

**Kisch, Frederick Hermann.** Semah Hyman.  
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## KISCH, FREDERICK HERMANN

**KISCH, FREDERICK HERMANN** (1888–1943), military engineer and Zionist leader. Born in Darjeeling, India, where his father, Hermann, was in the Indian Civil Service, Kisch finished in second place at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, joined the Indian Army, and was posted to Baluchistan in World War I. He was wounded in France and again in Mesopotamia; the second wound prevented further active service. He was then appointed to the Directorate of Military Intelligence at the War Office in the section covering Russia, Persia, China, and Japan. He was a member of the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference (1919–21), and headed the military intelligence section. Although he was a lieutenant colonel by that time, he nevertheless failed to obtain a nomination to the Staff College. He resigned from the army and in 1923 accepted Weizmann's invitation to become a member of the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem and head of its Political Department. Later he became chairman of the Jerusalem Executive, where his main task was to interpret the Jews to the Mandatory government and vice versa. Kisch's problems were compounded by his inevitable English orientation, so that while he and the British understood but did not agree with one another, he and the Jews agreed but did not understand one another. Anxious to find common ground with the Arabs, he met King Hussein of Hejaz (1924 and 1931), the emir Abdullah of Transjordan in Amman (1924), and Egyptian leaders in Cairo. He left the Jewish Agency Executive in 1931 and engaged in private business in Haifa, at the same time advising the *yishuv* on security matters. His experiences are recounted in his book, *Palestine Diary* (1938).

On the outbreak of World War II he returned to active service in the British Army and was sent to Egypt, where by 1941 he was chief engineer, Eighth Army, with rank of brigadier. He was responsible throughout all North Africa for maintaining the water supply lines for military construction during the advances and demolition during the retreats, and for designing mine fields and devising anti-mine measures. Almost at the end of the fighting he was killed while inspecting a German mine field and was buried in Tunisia. He was decorated by the British and French governments. Kefar Kisch and the Kisch Memorial Forest in Lower Galilee are named after him.

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[Semah Cecil Hyman]

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