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1. From Halukka to Bilu 2. The Second Aliya

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 70-98711

3. The Third and

Fourth Aliyot 4. Oriental Influ-

ences 5. The Fifth Aliya: Westernization 6. The

SBN: 8371-3719-5

Oriental Aliya 7.

New Settlement Forms 8. The

Changing Ethnic Composition 9. Capital and

Labor

56

Greenwood Publishing Corporation

4. Demographic

Highlights

51 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Conn. 06880

1. The Growth of

Jerusalem 2. Vital Statistics

Greenwood Publishers Ltd.

3. Occupational Structure 4. Residential Segrega-

42 Hanway Street, London, W.1., England

tion 5. "Mixed"

Marriages 6. Juvenile Delin-

quency 7. General Criminality

79

Printed in the United States of America

234

235

bites constitute a backward group even in relation to the Moslem-Arab fellahin. Their villages are neglected, their architecture poor, The eventual absorption of these two groups into the Jewish community can be foreseen.

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their clothing mostly dilapidated, their agriculture primitive. S--

7. The Bedouin

cially and culturally their status is low. They are regarded by ~err neighbors as lazy, and th~re is a tend~ncy a~ong. the Palestinian

The Moslem Arabs of Israel are either bedouin, nomadic herds-Arabs not to intermarry with them. This relationship of ~e _Pales-

men, or fellahin, settled agriculturists, or townspeople. The life-

tinian Arabs to the Moghrebites is especially noteworthy m VIew of

form of the bedouin is wandering within their traditional tribal

the very similar attitude displayed by many among the Jews of

territory, mostly in the Negev, and leading a precarious existence

Israel towards the present Moghrebite Jewish immigration. (Cf. on

the subsistence level. Notwithstanding their poverty in material pages 294 ff.)

goods, the bedouin are possessed of a great pride coupled with a

The remaining small minority groups can be dealt with m a deep

contempt for sedentary people, especially for the fellahin. "The

sentence or two. There were in Palestine (i? Haif~ and Acre) s~!?e

Bedu is the king of the world, the Fellah is the ass of the world,"

300 Bahais Persian followers of a sect which split off from Shi 1te

says one of their proverbs. In 1947 the bedouin in Palestine numbered about 50,000; their number today in Israel is estimated at 17,000. A few Ahmadiyyas, followers of a heretical Shi'ite sect, continue to live in the village of Al-Kababir on Mt. Carmel and publish a religious monthly called Al-Bushra, "The Message." In addition to herding tribes of Saudi-Arabia, Transjordan, Syria and Iraq, whose tribal territory stretches across political boundaries and who roam descendents of immigrants once constituting separate communities, with their rich camel herds over hundreds of miles of desert and but who in the course of time have almost completely assimilated the Negev are semi-nomads; their livestock consists mostly of sheep and goats; and they are tied to fixed camps. The Sudanese, the Negroes, the Ghawarna, the Kurds, the Syrians, the Lebanese, the Persians, the Afghans and the Gypsies. These of the year within a much smaller tribal territory, nearer to the minority groups, each in itself of no great consequence, accounted together for the mosaic-like appearance of the non-Jewish population of Mandatory Palestine. As the overwhelming majority of all these groups lived in Galilee, which today is part of the State of Israel those of them who did not abandon their homes during the being cultivated and of yielding some crop. This trend makes it imperative to divide the land, which previously was held in common. Special mention must be made here of two quasi-tribes. Jewish groups, by the whole tribe, into individual holdings to be owned either by the Samaritans and the Karaites. The Samaritans have lived, since the days of the Second Temple, in Nablus (Sichem). During the last fifty years their numbers have slowly dwindled and it began to look as though they were doomed to extinction. After the establishment of the Jewish State, however, they began to infiltrate into Israel, and today (spring, 1952) they constitute a community of 60 persons

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occupying considerable tracts of relatively good land and become in time feudal lords and big landowners. Other strong members of Jaffa-Tel Aviv.

. . . the tribe also prevail when it comes to dividing the tribal lands

The Karaites, stemming mainly from Egypt, have arrived in Israel and occupying tracts, so that the weaker and poorer tribesmen after the establishment of the State. There are now about 270 families remain altogether left out and inevitably become tenants. In this manner the social classes which are characteristic of the Arab village develop at the very moment when the semi-nomadic tribe in Israel, half of whom live in a workers settlement which they founded and called Matzliah, after a 10th century Karaite author. The rest are dispersed in various places throughout the country. become a settled community.

— Israel between East and West (Used by permission of the curator)