the criminals except for the info given by Alali. Shertok was not satisfied this time with the talks Cohen held with Rashid in order to compare his information with that of Alali, and wanted to meet with Rashid himself so as to learn what he knew about security matters in the north. The Department's situation was glum. It had no alternative sources of intelligence about the north, and was almost wholly dependent on the man situated in the offices of the Arab Executive in Jerusalem.

Already in the beginning of his work in the Arab Section Shertok realized the need for a comprehensive intelligence setup in order to deal with the violent acts by the Arab side, a lesson not learned from the 1929 disturbances, but was unable to implement it for lack of funds. The murder of a member of Nahalal and his son on 22 December 1932 caused an uproar in the Yishuv.

The next day Shertok instructed Cohen to call Duagi, who had excellent connections with the Istiklal circles in Haifa and the north. He was sent several times on special intelligence gathering missions in an attempt to get details of terrorist groupings there.⁵³ Duagi told of the controversy that arose in the meeting of the Istiklal party executive between the proponents of terror such as Subhi al Hadra and Awni Abed al Hadi, who preferred mass demonstrations. It appeared to him that the Istiklal members were surprised by the murders. However, Subhi al Hadra approved the deed, while Awni Abed al Hadi thought that actions like that were useless. Azat Druza stated that these actions proved to the British authorities that supposedly there existed a large body

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capable of showing resistance. Shertok and Ben-Zvi ordered Cohen to go to the north and try to glean information from his Druze acquaintances.

The investigation of the Nahalal murders embodied the perception advanced by Shertok to combine the Yishuv's operative and intelligence resources. For the first time, the intelligence people of the Arab section and of the Hagana joined up for an investigation. In addition to Cohen, Shaul Meirov (Avigur), intelligence coordinator of the Hagana came to the north. Shertok gave Meirov (his wife's brother) a special authorization as a representative of the Department.⁵⁴ Cohen and Meirov worked together. They consulted with Yosef Nachmani, who had many connections with the Arabs and Druze in the north, and with Abba Hushi and Eliyahu Agasi in Haifa. Meirov continued to investigate the murders until June 1933, when he was called to take up the investigation of the murder of Arlosoroff. Shertok supervised the investigation from Jerusalem and met frequently with Duagi. Cohen continued to question his agent Rashid and other Arab persons, but the murderers' identities were not revealed.

The murders in Nahalal and the events following it were a waypoint in the crystallization of patterns of intelligence gathering. Emanuel Vilensky, the Hagana intelligence coordinator in Haifa, testified that despite the considerable efforts made in the investigation of the Nahalal murders, the level of intelligence gathering was low. However, he noted that Cohen was the first to operate Arab agents. But when the Hagana volume was published, the Arab section's part was totally marginalized. Cohen's name was not even mentioned as the principal factor in the actions to find the murderers.

SURVEILLANCE OF THE FORMING OF "ISTIKLAL"

Much of Shertok's time was occupied in following the development of the new political power in Palestine, the Istiklal party, which called for the creation of one Arab state. He gathered most of the information on this subject from Duagi and Rashid. The

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crystallization of the Istiklal forces in Palestine and Trans-Jordan had a major influence on the political map of Palestine, on the decision-making process in the Trans-Jordan government and on the power plays between Faisal and Ibn Saud. Shertok feared that the developments inside the Istiklal would lead to radicalization. He asked Eliahu Epstein, a student at the American University in Beirut, a low-wage agent of the Arab section providing information on Syria and Lebanon, Reuven Zaslany a teacher in Iraq, and contacts in Egypt to pay attention to this organization.⁵⁵ Shertok held talks with Duagi, involved in the attempt to organize the Istiklal,⁵⁶ and when he handed him off to Cohen, the latter kept following the Istiklal's moves through him.

Cohen's talks with Rashid were increasingly more about the efforts of the Istiklal groups from all the Arab countries to establish their own organizations under the name of the "General Arab Congress Conference". Rashid, as a reporter and translator in the General Arab Congress' organ *al Arab*, became an important source for the Arab Section on Istiklal and passed on information to Cohen. Rashid and Duagi, close to the Istiklal circles, enabled wide coverage, from different points of view, of the making of the Istiklal, which was the focus of attention of the national Palestinian community in 1932.

This intelligence achievement of Shertok and Cohen was important but yet it is very hard to assess what was done with the intelligence. Shertok feared that the Istiklal grouping would be more extremist than that of the Husseinis and in his meetings with Duagi he tried to ascertain if his fears were founded. In order to prove to Shertok that the Istiklalis were more moderate than the Husseinis, Duagi promised in March 1932 to supply him with written proof of the correspondence between the heads of the Istiklal in Palestine and in Trans-Jordan according to which the Istiklalis favored moderation and quiet in Palestine, as opposed to the Husseinis. However, it turned out that the letters supplied by Duagi were forged and that Duagi had only tried to placate Cohen and Shertok.

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BEGINNING OF CONTACTS WITH ABDULLAH AND TRANSJORDAN

Along with the struggle against the Arab camp on Palestine, the network of contacts with Emir Abdullah and the sheikhs of Trans-Jordan became one of the principal issues to occupy Shertok. The 1930 White Paper's restrictions on Jewish land purchases in Palestine and the severe financial situation in Trans-Jordan led the landowning sheikhs to try to sell their lands to Jews.

Following Arlosoroff's taking up of his position in August 1931 he immediately occupied himself with the issue of settlement in Trans-Jordan. He brought this up in his first meeting with the High Commissioner, who implied that the British never saw Trans-Jordan as a part of Palestine in regard to Jewish settlement, and that any such settlement would cause them a security headache.⁵⁷ However this did not dissuade him from trying to purchase new reserves of land for the Zionist movement. The sheikhs were eager to sell and various middlemen tried to push Shertok and Arlosoroff to come to a decision but once again, lack of funds was a major obstacle.⁵⁸ Abdullah, who wanted to enrich both his kingdom and himself by the sale of land, responding to Arlosoroff's request for a meeting invited him to his palace on 14 March 1932. Shertok was carried away by Arlosoroff's enthusiasm. He and Arlosoroff instructed Cohen to prepare a comprehensive report on the history of the Trans-Jordan emir, his relationship with the Mufti, Ibn Saud, the tribes, and the Syrian exiles.

Shertok and Arlosoroff met with Abdullah on 14 March. Cohen, who had traveled with them, began establishing ties with members of the court. Arlosoroff defined the purpose of the meeting as not only ceremonial, but also the establishment of ties with the people surrounding Abdullah and gaining a first-hand impression of what was happening in the kingdom. He assessed that the contacts he and Shertok made might lead to negotiations in the following years.⁵⁹

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The day after the visit to Trans-Jordan Shertok met with Duagi and was surprised to learn from him that he already knew of the visit, from a report over the phone from the palace. Shertok saw in Duagi a vital source of intelligence on Trans-Jordan, in addition to his information about the Istiklal circles.

METKAL PASHA AND THE LANDS IN TRANS-JORDAN

The policy adopted by Shertok and Arlosoroff upon their return was to continue the negotiations with the Trans-Jordan sheikhs on purchases of their land with an emphasis that this would be done only with the agreement of the British authorities and of the Emir's regime. This enabled Shertok and Arlosoroff to stall for time, as they lacked the necessary financial resources to realize the purchase. They were forced to maneuver between the sheiks' need for money and the pressure by the Mufti's people not to sell land to Jews, without giving the impression that their negotiations were false.

Following Shertok's and Arlosoroff's meeting with Abdullah and Arlosoroff's meeting with Metkal Pasha on 27 April, we have no written evidence of a comprehensive strategic discussion about relations with Trans-Jordan. From the first such discussion at the JAE toward the end of September, and a comprehensive lecture by Arlosoroff in the Mapai council on 20 January 1933, it seems that Shertok and Arlosoroff had formulated a set policy on the subject after meeting with Abdullah. Apparently they did not assess that the issue of land purchase would become another focal point of the struggle with the Mufti. The Arab Section learned by chance of the Mufti's efforts to sabotage what appeared to be negotiations between Arlosoroff and Shertok and Metkal Pasha.

Shertok realized that in order to continue developing his ties with Abdullah and the Trans-Jordan sheikhs he needed someone on his behalf to hold direct contacts with them and not to rely only on secondhand intelligence. He formulated a plan that would facilitate the insertion of Cohen into Trans-Jordan under the cover of an Arabic interpreter. Duagi told Shertok and Cohen about infrastructure projects about to be

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carried out by the Amman municipality. Duagi wanted to profit from brokering between Jewish business factors and the Trans-Jordan authorities.⁶⁰ Shertok interested the Even Sid Company of Haifa in bidding for these projects. As a member of the company's team Cohen could enter and leave Trans-Jordan for intelligence purposes or for holding talks on subjects of interest to the Department. The goal was to gather information on Metkal al Faez and his intentions about the sale of his lands.

On 4 August Cohen and Duagi went to Amman. During his stay Cohen established primary contacts with people in the government. Duagi informed Metkal Pasha of Cohen's true identity and in a series of meetings the Sheikh explained the urgency on his part for selling the lands. Metkal simultaneously negotiated with Shertok and the Mufti, but when he realized that there was no chance of selling his land to an Arab entity he told Shertok that he had complied with all Arlosoroff's conditions. Shertok had no choice but to bring up the main argument Arlosoroff had raised a few months before, that with all the importance of the contacts with Trans-Jordan, there was still much land the Jewish Agency had not yet purchased in western Palestine. He also argued that the Jewish Agency's sources of financing were overseas where there was a grave financial crisis. In order to keep the door open for further contacts Shertok emphasized that he was waiting for Arlosoroff's return from London to discuss the matter with him. The meeting with Shertok ended on a note of crisis. Metkal claimed that he had done much for the Jews in Trans-Jordan in the past months and had actually opened for the Jewish Agency the option to purchase land in Trans-Jordan.

THE OPTION ON THE LANDS OF EMIR ABDULLAH IN GHOR AL KABED

In October D. Shneidman, the representative of Yitzhak Cohen, a merchant in Jerusalem, talked with Abdullah who expressed his willingness to lease him some land. The offer reached Heschel Farbstein of the JAE, who also informed another member of

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the Executive, Emmanuel Neumann, who heard a report by Shertok and Arlosoroff on their negotiations with Metkal Pasha in late September 1932, and had disagreed with their policy. They thought that contacts regarding land purchases should be made with Abdullah directly. Neumann and Farbstein met Abdullah on 27 November to discuss with him the purchase of his lands near Allenby Bridge.⁶¹ Duagi reported to Shertok about the deal, which was signed⁶² as an option on the Emir's land in Ghor al Kabed on 7 January 1933.

Shertok instructed Cohen to observe Abdullah's actions and the growing political struggle between the different political streams in Trans-Jordan. Cohen supplied Arlosoroff and Shertok with an abundance of intelligence. With his fine instincts, Cohen understood that what had begun as a land-sale deal had turned into a political issue involving the Zionist movement, Abdullah, the Mufti, and the circles of the Istiklal in Palestine and Trans-Jordan, with a potential of widening the gaps in the Arab camp on both sides of the Jordan. After analyzing the political interests of each side, Cohen noted, "However things will be settled, clearly we have become – knowingly and unknowingly – a considerable factor in the policy of the country of Trans-Jordan."⁶³ Shertok was well aware of the financial significance of the land deals with the Emir and the sheiks, and knew what resources were needed for handling the Arab issue west of the river Jordan. On 16 July Arlosoroff was murdered, and the full weight of heading the Department fell on Shertok's shoulders.

Shertok presented his political program before the Mapai Center in late July 1933, before he was officially nominated as Arlosoroff's successor. He thought that the resources allocated to promote the idea of purchasing land for the settlement of Jews across the Jordan should be reduced, defining the matter as "a central issue that occupied the Department during Arlosoroff's tenure, consumed much of its resources and prevented it from dealing with other subjects concerning the Arab problem."

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Shertok understood that the British would not permit a Jewish settlement in Trans-Jordan in the near future and stated that a strategic change had to be made. Since he considered that there was not much hope of reaching a comprehensive agreement with the Arabs he wanted to concentrate the efforts on practical actions small and large, with the potential of achieving something real.⁶⁴

On the Trans-Jordan subject he came up against Ben-Gurion who sided with extending the option on the Emir's land and compelled Shertok to continue to occupy himself intensively with this subject immediately on assuming the position of head of the Department. Despite Shertok's delaying tactics the option was extended. Shertok, who had earmarked the sum of £P500 for other purposes, was forced to accede to Ben-Gurion with the understanding that if the money would not be utilized for settlement in Trans-Jordan it should be considered as a payment to Abdullah for maintaining the ties developed over the past years.

Since the expiration of the option the beginning of January 1934 was fast approaching, Ben-Gurion urged Shertok to meet with the High Commissioner, to raise again the subject of the option renewal with the intention of trying to extend it as much as possible, and emphasized: "It will be a huge mistake if by our fault the option date will pass without its renewal."⁶⁵ Shertok tried to gain time. He informed Ben-Gurion on 7 December 1933 that he met with the High Commissioner only the day before, as he was ill, but had no time to raise the question of the option renewal. He reasoned the need to consult with more members, including Ussishkin and Neumann, at a meeting of the JAE on 10 December. A few other plans in the Arab subject had come up, requiring resources. This was a further attempt to explain to Ben-Gurion the inadvisability of allocating too many resources to the Trans-Jordan arena.

In light of Ben-Gurion's increasing pressure Shertok convened two meetings to discuss the option renewal – one at the Jewish National Fund with Ussishkin, Neumann,

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and Farbstein and the other in the Zionist Executive. The decision was made to extend the option, to inform the High Commissioner before the renewal and to try to lower the price to £P500 or to gain time before the payment. Shertok received the High Commissioner's agreement to renew the option on condition that it not be publicized, although he remarked that no Jewish settlement in Trans-Jordan would be possible.⁶⁶ Neumann met with Abdullah's confidant Muhammad Alonsi, who talked with Abdullah, who agreed in principle to renew the option.

CONCLUSION

The circumstances of Moshe Shertok's life made him knowledgeable in the Arab affairs of Palestine. His command of Arabic and his boyhood in an Arab environment prepared him to lead the Zionist movement's Arab affairs. His position did not come to him easily. When he took up the job of head of the Arab Section, it was after 30 years of management of this aspect of the Zionist movement by Kalvarisky and circles in the Yishuv that were not affiliated with the Labor movement. Within his own movement too this was not simple – he needed to overcome the expertise and contacts of Ben-Zvi. Moreover, he was entrusted with managing the Arab Section at a time when not a penny was available for Arab affairs in the Department's budget.

Under these circumstance Shertok's tenure as head of the Arab Section was characterized by the opening of a new era: the ending of the period of "purchasing" Arabs by monetary payouts without any checks or control, and the beginning of a period in which an attempt was made to develop means of intelligence gathering at low costs in order to assist with decision making on the Arab issue.

Shertok swiftly realized that no understanding could be reached with the Mufti of Jerusalem or with nationalists such as Antonius and Awni Abed al Hadi. Shertok therefore turned to other directions. The terror incidents in the north in 1931–1932

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convinced him of the need for close intelligence cooperation between the Hagana intelligence people (the Shai) and the Arab Section.

Sharett was the founding father of this cooperation, which developed further over the years, up to 1948. His understanding of the importance of intelligence led him to read in person all the original intelligence product received from the section's agents; he cultivated the intelligence channel and the person in charge of it, Cohen. However, perhaps because of monetary constraints beyond his control, the array of the Arab Section's paid Arab informers did not expand, and he continued to rely on the agents recruited by Kalvarisky in 1929–1930. Despite his doubts over the authenticity of some of their reports, Kalvarisky left him a superb legacy of intelligence in the form of Rashid, who knew on a daily basis the goings-on in the office of the number-two man in the Palestinian hierarchy, Jamal al Husseini. This source was activated up to 1948.

Lacking the possibility of reaching a rapport with the Mufti or the nationalists, Shertok unsuccessfully attempted to create a third political power group—villagers guided by Abdel Kader Shibel. Sharett rapidly understood what he was stepping into and terminated the attempt. He was also the key person who immediately realized the potential inherent in the forming of the Istiklal force and dedicated many intelligence resources to follow its organizing and activities. The ties with Abdullah began during his tenure as head of the Arab Section. Shertok regarded the attempts to penetrate Trans-Jordan with a clear eye and was well aware of the limitations on that sort of activity.

Sharett's conduct vis-à-vis the Arab sheikhs is exemplary, showing willingness while cultivating no illusions, and exploiting the British element and its policy while refraining from spending the Jewish people's funds in vain. Nevertheless, as head of the Department, he was unable to convince Ben-Gurion to forgo investing in the Trans-Jordan channel to the detriment of other, more important and pressing activities.

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When he began his involvement with the Arab issue Shertok had no political power. All such power was concentrated in the hands of Arlosoroff, Ben-Gurion, and Katznelson. This was a period where he could give advice and offer proposals, that his position as head of the Arab Section was only an addendum to his position as secretary of the Department, and was only one of many activities. Nevertheless he managed to leave his stamp, and later to be nominated as head of the Department of the Jewish Agency on behalf of Mapai.

NOTES

1. Moshe Sharett, *Imprisoned with Paper and Pencil* (Tel-Aviv, 2000), 144; *Personal Diary* (Tel-Aviv, 1978), 1964–66, 1970, 1985, 1988 [Both in Hebrew].

2. Testimony of Shmuel Yeibin, in Baruch Ben Yehuda, *The Story of Herzliya Gymnasium* (Tel-Aviv, 1970), 41 [Hebrew].

3. Moshe Sharett, *Shall We Ever Meet Again – Letters of an Ottoman Soldier 1916-1918* (Tel-Aviv, 1998) [Hebrew].

4. Moshe Sharett, *The London Days, Letters* (Tel-Aviv, 2003), 30 [Hebrew].

5. *Ibid.*, 14.

6. Avraham Almaliach (1885–1967). Born in Jerusalem; established first Hebrew school in Damascus; in 1912–13 together with Nissim Malul and others was a member of Hamagen group, which dedicated itself to establishing Jewish-Arab rapport. Exiled to Damascus in WW I; later worked in the Zionist Commission's press department under Zeev Jabotinsky. Wrote in *Alalam Alasraeli* and other Arab newspapers. Member of First Knesset.

7. A comprehensive survey of Kalvarisky's activities will appear in my PhD dissertation.

8. Najib Zafer, National Syrian Party activist, 1920; signatory of Jewish-Arab agreement with Hankin and Shertok in October 1931; in 1938 held contacts with Chaim Weizmann and then with Eliyahu Sasson over a Jewish-Christian pact for frustrating terror actions on the Lebanese-Palestine border.

9. Eliezer Tauber, "An Agreement between the National Syrian Party and the Zionist Movement," *Cathedra* 97 (2000): 149–56 [Hebrew].

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10. Moshe Sharett, *Political Diary* (Tel-Aviv, 2003) vol. 2, 1937, 141–42, 476, [Hebrew]; also *ibid.*, vol. 1, 64–5.

11. Michael Asaf (1896–1984) b. Poland, immigrated to Palestine 1920; wrote articles in *Hapoel Hatzair*. Member of the First Histadrut council. In 1924 sent to raise funds in Berlin; studied Middle Eastern studies and Arabic. Began working in *Davar* as editor of Arab section. Leading expert in Middle Eastern affairs; from 1937 editor of *Hakikat al Amr* newspaper.

12. CZA, S25/2968, H.M. Kalvarisky, “The Arab Question in General.”

13. *Ibid.*

14. Yosef Meyuchas, b. Jerusalem 1868; studied at *Ohel Yosef* yeshiva; taught Hebrew and Arabic at Jerusalem Alliance School; a founder of B’nai B’rith in Jerusalem. Headmaster of the Jerusalem Teachers Seminary during WW I.

15. CZA, S25/3101, Haim Ariav to Shertok, Hankin, Ben-Zvi, Shemi, Lurie, 9 September 1929.

16. Yosef Lurie (1871–1937) Zionist activist. Studied pedagogy in Berlin, where he joined the *Bnei Moshe* association. Delegate to first Zionist Congress. Wrote in Jewish newspapers in Warsaw. Settled in Palestine 1907. Taught history at Herzliya Gymnasium. Headed Zionist Executive’s education department after WW I. Editor in *Ha’aretz*; headed Brit Shalom.

17. *Minutes of the Zionist Executive*, vol. 10, 9 September 1929, 2954.

18. Nissim Malul (1892–1959) b. Safed, studied in the American College in Egypt; taught Arabic in Cairo University; wrote in Arab press in Cairo and Syria. Settled in Jaffa 1911; member of *Hamagen* group, which dedicated itself to establishing Jewish-Arab rapport together, among others, with Avraham Almaliach. Deported to Damascus in WW I; enlisted in the Jewish Battalion and was interpreter for the British army. Published *A-Salaam*.

19. Haj Amin el Husseini: studied in Egypt 1912–13; Turkish officer 1914–1917; agent of British CID in Damascus, was close to the nationalist circles around Faisal. In Palestine in 1919 joined Aref al-Aref, editor of *Syria al-Janubiya*. Following disturbances in Palestine escaped 1920 to Damascus. Returned later to Palestine; head of the Supreme Muslim Committee until October 1937.

20. LA (Labor Archive), F4-208-214B, meeting on the Arab question, 10–11 October 1929.

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21. Shabtai Tevet, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: from peace to war* (Oxford, UK, 1985), 148–52, 356–57 [Hebrew].
22. LA, 153/8 Ben-Gurion to Mapai Center members, 18 June 1936.
23. Sharett, *Political Diary*, 203.
24. Aharon Chaim Cohen (1906-62) b. Jerusalem, joined Ahdut Haavoda in 1921; Hagana member in 1926; served in the Arab Section until 1939.
25. LA, Ben-Zvi, 2, Kisch to Arlosoroff, August 1931.
26. LA, Cohen Testimony, 27.16; CZA, S1/279, Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows* (Jerusalem, 2004), 24, 26, 32–3 [Hebrew].
27. Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary*, 25 October 1931. Online version, transcribed by the Ben Yehuda Project.
28. Elyakim Rubinstein, “The Treatment of the Arab Question in the Twenties and the Thirties: Institutional Aspects,” *Zionism*, Collection 12 1987, 216–41 [Hebrew]; Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary*, 3 December 1931.
29. Tayasir Duagi, journalist from Damascus; active in nationalist circles close to Faisal 1918–1920; participated in the Syrian-Druze revolt against the French in 1925; moved to Trans-Jordan; exiled to Palestine 1929 for writing against the government; recruited 1930 by Kalvarisky as informer for the Jewish Agency; important contact person with the Political Department. Later run by Shertok, Cohen, and Sasson until 1935.
30. Kawas (Al Muhtaseb) Abdelkader Rashid, a journalist. His father was a *Kawas* (chief of guards) of a European consulate in Jerusalem and a close friend of Kalvarisky. Abdelkader married a Jewess.
31. Arlosoroff, *Diary*, 1 December 1931.
32. *Ibid.*, 15 October 1931.
33. *Ibid.*, 5 November 1931.
34. ISA (Israel State Archives), Files of the Arab Executive, 1780; UKNA (United Kingdom National Archives) CO/733/182/77050, Chancellor to Colonial Secretary; Yehoshua Porat, *From Riots to Rebellion* (Tel-Aviv, 1978), 24–9 [Hebrew].
35. Arlosoroff, *Diary*, 27 October 1931.
36. CZA S25/889, Asaf to Shertok (apparently September–October 1931).
37. Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary*, 28 November 1931.
38. Transcript, Sasson conversation recorded 5 November 1970, Sasson personal archive.

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39. CZA, S25/2976, n.d.

40. Sasson to Burla [Arabic], 31 December 1931, Burla files, Genazim Archive, Tel-Aviv.

41. Awni Abdel al Hadi, from a notable Nablus family; studied law in Istanbul and Paris; secretary of Emir Faisal in Versailles Conference, 1919; fled Damascus after the downfall of Faisal. One of the heads of the Istiklal.

42. CZA, J105/25, Information from the Arab Section, 10 November 1931.

43. Fahri al Nashashibi (1899–1941): worked in the 1920s in the Mandate administration. Member of the National Defense Party. One of the main opponents of the Mufti; called for continuation of British Mandate in 1939; held close ties with Eliyahu Sasson and David Hacohen. Murdered in Baghdad 1941.

44. CZA J105/25, Abdelkader Rashid to A.C. Cohen, 28 October, 10, 18 November 1931.

45. A.C. Cohen testimony, File 27.16, recorded 1953, Hagana Archive.

46. *Ibid.*, 6–13 December 1931.

47. *Ibid.*,

48. Yehoshua Porat, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1928–1939: From Riots to Rebellion* (London, 1977), 78–80.

49. George Antonius (1892–1942): orthodox Christian Lebanese diplomat; educated in Egypt and settled in Palestine. Palestinian spokesman facing the British Mandate administration and Western public opinion; historian of the national Arab movement; General Secretary of Arab delegation to 1939 St. James conference.

50. Arlosoroff-Shertok-Awni Abed Alhani meeting, *Arlosoroff Diary*, 12 February 1932.

51. CZA, J105/22, Shibel to Kalvarisky, 24 October 1931.

52. JAE meeting, 7 March 1932, Official minutes.

53. CZA S1/281, Shertok to Finance Department, 18 October, 6 November 1932.

54. CZA S25/5801, Shaul Meirov's authorization, 13 January 1933.

55. CZA S25/5361, Shertok to Zaslany and Epstein, 23 December 1931.

56. CZA, S25/4122, talks of the above and 29 June 1932.

57. Arlosoroff, *Diary*, 19 August 1931.

58. Gelber, *Roots of the Liby*, A, 91.

59. Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary*, 14 March 1932.

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60. CZA, S25/1542, Shertok to Arlosoroff, 2 August 1932.

61. Anita Shapira, “The Affair of the Option on the Lands of Emir Abdullah in Ghor al Kabed,” *Zionism*, (Tel-Aviv, 1973), 302–4 [Hebrew].

62. CZA S25/4122, Shertok, information from Duagi, 30 November 1932.

63. *Ibid.*

64. Shapira, “The Affair of the Option.”

65. CZA S25/1499, Ben-Gurion to Shertok, 29 November 1933.

66. Shapira, “The Affair of the Option.”