CHAPTER ONE

Biography of Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon

1907–1950

As a journalist covering daily life and events in Palestine, much of Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon's writing was autobiographical. This biography is therefore brief and is intended to supply a general overview of her short life, as well as severely limited central background information, which she assumed would have been familiar to her readers. More detailed background information is provided via notes and the glossary.

Many books have been, are, and will be written describing, analyzing, and arguing about the events to which Kahn responded in her writing: the rise of the Nazis to power in Europe; Jewish settlement of what became the State of Israel, World War II, the Holocaust, massive post-war immigration of Jewish refugees to Israel, detainment of these refugees in camps by the British Mandatory authorities, the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and the War of Independence and its aftermath in 1948–49. Clearly this collection, focusing as it does on the writings of one journalist, cannot hope to "cover" these events. We hope that readers who feel the need for wider background will make use of the Suggested Reading.

It might be thought strange to begin a biography with selections from an obituary of the subject; yet the obit published by *The Jerusalem Post* on August 7, 1950 not only reviews the major turning points of her life but also

provides a summary of reasons for renewed interest in the life and work of Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon, some sixty years after the day when her typewriter, lovingly preserved by her son Doron in his studio, began to collect dust:

DEATH OF DOROTHY KAHN BAR-ADON

We deeply regret to announce the death in Jerusalem of Mrs. Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon, author, historian of the Emek [Jezreel Valley] and for many years a valued contributor to *The Jerusalem Post*.

Dorothy Bar-Adon was born in Philadelphia, United States in 1907 and was for some years a reporter on the *Atlantic City Press* until her migration to this country in 1933. She joined this newspaper [then called *The Palestine Post*] immediately, but later interrupted her career as a journalist for three years during which she joined the communal settlement of Givat Brenner as a working guest.

After her marriage, she went to live in the moshav, Merhavia, from where she regularly contributed to this paper a series of articles that provided an inimitable record on the life and progress of the Emek.

She is survived by her husband, Pessah Bar-Adon—shepherd, watchman, writer and archaeologist, and a young son.

The funeral service will take place at nine o'clock this morning at the Bikur Holim Hospital. The body will be taken from there to Merhavia for burial.

A TRIBUTE

The blurb on the dustcover of Dorothy Kahn's *Spring Up, O Well* refers to the author's "long journey back, from being an American of Jewish persuasion," to Jerusalem. This book was published in 1936. The last fourteen years of her life were a rounding-up completion. In these years of maturing she found the companionship of a mate of quality, and there is a son whose realm is the Emek and whose seat is Merhavia. She saw the birth of the State, and shared in the travail that preceded it. Her sharing was real and personal. She lived to taste every moment of Israel's great fight and to relish every morsel of the big victory.

But for all the fullness of the circle, from assimilated (not necessarily assimilationist) upbringing to consciousness of the Jewish need and its fulfillment on its own soil, Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon should have been

spared for many more years. She had much to give. Her gift of observation was unspent, her urge for expression, undiminished, her vision, undimmed, and her spring of friendship and neighborliness, unexhausted.

Her battered typewriter—"Dot" was not at home with one that was not battered—sang to her mild coaxing, sang with a twinkle. The twinkle was never absent. She could be devastatingly amusing—what reader of this paper will forget her "Alice in Wonderland" series—but never solemn and certainly never sinister. She knew man to be a tissue of foibles, and you might scold him for it, good-naturedly for choice, but never hatefully. If you could make your British Mandatory adversary feel foolish and act sheepish, you gained more for your side than by roundly denouncing him as a bounder. And anyway, hate begets hate, and that was not what Dot was after.

She was not out to amuse herself, or amuse her readers. But her sense of the grimness of life was modified by her sense of proportion. There was to her something fanciful in man's folly at the base of man's troubles—and the whole of the disordered cock-eyed world, wasn't it after all fey?

Fey Dorothy Kahn was herself, of course, but far, far from disordered. Solid position, solid comforts, even solid reputation—these did not matter half as much as the mild amusements she derived and inimitably passed on, from the antics of men and women, none of whom quite escaped appearing moderately grotesque.

She was a poet. "Jerusalem is a woman who sits among bleak hills combing her hair and smiling," she wrote. That suited her, doing something no matter what, with a twinkle and smiling. She smiled when she wrote paragraphs on Boardwalk society in Atlantic City; she smiled when she wrote news paragraphs for this paper; smiled when she expanded these paragraphs into causeries of lasting quality; smiled as ardent wife and doting mother, smiled knowing she was fey, when she knew she was about to die.

[*The Jerusalem Post*, August 7, 1950, p. 3]

Dorothy Ruth Kahn was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on August 2, 1907. Her parents, George Kahn and Sarah Floss Kahn, had emigrated from Germany to the United States in the 1860s and raised their children—Dorothy and Beatrice—in an assimilated American-Jewish Reformed milieu.

In *Spring Up, O Well*[1] Kahn describes her journey to secular Judaism and Zionism. Her family did not maintain a kosher kitchen; Kahn and her parents traveled on Saturdays; the Kahn sisters were taught no Hebrew. Indeed, the family celebrated Christmas and Easter, although they saw the latter more as American national holidays than as religious festivals marking events in the life of Jesus Christ. Yet Dorothy was sent to a Reformed Sunday school to prepare for her confirmation (*bat mitzvah*). Kahn recalls the ceremony as a turning point in her identification with the Jewish people, "I still believe that it was the crimson and gold cover on the 'Torah' that made me shrivel into the whiteness of my dress, lost in a sudden realization of the glory and agony of Judaism" (35).

Kahn's awakening to the implications of her Jewishness gained strength in junior high school, when several gentile classmates stopped speaking to her on discovering she was Jewish, and the art teacher told her that "I didn't know you were a Jewess. You don't look like one. You're so different from the rest. Such a quiet child" (34). Offered the chance of pledging to a large Jewish sorority in high school or to "the most exclusive gentile sorority in the school," Kahn toyed with "outraging her parents and Christian friends" by joining the Jewish sorority, but she opted for Alpha Sigma, the gentile sorority.

Kahn describes the last sorority meeting before high school graduation, as plans are being made for the final dance:

> A lovely blonde, with the diplomacy of a Japanese statesman at a disarmament conference, reminding the girls that when they are inviting guests they must bear in mind that the Seaview Golf Club had "a Christian roster and we, as visitors, would hardly want to violate a tradition…"
>
> Remembering that I am the only Jew in the room.
>
> Feeling obliged to ask a feeble question.
>
> Being told that the Seaview Club doesn't mean me, of course. Haven't I always been invited there? Am I becoming supersensitive now? […]
>
> Wanting to stand up and shout defiance, but feeling that the world will topple if I am not dancing in my new sapphire chiffon frock at the Seaview Golf Club on the night before graduation. […]
>
> Then signing my name to the list of those who will be present (39).

[1] New York: Henry Holt, 1936. Unless otherwise indicated, quotes from Bar Adon in this biography are from *Spring Up, O Well.*

During 1925 and 1926, years in which America "was spending money like a whore after the fleet has sailed" (41), Kahn had an unhappy love affair with a man whom she dubs Hilary, "an Irish Roman Catholic who flaunted a London accent, an ex-wife and a quiet passion for me with fetching grace when he was sober and equally fetching pathos when he was drunk" (43). Kahn's Jewishness seemed to matter neither to her nor to Hilary. Yet, on occasion, she was drawn to attend a play produced in Yiddish, or to a performance by the great cantor, Yossele Rosenblatt. Although Kahn did not believe that she would marry Hilary, she suffered great disappointment when he informed her of his sudden decision to marry a wealthy Roman Catholic widow, much older than Kahn:

> So I heard my voice, although I choose now to believe that it was only the wind, crying through the rain, "I can't go on alone. You never remembered that I was a Jew. I didn't either. Take me and I won't ever be a Jew again."
>
> And then Hilary suddenly stopped being subdued and fetching. I saw his nonchalant graces of two years roll into a hard pinpoint of reality. "I've never stopped remembering you were a Jew." His words were clipped shortly. "I wanted to. You wouldn't let me" (44–45).

On her twenty-first birthday Kahn attended services at what she describes as her family's "church-like Temple" (48). It was here that she met a young man whom she called David, the son of an orthodox rabbi, who took her under his wing and introduced her to his family, to the Sabbath, and to daily life of observant Jews, "During the five years that followed, David continued to wrap up bits of Jewish life in common-places and to hand them to me with the same careless gesture as he had handed me the Sabbath. Never was there drama. Never was he the Martin Luther disseminating light nor I a Joan d'Arc hearing heavenly voices" (54). Although Kahn was never religiously orthodox, her identity as a Jew grew steadily:

> True, an incident, a crisis, a Herr Hitler or a Hilary talking into the storm may jolt you into the realization that you must either live freely or honestly as a Jew or suffer complete spiritual disintegration. But you cannot be jolted into possessing the sources, the secret springs that make the living of such a life, in its richest sense, possible. You cannot be jolted. So you travel and search (55).

During her childhood, the family had moved to the seaside resort of Atlantic City, New Jersey, then, as now, known for its broad beaches and boardwalk, elegant hotels, and casinos. In 1924, when Kahn was seventeen years old, her father died suddenly; the family lost not only a beloved father and husband but also its main provider. On completing her high school education, Kahn went to work as a reporter for the *Atlantic City Press* while simultaneously developing her interest in her Jewish heritage and in the possibility of expressing this heritage by immigrating to Palestine. Writing under the bylines Dot Kahn, Dorothy Kahn, Dorothy R. Kahn, Member of the Press Staff, or Staff Correspondent, Kahn lived in Atlantic City and was employed by the newspaper until her immigration to Palestine in 1933.

Many late-nineteenth century newspapers, as Chambers et al. note, "aimed to attract more women readers by introducing what came to be labeled as 'women's journalism,' a style of news writing confined to society news, reports on changing fashions, and feature articles on domestic issues. These stories for women readers were written by women reporters" (17).[2] During World War I, according to Beasley and Gibbons, women journalists were hired to replace men; this phenomenon was to accelerate during World War II (53).[3]

By the early 1930s, it was thus not unusual for women to work as newspaper reporters. The best-known American reporter, Elizabeth Jane Cochrane (1864–1922), published under the pen name Nellie Bly. After a promising beginning on the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, in 1887, Bly moved to New York. There she talked her way into the offices of Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and took on the assignment of investigating the treatment of women inmates confined in the Women's Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell Island. The subsequent expositive articles and book (*Ten Days in a Madhouse*) caused a sensation that resulted in government investigations of such institutions and led to improvements in the care of patients; they also brought Bly lasting fame and success as what is now called an investigative reporter.

The second project that Bly is best remembered for is her round-the-world voyage in 1889–90. Bly attempted to carry out in fact the journey described fictionally in Jules Verne's *Eighty Days Around the World*. *The World* kept up readers' interest in the feat by sponsoring a contest in which readers

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2 Deborah Chambers, Linda Steiner, and Carole Fleming, *Women and Journalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

3 Maurine H. Beasley and Sheila J. Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism* (State College, PA: Strata, 2003), second edition.

were invited to estimate to the second Bly's arrival time. Bly completed the journey in some 72 days, thus setting a short-lived world record.

These two projects serve as useful examples of two trends in women's roles in journalism until the mid-twentieth century. On one hand, some women functioned as correspondents covering, or indeed revealing important news. On the other hand, women were seen as being especially suited to cover the arts, as well as what came to be known as "human interest" stories. Women's supposed humane, emotional side as expressed in their reporting often led to their being termed "*sob sisters*."[4]

During her years as a staff reporter at the *Atlantic City Press,* Kahn's writing seems to have found favor with her editors: many of her stories were placed on the paper's opening pages and bore her byline. While much of the paper's national and international news was provided by the Associated Press, Kahn often covered stories of international interest when assigned to interview visitors to Atlantic City who had a connection to the burning issues of the day. On June 10, 1930, for example, under the headline "Russian Prince Sees Rule of Soviets Nearing End Abroad," her byline appears on a page-two interview with Prince V. Koudacheff, "formerly of the Russian diplomatic service," who was staying at the Ambassador Hotel while recovering from a tonsil operation. Kahn's interview with the prince dealt mainly with matters of import:

> The death of the present leaders, or the outbreak of any war will mean the swan song of the present regime in Russia, is the prediction of the prince. He declared that all revolutions are short-lived because they terminate with the death of their instigators. He also pointed out that in the advent of another war, the soldiers would seize the government whether they returned crushed or victorious.

It is only in the last paragraph that the reader is treated to what might be called a bit of sob-sisterly trivia: Princess Koudacheff, the prince's American wife, describes their wedding, "We had the Greek orthodox service. Since it was my second marriage, only half of the service was required. However,

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[4] The Oxford English Dictionary lists the following definitions: "sob sister, a female journalist who writes sentimental reports or articles; a writer of sob stories; hence in various *transf.* uses, *esp.*: an actress who plays pathetic roles; a sentimental, impractical person, a do-gooder; a journalist who gives advice on readers' problems; sob story, a report or article designed to make a sentimental appeal to the emotions." It is thus not surprising that the image of the sob sister entered popular culture via films, novels, comics.

we and our guests had to stand through the entire ceremony, which lasted for forty-five minutes."

Following the 1929 Palestine Riots, 1930 saw an event initiated by the British Mandatory authorities in Palestine that threatened to limit Jewish immigration: the Hope-Simpson report recommended limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine according to the perceived ability of the territory to absorb immigrants. On October 21, 1930, Sidney James Webb, Lord Passfield, Secretary of State for the colonies, issued a White Paper restricting further land acquisition by Jews, thus slowing Jewish immigration. Page two of the *Press*'s November 6, 1930, edition features a bylined article by Kahn headlined "Resort Jews Resent British Palestine Edict: Pass Resolutions Condemning Act; Rabbi Neuman and Rev. Mellen Speak." The article describes an interfaith protest meeting attended by more than a thousand Jews gathered at a local community center the previous evening to protest the British government's recent issuing of the Second White Paper.[5] The article's lead sentence is based on a quotation from the rally's keynote speaker, Joseph Roschovsky, president of the local Zionist organization, "The calamity which has befallen the Jews in Palestine today may be compared to the calamity which befell our forefathers when Titus and his hordes destroyed the Temple." We may thus assume that at this point, some three years prior to her own immigration to Palestine, Kahn's growing identity with the Jewish people and its stateless plight was already well developed.

As the Great Depression went into its second and third years, Kahn's interest in the Jewish settlement of the land of Israel grew, as did her sense that she herself might take an active part in the Zionist enterprise by immigrating to Palestine. She and her friend David discussed the desperation that both felt on witnessing the extremes of poverty and wealth, so clear in a resort such as Atlantic City: sitting at a table in a restaurant she noted that obviously hungry people on the street outside were looking through the window and watching her and the other customers as they eat. Why didn't they smash the windows and grab the food? "Is patience such a virtue?" she asked. David's answer was that:

> This degradation was not peculiar to America. It was the history of the world. Degradation and then uprising. Perhaps that uprising

[5] The First White Paper, June 3, 1922, limited the area covered by the Balfour Declaration to the west bank of the Jordan River, thus creating the Kingdom of Transjordan on the east bank. The Third White Paper, May 17, 1939, severely restricted both Jewish immigration to Palestine and severely limited the purchasing of land on the part of Jews.

> would come to America too. Or perhaps prosperity would come first and then there would be a triumphant lull before the next period of degradation. And the solution? Perhaps it lay in [Soviet] Russia. Perhaps not. Perhaps there was no solution.

As for the Jew? If there was any solution at all, it was Palestine (66).

David's challenge clearly mingled with that posed by the gentile speaker at a public lecture, which Kahn attended, "How can any young Jew sit here and withstand the adventure of his people in Palestine?" he asked (68).

Having decided to immigrate to Palestine, Kahn spent two hectic weeks of preparation in New York. On the day before she sailed, Dorothy and her mother attended the City Hall wedding of Kahn's sister, Beatrice, to a gentile. Dorothy did not see her sister's marriage as a case of a Jew leaving the fold; rather "she had never come in." Dorothy recalled that Beatrice had refused to be "confirmed" (i.e. to have a *bat mitzvah*), claiming that she didn't feel like a Jew and found Jews to be nervous, noisy and sometimes dirty (77). Most of the busy fortnight in New York, however, was spent in the complicated process of obtaining a visa for Palestine from the British consulate; buying clothes and shoes; and especially collecting letters of recommendation from people who might be able to assist in smoothing her first steps in Palestine.

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise[6] provided Kahn with letters of introduction to, among others, Henrietta Szold,[7] David Yellin,[8] Irma Lindheim[9] and perhaps most important, Gershon Agronsky[10] of *The Palestine Post*. The

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6 Rabbi Stephen S. Wise (1874–1949) was a leader of American Reformed Judaism and a leading American Zionist.

7 Henrietta Szold (1860–1945) was a leading American Zionist and the founder of the Hadassah Women's Organization. In 1933, she immigrated to Palestine and ran Youth Aliya, an organization which rescued some 22,000 children from Nazi-controlled Europe.

8 David Yellin (1864–1941), in 1912, became deputy director of the Jerusalem Teachers' Seminary. When its administration insisted that the language of instruction be German rather than Hebrew, Yellin founded the Hebrew Teachers' Seminary; he continued to serve as its principal until his death.

9 Irma Lindheim (1886–1978), an American Zionist activist, in 1926 succeeded Szold as president of Hadassah. She later immigrated to Palestine and joined Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek, where she lived for most of the rest of her life, with the exception of periods of international lobbying for Zionist causes.

10 Gershon Agronsky (Agron) (1894–1959) was founder of *The Palestine Post*. Between 1949 and 1951, Agron headed Israel's government information service. Between 1955 and his death, he was the mayor of Jerusalem and played a major role in the development of the western sections of the city.

newspaper was to be Kahn's second home from her arrival in Tel Aviv in 1933 until her untimely death in 1950. She also visited two acquaintances who provided contrasting views of her approaching *aliyah* (immigration). Rebekah Kohut[11] had written on Palestine in *My Portion*. Kohut questions Kahn closely about her immediate plans but then speaks words of warm encouragement, "Nothing can happen to you. You are going to your own people…You won't have to worry about a home. Everyone's home will be yours" (70, 71). Dr. Maurice Hindus,[12] on the other hand, a supporter of Soviet Russia, who was preparing to sail for Russia within a fortnight, posed some difficult questions, "Isn't the day of the ghetto past? Can't Jews ever learn to be people? Isn't it enough that old Jews are bound up with sentimental, outworn tradition? How can a young, assimilated Jew choose voluntarily to return to segregation?" (72).

In June of 1933, at the end of a sea voyage of some two or three weeks, Kahn's boat docked in Jaffa port. After passing through customs she and her baggage were piled onto a horse-drawn carriage; they rode through Jaffa and into Tel Aviv, finally stopping at a *pension* that had been recommended by a companion on the boat. Tel Aviv was to be Kahn's home during her first years in Palestine; she wrote at length about the burgeoning, vibrant city, then undergoing an influx of Jews from Germany who had concluded that the rise of the Nazi Party to power was a threat to be taken seriously.

In his introduction to *Spring Up, O Well,* Henry W. Nevinson,[13] a British gentile supporter of Jewish settlement of Palestine, wrote:

> It was, I think, unfortunate that she landed at Jaffa and at once proceeded to its great northern suburb, Tel Aviv, where, on the thickly pressed sands of the deserted coast, the Jews have founded their growing city. Here all is new and all is Jewish. Only Jews live there, and the only language spoken or written is Hebrew. There is nothing

[11] Rebekah Kohut (1864–1951) was active in Jewish women's organizations; she was an early leader of the National Council of Jewish Women.

[12] Maurice Gerschon Hindus (1891–1969) was a Jewish-Russian-American writer, foreign correspondent, lecturer, and authority on Soviet and Central European affairs.

[13] Henry W. Nevinson (1856–1941) was a British journalist known for his reporting on the Second Boer War and on slavery in Angola. In 1907, he helped found the Men's League for Women's Suffrage; as a correspondent in the Great War, he was wounded at Gallipoli.

> to remind one of Palestine's ancient history. It is a "sudden town" that has sprung up like any sudden town in the United States, and to the gentile visitor it is little more. But to the Jew it is a realized dream, a holy work, the result of patriotic "mass emotion." Jews from all countries are crowding there, pushing, "ill-mannered," all in a desperate hurry to enjoy freedom (13–14).

Prior to her departure from New York, Kahn had met with an unnamed "Foreign Editor of a press service" who asked:

> "Are you a journalist or a Zionist? We could use articles on Palestine but we can't get them. Jews seem to contract a sob in their throats whenever they begin writing about Palestine. That's all right for literature. But we need facts—not tears." I assured him that I was a journalist. And I believed that I was (70).

The above presents one view of the role of journalists "covering" events in which they have an emotional investment. Kahn was sensitive to the presence of this internal conflict; yet her years as a reporter for the *Atlantic City Press* had taught her that a correspondent is supposed to aim for an objective stance. A converse view of the role of the journalist was that which pertained to the Hebrew press at the time of Kahn's immigration to Palestine and for many years onward. Hebrew-language newspapers tended to be published under the aegis of political or religious groupings and owed loyalty to the views of their editorial boards. Kahn was not fluent in Hebrew during her first years in Palestine; she thus began to write for the English-language *The Palestine Post*, which became *The Jerusalem Post* in 1950.

The Palestine Post, edited by Gershon Agronsky (Agron), to whom Kahn had a letter of introduction, published its first issue on December 1, 1932. The intended readership included British military personnel and civil servants stationed in Palestine, many of whom opposed Jewish settlement; local members of the Arab community; businessmen; the growing tourist trade; and pilgrims and members of Christian religious institutions residing in Palestine. The paper's policy, to which the editor kept strictly, was based on fairness, objective reporting, and criticism founded on knowledge. Agronsky supported the maintenance of law and order and was not afraid

to take an editorial stand on important matters. In its first year, its distribution was 4,000 copies; on June 6, 1944, it sold a record 49,000 copies.

From her arrival in Palestine in 1933 until 1936, Kahn lived in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem while writing for the *Post* and composing her book *Spring Up, O Well*, published in 1936. She travelled throughout the countryside, however, and wrote prolifically of the new and not-so-new villages, communal settlements, and kibbutzim. She also met and wrote of members of the Arab communities. Nevinson notes that:

> Like myself, Miss Dorothy Kahn turns with most pleasure to the Zionist settlements on the land. Our old Cobbett[14] asked with scorn, "Who ever saw a Jew with a spade in his hand?" But scattered throughout Palestine are the "colonies" of Jewish settlers who actually work the land themselves, and in many cases are forbidden to employ Arab labor. Most interesting to her, as to me, were the Kvutzah, or communal colonies, run on the principle that all should work alike and all share the produce of their work. It was in communal villages like Beit Alpha and Ein Harod, both at the foot of the mountains of Gilboa, that I found the hopes of Zionism even more truly realized than in the rushing industries of Tel Aviv and Haifa, or even in the great University on Mount Scopus [the Hebrew University of Jerusalem], from which Titus overlooked Jerusalem when he prepared the Holy City's destruction" (15–16).

From 1936 until 1938, Kahn lived in the kibbutz, Givat Brenner. She was not a member of the collective but paid for her room and board by working in various agricultural branches (e.g., field crops and beekeeping), while also spending time in Jerusalem. During these years, she continued to write for *The Palestine Post*. In 1938, the paper sent her to Poland, where she investigated and wrote about the place of the Jews as a minority. Prior to her move to Givat Brenner, Kahn took a step that was as surprising then as it would be even in the twenty-first century: she applied for, and received, Palestinian citizenship, which necessitated renouncing her American citizenship. On September 13, 1935, the government of Palestine in Jerusalem

[14] William Cobbett (1763–1835) was a British farmer, journalist, pamphleteer, and Member of Parliament. In his writing, he gave expression to an anti-Semitic bent.

issued her with *Certificate of Naturalization number 15770*. For Kahn, this was a statement of commitment and intention.

The years 1936–39 saw a series of events in Palestine and Europe that influenced both Kahn's daily life and her work as a journalist, even when the latter bore the nature of what is now called feature writing. 1936 saw the beginning of what came to be termed the Arab Revolt in Palestine. The revolt was aimed against Jewish immigration to Palestine as well as against the British Mandatory authority, which was seen as enabling the continuation of Jewish immigration. At first, the Revolt was led by the Higher Arab Committee and involved strikes and other political protests. From late 1937 on, the Revolt became increasingly violent; British forces and Jewish civilians were targeted. Simultaneously, the attention of Jews throughout the world was focused on events in Europe: although the scope of the genocide perpetrated on European Jewry could not have been imagined, it was clear that Jews in Germany and the rest of Europe were in danger. Thus, the middle years of the 1930s saw immigration of Jews from Germany to Palestine; this formed a central theme in Kahn's writings until the White Paper of 1939 severely limited Jewish immigration to Palestine.

In autumn of 1939, Dorothy Kahn met her future husband, Pessah Bar-Adon, in Jerusalem. The young people fell in love and began living together; Dorothy continued her work as a journalist, both for *The Palestine Post* and as a freelancer, while Pessah took part in archaeological digs. On August 17, 1940, their only son, Doron, was born.

Pessah Bar-Adon, né Panitsch (1907–85) was born in Kolno, Poland, to a religious Zionist family. On his immigration to Palestine in 1925, he worked in housing and road construction while majoring in Middle East studies at the recently opened Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He lived among the bedouin near Beit She'an and Kuneitra; he adopted bedouin garb and went by the name of Azziz Effendi ("Azziz" remained his wife's nickname for him). He was curious as to why many kings during the biblical period had been shepherds and hoped that familiarity with the customs of contemporary nomads would shed light on this quandary. In time, he become one of Israel's more prominent archaeologists, taking part in the excavations of Beit She'arim, Tel Bet Yerah, Tel Kasila, the Cave of the Treasure at Nahal Mishmar, among others. During the 1929 Arab riots and the 1936–39 Arab Revolt, he was active in the Haganah (the pre-State Jewish defense force), which became the Israel Defense Forces on the establishment of the State.

In 1943 the Bar-Adon family—Dorothy, Pessah and little Doron—left Jerusalem and moved to the village of Merhavia, where they lived until Dorothy's death. The family rented an apartment in the Blumenfeld House, which they called "the castle" because it had been the first stone building in the Jezreel Valley. To this day there are two adjacent settlements named Merhavia: one a kibbutz and the other a moshav (cooperative village). It was here that Dorothy and Pessah raised their son. The closeness of the two settlements, as well as her previous experience as a resident of the kibbutz, Givat Brenner, enabled Dorothy to contrast the two forms—kibbutz and moshav—from the standpoint of a mother. Her writing on the subject is nonpartisan, and this at a time when public debate about the various forms of cooperative settlement in Palestine tended to be partisan.

In his memoir of his parents, Doron Bar-Adon quotes Dolly Avidor, a neighbor from the village of Merhavia:

> Your mother was an unusual figure in the village. She fought hard in order to maintain and defend the "nest," at a time when the burden of supporting the family rested on her thin shoulders. She loved you; you were the center of the world for her. At the same time she fought hard to please your dad. She dressed for him and cooked for him; she searched cookbooks for special recipes, even though what he really wanted was chickpeas and rice […].
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> Once I saw her observing you excitedly as you played with bottles filled with water—or maybe sand—to different heights, and then showed other kids how to play a tune on them; you knew how to organize other children in games. Mom was proud and happy as she watched you; she leaned on one foot and then on the other, chain-smoking.[15]

During the last decade of her life Dorothy was, indeed, the main support of the family, since Pessah's work as an archaeologist did not bring in a steady income. She wrote of daily life in the *Yishuv* [Jewish community in Palestine before 1948] during World War II, of the massive immigration of European Jewry to Palestine in the years immediately following the war's end, of the often successful attempts by the British Mandatory authorities

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15 Doron Bar Adon. *My Parents' Garments*. Published by the author. Israel: 2005, p. 250 (transl. N.R.)

to arrest and detain these immigrants in camps such as in Cyprus, of the events leading to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, of the War of Independence in which the young State was attacked from all sides by Arab armies, and of the war's end and the beginning of the building of a civil state. Dorothy continued to cover the central events of the day under the persona of a Jewish, Palestinian/ Israeli housewife residing in the agricultural heartland of the *Yishuv*. Simultaneously, from the same stance, she wrote of daily life in the villages and kibbutzim.

During her seventeen years in Palestine/Israel, Dorothy worked as a freelance writer in addition to her work as a staff reporter for *The Palestine Post*. She was a regular contributor to such foreign and Jewish journals as *The Jewish Advocate*, *The National Jewish Post*, *Palestine Review*, and *The Journal of Jewish Life and Letters*. She also composed publicity for a broad range of Jewish organizations in Palestine and abroad, among them Hadassah, Red Magen David, Youth Aliyah, and the Zionist Organization Youth Department.

In July 1950, Dorothy became ill; she was taken to Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem and found to be suffering from kidney disease, characterized by uremia; at the time, such conditions were incurable.

Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon is buried in the small cemetery adjoining the village of Merhavia, surrounded by the people she loved and the land whose story she told.