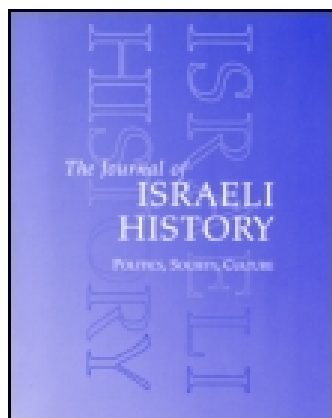


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## Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fjih20>

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Published online: 02 Feb 2015.



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To cite this article: Ayelet Kohn & Kobi Cohen-Hattab (2015) Tourism posters in the Yishuv era: Between Zionist ideology and commercial language, *Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture*, 34:1, 69-91, DOI: [10.1080/13531042.2015.1005858](https://doi.org/10.1080/13531042.2015.1005858)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13531042.2015.1005858>

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## Tourism posters in the Yishuv era: Between Zionist ideology and commercial language

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*(Accepted 23 July 2014)*

This study examines the complex national messages conveyed, both verbally and visually, in Zionist commercial advertisement posters produced in the Yishuv during the 1930s and 1940s. It focuses on posters promoting tourism and vacationing in Palestine, representing the growing perception of the country as an attractive destination for modern tourism that is not only religiously motivated. The posters are examined as historical documents that shed light on the ways in which the foundations of tourism in the country were laid and imbued with ideological meaning through the verbal and visual language of the posters. The article seeks to contribute to the study of Zionist visual culture in the Yishuv era by employing an interdisciplinary approach that combines textual-linguistic and contextual-historical analysis.

**Keywords:** Zionist tourism; commercial posters; national identity; multimodal systems

One of the sophisticated propaganda tools employed by the Zionist movement from its inception was the commercial advertisement poster, which was used to forge and promote a common national identity of the Jews in Palestine – an identity that was projected outward as well. As early as the 1920s, the Yishuv institutions produced posters and other graphic publications as part of the endeavor to build and consolidate the nation. The symbols and visual images featured in these publications played an important role in constructing national identity and creating a sense of belonging.<sup>1</sup> Advertisement posters for locally made products were part of this effort, and the same sense of mission permeated works of literature, poetry, theater, and cinema.<sup>2</sup> All these genres served to convey multifaceted messages that targeted diverse audiences: the local residents, the Jewish diaspora, and the British Mandate authorities.

This use of advertisement posters was especially prominent in the 1930s and 1940s, in the crucial era leading up to the establishment of the state, during which the effort to forge a distinct national identity was at its height. As propaganda tools, the posters employed a unique language: they served as bold and clear visual texts that translated an idea or message into the medium of design and form. The dictates of the period under discussion caused these messages, conveyed through the means of expression unique to posters, to become especially sharp and focused.

The Yishuv's consumerism campaign comprising both ads for specific local products and the broader campaign for purchasing local, rather than imported, goods

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was conducted alongside, and as part of, other public campaigns, such as the struggle for “Hebrew labor” and for the dominance of the Hebrew language.<sup>3</sup> These struggles also played an important role in forming the shared national consciousness of the emerging Jewish community in the pre-state era. Posters were a natural vehicle for these campaigns, since they appear in the streets or in other public domains such as newspapers, and convey a direct and immediate message that triggers an instant sense of identification or admiration in the viewer.<sup>4</sup>

This study examines the complex national messages conveyed, both verbally and visually, in posters produced in the Yishuv under the British Mandate during the 1930s and 1940s, focusing on posters promoting tourism and vacationing in Palestine. These posters are of interest given that the development of modern tourism was one of the prominent indications that the Yishuv in this period was opening up to contemporary Western influences, leading to a growing perception of the country not just as the Holy Land (which had been a magnet for pilgrims for generations) but as an attractive destination for modern tourism motivated not only by religious sentiments. The posters will be examined as historical documents that shed light on the ways in which the foundations of tourism in the country were laid – foundations in which economic and ideological aspects were combined into a single unified message – and how they were reinforced through the verbal and visual language of poster design. The article will consider the role of advertisement posters within the visual culture of the Yishuv and the Zionist movement and how the particular discussion of visual culture can expand our understanding of the conflicts within Yishuv society and the nation-building project. Were the familiar cultural conflicts (the “old” vs. the “new” Jew; consumerism vs. pioneering, etc.) given new expression in these posters?

Our model of analysis combines two fields – the study of tourism, and the examination of multimodal systems as means of expressing ideology.<sup>5</sup> We thus seek to contribute to the study of Zionist visual culture in the Yishuv era by employing an interdisciplinary approach that combines textual-linguistic and contextual-historical analysis. The diverse sources of data and knowledge at the disposal of historians, researchers of tourism, and researchers of verbal-visual discourse enable the posters to be discussed from a perspective sensitive to both their linguistic and historical contexts. In particular, this multimodal approach provides the opportunity to examine the interrelations between visual and verbal texts within the posters.

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen describe multimodality as the attempt to cross boundaries between genres, a conceptual framework in which common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes. This social semiotic approach is fruitful from a social-historical point of view, given that the posters we examine combine diverse genres and forms which shed light on the relations between Zionist ideology and Zionist commercial language. This approach will enable a better understanding of the posters’ historical background (both the general background and the background of the posters’ addressees) and their meaning in the period being studied.

In some cases it is not known who designed the posters under discussion; in other cases the names of the artists are known but little or nothing is known of their lives. However, the similarity of these posters to works by well-known artists and graphic designers in this period, such as Gabriel and Maxim Shamir, suggests that their creators

drew from the same sources of inspiration (see below).<sup>6</sup> Hence, we do not focus on the posters' designers as individuals, but rather regard them as part of an ideological collective that contributed to shaping the visual and verbal ideology of the time. The purpose of the discussion is to analyze the posters' verbal and visual construction in order to gain insight into the messages they convey and the complex issues of identity they evoke.

By their very nature, advertisements and other commercial and propaganda texts tend to be "transparent" texts with a direct and overt message; moreover, they are regarded as a crude or even contemptible genre, in which bias, exaggeration, and semi-truths are to be expected. In the particular circumstances of the era under discussion, this served the needs of the posters' designers, for it allowed them to produce commercial texts, apparently innocent of subversive messages, that were easily accepted by both the Jewish locals and the British authorities. In other words, the designers could use the posters to convey loaded messages at a time when the construction of Zionist identity was proceeding very cautiously in the tense climate under British Mandatory rule.

The development of tourism was perceived at this time as a national achievement and a step towards economic sovereignty, while financial profit and the public's consumer choices were likewise seen not only in terms of material gain but as having ideological significance. Indeed, the national dimension was prominent in almost every action during this era – commercial, political, or social – including advertising.<sup>7</sup> Moshe Temkin, who researched advertising during that period itself, noted in his book *What Is Advertisement* (1947), that this field saw its greatest development in Palestine between the years 1933 and 1939. The new immigrants to Palestine at the time included many professionals in the fields of graphics, print, and advertising, most of whom came from Germany and Austria. They brought with them two major influences – the contemporary Soviet style of revolutionary propaganda, and the style of turn-of-the-century French posters – both of which permeated German photography and graphic art in the period between the two world wars. The influence of these styles on the posters discussed below is evident in the use of variegated fonts, the layout of the page, and the design of the characters.<sup>8</sup> By adopting these sources of inspiration (even if unintentionally), the local artists took up a style that was already perceived by the new Jewish settlers, most of whom were from Germany, the Soviet Union, and eastern Europe, as a vehicle for conveying ideological messages through a familiar propagandist medium, and adapted it to their needs in the local advertisement posters. This propagandist style was ostensibly open and direct, and hence formed an effective framework for conveying more complex messages.<sup>9</sup>

The visual images presented for the purpose of this analysis are taken from two main fields: that of shipping, and that of tourism, both foreign and domestic, in Palestine. Both involve an encounter between the Holy Land, with its religious and historical connotations, and the advent of modernity with the accompanying secularization. Posters from both fields are examined in order to understand how the Yishuv integrated itself into its external surroundings (i.e., the world at large) through tourism and shipping, and into its local surroundings (i.e., Palestine itself) through an attempt to combine the sacred and the secular. The advertisements constituted a sophisticated tool for building national identity and Jewish independence in preparation for the founding of the state.

The era under discussion was marked by a struggle between two main ideologies regarding the desirable social order: the socialist ideology, led by the labor movement which dominated Yishuv politics from the 1930s onward, and the bourgeois-capitalist ideology centered on liberal free enterprise. Each of these ideologies had a different perception of the goals of the Zionist enterprise.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, they disagreed on the role of private capital in building the land and in promoting the growth of the Yishuv economy, and on the legitimacy of private profit as opposed to the collective effort towards national development. However, in practice there was a growing public recognition of the importance of private capital in strengthening the economy and laying the foundations for national independence.<sup>11</sup> The branch of tourism was no exception: though it belonged to the realm of private entrepreneurship, it became increasingly infused with Zionist ideology and certain parts of it – for instance shipping – were recognized as significant factors in consolidating Jewish nationhood in Palestine.

The six posters presented here were chosen because they reflect the issues under discussion with special clarity. All of them belong to the realm of tourism. Some are directed at foreign tourists, others at locals, and some address both audiences simultaneously. Some draw very clearly from international sources of inspiration, while others exhibit a striking combination of old and new and of Jewish and international influences. These posters will be interpreted as intertextual representations of ideological tensions, in which different languages and different images, drawing their inspiration from diverse cultural and artistic traditions and from old and new graphic schools, combine to create a novel, multi-layered message, which assumes the addressees' readiness to read it simultaneously as a commercial and an ideological text.<sup>12</sup> The discussion of the posters focuses on two patterns of intertextuality and connections between word and visual image:

1. The local interpretation of international trends in design and graphics, as reflected in the posters' visual design. The styles that influenced the artists – such as Soviet, French, and German propaganda posters promoting the aesthetic of youth and strength, which served as vehicles of an ideological revolution, or decorative Orientalist elements – acquired a local meaning when their original national and political context was replaced by that of the Yishuv, in which the image of the new (Hebrew) Jew and his recent history was linked both to existing sovereign entities (such as Britain) and to ones that were still only a utopian aspiration (the Jewish state).
2. The meaning of various “image/text” connections within the space of the poster. W.J.T. Mitchell proposes this term as a salient characteristic of contemporary culture – the culture of the pictorial or visual turn, in which visual images assume an increasingly central role in the public domain, at the expense of verbal messages. The relationship between the visual and verbal dimensions in these texts, claims Mitchell, is always one of competition, confrontation, and a struggle for hegemony. Within this competition, political, institutional, and social power-relations are reflected, realized in concrete instances of text and image.<sup>13</sup>

Our discussion of the posters below adopts this approach, seeking to draw a link between the motif of the Holy Land and the new modern elements of secularism, nationalism, and Zionism.<sup>14</sup>

## Trade and tourism

Large steamships, which began dominating the seas in the 1830s (the start of the industrial revolution in the Western world), rendered sea voyages considerably quicker and safer and triggered an unprecedented development in the field of shipping services. For the first time, the Middle Eastern ports of Beirut, Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, and Gaza were connected to the main Mediterranean shipping routes, and passenger ships began visiting Palestine on a regular basis. The completion of the Suez Canal in 1869 gave a further boost to the “rediscovery” of the Holy Land by the Christian world and accelerated the modernization process, especially of the country’s port towns.<sup>15</sup> Under the British Mandate this process was accelerated by the further development of steamships, railways, and roads, and also of tourist services, all of which expanded the possibilities of travel between Palestine and various Mediterranean ports.<sup>16</sup>

In the early 1930s, several privately held Palestinian Jewish corporations were founded that transported passengers and goods from Jaffa and Haifa to ports in Egypt, Syria, and Cyprus. Our first poster is an advertisement for the ships *Har Carmel* and *Har Zion* (*Mount Carmel* and *Mount Zion*) (Figure 1), which were combined passenger and cargo ships belonging to Palestine Maritime Lloyd Ltd.<sup>17</sup> It was designed by Oskar Lachs, whose work, like that of many German graphic artists and photographers in the interwar period, was influenced by the style of Soviet propaganda materials and French turn-of-the-century posters.<sup>18</sup>

The purpose of this poster is to present an image, and its ideological message is more important than its function as a commercial tool aimed at a specific target audience in a competitive market. Two components of the poster’s design – the way the eye is led along visual paths,<sup>19</sup> and the merging of visual and verbal icons symbolizing entire worlds of content – turn this poster into an image-forming mechanism that addresses both local and international audiences. The poster can be seen as a statement about the historic significance of independent trade realized by means of “Hebrew ships,” which not only carry inbound tourists but also export the local citrus fruit, and about the call for international recognition of this trade. It constitutes both a national statement and a celebration of an enterprise receiving international acclaim. In connection with Palestine Maritime Lloyd, it symbolizes the economic initiative of an entity that is not yet an independent state but is nevertheless conversant in the ways of the economic world and cultivates the national-economic enterprise of exporting the locally grown citrus fruit.<sup>20</sup> The poster declares: we are already an active economic entity (economic activity being one of the criteria for sovereignty), for we are merchants-exporters – all this while elegantly avoiding the fundamental question of who “we” refers to in this sensitive pre-state era.

The viewer’s eyes are first guided to the oranges in the foreground by their vivid color. They are visually linked to the name of the shipping company and its familiar logo, and to the frame of the poster, and only later is the viewer’s eye drawn inwards, to the small image of the ship in the poster’s center. The fruit’s orange color not only forms a harmonious combination with its complementary color, blue, but also resonates with the blue (and with the absent, but present in the Jewish addressees’ mind, white) to form national “color stripes.” The Lloyd logo, the ship, and the national colors are welded into a unified and clear symbol of a local entity that is presented as being on a par with an international entity (the current rulers of Palestine). The visual packaging





Figure 1. “Har Carmel, Har Zion: The Hebrew ships.” Poster designed by Oscar Lachs. Courtesy of the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

evokes international graphic styles, familiar, for example, from Soviet propaganda posters of the 1920s. The elements of the poster are commercial, but its overall conception is perceived as national-ideological. The oranges, one of the most prominent symbols of the (economic and symbolic) bond between the Jewish diaspora and the reemerging Jewish community in Palestine, are associated here with the Haifa–Constantza–Haifa shipping line (in the wording along the left edge of the poster).

This advertisement, like texts belonging to other “light” and “marginal” genres such as popular songs or feature films, was thus harnessed to serve the Zionist nationalist agenda. With its openly propagandist character, conveyed through the accepted graphic and chromatic conventions of the era, it is immediately understood as a tourist advertisement aimed at selling a product, yet, at the same time, it is utilized to convey ideological messages. The poster addresses local and external audiences simultaneously: Yishuv Jews intending to travel abroad, foreign tourists coming to Palestine, and also Jews everywhere, local or foreign, who do not necessarily intend to travel but would take pride in witnessing the very existence of “Hebrew ships.” The adjective



“Hebrew,” which evokes the ancient identity of the Jews before they became a people, was already associated with the national enterprise of reviving the Hebrew tongue. The nation is thus defined by its language. For the Jewish audience this is a nationalist text, both on the overt level and the covert ideological one. The propagandist format helps to soften and sublimate the political message.

The design elements and visual paths form a mixed Jewish and British hierarchy of symbols directed both inwards, to the Yishuv, and outwards, to the British authorities (oranges and ships), and the elements used to market the ships and form their image are woven into one unified fabric. A similar strategy can be detected in the poster in Figure 2, also designed by Oskar Lachs, which evokes communist propaganda posters.

This is a quintessential marketing ad which uses the imperative tense (“travel!”) for the clear purpose of promoting travel and freight transportation by “Hebrew ships.” The man depicted in the center – who is undoubtedly the poster’s “testimonial” figure, looking directly at the viewer and serving as a source of reference and identification – is an authoritative-looking Hebrew sea-captain whose role is to market this nascent national notion of “Hebrew ships.” In his impeccable, well-pressed uniform he



Figure 2. “Travel by Hebrew Ships!” Poster by Oskar Lachs. Courtesy of the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

communicates professionalism and determination, while the white scarf and gloves mark him as a gentleman, a cut above the common seaman. The cap and uniform evoke the British tradition but also converse with the Star of David in the background. The body, leaning slightly forward, leaps out of the poster and creates a sense of movement, conveying energy and virility. As the testimonial figure in the poster, he creates a dynamic local-international hybrid that serves to define a new national identity and transform the call to travel in Hebrew ships into a personal consumer choice that is also an act of national assertion.

The directive (“travel!”) imbues the very act of tourism with national significance and associates it with the promotion of the Israel Maritime League (whose name appears in the lower right corner of the poster).<sup>21</sup> The phrase “Hebrew ships” thus appears alongside the phrase “Israel Maritime League,” both of which suggest a declaration of national identity. The use of the name “Israel” in the league’s title also evokes biblical and traditional Jewish connotations of the “people of Israel.”

The two systems of signification – the written word and the combined visual images – point to the same phenomenon: the creation of a hybrid local-global entity demarking sovereign boundaries of identity. Another example of this phenomenon is seen in the third poster, an ad for the *Polonia* (Figure 3), a passenger ship of the Polish Gdynia-America shipping line, which brought Jewish immigrants to Palestine during the Fifth *Aliyah* (wave of immigration) in 1932–38. This is a quintessential commercial tourism ad that stresses the ship’s speed, its large size – emphasized by the smaller accompanying ships – and details its route. Importantly, it also emphasizes the two flags – the Zionist flag and the Polish one – which are given equal status. Like Figure 2, its color composition has blue and white as major components; the words “15,000 tons” impart a sense of security and presence.

This poster also seeks to create an image; here, the element that leads the eye is the ship itself. Shown from the side, it creates a camera-like angular movement similar to the dynamic movement of the captain in Figure 2.<sup>22</sup> In this poster, too, tension can be discerned between the depiction of the new national entity’s normal economic life and the simultaneous need to define this entity, which is still in a process of formation. This cinematic phenomenon is familiar from other domains in this period. For example, films created in the Yishuv in the 1930s borrowed visual models from the Soviet and German propaganda cinema of the time and placed them in the service of the new settlers’ bid for self-determination.<sup>23</sup>

### Domestic tourism in Palestine

The British Mandate period saw significant changes in the infrastructure, volume, and character of tourism to and in Palestine. Whereas, in the late Ottoman period, there were only a few thousand tourists per year, most of whom were pilgrims to the holy sites, in the Mandate era this figure grew to tens of thousands. The visitors were also more varied and had a broader range of goals in addition to the traditional goal of religious pilgrimage. Simultaneously, the volume of domestic tourism grew as well, especially during World War II, when hundreds of Allied troops were stationed in Palestine, while locals were banned from traveling abroad, for security reasons. This created a need to develop local tourist services – such as hostelry, restaurants and cafes, museums, guide services, etc. – for both the British soldiers and the locals.<sup>24</sup> The main new attractions were provided by the new urban centers, especially Tel Aviv, the “first Hebrew city,”



Figure 3. “The 15,000-ton *Polonia*, the largest ship on the Haifa–Piraeus (48 hours) and Constantinople–Constantza line.” Courtesy of the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

with its unique modern character; the emerging branch of seasonal fairs and events; the development of the beaches and other recreational facilities; and the establishment of health spas and accommodations in agricultural settlements. In addition to increasing the variety of options for incoming tourists, these developments reflected the growth of a culture of domestic tourism and recreation with unique local characteristics.<sup>25</sup>

These trends are depicted in the poster in Figure 4, which celebrates the combination of the ancient and the modern in Palestine. The symbol-like image at the center features the Tower of David in Jerusalem, with a rural landscape, rather than the historic city, at its feet. One element in this landscape is a water tower which, as Mordechai Omer noted, “already became a motif in local painting and literature in the 1920s, and later also featured in applied graphic arts as a dominant symbol of the Zionist agricultural settlement.” According to David Tartakover, “the water tower was the Jewish-Zionist answer to the mosque minaret . . . For the people of the first *aliyot*, immigrants from Eastern Europe, the water tower was the Jewish answer to the church towers that dominated the landscape of their countries of origin . . . The water tower is

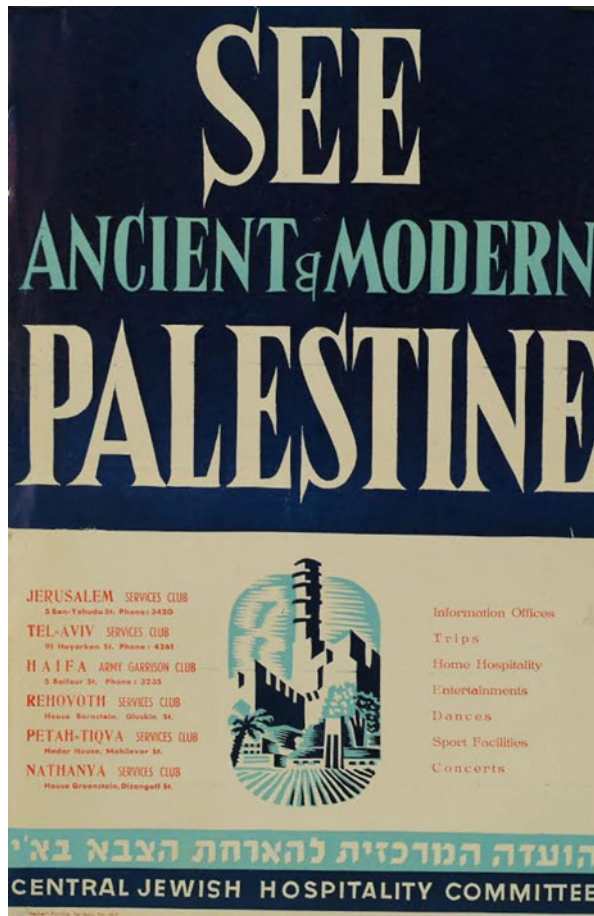


Figure 4. “See Ancient & Modern Palestine.” Courtesy of the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

one of the most ubiquitous symbols of the Zionist revolution.”<sup>26</sup> In addition to the water tower, the image at the poster’s center depicts plowed fields and a small palm tree, features of the Yishuv landscape that are associated with Zionist ideology and the myth of the Jewish pioneers. They were a frequent motif in propaganda and commercial materials produced by the Jewish Agency and the Bezalel Academy of Arts in the 1930s and ’40s.<sup>27</sup> The palm tree – which also appears in other posters, such as the one in [Figure 5](#) that will be discussed below – evokes both the oriental and biblical character of the land. The caption “See Ancient & Modern Palestine,” which takes up two-thirds of the poster’s space, serves a dual function as its headline and its most dominant component.

The combination of ancient and modern is illustrated through both text and image, and the central image featuring a hybrid of historic and modern settlement, as well as the combination of colors – blue, white, and black, creates a new image/text in Mitchell’s terminology. This array of symbols representing the meeting of old and new

soon became iconic. The grouping of palm tree, Tower of David, plowed fields, and various other symbols was already familiar from many other propaganda texts, so that viewers expected to see them together. In other words, the old-new array was already perceived as an independent ideological text. A modern version of this perception is found in tourist postcards today, which often feature a mosaic of the land's ancient and modern sites: a kind of flat, horizontal presentation of archeological layers.

The poster is signed by the Central Jewish Hospitality Committee, which reflects the political aspirations of the Yishuv institutions that operated among the Allied troops. Founded by the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, the purpose of the committee was to make contact with the soldiers, both Jews and Christians, who came to Palestine during World War II to undergo military training or to rest and regroup between battles. The Yishuv leadership saw this as a golden opportunity to convey Zionist messages. The Political Department sought to showcase the Zionist movement's achievements and its enterprise in Palestine, and to create positive public opinion among the troops that could affect public opinion in their home countries. During the war, the Political Department, by means of the Central Hospitality Committee, took 210,000 Allied soldiers on guided tours, during which Zionist ideas were promoted. As listed in the poster, the committee had offices across the country: in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Rehovot, Petah Tikva, and Netanya. It distributed pamphlets and also organized lectures and tea parties. The tours included historic sites alongside agricultural, industrial, and settlement enterprises. Some 60,000 soldiers were hosted in kibbutzim and moshavim for three days or more, free of charge.<sup>28</sup> The call of the Zionist institutions to the Allied troops to come and "see ancient and modern Palestine" is a call to become acquainted with the unique character of the modern Jewish-Zionist Holy Land – a land that combines the ancient and sacred with the modern, Western, and advanced, which are closer to the world and mentality of the troops and are represented, of course, by the Zionist settlers and the Zionist ideas that motivated them. The poster therefore presents the Yishuv as a political entity in an advanced stage of the progress towards sovereignty.

Ze'ev Raban's Hebrew and English poster (Figure 5) from 1929, promoting tourism to Palestine, is captioned "Tourism in Palestine" and "Come and See EREZISRAEL." As in Figure 4, this marketing ad depicts modern sites alongside traditional holy ones: the Herzliya Hebrew Gymnasium in Tel Aviv, the town of Rishon LeZion, the Bezalel building, and the agricultural community of Metula are interspersed with the Dome of the Rock, the Tower of David, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, and Rachel's Tomb. The design, in various shades of blue and orange (presumably chosen because they are complementary colors and also owing to limitations of the printing process), combines Orientalist elements with Raban's familiar Art Nouveau style.<sup>29</sup> We contend that this style facilitates the presentation of different religious and nationalist ideologies by anchoring them in a design framework that lends them equal force and redefines hierarchies such as Jewish tradition and the renewal of the Yishuv in a way that can appeal to diverse audiences. This is evident in the visual paths, in the testimonial figure at the poster's center, and in the choice of fonts for the Hebrew and English text.

By means of the style, which unifies and equates Jewish holy sites with the new Jewish settlements, the secular becomes sanctified and the sacred is secularized. This may also be a means of reinterpreting the world of diaspora Judaism, which the Zionist pioneers rejected, in two ways: by divesting the holy sites of their meaning as places the





Figure 5. "Tourism in Palestine." Poster by Ze'ev Raban, 1929. Courtesy of the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

Jews of the diaspora yearn for, and transforming them into symbols of the Jewish past in *Eretz Yisrael*, which the pioneers are redeeming and placing upon the map of the new Yishuv. The map replaces the traditional, "primitive" religious sanctity with historical context and a sense of continuity. The Cave of the Patriarchs and Rachel's Tomb, for example, are presented as both pilgrimage and tourist destinations, as are the new Jewish settlements. The acts of pilgrimage, sightseeing, and participation in the miracle of Jewish national revival provide a new context, in addition to the religious one. Aviva Halamish notes that many of the new immigrants who came to Israel felt they were coming to a familiar landscape, and thought of their immigration as an act of coming home. But, in reality, this familiarity was not with the actual land but with an imagined landscape. Hence, like any act of leaving one's homeland, their immigration was also accompanied by a sense of nostalgia for their countries of origin and all they left behind.<sup>30</sup> Raban's poster thus addressed not only foreign tourists but also the new settlers, who grappled with the memory of their lost Jewish home and with their yearning for it even as they built their new home.

The use of fonts in the poster's captions is interesting: in the word "eretz" ("land," referring to the Land of Israel), the style of the final letter *tzadeh* evokes a biblical font.

The use of this old/new font design, and indeed the very use of Hebrew script in this poster (and in any poster during this era), is part of the effort to forge a new national identity that converses with both the past and the present. Hana Wirth-Nesher has noted that diaspora Jews' use of Hebrew characters, or English characters designed to resemble Hebrew, reflects their complex attitude towards Hebrew texts: "For the majority of diaspora Jews, it [Hebrew] is the locus of a different alphabet, which binds together taboo, ritual, mystery, magic, and sanctity."<sup>31</sup> Jews partake of these "scriptworlds," as David Damrosch calls them in a study that discusses how "alphabets and other scripts continue to this day to serve as key indices of cultural identity."<sup>32</sup>

This complex relationship with the Hebrew script enables a direct link to be drawn between the biblical era and the resettlement era. The Hebrew script is thus presented not only as an emblem of sanctity and ritual in the religious lives of diaspora Jews but also as a daily symbol of Jewish national renaissance and its manifestation in the professional realm in the land. The connotations of sanctity are channeled towards the "religion of settlement" and the "religion of labor," in the spirit of A.D. Gordon,<sup>33</sup> and also towards the domain of tourism and other fields of economic development.

As in other posters, the fonts, place names, and the main visual symbols and paths come together to form a visual amalgam that seeks to create a new national entity and naturalize it. This entity does not yet have a political existence, but it does exist as an economic entity and as part of the international system; in other words, it is an independent entity maintaining work relations with international forces. The local information is presented as part of a mixed visual package addressing both local and foreign audiences, Jewish and international. The national (Hebrew) dimension takes part in conveying a message that can be seen as challenging the existing political situation.

Another interesting point concerns the correlation between the Hebrew and English in this poster: The Hebrew expression "Eretz Yisrael" is translated as "Palestine" and "the land," but in the main caption it appears as "EREZISRAEL." Here again we discern an appeal to a composite audience, as well as awareness of political sensitivities – those of the British authorities, the local Arabs, the pioneers, and diaspora Jews alike. The choice of the expression "EREZISRAEL" (rather than the standard and politically correct "Palestine") is directed at the Hebrew speech community. It evokes both the biblical Holy Land and the modern Jewish Yishuv, which was already in the process of constructing its settlement, economic, and ideological infrastructures. The term "EREZISRAEL" may also be directed at the diaspora Jews (as potential tourists or pilgrims), perhaps in an attempt to gain acceptance and bridge differences: *Eretz Yisrael* is the Promised Land of the Bible; its reincarnation in the form of a state, which contradicted traditional religious beliefs, is proposed here as an option without being stated explicitly.

The most prominent figure in the poster is the tour guide. Dressed in modern (and conspicuously British-colonial-style) clothes with a canteen slung from his shoulder and a hiking stick in his hand, he directs the viewer's gaze to the map. The surrounding frame forms a kind of door or Mediterranean-style portal composed of illustrations, each enclosed in its own frame. The overall layout, which bears some resemblance to a page of Talmud, indicates an attempt to weave together conflicting messages aimed at different audiences, in the appeasing guise of an innocent illustration and an invitation to come visit the land. The overall visual design, the testimonial figure,



and the typographic layout enable a social reading of the poster's visual and verbal modalities.<sup>34</sup>

The poster is signed by the Association of Jewish Guides, a body established as part of the political, economic, and ideological struggle between the Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine. One aspect of this conflict was a struggle over the right to guide tourists around the country and especially in Jerusalem. Jewish sources speak of a shortage of Jewish guides in Jerusalem in the beginning of the Mandate period, as compared with the abundance of Arab guides, and mention the state of hostility that developed between the two groups.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, the Zionist leadership's Trade and Industry Bureau initiated the founding of a school to train Jewish tour guides.<sup>36</sup> In late 1922, the school's first graduates founded the Association of Jewish Guides, whose goal was to conduct tours in a national-Jewish spirit.<sup>37</sup> However, the struggle between the Jewish and Arab tour guides continued in the late 1920s. The Arab riots of 1929, which were a turning point in Jewish-Arab relations in Jerusalem, exacerbated the conflict even further, making it increasingly difficult for the Jewish tour guides to bring groups to the Christian and Muslim sites in the city.<sup>38</sup> The situation of the Jewish tour guides in Jerusalem improved significantly during World War II, when, as mentioned, the Yishuv institutions offered many services to the Allied troops, including tours with Jewish guides to sites around the city and to nearby kibbutzim such as Kiryat Anavim. The demand for Jewish guides peaked in June–August 1943 when the Jerusalem guides gave tours to three or four groups (an average of 100 soldiers) daily, or about 9,000 soldiers in all.<sup>39</sup>

The Hebrew for “tour guide” – *moreh derekh* – was new in the context of Zionist activity, and reflected a change in the guides' status during the Mandate era. In the late Ottoman period, guided tours were organized and carried out by a “dragoman” – a distortion of the Arabic word *turjman*, meaning interpreter.<sup>40</sup> During the Mandate, this term largely fell out of use and was replaced by “guide.” But in the Hebrew-Zionist parlance, the guide became *moreh derekh*. The first word, *moreh* (teacher) evokes the concept of a spiritual guide (“one who shows the way”), or a teacher in a religious school. Both terms evoke the idea of religious knowledge. *Moreh* in combination with *derekh* (way/path) yields an old-new expression that underscores the concept of the land and its paths that must be walked and learned on the “way” to political sovereignty.

All the poster's components thus conspire to raise ideological issues while ostensibly forming part of a decorative promotional ad. The old-new iconic representations of sites serve to unify the sacred and secular, as do the Orientalist decorative style and the very use of the word “oriental,” in its Near- and Middle-Eastern sense. The “testimonial figure,” with his international-colonial features, who is a new immigrant himself (like the figure of the captain in [Figure 2](#)), displays international motifs but also initial attempts to forge a new local identity. The sophisticated use of Hebrew and English text and fonts, and the layout of the poster, give new meanings to genres such as religious texts or Orientalist illustrative styles, which in turn give new meanings to the notion of being a “new immigrant” in an old-new country.

The words used by Raban to appeal to his composite audience – “Come and See EREZISRAEL” – may be meant to evoke the command in Genesis 13:17: “Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you” (both texts feature the imperative voice and the word *eretz*, land, as key elements). This brings us back to the oft-quoted biblical promise and the system of myths it engendered, which call on

Jews to “conquer the land with their feet” and get to know it, for when the day comes and Jewish-Israeli sovereignty is realized, it shall be given to them.

This notion is nicely demonstrated in the poster in [Figure 6](#), which urges the Jews in Palestine to visit the local tourist sites instead of traveling abroad, and thereby strengthen the local economy. It speaks of “salubrious spots,” “wonderful views,” and “tranquility” – modern Western notions that had not yet gained currency in Palestine and the neighboring countries in that period.<sup>41</sup> It clearly attempts to market the land as a place of health and beauty in addition to its being the Holy Land. The lengthy text is broken up into three blocks, which are distinguished by means of distinct fonts and three sub-captions (“Jews,” “Hebrew Tourists,” and “Remember”). The poster is signed by the Center for Home Produce, founded in 1935 by the Jewish National Council. The center led the national campaign for local (Jewish) produce, which gained momentum mainly from the early 1930s. Its activity, aimed at producers, merchants, and consumers alike, was one of the reactions of the Jewish Yishuv to Arab measures against its economy, which included both violence and the boycotting of Jewish products.<sup>42</sup>



Figure 6. Poster of the Center for Home Produce calling for domestic tourism in *Eretz Yisrael*. Courtesy of the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

The campaign for local produce – a detailed discussion of which is beyond the scope of this article – was an important component of the national struggle and intimately linked to the efforts to harness the local economy to the promotion of Zionist ideology.<sup>43</sup>

In the spirit of these campaigns, this poster presents an amalgam of ideology and icons that combine to promote the notion of a local-international recreation site. Like the poster in [Figure 2](#), it uses the imperative voice, which is identified here as an invitation typical of advertisements, rather than a command.<sup>44</sup> The combined visual and verbal elements associate recreation with (national) economic prosperity and a sense of national mission, and merge high literary language with pompous propagandist language. The exhortative phrases involve the reader in economic considerations: “Remember that the hundreds of thousands of liras that remain in the country strengthen our national economy and strengthen the broad and diversified branch of tourism”; “Strengthen and fortify our domestic tourism – a fruitful economic branch, rich in potential.” In addition, the opening exhortation features an interesting combination of poetic “biblical” language and a pedagogical economic-national comment: “Jews! Before you set sail upon ships, eager for the enchantments of distant lands, look at our country, seek and you shall find salubrious spots and views more beautiful and wonderful than those foreign places to which you transfer hundreds of thousands of liras year after year.” The expression “foreign places” is the key, hinting at a moral betrayal by means of an economic act. The sharp contrast in tone and register between the long and poetic first part of the sentence and the prosaic second part is the source of its rhetorical power.

The visual element is made up of a deck chair in the shade of a tree, overlooking an expanse of water with a sailboat on it, and an indistinct town in the distance. The scene vaguely suggests the Sea of Galilee and Tiberias but is probably not meant to depict a specific location but rather a typical beach scene suggesting ease and tranquility. The use of silhouettes, which bespeaks a European influence, common in illustrated books, mainly intended for children, serves the poster in two ways: it divests Tiberias and places like it of their sacred or Orientalist connotations, familiar to the viewer from previous iconic depictions, and anchors the experience of tourism in a global and panhuman perception of peace and relaxation.

## Conclusion

The perception that language is a medium with its own meaning and history has informed, for example, recent studies of the terms “Old Yishuv” and “New Yishuv,” which have been subjected to a historical reexamination based on the understanding that the historiography of the Yishuv was influenced over the years by groups that achieved political dominance. The term “old” was applied to the Yishuv that was established through philanthropy and depended on the *Halukah* (charity of Jewish communities abroad). This term was coined by the generation that defined itself as “new” – the new settlers, the Zionists, who were presented as championing a return to the land, to productiveness, and to Jewish nationhood.<sup>45</sup>

The present study has sought to take the study of language in its sociological and historical contexts one step further by analyzing posters – a genre combining text and image – as a language with a context, meaning, and history of its own. “Travel by Hebrew Ships,” commands one of the posters we examined, and indeed, tracing the

meaning of the various text-image combinations in the space of the posters often placed us in the shoes of their creators – sailing among historical eras, visual influences, and diverse textual sources. The model of analysis we proposed sought to connect two fields: the study of tourism, and the examination of multimodal systems as a means of expressing ideological conceptions.

It is crucial to attempt to understand the perspective of the posters' designers at the time of their creation. The tourism posters reflect the identity of the artists themselves as Zionists returning to *Eretz Yisrael* and as immigrants with roots in European culture. The transformation in the perception of the act of immigration – no longer seeing it as an act of pilgrimage and religious duty but rather as a national act of settlement and revival – is expressed in the posters in a manner that serves to bridge gaps and settle contradictions. The convenient commercial and technical packaging of the posters may have assisted the designers of these propagandist texts in cleverly combining various worlds of content: both the traditions they discarded and those they adopted, as well as the artistic influences amongst which they operated.

The tension between word and image – which, as noted, exists in every text – finds another expression in the struggle for conceptual dominance within the posters. The posters display traces of Jewish graphic traditions, laced with the artistic styles of the day (Ze'ev Raban), and graphic influences of Soviet propaganda posters (the ship advertisements), as well as a complex use of religious and secular language, and the global language of trade laced with Zionist tropes and messages. This competition reflects the political, institutional, and social power-relations that existed between the Jewish settlers and the British authorities, and also, of course, between the locals – the Jews and Arabs in the country – as well as among the Jewish settlers themselves: between their European past and their new life in Palestine. Dealing with tourism and experiences of pilgrimage, the posters reflect the complex interplay of the Holy Land motif and concepts of secularism, nationality, and Zionism. At the same time, they illuminate the creative, personal, and emotional connections that enabled their designers to express the shifts and character of their own biographies and perhaps even use the act of creation as a mechanism for resolving their daily difficulties.

The model we proposed focused on the posters themselves and on the array of messages they convey. Identification with the Zionist idea, which characterized both the posters and their audience in that generation, is laid out before us in the form of “condensed texts” that were part of the effort to shape the emerging national entity. In analyzing the posters we pointed to the complex nationalist messages conveyed, with different degrees of explicitness, through verbal text and graphic design, against the backdrop of the growing national struggles and hostility during the Mandate period, on the one hand, and the development of tourism as one of the sophisticated tools used, directly and indirectly, in the national enterprise of constructing the emerging Jewish entity, on the other hand. Modern tourism became a means of shaping identity and an important part of the Hebrew culture and the sense of solidarity emerging in the country – and as such was often gripped in the vise of growing ideological conflicts. The posters can therefore be seen as historical documents which shed light on the foundations of the local tourist industry, in which the economic and the ideological were combined into a single unified message. Future studies on public cultural and economic products such as stamps, postcards, or banknotes might benefit from the overall concept of this combination of economic, historical, and multimodal perspectives which we have suggested in this article.

## Notes

1. Mishori, *Suru, habitu u-re'u*; Arbel, *Kahol lavan bi-tzva'aim*.
2. Kohn, "Reshit ha-kolno'a ha-eretzyisre'eli", 141–55.
3. Shapira, *Ha-ma'avakim*; Shilo, "Milhemet ha-safot."
4. Kraus, *Krazot*, 2–5.
5. Jewitt and Oyama, "Visual Meaning"; Kress and van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse*, 1–23.
6. Donner, *Lihiyot im ha-halom*. The Shamir brothers, born in Latvia and educated in Germany, emigrated to Palestine in 1935, opening a graphic design studio in Tel Aviv. In addition to commercial projects, they designed emblems, medals, stamps, and currency notes for the new State of Israel, including its Coat of Arms.
7. Cohen-Hattab, *Latur et ha-aretz*,
8. Temkin, *Pirsomet mah hi?* 59–84.
9. *Ibid.*, 165; Trajtenberg, *Bein le'umiyut le-omanut*, 15–20; Donner, *Ta'amulah ve-hazon*.
10. Lissak, "Aliyah, klitah u-vinyan hevrah be-Eretz-Yisrael."
11. Karlinsky, *Prihat ha-hadar*, 315; Lavsky, "'Ha-omnam kayam kesher"; De Vries, *Diamonds and War*.
12. Kronfeld, "Sokhnut intertekstu'alit."
13. See Mitchell, *Iconology*; Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*.
14. On the power of visual messages and the methods of analyzing them, and on a variety of symbols and their interpretation in Jewish Zionist culture, see Mishori, *Suru, habitu u-re'u*, 352–61; for an analysis of Israeli posters, see Grossman, "Shalom al Yisrael."
15. Ben-Arieh, *Eretz-Yisrael ba-me'ah ha-tsha-esreh*; Gilbar, *Ottoman Palestine*; Kushner, *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*; Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation*.
16. Cohen-Hattab, *Latur et ha-aretz*, 21–31.
17. Palestine Maritime Lloyd Ltd, a Jewish shipping company of the Yishuv era, was registered in Palestine in late 1934, and was established as a partnership between an Italian ship owner and several seamen from the Yishuv. The company bought from the Italian partner two combined passenger and cargo vessels, each with a capacity of 110 passengers, which plied between Haifa and Constantza, Romania. The ships were to be manned by local Jewish crews, and emphasis was placed on the use of the Hebrew language and on employing the ships to train local Jewish seamen. The company managed to gain a foothold in the market despite fierce competition. During World War II, the *Har Zion* was requisitioned for the British war effort, and in August 1940, while en route from Liverpool in Britain, to Savannah in the United States, it was torpedoed by a German U-boat and sank in the Atlantic. Only one of its 36 crew members, 17 of whom were Jewish, survived. The *Har Carmel* was destroyed by fire on January 5, 1938, while anchored in Constantza. See Hayam, *Sfnot mesaprot*, 109–13; Herman, *Ha-kovshim*, 14.
18. Donner, *Lihiyot im ha-halom*, 22. There is little information about Oskar Lachs. Born in Germany in 1898, he was a painter and designer and apparently came to Palestine in the mid-1930s. He was known for designing posters for national institutions like the Jewish National Fund. See Immigration Request, Oskar Lachs, Frankfurt, Germany, to Dr. Fritz Noak, Tel Aviv, October 29, 1933, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem (CZA), S6P/221/L.
19. Kress and van Leeuwen, "Front Pages."
20. Oranges, which became the Yishuv's prime export, were a major component of its economic independence during the second half of the British Mandate and bore a great deal of symbolic meaning: they signified a deep connection with the land, the local light and sunshine, the struggle for Jewish labor in the orchards, and the ability to translate the pioneering enterprise into economic success. Oranges are a common motif in propaganda publications and press photographs of the era, representing the practical facet of Zionism, namely, the local agriculture. This motif became less frequent following the crisis in the local citrus industry after the outbreak of World War II. See Karlinsky, *California Dreaming*; Donner, *Lihiyot im ha-halom*.
21. The Israel Maritime League (IML), headed by Shmuel Tolkovsky, was established in 1937 to promote maritime awareness and provide material aid for nautical training among the Jewish population in Palestine. Its founding conference was held in June of that year on board the



- Har Zion* and was attended by 140 people. The League took an active part in establishing and maintaining a nautical school affiliated with the Technion in Haifa, in partnership with the Jewish Agency; providing nautical training activities for youth during the British Mandate in partnership with the nautical school of the Zevulun Seafaring Society and other nautical youth movements; initiating the founding of the Zim shipping company; establishing the Maritime House in Haifa and the Merchant Marine Club; incorporating new immigrants in the merchant fleet; and organizing the Sea Day events, held each year on the 23rd of Iyar (the anniversary of the inauguration of Tel Aviv port) to celebrate Hebrew seamanship. The IML was officially disbanded in 1994. See **Yarkoni**, *Ha-yam*, 115–17; **Eshel**, *Ha-ma'arakhah le-khibush ha-yam*.
22. This poster seems to be influenced by the Ukrainian-French painter Adolphe Mouron Cassandre's advertisement for the French ship *SS Normandie* (1935). See poster in **Holme**, *Advertising*, 136.
  23. **Kohn**, "Reshit ha-kolno'a ha-eretzyisre'eli."
  24. **Gross and Metzger**, "Eretz-Yisrael be-milhemet ha-olam ha-shniyah"; **Cohen-Hattab**, *Latur et ha-aretz*, 39–50, 83–89.
  25. **Berkowitz**, "The Invention of a Secular Ritual", 73–95; **Cohen-Hattab**, *Latur et ha-aretz*, 53–90.
  26. **Omer**, "Migdalei mayim ba-omanut," 42; **Tartakover**, "'Migdal ha-mayim," 64–65.
  27. **Donner**, *Lihiyot im ha-halom*, 33.
  28. The Zionist Intelligence Bureau in Palestine, "Summary of Its Enterprises in 1939–1945," May 6, 1946, CZA, KKL5/14281. For a review of the Yishuv's activities among the British troops during the war, see **Gelber**, "Ha-yishuv ke-hevrah me'arahat."
  29. **Ze'ev Raban** (born 1890 in Łódź, died 1970 in Jerusalem) was a painter, graphic artist, and industrial designer, one of the pioneers of local Jewish art in the Yishuv period and considered one of the creators of the "Bezalel style." His posters, commercial ads, decorative art works, and book illustrations were in the spirit of Art Nouveau, which was popular in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and had a strong decorative component. His symbol-laden art – labeled "Hebrew Symbolism" – also incorporated oriental and biblical motifs associated with the Land of Israel and depicted the landscapes and people of Palestine. Raban's posters for promoting tourism were commissioned by the Jewish National Fund. See **Goldman**, *Ze'ev Raban*.
  30. **Halamish**, "Ha-nostalgiyah ba-historiyah."
  31. **Wirth-Nesher**, "Leshon ha-kodesh."
  32. **Damrosch**, "Scriptworlds," 195.
  33. **Saposnik**, "Kedushah tziyonit mehulenet."
  34. **Lister and Wells**, "Seeing Beyond Belief"; **Jewitt and Rumiko**, "Visual Meaning"; **Wells**, *Photography*; **van Leeuwen**, "Typographic Meaning."
  35. Session of the Zionist leadership in Palestine, March 6, 1922, p. 236; Trade and Industry Bureau, Jerusalem, to the Leadership of the Zionist Organizations in America, New York, March 8, 1922, CZA, S8/1403.
  36. **N. Tish** [Tishbi], Director of the Zionist Leadership's Trade and Industry Bureau, Jerusalem, to **A. Rupin**, March 9, 1922, CZA, S8/20/8; Trade and Industry Department of the Zionist Leadership in Palestine, Jerusalem, March 20, 1923, *ibid.*, 1403/1 – summary of a session in which Tishbi said that, "regarding Jewish tour guides, the idea came to him after he learned of the danger represented by the non-Jewish guides, who serve as a tool in the hands of the enemies of the Yishuv."
  37. See *Ha'aretz*, October 26 and November 1, 1922; Committee of the Union of Jewish Tour Guides in Palestine, *Alon Moreh Derekh*, no. 1, 10 Kislev 5683 [November 30, 1922], CZA, S8/1403/1.
  38. See **Sela**, "Me'ora'ot ha-kotel." After the 1929 riots Jewish tourists and tour guides were banned from entering the Temple Mount. See **Cohen-Hattab**, *Latur et ha-aretz*, 112–19.
  39. **Y. Hochstein**, Zionist Bureau for Tourist Information in Palestine, Jerusalem, to the members of the Zionist Information Bureau, Jerusalem, September 12, 1943, CZA, KKL5/12019. For more information on tourism as a propaganda tool in the overt and covert national struggle between Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine, see **Cohen-Hattab**, "Zionism, Tourism."

40. Avitzur, “‘Reshit hadrakhat olei ha-regel.’”
41. Andrea L. Stanton, “‘Palestinians Invade the Lebanon’: Mandate-Era Tourism and National Branding,” paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in Boston, November 2009. We are grateful to the author for providing us with this as yet unpublished manuscript. For more on tourism in the Middle East in this period, see Cohen-Hattab and Katz, “The Attraction of Palestine”; Thornton, “Tents, Tours, and Treks.”
42. Livni, *Ha-ma'avak she-nishkah*, 91–120. The center’s activity incurred sharp criticism for conflicting with the interests of various parties. For example, it contravened the economic policy of the Mandatory government, as well as the interests of industrialists and importers who maintained trade relations with a wide range of bodies around the world. For more on the center and the criticism against it, see Stern, “‘Imahot ba-hazit.’”
43. Shoham, “‘Buy Local’ or ‘Buy Jewish’?”; Shapira, *Ha-ma'avakim*; Shilo, “Milhemet ha-safot.”
44. Similar to the “call now” of contemporary advertisements. On the “new Hebrew imperatives,” see Bat-El, “True Truncation.”
45. Bartal, “‘Yishuv yashan’ ve-‘yishuv hadash’”; Kaniel, “Ha-munahim ‘yishuv yashan’ ve-‘yishuv hadash’”; Hertzog, “Ha-musagim ‘yishuv yashan’ ve-‘yishuv hadash’.”

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