**What Makes 'Mekorot' Unique?**

**Establishment, Impact and Activity of the National Water Company (1937-1948)**

The first thing that the original settlers in the farming settlement, Rishon LeZion, did upon arrival was dig a well. To establish water resources they looked to the local inhabitants for assistance and later they appealed to Baron Rothschild. Discovering water was a joyous moment and the cry "We found water" eventually became emblazoned on the settlement's seal.[[1]](#footnote-1) It should come as no surprise that water was the settlers' chief concern. From the dawn of time humankind has struggled to find and store water and secure its supply. Studies on the establishment and development of Jewish settlements are replete with information on local water projects; however missing in the research is a discourse on the establishment of regional and national water companies. This article focuses on one of those companies that operated during the British Mandate.

At the end of the First World War and the start of the realization of the Balfour Declaration, the Yishuv (the Jewish community in prestate Israel) established a number of institutions for managing and representing Jewish affairs in the country. In addition to the Jewish Agency (1929) the Jewish National Council received official recognition from the Mandate Government in 1928. Their work was aided by veteran Zionist institutions such as the Jewish National Fund (1901), Keren Hayesod (1920) and other bodies. These organizations gained the trust of the Jewish public notwithstanding the fact that that the Yishuv was essentially a volunteer society, and despite political disagreements over the proper response to British Mandate policy and the Arab population.[[2]](#footnote-2) In light of public trust, these institutions engaged in a wide range of crucial activities, such as defense, education, welfare and water. Water was a basic need for the expansion of the agricultural settlements. The national conflict that emerged in the Land of Israel, and the various plans for its solution, gave the water issue added relevancy for the Yishuv's existential security. One of the means employed by the institutions was the establishment of a water company. This article focuses on the Mekorot Company's activity. An examination of its growth, modus operandi, and areas of activity will hopefully shed light on this aspect of the water issue that the organized Yishuv had to address.

Human use of water is a significant factor in altering and shaping the landscape. In the desire to exploit natural resources, water has played a major role in realizing humanity's aspirations. But in addition to this instrumental approach, scholars have identified water as a product and seen it and society's relationship with it as an expression of political, economic and social processes.[[3]](#footnote-3) Our study of Mekorot, and its establishment and planning of water supply projects, will enable us to examine two questions: how the company shaped the landscape and how the company's founding reflected the Zionist institutions' attitude toward water. Mekorot was not the only water company operating in the Yishuv. Prior to and parallel with its establishment, other companies were also on the scene. Mekorot, however, emerged as the leading player in the development of water in the Yishuv and also later in the State of Israel. My article offers an answer to the question of how this came about.

Research on Jewish institutions and organizations in the Yishuv reveal the dominance of the workers parties and their representatives in public activity. This supremacy was expressed in the elected institutions and in the hegemony of the all-powerful Histadrut (General Federation of Labor) and its economic frameworks. The Histadrut's overarching control enabled it to prioritize all areas of life: land settlement, immigration, industry, agriculture, and so forth.[[4]](#footnote-4) This bias became the focus of the internal-Yishuv struggle that continued after the establishment of the state. Whether or not Mekorot received special preference due to its identification with the dominant bodies in the Yishuv's institutions, is another question the article will examine.

In recent years local research on the history of water has increased. Scholars in various disciplines try to explain the nature of the local relationship to water, and the history, legislation and management of water projects.[[5]](#footnote-5) My study adds to the current scholarship by discussing the commercial, technological and ideological organization of water in the final years of the Mandate.

In addition to secondary sources I have had recourse to a plethora of archival material and memoires. Biographical sketches of key figures in Mekorot's operations have been added to illustrate the unique aspect of the company's activity. The article traces the establishment and development of Mekorot. A description of its activities should prove the claim to its uniqueness. To appreciate this special feature we must now turn our attention to the companies that preceded Mekorot.

**Water supply activity in Eretz Israel (1920-1937)**

On the eve of the First World War the water system in Eretz Israel was undeveloped. The water supply in the Arab villages and *moshavot* (Jewish farming colonies) was based on local sources. Next to the sources were distribution systems designed solely for a village's needs and limited irrigation. The central government focused mainly on water supply to the large cities (Jerusalem, for example) by planning and creating new infrastructures.[[6]](#footnote-6) In the course of the war the water system fell into disrepair due to the lack of maintenance and the confiscation of equipment. Immediately after the inauguration of the British military regime (1917-1920) the authorities began to develop the water economy and improve the waste removal infrastructure.[[7]](#footnote-7) As groundwork on the water projects proceeded, the regime set to work drafting a water law that would come in addition to the regulations and directives it had already enacted.[[8]](#footnote-8) In light of the British Mandate and HMG's promise to establish a national home, the Yishuv's institutions took an interest in advancing the water economy, focusing not only on projects, as stated, but also on research and development. This was possible thanks to the absorption of technological innovations and advances (such as drilling tools, electric energy, and so forth) and the immigration of experts.[[9]](#footnote-9) On the other hand, the Arab agricultural economy remained tied to the traditional infrastructure.[[10]](#footnote-10) Development in the Arab sector was primarily assisted by the Mandate Government.

By the second half of the 1930s a number of regional water supply facilities had been established, the flagship projects being in the Harod and Jordan Valleys. The Jordan Valley facility was based on open channels while the Harod Valley facility was more sophisticated and combined drillings, pipes and collection ponds.[[11]](#footnote-11) The first company to deal with the production, transportation and sale of water at the regional level was the "Eretz Israel Water Company" (founded in 1933).[[12]](#footnote-12) This was a daughter company of the "Economic Company for Eretz Israel Ltd." (founded in 1926), which had been the initiative of the Louis Brandeis faction of American Jewry. The company's policy and motto was 'investment – not donations' which, in practical terms, translated into granting loans and other resources for the development of industries and production. Later the water company established a daughter company to lend assistance to a project known as the "Settlement of the Thousand."[[13]](#footnote-13) In 1935 the company expanded its activities and joined ranks with the "Palestine Jewish Colonization Association" (PICA) in delivering water to the Zvulon Valley industrial zone located next to Haifa Bay.[[14]](#footnote-14) In addition to supporting the supply facility, the company also engaged in research and planning of water facilities, in accordance with the national institutions' needs. Despite its widespread activity, the Eretz Israel Water Company was not permitted to concentrate its efforts on water matters in the Yishuv because the national institutions had already established their own Water Office.[[15]](#footnote-15) The background to the Eretz Israel Water Company's exclusion was the gap between its economic approach and that of the national leadership regarding competition and control of the water economy's development.

The Jewish Agency's Settlement Department initiated and administered two water companies: the "Emek (Valley) Water Company" (for irrigating most of the Jezreel Valley) and the "Gilboa Water Company" (for the Harod Valley). Their establishment was accompanied by commercial planning such as the enlistment of capital. The companies focused on drilling and the construction of regional water facilities.[[16]](#footnote-16) Despite the novelty of their activity and its contribution to agricultural development, the companies failed to play a major part in the development of the national water economy or, alternatively, to serve as models for others. The amount of available private capital was insufficient for the continued development and expansion into new areas. The growth of the Jewish settlement and the burgeoning need for water delivery demanded a solution.

**The founding of the "Mekorot" Company**

In April 1935 Levi Shkolnik (Eshkol) and his colleagues proposed the establishment of a water company[[17]](#footnote-17) that unlike the previous companies would set up water facilities in settlement regions in accordance with their requirements. The plan was discussed at the Zionist Congress and simultaneously equipment was acquired for the future company. Another year passed before the planners completed the organizational framework, and later they would determine the financial arrangements for its operations. In the midst of the organization stage drilling operations already started in the company's name. Simcha Blass, an engineer who had joined the company in its embryonic stage, began work on an interregional irrigation plan for the western Jezreel Valley.[[18]](#footnote-18) Since the founders realized that the company's economic strength would be the platform for its success, they spared no effort to secure economic arrangements. In a meeting on the founding of the company it was decided that the company's partners and owners would include Keren Hayesod (representing the Jewish Agency), the Jewish National Fund, Nir Ltd. (representing the Histadrut), and the Water Supply Company in conjunction with the Jewish Agency's Department for Settling German Jewry. It was also decided that the consumers (the settlements) would be stockholders in the company. By the same token "the company would not deliver water only to settlements, not to private individuals."[[19]](#footnote-19) This resolution prevented the establishment of the company's water facilities for individual Jewish settlers and Arab villages, neither of which was linked to a formal framework. The company's partners were asked to procure golden shares so that the capital would be available for the purchase of equipment and the development of facilities.

The company registered with the Mandate authorities on February 15, 1937 and announced that it would "do whatever was necessary to acquire, collect, sell, measure, convey, distribute and search for water."[[20]](#footnote-20) Three men would be responsible for the company's administrative operations: a company secretary; an operations supervisor, and Pinchas Kozlowski (Sapir), Eshkol's right-hand man, as general manager.[[21]](#footnote-21) Simcha Blass, who had gained experience in developing the Harod Valley water facility, would be responsible for planning the facilities. In addition, the company would consult with experts and representatives of the institutions financing the projects.[[22]](#footnote-22)

To maintain its activity in accordance with government rules and regulations, the company had to obtain certificates of approval for its work. For example, it had to report the drilling depths of wells to the person in charge of investment, and receive permission from the agriculture and fishery department for filling collection ponds. In their effort to expedite the company's requirements, the company heads were aided by their ties with senior officials in various government branches and by virtue of their additional roles in the Yishuv's institutions.[[23]](#footnote-23) The nature of the company's founding, its modus operandi, and the stockholders' institutional affiliation granted Mekorot an advantage over other water companies. Furthermore, its vision to engage in water delivery at the national and inter-regional level soon gave it priority over companies that concentrated on local and regional activities.[[24]](#footnote-24)

**The first facility**

Mekorot's first facility (the Kishon Facility) was established in the western Jezreel Valley, the main area of Jewish settlement at the time. The facility was planned to convey water from a well near the settlements Usha, Kfar Hasidim and Yagur to other settlements in the valley. The supply network would carry the water only on Jewish lands owned by the Jewish National Fund.

By the time it was operating, sixty drilling attempts had been made in the valley and surrounding area. Despite the large number, improvements in drilling equipment, and partial success in water production, the results were disappointing. The paucity of water limited the development of agriculture in the region, but Mekorot's wells outside of the settlement area proved more successful and thirteen out of eighteen brought up water. In addition to the wells' maintenance, the company was responsible for the facility's electricity supply and in this capacity began construction on two more collection ponds to guarantee delivery to consumers. A central pumping station was built twenty-five meters above the water source near Kibbutz Sha'ar Ha'amakim (in the Zvulon Valley) to pump the water between the ponds. Under these circumstances and in light of violent events during the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt, the pumping station was constructed with security measures. Work on the facility was allocated to a number of companies and contractors, including settlers from the valley. The "Eretz Israel Water Company" connected the pipes and checked the level of workmanship;[[25]](#footnote-25) Mekorot provided supervisors, one of whom was sent to Germany in 1937 to gain proficiency in pipe welding. The knowledge that he returned with enabled the company to carry out the work according to international standards.

In April 1937 the British authorities appropriated certain areas where the company was drilling, for a water facility that would supply the city of Haifa, which had become the hub of the government's military and economic activity.[[26]](#footnote-26) The Jewish National Fund that was, it will be recalled, in partnership with Mekorot, asked the company to limit its pumping from the wells out of concern that if water were found the authorities would it conveyed to Haifa instead of to settlement projects in the Zvulon Valley. A year and a half after the company's founding, the first water facility was completed and began delivery to farms in the western Jezreel Valley. The company's first facility was interregional and included sixteen producing wells and several that served as reserves. Forty-four kilometers of pipes were laid between the wells, ponds, and settlements (the consumers). Blass highlighted his company's accomplishments while downplaying the achievements of companies that predated Mekorot. "Development was carried out solely by Jews, from the geologist and geophysicist to the youngest worker in the shadow of an aloof government, in a country with no experience in developing water resources, by a people, most of whom had come to this profession only after they arrived in the country."[[27]](#footnote-27)

During its first year of operation the company continued to enlist capital to lower the price of water for agriculture. The financial sources included money from the 1933 "Transfer Agreement" (an arrangement signed between Yishuv representatives and Nazi Germany that allowed German Jews fleeing to Eretz Israel to take out capital in the form of merchandise or material). At the same time the company received loans from the Mandatory Government as part of the latter's efforts to increase the food supply in Palestine as war approached. Mekorot planned its steps meticulously to augment its equipment inventory and develop its facilities. For example, at the end of World War Two it purchased water pipes from England for company projects.[[28]](#footnote-28) In 1944 the company's first facility was conveying water to thirty-one consumers (twenty-five agricultural settlements and six urban locations). A year later the number of consumers rose to thirty-eight, and the total delivery volume came to eight million cubic meters, eight times more than in the first year. The jump in production was a milestone in the establishment of a central water company with a national orientation operating interregionally. Mekorot had demonstrated its economic stability.

**Activity in other geographic areas and other fields of endeavor**

In pursuit of its goal, Mekorot expanded its activity. One of the ways was by purchasing already functioning water facilities. The first was in the settlement of Kiryat Haim (north of Haifa). Mekorot offered assistance to the settlement in its economic distress. Other considerations included preventing the facility's sale to a competitor and, as noted, extending its own area of activity. Originally Mekorot was designated only for water delivery to agricultural settlements but in light of developments on the ground the management realized that by channeling water to urban settlements it would gain a subsidy on water for agriculture.

When the Haifa neighborhood of Hadar HaCarmel turned to Mekorot for water, an opportunity was created to lower the price of water for agriculture in the Jezreel Valley. Delivery to Hadar HaCarmel began in November 1939 and afterwards other areas in Haifa (the port, industrial zone, railroad yards, and military installations) also became consumers of Mekorot's delivery services.[[29]](#footnote-29) The company's ability to provide government industries with water bears witness to the management's professionalism and negotiating skills. Company activity in the urban sphere skyrocketed with the acquisition of a water facility southeast of Tel Aviv (where Holon stands today).[[30]](#footnote-30) In response to the city of Afula's request for water, the company carried out the first-ever drillings on the slopes of Nazareth.[[31]](#footnote-31)Nineteen forty-four witnessed the high point of the company's expansion. An agreement to set up a water facility in the Beit She'an Valley gave Mekorot an advantage by allowing it to continue its activity in the region in the future. The agreement also set in motion a mechanism that determined the conditions for safeguarding the settlements' water rights. In addition Mekorot was obligated to hire residents in the region for work at the facility. Following the geopolitical changes in the region after the 1948 war the company's holdings in the local facilities expanded when another water facility was completed and that was based on the addition of water from local springs.[[32]](#footnote-32)

During the Second World War and in the aftermath of the Arab Revolt when various ideas had been raised (and then shelved) regarding the country's partition, Mekorot, on Blass's initiative, began planning its facilities at the national level. In February 1941 he presented the company's leadership with a proposal based on the potential for water management at the national level. Since initial plans in this direction were already underway, the company provided Blass and his team with the necessary funding to draw up a master plan.[[33]](#footnote-33) Three years later the company published the plan under the title "Water Resources in Eretz Israel, the Chance for Hydroelectric Investment and Development." It was one of the most comprehensive plans of its kind in the period and, in effect, became the State of Israel's master plan in water economy.[[34]](#footnote-34) Blass and his team had analyzed the entire network of water supply within the borders of Mandatory Eretz Israel as well as in neighboring states, which in effect made the plan an engineering-ideological framework for conveying water at the national level. The heads of the company announced that the plan would assist in drawing up another plan for the settlement of Jews who were expected to flood the country at the end of the war. Be this as it may, the plan and its data need to be seen in light of the argument with the Mandate authorities over the country's absorption capacity. One of the main issues in this issue was water volume. British data downsized the overall water supply, while Mekorot and other parties produced higher figures and at the same presented a plan for the integrated use of water.[[35]](#footnote-35) In this way the company that operated the water facilities became the company that dealt with national planning. Mekorot's plan, like others, was formally discussed only after Israel became an independent state at the termination of the Mandate.[[36]](#footnote-36) But already in talks on the Partition Plan (November 1947) the Yishuv's representatives to the United Nations used the data on the location and need for water.[[37]](#footnote-37) After the Second World War the company increased its facilities. On the agenda stood the expansion of existing facilities, the acquisition of water companies, and the relationship with new consumers. Although Mekorot was identified with its projects in the valleys, its business operations extended to other parts of the country as well.

**The company in the service of the Yishuv and the state's leadership**

After discussions on the future of the country and the escalating conflict with the local Arabs and the British, the company was recruited to assist in a new settlement project. The fact that the Yishuv leadership turned to Mekorot testifies to its trust in the company's abilities and the connection between the management and the Yishuv's security and settlement plans.

The first water facility that the company established in this period was in the northwestern Negev. The facility was integrated into the greater regional settlement plan that came in response to the 1946 Anglo-American Morrison-Grady Plan. According to the plan, after the Mandate, the Negev and Jerusalem would remain in British hands and the northwestern Negev would go to the Arabs. The Jewish Agency's settlement project envisioned a Jewish presence in the region and naturally the question of water supply was on the agenda. The discussion was unique in that it not only reviewed soil type and the dearth of water resources, but it also had to decide which step would be taken first: building settlements or establishing the water infrastructure. The agricultural planning for each settlement had examined the possibility of a water supply from local wells near Kibbutz Nir Am. Both the proponents and the planners of the project decided that water infrastructure took precedence over settlements. In a historic operation, on the night of October 5-6, 1946 eleven settlements simultaneously put down stakes in the Negev. The sweeping arc of their spots was determined by the location of existing kibbutzim and outposts (Revivim, Beit Eshel, Gvulot, and Ruchama) and the possibility of supplying the new settlements with water. Security considerations had to be taken into account in the choice of location. Fearing that the plan would be thwarted, work on the water facility proceeded at a lightning pace. Construction began in early January 1947 in coordination with the British authorities. Additional companies, as well as settlers, participated in the digging and pipe-laying. Delays occurred because of directives of local military commanders, but the main concern was the passage of a law that would prohibit the conveyance of water from one region to another, and this was the deciding factor in rushing the project forward.[[38]](#footnote-38) A military force was sent to guard the sabotaged pipelines and in some places the route was altered. The line was completed in late 1947.[[39]](#footnote-39) The day after Israel declared independence (May 14, 1948) Arab armies invaded the country and the Egyptian army attacked Mekorot's camp at the main reservoir. The region's water supply was cut off, effectively putting the settlements under siege. When normalcy eventually returned, Mekorot worked overtime to repair the damaged facility and renew the delivery of water.

At the same time that the company was occupied in the northwestern Negev, it was called on to convey water to the Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem. The water supply, mainly in the Jewish sections, was based on government-built facilities and the use of traditional cisterns. Given the size and symbolic importance of the city as the capital the authorities struggled to ensure water delivery. The laying of a pipeline in 1936 from the Rosh Ha'ayin Springs in the coastal plan in the west to Jerusalem had been the highpoint in the effort to establish a delivery system. As the main water conduit to the city since 1936 the government did its best to protect its facilities until the end of the mandate in May 1948. When the Arab armies invaded the newborn state, they sabotaged the line from Rosh Haayin. Against the background of military developments in the western foothills in June 1948 and the deadlock in negotiations (through the mediation of the UN envoy Count Folke Bernadotte) to re-open the facility, Israeli military engineers improvised a solution that became crucial after the Arab saboteurs blew up the pumping station at Latrun. The engineers proposed clearing a make-shift dirt track (nicknamed the 'Burma Road') to Jerusalem and laying a pipeline alongside it.[[40]](#footnote-40) The water source for the alternative facility would come from drillings in the vicinity of Kibbutz Hulda in the western foothills where the water would be pumped to the city. As Mekorot's managers were studying the obstacles and requirements, they felt the enormous burden of responsibility on the company "to provide Jerusalemites with an immediate supply of water and save them from thirst. Our company considers it an honor to be working on this project."[[41]](#footnote-41) Mekorot also saw the project as an expression of the link between the State of Israel and Jerusalem.[[42]](#footnote-42) The plan entailed the construction of three pumping stations and laying a pipeline above Sha'ar Hagai (the narrow entrance to the Jerusalem Hills) to the Mandatory facility. The practical work, which began in July 1948, was carried out under punishing conditions and sometimes subject to enemy fire. Without enough pipes for the entire route, the engineers again devised a solution by linking connections of different diameters, a technical improvisation that would complicate maintenance later. The pond at Hulda and the construction of the pumping stations were built in the record breaking time of three weeks. Work was completed in thirty days and the life-sustaining water flowed into the city. Ben-Gurion made special note in his diary of the renewal of water delivery to Jerusalem, proof of the project's importance and significance. [[43]](#footnote-43) After the war the volume of water in the pipeline increased, and as the city grew, the company drew up plans for another line to the city. The "parallel" line (termed as such because it ran parallel to the Mandatory line) was inaugurated in 1953. Over the years Mekorot has built additional supply facilities for Jerusalem.

**What makes Mekorot unique?**

On the eve of Israel's independence Mekorot facilities were operating throughout country. Along with the increase in water facilities, the company established a smoothly run mechanism for management, planning, and development. These assets, in addition to the company's political and organizational ties, helped it amass private capital and establish itself as the country's leading water enterprise. Its economic and technological stability enabled the expansion of its agricultural activity, which by its nature produced changes in the landscape. The company's water supply strengthened the settlement consumers while the shift to irrigation accentuated their activity. The company's surface facilities (ponds and pumping stations) and subterranean ones (pipe networks and wells) played a key role in the survival of many settlements.

As a company of the main national institutions, the records of its water supply activity are available for public perusal. The company developed its mechanism for building and operating local, regional, and interregional facilities and for drawing up plans on the national level to assist the Yishuv leadership in formulating a policy for the future state. An examination of other Yishuv activities related to water delivery (research at the Hebrew University and the Technion, drilling companies, and so forth) reveals that the national leadership regarded water as a matter of paramount importance. Even before Great Britain received the mandate for Palestine, representatives of the Zionist movement had been involved in water issues and had tried to influence the demarcation of the national homeland's borders.[[44]](#footnote-44) My research has found that even though water activity continued throughout the Mandate period, this subject has not been presented comprehensively to date.

Mekorot and other companies exhausted the legal and economic possibilities for water development and distribution that the British authorities allowed. In the limited sovereignty that the Zionists were permitted in their settlements and on the land that they acquired, Mekorot, under the aegis of the national institutions, established an efficient water infrastructure. The company's productivity and political identification with the Jewish leadership was a cardinal factor in securing its status as the country's leading water company.

After the establishment of the state, the company's success and access to the political elites made it a key player in the development of the water economy. Although Mekorot lacked official status, it took the lead in carrying out the state's first major water scheme – the Yarkon-Negev Project, whose completion was the capstone of one of the largest water economy plans of the Mandate period. The company's success in carrying out the national project further enhanced its standing. Following the passage of the 1959 Water Law, Mekorot was officially elevated to the position of "national water company" but only as long as it worked on the construction of the National Water Carrier. Nevertheless, the recognition cemented its status.

During the Mandate period the institutions of the state-in-the-making administered many areas of life while struggling for autonomy from the British. Looking at Mekorot's activity in the Yishuv, we can say that it overcame formidable obstacles and produced outstanding achievements. In the early years of the state the company's personnel, like their colleagues (some of whom were former Mekorot staff) in the management of the water economy, believed that water was a natural resource to be exploited. Our study has tried to explain the reasons for the crystallization of this approach: the national struggle and the desire to expand agriculture and settlement. However, as this approach would prove catastrophic for the state's water supply and we must ask if and when those responsible for the water economy changed their attitude.[[45]](#footnote-45) This is a topic for further research.

1. Z. D. Levontin, “The Establishment of the Moshava Rishon LeZion,” in A. Yaari, (ed.), *Eretz Israel Memoires*, vol. 1, (Jerusalem, 1947) 440-442 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A. Halamish, *From a National Home to the State-in-the-Making: The Yishuv in the Land of Israel between Two World Wars* vol. 1, (The Open University, 2004) 163-186 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. J. Linton, *What is Water? The History of a Modern Abstraction* (Vancouver & Toronto, 2010) 3-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Halamish, 223-232. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. On the history of water, see A. Selzer, (ed.), *Cathedra*,172 (2019) [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. V. Lemire, "The Thirst of Jerusalem: A Water-history of the Holy City, 1840-1948," *Cathedra*, 151 (2014) 133-158 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. G. Biger, *Crown Moshava or National Homeland*, (Jerusalem, 1982) 158-160, 166-167 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. D. Schorr, "Water Law in British-ruled Palestine," *Water History*, 6 (2014) 247-263. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. R. Berman, A. Selzer, "Many Waters: Research and Development in the Jewish Water Sector during the Mandate Period," *Cathedra*, 172 (2019) 73-96 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See, for example, the description of the water facility in Baqa al-Gharbiyye. K. Peled, "The Well of Forgetfulness and Remembrance," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (2010) 139-158. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. S. Blass, *Troubled Water and Accomplishment: The Fascinating Story of the Water in Israel*, (Ramat Gan, 1973) 90-95 [Hebrew]; Y. Ben-Aryeh, *The Central Jordan Valley*, (Merchavia, 1965) 186-187 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. P. Doron, *Development: The Eventful Life and Travels of an Engineer*, (Jerusalem, 1993) 53-93 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The Settlement of the Thousand was a Jewish Agency project to establish one thousand farming units as part of the workers' settlements located next to already existing farming communities (*moshavot*). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. L. Picard, *Research and Activity: Pioneering Geology in Eretz Israel: Milestones in the Discovery of Groundwater and Natural Resources*, (Jerusalem, 1996) 63, 86 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Berman and Selzer, 85-89. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. "Report of the World Zionist Executive and Jewish Agency, presented at the Tenth Zionist Congress and the Fiftieth **[is fiftieth correct?]** Jewish Agency Council," (Zurich and Jerusalem, 1936) 349-351 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Levi Shkolnik (Eshkol) was a Second Aliya pioneer, member of Kibbutz Degania and one of the founders of the Histadrut (Labor Federation), and member of the Labor Party (Mapai). In addition to his role as manager of Mekorot he continued to fill other roles in the Jewish Agency, security and settlement. After the establishment of the state he served as minister of agriculture and minister of the treasury. In 1963 he was appointed prime minister. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Simcha Blass was a mechanical engineer, planner of Mekorot's first water facility and remained in the company; planner and advisor to the national institutions and settlements on water issues. After the establishment of the state, he was appointed advisor to the prime minister on water issues; general manager of the company for water planning in Israel (Tahal); left Tahal over a disagreement regarding the establishment of the National Water Carrier. S. Blass, *Troubled Water and Achievement*, 113-114 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Memo: "The Establishment of a Water Company for Building an Irrigation Facility in the Western Jezreel Valley," n.d., Israel State Archives, 10/14850 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Memo: "The Amalgamation of Company Limited Stocks, Order of the Companies 1926/36," Mekorot, Water Company Ltd. [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. M. Naor, *The Rise of a Leader: Pinchas Sapir*, (Tel Aviv, 1987) 107-108 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Picard, 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Mekorot to E. Kaplan (Jewish Agency), January 1, 1942, Israel State Archives, 17/14849 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Granot, 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Work conflict, February 5, 1928, Israel State Archives, 15/14849 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Memo: "Government Appropriated Land to Protect Drillings for the Investigating Institution" **[is translation of title correct]**, May 1937, ISA, S 25 6997. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. S. Blass, "Water Development in Labor Settlements," February 11, 1946, ISA, 13/1480. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Urban fire brigades in England used the pipes to cope with the damage caused by aerial bombings during the war. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Memo [in English], June 1942, ISA, 4/14852. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Protocol, Mekorot Management Meeting, Water Company Ltd., February 28, 1944, Lavon, IV-235-1 3 7490 [Hebrew].

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