From Zionist to Anti-Zionist. The Tragic Fate of Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine Reconsidered

Matthijs van der Beek MA

Name: Matthijs van der Beek
Student number: 911617181
E-mail: matthijsvanderbeek@gmail.com
Course: Zionism, Ideology and Gender
Teacher: Dr. Esther Carmel-Hakim
Date: 4 April 2016

Table of contents

Abstract

The Dutch-Jewish journalist Jacob Israel de Haan has become known as the object of the first political murder in the history of Zionism. The direct causes that led to his violent death committed by the Haganah, the Zionist underground, in June 1924, have been well documented in the mainly Dutch and Israeli historiography, while there has been less academic interest in his writings as Palestine correspondent. Between 1919 and 1924, De Haan worked as journalist in Jerusalem for the Dutch daily newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad* and published almost four hundred articles that covered the main political developments in Mandatory Palestine. These publications are extremely valuable sources to better understand De Haan's changing position towards Zionism throughout the early 1920s. Whereas De Haan has been described by his opponents as an enemy of the Jewish people and the Zionist movement, this essay argues that his frequent critiques in his articles of the Zionist leadership were much more nuanced. They addressed a wide range of issues that concerned politics, the economy, religion, demography and intercommunal relations in Palestine. The most central issue that preluded future conflict was certainly the tense relations between the dominant Zionist minority and the traditional Arab and Jewish Orthodox communities in Palestine. Once De Haan joined the ranks of Agudat Israel, the anti-Zionist Orthodox organization, as its political adviser, the more radical and offensive his views and writings became towards the Zionist movement. Though his constant stream of anti-Zionist propaganda was perceived among the Zionist elites as a threat to the Jewish National Home policy, it seems that their growing suspicion of his diplomatic activities, most notably his negotiations with Arab leaders, and their inability to deal with this peculiar personality ultimately determined his tragic fate.

Introduction

The murder of the versatile Dutch journalist, poet and jurist Jacob Israel de Haan in Jerusalem on June 30, 1924, by members of the Zionist underground Haganah is commonly known as the first political assassination within the Jewish community in British Mandatory Palestine. This was the heavy price that De Haan paid for his political activism on behalf of the Palestinian Arabs and Orthodox Jews, who in the early 1920s were embroiled in a growing conflict with the Zionist authorities. When De Haan emigrated to Palestine in January-March 1919, his attitude towards the Zionist movement drastically changed and his writings for the Dutch and British press became increasingly critical of the Zionist demands that he found incompatible with Arab expectations. Moreover, his close connections with Arab leaders and British officials

elevated his status as authoritative spokesman of the Jewish Orthodoxy, who could harm the secular Zionist aspirations for creating a Jewish state in Palestine. As suspicion of De Haan's activities rose in Zionist circles, it became clear that he needed to be eliminated.[1]

Whereas the direct causes that led to the assassination of De Haan have been well documented in the Israeli and Dutch historiography, mainly through the work of Shlomo Nakdimon, Shaul Mayzlish, Shimon Rubinstein and Ludy Giebels, there has been less interest so far in his exact writings as correspondent in Jerusalem nor in his turn away from Zionism.[2] The Dutch historian Giebels underlined that De Haan's anti-Zionism in his later years was not so much based on principals, but rather on the specific methods used by the Zionist leadership. He soon understood that the Zionist propaganda oversimplified the complicated reality of the situation in Palestine and felt the urgent need to inform mainly the Dutch society about his concerns and political activities.[3] For the leading Dutch daily newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad*, De Haan wrote since his arrival in Palestine almost four hundred feuilletons or serial stories in which he shed his light on the daily affairs, the different cultures and main political issues.[4] His newspaper articles are incredibly useful sources to better understand his shifting opinions, broad social network and peculiar personality that have previously lacked sufficient attention in the historical literature. A deeper analysis of De Haan's writings may also add more insight into the discussion raised by Rubinstein and Giebels whether his assassination was really necessary to save the Zionist project in Palestine or that the Haganah overestimated his influence.

This essay tends to focus on the main political issues discussed in De Haan's articles in the Dutch media and to explain the wider context of how his views towards Zionism exactly

---

For this essay I have translated all quotes that I used from De Haan's articles from Dutch into English. Any possible inaccuracies in the translations are therefore under my full responsibility. All references are mentioned in English and their original language. The titles in the bibliography are given in their original language.

[1] Ludy Giebels, 'Why was Jacob Israël de Haan murdered?' [Dutch title: 'Waarom werd Jacob Israël de Haan vermoord?'], *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 127:1 (2014) 63-64 (in Dutch).

[2] Ibidem, 63-84; Shlomo Nakdimon & Shaul Mayzlish, *The First Political Assassination in Palestine* [Hebrew title: *Haretzach hapoliti harishon be'Eretz Yisrael*] (Tel Aviv, 1985); Shimon Rubinstein, 'The Case of De Haan – A Political Assassination or Murder by the Authorities of the "State in the Making"' [Hebrew title: *Parashat Dehan - Rezah politi o hozah lahoreg shel "mosdot hamdeina sheba-derech"*], *A Journal for Judaism and Zionism* 27/28 (1985) 5-29, 179.

[3] Ludy Giebels, 'A Dutch Lawrence of Arabia and his Arab friends' [Dutch title: 'Een Nederlandse Lawrence of Arabia? Jacob Israël de Haan en zijn Arabische vrienden'], *De parelduiker* 18:2 (2013) 4-5.

[4] Ludy Giebels, *Jacob Israel de Haan : Feuilletons in the Algemeen Handelsblad, 1919-1924* [Dutch title: *Jacob Israël de Haan : Feuilletons in het Algemeen Handelsblad, 1919-1924*] (unpublished manuscript, 2010). De Haan's feuilletons can be downloaded from the website of the Digital Library of Dutch Literature (DBNL): http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/saveas.php?filename=haan008feui01_01.pdf&dir=haan008feui01_01&type=pdf (accessed on 4 April 2016).

changed and began to cause greater concern among the Zionist leaders in Palestine. More recently, there has been more academic interest in the particular streams of anti-Zionism within the pre-State Jewish religious communities. Yakov Rabkin claimed that the core of the struggle in Palestine was that the Zionists almost completely ignored the genuine interests of the traditional religious Jewish communities that mostly rejected Zionism through their Judaism.[5] As more in-depth studies on this subject still need to be written, this study aims to provide a firsthand account of the roots of anti-Zionism among the Haredi Jews in the early period of the British Mandate from the perspective of a gifted and very outspoken Dutch-Jewish writer. The first part of this essay deals with De Haan's coverage of the political affairs in Palestine during his first years when the future status of the country under British military occupation was still unclear. The second part seeks to analyze his growing opposition against Zionism when his trust in a compromise between the traditional communities and the Zionists faded away. The third section is devoted to his reporting about his meetings with the Arab leaders in order to reveal his true agenda. Finally, the question is addressed whether De Haan's writings and activities really posed a threat to the Zionist project that led to his tragic end.

The complicated reality in Mandatory Palestine

The thirty-eight-year old De Haan embarked on his journey to Palestine in January 1919 and arrived two months later in Jerusalem, where he lived until his assassination five years later. His decision to emigrate to Palestine as apparently one of the first Dutch Jews came forth from his turn to Zionism and renewed interest in the Jewish Orthodox belief of his youth. He understood the urgency to settle in Eretz Israel since this was the very place the Jewish people had yearned for during centuries of persecutions in Europe, but he was personally also strongly appealed to Jerusalem – the ancient city that was so important in Judaism.[6] While the Zionist movement was still weak and divided in the Netherlands by the end of the First World War, De Haan was convinced of the need to help to build the Jewish state in Palestine based on the laws of the Torah.[7] Yet it seems that his decision was also influenced by other factors. His biographer Jan Fontijn pointed out that besides his Zionist motivations, De Haan struggled with his homo-

[5] Yakov M. Rabkin, *A threat from within: a century of Jewish opposition to Zionism* (London, 2006) 139-40.
[6] Jan Fontijn, *Unrest : The life of Jacob Israel de Haan, 1881-1924* [Dutch title: *Onrust : Het leven van Jacob Israël de Haan, 1881-1924*] (Amsterdam and Antwerp, 2015) 305-15; Ron Blom, "Canaille, unite together, but stay yourself.' Jacob Israel de Haan and the socialist movement on homosexuality and Judaism.'' [Dutch title: "Kanalje verenigt u, maar blijft u zelf.' Jacob Israël de Haan en de socialistische beweging over homoseksualiteit en jodendom'], *Uitgelezen Boeken* 16:3 (2013) 34-5.
[7] Giebels, 'Why was Jacob Israël de Haan murdered?', 67.

sexuality and his marriage to his non-Jewish wife Johanna van Maarseveen, which he both found irreconcilable with his Jewish beliefs. Aware of his sins, it was necessary for him to change his path to the Holy Land.[8] Giebels argued instead that De Haan was rather frustrated by the fact that he was rejected for the professorship in criminal law at the University of Amsterdam. In Palestine he would certainly have good chances to fulfil his dream to acquire such prestigious position at the future Hebrew University. Although De Haan was already appointed by the Amsterdam *Algemeen Handelsblad* as foreign correspondent in Jerusalem, he was ambitious enough to pursue other goals in his professional career. Given his large productivity as journalist, it is hard to imagine that this was just one of his many activities.[9]

Right after his arrival in Jerusalem in March 1919 De Haan sought contact with Zionist officials. Against his expectations he was not received with open arms, it was everything but a "royal reception" in his own words. They did not take him very seriously when he offered them his services, which may have already affected his attitude towards the Zionist movement at an early stage. Though it was certainly not easy for him as an immigrant and being far from home[10], he spent his first months by delving into the complicated reality of British-occupied Palestine and explaining his Dutch readership the different streams in Jewish politics. One of his first feuilletons entitled 'Moods and expectations' explains the difference between the 'fearful' and 'daring' Jews. The fearful Jews were the Orthodox Jews who opposed Jewish nationalism and considered the daring Zionist immigrants as being dangerous, because they would turn the Arabs against them. However, De Haan wrote that he was happy to belong to the Zionist camp which had not any intention to harm the Arabs, but just pursued the rightful cause of establishing a Jewish state. Convinced as he was, he stated that there would be no clashes between Arabs and Jews so long as the British Government was in power. The Arab leaders would eventually realize that their people could only benefit from the Jewish immigration.[11]

His naïve optimism would soon fade away when De Haan began to realize through his meetings with prominent Arab and Jewish leaders that the rosy future presented in the Zionist propaganda completely ignored the Arab question and overlooked the deep divisions between religious and secular Jews. In early May 1919, De Haan wrote that the Arab question was ever present and not as easy to address as writers and speakers in Europe thought.[12] Taking the rising

[8] Fontijn, *Unrest*, 265-77.
[9] Ludy Giebels, 'Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine' [Dutch title: 'Jacob Israël de Haan in Palestina'], *Studia Rosenthaliana* 14:1 (1980) 48-50.
[10] Ibidem, 56-8.
[11] Jacob Israel de Haan, 'Moods and expectations' ['Stemmingen en verwachtingen'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 26 April 1919.
[12] De Haan, 'Governor of Jerusalem' [Gouverneur van Jeruzalem'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 2 May 1919.

Arab-Palestinian nationalism into account, it would be best for the Zionist leaders "to be careful, fair, patient and modest." He admitted that his own simplistic view of wild Arabs riding on horses who would voluntarily leave the country as it would become more densely populated by Jewish immigrants was just an illusion. There were the Arab nationalists in the Palestinian cities who were already against the Jews, while the rural Arab farmers would not even think about the idea to give up their land. Yet he still encouraged Dutch Zionists to emigrate to Palestine[13], something that changed several months later. By then, he warned his friends at home against misguided immigration propaganda, including the false information for newcomers that the Jewish economical life in Palestine was flourishing.[14]

In his overview of the different Jewish political parties in Palestine, De Haan routinely described their party programs and attitudes towards the Arab population. After his meeting with Mozes Temkine, who told him that his party *Hapoel Hatzair* (The Young Worker) strived for the conquest of Hebrew labor in order to Judaize Palestine, De Haan wrote that this was an euphemism for making an entire population breadless. The burning question for him was then whether Zionism and peaceful Arab-Jewish coexistence were really possible together.[15] David Yellin, the deputy mayor of Jerusalem, asserted him that though mostly Arab-Christians held anti-Jewish views there was enough space for both peoples and that the Arabs needed to understand that the land development by Jews was in their mutual interest.[16] Much depended of course also on the British, if they would receive the mandate over Palestine from the League of Nations and whether they would support the building of the Jewish National Home as was promised in the Balfour Declaration of November 1917. In early October, De Haan reported about the rumors that the British planned to cease Jewish immigration to prevent future conflict, despite the hopeless situation for Jews in Eastern-Europe. But he also criticized the Zionist Commission, chaired by Chaim Weizmann, whose unpopular leaders did not know their own people and had "a morbid desire for centralization" to unify all the Jews in Palestine:

> "[A] great formula is, that all Jews must be as one. Then we stand stronger against the British and Arabs. Here in Jaffa this goes well. The Jewish type is very different. Freely, sunny. Everyone works here. There is no dispensation. But my pious Jerusalem friends live in the shadow of the Wailing Wall. They pray and study all day. It is a completely different type of people. Here in Jaffa the formula works. There is one [Rabbinical] Council for Ashkenazim and Sephardim. There is one Rabbinate. But in Jerusalem the

[13] De Haan, 'Jewish politics'['Joodsche politiek'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 17 June 1919.
[14] De Haan, 'Many worries' ['Vele zorgen'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 3 October 1919.
[15] De Haan, 'Jewish politics'['Joodsche politiek'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 26 June 1919.
[16] De Haan, 'Jewish politics'['Joodsche politiek'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 31 August 1919.

> formula does not work at all. In this gloomy, melancholic City the time for unity has not come yet. But still there needs to be governed according to the formula. There must be one Church Council, one Rabbinate, one Jewish Court. A large part of the Jews does not want that. They want diversity with cooperation, where needed. That is also a form of unity."[17]

De Haan became ever more skeptical about the Zionist ideal of Jewish unity through his close ties to the Old Yishuv. As member of the Mizrachi Party, the religious-Zionist wing, he soon realized that the fierce opposition against political Zionism from the majority of the traditional Jewish Orthodox communities preluded future tensions. One of the major opponents was Rabbi Chaim Sonnenfeld, the leader of the small Ashkenazi Orthodox community in Jerusalem, whom De Haan first met in May 1919. Though he really admired Rabbi Sonnenfeld for his pious lifestyle and dedication to religious study, they were by this time still at odds on their stance towards political Zionism.[18] De Haan dismissed Sonnenfeld's claim that the Zionist institutions were responsible for the secularization among Jews by asking: "How far was the [Jewish] People in the time of the Kings and Prophets not deviated from the Teachings?" In addition, he rejected Sonnenfeld's statement that his community would not participate in the Jewish National Council (*Va'ad Leumi* in Hebrew) that the Zionist leaders planned to establish in order to conduct the Jewish communal affairs in Palestine. Sonnenfeld was even prepared to form his own legislative council. Since such divisions did not help the Zionist project forward, De Haan stated in his feuilleton that every Jew, whether it was a Russian idealist or a religious leader such as Rabbi Sonnenfeld, needed to sacrifice their own goals for the sake of Jewish unity.[19] Another opponent, Rabbi Yitzhak Diskin, the leader of the anti-Zionist organization Jerusalem, raised other issues the Orthodox Jews principally disagreed with, including the Zionist plans to introduce women suffrage (for the national elections) and non-religious education (in Orthodox schools). De Haan shared their opposition against women suffrage. This was something the Palestinian women did not even ask for but was pushed through by the leftist minority and only further divided both sides. But on the issue of non-religious education, he wrote that exclusive religious education kept pious Jews for their living expenses dependent on '*chalukah*' or the charity funds from Jewish communities abroad. Therefore, they should take their benefit from the so-called "unconsecrated courses."[20]

---

[17] De Haan, 'Many worries' ['Vele zorgen'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 3 October 1919.
[18] Fontijn, *Unrest*, 366-9; Giebels, 'Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine', 71-5.
[19] De Haan, 'An opponent' ['Een tegenstander'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 19 May 1919.
[20] De Haan, 'Another Easter in Jerusalem' ['Nog eens Paschen in Jerusalem'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 22 May 1919; De Haan, 'The Chief Rabbi of Palestine ['De opperrabbijn van Palestina'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 27 February 1920.

Yet it seems that his frequent contacts with Orthodox leaders raised his sympathy for their opposition against the Zionist movement. By August 1919, De Haan already negotiated on behalf of Agudat Israel, the anti-Zionist organization of the Haredim led by Rabbi Sonnenfeld, with the King-Crane Commission, which was appointed by the American Government to investigate the feasibility of a Jewish state in Palestine.[21] The Sonnenfeld group could really use De Haan's help for his fluency in English and his credentials as jurist. By this time, De Haan was much more critical of the political Zionists, who in his opinion had been unjust to the Orthodox Jews. The Zionist leaders had consistently ignored their rightful objections. This was the main reason that he distanced himself from what he called the true "professional Zionists." On the meeting with the King Crane Commission De Haan reported that the Aguda delegation had raised two demands: first, that Agudat Israel should be represented in the emigration committees that were still controlled by the Zionists; second, that the Peace Conference in Paris would consult the Orthodox organization before it would decide on the future of Palestine. De Haan informed his readers that he personally took the initiative for this second demand because: "it is dangerous, when a (..) group has more power or more money (a malevolent form of power!) than is in accordance with its spiritual powers. That danger is present with the Zionist Organization. We must raise the consciousness of our members and ensure that this organization does not become too powerful."[22] Although the delegation of Agudat Israel sought foreign channels to curb the Zionist influence, the King-Crane Commission report was not published until 1922, when the American Congress finally supported the establishment of a Jewish National Home along the lines of the Balfour Declaration. Giebels remarked that the distinction between political and religious Zionism was too subtle for the Congress to be mentioned even.[23]

Meanwhile, De Haan also interviewed for his work as foreign correspondent some Arab-Palestinian leaders, which certainly deepened his understanding of the Arab question. This did not mean that he aligned himself with the Arab-Palestinian nationalists, but rather he was interested in their views, that often remained unheard in Zionist circles. Through his Arab-Christian friend Dimitri Salameh, an alderman in Jerusalem, De Haan was introduced to Aref Basha al-Dajani, the president of the local Muslim-Christian Association. Al-Dajani explained

[21] Giebels, 'Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine', 76-8; Giebels, 'Why was Jacob Israël de Haan murdered?', 74-5; Fontijn, *Unrest*, 367. The King-Crane Commission was named after the scholar Henry King and the businessman Charles Crane who conducted the surveys in Palestine. Interestingly, Fontijn noted that the ultra-Orthodox Jews found that Agudat Israel was still too closely aligned with the Zionists, because of its approach to education, land settlement (i.e. the establishment of religious kibbutzim) and Messianism.

[22] De Haan, 'The commission welcomes' ['De commissie ontvangt'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 7 August 1919.

[23] Giebels, 'Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine', 77-8.

him that this Arab association was established in all the major towns in Palestine to defend the country against the Jews. He strongly opposed the Zionist idea of a Jewish state in Palestine and would even use violence to prevent further Jewish immigration. When De Haan asked him why, Al-Dajani answered that the supposed Jewish historical rights on Palestine would be the same as that the Arabs would claim Spain after hundreds of years. De Haan argued then that the centrality of Jerusalem and Palestine to the Jewish spirit was very different and that the Jews lacking any future in Eastern Europe had nowhere else to go. Al-Dajani's continued that given the current demography in Palestine it would be greatly unfair to grant the right of self-determination to the minority of about 65,000 Jews, that would then rule over almost a million of Arabs. De Haan clarified that the Jewish National Home was meant for the thirteen millions of Jews from the diaspora that would eventually become the majority, but Al-Dajani said that in such case he would mobilize the entire Muslim population in the Middle East. In his view, there was only limited Jewish immigration possible when Arabs would have adjusted themselves to the higher standards of the Jews, who were more rich, better educated and skilled in trade and business.[24] By emphasizing those Arab objections, De Haan really tried to show the complexity of the situation in Palestine, when it was anything but clear that the Zionists would succeed in building a Jewish state without provoking a conflict with the large Arab majority.

De Haan's report of their conversation is interesting since it shows more precisely his actual position on the Zionist project, which he still supported and found necessary for the Jewish people. Yet he realized that Zionism was not the ultimate solution for all the Jews. Massive emigration to Palestine was simply impossible given the strong Arab opposition and the limited absorptive capacity of the country. Therefore, De Haan proposed that: "One should first close off Palestine for those Jews, whose position was not untenable," meaning those from "America, Holland and England."[25] This pragmatic view stemmed also from his conviction that it was important to come to terms with the Arabs to prevent future conflict, which was imminent in these days. De Haan thought that as long as Arabs and Jews would be willing to accept each other, it was possible to reach some *modus vivendi* between the two communities. Taking his close friendship with Adil Effendi as an example, he was convinced that "we need to treat the Arabs as our inmates and our equals, who they truly are."[26] The Zionist leaders and Jewish settlers were blamed by De Haan for having no such genuine desire to develop intercommunal

[24] De Haan, 'Arab and Jewish politics' ['Arabische en Joodsche politiek'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 14 August 1919.
[25] De Haan, 'Political visits' ['Politieke bezoeken'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 19 August 1919.
[26] De Haan, 'A long day' ['Een lange dag], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 4 December 1919; Jan Fontijn, *Tenderness and storm : The personality of Jacob Israel de* Haan [Dutch title: *Tederheid en storm : De persoonlijkheid van Jacob Israël de Haan*] (Amsterdam, 2012) 35-9.

ties after the Arab protests against the Balfour Declaration in February-March 1920, that started peacefully, turned into violence. Jewish settlements in the Galilee were frequently attacked by Arab irregulars and at the Battle of Tel Hai the famous Joseph Trumpeldor was killed. [27]

The wave of violence across Palestine culminated in what became known as the Nebi Musa Riots in Jerusalem in early April 1920. These riots coincided with the seven-day long religious Nebi Musa festival, that was celebrated annually by Palestinian Muslims and which centered on the collective pilgrimage from Jerusalem to the Tomb of Prophet Moses near Jericho. When more processions of Muslims entered the Old City of Jerusalem the following days, the situation became extremely tense. Arab leaders delivered inflammatory anti-Zionist speeches and subsequently violence broke out against the city's Jewish population.. During the attacks five Jews were murdered and over two hundred got injured. The violence continued for no less than four days, apparently due to the soft response of the British administration. De Haan declared that such events were to be expected because of the negative attitudes of both the Arabs and British towards the Jews. Yet he was shocked by the fact that even the Jerusalem Arabs had widely participated in the attacks against their Jewish neighbors and that Jewish graves had also been desecrated. This went straight against his hopes for peaceful coexistence. Though his dispatches condemned this so-called "first pogrom" in Jerusalem, he attributed the tense relations to the Zionist Commission that lived in a state of war with the Arabs, British and many Orthodox Jews. That shifted the attention away from the Zionist point of view that the British had failed to adequately protect the Jewish citizens. De Haan did not mention for instance that the Commission had requested the British to prepare for upcoming disturbances in the days before the Nebi Musa festival nor that Weizmann had personally warned Samuel for the pogrom that was in the air. His dispatches could therefore be read as another indictment against the Zionist leaders that were implicitly held responsible for the violence. Their complete ignorance of the Arab-Palestinian population was at the roots of this conflict. After the Jewish victims were buried, De Haan expressed his sincere hopes that Palestine may not become the "Jewish National Grave of our Zionist ideals." Such statements would eventually bring De Haan on collision course with the Zionist movement.[28]

[27] De Haan, 'Tense days' ['Gespannen dagen'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 31 March 1920.

[28] De Haan, 'A Jewish-National grave' ['Een Joodsch-Nationaal graf'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 3 May 1920; De Haan, 'Silent days ['Stiller dagen'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 12 May 1920; Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete : Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (New York, 2001) 131.

Towards collision course with the Zionist movement

The Arab riots in the spring of 1920 deeply impressed De Haan. The attacks still continued when the Zionist Commission received the news from London that "the Holy Land was given to the Jewish people under the mandate of England." Many Jews celebrated the positive outcome of the San Remo Conference of 19-26 April 1920, but De Haan was far less optimistic. The Zionist diplomatic offensive had only resulted in the official recognition of the Balfour Declaration, that was still based on vague promises.[29] As Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill formulated it later, the British promise to favor a Jewish National Home in Palestine did not mean that "the country would no longer be the National Home of others" nor that "a Jewish government would be installed to rule over the Arabs."[30] Moreover, within the provisional designated borders of Mandatory Palestine, that excluded the Hauran region, the northern water sources and the eastern side of the Jordan River, De Haan found that the Jewish National Home could better be called a "Jewish national ghetto." The tidal wave of Jewish nationalism thus irritated him. He wrote: "Three weeks ago the Zionists were the bad guys who had brought us in trouble. Today they are the bringers of the Jewish state."[31] Those progressive Orthodox Jews led by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook who almost fully supported the Zionists were in his opinion certainly not the true Jewish Orthodoxy, since they compromised on their own religion for the sake of the Jewish national struggle. To express his great disappointment of the decline among his fellow believers, he dramatically claimed that Jerusalem, that once was the pious and quiet place to study, had become a "shouting market place."[32] His expectations to normalize the relations with the Arabs were neither optimistic due to their protests against the decision of San Remo. Perhaps it was good that the Sephardic Jews would get much influence in the newly elected Jewish National Council, since if the Arab-Jewish relations needed to be restored by "our East European brothers of the First, Second and Third International" it was hopeless.[33]

This growing lack of trust in the secular Zionist movement and their ambitious colonial enterprise was even more reflected in De Haan's articles for the *Algemeen Handelsblad* during the economic crisis that hit Palestine in the early 1920s. The major cause of this crisis was in his opinion the Jewish mass immigration, that led to unemployment, houses distress, price

[29] De Haan, 'Emotions' ['Emoties'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 20 May 1920; De Haan, 'Our situation' ['Onze toestand], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 1 June 1920; Fontijn, *Unrest*, 314.
[30] De Haan, 'Big days' ['Groote dagen'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 19 April 1921.
[31] De Haan, 'Emotions' ['Emoties'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 20 May 1920.
[32] Ibidem.
[33] De Haan, 'The elections' ['De verkiezingen'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 29 May 1920; De Haan, 'Our situation' ['Onze toestand'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 1 June 1920.

increases and food shortages. In sharp wordings De Haan blamed the Zionist leaders for their misguided propaganda, expensive travels and total inefficiency. They traveled from congress to congress, but what was actually needed were concrete plans to thwart the crisis. Yet they refused in De Haan's opinion to take any responsibility:

> "Enough congresses. Speeches and parties. We ask for deeds in Palestine. The rise of Zionism has created a sumptuous, malicious and mischievous kind of people. The travelers in Zionism. They go in two directions. They enter the Land and leave the Land. That takes treasures from our general and special organizations. Budgets are not published here. But a child can see how the money goes. Every time we read in the newspapers from people who intend to personally inform themselves. Nothing more vainly and easier than that. No work. No responsibility. Speeches and festive receptions."[34]

Though De Haan admitted that the Zionist Commission financially supported the kibbutzim and Jewish immigrants, the main problem was that the "costs of the colonization"[35] would only further increase at the expense of the traditional Jewish population. He was unsure if the land development project of the kibbutzim would really become an economical success and disliked the fact that the socialist pioneers stood so far away from the Jewish tradition. De Haan was very disappointed by Professor Weizmann, who on behalf of the Zionist Commission had really done nothing to prevent the widespread Sabbath breaches among the secular Zionists or at least addressed this problem in his speeches. He ascertained that Weizmann's foundations of the Yishuv were just limited to the three pillars of immigration, agriculture and national education. There was no central place left anymore for religion in this new Jewish society. While socialist settlements spread across the country, there were practically no Jewish Orthodox settlements being built where the old Jewish life could revive.[36]

De Haan saw some of his criticism on the conduct of the Zionist Commission confirmed in the report published in December 1920 by the reorganization commission made up of Julius Simon, Nehemia de Lieme and Robert Szold. This inquiry commission was sent to Palestine from London after Louis Brandeis, the American-Zionist leader, had demanded at the Zionist convention that the Jewish settlement policy in Palestine must be based on exclusive capitalist principles to overcome the financial problems. The investigators revealed that the Zionist Commission had spent most of their budget on unproductive labor and only a minor part on

[34] De Haan, 'Awaiting' ['In afwachting'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 21 July 1920.
[35] Please note that this term of "colonization" was used by De Haan to refer to the Jewish settlement in Palestine.
[36] De Haan, 'Young people power' ['Jonge volkskracht], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 1 September 1920; De Haan, 'On a turning point' ['Op een keerpunt'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 20 February 1921.

immigration and colonization. The financial policy had been irresponsible and had continuously led to deficits. Most worrying was that the Zionist leaders had failed to create a self-supporting Jewish community that was ready to accommodate thousands of new Jewish immigrants. The bitter conclusion of the report was that the inefficient Zionist Commission needed to be immediately replaced by a Zionist Executive under direct supervision of the Zionist World Organization, which was established in November 1921. Yet De Haan was still pessimistic of this planned transformation of a propagandist organization into an economically effective body, which required the appointment of skilled leaders with real vision instead of the small group of Russian notables that only chased after power and money.[37]

Though De Haan was ambiguous towards the Zionist settlement project from all what he heard and read, he still took the opportunity to visit several Jewish settlements on his own in order to make a fair judgment. In his article entitled 'The kevutzot' from August 1920 he described one of his first visits to Talpiot, a garden suburb near Jerusalem, and some of the major challenges the Jewish colonies faced. De Haan explained that most *kevutzot* or groups of Jewish workers who lived together in communal settlements were financed by the Zionist Commission and were more expensive since they did not rely on cheap Arab labor. Housing was the biggest problem in the temporary settlements as most immigrants still lived in tents. Since there was no proper road system in Palestine, most kibbutzim that were located in the hinterland had no direct access to education, health care services and libraries. Nevertheless, the young immigrants were determined to work autonomously and to cultivate the land rather than to work for Jewish farmers. As most of them were highly educated, De Haan found it in the public interest not to degrade them to the status of a "fellah." Moreover, he acknowledged that the kibbutzim fulfilled the task of educating the immigrants and creating a whole new Jewish peasantry. The pioneers in Talpioth, who planted thousands of trees, told him that they were not afraid to compete with Arab labor because the Jewish methods for tree plantation were superior. De Haan was probably amazed by their self-confidence and devotion. He wrote that though "the pioneers were far from everything that the old Jewish religion is, they have a great love for their Land, their People and their Work. Beautiful, fresh and open-minded people. Nothing like the cross-eyed, insidious and pinched small merchants from the shops in the Jaffa Street."[38]

[37] De Haan, 'A report' ['Een rapport'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 31 July 1921; De Haan, 'Days and years' ['Dagen en jaren'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 8 September 1921.

[38] De Haan, 'The kevutzot' ['De kewoetsoth'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 17 August 1920.

A year later De Haan visited Petah Tikva, the oldest and largest Jewish colony that was founded in 1878 by Orthodox Jews from Jerusalem. He explained that due to the recent attacks during the Arab uprising in May 1921 his friend Adil Effendi could not join him as Arab visitors and seasonal workers were no longer welcome. This meant that there worked exclusively Jews in Petah Tikva, a situation that according to De Haan was politically and economically untenable. The boycott of Arab labor could better be lifted soon, since it was impossible to work quietly while being surrounded by a hostile population. This implied that De Haan still believed that peaceful Arab-Jewish coexistence was possible and that any measures preventing so, no matter how understandable the fears among the Jews were, needed to be revoked. It was strange for him to see only Jewish workers around, of whom even the camel riders were Jews. Yet he noted that despite the fact that the Jewish workers asked for higher wages than the Arabs, they worked more and better. He was even quite positive on the progress that had been made in the (early) Jewish settlements by calling these "paradises in a sandpit," although he did not explicitly laud the Zionist leaders for that: "We have accomplished this with unschooled forces and in a Turkish era."[39] Before Sabbath began there was a clock striking at four o'clock "across the gardens of grapes and almonds" and "across the paradises of oranges and lemons" that unlike the gardens were irrigated (and therefore called 'paradises'). Though the Jewish workers ceased to work at the fields during the Sabbath, De Haan concluded that desecration of the Sabbath was on the rise.[40] His greatest irritations were the cooking fires and forbidden viands the Jewish settlers used for the Sabbath dinner. To emphasize the seriousness of those breaches, De Haan recalled the contract that was concluded between the "Great Rabbis of Jerusalem" and the founders of Petah Tikva four decades ago. The statutes prescribed that the settlers would commit themselves to the "Teachings" and that if Petah Tikva would succeed in its holy plight, this would be of the benefit for the entire land.[41] But with his typical sense of irony De Haan made it clear that this was a big utopia given the growing socialist community:

> "Palestine is being built up right now. We see it with our eyes. And our souls rejoice. But it is all very materialistic, very mercantile. We are here at a kind of front. One needs to be always chauvinistic, patriotic, loudly. There are no bigger chauvinists than the socialist Jewish workers and civil servants. We make spiritual progress though: cinemas and dancing rooms. Palestine ought to be a modern country. No antiquity museum. A beautiful modern Jewish land. When the cinemas and dancing rooms will come first,

[39] De Haan, 'To Petah Tikva' ['Naar Petach Tikvah'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 9 September 1921.
[40] De Haan, 'Sabbath at Petah Tikva' ['Sabbath te Petach Tikvah'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 14 September 1921.
[41] De Haan, 'Gate of Hope' ['Poort der Hoop'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 20 October 1921.

the less spiritual values of language and literature will follow automatically. A new generation of prophets will be born from the *chalutzim* [pioneers] of Minsk, Prinsk and Dwinsk. But it could be the fever."[42]

One of De Haan's major concerns was that the Orthodox Jewish community lacked the means to shape the future of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. His ultimate fear was that the settlement project would be exclusively directed by this generation of socialist "prophets" that did not care about religion. By the end of the year De Haan realized that his own Mizrachi Party led by Rabbi Kook was by no means able to defend the interests of the religious Jews within the Zionist Organization.[43] His party had actually completely surrendered to the secular majority that did not take their desires into account. Consequently, the gap with the conservative Agudat Israel of Rabbi Sonnenfeld only widened to such an extent that peace between the two Orthodox organizations was impossible. De Haan hackled such divisions, but soon he decided to choose the side of Agudat Israel that was still committed to challenge the political agenda of the secular Zionist establishment.[44] In January 1922, he informed his Dutch readership of the mission of this international Jewish Orthodox organization, that focused on promoting religious education in Europe and Palestine. One of the primary objectives of Agudat Israel, since the previous negotiations with the King-Crane Commission, was to demand from the British Mandate Government representation and equal rights in the Jewish Agency alongside the Zionist Organization. De Haan explained why this was necessary. Although the Zionists had been assigned the task of settlement in Palestine, the problem was that they did not represent the entire Jewish population. In his opinion, the Basel Program of the First Zionist Congress in 1897 had exclusively been based on nationalist objectives, while it had left out the religious dimension of Jewish nationalism. This was the main problem that needed to be solved. De Haan stated that as long Agudat Israel would not obtain the same status as the Zionist Organization "Palestine (..) would never be a Land, spiritually equal to the Land of Isaiah and Jeremiah." The solution was a federation of different organizations, representing both secular and religious Jews, that would be in charge of land settlement and communal affairs. This would enable Agudat Israel, that represented "the most precious part of the Jewish idea," to curb the power of the Zionist Organization.

Nevertheless, De Haan was aware that the British High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel was probably not willing to recognize Agudat Israel as independent organization since

[42] De Haan, 'The new year' ['Het nieuwejaar'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 24 October 1921.
[43] Giebels, 'Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine', 70-6.
[44] De Haan, 'Silence (end)' ['Stilte (slot)'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 2 June 1921.

that would only further divide the Jews in Palestine.[45] His well-intended policy was to establish unified institutions as means to overcome the deep ideological divisions within the Jewish community. Most controversial was the establishment of the Chief Rabbinate in 1921 that became the supreme religious authority to govern the administration of rabbinical law in Palestine. Rabkin indicated that this was unacceptable to most rabbis in Jerusalem, who recognized no Chief Rabbi.[46] Rabbi Sonnenfeld refused for instance to cooperate with the new rabbinate that was seen as being too dependent of the Zionist Organization. For De Haan this was not different. He denounced the fact that opponents of the Chief Rabbinate were called "traitors," while it was obviously clear that Sir Samuel's ambition to create a moderate and unified political-religious Jewish community did not correspond to the actual reality. The deprivation of autonomy in jurisprudence was problematic for both the Jewish Orthodoxy and the secular left.[47] The urgency for Agudat Israel to gain official recognition even heightened when the British Government allowed the Zionist City Council in Jerusalem to raise an excise tax on the unleavened bread for Passover. De Haan was very displeased by this decision that would force the Orthodox Jewish families to pay for the Zionist institutions, while the newly arrived pioneers were spared. This "infringement on religious freedom" was most of all unfair for the poor religious families that could almost barely meet their expenses for Passover.[48] The Aguda refused to pay the tax and was brought to court, where De Haan defended its case in the Matzos Trial. Although the Sonnenfeld group lost the lawsuit after an appeal, the next year the Orthodox Jews were allowed to raise and use the tax in their own community.[49]

When the British media magnate Alfred Harmsworth, better known as Lord Northcliffe, planned to visit Palestine in late February 1922, De Haan understood that this was the perfect opportunity for Agudat Israel to raise their burning issues. The League of Nations was finally about to ratify the British Mandate of Palestine soon, but it was still unclear for both the Arab and Jewish population what the British Parliament would propose as the actual form of government. De Haan probably thought that Lord Northcliffe, the owner of *The Times* and *Daily Mail*, could possibly sway the public opinion in Britain on the Palestinian issue if he was convinced

[45] De Haan, 'Agudat Israel' ['Agoedath Israël'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 11 January 1921.
[46] Rabkin, *A threat from within*, 138. Here it must be noted that the pro-Zionist Rabbi Kook was appointed as the Chief Rabbi of Palestine for the Ashkenazi Jewish community, where the Agudat also belonged to. For the Sephardic community Rabbi Yaakov Meir was appointed as Chief Rabbi.
[47] De Haan, 'A Jewish Constituent Assembly' ['Een Joodsche Constituante'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 25 March 1921.
[48] De Haan, 'Fire at the neighbors' ['Brand bij de buren'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 26 January 1921; De Haan, 'The big question is now…' ['De groote vraag is nu maar…'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 29 April 1921.
[49] De Haan, 'When it rains during the winter' ['Des winters als het regent'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 13 March 1923; Fontijn, *Unrest*, 484-5.

of the sincere concerns of the Jewish Orthodoxy. However, his meeting as spokesman of the Aguda delegation with Lord Northcliffe was everything but a success, since the Zionist media accused him of having spoken against the Jewish National Home and the Balfour Declaration. According to De Haan this was untrue, since his delegation had only asked for religious freedom and equal rights for Agudat Israel, but *Haaretz* refused to publish his statements on this matter. He noted that Lord Northcliffe had been surprised by the fact that there existed such a large Jewish organization alongside the Zionist Organization. Yet Lord Northcliffe was portrayed by De Haan as someone likeminded, who was also very critical of the Zionist interpretation of the Balfour Declaration and the current tensions in Palestine for which the "extreme Zionists" were to be blamed. Since all Arabs were against Zionism, the publishing magnate argued, the Zionists should be moderate and strive to live in peace with them. But this did not mean that the Balfour Declaration had to be revoked.[50]

Giebels revealed in her research that though the Aguda delegates had not spoken against the National Home, they had complained about the "powerful, grasping domineering methods of many of the newly arrived Zionist Jews."[51] She convincingly claimed that the negative image that De Haan presented of the *chalutzim*, whose arrogant behavior was not that of "decent new-comers," had helped to spark the conflict. After all they had escaped the anti-Semitism in Europe and felt then again attacked by fellow Jews in Palestine.[52] De Haan ignored this aspect in his account of the whole affair but condemned the subsequent outbreak of incidents that took place. He reported about synagogue services that were disturbed, threatening letters that delegates received, and rabbis that were drubbed by radical Zionists. Even his own students at the Law School in Jerusalem went on strike after he was labeled as being a traitor of the Jewish people. De Haan found that these incidents were the direct consequences of the abetment and soft responses of the Zionist newspapers and national institutions. He ironically reminded his Dutch readers of a speech once given by the British Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld in Amsterdam, who had called the pioneers "the peaceful conquerors of Palestine."[53] Though De Haan tried to clean his image after the Northcliffe affair, there was no chance for reconciliation with the Zionist Yishuv as long as he refused to abstain from any political activities, including his critical writings. Since early 1922, his tone against the Zionist leadership became only more offensive

[50] De Haan, 'Enough to do' ['Genoeg te doen'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 3 March 1921.
[51] Ludy Giebels, 'Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine II' [Dutch title: 'Jacob Israël de Haan in Palestina II'], *Studia Rosenthaliana* 15:1 (1981) 116.
[52] Ibidem, 111-6.
[53] De Haan, 'A week of sorrow and shame' ['Een week van smart en schande'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 9 March 1921.

in his articles when he claimed that the Jewish population in Palestine was governed by an undemocratic "terrorist government of East European civil servants."[54] This small minority of Zionist "labor leaders, teachers and officials" were described by him as "the carriers of a barbaric hyper nationalism without religion, without civilization, and without decency." They had seized their power after the elections that had been pushed through and ruled since then by the use of "boycotts, terrorism, lies and *Haaretz*."[55] The Zionist newspaper was also accused of having supported the student strike against him that eventually led to his imposed resignation two months after the Northcliffe affair. De Haan wondered how much freedom the lecturers of the new Hebrew University would enjoy in the future.[56]

De Haan's diplomacy towards the Arab leaders

While the Northcliffe affair already made De Haan the bitter enemy of the Zionist Yishuv, his most allegedly treasonable actions were certainly his high-level negotiations on behalf of Agudat Israel with Arab leaders in Transjordan that started in June 1923. Giebels argued that those contacts confirmed for the Zionist establishment that the peculiar Dutch journalist was not just speaking ill of the Zionist movement in foreign media, but was even prepared to dabble with the devil for the wider political struggle of the Jewish Orthodoxy. On the one hand, this seemed understandable, because the Zionist Executive obviously wanted to speak with one voice for the Jewish people in Palestine and such negotiations conducted by its main rival, the Aguda, could only weaken its diplomatic position. On the other hand, Zionist leaders also frequently negotiated with leaders from neighboring Arab countries.[57] In March 1923, De Haan reported that Weizmann and Emir Abdullah, the Hashemite ruler of Transjordan, had reached a provisional agreement in London. This agreement stipulated that Weizmann would accept Abdullah's proposal to extend his emirate to cover all of Palestine, in exchange for his support for the implementation of the Jewish National Home policy.[58] Eventually, the initiative never

[54] De Haan, 'Silence' ['Stilte'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 18 February 1922.
[55] De Haan, 'A Jewish Constituent Assembly' ['Een Joodsche Constituante'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 25 March 1921.
[56] De Haan, 'A week of sorrow and shame' ['Een week van smart en schande'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 9 March 1921; Fontijn, *Unrest*, 485-6.
[57] Michael Berkowitz, 'Rejecting Zion, Embracing the Orient: The Life and Death of Jacob Israel de Haan', in: Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, *Orientalism and the Jews* (Hanover and London, 2005) 115-6; Ludy Giebels, 'A Dutch Lawrence of Arabia? Jacob Israel de Haan and his Arab friends' [Dutch title: 'Een Nederlandse Lawrence of Arabia? Jacob Israël de Haan en zijn Arabische vrienden'], *De parelduiker* 18:2 (2013) 6.
[58] De Haan, '*Laisch la*' ['*Laisch la*'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 20 March 1923. Please note that Abdullah's principal aim was to strengthen the economic ties between Transjordan and Palestine, since the economy of his own country was much weaker.

came off the ground since the British turned it down due to their own interests in the region. A similar plan was proposed by Abdullah's father, King Husayn of the Hejaz, who aimed to integrate Palestine in an economical union of Arab states in the former Turkish territories, while the status quo of Britain and France in the region would remain unchanged.[59] The news of the Arab proposals was critically received by both Arab-Palestinian and Jewish nationalists, but the growing interest in the Palestinian issue among those Arab leaders encouraged the Aguda and De Haan to establish closer relations.[60]

In his capacity as journalist De Haan already visited Emir Abdullah in early February 1922 in Wadi Nimrin near the Allenby Bridge, where his tent camp was located during the winter. Together with some Arab friends from Jerusalem, Adil Effendi, Hassan Effendi and his house lord Abdul Salaam Aweidah – a Palestinian agent of the Emir, De Haan traveled on horse to Transjordan, a journey that reminded him of the Biblical places. He wrote that Abdullah was nothing like a "semi-barbarian ruler," but lauded him for his royal appearance, great knowledge and strong character. His dispatch showed that he was mainly interested in Abdullah's position on the Palestinian issue. The Emir assured him that Zionism was not of his business, but that many Arabs opposed a Jewish state in Palestine. This would become evident once the British troops would leave Palestine. However, Arabs and Jews could still live in peace in Palestine together, taking medieval Spain as an example, but then negotiations were highly necessary.[61] Later De Haan declared that the policy of Emir Abdullah was quite vague and that it seemed that his first priority was to gain independence for Transjordan, while he would gave up on Palestine. Through his daily contacts with the Arab elites De Haan got better acquainted with Arab politics towards Palestine. By November 1922, his feuilleton entitled 'From the other side' was published that summarized well the Arab objections against the Jewish National Home policy:

> "Because the Jewish National Home would eventually be fatal for the Arab reawakening in Palestine. That there are large Arab countries elsewhere, is no compensation for the Palestinian Arabs. There would emerge a Jewish atmosphere in Palestine and the Arabs would become water carriers and lumberjacks in a prosperous Jewish Palestine. The Arabs do not have the money yet, the science and experience to

[59] Martin Sicker, *Pangs of the Messiah : The Troubled Birth of the Jewish State* (Westport, 2000) 49-51.
[60] Ludy Giebels, 'The meeting of Frederick Kisch and Jacob Israel de Haan with Hussein, the King of the Hejaz, in January 1924: A triangular relationship in Amman' [Dutch title: 'De ontmoeting van Frederick Kisch en Jacob Israël de Haan met Hoessein, koning van de Hedjaz, in januari 1924: Een driehoeksverhouding in Amman'], *Studia Rosenthaliana* 13:2 (1979) 194, 199-200, 217-9.
[61] De Haan, 'The guests of the Emir' ['De gasten van den Emir'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 1 March 1922.

compete with the Jewish immigrants, who get support through the capital and through the knowledge of a great part of the Jewish People."[62]

Though De Haan was surely not an advocate of the Arab-Palestinian national movement, he was convinced that the Zionist leaders should take their fears of the Judaization of Palestine and of becoming second-class citizens seriously. For the time being, he reported, the Arabs preferred the British, French or Americans to lead the country over the "imperious and ambitious" Zionists. Not surprisingly, the Arab leaders welcomed the most recent statement of Churchill, in response to the Jaffa riots of May 1921, that partly lifted the Balfour Declaration. According to De Haan, the British Government finally realized that the Declaration had been a mistake and an injustice to the Arab population. Churchill's White Paper of June 3, 1922, assured the Arabs that the British Mandate did not intend to create a wholly Jewish Palestine nor to subjugate them to the rule of the Zionist Executive. The most controversial decision was perhaps to limit Jewish immigration to the economic absorption capacity of the country in order to reduce further tensions. The Israeli historian Anita Shapira explained that Churchill intended to restore the calm in Palestine in fact that was necessary to advance Jewish settlement, while the Zionist Jews saw the White Paper back then as a surrender to Arab aggression.[63] De Haan doubted whether this new policy was fair to the Jews, but also reminded his readers of the earlier British wartime pledges to the Arab population concerning self-rule in Palestine.[64]

His subsequent meetings with Emir Abdullah took place more than one year later in June-July 1923, not long after Transjordan was declared independent on May 25, 1923. Quite interesting is that De Haan did not expect that the Zionist movement was able to obtain the same status – meaning here a Jewish independent state in Palestine, since the Jews did not live in an exclusive contiguous Jewish land, but were scattered in settlements across the country. Further development of the Jewish economy could help the Zionist project forward though. Another contributing factor was the nascent signing of the Anglo-Hejaz Treaty of Alliance between Britain and King Husayn, whereby the latter was forced to recognize the *de facto* British pro-Zionist policy in Palestine. This friendship treaty would obviously be a setback for the Arab-Palestinian nationalists, who launched a media offensive to prevent King Husayn from agreeing to the terms of the Balfour Declaration.[65] Since Emir Abdullah was well aware of the negotiations of his father, De Haan had his reasons to go to Amman. This time he went by car

[62] De Haan, 'From the other side' ['Van den anderen kant'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 7 December 1922.
[63] Anita Shapira, *Israel : A History* (London, 2012) 76-7. Translated from Hebrew by Anthony Berris.
[64] See footnote 61.
[65] Giebels, 'A triangular relationship in Amman', 217.

and brought with him some goats as gifts for the little sons of Abdullah. His dispatch entitled 'A person dressed as Emir' reveals that De Haan presented himself as someone eager to learn the Arab customs and ways of thinking, perhaps to set an example for the Zionist Jews who were generally more stand-offish. This open attitude may have brought him on good terms with Emir Abdullah, who assured him that the uncertainty in the British policy was "a dangerous element," that continuously fed expectations among the extremists on both sides of the conflict. The Emir held the extreme form of Zionism responsible for the current tensions, but hoped that more moderate parties could restore the relations between Arabs and Jews.[66] This resembled actually the view of De Haan. When they met again in Amman the next month, Abdullah unequivocally stated that the Zionists should better rid themselves of their illusions and expressed his favor for the Orthodox party:

> "I do not see a Jewish majority in Palestine surrounded by Arab countries. One cannot live in peace, I mean true peace, with the Greater Arab Idea. From all sides there is suspicion. When Dr. Weizmann says that Jews in Palestine do not have political privileges, do you think the Arabs believe him? And if I say, that a constitutional government in Palestine will not harm the Jews, would the Zionists believe me? My country is open for Jews. And the country of my brother [King Faisal of Iraq] is open. All Arab countries. But just one condition: no exclusive political rights. Also not in Palestine. You have the choice: peace or friendship with all Arab nations. Or hunting after something impossible in Palestine. I do support Arab-Jewish cooperation on equal footing in all Arab countries, including Palestine. If the Zionists cannot or do not want to, let then the others, of Agudat Israel do it (..)."[67]

Abdullah's brother King Faisal of Iraq also attended the meeting in Amman. Though King Faisal remained quiet, De Haan thought that his presence was possibly meant to prevent Abdullah from making too sharp statements. Nonetheless, the Emir firmly rejected the idea of Jewish statehood in Palestine, while he regarded Agudat Israel as being a more suitable partner than the Zionist camp.[68]

The diplomacy of De Haan proved to have been more effective until this time than his reports in the Dutch media would suggest. His published dispatches silenced about the fact that Emir Abdullah signed a significant document that welcomed Jewish immigrants to Palestine if they renounced their exclusive nationalist ambitions. This written approval that De Haan extracted from him was read out by Rabbi Moshe Blau to the First World Congress of Agudat Israel held in Vienna in August 1923. Rabkin suggestively claimed that this document showed

[66] De Haan, 'A person dressed as Emir' ['Een als Emir gekleed persoon'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 31 July 1923.
[67] De Haan, 'The king of Baghdad' ['De koning van Baghdad'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 8 September 1923.
[68] Idem.

that peaceful coexistence based on equal rights for Arabs and Jews had been possible in Palestine if the Zionists had pursued a different kind of policy.[69] One should take into account here that the Emir Abdullah was not empowered to decide on Palestinian matters, but that any support from Arab rulers in the region was of course beneficial for Zionist, Orthodox and Arab-Palestinian leaders alike. Moreover, Rabkin ignored the growing local Arab opposition against Jewish settlement that cannot be underestimated. Undoubtedly, De Haan sought indeed for such a compromised solution to the Palestinian issue, but his principle duty was to serve the interests of the Aguda. Abdullah's informal declaration can therefore better be seen as the first serious attempt to set up a Haredi-Arab alliance against the Zionist policy of which the outcomes were highly uncertain. The Emir's former agreement with Weizmann and his dependency on British support to extend his emirate to Palestine offered him only limited leeway to support the Haredim.

While De Haan's early travels to Transjordan remained largely unnoticed in the Zionist echelons, this was the complete opposite when De Haan persuaded King Husayn to receive an official delegation of Agudat Israel in late February 1924. The dispatch entitled 'The King comes' shows us that the Dutch journalist was well informed of the political context of King Husayn's visit to Amman where many foreign delegations awaited him. The old King Husayn was actually in a troubled position since his Kingdom of Hejaz was under constant threat of the Wahhabis led by Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud, while his negotiations for a defense alliance with the British were still unsuccessful to reach a final agreement. His only natural allies left then were respectively his brother Abdullah and the Arab-Palestinians, but the latter were at odds with both Hashemite leaders over the possible recognition of the Balfour Declaration.[70] Quite remarkable here is De Haan's statement that the Kingdom of Hejaz was still becoming more powerful in the Arab world unlike the Zionist movement that only lost political influence. He assumed that the quest for Arab unity was simply too strong that it would prevail even if the royal house of Mecca would collapse. A year later the Kingdom of Hejaz was conquered by the Wahhabis during the Second Saudi-Hashemite War (1924-25) and as a result King Husayn was forced to abdicate from the throne. This was probably not foreseeable when Husayn arrived in Amman on January 18, 1924, because the specific content of the negotiations on the Anglo-Hejaz Treaty was largely unknown to the public. De Haan expected that if King Husayn was willing to accept the Balfour Declaration as precondition to integrate Palestine in his proposed

[69] Rabkin, *A threat from within*, 139; Shlomo Zalman Sonnenfeld. *Guardian of Jerusalem. The Life and Times of Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld* (New York, 2009) 414-5.
[70] Giebels, 'A triangular relationship in Amman', 199-201.

Arab Federation, the British would in return implement a moderate National Home policy. This was assumable because the British ruling elite was disappointed of the lack of progress made by the Zionist Organization in view of the declining Jewish immigration, large unemployment and increasing tensions with the Arab population.[71]

Contrary to De Haan's reasoning, King Husayn sought actually complete independence for the Arabs in Palestine at this time and proposed High Commissioner Sir Samuel certain amendments to the draft treaty to this effect, which brought the negotiations in a new impasse.[72] When the British delegation left Amman a few days later, De Haan got the opportunity to meet the Hejaz monarch. The journalist was accompanied by Rida Tuwfik, a former Turkish minister, who was his host and interpreter. They were both heartily welcomed by the king who sat on his throne with his cloak of camel hair. De Haan gave him first a letter from Rabbi Sonnenfeld with the request to exert his influence on Imam Yahya in order to stop the persecutions of Yemenite Jews. King Husayn promised to do so and stated that the Orthodox Jews were "honest, loyal and active people." He acknowledged that they suffered from the Zionist policy and feared that the Zionists would treat the Arabs as intolerant once they would have the power. He opposed the Zionists because they wanted to carry through an injustice with violence. Palestine belonged to the Arabs after all. Therefore, it was impossible for him to recognize the Balfour Declaration. Although De Haan did not get any information about King Husayn's negotiations with Sir Samuel, which were state-secret, he concluded that the Arab-speaking countries in Asia headed more towards unity and independence. Tuwfik reported him however of the official audience of the Zionist delegation from Jerusalem that was made up of the Zionist Commission's local chief Colonel Frederick Kisch, the Sephardic Chief Rabbi Yaakov Meir and deputy mayor Yellin. King Husayn expressed his sympathy for the Jewish historical claims on Palestine to them, but nothing more than that. De Haan just thought that their visit was probably not appreciated by the more extreme Zionist factions. [73]

On February 24, 1924, King Husayn received the Aguda delegation at his winter camp in Shunah in the Jordan Valley, eastwards from Jericho, where his negotiations with the British continued on the Anglo-Hejaz Treaty. The visit was endorsed by the Aguda leaders who came from Eastern Europe to Palestine to conclude peace with the Zionist Chief Rabbinate. De Haan

[71] De Haan, 'The King comes' ['De Koning komt'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 3 February 1924; Randall Baker, *King Husain and the Kingdom of Hejaz* (Cambridge and New York, 1979) 191-216.
[72] Sahar Huneidi, *A Broken Trust : Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestinians* (London and New York, 2001) 70-2.
[73] De Haan, 'The King of Mekka' ['De Koning van Mekka'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 7 February 1924; De Haan, 'The King' ['De Koning'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 14 February 1924; Giebels, 'A triangular relationship in Amman', 201-3, 206.

noted that it was exceptional that Rabbi Sonnenfeld, who was almost eighty years old, joined the delegation. King Husayn was moved by the fact that such an old and wise man made such a long journey from Jerusalem to Transjordan to meet him. The Aguda delegation presented him a memorandum that was read out in Arabic by Sheikh Fuad El Khatib, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hejaz. The memorandum stated that "Agudat Israel is an organization of orthodox Jews all over the world, composed of one million members, and it may express the feelings of even more orthodox Jews who are not yet organized but have the same purpose – to preserve the ancient form of Israel and the Torah in its pureness and holiness and settle in the spirit of the Torah all problems arising in Jewish life." There was no other organization that could speak on its behalf, or on behalf of the entire Jewish people. Agudat Israel should therefore be given the occasion to represent the Orthodox Jewry in all matters concerning the Jewish people. De Haan wrote that once El Khatib finished reading, they were all silent until King Husayn wisely said that though not all Jews in Palestine wanted to listen to the words of Rabbi Sonnenfeld, this should not sadden or frighten him, since the same befell Prophet Moses. Those that did not want to listen were simply doomed. Soon after the meeting, Rabbi Sonnenfeld was awarded the highest knighthood, the same title that Chief Rabbi Meir previously got from King Husayn, as gesture of their friendly diplomatic relations.[74]

Most controversial was undoubtedly De Haan's last interview with King Husayn on March 11, 1924. As foreign correspondent he attended the ceremony where Husayn was proclaimed as the new Caliph, one week after the Turkish Caliphate was abolished. In his dispatch entitled 'The new Caliphate' De Haan explained that King Husayn received the Arab Caliphate under the two conditions that he would defend the Arab cause in Palestine and would strive for the unity and independence of every Arab country. According to Giebels, it was unknown whether King Husayn adopted this title to strengthen his own position or that this was granted him at the instigation of Emir Abdullah. Outside the Hashemite sphere of influence Husayn was barely recognized as the new Caliph, which was proven for instance by the absence of representatives from Egypt and India. Yet De Haan found that Husayn was the rightful successor as being the descendent of Prophet Mohammed and the king of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. After the special gathering was finished and the newly proclaimed Caliph had spoken with the Arab-Palestinian delegation, De Haan got the chance to speak with him.

[74] De Haan, 'The visit to the King' ['Het bezoek aan de Koning'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 4 April 1924; Giebels, 'A triangular relationship in Amman', 209-11.

Husayn told him that it was not his duty to rule, but to "serve justice for all inhabitants of the Mohammedan countries without discrimination of people or belief."

When De Haan asked him what his policy would be towards the Zionists in Palestine, the Caliph answered that he was obliged as "Servant of Justice" to mobilize the entire Mohammedan world against the "current irreligious Zionist movement." This seemed like a direct war declaration and was as such quoted in many Arab newspapers in Palestine, which created the misunderstanding that this bold declaration was given at the previous meeting with the Aguda delegation. The whole matter was only settled when the Zionist leader Colonel Kisch demanded from Foreign Minister El Khatib that Husayn would revoke his statement. De Haan thought that Emir Abdullah was the one who actually persuaded his father to write an official denial to Kisch, because Sir Samuel was more inclined to help him to establish his Emirate if he did not openly oppose the Zionists. This led to the outrage of the Arab-Palestinian leaders, who forced Husayn to renew his statement in order to show his commitment to resist the Zionist policy in exchange for their continued support of the Caliphate. Though one can question the actual value of Husayn's statements, it showed that Palestine was at the forefront of Arab politics. De Haan claimed that the Arab-Palestinians were considered in the Islamic world as "a kind of martyrs who fought for a rightful cause." This widespread sympathy with their Arab nationalist struggle implied that they were a force to be reckoned with. [75]

The political activism of De Haan and his assassination

Throughout the last two years of his life, De Haan received several death threats and was repeatedly summoned by the Zionist elites to quit his political activities, but they remained ineffective to stop or silence him. Even Jacobus Kann, a dedicated Zionist and the Dutch consul in Jerusalem, who De Haan met only two weeks before his violent death, failed to convince him to cease his hostile reporting and support of Arab anti-Zionist propaganda. His struggle on behalf of the Orthodox Jews against the secular Zionist domination in Palestine was simply too important for him. Giebels added that De Haan has never been "a stable or cautious man," but was driven by his ambitions even if that made him an outcast in the provincial city of Jerusalem. This caused the editors of the *Algemeen Handelsblad* to publish fewer and fewer articles of their controversial Palestine correspondent, since the Zionist elites urged them to sever the newspaper's connection with him entirely. Consequently, De Haan's influence in the Dutch

[75] De Haan, 'The new Caliphate' ['Het nieuwe Kalifaat'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 2 April 1924; De Haan, 'A denial' ['Een démenti'], *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 15 May 1924; Giebels, 'A triangular relationship in Amman', 211-7.

press became very limited.[76] Since June 1923, he was appointed the same position at the British *Daily Express*, the third or fourth widely read paper in London, which was known for its sensational news and frequent attacks on Zionism.[77] To Zionist officials this showed that the Dutch journalist was actually able to influence the British and European press in general, but their profound fears for his writings seemed to have been overstated.[78]

Most of De Haan's publications were written in Dutch and only reached a relatively small and politically insignificant readership in the Netherlands, so that they could never really challenge the more pro-Zionist media across Europe. The Dutch society was generally far less occupied with the Palestinian issue than was the case in Britain, where the terms of the British Mandate for Palestine clearly divided the House of Commons. There the right-wing opposition and printed media became "conduits for a vicious anti-Zionism that was shot through with anti-Jewish themes and tropes."[79] Not surprisingly, De Haan accepted the job offer of the British media magnate Lord Beaverbrook to write for his anti-Zionist *Daily Express* when the latter visited Palestine. Though De Haan saw his chance to expose his propaganda to the lower middle class, the circulation of this paper was still very limited. Moreover, there are no signs that he articulated radical views against Zionism that were anti-Semitic in nature which characterized the right-wing British press in the early 1920s. Finally, it is doubtful to what extent the reader-ship of the *Daily Express*, which already held anti-Jewish views, was really interested in his short reports about the struggle of the Haredim in Palestine.[80]

Almost four months after De Haan's infamous meeting with King Husayn, the Haganah, the Zionist defense organization, assassinated him. On the evening of June 30, 1924, the Dutch-Jewish journalist was shot to death by Avraham Tehomi, a twenty-one-year old local deputy commander from Russia, when he left the synagogue of the Shadre Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem after prayer. De Haan became known as the object for the first assassination in the history of Zionism, which since then has been a rarely applied method by Zionist Jews. Two other notorious Jewish victims of Zionist political murder, who like De Haan were also advocates for peace with perceived enemies, were Chaim Arlosoroff (1933) and Yitzhak Rabin (1995). Yet

---

[76] Ludy Giebels, 'On the Dutch poet Jacob Israel De Haan (1881-1924) ', *Exquisite Corps: A Journal of Letters & Life* 5 (2000). See online: http://www.corpse.org/archives/issue_5/critical_urgencies/giebels.htm (accessed on 4 April 2016). Only 55 articles of De Haan were published by the *Algemeen Handelsblad* throughout the period 1923-1924 compared to about hundred articles each year in 1919 and 1920.

[77] David Cesarani, 'Anti-Zionism in Britain, 1922-2002: Continuities and Discontinuities', *Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture* 25:1 (2006) 139.

[78] Berkowitz, 'Rejecting Zion, Embracing the Orient', 116.

[79] Cesarani, 'Anti-Zionism in Britain, 1922-2002', 133-8.

[80] Ludy Giebels, 'Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine III' [Dutch title: 'Jacob Israël de Haan in Palestina III'], *Studia Rosenthaliana* 15:2 (1981) 199-201.

Rubinstein and Shapira argued that the murder of De Haan must be understood against the backdrop of the violence used by contemporary Russian revolutionaries. They claimed that the leading figures in the Zionist underground involved in the complot of the murder, of whom several were emigres from Tsarist Russia, were probably influenced by their ideas and methods. They perceived De Haan to be much more than just a political opponent. He was considered of being a serious threat to the Jewish National Home and therefore labeled as an enemy of the Zionist Yishuv. Rabkin rightly claimed that the murder of De Haan bereaved the closed community of the Haredim in Palestine of their supremely useful connection to the outside world, in example it effectively cut their ties with the Arab elites and the great powers.[81]

Due to the high political sensitivity of the case, De Haan's assassination has been a mystery for decades and there still existed just rumors about the possible perpetrators once the State of Israel was established. Over the years pieces of evidence have been collected and public confessions have been made however that showed that the murder was a well-planned Zionist complot. When Shaul Avigur published his historical account of the Haganah in 1955, it became clear that Joseph Hecht, then the Haganah's coordinator, had instructed Zecharia Urieli, the Jerusalem commander, to eliminate De Haan with the smallest group possible. The perpetrators became publicly known in Israel in November 1970 when the radio broadcast program *Zahor* invited Tehomi, who admitted that the murder had been a high-level decision by someone very important, but he found it too early to reveal further details.[82] Fifteen years later, in 1985, Tehomi was interviewed again by the well-known Israeli journalist Shlomo Nakdimon for the book he co-authored about the murder of De Haan. At a symposium held on May 28, 1985, in Beit Hasofer in the Old City of Jerusalem, Nakdimon subsequently revealed that Hecht had received a signed document from Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, one of the heads of the Haganah, ordering the murder of De Haan and had made the necessary arrangements. In addition, Nakdimon noted that Tehomi claimed full responsibility and admitted that there were no missions carried out at the time without the order of Ben-Zvi, who later became the second president of the State of Israel. Also present was Professor Rubinstein who added that the Haganah Archives contained documents of the death sentence decreed by the Court of the Haganah, that was under the leadership then of Saadia Shoshani, which confirmed that the crime was completely an operation of the Haganah.[83]

---

[81] Rubinstein, 'The Case of De Haan', 9-10; Anita Shapira, *The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (Stanford, 1999) 204-5. Translated from Hebrew by William Templer.

[82] Fontijn, *Unrest*, 546-55.

[83] Menachem Porush, 'Who killed Yaakov Dehaan?', *Jewish Press*, 31 July 2003. See online: http://www.jewishpress.com/tag/rabbi-porush/ (accessed on 4 April 2016).

As main reason for the murder Rubinstein identified the discovery made by Colonel Kisch about the powerful influence of De Haan on Emir Abdullah and King Husayn whose negotiations could seriously threaten the Zionist quest for Jewish statehood in Palestine. Rubinstein claimed that Kisch, rather than Ben-Zvi, was the instigator of the murder although there was no clear evidence in this direction.[84] However, it was true that the more De Haan traveled to Transjordan the more suspicious the Zionist elite became of his intentions. On May 16, 1923, De Haan sent a letter to Kisch in which he expressed his genuine concerns of a death threat letter he had received from a group named "the Black Hand," that he thought came from the circles the Zionist leader represented.[85] This was still more than one year before Tehomi pulled the trigger. According to Giebels, the immediate motive to the murder was that De Haan was about to expose a large financial scandal related to the Zionist land purchase project, in which the administrator of the Rothschild settlements Chaim Kalvarisky was the leading figure. De Haan probably found out that Kalvarisky embezzled money of a fund that was designated for the rapprochement of Arab-Jewish relations to solve his own financial problems, since his estate contained a receipt of Kalvarisky's bank account. Michael Berkowitz added that De Haan also planned to publicly accuse Zionist officials, including Kalvarisky, for attempting the murder of a Jew that refused to cooperate in a crucial land deal. This would have severely damaged the image and credibility of the Zionist leadership in Palestine. The best solution, it seems, was to get rid soon of De Haan before these cases would reach the public.[86]

The date for the murder was not set however until Hebrew newspapers reported on June 29, 1924, that De Haan would join an Aguda delegation to London. As legal adviser De Haan would present the Orthodox objections against the proposed Palestine Communities Ordinance at the British Colonial Office. The opposition was mainly directed against the British plan to create a single united Jewish community in every Palestinian town under the Zionist authority of the Jewish National Council, which was considered to limit the autonomy of religious communities to arrange their own internal affairs. This was obviously against the aim of Agudat Israel to become finally recognized as an independent community. Moreover, the draft Communities Ordinance was regarded as an infringement of the Mandate principles of freedom of conscience and religious tolerance.[87] De Haan would have certainly appealed to the British

[84] Rubinstein, 'The Case of De Haan', 11-2.
[85] Giebels, 'Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine III', 202.
[86] Ibidem, 211; Fontijn, *Unrest*, 540-1; Berkowitz, 'Rejecting Zion, Embracing the Orient', 116.
[87] Ludy Giebels, 'Jacob Israel de Haan in Palestine III', 226. The article contains the full memorandum that Agudat Israel sent to the Colonial Office on 1 July 1924, the day after De Haan's assassination, with its objections to the proposed Communities Ordinance for the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine.

authorities not to implement this unification policy that overlooked the deep divisions between the Haredim and the secular Zionist Jews. For Tehomi this was the perfect moment to carry out the order to eliminate De Haan and to prevent him from traveling to London. This brutal murder was of course a blow for Agudat Israel that not only lost a well-respected member of its community but above all someone that took the lead in internationalizing the political struggle of the Haredim in Palestine. For that purpose De Haan used all possible means within his positions as foreign correspondent and representative of Agudat Israel. Besides his journalism and diplomatic undertakings in Transjordan, he authored many memoranda and petitions to the League of Nations and the Colonial Office disclaiming the right of the Zionist leaders to speak in the name of the entire Jewish community in Palestine. Most lauded was De Haan by fellow believers for defending their right to declare themselves outside of the dominion of the Jewish Agency. Shlomo Israel noted that the greatest rabbis of his time, such as Blau and Sonnenfeld, "accurately eulogized De Haan as a martyr of the cause of Judaism."[88]

This brings us to the final question to what extent De Haan's journalism was related to his tragic fate. The analysis of his articles published for the *Algemeen Handelsblad* has shown that the language in his dispatches became more vehement once the conflict grew between Agudat Israel and the Zionist leadership. The first three years that De Haan spent in Palestine his reporting of the political affairs was relatively moderate, when he still supported the general aims of the Zionist movement and believed that peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews was possible. Yet gradually his trust in the Zionist leadership diminished when he began to understand that their policy was difficult to reconcile with the Jewish Orthodox worldview or the Arab nationalist aspirations. His articles explained why the Zionist ideal of Jewish unity was unrealistic given the deep divisions between the religious and secular Jews inside the Jewish community in Palestine. For the Zionist leadership, De Haan argued, there was no place left for religion in the Zionist Yishuv, while for him Judaism was at the core of the Jewish identity and therefore should form the foundation of the future Jewish state. One of his greatest fears was that the settlement project would be completely directed by the Zionist Organization, while the Orthodox Jews lacked any means of influence to shape the future of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. Consequently, the Zionist leaders who dominated Jewish politics became increasingly the target of De Haan's writings. They were blamed for the outbreak of the Nebi Musa Riots in April 1920 due to their ignorance of the Arab-Palestinian population. They were held responsible for the bad economic situation which De Haan related to the Jewish

[88] Shlomo Israel, 'The First Orthodox Jew Murdered by the Zionists', *The Guardians* 2 (1974) 13-4.

mass immigration and their irresponsible financial policy. Weizmann was attacked for not preventing the widespread Sabbath breaches. In sum, the Zionist leaders were generally depicted as incompetent, selfish and power-mad people. Only rarely De Haan wrote about their accomplishments in building new settlements, something he actually did not attribute to them. Though the Zionist pioneers were initially praised for their true devotion, later they were also increasingly condemned for their secularism, nationalism and boycott of Arab labor. De Haan's articles thus consistently emphasized the failures of the Zionist movement, which of course made the same Zionist circles very suspicious of him.

The negative image that De Haan presented of the Zionist movement was obviously not appreciated by the Zionists in a time when the future status of Palestine was still uncertain and when the Arab opposition grew against the Jewish National Home policy. Therefore, his journalism was considered as being anti-Zionist and pro-Arab so that his reputation became that of an enemy of the Jewish people. De Haan recognized that this was a direct effect of the "hyper nationalism" among the small Zionist minority that might indeed bring him in danger. It seems that his opponents just misunderstood the true intensions of his political activism, which were still to find a peaceful solution to the imminent Arab-Jewish conflict and to get Agudat Israel officially recognized by the British government. There is no doubt that De Haan sought the limits to seek justice by using his particular style of humor, satire and harsh criticism to attack political Zionism and to raise sympathy for the cause of Agudat Israel. For that purpose he shifted attention to issues that were not addressed in the Zionist media or propaganda, most notably the position of the Orthodox Jews and the growing Arab-Palestinian nationalism. His writings attempted to explain his readership in the Netherlands about the shortcomings and inherent dangers in the Zionist ideology and policies if such issues remained to be ignored; then conflict was surely inevitable in his opinion. De Haan never really questioned the right of Jews to have their own state in Palestine, which seems to confirm Giebels' argument that his anti-Zionism was not based on principles, but on the methods used by the Zionist leadership. For his Zionist opponents and those Haganah leaders that decided to eliminate De Haan his recommendations were just of no interest. They could simply not stand his constant stream of attacks against Zionism which they were unable to stop before his violent death. The great divide between the Zionists and the Dutch journalist simply left no chance for any reconciliation once Agudat Israel launched negotiations with the Arab leaders Emir Abdullah and King Husayn. The central role that De Haan fulfilled as the Aguda legal adviser in these negotiations, that were vividly described in his feuilletons, was in this context seen as treason against the Jewish people. More than his critical writings the Zionist fears for a possible Haredi-Arab

alliance, that could have formed an effective bloc to influence the British policy towards Palestine, seemed to have ultimately led to the tragic fate of this versatile, outspoken, but incautious journalist.

Bibliography

Baker, Randall, *King Husain and the Kingdom of Hejaz* (Cambridge and New York, 1979).

Berkowitz, Michael, 'Rejecting Zion, Embracing the Orient: The Life and Death of Jacob Israel de Haan', in: Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, *Orientalism and the Jews* (Hanover and London, 2005) 109-24.

Blom, Ron, "Kanalje verenigt u, maar blijft u zelf.' Jacob Israël de Haan en de socialistische beweging over homoseksualiteit en jodendom', *Uitgelezen Boeken* 16:3 (2013) 1-39.

Cesarani, David, 'Anti-Zionism in Britain, 1922-2002: Continuities and Discontinuities', *Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture* 25:1 (2006) 131-60.

Fontijn, Jan, *Onrust : Het leven van Jacob Israël de Haan, 1881-1924* (Amsterdam and Antwerp, 2015).

Fontijn, Jan, *Tederheid en storm : De persoonlijkheid van Jacob Israël de Haan* (Amsterdam, 2012).

Giebels, Ludy, 'De ontmoeting van Frederick Kisch en Jacob Israël de Haan met Hoessein, koning van de Hedjaz, in januari 1924: Een driehoeksverhouding in Amman', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 13:2 (1979) 194-219.

Giebels, Ludy, *Jacob Israël de Haan : Feuilletons in het Algemeen Handelsblad, 1919-1924* (unpublished manuscript, 2010). Online access to the manuscript that contains all Jacob Israel de Haan's publications for the *Algemeen Handelsblad* as foreign correspondent in Jerusalem: http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/saveas.php?filename=haan008feui01_01.pdf&dir=haan008feui01_01&type=pdf (accessed on 4 April 2016).

Giebels, Ludy, 'Jacob Israël de Haan in Palestina', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 14:1 (1980) 44-78.

Giebels, Ludy, 'Jacob Israël de Haan in Palestina II', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 15:1 (1981) 111-42.

Giebels, Ludy, 'Jacob Israël de Haan in Palestina III', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 15:2 (1981) 188-232.

Giebels, Ludy, *Jacob Israël de Haan : correspondent in Palestina, 1921-1924* (Amsterdam, 1981).

Giebels, Ludy, 'Een Nederlandse Lawrence of Arabia? Jacob Israël de Haan en zijn Arabische vrienden', *De parelduiker* 18:2 (2013) 2-15.

Giebels, Ludy, 'On the Dutch poet Jacob Israel De Haan (1881-1924) ', *Exquisite Corps: A Journal of Letters & Life* 5 (2000). See online: http://www.corpse.org/archives/issue_5/critical_urgencies/giebels.htm (accessed on 4 April 2016).

Giebels, Ludy, 'Waarom werd Jacob Israël de Haan vermoord?', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 127:1 (2014) 63-84.

Huneidi, Sahar, *A Broken Trust : Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestinians* (London and New York, 2001).

Israel, Shlomo, 'The First Orthodox Jew Murdered by the Zionists', *The Guardians* 2 (1974) 11-4.

Nakdimon, Schlomo, and Shaul Mayzlish, *Haretsach hapoliti harisjon be'Eretz Yisrael* (Tel Aviv, 1985).

Porush, Menachem, 'Who killed Yaakov Dehaan?', *Jewish Press*, 31 July 2003.

Rabkin, Yakov M., *A threat from within: a century of Jewish opposition to Zionism* (London, 2006).

Rubinstein, Shimon, 'Parashat Dehan - Rezah politi o hozah lahoreg shel "mosdot hamdeina sheba-derech"', *A Journal for Judaism and Zionism* 27/28 (1985) 5-29, 179.

Segev, Tom, *One Palestine, Complete : Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (New York, 2001).

Shapira, Anita, *Israel : A History* (London, 2012). Translated from Hebrew by Anthony Berris.

Shapira, Anita, *The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (Stanford, 1999). Translated from Hebrew by William Templer.

Sicker, Martin, *Pangs of the Messiah : The Troubled Birth of the Jewish State* (Westport, 2000).

Sonnenfeld, Shlomo Zalman, *Guardian of Jerusalem. The Life and Times of Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld* (New York, 2009).