Abstract:

**Laying the Foundation –**

**The Beginning of the Water-Supply Companies' Operations**

**in the Jewish Economy During the British Mandate Period (1948-1937)**

 From the outset of the Zionist movement's operations in the land of Israel, its activities were carried out by means of institutions and bodies that formed the infrastructure of the future state. Alongside the political, educational, and cultural institutions, companies that dealt with water were also established at that time. Confronted with the unique hydrological conditions in the land, the settlements had to work towards the development of a water system and with the transition to irrigated agriculture it became necessary to increase the water supply to the settlements. In light of this situation, a number of water companies were founded during the Mandate period, the most prominent of them being the Mekorot Company. This company, which was founded by the central Zionist institutions, became a significant factor in the development of the settlement landscape soon after its establishment in 1937. Moreover, the company heads worked to turn it into a national company and to use it to assist in a range of settlement activities in the land. This article will present the story of the establishment and development of the Mekorot Company in the first decade of its operation and the manner in which it regarded the sea. Through the discourse on the history of water and a broad discussion, we will present the company's method of operation and its influence. The story of the Mekorot Company is a reflection of the range of activities involving infrastructure that were carried out by the Jewish population during the Mandate period and an opportunity to examine the story of the settlement from below, from the water sources.

*A note to the author: I capitalized 'Mandate', as it refers to the specific British Mandate in the land of Israel. If you believe it should be written in lower case 'mandate', please change it, and let me know for further reference.*