

**AMERICAN CONSULS IN THE HOLY LAND: 1832-1914, Ruth Kark,  
Translated From The Hebrew by Joseph Shadur  
(Jerusalem and Detroit: The Magnes Press of the Hebrew University  
with the Wayne State U.P., 1994).**

This very solid, readable, and attractive work belongs in the library of everyone interested in the history of American diplomacy in the Middle East, the origins of Zionism, and nineteenth-century Palestine up to the eve of World War I. The author, a geographer on the faculty of the Hebrew University, has examined all the relevant archives in Israel, the United States, and Great Britain. This includes the valuable German consular correspondence which belongs to the Israeli State Archives in Jerusalem. The extensive bibliography will be useful to anyone seeking further information on the subjects covered in the book. All sources are acknowledged in clear and complete footnotes.

The work opens with Professor Kark's analysis of the difference between Christian concepts of Jerusalem as an idealized spiritual essence, and the Jewish view of the restoration of Zion as a physical accomplishment. She relates that contrast to the interests which brought nineteenth century Americans to Jerusalem. The body of her book begins with a very careful examination of the origins of the office of consul, going back to the Italian renaissance. She defines and discusses the concept of "capitulations," those concessions to foreign consuls by Ottoman Turkey, which allowed them to serve as judge, jury, and protector of their fellow nationals living abroad. That essential discussion explores the means whereby consuls broadened their power base by extending their protection to proteges whose claim to the consul's citizenship was tenuous, indeed.

Chapter by chapter, the author covers the earliest relationships between the United States and the Turkish Empire, the opening of United States diplomatic ties in Constantinople, the first consular agencies in Palestine, and finally the actual opening of a consulate in Jerusalem.

Professor Kark devotes the bulk of the book to an examination of the work of United States Consuls in Jerusalem. Each aspect of that work is covered systematically, and in detail. What could have been a dull recitation of facts is rescued and rendered lively, by the descriptions of the foibles of all successive men who held the post of Consul in Jerusalem.

Both the charm and the scholarly value of the book are enhanced by a series of appendices which will make this work essential for anyone undertaking research in Palestinian history. The appendices include lengthy and very vivid biographies of each man who held the office of consul at Jerusalem. They also list all the consuls who served at Beirut, as well as the names and dates of service for the subordinate employees of the consulate. Even the consular agents who served at Jaffa, Acre, and Haifa from 1832 to 1917 are listed. In a real example of "icing on the cake," the names and dates of service of all United States Secretaries of State and Ministers at Constantinople from 1831 to World War I are given.

The book is handsomely illustrated with portraits of the most notable of the personalities discussed in the book. Also, there are scenes from nineteenth-century Palestine, rare maps showing the extent of Turkish government jurisdictions, and even views of the original and present-day United States consular buildings. A valuable glossary provides clear explanations of all Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, and English technical vocabulary.

Because the original manuscript was written in Hebrew, the English text was the work of Joseph Shadur. There is only an occasional instance of wooden clumsiness in an otherwise smooth literary presentation. It certainly presents no obstacle to pleasant reading. The only error in proofreading caught by this reviewer was a reference to the American Civil War Battle of Cold Harbor as "Coal" Harbor. This reader was also surprised to find Isaac Leeser, an early champion of American Orthodox Judaism, described as a leader of Conservative Judaism in the United States. Actually, the Conservative movement did not begin until after his death.

Professor Kark's exhaustive work will surely remain the definitive reference source for information on the role played by American consuls in the encouragement and support of the earliest Zionist pioneers from 1881 until 1914.

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