Tal Alon-Mozes, Irene Aue-Ben-David and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn

Introduction

This publication on "Jewish horticultural and agricultural schools / training centers in Germany and their impact on horticulture, agriculture and landscape architecture in Palestine/Israel" presents the result of a symposium with the same title, which was held on September 26, 2016 at the Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem. It is also based on many years of collaboration between the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, and Leibniz University of Hannover, which commenced with a research project in the years 2001 and 2002 focusing on the history of the *Israelitische Gartenbauschule Ahlem* near Hannover (Jewish horticultural school Ahlem). This school was founded in 1893 by Moritz Simon (1837–1905), a Jewish banker who lived in Hannover, with the aim of training Jewish boys as gardeners and provide them with new professional opportunities. In the context of this research project, a first joint conference: "Die Israelitische Gartenbauschule Ahlem und ihre Wirkungen" (The Jewish Horticultural School Ahlem and its Impacts) took place on April 19 and 20, 2001 in Hannover, in collaboration with Prof. Dr. Ruth Enis, Dr. Shmuel Burmil, Dr. Hans-Dieter Schmid, Prof. Dr. Claus Füllberg-Stolberg and Marlis Buchholz, followed by a conference in Haifa in 2002.[1]

Ahlem, in all probability, was the most important horticultural school for Jewish boys in Germany. Several hundred of them were educated there as gardeners, many later emigrated to Palestine, and more than 60 are known to have emigrated to the United States.[2] But there were many other places in Germany where Jewish boys received training as gardeners.

A follow-up joint research project of the Technion and Leibniz University was carried out in 2015/16 and extended the scope of research from the Ahlem school to include the numerous other training centers in Germany where Jewish boys had worked and were trained as gardeners. The Lower Saxonian Ministry of Science and Research financially supported the project during the years 2015 and 2016 from a special funding program, which sponsors joint research projects of schol-

1 See, e.g., Hans-Dieter Schmid (ed.), *Ahlem. Die Geschichte einer jüdischen Gartenbauschule*, edition temmen, Bremen, 2008; revised edition Bremen, 2017.
Shmuel Burmil and Ruth Enis, *The Changing Landscape of Utopia. The Landscape and Gardens of the Kibbutz Past and Present* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Gartenkunst, Vol. 29) Wernersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Worms, 2011.

2 See Kenneth Helphand and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, The Israelitische Gartenbauschule Ahlem: the American connection, in: *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, 2018, 312–329.

ars from universities in Israel and Lower-Saxony.[3] The symposium "Jewish horticultural and agricultural schools / training centers in Germany and their impact on horticulture, agriculture and landscape architecture in Palestine/Israel" comprised a part of this research project.

In the context of the symposium, collaboration was extended to include the Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem, which organized and hosted it. The Institute is dedicated to the research of German Jewish History and Culture. In its Jerusalem archives, it holds various documents on *Hachsharot*, the German-Jewish Zionist Youth movement, as well as Youth *Aliyah* to Palestine.

In the course of the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous Jewish horticultural and agricultural training centers and schools *(Hachsharot)* were established in Germany to train Jews from Germany and other European countries, particularly from Eastern Europe. These institutions aimed to prepare their graduates to be capable of earning their living in the fields of horticulture and agriculture in Germany, as well as after emigrating to Palestine and other countries. They also reflected the students' attraction toward the land and the landscape, a topic which was relatively neglected in the emerging research field of 'everyday history' *(Alltagsgeschichte)* of Jewish life in Germany. Upon arrival in Palestine, graduates of these centers often became involved in the establishment of new settlements, in agricultural and horticultural activities, in agricultural education and in practicing landscape architecture. In contrast to the rich documentation of the role of the *Yekkes* – German Jewish emigrants who arrived in Palestine/Israel – in the development of the country, their contribution to the emergence and creation of the local landscape was barely examined.

The contributions in this volume discuss manifold aspects of *Hachsharot* in Germany and Palestine. The first part of the volume sets the context for the *Hachsharot*. Prof. Hagit Lavsky, Professor Emerita of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Professor and Academic Advisor at the Weiss-Livnat International MA Program in Holocaust Studies of Haifa University, explores the role of agriculture in Zionist ideology and practice as the foundation of the *Hachsharot* in Germany. Lavsky relates the Jewish interest in agriculture to the *Haskala* period and the trend toward secular education and productive labor. Her article emphasizes the connection between agricultural training in Germany and immigration to Palestine, estimating the number of *Hachsharot* members who arrived in Palestine before 1933 and in later years, during the period of the Nazi dictatorship. Dr. Verena Buser, who explores German *Hachsharot* after 1933, focuses in her article on the post 1933 period in Germany, arguing that the centers gradually expanded into

3 This program is financed by the so-called Niedersächsische Vorab der Volkswagen Foundation.

sites of alternative job creation and schooling, and were ultimately included in the range of welfare activities provided by the Jewish leadership.

The second part of the volume sheds light on the perception of nature among *Hachsharot* members, first in Germany, and later in Palestine. Prof. Hubertus Fischer and Prof. Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, both from the Leibniz University of Hannover, trace developmental aspects of the Jewish youth movement in terms of its convergence with and divergence from gentile bourgeois and proletarian German youth movements from approximately 1913 until 1938. Generally, they argue that the romantic, idealized perception of nature that the Zionist youth movement *Blau-Weiss* shared with the German bourgeois youth movements was gradually replaced with Jewish sentiments, realistic reports on Palestine and a discussion on horticulture and agriculture. The second part of the article presents some of these training centers and their graduates. Prof. Tal Alon-Mozes, a landscape researcher from the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, inquires what happened to these German romantic landscape perceptions after immigration to Palestine. Exploring both secular and religious *Hachsharot* members' diaries and texts, she argues that the first encounter with the hostile landscape of Palestine left only little room for romanticism and landscape appreciation. These sentiments returned only after a long period of casting roots in the foreign landscape of Palestine.

The third part of the volume presents in detail examples of Jewish agricultural and horticultural training centers in Germany and *Kibbutzim* in Palestine. Janina Hennig, from the Leibniz University of Hannover, discusses six centers of more than 100 institutions which operated in the regions of Hannover and Berlin/Brandenburg. Her research classifies the centers by their on-site activities and their administrative organizations. In addition, she examines what remains today at the sites of these former training centers. The historian Dr. Tamar Gazit presents the history of the agricultural settlement Gross Gaglow near Cottbus in the early 1930s. The less than an acre farm was founded jointly by the Reich Federation for Jewish Settlement and graduates of the Jewish Horticultural School in Ahlem (Isrealitische Gartenbauschule Ahlem) as a Jewish agricultural cooperative. Its members, who had wished to settle in Palestine as a group, could not find a single location for a communal settlement and dispersed all over the world. The fortune of other groups of *Hachsharot* graduates who arrived in Palestine is discussed by the environmental historian Dr. Shirily Gilad-Ilsar. Her article explores the history of two *Kibbutzim* in Beit She'an Valley, which were established during the late 1930s. The layout of the secular *Kibbutz* Kfar Ruppin and the religious Sde Eliyahu demonstrate the role of *Kibbutz* members in shaping their community according to their beliefs and to the local environmental conditions.

The concluding chapter, "Beyond *Hachsharot*", is dedicated to two different topics: Jewish Viennese women gardeners and garden architects, their lives and achievements are discussed by Dr. Ulrike Krippner, and the late Dr. Iris Meder, from the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna. The concluding contribution by Dr. Sabine Albersmeier presents the site of the former Jewish Horticultural School in Ahlem as it is today – a memorial and museum, which opened on July 25, 2014.

In conclusion, the findings of this research highlight the importance of future research to carefully study the history of *Hachsharot* in other European countries as well, for example, France or the Scandinavian countries.

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Hachsharot in context

Hagit Lavsky

Jewish Agricultural Training in Germany: Its Context and Changing Role

In this essay I trace how agriculture came to occupy a special place in Zionist ideology and practice, and explain the context in which Palestine became a unique destination of Jewish migration during the interwar period. I thereby seek to lay the foundation for appreciating the role of agricultural training (*Hachshara*) in the Zionist agenda in general, and in the case of Germany in particular.

Agricultural training in Jewish and in Zionist ideology

Agriculture appeared on the Jewish agenda with the emergence of the Jewish *Haskala* (Hebrew for Enlightenment), which was rooted in the general Enlightenment movement in eighteenth century Europe. Faced with the specific conditions and problems of Jewish society in Central and Eastern Europe during that period, the *Haskala* movement aspired toward assimilation as a precondition for Jewish emancipation and as an integral element therein. It furthermore advocated enhancing the productivity of the Jewish occupational structure, primarily by encouraging Jews to engage in trades and agriculture. The emphasis placed on these common objectives naturally varied among Jewish societies in various countries that experienced different conditions. In general, however, the trend toward secular education and productive labor was consistent and powerful. Striving toward modernization, regeneration, empowerment of the Jewish individual, and the reconstruction of Jewish society was closely linked to vocational reform and agricultural settlement.

In Central Europe, and particularly in Germany, the emphasis on agriculture was viewed as a further step toward integration with the awakening German nationalism, with its romantic advocacy of a return to the soil and to nature, while in Eastern Europe the *Haskala* movement focused on agricultural settlement as a remedy for the plight of Russia's Jews. Its adherents hoped that a vocational shift toward agriculture would ameliorate the dire poverty among Jews in the Pale of Settlement, restore the moral fiber of the Jewish social fabric, and render Jews less vulnerable to antisemitism. Agricultural training also received a strong impetus in the late nineteenth century along with the wave of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe headed primarily to the United States of America.

The Zionist movement that evolved during the latter decades of the nineteenth century was in many ways an offspring of the rise of European nationalism and the Jewish *Haskala* movement, and grew against the backdrop of the gathering

pace of Jewish emigration. However, while the overall trend toward modernization and productive occupations among Jews went hand in hand with their integration in the surrounding society at home and in their destinations of migration, Zionism emerged as a national renaissance movement. It therefore interpreted modernization and productive labor as a national endeavor – which would lead the Jews to become a normal nation among the nations of the world. Agriculture was regarded as doubly important: it would reform the Jewish people by developing a strong cohort of farmers that would settle and strike roots in the ancient homeland – the Land of Israel – and turn it into a flourishing Jewish national home. Agricultural training was therefore placed at the top of the Zionist agenda from its inception and from the modest beginning of Zionist immigration to Palestine in the 1880s. However, the major turning point in the status of Zionist ideology and practice occurred with the impetus toward establishment of the Jewish national home in Mandatory Palestine in the wake of World War I.

Destination – Palestine

Immigration Policy in Mandatory Palestine[1]

Parallel to the decline of the U.S. as the main destination of Jewish migration from Eastern Europe, after World War I Palestine under the British Mandate emerged as a new preferred destination for Jewish migrants worldwide.

The British Mandate of Palestine was a part of the new international order set up following World War I by the League of Nations through the Mandate system. It was unique among the mandates. Britain was granted the Mandate of Palestine on the understanding that it would implement the Balfour Declaration of 2 November, 1917, and pursue the development of a Jewish national home in the land. Consequently, the Mandate government opened the gates of Palestine and introduced a liberal immigration policy intended to attract immigrants and capital with a view to facilitating a process of modernization that would adjust the level of immigration to the country's capacity to absorb the migrants.

According to the terms of the Mandate ratified and signed in 1923, the British administration was required to cooperate to some extent with the Jewish Agency for Palestine (the Zionist Executive), which represented Jewish interests concerning the National Home. The issues of immigration and settlement were of prime importance from the Jewish-Zionist point of view, and were a major concern for the Mandate Administration, which had to maneuver between Jewish and Palestinian-Arab interests.

1 Hagit Lavsky, *The Creation of the German-Jewish Diaspora: Interwar German-Jewish Immigration to Palestine, the USA, and England*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin i.a. & Hebrew University Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 2017, pp. 19ff.