

A Murder in the Grove: Conceptions of Justice in an Early Zionist Colony

Abstract

This article offers a localized perspective on early Zionist settlers' evolving responses to interethnic violence in late Ottoman Palestine. It takes as its subject the first instance of murder in the early Zionist colony of Rishon LeZion, the death of Yaakov Abramovich in 1902, presumed to have been committed by the Palestinian notable Alfred Rock from Jaffa. Drawing from local archival records and the periodical press of the Palestine Jewish community and influenced by scholarship in legal and microhistory, the article resituates this community in the context of its relations with Ottoman authorities, Arab notables and peasants, as well as its European Jewish benefactors. It argues that the community's behavior and reactions were period and context-specific, consequences of legal assumptions about the workings of the Ottoman court system and the traditional confliction resolution mechanism of sulh but also products of evolving economic motives around land purchase and sale, and particular social dynamics among surviving family members in the colony, namely the deceased man's widow, his father, and his brothers. It emphasizes the contingent, local nature of communal interactions with the larger, overlapping social and legal structures of Late Ottoman Palestine.

On Tuesday, September 23, 1902, a group of Christian Arabs from Jaffa, among them Alfred Rock, the handsome 20-year-old son of one of that city's most important landowners, paid a visit with a group of friends to picnic in the Jewish colony of Rishon LeZion,¹ founded in the year of Rock's birth.² By evening on that hot, late summer day, a Jewish colonist by the name of Yaakov Abramovich, the dark-haired twenty-seven-year-old son of a productive local viticulturist,³ had been killed by a gunshot to the head after a petty scuffle, which mostly likely erupted spontaneously after a Jew driving a horse and wagon kicked up a cloud of dust on the picnickers, perhaps intentionally. Abramovich was buried the next day in the colony cemetery, 1.5 km from the site of the murder. Rock was presumed to have fired the shot.

As it mourned its first Arab-caused casualty,⁴ the Rishon LeZion general assembly found itself navigating layered systems of authority: the relatively new Ottoman state court system, the traditional Islamic system of *sulh*, or mediated reconciliation (an instance of *sulh* was known in Arabic and Hebrew as a *sulha*),

and the French Jewish oversight of the non-Zionist Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), a philanthropic promoter of Jewish productivization and agricultural efforts around the world that took over financial administration of the colony from the Baron Edmund De Rothschild in 1900.⁵ This incident, because it lacks features of later, more iconic Jewish-Arab clashes, should not be read in search of an “origin point” for Zionist-Arab interethnic violence.⁶ Instead, incidents like these, recorded in the periodical press and local archival records, help us answer a more specific and temporally rooted question: how did the early Zionist community of Palestine understand the notion of justice and how did they navigate existing structures and communities to try (often unsuccessfully) to achieve it in their late Ottoman context?

As this article shows, Jewish colonists, interacting with a relatively unfamiliar landscape of Ottoman law and Palestinian custom, were committed to the Ottoman court system as the desired arbitrator of violent crime. When the presumed murderers were Arabs, Jewish discussions on crime and justice developed a set of patterns and tropes, which began—already in the very first years of the 20th century—to shape a discourse on Jewish victimhood, Arab unreliability, and the importance of intervening with local authorities to bring justice to the “right” side of the equation. Despite this faith in the court system, however, they acquiesced (never fully) to the localized *sulh* process and its associated money payments. They did so for several reasons, the article argues: out of a sense that it was necessary to demonstrate cooperation with local customs so as to curry favor with the local Arab Palestinian population, from Zionist concerns around land purchase, and as an outcome of internal familial conflicts about the maintenance of surviving family members, especially the deceased man’s widow. These circumstantial considerations, as they played out in real time in one community, shed light on the nonabstract considerations that led to particular choices in a context scholars have called legal pluralism, one in which actors have access to—and must therefore weigh and negotiate the benefits of—multiple legal forums, typically state systems alongside religious and traditional ones.⁷

A local focus on a single incident relies, necessarily, on local archives; in this case, the protocols of the Rishon Lezion Colony Committee and General Assembly between the years 1902, when the incident took place, and 1911, when the episode was finally concluded. These protocols, written by hand in large rectangular hardback notebooks, are for the most part chronicles of the quotidian: yields of produce, financial decisions and transactions, land purchases, low-level conflicts both internally and with local Arabs. While some treatments of early Jewish colonization rely on the records of the central funding and settlement promoting bodies in Europe or Jerusalem (the Jewish Colonization Association, the various offices of the Jewish National Fund or Zionist Organization) or the private archives of prominent individuals, the protocols offer a different sort of locally-focused perspective. Yuval Ben-Bassat has used protocols like this across several Jewish colonies to understand the nature of Proto-Zionist Arab relations, arguing that the Judean colonies functioned as a bloc, but also each operated according to its own internal demographic features in responding to (or instigating) instances of conflict.⁸ There is much to be gleaned from a close focus on a single colony around a single incident whose implications unfolded over time—other similar cases might be explored using the records of Petach Tikva, Nes Ziona,

Rehovot, or other former colonies (now Israeli towns and cities) with extant records.

We must keep in mind, however, that this particular source base reflects the views and priorities of a small number of colony elites, exclusively men, with only brief glimpses of the far more heterogeneous population of the colony or the Jewish community of Palestine (the Yishuv) in general (we will have one such glimpse, of a woman, later in this article). Moreover, this source base lends little insight into Palestinian Arab communities, even the elites among them; the absence of Palestine-based Arabic-language newspapers before 1908 renders the description of locally focused discourses in that community even more difficult.⁹ Nonetheless, the protocols can embed observations about larger systems of law and social custom in the concrete, the quotidian and the local and uncover some of the individual personalities behind broader institutional positions. Though the Rishon LeZion colony might suggest insights into the choices and considerations of an entire population at a particular time, situating Jewish settlers in a series of broader social and political contexts, the local records remind us that for the actors themselves, the events were local and the stakes were personal.

Background

Abramovich's murder, ultimately tied to Rock, was one of the first dozen or so encounters between Palestinian Arabs and immigrant Zionists that ended in the murder of a Jew.¹⁰ Over time, such incidents shaped the subjective self-understanding of the Yishuv as a community under attack and in need of self-defense.¹¹ By the British Mandate period (following WWI), the establishment of several Jewish militia organizations and the use of "*Homah u-migdal*" ("Tower and Stockade") techniques of securing Jewish settlements through building defensive structures, would reflect an evolving ethos of military preparedness and local self-defense.¹² This 1902 incident, however, was viewed as unusual. The Hebrew newspaper *Ha-Melitz*, founded in Odessa in 1860, wrote in its November 9, 1902, edition that "On 21 Elul [September 23], there occurred in Rishon LeZion a terrible tragedy the likes of which the colony had not experienced since it was founded." Commenting in the aftermath of the murder, the Hebrew newspaper *Hashkafah* noted further that "the head of the family, Mr. Alfonse Rock, was liked by all groups in the city [of Jaffa] and always had good relations with Jews in general and those in the colonies in particular."¹³ The murder, from this standpoint, was a shocking and unprecedented break in relations rather than a confirmation that they were already broken.

The relatively low incidence of murders in these years has led Israeli Jewish scholars to emphasize the relative peacefulness of what came to be known as the First Aliyah and early Second Aliyah period. Anita Shapira writes that, "up until 1908 . . . it was difficult to discern any genuine confrontation between Jews and Arabs."¹⁴ Eliezer Be'eri concluded correctly that "acts of violence were exceptions" during the first twenty years of Zionist settlement, though he confirmed that a deeper Christian and Muslim anti-Judaism and suspicion about Jewish immigration, coupled with Jews' Orientalist perception of Arabs as hot-blooded and primitive, led many early Zionists to doubt the potential for harmonious relations.¹⁵ But even if it is inappropriate to date the onset of systemic Jewish-Arab violence to before 1908 or 1917, it is equally wrong to overlook earlier isolated instances of

violence. The goal of revisiting them is not to retroactively incorporate them into a later narrative; indeed the nationalist terms of later conflict do not accurately describe the terms of Zionist-Arab encounter in this period.¹⁶ Instead, my goal is to understand their meanings in their own time and, thus, to paint a clearer picture of the often murky and overlooked internal politics and legal landscape of their era.

The most recent accounts of Zionists in the period before 1908 have challenged a triumphalist Zionist historiography in order to focus on the ambivalent internal dynamics of Zionist nation-building, whether around education, languages, or agriculture. When figured as cultural actors, farmers, landowners, or promoters of Hebrew education, however, Zionists tend to be personalized and individualized but decontextualized from their local Arab or Ottoman context.¹⁷ Alternatively, the important contributions of some critical sociologists and social historians have highlighted the broader sociological and structural issues that led to conflict with the Arabs of Palestine during this period but, in considering the dynamics of conflict head on, have tended to highlight broader structural issues but depersonalize individuals.¹⁸ While an important new body of work has considered relations between Sephardi Jews and Muslim and Christian Arabs in the late Ottoman period,¹⁹ the presumption that the Ashkenazi community was more oriented toward Jewish autonomy and less interested in cooperation²⁰ has largely obscured the nature of Ashkenazi encounters with their immediate legal context in the late Ottoman period, particularly among those Jews who established colonies (*moshavot*) during the so-called First Zionist Immigration (First Aliyah) between 1882 and 1903.²¹

Their legal context was layered and multifaceted. Under Ottoman law of the turn of the century, families of murder victims had two options as they sought justice. According to Islamic law, the parties (even if neither was Muslim) could undergo a process of arbitrated reconciliation (*sulh*), which would ordinarily culminate in a reparation payment to the family of the victim—this would have traditionally been the default response to a murder case in Palestine. Alternatively, they could turn to the relatively new Ottoman state criminal court system, which had been set up on the model of the French legal system as part of the broader program of reform known as the Tanzimat. The 1840 Ottoman judicial reform made all subjects equal before the law; in 1847 civil and criminal judicial councils were created. After new commercial codes and courts were established in 1840 (and finalized in 1858), and the Ottoman Criminal Code was propagated in 1858, the 1870s saw the publication of the Mecelle, the new civil code, and, after a period of codification from 1864–1879, in 1879 a new code laid down a full system of procedures for state courts.²² After that point few criminal cases were brought to the Islamic courts, which became primarily responsible for *waqf* and family law.²³ Far from offering a concerted plan of action, contemporary sources suggested several potential collective responses to what was understood locally as an unprecedented event.

Inspired by a subgenre of microhistory that uses murder cases as departure points²⁴ and by the evolving tools of legal, social, and cultural history of Palestine/Israel, this article uses a combination of contemporaneous newspaper coverage and the internal protocols of the Rishon LeZion general assembly [*ha-asefah ha-kelalit*] of its colony committee [*va'ad ha-moshavah*] to explore the legal and social assumptions being made by small group of settler Jews who were responding to the first murder in their new agricultural colony. While a more

traditional Zionist historiography emphasizes Jewish heroism (fighting back against attackers) and sacrifice (dying for the national cause), these sources point to a deeper understanding of the tapestry of relations, actors, and bodies—Jewish, Arab, and Ottoman—within which the Yishuv was interwoven and which determined Jewish responses to episodes of intercommunal violence.

The Incident

The first Hebrew newspaper to report on the murder was the Jerusalem-based *Hashkafah* on September 26, less than a week after the murder. The news was presented alongside a report of another Jew who had died, in his case as the result of a fire in the colony of Motza, near Jerusalem. Death was no stranger to these colonists, who succumbed to accidents and disease not infrequently. But now a “more terrible tragedy” had occurred in Rishon LeZion, this time “not as a consequence of lack of caution, but at the hands of a murderer.” This account, the first draft of a history that would supply multiple and contradictory versions, paints a petty fight that began when a Jew on horseback threw up a cloud of dust on the crowd of Jaffan visitors, certainly an insult to this gathering of high-class individuals. While later versions of the narrative would focus on the physical acts of violence that ensued, this version also implies a failed dialogue. The “head of the group” (Rock) first “cursed the wagon driver.” Only when the colonist “offered a retort” did Rock hit that colonist and one other on the head with a stick. The injured colonist called out for help, and other colonists came, among them Yaakov Abramovich. Abramovich, this account states in the form of direct speech, “Drew close and said ‘What are you doing?’ and he [Rock] answered ‘Here’s what I am doing.’” And, the article narrates, “before the poor man could turn away he shot him in the head with a bullet and shattered his skull and he and his group ran away and disappeared.”²⁵ A cryptic conversation between a Palestinian Arab elite and the bourgeois colonist he encountered, and eventually murdered, on that hot autumn day gave rise to a series of conversations among multiple Jewish authorities and bodies, aimed at achieving the best possible judicial outcome.²⁶

After a period of intense heat, *Hashkafah* reported, and not just the heat of conflict, the air cooled off and the first raindrops of the season began to fall, as they typically would in October. And Rishon LeZion, along with the Hebrew press of the day, continued assessing the event. According to a November 10 account from *Ha-Melitz*, it was in part the wine that had drawn the group of visitors. The group from Jaffa, and among them “the son of a rich family,” the article intimated, had come to the colony “to have fun, with debauchery and drunkenness.” Soon enough they decided to get up and shoot birds and eventually they made their way to the eucalyptus grove behind the Great Synagogue, where they continued to drink. Suddenly, the precipitating event occurred: along came a horse and cart driven by an unnamed colonist,²⁷ and its wheels kicked up a cloud of dust and dirt on the revelers. The picnickers were incensed and a fistfight broke out, which was violent enough to draw the attention of other colonists. At that point, reported the article, “one of the group of Christians, the rich man named Alfred Rock, shot with his weapon at one of the group of young men from the colony and the bullet hit him in his temple and shattered his skull, and he fell to the ground dead.”²⁸ Rock would eventually flee not only Rishon LeZion but also the country, taking refuge in Europe: most likely in Greece but, depending on

the account, possibly in Cyprus, Italy, or the Vatican. He would return to Palestine later in the decade and eventually became involved in the Palestinian Arab nationalist movement.²⁹

Crafting a Response

The press coverage of the event makes clear that the Jewish community was not certain which course of action they would eventually follow, though they were aware of their options. After trying, unsuccessfully, to chase after the group of fleeing Arabs, perhaps to mete out their own justice, perhaps to turn Rock over to the authorities, the colonists of Rishon LeZion pursued a different strategy, which revealed their positionality relative to the authorities in Palestine: they contacted the government clerks in Jaffa and began to collect evidence for a trial. According to the article in *Ha-Melitz*, “they rushed to come with the municipality doctor to take testimonies and wrote everything down in a book. Thus the investigation and the search began.”³⁰ The process in their view was rapid, empirical, rooted in observation and medical science validated by a certified professional. *Hashkafah’s* account on October 1 suggests that the family requested a court trial from the beginning: “the father of the victim and his brother and wife, accompanied by a few others from the colony came here [to Jerusalem] and stood before the district governor of our city and asked for a trial and the district governor promised them that the government would do its duty.”³¹ While the governor had the ability to bring the case before the public prosecutor, he could not promise them a trial; nonetheless, the family seemed to have found encouragement in this vague promise.

While an apparently efficient evidence-gathering and trial-seeking process was getting underway, however, the *Ha-Melitz* article also reflects uncertainty about whether judicial proceedings would indeed lead to justice. “Given that the murderer is from the richest family in the whole city of Jaffa,” it stated, “he has not yet been arrested; he is hiding somewhere in Jaffa and the government clerks are not working hard to find him, because the family blinded the government clerks with a bribe, because of their great wealth.”³² On the one hand, this description confirms that the colonists had access to Jaffa officials and were familiar with the city’s social makeup. Yet despite the bonds between Jaffa and the colonies, the second part of the description paints Jaffa as a space beyond the colonists’ knowledge and suffused with corruption that had the potential to thwart the judicial process. It suggests that justice might be achieved not through facts but through money—or at least that in the context of a thriving discourse about corruption, this fear would have motivated the colonists, with or without any firm evidence. Jaffa, with a population at the time of 30,000–40,000 depending on estimates (around a third of whom were Jews), seemed to contain hidden lairs, places where a murderer could hide.³³ Moreover, the workings of the city were beyond their control—those with money could use that money to turn the local officials to their side. The possibility of an outcome other than a satisfactory state trial was evident from the outset. Such assumptions would make sense given widespread European consular comments about the corruption of Ottoman officials and the Ottoman court system, comments that, Avi Rubin shows, do not comport with the court’s actual performance.³⁴

Rishon LeZion was navigating an ambivalent relationship with both Jaffa and the Ottoman authorities. Jaffa was only 15 km away—an ancient and now rapidly growing regional center that was a straightforward journey by horse and wagon (indeed, the colonist whose cloud of dust irked the picnickers may have been headed there).³⁵ Just a few years later, the founders of Tel Aviv would depict Jaffa as a decrepit city surrounded by sand dunes, but other contemporaries were impressed by Jaffa's wide hinterland, describing it as a "Garden of Eden" for its extensive cultivation of "vast quantities of oranges, lemons, citrons, pomegranates, apple and pear trees . . ." ³⁶ By World War I, Rishon LeZion, though cultivated by Jews who fashioned themselves as independent colonists, was part of a "a complex ecosystem" of neighborhoods, colonies, farms, and roads defined the Jaffa region in the years before World War I, as Mark LeVine has emphasized.³⁷ Rishon LeZion was also connected to Jaffa through the movement of people back and forth to the city. Indeed, Yaakov Abramovich had met his wife Reyzl (Roza), in Jaffa while she was working at a clothing store on Boustros St.³⁸ And yet the workings of that city were shrouded for the Jewish colonists in a degree of inscrutability that had the potential to thwart justice.

The Trial

On October 14, 1902, less than a month after the murder, the Rishon LeZion Jewish community recorded a firm decision in their general assembly protocols: "Regarding the murder, it was decided to let Mr. Levi [of the Jewish Colonization Association] know, in the name of all of the members of the colony as well as the family of the victim, that our desire and our demand is to chase down the murderer and spiller of innocent blood, using all possible and expedient means, until the murderer is caught and stands trial in the criminal court."³⁹ And indeed, though Rock had fled the country, he was tried in absentia six months later, in March 1903 in Jerusalem. On March 6 *Hashkafah* reported that trial had been held on March 2–3 in the criminal court in Jerusalem, the administrative capital of the independent district (*mutasarrifiyya*) of Jerusalem, which also included Jaffa and most of the Jewish colonies of the Jaffa region. Though Jaffa had its own courts, murder cases could only be heard in, Jerusalem, the location of an *istinaf* court (court of appeals).⁴⁰

In bringing the case to court, the colonists sought the support of the JCA in Jaffa (known as the "*pekidut*," or administrative office), under the leadership of Isaac Levi, an Ottoman-born and German-educated man who served as a leader of the Sephardi Jewish community in addition to his role in the JCA (he was also active in local pro-Ottoman politics following the Young Turk Revolution in 1908).⁴¹ On the face of it, the JCA shared the colonists' commitment to bringing the murderer to court:

The colonists along with Mr. [Isaac] Levi, clerk of the colonies in Judea, are intervening with all their might with the governor of Jaffa and the Pasha of Jerusalem to put the murderer in jail, but their intervention has not borne fruit yet. The clerk of the JCA [in Jaffa] reported the news of the murder to the heads of the JCA in Paris and they got a reply by telegram to do everything they could to arrest the murderer and to judge him in accordance with his degree of evil.⁴²

However, the administrative office was ultimately answerable to the central office in Paris, and the colonists sensed that that this Paris-based organization, which was not explicitly oriented toward Zionism but sitting in a position of financial oversight over the community, might determine the outcome of the case. Rishon LeZion was indeed embedded not only in a network of local relations but also in a global network of Jewish influence. In fact, the *pekidut* in Jaffa would ultimately discourage the community from pursuing justice through the court system and instead recommended pursuing a financial agreement (*sulh*) with the Rock family.

Why would the colonists have been so certain that this judicial path was the right one, especially given perceptions that the state court system was corrupt? Some documents suggest that a deep faith in the Ottoman criminal system led to this conviction, as we will see. It is important to note, however, that the desire to intercede with imperial authorities (rather than, first and foremost, with local neighbors) in order to achieve collective aims was also an important and growing preoccupation in the Russian Empire. As Eugene Avrutin shows, Russian imperial desires to regulate and individualize its subjects since the late 18th century meant not that Jews were limited in their movement or employment prospects, as scholars had tended to assume, but that Jews became expert at navigating the legal-administrative systems of the empire. As mobile individuals, Jews both challenged the imperial systems structures and manipulated them. The patchwork of Ottoman and foreign imperial consular authorities in Palestine served as an extension of this terrain.⁴³ The contemporaneous reaction to the 1903 Rock trial suggests a broader context of Jewish interactions with and tempered enthusiasm about the Ottoman legal system.

Western historiography of Ottoman legal reform—based on French jurisprudence—had tended to celebrate the new state courts, pitting these seemingly enlightened, rational institutions, against the Islamic courts, understood to reflect traditional, backwards elements of Muslim society. This characterization is based on top down accounts of implementing a foreign legal system. How these systems functioned in practice, and how the diverse societies under their purview understood their efficacy, remained outside the frame of most scholarship. Avi Rubin, who has looked at Nizamiye courts across the Ottoman Empire, has emphasized that, “There are very few studies that explore everyday reactions to and experiences of nineteenth-century Ottoman socio-legal change in local judicial settings.”⁴⁴ The opportunity to embark on such a bottom-up evaluation is limited in the case of Palestine (like in many other parts of the Ottoman Empire), since Nizamiye court records were lost or destroyed in the transition from Ottoman to British control at the end of World War I. Haim Gerber makes much of one solitary volume of court records from 1887 that appears to have survived at the Israel State Archives, but court records are not available to examine particular cases.⁴⁵ The lack of Nizamiye court records, while an inconvenience, provides a particular opening to the historian; precisely because it not always possible to reconstruct court proceedings themselves in late-Ottoman Palestine, documents produced around, in relation to, and on the periphery of legal activity (memoirs, newspaper articles, local records) become a crucial means for understand the range of legal and extralegal options available to the Palestine community.

The new system of Ottoman civil and criminal law had been laid down with the Ottoman legal reform of 1858 and codified with the adoption of the

procedural code of 1879. The code's emphasis on procedure led rapidly to the development of a professional class of intermediaries, lawyers accredited by the Ottoman state. Where Islamic courts normally allowed untrained individuals elites to serve as representatives, the Ottoman Judge Ali Sehbaz Efendi wrote in 1886 that professional legal representation would ensure that "litigants would not be sacrificed to the deceits and tricks of people of unknown origin."⁴⁶ The Abramovich family apparently sought such representation: the lawyer for the Jewish side (the prosecution) was one of the most prominent jurists of his day, Malkiel Mani. Mani was a native of the Jewish community of Hebron. He had opened up a law office in Jerusalem in 1901 that initially served only members of the Sephardi community but quickly attracted Ashkenazi clientele, among them the Abramovich family.⁴⁷ Mani, who had begun his legal education getting to know the Qadis, Islamic judges, in Hebron, was not a formally educated lawyer but rather a judicial agent (known as a *vekil*).⁴⁸ Najib Effendi Anbari was mentioned in the press as a lawyer for the defense (though he may have been a representative of the accused rather than a formal attorney).

The March 1903 *Hashkafah* retold the murder story that it and other newspapers had conveyed earlier but now with a framing comment: "We all know the essence of the event." If in 1902 readers of Hebrew newspapers in Europe and Palestine were astounded by the breaking news, the readership of *Hashkafah* was now familiar with the story's outlines. But this later account, besides offering minor differences in the physical setting and context of the crime, has a new emphasis on the empirical validity of the narrative. After the story of the murder, the article affirms the narrative's correctness by stating: "Thus said the witnesses who saw the crime with their own eyes." Given conflicting accounts, the authorities collected "numerous testimonies" and "looked into the matter." On the day of the trial, fourteen witnesses were called to testify, among them four Muslims and, presumably, the rest Christians and Jews. We do not know the identities of these witnesses, but we might presume that they encompassed Rock's companions, servants, other Arab workers in the grove at that time, and colonists who saw the incident. "From all these testimonies it became clear that Alfred Rock was the murderer."⁴⁹ In other words, Rock, presumed guilty by the colonists from the outset, was indeed proven guilty by the court.

Small cracks, however, appear in this narrative of the court case: other witnesses had made conflicting claims about what happened. Indeed, after searching for Rock, the authorities, "were not able to catch the murderer himself, but caught four members of his group and one of them, a servant of Rock named Issa, said that he, and not his master, killed the colonist."⁵⁰ The October 1 *Hashkafah* article had suggested as much when it said that "three of the group were captured, and one of them said that he killed the colonist, though he didn't intend to kill him, just to threaten him and scare him away. But the witnesses suggest otherwise."⁵¹ Rock was sentenced in absentia to 15 years of hard labor, a sentence that was equivalent to jail time.⁵² However, two other members of the coterie were also sentenced for periods of six months, the aforementioned Issa, as well as a man named Najib. The very fact of their imprisonment suggests that the liability for the incident did not rest on Rock alone. Did others fire weapons as well? The article does not make this clear. Though it presumes that the verdict fairly convicted Rock, it leaves ambiguous what actually occurred.

Hoping for a just verdict, the Jewish community was following with rapt attention, as were Arab stakeholders. “A very large group of Jews and non-Jews crowded into the courthouse and the courtyard of the courthouse, and listened to the course of this murder trial, which at the time so outraged the whole community.” When justice fell to the benefit of the Jews, the Yishuv was elated. Indeed, the article concluded, justice had been done through proper rational channels and “everyone [*kol ‘am ha-aretz*] was happy.” How much the more so because “all the intervention of the family, which fought with all it had to save [their son] and clear this stain—was for naught”—it seemed that the rational powers of the system had overcome corruption.⁵³ At the end of the month, the newspaper *Ha-Tsefirah*, in a brief item announcing the 15-year sentence for Rock, emphasized that “The Rock family is one of the most important families in Jaffa,” as if to suggest how significant it was that even the son of an important family would not escape punishment.⁵⁴ While the fear of bribery appeared to be significant, its absence (or its lack of utility) suggested that the court system was relatively free of corruption.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, ambiguities about the correctness of the verdict cast some doubt on these perhaps performative pro-Ottoman statements.

It is instructive to compare the Rock case, and the ambiguous impression it creates about the Nizamiye court process, with a similar incident—the 1895 murder of a colonist in the colony of Petach Tikva, about 20 km from Rishon LeZion. There are a number of telling similarities with that case, which was chronicled by the Jerusalem-based journalist David Yellin. In this second case, the victim was a man named Shmuel Yaakov Rosenzweig, a Jewish butcher. (The victim’s profession, in a narrative twist, evokes—and inverts—a history of Jewish butchers being targeted in European blood libels, as Helmut Walzer describes in his own microhistory, *The Butcher’s Tale*.⁵⁶) The Rosenzweig case also opens with a point of interethnic contact: not leisure time pursuits but the mundane work of tax collecting: “It was the night of 23 Elul 5655 [September 3, 1895] and a tax collector named Salim Effendi Bin Amin al-Qasim came through the colony with a boy and two horses, having made his way from Nablus, the seat of the *sanjaq*.” In this telling, drunkenness also played a role: “And it was, when their hearts had been gladdened with that drink that makes hearts happy, the Effendi said to his friend, ‘shoot the Jews.’ And they shot with the barrels of their guns. And Rabbi Shmuel Yaakov (Abu Daoud), the colony’s butcher, was standing at that time in the front of his house, and a bullet hit him and he died.” In this telling this murder was the result of simple malice, while Abramovich’s arose as the result of a happenstance tiff. However, later iterations of the Abramovich story would also adopt a premise of wanton violence that mirrors the incidents that Yellin chronicles. In this case, like in the Rock case, the colonists of Petach Tikva were called to Jerusalem to testify in court.

In this butcher’s tale, too, suspects were apprehended. As Yellin reported, the members of the colony “were heroic” and “hastened and rode on their horses and chased after them and caught them after the horse of one of them was hit with bullets.” Subsequently the suspects were imprisoned and the investigation was orderly: nine witnesses, six Jews and three Muslims testified in Jerusalem (a tenth would have testified were it not for an illness). The defense attorney, Yellin wrote, tried to invalidate all of the Jewish testimony, but this claim was not accepted. Moreover, though the defendant later claimed that he had had no

weapon with him, and brought five witnesses to prove it, this was disregarded because he had not provided this information at the time of the investigation.⁵⁷

The witnesses' testimony begins to illuminate the quotidian social relations, both within the Jewish and Arab communities and between them, which may have also pertained to the Abramovich case. The butcher, for example, lived within a largely religious community. Petach Tikva was founded by religious migrants from Jerusalem who supported a vision of agricultural productivization and continued to have a large religious population. At the moment of the murder, Rosenzweig the butcher was at the home of the rabbi, Aharon Orlovsky, having brought a lung and a liver to be checked for blemishes that would render the animal un-kosher. Similarly in the aftermath of the Rishon LeZion case, individuals would seek religious authority—the Abramovich widow (herself a niece of the former chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Jaffa, Naftali Herz Ha-Levi Weidenbaum) would turn to Abraham Isaac Kook, the chief Rabbi of Jaffa in 1908, for a religious ruling. These brief glimpses of the quotidian religious practices of the First Aliyah remind us that we are dealing not with a secular Jewish community encountering Ottoman state courts and traditional customs, but one with its own structures and systems of religious law.

Yellin mentions several witnesses for the defense, most from the neighboring village of Saqiya 11 km east of Jaffa.⁵⁸ These witnesses testified that they had come into Petach Tikva and saw two horsemen, Ahmad Khalil and Suleiman 'Odeh, the first of whom was carrying a revolver with six bullets. It was at that point that "Abu Daoud, the Jewish butcher [Rosenzweig]" passed by "with a liver in his hand." As the witnesses kept walking, they saw the accused, Salim Effendi al-Qasim, along with his servant. Half an hour later, the Jews caught 'Odeh. As in the Rock case, however, there was some degree of uncertainty as to who had killed the butcher. Ahmad and Suleiman had returned home, and after Ahmad had gotten drunk and fallen asleep, 'Odeh gestured toward him saying, "this one killed a man and ran away, and the Effendi [was framed] instead of him." And the next morning 'Odeh addressed Khalil directly saying, "You killed, but others will be punished because of you." At that point, the witnesses recalled, Khalil took his revolver, tapped on the three remaining bullets, and said "So what if I killed a Jew? Is it such a big deal?"⁵⁹

Despite this hint of manipulation, the empirical standards of this trial and the Ottoman state legal system clearly impressed Yellin, who gushed that the judges "know how to distinguish between truth and lie."⁶⁰ What impressed him was the way that multiple perspectives, of people who did not know each other, could flesh out an empirically accurate picture of a single set of events: "all the members of these different villages who came through Umlabes [a commonly used Arabic name for the site of Petach Tikva] came one after another and didn't meet. All saw the horseman standing without moving and all saw the butcher with the liver in his hand and all saw the white revolver in the belt of Ahmad Khalil." The "excellent" judges would swear in each witness with the words "Wa-allah al-'adhim, ashhad b'il-sadaq!" (Great God, I testify to the truth) and "in their coolness of temper listened calmly to their words and wrote them down verbatim."⁶¹

Ultimately, the judge ruled that indeed Salim Effendi the tax collector and Suleiman 'Odeh, the second horseman, were innocent but that Ahmad Khalil, the true murderer, had not committed premeditated murder because he was drunk. Charged with manslaughter, Khalil saw his sentencing pushed off.⁶² Only

after hearing further testimony from a Jewish innkeeper who confirmed that Ahmad was the only one with a weapon and that he was indeed drunk, Ahmad Khalil was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to two years imprisonment. The short punishment did not please the prosecution, but the process itself was praiseworthy.⁶³ Yellin was assured that (at the very least) “after all these testimonies there is not a shred of a doubt that one of the two accused men was the murderer.”⁶⁴

This case study anticipates features present in the Rock trial as well: the apparent faith of the Jewish community in the Ottoman state courts, the description of a strongly empirical trial process, and the emerging narrative trope of Arabs as drunk and malicious. In addition, the groups of Arab visitors in both cases are comprised of multiple social classes: an elite man with a retinue of servants and assistants. In both cases, the most elite of the group—Salim Effendi, the tax collector, and Alfred Rock, the Jaffa notable—was presumed to be guilty, but in both cases, there was reason to believe that lower class individuals held or shared culpability. In the Rock trial, the notable was convicted despite the servant Issa’s testimony that his master was not responsible. Some of these aberrations may have derived from a class-based division between those involved in the trial. When one Christian Arab from Kafr Salfit, near Nablus, testified that a servant of Ahmad Khalil had deposited Ahmad’s revolver with him, the judge asked why he didn’t come testify, and the witness responded, “Ah, we are peasants, and we do our work so why should we get involved with trials that don’t relate to us?”⁶⁵ Two stories about elite Arab figures and their bloody encounters with Jews offer shadowy portraits of a more variegated social environment of masters and servants, notables and peasants.

The Sulh

The trial of the butcher’s murderer ended with a sentence and a punishment that, although it appeared lenient to some Jewish observers, reflected for them the outcome of a functioning legal apparatus. But in the Rock case, the story did not end in the Ottoman court system. The presumed murderer had fled the country, and though the court system had convicted Rock in absentia, it was unable to mete out punishment. But the courts were not the only judicial mechanism available. Palestine, like much of the Ottoman Empire, often turned to a local method of conflict resolution: the *sulh* ritual. In this case, negotiations produced a blood money (*diyya*) payment of 10,000 gold francs. In theory, while criminal proceedings mete out punishment to individual perpetrators while making no attempt to make peace between the families of victimizer and victim, the *sulh* ritual is premised on the assumption that crimes are fundamentally communal in nature and that restoring peace between communities is therefore the most comprehensive form of justice (it is often called “restorative justice.”)⁶⁶

The Jewish Colonization Association, whom the colony initially implored to seek trial, ultimately served as the intermediary for the *sulh*. The JCA, known by its Hebrew initials as “eeka,” was founded in 1891 in London by Maurice de Hirsch to support the development of Jewish agricultural communities in various parts of the world where Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe could engage in productive agricultural labor. The JCA’s primary investments were in Russia, South America, the United States, and Canada. They were not committed particularly to the Zionist movement or settlement in Palestine—but from 1896

supported independent communities in Palestine and in 1900 started to manage the colonies of the Baron Edmund Rothschild, including Rishon LeZion. Rothschild was not a beloved figure in his colonies—in fact the colonists in Rishon LeZion had staged a revolt in 1887 against the administrator he had appointed—but the JCA was particularly despised for operating without concern for the needs or desires of the colony and for being “far from the national spirit that reigned in those days,” according to one scholarly account.⁶⁷ This conflict would come to a head in the Abramovich incident, when the JCA appears to have promoted *sulh* as the right course of action.

The Ottoman *sulh* ritual is important to distinguish from the later evolution of this practice. As Alex Winder shows, the bright line presumed to exist between restorative justice and the state system became blurred during the mandate period by the intervention of state actors, including local Palestine policemen, in the *sulh* process itself.⁶⁸ This practice would continue throughout the mandate period and continue in a new form within the Israeli state, when representatives of the Israeli police, military government, or Knesset would take part in *sulha* ceremonies, as Shira Robinson discusses in the case of Kafr Qasim.⁶⁹ When these incidents involved a Jew and an Arab—a microcosm of interethnic conflict—the stakes of state intervention for placating intercommunal tensions were higher. Because the Abramovich-Rock agreement is one of the few Jewish-Arab cases chronicled so early it provides a unique window into the *sulh* practice in the Late Ottoman period.

Discussions about the acceptability of *sulh* and the fate of the money acquired thereby took place in the general assembly of the Rishon LeZion colony committee. In the days after the murder in 1902, as we have mentioned, the colony was clear about its intention to try the murderer, “the spiller of innocent blood” and exact revenge through the mechanism of the court system.⁷⁰ But it was clear even then that the JCA had a more equivocal view of options. There are two paths, Levi was reported to have said. One tends in the direction of reconciliation (i.e., *sulh*) and the receipt of reparations. The other option was to continue to pursue the court option. Levi was concerned, based on his presumptions about Palestinian Arab society and the Ottoman court system, that this would lead to a further act of revenge. Nonetheless, the assembly was steadfast, “we are not fearful of any threats from murderers. We will do our duty and, with all of our might and strength, avenge the blood [*lidrosh dam*] of Yaakov Abramovich from those who have spilled it, until he is brought to the government courts.”⁷¹ The use of the phrase “*lidrosh dam*” hearkens directly to a world of revenge killing in which a murder would be avenged through another murder. But in this case, the apparently more militant response was to eschew the restorative justice of the *sulh* and insist on revenge meted out by the state. Again, it is reasonable to suggest that a Jewish experience of intervening on behalf of imperial authorities, rather than seeking local resolution, may have influenced the Rishon LeZion colonists here as well.

It appears that the JCA started making arrangements for a *sulh* early on. Already on January 11, 1903 the Rishon LeZion protocols contain a cryptic mention by Baruch Feffermeister that “they agreed to 10,000 francs on the matter of the murder. But on this last matter it was decided immediately thereafter to cross it out [*leha'avir kolmus 'alav*] and cancel it and to put the nullified document in the colony's archive [to serve as a record of] the aforementioned terrible event that occurred to us this year.”⁷² An agreement worked out but immediately

cancelled. The Rishon LeZion city archive, however, does not contain this fateful document, which would not pass away so quietly into the annals of history, but would instead taunt the colony for years after.

Following this cryptic mention in 1903, years pass with little mention of the trial or the payment; Rock is presumably still abroad—indeed, Rock’s obituary in the *Palestine Post* suggests that he remained in Greece from 1902 until 1908.⁷³ It appears that whatever agreement was made in 1903 was either not completed or not deemed sufficient to declare the case resolved. Only in 1908, the year that Rock appears to have returned to Palestine, did discussions about the legitimacy of *sulh* and the blood money payment reappear in the protocols of the Rishon LeZion assembly. And while we hear again about the community’s unwillingness to accept the blood money payment, we also learn about the convergence of social circumstances, economic considerations, and assumptions about the Ottoman legal system that led the JCA to carry out the *sulh* and for the 10,000 gold francs to be deposited with the Jewish community.

On May 21, 1908, Malkiel Mani, who had argued for the prosecution in 1903 and continued to serve as a legal advisor to the JCA, came before the committee in Rishon LeZion and told them that the “equalization” [*hishtavut* (reconciliation)] process between the Rock and Abramovich families was moving forward, after the Rock family agreed to a payment of 10,000 gold francs. According to him, the sides had already come to an agreement that had been signed by Mendel Abramovich, Yaakov’s father, as well as by Abramovich’s widow Reyzl. Mani, for one, claimed that he was personally opposed to the reconciliation agreement, but that Mr. Albert Antebi, another member of the JCA administration in Jaffa, had said that everything was already concluded. Moreover, a group of seven witnesses had already been assembled and been instructed as to what to say to the authorities in order to free Rock from any fine or judicial punishment in the case of a retrial.⁷⁴

The news of the completed *sulh* was a shock to the assembly and at first they seemed to be in denial about it. Indeed, two days later, on May 23, the committee had a conversation attempting to clarify to what extent the reconciliation (*sulh*) path was indeed the only one open to them. Is the murderer still in Jaffa, asked Zvi Hershfield? If so, the authorities should attempt to capture him. Eliyahu Ostashinsky agreed—it was important to catch the murderer in Jaffa. But all this talk of a renewed trial was moot—what sat on the table instead was a reconciliation agreement somehow concluded without the full commitment of the victim’s family.

Mendel Abramovich was adamant in the May 24 meeting that he had been misled and that he intended to protest against the JCA administration, which had led him to “make peace” [*lehashlim*] with the Rock family. Abramovich explained: he had given power and permission to Yitzhak Frank to make peace with [*lehashvot im*] Rock, because Frank had already started negotiations with him. “But I regret it, and I will take back the signature that I gave to Mr. Frank.” At this point the assembly conducted a quasi-formal, almost ritualistic process of allowing the elder Abramovich to withdraw his agreement. Dov Haviv Lubman asked again, clearly, whether Mendel regretted his actions and wanted to rescind his signature and Mendel replied, “Hereby I regret my actions and rescind the signatures that I gave to Mr. Frank regarding peace with Rock with regard to the matter of the murder and henceforth and forever I will not enter any negotiations

with the Rock family on this matter. And if the colony wants to continue with the civil process I have the right to say only the civil process and not another.” Abramovich’s two other sons, Elhanan and Morechai, admitted at this point that they were coerced into signing the agreement as well and offered similar nullifications of their approval and vows never to make a deal with the Rock family. After the family expressed their categorical rejection of the blood money, Lubman suggested that the assembly collectively “protest openly before the JCA in Jaffa and Paris saying that the colony never intended at all to make peace with Rock for the good of the colony.” The proposal was accepted by a vote along with an affirmation that if, indeed, the murderer were in Jaffa, they would persuade the authorities however possible and by any means to chase him down.⁷⁵

What had happened? How had a *sulh* been concluded against the will of the family itself? Why had a civil court process—the process of seeking indemnity in the civil section of the Nizamiye court—not been completed, Gissin asked? And whose was the initiative to get into the *sulh* negotiations and to receive money for the murder? One might presume from this tortured, confused exchange in May 1908 that the community was unfamiliar with this mechanism and trying to come to terms with what it meant. Probing the path that led to the *sulh* offers an insight into the patchwork of ideological and material motivations that led the colony to act as it did.

Three reasons seemed to have coalesced in the decision to opt for *sulh*, reasons that shed light of the convergence of legal assumptions, financial considerations, and Zionist settlement objectives that motivated the members and sponsors of the First Aliyah colonies. First, JCA representative Albert Antebi said that, though the colony had in their minds the idea that a trial should continue, the JCA had been gradually convincing them that doing so would play into Rock’s hands. Mendel Abramovich attempted to explain this line of argument: he had been pressured for some years by the JCA administration in Jaffa to agree to a *sulh*. Mr. Frank and Mr. Antebi had told him, he said, that the murderer Rock was already in Jaffa, and if they didn’t complete a *sulh*, then they would lose all my rights to the civil process, and they told him, “as advice,” to finish the matter. “I was always opposed to it,” he said. “It was only upon the advice of the *pekidut* that I agreed to it.”⁷⁶ In fact, Antebi said, Rock was personally requesting a retrial, saying that because he was sentenced in absentia, the trial was invalid. Rock seemed to think that if he were tried again he would be found innocent. The possibility that the trial might be nullified on the basis of a procedural issue reflected the increasing complexity of the Nizamiye system and emerging tendency for trained attorneys to employ their knowledge of legal technicalities to invalidate trials or appeal them for those who could afford to pay.⁷⁷ In fact, Antebi reminded the group, “We don’t have certain evidence that he was the murderer.” Moreover, in a retrial the case would be relocated from Jerusalem to a “higher place” (likely to Istanbul, the site of the Court of Cassation, or highest court of appeals) and there is no certainty that we would win. Considering that there were only two witnesses who said they knew Rock, it is entirely possible that Rock could use this information to invalidate the trial. Committee member Ostashinsky wasn’t so sure about this logic. If he is so sure is he going to come out innocent in the trial, why would his family be willing to offer 10,000 francs? Antebi replied, “Rock is certain that he will come out not guilty, but believes that we would “go to war” against him [in a civil suit] and he would be obligated to pay

damages anyway: if so, it is better to pay 10,000 francs through a negotiated agreement.

The colony was not certain about what judicial mechanisms would be open to them: how did Rock know for sure that he would be found innocent and that Jews would “go to war” against him? Levi, unhappy that matters were being portrayed “in black and white,” appealed to Malkiel Mani “as an expert on the matter,” presumably seeing this experienced Sephardi Jewish lawyer as a reliable source of information about the Ottoman legal system. Indeed, Mani replied, it is possible that he would be found innocent in Jerusalem, and then we would have to appeal to transfer the trial to another place and it is possible that he would win there “just as we won in Jerusalem five years ago.”⁷⁸

Second, the JCA was moved by an actor with a personal interest in these events: Abramovich’s widow, Reyzl (Roza), née Jacobsohn. From one of the earliest Ashkenazi families in Palestine, Reyzl’s great-grandfather had come to Palestine in the early nineteenth century well before the beginnings of the Zionist movement. Some of the initial colony meetings after the murder focused on ensuring Reyzl’s sustenance, but this commitment remained unfulfilled. Indeed, Frank continued, the widow had come to him repeatedly asking to pursue the criminal trial but then began to change her tune and request a *sulh* agreement, presumably for the financial support it would provide her. This presumption is mentioned several times over the course of the discussions, until, suddenly, the widow herself, incredibly, enters the meeting room and presents the circumstances that led her to put her own pressure on the JCA to turn to a *sulh*. “The Widow Abramovich asks for permission to enter the assembly and convey to the them certain matters that pertain to her,” the protocols state, omitting her first name. We might imagine a frazzled young woman standing nervously outside an all-male gathering, unable to presume her right to speak. “Sir!” she began,

I came here to clear myself of the guilt that they are inflicting on me, that I enabled them to enter into negotiations to make peace with Rock with the agreement of the entire family. It was my material situation that brought me to that point. After my husband was killed I was left without anything. I turned to the colony committee and to the chief Rabbi of Jaffa, asking them to look into my situation, and I received no response. I travelled to Paris and I got a small sum from the JCA, but I spent this money opening a store in order to make a living, and I was left again without anything. I have only the 20 franks per month that I receive from my father-in-law, Mr. Mendel Abramovich. After the colony agreed to make peace with Rock I, too, agreed for the good of my daughter. I came here, gentlemen, to remove the guilt from myself.

A 10,000 franc payment would have constituted forty years of twenty franc-per-month payments for Reyzl; we can understand the financial motivation she would have had to pursue the *sulh*, and the extent to which this desire—a decidedly personal rather than collective desire quite distinct from the stories of ardent female Zionists held up by practitioners of women’s history—could have determined the outcome of this episode. Glimpses such as this into the perspective of female actors are exceedingly rare in these sources, which makes even this brief statement exceptionally valuable in piecing together historical motives.

A third reason for the *sulh* was mentioned only briefly, but was significant, particularly in light of the subsequent history of Zionist-Arab conflict. It seems

that not only process-related or financial considerations led the JCA to conclude a *sulh*; they also had on their minds the one issue that most motivated the Yishuv during this period and for decades after: land. “The purchase of lands,” Michael Assaf wrote in his 1970 study of Jews and Arabs in Palestine, “opened the first sphere of relations, and, as is naturally the case, immediately opened thereafter a sphere of regular, constant, daily contact, with the neighbors.”⁷⁹ The Rock family, it turns out, had been already connected to Rishon LeZion before the murder as an intermediary in land sales. Indeed, the “good relations” between the communities that had been expressed in the November 1902 *Ha-Melitz* article may have derived from the willingness of the family’s patriarch to be involved in such sales to Jews.⁸⁰ At first, the community was not prepared to place land over justice. On March 8, 1904, the community protocols discuss buying lands belonging to the adjacent village of Beit Dajan, with the elder Rock serving as intermediary. The colony announced that they were ready to enter into land negotiations “because we very much desire this land” but suggested doing so “only if the purchase doesn’t have any effect on the civil trial.” They feared the worst: “if there is an intention here to use the Beit Dajan lands as a bargaining chip [*kelaf mikuach*] or as a ransom [*kofef nefesh*] in exchange for the murderer, we should take this matter off the table.”⁸¹ Yet four years later, it appears that land was very much part of the reason that the JCA went for the *sulh*: “Why did we complete the *sulh*?” Frank asked rhetorically in a committee meeting on May 25, 1908: “We had received two letters from the colony committee regarding the purchasing of land from Rock, indicating that we should not continue with the civil proceedings against Rock in the event that doing so would harm the land purchase with Rock.”⁸² Concluding that pursuing justice through the Ottoman court system would have a chilling effect on the land purchases, the JCA may have decided to opt out of this course of action.

Conclusion

In the end, the JCA attempted to convince the Rishon LeZion colony that the collective good of the Yishuv would be best served by acquiescing to the apparently already-complete *sulh*. As Albert Antebi noted, “It is better that we forgive him [Rock] for the sake of the Yishuv in general.” Why would this be good for the Yishuv, in his estimation? Because in “acting according to the spirit of this land” and accepting a general practice of conflict resolution, they would be showing their good will. Moreover, it “would bring honor to us, to say that the Jews forgave him. . . we should do like they are accustomed to doing in this country.” Hearing this reasoning, Moshe Aharon Cohen agreed, “We should be silent for the good of the Yishuv.”⁸³ But if it appears from this narrative that the spirit of “peacemaking” eventually won out, based on calculations that this judicial outcome would be most beneficial in the long term, this would be an incorrect evaluation of a community that, although pushed in this direction by circumstance, clearly preferred the path of “war,” as they referred to the court process in the protocols, whether because of faith in its rational outcomes or prior preference, cultivated in Eastern Europe, to intercede with authorities and governments rather than to negotiate with local ethnic groups.

The Rishon LeZion community, like others living under Late Ottoman rule, engaged in a series of calculations as they navigated the multiple judicial arenas

available to them. They presumed at first that the Ottoman court system would be preferable, likely because of assumptions about its “rational” character (though they shared common European prejudices about its corrupt quality.) But they were disappointed in its inability to deliver a favorable judicial outcome. Subsequently, therefore, they agreed to the dictates of the *sulh* process, despite their lack of full faith and fundamental discomfort with the premise of accepting blood money. The Jews of Rishon LeZion thus began with intuitive assumptions about different legal forums, based on European commonplaces and communal stereotypes, but in practice did not make decisions only according to theoretical conceptions of “good” or “bad” justice; rather, they navigated available judicial alternatives in the hope of achieving the most favorable legal outcome for them given competing concerns about Abramovich’s family, the colony’s land purchases, and the overall image of the Yishuv in the eyes of Palestinian Arabs. The very nature of “justice” was by no means defined and could in practice be achieved through multiple means, all seen as imperfect in the eyes of the colony.

This part of the Abramovich episode ends with two outcomes, one framed as the embodiment of national sacrifice on behalf of the community; the other framed as betrayal. With the 10,000 gold francs now held in escrow by the JCA, discussions about the fate of the money dragged on throughout 1908 and much of 1909, as the widow and some members of the community argued that they should be given to the couple’s only child Rashe, while others opposed this. Some of those who eschewed blood money all together chipped in to create a separate trust fund for the daughter, Rashe. But when, on August 27, 1909, almost exactly seven years after the murder, Rashe died of an illness at the age of eight, her grandfather and uncles devoted her trust fund to building a medical clinic for the colony. The clinic was and continues to be presented in the city of Rishon LeZion as an expression of national pride and altruism. The clinic building is now the home of the Rishon LeZion city museum, which promotes a nationalist narrative of the colony’s founding.

But the other tangible outcome of the apparently botched and certainly unpopular *sulh* process—the 10,000 francs—was a decidedly nonnationalist one. With the death of her daughter, the widow Reyzl was becoming increasingly desperate. It is clear that her father-in-law Mendel barely supported her, considering her selfish and insufficiently devoted to the colony.⁸⁴ So Reyzl opted out, as did at least half of Jews who settled in these earliest colonies. After consulting with Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook in Jaffa, Reyzl finally got hold of the money in around 1911 and, as a local researcher Eli Nir puts it in his local account of the murder, “put them to personal use”—leaving for America.⁸⁵

The dominant narrative of Rishon LeZion emphasizes the image of Jewish productivity and unity in the midst of violent neighbors. Indeed, this schema is part of the master narrative of early Zionist settlement more generally. But when we move from this broad narrative to one concrete instance of violence, one of the first in the Yishuv and apparently the first in Rishon LeZion, we find a far more textured portrait of a community mapping out for the first time a communal stance and legal approach in a situation of legal pluralism and in light of their layered relations with Jewish and non-Jewish individuals and communities. A colony 15 km from Jaffa was embedded in the social dynamics and regional politics of that urban center and in Jewish networks that connected the colony to the

Jewish community of Jaffa, legal authorities in Hebron and Jerusalem, and representatives of Jewish philanthropic organizations in Palestine and in Europe.

Endnotes

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1. Rishon LeZion was founded in 1882 by seventeen members of Bilu, a Zionist settlement organization from Kharkov. It was populated nearly entirely by Jewish immigrants from the Russian Empire and Romania, until a group of Yemenite Jews joined the colony in 1909. Shulamit Laskov, *Ha-Biluyim* [The Biluites]. (Jerusalem: Ha-sifriyah ha-Tziyonit 'al yad ha-Histadrut ha-Tziyonit ha-'Olamit, 1979).

2. There is some discrepancy between sources regarding Alfred Roch's birth (also spelled Roch or Rock) and death dates. Two English language obituaries in 1942 (*Crown Colonist* and *Palestine Post*) place his birth in 1882 and his death in 1942, and I am following these. But at least two Palestinian biographical dictionaries (Abdul Hadi and Mattar) give alternative dates—1885–1956—and date his murder of the Jewish colonist incorrectly to 1905. Another source (Qalyubi) lists his dates as 1885–1945. "Social and Personal: Death of Alfred Roch," *The Crown Colonist*, June 1942; "Alfred Roch Dead: Important Christian Arab Leader," *Palestine Post*, April 22, 1942, 3. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, ed., "Rock, Alfred Butros (1885–1956)," in *Palestinian Personalities: A Biographic Dictionary* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 2006); Muhammad Muslih, "Rock, Alfred Butros: Politician, Citrus Merchant, 1885–1956, Jaffa," in *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, ed. Philip Mattar, Revised Edition (New York: Facts on File, 2005); Tahir Adib Qalyubi: *A'ilat wa-shakhsiyat min Yafa wa-qada'iha* [Families and personalities from Jaffa and its district] (Beirut: Al-mu'assasah al-'Arabiyah lil-dirasat wa-al-nahr, 2006), 281.

3. Yaakov Abramovich's father, Menahem Mendel (referred to as Mendel in many sources), immigrated to Palestine from Iasi Romania (known in Yiddish as "Yash") and made his way to Rishon LeZion in 1884. By 1900, according to a survey of the colony's members and land holdings, Mendel had 110 dunams (approximately twenty-five acres) to his name, of which ninety-three were planted with grape vines (cabernet, malbec, and other varieties). His son Yaakov, the report confirms, was twenty-five years old at that time and married. "Rapport sur les Colons de Richon le-Zion," Administration de Richon-le-zion, 1900. Central Zionist Archive (CZA) J15–6104, 1.

4. This wasn't the first instance of murder around Rishon LeZion; the journalist David Yellin records an event in January 1898 when a group of Jews from Jaffa went on a trip to Rishon LeZion and were attacked on the way by robbers in the neighboring village of Beit Dajan. One of the group, Yehoshua Ha-Levi Heyman, was killed and the perpetrators were subsequently convicted and sentenced to fifteen years of hard labor. But this does appear to have been the first murder in Rishon LeZion as far as the members of the colony were concerned. It was thus the first opportunity for the community to weigh its response to this kind of event. Nathan Brun, *Shoftim u-mishpetanim be-Eretz Yisra'el: ben Kushta li-Yerushalayim, 1900–1930* [Judges and Lawmakers in the Land of Israel: Between Istanbul and Jerusalem] (Jerusalem, 2008).

5. Ran Aharonsohn, *Rothschild and Early Jewish Colonization in Palestine*, Israel Studies in Historical Geography (Jerusalem, 2000).

6. Hillel Cohen has argued that 1929 should be seen as the starting point for the modern Zionist-Arab conflict. Hillel Cohen, *Tarpat: shenat ha-efes ba-sikhsukh ha-Yehudi-'Arvi* [1929: Ground Zero of the Jewish-Arab Conflict] (Jerusalem, 2013).

7. On Legal pluralism see Ido Shahaar, "Legal Pluralism and the Study of Sharia Courts," *Islamic Law and Society* 15 (2008): 112–141; Jessica M. Marglin, "Jews in Shari'a Courts: A Family Dispute from the Cairo Geniza," in Arnold E. Franklin et al. (eds.) *Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Medieval and Early Modern Times: A Festschrift in Honor of Mark R. Cohen* (Leiden, 2014), 207–25.

8. Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Proto-Zionist–Arab Encounters in Late Nineteenth-Century Palestine: Socioregional Dimensions," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 38, no. 2 (2009): 42–63.

9. On the challenges of working with the early Palestinian press see Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York, 2009), 119–24.

10. According to *Sefer toldot ha-Haganah* [History of the Haganah], between the beginning of Zionist settlement in Palestine in 1882 and 1908 there were thirteen Jews killed by Arabs. Abramovich was the eighth of these thirteen and the first to have been killed by a member of an Arab notable family. Eliezer Be'eri, *Reshit ha-sikhsukh Yisra'el-'Arav* [The Beginning of the Israeli-Arab Conflict], 1882–1911 (Tel Aviv, 1985), 65. Be'eri claims, following *Sefer Toldot Ha-Haganah*, that Shmuel Yaakov Rosenzweig was killed in 1895 by "one of the rich Arabs," but contemporary coverage of that trial, which I deal with later in this article, indicates that that was not the case.

11. In response to a string of property crimes against Jewish colonies and rising Arab national sentiment in the wake of the 1908 Young Turk Rebellion, the organization Ha-Shomer [The Guard] was established in 1909. A generation of young men, primed by their experience in self-defense organizations formed in the Russian empire after a spate of pogroms, defined themselves in Palestine by an ethos of bravery and devotion to the land. Ha-Shomer combined a romantic attraction to the Bedouin with a masculine sense of bravado and created the persona of the Sabra, a typology that would persist until and beyond the creation of the state Amir Bar-Or, "Hitpathut yahase ha-gomlin ben ha-mosdot ha-politiyim shel ha-Yishuv Ha-Yehudi u-mosdot ha-medinah ha-rishonim le-ven Irgun 'Ha-Haganah' ve-Tzahal be-reshito (1920–1949) [The Development of Reciprocal Relations between the Yishuv's Political Institutions and the State Institutions, and the Haganah and IDF in Their Early Years]" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Hebrew University, 2003), 62–63; Shapira, *Land and Power*, 71–72.

12. Mordechai Naor, ed., *Yeme homah u-migdal, 1936–1939: mekorot, sikumim, parshiyot nivharot ve-homer 'ezer* [Days of Tower and Stockade, 1936–1939: Sources, Summaries, Selected Incidents and Supplementary Material] (Jerusalem, 1987).

13. "Ha-retzah be-Rishon LeZion," [The Murder in Rishon LeZion] *Hashkafah*, 7 Adar 5663 [March 6, 1903], 1.

14. Shapira, *Land and Power*, 61; Be'eri, *Reshit ha-sikhsukh Yisra'el-'Arav* [The Beginning of the Israeli-Arab Conflict], 65.

15. Eliezer Be'eri, *Reshit sikhsukh Yisra'el-'Arav* [The Beginning of the Israeli-Arab Conflict], (Haifa, 1985), 32.

16. Jonathan Gribetz argues that Zionist-Arab relations in late Ottoman Palestine were not structured along the national lines that would become so prominent later. Rather, he argues, categories of religion and race were more commonly used by Zionists and Arabs as they looked to understand and categorize the other. These categories, moreover, were in flux and often used in conflicting or inconsistent ways. Jonathan Marc Gribetz, *Defining*

Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter, Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the Ancient to the Modern World (Princeton, 2014).

17. Yosef Lang, "Tehiyat ha-'Ivrit be-Rishon LeZion, 1882–1914 [The Revival of Hebrew in Rishon LeZion]," *Katedrah*, no. 103 (2002): 85–130; Arie Bruce Saposnik, *Becoming Hebrew: The Creation of a Jewish National Culture in Ottoman Palestine* (New York, 2008).

18. Gershon Shafir, "Settler Citizenship in the Jewish Colonization of Palestine," in *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (New York, 2005), 47–48. Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley, 1996); Baruch Kimmerling, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Cambridge, MA, 2003); Michael Assaf, *Ha-yahasim ben 'Arvim vi-Yehudim be-Eretz Yisra'el (1860–1948)* [The Relations between Arabs and Jews in the Land of Israel] (Tel Aviv, 1970).

19. See in particular Michelle Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford, 2011); Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem Between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse, 2011); Yitzhak Bezalel, *Noladtem tziyonim: ha-sefaradim be-Eretz Yisra'el ba-Tsiyonut uve-tehiyah ha-'Ivrit ba-tekuifah ha-'Otmānit* [You were Born Zionists: The Sephardim in the Land of Israel in the History of Zionism and the Revival of Hebrew in the Ottoman Period] (Jerusalem, 2007).

20. Abigail Jacobson, in an article comparing Sephardi and Ashkenazi newspapers, focuses on the Second Aliyah and its "Conquest of Labor Ideology," which she compares with the Sephardi tendency to promote contact and cooperation with Arabs. Abigail Jacobson, "Sephardim, Ashkenazim and the Arab Question in Pre-First World War Palestine: A Reading of Three Zionist Newspapers." *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2003): 105–130.

21. An important exception is Yuval Ben-Bassat's work on the ways in which Ashkenazi Jewish colonies employed a widely used petitioning process to engage with local and imperial-level Ottoman authorities. Yuval Ben-Bassat, *Petitioning the Sultan: Protests and Justice in Late Ottoman Palestine, 1865–1908*, (London, 2013), 161–186.

22. Mahmud Yazbek, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period: 1864–1914: a Muslim Town in Transition* (Leiden, 1998), 45.

23. On the implications of Ottoman legal reform for the Islamic court system see Iris Agmon, *Family and Court: Legal Culture and Modernity in Late Ottoman Palestine* (Syracuse, 2006), 7–14.

24. Some examples are: Michael Stanislawski, *A Murder in Lemberg: Politics, Religion, and Violence in Modern Jewish History* (Princeton, 2007); Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York, 1998); Mary Ting Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (Princeton, 2005); Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*, 1st ed. (New York, 2004).

25. "Ha-Shavua," [This Week] *Hashkafah*, 24 Elul 5662 [September 26, 1902], 1.

26. *Ibid.*

27. A later account identified him as Shakhne Vays, heading from the Ramle train station. Eli Nir, "Yahase Yehudim 'Arvim be-moshavah Rishon LeZion be-tekuvat ha-'aliyah ha-sheniyah" [Jewish-Arab relations in the colony of Rishon LeZion in the Second Aliyah period] (Seminar Paper, Tel Aviv University, 1986), 61.

28. Ben-Zion, "Ba-Eretz Ha-Kodesh," [In the Holy Land] *Ha-Melitz* 10 Heshvan 5663 [November 10, 1902], 3.

29. On the role of Christian Arabs in the Palestine national movement during the mandate period see Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh, 2013) and Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin, 2011).
30. Ben-Zion, “Ba-Eretz Ha-Kodesh” [In the Holy Land], *Ha-Melitz*, 10 Heshvan 5663 [November 10, 1902], 3.
31. “Ha-Shavua” [This Week], *Hashkafah* 29 Elul 5662 [October 1, 1902], 1.
32. Ben-Zion, “Ba-Eretz Ha-Kodesh” [In the Holy Land], *Ha-Melitz*, 10 Heshvan 5663 [November 10, 1902], 3.
33. Kark compiles extensive population statistics. Of six estimates between 1900 and 1904, five place the population between 30–40,000 (the outlier estimate places it at 13,000). Ruth Kark, *Jaffa: A City in Evolution, 1799–1917* (Jerusalem, 1990), 151.
34. Avi Rubin, “British Perceptions of Ottoman Judicial Reform in the Late Nineteenth Century: Some Preliminary Insights,” *Law & Social Inquiry* 37, no. 4 (October 1, 2012): 991–1012.
35. Some important studies of the Jaffa ecosystem in the Late Ottoman period are Mark LeVine’s *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine* (Berkeley, 2005), which is primarily concerned with Tel Aviv’s impact on the Jaffa district; Ruth Kark, *Jaffa: A City in Evolution 1799–1917*, which is primarily concerned with economic development; Nahum Karlinsky, *California Dreaming: ideology, society, and technology in the citrus industry of Palestine, 1890–1939* (Albany, 2005).
36. Cited in Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography*, 77.
37. Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography*, 81.
38. Hayim Yaakovzon, *Petach Tikva be-reshit ha-me’ah* [Petach Tikva at the Beginning of the Century] (Hayim Yaakovzon, 1986), 5.
39. Protocols, 13 Tishrei 5663 [October 14, 1902], Rishon LeZion Historical Archive, 5–1-ayin, 13.
40. Natan Brun, *Shoftim u-mishpetanim be-Eretz Yisra’el: ben kushta li-Yerushalayim* [Judges and Lawmakers in the Land of Israel: Between Istanbul and Jerusalem], 1900–1930 (Jerusalem, 2008), 28.
41. The two local representatives of the JCA who come up in this story, Yitzhak Levy and Albert Antebi, would go on to be the two principle Jewish representatives in local branches of the Committee for Union and Progress and vied with each other for power. Michelle Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford, 2011), 119.
42. Ben-Zion, “Ba-Eretz Ha-Kodesh” [In the Holy Land], *Ha-Melitz*, 10 Heshvan 5663 [November 10, 1902], 3.
43. Eugene Avrutin, *Jews and the Imperial State: Identification Politics in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, 2010).
44. Avi Rubin, “Ottoman Judicial Change in the Age of Modernity: A Reappraisal,” *Avi Rubin*, *History Compass* 6 (2008), note 35.
45. On the functioning of the dual system of state and Islamic courts in the District of Jerusalem, see Hayim Gerber, *Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem 1890–1914* (Berlin: 1985), 145–46.

46. Cited in Avi Rubin, "From Legal Representation to Advocacy: Attorneys and Clients in the Ottoman Nizamiye Courts," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 115.
47. "Yitzhak Malkiel Mani," in David Tidhar, ed. *Entziklopedyah le-halutze ha-Yishuv u-vonav* [Encyclopedia of the Pioneers and Builders of the Yishuv]. Volume 1, 340.
48. Avi Rubin, "From Legal Representation to Advocacy: Attorneys and Clients in the Ottoman Nizamiye Courts," 118.
49. "Ha-retzach be-Rishon LeZion" [The Murder in Rishon LeZion], *Hashkafah*, 7 Adar 5663 [March 6, 1903], 1.
50. *Ibid.*
51. "Ha-Shavua," [This Week] *Hashkafah*, 29 Elul 5662 [October 1, 1902], 1.
52. This punishment was also announced in "Be-eretz Yisra'el," [In the Land of Israel] *Ha-Tzefirah*, March 31, 1903, 2.
53. "Ha-retzah be-Rishon LeZion" [The Murder in Rishon LeZion], *Hashkafah*, 7 Adar 5663 [March 6, 1903], 1.
54. "Be-Eretz Yisra'el" [In the Land of Israel], *Ha-Tzefirah*, 3 Nisan 5663 [March 31, 1903], 2.
55. Haim Gerber, *Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem, 1890–1914*, 154.
56. Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town*, 1st ed. (New York, 2002).
57. David Yellin, "Mishpato shel rotzeach" [The Trial of a Murderer], 2 Shevat 5656 [January 17, 1896], *Yerushalayim shel temol* [Jerusalem of Yesterday] (Jerusalem, 1972), 11.
58. Saqiya was among the villages that Moshe Smilansky had claimed were economically helped by the proximity of Jewish agriculture: through wage labor, sale of services and goods, and through the sale of village lands to the colony, though locals may have felt differently. Nahum Karlinsky, *California Dreaming: Ideology, Society, and Technology in the Citrus Industry of Palestine, 1890–1939* (Albany, 2005), 160–161, n12.
59. David Yellin, "Mishpato shel rotzeach" [The Trial of a Murderer], 4 Adar 5656 [February 18, 1896]. *Yerushalayim shel temol* [Jerusalem of Yesterday], 24.
60. David Yellin, "Mishpato shel rotzeach," [The Trial of a Murderer], 2 Shevat 5656 [January 17, 1896], *Ibid.*, 11.
61. David Yellin, "Mishpato shel rotzeach" [The Trial of a Murderer], 4 Adar 5656 [February 18, 1896], *Ibid.*, 24.
62. David Yellin, "Mishpat ha-rotzeach" [The Trial of the Murderer], 18 Adar 5656 [March 3, 1896], *Ibid.*, 30.
63. David Yellin, "Mishpat ha-rotzeach" [The Trial of the Murderer], 10 Nisan 5656 [March 24, 1896], *Ibid.*, 35.
64. David Yellin, "Mishpato shel rotzeach" [The Trial of a Murderer], 4 Adar 5656 [February 18, 1896], *Ibid.*, 24.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Sharon D. Lang, *Sharaf Politics: Honor and Peace-making in Israeli-Palestinian Society* (New York, 2005), 85–86

67. Tzipi Eldar, "Gam hem hayu ben ha-'osim ba-melakhah: hevrat JCA 1900–1924" [They Were Also among Those Doing the Work: the JCA 1900–1924], *Ba-mikhlalah* 3–4 (1993), 42.

68. Alex Winder, "Collective Punishment and *Sulh* in Rural Mandate Palestine: "Official" and "Unofficial" Justice, Palestinian Intermediaries, and the Maintenance of Colonial Order" (unpublished paper presented at the Middle Eastern Studies Association Conference, 2013).

69. Shira Robinson explores the politics of the *sulha* that the Israeli government arranged following the government's cover up of the Kafr Qasim massacre. Shira Robinson, "Local Struggle, National Struggle: Palestinian Responses to the Kafr Qasim Massacre and its Aftermath, 1956–66," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35:3 (August 1, 2003): 393–416.

70. Protocols, 13 Tishrei 5663 [October 12, 1902], Rishon LeZion Historical Archive, 5-1-ayin, 13.

71. Ibid.

72. Protocols, 12 Tevet 5663 [January 11, 1903], Rishon LeZion Historical Archive, 5-1-ayin, 141. In 1873, France went on a gold standard by which 1 franc was 0.290322581 g of gold, so 10,000 francs would have been 2,903g of gold. By comparison, as we will see later, Abramovich's widow Rosa was receiving twenty francs a month for upkeep from her father-in-law after the murder; this would have represented forty years of such payments—a very significant amount of money.

73. "Alfred Roch Dead," *Palestine Post*, April 23, 1942, 3.

74. Protocols, 21 Iyar 5668 [May 22, 1908], Rishon LeZion Historical Archive, 13-1-ayin # 69–228, 1907–1909, 114–115. These witnesses were named: Mordechai Freiman, Avraham Barad, Yitzhak Fishelzon, Zelig Segal, Mordechai Abramovich (Yaakov's brother), Yehuda Glatzman, and Mordechai Berlinsky.

75. Protocols, 23 Iyar 5668 [May 24, 1908], Rishon LeZion Historical Archive, 13-1-ayin # 69–228, 1907–1909, 115–116.

76. Ibid.

77. Rubin, "From Legal Representation to Advocacy: Attorneys and Clients in the Ottoman Nizamiye Courts," 120.

78. Protocols, 23 Iyar 5668 [May 24, 1908], Rishon LeZion Historical Archive, 13–1-ayin # 69–228, 1907–1909, 115–116.

79. Michael Assaf, *Ha-yahasim ben 'Arvim vi-Yehudim be-Eretz Yisra'el (1860–1948)* [The Relations between Arabs and Jews in the Land of Israel]. Part B of *Hit'orerut ha-'Arvim be-E"l u-vihatan* [The Arabs' Awakening in Palestine and their Flight] (Tel Aviv, 1970), 11.

80. "Alfred Rock's family sold approximately 10,000 turkish dunams (about 9 square km) to Jews in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Later in the 1930s and 1940s he and other family members sold land to Jews at Rantiya and Fajja in the Jaffa district. In 1943 Alfred Rock sold land to the Jewish National Fund that later became part of Tel Aviv's central bus station." Kenneth Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917–1939* (University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 68.

81. Protocols, 21 Adar 5664 [March 8, 1904], Rishon LeZion Historical Archive, 7-1-Ayin, 63.

82. Protocols, 25 Iyar 5668 [May 26, 1908], Rishon LeZion Historical Archive, 13-1-ayin, 118.

83. Ibid, 119.

84. Eli Nir's local account of the murder, which plays up the heroism and self-sacrifice of Mendel, suggests that Mendel helped his daughter-in-law as far as he could "despite the fact that her demands were very great, apparently." Eli Nir, "*Yahase Yehudim 'Arvim ba-moshavah Rishon LeZion ba-tekufat ha-'aliyah ha-sheniyah*" [Jewish-Arab Relations in the colony of Rishon LeZion in the Second 'Aliyah period] Seminar Paper for the seminar "The Jewish Yishuv in the Land of Israel in the Period of the Second Aliyah" for Prof. Yigal Drori, December 1986, 63.

85. Ibid, 66.