

capital, and in spite of the use of low-paid Arab labor,⁹⁵ put them “on the verge of collapse.”⁹⁶ Thus, in 1883, merely a year after the first settlement, the settlers had to turn to the French banker, Baron de Rothschild, for help without which they would not have survived.⁹⁷ According to one estimate, Rothschild’s financial support exceeded £P 5,000,000.⁹⁸

This relatively large sum of money, along with agricultural experts, who were also provided by Rothschild, were critical components for the new form of agricultural organization, namely, plantations of cash crops of fruits and almonds. Most important were grapes for wine making destined primarily for export.⁹⁹ The original settlers remained on the plantations, but a greater number of Arab laborers were also used. For example, in 1889, the settlement of Zikhran Yaaqon had 200 Jewish settlers and 1,200 Arab laborers.¹⁰⁰

Nonetheless, the plantations proved unprofitable for Rothschild, a non-Zionist,¹⁰¹ who saw his financial support to the Jewish European colonial effort as primarily a business venture in spite of elements of philanthropy. The situation

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Dan Giladi, “The Agronomic Development of the Old Colonies in Palestine (1882-1914),” in Moshe Ma’oz, 176.

⁹⁷Owen, *Middle East*, 270-1; Giladi, 176-7.

⁹⁸Lehn and Davis, 9.

⁹⁹Owen, *Middle East*, 271; Giladi, 177.

¹⁰⁰Lehn and Davis, 39.

¹⁰¹Nathan Weinstock, *Zionism: False Messiah* (London: Ink Links, 1979), 67.