

The Zionist Central Archives¹

THE Zionist Central Archives were founded in Berlin in the summer of 1919 on the initiative of the late Dr. Th. Zlocisti, well known physician and writer (biographer of Moses Hess) and Dr. A. Hantke, then member of the Zionist Executive. In the year 1933 the Institution was transferred from Berlin to Jerusalem and in the year 1938 its collections were housed in suitable quarters specially constructed and furnished for the purpose in the Central Building of the Executive of the Zionist Organisation and the Jewish Agency for Palestine, in Jerusalem.

The Institution was originally known as "The Archives of the World Zionist Organisation," and in keeping with its designation it was entrusted with the housing and arrangement primarily of the files and old documents of the Executive of the World Zionist Organisation and its central Institutions. At the same time, however, it also set itself the task of concentrating, in the course of time, all documents and writings relating to the history of the Zionist Movement and Organisation through all phases of development, and it began effecting that purpose. Only upon the Institution's transfer to Jerusalem, however, was it given the opportunity of enlarging the sphere of its activity in a systematic manner. Since then the Institution has been officially known as the "Zionist Central Archives," and it has been charged with the duty of gathering together, as fully as possible, all documents in manuscript, print, or photographs, relating to the history of Zionism in all countries and in all periods, as well as those relating to the history of the Jewish Community in Palestine.

The Collections of the Zionist Central Archives at present include:

a) about 70,000 official files of the Central Zionist Institutions, beginning with the time of the founding of the Zionist Organisation by Theodore Herzl (1897), among them the historical archives of the following Institutions: The Central Offices of the Executive of the Zionist Organisation at Vienna (1897 — 1905), Cologne (1905 — 1911), Berlin (1911 — 1920), London (1917 onwards), Jerusalem (1936 — 1940); The "Committee for the Investigation of Palestine" and "The Palestine Ressort" (The Pales-

¹ Revision of a leaflet previously issued by the Archives from its headquarters in the Jewish Agency Building, Jerusalem.

tine Department of the Inner Zionist Committee) (1903 — 1913); The Palestine Office in Jaffa — Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (1908 — 1918); The Zionist Commission (1918 — 1921); The Branches of the Central Zionist Office at Copenhagen (1915 — 1920); Berlin (1920 — 1924) and Paris (1918 — 1927); The Zionist Representative at Constantinople (1913 — 1918); The Offices of the Zionist Congresses (1921 — 1939); The Congress Court and the Zionist Court of Honour (1923 — 1935); The Head Office of the Jewish National Fund (1907 — 1927); The Head Office of the Palestine Foundation Fund in London (1920 — 1926) and its Central European Department (1920 — 1924); The Palestine Land Development Company (1908 — 1930); The Department of Immigration at Tel Aviv — Jaffa and Haifa (1920 — 1935); The Hebrew University Board in London (1919 — 1934); The Joint Committee set up by the Jewish Agency for the Aid of German Jews (1933); The Office for German Jews in London (1933 — 1938); The Youth Department of the Zionist Executive in Berlin (1925 — 1930); The Editorial Offices of the *Haolam* (1924 — 1934); The *Palcor* Office (since 1934); The Zionist Organisations in Holland (1907 — 1938), in Eastern Galicia and in Mauritius (1941 — 1945). Additional files of official Institutions are constantly being handed over to the Archives when they are no longer required for the current activities of these Institutions.

b) Private Archives and Collections of Documents from the Hibbath Zion period to the present time. This Department at present contains upwards of seventy-five archives of various personalities and Institutions. The most treasured among these archives are the literary and political archives of the late Theodore Herzl, which includes the very rich literary remains of the founder of the Zionist Organisation. The Herzl archives have been augmented, due to systematic efforts over a period of years, by a large collection of Herzl's letters from his childhood to almost his last day. This collection now contains more than 4,000 of Herzl's letters in the original, or copy or photostat. Among the other collections in the department, mention should be made here of the archives of the following persons and Institutions (in alphabetical order):

Chaim Arlosoroff; W. Bambus; Jehoshua Barzilai-Eisenstadt; Benei Moshe; Eliezer Ben-Yehuda; Jizhak Ben-Zvi; Jacob Bernstein-Kohan; Jona Dov Blumberg; Dr. M. I. Bodenheimer; Dr. Zvi Peretz Chajes; G. G. Cohen; Alter Druyanow (the archives of the latter, and the important collection of documents relating to the history of the Hibbath Zion Movement, which were partially

kept and completed previously by the "Brit Rishonim" and which include remnants of the Archives of the "Odessa Committee" and various Hibbath Zion Societies, as well as the remains of the archives of J. L. Pinsker, M. L. Lilienblum, Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, Rabbi Schmu'el Mohilever, Rabbi S. I. Finn, I. L. Appel, the Bilui Zeev Dubnov, Yehuda Leib Halevi Levine and others); Dr. Harry Epstein (regarding Zionist activities in various communities in Germany); M. Ezrachi-Krichevsky; Jean Fischer; Dr. A. Friedemann; Seev Gluskin; Boris Goldberg; J. L. Goldberg; Grand Rabbin Zadok Kahn, Paris; Chajim Kalvariski-Margalith; Jacobus H. Kann, Haag; Isaac Gruenbaum; Mordechai Ben Hillel Hacohen; Dr. A. Hantke; The Hovevei Zion Association in England; Bezalel Jaffe; Leib Jaffe; The Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO); Hillel Joffe; Rev. J. K. Goldbloom; Dr. Jacob Klatzkin; Dr. Shmaryahu Levin; Z. D. Levontin; Dr. Joseph Lurie; Professor M. Mandelstamm; Menashe Meirowitz; Benzion Mosinson; Arie Leib Motzkin; Max Nordau; Yehiel Michel Pines; A. Podlischewsky; Shaul Pinchas Rabinowitz; Rabbi Dr. Isaac Ruelf; Dr. Arthur Rupp; Dr. H. Schachtel; Dr. Yehiel Tchlenow; Davis Trietsch; Joseph Trumpeldor; Menachem Ussishkin; Professor Otto Warburg; Gedalya Wilbushewitz; David Wolffsohn; Israel Zangwill; Theodor Zlocisti; I. Zollschan, and parts of the archives of others, and large numbers of odd documents.

These archives were for the most part handed over to the Zionist Central Archives, either in trust or as gifts, by the owners or their heirs. In part they were transferred to the Archives on permanent trust by the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. The documents in these archives to a great extent supplement the historical material in the official archives and embrace, in addition, the history of the Zionist Movement and the Upbuilding of Palestine during the periods preceding the establishment of the World Zionist Organisation.

c) The Archives relating to the Jewish Community in Palestine and its History.

This department, which was created in recent years, has a double purpose. Firstly, to gather together as far as possible all the written and printed sources relating to the history of Palestine upbuilding in all periods, and secondly, in collaboration with other archives and central and local Institutions, to make provisions for the safeguarding and registering of the archives of the Jewish settlements in Palestine, in so far as these historical archives will not be handed over for preservation to the Zionist Central Archives.

Of the original material already preserved in our archives, mention should be made of the Archives of the Provisional Committee of Palestine Jews (1918 — 1919), The Vaad Leumi (The National Council of Palestine Jewry till the foundation of the State of Israel), the Jewish Community Council in Haifa (1914 — 1934), The Mishmar Haam (Home Guard) in Jerusalem, The American Economic Board for Palestine (1932 — 1940), The Ruhama Settlement (1912 — 1919), The Beth Hasofer, a workshop for Scribes, founded for Palestine Refugees at Alexandria (1916 — 1919), the material collected by Dr. Britschgi-Schimmer on the poor quarters of Jerusalem, on the Yemenite Jews in Jerusalem, on the change of occupation of German Jews in Palestine, various single documents and minute books relating to the history of the Jewish Community in Palestine, etc., as well as a large collection of the internal publications of the Jewish settlements in Palestine (including bulletins, wall-papers, Passover Hagadoth, memorial pamphlets, etc.) which are published by the various communal settlements, and in recent times also by many workers' smallholders' settlements.

d) The Library, which now contains upwards of 25,000 books and pamphlets relating to the history of Zionism and the settlement of Palestine, in all modern languages. This library is the largest specifically Zionist Library in the whole world.

e) The Collection of Newspapers and Bulletins embraces the majority of the Zionist and Palestinian Press, particularly as from the year 1920, but includes also periodicals from earlier periods. A large section of these newspapers are preserved in complete sets. In all about 2,500 periodicals and bulletins of all sorts are concentrated here. About 500 newspapers, periodicals, and current bulletins are received regularly.

f) Collection of non-periodical printed matter. Here are concentrated and systematically arranged thousands of manifestoes and placards, one-time broadsheets, circulars, etc., relating to the history of Zionism and Palestine. A special section has been devoted to the history of the Zionist Youth Movements.

g) Collection of Photographs, containing about 12,000 photographs and illustrations relating to the history of the Zionist Movement and the Jewish Community in Palestine (photographs of personalities and events, Congresses and conferences, settlements and their activities, etc.).

h) A Special Section relating to the War Effort of the Jewish Community in Palestine during the Second World War. This sec-

tion concentrates documentary material relating to enlistment in the army and supernumerary police force, and regarding our soldiers during the Second World War, their life and activities. Included are also soldiers' newspapers, archives of the various units, badges, drawings, photographs, etc.

The Archives arrange and register the material received in a systematic and scientific manner, and place it at the disposal of the National Institutions and the public for consultation in connection with scientific and publicist works, with the exception, of course, of such archives use of which has been limited, according to the request of their owners. Numerous works of research and books have already been written on the basis of original material contained in the archives, under the direction of its officials. It is possible to say without the least exaggeration, that there is hardly a serious book issued in Palestine relating to the history and problems of the Zionist Movement and the Jewish Community in Palestine, which has been written without the author's soliciting and receiving the help of the archives.

The Archives has published during the years 1936-1941, and in 1946, under the name of "Bibliographical Bulletin," a periodical survey of new books and pamphlets dealing with questions relating to Zionism and the upbuilding of Palestine. For several years the Archives has published a weekly internal bulletin, listing new books and newspapers received at the Archives. Many documents from the collections of the Archives have been published either by the Institution itself and its officials or by others with the permission and assistance of the Archives. Preparations are being made for publication of a comprehensive collection (in six volumes) of "The Letters of Theodore Herzl" collected by the Archives, the first volume of which appeared in 1947. Apart from that, the Archives are endeavouring to arouse the interest of the public in the history of the Zionist Movement and of the Jewish Community in Palestine, by organising exhibitions of archival materials. Of these exhibitions mention should be made of the Herzl Exhibition in Jerusalem (in 1936); "Forty Years of Zionist Congress" (at the 20th Zionist Congress at Zurich in 1937); "The History of the Jewish National Fund," (at the Jewish National Fund Exhibition in 1942); "The Beginnings" (July, 1944, in Jerusalem, Haifa and other places); and "Fifty Years since the Publication of Herzl's Jewish State" (February, 1946); on the way to the Jewish State (1949); Jerusalem and Zionism (1950). Exhibitions on a smaller scale are arranged from time to time within the walls of the Ar-

chives or in connection with the exhibitions of other Institutions, and they are greatly appreciated by the visiting public as well as by the press. Exhibitions of this kind were arranged, among others, in memory of Herzl, Trumpeldor and Ruppin.

It is the first concern of the Archives to arrange for a safe preservation of the documents entrusted to its keeping. All documents are kept in iron cases and shelves. A special safe is devoted to the preservation of the more precious documents. A pleasantly arranged reading room has been set aside for consultation, which contains a reference library and the current press. That reading room is visited daily by research workers, writers, students and pupils, who study the history of our Movement and its activities in Palestine at first hand.

All the activities of the Archives have the aim of handing over to the present and to coming generations, in a faithful and non-party light, the foundations of the history of the Return of the Jewish People to their land, with all their difficulties and vicissitudes; to raise a monument to those who created the Movement and worked for the effectuation of its ideals, and in this manner to transform the past into an influential factor in the continuation of Zionist activity in the present and in the future.