

Jewish Immigration to Palestine in the Long 1920s: An Exploratory Examination

By

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Abstract

This paper provides an interim summary of a research effort aimed at filling some of the informational gaps that limited our ability to generate a detailed (quantitative) picture of Jewish immigration to Mandatory Palestine, particularly during the first decade of British rule. Concentrating on the long 1920s (1919-1932), a new micro data set containing rich demographic details and other pieces of information of about 45,000 individuals (covering more than 40 percent of all the registered immigrants of the period) was constructed from hitherto unutilized archival sources. This data set provided the necessary basis for the explorative documentation and analysis of the paper, which focuses on the demographic characteristics, labor market skills, and entry categories of the immigrants in an international comparative context. In doing so, the paper offers tentative answers to some of the questions concerning the nature of Palestine's Jewish immigration over the investigated period and its varying profiles between the early, the mid and the late 1920s, while pointing to still unresolved issues awaiting further research.

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Given the rich scholarly literature on the evolving Jewish community (the *yishuv*) in Palestine and the waves of immigrants feeding it from the late 19th Century to Israel's statehood in 1948, one may wonder what is left to be explored in the area of Jewish immigration (*aliya*) during the Mandate period. However, close scrutiny of the studies dealing with this influx, and particularly of the underlying data on which they are based, reveals substantial lacunae of information that have left us with only a very partial and highly aggregate picture of the migratory movements in question.

The existing quantitative studies, though very useful in providing estimates of the annual migration flows and some other characteristics, suffer, nevertheless, from serious deficiencies of the published statistics (independently compiled by the Mandatory government and by the Jewish Agency) on which they have almost exclusively drawn.¹ Note in particular, that prior to 1928 the recorded figures did not contain even such basic information as age breakdown of the immigrants (except for a dichotomous decomposition into "up to 16" and "above 16" years of age), let alone age by sex categories that are available in the published records only from 1935 onwards. Consequently, our knowledge regarding the demographic composition of the immigrants reaching Palestine before the mid 1930s has been so far rather limited, and of those arriving in the 1920s – including the massive inflow of the mid decade – virtually nonexistent.

Moreover, the aggregate nature of the published data restricts the categorization of the migration figures mostly to one characteristic at a time, thus not allowing for the construction of integrated cross-classified profiles of the new arrivals. In other words, while the general contours of Jewish immigration to Mandate Palestine are generally well known, the data deficiencies have

* This paper is part of an on going research project on Jewish interwar migration conducted by Hagit Lavsky and myself. The research has been supported by the Israel Science Foundation (Grant 955/02). My co-researcher Hagit Lavsky read the paper carefully, corrected mistakes and made helpful suggestions. Nachum Gross offered me as usual his useful comments. Haim Avni, the Director of the Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Batya Leshem, senior staff member, and all other workers of the CZA were extremely helpful and supportive. Invaluable research assistance was provided by Gur Alroey, Revital Benita, Guy Galili, Anat Goldman, Sagit Harel, Edy Levit, Israel Pupko, and Efrat Shpiro. Ronit Ashkenazi of the Falk Institute assisted in technically producing the discussion paper. I am thankful to them all.

¹ The basic quantitative studies are *Aliya*, 1935; Gurevich, Gertz and Bachi, 1944; Sicron 1957a, 1957b; Bachi 1977. The last three studies refer in detail to all the relevant data compilations published by the Jewish Agency and the Government of Palestine. For illuminating discussions concerning data sources, methodology, and substance see also Della Pergola, 1986, 1998.

imposed effective constraints on its study, preventing us from getting as detailed a (quantitative) picture as needed for comprehensively analyzing this influx and placing it in proper comparative contexts.

Being interested precisely in such an analysis, we were naturally troubled by the handicaps of the existing statistics and set out to look for archival "remedies" to overcome them. Fortunately, we managed to find some remedy in the Central Zionist Archives (CZA), where we uncovered a hitherto unexplored compilation of about 200,000 personal cards of Jewish arrivals that the Jewish Agency's Immigration (*Aliya*) Department had administered from 1919 to 1948 in its Haifa branch (CZA, file SC6). These cards contain listing of the newcomers' countries of origin, types of entry permits (visas), and arriving dates in addition to personal traits such as age, sex, marital status (including information on accompanying family members), occupations, and command of languages. The personal cards stored in the CZA – covering about 44% of all the registered Jewish immigrants during the Mandate period – seem to be the only "survivors" from the original compilation, in which the details of the immigrants registered in Jaffa–Tel Aviv as well as in Haifa were listed. It was this compilation, which provided the basic building blocks for the published immigration statistics by the Jewish Agency.²

While not exhaustive, the recorded information on the stored cards facilitated the construction, for the first time, of micro data sets at the individual level, on which a multi-faceted documentation and analysis of Jewish immigration to Mandate Palestine could be based. Rising to this challenging opportunity, we embarked on a labor intensive effort of turning the hand written information contained in the immigrant cards into a usable new micro data set, providing the foundation for an explorative examination of the immigration in the "long" 1920s (1919-1932), which is the essence of this paper.³

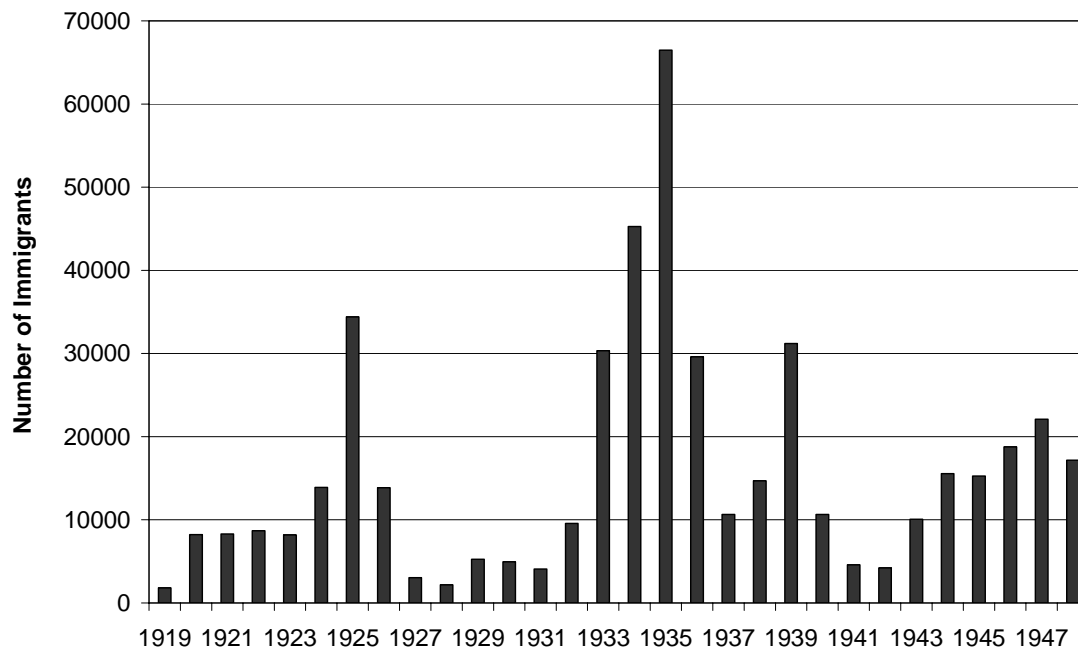
This "long" decade witnessed the first wave of massive Jewish immigration to Mandatory Palestine of 1920-1926 and the relative lull of 1927-1931, with some recovery in 1932, making for a total inflow of 126,349 individuals in 1919-1932. The immigration flow, as is well known, revived in 1933 and intensified thereafter to constitute the second massive influx

² The number of registered immigrants between 1919 and 1948 reached according to Sicion (1957b, Table A1) 452,306 in total. See also Sicion 1957a, Second Chapter.

³ In constructing the micro data set we used, in addition to the immigrant cards, demographic information on individual immigrants contained in ship lists and in other scattered registers of immigrants that we uncovered from the CZA files in series S3, S4, and S6 (the complete details of the source files used is given in the list of references). Unless otherwise stated, the numbers presented and quoted in the rest of the paper are all derived from this newly constructed micro data set.

of 225,263 people in 1933-1939, with another 118,338 managing to get into Palestine in 1940-1948 (see Figure 1).⁴

Figure 1. Jewish immigration to Palestine, 1919-1948



Source: Sicron, 1957b, Table A1

Although accounting for only 35% of the total inter-war inflow, the immigration wave of the 1920s produced in its peak of 1925 (consisting of 34,386 immigrants) the largest single year influx relative to the size of the resident Jewish population over the entire Mandate period (Figure 2). Moreover, the in-migration of the 1920s played a substantial role in the urban development of Palestine's Jewish community in general, and of Tel Aviv in particular (Giladi, 1973, Third Chapter; Metzger, 1998, Chapter, 2).

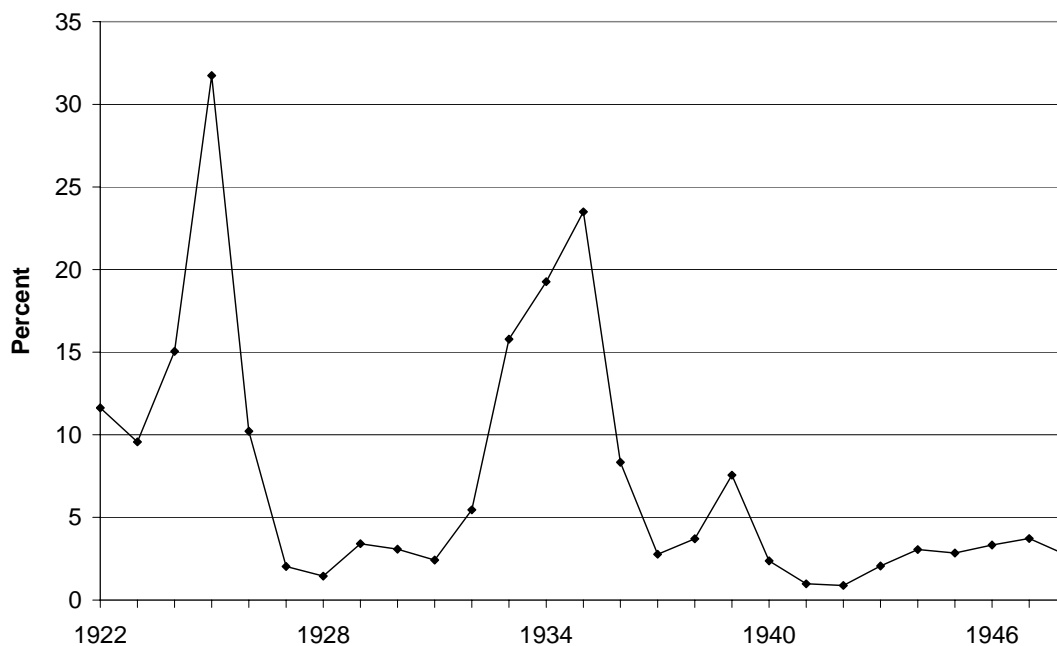
In addition to the general importance of the in-migration of 1919-1932 for the evolvement of the *yishuv*, there are two specific reasons for choosing it to be the subject of our explorative study. One, as noted above, is the more serious lacunae found in the published immigration statistics of 1919-1927 compared to the later years. And the second reason is our aim to concentrate on a migratory inflow that lends itself, without too many difficulties, to the typical (quantitative) analysis of voluntary migrations.⁵ This consideration rules out the 1930s

⁴ The numbers in this paragraph, which are also the source of Figure 1, include all the immigrants as estimated by Sicron, except for his guesstimated number of tourists who remained illegally in the country, 12,907 in total (Sicron, 1957b, Table A1).

⁵ This does not imply the absence of particular "push" factors inducing the outflow, only that emigration was not unwillingly imposed on the entire population by persecutions or other forms of

with their strong "fleeing factor" in Jewish emigration from (Central) Europe following the onset of the Nazi regime in Germany. Note also that the more severe data limitation concerning the 1920s on the one hand and the intense scholarly interest in the influx of the 1930s on the other hand, had produced many more studies on the latter period, particularly on the emigration from Germany,⁶ leaving room for much work to be done on the immigration waves of the former years.

Figure 2. Ratio (in percentages) of annual Jewish immigration to Jewish population of Palestine, 1922-1948



Sources: Sicron, 1957b, Table A1 for immigration and Bachi, 1977, Tables A12, A13 for population

This exploratory paper, presenting the immigrants' profiles and some additional findings derived from the newly constructed data set for 1919-1932, is a first step in this direction. In documenting the findings I shall attempt to address, among other issues, such questions as: Who were the immigrants of the long 1920s? Were they demographically comparable to other, including Jewish, contemporary migrations? How age-selective were they with regard to their source communities? Were the arrivals of the early 1920s sufficiently different from those of the mid decade to justify the standard distinction between the "ideological pioneers" of the *third*

discrimination, disallowing selectivity in migration. A clear case of a particular "push" factor intensifying voluntary emigration would be the heavy tax burden imposed on trade in Poland in the mid 1920s. It affected adversely the urban middle classes, Jews included, but left still the emigration decision to be voluntarily taken by families and individuals (see Giladi, 1973, Second Chapter).

⁶ see for example Gelber, 1990; Lavsky, 2003; Halamish, 2006.

aliya (1919-1923) and the "middle class" *fourth aliya* (1924-1926)? Where did the immigrants of the "in between" years 1927-1932 stand in this comparison? The tentative answers to these and other questions to be suggested in the paper should shed some new light on a still under explored chapter in the (quantitative) history of Palestine's Jewish immigration.

In the first section of the paper the new micro data set (MDS) is described, and confronted with the existing aggregate figures of the immigration in the considered years to examine its coverage and representativeness; In the second section the immigrant's demographic characteristics are presented and comparatively analyzed; The third section dwells on a number of additional attributes of the studied immigration; and the fourth section concludes.

I. The new micro data set (MDS): description and comparisons

The basic quantitative dimensions and classifications of the new MDS vis a vis the overall immigrating population of 1919-32 are presented in Table 1. It is seen that the MDS, containing personal data of 53,191 individuals who entered the country in 1919-1932, covers about 42% of all the immigrants registered by the Jewish Agency in those years.⁷ Moreover, since only 411 (0.8%) individuals are categorized in the MDS as being of "unknown sex," versus 17,765 (14%) among all the immigrants, the combined number of males and females in the MDS reaches almost 49% of the total number of immigrants with known sex.⁸ Furthermore, note that the MDS generates a yearly pattern of in-migration which is virtually identical to that of the published totals over the period concerned (see Figure 3).⁹ Likewise, with 83.1 percent of the MDS's immigrants originating in Eastern Europe, versus 77.7 percent among all the immigrants of 1919-32, it is observed that the composition of the MDS by countries of origin is not much different from that of the entire in-migrating population.¹⁰

⁷ A small fraction of the listed persons in the MDS (893 individuals in total) were returning residents of Palestine.

⁸ Since almost all the immigrants included in the MDS were recorded on the immigrant cards by name and surname, it was possible to identify their sex even if not quoted directly.

⁹ The correlation coefficient between the two series is 0.900.

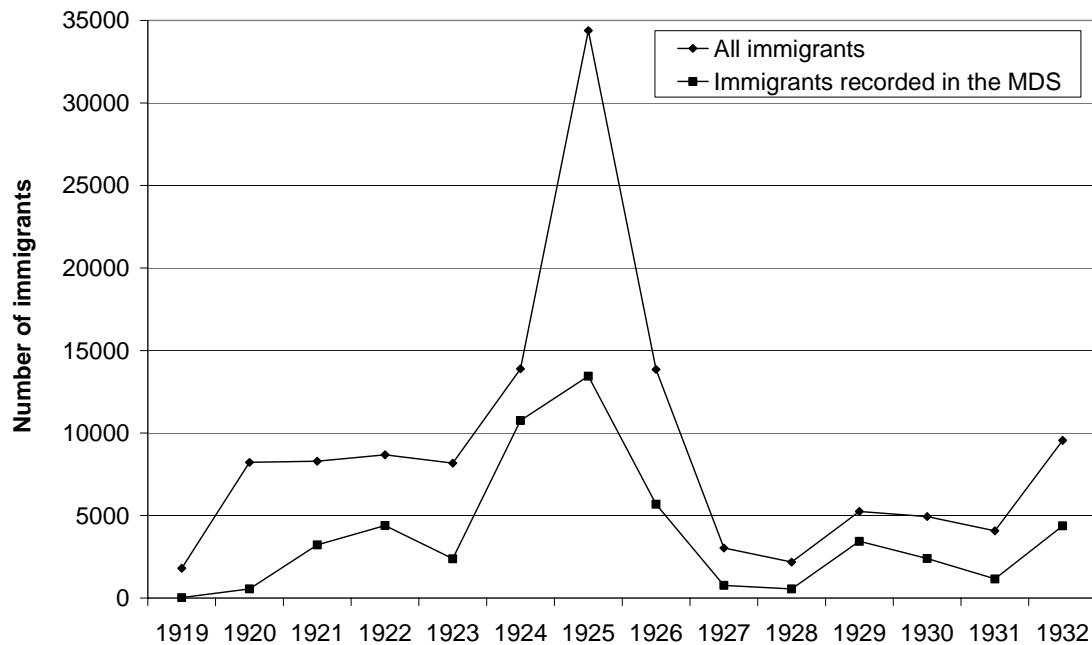
¹⁰ The comparison is based on the distribution of immigration by nationality, the only one available for the entire in-migration (Sicron, 1957b Tables A6-A11).

Table 1. Dimensions of Palestine's Jewish immigration, 1919-1932

	Number of immigrants		Percent of MDS in Registered [3]
	Recorded In MDS [1]	All officially registered [2]	
Males	31,900	61,121	52.2
Females	20,880	47,463	44.0
Total with known sex	52,780	108,584	48.6
Unknown sex	411	17,765	2.3
All	53,191	126,349	42.1
Immigrants with the following characteristics:			
Age			
Males	26,814	n.a.	
Females	18,226	n.a.	
Total	45,040	n.a.	
Marital Status			
Sex	32,866	48,052	68.4
sex and age	32,866	n.a.	
Countries of origin – all			
Birth	18,883	n.a.	
Last residence	36,634	n.a.	
Nationality	34,149	118,047	28.9
Countries of origin - Sex & age			
Birth	16,829	n.a.	
Last residence	31,494	n.a.	
Nationality	33,764	n.a.	
Entry categories			
All	33,856	98,421	34.4
Sex & age	31,275	n.a.	
Occupations			
All	29,180	52,287	55.8
Sex&age	20,953	n.a.	
Language skills by sex and age	27,569	n.a.	

Sources: [1]- MDS; [2]-*Aliya*, 1935, Table 19 for entry categories, Sicron, 1957b, Tables A1 to A27 for the rest; [3]=[1]/[2]x100

Figure 3. All registered Jewish immigrants and immigrants recorded in the MDS, Palestine, 1919-1932



Sources: Sicron, 1957b, Table A1 and MDS

It may thus be suggested that while the exogenously constrained MDS (by data availability) cannot be regarded a statistically "legitimate" representative sample of the population in question, its substantial size and derived pattern make it a respectable body of data, from which credible new findings concerning the immigration of 1919-32, can be drawn. These, as already stated, are largely based on the two unique features of the MDS: the age breakdown, and the options for cross classification.

Some idea about the variety and quantitative dimensions of these features can be obtained from the lower panel of Table 1. It reports the number of people for whom information on each of the listed characteristics is available in the MDS by sex and age, and thereby brings to the fore its advantage over the published data. This advantage becomes even more noticeable when keeping in mind that cross classification is possible for all the listed categories, providing useful means to be employed in the following documentation and analysis.

II. The immigrants' demographic profiles and patterns

The age by sex composition of migrating populations has long been recognized in the (social science) literature as basic, even if crude, indicators of selectivity characterizing voluntary migration.¹¹ It has been commonly observed that young and prime working aged adults of the

¹¹ See for example: Sjaastad, 1962; Kuznets, 1975; Massey et. al., 1993.

mid-teens to the mid-forties were disproportionately represented in the international migrations of the late 19th Century and the first three decades of the 20th Century (reaching 60 to 80 percent among the migrants, compared to their share in the "sending" populations that never exceeded 50 percent). These migrations were likewise noticeable for their high proportion of males (60 to 70 percent of the total in good many cases, see also Table 3, below), reflecting primarily the significance of staged and temporary migrations, typified by large numbers of single men and of married men migrating without their families.¹²

These observations are fully consistent with the accepted perception of voluntary migration; namely, that individuals and families who contemplate migration do typically expect the net gains from the change of place (be they material, social, and/or ideological) to outweigh the pecuniary and non-pecuniary cost of leaving their familiar environment and adjusting to a new one. Other things being equal, the cost of migration should be lower and its expected gains higher, the shorter the time the potential migrants spent in the area of origin before moving, the more mobile and adjustable to the labor market conditions in the receiving area they were supposed to be, and the longer the time they anticipated to remain economically active in their destination.

Following these remarks, it is only natural to start our demographic story by examining the immigrants' sex and age structure as presented in Table 2. With half the immigrants in the long 1920s concentrated in the 18 to 29 age group, and with males composing 60 percent of the influx, the 45,040 individuals (with known age and sex) exhibited undoubtedly similar demographic selectivity to that found in the voluntary migrations of the time. Interestingly, however, it is seen that while the share of males was particularly high in the 18-19 age bracket (71.6 percent), their weight in the 20 to 29 group (58.8 and 54.7 percent, respectively) was the lowest of all the adult ages. This finding indicates that the dominance of the young prime ages was as prevalent among women immigrating to Palestine as among men.¹³

¹² See among others the following sources: Ferenczi and Willcox, 1929, pp. 210-14; *Demographic Yearbook*, 1948, Table 4; *Sex and Age of International Migrants*, 1953; *The Aging of Populations*, 1956, Table III, Kuznets, 1975; Easterlin, 1982; Baines, 1991.

¹³ The percent of the 20-29 age group was among females (43.4) even higher than among males (40.8).

Table 2. Jewish immigrants to Palestine by age and sex, 1919-1932 (Percent)

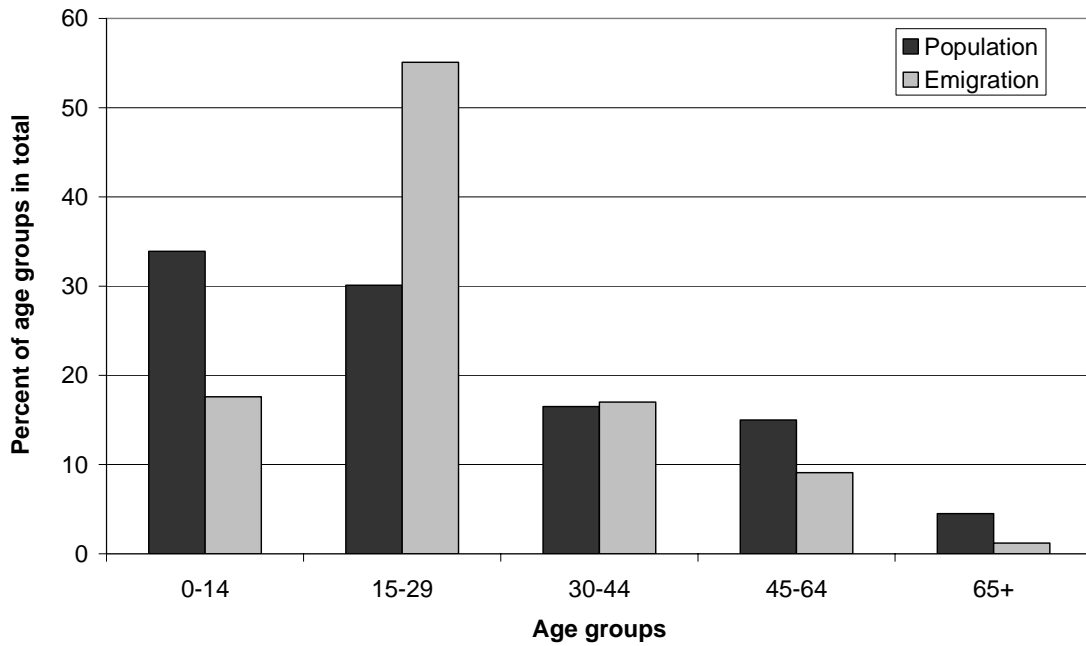
	Age group in total	Males in Age group
0-14	15.2	52.8
15-17	3.9	63.4
18-19	8.4	71.6
20-24	27.1	58.8
25-29	14.7	54.7
30-34	8.4	65.1
35-39	5.1	60.9
40-49	7.5	62.2
50-59	5.6	60.4
60+	4.1	61.0
All ages	100.0	59.5
All classified by sex only		60.4
Numbers: All by age & sex	45,040	
All by sex only	52,780	

Source: MDS

In attempting to identify more precisely the nature and extent of age selectivity in Palestine's immigration, the age breakdown of the immigrants originating in Poland and the Soviet Union are compared in Figures 4 and 5 with the respective age compositions of the (Jewish) population stocks from which they were drawn.¹⁴ The picture derived from these comparisons is virtually identical, demonstrating that the "positive" age selectivity of the emigrants destined for Palestine was concentrated entirely in the younger prime age segments of 15 to 29. Likewise, the noticeably small relative proportion of the 0-14 age group in the migrating groups suggests that families with infants and young children were less likely to move from their countries of origin to the Palestine destination.

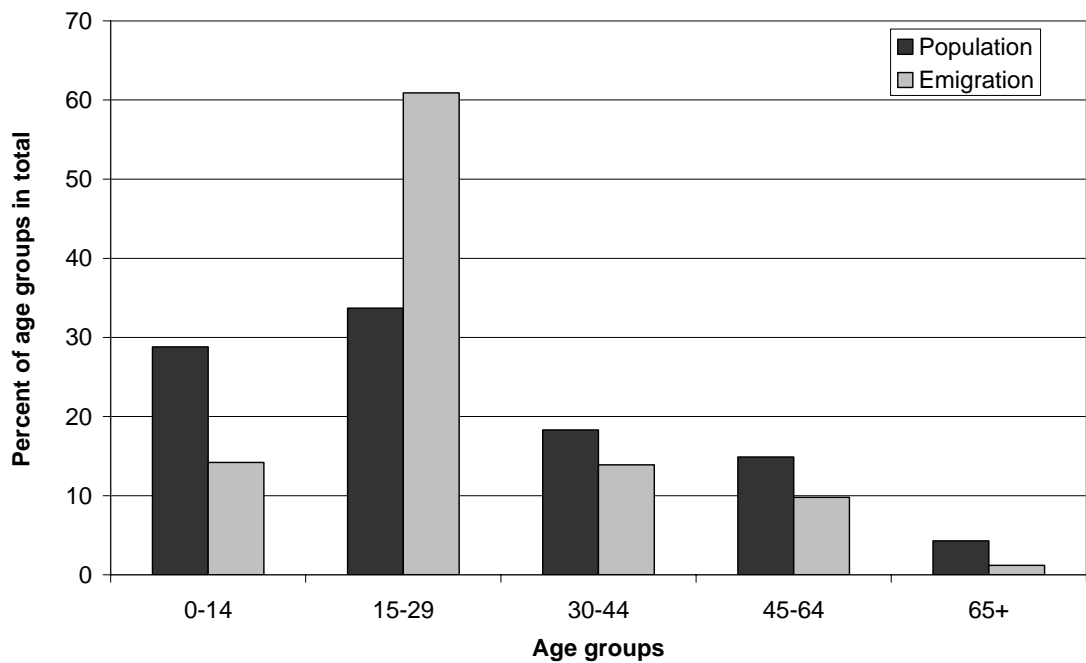
¹⁴ Poland and the Soviet Union composed together 62.6 percent of the immigrants listed in the MDS by countries of last residence, with Poland accounting for 47.3 percent, and the Soviet Union for another 15.3 percent.

Figure 4. Poland: Age distribution of Jewish population in 1921 and of Jewish emigration to Palestine in 1919-1932



Sources: Bachi, 1977, Table 8.11 for population and MDS for emigration

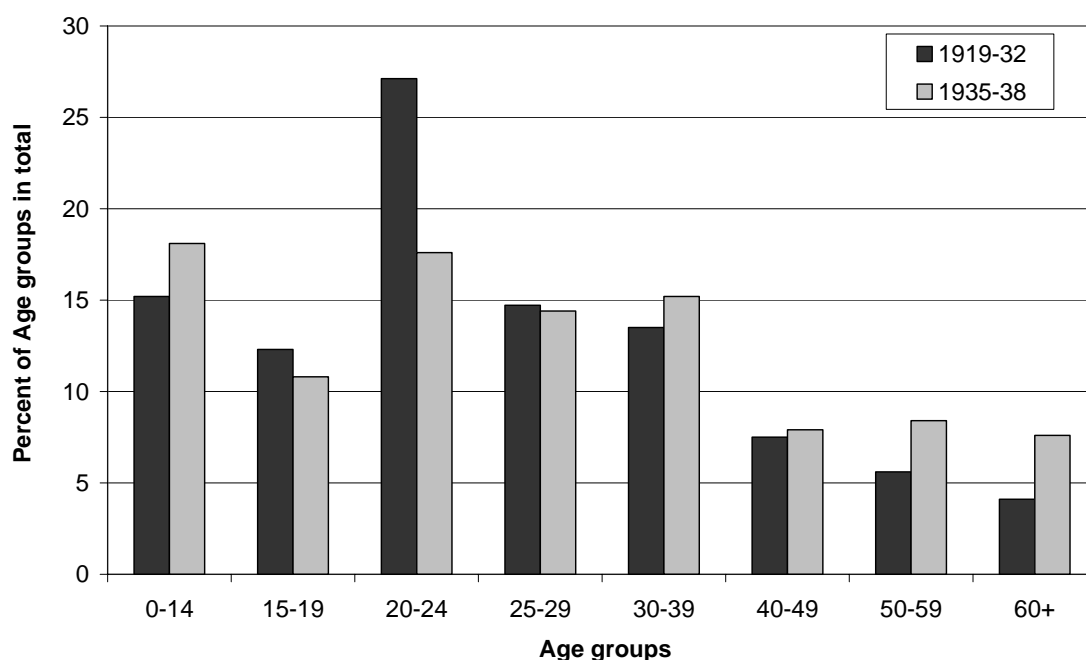
Figure 5. Soviet Union: Age distribution of Jewish population in 1926 and of Jewish emigration to Palestine in 1919-1932



Sources: Bachi, 1977, Table 8.11 for population and MDS for emigration

Another perspective for appreciating the selectivity towards the young prime ages among the considered immigrants is provided in Figure 6, which compares their age structure with that of the arrivals in 1935-38. It is demonstrated that the 20 to 24 years of age were in relative terms substantially "over represented" in the immigration of the 1920s, while the 0-14 and the 30+ ages were more heavily represented in the migration of 1935-38. These findings are hardly surprising in view of the push factors from Europe in the 1930s, and the consequential involuntary elements characterizing the migration of the larger part of that decade.

Figure 6. Age distribution of Jewish immigration to Palestine, 1919-32, 1935-38



Sources: MDS for 1919-32 and Sicron, 1957b, Table A17 for 1935-38

A related, Palestine-specific factor may have also played a role in generating this comparative picture. Reference is here to the declining proportion of the "labor" category of entry between the two periods (see the discussion in the third section below for more details).¹⁵ Since the "labor" certificates, granted to people with definite prospects of employment in

¹⁵ Whereas no less than 53% of the newcomers in 1922-32 with specified entry categories were granted by the Mandatory government a "labor" immigration certificate in response to periodic applications by the Jewish Agency, this proportion declined to around 40% among the arrivals of 1935-38. These percentages were derived from the *Statistical Handbook of Jewish Palestine*, 1947, p.103. In other compilations (such as Gurevich, Gertz, and Bachi, 1944) slightly different proportions are reported, but the direction of the difference between the two periods and its size is retained in them as well.

Palestine, however-defined, were mainly aimed at potential immigrants aged 18 to 35 (*Aliya*, 1935, p. 32), their extent may have affected the tilt toward young ages of the immigrants' age profile. A closely associated factor, reinforcing the "age" effect of the "labor" certificates was the ideological motivation (particularly of labor-Zionism) and preparation for immigration that were more prevalent among young adults (see the discussion in the third section, below).

Having said that, however, it should be stressed that whatever the effect that the immigration policies (of the British government and also of the Jewish Agency) and the ideological zeal of the immigrants might have had on the age structure of the immigration in the 1920s, it left the shares of the young adult ages among Palestine's arrivals well within the range observed in other international emigration of the time (Table 3, panel A). Moreover, it is seen that the people of 15 to 29 years of age, reaching 60.3 percent in the combined international emigrations presented in Table 3, accounted only for 54.1 percent in Palestine's immigration.¹⁶ In the opposite direction we find that the proportion of children (aged 0-14) was appreciably higher in Palestine's than in the other migratory movements.

Note, though, that the differences between the age compositions of the various migrations may reflect, at least in part, an "exogenous" effect of disparities between the age structures of their sending populations and not necessarily different selectivity patterns. In order to neutralize these effects, the direction and extent of age selectivity in migration is reported in Panel B of Table 3 as ratios between the weights of the separate ages in the emigrating groups and in their sending populations.¹⁷

¹⁶ Note that the share of the combined 15-29 age group in the immigration of 1919-23, considered to be highly ideological, was about 55.8 percent. Only among the immigrants of 1927-32 did the proportion of these ages exceed 60 percent (60.9 percent to be exact), see below.

¹⁷A ratio of 1 indicates that the proportion of the age group in question is identical in the emigrating group and in its sending population. A ratio larger than 1 means that the relative size of the examined age group is larger among the emigrants than in the home population and thus implies a positive selectivity in migration for that age group, the extent of the selectivity is larger the larger is the ratio. A ratio smaller than 1 points to negative selectivity in migration, whose extent is larger the smaller is that ratio.

Table 3. Migration movements in the 1920s by sex and age: An international comparison*

A Age and sex distributions of selected migrations (Percent)**								
	Emigration							Immigration
	Czechoslovakia 1922-29	Denmark 1920-29	Germany 1925-29	Norway 1920-29	Sweden 1920-29	Switzerland 1920-29	Total	Palestine 1919-32
0-14	11.1	10.4	11.0	10.4	10.5	9.6	10.8	15.2
15-29	58.6	63.4	59.7	61.8	62.4	60.0	60.3	54.1
30-39	19.8	15.4	19.3	17.4	16.2	18.1	18.4	13.5
40+	10.5	10.8	10.0	10.4	10.9	12.3	10.5	17.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total in numbers	249,577	61,802	291,207	88,520	133,205	58,299	882,610	45,040
Percent males in migration	72.0	66.5	56.0	64.4	60.6	63.0	67.6	60.4
B Ratios of age group weights: Emigration/Population of sending countries***								
	Czechoslovakia	Denmark	Germany	Norway	Sweden	Switzerland	Total	Jews in Eastern Europe: Population & emigration to Palestine
0-14	0.380	0.335	0.426	0.326	0.360	0.345	0.399	0.535
15-29	2.058	2.433	2.066	2.292	2.425	2.232	2.129	1.769
30+	0.718	0.614	0.647	0.677	0.602	0.674	0.648	0.729
Total	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

Notes:

* The separate emigrations were selected by their comparable age distributions.

** The years below the country names refer to their respective periods of migration.

***The emigration figures are those of Panel A. The population figures are of 1920 for Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland; of 1921 for Czechoslovakia, Denmark, and the Jews of Poland; of 1925, for Germany; of 1926, for the Jews of the Soviet Union.

Sources: *Sex and Age of International Migrants*, 1953, Tables: 76,79, 83, 100, 109, 111 for international emigration data.

MDS for Palestine's immigration and for Jewish emigration to Palestine from Eastern Europe.

Mitchell, 1975, Table B2 for general population data by countries. *Aliya*, 1935, Table 1 for total Jewish population in Poland and the Soviet Union; Bachi, 1977, Table 8.11, for their age structure.

It is shown that the relative extent of "under representation" of the 0-14 ages in migration was only slightly higher in Palestine's immigration originating in Poland and the Soviet Union grouped together than in the other international migrations combined (the emigration to population ratios were 0.535 and 0.399, respectively). But the "over representation" of the 15 to 29 age group among the emigrants leaving Poland and the Soviet Union for Palestine was comparatively less pronounced (1.769 vs. 2.129), thus reinforcing the observation that the weight of young adults among the Jewish migrants destined for Palestine was not exceptional, and may have even been on the low side of the international migration scene. Likewise, the above mentioned male domination of about 60 percent in Palestine's immigration falls also within the international range, as is well demonstrated in Panel A of Table 3.

Having established the immigrants' general demographic attributes, we may now proceed to ask if they uniformly characterize the newcomers to Palestine, or if any differences in their age structure by countries of origin could be detected. To address this question, Table 4 presents data on 31,494 immigrants for whom the MDS provides information of age by country or area of last residence prior to migration.¹⁸

The figures in the table are grouped into two clusters according to a rough age dividing line. Cluster I (constituting 84.4 percent of all the immigrants listed in the table) consists of areas in which the brackets of 15 to 29 years of age constituted at least 55 percent of all the emigrants destined for Palestine, while in the areas of cluster II these ages accounted at most for 40 percent. The emigrants from Central Europe, with the largest share of young adults (15-29) and the lowest weight of children (0-14), are particularly noticeable in cluster I. Note in addition that the immigration originating in Central Europe had the smallest percent of married persons (25.2 of those aged 15+). These observations may reflect the nature of the immigration from Germany and Austria (making for 79 percent of all the arrivals from Central Europe in the 1920s), which was at the time small in numbers but highly selective and dominated by young, mostly single, dedicated Zionists.

¹⁸ Except for Poland, The Soviet Union and Romania in which 74 percent of all the age-recorded migrants resided before emigration, the other countries of origin were incorporated into distinct geographic areas as listed in the table.

**Table 4. Immigrants to Palestine by countries/regions of origin (last residence):
Numbers, age structure, and proportion married, 1919-1932**

		Age structure (Percent)					All age-listed immigrants by origin		Percent Married (Age15+)	
		0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Total	Number	Percent	
Cluster I	Poland	17.6	55.1	17.0	9.1	1.2	100.0	14,996	47.6	43.5
	Soviet Union	14.2	60.9	13.9	9.8	1.2	100.0	4,452	14.1	35.8
	Romania	15.8	57.9	16.4	8.6	1.3	100.0	3,906	12.4	39.1
	Central Europe	7.5	70.5	16.2	4.8	1.0	100.0	1,845	5.9	25.2
	Baltic States	11.1	61.6	16.3	9.2	1.8	100.0	928	2.9	37.8
	Western Europe	10.5	58.2	18.4	9.9	3.0	100.0	474	1.5	36.6
Cluster II	Middle East, North Africa, Asia	33.0	34.7	20.6	9.5	2.2	100.0	1,948	6.2	65.6
	North America	11.1	24.3	24.0	32.0	8.6	100.0	1,941	6.2	67.9
	Balkan	16.6	39.3	24.8	16.0	3.3	100.0	1,004	3.2	61.5
Total								31,494	100.0	

Source: MDS

The emigrations from the areas of cluster II had in common, apart from the low proportion of the 15-29 age group, also a high share of married people (relative to cluster I), a feature which may well have been correlative with their particular age structure. Besides that, two additional findings should be alluded to: one is the exceptionally high proportion of children among the immigrants of Asian and African origin, suggesting that their families were larger than those of the other groups with similar shares of married people (the emigrants from the Balkans and from North America). The second finding is the exceptionally large weight of the 45 to 64 age group (32.0 percent) among the immigrants originating in North America (almost all of them emigrated from the United States and only a few from Canada), making it the largest age group within this immigration.

Likewise, it should be noticed that only a quarter of the US emigrants in the long 1920s entered Palestine with "labor" visas (see the discussion on the entry categories and types of visas in the next section). It may thus be inferred that the American immigrants to Palestine were by and large middle aged people who were materially secured, and able to provide for themselves and build an economic base in their country of destination. This inference is strengthened by the fact that the 1,941 arrivals listed by age in the MDS as emigrating from North America, constituted no less than 59 percent of all the immigrants holding American citizenship who reached Palestine between 1919 and 1932 (3,310 people in total, as derived from Sicron, 1957b, Table A8 and *Aliya*, 1935, Tables 10 and 30).

Before leaving the sending countries, however, it seems appropriate to digress somewhat and widen the scope of the discussion beyond the demographic attributes by dwelling on the patterns of migration as revealed in the data on countries of origin. Unlike the published statistics that classifies the countries of origin up to the mid 1930s in terms of nationality only, the MDS lists the sending habitats for a good many of the new arrivals by the three standard definitions: birth, nationality, and countries of last residence (see Table 1 above for the totals under each definition). This differentiation enables us to identify the country of birth for 15,255 individuals (out of 36,634) who are classified by their country of last residence prior to immigration, as reported in Table 5.

Table 5. Birth places of Palestine's Immigrants by Countries/regions of last residence, 1919-32 (Percent)

Country/Region of last residence	Born in Country of Emigration	Born in other Countries of:					Total	Total In numbers
		Eastern Europe	Central Europe	Western Europe	North America	Others		
Poland and Baltic States	90.0	8.7	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.4	10.0	8,607
Romania	53.6	43.0	1.3	0.3	0.1	1.8	46.5	1,828
Soviet Union	66.2	28.8	0.5	0.1	0.1	4.2	33.8	1,456
Middle East, North Africa, Asia	59.9	34.3	1.0	0.2	0.3	4.3	40.1	943
Central Europe	36.5	60.3		0.2	0.1	2.9	63.5	867
North America	21.0	66.5	4.8	0.9		6.8	79.0	808
Balkan	79.3	13.7	0.8	0.3		5.9	20.7	474
Western Europe	6.6	78.7	5.2		1.8	7.7	93.4	272
Total	71.5	25.1	1.0	0.3	0.2	1.9	28.5	15,255

Source: MDS

Some of the differences between the countries of birth and emigration are obviously due to border changes and to the establishment of new states following WWI, but others reflect undoubtedly varied patterns of migration across countries. While it is impossible to distinguish between these factors, some idea about the migration paths of Palestine's arrivals can nevertheless be obtained from the distributions presented in the table.

On the whole it is seen that 71.5 percent of the recorded immigrants were born in the countries of their last residence, but the differences between the various regions are quite illuminating. At one end of the range we find Poland and the Baltic States (the origin for more than half of the immigrants recorded in Table 5). No less than 90 percent of the people residing in these countries before migrating to Palestine were born there. It can thus be conjectured that most of the immigrants originating in Poland and the Baltic States did not experience any cross country migration before moving to Palestine. The same is true also for the emigrants from the Balkan. At the other end we see the emigrants from Central Europe, The United States, and Western Europe. Most of them were born in Eastern Europe and the move to Palestine was (at least) their second migratory experience after leaving (either as children or as adults) their original habitat. Note, likewise, that more than one third of the emigrants from North Africa, Asia and the Middle East were also born in Eastern Europe.

These two dissimilar patterns present different dimensions of the massive Jewish migration of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. More than two and a half million East European Jews moved mostly westward and became the main source of growth of the Jewish communities in the New World and in Central and Western Europe, and of the fast increasing Jewish community in Palestine, as well. Accordingly, it is demonstrated that the *yishuv* in the considered period was fed mainly by direct inflows from Eastern Europe and to a lesser extent by immigrants who made the long way from Eastern Europe to other destinations before landing in Palestine.

Getting back to the demographic profile of Palestine's immigration, I am ready to address now the question whether the immigrants destined for Palestine were differently selected (in terms of age and sex) from the Jews migrating in the 1920s to other destinations. In confronting this question I focus here on a bilateral comparison with the United States, the single largest destination country for Jewish immigrants in the era of mass migration.¹⁹

The US received about 50 percent of the entire Jewish international migration between 1920 and 1930, but this substantial weight averages two very different orders of magnitude. In

¹⁹ For a similar comparison for the years 1905-1914 see Alroey (2004), pp. 125-127.

1920-24, 67.5 percent of all Jewish international migrants (424,700) reached the US, but only 24 percent (out of 282,000) did so in 1925-30 (Metzer, 1998, Table 3.1). This gap reflected mainly the severe new federal restrictions on immigration that were put into law in 1924, further reducing the US entry quotas allotted to would be immigrants of East and South European origin, first introduced in 1921 (Bernard, 1982). Note that about three quarters of the Jewish immigrants to the US in 1920-24 emigrated from these European peripheries (Linfield, 1933, Table III).

Moreover, Palestine in receiving about 52 percent of the entire Jewish international migration (of 66,000) in 1925 (compared to the US share of merely 15.6 percent in that year) may have been the alternative destination choice for prospected Jewish emigrants (mainly from Eastern Europe) who were barred from entering the United States in the mid decade (Giladi, 1973, Second Chapter; Metzer, 1998, Chapter 3). This possibly forced "substitution" of destination sharpens the question whether the immigrants to Palestine and to the US were demographically two distinct groups or indistinguishable from one another. Providing an answer to this question, even if only tentative and suggestive, should be highly important for the characterization of Palestine's immigration in general, and of the *fourth aliya* in particular, vis a vis other Jewish migratory movements at the time. Table 6, which displays the age and sex composition of the Jews destined for Palestine and the US, as well as of the non-Jewish immigrants to America, should provide us with some useful observations for dealing with these matters.²⁰

It is seen that the proportion of children (0-15) in Palestine's immigration was substantially lower, and that of the prime ages (16-44) appreciably higher, than among the Jews immigrating to America. Likewise, no less than 62 percent of the arrivals to Palestine in 1920-1930 were males, unlike the US, in which the proportion of males among the Jewish immigrants over the same period did not exceed 45 percent.²¹ These dissimilarities – holding both for 1920-24, prior to the introduction of the tightened entry restrictions to the US, and for 1925-30, following their activation – suggest that the Jews migrating to Palestine were indeed demographically different from their brethren moving to America. Moreover, it is shown that the age and sex profile of Palestine's immigration was closer to that of the non Jewish immigrants to the US, reinforcing the above general inference that the immigrants destined for Palestine were

²⁰ The breakdown into the three age groups of 0-15, 16-44, 45+ is dictated by the US migration data by age which are divided in the considered years into these three age groups only.

²¹ The 62 percent are drawn from the MDS. Among all the immigrants to Palestine in 1920-30 of known sex the proportion was somewhat lower, reaching 57 percent, see Sicron, 1957, Table A13.

demographically similar to the international migration of the time, leaving in a sense the Jewish arrivals to the US as some kind of a "less selective" outlier.

Table 6. Age and sex of Immigrants: USA and Palestine 1920-1930 (Percent)

		USA		Palestine
		Jews	Others	
1920-24	0-15	29.7	17.3	19.7
	16-44	57.7	73.9	68.5
	45+	12.6	8.8	11.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total in numbers		286,560	2,488,040	13,942
Percent males in total		45.6	52.4	64.1
1925-30	0-15	24.8	16.0	15.8
	16-44	54.5	75.3	70.7
	45+	20.7	8.7	13.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total in numbers		67,686	1,694,924	26,488
Percent males in total		44.1	53.4	60.1
Jewish immigrants to the USA in 1924, and to Palestine in 1925-26				
		USA 1924		Palestine 1925-26
	0-15	27.6		19.2
	16-44	59.0		68.4
	45+	13.4		12.4
	Total	100.0		100.0
Total in numbers		49,989		18,753
Percent males in total		50.5		59.5

Sources: Linfield, 1931, Table XV, 1933, Table III for the United States, MDS for Palestine.

Some of these demographic dissimilarities, particularly in the second half of the 1920s, could have been possibly caused by differences in the immigration policies of Palestine and the US; In the former, preference was given to people of high earning potential determined by age, capital, and/or skills (see the discussion in the next section), while in the latter, immigration aimed at family reunion, allowing in many cases the completion of staged migration, was not

bound by the country quotas and was favorably treated in the otherwise restrictive law of 1924 and in practice (Bernard, 1982). To the extent that the channel of family reunion was exploited by the Jews, it could have reduced, other things being equal, the weight of males and of the prime working ages among the Jewish immigrants to the US, most of whom (as mentioned above) originated from the most severely quota-affected regions of Eastern and Southern Europe.²²

Looking specifically at the mid 1920s, the age and sex differences between the immigrants in 1925-26 and the American Jewish immigration of 1924 (just before the major changes in the US migration policy), are of particular significance (see the lower part of Table 6). They provide a firm basis for the conjecture that the arrivals of the *fourth aliya* were demographically distinct from the would be immigrants to the US even though Palestine may have well been considered a general "second best" alternative for many Jewish emigrants from the European periphery facing the closing doors of America.

The focus on the *fourth aliya* in examining Palestine versus the United States leads naturally to the next item on the paper's explorative agenda – a comparative account of the immigrants' demographic profile in the three sub periods of the long 1920s: the *third aliya* of 1919-23; the hay years of the *fourth aliya*, 1924-26; and the years of its declining phase, 1927-32.

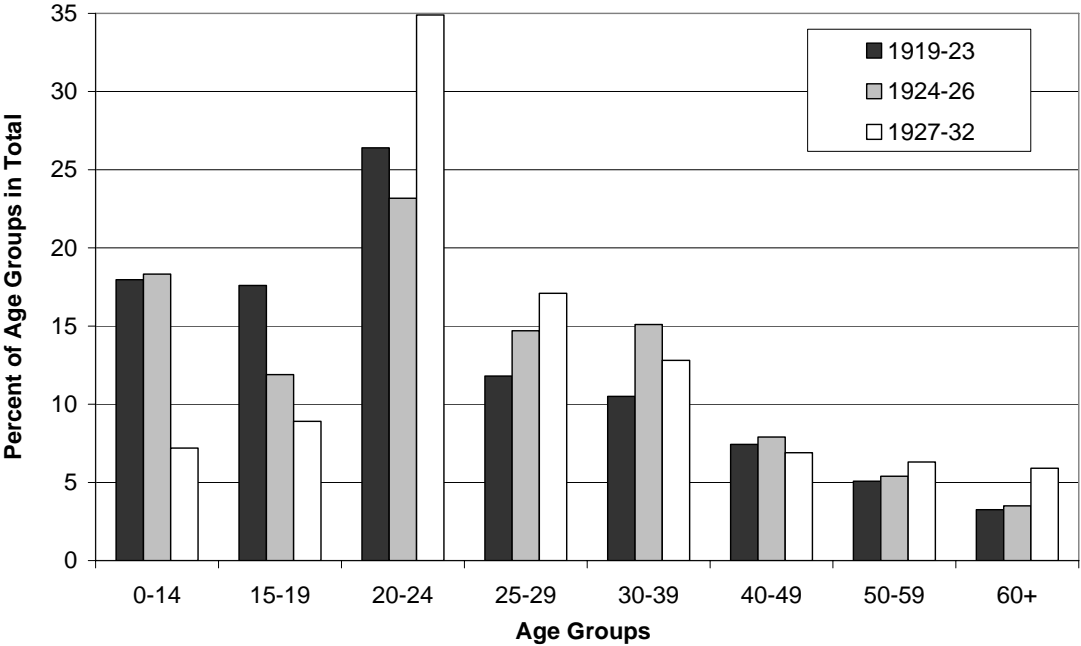
The *fourth aliya*, particularly the influx of 1924-26, has been characterized by contemporaries and in the historical literature as composed primarily of middle class, heavily urban, and self interested – individualistically inclined – people. They were thought to be driven to emigrate, at least to some extent, by the push factors of the tax policies in Poland at the time and by the loss of trading opportunities caused by the closing markets of Soviet Russia. These characteristics should have distinguished the immigrants of the mid decade from the *third aliya*, commonly perceived to be dominated by ideologically motivated, collectivist young pioneering migrants (see Giladi 1973). Obviously, this distinction, if valid, should be reflected also in the demographic profiles of the two migratory inflows.

The immigrants' age by sex composition, broken down into sub periods, is summarized in Figures 7 and 8, and the proportion married by sex, age and years of arrival, in Table 7, panel C,

²² This proviso of the American entry policies did affect mostly the immigration from the countries of Eastern and Southern Europe, which was most severely curtailed by the quota system. For example, in 1925-29 no less than 656,832 quota immigrants were admitted to the US from Northern and Western Europe but only 14,227 non quota immigrants, whereas for Eastern and Southern Europe the quota and non quota total admissions were about the same 98,555 and 96,951, respectively (Eckerson and Krichesky, 1947).

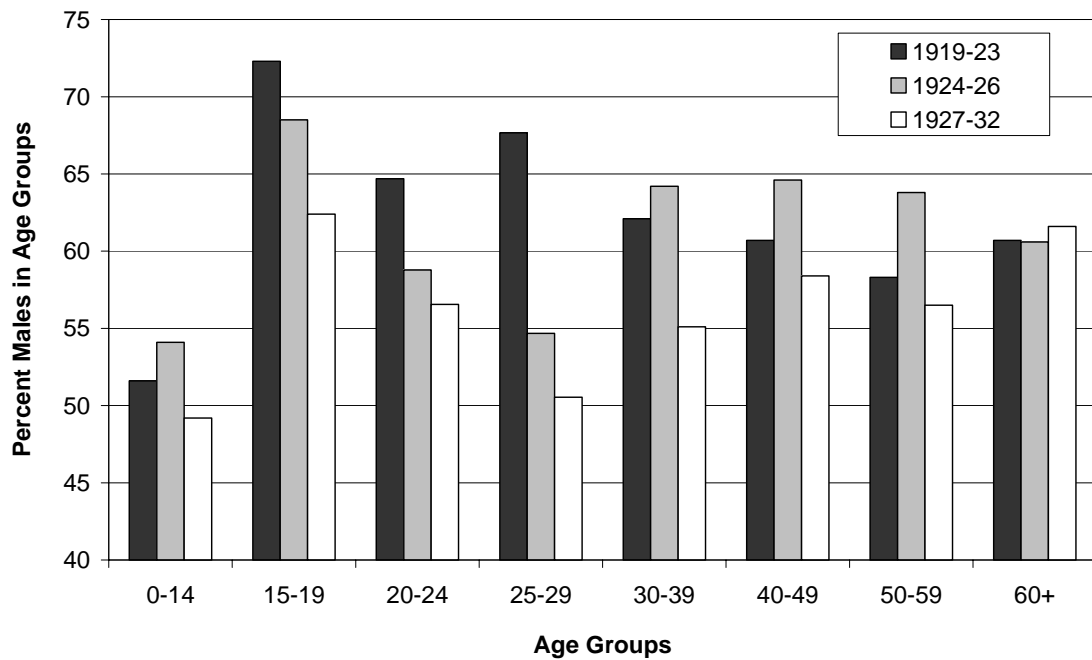
below. The findings reveal a somewhat mixed picture in so far as the distinction between the immigration waves (*aliyot*) is concerned. Considering first the *third aliya* (1919-23) against the peak years of the *fourth aliya* (1924-26), we find a number of similarities between the two inflows. Notice first the almost identical shares of children aged 0-14 (18 percent in 1919-23 and 18.3 percent in 1924-26), and the substantial weight of young prime ages (15 to 29) in the two migration waves. While it is not surprising to observe that the 15 to 29 age group constituted as much as 56 percent of all the arrivals in the *third aliya*, it is perhaps more surprising to find out that these ages accounted for about 50 percent of the newcomers in 1924-26, as well. Likewise, men made for 65.5 percent of the total immigration aged 15 and above in 1919-23, and no less than 61.4 percent in 1924-26 (the shares of males in all ages were 63.1 and 61.5 percent, respectively).

Figure 7. Age distribution of Jewish immigrants to Palestine by years of arrival



Source: MDS

Figure 8. Proportion of males in Jewish immigration to Palestine by age groups and years of arrival



Source: MDS

On the other hand, attributes consistent with the common distinction between the two waves are seen in the internal composition of the 15 to 29 age group, a larger weight of the younger ages 20 to 24, and particularly 15 to 19 in the *third aliya*, and a much higher percentage of men between the ages 15 and 29. Note also that only 17.8 percent of the men aged 20 to 29 arriving in 1919-23 were married, compared to 24.5 percent in 1924-26, with the analogous proportions for all the immigrating men (aged 15+) being 32.6 percent and 46.5 percent, respectively. The proportion of married women, however, both in the 20 to 29 age group and in all ages was about the same in the two sub periods (37.6 and 37.4 percent, for the 20-29 bracket and 48.7 and 51.4 percent for all ages).²³

It may thus be concluded that the *third aliya*, although not much different in its overall sex and age structure from the arrivals of 1924-26, does exhibit, nevertheless, a number of demographic characteristics that distinguish it from the latter influx. It should be stressed, however, that these characteristics, while being consistent with the perception of the *third aliya* as a particular movement of ideologically motivated young pioneers - mostly single men, were far from exceptional. They resemble quite closely the typical profile of the materially induced, self selected international migrants of the first two to three decades of the 20th Century.

²³ A detailed discussion of the immigrants' marital status and related subjects is conducted below.

In 1927-32, the years of relatively low immigration between the high points of the mid 1920s and 1930s, the picture gets more complicated. As far as the age structure is concerned, the immigrants of these years, with the relatively low proportion of children (7.2 percent vs. 18 percent in the previous years) and the heaviest concentration (60.9 percent) in the 15-29 age group, present a highly self selected profile, even more pronounced than that of the *third aliya*. Note in particular the extremely large weight of the 20-24 brackets (34.9 percent of the total inflow in 1927-32, against 26.4 percent in 1919-23 and 23.2 percent in 1924-26).

On the other hand, the lower proportion of men up to the age of 60, noticeably in the prime ages, and the finding that only 27.6 percent of the women aged 20 to 29 were married (vs. about 37.5 percent in the previous sub-periods), with a difference in the same direction holding for all women, blur somewhat the analogy with the *third aliya*. Moreover, the proportion of married men in the 20 to 29 age group was in 1927-32 virtually identical to that of 1924-26 and significantly higher than among the newcomers of 1919-23. Yet in the 30-39 years of age we get an opposite ranking, making for the share of married men among all the arrivals of 1927-32 (43.2 percent) to be much closer to that of the mid decade (46.5 percent) than of 1919-23 (32.6 percent). This adds to the problematics of comparatively characterizing the inflow of the later years. The ideological drive of young men and women to reach Palestine in spite of the economic downturn in the second half of the 1920s seems to provide only a partial explanation for the demographic profile of the influx of 1927-32. For a fuller explanation, more research on those “unmarked” years (to use the terminology offered by Gross, 1984) needs to be conducted.

As for the declining proportion of men among the immigrants of the late 1920s and early 1930s, it should be pointed out, though, that the same phenomenon is observed in most, if not all, the international migrations of the time. Prominent cases are, for example, the immigrations to North America, where the proportion of males shrank between the 1920s and the 1930s, in the US from 56.2 percent to 44.7 percent, and in Canada, from 67.3 to 47.9 percent. On the emigration side, the Scandinavian countries, Norway and Sweden, with a declining share of males among the emigrants from 62.1 percent to 44.1 percent between the two decades, are particularly eye catching (*Sex and Age of International Migrants*, 1953, Tables 21, 38, 100, 109).

This general pattern may have partially reflected the closing phases of staged migration, intensified by the emphasis on humanitarian concerns in the otherwise strict immigration laws and regulations activated by the main destination countries during the great depression (Easterlin, 1982). Staged migration may have played a non-negligible role in Palestine as well, thereby supplementing its more specific factors. These factors, among others, will be dwelt on in

the following discussion, which provides some more details on the immigrants' marital status and the extent of their migration within, and without, families.

The cross-classification of all the arrivals listed in the MDS by sex and marital status is presented in Table 7 (panel A), which reports (in panel B) also some internationally comparative figures.

Table 7. Marital status: Immigrants to Palestine 1919-32 by sex and age, and selected international migrations, 1921-26 (Percent)

A Palestine's Immigrants, age 15+						
	Married	Single	Widowed & Divorced	Total	Total in Numbers	
Men	42.1	56.7	1.2	100.0	19,945	
Women	48.2	48.3	3.5	100.0	12,921	
All	44.5	53.4	2.1	100.0	32,866	

B International migrations					
	Married	Unmarried	Total	Total in Numbers	
Emigrants					
1921-25, from:					
Germany	32.1	67.9	100.0		
Norway	35.0	65.0	100.0		
Sweden	32.0	68.0	100.0		
Immigrants to Argentina					
1921-26	40.3	59.7	100.0	837,000	

C Palestine's Immigrants: Percent married by sex, age and years of arrival						
	Men				Women	
	1919-23	1924-26	1927-32		1919-23	1924-26
15-19	1.4	3.7	7.6	9.7	11.0	16.7
20-29	17.8	24.5	24.3	37.6	37.4	27.6
30-39	71.9	82.5	68.3	86.8	83.7	59.7
40+	89.2	95.1	90.8	79.4	85.8	83.5
All	32.6	46.5	43.2	48.7	51.4	42.4
All in numbers						
Married	1,655	4,664	2,088	1,246	3,352	1,627
Total	5,077	10,031	4,837	2,561	6,526	3,834

Sources: MDS for Palestine; Willcox, 1931, country chapters for International migrations.

It is seen that 57.9 percent of the men, immigrating to Palestine over the long 1920s, and 51.8 of the women, were unmarried, making it a total of 55.5 percent of all the adults immigrants in 1919-32 (with more than 60 percent of all the unmarried persons being concentrated in the 15 to 29 age group). These proportions were much lower than the analogous ones in the German and Scandinavian emigrations of the early to mid 1920s, and also somewhat

lower than in the immigration to Argentina, and most probably, than in the inflow to the US at the time as well (Easterlin, 1982). It may therefore be conjectured that the observed shares of unmarried people among Palestine's newcomers were not above the international range, and may have even occupied its lower end. This finding reinforces the above inference that whatever the specific factors underlying Palestine's immigration may have been, they did not make for an atypical demographic structure of this movement.

Another important attribute, closely related to the immigrants' marital status is the extent of family migration, which is reported in Table 8 by sex, marital status and period of arrival. It is shown that 74.3 percent of all the married immigrants and 14.9 percent of the unmarried ones moved to Palestine within families. These made for an overall weight of 41.3 percent of family migration among all the immigrants aged 15 and above. In Germany, for example, 35.2 percent of the emigrants in 1921-26 migrated in families and in Norway the comparable share was 24 percent (Wilcox, 1931, pp. 301, 360). These few numbers can obviously not be an acceptable basis for firm comparative generalizations, but they do allow us to suggest that the extent of family migration to Palestine may have been in the 1920s quite substantial in international terms, thus pointing to its relatively permanent nature (see also Metzger, 1998, Chapter 3).

Table 8. Migration with family: Immigrants aged 15+ by sex, marital status, and years of arrival

		Men		Women		Total	
		All (Numbers)	With family (Percent)	All (Numbers)	With family (Percent)	All (Numbers)	With family (Percent)
1919-23	Married	1,655	65.4	1,246	89.4	2,901	75.7
	Unmarried	3,422	12.9	1,315	35.5	4,737	19.2
	Total	5,077	30.0	2,561	61.7	7,638	40.7
1924-26	Married	4,664	65.2	3,352	92.7	8,016	76.7
	Unmarried	5,367	11.5	3,174	27.9	8,541	17.6
	Total	10,031	36.4	6,526	61.2	16,557	46.2
1927-32	Married	2,088	59.1	1,627	79.2	3,715	67.9
	Unmarried	2,749	4.3	2,207	8.5	4,956	6.2
	All	4,837	27.9	3,834	38.5	8,671	32.6
1919-32	Married	8,407	63.7	6,225	88.5	14,632	74.3
	Unmarried	11,538	10.2	6,696	23	18,234	14.9
	Total	19,945	32.7	12,921	54.6	32,866	41.3

Source: MDS

The figures in Table 8 reveal in addition that women, both married and unmarried, tended substantially more than men to migrate within families. It is worth noticing, though, in line with the distinctions made above, that the extent of family migration was in 1927-32 appreciably lower than in the previous years. This decline is observed in all categories, but is mainly pronounced among women.

Focusing on married immigrants, some additional insights into the dynamics of the migration in question should be gained by observing the extent at which they moved with (or without) their spouses. Such information is given in Table 9 for 14,568 married people who arrived in Palestine between 1919 and 1932. The finding that over the entire period 41.5 percent of the married men and 24.8 percent of the married women immigrated without their spouses indicates that staged migration was indeed a significant part of Palestine's scene.

Table 9. Married immigrants to Palestine, migrating without spouses by sex, age and years of arrival

		Men		Women		Total	
		All married (Numbers)	Migrating without Spouse (Percent)	All married (Numbers)	Migrating without spouse (Percent)	All married (Numbers)	Migrating without spouse (Percent)
1919-23	15-34	659	36.6	672	20.5	1,331	28.5
	35-49	575	40.0	374	27.0	949	34.9
	50+	376	39.4	193	26.4	569	35.0
	Total	1,610	38.4	1,239	23.4	2,849	31.9
1924-26	15-34	2,156	34.6	1,878	18.0	4,034	26.9
	35-49	1,566	46.9	932	26.7	2,498	39.4
	50+	972	45.3	509	22.4	1,481	37.4
	Total	4,694	40.9	3,319	21.1	8,013	32.7
1927-32	15-34	833	26.8	835	22.5	1,668	24.6
	35-49	606	65.2	421	49.9	1,027	58.9
	50+	612	50.0	399	38.3	1,011	45.4
	Total	2,051	45.1	1,655	33.3	3,706	39.8
1919-32	15-34	3,648	33.2	3,385	19.6	7,033	26.7
	35-49	2,747	49.5	1,727	32.4	4,474	42.9
	50+	1,960	45.6	1,101	28.9	3,061	39.6
	Total	8,355	41.5	6,213	24.8	14,568	34.4

Source: MDS

Particularly revealing in this regard is the increase between 1919-26 and 1927-32 in the proportions of married men and women migrating without their spouses. Two observations are especially noticeable. One is the exceptionally high proportion of middle aged (35 to 49) married

men who traveled without their wives in the latter years (65.2 percent in 1927-32 compared to 46.9 percent in 1924-26), more than compensating for the decline in the percentage of the married men of younger ages who traveled alone. Given that the complete family size is typically reached in the 35 to 49 age bracket of parents, this phenomenon could be partly explained by the need of migrating married men in the more advanced ages to prepare the absorptive ground for their large families that would join them at a later stage. This need may have been strongly intensified during, and following, the economic downturn experienced by the *yishuv* in 1926-27, causing extra caution in planning and executing migration in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The second observation is the very sharp rise in the later years in the percentage of married women of all ages who traveled without their husbands. While some of the unaccompanied migration of married women in the earlier years could probably be attributed to "lagged" family reunion following WWI, its intensification in 1927-32 could reflect in part the "closing" of the mid and late 1920s staged migration "of men first," and in part the effect of fictitious marriages between immigrating women and single men residents of Palestine, a device resorted to, particularly in the 1930s, as a means of obtaining immigrant entry permits (Sicron, 1957a, Chapter 6; Bachi, 1977, Chapter 8, Section III).

With these remarks the demographic part of the exploration is brought to a close. In the next section attention is turned to some other, though not unrelated, attributes of the considered immigration.

III. Additional attributes of Palestine's immigrants

Three attributes, explorable by the MDS, are elaborated on in this section. I look first at the immigrants' language skills, then dwell on their occupational structure, and finally move to examine their entry categories.

Proficiency in the language of the receiving surrounding, let alone literacy in any language, has long been shown to have reduced the immigrants' costs of adjusting to the economic and social environment of their destination and to have increased their post-immigration earning capacity (Chiswick and Miller, 1992, 1995). In Palestine, Hebrew had evolved already in the early 1920s to become the common language of the modern Jewish community (the *yishuv*), and as such, was the language to be acquired by the immigrants of the time (see Table 11, below). Although no information is available on the acquisition of Hebrew by the newcomers after settling in Palestine, the MDS provides some details on language proficiency prior to migration, including Hebrew, of 27,569 arrivals in 1919-32.

The prior knowledge of Hebrew should be regarded as a selectivity attribute of the immigrants-to-be in two inseparable respects: one was the possibly stronger tendency among Hebrew knowing Jews to "make *aliya*," since the knowledge of Hebrew may have been an indicator of a strong Zionist commitment and/or because of the expected economic and social advantage to be derived from proficiency in the destination language. The other respect could well have reflected the deliberate decision to learn Hebrew taken by the people planning *aliya* as part of the preparation for their migratory move. Either way, it should be of interest to find out how the knowledge of Hebrew was distributed among the immigrants by sex and age, and also by countries of last residence.

Table 10. Command of Hebrew: language reporting immigrants to Palestine by sex and age, 1919-32

	Males		Females		Total	
	All (Numbers)	Hebrew knowing (Percent)	All (Numbers)	Hebrew Knowing (Percent)	All (Numbers)	Hebrew knowing (Percent)
0-14	2,199	13.8	1,890	10.5	4,089	12.3
15-19	2,425	71.8	1,145	47.4	3,570	64.0
20-44	9,999	72.0	6,392	42.3	16,391	60.4
45+	2,234	56.0	1,285	17.3	3,519	41.9
Total	16,857	62.5	10,712	34.2	27,569	51.4

Source: MDS

A summary of the sex by age picture of Hebrew-knowing, based on the immigrants' self reported information on languages, is given in Table 10. This information, besides possible inaccuracies of self-reporting, suffers also from deficiencies of not being sufficiently detailed, particularly in not distinguishing between reading, writing and speaking abilities. Nevertheless, the two main features that stand out in the table seem to be noticeable enough to withstand any possible data deficiencies. One is the substantially more extensive command of Hebrew among males than females in all ages, and the second is the higher proportion of Hebrew proficiency of some kind in the 15-44 age group of both sexes compared to both the younger and more advanced ages.²⁴

²⁴ Since the composition of the group for which information on the command of languages is available (27,569) by sex is virtually identical to that of all the listed immigrants in the MDS with known sex (52,612), the possibility that there were sex differences in responding to the "language" question on the immigrant cards is ruled out.

It may therefore be suggested that men may have invested more than women in learning Hebrew in expectation of becoming more involved in Palestine's labor market. The high concentration of Hebrew proficiency among prime aged men and women alike may indicate, at least partly, the same rationale. An additional, complementary explanation for the age concentration could be the Zionist zeal which should have naturally caught up more with younger people, inducing them to acquire Hebrew on ideological grounds. It is also quite revealing in this respect that the extent of Hebrew knowing among the immigrating children was conspicuously low; meaning that the acquisition of the language in primary school (including Jewish educational frameworks) was rather rare, and suggesting that Hebrew was acquired mainly in informal educational settings, at home, and in Zionist youth movements and other organizations.

The findings of Table 10 get some support from the *Census of Jewish Workers* (1926). The census contains data on Hebrew speaking, reading, and writing abilities by sex in two categories: foreign-born workers prior to immigration (they accounted for 92 percent of all the enumerated workers who responded to the language question in the census), and all the enumerated Jewish workers reporting on their command of Hebrew in Palestine as of September 1st 1926 (see Table 11).

It is seen that the gap in Hebrew proficiency between immigrating men and women before migration is demonstrated in the Census as well. Moreover, it is shown that the Hebrew "gender" gap did not disappear in Palestine, although the extent of Hebrew knowing was appreciably larger than abroad among the workers of both sexes. It is seen, in addition, that the response to the speaking, reading and writing classifications was almost identical in all the categories, implying that the listing in the MDS may well be regarded as indicating Hebrew literacy on part of the immigrants and not just Hebrew speaking skills.

Finally, the immigrants' Hebrew proficiency by country of origin (last residence before migration) is reported in Table 12. It is observed that the knowledge of Hebrew was quite prevalent among the emigrants from Romania, Eastern, Central, and Western Europe, but rather limited among the newcomers from North America, the Balkan, and Asia and Africa.

Table 11. Command of Hebrew by sex: Respondents to the Census of Jewish Workers, September 1st, 1926

Foreign born: Command of Hebrew prior to immigration:							
	Men		Women		Total		
	Total (Numbers)	Knowing Hebrew (Percent)	Total (Numbers)	Knowing Hebrew (Percent)	Total (Numbers)	Knowing Hebrew (Percent)	
Speaking	16,315	68.5	6,563	44.1	22,878	61.5	
Reading	16,404	71.0	6,426	45.3	22,830	63.8	
Writing	16,231	69.1	6,431	44.1	22,662	62.0	
All workers: command of Hebrew in Palestine							
Speaking	18,943	89.2	7,307	74.4	26,250	85.0	
Reading	18,430	89.1	7,368	72.5	25,798	84.4	
Writing	18,402	88.4	7,339	70.9	25,741	83.4	

Source: *Census of Jewish Workers, 1926*, Tables 38, 39.

Table 12. Palestine's immigrants 1919-32: Command of Hebrew and other Jewish languages by countries of last residence

	Poland	Romania	Soviet Union	Central Europe	North America	Asia & Africa	Balkan	Baltic States	Western Europe
Total reporting language proficiency (Numbers)	13324	2997	2049	1537	1329	1293	820	708	336
Command of Hebrew (Percent)	52.9	52.3	58.0	56.8	28.8	27.3	28.8	60.6	52.4
Command of other Jewish languages only (Percent)	44.2	37.2	31.4	22.1	55.6	13.7	18.2	33.3	26.2

Source: MDS

This suggests that the Hebrew selectivity factors may have played a lesser role in the emigration from the latter three areas of origin. However, unlike the American emigrants for whom the command of non-Hebrew Jewish Languages (i. e. Yiddish) may have "substituted" for the poor knowledge of Hebrew, it is quite surprising to find out that the extent of proficiency in any Jewish language (Ladino included) was low among the people arriving to Palestine from the Balkan and from Asia and Africa. A satisfactory explanation for this somewhat puzzling observation requires, however, a more detailed investigation of the nature of Jewish emigration from these areas, a task that has to await future research.

Closely related to the immigrants' earning capacity – besides literacy and language proficiency – are their pre-migration occupational experience and know-how. Some clues on these qualities among Palestine's immigrants are provided in the summary picture of Table 13. In the first two columns, the overall occupational structure abroad of 56,038 newcomers in 1919-32 (drawn from *Aliya*, 1935, Table 15) is presented side by side with the analogous composition of the 20,069 immigrants for whom occupation is listed in the MDS.

Table 13. Palestine's immigrants 1919-32: Occupations prior to immigration by age (Percent)

	Total		Immigrants listed in MDS by age		
	All registered Immigrants	Immigrants listed in MDS	15-29	30-44	45+
Professionals	8.2	7.0	5.9	9.4	9.1
Trade, managers & other white collar	11.0	16.0	9.3	25.6	38.6
Non agricultural skilled workers	41.3	41.6	43.3	42.0	32.0
Non agricultural laborers	16.5	14.1	17.0	8.2	6.5
Agriculture	23.0	21.3	24.5	14.8	13.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total in numbers	56,038	20,069	13,779	3,769	2,521

Source: *Aliya*, 1935, Table 15; MDS

It can be seen that the two distributions are quite similar, thus providing on the one hand additional evidence for the MDS's credible "representativeness," but on the other hand, directing us to look beyond the overall percentages for its singular contribution. And indeed, the added value of the MDS in the "occupational" area lies not in the aggregate but in the insights to be

gained from its derived distributions of occupations by age groups (the last three columns of Table 13).

Illuminating in this respect are the age related changes in the occupational structure. Take for instance the increase in the share of professionals from about 6 percent in the young ages to around 9 percent among the immigrants aged 30 and above. This pattern may well have been generated by the time-intensive training in many of the professions. Likewise, the continuously rising percentage with age of the immigrants engaged in trade, management and other white collar occupations may have reflected, besides the required training time, the significance of experience and capital accumulation in migration. Put it differently, we would generally expect considerations of age selectivity to induce people of relatively advanced age to migrate, if they possessed sufficient transferable resources, including experience and capital. Such resources could well have been abundant within the group of merchants, managers and white collar immigrants.²⁵ The non-agricultural skills occupy a middle position, they were the largest occupational category (42 to 43 percent) among the 15 to 44 age groups, declining to second place (with 32 percent) in the later ages, which were dominated, as shown, by the trade, management and white collar occupations.

Finally, we notice the two occupational categories which declined with age: non-farm manual labor and agriculture. In both cases the sharpest decline was between the 15-29 and the 30+ age groups. The fast age related decrease in the proportion of manual labor could also be mostly explained by material considerations of a general nature that, other things (including ideology) being equal, should motivate people with little transferable human capital to migrate, if at all, at young ages, so as to lengthen their earning period in the destination country.

However, to explain the age associated pattern of the agricultural occupations, Zionist-specific factors need to enter the picture. Reference here is to the agricultural training (*hachsharah*) in the countries of origin utilized primarily by young members of Zionist youth movements and other Zionist-socialist bodies prior to, and in preparation for, their immigration to Palestine. These training programs were mostly initiated and sponsored by the Zionist Pioneer (*He-Halutz*) organization. Moreover, given that as much as 21 to 23 percent of the adult immigrants of 1919-32 were self recorded as occupied abroad in farming (Table 13), it may be

²⁵ Consistent with these patterns are the findings that among the immigrant groups originating in the United States and in the Balkan States, whose members of 30 and above years of age constituted the high proportions of 64.4 percent and 44.1 percent, respectively (see Table 4 above), the shares of these two occupations were 40.3 and 37.9 percent in that order. In neither of the other countries of origin did they reach more than 27 percent.

suggested that for a good number of them their agricultural experience was limited to a few months or a year of enrolment in the Zionist training programs.

In the preceding discussion we concentrated on the immigrants' "supply" of occupational experience, irrespective of the entry determinants that the government specified in concert with its immigration policy. This policy, as is well known, was until 1937 overtly based on the vague concept of the country's *absorptive capacity* and translated operationally into specific entry categories, with which we are concerned next.²⁶ We start with a general quantitative documentation of these categories as recorded in the MDS, and then take up some of their age and occupational dimensions.

A summary picture of the 33,856 arrivals in 1919-1932 who are listed in the MDS by entry category is given in Table 14, columns 1 to 4. The arrivals enumerated in the table are grossly divided into three immigrant categories (numbers [1] to [3]), with an additional category of newcomers who held tourist (traveler) visas, officially allowing only for a temporary stay in Palestine (number [4]).²⁷ Note, however, that those who were granted entry as tourists/travelers before November 1933 were permitted by the government to stay permanently in the country without much difficulty (*Aliya*, 1935, pp. 26-38). Moreover, it is seen in Table 14 that the number of immigrating tourists in the MDS was very substantial, making for almost a quarter of all the arrivals in 1919-32. Apart from those, the returning residents of Palestine are identified by a separate category (number [5]).²⁸ And last are the people whose entry classification is not recognizable (number [6]).

²⁶ See Halamish (2003) on the *absorptive capacity* postulate as a policy guideline, and Halamish (2006) for a detailed documentation and analysis of the Zionist immigration policy in general, and during the 1930s in particular, concerning the various entry categories as constrained by the government directives and determinants.

²⁷ Until 1925 tourists were governmentally classified by entry category "A" (see *Reports of the Executive of the Zionist Organization*, 1923, p. 188 and 1925, pp. 222-223). From 1926 onwards the tourist/travelers were identified by category "H". In various immigrant lists they were often recorded alternatively by the number "8" (designating the alphabetical order of "H") or simply grouped under the heading of "tourists" (see CZA, Files S104). Interestingly, in the immigrant cards (from which the MDS was derived) all the immigrants who entered Palestine between 1926 and 1932 as tourist/travelers were listed as holding an "H" type visa.

²⁸ The returning residents of Palestine were classified by entry category "G" (see *Report of the Executive of the Zionist Organization*, 1923, p. 188), and were such recorded in the MDS.

Table 14. Jewish entrants to Palestine in 1919-32 by entry categories: Arrivals listed in MDS and all registered immigrants

	MDS listed arrivals with identified visas		All arrivals			
	Numbers 1	Percent 2	MDS listed arrivals		All registered immigrants	
			Numbers 3	Percent 4	Numbers 5	Percent 6
[1] Persons of independent means, and assured income or earning prospects	5,800	19.7	5800	17.1	18,568	14.8
[2] Persons having definite prospects of employment	11,150	37.8	11150	32.9	47,892	38.2
[3] Dependants, religious functionaries, pupils, and orphans	3,605	12.2	3605	10.6	19,628	15.7
[4] holders of visas allowing for temporary stay	8,020	27.2	8020	23.7	12,333	9.8
[5] Returning residents of Palestine	893	3.0	893	2.6		
[6] Unidentified and unknown			4388	13.0	26,928	21.5
Total	29,468	100.0	33,856	100.0	125,349	100.0

Sources and explanations: See text

The first immigration category (number [1] in the table) consisted of people possessing independent means of earning or minimal amounts of financial resources that were pre-determined by the government, but could be partially compensated for by the possession of gainful skills.²⁹ Applicants fitting this category would be granted immigrant entry permits by the British consuls in the countries of origin, or directly by the government in Palestine. There were generally no constraints on the number of permits issued under this classification until the second half of the 1930s, when political considerations led the government to impose restricting overall quotas on Jewish immigration.

The second, "Labor" category (number [2] in the table) refers to the number of immigrants, periodically decided upon by the Mandatory government, to be allowed into the country on the basis of their employment prospects.³⁰ The Zionist Executive would submit to the government periodic applications for the total number of entry permits (Certificates) under this heading, and would officially be responsible for their allocation. The third category (number [3] in the table) includes immigrants who were given entry permits by virtue of their dependence on immediate relatives, already residing in Palestine. To those, the small number (140 persons in total) of religious functionaries, pupils with assured means of existence, and orphans maintained by institutions in Palestine, were added.³¹

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²⁹ Classification [1] in Table 14 combines people who were listed in the immigrant cards under several entry categories: category "B" in 1922-29, categories A_i to A_{iii} in 1926-29, A_i to A_v in 1930-32 (see *Aliya*, 1935, Table 18) and category "H" in 1919-25. The "H" category is mentioned in the *Report of the Executive of the Zionist Organization*, as being designated for "small tradesmen and artisans who may be granted visas if they have assured prospects of earning their living in the country" (1923, pp. 188). Note that the Report of the Executive (1923, p. 188) states that category "H" was rarely used, and indeed only 66 arrivals in 1919-25 are listed under the "H" category in the MDS. It was already mentioned that starting in 1926 the "H" category was used to designate the entrants on tourist/traveler visas, see note 25, above.

³⁰ This Category was designated in the governmental classification as "E" in 1922-25, and as "C" later on (see *Aliya*, 1935, Table 18).

³¹ Religious functionaries were classified by entry category F in 1922-25, A_v in 1926-29, and B_{ii} since 1930. Orphans were classified by A_{iv} in 1926-29 and by B_i in later years, and pupils, by category A_{vi} in 1926-29 and B_{iii} afterwards (*Aliya*, 1935, Table 18).

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In columns 5 and 6 of Table 14, the distribution by entry categories of all the arrivals in 1919-32 as reported in *Aliya* (1935, Tables 18-19) is presented for comparative purposes. It is seen that the major discrepancies between the distribution of the entire immigrating population and that of the MDS-listed arrivals is found in the percentages of tourists and of the unidentified entrants. We conjecture that these discrepancies could be partly explained by the possibility that a non trivial number of immigrants entering Palestine with a temporary stay visa may have been listed in the published statistics (such as *Aliya*, 1935) under the unspecified or unknown categories.³⁴ Following this conjecture, we suggest that the MDS serves a useful function in demonstrating that the proportion of immigrants who entered the country with non-immigrant visas during the long 1920s may have been much larger than otherwise reported.

It is interesting to point also in this respect to some noticeable differences by areas of origin in the weight of the "tourist" vs. "immigrant" categories among the MDS-listed arrivals. Note that only 16% of the immigrants originating in Eastern and Central Europe were holders of tourist visas, while no less than 51% of those who came from North America and Western Europe, and 44% of the arrivals from the Balkan, Asia and Africa, entered Palestine on a temporary stay status. These differences may be possibly interpreted as an indication that most newcomers from the major countries of origin, mainly those of Eastern Europe, had already decided to make the big migratory move prior to departure, whereas in the West, and in other lesser countries of Jewish emigration, the decision to immigrate may have been taken in many cases "stepwise", choosing to enter Palestine first as tourists. A complimentary factor may have been the relatively less developed organizational infrastructure supporting immigration to Palestine in the "lesser" countries, thus leaving the avenue of tourist visas to be the most practical option for a good number of potential immigrants originating in those countries.

³³ Religious functionaries were classified by entry category F in 1922-25, A_v in 1926-29, and B_{ii} since 1930. Orphans were classified by A_{iv} in 1926-29 and by B_i in later years, and pupils, by category A_{vi} in 1926-29 and B_{iii} afterwards (*Aliya*, 1935, Table 18).

³⁴ This possibility seems quite real in view of the various listings of tourist/travelers, see note 25, above.

Finally let us look at the (MDS enabled) cross classification of the entry categories by the immigrants' age and occupations as reported in Table 15.

Table 15. Palestine's immigrants 1919-32: Entry categories by age and occupation (Percent)

	Immigrants' entry categories					Total in numbers
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	Total	
A Entry Categories by age						
0-14	30.4	36.4	15.2	18.0	100.0	4,055
15-19	20.7	43.2	12.7	23.4	100.0	2,936
20-34	12.6	48.5	10.5	28.4	100.0	13,431
35-49	28.2	30.5	10.7	30.6	100.0	3,656
50+	22.3	23.0	18.0	36.7	100.0	2,915
Total	19.3	40.9	12.3	27.5	100.0	26,993
B Entry categories by occupations						
Professionals	18.0	35.8	11.5	34.7	100.0	628
Trade, managers & other white collar	28.1	22.9	10.2	38.8	100.0	2,813
Non agricultural skilled workers	18.5	48.7	13.0	19.8	100.0	5,593
Non agricultural workers	11.8	57.4	12.3	18.5	100.0	1,445
Agriculture	13.7	53.8	11.4	21.1	100.0	2,502
Total	18.9	44.4	11.9	24.8	100.0	12,981

Source: MDS

In considering the distributions of the immigrants' age groups by entry category (panel A of Table 15), we should look mainly at the ages 15 and above, since the type of visa assigned to the immigrating children was determined pretty much by the entry status of their parents. As one would expect, it is observed that in the younger ages (15 to 34) the arrivals on labor certificates were the largest group, making almost half of the entrants in the prime ages of 20 to 34. In the more advanced ages, not surprisingly, the weight of the "independent means and assured earning," and the "tourist" categories, and in the 50+ age bracket the "dependent" category as well, grew significantly at the "expense" of "labor."

Complementary features to these findings are provided by the "occupational" panel (B) of the table. Whereas the "tourist" and the "independent means and assured earning" categories were the largest among the immigrants engaged in trade, management, and white collar occupations, with tourists making also a substantial percentage of the professionals, more than half of the farm workers and non farm manual workers had entered Palestine on a labor certificate. Likewise, "labor" was, also the largest category among the non farm skilled workers.

Linking these observations to the above discussed patterns of occupations by age, it is demonstrated that the age and occupational distributions by entry status support the overall inference about the general attributes of age selectivity that characterized Palestine's immigration in the long 1920s. These attributes are shown to have been reinforced by ideological factors affecting the immigrants-to-be on the one hand, and by the constraints and incentives regarding age, skills and economic means as reflected in the government's immigration policy and its derived entry categories on the other hand.

IV. Conclusions

This paper provided an interim summary of a research effort aimed at filling some of the informational gaps that had limited our ability to generate a detailed (quantitative) picture of Jewish immigration to Mandatory Palestine, particularly during the first decade of British rule. Concentrating on the long 1920s (1919-1932), we managed to construct from hitherto unutilized archival sources a new micro data set (MDS) covering more than 40 percent of all the registered immigrants of the period. This data set, containing rich demographic details of about 45,000 individuals and other pieces of information, provided the necessary basis for the explorative documentation and analysis of the paper. In presenting and studying the new data, extensive use was made of the opportunity provided by the MDS for cross classifying the immigrants different attributes, and for placing them in appropriate comparative contexts of the international (including Jewish) migrations of the time.

Strictly speaking, the findings reported in the paper refer only to the immigrants listed in the MDS and not to all the immigrants of 1919-32. Nonetheless, I venture to claim (as done in the first section) that the large size of the MDS and the similarity between its major derived attributes and the existing aggregate migration picture, guarantee the generality of our findings and observations. They should thus be interpreted as applicable, at least suggestively, to the entire immigrating population.

In newly documenting and comparatively analyzing the demographic characteristics, labor market skills, and entry categories of the immigrants, the paper was able to offer tentative answers to some of the questions concerning the nature of Palestine's Jewish immigration in the long 1920s and its varying profiles. While doing that, the explorative journey of the paper also led to some new and still unresolved issues that should provide sufficient motivation and enough room for further research.

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