

Nº 0050

GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE

PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATE OF PALESTINIAN CITIZENSHIP

Certify that Jacob Israel DE HAAN,

in accordance with Article 1 of the Order of the High Commissioner, the 1st of September, 1922, has been granted this Provisional Certificate of Citizenship.

[Handwritten signature]

For and on behalf of the Chief Secretary.



born in Amsterdam, Holland.

residence Birket Mamillah,

Jerusalem.

nationality Dutch.

residence here

Nil.

minor children under 18 years

applicant

Nil.



Signature of Applicant

Jacob Israël de Haan

The multiple lives of Jacob Israel de Haan



Prof. dr. Karène Sanchez Summerer,
dr. Lucia Admiraal (eds.),
Karstian Oudman

The Palestine years (1919-1924)

THE MULTIPLE LIVES OF JACOB ISRAËL DE HAAN
THE PALESTINE YEARS (1919-1924)

**The multiple
lives of
Jacob Israël
de Haan**

**The Palestine years
(1919-1924)**

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GUP continues to offer a platform for students and researchers to work together, for which we are very grateful.

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INTRODUCTION

**Jacob Israël de Haan in
Palestine (1919-1924):
unveiling a
nuanced mosaic**

Karène Sanchez Summerer

In 1919, the Dutch Jewish writer Jacob Israël de Haan (1881-1924), better known (back then, but also nowadays) as the author of the openly gay sexual novel *Pipe Lines* (published in 1909), emigrated from the Netherlands to Palestine. The prolific Dutch poet, literary writer, lawyer and journalist spent the last years of his life in British Mandate Palestine.

Working as a correspondent for the Dutch newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad*, his feuilletons give a vivid picture of politics and daily life in Palestine. There, he soon became a legal adviser and political spokesman for Rabbi Chaim Sonnenfeld's ultra-Orthodox community and *Agudat Israel* (later *Aguda* in this manuscript), the international organization of Orthodox Jews (founded in 1912 with the aim of establishing a Jewish state based on the Torah). He reproached the Zionists, to whom he was initially close, with not taking sufficient account of Orthodox Jews and Palestinian Arabs. De Haan's lectures at the Law School in Jerusalem were increasingly boycotted by Zionist students. Due to a lack of students, his job as a teacher ended in 1923. In June 1924, he was assassinated by a Zionist commando.

Jacob Israël de Haan's years in Palestine are those of an Orthodox Jew who befriended, to a certain extent, Palestinian Arabs in Jerusalem and progressively became disillusioned with and opposed to the political Zionist movement. Many of his experiences and thoughts in Palestine have been preserved in his articles in the *Algemeen Handelsblad*. They offer a unique insight into this important historical era of colonial rule over Palestine and proto nationalisms.

Born in Drenthe, he spent his last years in Mandate Palestine as a journalist, working for four and a half years for the Dutch newspaper and, later on, anglophone newspapers such as the *Daily Express*. De Haan had great influence on public opinion through his articles that appeared in Dutch and English. Palestine did not get much in-depth coverage by the British Press of the time, except in a few daily newspapers like *The Daily Mail* (whose owner Lord Northcliffe criticized the British Mandate as too costly and doomed to fail) or *The Times* (also owned by Lord Northcliffe but used as a tribune by many involved in the handling of the Palestine question).

After his death, Jacob Israël de Haan was often called the Dutch or Jewish ‘Lawrence of Arabia’, the famous Briton who, together with an Arab army, played an important role in the First World War. Yet, those five years (1919-1924) in Palestine have often been understudied in both academic and non-academic studies about De Haan (with the exception of L. Giebels’s articles and new monograph – June 2024). Furthermore, his reports in English are better known than his feuilletons, the latter not translated into English until today, but greater in number. De Haan became friends with another journalist, Leopold Weiss, during his stay in Jerusalem in 1923, and clearly influenced his views on political Zionism. Leopold Weiss, an Austrian Jew, freelancer for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, who later compiled his articles in a booklet, *Unromantisches Morgenland* (An Unromantic Orient), later became King Ibn Saud’s adviser and converted to Islam (and became famous as Muhammad Asad).

How did his interaction with various Palestine communities, his network and fieldwork impact De Haan’s opinions and reports? What was the evolution of his positioning towards the proto national agendas at the beginning of the 1920s?

De Haan’s Palestine years started in Groningen, in a farm located in Marum, which he visited with Marco Cohn and his wife, both declared Zionists. They had invited him after learning that his departure for Palestine was imminent, to show him their farm where Polish Jewish boys were trained in agriculture, participating in the efforts towards a ‘healthy Jewish agricultural population’, in a farm named Zion (*Algemeen Handelsblad*, feuilleton nr. 1 *Jewish farmers*). De Haan left Groningen touched by their trajectories, their linguistic abilities to communicate in Dutch (and some even knew of his poems) and the revival of Hebrew as a modern language, eager to leave soon for Palestine.

The following years that De Haan spent in Palestine have been one of the focuses of a seminar with students at the university of Groningen (Middle Eastern Studies), one of the sources of inspiration for the Public Engagement Seed Project (2023-2024, funded by RUG, focusing on the Palestine years of De Haan) and the focus of an exhibition that took place at the Synagogue of Groningen (April-October 2024), among other activities

around Jacob Israël de Haan. They all underlined the importance of those years not only for De Haan but also for political Zionism, Arab nationalism and European colonialism.

This present book brings De Haan's Palestinian years to the fore, and constitutes the catalogue of the exhibition *The Multiple lives of Jacob Israël de Haan, A man of contradictions and controversies* at the Synagogue of Groningen. Chapter 1 and most of Chapter 2 are texts from this exhibition. Chapter 3 includes English translations of some of De Haan's feuilletons about Palestine for *Algemeen Handelsblad*, as these are a unique and important historical source yet remain the most understudied part of De Haan's work, while the Epilogue questions his legacy in Jerusalem today.

As a correspondent for the Amsterdam daily *Algemeen Handelsblad*, De Haan left behind a little fewer than 400 reports written in the form of almost daily serials of 'things seen' and events in the 'Holy Land', investigating both Jewish and Arab populations. They constitute, in the spirit of Albert Londres's precept 'to carry the pen in the wound' (1884-1932, pioneer of investigative journalism) – a fascinating chronicle of Palestinian life during the years 1919-1924 and offer us a view as penetrating as it is personal of the 'work and days' of its composite population at the time of the British Mandate.

De Haan's commentaries are occasionally acerbic, often ironic, and alternate with captivating observations – with a spontaneous, sharp style (difficult to translate without losing some of his panache!).

“Curious: under the influence of the hatred between Jews and Arabs, the teaching of Arabic in Jewish schools has been partly abolished, partly reduced in stature. It was thought that the Arab population would learn Hebrew. Today, our daily ‘Doar Hajom’ carries an editorial calling for more and better education in Arabic, because this country is still Arab by language. And so are all the surrounding countries from Morocco to den Taurus.”

To those who reproached him his proximity to the various local communities, De Haan answered by confronting them with the accuracy of his remarks.

“But those, who sometimes doubted my objectivity, may now reread the interview of our Nahum Sokolov with the London correspondent (Thursday, November 6, Morning Paper). Who got it right?”

De Haan was close to various actors from different confessional backgrounds with important roles in Palestine. For example, in one of the feuilletons, translated in chapter 3, De Haan narrated his visit to one of the political leaders of Palestinian-Arab nationalism, Arif-al-Arif, and gave an account of his perception and positioning concerning an important leader of the Palestinian national movement and District Officer of Jenin and Nablus (exiled by the British administration because of his participation in the 1920 anti-Jewish riots and granted amnesty later). Arif-al-Arif was also the editor of the magazine *Suriya al-Janubiya* (Southern Syria), an allusion to the indivisibility of Palestine and Syria.

De Haan exposed himself in his numerous feuilletons over the years. Yet, his criticisms, at several levels, from ideological to pragmatic remarks, were shared by different actors of the time, including the Dutch and the American Zionist federations.

In his last feuilleton, dated from the 1st July 1924, the morning of his death, De Haan evoked aspects of a turbulent Palestine, very relevant a hundred years later.

abnoyA Nieuwe Amsterdamsche Courant
ALGEMEEN HANDELSBLAD

door

MR. JACOB ISRAËL DE HAAN.

“When I think about how many different things I could still write about. And when I think of how many different things I could have kept quiet about over the last few years! Yesterday, Sidna Abdallah [son of King Hussein] came to town. His father, King Hussein has agreed to pay for the entire cost of repairing the Omar Mosque. It is said to be more than a hundred thousand pounds. And Sidna Abdallah has come into town to arrange everything. He got off in the handsome drawing room of the High Commissioner, still called Sir Herbert Samuel [High Commissioner of Palestine from July 1920 until June 1925, a British Jew]. But now Sidna has dined again with Musa Kazem Pasha el Hussein, the leader of the anti-Zionist

Arab movement [and Mayor of Jerusalem from 1918 to 1920, dismissed as a Mayor by the British authorities, then head of the national Executive committee of the Palestine Arab congress from 1920 to 1934]. Many friends and acquaintances of Sidna have gone to kiss his hand. We asked for the peace of the Emir Talal and for the peace of the little Emir Naïf [the two sons of Abdalla I bin Al-Hussein, the then new Emir of Transjordan]. And we have heard that both their peace is peaceful. Praise be to Allah!

In four weeks, an Arab Congress will meet. Sir Herbert Samuel is going on holiday.

Everyone knows, these are all symptoms. Only Eternity knows whose and when it is; time will tell.”

(Algemeen Handelsblad, Nr. 394 Symptoms, 1 July 1924)

CHAPTER 1

The Multiple lives of Jacob Israël de Haan

Karstian Oudman

Childhood and youth

Jacob Israël de Haan was born in Smilde, Drenthe, on New Year's Eve 1881. It was the Sabbath, and so his father Izak de Haan refused to sign the birth certificate. The family of Izak de Haan and mother Betje Rubens was large and poor. His father did not earn much from his work as *chazzan* (Jewish cantor) in the local synagogue. Consequently, the family moved frequently in search of better income or forced by lack of money.

De Haan was six when he left the northern provinces of the Netherlands. He spent most of his childhood in Zaandam. Joop, as his family called him, grew up in a Dutch society where Jews, although they had full civil rights, were mostly poor and faced anti-Semitism on a daily basis.

The De Haan family lived in a small house in Zaandam. Although the Jewish community there numbered less than 200 souls, the town had a synagogue, a Jewish school and kosher butchers. Jacob Israël de Haan was very religious in his youth. He would later return to Zaandam often, but he also wrote: 'I had no all-controlling joys there, nor so much sorrow.'

De Haan had a close relationship with his slightly older sister Caroline Lea (better known as the writer Carry van Bruggen). Caroline was born on 1 January 1881 and Jacob Israël on 31 December the same year. 'Joop and Lientje' were often mistaken for twins. Later, Caroline would not look back on her childhood in a very positive way, especially as a nineteenth-century girl in a strict religious environment. The brother and sister parted ways when De Haan was admitted to the teacher training college in Haarlem.

Youth.

Your youth is youth. Because all youth perishes
And ye measure youth only by old age,
Enjoy therefore no less all thy benefit.
The Feast perishes before the drinker knows it.

De Haan was fourteen when he left his parents' home to attend the National School for Teachers. Both literally and figuratively, he pulled the door shut. School was more important to him than Jewish commandments. And so he went to school even on the Sabbath and holidays. On weekends when he was at home, he often clashed with his father.

In the beginning, 'Haantje' had a hard time at school and earned bad grades. He was not popular with his teachers, but they described him as hardworking. However, the students to whom he gave trial lessons 'liked him a lot' and performed well under his guidance. Not only did his grades improve, but also his self-confidence grew. On one occasion, De Haan even opposed a teacher, saying:

'You should not go against me like that, because you should remember that in a few weeks I will be your colleague.'

At the National School for Teachers, he also got to know 'the Tachtigers' (the Eightiers). This innovative art movement was very influential at the time, including at the National School for Teachers. Their books and political ideas impacted De Haan and other students. He started to write poetry and became interested in politics. Left-wing ideas like anarchism and socialism interested him and, together with his sister Caroline, he later became a member of the Social Democratic Workers Party.



(Alles wat deze afdeling aangaat, gelieve men te zenden aan Jacob de Haan, St. Willibrordusstraat 29, Amsterdam.)

Figure 1 Children's supplement by Jacob Israël de Haan in newspaper *Het Volk*.
(*Het Volk*, Delpher – Koninklijke Bibliotheek)

One of the best-known Tachtigers was Frederik van Eeden: psychiatrist, writer and founder of an anarchist community in Bussum. De Haan saw in Van Eeden, who was twenty years his senior, not only a friend but also a paternal figure. He even sent him love letters. Although his feelings were not reciprocated, the two became good friends.

Socialist friend of children

After graduation, the job search proceeded with difficulty. De Haan was repeatedly rejected and moved back in with his parents out of economic necessity. In 1902, he left to work in Amsterdam and dissociated himself from Judaism and from his parents. He also collected money for the families of laid-off workers after the general strike of 1903, among other charity activities.

In addition to his job as a teacher, De Haan was very active in the evenings, studying for the state university examination. He succeeded and was admitted to Law school in 1903. In the remaining hours of the day, he wrote not only fierce political reviews, but also articles for the children's supplement of the socialist newspaper *Het Volk*.

In June 1904, De Haan published the autobiographical homosexual novel *Pijpelijntjes*. Just a few days later, *Het Volk* fired him as editor of its children's supplement. He lost friends because of the book, and revoked his party membership. He continued, however, to vote for the socialists out of political conviction.

“The whole wheelwork stands still, if your mighty arm wants it”

A major strike broke out among railway workers in January 1903. The strikers' demands included the right of workers to organize in a union and conduct negotiations. Eventually, the employers gave in to the strikers' demands. At the same time, a backlash ensued to prevent subsequent strikes, much to the disappointment of many socialists.

To the barricades!

The Stokers II

Cheerful light through city and field,
Runs the express train along the track,
Runs the express train along the track,
And the stoker beast wakes up,
Oh well, such a stoker does not work hard,
A bit of standing and stoking,
Oh well, such a stoker does not work hard,
A bit of standing and stabbing.

Whether-he has to work day to day,
Always he is easy-going,
Always he is easy-going,
And the gentlemen for whom he 'does the work',
Are happy with such a stoker,
Every broken-down guy,
Is a chunk of dividend,
Every broken-down guy,
Is a chunk of dividend.

Isn't such a stoker a nice,
And willing worker beast,
And willing worker beast?
Nay, there is never such an accomplished,
Slave beast in the world has been,
Gratefully, it eats,
The dry rail bread in his sweat,
Gratefully, it eats,
The dry rail bread in his sweat.

Jacob Israël de Haan, "*Kanalje*" en
Opstandige Liedjes (Rebellious Songs)

HET VOLK



Figure 2
Cartoon by Albert
Hahn in *Het Volk*,
8 February 1903
(‘All the cog work
stands still if your
mighty arm wills it!’)

GANSCH HET RADERWERK STAAT STIL
ALS UW MACTIGE ARM HET WIL . . .

Pijpelijntjes

Pijpelijntjes (roughly translated: *Pipe Lines*) was published at a time when homosexuality was severely condemned in Western Europe. A famous example is the 1895 trial of Oscar Wilde, an Irish writer who was an inspiration for De Haan. Wilde tried, in vain, to clear his name in court of an accusation of ‘sodomy’ (then a derogatory term used for homosexuality). He was sentenced to two years in prison for ‘grossly immoral acts.’

The book *Pijpelijntjes* set in Amsterdam’s working-class neighbourhood de Pijp. The novel narrates the lives of two students who are in love: Joop and Sam. Like many writers at the time, De Haan invented his own words, such as (roughly translated) ‘tingle thriller’, ‘laddering’ and ‘attention-grabbing glory’. What was then striking was not only how openly the book talked about homosexuality, but especially how it did so airily and casually, as if there was no taboo at all.

Not only his employer reacted negatively to the appearance of *Pipe Lines*, but the Dutch literary world was shocked; the one who was most shocked of all was Arnold Aletrino, a scientist committed to a new view of homosexuality. Aletrino was a friend of De Haan and, presumably, his boyfriend. Aletrino realised very quickly that Sam and Joop were actually Aletrino and De Haan themselves. He bought as many books as he could, and subsequently burnt them.

De Haan literally became sick from the reactions to his book. In a letter to his friend Frederik van Eeden, he wrote that he was even considering leaving the Netherlands. This storm eventually subsided, although peace would never fully return. De Haan was no quitter and reissued the book, rewritten but certainly not censored. He also published the novels *Ondergangen* (1907) en *Pathologieën* (1908), remarkable books for the time, starring women and, again, homosexuality.

A lecture, given by Aletrino in 1908, eventually appeared in a book form, in which he debunked persistent myths about homosexuality, and concluded that homosexuality was innate and gays disadvantaged.

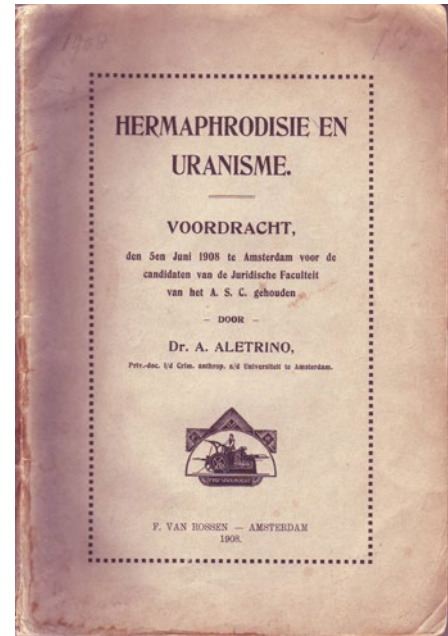


Figure 3 **Arnold Aletrino, 1908, *Hermaphrodisie en uranisme. Voordracht***
(IHLIA LGBTI Heritage)

Marriage

On 28 March 1907, at the age of 25, De Haan married Johanna van Maarseveen, who was almost nine years older. It was not unusual for gay men in the early 20th century to marry women. The aforementioned Oscar Wilde was also married to Constance Lloyd. Unlike Wilde and Lloyd, the De Haan couple did not have any children.

Maarseveen was a medical examiner in Amsterdam, the first woman in that position, and had previously been one of the first female medical students in the Netherlands. She later received a silver medal from the city for her great knowledge in the field of social medicine and hereditary problems.

For De Haan, it was a marriage of convenience. When he became ill after *Pijpelijntjes*, his wife took care of him, and he became very dependent on her. She also helped Arnold Aletrino in tracking down and destroying the book. De Haan promised her not to write anything like it again: a promise he would not keep.

The following years, De Haan made several trips. He went on holiday with his wife to France and visited England with Frederik van Eeden. There, he met Pyotr Kropotkin, a Russian geographer best known for his political theories on anarchism. Inspired by Kropotkin, De Haan traveled to Russia three times to investigate abuses and mistreatment in prisons there.

Return to Judaism

From 1905 on, De Haan put more emphasis on his second name Israël (in his publications and letters), which he had not done for a while. He also wrote Jewish poetry, but without addressing the question of faith. He wrote in 1915 that his return to Judaism had been a struggle. He also started to learn Hebrew. In addition, he became a member of the Dutch Zionist Union (the union was part of the World Zionist organization that tried to ‘find a home’ for Jews).

In 1914, he published a collection of his poems, *Het Joodsche Lied* (The Jewish Song). The Jewish faith became increasingly important to him, especially when he left the Zionist Union and joined the *Mizrachi*, the part of the otherwise predominantly secular Zionist movement where religion played an important role (created in 1902).

De Haan’s wife was not Jewish. Initially, this was not a problem for him, but for both of their parents, who were absent from their wedding. When Judaism became more important to him, De Haan considered divorce; he also continued to struggle with his homosexuality as an Orthodox Jew.



Figure 4 **Jacob Israël de Haan wearing a kippah**
(Unknown photographer, 1919, Literatuurmuseum)

Doctor without promotion

Encouraged by his wife, De Haan completed his law studies. He gained a good reputation and an especially good salary by tutoring. He also wrote articles on criminal law, which regularly provoked negative and mocking reactions against him.

In 1909, he wrote a sharp response to a book on Jews and crime. The relationship between religion, race and crime was a subject of scholarly debate at the time, explaining the influence of religion on human life.

De Haan wanted to make a career in law, and worked on a dissertation for years. He specialized in legal *significa*, described by him as ‘making legal language more logical’. On Tuesday, 1 February 1916, he received his doctorate for his research into the legal terms ‘liable’, ‘responsible’ and ‘imputable’.

Now a Doctor of Law, he remained loyal to the University of Amsterdam, where he hoped to become a professor. However, the position was awarded to someone else. Was this disappointment the reason for his departure for Palestine? In a farewell speech, he himself said:

“There is no disappointment of a scientific nature that drives me away, and there is no promise so rich that keeps my back in Holland.”



Figure 5 **Jacob Israël de Haan as University Professor**
(Literatuurmuseum)

Departure to Palestine

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 made a big impression on De Haan. Because Jews lived in different nation-states, they were forced to fight each other, participating in its armies:

‘This is the cruelest thing about wandering,
That crony against crony,
Each people die for their own inheritance,
We die to no avail.’

De Haan initially believed that only a country of their own would put an end to this division. In 1917, through the Balfour Declaration, the British government pledged to work for a ‘national home’ for the Jewish people in Palestine. It gave further wind to the growing political Zionist movement.

On 17 February 1918, a demonstration was held at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. The war was almost over and the demonstrators had demands for peace negotiations. They wanted full civil rights for Jews worldwide, self-government for Jews in Eastern Europe and a national home in Palestine for Jews.

De Haan’s desire to go to Palestine had increased from 1914 onwards, because of the war. In late 1918, he cut the knot and left his wife in the Netherlands. At a farewell meeting, he quoted his poem *Roepstem*:

'And I go, as clouds go
When the sun draws them,
Who shall resist God's call,
Who awakens His people?

And I go, as the days go,
I go like the night.
Who will live and withstand
Of his innermost life the power?

What binds stars to their orbits
The sun to its course
That binds the Poet to
His People, His Dream, His Act and Hope.'

‘Jaffa Gate.
My singing Heart: what is more beautiful
Than the Gate of Jerusalem.
Where in the sun a shalcken beggar
Sings a song with a forlorn voice.’

Jacob Israël de Haan, *Kwatrijnen*

‘People go. And they come. Yemenite Jews, with black, long locks along a fine face. Ashkenazi Jews, in cloaks of silk, hard red. Hard yellow, hard blue. A Polish fur cap on. Sephardim with a fez, which the lawmen wrapped with a black silk cloth. Large Moroccans, barefoot in wide and long pointed shoes. A white-yellow or heavy, black cloak over the high shoulders. Small, pious women arrive. Who kisses the Wall and raises their hands, as a mother blesses her sons.’

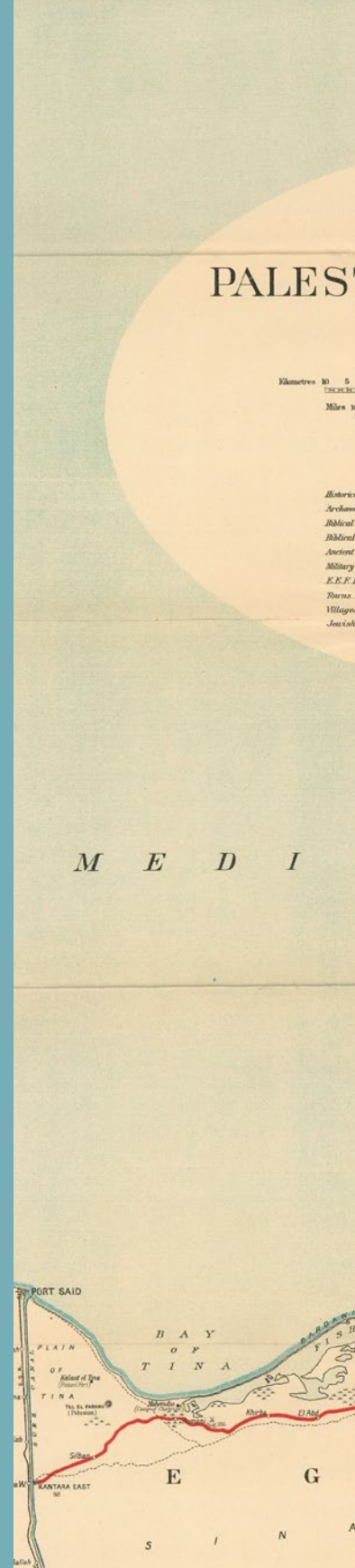
De Haan on the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, 9 February 1921 in *Algemeen Handelsblad*

CHAPTER 2

The Palestine years (1919-1924)

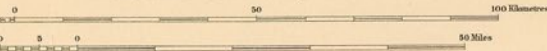
Karstian Oudman and Karène Sanchez Summerer

Figure 6 Railway Map of Palestine & Transjordania
(Sir Harry Luke, *The Handbook of Palestine*, London, 1922)



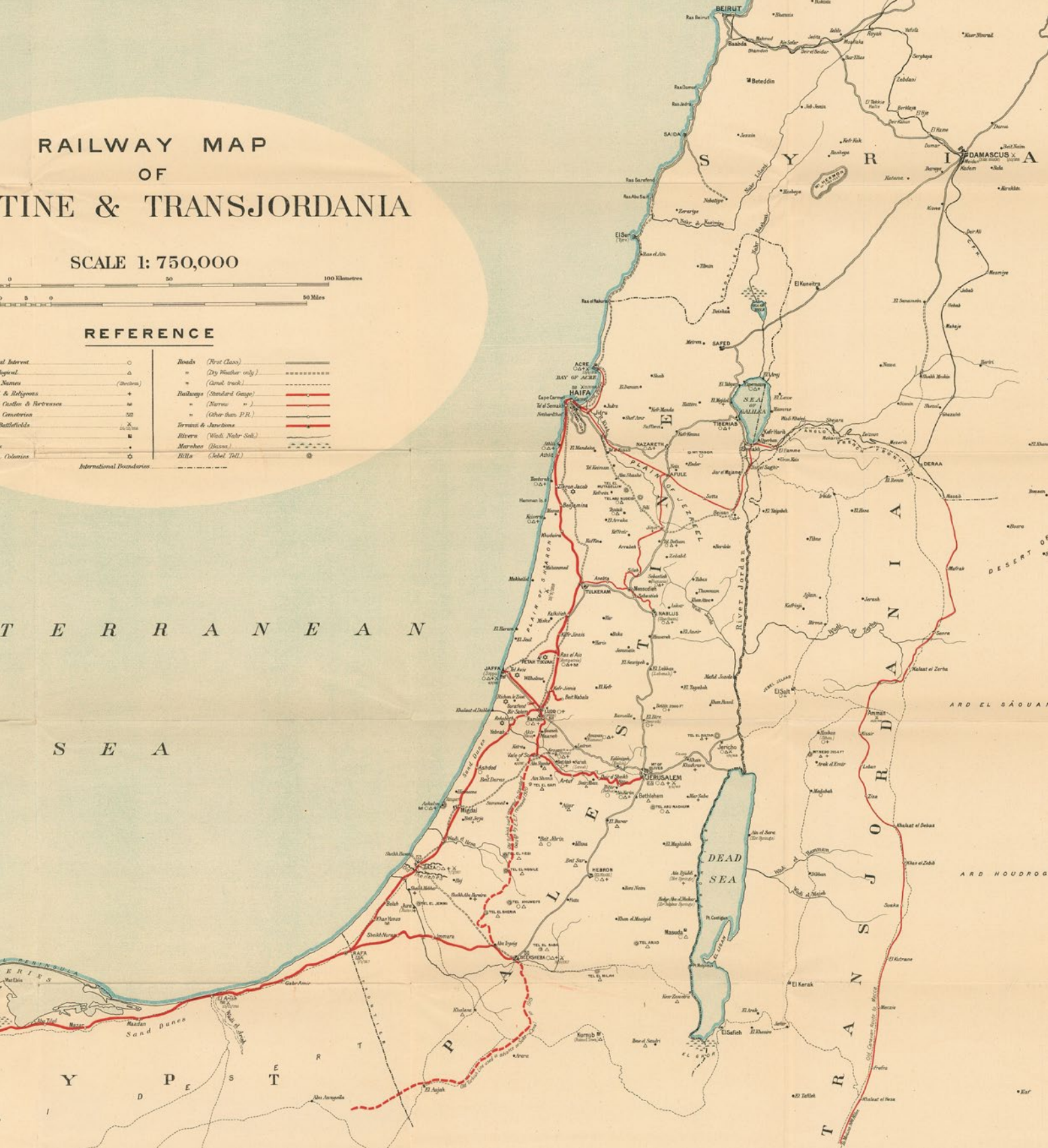
RAILWAY MAP OF SYRIA & TRANSJORDANIA

SCALE 1: 750,000



REFERENCE

of Interest	○	Roads (First Class)	—————
Legend	△	" (Dry Winter only)	- - - - -
Stations	(Symbol)	" (Small track)	· · · · ·
Railways	+	Standard Gauge	—————
Coastal & Fortresses	⊠	" (Narrow ")	—————
Canneries	⊞	" (Other than P.R.)	—————
Battlegrounds	X	Irrigation & Aqueducts	—————
Colonies	○	Rivers (Wick. Nahr Sob.)	—————
		Marshes (Sass.)	—————
		Hills (Label Tell.)	○
		International Boundaries	- - - - -



TERRANEAN
SEA

DESERT

TRANSJORDANIA

Mandate Palestine

From the 16th century until the end of World War I, Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire. Although not always without tensions, many communities lived side by side. Druzes, (sunnī) Muslims, Christians and Jews of various origins populated the cities and villages. Palestine was also home to itinerant nomadic tribes.

Palestinian Christians in Palestine mostly belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church, who constituted approximately 60% of the Christian population, along with Latin and Greek Catholics, while Arab Protestants represented a minority among the Christians. Several communities of Jews also lived in Palestine. Jews from Europe, from diverse countries, emigrated to Palestine, where several Jewish communities lived for centuries (mainly in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, Tiberias).

The Palestine to which De Haan travelled had been occupied by the British since the end of the First World War. The League of Nations labelled Palestine a so-called 'A-Mandate' in 1923, meaning that the indigenous populations were 'not yet ready' to govern themselves and thus given a form of colonialism while 'formally guided to self-government'.

In early twentieth century Palestine, nationalism, communism and modernism clashed but also reinforced each other. In the Ottoman Empire, sexual acts between single men were legal. In 1936, homosexuality was banned by the British 'in the name of civilization'.

Journey and arrival

De Haan had been thinking about leaving for Palestine for years, but the practical side of it probably figured little in those dreams. In his impatience, he tried to get precedence through influential acquaintances, but as a result he was actually considered a 'trouble-maker'. Due to the hassle surrounding his travel papers, he was unable to leave the Netherlands until 4 January 1919.

It took him almost two more months before he reached Jerusalem. Via London, Paris, Rome, Naples and Port Saïd, the journey continued to Cairo, where his patience was again tested. The Zionist leader and later president of Israel, Chaim Weizmann, had already warned him about this. The British authorities did not let everyone into Palestine quickly and made selections on the basis of an immigrant's physical condition as well as the necessity of their stay. The physically weak De Haan was not high on the list in this regard.

Figure 7
Jaffa (Frank Scholten,
1921-1923, NINO)



De Haan, however, remained confident in his capabilities. What he failed to do in the Netherlands, he sought to do in Palestine: to become a professor. On top of this professional and intellectual endeavor, he also intended to reinforce the diplomatic and economic links between Palestine and the Netherlands. He wrote: “My intention is to establish trade relations between Holland and Palestine.” In his ambition, he applied several times for the position of consul for the Netherlands, a high diplomatic job. He was not rejected as such, but neither was he hired.

Stormy winds and rain greeted De Haan when he finally arrived at Jerusalem’s tiny railway station. But it took more than a storm for De Haan to be intimidated. Over dinner, he inquired right away about the political situation. In the evening, he let what he called a ‘slow Arab’ guide him through the city, teaching him Arabic words in the process.

De Haan and Adil Aweidah

After a few weeks of exploring, homesickness struck, particularly after the news reached De Haan that his wife was ill: “If only I were home again!” Mood swings were characteristic of his writing at the time. A year later, he would write: “There will be no existence for me here in the long run.” Two weeks later, however, he felt the opposite was true.

De Haan made friends among the Palestinian Arabs. The Aweidah brothers were especially important to him. He even went to live with the eldest, Abdul Salam, in a garden shed, from which he had the former Greek occupant evicted through the courts.

The Aweidah brothers were politically involved. The youngest brother, Adil, was a member of the nationalist *El Muntada*, meaning ‘The Forum’. He was therefore reluctant to be seen publicly with the Zionist Jacob Israël de Haan. There were many political tensions in Palestine at the time, which frequently degenerated into violence.

De Haan took long trips around the country with Adil and learnt about the rich Palestinian Arab culture. Adil was also the inspiration for many poems and it is rumored that a relationship had formed between the two. Adil's departure for study at the Technical High School in Konstanz, Germany, put an end to this after two years.

In the Netherlands, De Haan was known mainly through his job as a journalist. For the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, he wrote no fewer than 394 feuilletons about his life in Palestine. His politically sharp, and simultaneously sentimental, writing style made his pieces very popular. He got his readers involved, for instance, by seeking support to buy cows for an orphanage.

Figure 8 **Jacob Israël de Haan and supposedly Adil Aweidah in Jericho**
(Frank Scholten, 1921-1923, NINO)



The 'Arab question'

It is difficult to pinpoint a starting point of the Palestinians' struggle for independence. Consequently, there is no single struggle. There has been successively an uprising against the Ottomans in 1834, later the struggle shifted to the British and the political Zionists. Two conflicting statements were important in the years of De Haan: the political Zionists invoked the Balfour Declaration, the Arabs the British promise of an independent Arab State.

During World War I, the Emir of Mecca and Medina, Hussein, fought with his army against the Ottomans. The British archaeologist and soldier T.E. Lawrence, nicknamed 'Lawrence of Arabia', supported him in this. The British promised Hussein a great empire and with it the Arabs' independence. But after the war, the third major immigration wave of Jews to Palestine began, creating doubts about the British promise among the Arab population of Palestine.

The Palestinian national movement did not consist only of Muslims. Christians played an important role as they formed an important part of the influential urban middle class, while Bedouins fought their own battles, their lands being threatened by the British borders and the land acquisition by Jewish persons and communities.

As a 'friend of Arabs', De Haan got involved in this 'Arab question'. Through Abdul Salam, he got to know Emir Abdullah of Transjordan and King Faisal of Iraq, sons of Hussein, two powerful contacts who could satisfy De Haan's grand ambitions. He became critical of political Zionists from the moment they banned Arabs from working on Jewish lands. However, he did not see the settlement of Jews in Palestine per se as a problem. He understood some Arabs' fear of becoming nothing more than 'water carriers and lumberjacks' in a Jewish State. But according to him, "They also made a lot of money from the Jews."

MEMORANDUM ON THE SITUATION OF THE
NON-ZIONIST JEWS IN PALESTINE

Before all I should like to make a remark as to the use of the word "zionist". Once it is used in the sense of a man who loves zion; and sometimes it is used in the sense of being an adherent of the zionist Organisation. I, however, am going to use it in the latter sense

In the first sense all the Orthodox Jews are Zionists; in the latter sense they are not. A part of the Orthodoxy is organised in the world organisation Mizrahi which has branch societies in different countries

The Mizrahi as a Federation, is a part of the zionist Organisation. Another part of the Orthodox Jews are organised in the world Organisation of the Agudat Israel, which has its branches principally in the countries of Middle and Eastern Europe. The Agudat Israel refuses to unite itself with the zionist Organisation since the latter in theory is religious, but in practice anti-religious. The Agudat Israel has hundreds of thousands of adherents in Middle and Eastern Europe. They belong for the greater part to the Talmudic scholars, merchants, handicraftsmen, etc. They hardly take part in politics and journalistic propaganda. The zionists, although they are less numerous, have come to the foreground since they take part in general political activity of the times. The leaders of the zionist Organisation, Dr. Weitzman and Mr. Sokolow, have, during the war and thereafter, always allowed themselves to speak on behalf of the whole Jewish people, although they had no right and authority to do so, except on behalf of the zionist Organisation whom they represented.

II.

The zionists in Palestine always avoid to call themselves by the name of zionists because they want to create the impression abroad that all the Palestinian Jews are political zionists.

The Palestinian zionists have elected an Assembly to which they have given the name of Jewish Deputies of palestine (Aschifat Hanivcharim). These in turn have elected an Executive Committee for conducting daily affairs, which designates itself the National Council of Palestinian Jews.

Figure 9 De Haan on the situation of non political Zionist Jews
(1923, archive of Jacob Israël de Haan, Allard Pierson)

“Rather Arab than Zionist”

De Haan was rather provocative but also offered opposition. After his arrival, it appears from his various writings that Palestine was not yet the land of his dreams. Soon he wondered: How can millions of Jews live in a land without coal? After barely a year, he wrote:

“Every nationalism, including Zionism, is after all only a necessary one-sidedness.”

The British Foreign Office appointed a Zionist Commission to mediate between the British government and the Jews, but, according to De Haan, it “did nothing but fuss and spend money.” His later observation (appearing in several of his feuilletons as well) that more Jews were leaving Palestine than entering due to bad policies was sharp. According to De Haan, the World Zionist Organization was responsible, he also accused it of ignoring other Jewish groups.

He was not the first and by no means the only one to say this. As early as 1904, the highest Jewish religious power in the Netherlands, the Chief Rabbis’ Assembly, spoke out openly against political Zionism, for religious reasons. According to them, a Jewish state could only be founded by the promised Messiah, and the largely secular World Zionist Organization was thus inadequate.

In Groningen, division even led to the ‘Groningen conscientious order’. The appointment of a new cantor was blocked by the Chief Rabbi for one reason only: he was a political Zionist. This made national news, with De Haan’s sister Carry van Bruggen also speaking out. Immediately afterward, two new candidates emerged for the board of the Jewish congregation of Groningen, and it became a vote in favor or against political Zionism. The latter won.

On the ‘Arab question’, the political Zionists obviously knew before they immigrated that Palestine was inhabited. However, most were convinced that the Arabs would accept Jewish ‘historical rights’ to the land. Moreover, political Zionists were blind to the differences between Palestinian Arabs and the surrounding Arab population, and some assumed that ultimately some of them would move out of Palestine willingly.

One country, many visions

“And know ye why we say here at Jerusalem, ‘Next year at Jerusalem’. The doctor says: ‘Because the present Jerusalem is not the city we desire. Next year’s Jerusalem is heavenly Jerusalem’. Miss Seraphine-Sara says: ‘the next year’s Jerusalem means that we hope that the entire Jewish people will be in Jerusalem next year.’
With these two worldviews in our heads, we go to sleep.”

Jacob Israël de Haan, 26 April 1923 in *Algemeen Handelsblad*



Figure 10
Bedouin woman with
braids (Frank Scholten,
1921-1923, NINO)



Figure 11 **Christian elite at a coffee shop in Jaffa**
(Frank Scholten, 1921-1923, NINO)



Figure 12
Arab boy selling the newspaper Palestine
(Frank Scholten, 1921-1923, NINO)



Figure 13
Girl with an egg, Orthodox Easter
(Frank Scholten, 1921-1923, NINO)



Figure 14
Russian Jewish immigrants, Judaea
 (Frank Scholten, 1921-1923, NINO)



Figure 15 **The Wailing Wall**
 (Frank Scholten, 1921-1923, NINO)

15H-I-31
 Dr. J. I. de Haan

Your presence is desired at an Assembly at Government House, Jerusalem (Mount of Olives) on Wednesday the 7th instant at 4 p.m. at which the Right Honourable Sir Herbert Samuel, P. C., G. B. E., High Commissioner, will communicate a Message to the People of Palestine from His Majesty King George V, and will announce the Policy of the Government of Palestine.

Figure 16 **Invitation to a meeting where the British High Commissioner of Palestine would make a statement on the politics of the Palestinian government**
 (1922, archive of Jacob Israël de Haan, Allard Pierson)

Aguda

De Haan was in close contact with three of the many different Jewish groups: the political Zionists, the *Mizrachi* (religious Zionist organization founded in 1902 in Vilnius) and the *Aguda*. The latter was founded in 1912 for a Jewish state based on the Torah (the first five books of the Jewish Bible/ Old Testament). As such, they opposed secular political Zionism.

Annie Landau, head of the Evelina de Rothschild school in Jerusalem, brought De Haan into contact with the local *Mizrachi* on his very first night in Jerusalem. He was soon granted a high position and remained a member until 1922. Besides Landau, doctor Moshe Wallach and teacher Abraham Goldsmith became good friends of his. Over time he became especially close to Rabbi Sonnenfeld and his followers: a devout Jew whose only fault, according to De Haan, was that he expected the same piety from others.

The group around the Rabbi Sonnenfeld was part of the *Aguda* and opposed to women's suffrage, among other things. They considered themselves the only legitimate representatives of Judaism. But it was Sonnenfeld himself and his principled opposition to Zionism that appealed to De Haan. Indeed, he feared that the World Zionist Organization would silence all dissenting opinions in the name of 'the greater good' of the Jewish state.

This orthodox resistance became apparent when Lord Northcliffe, the influential owner of several British newspapers, visited Palestine. De Haan, as a delegate of the *Aguda*, spoke with him and severely criticized the Zionists. The political Zionists blamed this 'Northcliffe affair' on him: Palestine received limited in-depth coverage from the British press, with the exception of certain newspapers owned by influential proprietors like Lord Northcliffe, who utilized newspapers to criticize the British Mandate, arguing that it was both excessively costly and destined for failure. In February 1922, he came to Palestine and met both the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and the Zionist Executive and he discussed at length with De Haan. He believed that the British public was imperfectly

informed, and expressed the profound discontent of prominent Orthodox Jews with the Zionist methods from a political and religious standpoint.

In addition, there was the 'matzah trial' against the political Zionist Chief Rabbinate. The Orthodox refused to pay taxes on this traditional Jewish Passover bread, and De Haan defended them in court. Incidentally, he, along with the *Aguda*, had tried to prevent the existence of this Rabbinate with letters to the League of Nations.



Figure 17
**Three men with
two children**
(Frank Scholten,
1921-1923, NINO)

“How silly is the twenty-fifth, if one has not been murdered on the twenty-fourth.”

Although he did not become a professor, De Haan still worked at the Law School in Jerusalem. Here, too, he faced opposition. Because of the ‘Northcliffe affair,’ his students refused to be taught by him. Many political Zionists hated De Haan.

When a theologian from the Netherlands visited him, he witnessed people spit at De Haan’s feet and said:

“They don’t do that out of regard for you.”

To which De Haan responded:

“No, out of regard for you. If you were not there, they would spit in my face.”

Clearly, De Haan had not lost his sense of humor. When the Dutch political Zionist newspaper *De Joodse Wachter* presented an award for the best mocking pun on his name (De Haan means ‘the rooster’), Jacob Israël de Haan himself responded:

“No rooster has crowed about that except me.”

Long before his resignation in 1924, De Haan had ceased to receive a salary. As for the *Handelsblad*, both its popularity and sales were in decline. He received death threats. One of them from 1923 went so far as to state that he would be killed on May 24 if he did not leave the country. De Haan suspected political Zionists.

Out of need for money, De Haan sent articles to various newspapers in Europe. Lord Northcliffe’s *The Daily Express* published many of his critical pieces. The newspaper’s screaming headlines infuriated political Zionists. That anger would only intensify when King Hussein visited Palestine in 1924 and addressed both the Sonnenfeld Group and the political Zionists.

The assassination

King Hussein's influence had waned considerably after the First World War. The Arabs wanted support against the political Zionists, but Emir Abdullah of Transjordan actually wished to use them to add Palestine to his emirate. Because of De Haan, who went to Amman during the summer 1923 to seek support for the Orthodox old Yishuv communities, favorable to an independent Palestinian State and against the Zionist plans to establish a State, Hussein decided to condemn political Zionism, a great success for the *Aguda*.

This statement, as well as De Haan's articles in *The Daily Express*, angered the political Zionists, because they undermined the image of a united Jewish Palestine that political Zionists wished to convey to the outside world. The Dutch consul Jacobus Kann tried in vain to persuade De Haan to relent, even attempting to bribe him with the offer of a professorship.

In May 1924, De Haan's father died, and as a result, he became preoccupied with death. Mentally and socially unmoored, he no longer felt safe and would allow hardly anyone into his garden shed. Several times he asked his wife if she would come to Jerusalem.

On June 30, 1924, while walking home after his twice-daily prayer in the synagogue, Jacob Israël de Haan was shot three times by two persons and died within minutes. He was only 42.

Aftermath

In his final moments, De Haan supposedly said that the perpetrator was "someone with white clothes." Based on this, some Agudists thought the perpetrator was a woman. The Mandate police arrested a woman but then released her. She would, however, receive annual hate mail until her death, accusing her of committing the crime.

DAILEY EXPRESS, Wednesday, July 2, 1924.
MUSIC FOR ALL
 MEMORIES OF DALYS THEATRE
 122 Now on Sale Everywhere
 10 Pages of lovely pictures and 7 pages of Music from DALYS PLAYS
 AND OF REMINISCENT CHORUS MUSIC
 Where the "Golden Gate," "The Shadow of the Night"
 "Go Fly Your Kites," "A Lovers' Melody"
 "The Love Dream" in Your Life
 PRICE ONE SHILLING

Daily Express



TODAY'S WEATHER.
 Risk of Thunder.

NO. 7,550. LONDON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 1924. ONE PENNY.

Britain's Best
THE DAILEY PIANOS
 Send for Catalogue to DAILEY
 108, GREAT PORTLAND STREET

"DAILY EXPRESS" CORRESPONDENT ASSASSINATED

JERUSALEM CRIME MYSTERY.

DR. DE HAAN SHOT DEAD IN A COURTYARD.

ESCAPE OF THE MURDERER.

MOTIVE OF THE ACT NOT YET ASCERTAINED.

DR. JACOB ISRAEL DE HAAN, the Palestine correspondent of the "Daily Express," was shot dead by an assassin in the heart of Jerusalem on Monday night.

His murderer has not been captured, nor is it yet possible to state the motive for the crime, whether political or otherwise. He had frequently been threatened, and for a considerable time had felt that his life was in danger.

FAMOUS POET.

Dr. de Haan was one of the greatest of modern Dutch poets, and was a jurist of high distinction. Although once a prominent Zionist he had become a leader of the anti-Zionists, and his despatches to the "Daily Express" aroused widespread interest everywhere. His last message was sent only two hours before his death.

The crime has been officially denounced by the Palestine Zionist Executive.

WOUNDED THREE TIMES.

By courtesy of the International News Service.

JERUSALEM, June 30 (11.5 p.m.). Dr. Israel de Haan was shot and killed last night outside a hospital on the Jaffa-road. The police search for the slayer, who fired

AMERICAN FLAG TORN DOWN.

CLIMAX TO JAPANESE DEMONSTRATIONS.

NEW HYMN OF HATE.

"Daily Express" Correspondent. TOKYO, Tuesday, July 1. The climax to the nation-wide anti-American demonstrations held here to-day was reached when the American flag was torn down in the American Embassy grounds by a Japanese demonstrator. The culprit escaped.

Remnants of the flag are now in the possession of the Embassy officials, and Baron Shidehara, the Foreign Minister, has formally offered the Government's apology regarding the possible reaction in California.

Other anti-American demonstrations were held throughout Japan to emphasize the disgust at the anti-Japanese Immigration Law in America, which comes into force to-day.

PILGRIMAGE.

Many thousands of people gathered at the Shinto shrines and prayed to Amaterasu, the sun god deity, to aid Japan in her present struggle of stress. Thousands of armistice reservists attended the principality Tokyo demonstration held at the Meiji shrine.

Various patriotic societies in Tokyo put signs on the telegraph and telephone poles throughout the city, declaring: "Japan, quit, never forget July 1, when America inflicted an irreparable insult on Japan. They must atone for such steps, when the occasion comes, as are demanded by the Fatherland's honour. All Japanese must remember the following rules—

1. Alter your mode of living to impress the date everlastingly on your mind.
2. Hate everything American, but remain kind to American individuals.
3. Deny yourself all luxuries.
4. Never forget the national honour for private ends.
5. Never enter a church supported or funded by Americans or United States missionaries.
6. Hate everything American, but remain kind to American individuals.
7. Remember that the American immigration law from the

LENGLEN RETIRES.

WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL MATCHES AT WIMBLEDON.

"HEARTBROKEN."

STRAIN OF DEFEATING MINY RYAN.

Mlle. Suzanne Lenglen has been forbidden by a doctor to take any further part in the lawn tennis championships now being played at Wimbledon.

This sensational decision is the result of a medical examination of Mlle. Lenglen last night by a London doctor, who made the definite statement that she is not in a fit physical condition to play any more tennis for the next week or two.

Earlier in the afternoon Mlle. Lenglen had scratched from the



Mlle. Lenglen.

mixed doubles, in which she was to have partnered Jean Borotra, the French champion, against the two Americans, R. N. Williams and Mrs. Wightman, to-day.

"I am heart-broken about it," said Mlle. Lenglen to the "Daily Express" representative shortly after

MACHINE GUNS RAIDED AT TOWER-BRIDGE.

TWO TONS SEIZED BY DETECTIVES.

"MACHINERY."

Dismantled machine guns and their mountings, weighing more than two tons, consigned to Amsterdam as machinery, were discovered in a shed on a wharf near Tower-bridge yesterday by Scotland-yard detectives. The detectives had been placed on special duty following recent revelations of alleged wholesale gun-running.

The consignment was in ten large iron-bound cases, which were forced open.

This was a task of some difficulty, as the wood was more than an inch thick and iron clamped inside each case was a substantial zinc collar. These were also forced with tools borrowed in the locality.

SPECIAL GUARD.

In view of the importance of the find a further staff of officers was despatched to the spot.

The customs authorities were communicated with and the cases and contents were handed over to them for safe keeping. The Customs officers locked them in a special shed and mounted a guard over them, which will be determined their ultimate destination.

The news of the confiscation of the guns and mountings spread like wildfire round the docks and a large number of dockside workers watched the police at their work.

A first consignment of fifty-six machine guns was successfully smuggled out of the wharf by craft was that by a foreign ship, to which the cargo of arms was transferred.

DANGER TO COLOGNE CATHEDRAL.

RISK OF COLLAPSE IN A STORM.

NEW EMPIRE CONFERENCE.

A NON-PARTY ROUND TABLE.

A new Imperial conference was fore-shadowed by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. J. H. Thomas, at a dinner at the Hotel Cecil last night, when Canadians in London celebrated Dominion Day. He said—

"The Government are not satisfied that all has been done that ought to be done for the Colonies. We are not happy in regard to the situation which enables great Empire problems to be made merely party issues. The Empire is greater than any party."

"The Government are convinced that the time has arrived when these problems should be discussed and examined free from party prejudice, and we are taking the necessary steps to ask the Dominions to come round a table and consider them in the interests of the Empire as a whole."

THE PRINCE IN BUTTER.

The Prince of Wales' statement that he hoped to return to his ranch in Canada "this fall" was received with cheers. Speaking of the Canadian Pavilion at Wembley, where there is a life-size statue of himself in leather, the Prince said: "I am certainly going there again, if only to see how I am faring in this hot weather. I want to see if my hat has acquired a dangerous hole as is going at the knees."

The Prince's speech was broadcast by 2 L O.

£20,000 BREACH OF PROMISE CASE.

SON OF A SUGAR KING SUE BY A WIDOW

Mr. Frances Mandham, an American widow, is claiming £20,000 special damages, in addition to general damages, in a breach of promise case against Mr. Robert Lasker, a Frenchman.

THE ROAD TO P...

ROMANIAN THE BULG...

FIGHT TO THEIR B...

BORIS TH...

A PEASANT T...

LIFE in the B...



While ex-King in Munich, his...

found, was one of the most famous in the world.

The group most suspected were the political Zionists. Some of them pointed the finger at Arabs because, allegedly, the homosexual De Haan had seduced one of their sons. Despite police investigations, no one was convicted. It was only in the 1960s, after investigations by Israeli journalist Chaviv Chanaan, that political Zionists Avraham Tehomi and Avraham Giora were officially recognized as the perpetrators. Avraham Tehomi (1903–1990, an immigrant from Odessa) served as a Haganah (paramilitary Zionist organization) commander and was one of the founders and first commander of the Irgun. According to Tehomi, the order came “from higher up”.

Newspapers in the Netherlands and Palestine were shocked by the murder, as were news outlets in other countries. Some newspapers, however, blamed the political Zionists for a hate campaign against De Haan, and the Egyptian newspaper *El Mokattam* feared that De Haan’s murder would lead to hostilities.

The same newspaper also offered a possible motive for the murder. De Haan was in fact planning to write about fraud within the political Zionist movement. According to the paper, he would have soon gone to England to plead with the British government on behalf of the *Aguda*. This was in addition to both his writing for *The Daily Express* and his meeting with King Hussein. It was on account of that meeting that some people saw De Haan as a Dutch ‘Lawrence of Arabia.’ Although De Haan was open-minded for his time, his views were not always generous or tolerant, nor free of Orientalist stereotypes. The Arabs and their culture interested him, but he also often wrote disparagingly about them.

Thousands of people attended the funeral of Jacob Israël de Haan in Jerusalem. He was labelled *Kadosh* (holy) by the *Aguda* and his grave, at the Mount of Olives, was considered a place of pilgrimage.

Figure 18
“Dr. de Haan Shot
Dead in a
Courtyard”
(*Daily Express*, 2 July
1924, *Daily Express*
Archive)



Feuilletons – De Haan as a reporter in Mandate Palestine

Karène Sanchez Summerer and Lucia Admiraal

Figure 19 **Map of the main places visited by De Haan in the south of Palestine in 1921** (background: Times Atlas 1920; NB the names and spellings are consistent with the source from which they are taken; not appearing on the Times Atlas map: Ness Ziyona / Wadi Shanin/ Nahalat Reuben, Rishon leZion, Re'hovot / Khirbat Deiran); map elaborated by *GeoDienst* (RUG)



This chapter presents, for the first time in English, some of De Haan's most striking feuillets written from British military occupied and later British Mandate Palestine. They were selected for their *couleur locale*, their depiction of political figures, and places and cities that De Haan visited on his travels through the country, notably the southern part of Palestine, where he visited Gaza and Hebron.

De Haan wrote 394 feuillets between January 1919 and June 1924 as correspondent of the *Algemeen Handelsblad* in Jerusalem. These feuillets (all accessible online in Dutch, see the References for the exact website) testify to his rich and nuanced perception of these formative years in Palestine and the rapid changes. They also underline the latitude of the changes of his own opinion towards various actors, structures (for example on the *kibbutzim*, collectively maintained agricultural settlements), his opinion on proto nationalist and socialist ideologies, Arab leaders, and political entanglements at local, regional and transnational levels.

After De Haan's arrival in Palestine in 1919 as a correspondent, it did not take long before he had friends and acquaintances amongst various communities in Palestine. Besides his friendships and contacts amongst the Jewish communities and religious Zionists, he often met with British Mandate leaders, and Palestinian Arabs. His wide network, and friendships in various communities, contributed to the diversity and intimacy of his reporting.

Through De Haan's impressions and observations in his feuillets, we get a unique insight into the diverse social, religious and political landscape of Palestine during his time there. They show a modern Palestinian society in transformation during the early 1920s, while De Haan reported on the 'building of a Jewish national home,' and its ramifications.

De Haan's feuillets often read as a personal, literary travelogue. They are amusing and rich in detail, full of anecdotes, dialogues and humor. His writing is as much about landscape, food and smell, as it is about the politics of his day. De Haan also infused his reporting about present-day Palestine with its historical and religious past, in line with his own,

and surely his readers' fascination for the Holy Land. Poetic sentences are followed by short, witty observations, sharp descriptions of his interlocutors, and a mocking sense of humor.

In Palestine and the wider Arab world, the first decades of the twentieth century witnessed an expansion of printing presses, newspapers and journals, which circulated locally, nationally and transregionally. Amongst these were many Arabic newspapers, notably the Palestinian newspaper *Filastin*, and a growing number of Hebrew newspapers. In Palestine, there was a multilingual and multi-confessional public sphere. Even though De Haan lived with the Aweidah family, his writings show that he did not engage much with the cultural and intellectual life of the growing modern Palestinian Arab middle class.

In 1920, however, De Haan interviewed Arif al-Arif, a Palestinian intellectual and editor of the Arab nationalist newspaper *al-Suriya al-Janubiya* (Southern Syria). In this rare interview, the reader becomes not only acquainted with Palestinian intellectual and political life – and the hardships of printing and journalism – through the figure of Arif al-Arif, but also gets an insight into the informed responses of Palestinian Arabs to the Zionist movement and Jewish immigration, vis à vis Arab nationalist aspirations.

De Haan's depictions of the diverse populations of Palestine, especially the Palestinian Arab population, are not free of (oriental) stereotypes, often depicting them as greedy or lazy. He mockingly calls himself a "*chawadja*", a term used for foreigner in Arabic, thereby emphasizing his positionality as foreign observer. The feuilletons are a far cry from the commonly more 'distanced' writing of correspondents in the present day: personal, impressionist, literary. Yet it was precisely through this type of writing that De Haan captured his readers in The Netherlands, and that makes the feuilletons not only rich historically but also highly amusing today.

Not all of his contemporary readers were amused by what he wrote for *Algemeen Handelsblad*, however. Some readers sent complaints to the editors of the newspaper, which they took seriously. As De Haan grew more critical of political Zionism over the years,

the newspaper published fewer and fewer feuilletons, or sometimes none at all. De Haan complained about this to his friend Van Eeden in a letter from 1921.

The following excerpts indicate the date of publication, not the date of writing, and the page numbering in the newspaper. Variations in spelling come from the texts published themselves (incl. diacritics signs). The last one, published on 1 July, was accompanied by an announcement from the editor: ‘Yesterday we received this letter, which will probably be the last we will publish from the writer.’

abnoyA Nieuwe Amsterdamsche Courant
ALGEMEEN HANDELSBLAD

door
MR. JACOB ISRAËL DE HAAN.

Het hol van den leeuw

Fragment on Arif el Arif and Jerusalem

This Arif al Arif appears to be a beautiful young Arab. His light grey-brown eyes without violence. And his brown, brushed-out, moustache above a quiet, mild mouth. He reads the Hebrew note. A Zionist? He wants to learn from everyone and speak to everyone. His life? A merchant's family. First school here. Then at Constantinople gymnasium and high school for state sciences. Arabic, Turkish and French. Worked in the department of foreign affairs. But war breaks out. He becomes an officer in the Caucasus army. Captured by the Russians. Three years in Siberia. Krasnoyarsk, Omsk, Tomsk. Together with German officers. Learned German and Russian there. And taught. With 20 other Arab POWs, he fled to Vladivostok and home across Japan. He has been here for a year now. Has used that time to learn English and Hebrew. He

writes almost exclusively for the newspaper. He also teaches at the Arabic grammar school and at an institute. He shows me something very beautiful. A newspaper he wrote in Siberia for his fellow prisoners. One copy. Circular and back. A bound book, with tender, beautiful pen drawings. He also has very nice hands. Many articles: England's losses at sea; temperatures at Krasnoyarsk; influence of Arabic on German; the Jews and Zionism. From the newspaper the man: patient, diligent, gifted, versatile, artistic. But not a sage. A fierce enemy. But an enemy not to wish for a lesser one.

I ask, why is he so against the Jews? 'I am not against the Jews. I am against political Zionism'. He was born a Moslem. But now a freethinker. A positivist. Religion is a private matter. He believes, with time, all religious differences will disappear. He

has nothing against the Jewish faith. Nor the Jewish people. Let it freely establish a state wherever it wants and is able to do so. Except in Palestine, where they clash with Arab ideals.

He wants to work for the uplift of the Arab people from Morocco down to India, centered on a block in Pre-Asia. Feel free to let every Jew work for the uplift of his Jewish people. The Days will speak and rights will be established between the two peoples.

What has he read about Zionism? Books, no. But the newspapers, regularly. He reads the Jewish Chronicle and the Jüdische Rundschau. And, he says very politely: 'what I have seen'. Indeed, the actions of some officials and members of the Zionist Commission have not been free of any posturing. They have sometimes behaved like rulers. Of late, they are now beginning to insist on better relations

with the Arabs. 'Politics' they say smugly. A powerful Arab press has emerged in the last year. Not a single magazine is pro-Zionist. And the majority are flatly anti-. One is now contemplating the publication of a broad, fine Arab magazine by the Zionist Commission.

His courant? In the beginning it did not work. Now he has fifteen hundred subscribers. He also has a Jewish translator.

The Jewish colonies. Should he not admit that they have also been a great benefit to the Arabs? For instance, are not the Arab villages in their vicinity better than the other Arab villages? He admits that. But still, he does not want Jewish immigration. The Jews do not want to be ordinary inhabitants of an Arab country, but rulers. The Jewish 'national home' is but a transition to a Palestine 'as Jewish, as England is English'. Weizmann said so himself. And the Arabs don't want that.

Nr 137 Het hol van den leeuw,
Feuilletons in het *Algemeen Handelsblad* 1919-1924, Jacob Israël de Haan – DBNL

260970 Nieuwe Amsterdamsche Courant
ALGEMEEN HANDELSBLAD

door
MR. JACOB ISRAËL DE HAAN.

Bischoem el hawa/een reisje naar Zuid-Palestina (8)

Fragment on Gaza

Part 4

While the beautiful, naughty, Jewish boys have ridden away on our horses; while Abdul Salam visits the market and the many coffee houses there, I think about all these bygone times. Gaza lies silent and atomized on its hills. The desert port of Egypt. Like Damascus of Assyria. At Gaza there was always abundance of water. Fifteen springs, watering the plain. There were wide roads to Egypt, southern Arabia, Petra and Palmyra. Amos curses Gaza, because they sold the Jews as slaves to Edom. (I: 6). In Greek times, Gaza was the southern export port. Akko the northern one.

For any army, coming from the south, the possession of Gaza was absolutely necessary. The English had to conquer it at all costs. The ancient Pharaohs conquered it. And the Ptolemies. Then again

it belonged to Syria. Napoleon considered Gaza indispensable to every possessor of the Nile Delta.

The city may never have belonged to Israel. And to that extent the present border is no worse for us than the historical one. The geographical chapter Joshua XV: 17 assigns Gaza to the tribe of Judah. But that does not prove actual possession. We do read (Judges 1: 18), that Judah took Gaza, Askalon and Ekron. But that place is disputed. Gaza, mentioned in I Chronicles 7: 28 is another Gaza, not far from Sichem. Solomon's power came to Gaza (I Kings 4: 24) as did Hezekiah (II Kings 18: 8). The Maccabees conquered Ekron, Ashdod, Askalon and finally Gaza. Which was destroyed. Pompey reconquered the city from the Jews. It was rebuilt, probably close to the sea. Caesar ceded it to Herod. Thou can read all this by Josephus. In the

first centuries of this era, the city was an important center of Greek culture. The Mohammedans conquered it at the beginning of their distant travels. Mohammed's grandfather is said to be buried here. At the time of the Crusaders, it was a ruin. In the mid-12th century, they built a fortress there. Until Saladin conquered the city in 1187. Then his times became very quiet, until Napoleon conquered the city. The English took the city with great difficulty and many setbacks. If the weather is fine tomorrow, we will ride where the battlefields were.

Part 5

The city was badly battered in the war. In the main street, entire blocks of houses have been torn open by bombs. The Serail, an old building from the thirteenth century, was badly damaged. So was the Grand Mosque, a church from the

twelfth century, which contained a lot of beautiful, old material. Almost nothing has been repaired yet. The Bazar doesn't have much going for it. Dark streets. And where is the smell of Jerusalem's spice street? The Bedouins come here eagerly to buy. Rather than in Hebron. Throughout Palestine, the small, dotty donkeys bring Gaza's black and red-painted pots. There is a whole pottery quarter. They turn their clay pots in dull, dull workshops. They are fired in old-fashioned ovens. Black. And they are sometimes painted rough red. I buy a nice pot of dull black and good red for two shillings. What the potter asked for. It is SO nice and SO cheap that I cannot bring myself to bargain. Although here one should never, ever pay what is asked for. Soon the naughty Jewish boys Joseph and Benjamin will laugh at me. And they will assure me that I was bought for three shillings.

Nr 211 Bischoem el hawa/een reisje naar Zuid-Palestina (8),
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ALGEMEEN HANDELSBLAD

door
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Bischoem el Hawa / een reisje naar Zuid-Palestina (2)

Fragment on Hebron

Hebron is still, what Hebron was for a year. It is as if it has not been gone. Chaïm, the Hotel owner. He still has only one eye. And still more children than travelers. Min Allah.

But Allah loves us very much today. Such soft and blissful spring weather. Here in Hebron, which is still higher than El-Kuds.

We say Hebron, which may mean 'Covenant'. Abdul Salam says El-Khalîl, the Friend. That is Abraham, the Friend of Allah. The narrow valley, in which Hebron is situated is called Wâdi el Khalîl. Perhaps this is the valley of Eskol, where the spies cut off the beautiful, large bunch of grapes. (Numbers 13: 23-24.)

An ancient city, which before was called Kiriath Arba, that is: 'the City of Arba' (Judges 1: 10) This Arba was a great man among the Anakites (Joshua 14: 15). Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, is given as a portion

'the city of Arba, father of Enak, which is Hebron' (Joshua 15: 13 and 21: 11). She was a city of freedom for the manslaughters (Joshua 21: 23). Genesis 35: 27 speaks of Kiriat Ha-Arba, with an article, though the Staten Bible does not. And this would then mean 'City of the Four'. Likewise in Nehemiah 11: 25. In the books of Samuel, the Kings and the Chronicles, the city is only called Hebron. David shared booty with the men of Hebron (I Samuel 30: 31). He lived there, by God's great word, after the death of Saul (II Samuel 2: 1). His sons were born there (id. 3: 2). Abner was buried there (id. 3: 32). David killed the murderers of Isboseth there (id. 4: 1-12). The elders of Israel made him King there (id. 5: 1-13). Absalom started his rebellion there (id. 13: 7-10). Rehabeam made the place a permanent city (II Chronicles 11-10). After the Babylonian exile, the city was repopulated.

Later it was in the hands of the Edomites, from whom Judah the Maccabean reconquered it. In their time, the Crusaders took it. Godfrey of Bouillon gave the city in fief to the Lord of Avesnes. The crusaders named the city Saint-Abraham. A bishop lived there, whose territory extended to the monastery of Engedi on the Dead Sea. In 1187, the city was captured by Saladin.

II.

From the hotel: 'Oak of Abraham' to the forbidden Mosque. Through the narrow streets of the Bazar. Vaulted in many places. Dark, but nice and warm. In their deep shop alcoves the merchants sit, squatting on pretty carpets. They smoke dignified hookahs. They drink small, delicate coffees, brought round by little coffee boys in red slippers. They speak quietly and calmly to their merchants. He who buys does good. He who does not buy also does good. There are warm coats of white leather, lined with brown. And lined inside with sheepskin. There are long, wide shoes with arched tips. There are headscarves of all colors. There are onions and potatoes. Carrots, tubers and leeks. There are coarse and fine cooking kitchens. There is everything. Many merchants wear white and green cloths around their fez. For

they are also sheikhs or pilgrims to Mecca. They have, now that it is cold, beautifully-built grey fire pots in their shops. They hold them cold in their hands. Sometimes they blow into the killed coals. And flames spark up in the dark shops.

I also walk into the old ghetto. With its courtyards, nooks and crannies. Where one suddenly has delightful views of the world around the city. Here you can also see the gate where Father Abraham deposited a purse of gold for the Jews of Hebron, when they were threatened with murder and plunder by a cruel Pasha, if they did not provide a certain sum. Here you can also see the small synagogue, where people once stood with nine men. One too few for communal prayer. Then an dignified, old man appeared. Who performed the prayer with them. Everyone understands that this was Abraham, the Friend of God.

III.

Jews in Hebron. Last year, there was a continuously declining population. And it is still there. There are about four hundred souls left. Tomorrow another big, old family is going to America. Today we saw them go through the town and through the valley for the last time.

We read of a *kvutsah* (cooperative labor group) in Hebron. The Jewish community had given its old land property for this purpose. One was to plant trees. But it didn't work. The *kvutsah* disbanded at a loss, I hear, of seven or eight hundred pounds. The group now consists of one couple.

Road work. The entire road is being improved from Jerusalem, across Hebron to Beersheba. But this work is in the hands of an Arab, who works only with Arabs.

A road will also be laid from Hebron over Bet-Jibrin and Deir Aban, where it will connect to the Jerusalem-Jaffa road. One then gets virtually a straight Jaffa-Hebron road. But this road has to pass through the neighboring villages. Each village will then do its part, with support from the government. Thus, no new force is emanating from the Hebron Jews. On the contrary. If there is no help in establishing an economically strong new population, they will all disappear. And then it's not easy to get Jews back in. As we see

in Sicheim. The Jews in Hebron are very small merchants or poor lawyers. The reduction of American charity money is formidably felt here.

Education did improve through the concerns of the Orthodox Education Council.

With the Arabs, the relationship is not good, not bad. The Jews of Hebron are poor and weak. They don't compete with the Arabs. They don't do. They don't live. They die every single day. Unlike Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa. There, too, the anti-Jewish feeling is much stronger.

There has just been a meeting of the council of the Hebrew Jews to deliberate on improving the situation. They want to send a memorandum to Dr Weizmann and Sir Alfred Mond, and urge the establishment of new industries. The land is full of vineyards around Hebron. Why not a winery and a factory for grape jam? There are large olive groves. Why no oil making? And soap. As at Sicheim. Surely the Arabs live too. And live well.

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Nieuwe Amsterdamsche Courant
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door
MR. JACOB ISRAËL DE HAAN.

Bischoem el Hawa/een reisje door Zuid-Palestina (3)

Beersheba/Bir-Es-Seba (Berseba)

II.

From Hebron to Berseba, we will thus pass through the Negeb. The Southern Land, as is usually translated. Although the Dry Land might be more accurate. The Wâdi Khalîl winds through it until Berseba. And then turns to the West, to break into the sea at Gaza. In winter, regret the name, there is plenty of water. In summer, corn. Eastwards the Negeb reaches the Red Sea. Westward to the plain of Gaza. It is the southern stronghold for the plateau of Judea, to be attacked either over Gaza, or through Moab over the Jordan. Its main road is the great caravan road from Egypt, connecting Berseba to Hebron. Before, the land must not have been barren. Now it is one of the harsh and difficult regions of Palestine. Roads, other than the Great Lord's Road, we see [only a] few. There is a road to Beit-Jibrin.

Like everywhere else in Palestine. No farm-houses in the middle of the fields, but people living together in very few villages. Their fields are often very far away. The low mountains are covered with a short heath. Lower down, towards Berseba, the fields are cultivated by wandering tribes. But there are places of ravishing beauty. The gentleman's road, built during the war, turns up steep, high hills, swung wide. From above we see the valley, wide and noble, through which the road winds. So two or three times. Flocks of pretty, little quail strike. An eagle sways. All along the road the life, which is of this land. There go the camels. Heavily laden with grains. An occasional mother has her little camel with her. Loaded little donkeys go, adrift, yet wise. There are herds of goats and sheep. With the little goats, and with the little lambs.

But all is deserted. A land, still waiting for its thousands. Work is being done on the

main road. Rocks are crushed. Rocks are smashed up. Spread over the road. And then rolled in. It is very bad before it becomes very good. In Hebrew, such a road is not called 'dérèg', but 'keurisch'. This road work is not done by Jews. It is in the hand of an Arab subcontractor. Heaps of Arabs sit. They chop and heap up the stones.

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Feuilletons in het *Algemeen Handelsblad* 1919-1924, Jacob Israël de Haan – DBNL

Bischoem el Hawa/een reisje door Zuid-Palestina (4)

IV.

The Jews of Berseba. There are now about five families. The two mill workers. A tailor. A shopkeeper. A *shoshet*, who also works in the mill. But a Jewish farming population is needed. Yet what system? Jewish colonies with Arab labour? Or cooperative labour groups, the *kevtzot*? Neither system has satisfied. There is now much talk of an intermediate form: cooperative colonies. And without the vices of any of them.

There is a *kevtzah* of three workers in Berseba, engaged in tree cultivation. There is no school for Jewish children. The miller, who is doing well, has his children at school in Jaffa.

The house here is the society of Berseba. And I am writing you this letter in the society in the house, which has nothing of nothing. A traveller in sewing machines has come. And a man, who knows everything.

And speaks everything except Hebrew. And who constantly asks loudly, who I am. But where I am, one cannot give him the necessary information. And I don't get up. Not by a long shot. The governor's driver also walks in once. A tall Jewish boy from Rishon le Zion. Those from the *kevtzah* will come later.

V.

Today the big weekly market was here. Then the Bedouins come from hours away to trade. They are called 'Arabs'. A name, only for the wandering tent-dwellers. Abdul Salam would be greatly offended if you called him an 'Arab'. He is an 'Ibn-Arab', son of Arabia. Those who know, will not be mistaken. When we arrive at the market, the play has already begun. There is a wide grassy field over low hills and long valleys. Where the groups lay and

the people go. There are beautiful, dignified sheikhs, in long robes, with fine silk headscarves. And around the head heavy cords of silver and black, that the silk headscarves do not blow away. There are poor Bedouins of the desert. There are egg women, chicken women, goat, sheep and lamb women. They do not go veiled. From her headscarf a band goes down with a cap over the nose. And two wide side bands across the cheeks. From these hang silver coins and gold coins. Rows of green or red beads. It tinkles and rattles as they go. Or are moved in adrift conversation. There are lazy, clever merchants from the city, selling woven fabrics, mirrors and soap. Some of the trade is still barter. One guy shouts: 'ros-a-ros'. And in Berseba that means 'measure for measure'. He gives a measure of dried figs for a measure of fine barley.

Wheat will also be sold. The buyer may fill his measure as full as he can. There are guys who know the art of filling up the measure. They shake and bend until the measure is full. With a head on it so that not a grain can be added. This is how they make their wages. The buyer is an effendi from the city. He watches punctually and eagerly as his man fills the measure to the

limit. The vendor is a big Bedouin from the desert. He looks, standing tall, at the effendi and at the male. And he smiles.

One can buy petroleum here and cooking oil. It is carried in a black bag made of goatskin, tied with a string. There is also a spice field. Where the sellers of spices sit on their squats behind their cloths with spices. It smells nice and bright there. Here they also buy tobacco leaves for their water pipes. At the corner of the spice field sits the man, who sells beautiful gold and silver coins, for the women. He also sells gold earrings, nose rings and bracelets.

There are sheep with their lambs. And goats with their little goats. Donkeys, beautiful and smart. Also camels, big and stupid. Real donkeys. Five, six, men sit crouched by one camel. They talk carefully and wisely. It takes a long time, because this is a big deal. May Allah give His blessing on it.

There are certainly a few thousand actors on this grand stage. The direction is impeccable in movement and colour. There is not a single liquor shop here. Not even a soup kitchen. Apparently, people are very moderate. One eats oranges and Arabic bread. And drinks the water.

Bischoem el Hawa/een reisje door Zuid-Palestina (6)

So we will go to visit Sheikh Ahmed il Sufi, the acting chief of the Terabin Arabs, who occupy the vast territory from Berseba to the Egyptian desert. Yesterday, Sheikh Ahmed came to the mill, where we found shelter, Arabic bread, soup and potatoes. He came last. But still wants to grind first. Were he not a sheikh, it would be folly to desire this. Now that he is a sheikh, it is granted to him. Another must then wait. Many guards lie in front of the mill in the street under the big moonshine. They smoke many cigarettes. And they crack small, green nuts, which come from Damascus. The sheikh is naturally very grateful that he, who came last, was allowed to grind first. We have to promise him that we will definitely come. He shakes hands with us too. Not just carelessly and loosely, as we do. No. Hands pressed firmly together. One thumb wrapped around the other. Looking at each other and saying many good words.

VI.

So on the way back we drive up to the Sheikh of the entire district of Berseba. In the time of the Turks, he was a feared man. He had the title of Pasha. He advised Djemal Pasha against launching an attack on the Channel. And when Djemal Pasha did it anyway, he said, 'Thou hast

no sense. No wonder, Abdul Salam esteemed him. His name is Ahmed il Sufi. And since he has been to Mecca, we call him Hadj. He must be wealthy. Thousands of dunams of land. Lots of sheep, goats and camels. We find the old sheikh in a big cave, the Cave of the Sufis. The den is very large. And also serves as a refuge for cattle. Last year, when the snow came even to Berseba, all the Terabin Arabs fled into this den. The sheikh sits on an old camel saddle. He smokes tobacco from a long, straight Arab pipe. With a beautiful stone bowl. And so all day long. He has been a friend of Abdul Salam's father. And so says 'my son'. When we drive back, Abdul Salam says that he doesn't consider this sheikh at all. Being so rich. And then living in a hole. No good food. No nice clothes! A fool.

Friday afternoon already, when we get home. We will stay the Sabbath over at Berseba. And on Sunday we will drive to a city I won't name before we arrive. But before the Sabbath starts I have to write a nice postcard to little black Fouad, who has promised us that he will always be sad as long as we are away! The address on a postcard to the little black Fouad is like this: 'From Berseba to Jerusalem. To the little black Fouad, by address Abdul Salam Effendi. Birket Mamilla.'

Have a good Sabbath!

EPILOGUE

**Traces of
Jacob Israël de Haan
in Jerusalem**

Lucia Admiraal

It is 30 June 2024, exactly 100 years after the murder of Jacob Israël de Haan. In Studio6, a cultural center in West-Jerusalem, a motley crew has gathered: researchers, students, activists, queers, and ultra-Orthodox Jews. A few have come out of interest, but have never heard of De Haan.

During the evening, there will be talks and discussions on De Haan's life, work and memory. A Dutch collection of De Haan's poetry is passed around; someone reads from Hebrew translations of his quatrains.

The evening is organized by 30-year-old activist and cultural organizer Roei Kleitman. De Haan is particularly well-known among a section of Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox communities, he says. The goal of the memorial is to keep De Haan's legacy alive in order to 'change the political landscape in Israel'. Also, in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* that week, De Haan's story is presented as an insight into a period when there were still opportunities to reach a settlement for 'existence between Jews and Arabs'.

In Israel and Palestine, De Haan is not known to a wide audience. Yet, he has a legacy as multifaceted as it is complicated. Because of his critique of Zionism, he is still perceived as a traitor in Israel. The assassination in 1924 has gone down in the books as the 'first political murder in the history of Zionism'.

At the same time, De Haan lives on among a modest but diverse group. His *nachleben* (afterlife) is almost as remarkable as his eventful life. Among some ultra-Orthodox Jews, he is seen as their historical advocate against the increasingly dominant Zionist establishment and as a martyr killed by secular Zionists. He also enjoys modest fame among queers and has been the subject of 'gay tours' in Jerusalem since 2012. A small group of left-wing activists, opposed to the Israeli occupation and oppression of Palestinians, or to the Zionist aim to unite and represent Jews, take an interest in De Haan's criticism of the Zionist secular establishment, and see him as an advocate of peace between Jews and Palestinians.

In the 2024 anniversary year of De Haan's assassination, there has even been a modest De Haan revival. Zvi Landsman's film *Jacob de Haan: A Voice Out of Time* about his life and conflicted legacy was released recently, the Israeli state broadcaster Kan11 is working on a documentary, Hebrew translations of his feuilletons are forthcoming, and his poems were included in a queer magazine.

At the same time, there is hardly a trace of De Haan left on the streets of Jerusalem. At the end of Jerusalem's Jaffa Street, which runs from the train station towards the Old City, lies the former Shaare Zedek hospital. Built in 1902, it was the first modern hospital outside the Old City gates. On the evening of 30 June 1924, De Haan walked out of the hospital. He had been visiting his friend Moshe Wallach, the hospital director, and had prayed in the synagogue.

Outside on Jaffa Street, he was approached by a man, who drew a pistol and pierced him with three bullets. The killer was Abraham Tehomi, a young Jewish immigrant from Odessa and a member of the Haganah, a paramilitary Zionist organization. That the murder was done on behalf of the Haganah was not well known amongst the public until the publication of an article in 1960 by the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*.

There is now nothing to indicate that a political murder was committed on the doorstep of this hospital a hundred years ago. There is a sign outside on the street explaining the history of the hospital, but not a word about De Haan. There is now a deep construction pit behind the building. The former synagogue on the ground floor hosts a photo exhibition about Orthodox Jews. The hospital is to become a luxury hotel.

De Haan had arrived at Jerusalem's (old) railway station in March 1919, as a correspondent for the *Algemeen Handelsblad*. Palestine was occupied by the British. Through the Balfour Declaration, the British government in 1917, under the influence of the Zionist movement, expressed its support for 'the establishment in Palestine of a national home

for the Jewish people'. This went against the will of Palestinian Arab nationalists, who sought an independent state and opposed the declaration and Zionist immigration.

As a correspondent, De Haan hoped to contribute to the Zionist construction of the 'national home'. But in five years, he changed from a religious Zionist to a fierce critic of Zionism. He stood up not only for Jewish orthodoxy, whose autonomy was threatened by the increasingly dominant Zionist organization, but also for the Palestinian Arab population.

After his arrival in Jerusalem, De Haan stayed at Yerachmiel Amdursky's hotel in the Old City, near the Jaffa Gate, opposite the Tower of David. In a serial, he wrote how from his bed he heard the bells of the Jaffa tower, Jewish songs, and Arabic voices, 'a language, soft and wide-ranging, which I shall gladly learn.' Today, the hotel building stands virtually unchanged but abandoned. The settler organization Ateret Cohanim is trying to buy up property in the Old City in illegally annexed East Jerusalem, including this hotel.

After several moves, De Haan spent most of his time in Jerusalem living with the Palestinian Aweidah family, from whom he rented a garden shed in their residential and commercial complex on Mamilla Street, just outside the Old City. At the time, it was a busy shopping street with many Palestinian businesses. In the 1948 war, the street was largely destroyed; there is now a modern shopping centre with some restored facades.

Adil Aweidah's daughter Nahil, in a concise memoir she wrote, only mentions in passing that a 'Dutch immigrant' lived in the garden shed. In Arabic media, De Haan pops up sporadically for his criticism of Zionism and attention to Palestinian nationalism.

De Haan lives on in a particular way amongst the ultra-Orthodox communities in Jerusalem. Here he is remembered for representing the interests of ultra-Orthodoxy and standing up for them against secular Zionism. In Mea Shearim, the district built in the

late nineteenth century for ultra-Orthodox Ashkenazi Jews, the story of De Haan's murder is known to this day.

Among the religious announcements on the walls of Mea Shearim, De Haan's name still appears sporadically. He is particularly remembered among members of the anti-Zionist group Neturei Karta, who oppose the 'secular' state of Israel. On the day of the assassination – but according to the Hebrew calendar – they still proceed to the Mount of Olives outside the gates of the Old City, where De Haan is buried.

Because of his remarkable life, De Haan will continue to live on in a variety of ways, in the Netherlands, Israel and Palestine. His life, a hundred years after the assassination, lends itself well to ideological appropriation and myth-making. At the same time, it is precisely now that the historical context of his Palestinian years is so relevant.

Figure 20
The artwork
Grenspaal in
Amsterdam's
Jodenbreestraat,
created by Hans
't Mannetje, also
known as 'Pillar-
bearing turtle',
contains a poem by
de Haan
(Vysotsky, 2017,
Wikimedia Commons;
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Figure 21 **Jacob Israël de Haan, a man of contradictions and controversies**

(Photo montage by Studio Eye Candy, 2024, for Public Engagement Seed Project RUG)

**SYNAGOGES
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**A DUTCH
LAWRENCE OF ARABIA?**

JACOB ISRAËL DE HAAN

**A man of
contradictions and
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**Een man van
tegenstellingen
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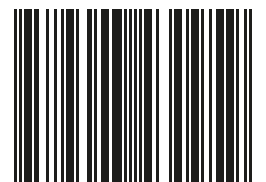
During the turbulent period following the First World War, the Dutch and queer Jewish poet, writer and journalist Jacob Israël de Haan (Smilde 1881-Jerusalem 1924) worked in Mandate Palestine as a correspondent for the *Algemeen Handelsblad* and later British media like *The Times* and *Daily Mail*. However, his stay in Jerusalem and his broader views on politics, culture and religion, including on Zionism and Arab Palestinian nationalism, remain largely unknown.

In 1919, De Haan went to Palestine, where exactly one hundred years ago, in June 1924, he was murdered because of his sharp criticism on political Zionism. This book contextualizes the Palestine years within the biography of a man who durably impacted the links between the Netherlands and Palestine and who is said to be, for some, a Dutch Lawrence of Arabia.



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