ON THE ROAD TO ZION

Charles Greenberg



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During the last week of March I was taken on a tour of the Prison in Akko. While inside I received a phone call from my best friend Nir Zlochover, he casually remarked that his great grandfather had been a freedom fighter and held at the prison in 1937-1938. I asked an employee if it would be possible to look up his file. To my surprise there was very little information on him and why he had been a prisoner. At that point I was intrigued and wanted to know more. I did not know at the time, but his life story would soon become intertwined with my own.

Dedication

I would personally like to extend my deepest gratitude to the following people, who without their interviews and help, this report would have been impossible to write. My best friend Nir Zlochover and his family, Udi, Mazel, Dina and Moshe Zlochover. Dina and Moshe Zlochover can be reached at 972-641-5331 for further inquiries. To Leah and her colleagues at the Akko Prison who helped me along the way. I would also like to thank the employees at the Central Jerusalem Prison for their enthusiasm with this project, and Brett Weatherston for his impeccable editing skills. Thank each and every one of you very much for your participation!

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Preface

Akko is a city that's located in northern Israel (western Galilee region) along the northern part of Haifa Bay, on the Mediterranean Sea. It's one of the oldest continually inhabited places on Earth, which dates back to the time of the Egyptian Pharaohs (1500 BC). Akko came under Persian rule and for a time, was controlled by Alexander the Great. After the Roman-Jewish War (AD 66-77) and

the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70, Muslims then took control of Akko from Christian Crusaders in AD 1291, unfortunately destroying much of the city and its surroundings.



Image 1. View of Akko from the Prison's tower.

In more modern times, the Akko Prison was built by the Bedouin Sheikh Daher el Omar, the Bedouin ruler of the Galilee in the middle of the 18th century on the remains of the Crusader Hospitaller Citadel. During the Ottoman period, Al Jazzar and the Turks restored the site. It served as a palace, a government house, and a military camp.

Under the British Mandate for Palestine (1917-1948), the prison served as a maximum-security prison where Jewish underground fighters were jailed and many executions were subsequently carried out. The prison was the most highly guarded fortress in the country, as it's surrounded by thick walls and a deep moat. On May 4th, 1947, the Irgun Tsvai Leumi (National Military Organization) launched an attack on the Acre fortress, freeing twenty of their comrades and seven Lehi fighters. Despite the heavy toll in human lives, foreign journalists described the action as the "greatest jail break in history," while military circles around the world described it as a "strategic masterpiece."

After 1948, the British Mandate ceased to exist and Akko's Prison became a hospital for the mentally incapacitated. Recently, in 2007, the prison was converted into a museum.

The Early Years

Jacob Zlochover was born April 19th, 1901 in Darno, Hungary. He grew up hearing the stories about Palestine and its un-ending upheavals during his teenage years. When he turned 20 in 1921, Jacob made aliya and moved to Jerusalem, leaving behind a brother and 4 sisters. They would be reunited27 years later, in 1948, at the dawn of Israel's independence.

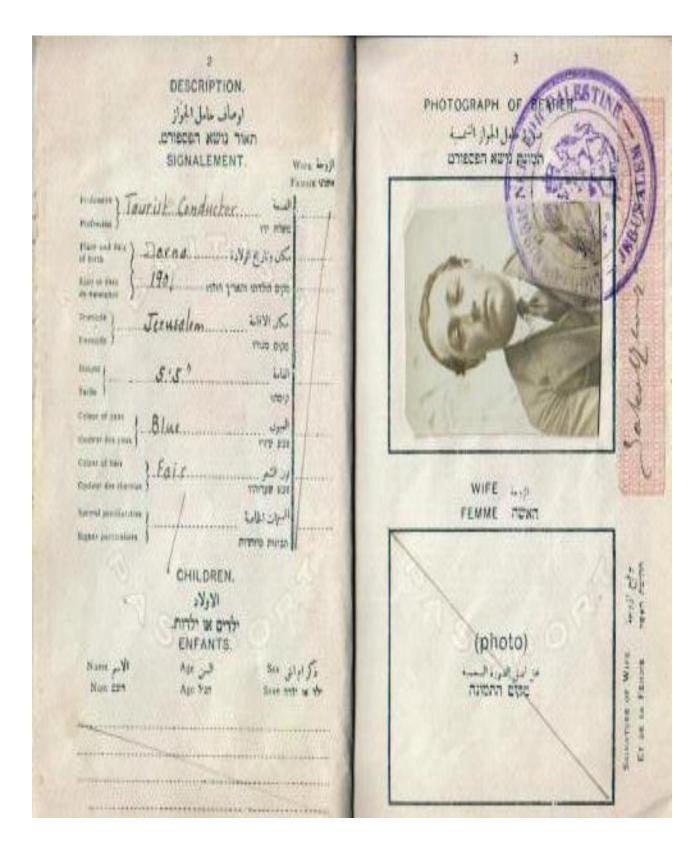


Image 2. 2nd and 3rdpage of Jacob Zlochover's Palestinian Passport.

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Image 2. First and inner pages of Jacob Zlochover's Palestinian Passport.

AFFILIATIONS & ASSOCIATIONS WITH POLITICAL GROUPS

Once in Jerusalem, Jacob lived on the corner street of Achva Reshit Chohma¹. Shortly after he moved there, Jacob joined the "Halutz," (pioneer) where he was an individual who was prepared for anything; for whatever the land of Israel needs. "Simply an iron rod; flexible – but strong like iron". A metal that can be molded into whatever the national machine required". He was very proud of his work and mostly participated by building homes, guarding settlements and kibbutz, in addition doing whatever else might have been asked of him from 1921-1922.

 $^{^{1}\,\}text{Moshe Zlochover}$ (son of Jacob Zlochover), in an interview at his home on June $8^{\text{th}}\,$ 2012.

² Quote taken from Joseph Trumeldor in THE IRGUN, by Joseph Kister pp. 11.



Image 3. Jacob Zlochover while in the Halutz, picture taken 1921 or 1922. He made this version of the picture himself.

For income, Jacob was a tourist conductor, and had Palestine's permission to take people to Syria, Egypt, France, Italy, Romania, Germany, Switzerland, and Belgium. For supplementary income he was also a waiter at Café Europa³ on Jaffa Street in Jerusalem.

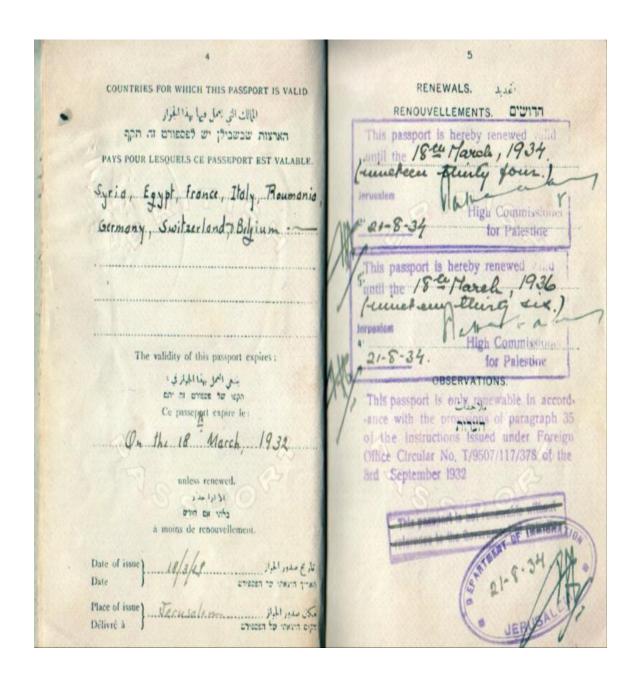


Image 4. 4^{th} and 5^{th} pages of Jacob Zlochover's Palestinian Passport.

 $^{^3}$ Dina Zlochover (daughter in-law of Jacob Zlochover), in an interview at her home on June $15^{\rm th}\,2012$

Once he finished his time with the Halutz he joined the Revisionist Youth Movement Club "Betar," in 1925 where he was taught drill tactics and strategy, light weapons, first-aid, guerrilla warfare, espionage, defense tactics, map reading, topography, cultural activities, nationalism, and martial spirit. One of his first tasks was to provide personal security forZe'ev Jabotinsky, who founded the movement. The reason for joining was his inherent passion to create a proper national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

It became apparent in 1935 that there were negative factions within the organization and once Jabotinsky resigned from his own movement, Jacob decided to join the Etzel; Hebrew acronym for Irgun Zva'I Le'umibe Eretz Yisrael(The National Military Organization in Eretz, Israel). Even though he was morally opposed to violence against Arabs, he felt that the movement was making more progress than the Haganah, who he believed were not doing enough for the cause.

1937-EVENTS LEADING TO DETAINMENT

After the killing of five Jewish workers on November 9th, 1937, the British Mandatory government announced the establishment of military courts in Palestine, which came into effect on November 18th, 1937. The crimes that would fall under the jurisdiction of these courts included:

- 1. Shooting of a firearm at any person is a capital crime
- 2. The personal possession of weapons, explosives etc., is a capital crime
- 3. Acts of sabotage and terrorism are capital crimes

Jacob's involvement grew stronger and he was selected to carry⁴ the burden of hiding weapons within his home. During this period of time the police would conduct routine surveillance of his home on a regular basis and search for arms or munitions. On one such occasion, three officers, an Arab officer, a British officer and Jewish officer had heard that Jacob had received a cache of weapons. Fortunately the Jewish officer was a

 $^{^4\}text{Udi}$ Zlochover (grandson of Jacob Zlochover), in an interview at his fathers home on March 30th^{th} 2012

sympathizer, and Jacob quickly told him where the arms were hidden. The Jewish officer told the others to search high and low, while he remained, sitting on top of where the arms were hidden. The other officers found some loose floor tiles and proceeded to pull them all out with haste. Finding nothing, they vowed to return and catch him eventually.

On Sunday the 14th of November 1937, known as "Black Sunday," Jacob was involved with what was considered the breaking of the self-restraint ("Havlaga") of the Jewish people. He ended up throwing a grenade at the Machane Yehuda police station. Exactly one week later, on Sunday, the 21st of November 1937, while working at Café Europa, Jacob was arrested under Martial Law. He was taken to a building in the Russian Compound that served as the central prison for the British Mandatory authorities in Jerusalem. He was brought there after being identified by a woman as the individual responsible for the grenade attack the previous week. It's not clear how much time he spent imprisoned there since the Jerusalem Central Prison no longer has any records for undetermined reasons. At the compound, this is the only record that he was ever there, and unfortunately the information is only partially correct.

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	תאריך ונסיבות השחרור:

Image 5. Jacob Zlochover's Jerusalem Prison card.



Image 6. Jerusalem Prison.

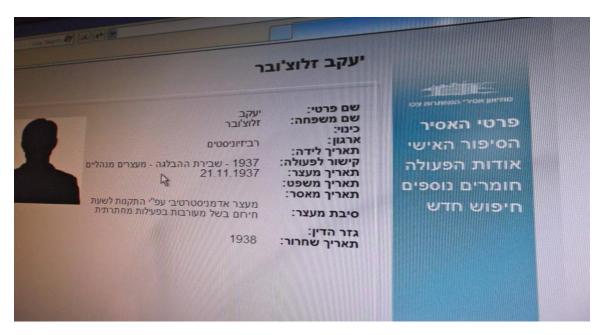


Image 7. Jacob Zlochover's record in the Akko Prison system.

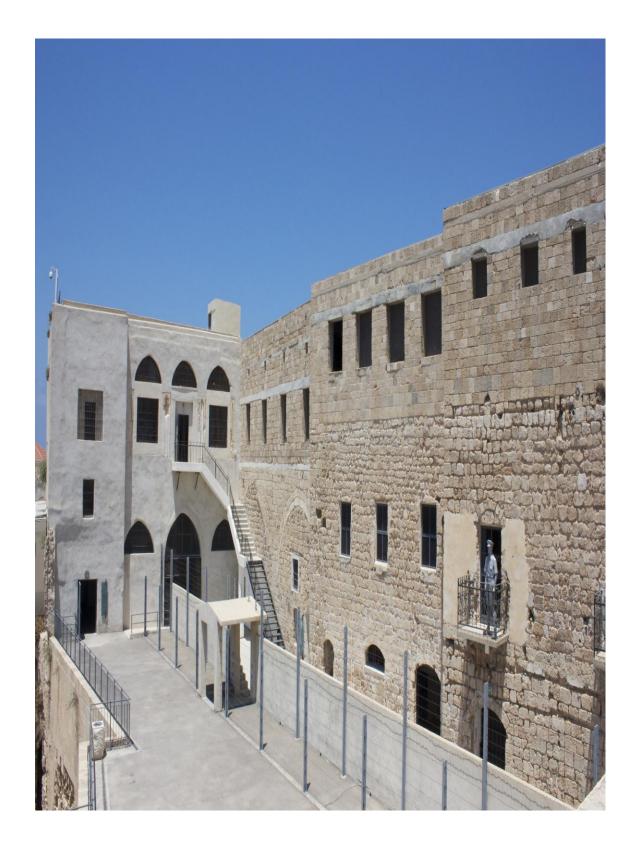


Image 8. Akko's Prison.

1938-Akko Prison Experience

Jacob was not there long before he was transferred to the imposing Akko prison, which was commandeered by W.R. Worlsley from 1935-1940. Once inside the intake room he was given two pairs of woolen brown pants, a grey undershirt, two collarless brown shirts, two pairs of socks, brown sandals, and a brown hat. After a hastily done haircut, he was placed in cell 28 with the other political prisoners and freedom fighters.

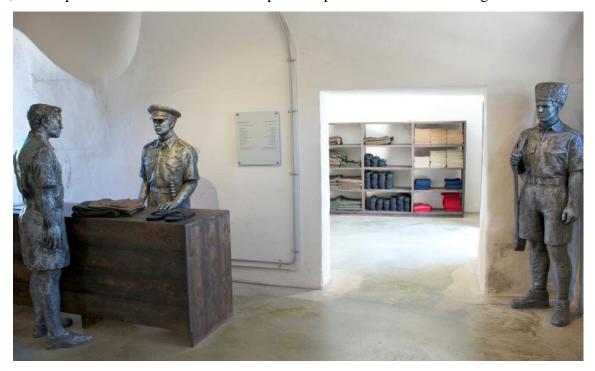


Image 8. The intake room of Akko's Prison.

The time spent was not easy for Jacob or his family. Fortunately his 10-year sentence had been suspended to 6 months when the sole witness proved to be unreliable. His wife Sara was left alone with their 3 children and no income. There were many nights where they went sleepless, afraid and hungry.⁵

⁵ Dina Zlochover (daughter in-law of Jacob Zlochover) and Moshe Zlochover (son of Jacob Zlochover), in an interview at their home on June 15th 2012

Every other week his wife would take a bus from Jerusalem to bring him kosher food since there was none served in the prison. The guards would tear apart whatever was brought searching for weapons, notes, or money. On one very rare occasion she was able to smuggle in a few coins inside of a cake. As expected, the guards, decimated the cake and tore it apart completely, but fortunately they didn't discover the coins on the bottom. This was very helpful because he could use the coins to barter with the other inmates for various things. His time was spent doing mundane tasks like cooking and cleaning, but it helped pass the time. For leisure, he and his fellow inmates would exercise and play sports. There was much talk of escape, but with his reduced sentence, Jacob did not feel it was a worthwhile endeavor.



Image 9. Cell 28 in Akko's Prison.

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⁶ Dina Zlochover (daughter in-law of Jacob Zlochover) and Moshe Zlochover (son of Jacob Zlochover), in an interview at their home on June 15th 2012

1938 was also the year when his friend Shlomo Ben-Yoseph was hung from the gallows. He died with a firm belief that his sacrifice sanctified the road to the redemption of the Jewish people and its land. Shortly after, another friend, Mordekhai Schwartz was executed.⁷



Image 10. The gallows of Akko's Prison.

 $^{^7}$ Dina Zlochover (daughter in-law of Jacob Zlochover) and Moshe Zlochover (son of Jacob Zlochover), in an interview at her home on June $15^{\rm th}\,2012$

Life after Akko

Once Jacob's 6-month prison term was over, he returned to Jerusalem. Without many options available to him, he joined the Haganah and continued to participate in the fight to force the British out of Palestine. An order from Defense Minister David Ben-Gurion on May 26th, 1948 officially set up the Israel Defense Forces as a conscript army formed out of the Haganah

that incorporated and consolidated the militant groups Irgun and Lehi. Jacob was a Regiment Sergeant Major from 1948-1949. From 1948 until his death in 1964, Jacob had the honor of raising the Israeli Flag at the annual parade of Israel's independence.



Image 11. Jacob Zlochoverwhen he was Regiment Sergeant Major with the Israel Defense Force.

⁸ Dina Zlochover (daughter in-law of Jacob Zlochover) and Moshe Zlochover (son of Jacob Zlochover), in an interview at their home on June 15th 2012.



שלמה נולן זייל

בה בן יוסף גולן (גולדנברג - שפיור) בשנת 1913 בטארנופול שבפוליו. מנעוריו שעיל ב,,נוער הציוני" ועלה לארץ בשנת כל ימיו היה חלוץ באופיו ובמהותו בכל

עד שנפטר ללא עת לפני 3 שנים.

האישי למעו בטחוו הישוב. לא היה שבחל בו, וחש תמיד בין הראשונים . עצמר.

ו חשובות ולעתום אף מכריעות.

ם קום המדינה, ובצער פרש מן השירות. בול הנוכחי. כראש לאירגון השוטרים המשוחררים, גם בעת שפקדה אותו המחלה הקשה (כיבי ב־11 בספטמבר 1965 נפטר יעקב ולוציבר, טרידוהו לא מעט בכעיותיהם, כי תמיד קיבה), לא ניאות לנטוש את זירת הקרבות. בו יד עוזרת ואוון קשבת. למחיית המשי בסוף מלחמת-השחרור הועבר לגדוד חיים ירושלים היא שהיתה עירו, עליה הגן, בה חי - רעייתו הנאמנה שליוותה אותו בכל 962 כמסקד לפלוגת-המטה, עד אשר שוהרר. ייסד הוא נמטר ב־10.8.66, בניל 61. ברד התיאטרונו "לאן הערב", שחסרונו יהא וכרו של אישיהגנה נאמן ומסור וה

גרשון (נוסק) גיכס, ז"ל

כשוטר מיוחד ושמר ב,תליארות". ב־1942 השתתף בקורם למכי"ם במעלה החמישה, ובי 1947 מונה כמפקד-קטע בצפון־תלפיות. עם פרוץ מלחמת־השחרור שימש כסגן למ־ פקד של אזור טלביה (בכך גם כמפקד האיזור



תמיד לעזור לזולת, בעל־משפחה למופת, מסור ונאמן לביתו ולילדיו. לא מעט סבל, כי ענייני המשפחה התנהלו לא תמיד על מי־מנוחות. אפילו האסונות שפקדוה לא מוטטוהו, כי ידע להתגבר עליהם עד מהרה והמשיך את חייו

ת ראשונים לו בהיהלצות למשטרה, לפי הספר "עומריה" ועל בניין "דויד". את הידיעות שוניה, נימנה עם הנאמנים ועם המסורים. המוסדות הלאומיים בשנת 1935. רק הללו קיבל גיבס מרביסמל אנגלי, שהביע את ממושמע ומבצע כל תפקוד, ולו הקשה ביותר,

ית בימים ההם, לתקומת המדינה. הצבא הבריטי. רב־הסמל עשה את המבוקט, גרתם יעקב מיומה הראשון בכל נפשו ומאודו. וכן המציא תכניות על בית־החולים האנגלי לא צעיר עוד היה או, אבל מצא את מקומו ה היה נלהב ודרוך תמיד לכל מישאלה שבטלביה והביא עמו מכונית ושמיכות. מפחי יומם וליל בחזית אשר בירושלים, שכן לא אלותינו, גכון היה תמיד להקריב את נפש נגרם לגיבס, כשהמיפקדה שלנו לא אישרה איש כמוהו יישב בעורף; ועם קום צה"ל את ההסכם, על אף דרישתו התקיפה. אף- אח"כ. היה בו מראשוני הרסרי"ם, והיתה על

ו בילה" בנעימים עד שנפרצה "דרך־בורמה". רי ה"הגנה" בירושלים היה בו זלוציובר מבין ז היה בהליכותיו ומיעט לשוחח עם עם הקמת צח"ל, מונה גרשון כמפקר־פלוגה הפעילים ביותר. מדי שנה בשנה היה משתתף יו על מפעליו הרבים. בשנת 1936 הש" בגדוד 162 ושתה עמה ב,ימין־משה", הר ביום־הזכרון לחללי מלחמת־הקוממיות וממלא בהגנת העיר העתיקה. חבר ל, הגנה" וק: ציון ודיר־אבו־טור. גם לאחר שהקרבות שככו תפקידים נכבדים. יחד עם שמוליק יפה ו"ל, ולית בכל עת ובכל זמן, הביא תועלת והלכו, עוד נמשכה המלחמה על הבתים של היה בחרדת קודש ממניפי הרגל ומורידו לחציר לש"י, בהעבירו לאנשיה בסכנת־נסשות אבריטור, והיריות לא פסקו כל העת. הוא התורן לאות אבל. כן שימש זלוציובר כאהד שניהל את המו"מ עם המפקדים המקומיים של הסגנים במחלקת־הסקר של הנשיא, והיה צמוד ב היה את תפקידו האחראי בקציון־משי הצד שכנגד — מו"מ, שקבע למעשה את הגד למקום במשך כל היום וממלא כל תפקיד שהוטל עליו.

חבר

אהרן פלפון (אוריק בלייףי) וייל

יעקב אדיר אהרן טלמון, הוא "אוריק בליץ", נולד בשנת רכ"א. עודנו נער, עלה לארץ עם בני קבועתו מקראקוב — מראשוני העלייה השלישית שב־ ד דיל נולד בשנת 1905 בעיר לודני יעקב זלוצי'בר ז"ל גאליציה המערבית. עם בואם, הם נשלחו לאלי : כחניך של תנועת "השומר הצעיר", יעקב זלוציובר הגיע ארצה מצירנוביץ שבי תר להכשיר את קרקעות דילב שממול

על עויבת הבריטים, הצליח להשתלט על ביתי גם במשפחת ה,,הגנה", שהיה מוותיקיהיראי ב יודעים על טיב העורה, שהושיטו השוט- רצונו לערוק. גרשון הבטיח לו מקלט, אם ימי לשביעת־רצונם של הממוגים עליו. יהודים, אשר שירתו במשטרה הערבית: סור על תאריכי הפינוי ופרטים על תנועות ולמלחמת־הקודש, זו מלחמת־הקוממיות עליפייכן, הסתיר את רביהסמל בביתו, כך גאוותו. הנוקקים במסירות, בנאמנות ומתוך ומחמת המצור, שכן אצלו הלה, שתה ואכל לאחר מלחמת השיחרור, משהוקם ארגון חבי

שרידוהו לא מעט בבעיותיהם, כי תמיד קיבה), לא ניאות לנטוש את זירת הקרבות.

רצה ב־1926. לראשונה עבד בפרדסי בוקובינה, והוא נער בן למשפחה מכובדת לאבורגוש ולהקים עליה את קרית־ענבים. ב ולאחריסכן נצטרף לקיבוץ עין־שסר. וציונית בעירו. הכרתיו עת הגיע לירושלים בבואו אל בין סוללי הכביש עפולה-נצרת כבר בילים הגיע ב־1929, התגדב ל"הגנה" בראשית שנות ה־20, ובייחוד כשכני לדירה נחשב לפועל של ממש – מנקב בסלעים משיל בשיר העתיקה. ב־1936 שימש במשך שנים מספר. צנת ושובילב היה, מוכן ומבקעם לאבני ה,סולינג" (ההשתית), מאמן

Image 12. Article by the Haganah for Jacob Zlochover's obituary in 1964

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The following are the online sources I have read in advance to gather information and documentation on Akko's Prison and various activist groups:

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