

Sarona

The Kingdom of God - to Nazism - The Kingdom of God

By Jerry Klinger



The first fruits to carry the "Jaffa orange" brand were from an agricultural colony of the [Temple Society](#) in [Sarona](#) (commonly pronounced Sharona, est. 1871).¹

After World War I, the British sent the Templars packing, but members of the sect were later allowed to return. They were banished for a second and final time when their Nazi connections were discovered in the late 1930s.²

The carefully tended groves of Jaffa oranges are long gone, buried, forgotten beneath the concrete, steel and asphalt of modern day Tel Aviv. The bones of those that planted the groves and loved their land as part of the Kingdom of God peacefully await the Second Coming, from the Galilee, to Jaffa, to Jerusalem.

August, 1854 in Ludwigsburg, Germany, Christoph Hoffman, Christoph Paulus, Georg David Hardegg and Louis Hohn, along with 200 supporters, form the "Society for the Gathering of the People of God in Jerusalem." They were members of a fundamentalist splinter of the Lutheran

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaffa_orange

² <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull&cid=1208870500760>

Church which expelled the rapidly growing movement in 1859. Failing in their appeal not to be expelled from the Church to King William I of Wurttemberg two years later, they established an independent Christian religious organization called the *Deutscher Tempel* (German Temple). Hoffman was elected Bishop. The members called themselves Templers. The Templers believed that they must relocate to Palestine as Germany could not be reformed. In Palestine they would dedicate their lives to live according to the apostolic vision from Corinthians 3:16 “Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?” Remaking their lives as God's temple in Palestine, they believed, would hasten the Second Coming of Christ and the Messianic era.

A thousand adherents yearningly wished Hoffmann and Hardegg, with their families and other emigrants, well as they departed for the Holy Land to establish the first German Templer community in Palestine in 1868. They traveled to the backwater port city of Haifa and purchased land at the foot of Mt. Carmel. There they laid the foundation for their first building in September of 1869. With typical German organizational ability they quickly designed a community of sturdily built stone houses with red-shingled roofs. The houses were designed by architect Jacob Schumacher sited on 30' wide streets, neatly organized and planted with trees on both sides. They purchased additional land outside the city and built the first planned agricultural community in Ottoman Palestine. Conditions were extremely difficult. Many died due to disease, harsh conditions, over work, and the climate. Sustained by faith and dedication the Haifa colony eventually became self sustaining.³

Hoffman did not remain in Haifa. He relocated to the newly established community in Jaffa first taking residence in an abandoned American settlement of Messianic colonists. He purchased

³ The Templers arrived about the same time as did Baha'u'llah the founder of the Baha'I Faith. The Baha'u'llah stayed twice in the German Colony. Today, the city of Haifa's main tourist office is located in one of the many surviving Templer houses at the base of Mt. Carmel. Rising with extraordinary beauty from the top of the onetime Templer community's main boulevard, renamed Ben Gurion, is one of the great cultural and historical sites of the world. The Baha'I Gardens and the gold domed white Grecian temple styled tomb of the founders ascend, seemingly vertically, along rich green bordered garden terraces to the summit of Mt. Carmel.

A Haifa contemporary tourist marker in the German Colony reads:

“The establishment of the German Colony in 1869 is a milestone in the history of Haifa's development. In the middle of a sparsely populated and largely barren land, laboring under deficient rule, hundreds of German settlers characterized by great energy, resourcefulness, religious fervor and a variety of professional backgrounds, established a garden city unlike any that existed in the country until then.

Outside the Haifa city walls, a boulevard sprang up stretching from the foot of the hills to the sea. It was lined with gardens and homes, remarkable for their beauty.

In addition, the German settlers succeeded in establishing on Carmel Mountain a residential quarter among the most pleasant in the country, today's Carmel Center”.

600 dunams⁴ of marshy, malarial land on the Jaffa road to Nablus about four kilometers north of Jaffa from a local Greek monastery. Sarona (*Sharona* – because of its proximity to the plains of Sharon) was dedicated as the second Templer community, August of 1871.⁵ 28 of the original 125 Sarona settlers died in 1872 alone. They persisted in their efforts to improve the conditions and reclaim the land by instituting the first large scale reforestation project in modern Palestine by planting 1300 Eucalyptus trees.⁶

By 1889, 269 Templers lived in Sarona. They had 41 houses and 30 other buildings.⁷ Land continued to be purchased, reclaimed and the Templer community continued to grow.



Dedication of the Sarona School building – 1910



Sarona – early 1900's

The Sarona Templers first introduced and developed the famed Jaffa orange to the local economy. It quickly succeeded as a major cash crop. “By 1939, the combined Jewish and Arab orange orchards in Palestine totaled 75,000 acres (300 km²), employing over 100,000 workers, and their produce was a primary export of the economy”.⁸

(Continuing Palestinian terrorism reached a new level of depravity in Europe, Feb. of 1978. A new Palestinian terror group, calling itself the Arab Revolutionary Army – Palestine Command, hypodermically injected what they believed were Jaffa oranges with mercury. A number of people, particularly children, were made severely ill. At first it was believed to be a major economic blow to Israel's \$172,000,000 Jaffa orange export business. It was later determined that the terrorists did not know they had also injected Jaffa style oranges from Spain and Morocco with the same poison. Ironically, the effect on Israel's Jaffa orange industry at first was significant but it eventually became a positive. Agricultural land, labor and water use in Israel was becoming cost prohibitive. It was increasingly a historical anachronism of the early Zionist pioneering efforts. The Jaffa orange terror

⁴ About 130 acres

⁵ The third German Templer Colony is founded near Refaim in Jerusalem, 1873. The “German Colony” is an upscale trendy Jerusalem neighborhood in 2008 with many restaurants and boutiques.

⁶ Eucalyptus trees are a fast-growing source of wood, its oil can be used for cleaning and functions as a natural insecticide, and it is sometimes used to drain swamps and thereby reduce malaria risk.

⁷ Community buildings, a winery, workshops, barns and sheds

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaffa_orange

helped accelerate the transition of Israel's economy from agrarian based to one much more efficient, profitable and powerful: the new industrial and technology based economy of modern Israel.⁹⁾

Where ever the Templer communities established themselves, a significant improvement was realized in the standards of local agriculture, business, education and health and infra-structure development, such as roads. Their successful cooperative communal effort served as a model for the later Zionist movement and the building of the Yishuv.

As the Templer communities success grew, they attracted more and more Arab labor to pick the oranges, build the roads and run the farms. However, Sarona and the other Templer communities, alone, did not support the huge influx of Arabs to Palestine looking for economic opportunity.

Even before the Ottomans, and for centuries, under the Ottomans, Palestine had been an under-populated economic, political and cultural backwater. Another, more powerful, more aggressive, more desperate movement of people was moving to Palestine. They brought money for development. They purchased land. They learned, sometimes from the Templers, and became farmers. Many chose urban living. They radically improved and changed Palestine economically, politically, culturally and religiously. The Jews were returning. They were returning in larger and larger numbers to their ancient homeland. Some of the earliest returned for religious reasons. Later Jewish immigration returned, increasingly, because of spiritual needs fueled by practical necessity, as during the First Aliyah. By the 1930's Jewish immigration was a flood of desperate humanity, not just for economic opportunity, but for survival as the murderous clouds of the Holocaust formed. The Jewish return, before the 1880's, had been a trickle. By the 1930's, it was a comparative torrent.

The Jews returned to Jaffa fifty years before the Templers arrived. Jaffa was the largest port city in Palestine from the biblical times of Jonah until the early 20th century. It was the sea gateway to Palestine.



⁹ The Jerusalem Post sarcastically attacked the Palestinians: "They now send their freedom fighters to stab—if not with the sword at least with the syringe—the harmless Jaffa orange."
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,915917,00.html?promoid=googlep>

"The revival of Jaffa's Jewish community was initiated by a rabbi from Constantinople, Yeshaya Adjiman. In 1820 he purchased a house that he used for (Jewish) pilgrims passing through the city. The first Jewish residents of Jaffa were artisans and Jewish merchants from Maghreb who preferred to live from their own handiwork rather than depend on subsidies from charity – the halukkah.

The first wave of Zionist immigration – the First Aliya (1882 -1904) overturned the customs and habits of the Jewish community of Jaffa. Jaffa became the meeting place for the newcomers who wandered at great length in its streets before venturing into the interior of the country where only the most veteran wander in search of work (a personally dangerous proposition). The city developed serious housing problems, which prompted the Rokach brothers, Shimon and Eleazer to found the charitable organizations – Bnai Zion, the Children of Zion, and Ezrat Israel – Aid to Israel – to assist those most in need.

These associations would support the opening of numerous institutions, such as the hospital Shaare Zion, the Gates of Zion.

With the beginning of the First Aliyah in 1882, the Jewish community of Jaffa grew five fold or more (to about 6,000) in the space of a few years. Two new Jewish neighborhoods — Neve Zedeq and Neve Shalom — were founded before the end of the century; several others followed before the Second Aliyah began in 1904–1905. This new wave exacerbated the housing shortage”.

“In July 1906, the convention of the Jews of Yafo was held at the Yeshurun Club. The participants complained about the terrible living conditions of Yafo's Jews, the poor sanitation and congested housing, the badly lit streets, and worst of all the "Muhra. (The Muhra was the Muslim requirement that Jews must change their residences once a year.) Arie Akiva Weiss, who had just arrived in the country, proposed the establishment of a new neighborhood outside Yafo. Weiss' idea was enthusiastically received and Yafo Agudat Bonei Batim (Jaffa House-Builders Association), forerunner of Ahuzat Bait, was formed at once. It marked the beginning of Tel Aviv.

The founders of the new community aimed to build a new neighborhood that would be independent of Yafo. Their vision was a city designed along the lines of the Garden City Movement, headed by the British city planner Sir Ebenezer Howard. They had in mind a green and spacious city, the very opposite of the urban squalor of Yafo.

Once enough people had registered for the new neighborhood, land was purchased (approximately 5 hectares – 12.5 acres of largely worthless sand dunes purchased from a local Bedouin) east of Neve Tzedek¹⁰, not far from the beach. The land was divided into 60 plots for the first 60 families who had joined Ahuzat Bait.

The member families could not decide how to allocate the land. They eventually decided to hold a lottery to ensure a just and unbiased distribution. The lottery, organized by Raphael Kairi, was held on the second day of Passover 1909. The participants gathered on the sand dunes by the beach. Arieh Akiva Weiss, chairman of the lottery committee, gathered 60 grey and 60 white shells. He wrote the names of the participants on the white shells, and the plot numbers on the grey shells. After all, at stake was nothing less than the allocation of the first plots of the new city developing on the shores of the Mediterranean. Weiss had aptly chosen seashells as lots.¹¹



Lottery for new housing outside of Jaffa, 1909

¹⁰ Rabbi Kook first rabbi of Neve Tzedek

Neve Tzedek was established in 1887, 22 years before the 1909 founding of the City of Tel Aviv, by a group of Jewish families seeking a more peaceful life outside of overpopulated Jaffa. Other neighborhoods sprung up around Neve Tzedek, which were incorporated into the contemporary boundaries of the neighborhood.

The new residents constructed mostly colorful, low buildings along narrow streets. Residents' homes featured many contemporary luxuries like private bathrooms and kitchens.

At the beginning of the 1900s, many artists and writers made Neve Tzedek their residence. Most notably, future Nobel Prize laureate Shmuel Yosef Agnon, as well as Hebrew artist Nahum Gutman, used Neve Tzedek as both a home and a sanctuary for art.

¹¹ <http://tourism.index.co.il/siteFiles/1/60/249388.asp?index1=3>

“Within a year, Herzl, Ahad Ha’am, Judah Halevi, Lilienblum, and Rothschild Streets had been laid out, pipes laid for running water, and the 66 houses (six of the plots had been subdivided) completed; a site at the end of Herzl St. was set aside for a new building, the Herzliyya Hebrew high school, founded in Jaffa in 1906. Shortly thereafter, on May 21, 1910, the householders renamed their settlement “Tel Aviv” — “Spring Hill.” Their immediate inspiration was the title that Nahum Sokolow had given to his Hebrew translation of Herzl’s utopian romance, *Altneuland*. Sokolow, who borrowed the name from Ezekiel 3:15, thought of *tel* — a heap of ancient ruins — as corresponding to *alt* ‘old’; and of spring as conveying the idea of rebirth latent in *neu* ‘new’.

By 1914, after the addition of several new neighborhoods, the area of the suburb had grown to more than 100 hectares, the number of houses had tripled, and the population had increased almost sevenfold, to around 2,000.

World War I and the Ottoman authorities’ suspicion of the large un-naturalized Jewish immigrant population put an abrupt halt to the town’s growth. Finally, as the British Army approached Palestine, the Ottomans expelled the Jews from both Jaffa and Tel Aviv (Mar. 28, 1917). Eight months later, after the British forces occupied the area, the refugees (most of whom had been living in the Jewish agricultural colonies of the interior) were able to return home.

Two major watershed events took place in May 1921: On May 1, Arab rioters began a pogrom in Jaffa, which took the lives of 47 Jews. The Arabs won the battle — to get the Jews out of central Jaffa — but lost the war: the Jewish mass migration to Tel Aviv, which left Jaffa almost devoid of Jewish residents and especially commercial interests, provided an important stimulus to the economic growth of the new Jewish city.

On May 11, the British Mandatory authorities gave Tel Aviv “town council” status, which included the right to set up a local police force and local court. The next year, the Jewish neighborhoods of northern Jaffa were transferred to Tel Aviv, whose population reached 15,000.

The boom continued with the advent of the Fourth Aliyah, mainly central European bourgeois; by 1925 Tel Aviv was a bustling city of 34,000. Cultural life was professionalized with the establishment of the Ohel Theater and the decision by Habimah, founded in Moscow in 1918, to make Tel Aviv its permanent home (1931). The economic slowdown of 1927–30 kept the growth from continuing. But after the Nazis came to power in Germany, the Fifth Aliyah (mainly 1933–35) flooded Tel Aviv, whose population skyrocketed—from 45,564 in 1931 to 120,000 in 1935 and 150,000 in 1937 (“mother” Jaffa, mostly Arab, had only 69,000 residents in that year).

On May 12, 1934, Tel Aviv officially received municipal status. The gardens of Ahuzzat Bayit had disappeared, but the city was the undisputed heart of Jewish Palestine in every major realm —

economic, financial, cultural, and even political. Of the major institutions of the Yishuv, only the Chief Rabbinate and Jewish Agency were in Jerusalem. In 1936, the Tel Aviv port was opened to provide an entrance to the country that would be in exclusively Jewish hands. By 1939, Tel Aviv had 160,000 residents — slightly more than a third of the Jewish population of Eretz Israel.”¹²

Sarona continued to expand and prosper under the Ottoman’s. The tables turned radically against the German Templers with the fortunes of World War I. The Templers remained committed German nationalists. They never severed their ties, emotional, familial, spiritual and economic with their German homeland.

“In November 1917, during the orange harvest time, the war came to Sarona. British troops (including many Australians) occupied the German settlements in Palestine, including Sarona, and in July 1918 its inhabitants, together with those of Jerusalem, Jaffa and Wilhelma (a total of 850 people) were interned in Egypt at Helouan near Cairo. Ottoman Turkish Rule ceased in Palestine that year. Negotiations for a return to Palestine were protracted over two years. The Red Cross, the Quakers and Unitarians were among those who took up the cause for the internees. Eventually, on 29 July 1920 (only after 270 internees had been repatriated in April to Bad Mergentheim in Germany) the House of Lords gave permission for the remaining internees in Egypt to return to Palestine. The residents of Sarona returned to a plundered and dilapidated settlement. Some houses were gone altogether. Vineyards and orchards were overgrown and neglected and livestock had disappeared. Following negotiations with the British authorities, compensation was paid, in some cases up to 50%.

By 1925 Sarona was still a small settlement, although grown in area to about 492ha. It remained a farming community then with more emphasis placed on commerce. On 24 July 1923 the Council of the League of Nations passed the Mandate resolution to be administered by Great Britain. With the increasing immigration of Jewish migrants to Palestine (80,000 between 1920 and 1926 alone) Sarona prospered because of a ready market for their produce and their services.¹³

Tel Aviv grew rapidly after WWI. Its growth violently exploded in the 1930’s with desperate Jewish refugees seeking a safe haven, a place that would want them. As the world descended into economic depression, like a seesaw, new deadly form of scientific anti-Semitism viciously rose. Tel Aviv’s rapid growth gobbled up land for housing. Land values skyrocketed overnight. Fortunes were made by heartless speculation, by Jews and non Jews alike, on the backs of the terrified and desperate. Poverty loomed, the few good jobs went for lower and lower wages.

¹² http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/geo/tahist.html

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarona,_Palestine

Tel Aviv expanded right up to the borders of Sarona. Farm land disappeared as the rapidly rising land values made agriculture far less profitable than development. The Templers quickly recognized the value of gouging the Jews hungry for land.

Robert Gessner, a Jewish American Zionist from the American Mid-West with strong socialist leanings, visited Palestine in 1935. He was already well known as a movie writer, social critic and social activist on behalf of American Indians. Returning to America he wrote his famous travelogue of his journey to Britain, France, Germany, Poland and Palestine, *“Some of my Best Friends are Jews.”* What shocked him, as he traveled east, were the rising degrees of anti-Semitism he found and the unbelievable poverty of the Polish Jews.

*“The poverty of the Polish Jew can be visualized by the taxes he pays. One out of every two Jews can’t pay the minimum demanded – less than a dollar a year. One-half of all taxpaying Jews can’t pay more than two dollars a year. Those who do pay are decreasing in number. For every Jew who sought relief under the czars there now two, and in total they average four out of every ten Jews. As the wealth of Poland concentrates into Polish hands, there is a corresponding spread of poverty among Jews. One-half the Polish Jews are underfed; one-third have no means of support.”*¹⁴

English anti-Semitism was polite, French anti-Semitism was apparent; German anti-Semitism was institutionalized and reinforced by governmental policy. Polish anti-Semitism, to him, was almost genetic.

He met and interviewed many German Jews that refused to leave Germany. They refused to believe that Hitler was anything but a passing nightmare. Germany would soon return to her senses they felt. He even met German Jews who were pro-Nazi, anti Jew. They actively denied that Hitler meant what he said.

*“In Germany I had seen Jews completely assimilated, from ‘honorary Aryans’ to 100% Nazis, who had allegedly stamped out their all-Jewish meetings, hands raised in the Hitler salute, shouting, ‘Down with us!’ They had buried their heads, ostrich-wise, in the social sands of Germany, but the anti-Semites shot them nevertheless, because they were not economically assimilated. Although they spoke the same language as other Germans, loved the same philosophers and authors, drank the same beer and liked the same sausages, they remained competitors with in acquisitive society.”*¹⁵

Gessner knew nothing of the plans to exterminate European Jewry because the Germans had still not formally decided on the policy until the Wannsee Conference of January 1942. Extermination of Jews had not been industrialized as of yet. The German’s did realize that they could do what they wished with the Jews because the world was not going to stop them.

¹⁴ Some of My Best Friends are Jews, Robert Gessner, Farrar & Rinehart, N.Y. 1936. Pg. 110-111, chapter titled Hitler is more Humane.

¹⁵ Ibid pg. 144

Gessner knew and wrote about the hundreds of thousands of murdered Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia following World War I. He recognized that the world did not care about them then. He knew and wrote about the infamous transfer agreements between the Zionists and the Nazis to exchange Jews for German products and money.¹⁶ He, and world Jewry, did not believe that the Germans would or could envision and implement a “Final Solution”.

His last night in Poland he thought of his upcoming “escape” to Palestine.

“I lay in darkness and despair. Never before had I felt so deeply involved in the resurrection of a dying people. I had been indignant over American Indians, but in the depths of medieval Poland I felt a deep personal compassion. The death of the wretched Jews had become my death...I lay in darkness and despair, and gradually as the night deepened an emotional understanding grew in me. Now I could understand why these tortured Jews yearned for Palestine.... As for many Jews, Palestine symbolized for him many things – hope, freedom, life.”¹⁷

Having left Poland he stopped in Vienna on his way to his ship in Italy. In Vienna he observed the German form of anti-Semitism and paid his respects at the gravesite of Theodor Herzl. Herzl had sacrificed his self, his personal fortune, his family, his life for the Jewish people. Though buried as an Austrian Jewish aristocrat he was forgotten.

“He was buried in the Doblinger Friedhof, high above Vienna. There is another cemetery in Vienna, the Zentral-Friedhof, where the poorer Jews are buried in dreary, monotonous rows. Herzl does not lie among the rank and file of his people. He is in an exquisite garden, where a luxurious sweep of green hills and valleys runs on to the Kahlenberg. He sleeps among the Jewish aristocrats of Vienna. But the bitterest after –death touches have been administered by the Zionist disciples of Herzl, who have neglected their leader and his family. Herzl’s seventy-fifth birthday was practically ignored in America, home of Tom, Dick and Harry banquets. In Europe it received scant attention compared with the sixtieth anniversaries of Dr. Chaim Weizmann, Zionism’s present leader, and Bialik, Zionism’s poet. While disciples were spending fortunes on banquets and publicity and paid their own salaries in gold, Herzl’s son begged for bread. His father had spent the family fortune on Zionism. Out of bitterness over the Zionist’s treatment of himself and his sisters, he tried his father’s first plan for the salvation of the Jews. He joined the Catholic Church, but soon left it in despair, and finally committed suicide.”¹⁸

¹⁶ <http://www.transferagreement.com/>

¹⁷ Gessner, pg. 147.

¹⁸ Gessner, pgs. 159-160

Herzl’s, last descendent, his grandson, Stephen Theodore Norman was abandoned and forgotten by the Zionists for 61 years. Norman was the only Herzl to have visited Palestine other than his grandfather. He was a committed Zionist. He died in Washington, D.C. in 1946. He was buried by the Jewish Agency and forgotten. Dec. 5, 2007, after a bitter struggle lasting almost six years, Norman was brought home. He was buried with his family on Mt. Herzl in the plot for Zionist leaders.

TheLast Herzl: <http://www.jewish-american-society-for-historic-preservation.org/thelastherzl.html>

Embarking from Italy for Palestine, Gessner was enveloped by the spirit of the Halutzim going to Palestine; even the ship's captain is Jewish. "This is a remarkable thing; I tell myself, that a Jew should be a captain of a ship loaded with fellow Jews heading for Palestine to establish a homeland. Yes, the captain is really a Jew. I am relieved and I am proud."¹⁹

In Palestine, Gessner met and interviewed much of the Zionist present and future leadership; Meir Dizengoff, Chaim Weizmann, Ben Gurion, Golda Meyerson, Henrietta Szold, Moshe Shertok, Vladimir Jabotinsky, Dr. Judah Magnes as well as members of the Arab community such as Fakhri Bey Nahashibi. He toured, studied, observed and bitingly commented on Palestine, a country of intense contrasts.

Gessner's emotions rolled from side to side, like a sea sick sailor, as he witnessed Jews exploiting Jews for profit.

"And it is even natural, in this uncontrolled and landless Klondike, to see orange groves hardly planted and barely matured, plowed under to make way for the foundations of apartment buildings. The resigned policemen are replaced by British offices who drink in bars with their caps on, like colonial overseers. And the English bank clerks, unemployed at home, act here like the representatives of civilization. And wealthy Jews from around the world come in the spring to attend the Maccabiad, which is the All-Jewish Olympics. And wealthy travelers also come to celebrate Passover at public Seders. And the poor Jewish peddler standing with envelopes and postcards outside the post office. And the old woman vendor before the Anglo-Palestine Bank selling matches and pencils – two months from Riga where she sold eggs and chickens, and made a better living at it – complaining of her rent and food costs and wishing me 120 years of life and health...."

*And out of the incongruities a new culture is painfully but definitely emerging. For the immigrants there are classes in Hebrew language and literature and history. There is a slow amalgamation of old-world inheritances into a twentieth century Hebrew culture."*²⁰

In Tel Aviv he deliberately went to see a place of extreme contrast - Sarona.

"In the mushrooming of Tel-Aviv the city expanded into a barbed-wire fence, edged warily around it and has gone galloping triumphantly on. Paved avenues with crowded apartments on both sides have been abruptly halted by wire entanglements, as though a barricade had been thrown up at the end of the street. The barricade was erected by Hitler's subjects- right in Tel-Aviv, the capital of the Jewish Kingdom. Even more ironic is the fact that the Nazis were there before Tel Aviv. Sarona was established as a colony for German Knight Templars in 1871.

'Why in the world do you want to see Sarona?' a Tel Avivian asked. "I've been here ten years and I've never gone there.'

¹⁹ Gessner, pg. 166

²⁰ Ibid pg. 181

'That's just why,' I answered. Although enclosed by a fence, Sarona is no ghetto. Sarona herself raised the fence. Sarona is not exploited by Tel-Aviv; she has something which Tel-Aviv is itching to get. She has land, over 7,000 dunams – precious sand on which apartments can be constructed.

The Saronians are the one group in Palestine to whom the bloodshed, contradictions, and confusions are a big joke. The repeated preparations of the British for widespread uprisings, the importation of troops by airplane from Egypt, the parades of tanks, the erection of barbed-wire entanglements – seem to them quite funny, because they aim to profit either way. The Jews want their land, the Arabs their sympathy, the British their tax money. Going to Palestine as they did in the 1870's they preceded by over half a century the arrival of the Zionists. They went to Palestine from Germany as religious Zionists; they were returning to the land of their spiritual birth. They desired to live and die in Zion in the service of their Lord, Jesus Christ. They established for themselves a spiritual homeland. With them it was not a question of physical persecution, as it later has been the case with most Jewish Zionists. And so it came to pass that the Nazis got the German Jews going and coming....

They had come to Palestine as religious, petty-bourgeois farmers. They struggled with the stubborn sand and lived smugly among themselves. Suddenly they awoke to discover their sand worth almost its weight in gold. They sold their marginal lands for over \$3,000,000. A dunam, for which they gave an Arab \$10, brings them \$10,000 and up from a Jew. They have become big businessmen, have abandoned mixed farming to play the role of plantation gentlemen and oversee Arabs cultivate their newly planted orange groves. They ride along their shaded streets on small donkeys which hurry like mice under the enormous loads of beer and sausage, the legs of the overstuffed sausages barely clearing the ground. They return each summer to their home towns in Germany, where Palestine pounds establish them as prodigal princes.

Back in Palestine they sell off a quarter-acre and the trip has been well paid for. Some of the community's sixty families became frightened and the Town Council, to quiet those who had little land and were religious (and to bull the market) ruled that no more land should be sold to Jews. Whereupon the next German Aryan, who was approached by an untouchable Semite, patted his prospective customer's arm and told him to wait until he returned. He ran to the council chamber to announce that he was being offered so many thousands of pounds by Ginsberg and he was going to sell. The council in hurried session offered 10 per cent less than the Jew's price and played on their countryman's patriotic instincts as being worth the 10 percent difference. The shrewd German sold – and came out 10 per cent ahead of Ginsberg's offer.... Now the councilmen have agreed that it is patriotic to sell land along the highways for stores, or erect the stores themselves and rent them at exorbitant but patriotic rates.

The main street of Sarona has been converted from a sleepy road in an Iowa agricultural settlement to a business thoroughfare in a Florida metropolitan resort. The baker has turned his bakery into a sidewalk café with tables on a terrace under lights and lanterns. A farmer's wife has opened a ladies' shop. Parlors and sitting rooms have been converted into stores and ice-cream stands. 'What do your fellow Germans say about having a business her for Jews?' I asked.

"Business is Business," was their reply. "I sell all my bread in Tel Aviv. I sell my ice cream in Tel Aviv. I sell..."²¹

And on Saturday Sabbath some German Jews in Tel Aviv emigrate back to their Fatherland. They are the few Aryanized Jews. You can see them strolling under the willows and eucalypti, cane in hand, conversing freely in German, stopping here for an ice and there for a cigar, feeling at home in the Kurfurstendamm. The Nazis have no objection; it is not their Sabbath and no religious or civil law prevents them from making money when Tel Aviv's stores are closed.

The drugstore in Sarona has been run by a Jew since long before the recent exodus from German and he consequently feels himself a native Nazi, is repulsed by East European Jews, and hopes Tel-Aviv does not buy Sarona, because it is a model for the crude and vulgar people of that frontier mushroom. Also he has good friends among the Nazis and feels no discrimination personally. He is, of course, a Zionist. I asked him concerning the rumor I had heard that Arab politicians were receiving money from Sarona for the purpose of spreading anti-Jewish propaganda. I had been seeing an unusual number of German pictures in the Arab press, glorifying the Third Reich and Hitler.

The Jewish druggist was taciturn. 'The Nazis are quiet with their propaganda,' he said.

'No! They are not!' interrupted his assistant, a girl one year from Latvia. 'They teach their children to Heil Hitler!' and every night they sing the Horst Wessel song. But if they dare touch us – we shall sweep them away!"

She stood defiant, face red. Her employer glanced at her suspiciously and shrugged his shoulders.

In the street a member of the Ladies Auxiliary was taking the air. 'Yes, the air is good under the trees, but malaria comes from the Jewish pesthole over there.' She pointed to the Montefiore suburb of Tel-Aviv, the land of which the Jews had purchased from Arabs, not from Germans. 'Certainly, the Jews want Sarona," she added, 'because they want all Palestine. Balfour did a foolish thing...'

The Burgermeister may have agreed with her at the town hall, but in his downstairs office, he thanked Balfour for bringing prosperity to the Germans of Sarona. They were the only World War enemies of England who benefitted from the diplomatic declarations and treaties of British statesmen – an ironic joke on Hitler. In his office the Burgermeister talked of building more homes in Sarona (to lease to Jews) and of buying more land from Arabs (to resell to Jews). The Nazis in Palestine likewise are speculating on anti-Semitism. They have forgotten that they had come to the Holy land as young knights dedicated to the service to their Lord; in their Temple they have become money-changers. And the tree beside the blacksmith shop, where I saw a

²¹ No good German is still buying from a Jew," Adolph Hitler's to Nazi Party, March 1933

*German Jew from Tel-Aviv pause to light his cigar, has a Haken-kreuz carved into its bark, done unmistakably by a long sharp knife.*²²

Sarona was the first community, outside of Germany, to have a Nazi party chapter. In Tel Aviv the German Counsels' office flew the Nazi flag at full staff. Cars from Sarona proudly carried the Haken-kreuz medallion on their grills. The Templers in other Palestinian communities behaved similarly.²³

"During the 1930s Palestine-Germans of military service age were required to go to Germany to do compulsory military training, as they were German citizens, and benefited from services and protection provided to them by a German consulate in Palestine, even though they were not born in Germany. In August 1939 all Palestine-German men who had done training in Germany or who were of military service age received orders to go to Germany and report to the armed forces. Young men from the Templer community responded to the call up. About 60 German settlers, who were visiting Germany when the war broke out, were not allowed to return to their settlements in Palestine.

After the war broke out, the British Mandate government turned the German farming settlements of Sarona, Wilhelma, Bethlehem and Waldheim into large internment camps. All of the Germans left in Palestine were moved into these camps except for the remaining men of military age. Those men were placed in a Prisoner Of War camp at Acre. Within these internment camps, surrounded by barbed wire, the Palestine-Germans were allowed to move freely and carry out farming activities to produce food.

²² Ibid. pg. 187-191

²³ <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull&cid=1208870500760>

"Templar youth from Palestine had been sent to attend "educational" youth activities and family visits in Germany, where they met with top Nazi officials. Photographs on display at the Beit Lehem HaGlilit home of the Fleischman family depict Templar sect members wearing swastika armbands and congregating in one of the large courtyards between the two-story buildings and outhouses. The Templars of Beit Lehem HaGlilit (Galilean Bethlehem) and neighboring Waldheim (meaning "Forest Home" in German) were eventually rounded up by the British and sent to detention camps until their deportation, after which British Mandate soldiers and police were billeted in the Templars' former homes. When Jewish refugee families later moved into the Templar houses in Beit Lehem HaGlilit and Alonei Abba, they discovered hidden Templar belongings that attested the sect's support of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime. Items discovered in the community's homes included Nazi party pennants, badges, banners, pamphlets and flags, in addition to photographs".

When General Rommel won a series of important battles in the North African desert, the British authorities in Palestine sent the younger Templer families to Australia, where most of them were interned in the Tatura camp in Victoria".²⁴

"In July 1941, 198 people from Sarona, together with almost 400 from the other internment camps were suddenly transported to Australia in the then troop carrier liner Queen Elizabeth. They remained interned in Tatura in Central Victoria Australia until 1947. By November 1944 most of the other people still in Sarona had been moved to the Wilhelma camp and the few remaining followed in September 1945".²⁵

"During the war there were three prisoner exchanges between Germany and Britain. People in Palestine of German nationality (mainly women and children) were exchanged for Jews in Germany, most of whom were in concentration camps. Some Palestine-Germans were keen to be part of this exchange, in order to be able to see their men folk when they were back in Germany on leave from the armed forces."²⁶

The Nazis used the exchange to advance the Final Solution.

"On the following day, March 21, the actual day of the Purim festival, there was another 'Purim Massacre' in nearby Piotrkow. That day, Jews living legally in the ghetto were told that there was to be an exchange with German citizens living in the settlement of Sarona, in Palestine. Ten people were needed for this exchange, the Germans declared. All must possess university degrees: that was the only condition for emigration.

The Jews chosen for Palestine were driven out of Piotrkow in Gestapo cars, and then driven round the city a few times, before being taken, as darkness fell, to the Jewish cemetery. A deep pit had been dug. The Gestapo lined up the 'chosen', made derisive speeches amid much drinking and laughter, and ordered the Jews to undress.

Among the Jews shot that night at the Piotrkow cemetery was Dr. Maurycy Brams, a pediatrician and popular figure among the poor Jews of pre-war Piotrkow, shot that day with his wife and sixteen-year-old daughter, Hannah –'Ania'. The teenage girl had managed to run away from the cemetery at the last moment, but the Gestapo chased her among the tombstones until they caught her. Also shot that night was a young lawyer, Simon Stein, killed with his mother and the psychiatrist Dr. Leon Glattter.

Part of the Nazi 'Purim game' was to 'revenge' the ten sons of the Jew-hater Haman. These ten had hanged in the biblical story. But only eight Jews had been brought from Piotrkow that

²⁴ <http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/dnutting/germanaustralia/e/palestine3.htm>

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarona,_Palestine

²⁶ <http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/dnutting/germanaustralia/e/palestine3.htm>

night, so the Jewish watchman of the cemetery and his wife were included, at the last moment, in the execution. ²⁷

It is unknown if any Jews survived the “exchanges” for Sarona Templers.

At the trial of Adolph Eichmann in Jerusalem, for his major role in the extermination of European Jewry, it became known that Eichmann had cultivated a legend that he had been born in Sarona, Palestine. He had not.²⁸

“In July 1941, 198 people from Sarona, together with almost 400 from the other internment camps were suddenly transported to Australia in the then troop carrier liner Queen Elizabeth. They remained interned in Tatura in Central Victoria Australia until 1947. By November 1944 most of the other people still in Sarona had been moved to the Wilhelma camp and the few remaining followed in September 1945. On 22 March 1946, Gotthilf Wagner, aged 59, the last Mayor of Sarona, was assassinated in Tel Aviv”.²⁹

“After the war, Sarona became a British military and police base. The base was the site of the first ever unconcealed Haganah attack on a British installation”

The base was taken over by the Haganah on December 16, 1947, and renamed to Camp Yehoshu'a, after Yehoshu'a Globerman, who was killed near Latrun while returning from a mission to Jerusalem. The base was dubbed *HaKirya* because it contained the government offices in Tel Aviv, the provisional capital of Israel at the time, until Jerusalem was secured and declared the capital. The Haganah and then Israel Defense Forces also used the Templer buildings as their first headquarters, including the headquarters of the Sherut Avir (later Israeli Air Force).

Over the years, the military base's land area has been decreasing, due to the high land value and sale to private companies, although the government retains many of its offices in the Kirya Tower in the southern Kirya.

²⁷ The Holocaust, A History of the Jews of Europe During the Second World War, Martin Gilbert, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1985 Pgs. 552-553

²⁸ <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Judgment/Judgment-011.html>

²⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarona,_Palestine

The Kirya today consists of a northern section, used for the military base, and the southern, a business district mostly under construction as of 2008, which includes the Kirya Tower. These sections are separated by Kaplan Street. The military base is home to the Matcal Tower and Marganit Tower, and serves as the headquarters of the IDF's General Staff".³⁰



Matcal Tower



Marganit Tower

“When in the mid 1970s plans for redevelopment of the Kirya area were considered by the authorities, considerable opposition to the planned demolition led to negotiations as to its suitability for the area. Consulting with historians like Dr. Jakob Eisler (who did his Doctorate dissertation in 1997 on the Templers) and Professor Yossi Ben-Artzi as well as Dr. Alex Carmel and Dr. Danny Goldman it was decided that a large part of the erstwhile Sarona was of heritage value and 18 of the structures, with distinct architectural building styles, should be preserved.

In 2008, after 60 years in the wilderness, the name Sarona is back on the map. Following the opening of a widened Kaplan Street, the authorities have renamed the area south of the street the Sarona Garden.



Sarona Garden Logo

³⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HaKirya>

A logo has been designed for Sarona Garden which depicts the "old" (the Winery and Cellar) surrounded by the new".³¹

The lands that encompassed Sarona have changed hands many times. When first sold to the Templers by local the Greek Monastery, for huge profits, it was a malarial marshland that had to be reclaimed. To establish their Kingdom of God in Palestine, the Templers drained the marshland and made it bloom with the fragrant smell of the Jaffa orange. War and the rapid expansion of the Jewish city of Tel Aviv; Sarona engaged in exploitative land profiteering. Ultimately, because of the very strong cultural identity of the Templers as Germans, large numbers of them became active Nazis in Palestine. For them, being a German Nazi was a stronger, more important identification than a "*religious Zionist*". The Templer Kingdom of God came to a complete and final end after WWII. The last Templers left Israel in the early 1950's. They were compensated by the State of Israel for their property. The money came from the restitution payments being made by the German government for the monstrous crimes committed against the Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Today, the area of Sarona and the Kirya is changing again. Rising land values are forcing the Israeli government to consider relocating large portions of the I.D.F. (the Israel Defense Forces) administrative complex away from the Kirya. They are selling the land for enormous gains to development speculators.

Jerry Klinger is President of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation

www.JASHP.org

³¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarona, Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarona,_Palestine)

