Atypical Settler Colonization in Modern Times: 
Jews in Mandatory Palestine and Other Cases 

by 

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In considering the settler societies of the modern era and their economic structure and functions, we usually think about colonizing settlements of Europeans in distant areas, which the States of Europe (primarily Britain and to some extent Holland and France) took control of in the course of their colonial expansion from the 17th to the early 20th Century. The temperate climate of the colonized territories in America, Africa, and Oceania provided a hospitable environment, and their rich natural resources, an economic incentive for Europeans to settle in those areas. Likewise, the inability of the indigenous peoples to effectively resist dispossession and otherwise marginalization guaranteed in many cases the dominant position (at least for some time) of the settlers and/or their mother countries in the colonized territories.

Within this broad category, two types of colonization are commonly identified: one consists of the colonial settlements in America and Oceania, and the other, of the African settler colonies. In the first type, the colonized areas were sparsely populated on the eve of settlement, with the size of the indigenous population diminishing further afterwards – succumbing to unknown diseases imported from Europe and to assaults by the colonizers – thus sharply reducing the potential supply of native labor for the settlers to draw on. Consequently, the settlers had to resort to imported labor (initially of coerced nature: convicts, indentured labor, and slaves), in addition to utilizing labor services of their own ranks. Immigration continued to be attracted to these "labor scarce" colonies that finally turned into the independent polities and societies of the "New Europe" overseas.

The settler colonization of the African type (primarily in South Africa, Algeria, Southern Rhodesia, and Kenya) was characterized on the other hand by whites settling in densely populated areas, where the colonial governments had typically played an active role in securing land for the colonizers, using a variety of administrative means. These included, not the least, the dispossession and displacement of indigenous people, who found themselves in many instances forced to provide labor services to the colonial administration and to the white private
settlers who had to rely heavily upon the natives for the provision of labor. The economic dependence of the white settlers on the indigenes' cheap labor, and the enormous gaps in size and wealth between these two peoples proved to be dynamically unstable, enough to turn the tide on the hegemony of the colonizers in the countries of Africa which managed to decolonize in the second half of the 20th Century (Mosley, 1983; Kennedy, 1987; Osterhammel, 1997).

The above two types are fairly representative of the colonial settler economies and societies as commonly perceived. But the notion of settler colonization in history, referring to the settlement of well identified peoples (by ethnicity, religion, politics, culture and/or social affinity) in new areas – where they gained possession of land and established their distinct entities – allows for more diverse phenomena than that of the colonialist settlements. This is true for the pre modern period and for the 19th and 20th Centuries alike (see Lloyd and Metzer, 2005).

In this paper attention is turned precisely to such "atypical" instances of settler societies, concentrating on the colonization of Jews in late Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine, and supplementing the discussion with some observations on two additional phenomena: the Afro-American settler society in Liberia, and the mid 19th Century settlement of the Mormons in the American West. Unlike the settlers in the Europe-originated (African) colonies of the 19th and 20th Centuries, the colonizers in the cases dealt with here are comparable in one important sense, they were all regarded and/or self perceived as "others" in their original habitat. This "otherness" had been an important "push" factor on their road to colonization, and played also an instrumental role in shaping the nature of their settlements.

I

Modern Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine had started already in the late Ottoman era, generating between the early 1880s and 1914 a net influx of 40,000 people that constituted at least half of the country's Jewish population on the eve of WWI. It was, however, during the three decades of the British Mandatory regime (1918-1948) that the settling influx of Jews gained its impetus, thereby advancing the Zionist-national project, which by itself provided a forceful inducement for Jewish
immigration to Palestine at the time. The Jewish minority in Palestine grew more than 10 fold in those years (from about 60,000 people in 1918 to 650,000 by the end of the Mandate in mid May, 1948), evolving into an institutionally, culturally, and economically distinct ethno-national entity, largely separated from the Arab majority that reached by the end of the period (primarily by natural increase) a size of more than 1.3 million people (Bachi, 1977).

At first glance, the buildup of the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine seems to resemble quite closely the typical settler colonization of the 19th and 20th Centuries' African type. Both patterns had in common a European colonial power controlling the settled territory, settling immigrants – mostly of European origin – striving to acquire land and establish a stable base for themselves in the destination area, and a sizeable native population significantly larger than the in-migrating community. The obviously comparable cases are Algeria, South Africa, Kenya and Southern Rhodesia.

The latter two territories, which were controlled by Britain and gained official status as colonies (Kenya in 1921 and Southern Rhodesia in 1922) at the time of Britain becoming the internationally recognized mandatory of Palestine (1922), are particularly relevant. Most of the would-be-settlers, immigrating to Kenya and Southern Rhodesia between the early 1920s and the end of the colonial rule in the early 1960s, brought their settler societies to fruition at about the same time as the newly arrived Jews crystallized their collective ethno-national existence in Mandatory Palestine (see Kennedy, 1987 and Metzer, 1998). The similarity between the fast growth of the Jewish community in Palestine and that of the European communities in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia is well illustrated in Table 1. The numbers show also that the Jews constituted by the end of the Mandate a much larger share of Palestine's population than the share of the Europeans in the populations of the African settler colonies (this includes South Africa and Algeria as well, see Table 2).

It should be noted, though, that unlike the large relative size of the Jewish community in Palestine (reaching almost one third of total population in 1947), the share of land held by the Jews was substantially smaller. As seen in Table 2, the ratio of Jewish land to population shares of 0.4 was by far lower than the equivalent ratios

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1 Of the Jews arriving to Palestine in 1919-1948, 88 percent emigrated from Europe; 60 percent from Eastern Europe, 18 percent from central Europe and the remaining 10 percent from other European countries, see sicron, 1957.
for the European settlers in Kenya, Southern Rhodesia, and South Africa. Even in Algeria, which came closest to Palestine, the analogous ratio was 1.2 in 1960, leaving the Jews of Palestine by the end of the British Mandate to be the only settler community with a (significantly) smaller share of landholding than of population.\(^2\) This exception becomes all the more significant in view of the similarly high proportion of urban dwellers among the Jews in Palestine and the European settlers in the African colonies (between 65 and 75 percent).

Another conspicuous difference between Palestine and the African settler economies is to be found in the inter-communities income disparities. These are presented in Table 3, reporting per capita income differentials in ratio terms between the various ethnic groups in Palestine and in Africa. It is seen that contrary to the African economies, where the income of Europeans was at least 10 times higher than the earnings of natives, wages and income per capita of Palestine's Jews were typically no more than 3 times higher than those of the Arabs, except for the boom years of Jewish economic growth in the first half of the 1930s where the differential rose to about 4 times.

The substantial differences in the extent of the settlers' land holdings and relative income position that existed between Palestine and the African settler economies do certainly point to some of the "outlier" attributes of Jewish colonization. However, these differences by themselves do not make for qualitative disparities of sufficient significance so as to single out the Jewish colonization as atypical. In order to do that, we need to dwell some more on the particulars of the Jewish story.

Palestine under the rule of Britain could certainly be viewed as part of Europe's colonial system, but unlike the "African" destinations of European settlement, Palestine was not an "ordinary" colony. It was designated in 1922 by the peace agreements, officially ending WWI, as a mandated territory of a similar status to that of other Mid Eastern territories formerly belonging to the Ottoman Empire.

Britain, which controlled Palestine since it had conquered the area in the last phases of the war, was granted by the League of Nations the mandate to rule the

\(^2\) Moreover, since Jewish landholdings refer to Palestine's non-desert land only, the reported ratio of land to population shares for the Jews should be considered an upper bound of the true one.
country until it became ready for independence. The Mandate, though, was more specific than that, embedding in its wording the explicit British commitment (already expressed in the famous Balfour declaration of 1917) to secure the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. This commitment reflected the mutually converging interests of the Zionist movement, aspiring to establish a territorially-based Jewish national existence in Palestine, and those of Britain, aiming to rely on local forces as collaborative partners in establishing and maintaining its imperial stronghold in the region. Besides the commitment to the Jewish National Home, the terms of the Mandate required also that the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion, be safeguarded by Britain (see Smith, 1993; Metzer, 1998; Golan, 2001).

In ruling the country and aiming to fulfill its commitments, Britain endeavored to turn the government of Palestine into a modern administrative, legal, and fiscal system, while utilizing also some functioning indigenous structures and customs. Pretty soon, however, the diametrically opposed objectives of Zionism and of the emerging Arab national movement – propelled by violent outbursts of Arab resistance to the Jewish buildup and to the Mandatory regime – made Britain realize that fulfilling the dual role of the Mandate was politically impossible. This realization caused the government to gradually distance itself from the National Home postulate, attempting, instead, to strike in its governing conduct some kind of a balance between the two rivaling national communities and their conflicting interests.

Translated into actual policy, these attempts led the government, on the one hand, to develop the country’s infrastructure and public services, while otherwise minimizing its intervention in economic affairs and relationships within and between the Arab and Jewish communities. Similarly, and in accordance with the requirements of the Mandate, external trade was also conducted as a free activity, with nondiscriminatory, revenue-generating import duties, increasingly turning into protective tariffs (Gross, 1984; Smith, 1993, Metzer, 1998).

On the other hand, Britain’s position “between Arabs and Jews” made it employ fiscal and institutional means to compensate the Arab community for

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3 Palestine and other Mid-Eastern territories, formerly belonging to the defunct Ottoman Empire, were put by the League of Nations under the stewardship of Britain (Palestine, Trans-Jordan, and Iraq) and France (Syria and Lebanon) – the war winning powers on the ground. This stewardship took the form of a Mandate to rule those countries.
developmental deficiencies, for example by the provision of schooling, and to seek some remedies for ill effects, such as tenants’ landlessness, caused by (Arab) landlords selling their property to the Jews. Likewise, while officially recognizing the role of the Zionist institutions in promoting the “statutory Jewish community” in Palestine (the yishuv), and enabling them to function as a quasi-governmental public sector for this community, the government imposed some restrictions on the Jewish buildup in the country.

Major among them were the checks on Jewish immigration. Until the late 1930s a vaguely defined criterion of the economy’s “absorptive capacity” was employed in order to control the number of working age immigrants who lacked independent financial means. But starting in 1937, non-economic restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine were imposed by Britain, largely in reaction to the outbreak of the Arab revolt (1936-1939), which culminated in the severe entry restrictions of the “White Paper Policy” of 1939 (Gurevich, Gertz & Bachi, 1944; Survey, Vol. I, 1946).

Another area in which Britain tried to restrain Jewish activity, without much success though, was the land market. The land regime inherited from the late Ottoman era, and improved upon by the Mandatory government, allowed for a free land market within a system of private property rights which effectively covered most of Palestine’s landed territory. Transactions in land could, and in fact did, result in the dispossession of tenants who were removed from the land they had cultivated until it was sold by their landlords to new owners. The surrender of landed property by peasants who were unable to pay their debts to Arab moneylenders may have had similar effects (Stein, 1984; Kamen, 1991; Metzer, 1998).

The plausibility of such eventualities made the government worry that the sale of non-Jewish land to the Jews may increase Arab landlessness. These worries were already expressed in the Land Transfer Ordinance of 1920 and in much stronger terms in the cultivators’ protection and compensatory regulations following the riots of 1929. The strictest restrictions on the otherwise relatively free land market were imposed, though, a decade later. Recognizing the crucial role that the land issue played in the Arab Jewish conflict (particularly in view of the Royal Commission’s proposal of 1937 to partition the country into two nation-states), the British government prohibited in the Land Transfer Regulations of 1940 all inter-communal
land sales in a large part of Palestine’s territory. In doing so Britain officially admitted that the land question, which it had largely treated before as an issue of wealth distribution, was actually a major factor in Palestine’s arena of ethno-national politics (Survey, Vol. I, 1946; Stein, 1984).

These glimpses at the complex reality of Mandatory Palestine enable us to highlight some of the features that set it apart from the settlement colonies of the African type. First and foremost, the Jewish settlement in Palestine differed from the African settler colonies in being the product of a well defined and clearly aimed modern national movement. Jewish nationalism, as embedded in Zionist ideology, and institutionally in the World Zionist Organization, emerged in Eastern and Central Europe in the second half of the 19th Century. Its goal of turning the Jewish people who were discriminated against "others" in their (primarily East European) countries of residence, into an independent, territorially-based nation in a world of nation-states fitted clearly the blueprint of modern nationalism. However, unlike the typical nations, or nations to be in Europe of the 19th and 20th Centuries, establishing their polities in the territories of their being, the realization of Zionism required that a large enough number of Jews emigrate from their countries of residence and settle in Palestine.

In designating Palestine, uncompromisingly, for the realization of Jewish nationalism, Zionism made an unequivocal choice in favor of the ancestral homeland over the idea of having the Diaspora Jews colonize and establish their polity elsewhere. The success of Zionism in its territorial choice was, to use Anthony Smith’s language, “in large measure, due exactly to the fact that the ancient conceptions of the holy land and chosen people had retained their popular resonance through encoded collective memories, symbolism and ritual, and the generational repetition of collective aspirations.” This enabled Zionism to translate “into secular terminology the shared memories and myths and the inner religious yearning of Jews everywhere for a return to Zion in a sovereign state” (Smith, 1995, pp. 16-17).

Moreover, the historic, religious and cultural links of the Jewish people to the ancient land of Israel led them perceive themselves as natives of the land to which they returned. This perception served both as a basis for the Zionist movement’s territorial claims and as an ideological driving force for many nationally motivated
Jewish individuals and groups to emigrate and settle in Palestine (but by no means for all the Jewish immigrants or in all years). In the African colonies, on the other hand, while territorially based collective – even national – identities may have evolved in the course of crystallizing the settler communities, such "ex-post" identities played seldom a role in motivating the would be settlers – who were mostly driven by economic considerations – to join those communities.

Although Britain, as already mentioned, had recognized and accepted the national aspirations of Zionism as a legitimate factor in shaping its rule over Palestine, it never served as an imperial “mother country,” a-la Africa, for the Zionist project and/or the (Jewish) colonizing settlers in the country. Consequently, the Jews of Palestine did not benefit from discriminatory market interventions that colonial governments had commonly employed in order to promote the particular interests of their settlers, and which were rightly identified by Paul Mosley (1983) to be the defining and unifying attributes of the colonial (primarily African) settler economies.

The characteristics of such interventions are summarized in the following passage quoted from my book on the economy of Mandatory Palestine:

> The colonial administrations typically used their power of coercion to legislate and enforce property rights in land [so as to secure large chunks of land for the settlers to possess, and limit the amount of land that non-European could hold and utilize J.M.] and to regulate key aspects of the land and labor markets, including a racial division of land ownership backed by bans on inter-ethnic transactions in land and by restricting the mobility of indigenous workers. The result was a supply of cheap (often free) land for settlers and a relatively elastic supply of (indigenous) low wage labor, secured by fiat. In addition, various regulatory means were used in the settlement colonies to prevent indigenous farmers from competing with settlers in export markets (Metzer, 1998, pp. 200-201).

As for Palestine, we have already indicated that the Mandatory government, unlike the interventionist administrations of the African settlement colonies, did generally refrain from intervening in the economic lives of, and between, Arabs and Jews, and provided, instead, a legal and institutional framework for free, relatively unregulated, economic activity (except from the attempts to regulate and restrict transactions in land between the two peoples, as indicated above). This "hands off" economic policy, which did not allow for settlers-favoring "extra market operations" (to use Mosley's terminology) by the government, forced the Jews and their public and private settling
institutions to rely solely on their own financial, human, and technological resources for advancing their settlement project via the free factor and product markets.

Note, though, that to the extent that governmental regulations were effective in checking Jewish immigration and/or land purchases they may have slowed down somewhat the development of the Zionist project. In general, however, the unregulated economic environment maintained by the government provided a supporting setting for the Zionist organization and the Jewish settlers to mobilize resources in nurturing their growing economy, besides enabling both Arabs and Jews to pursue their different economic agendas.

A major Zionist activity in the area of settlement was, quite naturally, the acquisition of land, which could only be done by purchasing it from willing sellers, mostly Arabs, at the ongoing market price. In examining the history of the inter-communal transactions in land, some of the scholarly literature has long suggested that the "only factor limiting the pace and scope of Jewish land purchase prior to and after the institution of the Mandate was insufficient [Zionist and other Jewish] funding" (stein, 1984 p. 37). Notice, nonetheless, that Arab political objection to, and governmental restrictions on, sales of non-Jewish land to the Jews may have induced Arab landowners to raise the minimum price at which they were ready to sell their property, implying thereby that the amount of land transferred between Arabs and Jews may have been smaller than it would have been in a politically neutral land market. These market effects may partially explain the small proportion of Palestine's land held by the Jews relative to the holdings of white settlers in colonial Africa (see above).

Between 1914 and 1947 Jewish land purchases amounted to 1.2 metric dunams [one metric dunam equals exactly one thousand square meters, and approximately one quarter of an acre], increasing the share of Palestine's land held by Jewish public and private institutions and individuals from 1.6% of the country's land area on the eve of WWI to 6.9% by the end of Mandate. About two thirds of the non-Jewish land purchased by Jews in the Mandatory period were bought by the Jewish National Fund (JNF), which was established by the World Zionist Organization in 1901 [and incorporated in London in 1907 as an "Association Limited by Guarantee without Capital Divided into Shares"], to be funded by contributions of Jewish individuals and institutions for the purpose of acquiring land for Jewish settlement in
Palestine and retain it in perpetuity. Prohibited by the Zionist charter from alienating its landed property, the JNF would allot plots of land to Jewish settling groups and individuals on hereditary leasehold terms only (Reichman, 1979, Metzer, 2004).

Turning Jewish land into an inalienable collective property of the JNF, which represented its contributors and nominal owners – the Jewish people at large, was to serve the basic Zionist goal of securing the formation of a Jewish territorial body politic in Palestine. National ownership of Palestine's redeemed land (to use the common Zionist terminology denoting the purchase of land from non-Jews) was perceived as a pre condition for the aspired Jewish territorial sovereignty in Palestine, and as a substitute for it under British rule.

The Jewish National Institutions used subsidized allotments of land as an inducement to settlement in accordance with Zionist directives, targeting the Jewish spatial buildup in sparsely Arab-inhabited regions, such as the coastal plain and the inner valleys. Likewise, allotting relatively small plots of national land to Jewish lessees, requiring them to continuously cultivate their held land and to avoid hiring non-Jewish laborers, should have provided the JNF with means to advance the Zionist agenda in two interrelated respects. One involved the emphasis on agricultural settlement as a way of revitalizing the actual connections of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. The second respect was to facilitate demand for Jewish farm labor at sufficiently high wages (which should have been possible in a nationally split labor market), thereby providing employment opportunities in farming for prospected Jewish immigrants at "attractive" wages. Moreover, avoiding consolidation of plots would prevent Jewish settlers from acquiring market power that would allow them to drive wages of farm labor below the "acceptable" Jewish level, and the ban on employing non-Jewish labor on national land should have prevented, according to Zionist thinking, the Jewish settlement endeavor from becoming a colonialist-type enterprise relying on "cheap" Arab labor (Metzer, 1998).

In promoting the notion of ethno-nationally segregated labor markets in Palestine, the national goals of the Zionist Organization coincided with the interests of Jewish organized labor in preventing Arab labor from competing for employment in the Jewish economy (Metzer, 1978). In this respect the Jewish colonization in Palestine differed substantially from the above described labor policies of the African
setter colonies whose reliance on native labor was an essential factor in their economic life.

In practice, however, apart from the agricultural settlements on JNF land and the productive establishments owned by the dominant Jewish labor organization (Histadrut), the attempts to exclude Arab labor from the Jewish private economy turned out to be futile. In 1935, for example, no less than 12,000 Arabs were employed by Jews [7,000 in agriculture, mostly in private citrus groves, 3,600 in construction and manufacturing and 1,400 in services] accounting for about 5 percent of the Arab labor force in Palestine and 8.5 percent of all employed persons in the Jewish economy. The wages earned by Arab (unskilled) employees in the Jewish economy were on the whole higher than the average product per worker in Arab agriculture and apparently higher as well than the alternative wages in the Arab economy. These earning opportunities provided the Arab laborers with a strong incentive to offer their labor services to Jewish employers in a market for unskilled labor which seem to have been far from segregated (Sussman, 1973).

But attractive as they may have been, Arab wages were substantially lower than the skill-equivalent Jewish wages. This differential may have partly reflected compensatory effects of non-pecuniary costs (self) imposed on Jewish employers by not adhering to the Zionist exclusionary directives. To the extent that this was the case, the ideological and organizational – extra market – attempts on the Jewish part to ethno-nationally segregate the labor market in Palestine may have had wage effects similar to some of the coercive labor policies observed in colonial settler economies.

Likewise, the land retention ideology and practice of the JNF, that were followed also by private Jewish landowners who largely refrained from selling their holdings to non-Jews, made the otherwise free land market become ethno-nationally unidirectional. Adding to this the dispossession of tenants-cultivators, caused by Arab land being sold to Jews, and one gets qualitatively analogous outcomes to (although proportionally much smaller than) some of the consequences of land alienation schemes in the African settlement colonies. These land and labor market outcomes of Jewish settlement notwithstanding, the extremely fast growth of per capita income between 1922 and 1947 in both the Arab and the Jewish communities (3.6 percent and 4.8 percent per annum, respectively, see Metzer, 1998) suggest that their overall
adverse effect on the Arab economy, within which most of the Arab primary sources were employed, must have been rather small.

To summarize, in dwelling on some of the characteristics of Jewish settlement in Mandatory Palestine, we have comparatively illuminated its distinct nature as a settler colonization, evolving within, but not being an integral part of, the European colonial system. It has been shown, on the one hand, that unlike the governmentally backed (African) settler colonizations, the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish immigrating settlers had to rely on their own financial and human resources, using them in Palestine's relatively free markets in order to advance the Jewish national project. On the other hand, similarities in some of the economic outcomes between the typical settlement colonies and the Jewish buildup have been stressed, thereby demonstrating the complex nature of the Zionist endeavor in Palestine prior to Israel's statehood.

Following these remarks, we turn now to the next case on our "plate," the Afro-American settler society of Liberia.

II

The colonization story of Liberia begins in the early 1820s with the settlement of American free Blacks and freed and repatriated slaves on the West African coast that became the kernel of later day Liberia. The settlement project was initiated by the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States (to be shortly known as the American Colonization Society-ACS). The ACS, a federally-assisted NGO established and run by whites, launched its activities by organizing and managing the new settlement on land it acquired from indigenous tribal chiefs around the area of Monrovia – the future capital city of Liberia.

The West African settlement, which turned into the Commonwealth of Liberia – a unified colonization enterprise – in 1839, and into the Republic of Liberia – an independent state ruled by the Americo-Liberian black settlers – in 1847, was certainly an atypical settler colonization. It differed from the African settlement

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4 The discussion in this section draws on the books by Shick (1980) and Gershoni (1985) and on the article by Temperley (2000).
colonies not only in being settled by American blacks (for which the settlement of Blacks in British Sierra Leone provided some kind of precedent) and not by European whites, but also in becoming a sovereign state as early as the mid 19th Century, without passing through the standard African stage of prolonged colonial rule by an European power.

The departure of free and freed blacks from the US destined for Liberia was propelled by a wide range of complex and even contrasting motivations and aims that were part of the discourse concerning slavery and race relations in America since the late 18th Century. But diverse as the motivations leading to the colonization of Liberia and its objectives may have been, they all derived from the common premise of blacks' "otherness," reflecting their different race and culture, and the exclusionary and discriminating treatment by American whites to which they have been exposed. This premise made the proponents of colonization, regardless of their race and views, highly skeptical, both before and after the abolition of slavery, about the possibility of integrating the Afro-Americans into the all American polity and society.

As for the attitudes of white America concerning black colonization, we encounter on one end the Jeffersonian approach – conceding the moral stain of slavery, while worrying about the danger of post-abolition miscegenation, a dilemma for which colonization (in Africa) should have provided a reasonable solution. Moreover, colonizing free blacks on a land of their own was expected, in similarly expressed ideas, to generate opportunities for the development of skills, self confidence, individual enterprise and sense of community that could not be realized in the racially antagonistic environment of the USA. Likewise, the return of emancipated slaves to Africa to build there a new society founded on the virtues of civilization and Christianity would be, according to some of the "moralistic" views of the time, a "just" reversal of the course of history in which natives of Africa were coercively turned into oppressed slaves in America.

On the other end, we find the attitudes of southern slave-owners. They visualized the overseas colonization of free blacks and manumitted slaves to be a safety device against the threat that a growing population of free blacks in their midst would become to the stability of the institution of slavery and to the market value of their slaves. In various cases the colonization option played an inducement for manumission, being regarded by some masters a "safe" reward for slave's good
services. There were even extreme instances where manumission was granted conditional on the manumitted slaves’ immigrating to Liberia (some analogies could be found between such steps and the British policy of colonizing convicts in the distant shores of Australia).

Turning to the black community, the reaction to the colonization idea and its attempted implementation by the ASC was mixed at best. The majority of the free black community opposed the concept on two grounds. One was the strong sense of belonging to America, earned by their hard labor with which the land was enriched. The other was the notion that the colonization of free blacks would remove from the US the supporting ally of the slaves waiting to be freed, and thus weaken the prospects of emancipation.

Although received with suspicion and mistrust by the majority, the concept of colonization in Africa did not lack its black supporters. Some of them would praise the feeling of personal liberty and of the potential for individual economic improvement in Liberia that, unlike in the US, would not be hindered by white dominating discrimination. Others would push such arguments further to the collective level, emphasizing the need of proving the capacity of blacks to manage their own affairs, which would be impossible in America, as a necessary step on the road to the abolition of slavery.

This idea, resembling similar arguments raised by white promoters of colonization (see above), led to two concepts. One was *Negro Nationalism* advocated most forcefully by Edward Wilmot Blyden, who, in referring to the Biblical divine message to Abraham, called upon the black people of the American Diaspora to return to Africa – the land of their forefathers, and to establish (in Liberia) a free black national entity based on Christian values and fully integrated with the country’s indigenous people. The analogy between these ideas and the Zionist blueprint for the realization of Jewish nationalism in the land of Israel comes naturally to mind.

The other, and in reality the winning, concept was based on a different notion, viewing the Liberian settlers as *expatriate Americans* who were excluded from the American polity on racial grounds. The colonizing blacks, according to the notion of expatriation, did fully subscribe to the universal ideals of liberty and participatory citizenship as embodied in the American Declaration of Independence, but they were forced – like the pilgrims settling in 17th Century North America – to leave their
country of birth and settle on the remote and wild shores of Africa in order to realize those ideals. And indeed the Liberian Declaration of Independence of 1847, which was modeled on the American one, spelled out this approach explicitly. It should be noticed, however, that it was not the desire for statehood as such, but a more practical rationale – the need to establish territorial sovereignty in order to enable the enforcement of Liberian custom duties on British traders – that drove the ACS to change the settlements’ status from *commonwealth* to *state*.

Contrary to the perception of *Negro-nationalism*, calling for the amalgamation of the settlers and the indigenous people of Africa into one black nation and society, the self characterization of the colonizers as *American expatriates* made room for their segregationist attitudes towards the native population, which became a basic feature of Liberian history. It should be remembered, though, that the rejection of colonization by most American blacks on the one hand and the harsh disease environment and extremely high mortality rates experienced by the immigrants on the other hand (see McDaniel and Preston, 1994) left 19th Century Liberia with a relatively small community of 13,000 to 15,000 America-originated settlers, never accounting for more than 10 percent of the country’s entire population. It was, however, this small minority which ruled the republic of Liberia for more than 130 years, essentially identifying the Liberian State and society with the Americo-Liberians settlers and their descendants.

This approach was embodied already in the 1847 Declaration of Independence, which referred only to the American immigrants and their offspring as the "people of Liberia" to whom it applied. Likewise, the constitution of the republic, that was adopted in the same year, limited voting rights and government office to land-owning males, effectively barring native tribe–people (whose land rights were mostly communal) from participatory citizenship, at least until 1905 when this barrier was officially lifted. In practice, however, tribal persons remained politically and economically discriminated against for most of the 20th Century. The arguments used by Americo-Liberians to justify their segregationist approach and paternalistic discrimination of the indigenes were based on their proclaimed superiority of western (in this case American) Christian civilization, of which they viewed themselves as faithful carriers, over the natives' *savage* culture. These arguments, with the strong missionary and educational factor embodied in them, resembled rather closely the
"white man's burden" approach of colonialist Europeans toward the native populations of their colonies.

Although the missionary-educational factor by itself did create some possibilities for integration between the Americo-Liberians and the native Africans, the success was rather limited. Moreover, there were strong countervailing factors contributing to frictions and conflicts between the two peoples, among them: the attempts of the settlers to abolish the slave trade in which tribal traders were involved, the settlers' hunger for land, and their desire to control the country's trade routes. In addition, there was the fear of "going native," (in Temperley's language) commonly observed in settler societies, which somewhat paradoxically may have been aggravated precisely by the racial identity between the Americo-Liberians and the natives, intensifying the settlers' efforts of differentiating and distancing themselves from the indigenes by emphasizing their singular capacity to uphold western standards in Africa.

All this led to the great irony of Liberia's history namely "that the descendants of American slaves found themselves in a role performed elsewhere in Africa by white colonizers" (Temperley, 2000, p. 87). And, as Gershoni rightly concludes "despite their common race and color, the Americo-Liberians were perceived by the Africans as foreign rulers in every sense" (Gershoni, 1985, p. 95).

It may thus be stated that, atypical as the settler colonization of Liberia may have been in terms of the origin, composition, and motivation of the settlers, the country's political, social and economic history reveals an extreme, albeit peculiar, form of (black) colonialism. As such, it provides further credence to the general observation made by Temperley that "perhaps no settler group, however adaptable or well intentioned, would have succeeded in reconciling its own interests with those of the indigenous population" (Temperley, 2000, p. 89).

Adding to this irony was the fact that due to the self serving discriminatory conduct of the dominant tiny Americo-Liberian elite (constituting in the 1960s 3-5 percent of the country's population), Liberia was deprived for more than a century of the benefits in infrastructure, education, civil administration and training, accruing to many of the indigenous people of Africa under European colonial rule (see Dalton, 1965). Furthermore, it had been claimed by Dalton "that the traditional Americo-Liberian rulers, who fear losing political control to the tribal people, have not allowed
these changes to take place which are necessary to develop the national society and economy" (Dalton, 1965, p. 581). Recently Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) have reiterated Dalton's point, stressing that in promoting its own particularistic interests, the Americo-Liberian elite and its political arm – the ruling (up to 1980) True Wig Party (TWP), turned the state apparatus into a huge, kinship-based, patronage machine. The institutional choices made by this machine in controlling the (partly coerced) provision of labor services and other areas of economic activity were highly inefficient, hindering economic development and growth for years to come.

With these remarks we conclude our observations on the problematic experience of Liberia and, to wrap up our "tour," move to another, rather successful, case of settler colonization by a group of "other" Americans – the Mormons' frontier settlement in the American West.

III

The Mormons were singularly identified by their secretive novel religion and its derived "peculiar" customs (note, in particular, polygamy), setting them apart from main-stream Christian white America. On the one hand, a strong element of separation from the Gentiles that is, the rest of American society, was embodied in Mormonism itself. On the other hand, "ordinary" Americans – particularly in the Ohio and Mississippi valley frontiers of the 1830s and 1840s where Mormonism had evolved – were not ready to accept, and fiercely resisted, the existence of Mormon enclaves in their midst.

The push effect generated by the local citizenry and the local and state government, driving the Mormons away from Kirkland, Ohio, Far West Missouri, and Nauvoo, Illinois, coincided in some ways with the Mormons' wish to establish their own secluded "Zion" on American soil. Consequently, Brigham Young (who became the autocratic leader of the Mormon church and communities, following the murder of their prophet Joseph Smith in 1844) was prompted in 1846 to initiate and lead the movement of about 16,000 faithfuls across the Mississippi from Nauvoo Illinois into Iowa in preparation for the exodus to Utah and the erection in 1847 of the "Kingdom

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5 This section draws on the comprehensive study of Mormon economic history by Arrington (1958), on the chapter on Brigham Young in the book by Hughes (1986), and on the recently published short history of Mormons in America by Bushman and Bushman (2001).
of the Latter-Day Saints," in the Great Salt Lake Basin. The choice of this remote mountainous region to be the destination for the planned Mormon settler colonization served well the desire of Brigham Young, who (as Hughes insightfully stated) "wanted a difficult land, one which would both keep his Saints hard at their labors and which would not seem an inviting place for Gentile settlers." (Hughes, 1986, p. 91).

The creation of a viable Mormon settlement on the western frontier, which involved moving the colonizers (20,000 people up to 1852) on the great Mormon trek from the Mississippi to the Salt Lake and turning their Great Basin settlement into a functioning economy, was a formidable undertaking. Relying on the built-in discipline and obedience within Mormonism and on the church hierarchy, controlling material as well as spiritual matters, Young was able to manage and guide his disciples' communal and economic life so as to assure the success of the Mormon westward movement and colonization project. The great trek itself was organized as some kind of a moving settlement (as described by Hughes 1986, p. 87), with land being farmed along the road to supply the moving people with the needed provisions, while maintaining the Mormon community intact on the long journey. Likewise, Young and the church leadership built the Mormon settlement in Utah as a self-managed and centrally directed commonwealth, aiming at economic self-sufficiency, which should have guaranteed its secluded sustainability.

The autarky postulate, however, did not stand the "test" of the opportunities for gainful trade opened by the California Gold Rush of 1848-1850 and efficiently exploited by the Mormon settlers. Moreover, the whole idea of Mormon seclusion received a final blow with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 and the integration of markets at the national level. Nonetheless, after the initial difficulties of the first two years had been overcome, thanks not the least to the benefits of the gold rush, the following two decades (1849-1869) witnessed a viable Mormon community and economy with clearly identifiable traits evolve in the Great Basin.

Most noticeable among these traits was the Mormon "mixed economy." On the one hand it involved the church self-imposed responsibility for attracting and collectively supporting newly-converted immigrants to the "Kingdom," and for its economic "blueprints" to be devised and carried out in order to cope with the, primarily nature–made, challenges of the Great Basin area. The main collective tasks
undertaken by the church included detailed planning of the settlement’s spatial and industrial contours, and the initiation and execution of elaborate public work programs. Likewise the egalitarian principles of Mormonism were translated into a clear commitment of the church under Brigham Young’s leadership to collectively care for the welfare of the entire Mormon community and of each one of its members.

On the other hand, Young’s pragmatism left plenty of room for a vibrant (church promoted) cooperative and individualistic private sector to function within a largely free market environment. Driven by the necessity to provide incentives for settlement and wealth creation, and to counterbalance the economic "attraction" of the outside-Gentile's world, he encouraged private economic initiatives and individual enterprising zeal, constraining them only by the developmental and welfare needs of the Mormon community. Interestingly, students of Palestine's economic history may find, as I have shown elsewhere (Metzer, 1978), some illuminating analogies between the underlying premises and objectives of the Mormon undogmatic "mixed economy" model and the Zionist economic "design" for the evolving Jewish yishuv in Palestine.

The link between the collective and the individual dimensions of Mormon economic life was provided by the all-inclusive fiscal devise of the tithe – a 10 percent levy imposed on individual base-line property (that which was owned at the time when the tithe was first paid), on all forms of income, and also on individuals' labor time. Widespread adherence to the capital and income tithing provided the church with the resources needed for the execution of its developmental and public works projects, as well as of its egalitarian welfare programs. Likewise, the tithing of labor time enabled the church to mobilize labor and utilize it in various communal projects all over the Great Basin.

In his comprehensive study of Mormon economic history, Leonard Arrington traced the roots of Mormon economic collectivism to the settling experience of former generations in early America's North East and Mid West. This communitarian heritage, according to Arrington, stood in sharp contrast to the individualistic drive of the Mormons' contemporaries – the Gentile settlers of the western frontier, as he forcefully stated:

Yet, Mormon economic institutions were unique in the contemporary American West. To be sure, there was the same hunger, the same improvisation, the same struggle for success, as in all Western settlements. But the unity,
homogeneity, joint action, and group planning all stamped the Mormon frontier as unique – as a contrast with the scattered, specialized, exploitative, "wide open" mining, cattle, lumber, and homestead frontiers with which historians have familiarized us (Arrington, 1958, p. 62).

This observation adds another dimension to the characterization of the Mormon frontier as an atypical settler colonization, showing that it differed not only from the overseas European settlement colonies of the 19th and 20th Centuries, but also from the typical frontier settlements of the American West. However, atypical as it may have been, the communal cohesiveness of the Mormon settlement untied by religion and conduct may single out the Great Basin Kingdom of the Latter-Day Saints, at least in the 1850s and 1860s, as a settler society in the fullest sense.

IV

In lieu of summary it should first be stated what this paper did not do. Although concentrating on atypical settler colonization, its aim was not to provide an exhaustive typology or a complete catalogue of colonizing settlements in modern times that could be characterized as atypical in one respect or another. Instead, what it attempted to do was to broaden the notion of settler colonization beyond common perceptions, by looking at a number of cases where colonization in non-colonies, either overseas or on the frontier, became one of the sought after solutions to the problem of "otherness." In Zionism, it was coupled with the indispensable place which the Land of Israel occupied in the emerging Jewish national movement, partly in response to modern anti-Semitism; in the case of Liberia, colonization was viewed by its proponents, white and black alike, primarily as a workable means to overcome the barriers of America's racism and race dilemma; and in Mormonism, the settlement of the mountainous west was to guarantee a self-managed secluded habitat for the religiously homogenous community of the Latter-Day Saints. A central feature of the paper was, obviously, the illumination from a comparative perspective of the economic dimensions and implications of the considered cases, aiming thereby to deepen our knowledge and appreciation of the versatile experiences of settler societies and economies in modern history.
Table 1: Composition and Growth of Population  
Mandatory Palestine, Kenya, and Southern Rhodesia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1947</th>
<th>1921-1947</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(000')</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>(000')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate Palestine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabs</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>741</td>
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<td>1,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europeans</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africans</td>
<td>2,333</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>6,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>219</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2,376</td>
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<td>6,587</td>
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<td>Southern Rhodesia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europeans</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>2,910</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>3,150</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Percentage Shares of Land holding and Population: Jews in Mandatory Palestine and Europeans in African Settler Economies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Share of non-desert land held by Jews</th>
<th>Population share of Jews</th>
<th>Ratio of land to population shares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Palestine, 1947</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>32.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenya, 1960</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Rhodesia, 1960</td>
<td></td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa, 1960</td>
<td></td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algeria, 1960</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Differences in Earning and Product per Capita: Mandatory Palestine, Kenya, Rodesia, and South Africa

**Mandatory Palestine**
- Range of Jewish/Arab ratios of daily wages
  - Non-public employment across occupations
    - Lowest ratio: Citrus rappers, 1945
      - 1.1
    - Highest ratio: Weavers, 1931
      - 3.8
  - Public employment by category
    - Lowest ratio: Jerusalem municipality, 1944/45
      - 0.9
    - Highest ratio: Tel-Aviv municipality, 1935/36
      - 3.1
- Ratio of Jewish/Arab Net National Product per capita
  - Average over the years:
    - 1922-1929: 2.2
    - 1930-1935: 3.8
    - 1936-1947: 2.6

**Kenya**
- Ratios of Gross Domestic Product per capita, average for 1953-57
  - Europeans/Africans: 75.0
  - Europeans/Asians: 4.0

**Southern Rhodesia**
- Ratio of earnings per employed person:
  - (Europeans, Asians, and Colored)/Africans
    - 1954: 13.6
    - 1965: 10.0

**South Africa**
- Ratio of personal income per capita: White/African
  - 1936: 13.1
  - 1960: 12.3
  - 1975: 10.9
  - 1994: 8.6

References


