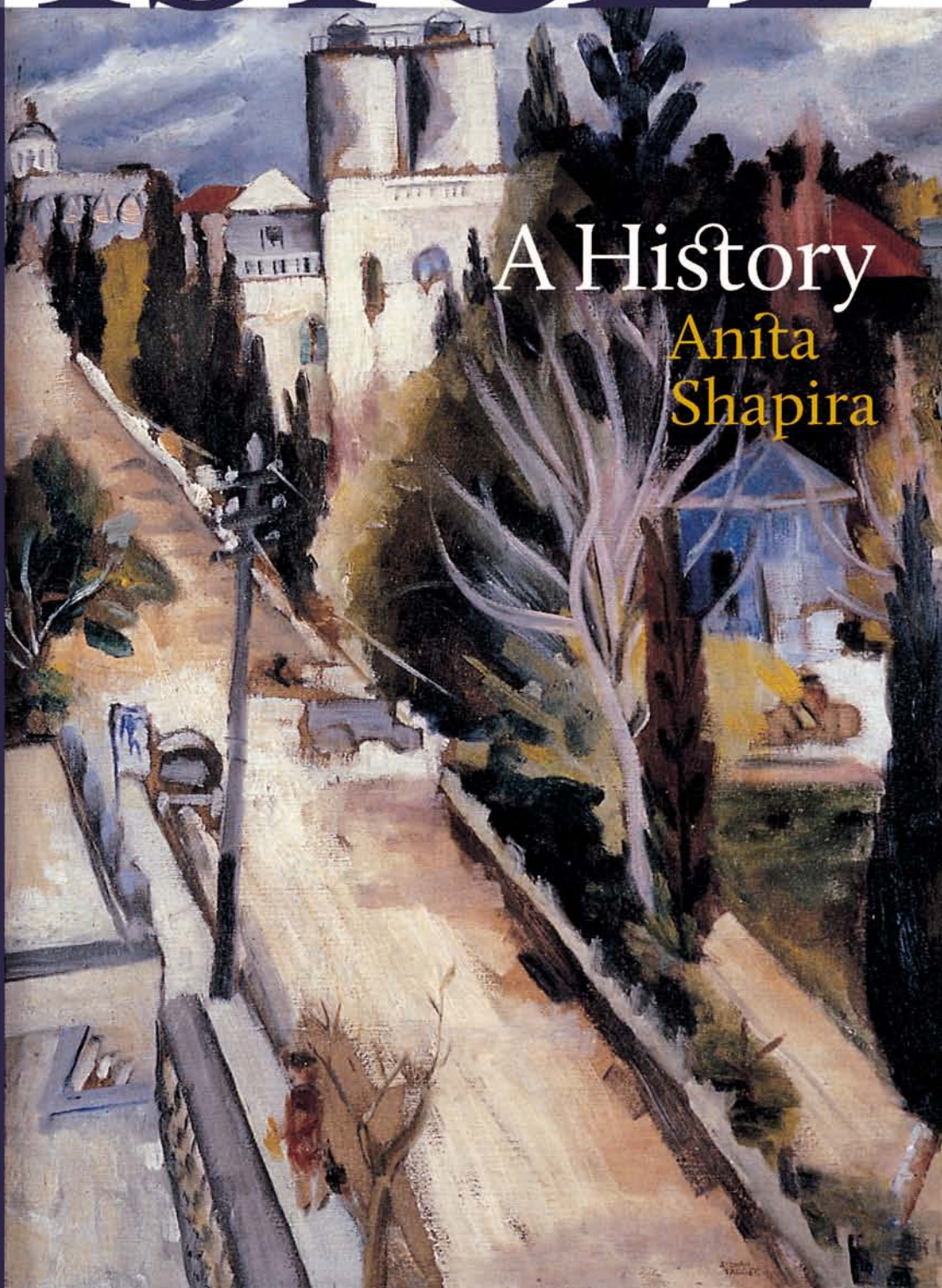
ISRAEL



A History

Anita Shapira

ISRAEL
A HISTORY

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ANITA SHAPIRA

ISRAEL
A HISTORY

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW
BY ANTHONY BERRIS

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For my grandchildren
NADAV, NOAM,
ITAI, TAL, & MAYA,
so they may come to know
their homeland.

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Understandably, such a book could not be based solely on my own scholarship and research into primary sources. I relied, of course, on my vast expertise in Zionist and Israeli history, acquired through forty years of research and study. But in some chapters, especially those dealing with the more recent past, I made use of secondary sources, and benefited from the advice of scholars with expertise in specific subjects and areas of study. The following scholars graciously read individual chapters, and their suggestions helped me shape the text: Mordechai Bar-On, chapters 7 and 12; Jacob Metzer, chapters 9 and 18; Yaron Tsur, chapter 10; Motti Golani, chapter 12; Aryeh Naor, chapter 17; Itamar Rabinovich, chapters 18 and 19; Nissim Leon, chapter 18; Sara Ossietzky-Lazar, chapter 19.

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ANITA SHAPIRA • TEL AVIV, 2012

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Footnotes in this volume are reserved for direct quotes; the sources that served me in my writing are listed in bibliographies at the end of each chapter, and readers are invited to make use of them for a more detailed picture and elaborate analysis. Each chapter also includes suggested further readings available in English-language editions. A list of suggested further readings in Hebrew is available on the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies website at www.brandeis.edu/israelcenter/shapira.html.

PART I

1881–1918

ZIONISM IDEOLOGY & PRAXIS

I THE EMERGENCE OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

"At Basel I founded the Jewish state," wrote Theodor Herzl in his diary after the First Zionist Congress in 1897. "If I said this out loud today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in fifty years, everyone will perceive it."[1] In fact, fifty-one years intervened between that first congress and the State of Israel's Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948. What began as an evanescent movement whose most ardent supporters never believed that the objective of Jewish sovereignty in Palestine would be achieved in their lifetime became a real national movement that shaped a society and nation and built a state.

The Zionist movement was born amid stormy controversy that attends it to this day, although the focus of contention varies. What *was* Zionism, anyway? A renaissance movement directed toward reshaping the Jews, Jewish society, Jewish culture? A colonization movement aiming to establish a Jewish territorial entity that would grant the Jews what other peoples had: a homeland where they could find refuge? A spiritual or political movement? Could Zionism resolve the question of Jewish identity in an era of rising secularization and acculturation, with religion no longer able to save the Jews from atomization? Could it relieve the Jewish existential anxiety that had been on the rise since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when a racism-oriented antisemitism emerged that for the first time in history refused Jews the option of conversion as an escape from the Jewish fate? These questions, which attended the internal Zionist disputes from the beginning and were posed by the movement's own adherents, bore fateful implications for Zionism's character and development, its strengths and weaknesses.

At the same time, another controversy raged around the Zionist movement, fomented by its adversaries, who held up a mirror that revealed Zionism's every weakness, each ideological and practical flaw. In 1881 Dr. Yehuda Leib Pinsker published a pamphlet titled *Auto-Emancipation.* Writing in the wake of the wave of pogroms that engulfed the Jews in the Tsarist Empire's Pale of Settlement (known as *Suffot Banegev*, Storms in Southern Russia), Pinsker analyzed antisemitism in depth and concluded by calling for the establishment of a Jewish homeland: a place where Jews, no longer a minority among the gentiles, would live not as guests, but as masters. The possession of a territory where Jews were masters of their own destiny would radically change the twisted relations that had existed for generations between Jews and the peoples they had lived among.

This modest pamphlet, published in German and later translated into Hebrew and other languages, sparked a public debate. The opponents of Pinsker's idea had a range of objections. Was the idea workable? If so, how much time would be needed to establish this independent or autonomous Jewish entity? We can assume that it will take several centuries, asserted Adolph Landau, editor of the Jewish Russian-language newspaper *Voskhod*. But in the meantime the world is marching forward, and it would make far more sense to devote our efforts to establishing a liberal and enlightened society in Europe that will accept the Jews as members with equal rights, instead of wasting those efforts on some remote corner of the Middle East or elsewhere, where no one can guarantee their long-term safety and grant them the peace and tranquility they seek. In contrast with the notion of isolating Jews from European society, Landau propounded the ideal of enlightenment and modernism, an optimistic picture of an ever-improving world. Jewish salvation would be part of this general progressive movement, he contended, and temporary reversals of the march of progress should not overshadow the great, decisive shift that was occurring.[2]

Though this debate was protean, the fundamental question it raised did not change from the earliest days of the Zionist idea: would Jewish salvation come about as a result of a universal realignment—through either the triumph of liberalism and democracy or the victory of the communist revolution that would redeem the world—or would it require a specific Jewish initiative, separate from the great global one? One element of the debate involved questioning the feasibility of the Zionist enterprise, since the Ottoman regime opposed the immigration of Jews and their settlement in Palestine. Palestine was not an empty country; some half a million Arabs lived there. What would the Zionists do with them? Force them out, or allow them to remain? Would they be declared aliens in their own homeland? And if the Zionists did not discriminate between them and the new immigrants, who could guarantee that in time the Jews would not become a minority in their own country and find themselves once again in the situation they had sought to escape?

While the liberal Jews posed questions of feasibility, the Jewish revolutionaries raised moral issues: let us assume, they said, that contrary to probability the Jews succeed in putting down stakes in that impoverished, economically backward country with no natural resources and without the capacity to absorb millions of immigrants. Would it be morally justifiable to transform the Arabs from masters of the land into a minority?[3]

The anti-Zionist discourse did not embrace only the issue of what was possible and desirable; it also included the religious aspect. Pinsker, and later Herzl, did not suggest Palestine as the only possible location of the proposed Jewish state, but they did mention it. However, from the moment the idea took shape, it was

connected in the minds of the Jewish masses to one country alone: the Land of Israel they had prayed for and dreamed of, even if they had not attempted to return and settle there. The idea of return to the motherland was intrinsic to Zionist ideology. Its critics contended that the connection with the Land of Israel was based upon religious myth, and that a secular Jew should not embrace the notions of the sanctity of the land, of "renewing our days as of old," and other such ideas originating in the Jewish faith. To ultra-Orthodox Jews, on the other hand, the idea of Jews returning to their homeland flew in the face of the fate decreed for them. To them such an act ran counter to the three oaths the Jewish people swore to the Almighty: not to storm the wall, not to rush the End, and not to rebel against the nations of the world, while the Almighty adjured the nations of the world not to destroy the Jewish people.[4] They saw an attempt to bring about redemption by natural, man-made means as rebelling against divine decrees, as Jews taking their fate into their own hands and not waiting for the coming of the Messiah. Consequently ultra-Orthodox Jews vehemently opposed this perilous heresy.

Opposition to Zionism therefore unified many and varied groups: ultra-Orthodox and assimilationists, revolutionaries and capitalists, dreamers and pragmatists. There were those who opposed the idea because they believed that a better solution to "the Jewish problem" could be found within a more universal framework. Other opponents were concerned for their status as citizens with equal rights in the countries where they lived. Still others thought Zionism either too revolutionary or excessively conservative.

THE JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT

Although the Jews customarily mentioned Jerusalem and their hopes of returning there in their prayers three times a day, they did not tend toward taking any initiative that might change their existential situation, which had lasted for centuries. The vast majority of the Jewish people lived in Europe and accepted the reality of occasional outbreaks of violence, humiliation, and discrimination. What, then, changed in the nineteenth century that led to the emergence of the Zionist idea?

In the second half of the eighteenth century, modernization began to penetrate the Jewish street, as the absolutist kingdoms undermined the old European social order of a corporate society in which each corporation was autonomous and could maintain its traditional life and culture. For hundreds of years the Jews had constituted a corporation within European society and enjoyed autonomy within the *kahal* (community), a sort of lesser self-rule under which anyone could be ostracized who did not abide by accepted religious laws and the rules of social conduct. In this way the Jews preserved a clearly defined Jewish identity in accor-

dance with halakhic law and traditional social mores. The absolutist states, however, introduced a system of direct rule, invalidating the corporate bodies that mediated between them and their subjects. The authority of the *kahal* was nullified, and the structure that had preserved traditional Jewish identity—either voluntarily or through coercion—collapsed. New options opened to the Jews.

This process began in Western Europe and slowly penetrated to the east, where beginning in the early nineteenth century, a demographic revolution occurred: the Jewish population increased at a rate several times greater than the general population. In 1800 there were between 1 and 1.2 million Jews in the Russian Empire, and by the end of the century there were some five million. This tremendous natural increase created an acute problem out of what had been a marginal one: the Jews did not speak the local language and did not send their children to their country's schools. They lived mainly in Poland, Western Ukraine, and Lithuania, made a living from crafts, peddling, and trade, and suffered increasing poverty. Many sought a livelihood in the big cities, but due to increasing modernization and the beginnings of industrialization—in which they were unable to participate—they found themselves doomed there, too, to continued poverty and hopelessness. They were thus considered a noncontributing element of the population.

In 1781 (for the Jews of Bohemia) and 1782 (for those of Austria), Emperor Joseph II of Austria issued a series of Toleranzedikten (Edicts of Tolerance) that opened previously unheard-of possibilities of education and economic advancement to the Jews of the Habsburg Empire. Accordingly, the first buds of a Jewish Enlightenment movement sprouted. Among other things it strove to bring progress and what was termed "productivization" to the Jewish masses, modernizing them and turning them into useful citizens who were part of their local economy and culture. Learning the local language and secular education were the foundation stones of this movement.

In the 1860s the policies of Tsar Alexander II brought these trends into the Russian Empire as well, and secularization created an entire stratum of Jews who moved, to varying degrees, away from Jewish tradition: some upheld tradition in the home but conducted themselves as non-Jews outside it. ("Be a man abroad and a Jew in your tent," wrote Yehuda Leib Gordon, a poet of the Enlightenment period.[5]) Others, apart from minimal observance of the Jewish festivals, did not view themselves as Jews, and many converted to Christianity.

Until the early nineteenth century Jews had viewed themselves as a people, albeit a diaspora people without territory and sovereignty. In Jewish consciousness the maxim "all Jews are responsible for each other" meant far more than just religious identity. The Jewish corporation sustained the dual identity of religion and ethnicity, especially since for centuries conversion to Judaism was forbidden in the Christian and Islamic countries. The solidarity that existed among

Jewish communities in times of crisis—such as ransom of prisoners or blood libels (as in Damascus in 1840) or attempts at expulsion of Jews (such as that perpetrated by Empress Maria Theresa in Prague in December 1744) against which Jews from various countries stood together[6]—strengthened these communities' sense of closeness and of sharing a common fate. So long as the traditional identity was not undermined, the question of a disjunction between religion and nationality never arose. But once the winds of secularization began to blow, the religious connection was weakened, and questions arose regarding the character of Jewish identity: What are the Jews? Do they possess just a common religion or also a separate Jewish nationality?

The French Revolution granted the Jews equal rights on condition that they relinquish their collective identity. As Clermont-Tonnerre declared in the French National Assembly: to the Jews as individuals—everything; as a nation—nothing. That was the price the Jews had to pay for equal rights. The Napoleonic Wars broke down the barriers of European conservatism and led to the spread of nationalist consciousness and the emergence of nationalist aspirations throughout the continent. The multinational empires, such as the Habsburg and Russian Empires, found themselves under attack by national movements. In Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Germany, and Italy, these began as movements of cultural renewal born of a desire to return to the nation's cultural roots, to nurture the national language, literature, music, and art. Each national culture included a connection with a version of Christianity: Russian, Ukrainian, and Serbian nationalism was linked to streams of Orthodox Christianity, whereas the Polish variety was interwoven with Catholicism.

The appearance of nationalism laid down a dual challenge to the Jews: First, should they become nationalists of the countries where they lived, or should they remain loyal to the great empires? Second, while the peoples of Europe were taking on national identities, the Jews were required to relinquish their collective identity as a prerequisite for obtaining equal rights. The borderlines of the Jewish collective, which until then had been clearly demarcated, became blurred: individual Jews now had to face their personal identity and fate, and to a great extent they could define these as they saw fit. The Jews in the Western countries enthusiastically accepted equal rights, which they saw as the key to acculturating into non-Jewish society. Many did not intend to relinquish their Jewish identity, but simply defined it differently. Thus a paradox was created whereby in an era of increasing secularization, the Jews' self-definition began to lean heavily on religion: Germans of the Jewish faith, French people of the Jewish faith, and so forth.

This self-definition created for the first time a distinction between Jewish religion and nationality. The Jews believed that emancipation, which opened before them a future of progress, including education, new occupations, and geo-

graphic, social, and economic mobility, would lead to redemption from exile, as described by Yechezkel Kaufmann, author of an analysis of Jewish political currents.[7] The drive to assimilate amounted to a movement with messianic attributes that viewed integration into the countries where Jews lived as the correct road, the redeeming direction, and it constituted the dominant trend in the first half of the nineteenth century.

During the course of that century, emancipation was completed in both Western and Central Europe, but stopped at the border of the Tsarist Empire. As a consequence of the division of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, this empire now ruled over a large Jewish population, and throughout the nineteenth century its rulers tried both to convert the Jews, by means of edicts and pressure, and to reform them, i.e., make them more useful to the state. Attempts to make the Jews more productive included both general education and teaching them the language of the country, and under Alexander II they were given the opportunity to attend high school. Alexander was also more benign regarding Jews who lived outside the Pale of Settlement (the areas annexed by Russia from Poland where Jews were allowed to reside). But following Alexander's assassination in 1881, the pendulum swung back toward a policy of edicts and restrictions, and Jewish emancipation reached Russia only in 1917, with the February Revolution.

Thus it was not surprising that some Eastern European Jews reacted with suspicion and hostility toward their brethren who raised the banner of Enlightenment, whom they saw as government emissaries seeking to convert them. But once Jewish secular education got under way, there was no stopping it. It took time to penetrate the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe, since the majority observed Jewish tradition, but Jewish life slowly opened to external influences, and a Jewish economic elite that adopted a modern lifestyle formed in Tsarist Russia.

As noted before, the initial manifestation of nationalism across Europe was a cultural renaissance, a return to national cultural sources in the vernacular languages, the restoration of classic works in those languages, and the creation of a new Romantic cultural corpus that would give expression to the desires of the people. European nationalism saw an unbreakable bond between a people's cultural heritage and its right to political self-expression, for a cultural heritage was evidence that a people was worthy of acceptance into the family of nations. Romanticism produced an impressive burgeoning of culture, particularly in national literatures. After the Napoleonic Wars, the Russian elite embraced the language of their own people as a language of culture, and Russian literature appeared. The works of Goethe and Schiller in Germany, Mickiewicz in Poland, and many more represented communities connected by language and literature that gave expression to, and even fostered, national desires. By its very nature nationalism was a secular movement that extolled human liberty and aspirations

of self-determination. At the same time, all these national works also appropriated religious symbols.

These spiritual and political currents also permeated the Jewish communities. There were Jews who turned to the general culture of the region where they lived and embraced it. But others introduced Romanticist principles into the Jewish arena. Thus the aspiration to learn the classical sources of the national culture, in its own language, manifested itself in the creation of a secular Hebrew culture. Abraham Mapu, a Lithuanian Jew, published his historical novel *Ahavat Zion* (love of Zion) in 1853. The book, set in Jerusalem at the time of the First Temple, presented Jerusalem as an earthly, not heavenly, city. Although Mapu was far removed from informed nationalist ideas, his use of the holy tongue for this secular book was an expression of the influence of European Romanticism on the Jews, who were now open to the influences of secular culture.

Jewish Enlightenment, as manifested in literature, poetry, philosophy, grammar, and autobiography, laid the cultural foundations for Jewish nationalist ideas to flourish. The Bible, whose beauty had been cloaked by the mantle of the traditional commentaries for generations, was now brought to life by the study of grammar, so that every educated reader could understand its text. This accessibility brought the Bible into the consciousness of the educated Jewish public, where it assumed a status similar to the high status it held among Protestants. It was no longer merely the Holy Writ but a book describing the past heroics and wonders of the Jewish people. In addition, it was a book that extolled universal, lofty principles of peace and fraternity for all humankind.

Thus, while in Western and Central Europe the dominant modernizing trend was toward relinquishing Jewish collective identity, Eastern Europe moved in a different direction. There, millions of Jews lived in villages, towns, and medium-sized cities where they constituted a third or more of the population. With many Jews crowded into geographical and cultural proximity, secularization in Eastern Europe resulted not in an aspiration to become part of the general society but in a flourishing of Hebrew culture (at least in the initial stage). The Tsarist regime and the Russian masses did not view favorably the idea of Jews integrating among them. Thus, even when under Alexander II Jews were able to study in high schools and attend institutions of higher education, only a relatively small segment of the Jewish masses managed to leave the Pale of Settlement, integrate into the developing Russian capitalist economy, and become part of its emerging bourgeoisie. Repression on the one hand and secular consciousness on the other gave rise to a sense of deprivation and injustice that underlay the newly awakened nationalistic ideas.

The modernization of Jewish life undermined the traditional worldview and the perception of space, and expanded the gamut of possibilities. The appear-

ance of modern newspapers in all the Jewish languages turned what was happening in one Jewish community into information that agitated and excited other communities. Thus, for example, Suffot Banegev, the wave of pogroms that struck southern Russia in 1881, became a seminal event, discussed throughout the Jewish world. The problem of the Jewish refugees who fled the pogroms became a central issue on the Jewish agenda throughout Europe. It is impossible to comprehend the impact of the shock of the Kishinev pogrom in 1903 without the world's Jewish newspaper reports on it—despite the tsar's censorship. Debates on the Jewish problem, i.e., the future of the Jewish people, were a leading topic in the Hebrew-language and Russian-Jewish journals.

The appearance of the locomotive and the steamship made long-distance travel safer, more comfortable, and relatively inexpensive. One's birthplace suddenly ceased to define one's identity: one could decide to migrate from a small town or village to a medium-sized town, or even to a big city such as Warsaw (home to the largest Jewish community in Europe), or try to cross the border into Galicia, ruled by Emperor Franz Josef (from the Jews' perspective, a benign ruler). The more daring and resourceful crossed the border into Germany, where a wide range of possibilities was open: remain in the German Empire, immigrate to England, or sail to the United States, Argentina, or South Africa. Still others traveled by train or by boat on the Dnieper to Odessa, and thence sailed for Palestine; or they reached Trieste, the Habsburg Empire port of exit for Palestine. At the end of the nineteenth century, migration from the provinces to the center of a country, from one country to another, and even to a different continent, was a distinct option.

The many possibilities now open to Jews, including the choice of way of life, language, conduct, culture, and identity, weakened the connection to their birthplace, local culture, accepted customs, and religion. Many Jews now adopted the national identity of the country where they lived and, seeing their connection with it as a sacred alliance, willingly went off to fight in national wars of liberation. Consequently the various Jewish communities moved apart, separated by their ways of life, accepted behavioral norms, and cultures. Distinctions arose between Western and Central European Jews and their Eastern European brethren, and among Russian, German, and English speakers. Yiddish was still the language that bound all the Ashkenazi communities together, but many members of the second generation after integration viewed it as a low, shaming language that cultured people should not use.

This same period saw the appearance of global Jewish organizations that viewed protecting the Jews and their advance toward modernization as a worthy cause. For example, Alliance Israélite Universelle[8] sought to disseminate French culture among Middle Eastern and North African Jews while at the same time

working to protect Jews and help them move toward modernization and productivization. In 1870 Alliance founded the Mikve Yisrael Agricultural School to educate Jewish children in Palestine to work the land. The German Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden[9] organization had a similar aim—to establish a German-language education system in Palestine. The Jewish Colonization Association[10] sought to settle Jews on land in Argentina and elsewhere, while the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee ("the Joint")[11] also sought to aid Jews in distressed areas and encourage productivization.

Side by side with these centrifugal trends of modernity and emancipation, there existed an opposing trend: the Jewish press created an international community that was exposed to the same information, enthused over the same events, and identified with the Jewish masses even when they lived in communities that were strangers to one another in language and culture alike.

SETBACK AND BETRAYAL

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the positive trends that had led to belief in the power of education to bring progress and prosperity to human society and eradicate prejudice, discrimination, and injustice were arrested. In 1881, Alexander II was assassinated by revolutionaries who sought to topple his autocratic regime. Among the plotters were Jews, both men and women. This event opened a new period: not only did Jews act in concert with non-Jewish revolutionaries, but young Jewish women who had recently broken free of traditional culture cooperated with men and non-Jews. Such was the outcome of Alexander II's educational reforms, with Jewish and non-Jewish students finding a common language in the lofty hopes of world reform and the building of a new society in which a person's religion would no longer be a criterion for inclusion.

The tsar's assassination sent shock waves throughout the Russian Empire, as well as a spate of pogroms in Ukraine. The Church and the government made no effort to rein in the mob, and Jews suspected both of collaborating with the rioters. While the damage was mainly to property, the shock was great: mass rioting against Jews had not occurred in Eastern Europe during the previous century. The assumption had been that the strengthening of the absolutist state ensured public order and security. Now it suddenly appeared that, whereas in most of Europe and in America the Jews were citizens with equal rights, the Russian masses could still go on the rampage while the government either stood passively by or was itself involved in the rioting.

The pogroms not only undermined the Jews' sense of security but also shook their faith in progress, for the Russian revolutionaries did not rush to the Jews' defense. These revolutionaries considered the indifference displayed by the Russian masses toward revolutionary propaganda and their own oppression to be the

main stumbling block on the road to revolution. They saw the uprising against the Jews as an expression of the masses' fury, heralding the change in consciousness that would lead those masses to rise up and bring about the downfall of the regime. It was the enlightened, educated elements of the Jewish population who were hurt most by this reaction; they had believed in the Russian revolutionaries' solidarity with them, and now they perceived that they stood not on solid ground at all, but on quicksand.

This betrayal recurred several times during the period leading up to World War One, during the Kishinev pogrom of 1903 and the October 1905 pogroms that erupted after the failure of the first Russian Revolution. Each wave of pogroms was worse than the previous in its brutality, the number of victims, and the scope of the damage. And in each case the same local government weakness or indifference and failure to arouse enlightened public opinion in Russia against the pogroms was repeated. Moreover, after Suffot Banegev came what was known as the "Cold Pogrom," or what the regime termed the 1882 May Laws, which restricted Jewish residence to the Pale of Settlement and reduced Jews' access to higher education and the chance to become more productive and engage in agriculture. The regime justified these decrees by claiming that the pogroms were a response to Jewish exploitation of the masses.

The likelihood of equal rights for Russian Jewry now receded further into the distance, with a twofold effect. First, the loss of existential security had an impact not only on communities that had suffered pogroms, but also on relations between Jews and the authorities in general. Despairing of any possibility to improve their lot, the Jewish masses tried to leave Russia. In the years leading up to World War One, millions of Jews, no longer prepared to accept their fate, migrated from Eastern Europe seeking to build a new life for themselves. The vast majority immigrated to the United States, the land of unlimited opportunities. Some moved from Eastern to Western Europe, to Germany or England, while others went to South America and South Africa. And tens of thousands went to Palestine.

The second effect was the radicalization of the Jewish masses, which stemmed from three factors: a sense of being deprived and discriminated against by the authorities; a new self-awareness that came with increased exposure to the larger world; and the increasing trend of secularization in the Jewish street, in accordance with the contemporary zeitgeist. The Russian revolutionaries of the last third of the nineteenth century were idealistic, educated young people who chose to sacrifice their lives in the struggle to liberate the masses and establish a just society. These young men and women, who "went to the people" seeking to arouse hundreds of thousands of oppressed peasants to awareness of their wretched situation and its injustice, encountered not merely indifference but also

hostility from those they hoped to redeem—who instead handed them over to the authorities. Their ultimate fate was long years of incarceration, expulsion to Siberia, madness, and death.

This martyrdom took on mythical proportions for generations of revolutionaries, Jews and non-Jews alike. The example set by Russian youth was taken to heart by Jewish young people who smarted under the discrimination and disadvantages they suffered and also sought a lofty ideal—to reform the world in the image of the kingdom of heaven. Some joined the Russian revolutionary movements and displayed no interest in the fate of the Jews; these included Leon Trotsky (né Bronstein) and Yuli Martov (né Zederbaum), who left their mark on Russian history. Others tried to organize a Jewish workers' movement. In 1897 they founded the Bund, a Jewish-Marxist party that fought to protect Jewish workers from exploitation by their employers, most of whom were Jews themselves. Built on clearly popular foundations, the Bund successfully engaged the lower classes. Another section of Jewish youth, also affected by the mythology of the Russian revolutionary martyrs, despaired of attaining justice for Jews in any country they lived in and chose to reform Jewish society in a country that would be their own. These were students, who founded the Am Olam (eternal people) movement, which chose to settle in the United States, and the Bilu (an acronym for *Beit Ya'akov Lekhu Venelkha*, "House of Jacob, Let Us Go [Up]") association, which aimed to establish a colony in Palestine. They were followed by various other Zionist-socialist groups.

A NEW JEWISH NATIONALISM

As the Jews' security in Eastern Europe was increasingly undermined, modern antisemitism made its appearance in Western Europe. Hatred of Jews was not new, but this time it was marked by racism and determinism: its object was not the Jewish religion but the Jewish race. Religion can be changed; race cannot. In an era of rising secularization, religious hatred might seem to be a thing of the past, but racial hatred was modern and up to date: it spoke in the language of scientific Darwinism.

The old hatred of Jews had been aimed at the alien, different Jew, whereas antisemitism targeted the Jew who looked like anyone else, who spoke the local language, whose appearance and behavior was middle class, who took part in and even created national culture. Antisemites accused the Jews of causing all of capitalist society's ills, inciting to revolution, and undermining the existing order. They pictured the Jews as parasites, incapable of establishing a society or culture of their own, who rode on the backs of other peoples and copied or perverted their cultures. Since Jews were unable to truly integrate into a culture, their cultural creations were artificial, neither authentic nor original.

Traditionally observant Jews perceived the old hatred of Jews as part of the accepted world order that would not change until the coming of the Messiah, a decree that must be accepted and endured. The new antisemitism injured Jews who believed that they were part of the people they lived among, with equal rights and obligations—that there was no longer a Jewish "community." Now they found themselves all lumped together under the infamous appellation "Jew." As Yechezkel Kaufmann writes, the redemption from alienation that the Jews had yearned for and expected with their integration into society was now revealed as a fata morgana. Constitutional equality did not bring about social integration, and certainly not recognition by the Germans or French that the Jews were an organic part of their nations. In his memoirs, Gershom Scholem describes the Jews' varying reactions to the emergence of antisemitism. Some chose to ignore it; thus Scholem's father felt that to all intents and purposes he was German, even when he was forced to leave the clubs he belonged to due to increasing opposition to Jewish membership. One of Scholem's brothers remained a German patriot to his dying day, contending that Hitler would not decide whether or not he was a German. Another brother was a communist and perished in the Buchenwald concentration camp, while Gerhard, who was to become Gershom, turned to Zionism.[12]

Like other nationalist movements, Jewish nationalism was formed out of a new self-esteem, born of exposure to modernity, and a new social sensitivity, resulting from a secular education. Rejection by the dominant nationalism profoundly wounded these modern, secular Jews. Ernest Gellner links the formation of nationalist movements with the growth in the number of educated people, the greater mobility of people, goods, beliefs, and propaganda that accompanies industrialization, and the frustration born of unfulfilled expectations of integration into society. The creation of an intelligentsia in such a rejected ethnic group was the first step in the development of such a movement, which could then disseminate its message through improved means of communication. A similar process can be seen among the Jews: what previous centuries saw as instinctive identification with "Jewry," with no national awareness or aspirations to give political voice to Jews' feelings, now became a national consciousness.

In contrast to the dominant trends in nineteenth-century Jewish society, the nationalist movement demanded, first and foremost, recognition of the existence of a Jewish nation with a common past, present, and even a future. It viewed this nation as possessing intrinsic value, as an important part of world culture. In his *Rome and Jerusalem* Moses Hess, a German-Jewish socialist and contemporary of Marx, likened the family of nations to an orchestra that could not play in harmony as long as one instrument—the Jewish nation—was missing.[13] Others, like Herzl, viewed the existence of a Jewish nationality as preor-

dained, an inescapable fate. Both demanded recognition of the Jews' distinctiveness, not only as individuals but also as a collective. For the Jews of Central and Western Europe, Herzl's famous call, "We are a people—one people!" was a revelation conveying a liberating message. For Eastern European Jews, by contrast, it was a self-evident statement of their political situation.

One characteristic of European national movements (and Zionism was one of the later ones) was a plea for legitimacy, and legitimacy usually relied on a genealogy testifying to the antiquity of the nation, its historical rights to territory and sovereignty, the beauty of its national culture, and its contribution to world culture. The Jewish people's genealogy relied on the Bible, which presented something of a paradox, since until the nineteenth century the Bible was considered secondary to Jewish oral law. Children studied the Pentateuch in heder, but merely as an introduction to study of the more important writings, the Talmud and the *poskim* (religious arbiters). It was the Protestants who discovered the Bible and extolled its importance in educating the younger generation. Even the idea of the Jews returning to their ancient homeland as the first step to world redemption seems to have originated among a specific group of evangelical English Protestants that flourished in England in the 1840s; they passed this notion on to Jewish circles.

It might seem that the idea of returning to the Land of Israel had been part of the Jewish people's spiritual beliefs from time immemorial. After all, the Jews prayed every day for the return to Zion. Every Passover they recited, "Next year in Jerusalem," and on every Ninth of Av fast they mourned the destruction of the Temple. In the seventeenth century the Jewish world had been galvanized by the appearance of a false Messiah, Shabbetai Zvi, who promised to end the exile and restore the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. Yearning for Zion was certainly an intrinsic component of the Jewish psyche and sentiments.

But there was an essential difference between this yearning and Zionism. For centuries the Jews had focused on a miraculous redemption, occurring as part of a cataclysmic event that changed the existing world order. Until that time, which was shrouded in the mists of the future, they were to live their lives in the Diaspora and not force the issue. The ideas that began circulating among both secular and religious Jews in the nineteenth century were entirely different. Instead of passively awaiting the coming of the Messiah, the Jewish people would take their fate into their own hands and transform their situation through their own action. This concept met with bitter opposition from conservative religious circles, who saw it as opposing divine will. The left, on the other hand, objected that this concept was based upon religion—something enlightened Jews should keep their distance from.

The Hovevei Zion (lovers of Zion) groups, which appeared in the Russian

Empire in the wake of Suffot Banegev and the loss of the belief that progress would save the Jews, were small in scope, inexperienced both organizationally and in creating settlements, but they introduced a significant innovation: they stopped talking about the Land of Israel as a mythical land and began referring to it as a real country that could be settled. What Herzl did fifteen years later was add a political component to a movement that had begun before his time. This aspiration to effect an essential change in the Jews' psyche and attitude toward the world, as well as the world's attitude toward them, is what left a revolutionary mark on the Zionist movement. It was revolutionary to call for Jewish activism, real action in the present—what Gershom Scholem called the Jews' return to history. And just as other national movements had done, this new movement employed ancient myths and symbols, most drawn from tradition and religion.

HERZL AND THE ORIGINS OF ZIONISM

Jewish history reserves a special place for Theodor Herzl, the father of the Zionist movement. As much as one tries to explain certain historical phenomena, they retain an inexplicable, mysterious, mystical element. Herzl's appearance in the Jewish world and his vigorous activity over less than a decade constituted one such phenomenon: a passing lightning storm that illuminated reality and shook it up, laying the groundwork for future changes. Herzl was a Hungarian Jew whose family had been emancipated and acculturated in German culture; his knowledge of Judaism was meager and, of the Jewish people, superficial. A journalist who specialized in light feuilleton writing appreciated by the mainly Jewish, sophisticated and ironical readers of the important Viennese newspaper *Neue Freie Presse* at the turn of the century, Herzl also tried his hand at playwriting, with limited success. Nothing in his personal history hinted at the mental fortitude, boundless energy, political acuity, and endless dedication he displayed in the last, amazing decade of his life. Almost overnight this mediocre bourgeois intellectual turned into a man driven by his vocation.

The short pamphlet *Der Judenstaat* (The State of the Jews) that Herzl published in 1896 belongs in the company of *What Is the Third Estate?*, the treatise by Abbé Sieyes that helped spark the French Revolution, and Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, which created widespread support for the American Revolution. Yehuda Leib Pinsker's 1882 *Auto-Emancipation* preceded Herzl's pamphlet, and although Pinsker's analysis of antisemitism was certainly deeper, Herzl's greatness was to position this phenomenon in its modern context and draw concrete conclusions from it. Herzl understood the multifaceted character of modern antisemitism, which connected opposing elements. The Jews were hated as both capitalist and revolutionary; wealthy and poor; educated and ignorant; and as people who appropriated the local culture yet remained distinctive.

Above all, Herzl recognized that antisemitism derived from a new phenomenon in the distribution of power in Europe: the politics of the masses. As the masses' power increased with the rise of nationalism and democratization, Herzl asserted, the risk to Jews rose concomitantly. Living in Vienna and Paris, he witnessed the increasing power of the masses. In Austria, Karl Lueger, an antisemitic rabble-rousing politician whose election as mayor of Vienna was not approved by Emperor Franz Josef, was nevertheless reelected by the German public. Germans felt threatened by the rising nationalism of the Poles and Czechs and resented the Jews' obvious success in the cultural and economic life of the imperial city. The politics of hatred therefore suited them. In Paris, Herzl observed the mass indignation that followed the Dreyfus trial. It was, however, not this trial that aroused his sensitivity to the Jewish problem (antisemitism), as popular belief has it. His nationalist awareness had already been awakened by the growing power of the masses and what that meant in light of their attitude toward Jews—even in a country where the Jews had been emancipated for almost a century. The masses' resentment of the Jews reinforced his belief that the Jews could not assimilate—not because they did not want to, but because they would not be allowed to. In the long term, progress might change this situation, but what lent urgency to Herzl's scheme was this question: how much time was actually left to resolve the question of the Jews?

Intuitively Herzl perceived the lurking existential danger: whether emancipation had failed or had succeeded beyond expectation, it had been granted based on abstract principles of constitutional equality. It had not won the hearts and minds of people who refused to accept the Jews as part of the civic fabric. Herzl's conclusion was simple: there was no point in fighting antisemitism, in proving it misguided, since it was grounded in a deep-seated mind-set that rational thinking could not overcome. The only option was to circumvent it. The Jews were a nation that needed a state of its own. Herzl's unequivocal diagnosis of the nature of the malady and its cure was liberating: it ended the half truths, the pretense that everything was fine, that emancipation had solved the problem. The wounded pride of the educated, assimilated Jew who found himself rejected by the culture and nation to which he felt he belonged led Herzl to the frank, proud declaration: We are a people—one people!

To this conclusion Herzl added another original concept: the Jewish question was a global problem that would only be resolved with the aid of the Great Powers. Discussing the Jews in terms of a "question" was demeaning and patronizing. People referred to "the slavery question" and "the woman question," with the implication that these groups were inferior in status and needed emancipation. In contrast, by defining the problem of the Jews as an international issue, Herzl removed it from the back burner of social and ethnic politics in the

various countries and placed it on the international agenda. He saw both overt and covert European antisemitism dialectically, as a force that would drive the countries of Europe to help establish a Jewish state. Seeking to rid themselves of the rebellious Jewish intelligentsia, the successful Jewish middle class, the surfeit of Jewish intellectuals in the West, and the poverty-stricken Jews of the East, the European powers would offer their assistance in carrying out a modern Exodus.

Herzl's understanding of antisemitism was extremely astute. In his diary he likened the Jewish people to a rolling stone whose plunge into the abyss could not be halted. "Will they expel us, will they murder us?" he wondered in a speech he planned to deliver to the Rothschilds.[14] Despite such nightmares, he placed his trust in European humanism and progress, believing that the Europeans would want to rid themselves of the Jews, but humanely, by helping them establish their own state. He could not have imagined that the Exodus would some day be replaced by the crematoria of Auschwitz.

Firmly rooted in the modern world, Herzl loved and admired European culture, the opera, theater, and music. He saw the potential of the new technologies that shortened distances, making attainable what had been considered impossible fifty years earlier. It was now possible to convey millions of people from one continent to another in a short time and to support large-scale colonization movements without great suffering and anguish. Herzl's description of how the modern world made such undertakings possible captivated many Jews. As it turned out, the Jewish state was not built according to Herzl's scenario; it entailed tremendous difficulties. Zionists can be thankful that he did not anticipate those difficulties, for then perhaps he might have despaired of the enterprise at the outset.

Herzl outlined a process of transferring millions of Jews from Europe to Palestine—Jews who, he claimed, could not or did not want to assimilate. He explained that such a process must be supported by a binding international document that would grant the Jews rights in their new country in accordance with the chartered-society model. Chartered societies had previously been established in the British Empire, either for the purpose of white colonization or to obtain trading and other franchises. A deputation of Jews should be assembled to negotiate with the Great Powers in order to obtain a charter. Had Herzl stopped after the publication of *Der Judenstaat*, which gained immediate acclaim and was translated into Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, and other languages, he would never have attained his inalienable place in the Jewish pantheon. Herzl's greatness was not only that he identified the objective, but that he fashioned the means to achieve it by convening the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.

Before this point he had attempted to engage the active international Jewish philanthropic associations. These organizations sought to advance productiviza-

tion of the Jews, to teach needy Jewish children a trade, and to settle Jews in Argentina. They had been established and were closely controlled by wealthy, respected Jews with laudable aims but no nationalist pretensions. In the first stages of developing his concept, Herzl had hoped to gain assistance from major Jewish philanthropists such as Baron Moritz Hirsch, who financed Jewish colonization in Argentina, or Baron Edmond de Rothschild. But his meetings with these men were unsuccessful. When they consented to receive him, they saw him not as the prophet of nationalism, but merely as a well-known journalist, and his program as the fruit of a fevered imagination lacking roots in reality. Herzl's charm, which had stood him in good stead with statesmen and politicians, failed him with these philanthropists. It was after this lack of success with the millionaires that he decided to write *Der Judenstaat*—a predictable step for a man for whom journalism was his bread and butter.

The reverberations caused by this modest pamphlet led Herzl to conclude that he must found the "Association of Jews" it mentioned, which would represent the Jews in negotiations on the charter. The innovation in his idea of a congress was that for the first time in Jewish history, international delegations representing the partners in the Zionist idea would convene on a broad popular basis. Though it was to be expected that those who managed to participate were from the educated Jewish middle class who could afford the journey, the concept was of a congress that would represent all the Jewish people and communicate with outsiders based on the ideas of Zionism. Delegates from all over the world attended the 1897 congress, and over its three days the mold of the Zionist movement was fashioned. Permanent institutions were set up. The congress would convene every year or two as a sort of parliament. The president and executive committee constituted an executive body that would be active between congresses. Local associations were formed whose members paid dues—using the Zionist shekel—and sent delegates to the congress in accordance with the number of paid-up members. In those few days Herzl laid the organizational and political foundations of what would later be called "the nascent Jewish state." So it was with a very specific meaning that Herzl declared, "At Basel I founded the Jewish state."

This magical act of creating ex nihilo a representative body of the Jewish people, which would negotiate as its legal representative with the heads of the states that would help obtain the charter, was a revolutionary move that proclaimed to the world the formation of a new national movement. As the one responsible for dealing with the press, Herzl swiftly invited international press representatives to report on the event. He made sure that the hall would be dignified, with delegates wearing tails and white gloves. The mixture of modernity and ancient symbols was notable in the graphic images that were used. For example, the delegate's card bore on one side an illustration of the Western Wall (the ruin of the Temple

wall), and on the other, the figure of a Jewish farmer working his field. The Zionist flag, based on the tallith, the Jewish prayer shawl, with a Star of David at its center, was Herzl's idea. The poem "Hatikva" (the hope), by Naphtali Herz Imber, was adopted as the movement's anthem, although the language of the congress was German, in which most delegates were fluent.

Richard Lichtheim, a German Zionist leader, defined Zionism as "Europe's gift to the Jewish people,"[15] and his phrase underscored the nationalist, innovative character of the movement, which became a mediating factor between the Jewish people and modernity. The phrase also reflected Zionism's embrace of modes of political organization and diplomatic action originating in Europe. Herzl brought to the Zionist movement the political savvy he learned at the Palais Bourbon during his time in Paris, as well as prevailing big-world concepts and practices: congresses, charters, top-level negotiations, wide-ranging action, and so forth. These spheres of activity had been unknown to the Jewish people. This is why such a large proportion of the young Zionist movement's leadership came from the Jews of the West, the graduates of emancipation.

In contrast, the masses that Zionism sought to save lived in Eastern Europe and knew little of Western culture. Many remained immersed in a religious lifestyle and observed the Halakha (Jewish law) and tradition. The accelerated modernization in the Tsarist Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth affected broad strata of this population: the railways made the Jewish peddler redundant, traditional occupations such as carting became unnecessary, and numerous crafts lost their economic role in the wake of industrialization. The loss of these sources of livelihood, combined with the great population increase among the Jews of Tsarist Russia between 1800 and 1900, led to wide-scale poverty. The preferred solution to economic hardship, an absence of physical security, and a lack of hope was emigration overseas. At the turn of the century, immigration to the United States seemed to be the solution for millions of distressed Jews, but even though many left for the New World, on the eve of World War One the number of Jews in the Russian Empire had actually increased from 1882.

Thus Herzl's call, which found few sympathizers in Western Europe, gained broad popular support in the East. The conjunction of post-emancipation Western leadership that had returned to its Jewish identity with a broad base of loyal Yiddish-speaking supporters steeped in Jewish culture—some loyal to tradition and others "enlightened" to one degree or another—seems to prove the veracity either of the Jewish Sages' aphorism "A prisoner does not release himself from prison" or of Moses' example, which demonstrated that only a free man can bring freedom to his enslaved brethren. Herzl addressed the Jewish people but

did not know them, while the Jewish people saw him as an almost biblical figure, the King of the Jews.

The Hovevei Zion movement, based in Odessa, had begun establishing colonies in Palestine in the wake of Suffot Banegev. From 1889, when he published his essay "This Is Not the Way," Ahad Haʿam (Asher Ginsberg) was considered the movement's most important intellectual and moral figure. His power lay in his cogent analysis and lucid Hebrew style. He did not hesitate to publish "Truth from Eretz Yisrael" (1891), an article that exposed all the failings of the young colonization enterprise in Palestine. At a time when well-considered perspectives on political and practical issues of settlement were sparse, and the pro-Zionist press printed romantic descriptions of life in Palestine that portrayed an attractive country, Ahad Haʿam's candor was considered a political act of the first order. However, although he was an outstanding critic, his ability to act or to lead was limited. Until Herzl came on the scene, Hovevei Zion could not attract mass support; it was just marking time. Herzl's sudden prominence, the preparations for the congress and the congress itself (reported by both the Jewish and non-Jewish press), sparked the imagination of the Jewish masses and created for the first time a community of sympathizers for the Zionist idea.

Ahad Haʿam was not enthusiastic. Mass immigration to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state there contradicted his definition of the Jewish question and its solution. Whereas to Herzl the Jewish problem—antisemitism—was the issue the movement had to deal with, for Ahad Haʿam the problem was "Judaism's problem": the weakening of the Jews' connection with their culture due to emancipation and secularization. He did not see Palestine as providing a solution for millions; he thought Jews should immigrate to the United States. What the Zionist movement could and should do, he maintained, was establish a "spiritual center" in Palestine that would be characterized by secular Hebrew culture, the renaissance of the Hebrew language, and integrity and morality. There the vision of the Chosen People would come to fruition. A source of pride and a shining example for the Jewish people, the center would manifest what Ahad Haʿam defined as "the spirit of Judaism" and function as a counterforce to the inclination of the Jews (particularly in the West) to relinquish their national identity for the sake of assimilation. This center would be developed gradually, meticulously selecting those worthy of entering it, avoiding shortcuts, political adventurism, and exaggerated expectations.

Ahad Haʿam represented spiritual Zionism, whose perspective was diametrically opposed to Herzl's. Herzl felt a great urgency—both because he realized that to sustain mass enthusiasm and support for Zionism he had to provide tangible achievements and because he knew intuitively that the movement had

only a limited time in which to act. To him the Jewish problem was not a set of abstract concepts as it was for Ahad Haʿam. It demanded a swift solution because it affected the lives of real people. Herzl intended his Exodus above all as a mass immigration of poor, simple people, who would build up the country. He envisaged not selective immigration of the educated, respectable few, but a movement of millions, of anyone seeking to emigrate. The short time he allocated to implementing this program and its tremendous scope seemed implausible to Ahad Haʿam, who criticized both the program's content—since he thought it provided an answer to the wrong question—and Herzl's grandiose plan to obtain a charter and acquire Palestine through diplomacy, in one daring feat. "Israel's salvation will come through prophets, not diplomats," Ahad Haʿam chided at the conclusion of his article "The First Zionist Congress," in which he responded to the congress and attempted to lower expectations for the new political Zionism and the new actor in the Zionist arena.[16]

THE UGANDA PLAN AND TERRITORIALISM

In the years that followed the congress, Ahad Haʿam had many opportunities to say "I warned you," and he did not waste any of them. Herzl's attempts to negotiate with the Ottoman regime, the German Kaiser, and the Russian minister of the interior ended in failure. The Turks were not interested in introducing an additional non-Muslim element into the Middle East that would provide further grounds for European intervention in the Ottoman Empire. The Russian Zionists wanted to boycott the authorities following the 1903 Kishinev pogrom, which had stunned the Jewish world after more than twenty years of peace and quiet. Yet Herzl went to meet with the Russian minister of the interior, Vyacheslav von Plehve—who was suspected of culpability in the pogrom—hoping that this antisemite would be willing to pressure the Turkish government to agree to evacuate the Jews from Russia to Palestine. The visit yielded nothing, but at the Vilna (Vilnius) train station Herzl met, for the first time, crowds of Jews who had come to welcome him and demonstrate their sympathy with "the King of the Jews" and the idea of the Jewish state. Herzl was moved by the waves of love that flowed to him from the throng: this was a different Jewish experience, different from the restraint familiar to him in Western Europe and from the angry reservations voiced by Ahad Haʿam and his followers. The violence displayed by the police who tried to disperse the crowds, and the people's bravery in the face of this brutality, perhaps made him feel committed to redeeming them, come what may.

A few months before this visit to Vilna, British colonial secretary Joseph Chamberlain had offered Herzl a charter for part of East Africa, an area the Zionists called Uganda but that was actually in present-day Kenya. Given the hardships he had witnessed, Herzl could not summarily reject this proposal. That a world

power like Great Britain should make an offer of territory in its empire was a tremendous achievement for a fledgling movement less than ten years old that possessed neither power nor base. It was international recognition of Zionism as a national movement, but that is not how the offer was received in the Zionist camp. Although Herzl had deliberated in *Der Judenstaat* between Argentina and Palestine as a place for Jews to settle, his encounter with the representatives of Eastern European Jewry made it clear that only Palestine could gain Jewish support, so all his diplomatic efforts now focused on it. He nonetheless brought the British proposal before the Sixth Zionist Congress and asked the delegates to send a survey team to Uganda to examine its capacity to absorb mass Jewish immigration.

This was one of the moments of truth in the history of the Zionist movement when ideology and myth clashed with practicality and reality. Similar moments recurred in 1937 (with the first proposal for partitioning Palestine into Jewish and Arab states) and in 1948 (at the decision to declare Israel's independence) and will no doubt occur in the future. Though Herzl's proposal was motivated by a sense of urgency in the face of the distress of Russian Jewry, it was opposed by the Eastern European delegates. Max Nordau, a well-known German-language writer and an important figure among those Herzl had enlisted to the Zionist camp, tried in vain to sugarcoat the pill by describing East Africa as merely "a night shelter" on the road to Palestine. The Russian Zionist delegates, on whose behalf Herzl wanted to accept the proposal, considered it a betrayal of Zion and threatened a split in the young Zionist Organization by refusing to ratify it. Only when Herzl swore dramatically, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning," did they agree to return to the congress hall. In the end—after Herzl threatened to resign—it was decided to send the survey team to East Africa. This group went out to inspect the location and returned with the conclusion that it was unsuitable for mass settlement. Thus the Uganda Plan was dropped.

This episode is more important for its symbolic-cultural meaning than its political one. What tipped the scales in the end was the power of the Land of Israel myth so deeply ingrained in the very being of the Jews who adhered to the Zionist idea. The charged emotions show that, for these adherents, Palestine was not merely a territory that if necessary could be replaced by another territory. The idea of the Jews' return to their land endowed the Zionist movement with a magnetism that went beyond economic and political interests and fleeting benefits.

The period after the demise of the Uganda Plan saw the creation of the Jewish Territorial Organization (JTO). Led by the Anglo-Jewish writer Israel Zangwill, it sought a country for the Jews. Of all the nationalist streams among the Jewish people, the territorialists came closest to political Zionism. They adhered to two basic Zionist tenets: territory and self-government. Like Herzl, they were moved

by the Jews' distress and believed in a mass immigration movement. During the depressed period that the Zionist movement experienced following the death of Herzl a year after the Uganda congress, and in response to the wave of pogroms in Russia, more violent than their predecessors, that followed the 1905 revolution, the territorial movement attracted massive support. But every attempt to find a suitable, available territory ended in failure. Zionism's weakness at that time derived, among other things, from the unavailability of Palestine. But territorialism fared no better.

NOTES

1. Theodor Herzl, *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Marvin Lowenthal (trans.), New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1962, p. 224.

2. Alter Druyanov (ed.), *Ketavim letoldot Hibbat Tzion* (Writings on the History of Hibbat Zion), vol. 3, Odessa and Tel Aviv: Committee for the Settlement of the Land of Israel, 1932, pp. 451–457.

3. See, for example, Yitzhak Epstein, "She'ela ne'elama" (A Hidden Question), *Hashiloah*, 17, 1907; Hillel Zeitlin, *Hazman*, vol. 3, July–September 1905.

4. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ketuboth, 111.

5. From the poem "Hakitza ami" (Awake My People), *Kitvei Yehuda Leib Gordon* (Collected Writings of Yehuda Leib Gordon), poetry volume, Tel Aviv: Dvir: 1959, p. 17.

6. Shlomo Avineri, "Statecraft without a State: A Jewish Contribution to Political History?" *Kontexte der Schrift* I (2005), pp. 403–419; *Minha leMenahem: kovetz ma'amarim likhvod harav Menahem Hacohen* (Jubilee Book in Honor of Rabbi Menahem HaCohen), Hanna Amit, Aviad HaCohen, and Hayim Beer (eds.), Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 2007, pp. 269–283.

7. Yechezkel Kaufman, *Golah venekhar* (Exile and Estrangement), Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1962.

8. Alliance Israélite Universelle, founded in Paris in 1860.

9. Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden, founded in Berlin in 1901. Its primary aim was to assist in Jewish education in Eastern Europe. Later it was also active in Palestine and Syria.

10. The Jewish Colonization Association, founded in London in 1891 by Baron Moritz Hirsch. Its primary aim was "To assist and promote the emigration of Jews from any parts of Europe or Asia, and principally from countries in which they may for the time being be subjected to any special taxes or political or other disabilities, to any other parts of the world."

11. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was founded in 1914 following the outbreak of World War One, in order to aid needy Jews wherever they might be.

12. Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem*, New York: Schocken Books, 1980, pp. 42–43.

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2 JEWS, TURKS, ARABS
FIRST ENCOUNTERS IN THE LAND

Concurrent with Herzl's intensive efforts to obtain a charter—and unrecognized by him—the beginnings of modern Jewish settlement were already present in Palestine.

PALESTINE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Palestine was a remote, backward province of the Ottoman Empire, which itself was in decline. Internecine wars and clashes between Bedouins and fellahin occurred every day, and the roads, controlled by robbers and bandits, were dangerous. The country was almost empty, with some 250,000 inhabitants, including about 6,500 Jews concentrated in the four holy cities: Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron.

Napoleon's campaign in Egypt and Palestine had failed because an epidemic decimated his army during the siege of Acre in 1799. However, the campaign aroused the European powers' interest both in Palestine and in the division of the Ottoman Empire, whose weakness had been exposed. In 1831 the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali Pasha conquered Palestine. He ruled it until 1840, setting in motion a process of stabilizing governance and reinforcing the inhabitants' security that continued even after Palestine was restored to the Ottoman Empire following pressure by the European powers. Seeking to demonstrate that his government was enlightened compared to the Ottoman regime, Muhammad Ali permitted the European powers to send representatives to the Holy Land.

Consequently, when Palestine was restored to Ottoman governance, the authorities could no longer close the country to non-Muslims, and a system of capitulations ensured that the subjects of foreign powers could be protected by their consulates. Non-Muslims were granted rights equal to those of Muslims, and were even permitted to purchase land, on condition that it was managed in accordance with Ottoman law. France, Britain, Austria, Russia, and Germany all opened consulates in Palestine. A German Protestant bishopric was established in Jerusalem, soon followed by others. Building in the city had been suspended since the end of the sixteenth century, but now the Catholic, Protestant, and Greek Orthodox churches embarked on accelerated construction of churches, orphanages, hospitals, and schools. With the improved security situation on land and at sea and the decreased cost of transportation after the appearance of steamships, thousands of Christians set forth on pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

The churches built hospices for them, the most impressive of which was the Augusta Victoria Hospital and Church, a magnificent building that dominated the Jerusalem skyline. In the middle of the century, the Templars, a German Protestant sect, began moving to Palestine; between 1868 and World War One they established seven colonies with some 2,200 inhabitants. The Templars were the pioneers of modernization in Palestine. Their colonies were a shining example of planning, order, and organization. They proved that despite the difficulties presented by the Ottoman government, European settlement in Palestine was possible.

By the end of the 1840s, steamships sailed regularly to Palestine from Marseilles, Odessa, and Trieste. In honor of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the first road in Palestine was laid between Jaffa and Jerusalem, and cart and carriage traffic between the two cities commenced. Until then transport had depended entirely on pack animals. Mail and telegraph services were opened, connecting Palestine with the outside world.

The Ottomans' institution of civic order (relative to what had existed in the past) and subduing of the wars between local leaders, the cessation of Bedouin incursions into the villages, and improved health and education services all resulted in an increase both in the area of cultivated farmland and in population. By the end of the 1870s, the population had reached some 380,000, while the Jewish population had increased to 27,000. The most significant growth was in Jerusalem, where Jews had increased from 2,250 in 1800 (out of a total population of 9,000) to 17,000 (out of a total of 31,500). Even before Zionist immigration began, then, the Jews constituted a majority in the city.

The main increase was of Ashkenazi Jews. They had barely existed in Jerusalem at the turn of the century, but by 1880 they were more numerous than the Sephardim. The vast majority of Ashkenazim were concentrated in *kollelim*, charitable institutions based on country of origin that distributed financial aid raised in those countries to support the "Learners' Society," which was composed of yeshiva students who had wives and children but did not work for a living. This distribution of charitable funds was known as the *haluka*. Because very few Ashkenazim earned income, they lived in severe poverty. By contrast, the Sephardim generally did not follow the Learners' Society model but instead gained their livelihoods from crafts and trade. Since they were fluent in the country's language and conversant with its way of life, they could navigate local and even international trade and finance.

One of the new centers that attracted Jewish settlement was Jaffa. At the turn of the eighteenth century, Jaffa was a small, insignificant port city. With increased tourism and Christian pilgrim traffic to Jerusalem, the city grew and became the most important port of entry to the center of the country. In 1892 the railway

between Jaffa and Jerusalem was inaugurated, heightening Jaffa's importance. Surrounding the city were the first citrus groves in Palestine, which had been planted by the Arabs. The export of oranges under the "Jaffa" brand name turned the city into the country's major export port. By 1880 its population had reached 10,000, including some 1,000 Jews. In the north of the country, the city of Haifa had begun to develop; in only a few years it surpassed Acre as the area's major port.

EMIGRANTS AND IMMIGRANTS: AN OVERVIEW

In his memoirs Joseph Eliyahu Chelouche, born in Jaffa in 1870 of an immigrant father from Oran, Algeria, and an immigrant mother from Baghdad, describes an encounter between the first members of what would later be known as the First Aliya (lit., ascent [to the Holy Land]) and the contemporary Sephardi elite of Jaffa. The Chelouche family was very devout, and the men's daily routine included not only prayers at the appointed time but also several hours of Torah study. A spacious room was set aside in their big house as a synagogue. Members of the Yesod Hamaʿala Committee, who came to purchase land for the first moshava (colony, pl., moshavot) established by Hovevei Zion (to be called Rishon Lezion), were warmly welcomed at the Chelouche home, though with some puzzlement: the visitors wore European attire (and some, spectacles), and although they spoke Hebrew—in which the Sephardim were fluent—there remained a gnawing doubt whether they were really Jews. Like the rest of the family, young Joseph wondered: if they *were* Jews, then why did they not observe the precept to wear ritual garments? Despite such doubts, relationships developed between the distinguished Sephardi families of Jaffa—the Chelouches, Amzalegs, and Moyals—and the first immigrants, who came to seek help in purchasing land in Palestine. For the newcomers, who did not speak the country's language and were unfamiliar with its customs, the assistance provided by these families opened a portal to the reality of Ottoman Palestine, with its multiplicity of government officials and attendant obstacles to Jewish settlement, and provided tactics for surmounting these obstacles.

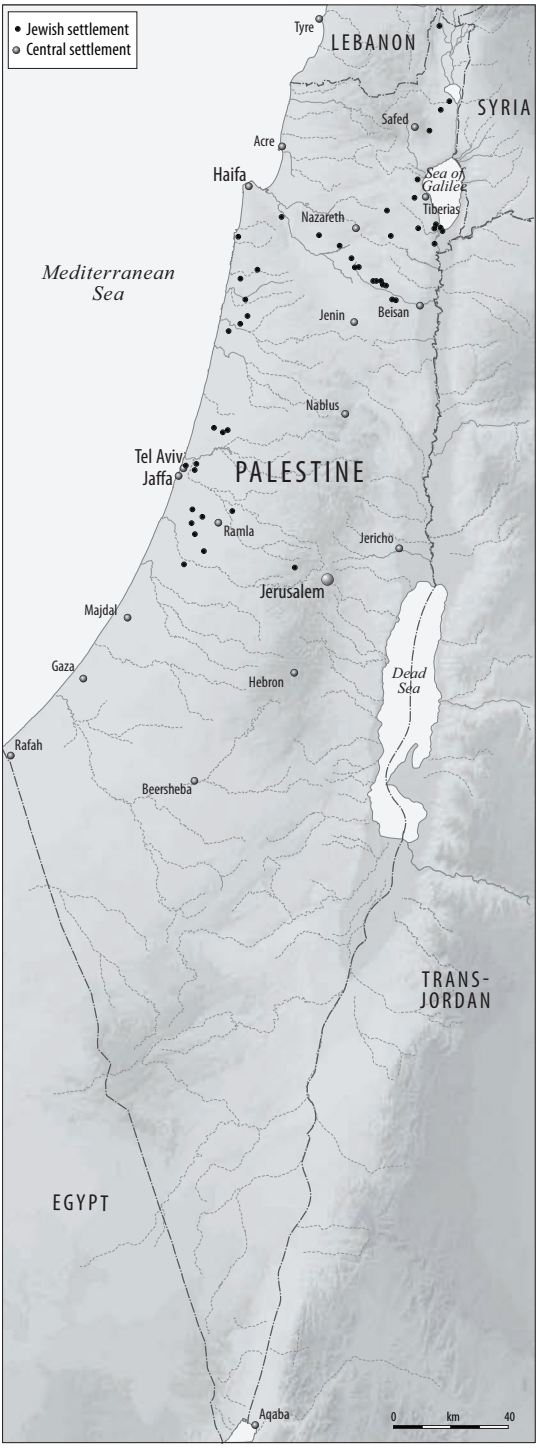
The founding of the first settlement with the specific nationalist goal of establishing a Jewish political foothold occurred in 1882, marking the start of a new period in the history of Palestine and the Jewish people. Vladimir Dubnow came to Palestine with the first wave of immigration as a member of the Bilu association (elaborated shortly). In a letter to his brother, historian Simon Dubnow, who advocated obtaining national rights for the Jews in the Diaspora countries, set out the goal of his group: "The ultimate aim or *pia desideria* is to take control of Palestine in due time and to return to Jews the political independence they have been deprived of for two thousand years." Since he knew quite well what his brother would think of this, he added: "Don't laugh, this is not a delusion." This

goal, he explained, required creating a solid Jewish economic foundation in Palestine: "In brief, to try and make sure that all land and all production is in Jewish hands." He believed that establishing a Jewish presence in Palestine mandated learning to use firearms: "In free and wild Turkey anything is possible," he noted, and added this vision: "Then . . . and here I can only guess . . . the grand day will arrive, the day whose coming was prophesied by Isaiah in his impassioned vision in the song of consolation. The Jews will yet arise, weapons in hand (if need be); and, in a loud voice, they shall proclaim themselves the lords and masters of their ancient homeland."[1] It is doubtful that the majority of first-wave immigrants shared these far-reaching dreams.

After encountering the country's established Jewish residents, the new immigrants swiftly defined themselves as "the new Yishuv" (Jewish community) and their predecessors as "the old Yishuv." These labels were supposed to denote different objectives, lifestyles, and "new" and "old" human types. Both the Palestinian and Diaspora press depicted the old Yishuv as fanatically ultra-Orthodox. Crowded into the four holy cities—above all Jerusalem—it lived on *haluka* funds, rejected any attempt at productivization or openness to the outside world, and was clearly opposed to the Zionist idea. The new Yishuv was described as enlightened and educated, establishing agricultural settlements, striving for a productive life, and possessing Zionist political awareness. But like any label, these definitions blurred the many variations present on both sides.

Despite its religious fanaticism, the old Yishuv had undergone slow processes of change and it included elements seeking modernization in employment and housing. The first settlers outside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City came from the old Yishuv and were driven there by overcrowding. Jewish neighborhoods were built with *kollel* funds north and west of the city, heralding a readiness for change. It was Jews from the Old City who made the first attempt at agricultural settlement in Palestine, in 1878 at Melabes (later Petach Tikva). Although these settlers were motivated by the wish to observe the commandments connected with the Holy Land, their willingness to undertake a farming life was something of a revolution.

On the other hand, not every member of the First Aliya was worthy of the name "new Yishuv," if that phrase was supposed to signal commitment to the Zionist idea. Many new immigrants were much like their old Yishuv predecessors; they hastened to Jerusalem in hopes of getting *haluka* funds. Many others were part of the big wave of emigration that left Eastern Europe during this period, particularly for the United States. These emigrants, who apparently constituted the majority of the First Aliya (1881–1904) and the Second Aliya (1904–1914), sought in Palestine what emigrants sought anywhere else: a better living; security—freedom from the terror of the pogroms and discrimination on the part of Russian



MAP 1.
ZIONIST SETTLEMENT IN THE FIRST AND SECOND ALIYA PERIODS, 1882–1918.
(SEE PLATE 1.)

authorities; and new hope for their children. They were city dwellers who wanted to go on living in a city, not attempt rural settlement. They had come to Palestine almost by chance, perhaps because they had heard that Lord Laurence Oliphant was settling Jews in Palestine or that Alliance Israélite Universelle[2] supported settlement, or because sea passage to the Middle East was cheaper than to America, the journey to Palestine was shorter, and it would be easier to go back home.

The First Aliya also included relatively small groups from Hovevei Zion that had organized in their home countries, Russia and Romania, in order to purchase land in Palestine for Jewish agricultural settlement. Driven by nationalist motives, these groups included two groups of intelligentsia. The first, the Bilu association, consisted of young people, some of whom had acquired a higher education in Russia. Despairing of integration with the Russian people after the pogroms, they decided to "go to the Jewish people" and establish in Palestine an independent Jewish entity with dreams of Jewish sovereignty (similar to those of Vladimir Dubnow, although he himself soon returned to Russia). These youngsters were single, educated freethinkers, inspired by an ideal and a far-reaching plan to organize a mass movement. But their impressive intentions were separated from their ability to implement them by inexperience, lack of funding, and the reality of Palestine. Once they climbed down from the heights of their vision to the ground of reality, they gave up their grandiosity and focused on establishing a colony that would be a settlement model for people coming after them. A small, select group, the Biluim were motivated by Narodnik ideas they had absorbed from the Russian revolutionary movement, which they sought to apply to Zionism. They did not leave behind a real settlement heritage. The majority dispersed even before they arrived in Palestine, but after numerous travails a few dozen settled in Gedera, where they were compelled to observe a religious lifestyle. All that remained of their youthful dreams was the Bilu legend, a shining example for the groups of idealistic youth that followed in the decades to come, viewing the Biluim as the first link in their settlement genealogy. The second group comprised middle-class young people, educated property owners who held liberal views (it was members of this group whose behavior astounded the young Joseph Chelouche) and were motivated by nationalist ideas.

The rest of the Hovevei Zion members were middle-aged Jews who came with their families out of a combination of personal and nationalist motives. They wanted to live a free life in Palestine "under their own vine and fig tree." In the main they were religiously observant, uneducated, and had no leadership. They were small shopkeepers or religious functionaries and knew absolutely nothing about farm work. Some had begun thinking about immigrating to Palestine even before the 1881 pogroms, but it was the Zionist awakening that followed the riots that moved them to put the idea into practice.

At this time immigration was an option, not a necessity, and many newcomers chose to leave the country after a short while, especially in the years preceding World War One, when their homes in Russia, Galicia, or Romania were still standing and immigration to America or elsewhere was still possible. For many Palestine was just a wanderer's way station along routes through countries that had not yet closed their borders, so entering them did not require a passport. The accepted estimate is that the First Aliya comprised 60,000 men and women, of whom at least half left the country; some even put this figure at 70 percent. In 1904, on the eve of the Second Aliya, the Jewish community in Palestine numbered some 55,000 (including natural increase), of whom 10,000 to 15,000 belonged to the new Yishuv living in the moshavot and in Jaffa, as well as a few in Jerusalem and the other cities. In the following decade some 40,000 immigrants came to Palestine, and more than 60 percent of them eventually left, with some estimates putting that figure even higher.

The vast majority of Second Aliya immigrants were no different in character from those of the first. And like the first, the Second Aliya included an elite group of no more than three thousand: young, single men and women who came to Palestine on their own, motivated by nationalist idealism. Even among this group, there was a ruthless selection process. According to David Ben-Gurion, who came from Poland in 1906 when he was twenty and later became Israel's first prime minister, 90 percent of them wound up leaving.[3] But it was the members of this small group who shaped the national ethos, the historiography, and the leadership. When we refer to the Second Aliya, it is this select group that we mean.

The reality of emigration and settlement dictated that there was no direct correlation between immigrants' initial motives and their actual conduct: many who came with neither expectations nor ideology became loyal patriots, whereas quite a few idealists who arrived ready to make sacrifices broke on the rock of their encounter with harsh reality and left. Before World War One immigration to Palestine was not a binding Zionist principle, and there was no stigma attached to leaving. Departures, either for a short time or permanently, were part of life in Palestine. Both Zionist leaders and luminaries of Hebrew culture came to visit, but did not remain. "The best of our comrades and of Zionists in general reside in the Diaspora and yearn, and that is enough for them," complained Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, who added, "They come from abroad—and then only to see the ancient and modern in our life—and go back."[4]

AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT, 1882–1904

Although the new urban Yishuv, particularly in Jaffa, absorbed the majority of the immigrants, the image of Zionist settlement in Palestine was agricultural. Several factors contributed to this attraction to agriculture: the romance of tilling

the soil, the immigrants' limited skills, and the aspiration to lay the foundations of Jewish ownership of land.

Although it might seem that the capitalism emerging in Western and even Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century should have created an economic bias toward entrepreneurship, commerce, and finance, the appearance of Marxism reaffirmed the status of the worker. Marxists contended that it was only the proletariat that created durable assets with its labor; all other classes lived like leeches off the surplus value produced by the workers. This concept was a continuation of the thought of the eighteenth-century Physiocrats, who attached value only to workers in primary occupations, marginalizing the mediating factors in the economy. Both these schools of thought assigned the Jews inferior status since they were unproductive and exploited the labor of others. Modern antisemitism espoused this image of the parasitic Jew, which from the Enlightenment period onward penetrated the public discourse of Jews as well. All the modern Jewish philanthropic societies viewed tilling the soil as the way to save Jews from their supposedly marginal place in the economy and give them a productive role in society, and so they promoted initiatives for agricultural settlement projects throughout the world.

Another factor was the Romantic conception of the city—cradle of industrialization and the alienation it engendered—as the root of all evil. The ideal was, à la Rousseau's *Emile,* to return to the lost paradise of innocence: the rural community, a life close to nature and physical contact with the elements. In Russia the Narodniks lauded the simple peasant who expressed the nation's true, fundamental essence, as opposed to the nobility and the *nouvelle bourgeoisie* that had begun appearing in the cities. They saw the Russian peasant and his rural community as heralding the possibility of achieving a socialist regime in Russia without first walking the Via Dolorosa of brutal, depriving capitalism.

This attitude filtered down from the Russian intellectual sphere to the Jewish one. Zionist circles believed that a man who tilled the soil had a profound connection with his land—a potent antidote to wanderlust, another quality the Jews were accused of possessing. Living from his honest toil, the peasant developed characteristics such as a simple lifestyle, a love of nature, and independence. Of course this idealistic picture was a far cry from reality. As Berl Katznelson once remarked ironically, it was doubtful whether the young people who expressed extravagant admiration of that Russian peasant would be able to withstand the stink of pitch on his boots. The same romantic vision was attached to the Jewish agricultural worker, and the figure of the Jewish laborer tramping across his field was a central icon in Zionist propaganda. Even a level-headed, Western-educated man like Arthur Ruppin saw work in the fields as "the wellspring from which we revitalize our physical and spiritual life."[5]

At this period the cities of Palestine had limited capacity to absorb new residents, and most of the immigrants who tried to settle in them were forced to leave the country. There was no industry to speak of, and it is doubtful that the country was at a level where industrial development could occur. Palestine was an agricultural country, so the simplest, most obvious solution for anyone seeking to immigrate there was to settle on the land and make a living from farming. The vast majority of immigrants had little means and no farming experience. Those with a small amount of capital did the math and figured out how much a plot of land, farming equipment, building a house, tilling and sowing the land, and waiting a year until they saw a crop would cost. Then, once their representatives had purchased the land on which they and their fellow association members would build, only the Mediterranean Sea seemed to separate them from a life of peace and tranquility. Those with no capital assumed that the philanthropic organizations would find a way to settle them on the land. Moreover, they knew that the settlement associations being organized to buy land would each allocate some land to a few families without assets. So from a distance, at any rate, it appeared that the means of making a living from farming were available and could be arranged in advance.

Beyond economic need and romantic ideology, there was the political vision: a concrete hold on the country's territory through purchase and settlement of the land was believed by those known as "practical Zionists" to be the best way to create a Jewish right of possession in Palestine. Though not empty, the country was relatively sparsely settled, and just as the Templars had put down roots in its soil, so would the Jews. Any political achievements would derive from this act of settlement. This thinking did not drive the individual settler—especially not the poor, uneducated one—but it was in the minds of others: the Hovevei Zion committee members in Russia, known as the Odessa Committee; Baron Edmond de Rothschild, who had begun supporting settlers as early as 1882; the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), which established a new string of settlements in the first decade of the twentieth century; and the Palestine Office, established in 1908 and headed by Arthur Ruppin, which coordinated Zionist activity in Palestine.

Herzl dismissed all attempts at Jewish settlement in Palestine before a charter was obtained as "infiltration"—that is, irresponsible behavior inappropriate for a movement whose mission was establishing a safe refuge for the Jewish people, guaranteed by international law. He also feared that purchasing land before the charter was obtained would lead to speculation and increased prices. But popular instinct mandated laying the foundations of Jewish settlement in Palestine with or without a charter, in hopes that facts on the ground would ultimately determine the political order. This perception continued to mark the Zionist enterprise and became a seminal myth.

The Ottoman authorities were well aware of the Zionists' aspirations and their efforts to expand the Jewish foothold in Palestine. There was already a separatist Christian movement in Lebanon, and the notion of importing to Palestine another such movement, which would lead to increased intervention there by foreign powers—adding yet another element of pressure to that already being exerted on the empire—was unacceptable to the Ottomans from the outset. What was more, the vast majority of the immigrants were not Ottoman subjects but came under the protection of the foreign consulates. These two reasons were sufficient for rejecting the Zionists' efforts.

Yet added to these objections was the Arabs' opposition to any strengthening of the status of non-Muslims in the empire, and to granting them equal rights in the wake of the Berlin Congress of 1878, which had weakened the empire politically. Sultan Abdul Hamid II attempted to tighten the kingdom's loose bonds by appealing to religious sentiment: he declared himself Caliph of the Faithful and even built the Hejaz railway for the benefit of pilgrims to Mecca. The Arabs were a key constituency of the empire, and their opinion was important to the authorities. The local Arab leadership, Muslim and Christian alike, looked upon the wave of Jewish immigrants to Palestine with suspicion and hostility. Quite aware that the Jews had pinned their nationalist hopes on Palestine, the Arabs were not prepared to accept an invasion of their country by these foreigners. They had taken a dim view of the Templars' settlement and felt even more strongly opposed to settlement by Jews.

As a result, the Ottoman government was antagonistic toward Jewish immigration and purchase of land. As early as 1881 the Turks prohibited Jews from coming to Palestine, and when the first Biluim arrived in Istanbul on their way to Palestine they were welcomed with the announcement that Jews could settle anywhere in the empire except for Palestine. Herzl tried vainly to have this policy changed by promising the sultan financial benefits, but his talk about a charter under international auspices only heightened Ottoman suspicion. Pressure from the Western powers insisting on the right of their citizens to settle in Palestine yielded a slight easing of the regulations: Jewish pilgrims were allowed to visit, at first for one month and later for three. Each local ruler enforced the rule according to his own understanding: in Jaffa the total prohibition was strictly observed, whereas in the ports of Haifa and Beirut the Jews were allowed to disembark. Harsh restrictions were imposed on land purchase and construction, but these ordinances were amended every other day as a result of consular pressure, leaving room for doubt with regard to the authorities' intentions. This ambiguity gave the local rulers some flexibility, and bribery was common. The Jews took advantage of the loopholes in the ordinances, the authorities' inability to enforce their policies, and the dire weakness—both political and ethical—of the execu-

tors of those policies. Still the harsh, hostile Ottoman policy was one of the main factors underlying the tremendous difficulties faced by the settlers.

In the first years of settlement, seven moshavot were founded in three main areas: southeast of Jaffa; on Mount Carmel and in Samaria (the area south of the Carmel range, not the Arab-populated area of the same name to the east); and in eastern Upper Galilee (see map 1). Rishon Lezion, Yesod Hamaʿala, Gedera, Ekron, and Petach Tikva were established by immigrants from the Russian Pale of Settlement, while Rosh Pina and Zichron Yaʿakov were established by Hovevei Zion from Romania. Except for Ekron, established by Baron de Rothschild, and Gedera, settled by the Biluim with the aid of the Hovevei Zion Odessa Committee, all were created by private initiative, with private capital.

The immigrants organized themselves into groups, generally by city of origin, to purchase land, most often from Arab owners, *effendi*s, and Arab and other land brokers. This land was usually uncultivated, though some of it had previously been worked partially by tenant farmers. The soil was sandy (Rishon Lezion, Ness Ziona, Rehovoth, Gedera, and Petach Tikva), rocky (Zichron Yaʿakov and Rosh Pina), located near swamps (Yesod Hamaʿala and Hadera), or lacking surface water or good rainfall. The Arabs preferred hilly areas that were free of malaria, with abundant rainfall and springs, where they cultivated mainly fruit trees. Land on the coastal plain was considered to be of poor quality until the Jewish settlers discovered that the groundwater level was not very deep. They began pumping water with modern equipment and adapting their crops to the sandy soil.

However, all the detailed calculations the settlers had made before immigrating turned out to be optimistic in the extreme. As we have seen, shortly after the start of the first wave of immigration, the Ottoman government prohibited Jews from coming to Palestine, in particular for the purpose of buying land and establishing settlements. The shrewdness of some Sephardi Jews who were Ottoman subjects made it possible to register land ostensibly purchased in their names, but until the registration procedure was complete at the Land Registry, no buildings could be constructed. As a consequence, the entire timetable planned by the settlers went awry. It was also essential to pay bribes, adding to the settlers' unforeseen expenses.

In most cases land purchase involved friction either with neighboring Arab villages displeased by the border marking of land purchased by the Jews; with sellers who were dishonest in their dealings with buyers; or with the tenant farmers whom the buyers sought to remove from their land. If the arguments were not about land borders or ownership, they were about the Bedouins' grazing rights on stubble fields, or crossing rights and the use of the nearby spring or local well. Resolution of these clashes required substantial payments. If the par-

ties went to court, the case dragged on for years. Meanwhile the buyers could not settle or build on the land; they and their families lived temporarily in the nearest town and were forced to dip into their savings. Finally, although the settlers did not come from the developed regions of Europe, they still aspired to a certain standard of public amenities that mandated a synagogue, a school, and a facility for medical treatment. These needs required further investment that had not been taken into account beforehand.

The Hovevei Zion associations were supposed to maintain settlers for the first year, until the first crop was harvested, but they never managed to raise the required funds. Since they transferred the money they did receive bit by bit, there was never enough to consolidate the settlement but only to meet its day-to-day needs. By the end of its first year, Rishon Lezion, the first moshava, found itself in crisis when it appeared that the field crops would not yield enough to cover expenses and ensure that the families could subsist from then on, as had been hoped. On top of such external problems, these European city dwellers found it difficult to adapt to village life in the Middle East. They were inexperienced in the type of hard, fatiguing work required for agriculture. The hot climate was alien to them, mosquitoes and other insects made their lives a misery, and malaria was rife in some moshavot, leaving the settlers physically drained.

It was Baron Edmond de Rothschild who came to their aid. When in 1900, at the end of this period, Rothschild censured the Yishuv representatives by saying, "I created the Yishuv, I alone," he was not exaggerating. He was not a professed Zionist and thought that any action undertaken by Jews in Palestine should be low profile, low key, and should eschew far-reaching political statements so as not to arouse government suspicion or Arab hostility. After Rothschild's death in 1934 the Palestine press quoted an interview in which, regarding the issue of a Jewish state in Palestine, he had commented that the Jews should conduct themselves according to the rule set down by the French statesman Leon Gambetta following the cession of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany after the French defeat at Sedan in 1870: "Never speak of it, always think of it." This was certainly wise counsel, but it did not take into account the difficulty faced by a national movement that had to sustain the enthusiasm of its loyal supporters and followers while asking them to conceal their feelings and remain loyal, even though their hopes for the future were not being bolstered in the present.

Within a few years, four moshavot came under Rothschild's patronage (Rishon Lezion, Rosh Pina, Zichron Ya'akov, and Ekron), and he also supported almost all the rest of them to some degree. He conditioned his support on transfer of title in the land to him, on management of the moshava by his representatives, and on his involvement being kept secret. This last stricture was not followed, and he entered local folklore under the sobriquet "The Well-Known Benefactor."

The baron invested vast sums to secure legal ownership of the land and obtain building permits. His dealings with the authorities, through his officers and with the assistance of the French consul, helped ensure the continued existence of the moshavot and their protection against attack or government arbitrariness. To augment the farmers' holdings in hopes of economic consolidation, Rothschild purchased large tracts of land adjacent to the moshavot. He also distributed land to moshavot residents who did not own any in order to expand the moshavot and make public services and security more efficient. He demanded that workers employed by the moshavot under his aegis be Jews, another way to boost their Jewish population. In addition he invested huge sums in developing the water infrastructure of the moshavot through relatively deep drilling of artesian wells and modern pumps.

The classic image of the tiller of the soil is the figure of the farmer plowing and sowing his land, and indeed the first moshavot were based on field crops. Field crops required neither a large investment nor irrigation, but providing a living for a farmer and his family by growing grain required some seventy-five acres per settler, and most farmers had far smaller holdings. The settlers envisaged not a life of plenty, but one of dignity from their labors, and despite his investments in infrastructure and public buildings and his support of needy settlers, Rothschild realized that growing cereals would not provide a dignified existence. Starting in 1885, on the advice of agricultural experts brought from France, the baron began converting the moshavot he controlled to a plantation economy. Thousands of acres of vines were planted. The moshavot he did not control, as well as those established in the 1890s (the most notable being Rehovoth and Hadera), followed this example and based their farming on monoculture. Rothschild built modern wineries in Rishon Lezion and Zichron Ya'akov that pressed all the grapes produced by the moshavot.

The industrial plantation economy was unknown in Palestine, and as far as we can tell the baron duplicated the efforts of French inhabitants in the south of France and Algeria to introduce the viniculture economy. But the transition from field crops to an industrial plantation economy was not easy. The grape varieties introduced by the French experts were unsuited to the local climate, and more than once the farmers had to uproot the vines and plant new varieties. The Zichron Ya'akov vineyards were invaded by the Phylloxera fly and had to be destroyed.

Initially the moshavot had been managed by elected committees, and the beginnings of democratic management emerged despite the internal disagreements typical of a group of people with no clear leadership who found themselves living in extremely harsh conditions. When the baron took over the moshavot, he disbanded all the self-government institutions and replaced them with his own managers in what was called a "custodian regime." This act displayed consider-

able arrogance on the part of this modern Westerner toward Eastern European Jews, as well as the wealthy man's lack of confidence in his protégés. What Rothschild wanted was to settle the land with simple, uneducated, unpretentious farmers, much like farmers in Europe. Thus, for example, the people he settled in Ekron, which he established, were illiterate and needed one educated man who could write letters for them to their families in Lithuania. The baron was not impressed by the educated elite of Rishon Lezion, or of Rehovoth a decade later, and was unwilling to support Gedera, the moshava of educated Biluim. In his view Jewish settlement in Palestine was to be founded on a specific human type: the modest farmer happy with his lot, looking no farther than the horizon, whose holding was his whole world. Yet the advanced methods and modern farming Rothschild introduced called for a different type of farmer who was aware of changing needs, understood technology, and was open to innovation.

The outcome of this contradiction was the introduction of an entire system of officials, experts, and instructors who managed every last detail of life in the moshavot. These officials, some dedicated to Jewish settlement in Palestine and others with no interest in it, treated the inhabitants with insufferable lordliness, triggering several revolts. The baron supported his officials unquestioningly and had some farmers with independent views removed, extinguishing the spark of local leadership. His custodial regime bred moral decay in the form of a class of obsequious toadies who sought the officials' favor. Thus the initiative and resourcefulness of the independent farmer was replaced by dependence and debasement. Rothschild's wineries pressed all the moshavot grapes at fixed prices that were subsidized well in excess of their real price.

By the end of the 1890s, there was a large surplus of wine for which there was no demand, and the baron's officials were unable to sell it. But inside the moshavot the subsidy created a false impression of plenty. There were displays of luxury in clothes, dwellings, and education; the sons of the moshavot were sent to study in France on the officials' recommendation. Zichron Ya'akov was dubbed Little Paris: French culture—the culture of the ruling class—was a model for the younger generation. The saying "at the baron's expense" reflected the atmosphere of extravagance and hedonism.

In 1887 the Hovevei Zion Odessa Committee, which perceived the baron's assistance as the foundation of the settlement enterprise, strongly rebuked a group who revolted against the officials in Rishon Lezion. Yechiel Michal Pines, the patron of the Biluim, called the rebellious farmers "nihilists." Ahad Ha'am censured them. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the fierce fighter for the Hebrew language and against the ultra-Orthodox in Jerusalem, proclaimed, "Not with educated people accustomed to freedom, who cannot bear the yoke of masters, and all their

thoughts all day long are of being free men, will Judea be built," and warned, "in the moshavot they [the educated] are ruination, ruination, ruination."[6]

Yet only a decade later, many of the same voices were raised criticizing the management of the moshavot and their objectives. Ahad Haʿam and his followers castigated the custodial system for creating decay in the moshavot. Baron de Rothschild's investment had been enormous. According to the estimate of researcher Ran Aharonson, in the eighteen years of his involvement in the moshavot he invested £1.6 million, almost twenty times the total investment of Hovevei Zion in the same period. Yet the moshavot did not achieve economic independence. Apparently the baron concluded that the time had come to change the system, and at the end of 1899 he signed an agreement with the Jewish Colonization Association that transferred the moshavot to JCA control. The JCA, founded by Baron Hirsch, fostered Jewish agricultural settlement in Argentina, and in the second half of the 1890s it had also become active in Palestine. With the signing of the agreement, Rothschild transferred 15 million francs to the JCA for continued investment in the settlement enterprise.

The JCA's approach was less paternalistic and more capitalist and rational. It ended the grape subsidies, decreased direct support payments to the farmers, and significantly reduced the number of officials and public servants. The farmers were told to cope on their own and restructure their farming economy. The Jewish workers, whose relatively high wages corresponded to the period of prosperity, were now dismissed and replaced by low-paid Arab workers. The JCA had no qualms about encouraging the unemployed workers to leave the country, and even provided them with passage. It did the same for members of the second moshavot generation who did not have a holding. Old vineyards were uprooted, the JCA encouraged a shift to mixed farming of field crops and plantations, and the first attempts at planting citrus trees were made. After a crisis lasting several years (manifested by, among other things, enthusiastic support of the Uganda Plan among the colonists), the older moshavot began to stabilize and consolidate. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the moshavot founded before 1900 achieved economic independence.

The JCA now reverted to the settlement model based on field crops and poor, uneducated, simple settlers. Its most important settlement enterprise was in a new area of Jewish settlement, Lower Galilee, where it founded five moshavot intended for experienced agricultural workers of proven ability. Since Lower Galilee has only scanty rainfall, the plan was to base the enterprise on field crops that need little water. To ensure that a settler could earn a living from his labor, relatively large holdings of about seventy-five acres were made available. The soil was rocky, and the settlers had to clear the fields before they could work the land.

The JCA provided each settler with an inventory of livestock and equipment so that he could stand on his own two feet right away. According to the contract between the JCA and the settlers, the latter would be considered tenant farmers until they repaid the investment in their farm to the JCA. The five moshavot were established within walking distance of one another—the first example of planning Jewish settlement in a block. The remoteness from the center of the country, the settlers' isolation and need to make do with little, and the field crop economy all carried a sort of magical appeal for the young people of the Second Aliya, who saw Galilee as a wonderland and its farmers as genuine tillers of the soil, in contrast with their mollycoddled counterparts from the plantation moshavot.

But the settlers' life was extremely hard due to the sparse rainfall, a chronic shortage of water, and poor yields. Both natural disasters and human ones (Bedouin raids from Transjordan and belligerent Arab neighbors) forced the settlers to be prepared to fight for their lives and property. They developed a fiercely individualistic attitude somewhat resembling that of the Wild West.

In 1904 there were thirty Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine, with between 5,000 and 5,500 inhabitants. For many years it was these settlements that determined the boundaries of the Jewish Yishuv, from Metulla in the north to Be'er Tuvia in the south (see map 1). To a great extent the settlement blocks formed during this initial period shaped the future development of the Yishuv. Later efforts were directed at extending these blocks and connecting them—a master plan already present in embryonic form in the distribution plans for these early settlements.

THE SECOND ALIYA AND THE BIRTH OF THE PIONEERING ETHOS

After the Uganda crisis, the Zionist movement sank into a deep depression, which worsened after Herzl's sudden death in 1904. The movement focused on everyday issues, for it was clear that as long as there was no change in the international situation, there was no likelihood of realizing the dead leader's dream of obtaining a charter for Palestine. The older moshavot began to emerge from the crisis of the transition to JCA control, but the crisis mentality persisted, and numerous members of the second generation left the moshavot. It was amid this gloomy atmosphere that a new wave of immigrants began to reach Palestine—a group that would go down in history as the Second Aliya.

Like its predecessors, this influx of between 35,000 and 40,000 immigrants can be seen as the foam atop the great wave of Jewish emigrants leaving Eastern Europe at this time, most of whom went to America (between 1904 and 1914, some 1.2 million of them reached the United States). In the writer Yosef Haim Brenner's description, "A family that wanted to rid itself of a problem sent the

problem to Palestine." He continued, "Only revolutions like those of 1905–1906, which roiled and shook our cooking pot in the Pale of Settlement and in one fell swoop sent tens of thousands of our people across the seas, also sent splinters to Eretz Yisrael."[7] Most of these immigrants wound up returning home, although a certain number remained and settled in the cities, mainly Jaffa. A minority, however, chose another path; and these left their mark on the entire Second Aliya.

The thirty years between the First and Second Aliyot changed the face of the Pale of Settlement, where most immigrants came from. Accelerated industrialization and modernization in Russia led people to move from small towns to district towns and the main cities of the Pale. One outcome of this urbanization process was greater radicalization of the younger generation. The increasing activity of the Russian revolutionaries, particularly the social revolutionaries who engaged in terrorist attacks against government figures, attracted young Jews, whose thought went: "Here are young Russians rising up against government tyranny, and if they can, so can we." As we have seen, the Bund, a Jewish-Marxist party that aspired to advance Jewish workers' interests, was founded in 1897, the year of the First Zionist Congress. The Bund aroused the pride of Jewish workers, instilling in them class and national consciousness and the hope that when the democratic revolution came, all religious- or nationalist-oriented discrimination would be eliminated.

In the wake of the 1903 Kishinev pogrom, Jewish self-defense groups began organizing, with the support of the Bund and the Zionists. The radicalization process gained momentum following the wave of pogroms that rocked the Pale of Settlement after the first Russian Revolution in 1905. Radicalization of Jewish youth manifested itself in a plethora of ideologies and schools of thought. There were those who believed in the democratic revolution that would enable Jews to live in Russia as a minority entitled to maintain its exclusive culture as expressed in Yiddish language and literature ("Autonomists" and Bundists). Others, after the Uganda Plan and the failed efforts to obtain Palestine, were attracted to territorialism, a search for a territory for the Jews outside Palestine.

There were also, of course, the Zionists. But the Zionism of Hovevei Zion or Herzl seemed bourgeois; it had not achieved its goals, and it was incompatible with the spirit of those stormy times. Radical Zionist circles began to emerge: Tze'irei Zion (young Zionists) and Poalei Zion (Zionist workers). At first these entities were amorphous and less able to express positive goals than to define what they were against: the custodial regime in the moshavot (which they had learned about from Ahad Ha'am's famous essay "The Yishuv and Its Custodians"); the far-reaching plans of political Zionism that had no grounding in reality; the petit-bourgeois character of Zionist activity. They wanted a different Zionism, one that would be meaningful not only for the Jewish collective, but also for

the individual. It should embody a psychological revolution in the image of the Jew—a revolution of values, norms, and behavior. Tze'irei Zion emphasized national and cultural factors and strove for a life of morality and authenticity in the Land of the Forefathers, while Poalei Zion was influenced by the socialist ideas in the Russian street.

Ber Borochov created a synthesis between Marxism, then considered the dominant ideology, and Zionism. He explained that the Jews in their respective countries were unable to become part of the proletariat, the class of the future, because they were not allowed to work in industry. Instead they were being pauperized and turning into a proletariat of tatters, a *lumpenproletariat.* Consequently the Jews were doomed to be ground down in the imminent great battle between capitalism and socialism. In order to save themselves they needed a country of their own where they could practice a class war properly, and this country was Palestine. In Borochov's vision this development would occur through objective, spontaneous processes, independent of human will. He asserted that socialist Zionists were not supposed to immigrate to Palestine for emotional reasons but would be driven there by these "objective" processes. Therefore there should be no use of immigration propaganda and no collaboration with the Zionist bourgeoisie. The role of Poalei Zion was to assist in the development of capitalism in semi-feudal Palestine; it was only after this vital stage in its historic development was reached that a socialist revolution would arise there. From today's perspective the Poalei Zion worldview seems nothing more than a clumsy attempt to clothe a desired reality in theory; but bear in mind that Borochovism provided tens of thousands of young Jews with the synthesis that enabled them to connect the universal revolution—which for them represented the advancement of the human spirit—with their nationalist yearnings.

In 1906 Joseph Vitkin, a tubercular Hebrew teacher bitterly disappointed by his teaching experiences in the moshavot, published an "Appeal to the Youth of Israel whose heart is with their people and Zion," in which he called upon idealistic young people to immigrate to Palestine. "Awake, O youth of Israel, come to the aid of your people! Our people is struggling, its land will soon slip out of its grasp forever. Hasten to its help!" He tried to prepare his readers for the trials awaiting them: "Ready yourselves to fight nature, sickness, hunger, people—friends and adversaries—strangers and brothers, haters of Zion and Zionists. . . . Ready yourselves for the hatred and brutality of those around you who will view you as a dangerous competitor." Ultimately, "Many of you will fall, perhaps fighting sickness and anguish, hunger and toil, but those who remain and those who follow them will fill the ranks, and the war, this war of peace, will continue to victory." He concluded, "Heroes of Israel, hurry and move forward. Renew the

days of the Biluim with even greater energy, for otherwise we will surely and swiftly be lost."[8]

Most of these young men and women came to Palestine on their own and remained single for many years. They arrived very young in a remote, unknown country, devoid of relatives or friends, without the backing of a movement, a society, or an association that might welcome them. The vast majority came without money or means, with the sole ambition of being workers in the Land of Israel. The years of the Second Aliya were also the years of the arrivals' crisis of adolescence. They were wanderers; they worked for a time in the citrus groves of Petach Tikva, then the wind carried them to Hadera and from there to the Galilee, and so on. On one hand, this lack of permanence expressed their desire to get to know the country, while on the other it reflected a certain dissatisfaction, a lack of maturity and readiness to commit to a place, people, and way of life. Driven by the spirit of the Russian revolutionaries, they wanted a meaningful life and were not deterred by the suffering and hardship they took upon themselves. "We feared well-being," wrote Rachel Bluwstein, who became known as Rachel the Poetess. "We yearned for sacrifice. . . ." Zalman Shazar described this emotion as "the joy of sacrifice."[9]

From Russia the Second Aliya pioneers brought the political party as the accepted organizational framework. A "party" entailed an elected leadership, a platform that included the salient points of the group's ideology, and a newspaper that would fight the party's battles and present its ideology to the public. The first such party to be founded in Palestine was Hapoʿel Hatzaʿir (the young worker) in 1905. It did not espouse a predetermined platform, which was tantamount to a declaration that its members were not engaged in political theory but were anchoring themselves in Palestinian reality. They inscribed on their escutcheon "the conquest of labor," by which they meant the entrenchment of the Jewish worker in agricultural work on Jewish land. In terms of culture they viewed the development of a Hebrew center of culture in Palestine and turning Hebrew into an everyday language as a national mission of the first order. For them the romanticism of being an agricultural worker connected with the idea that manual labor would redeem the Jew from the malady of generations. It would be a source of mental fortitude and create new attributes that would bring about a psychological revolution.

In 1906 the Poalei Zion party was established in Palestine. The Ramla Platform, its manifesto, was formulated in the spirit of Borochov by twenty-year-old David Ben-Gurion, who had arrived in the country just a few months earlier. Poalei Zion sought to become a proletariat, and therefore looked for manual labor in the moshavot. The party appears not to have imbued this work with the

spiritual importance attributed to it by Hapoel Hatza'ir, but rather saw it as an existential necessity. In reality the everyday interests of both these streams of thought came together in this agricultural work.

As we have seen, once the moshavot came under JCA control, hardly any Jewish workers remained in them. The youngsters who now began to arrive in the moshavot were a breed totally different from their humble, poor-spirited predecessors. They brought a strong sense of mission and a conviction that their role was to ensure the Jewish foothold in Palestine and the nationalist character of the moshavot. They were freethinkers, men and women who went out to work and spent their leisure time together, and they saw themselves as the avant-garde showing the way to those who would come after. They placed great value on their status as laborers, and the idea of overseeing the work of others—that is, exploiting their labor—was anathema to them. By the same token they rejected the earlier workers' ideal of becoming landowning farmers. They wished to remain simple workers, and saw their labor as fulfilling their national mission. Taking a lesson from the fate of the First Aliya pioneers who had lost their ideals when they came under the baron's patronage, and abhorring the ultra-Orthodox who lived on the charity of the *haluka,* they refused any support whatsoever. Their independence would only be preserved if they refused to associate themselves with any material possessions and zealously safeguarded their freedom from dependence.

The encounter between these radical, highly ideological youngsters and the reality of the moshavot was traumatic. "The pioneers of the First Aliya became speculators and shopkeepers trading in the hopes of their people and selling the aspirations of their youth for pennies. They introduced the idol of exile into the temple of rebirth, and the creation of the homeland was sullied by 'idolatry,' "[10] wrote David Ben-Gurion. Idolatry is one of the three exceptional Jewish sins of which it is said, "Let the Jew prefer death and not commit that sin" (the others are shedding blood and incest). In using these metaphors Ben-Gurion was identifying the profane and profaning "idol in the temple" with Arab labor in the fields of the moshavot. He thereby shifted the issue of Arab labor from the practical level of Jews obtaining work in the moshavot to the mythical level of breaking a taboo.

The clash between these workers and the First Aliya farmers was a clash of civilizations—between a conservative society and a radical one, between a traditionally observant society and one proud of its secularism, and between a society devoted to permanence and stability and one that rejected bourgeois values and material success. The farmers despised the youngsters as *schmendricks* (clueless or worthless people), while the youngsters characterized the farmers as national traitors whose desire for money made them willing to relinquish the Zionist idea

of establishing a productive Jewish entity in Palestine. In the war of generations that flared, the farmers pointed to their hardships over the past thirty years and argued that it was important to maintain the economic stability of the moshavot as part of settling Palestine, that in any case there were not enough workers to sustain exclusively Jewish labor, and that perhaps living in peace with their Arab neighbors required that they not insist on this. However, these points went unheeded. The battle for Zionist public opinion, which closely followed the controversy in the press in Palestine and overseas, was won hands down by the Second Aliya workers, who thenceforth assumed the aura of redeemers of the nation, while the farmers bore the stigma of class egoism.

The debate on Jewish labor in the moshavot became a debate on the substance of Zionism. In 1912, after his third visit to Palestine, Ahad Haʿam published his essay "All in All." Whereas in his previous essays "Truth from Eretz Yisrael" and "The Yishuv and Its Custodians" he had sharply criticized the situation in the moshavot, he now presented their achievements, their economic growth and independence. He described the successful farmer he encountered in the moshavot as an almost ideal figure, a kind of biblical Boaz, a proud, knowledgeable owner who oversees his workers and makes a living from agriculture but does not work himself. Then Ahad Haʿam posed the crucial question: "The foundations of life of any country lie in the rural masses . . . the rural masses in Palestine are not ours in the present, and it is difficult to imagine how they will be created in the future." He concluded that by his very nature the Jew was not cut out to be a tiller of the soil: "The Jew is too smart, too cultured, and is not capable of reducing his whole life and desires to a small plot of land and being happy with his lot, earning humble fare from it by the sweat of his brow."[11] All the hopes espoused by Herzl for Palestine as a "safe haven" therefore had no basis, since the Jews would always be a small minority within a large Arab majority. To Ahad Haʿam, this situation was a vindication of the "spiritual center" idea he had propounded from the outset, but for the believers in greater Zionism it was a death knell. The failure of the conquest of labor in the moshavot was not only a personal failure for these young people but also a national one, a diminishing of Zionist perspectives.

A social structure in which the landowners are a European minority and the workers natives is reminiscent of the colonial societies where the European minority ruled the local majority and exploited its labor. From the outset the Jewish society in Palestine did not fit this pattern. The new Jewish Yishuv was not established so that the motherland could send its sons and daughters to settle in a country it ruled and exploit the colony's resources. Rather, Palestine was a unique case of mainly European settlers who chose to come to an undeveloped, economically undesirable country, and invest capital and labor in it for nationalist and ideological reasons. The settlers did not conquer the land; they purchased it.

Still, the socioeconomic structure that evolved in the moshavot was similar to that in the European colonies, and the people of the Second Aliya rejected it completely. Since the French Revolution, revolutionaries, especially in Tsarist Russia, had accepted the slogan "The Land for Its Workers." The people of the Second Aliya believed that maintaining the status quo in the moshavot meant living by exploiting another's labor, and also posed the danger that one day the Arab workers would rise up against their Jewish masters and take possession of the land. Their socialist ideology made these youngsters sensitive to the potential danger inherent in the moshavot's socioeconomic structure and its moral flaws.

The struggle for the conquest of labor in the moshavot failed. In some cases the farmers did not want insolent Jewish workers who challenged their employers. In others there were simply not enough Jewish workers to "conquer" labor. Worst of all, it turned out that even when Jewish workers were permanently employed, and managed to persevere in the hard, tedious work, they were unable to sustain life as cultured people who occasionally read a newspaper or a book, and it was certainly beyond their ability to start a family. This problem became more acute as the decade of the Second Aliya progressed and the young men and women grew older.

This last difficulty led to the idea that perhaps the idealistic, relatively educated worker with a need for culture was unsuited for the conquest of labor. Perhaps this would be better accomplished by those referred to at the time as "natural workers"—people to whom physical labor came naturally, who had no need to "conquer" it, in the sense of having to achieve a kind of victory over themselves in order to do such work. And it appeared that such natural workers were available.

During the First Aliya several thousand immigrants from Yemen had reached Palestine on their own initiative. At the end of the 1840s, the British had taken Aden, opening a window for the Yemenite Jews to obtain information through the Jewish press that reached the city about happenings in other Jewish communities. In the 1880s the rumor became rife that wealthy Jews were about to purchase Palestine and settle Jews there. The Ottoman rulers of Yemen strictly enforced all the humiliating anti-Jewish edicts in that Muslim country. The combination of harsh conditions in Yemen, love of the Land of Israel, and the hope of improving their lot there motivated Yemenite Jews to undertake the journey to Palestine. As Ottoman subjects they were permitted to enter Palestine, and the opening of the Suez Canal shortened the trip.

Reaching Palestine in several waves, the Yemenites settled in Jerusalem and Jaffa and made a living as artisans, silversmiths, construction workers, and stonecutters, occupations in which they competed with the Arabs. They had a reputation as industrious people who made do with little. So, at the moment when the Second Aliya workers were in the grip of despair over the failure of the "conquest

of labor," the notion of bringing in Yemenite Jews, who would integrate into the moshavot as "natural workers," was born. Shmuel Yavne'eli, posing as a rabbinic emissary from Palestine to the Diaspora communities for the purpose of raising charitable donations, traveled to Yemen to convert the Jews of that remote country to the idea of immigrating to Palestine, a journey that became part of Second Aliya mythology. Starting in 1909 waves of Yemenite immigrants again arrived in Palestine, with some 1,200 going to work in the moshavot. Their difficulties were exceptionally harsh: they were physically weak, inexperienced in agricultural work, and certainly no competition for the Arabs. Mortality from sickness was extremely high. By 1914 the Yemenites constituted some 5 percent of the Jewish population of Palestine, but "natural workers" they were not.

In its more abstract sense, the term "conquest of labor" referred to the Second Aliya workers' efforts to adapt to physical work, and this effort was their formative experience. As Yosef Haim Brenner recounted, "Who can imagine the pain of the wretched Jewish intellectual who comes here in the hope of living a different, wholesome life of physical labor, with the smell of the field—and after a few days realizes that his dream is an empty one . . . that there is no hope for the Jewish people here, and that—and this is the main thing—he himself is unqualified for any form of labor. . . ."[12] The literature and memoirs of the period are rich with descriptions of the difficulties experienced by the Jewish intellectual doing physical labor under the burning sun, competing with the far more experienced Arab worker. Labor was held up as having moral value and being rich with therapeutic qualities for both individual and society. Accordingly the workers were considered the nation's elite, sacrificing themselves for the national interest and carrying on their shoulders the realization of the Zionist idea in all its purity. Physical labor was also believed to bestow upon the individual spiritual qualities and a mystical connection with the country. Through it the individual Jew was redeemed from the heritage of exile. This was how the workers compensated themselves for their suffering as they labored daily in the moshavot.

In contrast with the socialists in Europe, who separated their worldview and their actual way of life, the Russian revolutionaries insisted on living in accordance with their ideals. Transferring this idea to Palestine meant that it was not enough to believe in the benefit of work in the fields over any other form of labor; one must live out that belief. It was not enough to believe that one should live without exploiting others; one must realize that belief in practice. However, only a small elite was capable of actually doing so. The vast majority of workers soon despaired of agricultural work, moved to the cities, and took up other occupations. Thus few of the writers and leaders who preached this doctrine actualized it in their own lives. Even so, they would testify to their time as agricultural workers as a way of associating themselves with the nation's elite. Ben-Gurion,

for example, only worked on the farm at Sejera for about a year, but referred to this short period as a formative experience. The pioneering ethos that inspired generations of young Jews, who saw it as combining the sacrifice of the social and the nationalist revolutionaries, was based on this principle of "realization" of the ideal in everyday life.

Toward 1909 a second wave of the Second Aliya began, and with it came some creative ideas that ended the standstill resulting from the failure of the "conquest of labor" in the moshavot. Educator and philosopher Joseph Vitkin and Berl Katznelson, who became an important leader of the labor movement, were among the first to offer ideas for alternative forms of settlement. The Arab worker, an experienced farmhand, was willing to work for a low wage because he already had land and family in his village, and working on a Jewish farm was a form of moonlighting. Since the Jewish worker could not compete with him, the Jewish worker must establish a farm of his own. Experience showed, however, that when workers became farmers they could not handle all the work themselves and wound up hiring Arab workers. And in any case the Second Aliya workers lacked enough capital to settle on independent holdings, but rejected financial aid since it led to subjugation and decay.

How to overcome these two obstacles? Here a practical solution preceded an ideological one. The Palestine Office, which had been active in Palestine since 1908, was headed by Arthur Ruppin, a Prussian Jew who was open to social experiments. Beginning in 1909 the Office established farms on Jewish National Fund (JNF) land that were managed by agronomists and employed mainly, but not always, Jewish workers—the first time that the Zionist Organization undertook practical work in Palestine. On all these farms relations between management and workers were strained. One was the Kinneret Farm, where the workers went out on strike. The difficulties there indicated that a new form of organization was needed. On the other side of the River Jordan from Kinneret was another piece of JNF land called Umm Juni, which the Office leased to a group of one woman and six men to work for one year, on their own responsibility. The first year ended with a profit. That was the beginning of Degania, "Mother of the Kvutzot."

This experiment, undertaken almost by chance, became the basis of a new settlement model: national lands leased to workers. This was considered not philanthropy but national enterprise. The workers had no overseer, which reduced labor costs and eliminated friction. Later, Berl Katznelson added two further elements to this structure. The first was mutual responsibility: the group bore a common responsibility for labor, enabling weak, new, sick workers to integrate into the group. This was also a way to integrate women into agricultural

work. Second, the group was part of a federation or movement in which the collective oversaw both the individual members and each group. The JNF was committed to Jewish labor on its land, and each of these elements constituted a check against the temptation of employing Arab workers. Self-labor was designed to prevent hiring the cheap labor of others, while mutual responsibility ensured that the group had authority over the individual who might be tempted. The federation's authority over the group provided an additional layer of prevention against deviation.

This was the beginning of the concept of constructive socialism. On the eve of the Third Aliya in 1920, Brenner summarized the worldview of the Second Aliya members who had remained in the country: "Now this small camp that has remained is of one mind, that the salvation of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel will come not through prophets or people with high politics, not through citrus grove owners and not through a spiritual proletariat, but through groups of new workers who will come with tremendous strength and flow toward the purpose of settlement, either in *kvutzot* or workers' moshavim (cooperative farms), in a proper collective-national manner."[13] He thus formulated a program for the coming years.

Workers' settlement challenged the quasi-colonial settlement regime of the moshavot by presenting an alternative that, the workers contended, was not only more aligned with the national interest but also more ethical. It was intended to draw the socioeconomic sting from the Jewish-Arab encounter and limit the conflict to the political-national sphere.

The concept of independent workers settling on national land was an attempt to adapt the settlement system to the potential settler. The "natural worker" was the smallest of minorities among the Jews. The vast majority of impoverished immigrants who reached the shores of Palestine had no intention of settling in a village and engaging in manual labor. They wanted to settle in a city and continue working as artisans and in commerce, the traditional Jewish occupations. It was the idealists who chose agriculture, but they refused to accept competition with the Arabs, the humiliation of working under an overseer, and the condescension of the farmers. Workers' independent settlement soon became known as "labor settlement." This concept, which disparaged the moshavot—where Jews were said to not really "work"—made the most of the idealists' strengths while minimizing their weaknesses. These relatively well-educated settlers wanted to invest all their strength and skills in the work and were open to technological innovations, desiring to learn from agricultural experience both in Palestine and elsewhere in the world. Full of initiative, they strove for constant modernization. Their independent, inquisitive character made them useless as someone's subor-

dinate but superb at working independently, running their own farms. In this way the individual interests of the radical workers who lacked means and the interest of Zionism were made to converge.

The transition to workers' settlement meant relinquishing the "conquest of labor" in the moshavot. For the two workers' parties this conceptual shift was difficult. To the leaders of Hapoʿel Hatzaʿir, abandoning the moshavot was like fleeing the battlefield amid the fight for the "conquest of labor," while for Poalei Zion the idea that workers would run a farm contradicted the Borochovist ideology of creating a proletariat. But such is the way of an immigrant country, where ideologies that do not pass the test of local reality are eroded and elites based on the old ideology are relegated to the sidelines, while new elites who manifest the new reality arise. By the eve of World War One, the idea of independent workers' settlement on national land, supported by the Zionist Organization, was accepted by broad segments of the Second Aliya workers who had remained in Palestine. From now on the worker could claim the title of pioneer—a person who actualized the national ideal on a day-to-day basis, sacrificing him or herself on the altar of Zionism. During this period the workers were a small minority of the Yishuv, lacking both economic and political power, yet they possessed in embryonic form a claim to hegemony. The self-awareness of these people, the talents of their leaders and writers in formulating a public agenda and inculcating it in the minds of wide circles outside their own milieu, transformed this claim from the pretension of a few into a national ethos that few dared oppose.

This decision to establish workers' settlements that would constitute a territorial space protected against penetration by Arab labor was to determine the character of the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine as an entity existing not within the Arab population, but beside it. The decision was not self-evident; Jews had settled in Arab locations that became mixed Jewish-Arab cities. This was the case in the four holy cities, and also Jaffa and Haifa. When previous Bilu member Yaʿakov Shertok and his family immigrated to Palestine in 1906, he chose to lease a big farm in the village of Ein Sinia in the Ephraim Hills, a location remote from any Jewish settlement. They lived there for two years, then moved to the new Ahuzat Bayit neighborhood that had been built near Jaffa (and that would become Tel Aviv). This action was not considered unusual. There were Jews who tried to purchase land in Arab locations, and up to the 1929 riots Jews lived in Gaza and Hebron (but not in Samaria, the Arab heartland of Palestine). By the same token the Jewish moshavot were a focus of attraction for local Arabs, who resettled Arab villages that had been abandoned in the nineteenth century. Thus the option of creating a common economy and a mixed Jewish-Arab society in Palestine was not perceived as an impossibility. Although the idea of establishing a separate economy, which would entail (visible in retrospect) a society separate

from Arab society, as a basis for an independent national entity was inherent in the idea of the protected, protectionist space of Jewish labor, it is quite clear that no one thought about this at the time.

JEWS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

Palestine under Ottoman rule was not a discrete political unit. The Galilee and Samaria were the two separate *senjaks* (districts) of Acre and Nablus, respectively, which came under the authority of the Beirut *vilayet* (province). The Jerusalem *senjak*, which included the central area of Palestine, the Hebron hills, the southern coastal plain, and the northern Negev, was important because of international sensitivity regarding the holy places, so it was under the direct authority of Istanbul. Despite this fragmentation, the first stirrings of an Arab national movement existed in Palestine, led by educated Christian Arabs. The Muslim Arabs were mostly loyal to the Ottoman Empire and had hardly any independent political awareness. Following the Young Turks' revolution in 1908, which raised hopes for an enlightened regime that would permit expression of nationalist feelings in the empire, there were some displays of Arab nationalism in Palestine, such as the appearance of the *Al-Karmil* newspaper in Haifa, which preached anti-Jewish sentiments, but it is still difficult to discern any particular Palestinian Arab national consciousness during this period. The Arabs were, however, aware of the Jews' attempts to settle in Palestine and concerned about what they perceived as foreign incursion. In 1891 Arab dignitaries from Jerusalem sent a petition to the sultan begging him to stop the wave of Jewish immigrants coming to Palestine. In response the Sublime Porte (Ottoman government) promulgated a prohibition against Jews entering the country.

The debate on what was then termed "the Arab problem" was mainly an internal Jewish one, not a reaction to displays of Arab nationalism, and it revolved around the Jews' behavior toward the Arabs. In his essay "Truth from Eretz Yisrael," Ahad Ha'am censured the Jewish farmers for their mistreatment of their Arab workers (1891). Yitzhak Epstein, in his article "A Hidden Question," cautioned against the dispossession of Arab tenant farmers that followed Jewish settlement, even when they were paid generous compensation (1907). Rabbi Benjamin (Yehoshua Redler-Feldman) proposed fostering and advancing the Arab population together with the Jews as a way of bringing the two peoples together (1911).[14] Like their guide and mentor Borochov, Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi (the latter of whom became Israel's second president) thought that the Arab *fellahin* were descendants of the ancient Jews who had converted first to Christianity and then to Islam; now, with Jewish settlement, they would assimilate among the Jews. These ideas led to a lively debate in the Zionist press, but it is doubtful if the discussions had any practical implications: the Jewish Yishuv was

still too young and sparse to constitute a real threat to the Arabs, while on the other hand it had nothing to offer them. Considering the Zionist movement's lack of resources, ideas like Rabbi Benjamin's were completely impractical.

However, a certain existential anxiety attended life in the Yishuv, and the Jews attentively followed what went on among the Arabs. Clashes between Jews and Arabs during this period were mainly disputes between neighbors over such issues as land, water, and grazing. In everyday life the Jews had to take measures to protect their lives and property, and the moshavot employed Arab guards, who often collaborated with thieves. Still, the principle of self-defense was an inseparable part of the ideology of the Second Aliya. The first Poalei Zion members to immigrate to Palestine had belonged to a self-defense group in Hommel, Ukraine, and brought this tradition with them as part of their program of changing the image of the Jew, as manifested in the willingness to defend Jewish lives and honor. In 1907 at Sejera, members of Poalei Zion formed the Bar-Giora secret society.

In 1908 the Hashomer (guard) organization superseded Bar-Giora, adopting as its slogan a line from a poem by Ya'akov Cahan, "In fire and blood did Judea fall; in blood and fire Judea shall rise." Hashomer was controversial; the colonists (Jewish farmers) felt that its members were inclined to provoke the Arabs, unnecessarily making relations with them more contentious. The members of the workers' parties also had reservations about the organization. Its adoption of Arab symbols and accoutrements—the abaya, the keffiyeh, bandoliers, weapons, the horse—seemed like a deviation from Jewish culture. The choice to be a guard was seen as a rejection of hard agricultural labor in favor of a romanticized use of force. Instead of the figure of the tiller of land, Hashomer fostered the image of the fighter, which seemed to contradict the workers' philosophy. The importance of Hashomer in this period was far less in its actual actions than in the fact that it attempted to fashion a Jewish defense force in Palestine. Just as the Biluim were the root of the pioneers' family tree, Hashomer was the ancestor of the Jewish defense force.

THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL CULTURE

In the thirty years between the First Aliya and World War One, there appeared in Palestine not only the seed of modern Jewish settlement but also the embryo of a national culture. This culture was characterized by a secular Jewish identity, a shift to Hebrew as the spoken language, and a demand for independence from Diaspora cultures.

The two great cultural mentors of the period were Ahad Ha'am and Micah Josef Berdyczewski. The Bnei Moshe (sons of Moses) society founded by Ahad Ha'am was influential among the liberal intelligentsia in the moshavot, whereas Ber-

dyczewski influenced mainly the Second Aliya. The contrast between the two created two poles of modern Jewish identity whose differences lay in perceptions of the Jewish past, its symbols and meaning, and also in what constituted a desirable image of the "new Jew." Ahad Haʿam's version of Jewish history was a moralizing tale of a people that by its very nature despised physical power and sanctified spiritual and moral force. In his view the Jewish experience was steeped in this quality, which had shaped its history. Berdyczewski, by contrast, saw this ostensibly moral quality as the consequence of the Jews' national weakness, dating back to the destruction of the Temple. To him this characteristic resulted from the loss of the vitality and naturalness of a people living in its own land, who would possess intrinsic aggressiveness, spontaneity, closeness to nature, and aspirations for power.

Where Ahad Haʿam emphasized the principle "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (which he amended to "*the* spirit," eliminating the rest of the verse), Berdyczewski thought that this emphasis suppressed the natural instinct of a nation not to flinch from the use of force. Ahad Haʿam sanctified the figure of Rabbi Yochanan Ben-Zakkai, who according to legend fled from besieged Jerusalem on the eve of the destruction and pleaded with the Romans for Yavneh, where he would establish a center of Judaism separate from Jerusalem (and which continued to exist after the loss of national sovereignty). Berdyczewski, for his part, extolled the zealots who chose to die on the ramparts of Jerusalem and not surrender. Yavneh and Betar (the center of the Bar-Kokhba revolt) became symbols of two competing versions of modern Jewish identity. The first saw spirituality as the essence of Judaism, while the other emphasized the existential being of the Jews. Ahad Haʿam hailed a Jewish identity that was not bound to observe the ritual commandments but did identify with historical Judaism. His concept was based on the assumption that there was one monolithic, complete, and authentic Jewish nature. Berdyczewski challenged this perception in the name of other Jewish qualities that had been repressed for generations by that hegemonic concept. He conjured images of power and heroism from the First and Second Temple periods, from Joshua and Samson and Saul to the Hasmoneans and the fighters of Masada, which until then the traditional Jewish historical narrative had overlooked and neglected.

Ahad Haʿam's moralistic concept suited the Hovevei Zion intelligentsia, the first generation of settlers, but it was incompatible with the rebellious spirit of the Second Aliya generation, which challenged the Jews' weakness. Berdyczewski's dialectical concept, which extolled spontaneous vitality while calling for an opening to the culture of the larger world, attracted them more than did Ahad Haʿam's image "The waters of Shiloah flow slowly," which advocated Jewish seclusion from foreign influences out of fear of assimilation. Ahad Haʿam was

highly esteemed as an honest critic, but Berdyczewski and the vitalist school of thought had more influence; Cahan's poem "Habiryonim" (the outlaws), from which the Hashomer motto was taken, extols the zealots cast out and censured by Jewish tradition. These two versions of secular Jewish identity both contributed to Yishuv culture and were sometimes interwoven.

One of the most important changes to occur in Palestine was secularization. This process barely affected the ultra-Orthodox communities in Jerusalem, which adhered to their own way of life, but it was clearly evident in the First Aliya moshavot. The first generation there strictly observed the commandments, and life revolved around the synagogue; the first public building to be erected was the *mikve*, the ritual bath house. But the second and third generations rapidly became secularized, leading to a cultural clash as early as the 1890s. The moshavot were not closed to the influence of the world around them, and something in the atmosphere of Palestine and the rural way of life encouraged young people to turn their backs on religion. Although education in the moshavot was traditional, it included secular, nationalist elements, and the teachers, who were mostly nonobservant, also exerted an influence.

Disputes between religious and secular Jews mainly concerned conduct in public, such as theater performances or dances attended by both men and women. From these conflicts the younger generation emerged triumphant. They also adopted leisure activities from their Arab neighbors, including horse racing, Arab-style celebrations (*fantazias*), and Bedouin dress (similar to that adopted by Hashomer). A "native" culture developed, characterized by speaking Hebrew, aggressive behavior that emphasized physicality, and a self-definition diametrically opposed to that of Diaspora Jews. Those residents of the moshavot who were actually born in Palestine clearly displayed this secular identity. What was more, by virtue of being native born, they felt entitled to leadership and used it to draw a distinction between their identity and that of the Second Aliya immigrants.

Secularization was even more pronounced among the Second Aliya members. They had come from traditional households, but the distance from home, the company of their peers, the experience of being young men and women together, and the absence of adult supervision all led to rapid abandonment of religious observance. S. Y. Agnon described this process ironically: "Rabinovitch has nothing to do with his Creator and nothing against his Creator. Ever since the day Rabinovitch left his hometown, it's doubtful that he remembered Him. Many are the issues a person has to deal with, and he hasn't got time to remember everything."[15] Nevertheless most freethinkers maintained their connection with Jewish festivals and rites of passage—marriage, circumcision, bar mitzvah, and death. The residual yearning for the traditional framework of life that had been lost with the move to Palestine was well described by A. D. Gordon: "Anyone who

has not seen the spirits of the young people on the High Holy Days would not understand it or even believe it. One sees something very odd: our weekdays are far lovelier than those of our brethren in the Diaspora, and the Sabbath and festivals are far more beautiful in the Diaspora. We have tried to create new festivals, but to create national holidays according to logic and invention—is that not like 'making' poetry to order?"[16]

Gordon's words reveal the difficulty of creating a new tradition without the magic of generations of ritual behind it. Researchers generally describe the formation of the national culture as a planned construction of something that had been predesigned. In fact there were a variety of complementary blueprints. One must speak not of calculated actions, but rather of copying patterns the Zionists were familiar with from national movements in Europe and adapting them to the Jews' special needs and character. The creation of the national culture had actually begun in the Diaspora during the Jewish Enlightenment, with literature that opened before the Jewish reader a world of emotion and imagination. A vast enterprise of translation from Russian, German, English, and other languages created a corpus of world literature in Hebrew that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century slaked the thirst for a wider culture among the first Enlightenment generation in the Pale of Settlement. The titles included not only the best of world literature but also historical novels, plays, popular songbooks, children's literature, and so forth. Hebrew periodicals also flourished, providing popular reading matter for young and old alike. This was the raw material out of which young readers shaped their worldview. Between the pages of the Gemara, Torah students concealed books and periodicals that stirred in them a longing for the realms of national pride, heroism, and willing self-sacrifice. These books, poems, and songs formed the Zionist narrative, and this shared experience created imagined communities that used the same texts, employed the same images, sang the same songs, and were moved by the same ceremonies.

Converting Hebrew from the language of prayer and sacred texts into the language of Hebrew culture, and beyond that into the language of the street and home, was one of the Zionist movement's most magnificent achievements. A common language was considered the keystone for building nationalism, proof of a nation's existence. The extraordinary nature of this achievement is most obvious when compared with attempts by other nations—the Irish, for example—that had only limited success in reviving an ancient language. The Zionist movement's success was particularly amazing since it took place in the course of migration, settlement, and the formation of a national identity.

The need for communication between Jewish communities from East and West made Hebrew the natural choice; as we saw, the early immigrants of the First Aliya spoke Hebrew with the Chelouche family in Jaffa. This was one of the

most persuasive arguments in favor of Hebrew and against Yiddish as the national language, even though millions of Jews spoke Yiddish. During the Second Aliya period, when this debate took place, it was still not clear whether Hebrew would overcome not only Yiddish but also the foreign languages that had penetrated the Jewish cultural arena.

Hebrew teachers in Palestine adopted the Sephardi accent because they assumed it was closest to that of ancient Hebrew, but this choice probably also expressed a latent tendency to distinguish between traditional Ashkenazi Hebrew and the new Hebrew of Palestine. The Sephardi accent was not easy for Eastern Europeans to master. Before his immigration Y. H. Brenner, one of the most important Hebrew writers, feared it greatly. Berl Katznelson sealed his lips for ten days after his arrival in Palestine until he had mastered the language. The Hebrew of Palestine was more easily absorbed by men, who were familiar with religious texts from their youth, whereas women had to learn it from scratch. In the same period Hebrew also became the language of literature and culture.

The heroes of the triumph of Hebrew were the teachers. Vacant teaching positions were few and far between, so the best minds in Palestine sought these jobs in the moshavot or the towns. With respect to the development of national educational and cultural practices in Palestine, teachers were a leading, elite group. The intelligentsia struggled to earn a livelihood even as its members formulated a Hebrew vernacular and teaching language, revived terminology they needed in their work, wrote textbooks, and adopted poems and songs that they disseminated among their students. The teachers also shaped the Zionist calendar and its attendant ceremonies: the fifteenth of Shevat, the tree-planting festival; the twentieth of Tammuz, Herzl Day; and the Hanukkah festival, which changed from a celebration of the miracle of the oil to a celebration of the heroism of the Maccabees. The agricultural significance of the three pilgrimage festivals (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles) was emphasized, rather than their religious meaning. It was the teachers who initiated field trips to historical sites, like the graves of the Maccabees and Betar, with priority given to sites associated with the heroism and glory of the past. Thus did they inculcate knowledge and love of the country. For them religious memorial sites, such as the graves of the Patriarchs in Hebron or the grave of Rachel the Matriarch, were not desirable destinations. The founding in 1903 of the Teachers Association, the first such national body, reflected the teachers' intense self-awareness and belief that they had taken on responsibility for an enterprise of historic significance.

In this young society the Bible was the seminal text. Yitzhak Tabenkin, a leader of the labor movement, wrote: "The Bible was a sort of birth certificate that helped bring down the barrier between man and the country, and nurtured 'the sense of homeland' . . . This manifested in close, firm contact with the Book and

at the same time something so uncommon among workers—finding a Bible in almost every worker's room."[17] The Bible symbolized the connection with the national past. It was a guidebook to the country's fauna and flora and to ancient settlement sites that had been covered with the dust of generations and were now revealed—exciting sites like Mount Gilboa, the River Jordan fords, and the Ayalon Valley. It preserved historical memory—what Ahad Haʿam called "book memory"[18]—and also concretized the Land of Israel, forming a direct connection between past and present. It was a source of national pride, proof of Jewish creativity on the soil of the homeland.

But the Bible was also a text replete with universal aspirations for justice among nations and peoples, social equality, and world peace. In it could be found evidence for the doctrines of both Ahad Haʿam and Berdyczewski. A debate raged at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century over how to teach the Bible at the Hebrew Gymnasium in Jaffa (shortly to become the Herzliya Gymnasium in the new city of Tel Aviv), reflecting different attitudes toward the significance of the Bible in the nationalist context. The teacher Ben-Zion Mossinsohn taught the Bible in the spirit of Julius Wellhausen's biblical criticism, which addressed the Bible as literature written by humans that could be critiqued and amended. Zalman Epstein, a moderate religious Zionist, and even Ahad Haʿam, viewed this perspective as an affront to the nation's most fundamental historical assets. The younger generation, on the other hand, eagerly espoused a secularist engagement with the Bible that tried to understand it in a modern, literal spirit through philology and archeology, without the layers of traditional associative interpretation that had enveloped it for generations.

Through the Bible Mossinsohn sought to instill in his students love of the Land of Israel and rejection of Diaspora life. In so doing he created a psychological divide between "here" and "there," while appropriating the Bible for "here." This controversial approach was opposed by numerous teachers, but it was congenial with the "native" instincts that the students had developed.

By 1910 there were several leading newspapers in Palestine. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's *Hatzvi* (the gazelle) or *Hahashkafa* (the perspective; it regularly changed its name to avoid Turkish censorship) expressed the Francophile views of the Ben-Yehuda family. Others were *Haherut* (liberty), the Jerusalem Sephardi paper; *Hapoʿel Hatzaʿir,* the organ of that party; and *Haʾahdut* (unity), the Poalei Zion paper, which after a short-lived attempt at publishing a Yiddish journal adopted the principle that Hebrew was the dominant language in Palestine.

There were dozens of educational institutions affiliated with the national school system, from kindergartens to high schools, teachers' seminars, the Bezalel School of the Arts, a conservatory of music, and so forth. Even though the majority of students studied in the traditional heders or the educational pro-

grams of philanthropic institutions such as the French Alliance and the German Ezra, the cultural climate of the country was shaped by the national education system. The bourgeois intelligentsia in Jaffa (after 1909, Tel Aviv) or Jerusalem found common ground with the Second Aliya workers; together they conducted the campaign to instill Hebrew culture in the Jewish world of Palestine, and their alliance formed that culture.

At that time the proportion of writers and other people of culture was quite high for the number of Jews in the country. Some of these intelligentsia had lived there for a short time, others for many years. To mention just a few, they included S. Ben-Zion, Y. H. Brenner, A. D. Gordon, David Shimonovich, S. Y. Agnon, Aharon Hareuveni, A. Z. Rabinovich, and Moshe Smilansky. They sought to spread highbrow Hebrew culture—mainly in the form of literature—but faced two difficulties: first, most of the Yishuv did not know enough Hebrew to enjoy reading this literature, and second, it preferred popular culture—and in Yiddish. Each time a Yiddish play was performed in Jaffa it drew large audiences of ordinary people who longed for entertainment in their mother tongue, entertainment that was sadly lacking in the scholarly Hebrew-language lectures delivered in the political party clubs or at the Herzliya Gymnasium, the center for the zealous imparting of Hebrew. People were also drawn to the circus, processions, gymnastic performances, or the cinema, which appeared at this time. To the intelligentsia these were debasing displays of cheap culture, unworthy of the enterprise of national rebirth, but they were in greater demand than lofty productions in Hebrew, replete with nationalist messages. Competition between Yiddish and Hebrew led to clashes between the Hebrew zealots and the Yiddish speakers. In their homes immigrants still spoke in their mother tongue; ordinary people spoke Yiddish, while the more educated spoke Russian or German, and the Alliance graduates spoke French. It was young people educated in Palestine for whom Hebrew was a spoken language.

Despite these conflicts, a Hebrew-culture community formed, which within several years demonstrated its power against external cultural pressure. The first incident that proved the existence of the Hebrew cultural republic went down in history as the Brenner Affair. Brenner, who enjoyed a preeminent moral position in the writers' community and among the Second Aliya workers, published an article in *Hapoʿel Hatzaʿir* titled "Al Hizayon Hashmad" (on the phenomenon of conversion) in which he contended that conversion to Christianity was not worth a lot of discussion, since those who converted were in any case lost to the Jewish nation, which had far more important issues to deal with. He spiced his remarks with provocative criticism of the lofty status of the Bible in the national curriculum and of the rabbis, even adding that he did not totally reject Jesus of Nazareth as a historic figure. The article caused great consternation in the Diaspora, and

Ahad Haʿam called upon the Odessa Committee to stop funding *Hapoʿel Hatzaʿir*. When the committee informed the paper of its decision to make renewed funding conditional on changing the editorial board, there was a universal outcry by writers and public intellectuals in Palestine. It was inconceivable that those who held the purse strings in Odessa should control opinion in Palestine. Bourgeoisie and socialists, educated people from the moshavot, and urban intelligentsia joined forces in this revolt, which reflected the existence of a distinct educated community in Palestine that insisted on its independence and rejected the idea that wealthy people sitting in Odessa could foist their opinions on it.

The second event that demonstrated the power of this intelligentsia became known as the Language War. In 1913 the board of governors of the Ezra society in Germany decided that some classes at the Technion, to be built in Haifa, and its high school (which became the Reali High School) would be conducted in German. A public protest was mounted against Ezra, demanding that the language of instruction be Hebrew. The protest started at the bottom among students and teachers, who organized a strike. The Teachers Association and the Zionist Organization supported this action somewhat tentatively as they made unsuccessful efforts to find a compromise. The dispute rapidly became a national issue. The striking teachers and students boycotted Ezra and set up alternative schools, which the Zionist Organization was forced to fund. Until then it had avoided involvement in education, a subject of contention between its religious and secular members. The involvement of the workers' parties, all the newspapers, and the teachers and students put the Ezra society in a difficult position.

Whereas the struggle between Yiddish and Hebrew was between two national languages, the protest against Ezra was against German linguistic colonialism. This fight against a foreign language united the entire new Yishuv, for the struggle was above all against an outside authority dictating cultural policy in Palestine. After reaching a compromise with the Zionists on the Technion in 1914, Ezra recovered to a certain extent, but it lost its momentum in the field of education, and when the British occupied Palestine, they closed all the Ezra institutions in the country.

On the eve of World War One, the Yishuv numbered some 85,000 people, approximately 12 percent of the country's total population of 700,000. This represented an increase from 5 percent of a total population of 450,000 in 1880. More than half the Jews lived in Jerusalem, and between 10,000 and 15,000 lived in Jaffa (including Tel Aviv, which had been built as an adjoining garden suburb), whose total population had increased to some 45,000. On the eve of the war, the population of the agricultural settlements was between 12,000 and 12,500. After thirty years of Zionist settlement, there were forty-five agricultural settlements in Palestine. But beyond the actual existence of the moshavot, estates, farms, and

workers' moshavim, which all left their mark on the country's landscape, these settlements represented an affirmation that the Jews were capable of being settlers and builders of the country. Despite its difficulties and weaknesses the Yishuv was dynamic and productive. It had an impressive educational system and an intellectual vibrancy that went far beyond the needs of the local population, expressing the intellectuals' vision that in this place a new Jewish entity was emerging. A dynamic, engaged public opinion had developed, which participated actively in the Yishuv's internal struggles.

Spiritual vibrancy was attended by social innovation. The concept of labor settlement and the experiments in private and cooperative settlement turned the Palestine of the Second Aliya into a sort of socioeconomic experiment. Everything was accomplished on a small, embryonic scale: farms to train women workers in animal husbandry and market gardening, the Merhavia cooperative, groups of vegetable growers, plant nurseries, workers' groups for contract employment, the Sejera cooperative, and the kvutza at Umm Juni, which later became Degania. It was an atmosphere of agricultural and human experimentation, learning about nature and learning about human nature. The people from these core groups who managed to survive the war period were destined to become the germs of the Yishuv society during the British Mandate.

NOTES

1. Vladimir Dubnow to Simon Dubnow in St. Petersburg, Jaffa, 20.10.1882, in Druyanov, Alter (ed.), *Ketavim letoldot Hibbat Tzion* (Writings on the History of Hibbat Zion), reedited by Shulamit Laskov, vol. 1, Tel Aviv, 1982, pp. 522–523.

2. Alliance Israélite Universelle, founded in Paris in 1860.

3. Bracha Habas (ed.), *Sefer ha'aliya hashniya* (Book of the Second Aliya), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1947, pp. 17–18.

4. Yitzhak Ben-Zvi to Kalman Marmur, Jerusalem, 20.8.1909, YIVO RG 205/104.

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PART II

1918–1948

A STATE-IN-THE-MAKING

3 PALESTINE UNDER BRITISH RULE

On December 11, 1917, the eve of the Hanukkah festival, General Sir Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem, opening a new period in the history of Palestine, Zionism, and the Jewish people. As befitting a modest pilgrim, Allenby dismounted from his horse at the Old City wall and entered the city on foot—the city that had not seen a Christian conqueror since Godfrey of Bouillon in 1099. In this way four centuries of Ottoman rule came to an end.

The war years had left a ruined country whose Jewish community had barely survived. Of the 85,000 Jews living there in 1914, only 56,000 remained to welcome the new conqueror. The Arab population, too, had suffered greatly; some 100,000 had fled, been killed, or died of disease and hunger.

When the war broke out the Ottomans seized the opportunity to rescind the system of capitulations. Overnight the country's foreign subjects found themselves at the mercy of the Ottoman bureaucracy's arbitrariness. People lost faith in Turkish currency, which led to the hoarding of food and staples, and a run on the banks. The authorities declared a moratorium on withdrawal of money. The situation deteriorated further in October 1914 when Turkey entered the war on Germany's side. Tens of thousands of Russian Jews living in Palestine became enemy subjects and were required either to leave the country or assume Ottoman citizenship, which mandated conscription into the army or the payment of a high indemnity. Many opted to leave.

The government now had the opportunity to vigorously suppress the Zionist movement. Jamal Pasha, the Ottoman commander-in-chief in Syria and Palestine, proscribed any expression of Jewish autonomy. The use of Anglo-Palestine Company banknotes, replacing those that had disappeared from the market, was forbidden. All the Hebrew street signs in Tel Aviv were taken down. The moshavot and Tel Aviv were constantly under threat of searches for weapons, and Jewish guards were forbidden. Defense of the Yishuv was left to Turkey's ally Germany and to the United States, which until 1917 remained neutral. Had it not been for the Germans and Americans, Jamal Pasha would have succeeded in destroying the Yishuv.

The war in the Mediterranean cut the Yishuv off from Europe and hit it hard economically. The citrus growers were unable to export their fruit or the vintners their wine. The Jewish charitable institutions that supported the old Yishuv could not transfer funds to the needy. The Yishuv was threatened by famine and only rescued by the efforts of the American ambassador in Istanbul, Henry Morgen-

thau, who interceded with the authorities. As a result, American warships were allowed to bring money and vital supplies to the Yishuv. The aid provided to the Yishuv by American Jewry in the war years amounted to a million dollars and saved it from annihilation. No less important than the economic aid was the message conveyed to both the Turks and the Arabs by the vessels of this neutral power: the Jews have powerful allies and should not be mistreated.

Etched in the Yishuv's collective memory are three dramatic events: the brutal deportation of foreign subjects on January 17, 1914; the expulsion from Tel Aviv and Jaffa in April 1917; and the Nili Affair in September–October 1917. The deportation of the foreign subjects from Palestine was executed without prior warning. A sudden announcement informed all foreign subjects that they must immediately board an Italian ship anchored in Jaffa Port that was about to sail to Alexandria. Pandemonium ensued. The police treated the deportees savagely; families were separated from their children, and cargo and baggage were loaded without their owners. Some dreadful scenes led the German consul to lodge a bitter complaint with his counterpart in Istanbul. Jamal Pasha was reprimanded, while the officer in charge of the deportation was transferred from his post. Mass deportations were stopped but replaced by selective ones. With the clear intention of driving out every last vestige of the Yishuv leadership, the Turks ordered party leaders, heads of local committees, teachers, public intellectuals, and all leaders of Zionist institutions to leave. On the eve of the British conquest of Palestine, the leadership elite formed in the days of the Second Aliya was absent from the country.

The second event was the expulsion from Jaffa. After Allenby's failed attempt to take Gaza in March 1917, the inhabitants of the southern part of the country were ordered by the Turkish authorities to leave their homes and go into exile. The residents of Gaza were forced to move northward, under harsh conditions, with no aid from the authorities. On Passover eve, fueled by the Turks' fears of Allenby advancing northward, the residents of Jaffa were also ordered to leave. At the time some 10,000 Jews lived in the city, including approximately 2,000 residents of the handsome new neighborhood to the north, Tel Aviv. Carts from the moshavot and the Galilee were the only means of transport available to the exiles, and they rolled out of Tel Aviv loaded with bedclothes and kitchen utensils atop which sat the families that had managed to organize themselves before leaving. They were the minority. Most left on foot. Tel Aviv became a ghost town, with only a few young people allowed to remain and guard the houses against looters.

The exiles came first to Petach Tikva, then dispersed to all the moshavot in Samaria and the Galilee. In the meantime a typhus epidemic spread through the Turkish forces, then infected the civilian population. The exiles, who often had to find shelter in shacks or woods adjoining the moshavot, were particularly sus-

ceptible to disease, and lacking sanitary conditions or medicines, they were decimated by the epidemic.

The third event was the Nili Affair. The most notable group among the young people of the moshavot was "the Gideonites," organized in the Samaria moshavot by Alexander Aaronsohn from Zichron Ya'akov. His brother Aaron was an agronomist who gained world renown after identifying wild emmer, the "mother of all wheat." He ran an agricultural experimental station at Atlit and impressed Jamal Pasha, who put him in charge of eradication during the plague of locusts of 1915. Aaron Aaronsohn therefore was familiar with Jamal Pasha and his tyrannical methods. Shocked by the genocide of the Armenians after their expulsion from Asia Minor, he saw the British as the saviors of the Yishuv. To help them conquer Palestine—and in hopes of obtaining their assistance for Zionism—he organized an espionage network, Nili (a Hebrew acronym for "The Eternal One of Israel will not lie"), whose members were his family, the Gideonites, and other youngsters from the moshavot. Aaronsohn traveled to Egypt, where he made contact with the British authorities, then began to provide them with intelligence on the morale of the Turkish troops, troop movements, fortifications, and plans. In the fall of 1917 the network was uncovered by the Turks. Two of its leaders were captured and executed, and Aaronsohn's sister Sarah was tortured so viciously that she took her own life. As collective punishment a curfew was imposed on the moshavot, innocent people were arrested and flogged, and some were even taken to Damascus for detention.

The network's activities aroused controversy within the Yishuv, whose leadership demanded total loyalty to the Turks, insisting that no one give them grounds for destroying the Yishuv. The fate of the Armenians had lit a warning light. Furthermore the notion of a small group setting itself apart and deciding to take independent action that might endanger the entire population was anathema to the leadership, who saw this group as a small minority forcing the hand of the majority. Another objection demonstrates the naivety of the time: espionage was considered ungentlemanly—cheating and deceitful.

Nevertheless it was the members of Nili who brought the story of the expulsion from Jaffa and Tel Aviv to the knowledge of the outside world; and in 1917, with British help, they brought gold coins into Palestine when all other ways of bringing money into the country were blocked. Though the leadership had sharply criticized them, it was not averse to accepting these funds, which were vital for the Yishuv's continued functioning and for preventing actual starvation. The importance of the Nili Affair lay in its ramifications for the relations among various groups in the Yishuv that were striving for dominance and for the issue of accepting the authority of the majority.

The Jews welcomed the conquering British as liberators, or in the terminology

of the time, "redeemers." Girls born that year were named Geula (Redemption) and boys Yigal (from the same Hebrew root) to mark the beginning of a new era of great expectations. Enthusiasm for the British derived primarily from the awareness that as long as the Turks were in power, there was no hope for Zionism. Second, Britain was a European nation with proper governance, a welcome change after the tyrannical, corrupt rule of the Ottomans. Third, news of the Balfour Declaration had spread throughout Palestine, and hopes for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine reached new heights.

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

Max Nordau, the most important of Herzl's partners in the Zionist adventure, remarked on the eve of Turkey's entry into the war in the fall of 1914 that the Zionist movement had no real achievements, nor had it made any commitments, and that its only hope was the fall of the Ottoman Empire. During the war years the Zionist Organization maintained an office in neutral Copenhagen and scrupulously avoided taking sides in the conflict. The reason for this policy was that the Zionist movement was a worldwide organization, and any identification with one side might harm Zionists on the other. With regard to their personal loyalties, the Jews were ambivalent. They considered France and Britain the countries with the most liberal attitudes toward them, and quite naturally the Jews wanted to side with these nations. But Tsarist Russia, which the Jews hated for its discriminatory policies and persecution of them, was the ally of France and Britain. Thus the Jews' support for the Entente Powers was only partial. On the other hand, a victory by the Central Powers, led by Germany and including Ottoman Turkey, meant continued Turkish rule in Palestine, with no chance for Zionism to succeed.

From the beginning of the war, however, some individuals acted on their own initiative, in defiance of Zionist Organization discipline, to link the Zionist movement with Britain. Among these the most notable were Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky, a Russian-Zionist journalist, writer, and politician, and Chaim Weizmann, a chemist and researcher at the University of Manchester and a leader of the Democratic Faction, a group in opposition to Herzl. Jabotinsky attempted to start a movement in which Russian Jews who had immigrated to England would enlist in the British Army. He hoped that these special units, known as the Jewish Legion, would rouse British interest in Zionism and perhaps encourage a certain commitment to it. Weizmann worked to create a pro-Zionist lobby among the British leadership.

British interest in Palestine was aroused once it became clear that the days of the Ottoman Empire were numbered. Following the failed Turkish attempt to attack British posts along the Suez Canal in 1915, the British realized that the

Sinai Peninsula, which they had thought was a natural barrier preventing armies from reaching the canal, was passable. Palestine now became a strategic asset, not only as a stepping-stone to Suez but also as part of the overland route to India through Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf. India was indeed the jewel in the crown of the British Empire, on which the sun had not yet set. Later, in the 1930s, oil fields were discovered in the Middle East, adding to its importance, but when the fate of the region was decided after World War One, the foremost considerations revolved around the region's imperial routes.

Starting in spring 1915 Palestine was a topic discussed in the British cabinet and between Britain and France. In a secret agreement signed in May 1916 between Sir Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot, which had been under negotiation since the fall of 1915, they agreed upon the division of the Ottoman Empire. Iraq and the overland route in southern Palestine and Transjordan came under the British sphere of influence, while the French were given Syria and Lebanon. Western Palestine, to the south of the Sea of Galilee and north of Gaza, was to be under international rule.

At the same time, the high commissioner in Egypt, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, acting on his government's behalf, promised Sharif of Mecca Hussein bin Ali that in return for an Arab revolt against the Ottomans, with the sharif's armies taking Syria, Britain would support Arab independence from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean and as far as the Taurus Mountains, except for western Syria and Lebanon. The document did not mention Palestine specifically, but McMahon claimed that it was made clear to the sharif that this area was not included in the Arab areas. It is not known whether the ambiguity of McMahon's letter was intentional or not. In any event it was the source of the Arab belief that Palestine had been promised to the different parties on several occasions. The contradictions between the McMahon letter and the Sykes-Picot Agreement are difficult to resolve. According to researcher Isaiah Friedman the intention in the McMahon letter was to give the Arabs not complete independence but rather freedom from the Ottoman yoke, together with European protection. In any event it was clear to the Great Powers that Palestine would have a fate unlike that of the other regions and would be governed internationally.

The story of the Balfour Declaration combines idealism and imperialism, international intrigue, and erroneous assessments of power and weakness. For the first two years of the war, Weizmann conducted a pro-Zionist campaign in the British corridors of power, but he made little progress until December 1916, when David Lloyd George became prime minister. Lloyd George, a Protestant brought up on the Bible, harbored deep sentiments regarding the connection between the Jews and the Holy Land. He was greatly influenced by the romantic idea of the Jews returning to their ancient homeland that was prevalent in nineteenth-

century Britain and fired up by the Zionist idea. He also believed that the Zionists and Britain had common interests, which he saw as a lever for freeing Britain from its commitment to the French that Palestine would be international; he wanted to keep it under British control.

Lloyd George's foreign secretary was Arthur Balfour, an urbane and imaginative man who both admired and feared Jewish genius. The combination of Lloyd George and Balfour in the British cabinet at the critical moment in 1917 created the declaration bearing Balfour's name. Although in the end the British interest in controlling the overland route to India and not allowing France a toehold in Palestine was decisive, the rationale for the declaration changed periodically during the negotiations that led to its publication. Each succeeding rationale, however, was based on an overestimation of Jewish power in the world; here the essentially antisemitic image of the omnipotent Jew played into the Zionists' hands. In the United States, which until spring 1917 was neutral, most American Jews, like the Irish and German minorities, supported the Central Powers. They had hardly any influence on U.S. policy and indeed, before the Balfour Declaration was even published, America had entered the war on the side of the Entente Powers.

In Russia a liberal revolution took place in the spring of 1917, and the Zionist movement enjoyed a surge forward. The British believed that the Zionists were the decisive element among Jews, who they thought controlled the Russian revolutionaries. The British hope was that Jewish support would moderate these revolutionaries, who were advocating Russian withdrawal from the war. The British also feared a German pro-Zionist declaration that would preempt the Balfour Declaration, thus leading Jews to support the Central Powers. But the Germans' hands were tied by their Turkish allies. However, the prolonged discussions on the declaration, the scrupulous consideration of its every word, show that it was not intended as part of a propaganda war, whose effect would dissipate the moment it was no longer needed, but as a political declaration of cardinal importance.

The declaration, which was conveyed on November 2, 1917, from the British foreign secretary to Baron Lionel Walter Rothschild, states:

> His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other countries.

The declaration assured the Jews of an opportunity to establish a "national home" in Palestine. The British were to facilitate this enterprise, but it had to be

implemented by the Jews themselves. Although the declaration did not promise a Jewish state, in private discussions the British statesmen explained that the ultimate intention was to create a state when the Jews should constitute the majority of the country's population. There was no mention of the borders of this national home, but in time the words "in Palestine" would be interpreted as implying that not all of Palestine had been promised to the Jews as a national home. The two qualifications, regarding non-Jewish communities in Palestine and Jews not interested in Zionism, were added in the final stages of the declaration's formulation and refer not to national rights but only to civil and religious ones. It is striking that the Arabs are mentioned only as "non-Jewish communities," not by name.

Like the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration belongs to an era in which a handful of statesmen in smoke-filled rooms decided the fates of peoples and states and how to divide up declining empires, with no participation by the media or the masses. From Zionism's standpoint this was a unique opportunity. In these final days of globe-spanning imperialism, these few statesmen not only dared to act in accordance with political common sense but were also driven by a spiritual vision. To Balfour, Lloyd George, Mark Sykes, and others, the idea of the Jews returning to their country seemed a lofty enterprise worthy of their support, even though it ran counter to the Powers' declarations on the right of nations to self-determination that had been one of the objectives of the war. The opposition of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine seemed to them of secondary importance when compared with compensating the Jews for thousands of years of persecution and debasement. In his blunt style Balfour defined the situation in the following words:

> The Four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, and future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land. In my opinion that is right.[1]

Although the motivation of these British statesmen to support the Jewish national home was sincere, at the same time Zionism provided a convenient pretext for getting control of Palestine. The British were able to present their desire to rule Palestine as arising from the needs of the Jewish national movement, not their own imperialistic ambitions. At the very same time, the British were encouraging the Arab national movement through T. E. Lawrence, who fomented the "Revolt of the Desert"—more a stirring myth than a campaign with any military value. Mark Sykes believed that there was no contradiction between Jewish and Arab nationalism and strove for cooperation between them. As long as Faisal, the son of Sharif Hussein and the future king of the great Arab kingdom, led the

Arab national movement, its hostility toward the Zionist movement was not pronounced. But from the moment in 1920 that Faisal was ousted from Syria by the French, who were not prepared to relinquish their part of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the rising nationalist emotions of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine focused on their opposition to Zionism.

The British conquest of Palestine in 1918 did not take place under the banner of the Balfour Declaration. The declaration was not officially published in Palestine, although its content was known to both Jews and Arabs. From the Jewish viewpoint it was the charter that Herzl had so fervently sought, while the Arabs saw it as undermining their centuries-old superiority in Palestine. Their concern over the appearance of another claimant to ownership of the country was genuine, even though some made political capital from it. The Palestinian triangle of British, Arabs, and Jews was formed at that moment in December 1917 when Allenby dismounted outside Jerusalem. For the next thirty years this trilateral relationship lay at the heart of the Palestine dilemma.

The story of the thirty-year-long British rule in Palestine is a tale of Britain's slow withdrawal from its pro-Zionist commitments, the Zionist leadership's efforts to exert pressure on the British to meet those commitments, and Arab pressure in the opposite direction, with each party accusing Britain of betrayal, reneging on its promises, and unfairness. In the end the British left Palestine, slamming the door behind them and leaving a country embroiled in a civil war—or a war between national communities—that rapidly evolved into a war between countries. They also left behind a Jewish community capable of withstanding the horrors of that war and that established the State of Israel.

Historian Elizabeth Monroe has described the Balfour Declaration as "one of the greatest mistakes in our [British] imperial history," which greatly damaged Britain. This assertion assumes that everything that took place in the Middle East was a consequence of the Balfour Declaration and gives the story a moralistic element: the British did not keep their promises to the Arabs and therefore were doomed to lose their standing in the Middle East. The Zionists also moralized the story: the British reneged on their undertakings to the Jews in order to placate the Arabs, but the Arabs did not remain loyal to them, and they lost the support of the Jews, thus losing their rule over the Middle East. Both these narratives ignore the rise of nationalism and the dismantling of the great empires, which happened regardless of the appearance of Zionism and whether or not the British remained loyal to the Jews. It is difficult to assume that Britain could have maintained its standing in the Middle East even if there were no Zionist movement.

The British rule in Palestine can be roughly divided by decade: 1918–1929; 1929–1939; and 1939–1948. This division encompasses certain major events affecting relations within the Palestine triangle and highlights the way political

factors shaped reality in Palestine. The first decade, which came after a period of instability and unrest, was characterized by relative quiet, the shaping of Mandatory rule, and the weakness of both the Arab national and Zionist movements. This stability ended with the 1929 riots, a violent Arab outburst that led to a series of British decisions intended to curb the development of the Jewish national home. The Zionists succeeded in having these restrictions annulled in 1931, and a period of economic and population growth ensued until 1936. That year saw the outbreak of the Arab Revolt, a popular uprising against the Jews and the British that continued intermittently until 1939, when it was brutally quelled by the British. In May 1939 the colonial secretary announced a new policy intended to freeze the development of the Jewish national home. This date marks the end of the alliance between the Zionist movement and Britain. The third decade began with World War Two and ended with the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine following the United Nations General Assembly resolution of November 29, 1947.

1918–1929

Any change in the status of Palestine was linked to the delicate relations within the Palestine triangle. The decision to end the military government—which had been extended due to Turkey's rejection of the Treaty of Sèvres—and enact civil rule, even before the British Mandate for Palestine was officially ratified, was made because on Passover in 1920 (April 4) rioting broke out, mainly in Jerusalem. Arabs attacked Jews, wounding, killing, and damaging property. The military authorities, who were not devout supporters of the Balfour Declaration and were inclined toward the Arabs' side, strove to maintain the status quo, as would be expected of a temporary military government. This meant suppressing the aspirations of the Jews, who wanted to implement changes following the Balfour Declaration regarding immigration, land purchase, and making Hebrew the official language. Thus there was a clear contradiction between the Balfour Declaration and the policy actually enforced in Palestine.

The San Remo Convention of the victorious powers decided on April 18, 1920, shortly after the rioting, to grant Britain the Mandate for Palestine and give it responsibility for implementing the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration thus ceased to be a unilateral British declaration and became the policy of the Entente Powers, with international legal status. Because of the pro-Arab leanings of the military government, it was decided at San Remo to transfer power from the military to a civil government. Herbert Samuel, a keen British Zionist and former minister—a man of great talent and administrative experience, and also a man of action—was appointed Palestine's first high commissioner. This was a clear pro-Zionist statement by the British government, still headed by Lloyd George.

The next act in the Palestine drama took place about a year later: Herbert Samuel arrived in Palestine, to be greeted with great warmth by the Jews and undisguised suspicion by the Arabs. The country appeared quiet and it seemed that reconstruction and building could begin, but in May 1921 there was a resurgence of violence that started in Jaffa and spread to the moshavot. The authorities had difficulty quelling the riots, which went on for several days, resulting in the deaths of dozens of Jews. The British response this time inaugurated what became a recurring pattern. The high commissioner delivered a speech placating the Arabs in which he announced a temporary halt to immigration to Palestine. To conciliate them even further he appointed Haj Amin al-Husseini as Mufti of Jerusalem. Al-Husseini, a scion of a notable Jerusalem family and a radical nationalist, had been tried for involvement in the 1920 Passover riots.

In the meantime the draft League of Nations instrument for the British Mandate for Palestine was being formulated. The mandatory system was a consequence of international anti-imperialist sentiment in the wake of World War One and the Bolshevik Revolution. Instead of annexing countries France and Britain took responsibility for administering certain countries for a limited period while preparing them for independence. France was granted the Mandate for Syria, and Britain the Mandate for Iraq and Palestine, which included Transjordan. The draft instrument of the British Mandate for Palestine was pro-Zionist: it included the Balfour Declaration and recognized the historical connection between the Jewish people and Palestine. Article 2 referred to "placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home." Article 4 spoke of "an appropriate Jewish agency" that would "take part in the development of the country . . . in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government." Article 6 referred to "close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands." The Arabs were not mentioned by name in the instrument, which was directed mainly toward the development of a Jewish national home.

Now, trying to pacify the Arabs in the wake of the riots, in June 1922 the Colonial Office under Winston Churchill published a White Paper that announced a new British policy in the guise of an interpretation of the Mandate instrument. It assured the Arabs "that it [the Mandate] does not contain or imply anything which need cause alarm to the Arab population of Palestine." The Zionist Organization had status only on matters pertaining to the life of the Jews, but the White Paper did state that the Jews were in Palestine "as of right and not on sufferance." On the other hand, the intention was not that Palestine become the national home, but that a national home would be established in Palestine. The White Paper also stated that "immigration cannot be so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb

new arrivals. It is essential to ensure that the immigrants should not be a burden upon the people of Palestine as a whole." The paper further raised the idea of a legislative council that would give expression to the inhabitants' wishes, and although this body would not be democratically elected, the mere mention of it was an expression of the right of the Arab majority to political representation. From a policy favoring a Jewish national home, the pendulum now began to swing toward granting rights and representation to the Arab population.

The men behind the White Paper, Samuel and Churchill, were loyal supporters of Zionism. The new policy was designed to allay Arab fears and create the cooperation, or at least the calm, that was necessary for immigration, economic development, and advancing Zionist settlement. But not all Zionists accepted this approach, so that from then on there were two opposing points of view on British policy. The first considered the 1922 White Paper an appalling surrender to Arab aggression that rewarded the aggressor and a demonstration of weakness that would inspire further aggression. This group believed that if Samuel had adopted an iron-fist policy and made it clear that Britain was determined to implement the national home policy, the Arabs would have bowed to the inevitable.

The other group contended that it was impossible to subdue an awakening national movement by force and that Britain, exhausted by the war, could not be expected to adopt a policy requiring substantial spending on security as well as harsh suppression of popular resistance. British public opinion, which was opposed to imperialist commitments, would have turned its back on Zionism and the Jewish national home. To gain the time required to build up a Jewish critical mass in Palestine before Britain decided that the Mandate had run its course, the Jews needed to calm the troubled waters.

In 1921 it was clear that the international moment of opportunity that had led to the great achievements of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate instrument had passed, and the tide was turning in favor of the Arabs. The Arab Executive Committee sent a delegation to London that received support from the British press and politicians, and public opinion began to display an awareness of the position of the Arabs, who were presented as victims of the Balfour Declaration. Thus Samuel's conciliatory and fair policy toward the Arabs—which large segments of the Yishuv perceived as nothing other than betrayal—was in fact the only one possible, given the situation. During his five years as high commissioner, Samuel stabilized the situation, put in place the mechanisms of the Mandatory government, and brought about economic growth and relative peace. The fact that the Jews needed calm in order to build the country, while the Arabs benefited from rioting—a dynamic Weizmann had understood before any other Zionist statesman—from then on informed Zionist policy. The opposition to the Zionist Executive (the entity in charge of executing Zionist policy in general)

continued to support the demand that Britain employ an iron fist, a demand the British had no inclination to accept.

The decade following the 1921 riots saw a continuation of relative peace. During these years the Palestinian Arab national movement underwent splits and disagreements and lost an opportunity to gain influence when they rejected Samuel's proposals to establish a legislative council. None of the draft proposals he suggested satisfied them, since participation in such a body, established under the Mandate, would constitute recognition both of the Jews' rights in Palestine and the legitimacy of the Jewish national home. The Arabs' total refusal to cooperate with the Mandatory government regarding state policy was understandable (they did cooperate in areas such as health, administration, and education), but in rejecting a legislative council they relinquished an important public platform, thus handing the Jews an advantage. As for the Zionists, their rhetoric—especially their internal rhetoric—remained belligerent, functioning as a safety valve for blowing off steam, but in everyday life and on the political level the Jews cooperated with the pacifying policy of Samuel and his successor, General Herbert Plumer.

1929–1939

The second decade of British rule opened with a storm that lasted two years. It began with a dispute over the Jews' claim to the Western (Wailing) Wall. Researchers believe that the mufti tried to enhance his status in the Muslim world by fomenting concern that the Jews intended to take over the Temple Mount; in Muslim tradition, the Western Wall area is the place from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven on his legendary steed. As early as the nineteenth century, the Jews had made attempts to purchase land around the Wall, which the Arabs interpreted as a desire to take over the holy site. Sites that are holy for several religions are always powder kegs, and a single match can set off an explosion. In this case the match had two components. The first was provocative conduct on the part of British policemen who removed the screen separating men and women during Yom Kippur prayers in September 1928. This action again aroused Arab fears that Jews intended to take control of the site, fears that were enhanced by inflammatory rhetoric on the part of preachers and the press. Arabs threw garbage into the Western Wall alley and directed donkeys through it, disturbing Jews. Muslim calls to prayer were made at high volume. The second component was the Jewish reaction, which involved young hotheads holding nationalist demonstrations at the Wall, proclaiming Jewish rights.

On August 23, 1929, Arab violence erupted in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and throughout the country, and continued for a week. It included particularly brutal acts against two helpless, non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox communities in Hebron

and Safed. During Plumer's term of office as high commissioner, the security forces in Palestine had been reduced to three hundred British policemen, who were unable to control this mass violence. Reinforcements from Egypt and Malta arrived only after the rioting had spread throughout the country. Overall, 133 Jews were killed, settlements were destroyed, and property was looted.

The Jews, whose warnings prior to the rioting had been ignored by the authorities, accused the Mandatory government of losing control and being unconcerned with the inhabitants' safety. In response the administration claimed that though it was the Arabs who had rioted, the real fault lay with the Jews' national home policy, which the Arabs feared would lead to their being dispossessed. Sir John Chancellor, who had replaced Plumer as high commissioner, had no sympathy for the Zionist cause. A typical colonial official, he viewed his role as looking after the local population. To him the extraordinary circumstance of the Mandate being designed to change the status quo in Palestine for the benefit of a new element, the Jews, seemed unjust and inappropriate. He was determined to annul the preferential status granted the Jews as a people by the Mandate instrument and to focus Britain's policy on looking after the interests of the Arabs and the local Jews.

Chancellor had no regard for the Jewish people as a whole—the subject of the Mandate instrument policy—but because the instrument had international validity affirmed by the League of Nations, its terms could not be amended. Therefore he focused on details of implementation, especially issues of settlement and immigration. Since further land purchases by Jews would lead to dispossession of Arabs, he decided, the sale of land should be prevented and Jewish immigration restricted by strictly observing the condition regarding economic capacity.

The Shaw Commission, appointed by the British government to examine the causes of the riots, adopted the high commissioner's line clearing the administration of culpability. It demanded an investigation of immigration and land issues, as well as progress in creating the legislative council. To rectify the imbalance between Arabs and Jews in the Mandate instrument, the British government now stated that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate instrument contained a dual commitment: to the Jewish people and to the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. Sir John Hope-Simpson was dispatched to Palestine to study the issues of land, immigration, and development policy, and his conclusions were consistent with the new line. He advised restricting land purchases by Jews and enforcing the principle of economic capacity—not, however, on the basis of the capacity of the Jewish economy created with Jewish capital, but on the basis of the entire country's capacity. This meant that Arab unemployment would be grounds for halting Jewish immigration.

In October 1930 Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield published a White Paper

based on the principle of the "dual commitment," which negated the distinction between "the Jewish people" and "non-Jewish communities" in Palestine. He accepted Hope-Simpson's definition of economic capacity and his recommendations on restricting land purchase by Jews. The Arabs claimed that one reason for the rioting was the establishment of the Jewish Agency. Designed to enable non-Zionist Jews to take part in building the country, the Agency heightened the Arabs' fears of dispossession. Thus Passfield made a point of saying that the Agency had no political status; in accordance with the Mandate instrument, its role was limited to participating in the country's development. At the same time, he announced the formation of a representative legislative council that would, of course, give expression to the Arab majority.

The Passfield White Paper sparked an international political storm. Weizmann resigned as president of the Zionist Organization in protest. Leading British statesmen and jurists claimed that the White Paper contravened the Mandate instrument and demanded its annulment. Demonstrations were held against it throughout the Jewish world. Fearing harsh criticism from the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission, which oversaw implementation of the Mandate, the British government opened negotiations with the Zionist leadership and subsequently published a letter from Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. The MacDonald Letter, which was accorded the same status as a white paper, stated that the undertaking in the Mandate was not confined solely to the Jewish population of Palestine, but to the entire Jewish people, and that the obligation of encouraging Jewish settlement in and immigration to Palestine still stood, assuming that this could be accomplished without harming either the rights or situation of the non-Jewish inhabitants. To the Jews the letter appeared to arrest the erosion of the promises the British had made them and to offer the possibility of continued immigration and settlement—a critical achievement in this decade. For the Arabs, however, the MacDonald Letter, coming as it did after the White Paper, was a "Black Letter."

The second decade thus began with a demonstration of how fragile the British undertaking to the Jewish people was, making the time element critical in realizing the Zionist vision. Overall the 1920s had been years of international stability, with Britain's position as the leading imperialist power still standing firm. But in 1929 the New York Stock Exchange crashed, triggering a deep global economic crisis that sent political shock waves throughout Europe. Proto-fascist regimes came to power in Eastern and Central Europe, while Germany witnessed the meteoric rise of the Nazi party, and in 1933, the invitation to Adolf Hitler to serve as chancellor. If in the 1920s the Zionist enterprise seemed to consist of slowly developing a society and culture in the spirit of Ahad Ha'am, in the 1930s its mission became rescue of the persecuted Jews of Poland, Romania, and Ger-

many. In the wake of the economic crisis, all countries applied more stringent immigration laws, and Palestine became the main refuge for Jewish migrants. Evolutionary development no longer met the needs of the Jewish people.

In 1931 the narrow-minded John Chancellor—also tainted with antisemitism—was replaced as high commissioner by Sir Arthur Wauchope, an open-minded man, empathetic toward the Jews and very fair-minded toward the Arabs. Starting in 1932 immigration to Palestine grew, and within a few years the Yishuv, which in 1929 numbered some 170,000, increased to 400,000. Mass immigration changed the face of the country. In this period the Jews passed the point of no return: a Jewish critical mass formed in Palestine that was strong enough to prevent the Arabs from establishing an exclusively Arab state, or so the Zionists thought.

The Arabs were fully aware of this change taking place before their eyes. A country that had been Arab in character was suddenly taking on a new, European aspect. Like the Jews, the Arabs had been experiencing economic growth, but this was scant compensation for the feeling that they were gradually losing control of the country, which only a few years earlier had been essentially theirs. For the first time, radical political forces appeared in the Arab street. These forces were outside the traditional clan framework, in which power was shared between the supporters of the al-Husseini clan, who were fanatically opposed to the Jewish national home while emphasizing the element of Islam, and the relatively moderate Nashashibis, who were prepared to cooperate—to a certain extent—with the Mandatory government.

The Istiklal party, which appeared in the early 1930s, was a political force built not on the old privileged families, but on a modern platform that demanded independence for Palestine as it enlisted educated urban Arab youth into its ranks. The Arabs concluded that the heart of their problem was not the Jews, with whom they thought they could deal by themselves, but the British. In 1933 violent Arab demonstrations demanding self-government were aimed at the authorities, not the Jews. Wauchope had no hesitation in suppressing them by force, but at the same time he initiated a move designed to establish a legislative council in Palestine.

Concealed behind this legislative council idea was a recognition of the right of the Arab majority to majority representation in the government. When the council idea was first mooted by Herbert Samuel in the 1922 White Paper, the Jews had been too weak to oppose it. But now they were compelled to deal with the question of what kind of governmental structure they would propose for Palestine. Until this moment, the conventional wisdom among the majority of Zionists in Palestine was that the British Mandate had created the conditions for building a Jewish majority through immigration and settlement, and that when that major-

ity was achieved a Jewish state would be established. This line of thinking ignored growing Arab nationalism and the Arabs' emergence as another claimant to rights over the country.

The conventional wisdom was now being contested at both ends of the Zionist political spectrum: on the one hand by the Revisionist movement, led by Vladimir Jabotinsky, and on the other by Brit Shalom (peace alliance). Jabotinsky was convinced that a clash between Jewish and Arab nationalism was inevitable and that Zionism could not be realized without an active British policy establishing a "colonization regime" in Palestine that would grant state lands to the Jews, enable mass immigration and large-scale settlement, and stop any Arab resistance by force. Brit Shalom, for its part, advocated reaching agreement with the Arab national movement at any price. Its watchword was *binationalism*, which neutralized the issue of majority versus minority by agreeing that in Palestine there were two peoples entitled to an equal share in the country, each of which would have an autonomous cultural life (an idea known as "cultural Zionism" as it related to the Jews). According to this plan, the British would remain in Palestine for an extended period as mediator between the two peoples. Brit Shalom had accepted the slogan "not a majority but many" since the 1920s, but it did not satisfy the Arabs, and Brit Shalom was now prepared to consider capping Jewish immigration, if only as a way to reach agreement with the Arabs. This position was driven by both moral principles and the conviction that time was not on the Zionists' side, which made an immediate agreement with the Arabs preferable to any delay.

Jabotinsky's idea of a "colonization regime" was not an option, since the British had already demonstrated that they were not prepared to pull the Jews' chestnuts out of the fire, and Brit Shalom's ideas were unacceptable to Jews and Arabs alike. In the wake of the riots, however, the prevailing evolutionary concept was called into question. In the race between emerging Arab nationalism and realization of Zionism, it was clear that Zionism was losing. Arab nationalism was developing far more rapidly than the rate of Jewish immigration to Palestine. These facts forced the Jews to consider the governance options open to them long before they had expected these options to mature.

In the early 1930s there were numerous discussions about what governmental framework to introduce in Palestine. The Zionists began these discussions among themselves in response to the Mandatory government's placing the legislative council on the agenda. There were some attempts to talk to the Arabs, but they were fruitless, for the Arabs refused to recognize any Jewish right whatsoever to the country. They were prepared to allow Jews who had come to Palestine before the Balfour Declaration to remain, but not to recognize them as a collective with a historical connection to the country.

On the other hand, the Zionists were for the first time prepared to recognize the Arabs' national rights. Even though the Jews were still a minority, this decision was not easy. From the first moment of this modern return to Zion, the new immigrants had felt that they were the masters of Eretz Yisrael. Their awareness that the development of the Yishuv was too slow enabled them psychologically to relinquish the exclusive right of ownership. But they could not accept that the Arabs held exclusive rights either, and certainly not the right to prevent Jews from settling and developing the country.

The evolutionary strategy relied on deferring any decision on the fate of Palestine until the national home had been strengthened, and in the meantime hoping that the British would continue to faithfully uphold their undertakings in accordance with the Mandate instrument. In the summer of 1932 Chaim Arlosoroff, the head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department, analyzed the situation and concluded that this fatalistic approach was inappropriate for the Zionist movement. It might perhaps have been suitable if the time available to the Zionist movement had not been limited. But Arlosoroff estimated that the mandate system would end within a few years. He predicted that in the near future a world war would break out, accompanied either by an Arab-British alliance or an Arab revolt, and the entire mandate system would be annulled.

The other options available were division of sovereignty over Palestine between Jews and Arabs—that is, different versions of the binational idea—or partition of the territory. Arlosoroff did not approve of any of these alternatives, not even partition or cantonization, which both Zionist and British circles had begun to consider. Although he noted that partition embodied the two basic elements of Zionism—territory and self-government—Arlosoroff did not support it because the country was so small and because the Jews would not constitute a majority even in the areas designated for them.

Arlosoroff wrote to Weizmann expressing his frustration at the limited possibilities available to the Zionist movement under the British administration, but by then the question of the legislative council was already less urgent, since the pressure from the British regarding the council had eased. A year later, in 1933, mass immigration began, and the national home's growth rate increased dramatically. The pressure of Jewish adversity changed the reality of Palestine and for a few fateful years removed from the agenda the various ideas for resolving the issue of two nations claiming ownership of the same small country.

For the Middle East in general and Palestine in particular, 1935 was a very eventful year. That year 62,000 Jews immigrated to the country, the largest number in a single year during the Mandate period. Italy invaded and conquered Abyssinia, introducing an element of tension into the Middle East that manifested itself in financial panic and the end of economic prosperity in Palestine.

That same year a Muslim terrorist group attacked Jews in northern Palestine. In a battle between that group and the British, the group's leader, Azaddin al-Qassam, was killed and became the symbol of Palestinian resistance. Finally, in that year Arthur Wauchope formulated his proposal for a legislative council, which was debated in the British parliament and rejected. Once more the Arabs of Palestine felt frustrated at not being given even a crumb of self-government. During the 1930s the other countries of the region underwent decolonization processes. In Iraq the Mandate was replaced by self-government, and in Egypt the terms of the British protectorate were amended in Egypt's favor. The French Mandate for Syria was also changed to a more liberal system of government following a prolonged strike in that country. Of all the Class A mandate countries, only Palestine remained under a regime that did not grant representation to the majority of the population.

April 1936 saw the outbreak of the Arab Revolt. Like its predecessors it began with a wave of random violence against Jews, but within a few days the Arab Higher Committee took command and made political demands: cessation of immigration and land sales, and representational governance that would place power in the hands of the Arab majority. The committee backed these demands with a countrywide general strike, which demonstrated that the Palestinian national movement had matured and was able to mobilize the masses. The strike lasted about six months, severely damaging the Arab economy. Arab workers did not go out to work, the sale of produce to the Jewish market ceased, and the export of Arab citrus fruit fell. However, if the Arabs thought that an economic boycott would force the Yishuv into submission, it became clear that they were mistaken, for the Yishuv showed that when necessary it could become self-supporting. The Jaffa port was replaced by the jetty at Tel Aviv for exporting citrus fruit and taking in immigrants, who continued to arrive.

Arab gangs sowed terror throughout the country, but the high commissioner avoided using military force to suppress them. In the meantime efforts were made to persuade the Arabs to end the strike so that the Royal Commission could come to Palestine and examine the reasons behind the rioting. Instead the Arabs demanded an end to immigration and assurances of independence, demands the British rejected. In October 1936 the Arab states gave the Arab Higher Committee a way out of the corner it had painted itself into with the strike and accompanying terrorism. They called upon the Palestinians to end the strike while expressing their faith in Britain's good intentions, and gave assurances of their continued support of the Palestinian Arabs. This intervention transformed a local problem into a regional one.

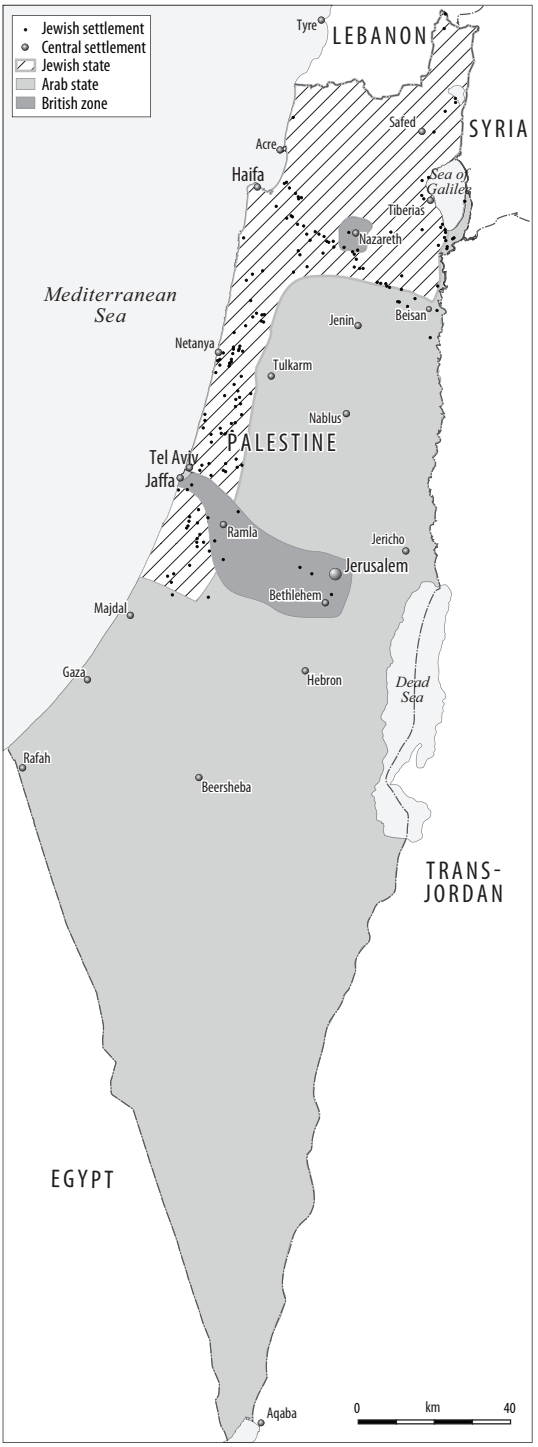
The Royal Commission, better known as the Peel Commission after its chair-

man, was a high-ranking body that was granted broad authority to examine the entire issue of Palestine and propose a long-term solution. The commission arrived in Palestine in November 1936 and heard testimony from government officials and from Jewish and Arab representatives. Its report was the most thorough, comprehensive, and intelligent document ever written on Palestine during the British Mandate, and its conclusion was radical: the Mandate is unworkable since the undertakings given to the Jews and the Arabs are contradictory. The hope guiding the Mandate administration, which Wauchope expressed in his policies, was that in time a local citizenry would be created, common to Jews and Arabs both, who would live together in one country. Wauchope intended that the Jews would constitute 40 percent of the population, but because of their economic and cultural advantages this would amount to a balance between them and the Arabs. The Peel Commission found that this idea had no basis in reality, since the two national groups in the country not only had nothing at all in common but were embroiled in a bitter conflict over the right of ownership. The commission concluded that the way to satisfy the parties' desires—at least partially—was to partition the country and establish two independent states, Jewish and Arab. It proposed a partition plan that gave the Jews the coastal plain from Qastina to Rosh Hanikra, the Galilee, and the Jezreel and Jordan Valleys. Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and their environs, and a corridor to Jaffa, would remain under Mandate jurisdiction, while the Arab state would have the remaining territory. The commission also proposed population exchanges between the two states as modeled by those implemented between Turkey and Greece during the 1920s (see map 2). Finally the commission assumed that the Arab state would become part of a federation with Transjordan.

The partition proposal led to bitter dispute among the Jews. Supporters saw it as the seed of an independent Jewish state, while for opponents it meant giving up the vision of the historical Land of Israel, especially since Transjordan had already been sliced off for King Abdullah's kingdom. The myth of the ancient Land of Israel, of Hebron and Jerusalem and Beth-El, now stood in opposition to the partitioned state. Another group of opponents based their objections not on myth or history but on the rational argument that the partitioned Jewish state would be unable to sustain itself and to absorb and be a refuge for masses of Jews.

Yet at the same time, the proposal presented the first glimmerings of possible Jewish sovereignty. At the Twentieth Zionist Congress in Basel in 1937, there occurred a moment of truth recalling the one during the 1904 debate on Uganda, as political realism clashed with the tradition of generations and the power of myth. In the end, after disputes that threatened to tear the Zionist movement

MAP 2.
THE PEEL COMMISSION
PARTITION PLAN, 1937.
(SEE PLATE 2.)



apart, a large majority joined ranks around a resolution allowing the Zionist Executive to enter into negotiations based on the partition plan. However, it had to bring any proposal that was formulated back to the congress for ratification.

The Arabs, by contrast, united swiftly in total opposition to the partition plan and on a demand for independence for Palestine, and the Arab states supported them. In fall 1937 Arab terrorism in Palestine resumed. The authorities imposed martial law and the army took harsh action against the rebels but had difficulty quelling the rebellion, which continued until summer 1939. In the face of Arab opposition, the British government slowly began distancing itself from its own partition plan.

British policy was now guided by the need to ensure peace and quiet in the Middle East. Appeasing the Arabs was part of Britain's preparations for the approaching conflict in Europe. Starting in fall 1937 winds hostile to the Zionists began to blow in British corridors of power. An anti-Zionist British move was clearly imminent, in the form of reneging on the undertakings in the Mandate instrument and the Balfour Declaration. During the period of tension attending the Munich Pact, which deferred the threat of world war by a year, the Zionists believed they were about to become the next victims of Britain's appeasement policy.

At the end of 1938 and the beginning of 1939, the British were still ostensibly making efforts to reach a solution acceptable to both Jews and Arabs. However, there was no chance of success, as was clearly demonstrated at the St. James Palace Round Table Conference. When the Arabs refused to sit at the same table with the Jews, the British caved in and arranged separate tables. The British had invited delegates from the Arab states to take part in the conference, hinting that they were willing to make concessions to the Arabs. The agenda included the three Arab demands: independence, an end to immigration, and no more land sales to Jews. After some deliberation the British government decided to accept the Arab position on the majority of the agenda items and issued a document known as the 1939 White Paper, stating that immigration would be limited to 75,000 over a period of five years and that any further immigration would be conditional upon Arab consent. Palestine would become an independent state—that is, a state with an Arab majority—after a ten-year transitional period. Land sales in most regions of the country were restricted.

Of these three restrictions the one most scrupulously enforced was that on immigration. At the most tragic moment in Jewish history, the gates of Palestine were barred to immigrants. The Jewish Agency's proposals to bring Jewish children from Germany to Palestine or Britain were cynically turned down by the Mandatory authorities. Refugees who reached Palestine after the outbreak of the war were not allowed to stay but were sent to Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. If

there was one thing that made the Jews of Palestine hate Britain and feel so hostile toward the Mandatory government, it was this attitude toward Jewish refugees during World War Two. The Jews of Palestine placed responsibility for closing the country to war refugees squarely on the government's shoulders. Once news of the Holocaust arrived, the Jews considered the British to be passive accomplices to murder.

1939–1948

The outbreak of war in September 1939 changed the Yishuv's priorities. The struggle against the White Paper, which had been on its agenda for the past year, was replaced by fear of war. Ben-Gurion coined a slogan: "We shall fight the war against Hitler as if there were no White Paper, and we shall fight the White Paper as if there were no war."[2] It expressed the Zionist dilemma. On one hand, the great enemy of the Jewish people was Hitler, and it was necessary to fight him to save the entire spectrum of human values from barbarism and violence. On the other hand, Britain, which was leading the fight against Hitler, was now an enemy. How could the Yishuv fight on Britain's side against a common enemy without abandoning the struggle against the White Paper?

In the end the struggle against the White Paper was shelved until better times, and the Yishuv enlisted itself in the war effort by placing at Britain's disposal its production capacity, human resources, and military potential; 27,000 young Jews enlisted in the British Army. The Arabs, for their part, leaned toward the other side. In 1941 a rebellion led by Rashid Ali al-Gaylani in Iraq endangered British rule in the region. The Mufti of Jerusalem fled to Berlin and actively participated in formulating Nazi propaganda in the Middle East, demonstrating both ideological and political identification with Nazism.

So long as Britain's situation in the Middle East was dire, Jewish-British cooperation flourished. The Palmach, for example, was created as a force designed to help the British with intelligence gathering and sabotage. From the summer of 1941 into 1942, when it seemed that Rommel's Afrika Korps was about to break through the British lines in Egypt, panic reigned in the British officer corps in Palestine and there was talk of withdrawal to Iraq, leaving the Yishuv in danger of destruction. Its identification with the British victory at El-Alamein in October 1942 was total, for the Zionists had no other allies. Yet none of this prevented the British from assiduously maintaining the prohibition on immigration, and violent searches for Haganah weapons continued unabated.

The Zionist leadership, headed by Weizmann, had not yet given up on the alliance with Britain. Weizmann assumed that the 1939 White Paper's anti-Zionist policy derived from Britain's need to obtain Arab support and maintain peace in the Middle East. He reckoned that when the war ended there would be room for a

reappraisal of British policy. Prime Minister Winston Churchill was thought to be a friend of Zionism. Toward the end of the war, he set up a cabinet committee to reformulate policy on the question of Palestine, and its list of members boded well for the Zionists. Meanwhile, as Weizmann hoped that the frozen sea of British policy would thaw after the war, Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, shifted his focus to another Great Power—America. The support of American Jewry, the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, who seemed cordial toward the Jews, and America's might compared with Britain's dwindling power due to the cost of the war were three factors in Ben-Gurion's political reorientation. Another was his deep-seated suspicion of the British, which contrasted with Weizmann's faith in them.

At the May 1942 Biltmore Conference in New York, the Zionists stated that their war aim was to establish "a Jewish Commonwealth" in Palestine—"commonwealth" being a synonym for an independent state. To avoid arousing their Jewish opponents over an egg yet to be laid, the Zionists avoided mention of partition, as well as the issue of the Palestinian Arabs. The Biltmore Program symbolized the Zionists' resolve to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, even if it meant a bloody conflict with the Arabs. At a time when the destinies of peoples and countries were decided by armed force, the Jews were slowly adjusting to the idea that their fight for independence would also involve bloodshed.

The war's end did not result in the change in British policy that the Zionist leadership hoped for. The cabinet committee set up by Churchill had recommended partition, with implementation postponed until after the war. But in 1945 the Labour Party led by Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin won a landslide victory in Britain's general election, and Churchill's Conservative Party was voted out. Although the 1944 Labour Party manifesto contained a pro-Zionist statement that included the transfer (population exchange) idea first raised by the Peel Commission, now that Labour was in power it had new issues to consider. Ernest Bevin was appointed foreign secretary of a strong Labour government that made some weighty decisions, such as granting independence to India. But the country had been bankrupted by a world war, and the government had to manage the transition to a peace economy and take care of the returning soldiers in an era of food and fuel rationing. The Cold War already loomed, putting additional problems on the government's plate. In this situation the friendship of the Arab states was more important than ever; indeed the vast oil resources in the Middle Eastern deserts made them advantageous allies. And since the Palestine issue was central to relations with the Arab world, the Labour government had no intention of changing the White Paper policy.

On the other hand, the Jews had experienced the greatest trauma in their history—the Holocaust. The world, and even the Jewish people, had not yet fully

digested what had happened. The Jews became aware of the atrocities only gradually, and when they did, they had difficulty dealing with them. Together with grief and trauma came anger: the enlightened world had not lifted a finger to save Jews from extermination. Although all the facts were not yet known, the Jews intuitively felt, as poet Nathan Alterman put it, that "Amidst the weeping of our children in the shadow of the gallows, / We failed to hear the rage of the world."[3]

The radicalization of many American Jews—normally moderate and cautious about expressing extreme positions—revealed itself in a determined struggle to open the gates of Palestine to Jewish refugees.

Nor did the close of the war bring an end to the hardships of Eastern European Jews. The antisemitism fostered by the Nazis and their Eastern European collaborators did not dissipate. Jews who tried to return to their towns and homes were greeted with hostility and violence. In the summer of 1946 there was a pogrom in Kielce, Poland, in which some forty Jews who had returned to their hometown after liberation from the Germans were brutally murdered. A vast "migration of peoples" occurred as millions of forced laborers, prisoners of war, and refugees began moving back home. Refugees who were unable to return to their own countries remained on German soil. These were mainly Nazi collaborators, concentration camp guards, and so forth, who had nowhere to return to. Tens of thousands of Jews also remained on German soil, survivors of the infamous death marches that took place at the end of the war or of concentration camps.

All the refugees were held in the same camps under the same conditions. In vain the Jews demanded to be separated from people who only yesterday had been their persecutors and even now continued to abuse them. The British occupation authorities contended that separating Jews from non-Jews was a continuation of Hitler's racist policies. It was only after the intervention of Jewish chaplains in the US Army that American Jewry raised an outcry, and President Harry Truman sent an envoy, Earl G. Harrison, to examine the situation in the camps controlled by the US Army of Occupation in Germany. The Harrison Report scathingly criticized the conduct of the Army of Occupation toward the Jews. It also described the hope of the majority of displaced persons (DPS) to immigrate to Palestine, and the president requested that his British ally permit 100,000 Jews to do so.

Bevin found himself in a bind. He was not prepared to change the White Paper policy, yet he could not accept strained relations with the United States, the only country capable of rebuilding Europe—not to mention its importance for engaging the Soviet bear. Accordingly he proposed an Anglo-American commission to study the situation and promised that if the commission reached a unanimous decision, he would honor it. The commission's operative recommendation was

to grant 100,000 immigration certificates to Jews in the DP camps in Germany. However, Bevin was unwilling to keep his promise, and in the meantime the flow of refugees from Eastern Europe to the DP camps in the American zone continued unabated, for the Soviet occupation was causing economic and social shock waves that affected the surviving Jews.

Hamossad Le'aliya Bet, the Haganah's illegal immigration arm, organized illegal immigrant ships that attempted to reach the shores of Palestine clandestinely. As more and more ships made the attempt, British efforts to stop them increased. In August 1946 the British began stopping these ships out at sea and sending their refugee passengers to detention camps in Cyprus, which was under British rule. These voyages, as well as the forcible deportations of the illegal immigrants from the shores of Palestine, were reported in the international press and put the problem of the Jewish DPs on the world agenda. Jewish public opinion in Palestine was in an uproar, and the feelings of helpless anger aroused by the Holocaust were now directed against the British.

Nathan Alterman's political poems highlighted the defenselessness of the Jewish refugee: "'Mother, are we allowed to cry now?' asked the little girl as she emerged from her hiding place."

This very defenselessness becomes a protest against the closure of Palestine to the refugees: "When you come out from behind the barbed wire, you'll be pursued by the army and the fleet."

The little girl marches through Europe:

> On your back exempt from pity
> the Joint bundle given to orphans. And in your little hand a crust of bread
> that UNRRA gave for tomorrow.

But she will reach the shore:

> Young men, unyielding as a fist
> Will carry you safely to the shore
> Your arms around their neck
> In the face of seventy parliaments and the sea.
> Joy and happiness in your eyes
> And the Law will vanquish the law.[4]

The entire Yishuv, moderates and radicals alike, rallied around the issue of the refugees, and the story of illegal immigration became one of the seminal myths of Israel as the country of refuge.

In Palestine the Jews mounted guerilla and terror attacks against the British, who had not yet found a formula for issuing 100,000 immigration certificates that would both satisfy the US president and not damage relations with the Arab

world. The British government probably thought that if the fate of the Jewish refugees was really so close to Truman's heart, he could amend US immigration laws and allow them to settle there. But Truman knew that such a move would be very unpopular in his own country, and the British avoided embarrassing him with a direct request.

The Zionist Executive was also in an uncomfortable position. If Bevin issued the 100,000 certificates, the Palestine question would be off the international agenda without the Jews having attained a state. But since Bevin stood fast, the struggle for the 100,000 immigrants became the struggle for a Jewish state, since it was clear that only when they had a state of their own would the Jews find refuge. Richard Crossman, a British member of parliament and member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, later remarked that Bevin was worthy of a statue in his honor in Israel, since it was thanks to his obduracy that the Jews obtained their state.

In the end Bevin despaired of finding a solution to the Palestine problem, and the British cabinet decided to return its Mandate to the United Nations (which had replaced the League of Nations). This change was announced in February 1947, and the UN set up a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to reexamine the question of Palestine. The committee visited Palestine in the summer of 1947 and witnessed some dramatic events, including the arrival of the illegal immigrant ship *Exodus*—whose passengers were deported back to Germany by the British in a display of utter insensitivity—and terror attacks by Jewish underground groups. UNSCOP recommended the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states (see map 3), but the Arabs flatly rejected this recommendation and demanded the establishment of a majority state in Palestine.

The UNSCOP recommendations were brought before the UN General Assembly at Lake Success, New York, where a two-thirds majority was needed for ratification. The Arabs hoped that the Eastern bloc led by the USSR would thwart the resolution, but they did not take into account Soviet aspirations to weaken Britain's standing in the Middle East. Quite amazingly—and only briefly—the Soviets changed their hostile policy toward Zionism and supported the establishment of the State of Israel. The historic UN General Assembly vote on November 29, 1947, decided to terminate the British Mandate for Palestine and establish two states, Jewish and Arab.

The UN resolution passed on a Friday evening. All Jews in Palestine were glued to their radios and when the result was announced, they flooded the streets. Zipporah Borowsky (now Porath), an American student who had come to Palestine two months earlier, described the event in a letter to her parents: "I walked in a semi-daze through the crowds of happy faces, through the deafening singing of 'David, King of Israel, lives and is alive,' past the British tanks and jeeps

MAP 3.
THE UNSCOP PARTITION PLAN, 1947. (SEE PLATE 3.)

piled high with pyramids of flag-waving, cheering children. . . . I pushed my way past the crying, kissing, tumultuous crowds, and the exultant shouts of 'Mazal Tov' . . . to try to share with you this never-to-be-forgotten night."[5] There was a feeling of spiritual elation, a mixture of individual and public joy. But in the Arab community there was shock and mourning. The following day saw the first fatalities on the road from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv.

THE HERITAGE OF MANDATE RULE IN PALESTINE

During Ottoman rule Palestine had been part of a single polity stretching from North Africa to Iran. It was divided into several Ottoman administrative districts and was known as "Southern Syria," with no political designation of its own. The terms Palestine and Eretz Yisrael acquired geopolitical significance only during the Mandatory period, when the government defined the country's northern, southern, and eastern borders. The designation of the northern border took into account Palestine's developmental needs, keeping part of the River Jordan's water sources inside the country. Later discussions of Palestine referred to the 1920s Mandatory border, which was given the status of an international border.

Although Herbert Samuel undertook far-reaching development plans and government initiatives, it was soon clear that the government in London was not prepared to invest in the development of Palestine. The British taxpayer was not to bear the cost of maintaining the country; Palestine was supposed to generate enough income to cover British government expenditures there and even return part of the Ottoman debt. The policy that the Mandatory government had to balance its budget, dictated by London, was typical of British colonial administration all over the world.

Britain's paramount interest in Palestine was strategic, and the British were only willing to make investments in Palestine that were linked to this interest, as occurred during both World Wars. The Mandatory government invested vast sums from its operating budget to develop transportation infrastructure. In addition to constructing the road network and railways, in the early 1930s it initiated construction of a deepwater port in Haifa with the intention of bringing in an oil pipeline from Iraq that would ensure a fuel supply for the British Mediterranean Fleet. To this end British-owned oil refineries were built in Haifa. The government encouraged construction of electric facilities on the Jordan and Yarkon Rivers. Though all this investment helped modernize Palestine and advanced agricultural and industrial development, it was also vital to the activities of a modern army.

Examination of the Mandatory government operating budget shows that administration and security accounted for more than 50 percent, whereas welfare (health and education) totaled a mere 12 percent. These proportions derived not

from security problems in Palestine but from the tradition of colonial administration; the respective allocations were much the same in the contemporary budgets for India, Cyprus, and Transjordan. In stark contrast the budget in Britain itself during this period earmarked the lion's share for welfare. This is the difference between a colony and its mother country.

Compared with the previous administration in Palestine, however, the Mandatory government must be credited with some great and comprehensive accomplishments. The development of health services, preventive medicine, and a fresh water supply, the fight against malaria, the draining of the swamps, and other infrastructure improvements enhanced both the quality of life and the life expectancy of all the inhabitants.

The Mandatory government acted in accordance with the principles of British colonial government. Most of the senior Mandatory officials had previous experience in British crown colonies, which they applied, for better or worse, to Palestine. Colonial social policy was designed to further economic progress and introduce modernization but without damaging the local cultural fabric and social tradition. For example, the Arab population of Palestine was mainly agrarian, and British initiatives to nurture, improve, and modernize Arab agriculture helped raise the standard of living in the villages and increase the population, mainly as a result of reduced infant mortality. At the same time, after an impressive initial investment in building schools in the villages, budgetary constraints halted educational development in the Arab sector. Until the end of the Mandate period, the Arab education system provided only four years of schooling to most boys and to only a small percentage of girls. In the 1930s urbanization gained momentum due to population increase, land sales to Jews, and the availability of government jobs. But all in all, the Arab village maintained its structure and traditions. While the Mandatory government was entrusted with care of the inhabitants, it did not consider itself responsible for helping them advance.

The Jewish Yishuv benefited from the Mandatory government both directly and indirectly. It enjoyed security of life and property, which the government ensured not only in the center of the country but also in more remote locations, such as the Jordan Valley, which in the past had suffered as a result of Bedouin incursions. Jews could now safely settle all over the country. The modern transportation network set up by the British brought produce from Jewish farms to the cities. Better sanitation and a government forestation initiative also benefited the Yishuv. Mandatory government allocations to welfare services, education, and health care were small and went mainly to the majority Arab community. But the Yishuv supplemented the welfare allocations by setting up its own welfare services, in which the government did not interfere. The Jews also had their own education services, far higher in quality than those funded by the Mandatory

government. By the end of the Mandatory period, between 90 and 97 percent of Yishuv children had had nine years of schooling. When this period began Jews and Arabs had a common health service, but over the years, as tensions rose, in this area too the services were separated. The Jews had high-quality health services, due especially to immigration from Germany—yet another instance of self-sustainability that developed during the Mandate period.

The Peel Commission defined Palestine as a dual country with two economies, two cultures, and two nations living side by side yet separately. In this view partition of the country into two states was the outcome of the inevitable development of these two peoples, in which the British government played a minor role. Most researchers today accept this notion. There is, however, another school of thought that sees this duality—and, in retrospect, partition itself—as the outcome of a deliberate Mandatory government policy that was biased in favor of the Jews. This school believes that there were in Palestine the seeds of an economy and a society common to Jews and Arabs that, under a supportive government, could have developed in the direction of cooperation and creation of a single society, instead of separately. It points an accusing finger at the authorities' economic and employment policies (for instance, the distinction between the economic capacity of the Jewish economy and that of the entire country's economy), separate education and health services, separate ethnic municipal units, and so forth. This policy allowed the Jews to nurture the seeds of their autonomy and in fact encouraged laying the foundations of a separate society and identity.

Was there indeed any likelihood that a common Palestinian Arab-Jewish society could have formed? Each wave of violence brought with it further distancing and segregation of these national communities, each into its own territory. The mixed-habitation towns and buildings, cooperation in business, and even shared leisure activities that existed to some extent during the Ottoman period became increasingly rare. Attempts made in the 1920s to establish joint workers' organizations disappeared in the thirties. Though economic development accelerated for Jews and Arabs alike during World War Two, the Arab community was, and in the main has remained, rural and traditional, whereas the vast majority of the Jewish community was urban and modern. Thus the distance between them grew.

The Mandatory officials found themselves expected to allow foreigners to settle in and develop Palestine while working to change the existing circumstances for these foreigners' benefit. This situation seemed strange to them and inappropriate to their colonial tradition. It would have been different had the settlers been British subjects, for settlement in countries like Australia, Canada, or South Africa was part of their colonial heritage. But in Palestine they were supposed to assist pretentious foreigners, most of whom did not speak English, did not know

their place, and frequently complained and made demands. Based on their rights under the Mandate instrument, the Jews expected preferential treatment from the authorities, which they did not get. At best the government "viewed with favour," as the Balfour Declaration stated, the establishment of a national home, but it assumed that the Jews would build that home themselves.

The distance between the Jews' expectations and the reality was the source of constant friction. In the first decade of the Mandate immigration to Palestine kept pace with the economic capacity of the Jewish economy, a criterion the Jews accepted de facto. But starting in the second decade, immigration became a bone of contention and a focal point of Zionist frustration. Article 6 of the Mandate instrument, which authorized dense Jewish settlement, was never implemented. Except for some negligible land in desolate areas (such as that allotted to the Dead Sea Works), the Jews were not given state lands for settlement as Article 6 had specified. Until the end of the Mandate period, all Jewish-owned land had been purchased at full price.

The Jews demanded protective tariffs to benefit the country's young industry, but that meant increased import costs for the Arabs, who opposed such a measure. On the other hand, maintaining high grain prices in Palestine worked in favor of Arab villagers but adversely affected Jewish city dwellers. The Jews complained that they were not being employed by the government in accordance with their percentage of the population, and certainly not in accordance with their contribution to the government budget. The government acknowledged this but refused to pay the Jews more than the Arabs, who were willing to work for a minimal wage. These are but a few examples of the constant clashes between Jewish and Arab interests, with the government finding itself in the middle.

Either wittingly or unwittingly, the Mandatory government's policy of economic liberalism and nonintervention in internal life allowed the Jewish community to establish a very sophisticated system of autonomous self-government and to preserve and nurture its unique cultural identity. When the Peel Commission concluded that there were two separate national identities in Palestine, it was mainly reacting to the presence of two separate education systems, each of which taught students to be loyal to one nation and its worldview. The economy that developed under the Mandate underscored the disparity between the Jewish and Arab economies: one was dynamic, innovative, and tended toward initiative and industry, while the other was rural, conservative, and willing to accept innovation but not to initiate it. Both economies grew impressively, but there was a great difference in lifestyles and standards of living.

While the Mandatory government tried to create a "Palestinian" loyalty and sense of citizenship among both Jews and Arabs, it recognized the de facto existence of two economies and two societies. The separation of the two economies

(despite points of contact, cooperation, and even common interests, such as among citrus growers) reflected the aspirations of both sides to preserve their uniqueness, tradition, and culture. As tension between Jews and Arabs heightened, the fabric of their common life—even to the modest degree that this existed—unraveled. At this point the British cow made no effort to suckle, and the two calves, Jewish and Arab, fiercely refused to feed.

The thirty-year transitional Mandate period enabled the Jews to establish a society and economy of their own in Palestine. Without British bayonets the Jewish community would have been unable to develop in size and strength until it passed the point of no return. The development of Arab nationalism was an outcome of the development of the national home, and it is doubtful that an aggressive British policy against the Arab national movement—as the Jewish activists demanded—could have changed the direction of that development. Furthermore such action ran counter to traditional British colonial policy. As far as the British were concerned, Palestine was an interesting but particularly troublesome colony, and when the cost of maintaining it exceeded the benefits, they left without agonizing over the decision. For the Jews this was the pivotal point for a national movement that had nowhere else to go. Throughout the entire period there was no significant discourse between Jews and Arabs. The Arabs saw no reason to relinquish their exclusive ownership of Palestine, while the Jews had as yet nothing to relinquish.

NOTES

1. Yigal Elam, "Historia politit, 1918–1922" (Political History, 1918–1922), *Toldot hayishuv hayehudi be'Eretz Yisrael me'az ha'aliya hashniya* (History of the Jewish Community in Palestine since the First Aliya), Moshe Lissak (ed.), The British Mandate Period, Part One, Jerusalem: Israel National Academy of Science, 2001, p. 171; E. L. Woodward et al. (eds.), *Documents of British Foreign Policy*, 4, London, 1952, p. 345.

2. November 12, 1939, Mapai Central Committee.

3. Nathan Alterman, "Mikol ha'amim" (Of All the Nations), The Seventh Column, vol. 1, Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1977, p. 9.

4. Nathan Alterman, "Ima, kvar mutar livkot?" (Mother, are we allowed to cry now?), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1952, pp. 22–24.

5. Zipporah Porath, *Letters from Jerusalem, 1947–1948*, Scranton, PA: Temple Israel, 1998, p. 43.

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4 IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT DURING THE MANDATE PERIOD

"We had to go and leave behind everything, to shoulder just a knapsack and leave in exiles' clothing." These are the opening words of Uri Zvi Greenberg's poem "The Necessity." It explains immigration to Palestine as the result not of that country's attraction but of the Diaspora's expulsive power. "We had to leave. The ground screamed beneath our feet, the beds shook." He goes on to describe his unrequited love for the country he has left:

> We also had to hate what we had loved. We loved the forest, the stream, the well and the mill
> We loved the falling leaves, the fish, the pail and the challah, and secretly we also loved the sound of their bells
> And even the young ruffians with their white-blond hair.

And he concludes with his prophecy of the menacing destruction:

> We had to go in pain from villages and look one more time with fiery tears at the houses
> Knowing that one day they would be put to the brand.[1]

This poem, written in 1924, reveals the immigrants' hidden pain and the powerful attraction of the world they have left behind. To understand immigration and settlement in the period between the two World Wars, we must bear in mind the opposing pull of two magnets: the profound connection to the physical-cultural homeland and the acknowledgment of the existential necessity of leaving home, family, culture. It is impossible to comprehend what was created in Palestine without understanding every immigrant's psychological struggle of being pulled between these two magnets.

At the end of December 1919, the SS *Ruslan* anchored off Jaffa from Odessa, carrying 650 immigrants. The *Ruslan* later attained the status of an Israeli *Mayflower,* for among its passengers were leading intellectuals from among the best of the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia, as well as a group of enthusiastic but penniless young people. This landing marked the beginning of the wave of immigration that went down in Zionist history as the Third Aliya (1919–1923), the first of three waves that arrived during the Mandate period. The others were the Fourth Aliya (1924–1929) and the Fifth Aliya (1932–1936).

The distinctions made among these aliyot reflected an awareness of the cyclic

nature of immigration and the economic highs and lows that characterized it. Each aliya also had its own distinct image, based not on statistical facts but on impressions and public discourse. Thus the third was labeled the pioneering aliya and the fourth the middle class one, even though statistically the majority of immigrants of both aliyot were not pioneers—and, in fact, the Fourth Aliya included a greater number of pioneers than did the third. The Fifth Aliya entered Zionist consciousness as the German aliya, even though most of its immigrants—as with its predecessors—came from Eastern Europe.

The early 1920s were years of great hope: the Balfour Declaration set off currents of almost messianic enthusiasm among Russian Jewry. For the first time in its history, Zionism became a mass movement, as thousands of young people streamed into the Hechalutz (pioneer) movement, founded by Joseph Trumpeldor in the Crimea to train youngsters before they immigrated to Palestine. The Bolshevik Revolution and the brutal civil war that followed were accompanied by terrible pogroms throughout Ukraine, with estimates of Jewish dead ranging between 100,000 and 200,000.

The revolution led to tremendous enthusiasm among young Jews, who saw the Reds as defenders of the Jews against the Whites, who had fomented the anti-Jewish rioting. The revolutionary spirit inspired the idealism of the pioneers, but the pogroms heightened their awareness that this was not their revolution, and that they should implement their ideas of giving birth to a regime of equality and justice on earth in Palestine. In the sphere of ideas and ideals, world revolution competed with Zionism for the hearts and minds of the young. For the first half of the twentieth century, these two movements were the opposing focal attractions for Jewish youth.

The war and the revolution brought about far-reaching changes in Russian Jewry. The old shtetl was no more, and the lower middle classes to which the Jews belonged were eroded in Soviet Russia. Religious practice was forbidden and Zionists persecuted. In contrast to the people of the Second Aliya, who came from a traditional, stable, solidly grounded Jewish world, the Third Aliya immigrants grew up in the shattered remnants of that world. Most knew nothing of the traditional small town and received no Jewish education; their worldview combined Jewish nationalism with world reform. Young single people left their mark on this aliya; of 37,000 immigrants 14,000 were single. They had no possessions to speak of and were ready for hard physical labor and eager to build a new society in Palestine.

The early 1920s were also years of great belief in the "shortcut." Just as the Soviets had leapfrogged the phase of capitalism—which according to Marxist theory should precede the revolution—and moved directly into a socialist society,

so also could Palestine. Since Palestine lacked a modern, developed economy, industry was still in its infancy, an egalitarian, just society could be built from scratch, without enduring the trials and tribulations of capitalism. This belief, common among both the old-timers of the Second Aliya and the youngsters of the third, was based on the fact that backward Palestine was not an attractive prospect for the wealthy. In the early 1920s it seemed that the country would be built by national capital—money raised by Zionist institutions such as Keren Kayemet (Jewish National Fund) and Keren Hayesod (lit., foundation fund, devoted to building the country), which were at the disposal of the Zionist Organization—on national land, by camps of pioneers who would create the country according to their ideals. The Zionist movement had at its disposal legions of young, impoverished people who sought to build the country and rebuild their life and future in this new land. There were no other candidates available to create "the national home," so the Zionist Organization was prepared to offer its capital to labor settlement. This was the basis of the alliance between the Zionist Organization led by Chaim Weizmann and the Palestine workers' movement.

It soon turned out, however, that the amount of capital they managed to raise was far smaller than expected. During the 1920s the Zionist movement had only £600,000 a year at its disposal, an amount that was grossly insufficient to support mass settlement. Instead of extensive settlement on national land, the Third Aliya immigrants were compelled to earn their living in public works initiated by Herbert Samuel—that is, road building. Road work became legendary, but the mythology could not disguise the fact that the Zionist Organization lacked the financial capacity to settle the pioneers. In 1923, when work on the roads came to an end, the Third Aliya was in crisis.

The year 1924 brought the Fourth Aliya, the first wave of mass immigration in the history of Zionism. In 1925 the country absorbed 285 new immigrants per one thousand Jews already settled—a record that remained intact even during the years of mass immigration that followed the establishment of the State of Israel. In the space of two years, some 60,000 immigrants came to Palestine. This aliya reflected a fundamental change in Jewish migration in the world. In the United States amendments to the immigration laws effectively closed the gates of America to Jewish immigrants. The USSR, for its part, imposed even greater restrictions on immigration, then closed its gates completely at the end of the 1920s.

These two changes determined the sources of both Jewish migration and human capital in Palestine. The country became a main immigration destination for Jews—in the 1930s, *the* main destination. Poland, home to more than three million Jews, was the principal source of Jewish migrants. The laws introduced by Polish prime minister Władisław Grabski to stabilize the Polish currency hurt

the merchant class in the cities, most of whom were Jewish, and it was the instability of the Jewish middle class that led to the fourth wave of immigration. This time the immigrants included a large number of families, and their average age was slightly higher than in the Third Aliya. These middle-class immigrants gave the Fourth Aliya the image it had in the public mind.

Herbert Samuel decided that the Mandatory government would supervise immigration in accordance with the economic capacity criterion. The Zionist Executive accepted the principle that immigration must be controlled and limited lest the Jewish economy collapse, resulting in a deep crisis that might shake belief in the Jews' ability to build the country. In fact, what restricted immigration in the 1920s was not the British but the Zionist Executive's budgetary constraints. The Mandatory government designated four categories of immigrants. The first included people of means who were exempt from all restrictions. To be considered a person of means the candidate had to prove ownership of 500 (later 1,000) Palestine pounds by depositing the funds in a bank. The second category consisted of students or religious functionaries, who had to prove that their livelihood was assured. They were permitted to immigrate with no further restriction. In the third category were immediate relatives of residents of Palestine and returning residents. The former had to prove that their relatives were able to provide for them. These three categories were controlled solely by the Mandatory government.

The fourth category—workers—was the object of a struggle between the Zionist Executive and the government. The workers were impoverished young people who had to make a living in Palestine from their labor, and for whom the Zionist Organization had guaranteed work in the Jewish economy. However, the Zionist Executive and the Mandatory government had differing assessments of economic capacity. Every six months the executive submitted an assessment of the "schedule" (immigration quota), and the government would usually approve a number of immigration certificates far lower than the number requested. Until 1936 this was how immigration to Palestine was determined.

In the first two years of the Fourth Aliya, some 40 percent of immigrants and their families fell into the category of "people of means." These were mainly lower middle class people who used a large portion of their assets to finance their immigration, but they considered themselves bourgeois and aspired to an urban lifestyle similar to the one they had had in Poland. Most members of this aliya went to Tel Aviv, which had enjoyed an unprecedented boom in construction, and also to Haifa and Jerusalem. If during the Third Aliya it had seemed that the country would be built with public capital and by socialist pioneers, now a new means of realizing Zionism appeared, in the shape of the middle class and the use of private capital. Whereas Zionist ideology viewed agricultural settlement as

the heart of the enterprise, the majority of the aliya was now moving from the village to the city. Jewish Palestine had become unmistakably urban.

The aspiration that idealistic aliya would build an egalitarian society from scratch by turning to agriculture, thus changing the image of the Jew from trader and middleman to physical laborer, foundered due to limited national capital and the unexpected presence of private capital. The middle class Jew became a new candidate for building the country. The Fourth Aliya was the target of fierce criticism in the workers' press, and Weizmann accused its members of having transferred Dzika and Nalewki Streets (Warsaw streets housing traders and peddlers) to Tel Aviv.[2]

The source of these vilifications was the dual disappointment of the failure to raise enough national capital and the arrival of an aliya whose characteristics did not meet the left's idealistic expectations. The Fourth Aliya sparked a long debate between the socialists and the owners of private capital—those who demanded selective immigration of young people consistent with the pioneering model versus those who demanded immigration open to all, reflecting the structure of Jewish society in the Diaspora. Since the Zionist Organization did not control the aliya of people with means, in the end the debate was about whether the Zionist Organization would support urban or rural settlement. The Zionist budget devoted more than 30 percent of its resources to agricultural settlement, compared with less than 10 percent for urban settlement. This preference arose from the aspiration to establish a new Jewish people in Palestine, a people close to the soil. But it also derived from the desire to control relatively large tracts of land that would form a continuum of Jewish settlements—the foundation of sovereignty over the territory. It was far less expensive to absorb immigrants into the city than into rural areas. Urban settlement also made possible the absorption of many people who were not suited to physical labor and had no inclination to change their way of life. But from the Zionist standpoint the village was not only the romantic image of the new reality; it was also a vital factor in ensuring ownership of the country.

THE EMEK AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT

The main settlement enterprise of the 1920s was that of the Jezreel Valley, which went down in Palestine settlement mythology as "the Emek" (valley). This strip of land, which ran from the coastal plain to the Jordan Valley and created a continuum with the Lower Galilee settlements of the early twentieth century, was purchased by the Zionist land agent Yehoshua Hankin without prior approval from the Zionist Organization. This act ignited a stormy debate in the Zionist Executive because it took a large bite out of the meager Zionist budget. The Emek

became the site of the social and settlement experiments of this decade. It was there that the ideals of young people eager to reform the world came up against Zionist needs, and a synthesis between the two was created.

In 1920 the Joseph Trumpeldor Gedud Haʿavoda (Labor Battalion) was founded by members of the Russian Hechalutz movement. The transformation of the Gedud Haʿavoda into a commune took place during work on the roads, in a camp near Migdal. To provide for the workers' domestic needs after an exhausting day's work, the communal kitchen, laundry, and dining hall came into being. The work was done on contract by groups of laborers in which the strong covered for the weak and payment was distributed equally. The Gedud Haʿavoda was a non-selective body, open to any pioneer seeking to join.

At that historic moment, when it seemed that Utopia was being realized in Russia, these young people believed that they too were being given a chance to establish a "General Commune of Jewish Workers in Palestine" without private property, with one pocket for all. It was a socialism of poverty: shortages were acute, living conditions harsh, but the spiritual exaltation the pioneers derived from the sense that they were building a new society outweighed the difficulties and homesickness they faced. The feeling of togetherness, the ecstasy of dancing at night, compensated for the suffering and hardship. Uri Zvi Greenberg perpetuated the spirit of those days with the lines:

Remember, God
Those young men and women
With neither father nor mother here
Like an army in battle
And the hoe sliced
Like a sword through the flesh of Philistia
And the steamroller was led
Like the chariot of the Messiah . . .[3]

When settlement began in the Emek in 1922, the Gedud Haʿavoda was available for this work and founded two kibbutzim: Ein Harod and Tel Yosef. The kibbutz was the creative idea of Shlomo Lavi (Levkovich) of the Second Aliya. Levkovich developed the "big kvutza," reminiscent of the thinking of French utopian socialist Charles Fourier. The kvutzot founded during the Second Aliya, Degania and Kinneret, were based upon an intimate, almost familial model. Once Degania had expanded to several dozen members, it split into Degania Alef and Degania Bet. Although the kvutza was supposed to be an extended family, in practice over-intimacy proved burdensome and created a great deal of friction, manifested in people leaving and damage to relationships. Lavi believed that the big kvutza would avoid invasion of privacy and enable different types of people to

fit in. He foresaw kvutzot of one thousand men and women, a figure then considered delusional. Lavi sought to unite agriculture and industry under the kvutza's roof, so that anyone could find suitable employment. He also believed that its large size would enable rational exploitation of the means of production and make the kvutza profitable. Its broad framework was even designed to facilitate cultural life. The Gedud Haʿavoda took upon itself the experiment of establishing the big kvutza.

Beit Alpha was founded to the east of Ein Harod and Tel Yosef with the participation of another Third Aliya organization, Hashomer Hatzaʿir. Whereas the Gedud Haʿavoda consisted mainly of eager but uneducated people from Russia, the Hashomer Hatzaʿir youngsters were from Galicia and Poland. They came from the upper middle class, had a high school education, and believed in anarchistic doctrines and Freudian psychoanalysis. During their first years in Palestine, they devoted much time to soul searching and seeking meaning. Settlement on the land of Beit Alpha, and later Merhavia and Mishmar Haʿemek, was part of their maturing out of adolescence and adapting to life in Palestine. They believed that prior indoctrination was a prerequisite for kibbutz membership and maintained a selective admissions policy. Several more kvutzot settled in the Emek; like the Hashomer Hatzaʿir kibbutzim, these were a sort of compromise between the narrow confines of the "small kvutza" like Degania and the "big kvutza" such as Ein Harod or Tel Yosef.

In the western Emek land was allocated for a different form of settlement, initiated by a group of Second Aliya veterans who had left Degania. They opposed the kvutza way of life, which they thought undermined both the natural family and the intimate relationship between farmers and their land, a relationship founded on the family land unit. They were the founders of the first moshav, Nahalal, which aimed to establish a group of smallholders rooted in soil that would be worked by the family. Nahalal was founded on the principle of mutual aid among members and on joint marketing of their produce. Its houses were built in a circle, close together, with fields behind each house. This arrangement created physical closeness between the families and preserved the spirit of a community whose members were responsible for one another.

All the forms of agricultural settlement in the Emek were grounded in the lesson learned by the Second Aliya: how to prevent farmers from being tempted to employ hired labor, which was an opening for Arab labor. Communal authority and landownership and total prohibition of hired labor were the checks designed to ensure the Zionist character of the settlement. In the 1920s the moshav was considered the ideological limit of labor settlement, beyond which, Ben-Gurion contended, lay capitalism.

The Gedud Haʿavoda and Hashomer Hatzaʿir were Zionist youth organizations

that sought the pioneering venture and the socialist challenge. The innovative forms of settlement in the Emek enabled them to feel that they were participating in building a new world. In the early 1920s they believed that their idealism would give the entire Zionist enterprise a socialist disposition, but the Third Aliya crisis and the arrival of the Fourth Aliya made them realize that the Zionist enterprise could not avoid the capitalist stage of social and economic development. For many this was a breaking point. What should take precedence? Was realizing Zionism most important, even if that meant accepting some forms of capitalism, or was it preferable to immigrate to a place where a truly egalitarian society was being built? Some Gedud Ha'avoda members, led by Mendel Elkind, chose to return to the Soviet Union, hoping to establish the ideal society there, but the vast majority preferred the aims of Zionism. They shelved the establishment of the socialist society until a Jewish majority was attained in Palestine.

Meanwhile these young people's idealism was harnessed to the most difficult of Zionist missions. Collectivist organization, internal discipline, and mobility all enabled settlement in remote, dangerous corners of the country where the climate was harsh. The kibbutzim spearheaded the Zionist enterprise all over Palestine. Zionism's orientation toward real action, as opposed to just talk, fulfilled the aspirations of idealistic youth who wanted to dedicate their lives to society and the nation. Collective settlement gave the Zionist movement a superb mobilization tool that defined itself in socialist terms and placed itself at the disposal of the Zionist enterprise for all the "conquest" assignments. The more centralized and disciplined the kibbutz, the greater the willingness to enlist in national objectives.

This combination of socialist and nationalist yearning breathed a unique energy into the members of the kibbutzim, kvutzot and moshavim, making them into the pioneers of the Zionist enterprise, always at the disposal of the Haganah, the Histadrut, or the Zionist Executive. The pioneering ethos is linked with the figure of the kibbutz member, the tiller of the soil, who serves the nation day after day in his work on the nation's land, in his willingness to live a life of poverty and privation and risk his and his family's lives by settling in dangerous areas. The distribution of the kibbutzim along the length of the northern border, in the Beit She'an Valley, and in the Negev desert made Jewish settlement geographically contiguous all over Palestine and ultimately determined the borders of the state.

Because of the financial constraints, agricultural settlement developed slowly. Until the end of the Mandate period, more Arab land was being offered for sale than Jews were able to purchase. Settlement in the Emek was followed by settlement in the Hefer Valley and then the Haifa Bay area. The great surges in settlement came after the 1937 Peel Commission report, which turned the spotlight on

the connection between the future borders of the Jewish state and the geographic distribution of settlements. The Beit She'an Valley, state land that had been given to the Bedouins in the area by Herbert Samuel, was now purchased from them by the Jewish National Fund, and settlement on it began quickly. Western Galilee and the northern border were also settled, with a combination of private (Nahariya) and collective settlements (Hanita, Shavei Zion, Yechiam). During the struggle against the British and after World War Two, eleven new locations were settled in the Negev, assisted by a pipe laid by the Mekorot Water Company. These dangerous areas, remote from concentrations of Jewish settlement, were settled by kibbutzim (see map 3).

In the 1920s the extent of labor settlement's contribution to the Zionist enterprise was not yet clear. At the Fourteenth Zionist Congress in Vienna, Heschel Farbstein of the Mizrachi party, who considered himself a representative of the middle class, called the kibbutz members *kest kinder*, i.e., freeloaders living off the Zionist Organization's meager funds—funds being withheld from thousands of Jews knocking on Palestine's gates. In the late 1920s a committee of experts that examined the settlement situation handed down a deadly verdict, asserting that the kibbutz was a social framework unsuited to human desires, and especially to a Jew. Its verdict on the moshav was more lenient, since the moshav structure was more in line with traditional thinking. The debate on whether labor settlement was economically viable would continue for many years, and in fact has never ended. Per capita investment in the kibbutzim was far greater than in the cities, but it is doubtful whether it was greater than investment in the moshavot, which in the 1920s were flourishing and economically successful. They were offered as proof of the success of the privately owned farm—though the vast investments of Baron de Rothschild and the JCA before this success was achieved went unmentioned.

Tel Aviv now stood in contrast to the Emek as a model for absorption and building the country. From a small garden city of about 2,000, by 1925 it had become a vibrant township with a population of 34,000; by 1931 it had increased to 46,000. This rapid growth of the city in the sand dunes raised the fears of those who had expected that Zionism would not only bring the Jewish people from the Diaspora to Palestine but also create an essential change in the image of the Jew. With its land speculators and the raucous commerce of its streets, Tel Aviv seemed like Warsaw or Lvov transplanted into Palestine. It reflected the Jews' tendency to choose city life, their avoidance of physical labor, and their desire for simply geographical—as opposed to revolutionary—change that would allow them to live among other Jews. One of Tel Aviv's attractions was that it was almost completely a Jewish city. Yet its petit bourgeois urban image roused the fears of all who wanted to see the new Jew emerge. In a noted critical article on the Fourth Aliya,

Chaim Arlosoroff claimed that it was not urban settlement—as populous as it might be—that would determine the country's future, but agricultural settlement. He described settling on the land, with the tiller of the soil deeply rooted in it, in stark contrast with the unplanned aliya that perhaps provided a solution for the individual Jew but was of no help in shaping the Jewish nation in Palestine.[4]

Despite all the preaching, and the harsh economic crisis that beset Tel Aviv at the end of the Fourth Aliya—in which a third of the city's workers became unemployed—in 1931 only 19 percent of the Jews in Palestine lived in agricultural settlements, and subsequently this figure dwindled. The three main cities—Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem—made up the main triangle of Jewish settlement. This configuration also reflected the fact that most of the capital used to build the country was private. In 1925 alone £2 million was invested in Tel Aviv, a sum that labor settlement could only dream of. Between 1918 and 1937, 75 million Palestine pounds in private capital were brought into the country, whereas only 20 million of national capital was raised. Given this reality there was a kind of "division of labor" between national capital, which went to places avoided by private capital, and private capital, which went into the cities and the coastal citrus plantations. The Tel Aviv model was appropriate for private capital, while the national capital went to the Emek.

In the late 1920s the Zionist enterprise in Palestine suffered the worst economic crisis it had ever experienced, which became a crisis of confidence in the Zionist movement's ability to succeed as a settlement movement. Centered in Tel Aviv, the crisis was caused by the end of the flow of capital from Poland, which had been devalued as a result of economic developments in that country. Numerous immigrants went bankrupt and were unable to meet their commitments. In 1928 twice as many people left Palestine as immigrated to it. Economic recovery began in 1929 and gained momentum in 1931, after the publication of the MacDonald Letter.

Ever since the Second Aliya the Jewish settlers had searched for an agricultural product on which they could base their economy. Their experiments with field crops were unsuccessful. Then they pinned their hopes on viniculture, which also failed. Almond trees were planted, then uprooted. Experiments with growing tobacco in the 1920s failed too. What emerged as the "golden product" of the country's agriculture was citrus fruit. The first to plant citrus were the Arabs of Jaffa, who created the "Jaffa oranges" brand. Jews began planting citrus groves during the Second Aliya, mainly in Petach Tikva and Rehovoth, and planting continued during the Mandate period. Both Jewish and Arab economies accelerated development of the citrus industry; only in 1931 did the acreage of Jewish plantations equal that of the Arabs. Citrus groves were concentrated mainly in the Samaria and Sharon regions, where groundwater had been discovered at an

accessible depth, and the soil was suitable. The citrus industry, which in the 1930s was Palestine's leading export and agricultural sector, was the result of private enterprise and private ownership.

Citrus production involved considerable risks. It depended on foreign market demand and was affected by economic changes in Europe. It was in constant competition with Spanish oranges. The uncontrolled planting of new citrus groves led to fears of surplus production, which were proved valid at the end of the period. After 1937 the industry was in crisis due to reduced demand, and when sea freight ceased during the World War, the growers needed government aid to maintain their plantations. But as long as the economic situation was fairly good and export continued, citrus was considered the success story of private farming in Palestine.

In contrast with Tel Aviv, which seemed to embody the Diaspora way of life, the citrus industry symbolized working the land, closeness to nature, the ultimate Palestine experience. As we have seen, Tel Aviv suffered widespread unemployment during the Fourth Aliya crisis, but the moshavot plantations flourished, unaffected. The problem was that the citrus-growing moshavot, particularly the largest, Petach Tikva, employed Arabs. As long as the labor movement was convinced that labor settlement would cover the country with socialist communities, it gave up fighting for Jewish labor in the old moshavot. But with the change of perspective following the Fourth Aliya, and more particularly given urban unemployment that mandated directing thousands of workers to the moshavot, the struggle for Jewish labor was renewed at the end of the 1920s.

For the labor movement this struggle, which strained farmer-worker relations but did not prevent hiring Arabs to pick fruit in the moshavot, was presented as evidence that private capital would not contribute to building the country and realizing Zionism. Its sole aim was profit, and the owners were not prepared to make the necessary financial sacrifice so that this capital could be used to build the country. The premise that Arab labor in the Jews' fields represented the triumph of class egoism over the national interest was widely accepted among the Jewish population, even by those who did not share the left's socialist perspective. Thus, for example, the National Farmers Union, composed of farmers from the newer moshavot in the Sharon area, whose groves had begun yielding fruit only in the 1930s, did not employ Arabs on principle since they identified with the workers' nationalist arguments. On the other hand, the farmers in the older moshavot with a mixed workforce (approximately one third Jewish workers) claimed that the daily cost of a Jewish worker was twice that of an Arab worker, and in a sector built on export in an unprotected global market, Jewish farmers could not afford this disparity. This debate helped raise the prestige of the workers considered to be sacrificing themselves to build the country, in contrast with

the poor image of the farmers, even though they worked the land and had settled the country.

Basing the moshavot economy on citrus was a different form of Baron de Rothschild's concept from the Ottoman period: modern monoculture farming based on export. In 1936 citrus fruit accounted for more than 80 percent of exports from Palestine. Yet the drawbacks of this economy were essentially similar to those of viniculture: dependence on foreign markets, the need to employ numerous workers during the harvest season, and a sharp decrease in the need for labor in the off-seasons. Demand for large numbers of unskilled workers for short periods could not be the basis of a Jewish agricultural working class in the moshava. The number of Jewish workers living in the moshavot increased over the years, but most of them found work in construction, services, and agriculture-related industry. Urbanization of the moshavot reduced the importance of the farms in them and made it possible to consolidate the population of Jewish workers there, even though Arab workers continued to work in the citrus groves.

Labor settlement adopted a mixed farming model: field crops (mostly grains), orchards, vegetables, chickens, and dairy. The produce would enable the settlement to be self-sufficient and not dependent on the market, while any surplus would go to the cities, especially surplus dairy products. This farm model was intended to prevent large-scale employment of hired laborers during the busy seasons, and whenever necessary there was an internal mobilization of working hands in the kibbutz or moshav at harvest time. What was more, the supply of fresh produce to the cities made the Jewish city less dependent on the Arab economy. This approach led to the development of modern sophisticated agriculture that became vital for food supply after the establishment of the state. During the Mandate period, however, its profitability was debatable.

The majority of workers went to the city to find a livelihood. During the 1926–1928 crisis, some found work in the moshavot, but once the cities started to recover and building began again, the workers quickly left agriculture to work in construction. In an immigrant country, construction is one of the main drivers of the economy. Population increase and a rise in the standard of living mandate large-scale construction. The surge of the Fourth Aliya period (1924–1929) derived from construction projects, while the emergence from the crisis was marked by renewed immigration in 1931 and 1932 that brought with it renewed construction. Starting in 1932 voices were raised among the workers' leadership complaining that people were leaving agriculture for construction work, which offered more than twice the daily wage. The shortage of Jewish workers in the moshavot continued until the end of the period of prosperity in 1936, but the citrus economy then entered a severe crisis from which it recovered only at the end of the World War.

The prosperity of the years between 1932 and 1936 marked a reversal of roles between Palestine and the Diaspora. In the 1920s the Zionist enterprise in Palestine was dependent on world Jewry for human resources, capital, and political influence. In 1931 the pressure exerted by world Jewry was one of the factors that led the British government to shelve the Passfield White Paper, giving the national home a respite. Although contributions to the Keren Hayesod did not meet expectations, they were the mainstay of labor settlement. The deep economic crisis in Palestine at the end of the 1920s occurred at a time when the unstable post–World War One political situation in Europe had stabilized and economic growth had begun. With the 1929 New York stock market crash, stability and growth were replaced overnight by a global economic crisis. Europe entered a period of economic depression, unemployment, social unrest, and political shock waves. In Germany the struggle between left and right began, ending with the Nazis' rise to power in January 1933. In Palestine, on the other hand, the uncertainty of 1929–1931 was replaced by relative quiet, political stability, and economic growth. The arrival of the new high commissioner, Arthur Wauchope, heralded a period in which Palestine, instead of depending on the Diaspora, suddenly became a country of refuge for masses of Jews seeking shelter from the gathering storm in Europe.

Within four years the population of the Yishuv more than doubled (a June 1927 estimate put it at 150,000 Jews; the November 1931 census recorded 174,610; a December 1936 estimate was 384,000; and a December 1939 estimate indicated 474,000). Most immigrants came from Poland, the Jewish people's largest demographic pool, but more than 50,000 came from Germany and had a different social profile than those from Eastern Europe. For several generations they had lived in a developed Western society as a minority with equal rights. Many had a university education. Fifteen percent were doctors, engineers, attorneys, or other professionals. They raised the standard of the Hebrew University and of banking and finance. Bauhaus architecture left its mark on Tel Aviv. The standards of hygiene and aesthetics in the consumer sector improved beyond measure. Patterns of consumption were upgraded: modern department stores, delicatessens, and cafés whose pastries were far superior to the local variety appeared.

More than a third of the German immigrants were classified as "people of means." Some came with modest capital of 1,000 Palestine pounds (a requirement for receiving an immigration certificate in this category), while others came with far larger sums that they invested in agricultural settlement or industry. According to accepted estimates, capital valued at 50 million Palestine pounds was brought into the country during those years, 80 percent of which was private. Half of it was invested in industry and commerce. This flow of capital made possible the economic prosperity of those years, and it also provided a reason for

increasing the number of immigrants on "the schedule," since the new economic production created a demand for workers.

One way to transfer the assets of German immigrants was the Transfer Agreement signed in 1933 between the German government and unofficial Zionist bodies, but with the knowledge of the Zionist Executive. Money deposited by Jews in Germany was used to purchase German goods to be imported into Palestine, and in Palestine the money was restored to its owners in local currency. The Germans benefited by this promotion of their exports—and because the agreement provided a way to get rid of Jews—while German Jews seeking to escape the Nazi trap could save some of their assets. The Zionist Executive viewed the Transfer Agreement as an important channel for bringing in the capital required for building the country. However, it was bitterly criticized in the Jewish world. The Nazis' discriminatory and debasing policy toward the Jews of Germany had inspired an international Jewish movement to boycott German goods. The Transfer Agreement hurt the boycott movement and ostensibly legitimized the expulsion of Jews from Germany. When it turned out that the boycott was not achieving its aims and that the Nazis were hardening their anti-Jewish policy, opposition to the agreement waned. And in fact the Jews of Germany saw it as an escape route at that fateful time. The Transfer Agreement brought some 8 million Palestine pounds into the country, about 1 percent of the assets of German Jewry in 1933. For the Jews whose immigration it facilitated, this was a large amount.

The year 1936 brought a severe economic crisis in Palestine that continued until 1941. It was caused by the Arab Revolt, the dwindling capital coming into the country, and the immigration cutback by the Mandatory government, which had placed a political cap on it since 1937. In 1940 there was 12 percent unemployment in the Jewish community, but this low ebb was rapidly replaced by a growth surge during the war years that averaged 10 percent annually. Driven by the British Army's great demand for agricultural and industrial products, this growth benefited both the Jewish and Arab economies. The Middle East became an important supply center for the Allied armies. Cessation of imports during the war encouraged development of local industry. The glory days of agriculture as a main employment sector were now over. Industry expanded to employ approximately one third of the Jewish workforce. Industrial development was aided by machinery brought into the country through the Transfer Agreement, and German immigrants with academic talent and technical skill were among the leading developers of industry. The Yishuv enlisted in the Allies' war effort by recruiting some 27,000 of its young men and women, and by supplying spare parts, optical equipment, and medical supplies for the British war machine.

The transition to a postwar peace economy was marked by continued growth arising from a revival of the citrus market and increased exports, and also from

the permits now being issued for private construction—which had been prohibited during the war years—which brought about great demand for new dwellings. Growth in these sectors offset the reduced demand from the British Army.

The immigration and settlement processes in the thirty years of the British Mandate laid the groundwork for creation of a durable Jewish society in Palestine. The growth of the Jewish population from 56,000 to 650,000, the establishment of a productive agricultural and industrial economy, and the distribution of Jewish settlements throughout the country were the foundations on which the Jewish state was built.

NOTES

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2. Weizmann's response in the political debate at the Fourteenth Zionist Congress in Vienna, 23.8.1925, in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, B. Litvinoff (ed.), Series B, 1, Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1983, p. 454.

3. Uri Zvi Greenberg, "Hazon ehad haligionot," (A Vision of One of the Legions), *Be'emtza ha'olam uve'emtza hazmanim* (In the Middle of the World, In the Middle of Time), Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1979, p. 85.

4. Chaim Arlosoroff, "Leha'arakhat ha'aliya harevi'it" (The Fourth Aliya: An Assessment), 1925, *Kitvei Chaim Arlosoroff* (The Writings of Chaim Arlosoroff), vol. 3, Tel Aviv: Stiebel, 1934, pp. 107–118.

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5 THE YISHUV AS AN EMERGING STATE

Jewish society in Palestine during the Mandate period was organized and functioned without legal authority. Consequently, preserving Jewish autonomy required a system of agreements, compromises, goodwill, and a readiness to concede. Yet this was also a time of nation building, when the ability to mobilize individuals and the masses was vital to advancing the national agenda. Shaping a leadership's authority and ensuring that the public complied with it without coercion was the secret of forming the emerging state.

Article 4 of the Mandate instrument states: "An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine. . . ." The Zionist Executive filled this role de facto. The Jewish Agency was established in 1929, with half of its members coming from the Zionist Executive. The other half consisted of Jewish magnates not identified as Zionists, but prepared to assist in building the national home. Weizmann hoped thereby to raise Jewish capital for building the country, but the Agency did not live up to these hopes. Right after the Agency was founded, the New York Stock Exchange crashed, and the wealthy were preoccupied with other matters. Thereafter, although the façade of a dual Jewish Agency Executive and Zionist Executive was maintained, the two were in fact one body and the chairman of the Zionist Executive also chaired the Jewish Agency Executive.

In the early 1920s the Zionist Organization was run as an organization of notables, without popular control. Weizmann was thus able to serve as its president without a political party behind him. For the same reason, a group with prestige but no public backing, headed by US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, leader of the American Zionists, caused an uproar at the 1920 Zionist convention by demanding that the guiding principles of the organization be changed and made strictly capitalist (the attempt failed). That oligarchic structure disappeared within a decade. Delegates to the 1931 Basel congress belonged to political blocs with clear leftist, rightist, and centrist characteristics. This shift resulted from the appearance in the Zionist movement of popular parties representing the masses. The most notable were the leftist bloc led by Mapai (an acronym for Workers Party of Eretz Yisrael) and the rightist bloc led by the Revisionists.

At the beginning of this period, the Zionist Organization was at the peak of its powers, garlanded with triumph since the Balfour Declaration. When the Zionist

Commission, representing the Zionist Executive, arrived in Palestine in 1918, representatives of the Yishuv requested membership on the commission, but Weizmann, who chaired it, refused. The executive, he asserted, represented the Jewish people, not the small, weak Yishuv. This relationship changed when Mapai gained leadership of the Zionist Organization in the 1930s, and the center of gravity of Zionist activity shifted from London to Jerusalem. The change was marked symbolically by replacing German with Hebrew as the spoken language of the Zionist Executive.

The Yishuv's autonomy was built around Knesset Yisrael (Jewish assembly), a body encompassing all the Jews of Palestine except for those who did not wish to belong. Its members elected an Assembly of Representatives, which in turn elected a National Committee from among its number. Knesset Yisrael was split between religious and secular, right and left, moderates and activists, and never became a prestigious and influential central institution. An example of these divisions and their destructive effect on the Knesset Yisrael's authority was the controversy over women's right to vote and be elected. Women voted in the elections to the Zionist Congress and were elected as delegates even before they were granted this right by Western legislatures. It was universally accepted in the new Yishuv that women had equal status with men, but this principle was unacceptable to the ultra-Orthodox and their Agudat Yisrael party; they were reluctant to participate in a body whose election process included women.

This issue was important, since if the ultra-Orthodox left Knesset Yisrael, the body would be unable to claim universal representation of the Jews of Palestine. What was more, before the arrival of the Third and Fourth Aliyot in the early 1920s, the old Yishuv had considerable demographic consequence. If the ultra-Orthodox left, the religious-Zionist Mizrachi party, in whose institutions women voted and were elected, was apt to find itself the sole representative of religion in Knesset Yisrael. In this situation it might feel compelled to adopt extreme positions on religious matters—perhaps even leave the Knesset—in order to avoid seeming less religious than the ultra-Orthodox. If the religious parties left, then the secular right and center would find themselves at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the left, and might consider leaving themselves. In this way the departure of a single party could create a chain reaction. The dynamics of a voluntary organization sustained by consensus require compromise among its members in order to maintain its overall framework. Therefore, in the first years of the Mandate, elections to the Assembly of Representatives were consistently postponed in the hope of reaching a compromise that would enable ultra-Orthodox participation without detracting from the principle of women's equality, which was considered a keystone of the new Yishuv.

In April 1920 nonobservant Jews led by the Zionist left won the first elections

by a large majority—even though ultra-Orthodox men were allowed to vote at separate polling stations where each vote was counted as two (the second being for their wives, who did not vote). The result stunned the ultra-Orthodox, who swiftly announced that they were leaving. All attempts to reach agreement with them failed, and they remained outside Knesset Yisrael. The elections to the second Assembly of Representatives in 1925 were held in accordance with the electoral constitution that granted full equal rights to women, thus ending a protracted and onerous affair that brought no prestige to Knesset Yisrael and its institutions. In 1928 the British enacted the Communities Law, recognizing the authority of the Chief Rabbinate in all matters pertaining to Jewish religious life and personal status. This law also included the Knesset Yisrael constitution. Agudat Yisrael demanded from the authorities—and was granted—the right to establish a separate community that did not recognize the general institutions of the Yishuv.

The weakness exposed in these institutions representing Jewish autonomy had an impact on their status both inside the Yishuv and externally in the Yishuv's relations with the British. There was a shift of power and prestige from the general institutions to those representing specific groups: the Histadrut (General Federation of Jewish Workers), the political parties, and the Zionist Executive. These were the entities capable of mobilizing supporters, galvanizing the masses, and formulating a public agenda. Other important bodies were the municipalities and the local councils, which the government allowed to impose taxes, an authority not granted to Knesset Yisrael.

At the beginning of the Mandate period, there were three main blocs in the Yishuv: the left, the nonreligious center-right, and the religious blocs. With the withdrawal of the non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox from involvement in Yishuv life, only the Mizrachi party remained within the Zionist camp as an active but weak religious-Zionist entity. There were also separate ethnic organizations representing the Sephardim and the Yemenites, which split the power of the religious camp. However, nationalist ideology disapproved of such organizations, which were seen as representing particular interests, not the Zionist cause. For many years the stigma attached to ethnic organizations prevented the establishment of ethnic parties. The right-center bloc was divided into two power bases: the municipal authorities led by the Tel Aviv municipality and the Farmers Union representing the farmers from the old moshavot. The secular right had a liberal philosophy and a Zionistic approach but no coherent worldview, organizational structure, or resolute leadership. The Farmers Union was plagued by conflicts of interest between the farmers from the prosperous plantation moshavot and those from the poorer Galilee moshavot. At the same time, the controversy over Jewish labor distanced the farmers from the liberal center and the intelligentsia,

which tended to accept the workers' position. Consequently there was little likelihood that any political entity would emerge to represent the center, which had considerable demographic and economic importance.

Beginning in 1919 a slow process evolved that led ultimately to unity among the workers; it was completed with the founding of Mapai in 1930. The first phase of this process was the 1919 unification of the majority of members of the Poalei Zion party from the Second Aliya period with those known as "nonpartisan" workers, mostly representing the agricultural workers' unions founded during that same period. The initiators and leaders of Ahdut Haʿavoda (Zionist-socialist labor union) were David Ben-Gurion, a Poalei Zion leader who spent the war period in exile in the United States, and Berl Katznelson, the leader of the nonpartisans. The union was formed under the banner of overall unity of the workers' camp, but it never materialized, because the Hapoʿel Hatzaʿir party refused to disband and join the new entity.

A principal motive of this unification was the desire to greet the new wave of immigration with a cohesive organization that could absorb the newcomers. In an immigrant country each new wave of immigrants constitutes a challenge for its predecessor, which has already formed patterns and norms of conduct and seeks to ensure that the new wave will assimilate into and not undermine it. This dynamic had already appeared on the eve of the Third Aliya, and Ahdut Haʿavoda was meant to meet the Third Aliya immigrants with the social and settlement doctrine of the Second Aliya and make certain that they accepted it. As these immigrants assimilated into Second Aliya ideology, they were also expected to give political backing to the new party, thus increasing its power in the Yishuv. It was for the same reason that Hapoʿel Hatzaʿir refused to disband: a rumor spread that groups of Tzeʿirei Zion (a Zionist populist youth organization) already established in Europe would soon come to Palestine in large numbers, join Hapoʿel Hatzaʿir, and increase its power.

However, the people of the Third Aliya, received by two parties competing for their support, chose instead to form their own social organizations such as Gedud Haʿavoda and Hashomer Hatzaʿir. Thus it is no surprise that the Third Aliya organizations constituted the driving force in forming a joint entity that would represent all the workers' parties and have the role of assisting in immigrant absorption and creating labor settlement. December 1920 saw the founding of the General Federation of Jewish Workers in the Land of Israel (known as the Histadrut), which had two main arms: the constructive arm, assigned to building the country through settlement, cooperatives, and contract work, and the professional arm, representing the workers in relation to the employers.

The constructive arm, unique among labor organizations worldwide, reflected its perceived central role in realizing Zionism. The professional arm was similar

to other workers' organizations elsewhere, but had additional functions deriving from the special situation in Palestine. In a country with no mechanisms to absorb new immigrants, where there were no relatives to help them through the initial period, the Histadrut played a leading role in helping newcomers settle in. Histadrut membership provided new immigrants with access to the Histadrut employment exchange, which divided workdays between old-timers and newcomers. Members received medical help from the Histadrut sick fund. Workers' kitchens in the main cities served inexpensive cooked meals to the young single people without home or family. At the Histadrut cultural centers workers could read a newspaper or book and enjoy the company of other young people—a remedy for loneliness, especially of those who had immigrated on their own and were not part of an organized group. Settlement was considered a privilege, and the Histadrut made sure that no group of pioneers got to jump the line. It gave hope for the future. In the cities it built workers' housing, and even a school system and cultural institutions. The relationship between the Histadrut and its members was based on the members' dependence on the system, internalization of its values, and the political backing they gave it in return.

By contrast with a right and center lacking any clear political consciousness, the left consolidated around an ideology that used socialist imagery. Philosopher and biblical scholar Yechezkel Kaufmann contended that the Jewish-Palestinian left was unlike the European left. Although it spoke in socialist slogans, it acted like a pioneer engaged in building the country—that is, it fulfilled a national mission. The workers established the Jewish working class, the vital foundation for building a lasting Jewish society. In order to do so they took in new immigrants, even though the latter competed with veteran workers; they fought for Jewish labor to ensure that the minimal conditions required for a Jewish worker to integrate into the country existed; and they went to settle in places where private capital refused to go. Thus the workers' organization was vital to absorb immigrants and to expand the Jewish hold on the country. The labor movement, Kaufmann writes, "fulfills a national mission with its organization, with its aspiration to communal forms of settlement, in its war for decent working conditions, in its war for Jewish labor, and also—in its strikes, despite all the wild weeds growing here."[1]

However, the use of socialist symbols by the labor movement led to increased tension in relations between left and right in Palestine—what Kaufmann called "a psychological class war." The Histadrut used these symbols and the clashes between left and right to consolidate its followers and to help build broad ideological and social solidarity. During the period when the Yishuv had no legal mechanism for enlisting members, enthusiasm, political loyalty, and identification with the movement became the most important mobilization tools. The

Histadrut knew how to turn its members' economic and social dependence into a first-class recruitment tool for Zionist and political tasks alike. City workers provided the masses who took part in political rallies and other events that called for casual participation, while the kibbutz members offered an endless supply of activists ready to enlist for long-term missions. From the kibbutzim came emissaries to the Hechalutz movement in the Diaspora, Haganah activists, volunteers to carry out illegal immigration actions, and so forth.

In 1925 a new party, the Revisionists, led by Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky, appeared on the political scene. Jabotinsky had resigned from the Zionist Executive in 1923 following political differences with Weizmann. Jabotinsky believed that public pressure could force Britain to establish a "colonization regime" in Palestine, meaning a regime that would actively help build the national home by creating appropriate economic and political conditions. Weizmann, at the helm of the Zionist Executive, thought the most the Zionists could achieve was to prevent a policy that would arrest the development of the national home. Jabotinsky's activist views were in line with the perceptions of Ahdut Haʿavoda at the time. But agricultural labor settlement depended on Zionist Executive funds, so even though the workers' rhetoric was belligerent, their policy was moderate, and they opposed Jabotinsky on each concrete issue that came up. For his part Jabotinsky understood the workers' dependence on the Zionist Executive. In a letter to Oscar Grusenberg, a noted Jewish attorney who suggested that Jabotinsky base his movement on the workers' support, he described the young people turning to the workers' group as "intelligent youth seeking self-improvement through simplicity, that is, the best [colonizing] material in the world." Still, he added, since they were economically dependent on the people holding the purse strings, they would not cooperate with someone like himself, who sought to undermine the existing order in the Zionist movement. "As builders they are worthy of respect and distinction—but as a political factor they are our 'Black Hundred' [referring to an ultra-reactionary movement in Russia]."[2]

Jabotinsky therefore oriented his party toward the Jewish middle class in Poland, representing nationalist Jewish youth. In contrast to the left's socialist rhetoric and symbols, Jabotinsky adopted symbols that extolled the nation and demanded the subordination of class interests to the national interest. In the debate that had gone on since the Fourth Aliya on whether the country should be built with private or national capital, Jabotinsky sided with private capital. In opposition to the workers, who claimed that they exclusively were the nation's pioneers—which is how most of the Zionist public perceived them—Jabotinsky presented the petite bourgeoisie as another claimant to the crown of implementers of Zionism. He demanded that the workers abstain from striking and accept mandatory arbitration and a neutral employment exchange (belonging neither to

employers nor employees) and that the employers avoid shutdowns and employ Jewish labor. He contended that wages should be determined by economic capacity. In the absence of binding social legislation, these demands amounted to concessions by the workers.

Jabotinsky was a brilliant orator with fiery rhetoric and a keen sense of political drama. He knew how to shape catchy slogans. The "Iron Wall" was the battalion he sought to establish under British aegis that would block Arab nationalism from preventing Jews from building the country. His slogan "One Banner" or "Monism," as opposed to *sha'atnez*, "an incongruous mixture," advocated a wholly nationalist worldview, instead of the workers' combination of nationalism and socialism. "Yes, break it!" supported breaking Histadrut strikes. These phrases were all designed to consolidate his bloc, whose youth movement, Betar (an acronym of *Brit Yosef Trumpeldor,* Joseph Trumpeldor covenant), had been founded in Eastern Europe and was influenced by Polish right-wing nationalism.

Jabotinsky's heart was not in his movement's social and economic ideology, but he embraced it out of the political need to define his party vis-à-vis the workers, and also because the conventional discourse of the era required it. But his heart *was* in his political doctrine. Jabotinsky raised the banner of the Jewish state and believed it was achievable by fighting in the arena of European public opinion in general, and that of Britain in particular. At the 1931 Zionist Congress, shortly after publication of the MacDonald Letter, he demanded that the congress declare that the final goal of Zionism was a Jewish state. At that time such a declaration was considered both provocative and unnecessary. When the congress rejected it he defiantly tore up his delegate's card and strode out of the hall. From that point he set out to take the Revisionists out of the Zionist Organization, a break that took place in 1935.

The Revisionists were one of two forces representing the masses at that congress. The other was Mapai, formed in 1930 by a merger of Ahdut Ha'avoda and Hapo'el Hatza'ir. The workers had greater electoral strength at the congress, but the difference between them and the Revisionists was not significant, since other centrist and right-wing parties supported the Revisionists, making them the leading party of the right-wing bloc. From now on the Revisionists and the labor movement competed for hegemony over the Zionist Organization. This competition took place mainly in Poland, where the two movements fought for the hearts and minds of the Jewish masses, who were led by economic hardship and the rise of antisemitism to join the Zionist movement by the thousands. At the same time, the struggle between the two movements in Palestine shook the Zionist consensus and exposed the weaknesses of the voluntary society in the face of resolute ideological minorities.

The source of the Zionist Organization's power was its authority to represent

the movement with the Mandatory authorities, for example by helping select immigrants in the "workers" category every six months in the "schedule." The Mandatory government laid down the rules, but it was the "Palestine Offices" in each European country that drew up the lists of immigrants. These offices were staffed by representatives of organizations and parties according to their relative representation at the Zionist Congress. Until the early 1930s the issue of selecting immigrants was not acute since there were few candidates, but when the Jews' travails increased and immigration pressure heightened, so did the claims of political discrimination in the selection process.

The right to choose immigrants gave the Jewish Agency Executive great power, but this power had limits, because the Agency could be circumvented. If the Agency acted arbitrarily, the Yishuv employers could approach the Mandatory government directly with requests for immigration certificates. In 1933 Jabotinsky attempted to do this by reaching an agreement with an employers' organization of farmers, "Hanoteah" (the planter). Hanoteah was to apply to the Mandatory government for immigration certificates and grant them to members of Betar. (Betar's Order No. 60 directed its members not to apply to the Palestine Offices for certificates, but to await certificates from Hanoteah.) That same year a Farmers Union representative submitted a request to the Mandatory government for certificates for workers that the union would select: not fiery young socialists, but family men, modest farmers from the Carpathians. In this way the farmers and the Revisionists sought to undermine the Agency's exclusivity in selecting immigrants in the workers category, contending that all the human material coming to Palestine was cut from the same socialist cloth. Since half of the immigrants in this category were graduates of the Hechalutz training farms who identified with the left, it was true that socialists were given priority. These attempts to circumvent the Zionist Organization did not succeed, since they wound up bringing in very small numbers of immigrants, but they raised interparty hatred to new heights.

The Revisionists continued to fight the Jewish Agency's authority by boycotting the Zionist funds and by getting hundreds of thousands of Jews to sign a petition calling on the British government to change its policy in Palestine. The petition impinged upon the Jewish Agency's monopoly in administering Zionist policy. In Palestine the Revisionists focused on undermining the Histadrut's power. Recognizing its authority as a source of power among workers and employers alike, they challenged its claim to be the sole representative of the workers and to allocate work. Their actions included breaking Histadrut-organized strikes by putting Betar workers into strikebound workplaces. They claimed that the strikes were organized in order to enforce "organized labor"—that is, to

create a Histadrut monopoly, not for a legitimate purpose such as achieving better working conditions or advancing Jewish labor.

In the first half of the 1930s, tension between left and right, farmers and workers, peaked and spilled over into street violence. These events can only be understood in the context of what was happening in Europe during those years: the rise of the Nazis to power in Germany, the repression of the left, and the rise of fascism in other European countries. The latent civil war in the Yishuv, and the terms by which each side referred to the other, was a local reflection of the European right and left and their bloody struggles. Tension in the Yishuv and outbursts of street violence threatened to destroy internal solidarity. In June 1933 the head of the Jewish Agency Political Department, Chaim Arlosoroff, was murdered on the Tel Aviv beach. Arlosoroff was a brilliant young man whom the Revisionists had attacked virulently because of his work negotiating the Transfer Agreement with Nazi Germany. Members of Betar were suspected in his murder. The temperature in the street soared to new heights, with Betar and its supporters claiming a "blood libel" while the left viewed them as the murderers.

In 1934, to prevent the situation from deteriorating, an attempt was made to reach an agreement between Ben-Gurion, who had replaced Arlosoroff on the Jewish Agency Executive, and Jabotinsky. Surprisingly the two leaders found a common language and spiritual closeness. But the agreement was rejected by a Histadrut referendum. It seems that the rank and file had internalized the mutual hate propaganda more than had the leaders. Still this episode marked the beginnings of moderation in the struggle in the Palestinian street. The 1935 Zionist Congress in Lucerne was held under the slogan "Peace in the Yishuv," and a process of conciliation ensued, first between Mapai and the Mizrachi religious-Zionist party (a "historic alliance" that held firm until 1977) and later between the Zionist Executive and the farmers. Mapai had to concede some of its power in return for the support of the farmers and their sympathizers—an example of a concession made for the sake of consolidating a consensus. When the Arab Revolt broke out and the economic crisis began, hurting the farmers, both sides sought common ground. In the years that followed, political disputes in the Yishuv did not go away, but the attempts to bypass the Zionist Organization and go directly to the Mandatory government ceased. The Revisionists' secession from the Zionist Organization and founding of the New Zionist Organization (NZO) gave the workers' movement dominance in the Zionist Organization but also perpetuated a pattern of secession.

While in the 1920s the focal point of tension had been the debate on the role of private versus public capital in building the country, in the first half of the 1930s the contentious issue was what type of immigrants were best for building the

country, and who should select them. This issue touched upon the question of Jewish labor and labor relations in the Yishuv. At the same time, there was a debate over the Zionist Organization's political methods. Should it try to confront the British or simply do the best it could under the Mandatory government? All these issues were linked to the question of whether or not majority authority would be accepted. Each time the farmers, the Revisionists, or the ultra-Orthodox found themselves at a disadvantage in relation to the majority, they sought ways to circumvent it. In the absence of constitutional rule the majority was forced to compromise with the minority if it wished to maintain the integrity of the framework. Thus, for instance, while the Mandatory Municipalities Order gave residents the right to vote without a property requirement, Mapai agreed to a certain requirement in the moshavot, in order to keep the peace. It also accepted the establishment of national employment exchanges that ensured equal division of work among all workers, including those who were not Histadrut members. The crises of the late 1930s, which highlighted the need for national discipline, worked in favor of Zionist Executive authority. However, every time the executive wanted to present a united front either to the authorities or to world public opinion—for example, during testimony before the UNSCOP committee—it was compelled to make concessions to the Agudat Yisrael party, or to the farmers, to avoid breaking unity.

In the second half of the 1930s, the debates over national authority shifted to security issues. Nineteen twenty had seen the establishment of the Haganah, a civil militia, whose operation was transferred to the Histadrut after its founding. Until 1936 the Haganah was unimportant, as reflected in the meager resources allocated to it in the Zionist budget. In 1931 a section of the Haganah known as Irgun B (organization B) broke away, contending that the Haganah was not sufficiently activist. Irgun B membership came mainly from the right. After the outbreak of the Arab Revolt, the Haganah reached an agreement with Irgun B, most of whose members returned to the Haganah. However, a minority of them, members of Betar, founded Etzel (an acronym for *Irgun Tzva'i Leumi*, national military organization, which in English was shortened to Irgun), which recognized only Jabotinsky's authority. In the fall of 1937 the Etzel broke the policy of restraint upheld by the Haganah in accordance with Zionist Executive instructions. This policy stated that Jews would not commit terrorist acts in response to Arab terror. In this way the Zionist Executive sought to ensure Mandatory government support in quelling the Arab Revolt, and even for developing a Jewish defense force.

The issue of the monopoly over the use of force was now the focal point of tension between the Yishuv and those known as "the secessionists." In the Mandate's last decade this became one of the thorniest issues in majority-minority relations. The Etzel and later Lehi (an acronym for *Lohamei Herut Yisrael*, fighters

for the freedom of Israel, or as they were known in English, the Stern Gang), led by Avraham Stern and founded in 1940 by an extremist Etzel splinter group, were underground organizations beyond the control of a civil body. They considered themselves a fighting vanguard carrying on their shoulders the liberation of the nation, and answered to themselves alone. Following Jabotinsky's death in 1940 they even refused to accept Revisionist movement authority. These underground organizations' independent activities both undermined Zionist Executive authority and damaged it politically. The executive attempted to isolate the underground organizations from their right-wing supporters by agreeing to set up a "national command" in which the left relinquished its majority status and shared leadership on a par with the other Yishuv groups. In return the right-wing groups agreed to the national command in place of the existing fragmented regional structure of the Haganah. Moshe Sneh of the General Zionists party, who had only recently escaped from Poland to Palestine, was appointed head of the national command. But all attempts at creating a framework that would also be binding on the underground organizations (who were supposed to be represented by the rightists in the national command) failed. So did attempts by the Haganah, and by the Haganah together with the Mandate authorities, to suppress the organizations. The Jewish Agency Executive did not succeed in gaining a monopoly over the use of force by Jews until the establishment of the state.

The use of force was a gray area in Jewish Agency Executive affairs. The executive was entrusted with dealing with the Mandatory government and as such was obliged to scrupulously observe the law. It was inconceivable that such a body would engage in any kind of underground activity. Therefore the Haganah was not officially connected with the Zionist Executive; it was initially run by the Histadrut and later by the national command. In fact, however, from the early 1930s on, after Mapai joined the Jewish Agency Executive, and particularly after Ben-Gurion joined it in 1933, an equivocal situation prevailed: the Jewish Agency Executive was ostensibly not involved, but in reality the Haganah accepted its authority. Within Mapai a small circle of people had no official roles in the Zionist Executive but were entrusted with instructing and directing the paramilitary body. The most important of them were Berl Katznelson and Eliahu Golomb. At times of military cooperation with the authorities, such as during the Arab Revolt and the first two years of the World War, the ambiguity resolved somewhat, although the Haganah never relinquished its independence and separate structure. During periods of conflict and unrest, such as after the publication of the 1939 White Paper and after the World War, the Haganah went deeper underground. Nevertheless the authorities were well aware of its connection with the Jewish Agency Executive. It was not by chance that during the British military operation on "Black Sabbath" (formally Operation Agatha) in June 1946, the

government apprehended all the Histadrut leaders and members of the Zionist Executive that it managed to lay hands on.

Another gray area of Zionist Executive activity was illegal immigration, which had begun with the Hechalutz organization in Poland. Long waits before Jews could emigrate gave the members the idea of bringing illegal immigrant ships to Palestine without the authorities' knowledge. This idea was adopted by the Betar movement, whose punishment for Jabotinsky's scheme of bypassing the Jewish Agency Executive to get immigration certificates was loss of the right to certificates. Betar organized several illegal immigrant ships during the 1930s and up until 1941. It also used tourism to the 1935 Maccabiah Games as a cover for illegal immigration; many people who came to Palestine as tourists remained there illegally.

The Jewish Agency Executive took a dim view of these operations, which encroached on the only authority it had—the selection of immigrants in the workers category—and made immigration less selective, especially since more than half of the immigration slots were not under the executive's control in any case. Worse, the authorities deducted the number of illegal immigrants from the immigration quota, further impinging on the executive's authority. After 1938, however, when the Mandatory government began applying the political criterion to limit immigration, Ben-Gurion stopped opposing illegal immigration and began to support it. At the Twenty-first Zionist Congress in Geneva, Berl Katznelson delivered a speech supporting illegal immigration, which Ben-Gurion praised. From then on the Zionist Executive openly espoused both legal and illegal immigration. After the World War illegal immigration became one of the Zionist Executive's major tools in its struggle against Britain's restrictions on Jewish immigration.

This strategic ambiguity in Zionist Executive policy, between scrupulously observing Mandatory law and ignoring it when a critical national interest was in the balance, was accepted by the majority of the Yishuv, but not by all. Some groups believed that this policy was detrimental to the movement's integrity and gave a stamp of approval to actions that undermined its authority. However, the Zionist Executive, led by Ben-Gurion, succeeded in creating a national consensus. Although this consensus was challenged by forces from right and left alike, it comprised the emotional, psychological, and organizational foundations that made it possible to mobilize most of the public institutions, organizations, and groups of the Yishuv for the struggle for independence. An ethos of acceptance of Jewish Agency authority was created, which became the norm, so that the few who deviated from it were seen as damaging national unity. One expression of the acceptance of this norm was the taint of censure attached to the label *secessionist.* In the final decade of the Mandate, the vast majority of the Yishuv identified

with the struggle for a Jewish state, even though a large part of it had come to Palestine only a few years earlier, and without a clear Zionist ideology. For most this was a passive form of identification. Only select groups enlisted as activists. Yet this general identification with nationalist objectives was the adhesive that enabled an immigrant society to cohere into the kernel of an emerging state.

NOTES

1. Yechezkel Kaufmann, "Milkhemet hamaʿamadot beYisrael" (The Class War in Israel), in *Bechavlei hazman* (In the Bonds of Time), Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1936, p. 162

2. Ze'ev Jabotinsky to Oscar Grusenberg, 12.11.1925. *Letters,* Tel Aviv: Amichai (n.d.), pp. 72–73.

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6 THE YISHUV
SOCIETY, CULTURE, AND ETHOS

In 1922 the poet David Shimonovich published a poem that became a watchword:

> Don't listen, my son, to your father's instruction
> Nor to your mother's teaching give ear,
> For "Line by line" is a father's instruction
> And a mother's teaching: "Slow but sure . . . "
> And a spring storm speaks the truth:
> Listen, man, to the song of the son![1]

This poem, published in Warsaw, epitomizes the youth rebellion that was part of the Zionist experience. Old Judaism seemed aged and ailing, lacking relevance to the new world dawning in the wake of World War One. The old Jew, the Jew of the Diaspora, was depicted as psychologically flawed, physically weak, inclined toward *luftgesheftn* (lit., "air business," meaning peddling, acting as middlemen, and engaging in other ephemeral trades), a stranger to nature and anything natural and spontaneous, materialistic and incapable of acting on anything but his or her own immediate interests. The new Jew was to be the complete opposite: an ethical, aesthetic person guided by ideals who rebels against a debasing reality; a free, proud individual ready to fight for his or her own and the nation's honor. Yearning for freedom and equality among peoples, admiring nature, beauty, and open spaces, the new Jew relinquished the pleasures of a hypocritical, bourgeois world shackled by outdated conventions and sought the challenge of a life in which dedication to the collective was congruent with maintaining inner truth and a life of simplicity, honesty, and self-realization. The new Jew aspired to equality, justice, and truth in human relations, and was prepared to die for them.

This type of thinking is typical of those who dedicate themselves unreservedly to revolutionary or national movements. It represents the transference of the patterns of thinking and behavior characteristic of religious sects to the secular world. Such idealism usually appeals to young people. And indeed the Zionist movement was essentially a youth movement that also attracted adults. The Zionist pioneer, the soldier-volunteer in the struggle for the sake of the nation, was always a young man or woman who devoted his or her life to the uplifting experience of self-sacrifice for a lofty ideal. Shimonovich's poem illustrates the cult of

youth that was part and parcel of this movement. These young men and women detached themselves from existing society in order to establish the society of the future. In such a setting the movement replaces both community and family, and the peer group becomes the significant reference group. The present becomes an avenue leading to the future. Relinquishing material possessions becomes a rite of initiation into the new society. The "divorce" from community, family, and home symbolizes the severing of old loyalties for the sake of a covenant of loyalty to the new society. "O, Mother, know this, that if you see me you will no longer know me. I am with those who walk barefoot in the wilderness. / Poverty here walks with a crown of thistles and a robe and carries a great scepter of gold on the Mediterranean shore!" declared Uri Zvi Greenberg in his poem "The Army of Labor."[2]

The new identity embraced old Jewish patterns while reconfiguring their meaning. Thus poet Avraham Shlonsky sanctifies work on the roads:

> Dress me, good mother, in a glorious robe of many colors
> and at dawn lead me to [my] toil.
> My land is wrapped in light as in a prayer shawl. The houses stand forth like frontlets,
> and the roads paved by hand stream down like phylactery straps.[3]

And Uri Zvi Greenberg speaks of "Jerusalem—phylacteries of the forehead, and the Emek—of the hand!"[4] The new identity created its own diverse texts and symbols: poems, songs, slogans, lifestyles. The new society was founded on truth in human relations; people said what they meant and meant what they said. In this ascetic way of life, poverty and privation endowed people with special value. It was a society that lived at high levels of tension: day after day its members put their loyalty to the test, in both their own eyes and those of their peers. Only young people, whose enthusiasm enables them to undergo a conversion from one culture to another, from one society to another, can live like this.

The conversion from old to new Jew was based on the notion of "negating the Diaspora." This idea came into being with the fathers of Zionism—Pinsker and Herzl—and their belief that as a minority in the Diaspora the Jews were in existential danger, so they needed a homeland. Abraham Mapu, Y. L. Gordon, David Frischmann, and Mendele Mocher Seforim (Sholem Abramovich)—all non-Zionist writers and poets—also built upon these basic ideas. They rejected the Jewish way of life in the Diaspora, continuing the line of criticism leveled against it by all the movements that had sought to modernize the Jewish street since the Enlightenment period. They depicted a degenerated Jewish society and called for productivization, secularization, and education. Berdyczewksi and Brenner added a call for mental and psychological transformation, a "change of values" in the spirit of the Vitalist school of thought, emphasizing earthiness over spir-

ituality, tilling the soil as opposed to living at a remove from nature, manliness as opposed to cowardice.

The more driven the pioneers were by the utopian vision of an alternative society, the more virulent was their criticism of the society they had come from. The harsher the reality of Palestine, and the sacrifices it claimed from them, the greater their need to erect psychological barriers against the desire to go back home. "Home" was still there in Eastern Europe, and families frequently urged their sons or daughters to return to the nest. Avigdor Hameiri's popular poem "Two Letters" gave lyrical expression to the divided heart. The mother writes,

> To my good son in Jerusalem,
> Your father is dead, Mother is sick
> Come home to the Diaspora.

And the son replies,

> Forgive me, my sick mother
> I shall never return to the Diaspora
> . . . If you really love me, come here and embrace me.

Now comes the Zionist declaration of faith:

> I shall no longer be a wanderer!
> I shall never budge from here!
> I shall not budge, I shall not budge
> No!"[5]

The need to repeat the oath of loyalty over and over again actually indicates its weakness.

To maintain the youngsters' enthusiasm and their loyalty to the enterprise, writers and poets described the small town in Europe as a human, national, and cultural failure, the source of the weaknesses that kept the Jews from attaining Utopia. Perhaps the harshest critics of the Diaspora were Mendele and Brenner, who described with bitter sarcasm all the ills of Jewish society, its dependence on the gentiles, its weakness and wretchedness. The pioneers who came from the Diaspora knew its reality, so their own experience moderated the influence of literature. Not so with those born and educated in Palestine; for them the literary caricature reflected a reality that was entirely different from and inferior to a life of freedom in Palestine. In fact Mendele and Brenner were ambivalent toward the Diaspora, for it represented their own life experience and their people. Despite their harsh criticism of the Jews, in the end they identified with them and loved them. Those born in Palestine, on the other hand, took in the criticism without the love that mitigated it.

The pioneer was the model used to indoctrinate the youth movements founded in Eastern Europe between the two World Wars. This ideal figure served as a tool for recruiting idealistic human resources for the Zionist movement. The figure of the pioneer was drawn from two sources of inspiration. The Russian Narodnik, the revolutionary who left family and home behind and pursued a life of total dedication and sacrifice for the revolution, was the inspiration for pioneering as a way of life—not a daring onetime act, but a lifelong commitment. The second source was apparently Hasidism, through which bubbled springs of enthusiasm, willingness to give up the material world, and dedication to the community of believers. Other sources of inspiration included the Polish national movement, which influenced education in Betar. The difference between the Betar pioneer and the pioneer from the leftist movements lay in the final aim of their indoctrination. Whereas the Betar member was instructed to fulfill any mission required for the realization of Zionism, especially military ones, leftist youth movements directed members toward agricultural settlement, preferably on the border, in the form of kibbutz life. The settlement ethos was potent, for it presented the young person with a concrete mission whose importance was never in doubt and did not wane with time. The power of this ethos is evident in the fact that nonsocialist movements such as Hapoʿel Hamizrachi also espoused kibbutz settlement for their members. Labor on the borders became the leading Zionist-pioneering ethos of the time; even Betar was affected by it and attempted to establish labor brigades in the moshavot.

The cult of youth was an inseparable part of the notion of the new Jew. The adults, in Palestine and the Diaspora alike, were considered "the generation of the wilderness," who would not live to see the Promised Land, i.e., the realization of Zionism. The young people who grew up in freedom would be the ones to bring redemption. In his poem "Creed," Shaul Tschernichovsky lauds the future generation in Palestine:

> Then my people will blossom once more,
> And in the land a new generation will rise
> Its iron chains will be removed,
> Eye to eye it will see light.
>
> It will live, love, and strive,
> A generation in The Land is indeed alive,
> Not in the future, in the sky—
> Living in the spirit is not enough.[6]

This generation was envisioned as possessing healthy instincts, passion, sensuality, and a talent for living. The direct link between the country and the young

people who were educated in it would bring about the rebirth of the Jewish people as a courageous nation, connected with nature and rejecting the excessive spirituality of the Diaspora. In this cult of youth a special place was reserved for those born and brought up in Palestine. Whereas their fathers had struggled to get used to physical labor, the sons worked in the fields with no difficulty. While the older generation spoke of their love of the country but barely knew it, their children tramped its length and breadth and identified with its climate and landscape. They did not yearn for a different home and landscape, nor did they suffer from what poet Leah Goldberg called "the heartache of two homelands."[7]

The older generation spoke much of the need for self-defense and bearing arms, but very few actually did so. In contrast, Yitzhak Tabenkin, the leader of the Hakibbutz Hameuhad movement, described the young pioneer as a man carrying a hoe in one hand and a rifle on his shoulder, uniting the tiller of the soil with the fighter-defender. "Your boys once brought you peace with the plow. Today they bring you peace with the rifle!" as Nathan Alterman put it in a song of the late 1930s that was sung by the members of the Haganah. The *sabra*, the desert cactus encountered by the immigrants, gave its name to this generation: its prickly pear has a thorny outer skin but flesh that is sweet and juicy. The sabras were said to be frank and direct, honest and brave, free of the hypocritical mannerisms of bourgeois society, with strength that lay not in words but in deeds. Thus did the settlers idealize the native sons, who to their parents seemed to epitomize all the dreams of free children of nature growing up in Palestine. A young American woman student who encountered this breed of sabra defined them as follows: "Rugged and unpolished, unsophisticated, uninhibited, often shy, uncomplicated, direct, gentle, ruthless, undaunted, self-reliant, with a gift for improvisation."[8]

COLLECTIVE VERSUS INDIVIDUAL

A mixture of admiration, anxiety, rivalry, and identification characterized the Yishuv's attitude toward Soviet Russia. The Bolshevik Revolution inspired tremendous enthusiasm. Intellectuals all over the world saw it as the opening of a new, lofty chapter in human history. "There is no political movement anywhere to which masses of mankind, in their millions, looked with such messianic yearning as they did to the Russian Revolution . . . ," wrote Berl Katznelson. "People did not fully comprehend the nature of the [new] regime; they did not judge it on its merits or faults. They so sorely wished to see the old regime shatter that everybody sought to accept the good and refused to acknowledge the evil. That was the beginning."[9]

The experience of a revolution that razed an old world to the ground captivated young people. The pioneers of Palestine longed for the shortcut discussed earlier: building an egalitarian society and economy from scratch in Palestine, just

as people had in Russia. The pioneers were less influenced by communist ideology than attracted by the fact that in that vast country a social experiment was taking place similar in character to the one occurring in Palestine, albeit on a different scale. From a distance the surge in construction, the industrialization and electrification, the organizational boldness, eradication of illiteracy, and advances by women and children, all seemed in line with the pioneers' own desires. The communist regime, which swore by the abolition of all forms of discrimination and had promoted Jews to senior positions, tugged at the very sensitive heartstrings of Jews all over the world. When the pioneers of Palestine sang, "Our faces to the rising sun, / Our path again turns eastward. / We look ahead to the great hour, / Heads held high, our soul unbowed," they had in mind both the Zionist and socialist visions.[10]

The pioneers saw themselves as part of the revolutionary movement and expected the Soviet Union to extend a supportive hand. The problem was that in 1920 the Comintern (Communist International) had declared Zionism reactionary, considering it an ally of British imperialism against the Arab masses who were carrying progress forward in the Middle East. Since then the history of the left in Palestine (and later the Israeli left) has been marked by many attempts to explain Zionism to the Soviets and prove its justness to them. Relations between the pioneers and "the world of the revolution" were not severed by the Soviets' rejection. Many Jews who came from Russia and knew its language loved Russian culture. But even those who did not know the language sought contact with the society of the future. Films, journals, and books in Russian and in translation nurtured the myth of the wonderland where a society without exploiters and exploited was being built. Hashomer Hatzaʿir posters in Palestine copied the style of *Ogonyok*, an illustrated weekly full of Soviet images. "Socialist realism" became the accepted style of many writers of the generation that came of age in 1948. Youth movement members enthusiastically sang patriotic Russian songs in Hebrew translation. Berl Katznelson cautioned that the Cossack cavalry they were singing about had perpetrated pogroms against the Jews, but in vain; the enthusiasm did not falter.

Two publishing houses established by kibbutz movements (Sifriat Hapoalim, by Hashomer Hatzaʿir, and Hakibbutz Hameuhad, by Hakibbutz Hameuhad) translated both popular literature and Russian writings on Marxism-Leninism into Hebrew (literature the younger generation hardly read). In 1942 Sifriat Hapoalim published *Russian Poetry,* an anthology of the best modern Russian poetry, translated into Hebrew by some of the leading poets in Palestine. Nobody noticed that very few Soviet-period poems were found worthy of inclusion. Novels such as Anton Semyonovich Makarenko's *The Pedagogical Poem* (translated by the poet Avraham Shlonsky, a pioneer of modernism in Hebrew poetry), describ-

ing the educational experience of abandoned children, and Valentin Petrovich Kataev's *A White Sail Gleams*, about the 1905 revolution, became best sellers in Palestine.[11] Books about World War Two inspired admiration for the heroism of the Russian people in their fight against the Nazis. In the knapsack of every Palmach soldier was a copy of Alexander Bek's *Panfilov's Men*, which described the heroism of a Red Army unit in defending Moscow.[12] There was no similarity between the values this book inculcated and the values of the Palmach (for example, in the novel a deserter is executed in front of his company; no one in the Palmach would have dreamt of such an act), but that did not prevent psychological identification with them. The image of the partisan, a fighter with no need of rank or uniform, a commander who treated his men as equals, was extremely potent in shaping Palmach norms. It was in line with the perception of genuineness and sincerity in relationships, in contrast with the buttoned-up formality of a regular army, which was considered an expression of militarism.

The Zionist call for the "generation of the wilderness" to defer gratification for the sake of future generations may seem reminiscent of the Soviet mentality that did not hesitate to sacrifice two generations for the revolution. The essential difference, however, was that the society in Palestine was founded on free will; anyone who did not want to embrace the directives of the collective was exempt from them. In Russia such people found themselves in godforsaken exile. In Palestine they went to live in Tel Aviv.

During the 1920s the Soviet Union presented what appeared to be an alternative to Zionism. The authorities initiated an agricultural settlement plan in the Crimea for hundreds of thousands of Jews who had become impoverished due to the erosion of the middle classes in Russia. Its second stage involved a plan to establish an autonomous Jewish region in Birobidzhan in Central Asia. Both these possibilities sparked the imagination of Jewish activists throughout the world, since not only did they offer an existential solution for hundreds of thousands of Jews, they also amounted to Soviet recognition of a Jewish nation. British author Israel Zangwill, one of Herzl's first supporters, who had become a territorialist following the Uganda controversy but returned to Zionism after the Balfour Declaration, enthused over the broad scope of the Soviet plans. Palestine, he contended, was as small as Wales and would be unable to provide a solution for the needs of millions of Jews. The Joint invested millions of dollars in Jewish settlement in the USSR, while the Zionist Organization could only look on enviously. The enthusiasm generated by the Jewish rehabilitation plan in the USSR attracted pioneers from among both the Gedud Haʿavoda and Jewish American communists. The lucky ones eventually managed to get out alive, but most perished in the Holocaust, in the Stalinist purges, or from the privations of the remote locations they were sent to. Since the local inhabitants opposed Jews

being settled among them, and the Jews themselves preferred to rebuild their lives in Russia's big cities, these projects produced no lasting results. But in the 1920s they seemed to present an ideological and practical alternative to Zionism.

It is customary to describe Yishuv society as one whose prevailing ethos was collectivist, requiring people to relinquish their individual personalities for the benefit of the great national objectives. And indeed, unlike the accepted norms of today's individualistic Western society, the power of the collective was greater than that of the individual. Yet like any generalization, this one is too simplistic. Although the goal of the national movement was to save all Jews, in order to motivate people to action it had to present a vision of personal redemption. Throughout the entire period, therefore, there was tension between individual aspirations to redemption and the demand that each person accept the collective's directives.

The people of the Second Aliya were extremely individualistic. They immigrated to Palestine alone, without support from an organization, and found their way in the country as individuals. The ideologies and methods of operating they formulated were original, derived mainly from their experience in Palestine. The works of young people who rediscovered their Jewish identity there, such as poet Rachel Bluwstein or writer Zvi Schatz (Trumpeldor's comrade in arms), reveal a strong emphasis on the individual—his or her desires, anguish, and soul searching. The literature translated into Hebrew on the initiative of people of the Second Aliya is literature of the individual—for example, the poetry of Mikhail Lermontov, Gerhart Hauptmann's stories, and Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels. The great diversity of cultural trends during the Second Aliya period indicates an openness to the world of the individual.

In the 1920s, under the influence of the Bolshevik Revolution, the star of the collective rose. Among the people of the Third Aliya, especially in the Gedud Ha'avoda, there were collectivist tendencies. The aliya's members immigrated to Palestine as part of groups that later joined centralist organizations that emphasized the authority of the community over the individual. Members of Hashomer Hatza'ir immigrated to Palestine as disciples of Freud and Gustav Landauer, fervent individualists who sought personal redemption. But once in Palestine they organized themselves into a Marxist movement that accepted "ideological collectivism"—meaning that after stormy ideological debates, the position of the movement's historical leadership (Ya'akov Hazan and Meir Ya'ari) was usually accepted. Groups of immigrants from Hechalutz and Betar, and people from the labor youth movements of Palestine in the 1930s, cultivated dedication to the community and subordination of the individual's desires to the will of "the movement." Members of the Yishuv's underground and paramilitary organizations accepted the authority of the collective in the form of an unbreakable rule:

"We have all been drafted for life, / Only death will discharge us from the ranks," as Avraham Stern put it in the Lehi anthem he composed.

Clearly, then, there were idealistic minorities who accepted what was known at the time as "the movement's decision." For a movement that had taken upon itself the task of building a nation, the existence of such minorities was vital. The question is to what extent these norms were prevalent among the general public, and whether the collective possessed the power to compel individuals to accept its discipline. Public intellectuals, propagandists, and educators all glorified those who accepted the yoke of the collective, although with reservations. For example, the subject of "elevation of Man" and the importance of the individual was central for the youth movements of Palestine. Literature, even that produced by the 1948 generation, was ambivalent about collectivism. The protagonists of stories about the kibbutz—*Ma'agalot* (Circles) by David Maletz, *Efraim hozer la'aspeset* (Ephraim goes back to the alfalfa) by S. Yizhar, and *Haderasha* (The sermon) by Haim Hazaz—were all extraordinary individualists who rebelled against accepted norms.[13] Even Moshe Shamir's emblematic novel *Hu halakh basadot* (He walked in the fields), considered to express the collectivist ethos, creates a confrontation between the aspiration of Mika, the female protagonist, to individual happiness and the commitment of the male protagonist, Uri, to the collective.

People at the time were aware of the tension between individual and collective. They perceived themselves not as subject to an unavoidable authority but rather as having a choice. The intelligentsia who identified with the labor movement maintained their individualist ideal, and gave expression to it in their work. A good example is Nathan Alterman, author of both "The Seventh Column" (a title referring to both his weekly newspaper column and a book of poetry collected from the column)—political poetry in the full sense of the word that contributed to shaping the collective ethos—and *Kokhavim bahutz* (Stars outside), a book of lyrical individualist love poetry. The popularity of Alterman's poetry among young people demonstrates their profound identification with individual experiences and personal expression.

Although public and political discourse created the impression that the authority of the collective ethos was universally accepted, behind this public image lay individualist tendencies that did not accept "the movement's decision." The people on "the mountain"—Mount Scopus, home of the Hebrew University—did not abide by the ethos of the Emek. The dropout rate in the youth movements even before members reached a kibbutz was staggering. After their arrival in the country, many members of Hechalutz decided to look for work in Tel Aviv instead of going to a rural community. Then not everyone who went to a kibbutz remained to live in it. Every time the Yishuv authorities called for a mass volun-

teer effort—enlistment in the British Army, payment to Kofer Hayishuv (a fund to finance security needs) or Magbit Hagiyus Vehahatzala (an appeal for funds for the Yishuv war effort in 1942)—it was very difficult to get people to accept the community's decisions without coercion. The picture painted of a Yishuv that voluntarily accepted the community's decisions thus appears overblown and simplistic, omitting the variegated shades in the Yishuv mosaic. Recall too that until the 1950s, the pendulum between the good of the individual and that of the nation was swinging toward the national interest all over the world. At a time when nations were fighting for their very existence, as in World War Two, personal interests were relegated to second place everywhere.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DISTINCTIVE YISHUV CULTURE

Yishuv society is also usually depicted as extolling manual labor and the simple worker and being contemptuous of the intellectual. Artists, writers, and poets who were members of Gedud Haʿavoda said they felt that they had to conceal their intellectual "weaknesses" lest they be mocked or lose their standing. But although some people reported feeling this way, it is doubtful that their personal experience was true in general. The Yishuv inherited the esteem of both Jewish and Russian tradition for the writer and poet. Ever since the Second Aliya, as much as the Yishuv extolled the manual laborer, it also held the intellectual in high regard. Yosef Haim Brenner lived in the Gedud Haʿavoda camp at Migdal and was deeply admired, even though most of his comrades—to whom he taught Hebrew—could not read his stories. Uri Zvi Greenberg, who had immigrated to Palestine in 1924, received an enthusiastic welcome, and his volume of poems, *A Great Fear and the Moon*, was published the following year. The two workers' parties, Ahdut Haʿavoda and Hapoʿel Hatzaʿir, competed in publishing literary journals. Considering the financial difficulties this enterprise involved, it amply demonstrates the importance accorded cultural life.

In the 1920s the center of Hebrew culture moved from Russia to Palestine. S. Y. Agnon, Ahad Haʿam, and above all Chaim Nachman Bialik all settled in Palestine and gained both reknown and a large number of admirers. In 1925 Berl Katznelson began publishing the Histadrut daily newspaper *Davar* and invited the Yishuv intelligentsia to contribute. Another example of the importance accorded the intelligentsia is the special relationship between the labor movement and the Hebrew University. Many members of Brit Shalom (see chapter 3) were on the university faculty. As the struggle between Arabs and Jews intensified, their position as a peace alliance became increasingly marginal. The contrast between the position of the Brit Shalom lecturers and that of the students was particularly acute. Nevertheless the dialogue between Brit Shalom and the labor movement leadership

continued throughout this period. The former were considered worthy interlocutors who should not be excluded from the Zionist movement, even when their opinions ran counter to the position of the Jewish Agency Executive.

The importance of cultural heroes in shaping Yishuv society cannot be overstated. Brenner and Gordon became the paragons of the labor movement; the youth movements used their works to educate members. Bialik, the national poet, enjoyed free rein to criticize every event that took place among Jews and in the Yishuv. Writers such as Uri Zvi Greenberg, Avraham Shlonsky, Eliezer Steinman, Alexander Penn, and after them Nathan Alterman, Yonatan Ratosh, S. Yizhar, and the writers and poets of the 1948 generation gained special status in the Yishuv, much like the place of intellectuals in Russian or French society. On the Revisionist right, Uri Zvi Greenberg wore the mantle of poet-prophet who foresaw the future. In the 1940s Alterman's "The Seventh Column," which expressed the spirit of the Yishuv and its aspirations, was considered the most authentic voice of the period. Alterman did not hesitate to speak in the voice of humanistic morality in assailing the acts and errors of left and right, but he gained true fame in the Yishuv for his vehement, powerful criticism of British policy.

The labor movement extolled what it called "the cultured worker"—a worker who was also a consumer of culture—and made efforts to close the gap between intellectuals and manual workers. While this mission was never accomplished, the intention behind it refutes the claim that there were anti-intellectual trends within the movement. The public libraries of the workers' councils had a wide readership who sought out Hebrew books. Their culture rooms were populated by newspaper and magazine readers. The descriptions of philharmonic orchestra concerts at the Harod Spring and the promotion of choirs and other musical activities in the kibbutzim demonstrate the yearning for beauty and cultural experience that persisted even under conditions of material hardship. The publicity given all these cultural resources demonstrates their importance in the eyes of the leadership. Herzl had depicted the excessive numbers of Jewish intellectuals as one cause of antisemitism. But even while in theory the new Jew was supposed to shed the excessive spirituality attributed to the Jewish intellectual (as opposed to workers, who made their living through physical labor), the rich spiritual life that developed in the small Yishuv and turned it into the center of Hebrew culture, shows that on this issue, too, a great distance separates the hackneyed notions from reality.

The model pioneer bearing his hoe and rifle had another attribute: he spoke Hebrew. At the training farms in the Diaspora, those who knew Hebrew got priority in immigrating. This policy shows the great importance attributed to the language and the culture deriving from it in the shaping of the nation, following

European nationalist tradition in which a nation's language was a substantive symbol of its existence as a national entity. The "language war" that broke out toward the end of the Second Aliya period ensured the dominance of Hebrew in both the secular and Mizrachi educational institutions in Palestine. Only the ultra-Orthodox used Yiddish as their language of instruction. During the Mandate period Yishuv representatives called for Hebrew to be recognized as an official language, together with Arabic and English, and to a great degree they succeeded. The status of Hebrew was recognized symbolically in the name of the country, which was known as Palestine–Eretz Yisrael—a sort of compromise between the Jews' demands that the country's historical Jewish heritage be recognized and fierce Arab opposition to this.

Though the Yishuv became the world center of Hebrew culture in the 1920s, that did not ensure the dominance of Hebrew as the spoken language. Each wave of immigration brought with it the immigrants' native tongues. The quintessential Jewish language was Yiddish, the beloved mother tongue of all the champions of Hebrew. After the 1908 Czernowitz Yiddish Language Conference, and mainly from the 1920s onward, Yiddish and Hebrew competed for the Jews' hearts and minds. As belles lettres flourished in Hebrew, the same sort of literature appeared in Yiddish. Thus as Hebrew literature was being "demoted" from sacred to secular, Yiddish "ascended" from a vernacular to a language of high culture. The socialist Bund and Volkist movements that fought for Jewish autonomy in Eastern Europe presented Yiddish as the language of the Jewish masses and Hebrew as the reactionary sacred language of an educated Jewish elite detached from the lives of ordinary people. After the Bolshevik Revolution the Communist Party created the Yevsektsia (Jewish section), which was responsible for Jewish culture in Russia. Identifying Hebrew with Zionism, it acted to suppress both, banning them in the USSR.

The Zionist movement, however, did not ban Yiddish. Hechalutz conducted its activities in Poland mainly in that language, since most candidates for immigration knew no Hebrew. Ben-Gurion, a sworn Hebraist who used the language even before he immigrated to Palestine, spoke Yiddish at election rallies in Poland. He did the same when he toured the DP camps in Germany after World War Two. But as long as the non-Zionist left associated Yiddish with the political rejection of Zionism, setting it up as a challenger to Hebrew, the two Jewish languages appeared to be in competition.

In Palestine the passion for guaranteeing Hebrew's dominance as a spoken language increased with the onset of mass immigration. The Legion of the Defenders of the Language was formed in Tel Aviv; its members would admonish people they found conversing in Yiddish in public. This happened to Bialik, who liked to chat in Yiddish instead of Hebrew, which he said did not roll off his

tongue. In the 1930s the Hebrew-language zealots faced another issue: most of the immigrants from Germany spoke only German and displayed little talent for learning Hebrew. The zealots contended that the Germans should not speak the Nazis' language in the street. This uncalled-for fanaticism only made the immigrants' new life more difficult.

The younger generation did learn Hebrew and was relatively fluent in it, showing that other languages had only a temporary hold on the population. Tel Aviv, the arena in which the needless zealotry occurred, displayed tolerance toward foreign languages in one noteworthy area—street names. Despite being known as "the first Hebrew city," Tel Aviv commemorated Zionism's founding fathers, its writers and poets, and important Jews in history, without being fazed by their non-Hebrew names. In the end the Yiddish-Hebrew debate dissipated with the annihilation of millions of Jews—the Yiddish speakers—in Eastern Europe. In the USSR Yiddish culture was destroyed in the late 1940s, together with its proponents, while in the United States it simply disappeared with the passing of the older generations.

Promoting the pioneer as the ideal type of the labor movement was part of a multifaceted attempt to shape Palestine society into an alternative to bourgeois society. The seeds of this utopian society were the labor settlements where the lifestyle perfectly matched the ideal. But most workers in Palestine lived in the cities and identified only partly with labor ideology. They were attracted to the bourgeois lifestyle, the temptations of the city, and its hedonism. Yet their allegiance to the labor movement and acceptance of its ideology as the foundation for building the country were all vital for a movement that sought to consolidate its political hegemony through mass support.

Socialization of the workers and their families in the spirit of the dominant ethos was carried out both directly and indirectly. They were invited to take Hebrew lessons and evening classes for adults and working youth, to broaden their education. The daily paper *Davar* was designed to bring the Zionist-left worldview into every home. The 1930s saw the publication of *Davar Liyeladim* (children's *Davar*), a high-quality weekly intended to educate a generation of young readers. Every now and then *Davar* published books relevant to the Zionist-socialist worldview, which the paper distributed at a discount to subscriber households. In the early 1940s the development of indoctrination through printed materials was completed with the establishment of the Am Oved (working people) publishing house. In contrast with the publishing arms of Hashomer Hatza'ir and Hakibbutz Hameuhad, whose dominant objectives were Marxist indoctrination and cultivating a sympathetic attitude toward the USSR, Am Oved nurtured its readers' literary tastes while emphasizing Jewish subjects and identification with the Jewish people. In 1928 the Habima theater arrived from Russia and built a new home in

Tel Aviv. Despite the general admiration of Habima, the Histadrut founded the Ha'ohel theater, which it defined as a workers' theater, part of the alternative society. The Hapo'el sports association stressed the distinction between the workers' and the middle class sports association, Maccabi. In its early years Hapo'el did not encourage competitive sports but focused above all on popular sports. Over the years the differences between the two associations blurred, but Hapo'el retained the loyalty of its leftist members, who identified with its red-shirted teams at soccer games, a clear class symbol.

In addition to services such as its sick fund and labor exchange, the Histadrut built "workers' housing"—pleasant, well-planned neighborhoods with large green spaces separating the buildings. It also built schools for workers' children, whose educational practice promoted the importance of manual labor by having students work in the vegetable garden and with livestock and taught labor movement values. These housing developments and schools served mainly the families of officials and permanent workers—the working class elite. Poor workers could not afford workers' housing and usually sent their children to the schools of the general education system. But the attempt to create a workers' community where the workers lived close to one another and assimilated the same manners and behavioral norms was of cardinal importance in forming their self-awareness as bearers of a different culture.

This culture had its own character and symbols. Clothing fashions highlighted proletarian reserve: the simple blue cotton shirt worn by youth movement members ("The blue shirt surpasses any jewelry," they sang); the side-buttoned Russian shirt worn on festive occasions, such as the Sabbath eve; the young women's *sarafan* (pinafore dress) and long braids; the Palmach fighter's khaki shorts; the kibbutznik's *tembel* beanie; and the city worker's peaked cap. Leisure activity usually included dancing on Sabbath eve. The kibbutzim and youth movements preferred circle dances that demanded no special skill and allowed single people to join in. The hora circles whirled at a dizzying pace to the sound of hasidic tunes, highlighting the connection between religious and secular ecstasy. Couple dances to Russian melodies were given a seal of approval since they were "folk dances" that ostensibly resurrected authentic popular culture from oblivion, in the spirit of reinventing the tradition of European nationalist movements. Sing-alongs lasting hours created a sense of belonging to the community and sharing common values. Here too the emphasis was on equality; the choir took precedence over self-important soloists. Festival ceremonies were designed to include as many children as possible in the performance. This practice gave rise to the "pageant," a reading of texts in sequence that did not require either acting or vocal talent. One of the most popular selections was Yitzhak Lamdan's poem "Masada," describing the refugees fleeing the 1920 pogroms in Ukraine

for Palestine, while resisting the seduction of the Red enchantment. "Open your gate, Masada, and I, the refugee, shall enter!" declares Lamdan, for whom Masada symbolized reborn Palestine, not destruction. He calls out: "Rise, fire of the dance! / Masada shall not fall again!"[14]

The Jewish calendar provided ample opportunity for applying religious symbols to the secular world and adapting them to the needs of labor settlement. Thus the Sukkot (Tabernacles), Passover, and Shavuot (Pentecost) holidays became agricultural festivals. Every kibbutz worthy of the name had its own *bikurim* ceremony (the harvesting of the first fruits), with a procession displaying all the kibbutz's achievements in agricultural produce and livestock, plus the latest farm machinery. These festivals engendered music and dance traditions. The walls of the dining hall were decorated according to the members' artistic talents. The Passover Seder was a great festive celebration held in the dining hall, at tables covered with white cloths, with the traditional Passover Haggadah replaced by a locally written version reflecting the spirit of the time and its problems and including readings of literary excerpts and singing.

However, this heroic attempt to establish the alternative society and invent for it suitable cultural patterns never overcame the seductive power of bourgeois modernity. The norms of the petite bourgeoisie lived and flourished together with those of the workers. In Tel Aviv, the center of bourgeois society, immigrants from Poland built a plethora of "dream homes" during the 1920s. These houses were intended to combine the architectures of East and West but were actually an odd and extraordinary collection of eclectic styles that expressed the Tel Aviv bourgeoisie's aspirations for a life of comfort and luxury. Certain areas of Tel Aviv were built during the 1930s in the Bauhaus style, with spacious apartments boasting the latest architectural innovations.

Ever since the first Tel Aviv kiosk was constructed at the time of the Second Aliya, that city displayed a clear tendency toward hedonism and joie de vivre. As early as the 1920s, and even more so in the 1930s, the shop windows along the main thoroughfares displayed the latest Paris fashions. The cafés and restaurants were crowded. Cultural and political elites preferred meeting in the bourgeois cafés rather than the workers' kitchens or the modest cultural centers. The Tel Aviv boardwalk was lined with cafés where orchestras played, so that diners could dance ballroom dances like the tango and waltz in the best European tradition. The stark contrast between the ascetic lifestyle of labor settlement and the city's open hedonism aroused sharp criticism of Tel Aviv, whose very existence was a constant temptation for the pioneers who had to forgo the pleasures of life in order to build the nation. Very few city workers could resist the attraction of bourgeois glamour.

Tel Aviv's leisure culture attracted the middle and working classes alike. The

masses went to the beach, which suited their wishes and the size of their pockets. Billboards invited the public to cultural events, from the Oneg Shabbat (lit., Sabbath joy, reception of the Sabbath) evenings led by Bialik as an expression of the high Hebrew culture the intelligentsia sought to nurture, to the satirical theaters, such as the Kumkum and the Matateh. The most popular form of entertainment was the cinema, even though the proponents of high culture sermonized against it as an empty, escapist medium. The Adloyada processions accompanying the Purim festival (the name is derived from the rabbinic saying that one should revel on Purim until one "no longer knows"—*ad delo yada*) were an example of the light, entertaining culture that characterized Tel Aviv and attracted thousands. During the festival the streets were crowded with visitors from all over the country, including labor settlements, who came to enjoy the costumes and the carnival atmosphere. Even the Arab neighbors from Jaffa liked to walk among the happy throng.

The Orient Fair, which first opened in 1932, provided an opportunity to exhibit the country's industrial and agricultural achievements. All the leading dignitaries attended the opening. Tel Aviv showcased itself as the economic and manufacturing heart of Palestine, no less important than labor settlement. A young American student who came to Palestine in October 1947 was more impressed, however, by the differences between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, where she lived: "Tel Aviv is a far cry from provincial Jerusalem, very sophisticated and cosmopolitan with a slight Hebrew accent." The city reminded her of Coney Island: "It has a carnival air about it: big signs, blaring noises, laughing faces, boisterous children and flamboyant colors."[15]

Tel Aviv was also where large-scale events were held. The city's halls were small and stifling, and in the Mediterranean climate, the outdoors had greater appeal for a sort of street theater. Open-air political rallies went on for hours, with audiences standing as they listened eagerly to the speakers. Heat, sweat, and crowds did not bother the hundreds and thousands of supporters. In the pretelevision era the political rally was the most direct form of contact between the public and its leaders. Attendance at these events demonstrated solidarity with the organizers, plus a willingness to enlist in the cause for a few hours by addressing political issues. Such a rally was both political statement and source of entertainment, for the political leaders were first-rate orators who knew how to capture an audience.

May Day was the occasion for mass demonstrations by the Histadrut and the parties of the left. The Histadrut leadership, trade unions, workplaces (especially those belonging to the *hevrat ha'ovdim*, or society of workers), kibbutzim, and youth movements all made sure their members attended. Red flags were waved and rousing speeches delivered, after which the public quietly dispersed. On Tel

Hai Day (eleventh of the Hebrew month of Adar), commemorating Trumpeldor and his comrades who fell defending Tel Hai in 1920, the youth movements marched through the city streets, with those in brown Betar uniforms marching separately from the wearers of blue shirts. Whereas May Day symbolized solidarity with the workers' movement worldwide, Tel Hai Day symbolized the Zionist struggle for Palestine. Betar emphasized the myth of Trumpeldor the fighter, who as he lay dying whispered, "Never mind, it is good to die for our country." Those in blue shirts focused on Trumpeldor the pioneer worker, the man who plowed his soil. The slogan "What we have built must not be abandoned," coined by one of the Tel Hai fallen, became central to the labor movement ethos.

The Hanukkah torchlight processions by the youth movements reflected the way this holiday had been transformed. The traditional festival of the small jug of oil was now a festival of heroism. The heroism of the Maccabees had inspired the founding fathers of Zionism and their dream of transforming the image of the Jews. "The Maccabees will rise again," Herzl declares.[16] When Bialik wanted to underscore the wretchedness of the Jews during the Kishinev pogrom, he compared their cowardice with the heroism of their Maccabean ancestors. And in his poem "They Say There Is a Land," Tschernichovsky declares, "You are the Maccabee!"[17]

A miracle did *not* happen to us,
We found no cruse of oil
We cut through rock till we bled
And there was light!

Thus sang the youngsters of Zionist activism, setting themselves in opposition to those who believed in miraculous redemption.[18] The traditional Hanukkah spinning top and pancakes remained popular, but the holiday as a whole acquired a layer of public meaning designed to demonstrate the historical tradition of heroism in the Holy Land.

Large national funerals were also held in Tel Aviv. This tradition began with the funerals of the people killed in the 1921 riots, who included the venerated writer Yosef Haim Brenner. It was renewed with the funeral of Chaim Arlosoroff, the murdered head of the Jewish Agency Political Department (1933), and continued with the funerals of Bialik, Tel Aviv mayor Meir Dizengoff, Berl Katznelson, and many more. Cultural heroes were given mass funerals as a mark of respect for the deceased and what they stood for. The funerals for riot victims provided an opportunity to express solidarity and loyalty either to labor or to the right. The mass demonstrations against the Mandatory government had a similar purpose. Particularly noteworthy were the demonstrations protesting the White Paper in 1939, and those after the World War demanding that the gates of Palestine be opened, using the slogan "Free Immigration, A Jewish State."

The education system worked to inculcate in the younger generation a commitment to the Zionist idea. Every Friday children came to school with a donation to the Jewish National Fund, which they put in the JNF Blue Box. The class that collected the most money won a commendation, with songs in the accompanying ceremony stressing the importance of these contributions for redeeming the land. One lesson taught in primary school classes was "Homeland," which covered the country's geography, climate, and flora. A map of Palestine appeared on the first page of the exercise book, in which children wrote the songs about Palestine learned that year. Children's books emphasized the connection with the country. "Our Land, You Are Beautiful" was the title of one popular book. Textbooks were full of such terms as "homeland" and "our land." "As the sun blazes on the mountain, / And while the valley's dew still glistens. / We love you, our homeland, / With joy, with song, with labor," the children sang. "From the slopes of Lebanon to the Dead Sea / We will plow your fields. / Plant, farm and build for you, / So that you will be beautiful." Nobody questioned this song's personification of the land itself rather than the nation.[19] A tree-planting festival was held on the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Shevat. According to the Zionist narrative, the Arabs had destroyed the country's forests, causing soil erosion. Now the Jews had come to restore Palestine to its former beauty as a land flowing with milk and honey, so trees must be planted. The tree-planting ceremony, done by kindergarten and primary school children, encouraged them to identify with the slogan of making the desert bloom.

Schools and youth movements took field trips to historic sites such as the graves of the Maccabees at Modi'in, Masada, and Tel Hai. Every trip included explanations of the historical contexts. The songs participants sang as they went along, the texts read at the sites, the physical exertion of the walks, peer-group identification, and the sense of togetherness and belonging all coalesced to help anchor love of the country, its landscapes, and its history deeply in the adolescents' psyches. This identification with the physical land, its heat and dust and mountain springs, was unique to the children born and raised in Palestine. Their parents' generation did not know it. They acquired the feeling of being masters of the country from Jewish history and Zionist ideology, and their love of it was not free of longing for other landscapes. For native-born children, being masters of the land was self-evident. It was their homeland—they knew no other. If on their field trips they encountered Arab villages, they perceived these as part of the scenery—perhaps as a cause of some tension and a sense of danger that heightened the excitement of the trip but not as representing another claimant to ownership of the country.

Had a survey about the Zionist ethos been conducted among the people of the Yishuv after World War Two, we can assume that the majority would have recited

the standard slogans about "inverting the pyramid" and establishing a workers' class in Palestine, the importance of the pioneer, the wonders of the country's youth, the malice of the British, and the backwardness of the Arabs. They would probably have condemned the employers of Arab labor and demanded free immigration to Palestine. If asked whether they were willing to dedicate their time and their lives to achieve national objectives, a high percentage would have declared themselves ready and willing. We can also assume that they would have expressed faith in the Zionist leadership headed by David Ben-Gurion and shown themselves ready to follow him. On the face of it, this survey would have shown the predominance of Zionist-socialist ideology in its moderate Mapai form. On the conscious level of public discourse, propaganda, and education, this was a consensual worldview, accepted also by the center and even the right. To what degree this worldview was a guiding light in everyday life is another question entirely.

NOTES

1. David Shimonovitz, "Mered haben" (Rebellion of the Son), first published in the Hashomer Hatza'ir magazine in Warsaw, 1922. Reprinted, inter alia, in *Songbook*, Tel Aviv: Yakhdav, 1965, p. 76.

2. Uri Zvi Greenberg, "Tzvah ha'avoda" (The Army of Labor), *Be'emtza ha'olam uve'emtza hazmanim* (In the Middle of the World, In the Middle of Time), Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1979, p. 32.

3. Avraham Shlonsky, "Amal" (Labor), *Poems*, Merhavia: Hapoalim Publishing, 1965, p. 165.

4. Uri Zvi Greenberg, "Hizdaharut" (Illumination), *Be'emtza ha'olam uve'emtza hazmanim* (In the Middle of the World, In the Middle of Time), Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1979, p. 52.

5. Avigdor Hameiri, "Shnei mikhtavim" (Two Letters), popular song.

6. Shaul Tschernichovsky, "Ani ma'amin" (Creed), *Kol kitvei Shaul Tschernichovsky* (Collected Works), vol. 1, Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990: Poems and Ballads, pp. 27–28.

7. Leah Goldberg, "Oren" (Pine), *Barak baboker* (Morning Lightning), Merhavia: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1957, p. 39.

8. Porath, *Letters from Jerusalem*, p. 51.

9. Berl Katznelson, *Arakhim genuzim* (Hidden Values), Ephraim Broide (ed.), Tel Aviv: Ayanot, 1957, p. 111.

10. Yitzhak Shenhar, "Shir haherut" (The Song of Freedom).

11. Anton Semyonovich Makarenko, *Hapoema hapedagogit* (The Pedagogical Poem), Avraham Shlonsky (trans.), Merhavia: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1939; Valentin Petrovich Kataev, *Mifras boded malbin ba'ofek* (A White Sail Gleams), Leah Goldberg (trans.), Merhavia: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1942.

12. Alexander Bek, *Anshei Panfilov* (Panfilov's Men), Shlomo Even-Shoshan (trans.), Ein Harod: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1946.

13. David Maletz, *Ma'agalot* (Circles), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1945; S. Yizhar, *Ephraim hozer la'aspeset* (Ephraim Goes Back to the Alfalfa)—first published in *Gilyonot*, ed. Yitzhak Lamdan, 1938. Reprinted in book form in 1978 (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad) and 1991 (Tel Aviv:

Zmora-Bitan); Haim Hazaz, "Haderasha" (The Sermon), *Luah Ha'aretz*, 1943, pp. 82–96. Reprinted, inter alia, in *Avanim rotkhot* (Seething Stones), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1946, pp. 227–244.

14. Yitzhak Lamdan, "Masada," Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1952.

15. Porath, *Letters from Jerusalem*, p. 31

16. Binyamin Herzl, *Medinat hayehudim* (The Jewish State). Jerusalem edition: Jewish Agency, 1986, p. 75.

17. This particular line appears in the first draft of the poem, dated 1923. *Kol kitvei Shaul Tschernichovsky* (Collected Works), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990, vol. 1: Poems and Ballads, pp. 253–255.

18. Aharon Ze'ev, "Anu nos'im lapidim" (We Are Carrying Torches), *Shirei Hanukkah: kovetz shirim me'et malkhinim umehabrim shonim* (Hanukkah Songs: A Collection of Songs by Various Composers and Lyricists), Tel Aviv: Renen, 1971.

19. Nathan Alterman, "Shir boker" (Morning Song).

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PART III

1948–1967

NATION BUILDING

7 THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1947–1949

The night of November 29, 1947, following the United Nations General Assembly vote partitioning Palestine, was marked by a spontaneous outpouring of joy. Crowds danced in the streets, the Hallel prayer of praise was offered up in synagogues opened specially in the middle of the night, and children garlanded sinister British armored vehicles with flowers. One who did not take part in the universal celebrations was David Ben-Gurion. Always the realist, he was aware of the bloody toll that the establishment of the Jewish state would exact. A year earlier, at the Twenty-second Zionist Congress, he had told the Yishuv's security leadership that the Jewish forces must be held in check and confrontation with the British avoided, since the state would soon be declared and this would entail war not only with the Arabs of Palestine but also with the regular forces of the Arab states.

At that time the member states of the Arab League, which had been created toward the end of World War Two to form a joint Arab front, were still a long way from passing any kind of resolution on military intervention in Palestine. Ben-Gurion's assessment was based not on solid information but rather on an appreciation of the existing dynamics in Palestine and the Arab states, which would ultimately result in the latter invading Palestine. In July 1945 that same insight had led him to convene a conference of wealthy and distinguished Jews in New York and persuade them to make available to the Zionist Executive the funds necessary to purchase arms-manufacturing machinery from US Army surplus, which was being sold as scrap. The struggle in Palestine, he told them, would no longer be waged solely against Arab gangs but against Arab armies, and it was therefore crucial to establish a Jewish arms industry in Palestine.

Jewish enthusiasm over the UN resolution derived from the fact that the nations of the world had recognized the Jewish people's right to a sovereign state in Palestine. But beyond that there was the feeling that "a great miracle happened here," as the Hanukkah story says. This sense of a miracle, later extended to cover all the events of 1948—"the year of miracles"—prevailed because, contrary to British and Arab expectations, both Eastern and Western blocs supported the draft resolution. As we have seen, the Soviet Union and the Comintern virulently opposed Zionism and were hostile toward Jewish nationalism. In February 1947, when the British decided to leave Palestine, they assumed that the United Nations would not achieve a binding resolution on Palestine, which required a two-thirds

majority, because of Soviet opposition. But the Soviets instead seized this opportunity to undermine Great Britain's standing in the Middle East and expedite its removal from Palestine by supporting the establishment of a Jewish state.

In April 1947 Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet permanent representative to the United Nations, delivered a speech supporting a resolution of the Palestine issue that would recognize the rights of the Jews, as well as the catastrophe that had befallen them in World War Two. Although he expressed a preference for a single binational state, he described the Jews as a nation worthy of a state of its own, and raised the possibility of partitioning Palestine and establishing two states in it, one Jewish, the other Arab. This speech heralded the change in the USSR's position, and on November 29 the USSR and its satellites voted in favor of partition. This was the "great miracle" that stunned allies and enemies alike. The Jews were disposed to explain the change in the Soviet position as a consequence of the Holocaust; some even said that Stalin had apparently expressed his intention of supporting a Jewish state as reparation for what the Jews had endured during the war. Historical research has rejected this explanation. Neither moral principle nor historical justice motivated the Great Powers to vote for the partition resolution. Each was motivated by its own interests.

What appeared to the Jews as a divine miracle, a sign that a global system of justice existed, was perceived by the Arabs as a flagrant wrong, a miscarriage of justice, and an act of coercion. They were being called upon to consent to the partitioning of a country that only thirty years earlier had been considered Arab, and to the establishment of a Jewish state in it. To them recognition of the Jews' national rights in Palestine was insufferable, and the only possible response was armed resistance.

Beneath these differing perceptions lay the seed that later germinated into the opposing Jewish and Palestinian narratives of the 1948 war. The names given the war reflect this stark contrast. Ben-Gurion called it "Milkhemet Hakommemiut," a phrase that literally translates as "the War of Sovereignty" but whose actual meaning is somewhat vague and difficult to render. The closest phrase in English is "the War of Independence," which expresses the most important change that resulted from it—the achievement of Jewish sovereignty. The fighters of the Palmach—the precursor and spearhead of the new Israeli army—called it "the War of Liberation," as if it were another anticolonial war leading to liberation from the yoke of a foreign ruler, in this case the British. However, the war was not waged against the British, but against the Arabs. It was not a war of liberation, but a war between two peoples striving for control over the same piece of land. For their part the Arabs referred to the war with the neutral phrase "1948 war," implying that it was just one in a series that had been and would be waged. They focused less on the war itself, its causes and course, which from their point of view were

problematic, than on its outcomes—the loss of Palestine as a state and the exile of some 700,000 Palestinians. For them it was the Nakba (a catastrophe).

The players in the War of Independence drama naturally did not know what we know today. Their insights and reactions, along with their actions and failures to act, occurred in a situation of partial intelligence at best, and lack of intelligence at worst. Decisions were made based on groundless assumptions. Thus, for instance, the Jews did not believe that the British really and truly intended to evacuate Palestine. Some did not believe it at all and found prima facie evidence of a covert British conspiracy to destroy the Yishuv, while others wavered between total and partial belief. This mistaken assumption also fed the view that the British sought to engineer a situation in which the defeated Jews would beg them to return and resume governing in Palestine without having to make any concessions to the Jews or support a national home. In fact British policy in Palestine between November 29, 1947, and May 15, 1948, during what is known as "the intercommunity conflict," was influenced above all by the need to safeguard their withdrawal routes in Palestine and the gradual dismantling of their military and civil infrastructures. After the invasion by the Arab states, the Jews did not believe Britain's claim that it had actually imposed an embargo on arms shipments to the Middle East. They were unaware that the British government had rejected all its officers' entreaties to bypass the embargo and that the Arab Legion, the Jews' main military adversary on the central front, had run out of ammunition and was in desperate straits.

Another example of the disjunction between the intelligence the Jews had at the time and our knowledge today involves the relative strength of the Jewish and Arab forces. The Arab population west of the River Jordan was twice the size of the Jewish population. Although the British diligently guarded the coastline and prevented arms or fighters from reaching the country's shores, their army could not block its land borders, and the Arabs were able to effortlessly smuggle both arms and fighters overland from the Arab states. The Arab League's "Arab Liberation Army," led by Fawzi al-Kaukji, crossed the border even before British rule in Palestine had ended. The resolve and self-assurance (not to say boastfulness) of the Arab media and the Palestinian national movement spokespeople gave the impression that they possessed real military capability, which aroused concern.

On November 30, 1947, the Arabs initiated clashes that ignited the war between the two national communities: a mass riot in Jerusalem's new commercial center, with burning and looting of Jewish shops. The Haganah's weak response did not bode well for the future. Roads linking Jewish settlements all over the country suddenly became dangerous, since they passed through Arab villages. The only one that did not was the Tel Aviv–Haifa road. Isolated settlements came under siege. The road to Jerusalem was blocked by Palestinian irregulars. In the

first month of the fighting, some 250 Jews were killed—about half of all the Jewish casualties during the three years of the Arab Revolt (1936–1939). The Arabs' fighting capacity appeared serious and their military resources limitless.

What we know today is that with the opening of hostilities, Palestinian Arab society started to disintegrate. The ruling elites were unable to impose either civil or military authority. The Arab militias were not formed into an army. The country was in a state of chaos, and the wealthy rushed to depart for the neighboring Arab states. As anarchy increased in the cities following the collapse of civil authority, middle class people sought to follow the upper class and leave Palestine, or at least move to the hilly, Arab-populated areas. As the Jews went on the offensive and fighting intensified, panic ensued, and everyone able to flee took to their heels.

Certainly the Arab nations, with tens of millions of inhabitants, appeared to have vast military potential. Their propaganda machine asserted their intention of driving the Jews into the sea—in other words, total war. In fact, however, no more than a few tens of thousands of ill-equipped, partially trained soldiers took part in the invasion of Palestine. Their command was outdated, with each army driven by its own interests. As a result, there was no coordination and no central command. Until July 1948 the invading armies had a numerical advantage, but thereafter the fledgling Israel Defense Forces (IDF) managed to organize itself and throw enough troops into battle to outnumber the invaders. At the time no one could have known that the Palestinian society would collapse, that the British would not intervene, that the Arab armies possessed only limited fighting capacity, and that there was a huge discrepancy between the rhetoric and the reality. Israeli intelligence was still in its infancy, field intelligence was primitive at best, and situation assessments were based more on tough talk than analysis of the facts on the ground. Consequently the war is etched in contemporary Jewish memory as a war to the finish, fought for the nation's very existence, whose success was due to total mobilization, endless sacrifice and risk of life, and very many casualties.

This longest and most difficult of all Israel's wars lasted from December 1947 to March 1949. Six thousand Israelis were killed, almost 1 percent of the Jewish population. Fourteen Jewish settlements were destroyed and abandoned, and a few more were occupied and then destroyed. The high command's "Tel Hai order" stated that no settlements should be abandoned, and that women and children would only be evacuated on the orders of the local commander. However, these instructions were not always followed, due to the press of events. Some 60,000 Jewish refugees left their homes. About one third of Jerusalem's Jewish population left the city despite orders to the contrary issued by the Haganah and the city's military governor. Thousands of people who lived on the

margins between Jewish and Arab neighborhoods chose to move to safer locations. Public buildings in Tel Aviv, as well as the entrances and roofs of private buildings, were crowded with thousands of refugees who had fled the city's southern neighborhoods, which were on the front line facing Arab villages and the city of Jaffa. Some wealthy Jews left the country during the fighting, giving many and varied excuses. Nevertheless Jewish society and its elites displayed the needed resolve in withstanding the pressures of the protracted war. Zipporah Borowsky (Porath) wrote to her parents in New York, "There is an overpowering sense of belonging, of being needed and of being wanted. A commitment you cannot reject."[1]

Although there were difficulties merging the Haganah and the underground organizations, the authority of the state over all the Jews was accepted, and one army under a single command was formed (see chapter 8). Municipal government functioned well and assisted the population through difficult times, such as the bombing of Tel Aviv, the shelling of Jerusalem, and incidents involving mass casualties. Through tremendous difficulties the communications system, the press, and the economic and financial systems all continued to function. Supplies of vital foodstuffs reached the cities. In addition to fighting, consolidating the society, and setting up state institutions, the country took in more than 100,000 new immigrants during the first year of the war. Some were conscripted into the army, while others settled in abandoned Arab towns.

The first months of the war took place under a shadow of uncertainty regarding the British position. After November 29, 1947, they had allowed both Jews and Arabs to maintain a sort of autonomy within their own areas, but as long as they governed the country the British did not allow Arabs to take over Jewish localities, or vice versa. During the first months of fighting, the Jews were on the defensive, either due to concern about acting forcefully while the British still ruled or because they had not formulated an appropriate response to the new situation, which was unlike their previous experience in clashes with the Arabs. The Jews displayed an initial military weakness, with high casualty figures. For example, in January 1948 thirty-five soldiers sent to reinforce the Etzion Bloc were all killed in a battle with Arab villagers on their way there; one of the dead was Moshe Perlstein, a student from the United States. There were doubts in the international arena about the Jews' ability to survive. On March 19, 1948, the US State Department proposed an amendment to the UN resolution of November 29: withdrawal of the partition plan in favor of a temporary UN trusteeship in Palestine, a sort of mandate without the limitations of the national home.

The main focus in the first phase of the fighting was protecting civilian localities and ensuring safety on the roads. To protect road traffic the Jews organized convoys with armed escorts. The Arabs swiftly learned to attack the con-

voys by calling upon hundreds of residents of villages near the road to help the attackers. At the end of March 1948 the situation reached crisis point, when several large convoys ended in disaster. The Nebi Daniel Convoy, carrying supplies to the Etzion Bloc on the Hebron-Jerusalem road, was delayed on its way back, enabling the attackers to organize. The convoy drove into an ambush and suffered heavy losses; the Jewish soldiers were rescued only through British mediation. In return for being safely evacuated, the fighters had to hand over their weapons and armored vehicles, which were then turned over to the Arabs. A big convoy from Hulda to Jerusalem failed to get through and was forced to return. In the north the Arabs laid an ambush for a convoy on its way to the isolated Kibbutz Yechiam. Nearly fifty fighters fell in the ensuing battle, and the convoy was looted.

Given the convoys' failures to break through to Jerusalem, the city's 100,000 Jews seemed to be cut off and under siege. "Any way you look at it, the picture is already grim," Zipporah Borowsky wrote to her parents. "There have been no convoys out of the city for a week and, worse yet, none have arrived in Jerusalem. Food and water supplies are getting critically low and our worst nightmare, isolation from the Jewish state, may ensue."[2] This was one of the most difficult moments of the war, causing universal dejection.

Clearly the war had to be waged differently, and April 1948 saw the first attempt at a large-scale Jewish offensive. Operation Nachshon, a military operation on the road to Jerusalem that included taking and destroying villages on both sides of the road, marked a new phase of Haganah action. For the first time an entire brigade of 1,500 was fielded. Until then only relatively small units no larger than a battalion had been deployed. On this occasion, under pressure from Ben-Gurion, the Chief of the General Staff organized a large force to break through to Jerusalem. The year 1948 was distinguished by a sense of trailblazing, since so many things happened for the first time. Operation Nachshon's breakthrough to Jerusalem was a fine example, for it initiated a new phase in the way the Haganah functioned.

The night before the operation an aircraft brought in an arms shipment from Czechoslovakia, which was immediately issued to the fighters. For the first time every soldier had a personal weapon. Operation Nachshon's success owed to actions taken at both ends of the road to Jerusalem, hitting two vital Palestinian units: the headquarters of Hassan Salame near Ramla and the forces commanded by Abdel Khader al-Husseini on the Castel (a strategic hill dominating the Tel Aviv–Jerusalem road). The Castel peak changed hands and al-Husseini was killed, hurting both the operation and the morale of the Palestinian militias. They never recovered from these two blows. The road to Jerusalem would be blocked

again, but in the meantime large supply convoys got through, enabling the city to keep its head above water.

Another drama was unfolding at the same time in the approaches to Haifa. Al-Kaukji's Liberation Army attempted to take Kibbutz Mishmar Haʿemek, with the goal of joining up with the Arab villages on Mount Carmel and outflanking Haifa. A bitter battle ensued, and in a spirited counterattack the Haganah forces defeated al-Kaukji, forcing his retreat from the areas assigned to the Jewish state.

It was now possible to implement Plan Dalet (Plan D) in preparation for the expected invasion by the Arab states. Brigade commanders were instructed to occupy their respective areas, which were all within the general area defined by the partition plan as the Jewish state, but also to defend Jewish settlement blocs outside the partition borders—Jerusalem, for example, which according to the 1947 map was to be under international rule. Pro-Palestinian researchers present Plan D as the draft of a preplanned, total population transfer of the Arabs of Palestine. But as the plan text shows, while it did order commanders to destroy villages and expel the inhabitants if they resisted, it also instructed commanders to leave them where they were if they did not resist, while ensuring Jewish control of the village. There is a great difference between an order for total expulsion and a selective order, which assumes that Arab villages will be able to live in peace in the Jewish state. Tiberias was the first mixed-population city to fall to the Jews. Its Arab inhabitants, who lived in the lower town, were evacuated with the help of the British, who offered evacuation assistance to the weaker side in every such city. The Jews later entered deserted neighborhoods whose inhabitants had left. Haifa fell to the Jews the same week; the Arab residents chose to leave the city and not remain under Jewish rule. Attempts by their Jewish neighbors to persuade them to stay failed. Golda Meyerson (Meir) reported to the Jewish Agency Executive on her visit to the city on May 6, 1948: "It is a dreadful thing to see the dead city. Next to the port I found children, women, the old, waiting for a way to leave. I entered the houses, there were houses where the coffee and pita bread were left on the table, and I could not avoid thinking that this, indeed, had been the picture in many Jewish towns [i.e., in Europe, during World War Two]."[3] The British, who now ruled only the Haifa port enclave, did not oppose the Jews' taking control of the city and perhaps even assisted them. According to the partition plan, Tiberias and Haifa were within the borders of the Jewish state. That same month Eastern Galilee and Safed fell into Jewish hands. In Safed the opposite of what happened in Tiberias took place. The British offered to evacuate the Jewish minority in the city, which was also within the borders of the Jewish state, but the Jews rejected the offer. After fierce fighting the Palmach conquered the city, and its Arab inhabitants fled.

The Jewish leadership was astounded by the ghost neighborhoods in these mixed-population cities and, a short time later, in an Arab enclave in Jaffa conquered by the Jews on May 15. How could an entire population just get up and leave? Various contemporary explanations have been proposed. They include fear of the war and fear of the Jews, particularly after the Deir Yassin massacre in early April, in which Jewish fighters attacked an Arab village. Propaganda disseminated both by the Etzel, which was the main actor in the attack, and by the Palestinians magnified this event to dimensions of terror and atrocity far beyond what actually happened, which was bad enough. The prevailing version has it that there were 240 dead. However, updated studies by Palestinian researchers report that the number of dead was closer to 100 and refute the stories of rape that circulated.

Other explanations for the Arabs' wholesale departure include the assumption that the evacuation was only temporary and they would return to their homes when the Arab states' armies were victorious. Another explanation circulated among the Jews, which in time became part of the Israeli narrative: that the Palestinians were ordered to leave Palestine by their leaders in order to facilitate Arab military operations against the Jews. This explanation, based on isolated Arab sources, is baseless. Even at this stage of the war, both the Palestinian leadership and the leaders of the Arab states tried to persuade the population to stay put and not flee the country. But the collapse of Palestinian society and its governance led to mass flight, which according to accepted estimates had reached about 300,000 before May 15, 1948.

THE ARAB INVASION

As the sheer magnitude of the Palestinian Arabs' defeat emerged, and as the horror stories of the Jews' alleged brutality spread throughout the Arab world, the pressure exerted by public opinion on the Arab states to come to the aid of their Palestinian brethren intensified. Despite difficulties arranging a unified military command, as well as mutual suspicion regarding each other's objectives in Palestine, on April 30 the Arab states decided to invade.

The best-trained and best-equipped Arab army was the Arab Legion, which was under the overall command of King Abdullah of Transjordan, with a command echelon that was British. Since the 1930s Abdullah and the Jews had held talks on various occasions, based on their common hostility toward Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini. The king sought to annex to his kingdom those parts of Western Palestine destined for the Palestinian state, a plan that had British government blessing and that the Zionist leadership was prepared to accept. However, public opinion in the kingdom forced Abdullah into the war. Although Jerusalem was supposed to be under international rule, it was the object of clashes between

the Jews and Transjordan. The Jews controlled the western part of the city, the Arabs controlled the eastern part, and each tried to extend its control over the entire city. Abdullah proposed that the Jews accept autonomy within an Arab state on both sides of the River Jordan that he would rule, but they were not enthusiastic about this idea.

On the eve of Israel's Declaration of Independence, Golda Meir made a last-minute visit to the king, who explained that the tremendous pressure he was under was forcing him to renege on the understandings he had with the Jews. Now that he was a member of an alliance, he had to act within its framework. Both sides understood that they were entering a war in which they would make every effort to achieve as many of their objectives as possible with whatever means they had at their disposal (à la guerre comme à la guerre). Nevertheless Abdullah hinted that friendly relations between him and the Jews could be resumed after the fighting. The Egyptians were also reluctant to go to war and wavered until the last minute, but they too were swept up by the wave of nationalism engulfing their country. The Iraqis and the Syrians joined in as well. All wanted to thwart Abdullah's expansionist plans. In addition to the Arab states' regular forces, the Arab League Liberation Army's irregulars were active in Central Galilee, which was under Arab control.

On May 12 the Jewish People's Council, a sort of provisional government comprising representatives from the Zionist Executive and the Yishuv political parties that functioned as a parliament, held a decisive meeting. Moshe Sharett, the foreign minister of the nascent state, back from New York, reported that the Americans had proposed a ceasefire and a delay in the declaration of independence. He said that Secretary of State George C. Marshall, a former US Army chief of staff, had warned him not to trust the assurances of generals drunk with victory over the Haganah's successes in April and to make no hasty decisions about declaring the state. At the meeting Yigael Yadin and Israel Galili, the heads of the Haganah, were asked to provide their assessment of the Yishuv's chances of withstanding the Arab attack. Yadin thought the chances were fifty-fifty. The fighters were exhausted from months of continuous fighting, he said, and this had to be taken into account. The Etzion Bloc was about to fall, and its shadow hung over the meeting. The discussion was protracted, the main question being whether to declare or to postpone. In the end the decision was six to four to declare statehood, with Ben-Gurion putting all his weight behind it. The council members were taking a tremendous gamble on the future of the Yishuv.

On Friday afternoon May 14, the members of the People's Council convened at the modest Tel Aviv Museum building on Rothschild Boulevard to hear Ben-Gurion proclaim the Declaration of Independence: "We [. . .] hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael, to be known as the State of

Israel." The declaration ceremony was held in Tel Aviv since Jerusalem was under siege, and it was impossible to bring the council members from there to sign the declaration. Thus the young city Tel Aviv had the honor of hosting the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel. Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: "In the country there is celebration and profound joy—and once again I am a mourner among the celebrants, as I was on November 29." That evening he began a new diary notebook, which he opened with a dry, understated comment that concealed the fact that he was holding his breath: "At four o'clock in the afternoon, the state was established. Its fate is in the hands of the security forces."[4]

Although the high command assumed that the Arabs would indeed invade, no solid intelligence backed this up and, of course, the Arab war plans, the size of their forces, and any real information on what to expect were all unknown. These war plans were changed several times on the eve of the invasion, and historians find it difficult to reconstruct them. It is hardly surprising, then, that the dominant feeling at the time among the leaders of the one-day-old state was helplessness in the face of an expected attack from an unknown direction and with unknown force. There were reports that Arab Legion, Iraqi, and Syrian motorized columns with armored vehicles and artillery were on the move from Transjordan toward Western Palestine. Egyptian columns were advancing northward along the coast road and along the 'Uja–Beersheba road toward the Hebron hills. Egyptian aircraft attacked Tel Aviv, and Arab Legion artillery shelled Jerusalem. Facing them at the beginning of the "Month of Fighting" (May 15 to June 11) were forces armed only with light weapons, since the heavy armaments purchased in Europe and the United States were still on their way to Palestine. Thus there was no way to respond to the shelling or air attacks. Defense was the only option until the scope of the Arab offensive became clear and until the arrival of the artillery, tanks, and aircraft—which could now be brought into the independent state.

The Month of Fighting that occurred between the Arab invasion and the first ceasefire imposed on both sides by the UN was the most difficult and dangerous of the entire war. During that month some 1,600 Jews were killed, about one quarter of all the war's fatalities. The Syrians swept from the Golan Heights down to the Jordan Valley, advancing through Zemakh, and invaded the heartland of Jewish settlement in the Jordan Valley—an incursion that was deadly for the Jews. The Syrians were halted thanks to the sacrifices made by the inhabitants, a few field cannons that provided mainly moral support, and their own weakness, since they ran out of steam and were forced onto the defensive after encountering resistance. The Iraqi force penetrated south of the Syrian one into the Beit She'an Valley; after failing to take Kibbutz Gesher, it moved into Samaria. Together with the Liberation Army, which had penetrated Central Galilee,

it attempted to take Sejera, the key to Lower Galilee, with the aim of connecting it with Central Galilee and threatening Haifa. This attempt, too, ended in failure, and from that point on the Iraqis confined their action to Samaria, which had been assigned to the Arab state.

The Arab Legion's goal had been to take control of areas designated as part of the Arab state, and as far as possible avoid clashing with the Jews. But it was unable to ignore requests for help from the Palestinians in Jerusalem, who felt threatened after the loss of the Arab neighborhoods in the western part of the city to the Haganah, and especially after the Jews attempted to break in to the Old City, where the Jewish Quarter was under siege. Colonel David Marcus (who used the nom de guerre Mickey Stone), an American Jew who volunteered to help the nascent Jewish army, analyzed the Jews' chances as follows. The Arab Legion had two choices: One, move into Samaria and attempt to cut the Jewish state in half near Netanya. Two, try to take Jerusalem. If the Arabs made the first choice, the Jews would face a life-threatening challenge. But if they tried to take Jerusalem, the state would be saved, since the Legion's advantages as a regular army would disappear in house-to-house combat.

In the event, the Legion went for Jerusalem. It shelled the Jewish part of the city, and once it had taken Latrun, which commanded the road to Jerusalem, it was able to close the road. Bitter fighting ensued between the IDF forces and the Legion. All the IDF's weaknesses were exposed in these clashes with the relatively modern Arab army and its experienced British commanders. The IDF mounted five assaults on Latrun and its emplacements but was unable to overcome the Legion's forces. What became evident in the first two assaults, Operations Bin-Nun A and B, were inexperience, lack of equipment, unfamiliarity with the terrain, lack of intelligence, and hasty organization. These battles became the focus of disagreements between graduates of different military schools of thought—the British Army, the Haganah, and the Palmach—who voiced their mutual resentment. The disagreements within the army were fed by arguments between the head of the operations branch, Yigael Yadin, and Minister of Defense David Ben-Gurion over Latrun and Jerusalem. Yadin believed that Jerusalem was not about to collapse, so there was no need to divert forces that were required elsewhere to take Latrun. Ben-Gurion, however, saw Jerusalem as the heart of the Zionist enterprise, as well as a population center and the country's strategic center. He was gravely concerned about the city's fate and insisted on addressing its cries for help.

The recurring failures to take Latrun and the great losses sustained there (168 dead, most in the first two battles) gave rise to mutual accusations that became the basis of the myth of Latrun as the place where the blood of Holocaust survivors—new immigrants who had been sent into battle untrained—was spilt. The

myth of Latrun did not appear until much later, and became part of Israeli culture, but the actual events it was based on occurred at this period. On the margins of the battle, a few Arab villages south of the road were taken. It turned out that an alternative route to Jerusalem could be opened through them. Thus "the Burma Road" (named after the famous World War Two Allied supply route into China that bypassed the Japanese), a makeshift dirt road, was used to transport equipment and supplies into the city. As a result, when the ceasefire came into force, the Israelis controlled a road into Jerusalem.

Another front that seemed extremely dangerous was in the south. Although the partition plan had assigned the Negev to Israel, the Jewish population there was very sparse. New kibbutzim, most settled in 1946, were spread over a wide desert area between Bedouin tribes and Arab villages. The only Jewish defense forces in the area, they were subsequently reinforced with two Negev Brigade battalions. The Egyptian forces, comprising an infantry brigade (two battalions), an auxiliary battalion with medium weapons, an artillery battalion, an armored battalion, and antiaircraft, antitank, engineering, and auxiliary units, appeared to the Israelis to be a well-equipped and well-armed army. They invaded Palestine in two columns. One advanced northward through the Negev, parallel to the coast. Several kibbutzim stood in the column's way, and it stopped its advance to mop up these nests of resistance. Each day that the column halted gave the defending forces time to regroup, rearm, and mobilize additional personnel. After taking Kibbutz Yad Mordechai, the column continued to advance slowly, with the road north open before it.

Meanwhile the second Egyptian column turned eastward to join up with volunteer and Muslim Brotherhood forces that had moved through Beersheba to the Hebron hills and attacked Jerusalem from the south. Kibbutz Negba, which sat on the east-west road between Majdal and Beit Jubrin, disrupted communications between the two arms of the Egyptian army. The kibbutz resisted desperately under heavy shelling, and the Egyptians were unable to overcome it. The Egyptian column moving up the coast road advanced slowly and reached Isdud (Ashdod) on May 29. The Givati Brigade was deployed in a heroic effort to block its advance on Tel Aviv. The column was halted at a bridge, which went down in history as the Ad Halom (lit., this far) Bridge. It was either attacked by the Israeli Air Force's first aircraft, stopped by Givati, or simply was not strong enough to reach the centers of Jewish settlement on the coastal plain, and had never intended to do so.

Even though Israeli attempts to counterattack (at Jenin, Isdud, and Latrun) were unsuccessful, no Jewish settlements within the territory assigned to the Jewish state fell into Arab hands, with two exceptions. The Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem, supposed to be under international rule, fell to the Arab Legion on May

29, and the Mishmar Hayarden moshava on the west bank of the River Jordan was conquered by the Syrians on the eve of the ceasefire. Thirteen Jewish settlements in the area assigned to the Arab state were taken by the Arabs and completely destroyed. The State of Israel managed to halt the invading forces and even take control of Western Galilee, assigned to the Arab state. But a month of incessant fighting had left the Israeli army depleted. It had had to learn warfare in combat situations: mobilizing an army, deploying large forces, air-ground coordination, field intelligence, supply transport, and so forth. The soldiers were exhausted after long months of fighting, and they complained about equipment that was late in arriving and the lack of headgear, water canteens, and personal weapons. Still they withstood this existential test and emerged with the satisfaction of knowing that they had halted the Arab armies. "Just be happy for me that I have been fortunate enough to be here at this time to help give life to this long-yearned-for state," wrote Zipporah Borowsky at the end of a letter to her parents describing the physical hardships she had endured during the siege of Jerusalem.[5]

A four-week truce was agreed on, and a UN mediator appointed—Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte—who was to propose solutions for the Palestine issue. His mission was a total failure. The Arabs would not accept any proposal whatsoever that meant de facto recognition of the existence of the State of Israel. The Israelis rejected any proposal that offered less territory and sovereignty than the November 29, 1947, resolution had given them. Both sides violated the ceasefire. The Israelis brought military equipment into the country, mainly aircraft and armor, while the Iraqis poured additional irregular forces from the Arab states into Palestine.

The fighting resumed on June 9, 1948, and continued for ten days. The main thrust of the Israeli effort was against the Arab Legion forces on the central front. The presence of a strong Arab force threatening the centers of Jewish settlement on the coastal plain on the one hand, and Jerusalem on the other, seemed extremely dangerous. The Jews were unaware that the Legion, short of ammunition, had been forced onto the defensive. They interpreted its deployment in the center of the country as preparation for an attack. Operation Danny, the main operation in the battles of those ten days, was planned to conquer Lydda (Lod), Ramla, Latrun, and Ramallah, but managed to take only the first two and the international airport. It also extended the corridor to Jerusalem southward, making it possible to lay the "Road of Valor" and a wide-diameter water pipe that ensured a water supply to Jerusalem. At the same time, Operation Dekel was mounted and conquered Central Galilee and its main city, Nazareth.

It was during Operation Danny that the expulsion of the 50,000 inhabitants of Lydda and Ramla took place. Believing that the Arab Legion was rushing to their aid, the inhabitants of Lydda rose up against the occupying army. The Legion did

not arrive, but the uprising demonstrated to the occupiers the great risk of leaving a large, hostile population in the rear of the advancing army. There was also the strategic consideration of having a large Arab population in the center of the country, close to the airport and on the Tel Aviv–Jerusalem road. The expulsion of this civilian population by the military was evidently approved by the political leadership. It was also the only case of organized removal of entire cities on Jewish initiative. The Ramla exiles were bused to the Arab Legion lines. Those from Lydda walked to the same lines. It was not a particularly long walk (some fifteen kilometers), but it was hot, the people were loaded down with their possessions, and the shock both of the defeat and of being forced into exile was great.

After the Arab invasion Israeli policy toward the Palestinians had hardened. The bitter fighting and high casualty rates caused resentment and anger. The Jews perceived the Arabs of Palestine as guilty of warmongering and bringing the invaders into the country. They were seen as a fifth column that collaborated with the invaders, so it was dangerous to leave them in the army's rear. In most cases the Palestinian civilian population fled as the army approached, but the army also took the initiative, driving out inhabitants and destroying their villages so that they would not return. At the same time, the inhabitants of Nazareth, who had waved white flags, remained where they were, and Ben-Gurion forbade their expulsion. The residents of Abu Ghosh were returned to their village after their expulsion on the initiative of a local commander. Policy regarding the Palestinians was inconsistent—each commander acted as he deemed fit based on local circumstances.

A second truce was declared on July 19, 1948. The Arab governments, and especially the Arab Legion command, were in favor of it. But since the press in the Arab states portrayed the fighting in Palestine as crowned with victories, the public was angered by the ceasefire, which they saw as surrendering to the dictates of the Western powers, thus enabling the Zionists to regroup and strengthen their forces.

When the second truce—which did not have a specific time limit—was announced, the Arab League Liberation Army was in the Galilee, the Iraqi expeditionary force was in Samaria, and the Negev was cut off, with the Egyptian army controlling the east-west Majdal–Beit Jubrin road, which went as far as Hebron. The Arab Legion was in the central region, but with the opening of the Road of Valor and the laying of the water pipe to Jerusalem, the battle against it had lost urgency. Although there were still clashes in Jerusalem along the line between Arab- and Jewish-controlled areas, in fact the front there had stabilized.

The largest and strongest invading army belonged to the Egyptians, and Egypt was by far the largest Arab state. UN mediator Bernadotte proposed a territorial

exchange: Israel would relinquish the Negev—which was assigned to it by the partition plan, but which it did not hold—in exchange for Western Galilee, which it had conquered (and which was originally assigned to the Arab state). But this was an option that the Israelis would not accept. Ensuring Israeli control of the wide expanses of the Negev, which comprised some 50 percent of the Jewish state, became urgent in view of the possible challenge to its sovereignty there posed by the Bernadotte plan. Yet attacking the Egyptian army and driving it out of Israeli territory would mean breaching the truce and provoking the UN, which Israel was not eager to do. There was also concern that the Iraqis might take advantage of the IDF concentrating its forces in the south and try to cut the state in two from east to west in the area of Netanya. Members within the Israeli government disagreed about what to do. Ben-Gurion decided in favor of the attack and wrote in his diary: "Today the government took the gravest decision since we decided to declare statehood."[6]

On October 15, Operation Yoav was launched to break through the Egyptian lines and open the way to the Negev. Whereas the previous operations against the Arab Legion had territorial objectives, Operation Yoav was aimed at routing the Egyptian army. It was one of the most difficult operations of the entire war. The Egyptian army displayed fighting ability and resolve, and only after repeated battles did the IDF manage to break through its east-west lines and open the way to the Negev. But the operation had not yet achieved its objective of destroying the Egyptian army—and meanwhile the sand in the hourglass was sifting away. The UN Security Council convened and declared a ceasefire, as the Egyptians remained sitting in Gaza and Beersheba. A last-minute decision by the Israelis diverted forces to take Beersheba, a vital road junction with a biblical name. By October 21, 1948, the IDF held Beersheba.

This operation marked a watershed in the history of the war, for despite its previous failures, the IDF now proved itself capable of overcoming a regular army in a breakthrough battle. Although the Egyptian army remained in the Gaza Strip and the "Fallujah Pocket" on the eastern end of the east-west road, which the Israelis were unable to take, it had spent much of its force and no longer posed a threat. What was more, the Arab coalition was not cohesive, and none of its armies rushed to assist the Egyptians. Finally the concern that the UN would impose sanctions on Israel also turned out to be exaggerated.

At the end of October, Operation Hiram was launched in the north. It gave Israel control of Central and Northern Galilee, as well as territory along the northern border with Lebanon and Syria. The fighting was mainly against the Liberation Army, which fell to pieces. Israel even occupied some Lebanese villages as a bargaining chip for ceasefire negotiations. The entire area from the Jezreel Valley to the international border was now in Israeli hands. However, the

operation did not succeed in returning Mishmar Hayarden, the Syrian bridgehead in Israeli territory, to the Israelis.

Both sides now attempted to improve their positions before the next attack. The Egyptians feared an Israeli attempt to occupy the Gaza Strip, while the Israelis were concerned lest the Egyptians attempt to break out of the Fallujah Pocket and reoccupy Beersheba (whose loss the Egyptians did not acknowledge). The Egyptians refused to enter ceasefire negotiations, demanding that the Israelis first withdraw to the pre–Operation Yoav lines. The Israelis concluded that they had no alternative but to drive the Egyptians out of the country. Operation Horev, at the end of December 1948, demonstrated the tremendous change in the balance of power and in Israel's operational capability since the resolution of November 29, 1947. The IDF fought straight through the Negev, overcame the line of Egyptian strongholds, and destroyed the southern arm of the Egyptian army. IDF forces operated inside the Sinai Peninsula, occupied Abu Ageila, and approached the airfield at El Arish. British and American pressure on Israel led to a withdrawal of Israeli forces to the international border. An Israeli attempt during the withdrawal to occupy Rafah, thus cutting off the Gaza Strip, did not succeed, and the Strip remained in Egyptian hands.

In the wake of Operation Horev, Israel and Egypt negotiated an armistice on the island of Rhodes, with the aid of the American mediator Ralph Bunche. The negotiations were not easy, but on February 24, 1949, an agreement was signed, making Egypt the first Arab state to withdraw from the war. Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: "After the establishment of the state and our victories on the battlefield, this is the greatest event in this year of epic events."[7]

One more objective remained: control of the port city of Eilat on the Red Sea coast. The plan was to use minimal force, deploying two columns to prevent the Transjordanian army, which had occupied outposts in the Arava desert on the Israeli side of the border, from intervening in troop movements. On March 10, 1949, the two columns reached Eilat, and Israeli sovereignty on the shores of the Red Sea was established. This concluded the war's large-scale operations.

Just as the Arab states had invaded separately and had not collaborated in the fighting, so the war was concluded separately with each state. Following the success of the IDF's large-scale operations against the Egyptians, the other Arab states sought a dignified exit from the war. The problem was that an armistice agreement with the Israelis amounted to de facto recognition of the existence of a Jewish state, which was completely unacceptable both to the Palestinians and to the other Arab nations. The armistice with the Egyptians had been achieved under pressure from the Egyptian army, which was encircled in the Fallujah Pocket and had no other way out of the siege. The armistice agreement, which recognized the international border between Israel and Egypt, included an Israeli

concession: the area on both sides of the border around Nitzana (ʿUja) was declared a demilitarized zone and was made the seat of the UN Armistice Commission, which oversaw the implementation of the armistice. The Gaza Strip, with its thousands of refugees from Jaffa and villages in southern Israel, remained under Egyptian rule. It persisted as a constant source of bitterness and of guerilla and terrorist operations against Israel.

Signing the armistice agreement with Egypt opened the way for negotiations with Jordan. These began with a secret agreement on Jerusalem; the Jordanians and Israelis preferred to divide the city between them rather than introduce international rule. Thus this city, which had been the focus of clashes between the Arab Legion and the IDF, became the first item of agreement between the two countries. As we have seen, King Abdullah sought control over the areas that would come to be known as the West Bank, and in this respect he was encouraged by Britain. Israel was prepared to recognize his control over the West Bank as the only reasonable option, preferring it to control by the Palestinians (which in any case was only theoretical, since there was no Palestinian authority or government to which power could be handed over). There were also the previous understandings between the Zionist Executive and the king, which had been suspended due to the war. Now these agreements could be resumed between Israel and Abdullah, who to the Israelis had always been the least hostile of the Arab rulers.

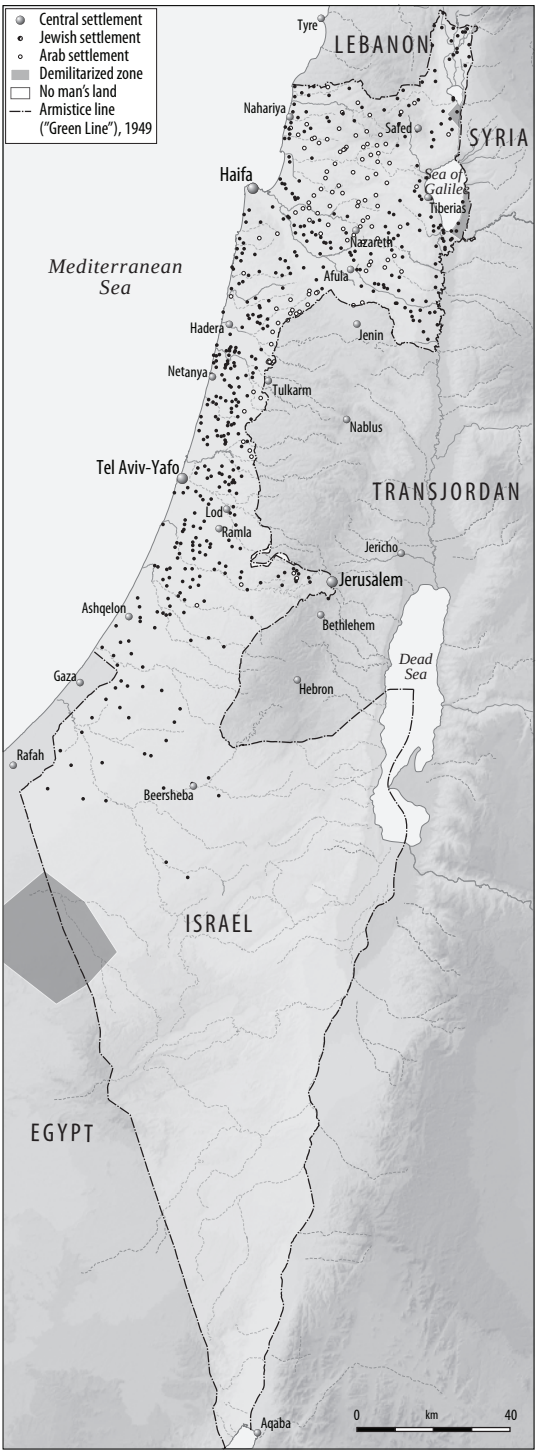
As a condition to the armistice, Israel demanded the hilly ridge dominating Samaria and Wadi ʿAra, in the area where Israel's "waist" is narrowest. The Jordanians hesitated, concerned about the reaction of Palestinian public opinion. But preparations for a military operation to occupy Samaria convinced them that an agreement was preferable to another round of fighting. The Arab villages in the area passed into Israeli hands, as did their inhabitants, who preferred to live under Israeli rule rather than as refugees in Jordan. As part of the agreements with Jordan, the Iraqi expeditionary force encamped in Samaria withdrew to Iraq and was replaced by the Arab Legion. Thus Iraq could claim that it had neither recognized the Jewish state nor signed an armistice agreement with it (April 3, 1949). The agreement with Lebanon was the least complex of the armistice agreements. Israel and Lebanon recognized the international border as the frontier between them, and Israel withdrew from the Lebanese villages it had occupied in Operation Hiram. Also as part of these agreements, Syrian army forces close to the border withdrew to the north.

The agreement with Syria of July 20, 1949, was the last to be signed. The Syrians refused to recognize the international border and demanded that the border run north to south down the middle of the Sea of Galilee. The Syrian chief of staff, Husni Zaʿim, who had seized power in a military coup, proposed a peace

treaty with Israel that would include the settlement of 250,000 Arab refugees in Syria, if Israel would agree to Syrian control over half of the Sea of Galilee, Israel's main natural reservoir. Syria even agreed to share the River Jordan water sources with Israel. However, these terms were unacceptable to Israel, which ultimately accepted the American mediator's compromise proposal based on the 1947 map. Syria withdrew from its bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden, and demilitarized zones on both sides of the border along the Hula Valley, the River Jordan, and the Sea of Galilee were defined. These zones became objects of incessant clashes between Syria and Israel, both of which claimed sovereignty over them. The entire Sea of Galilee and a ten-meter strip on its eastern shore were included in Israeli territory. But the Syrians never gave up trying to partially expropriate it from Israel. Husni Za'im did not live to see negotiations on a peace treaty with Israel; he was murdered in a new military coup less than a month after the armistice agreement was signed, and his peace overture was remembered as a thrilling (for the possibility of peace it held out) but marginal episode. Ever since, it has served those seeking to attack Israel for missing an opportunity for peace, since Israel treated this military adventurer with suspicion, trusted neither him nor the stability of his regime, and thus rejected his proposals.

The thunder of the cannons now ceased. Some young generals tried to persuade Ben-Gurion to occupy the entire country to the River Jordan border, but Ben-Gurion was already immersed in the vital mission of bringing in masses of new immigrants and absorbing them. Maintaining a large army imposed a heavy burden on the Israeli economy, and Ben-Gurion wanted to end the war and send the soldiers home so that he could concentrate on building the nation and the state. The armistice agreements had drawn what came to be known as the Green Line demarcating the borders between Israel and its neighboring states. These agreements were seen as an important step toward peace treaties that, it was thought, would soon be signed. At the time, no one even imagined that the armistice agreements would be the only bilateral agreements signed between Israel and Arab states until the peace treaty with Egypt at the end of the 1970s.

The State of Israel emerged from the War of Independence bruised and wounded as a result of the high casualty figures and destruction of settlements and towns. But the state also emerged from the war elated. Israel had been established. It was a reality, and it had successfully overcome its attackers. The inexperienced IDF had emerged as the strongest army in the region. Not only had Israel maintained control of all the areas assigned to it by the 1947 UN resolution, it had actually extended its borders. After the Arab invasion Israel no longer considered itself bound by the partition borders. Before the first truce the balance of power had prevented it from enlarging its territory, but after the "ten days" battles it was able to extend its hold on the center of the country, the Galilee, and the northern Negev



MAP 4.
THE 1949 ARMISTICE AGREEMENT GREEN LINE BORDERS. (SEE PLATE 4.)

(see maps 3 and 4). From Ben-Gurion's viewpoint Israel's achievements in the war went far beyond his most optimistic hopes. A courageous yet cautious statesman, he knew the limits of the possible and did not want to provoke the Western powers, which he perceived as Israel's support in the long term. That was why he preferred to reach agreements with Jordan and Syria and avoid the military option.

The war's biggest losers were the Palestinians. By the war's end about 700,000 Palestinians had been exiled from their homeland. In the first stage of the war, the Palestinian exodus from the areas assigned to the Jewish state was a consequence of the collapse of governmental systems in Palestinian society and the anarchy that reigned in their place. In the second stage, following the Arab invasion, there were numerous instances in which the IDF expelled the Arab population and destroyed its villages to prevent its return. The war was a matter of life or death, and the belief that the Palestinians had caused this catastrophe hardened the hearts of officers and men who suffered harsh experiences of loss and displays of abuse by the enemy. An estimate by Arab historian Arif al-Arif put the number of Palestinian dead in the war at 15,000, amounting to more or less the same percentage of the population as the Jewish fallen. Although acts of massacre and brutality were perpetrated by both sides, in Palestine there were no acts of mass slaughter like those witnessed elsewhere in the twentieth century. If we compare this war with the contemporaneous conflict between India and Pakistan following their partition, it appears that Palestine did not see the same level of brutal bloodshed. But this was small consolation for the hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees gathered in the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

The Palestinian flight in the first stage of the war left the Israelis aghast. They were unable to comprehend this phenomenon of an entire population fleeing its home and leaving ghost towns behind. But once they realized what was happening, they saw it as a great miracle that completely changed the nature of Israel. The partition plan had assigned some 400,000 Arab inhabitants to the Jewish state, approximately 40 percent of the total population. About thirty Jewish localities were supposed to come under Arab rule. The discussions and preparations for the establishment of the state had assumed that it would include a large Arab population. Now, given the destruction of all the Jewish settlements on the Arab side, and the Arab evacuation from the Jewish side, a new reality materialized: two ethnically homogeneous states, a mainly Jewish one and a purely Arab one. The conclusion was that the State of Israel could not allow the Arabs to return to their homes. Their flight had become refugeeism. At a meeting of the provisional government on June 16, 1948, Moshe Shertok (Sharett) addressed this issue: "Had any of us said that one day we must get up and expel them all—it would have been considered madness. But if it came about during the upheavals of war, a war declared on us by the Arab nation, and as the Arabs themselves were

fleeing—then it is one of those revolutionary changes after which history does not return to the status quo ante."[8]

This was a new policy, formulated gradually in response to the difficulties of the war, Arab resistance to Jewish rule, and the slowly dawning perception of a historic, revolutionary change in the demographic balance—an opportunity that should not be missed. From the summer of 1948 on, the army's orders were to prevent the Arabs from returning to their villages, either by force of arms or by destroying the villages.

In the context of the time, Israeli policy on the refugee issue was not considered out of the ordinary. It was only three years since the end of World War Two, whose casus belli had been the presence of German minorities in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The conclusion of that war had involved massive population movements. Fixing the Poland-Germany border along the Oder-Neisse River mandated the expulsion of some eight million Germans to the west. Territories in what had been eastern Poland were transferred to the Russians and became part of Ukraine; the Polish population was either expelled or forced to flee. The Beneš Decrees enacted in Czechoslovakia dispossessed three million Germans in the Sudetenland, who were forced to leave the country. Removing hostile elements who bore guilt for the war and creating ethnic homogeneity in Eastern and Central Europe were considered appropriate responses to a catastrophe perceived to originate from the multiplicity of minorities in the countries of the region. The Israeli leadership saw itself confronting precisely the same situation. The Palestinians had caused the war and they now bore its consequences. Decreasing the Arab minority in Israel was considered a natural outcome of the Palestinians' open hostility to the state. Moreover, just as Germany had absorbed the German refugees from the east, and Poland had absorbed Polish refugees, there seemed no reason why the Arab states should not absorb the Palestinian refugees.

As it turned out, however, of all the refugees created in the second half of the 1940s, the Palestinians were the only ones not absorbed by the countries where they lived. Thus they became a permanent problem in the Middle East. The demand that they return to their previous homes was impractical from the outset, for the war had erased the reality to which they wanted to return. In UN Security Council Resolution 194 of December 1948, which called upon Israel to allow the refugees to return, the return was made conditional on their willingness to live in peace side by side with the Israelis. Because this resolution called for recognizing the existence of the State of Israel, the Arab states rejected it. The Palestinians later used it as propaganda, while obscuring the context in which it was passed.

The Arabs were not ready to recognize the Jewish state. The shock of defeat and refugeeism did not create a desire for conciliation; it further inflamed the

myth of the return, perpetuating the refugee problem and preventing the refugees from integrating into the countries where they lived. The myth of the return formed part of the expectation that there would be a "second round"—another war that would erase the shame of defeat and bring about the destruction of the Jewish state. The 1948 war was perceived as an accident that would be swiftly rectified, since the demographic balance of power favored the Arab states and would enable them to triumph in the long term. This perception not only perpetuated the refugee problem but also was behind the refusal to make peace with Israel. It was therefore not reality but rhetoric that shaped the Palestinian national memory and consciousness. This rhetoric, fostered by education and propaganda, has fettered the hands of the policy makers and denied them the possibility of conciliation with Israel.

NOTES

1. Porath, *Letters from Jerusalem*, p. 66.

2. Ibid., p. 148.

3. Minutes of the Jewish Agency Executive, Jerusalem, 6.5.1948, Zionist Archive, Jerusalem.

4. David Ben-Gurion, *Yoman milhamah: Milhemet ha'atzma'ut* (War Diary: War of Independence), vol. 1, Gershon Rivlin and Dr. Elchanan Oren (eds.), Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1982, p. 416.

5. Porath, *Letters from Jerusalem*, p. 193.

6. Ben-Gurion, *Yoman milhamah*, vol. 3, 6.10.1948, p. 736.

7. Ibid., 24.2.1949, p. 970.

8. Moshe Shertok at a meeting of the provisional government, 16.6.1948. Cited by Yoav Gelber in *Kommemiut venakba* (Independence and Nakba), Jerusalem: Dvir, 2004, p. 284.

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8 THE CREATION OF ISRAELI DEMOCRACY

Of all the states created after 1945, Israel is one of the few that has maintained a democratic regime. Certainly it has not been a perfect democracy (and it is doubtful if such a democracy exists), but considering the state of war in which Israel was founded, the tremendous demographic shock waves that rattled it during its early years, and the nature of its immigrants—most of whom came from countries lacking a democratic tradition—there is something miraculous in the speed with which the new state established proper governance, and made that governance democratic.

The Mandatory authorities refused to cooperate in any matters pertaining to the November 29, 1947, UN resolution because of Arab opposition to it. Therefore there was no orderly transfer of power by the Mandatory authorities to the Jewish government that was to replace it. Furthermore, right up to the eve of the declaration of statehood, it was not clear that the state would indeed be established and become a reality. Nevertheless the leadership had already begun to formulate new structures designed to ensure governmental continuity and prevent anarchy. In April 1948 the Zionist Executive established a People's Council and a People's Administration. The former, consisting of thirty-seven members, was a sort of embryonic parliament, as noted in an earlier chapter; the latter, with thirteen members, was an embryonic government. The members of both these bodies came partly from the Jewish Agency Executive elected by the Zionist Congress, and partly from the National Committee elected by the Jews of Palestine. Since the Mandatory government prohibited the establishment of alternative government bodies while it was still in power, these entities were given names emphasizing that the source of their authority was the people, not the state. Once statehood was declared, they became the Provisional State Council and the Provisional Government.

Although disagreements among the political parties and different political worldviews and perceptions remained, all shared the sense of being present at an unparalleled, historic, exalted hour. This feeling precluded contentiousness and led to mutual tolerance, cooperation, and willingness to make concessions. Thus representatives of parties that had withdrawn from public office, such as Agudat Yisrael, the Revisionists, and the Communist Party, participated in both bodies. The excitement was palpable: "Everyone is moving, there is momentum, everyone is tense and ready," wrote Uri Heinsheimer (Yadin) on April 5. "It is hardly

surprising that one wakes up at five in the morning despite working hard till late at night, who can sleep at a time like this, who would not do anything to live this time even more awake, even more intensively, even closer, more attentive and dedicated?"[1] Soon afterward he was put in charge of legislation in the Ministry of Justice.

A declaration of independence had been drafted that included the Zionist narrative explaining the connection of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, the international recognition of the Jews' right to their country, and the proud declaration of "our natural and historic right" to establish a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. The country's borders were not mentioned. Ben-Gurion replied to questions about this by noting that even the American Declaration of Independence did not mention borders. The declaration emphasized the nature of the state as a democracy that would ensure complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens, and it appealed to the neighboring states and their Arab citizens with an offer of peace. Nevertheless the state was to be a Jewish state, open to Jewish immigration. The declaration was written in a nonreligious spirit, and although the words "as envisaged by the prophets of Israel" appear, it contains no religious concepts. The Mizrachi representatives protested this absence, and in the spirit of those great days a compromise was found whereby the document concluded with the words "Placing our trust in the Rock of Israel," a nebulous phrase that may be interpreted either as a reference to the Almighty or as a literary expression referring to the Jewish people.

The ceremony marking the declaration of statehood at the Tel Aviv Museum was modest. Due to concerns about a possible air raid or another act of sabotage, the location and time of the ceremony were kept secret, but the secret was not as closely guarded as it should have been, and on that Friday afternoon a large crowd gathered outside the building. After Ben-Gurion read the declaration, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Fishman-Maimon intoned the blessing in a voice shaking with emotion: "Blessed are You, LORD, our God, King of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season." Those present were hit with the full recognition of the meaning of independence when Ben-Gurion read the Provisional Government "proclamation" revoking the ordinances deriving from the 1939 White Paper, which prohibited immigration. Foreign rule was no more. The independence scroll bearing the signatures of those present was put into a safe in the basement of the Anglo-Palestine Bank so that if Tel Aviv were bombed, it would be preserved for generations.

Ben-Gurion's thinking about what the regime should be like was guided by the concept of *mamlakhtiyut* (statism). He wanted the state to be the sovereign entity to which all other government bodies were subordinate. Under its aegis he sought to introduce all the societal powers of the Yishuv, plus powers that the

Yishuv had not possessed, such as the courts and legal enforcement, a monopoly over the use of force, and the shaping of the legislative and executive branches. He supported all bodies that reinforced the competence of the state and its status as the exclusive source of inspiration and power. As much as he could, he sought to weaken all bodies that intervened between the authority of the state and its citizens. More specifically he wanted to weaken the parties' influence and social organizations, such as the kibbutz movements, that had been vehicles for recruiting people during the Yishuv period. In their place he upheld the new state framework as a single undisputed source of authority that ensured equality for all citizens and safeguarded the general good.

From the moment the state was established, its juridical infrastructure was in place and ready to function. The Ministry of Justice, one of the first entities to be established, ensured that all government activities would be grounded in law. In the state's first week all laws and ordinances were published in the Official Gazette (later known in Hebrew as "Rashumot"), in accordance with the principle of the rule of law. The Law and Administration Ordinance, enacted only a few days after the establishment of the state, gave the governmental institutions the power to govern until proper elections could be held. "And all the state's services are working: mail, ports, the Citrus Board, radio, arrests, expropriations, tax payments, civil defense, supervision of local authorities, manpower recruitment, fuel supervision, and so on and so forth," noted Uri Yadin, amazed at how the young state was functioning only two months after its creation. "Even the first claims against the government have already been submitted," he added, referring to claims submitted to the Tel Aviv District Court, which had been authorized in the interim to serve in the capacity of the not-yet-established Supreme Court.[2] Israeli democracy had begun to work.

Its form of government was determined almost by chance; there was in fact no discussion of whether to copy the old structures or establish new ones. The parliamentary system, in which the government is responsible to parliament and must obtain its confidence, was appropriate both to the precedent set by the Zionist Congresses and to British tradition. From the latter Ben-Gurion had learned and copied the concept of collective responsibility: that a decision made by the government was binding on all its ministers. The Knesset, Israel's parliament, continued the system of proportional representation used by the Zionist Congresses. In those heady early days no one thought to question this electoral system, which by favoring smaller parties encouraged them to exist, but it would later plague the Israeli parliamentary structure. Ben-Gurion demanded a change in this system, but did not succeed in making it happen. Over the next fifteen years, however, Mapai was the central party in Israeli politics, with more than one third of the seats in the Knesset. It formed all the governments and was the

majority party in all of them. So long as Mapai's rule remained intact, the proportional representation system did not impair the government's functional stability.

The First Knesset, elected on January 25, 1949, was supposed to be a statutory assembly that would formulate and ratify the constitution. But it rapidly became clear that at this point no constitution would be enacted; instead the Knesset would enact a series of Basic Laws that in time would be combined into a constitution. The choice of the British parliamentary system, which has no constitution, derived from both political considerations and reasons of principle. The Israeli legislators reviewed the model of the American Constitution, which grants the Supreme Court the power to declare laws passed by the legislative branch unconstitutional. To Ben-Gurion this authority seemed to bypass the wishes of the democratic majority and restrict the government's decision-making power. For precisely the same reason, the parties at both ends of the political spectrum—Mapam (United Workers Party) and Herut (liberty, the main right-wing party)—supported a constitution, since it would protect individual and minority rights against the coercive power of the majority. They feared that without a constitution, a government headed by Mapai could enact laws damaging to the small parties.

Ben-Gurion recognized the importance of a constitution as a central symbol of a state that educates its citizens to recognize the rule of law and the principle of equality before the law. But he contended that loyalty to the rule of law results not from the existence of a constitution but from a general civic ethos. Numerous countries have both glorious constitutions and regimes that are oppressive, tyrannical, and detrimental to the freedom of individuals and their rights. Thus a constitution is not a panacea that guarantees democracy and human rights, and its advantages do not outweigh its disadvantages. Ben-Gurion also argued that only 10 percent of the Jewish people were actually in Israel (at the time), and it was unwise for a tiny minority to force a constitution on the entire people for generations to come.

From a political standpoint Ben-Gurion was trying to avoid the internal struggles that accepting a constitution would produce, and he particularly wanted to avoid straining relations with the religious parties. A constitution would raise the issue of making the Halakha the source of law in Israel, or at least a demand to base the constitution on Jewish law, which the judicial system totally rejected. A constitution would also mandate codification of such ad hoc agreements as the "status quo arrangement," which had been reached in talks between Ben-Gurion and Agudat Yisrael before November 29, 1947. The Jewish Agency had given Agudat Yisrael assurances that in the future state the Sabbath would be the public day of rest, public kitchens would be kosher, efforts would be made to maintain the halakhic laws of personal status, and the autonomy of religious education

would be preserved but would include the core studies of the general education system. It would be difficult to anchor this arrangement in a constitution. With the state still unformed, a "culture war" might undermine loyalty to it and damage internal cohesion.

From the perspective of sixty years on, this seems one of Ben-Gurion's greatest mistakes, largely because he never imagined that the influence of religion and the power of the religious parties would grow. He also agreed to exempt yeshiva students and girls who declared themselves religiously observant from military service, assuming that ultra-Orthodox Jewry was on its last legs and would eventually either disappear altogether or become a small, insignificant sect. As to the religious-Zionist parties, Hamizrachi and Hapo'el Hamizrachi, he had seen them as faithful coalition partners on the Zionist Executive since 1935. Ben-Gurion maintained this tolerant attitude toward the religious parties not only because they were convenient coalition partners—their demands were limited to the sphere of religion and did not impinge upon either foreign policy or economic matters—but also as a matter of principle. To him they represented a historical tradition among the Jewish people; they were also a trend doomed to disappear, a sort of remnant of the past.

In the state's early years the trauma of the Holocaust was still strongly embedded in ultra-Orthodox consciousness, the birth of the state was perceived as the dawn of redemption, and in the synagogues on Independence Day the Hallel prayer of praise was chanted. At that time it might have been possible to agree on the adoption of a constitution in Israel. A constitution's importance goes beyond its purely legal aspect. Such a document is a tool for creating a civic ethos as a central component of the state's identity. A constitution could have made a significant contribution to healing the rifts in Israeli society and stabilized universally accepted norms of governance. In this regard Ben-Gurion did not foresee historical developments. Bear in mind, however, that the optimistic assumption that Ben-Gurion could have legislated a constitution is simply speculation. Some scholars hold that in those early days the differences of opinion with the religious sector were severe enough to make such a thing impossible.

Even though no constitution was legislated, the Supreme Court possessed from its inception both an elevated status and a legal authority that went beyond those accorded by law. In contrast with the lower courts, which were a continuation of institutions that existed under the Mandatory government, the Supreme Court was an exclusively Israeli creation with no connection to the Mandatory institution that preceded it. Initially Ben-Gurion thought this honored state institution should be located in Haifa, which had not been awarded any national distinctions, but the appointed justices insisted that it be housed in Jerusalem, even though at the time the city's political status was unclear. The inauguration

of the Supreme Court on September 15, 1948, caused great excitement. Court president Moshe Zmora avowed emotionally: "For almost two thousand years the Jewish people have prayed three times a day for 'And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning.' Today in awe we come closer to fulfilling that vision."[3]

In the early years Supreme Court justices were appointed by the political system, and although one might have expected members of the ruling Mapai party to be given preference, in fact the goal was to create a politically balanced panel of justices that would also represent the religiously observant and the political center, while giving clear priority to professional jurists over political appointees. As time went by, the Supreme Court ensured its independence with an ordinance decreeing that its own members would elect new justices, unanimously. The political system generally made sure to uphold the dignity and independence of the Supreme Court—an unmistakable manifestation of the concept of statism.

Initially the court was inclined toward formal judgment according to the letter of the law, influenced perhaps by the German legal system, which many leading members of the Israeli system had graduated from. Researchers are divided regarding the reasons for this disposition. Explanations range from the justices' fear of clashing with the collectivist trends prevailing in Israeli society to their desire to educate the public to respect the rule of law and the public arena. But the court swiftly extended its authority. In 1953 two communist newspapers, the Hebrew *Kol Ha'am* (voice of the people) and the Arabic *Al-Ittihad* (the union), petitioned the Supreme Court to revoke an order by the minister of the interior to close the papers because they had published defamatory articles against the government that were interpreted as inciting the public against enlisting in the army. In itself the issue amounted to a tempest in a teapot, since the articles had been published in response to a story that Israel's UN ambassador had expressed agreement to mobilizing 200,000 Israelis to fight against the USSR in Korea, which turned out to be a fiction. What *was* important was the court's decision to revoke the minister's order to close the papers, because it found that the articles provided insufficient grounds for restricting freedom of the press. The court based its decision on the freedoms enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, thus giving the declaration the status of a sort of constitution guaranteeing individual freedom and rights.

The Declaration of Independence mentions the right of Jews to immigrate to Israel and declares "ingathering of the exiles" to be a state objective. This was a preferential right granted to Jews over other citizens. It arose from the Zionist worldview that Israel was to be the Jewish state, the home of every Jew desiring to live in it. The Law of Return, passed in July 1950, codified the right stated in the declaration. The juxtaposition of Jewish national identity and immigration to

Israel grants Jews the unconditional right to Israeli citizenship from the day of their arrival in the country, except if they endanger public order (for reasons of criminality, health, security, or acts against the Jewish people). Citizenship includes the right to vote and to be elected to office. When the law was drafted in 1950, it did not explain how to define who is a Jew. Between 1948 and 1951, the years of mass immigration, no one investigated or examined this issue, and anyone's declaration that he or she was Jewish was accepted and recorded under "Nationality" on the person's identity card.

In the late 1950s Minister of the Interior Yisrael Bar-Yehuda (of the left-wing Ahdut Haʿavoda party) learned that his ministry's officials were taking the law into their own hands, sometimes accepting a declaration in good faith and other times refusing to do so. He issued specific instructions: any person declaring in good faith that he or she was a Jew, as well as children of mixed marriages, should be registered as a Jew, with no additional proof required. Bar-Yehuda's amendment turned a flexible procedure into an inflexible law, and this explosive issue, which until then had been avoided thanks to the Law of Return's ambiguity, was now placed on the public agenda. July 1958 saw the first Knesset debate on "Who Is a Jew." The government ratified Bar-Yehuda's guidelines, thus determining that a person could be considered Jewish from the standpoint of belonging to the Jewish people, even if not considered so according to Jewish religious law. In response to this decision the Mafdal (National Religious Party) ministers resigned. To them this issue was paramount, since it redefined the borderlines of the Jewish collective.

In the absence of a compromise that met the demands of both the nonreligious side, which endorsed the national-identity definition, and the religious side, which insisted on the halakhic definition, Ben-Gurion decided to consult with fifty Jewish sages in Israel and the Diaspora. The problem was, first, that he was handing this issue over to people who were not only unfamiliar with it but also detached from the reality of life in Israel, and second, that the majority of the chosen fifty were religiously observant. In essence Ben-Gurion had "commissioned" a response that would satisfy the Mafdal and put an end to the coalition crisis. And indeed the majority of the respondents stated that "Who Is a Jew" should be defined according to halakhic law. When the Mafdal ministers returned to the government fold, the Ministry of the Interior was transferred to a religious individual who annulled his predecessor's guidelines and unofficially ordered the ministry officials to register as Jewish only persons either born to a Jewish mother or who had converted in accordance with the Halakha. Not being grounded in law, these instructions invited appeals against them.

The first appeal, based on the contradiction between the law's stipulations and the minister of the interior's regulations, was lodged by Brother Daniel, a Car-

melite monk of Jewish origin whose former name was David Oswald Rufeisen. Rufeisen saw himself as a Jew of the Christian faith, and had asked to be registered as Jewish on his identity card. A Ministry of the Interior official denied his request, and in 1962 Rufeisen petitioned the Supreme Court, claiming his right under the Law of Return. His petition required the court to decide whether the Law of Return's definition of Jewish nationality overlaps its religious definition, or whether the two are separate. In a majority decision the court ruled against Brother Daniel, basing its decision not on the halakhic definition of "Who Is a Jew," whereby he was in fact considered Jewish ("A Jew who has transgressed is still a Jew"), but on how a Jew is perceived by the man in the street. No one would think that a Christian monk might be a Jew. At least one justice, however, believed there should be a complete distinction between the religious and national definitions, and therefore concluded that Brother Daniel was a Jew according to his own definition. Ultimately, Brother Daniel was granted citizenship under the Nationality Law, which covers all non-Jewish citizens in Israel, but the ideological issue remained unresolved. Can an individual be a Jew by nationality without being Jewish by religion?

The controversy resurfaced several years later, when Benjamin Shalit, a senior IDF officer married to a Scottish woman who defined herself as an atheist, demanded that their children be registered as Jews. When the registrar denied his request, Shalit appealed to the High Court of Justice with a petition based on the Law of Return. In a long, detailed decision the court recognized the right of the Shalit children to be registered as Jews, based on the fact that the Law of Return contained no formal definition of "Who Is a Jew." It said that children growing up in Israel, raised as Jews, who identify with the Jewish people, were worthy of recognition as Jews. The court added that this in no way undermined the halakhic perception, since the identity card was an official state document that neither proved nor disproved an individual's Jewishness for the purposes of marriage and divorce, which came under the authority of the rabbinic courts.

The religiously observant considered that the court had taken upon itself the authority to distinguish between religious and national identity, the "Siamese twins" that had accompanied the Jews throughout history. The first appeal against connecting the two had been voiced by Clermont-Tonnerre in the debate on Jewish emancipation in France during the French Revolution. He was prepared to grant the Jews equal rights on condition that they relinquished their identity as a nation and adhered only to their religious one. In Israel the issue came up from the opposite direction: can a person be a Jew by nationality without being a Jew according to the Jewish faith? This topic was linked with another, complex one: did this mean that the State of Israel should permit civil marriages? In the late 1960s this question generated stormy controversy between Jewish

freethinkers and the religiously observant. Nevertheless it remained on the fringes of public consciousness, since the vast majority of nonobservant Jews accepted the connection between religious and national identity as self-evident, and did not challenge the religious character of either the marriage and divorce laws or the rites of passage ceremonies (circumcision, bar mitzvah, burial).

In the end, under pressure from the religious parties, an amendment to the Law of Return was enacted in 1970 that defined a Jew as a person born to a Jewish mother or a person who has converted, and who is not a member of another faith. This definition contained two concessions to the nonreligious public. First, there is no mention of "conversion according to halakhic law," which means that those who converted through the Reform or Conservative movement in the United States—which the Orthodox religious establishment in Israel had disqualified—were not excluded. Second, from then on the Law of Return would also include the children and grandchildren of Jews, the intention being to include the offspring of mixed marriages. This regulation concerned above all immigrants from the USSR. It became a central issue after the mass emigration from Russia in the 1990s (discussed later).

CONSOLIDATING STATE POWER

The need for a transition from a society governed by consensus such as existed during the Yishuv period—in which each entity could reject the authority of the majority and withdraw—to a state run by a government under law, which had the power to compel, was not accepted as self-evident. Thus the state had first to ensure its monopoly over the use of force. As we have seen, Yishuv minorities that did not accept the rule of the majority had posed a challenge in this respect. With the establishment of the state, the Lehi underground organization announced that it was disbanding and that its soldiers would join the IDF. The Etzel, however, did not do this. Even before the state was established, it had negotiated with the Haganah leaders about integrating into the army of the new state. The Etzel demanded several special rights, such as maintaining its units within the IDF, as well as an agreement that it would not be dismantled in Jerusalem, whose inclusion in the State of Israel was still unclear. However, it agreed to accept the state's authority, and its soldiers joined the IDF.

During the first ceasefire, however, a crisis erupted. An Etzel vessel carrying arms and immigrants, the SS *Altalena* (a pen name of Jabotinsky), reached the shores of Israel. Since the government had given the UN an undertaking that it would not import arms during the ceasefire, the ship was diverted to a remote beach at Kfar Vitkin in the hope that the UN inspectors would not discover it, and it could unload its cargo of arms there and transfer them to the IDF. The Etzel tried to negotiate for its units to have priority in receiving the arms, and for part

of the cargo to be sent to its separate organization in Jerusalem. The government rejected these terms and refused to accept the Etzel as a negotiating partner. Initially the Etzel appeared ready to transfer the arms to the IDF, but soon made clear that it would not. Etzel people and IDF soldiers clashed on the beach, with casualties on both sides. The ship set sail and ran aground off Tel Aviv in full view of the global media. Menachem Begin, the Etzel commander, boarded the ship and in a dramatic radio broadcast called upon his members to come help unload the cargo. Former Etzel members deserted from their IDF units and hurried to the shore. Violent clashes ensued between the Etzel people and IDF soldiers. A curfew was imposed on Tel Aviv, and Yigal Allon, the Palmach commander, was ordered to stop what the government and most of the public viewed as an attempt to challenge government authority. A cannon round fired from the Yona camp in north Tel Aviv hit the vessel, which started burning. A number of people were killed or wounded, and the Etzel members were forced to abandon the burning vessel and surrender. The *Altalena* story became Menachem Begin's seminal myth as a leader prepared to assume responsibility for the welfare of the nation as a whole, because when the ship went up in flames he called upon his men to stop fighting and avoid an internecine war. But it also became a seminal myth of Israeli state sovereignty, for Ben-Gurion had proved his determination to ensure state control by military force, if necessary. The Etzel people now returned to the IDF as individuals and integrated into various units.

On August 17, 1948, UN mediator Count Folke Bernadotte was assassinated by former members of Lehi. In response the government took decisive action, arresting Lehi and Etzel activists and eliminating the Etzel's last vestiges of independence in Jerusalem. In September 1948 Ben-Gurion ordered the Palmach disbanded. The Palmach, the IDF spearhead, had proved its worth in fierce battles. It did not breach IDF discipline and did not constitute a potential threat to the government as the Etzel had seemed to do. But Palmach headquarters was linked politically with the left, especially Mapam, the left-wing party founded in January 1948. Ben-Gurion wanted an army whose primary loyalty was to the state, with no other sources of inspiration. By dismantling the Palmach he intended to show that there was only one army, the IDF, and one legal source of authority, the elected government. There were those who contended that Ben-Gurion was trying to weaken his political adversaries, but in retrospect there can be no doubt that his actions created precedents for the state that guaranteed the army's noninvolvement in politics.

Yishuv society had possessed strong political awareness. Its parties were mobilizing and organizing entities that helped mediate between the individual and society. Everything was allocated according to political allegiance: immigration certificates, national settlement, the Haganah national command, the employ-

ment exchanges, even the order of boarding the illegal immigration ships. The banner of statism raised by Ben-Gurion was meant to counter the power of political bodies and establish the state as the representative of the general interest that strove to ensure the welfare of all citizens. The state was committed to a policy of equality for its citizens regardless of their political affiliation.

As we have seen, depoliticizing the army was one of the first actions taken to this end. Five of the six IDF chiefs of staff who served under Minister of Defense Ben-Gurion were nonpartisan, and not by chance. Senior officers who leaned obviously to the left did not find a place in the IDF. In the 1950s one could still identify senior IDF officers who were active in political parties, mainly Mapai, but the principle of separation between political activity and active military service slowly penetrated public consciousness, and by the end of the period was universally accepted. The legal system was another arena for depoliticization. As hinted at in the discussion on "Who Is a Jew," most judges had no clear political affiliation, while the courts took care to display ideological neutrality and did not hesitate to criticize government institutions.

The civil service, on the other hand, was built on the departments that had existed in the Jewish Agency Executive, the National Committee, and the Mandatory government. The first two had a tradition of politicization that was now transferred to the civil service. Each minister swiftly staffed his ministry with his cronies. The idea of professional civil servants who could serve as a counterweight to a minister motivated by partisan considerations was barely accepted. For the first decade the civil servant worked on behalf of the minister's political interests. Finally, in 1959 a number of civil service laws were enacted that established universal, meritocratic criteria for appointments. From now on each minister was entitled to appoint three of his own people to "positions of trust," while the rest of the officials were selected by professional committees based on their skills, and the minister was not allowed to replace them. The Civil Service Commission was entrusted with these appointments.

The principle of meritocracy ultimately triumphed, so that civil servants' level of education and ability had greater influence on their advancement than their political affiliation. One fine example is the development of the Ministry of Finance. Its civil servants were students of a young economist, an American immigrant called Don Patinkin, who introduced modern economic thinking into the Hebrew University Department of Economics. "Patinkin's Boys" became the hard core of the Ministry of Finance and Bank of Israel professional staff, and they introduced norms of professionalism and political neutrality to subjects such as management of the state budget, ministry allocations, tax collection, and so forth.

During the Yishuv period the education system was structured into "streams"

controlled by different interest groups. The "general stream" was Zionist and nonreligious; it had no political affiliation but was identified with the center and the right and run by the municipalities and the local councils. The Histadrut "workers' stream" educated students for manual labor, agriculture, going to the kibbutz, and dedication to the collective. It nurtured an affiliation with socialist images and ideas and identification with the world's wretched and oppressed. The pioneering youth movements, associated with political parties, were active in its schoolyards. The "Zionist-religious stream" belonged to Hamizrachi and fostered religious studies and a religious worldview, but also included general studies with an emphasis on traditional Jewish and Zionist values and images. Finally, the Agudat Yisrael "independent stream" taught religious studies only.

Education is a significant tool for shaping national identity. Leaving it in the hands of political factions would have perpetuated the Yishuv's political legacy. But none of these groups was eager to give up its power, especially the workers' stream, whose power had increased due to its dominance in the immigrants' camps and *maʿabarot* (transit camps, sing. *maʿabara*, discussed later). It was now the biggest stream, even though its scope during the Yishuv period had not been impressive. (Most workers in the cities and moshavot sent their children to the general-stream schools.) In the wake of fierce clashes between the religious and workers' streams over the immigrant children, an arrangement was devised. Hamizrachi and the workers' stream agreed to relinquish political control over education, which was now the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and was divided into "state" and "state-religious" tracks. The Agudat Yisrael independent stream remained in control of its own education system, but as we have seen, it was small and nobody thought it had a future.

Some assert that Ben-Gurion assumed that state education would be conducted in the spirit of the workers' stream, which was growing at the time. But the situation did not turn out that way. For better or worse, education took on a neutral character. Ben-Gurion's critics later contended that eliminating the streams had actually led to the destruction of the workers' stream and its special way of educating, while the other streams remained as they were. The result was to diminish the left's ability to impart its worldview to the younger generation. At the same time, transferring education from the control of political factions to the state was a great achievement for the concept of statism.

One focus of political power was the labor exchanges. From the end of the 1930s on, these were run by the Jewish Agency. Their staffing and the apportioning of work were determined politically. When the state was established the labor exchanges were transferred to the Ministry of Labor, but their political character and the influence of political affiliation on job seekers' getting work continued until the late 1950s, when the labor exchanges became "employment services"

and their staff civil servants. Mechanisms of allocating work were now run according to civil service rules and under the supervision of the state comptroller: another victory for statism.

Other movements in addition to labor found their traditional roles expropriated by the state. Herzl's creation, the Zionist Organization—"the emerging state"—was suddenly left without a clear mission. The Jewish state had become reality. So what now? The question of the role and position of the World Zionist Organization in the new state was linked to relations between Israel and the strong, wealthy American Jewish community. The American Jewish leadership had been prepared to support the Yishuv enterprise in Palestine, and approved sending it aid, but on condition that its activity would have no national aspirations that might play into the hands of antisemitic elements in American society, which could then accuse American Jews of dual loyalty. Thus, for example, Hadassah (the Women's Zionist Organization of America) operated a wide-ranging health care organization in the Yishuv. Beginning this work with the British conquest of Palestine, it had established a preventive medicine system, infant welfare centers, and hospitals in the Yishuv and later in Israel. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee ("the Joint") was also active in the country. On the face of it at least, these organizations acted as philanthropic, not national, bodies.

Some groups among the American Jewish elites totally dissociated themselves from the Zionist Organization. The most extreme of these was the American Council for Judaism, which went so far as to engage in virulent anti-Zionist propaganda; its members helped Arab spokespeople prepare their speeches at the UN when the decision on partition was pending. Other groups, such as the American Jewish Committee (AJC), adopted a more moderate tone. They were concerned about involvement in matters that might portray the Jews as a nation, not solely a religion, and dissociated themselves from Zionism. This position was also adopted by the Reform movement. As the fate of European Jewry became known, the leaders of non-Zionist American Jewry were increasingly inclined to associate themselves with the Zionist struggle, and also to donate generously for arms procurement, the establishment of an arms industry in Israel, and the cost of the War of Independence. The leaders of the AJC, Joseph M. Proskauer and later Jacob Blaustein, and the heads of the United Jewish Appeal, Henry Morgenthau Jr. and Henry Montor, developed a direct connection with Ben-Gurion and his fellow members of the Zionist Executive, bypassing the leadership of the Zionist Organization of America. At that time the Zionist Organization of America had a forceful, influential leadership headed by Abba Hillel Silver and Emmanuel Neuman that did not see eye to eye with Ben-Gurion on numerous issues, and it conditioned its willingness to mobilize to assist the state on a

set of demands. This position irked Ben-Gurion, who believed that the Zionist Organization should be committed to the state without reservation.

The establishment of the state put two main issues on the state's agenda with regard to the Zionist Organization. The first was defining the difference between Zionists and non-Zionists, now that the state existed. The second was redefining the limits of the state's sovereignty vis-à-vis the Zionist Organization. Ben-Gurion could now see no real difference between Zionists and non-Zionists; neither group was immigrating to Israel, while both wanted Israel to flourish and were active on its behalf. Moreover, the non-Zionists' fundraising capabilities turned out to be far greater than those of the Zionists. And with respect to political influence, the non-Zionists had far more effective contacts. The Zionist Organization suffered a drastic drop in both prestige and influence, while the non-Zionists, led by AJC president Blaustein, demanded a clear definition of the state's authority that would apply to its citizens only, with no claims whatsoever on American Jewry. They also demanded that the United States be defined as a "diaspora" and not an "exile" (a term implying that Jews ought to immigrate to Israel) and that the slogan "ingathering of the exiles" not apply to American Jewry, but only to countries where Jews were in distress.

In fact there was no difference between the non-Zionists and Zionists on the issue of immigration. Both saw the United States as a homeland, not a place of exile. But the Zionists wanted Israel to recognize them as a mediator between the new state and the Jews of the Diaspora; the Zionist Organization would represent those Jews vis-à-vis Israel and represent Israel to them. Ben-Gurion rejected this notion out of hand; the sovereign State of Israel could establish relations with whomever it deemed fit. He vehemently refused to grant the Zionist Organization exclusivity as a mediator. There are numerous Jews who are not Zionists, he said, and they too wish to play a part in building the state. Here two interests converged: that of the state, in defining itself as the focus and source of inspiration of world Jewry, and that of the non-Zionists, in preventing the Zionist Organization from obtaining the status of sole representative of the Diaspora Jews.

Ben-Gurion was adamant: only citizens of Israel were entitled to influence its policies, and Jews not living there had no right to interfere. On the other hand, he declared that the state had no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of the American Jewish communities. This was the spirit of the "understandings" reached between Ben-Gurion and Blaustein. At the Twenty-third Zionist Congress in 1951, the first to be held after the establishment of the state, Zionism's aims were set out in the Jerusalem Program: "The task of Zionism is the consolidation of the State of Israel, the ingathering of exiles in Eretz Yisrael, and the fostering of the unity of the Jewish people." This definition was ambiguous in the extreme. The reference to "ingathering of exiles" did not differentiate be-

tween countries where Jews were in distress and the Jews of the West, but the fact is that it was not aimed at Jews in the West. The reference to "the Jewish people" was also extremely general, out of concern for the feelings of Blaustein and the other non-Zionists.

The congress decided, however, that Israel should enact a law recognizing the special status of the Zionist Organization as the representative of Diaspora Jews. Such a law contravened not only the "understandings" between Ben-Gurion and Blaustein, but also Israeli interests as Ben-Gurion perceived them. Consequently, along the way from the congress's decision to the Knesset's enactment of the law, the Zionist Organization's status was eroded. The paragraph describing it as "the representative of the Jewish people" was deleted and replaced by a description of it as "an authorized agency" acting in Israel for the development and settlement of the country, immigrant absorption, and coordination of the activities of Jewish institutions working in these areas in Israel. In 1954 a covenant was signed between the Zionist Organization and the government granting the Zionist Organization official status as the representative of world Jewry in all matters pertaining to its missions. But this agreement did not prevent the government of Israel from negotiating with other Jewish organizations. The State of Israel Bonds enterprise, with sales revenue greater than that of the United Jewish Appeal (whose income declined during the 1950s), was placed in the hands of the non-Zionists.

Ben-Gurion found it easier to negotiate with representatives of the non-Zionist organizations. Zionist Organization representatives were party members with political pretensions who sought to interfere in Israeli affairs from both within and without. The non-Zionists, for their part, did not want Israeli intervention in Diaspora matters, and in return refrained from interfering in Israeli matters. Instead of political power they asked for respect, and for their counsel to be heeded. Ben-Gurion asserted that the Zionist Organization had fulfilled its role and advocated that it be disbanded, but he found no support for this position even in his own party. Many in the Israeli leadership felt a commitment to the entity that had only recently led the struggle to establish the state. They also recognized that the Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency (which had shared personnel) were experienced in organizing immigration and absorbing and settling immigrants. They therefore supported the organization's continued existence despite Ben-Gurion's opposition.

Over the years the difference between non-Zionists and Zionists in American Jewry became blurred. The subject of dual loyalty, which had troubled the non-Zionists after the state was established, was now marginal. The enthusiasm that gripped Diaspora Jews over the Six-Day War brought down the barriers between the two types of identification with the state. The year 1968 saw the formulation

of the second Jerusalem Program, which declared the aims of Zionism as follows: "The unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life; the ingathering of the Jewish people in the historic homeland, Eretz Yisrael, through aliya from all countries; the strengthening of the State of Israel which is based on the prophetic vision of justice and peace; the preservation of the identity of the Jewish people through the fostering of Jewish, Hebrew, and Zionist education and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values; the protection of Jewish rights everywhere." Very little remained of the Ben-Gurion–Blaustein "understandings" of the early 1950s. The program recognized the centrality of Israel in the life of the Jewish people; it recognized immigration as one of Zionism's goals, without excluding Western Jewry; and it gave the Zionist Organization an important role in the Diaspora that it had not previously played. In 1971 an expanded Jewish Agency was established, with 50 percent of its representatives coming from the Zionist Organization, 30 percent from the United Jewish Appeal, and 20 percent from contributing organizations in the rest of the world. Thus the final barrier between the fundraisers, most of whom came from the non-Zionist organizations, and the Zionist representatives fell.

THE EARLY YEARS OF ISRAELI DEMOCRACY

In contrast to the norm in other social democratic countries, in Israel the left opposed "big government" and the right endorsed it. The voluntarist organizations of the left, such as the kibbutz movements, whose organizational skills and dedication underlay the mobilizing capabilities and resourcefulness that fortified them during the Mandatory period, did not accept losing the national functions they had performed when these were transferred to the state. Mapam, a Marxist party established in 1948 as a result of a union between the Hashomer Hatzaʿir party (which was based in the Kibbutz Haʾartzi Hashomer Hatzaʿir) and Ahdut Haʿavoda (established in 1944 by former Mapai members, most of whom were members of Hakibbutz Hameuhad), saw statism as an attempt by Ben-Gurion to dispossess the labor movement of its ideological and socioeconomic assets and transfer the movement's nation-building roles to the state. Mapam considered itself a leftist alternative to Mapai and interpreted Ben-Gurion's statism as a crude attempt to shunt it aside while Mapai took over the new positions of power.

The left's feeling of alienation from the new state was heightened by the dismantling of the Palmach, by Ben-Gurion's demand that the kibbutzim absorb hired workers from among the new immigrants (discussed later), and by the quelling of the "Seamen's Rebellion," a strike by the Israeli merchant fleet that was put down with the use of military mobilization orders. During those years of

the Cold War, the left blindly admired the USSR, whereas Ben-Gurion took the State of Israel from a position of neutrality between the blocs, which it had adopted during the War of Independence, to a clearly pro-Western stance. The hostility from members of the left toward statism and Ben-Gurion derived from what they saw as damage to their historical assets for the sake of statism, and from their opposition to Ben-Gurion's political line, which ran counter to their ideology and politics.

Israel's first era (1948–1967) was marked by Mapai dominance. The party had a majority in all the governments headed by Ben-Gurion. It also had a majority in the Histadrut executive committee, and the Histadrut general secretary was a Mapai member. Mapai filled most Histadrut posts, including those in the Hevrat Haʿovdim (society of workers, the Histadrut's holding company), Solel Boneh (the major Histadrut construction company), and even the workers' councils, which ruled workplaces rigorously, granting little power to workers' committees or trade unions. Mapai members also dominated the civil service. Mapai and the Histadrut seemed almost like subcontractors tasked to apply the principles of statism. They acted as a sort of Praetorian Guard that implemented the national policy formulated by Ben-Gurion. This process turned Mapai into a political machine that stamped out any attempt to democratize it from within or without, to change its way of operating, or to introduce new groups into its leadership. Statism Mapai-style was paternalistic, with control in the hands of one political movement that guided the state in the direction it perceived best for the public good. During this period Israel was a parliamentary democracy, but with a level of centralized political and economic power unknown in democratic countries. A democracy of the people, for the people, but not by the people.

Ben-Gurion declared it possible to create a coalition that included the entire political spectrum in Israel but "without Herut and Maki" (the latter being the Israeli Communist Party). Herut was the party founded by Menachem Begin after the Etzel had disbanded. It was not certain that Begin would decide to switch to parliamentary activity and accept the rules of the democratic game, nor were his behavior and political style during those first years always compatible with those rules. In 1952, when the Knesset debated the reparations agreement with West Germany (discussed later), Begin allowed demonstrators from his party to assault the Knesset and throw stones at its façade, until the speaker was forced to suspend the session—the first time this occurred in the legislature's history. Begin adopted the affectations of a populist leader, such as having motorcycle outriders escort him to election rallies. He presented his right-wing party as the true alternative to Mapai and its socialistic methods. But the core of his concept was political: demanding the entire Land of Israel, on both sides of the River

Jordan, for the State of Israel. He accused the Ben-Gurion government of being fainthearted and submitting to the Great Powers, a position most Israelis perceived as unrealistic and warmongering.

Although as time went by Herut became institutionalized and more moderate, and suspicion aroused by its use of undemocratic tactics waned, as long as Ben-Gurion was prime minister Herut did not enter the coalition. Nor did it manage to gain more than seventeen seats in the Knesset. In 1965 Herut merged with the Liberal Party (which had been spawned by the General Zionists) in hopes of shedding the image of a radical, irresponsible right-wing party and reaching a broader audience of voters. The new party was named Gahal (an acronym of *Gush Herut-Liberalim*, Herut-Liberals bloc). A few months earlier, in 1964, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol had fulfilled Ze'ev Jabotinsky's request in his last will and testament that an independent Israeli government would bring his remains to Israel for reburial. This symbolic act heralded the legitimization of Herut in Israeli political life.

Maki, the Israeli Communist Party, was outside the Zionist consensus altogether. Although it accepted the existence of Israel as a state (since the USSR had voted for the two-state solution on November 29, 1947, and had recognized Israel), it was an anti-Zionist party that adhered without reservation to Soviet policy. Maki was binational, and it provided an authentic voice for the Israeli Arabs during the period after the 1948 war when they were deprived and isolated. It fought fiercely against the military government imposed on the Arabs after the war and against government expropriation of Arab land. As time went by, the party became polarized between its Jewish members, who objected to Arab nationalist statements calling for the destruction of Israel, and its Arab members, who endorsed such statements. According to one version, at a secret meeting of the party's central committee, Knesset member Tawfik Tubi proposed that the USSR declare the establishment of the State of Israel to be a Stalinist mistake that should be rectified. The proposal was rejected by a vote along national lines. In 1964 the party split. Only Jewish members remained in Maki, while the breakaway party, Rakah (acronym for *Reshima Kommunistit Hadasha*, New Communist List), consisted almost entirely of Arabs. Maki supported the Israeli position on the eve of the Six-Day War, and Rakah supported the Arabs.

The Arab minority in Israel after the War of Independence numbered 156,000, about 20 percent of the population. Most Arabs lived in the Galilee, the "Little Triangle" given to Israel by Jordan after the armistice agreement, and the Negev. Stunned by the defeat, the flight, and the expulsion, they had no acknowledged leadership. Israel seized abandoned Arab property and expropriated Arab land for Jewish settlement. According to some estimates, between 40 and 60 percent of the Arab-owned land in Israeli areas in 1948 was now transferred to Jewish

settlement. In the Declaration of Independence Israel assured its Arab inhabitants of equal rights, but in the wake of the war Ben-Gurion was persuaded that the Arabs could not be trusted and military government should be imposed on them for security reasons—meaning that they were excluded from the right to defend themselves in the Israeli judicial system.

Ironically this military government was based on the British Mandate Defence (Emergency) Laws that had been used against the Jewish Yishuv. Military government restricted the Arab inhabitants' freedom of movement. They needed permits to leave their towns and villages, a situation that prevented them from obtaining employment in the center of the country or higher education. The military administration was entitled to demolish buildings and confiscate land if it thought they had been used to perpetrate hostile actions. Employment in education or the municipalities was conditional upon the administration's consent. Except for Maki and, after 1954, Mapam, Arabs were excluded from Jewish political parties. Only in 1960 were they accepted as members with equal rights in the Histadrut, whose descriptor was now changed to "General Federation of Workers in Israel." Mapai established Arab "satellite" (electoral) lists, whose elected members supported Mapai in the Knesset. In this the party was supported by the military administration, whose staff treated the Arab minority as a clientele that received privileges in return for political support. Mapai activists supported the Arab clan leadership, which provided votes in elections. In Israel's second decade, military government laws were weakened and restrictions on movement abolished. But even though most parties (including Herut) recommended abolishing the harmful, anachronistic apparatus of military government, which was a stain on Israeli democracy, this was not done until 1966, during Levi Eshkol's premiership. After that the satellite lists were gradually weakened, then completely done away with in 1981, and independent Arab parties appeared.

In the history of Jewish-Arab relations in Israel in the 1950s, one traumatic event became a symbol. On October 29, 1956, on the eve of the Sinai Campaign, tension along the border with Jordan heightened. The sector commander changed the night curfew imposed on the villages from 9 p.m. to 5 p.m., without notifying the workers in the fields. A border police battalion commander ordered his subordinates to shoot anyone breaking the curfew. Of the battalion's eight platoon commanders, seven made sure that the inhabitants were allowed to return safely to their homes, but one obeyed the order to the letter, and that evening in Kafr Kassem forty-seven men, women, and children were killed.

The defense establishment was in shock, and the immediate reaction was a cover-up. Ben-Gurion tried to silence public discourse. The military censor prohibited mention of the massacre, but the news spread. Maki Knesset members interviewed the wounded in the hospital and took evidence. Afterward, protected

by their parliamentary immunity, they revealed all the details from the Knesset podium. *Ha'olam Hazeh*, an opposition newspaper, printed the shocking facts in a blatant breach of censorship. The Israeli public was stunned. Eleven officers and men were tried, and eight were sentenced to long prison terms, though within two years they were all pardoned. The court that tried them set a precedent, which ever since has been a keystone of Israeli law: an order over which a "black flag" flies is manifestly illegal. In other words, the excuse that one was obeying an order is invalid in cases where the order is clearly illegal—as here, where it involved killing innocent civilians. The Arab population has not forgotten the Kafr Kassem affair. Every year a remembrance day marks this massacre, which is presented as a link in the chain of injustices and acts of brutality perpetrated by the State of Israel against them.

For the Jewish public, on the other hand, the Kafr Kassem affair represented the obligation to set clear boundaries between what was permitted and what was prohibited in relations between the army and citizens, and to establish ethical norms for military conduct. During the War of Independence the poet Nathan Alterman had written in his weekly newspaper column (called "The Seventh Column") about the cold-blooded murder of an elderly Arab during the conquest of Lydda (Lod). Titled "On This," the column called for the murderer to be tried: "For the bearers of arms, and we with them / Either actively / Or with a nod of consent, / Are pushed with a murmur of 'necessity' and 'vengeance,' / Into the sphere of war criminals." Alterman added, "Let's eradicate the serenity whispering 'Indeed' / Which is frightened of its face in the mirror!" Ben-Gurion endorsed this column and had it distributed throughout the IDF.[4]

However, it is doubtful whether this understanding of the nature of relations between the army and the citizens in a democracy had filtered into the public consciousness. In the early 1950s brutal searches for infiltrators were conducted in Arab villages, and the army's finger was light on the trigger. Again and again Alterman vainly warned about the injustices of the military government and opposed suppressing the communist Tawfik Tubi's "right of outcry" in the Knesset. In this instance Ben-Gurion, the poet's great admirer, did not assent. Thus the Kafr Kassem massacre was a great crisis that had the dialectical effect of creating a catharsis. It called for moral stocktaking and establishing binding criteria, which if not always maintained still had an educational force that limited violence.

In its infancy Israeli democracy borrowed both liberal parliamentarian models from the West and some models from the Eastern bloc's "guided democracy." It was a unique combination in which freedom of speech and assembly, an independent judicial system that protected individual rights, free elections, and a free press coexisted with a centralized political system controlled mainly by one party,

protectionist government apparatuses, and standards that enabled politicians to profit from their positions. When the Jewish Agency comptroller drew the attention of Levi Eshkol, then director of the Agency's settlement department, to corruption among his officials, he replied with a Bible quote that became a classic: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Deut. 25:4)—implying that the use of public office for financial gain was inevitable. In the bureaucratic system of the time, when importing, exporting, or receiving foreign currency required a permit, and during the period of austerity in the 1950s when all luxury goods were considered a violation of the law, using "contacts" to obtain discounts, relief, licenses, and so forth was accepted practice. There was a saying that if you had friends, you didn't need *protektsia* (pull, influence, clout).

There were rumors of bribery. As Alterman put it: "They talk quite openly, not in a whisper, / And mention names and title, / And tell positively: Who, when, and the sum, / And in which institution / And post / And profession. / And one hears not shameful names / Like Al Capone for instance, / No! But names of people who labored on the roads, / And sang 'The Temple shall be rebuilt.'"[5] Political life was managed by parties, and every party in the coalition sought perks for its organizations and activists. The left took care of the kibbutz movements, the moshav movement, the Hevrat Ha'ovdim. The center and the right took care of the princes of private enterprise, industrialists, citrus grove owners, hoteliers, and contractors. The idea of public tenders had not yet been internalized. Thus there was fertile soil for corruption—of individuals and organizations alike—that circumvented the procedures of statism.

Israel had a free press: each party owned its own newspaper, and there were also several independent papers. The government was roundly criticized by both right and left. However, journalists were wary of touching upon some areas, one being security. The Editors Committee, a highly respected forum that the prime minister convened from time to time for updates—thus making its members privy to secret information—was one means of guaranteeing press cooperation with the government. Television had not yet penetrated the borders of Israel—Ben-Gurion thought it corrupted the public. Radio broadcasts were controlled by the Broadcasting Authority or the army radio station, both government-supervised bodies. Thus the government enjoyed an advantage over any opposition group in disseminating its version of events. But the opposition fully exploited the freedom of speech it had in the press and managed to convey its point of view to its faithful. The leading newspapers, such as *Ha'aretz*, *Ma'ariv*, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, and even *Davar*, the Histadrut (actually Mapai) paper, were all independent and to varying degrees opposed different government policies and actions.

In one area, the borderline between permitted and prohibited was somewhat vague. Was the government allowed to spy on elected officials? Such an act can

have various justifications: state security, suspicion of contact with foreign agents, or the fight against subversive activities. But could the prime minister authorize the Shin Bet (Security Service, later the General Security Service) to wiretap Mapam's leaders? Hidden microphones discovered in the Mapam leadership's conference room turned the spotlight onto what would be the tip of the iceberg, for the practice was widespread. The military government had maintained surveillance of and wiretaps on Arab leaders. It may be assumed that other opposition leaders and perhaps even people within the ruling party were also wiretapped. The accepted principle that state institutions like the Shin Bet did not serve particular interests was not always applied. It seems that some members of the security establishment were occasionally intoxicated by the establishment of the state and the feeling that they held the reins of real power. This can explain the use of the Shin Bet for political purposes; the breaking of the seamen's strike by issuing military mobilization orders; or the idea that was included (though not implemented) in the IDF Law—that every soldier would work in agriculture for one year as a form of education. It was only this type of atmosphere that could give rise to the foolhardy idea of operating a network of Zionist Jews in Egypt to undertake sabotage that would destabilize the British evacuation of that country. This affair was inscribed in Israeli mythology under the euphemistic code name "The Bad Business" (1954).

THE COEXISTENCE OF INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM

The state's first two decades were marked by tension between collectivist norms supporting dedication to society and the importance of recruiting individuals to work for the good of the state, and people's individualist aspirations to improve their standard of living, secure a good education for their children, and climb the social ladder. The Zionist-socialist values dominated the rhetoric, but in everyday life people increased their efforts to improve their personal situation. This conflict had interesting manifestations in three extra-parliamentary opposition groups that appeared at this time.

The first, "Shurat Hamitnadvim" (the volunteers' line), appeared in 1952. This group of idealists consisted of Hebrew University students who wanted to improve Israeli society. Most were either members of Mapai or ideologically close to it. They seem to have internalized Ben-Gurion's concept of statism and sought to put it into practice. They maintained their independence and the group itself did not align with any political party, but worked to help absorb mass immigration on the one hand, and fight corruption in the government apparatus on the other. Shurat Hamitnadvim embraced collectivist standards. Its members believed they were obligated to prove their right to make demands on others by undertaking

volunteer work. Thus their first activity was to help the residents of a transit camp near Jerusalem during the floods of the winter of 1951–1952, and teach the new immigrants Hebrew.

Afterward, in the name of social responsibility, they began warning of and informing about cases of persistent corruption in government circles. Purging the government apparatus was supposed to create a worthier Israeli society. The group's connection with collectivist trends was clearly evident in its puritanism and its untiring infiltration into the inner workings of the government apparatus, sometimes infringing government authority or invading privacy. Frustration with the negligible results of their actions drove them to seek sensationalist claims that would arouse the public to support purging corruption. So they focused on making accusations against Amos Ben-Gurion, a senior police officer and the prime minister's son, who sued them for defamation of character. The resulting publicity went far beyond anything they had previously achieved, but also alienated numerous people who had supported them. In the end Shurat Hamitnadvim broke up and its members dispersed in different directions. They can currently be found in either the left or extreme right camps.

The second extra-parliamentary opposition group was embodied in the *Haʿolam Hazeh* (this world) weekly, edited by Uri Avneri. Avneri started out as a right-winger, a member of the Etzel, with clear leanings toward Canaanism, a movement that sought to create a new Israeli identity based on ancient Semitic peoples (see chapter 11). But by the time he acquired the weekly in 1950, he had undergone a personal revolution and now supported dialogue between the Jews and Arabs. The aim of the weekly was to topple Mapai. Avneri's pet hatred was for Ben-Gurion, whom he viewed as an evil dwarf acting against the generation of native-born Israelis raised in the Yishuv. *Haʿolam Hazeh* was an independent publication that subsisted on subscriptions and advertising and had no political identification. It introduced into the Israeli press what later came to be known as "investigative journalism," and numerous journalists received their training in its office. Its motto was "Without Fear, Without Bias." Front page headlines screamed about corruption in the Mapai apparatus, as in a series of articles on "Khoushystan"—the city of Haifa, whose Mapai mayor was Abba Khoushy. The back page carried photographs and articles in the *Playboy* style, adapted to local standards of modesty. This mixture of unbridled political aggression and sensationalist voyeurism made *Haʿolam Hazeh* very attractive. Many read it, though usually in secret.

In the 1950s *Haʿolam Hazeh* collaborated with Shmuel Tamir, a fanatical right-wing attorney with a deep-seated hatred of Ben-Gurion, giving him exposure in two legal affairs that rocked Israel: the Grunewald-Kasztner trial (see chapter 11) and the case of Amos Ben-Gurion and Shurat Hamitnadvim. Another of the

paper's targets was "the Organization of Darkness"—the Shin Bet (*Sherut Habitahon Haklali*, General Security Service)—which it viewed as a serious threat. Avneri coined the Hebrew terms *Bitsuism*, the tendency of Ben-Gurion's people to emphasize action at the expense of ideology, and *Bitchonism*, the subjugation of political and social thinking to the needs of the defense establishment. He was a bitter critic of Ben-Gurion's control of the defense establishment, and later aimed his barbs at Moshe Dayan, whom he considered a threat to Israeli democracy. At the same time, throughout his life he had a soft spot for the IDF's soldiers, with whom he served in the War of Independence. He is credited with exposing the Kafr Kassem affair and carried on an unrelenting struggle against the military government. In 1965 Avneri was elected to the Knesset on an activist ticket advocating peace with the Arab states.

Avneri and his paper acted unconventionally. The uninhibited use of the media, the crude style, tearing up the rule book in its exposés, all heralded a new period in government-public relations. Yet like Shurat Hamitnadvim's idealism, that of *Ha'olam Hazeh* adhered to collectivism as a guiding ideology. It is difficult to discern liberal elements striving for individual liberty and rights in Avneri's ideology, and in this sense he, too, belongs to the era of collectivism.

The third opposition group was composed of Hebrew University professors and intellectuals who organized in the 1960s to protest the conduct of Ben-Gurion, which they saw as aggressive and authoritarian. In 1960 forgeries had been discovered in documents relating to "the Bad Business." Pinchas Lavon, secretary-general of the Histadrut and one of the most powerful men in the country, had been minister of defense at the time of "the Bad Business" and as a consequence had been forced to resign. He now sought to clear his name, contending that it was not he who had given the order to operate the sabotage network in Egypt. Ben-Gurion denied his request for formal exoneration, saying that the prime minister did not decide guilt or innocence, especially based on the version of only one party in the case—the other party being Chief of Military Intelligence Benjamin Gibli, who contended that Lavon had indeed authorized him to activate the network.

Now the "Lavon Affair" snowballed. Lavon broke all the rules of the political game by appearing before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, a political forum that included representatives of the parties, and laying out an entire list of claims and allegations about the defense establishment. His statement was leaked to the press, again against the accepted rules. When a ministerial committee ("the Committee of Seven"), which had been set up for procedural purposes only, ruled that Lavon had not given the order, Ben-Gurion decided that the whole proceeding injured the principles of both separation of powers and natural justice, and resigned. The more entrenched in this position

Ben-Gurion became, the more Lavon played the martyr. The affair took on the proportions of a sort of Dreyfus trial, especially after the Mapai Central Committee relieved Lavon of his duties as secretary-general of the Histadrut.

More than a hundred professors signed a letter of protest against Ben-Gurion, demanding that Lavon's name be cleared. There are several possible explanations for this unprecedented mobilization of academics to support Lavon. The affair occurred after a number of clashes between Ben-Gurion and the intellectuals, which resulted from his expressions of indifference toward Hebrew literature, his pretension of being not only a political leader but also the shaper of the people's vision—expressed in his attitude toward the Bible as the focal point of Jewish creativity, while ignoring all the other achievements of Jewish culture down the generations—and his elevating the slogans "The Chosen People" and "A light unto the nations" to the status of national goals. According to this theory, the intellectuals thought that Ben-Gurion's claim to be not only a leader but also a prophet could lead to a "totalitarian democracy"—a term coined by Ya'akov Talmon, an important historian and a leader of the intellectual opposition.

Another possible reason for the professors' action was Lavon's former leadership in the Gordonia youth movement. Some of the academics' leaders, such as Nathan Rotenstreich, had belonged to this movement and chose to be loyal to their past leader. Even Amos Oz, then a young author and member of Kibbutz Hulda, which was affiliated with Gordonia, considered Lavon his guide and mentor. Uri Cohen, a historian of higher education in Israel, believes that the government's decision in the late 1950s to build a university in Tel Aviv, thus breaking the Hebrew University's monopoly over higher education, created an antagonistic state of mind among the professors, which found its ideological focus in the Lavon Affair. Either way, the affair turned Israeli intellectuals into a powerful opposition group that could mobilize the media and wield great influence over public opinion. During this period a certain fatigue with nation building can be detected among the intellectuals. Still, the very fact that the professors left their ivory tower and went into action on behalf of what to them was a question of values shows that this group, too, was still powerfully driven by the collectivist ethos and considered itself committed to helping shape the image of the state.

From 1960 to 1965 the affair remained high on the country's agenda. But ordinary citizens were sick to death of it. They were no longer interested in the details of the story, whose various conflicting versions were still popular at private gatherings among the educated middle class—they simply wanted it to go away. Ben-Gurion, however, would not let it go. For him the main issue was now the legal one: government ministers could not clear or indict someone. Allowing this to happen would constitute a deadly blow to the principle of separation of powers and the principle of state supremacy on which it was based. But to the

public his unremitting perpetuation of the affair looked like an unnecessary power struggle. One contemporary cartoon showed Ben-Gurion shattering his own bust (that is, demolishing his public image) with a hammer.

In retrospect one can see there was tacit agreement that Ben-Gurion's position was correct, for in 1968 the State Commissions of Inquiry Law guaranteeing the independence of such commissions from the political system was enacted. But this triumph of Ben-Gurionist statism was a Pyrrhic victory. In the interim Mapai had split, and Ben-Gurion and his supporters founded the Rafi party (an acronym of *Reshimat Poalei Yisrael*, Israel Workers' List) from among "the youngsters," led by Shimon Peres and Moshe Dayan. Mapai's standing in public opinion was damaged. In the next elections, in 1965, the power of the labor movement decreased. Before the elections the Alignment, a union of Mapai and Ahdut Ha'avoda, was created. Whereas in the elections to the Fifth Knesset Mapai had won forty-two seats and Ahdut Ha'avoda nine, in the elections to the Sixth Knesset the Alignment won only forty-five. Internal unity and the balance between younger and older members had been damaged as the younger leadership was deposed and the older generation took over. Without the attractive power of Ben-Gurion, Mapai began losing its unassailable position among the public. The erosion of its power continued from then on.

In 1953 Ben-Gurion had resigned the premiership and gone to live in Kibbutz Sdeh Boker, which had been built in the middle of the Negev desert and was not affiliated with any of the existing kibbutz movements, in order to demonstrate devotion to pioneering statism even in his retirement. Large sections of the population felt abandoned; the founding father had left the wheel of the ship of state. People did not see Moshe Sharett, who replaced him, as capable of inspiring the same level of confidence in the country's leadership. Not much time passed before Ben-Gurion returned to the premiership in 1955. But in the 1960s, as debate on the Lavon Affair went on and on, the public felt that the time had come for a changing of the guard. Ben-Gurion had nurtured some talented younger men (Dayan, Abba Eban, and Shimon Peres) whom he appointed to the cabinet he formed in 1959. This act raised concerns among the intermediate Mapai generation that Ben-Gurion was trying to bypass them and hand the baton of government to the younger men. This intermediate generation included figures such as Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, Pinchas Sapir, and Zalman Aranne, all of whom had served in key government posts. They opposed Ben-Gurion in the affair. This clash reflected Ben-Gurion's diminishing status in his own party and the challenge to his leadership from within it. Ben-Gurion's resignation and his replacement by Levi Eshkol in 1963 marked the end of an era: the formative period of Israeli democracy was over. The political system for changing the guard worked well. Eshkol's premiership was marked by more flexibility regarding the cen-

trality of the state and greater tolerance and openness. Abolition of the military government and bringing Jabotinsky's remains to Israel heralded a new willingness to expand the scope of Israeli democracy and the national consensus.

Statism was a guiding principle, a standard not always realized in practice but that had an essential educational value. In the end a generation grew up that internalized its values and rid itself of politicization—the last vestige of Yishuv practices. During this initial period, control mechanisms were put in place to ensure equality of citizens before the law and to prevent arbitrary action by government: the Supreme Court, the State Comptroller, and the Attorney General. Israel during this period was not a liberal democracy in all matters pertaining to individual and minority rights. According to one scholar's definition, statism was a republican concept that saw the state as a free commonwealth whose members were committed to acting to promote its success, and whose discourse emphasized the obligations of the citizen. The balance between individual and society tilted toward society. Individual alienation, which is part of liberal democracy, did not exist in Israel during this period; there was a high degree of public involvement in what was going on. The high voting percentages in elections to the Knesset attest to this. In the 1950s and 1960s, at the height of the Cold War, even long-standing democracies such as Great Britain, the United States, and France allowed themselves to subordinate the principles of liberalism if they felt the public welfare was under threat.[6] Thus, according to the rules accepted at the time in the democratic West, the young Israeli democracy conducted itself well.

NOTES

1. Uri Yadin's diary, 10.5.1948, *Sefer Uri Yadin: ha'ish ufo'alo* (In Memoriam: Uri Yadin), Aharon Barak and Tana Spanitz (eds), Jerusalem: Bursi, 1990, p. 23.

2. *Sefer Uri Yadin*, 15.7.1948, p. 40.

3. Moshe Zemora's speech at the inauguration of the Supreme Court, *Hapraklit* 5, 1948–1949, pp. 187, 189. Cited according to Pnina Lahav, "Ha'oz vehamisra: hashanim haformativiot shel beit hamishpat ha'elyon, 1948–1955" (The Supreme Court of Israel: Formative Years, 1948–1955), in Anita Shapira (ed.), *Atzma'ut—50 hashanim harishonot* (Independence—The First Fifty Years), Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1998, p. 152.

4. Nathan Alterman, "Al zot" (On This), *Hatur hashvi'i* (The Seventh Column), Book Two, Tel Aviv: Davar, 1954, p. 24.

5. Nathan Alterman, "Tnai rishon" (Precondition), *Hatur hashvi'i* (The Seventh Column), Book Two, Tel Aviv: Davar, 1954, pp. 124–126.

6. The hearings held by the House Un-American Activities Committee in the United States are one example of behavior deviating from the normal standards of democracy. In France, de Gaulle's government functioned under emergency laws for six months during its early days. The fight against Soviet espionage in Britain caused infringement of individual rights, while the fight against terrorism in Northern Ireland was carried out with the gloves off.

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9 STATE BUILDING
ECONOMY, DEVELOPMENT, AND BIG GOVERNMENT

Establishing the state gave its leaders the chance to put into practice the utopian plans that had enriched Zionist thinking from its inception. The Mandatory government's restrictions on Zionism's vision of building and development enterprise had come to an end. "We will dress you in a gown of concrete and cement, and lay for you a carpeting of gardens," wrote Nathan Alterman in the early 1930s in "Morning Song," which the children of Israel sang as a sort of second national anthem describing the Zionist plan for the country. In the headiness of independence everyone thought more about possibilities and less about limitations. Then reality arrived and sobered them up.

In the first three years of the state, everything was subordinated to two principal objectives: victory in the war to ensure Israel's existence, and immigrant absorption. The war lasted until the spring of 1949. More than 100,000 people had been mobilized since the summer of 1948 and consequently had not contributed to the economy. On the other hand, 100,000 new immigrants had arrived during the war, more than in any previous year. This was the first hint of what would happen later. In the first forty-two months of the state's existence, the average monthly number of new immigrants reached some 16,000. All in all 690,000 immigrants arrived in Israel, and within three years the Jewish population doubled. The vast scope of this immigration relative to the size of the host population—unheard of in any immigrant country—created tremendous pressures on the economy.

In February 1948, in a display of opposition to implementing the UN resolution of November 29, 1947, Britain removed the Palestine pound from the sterling bloc, which meant that the local currency was no longer supported by the pound sterling. The Jewish population reacted with restraint; there was no run on the banks, and the inhabitants did not withdraw their deposits. The Anglo-Palestine Bank made sure that its coffers held an available supply of cash in Palestine pounds to prevent shortages that might impair local economic activity. At the same time, the bank got ready to print the new national currency, the Israeli lira (pl., lirot), even before the state had been established. The Israeli lira—yet another expression of independence and sovereignty—first saw the light of day in summer 1948. To prevent loss of public trust in the new lira, the old

exchange rate of 1:1 between the Palestine pound and the pound sterling was maintained. This rate had been unrealistic since World War Two, since during the war the rate of inflation in Palestine was far higher than that in Britain, thus devaluing Palestine's currency.

Maintaining the nominal value of the Israeli lira required financial control, governed by regulation. These were the first steps in a planned or directed or (as the Israeli economic system was described at the time) managed economy. This system had its roots in the Yishuv period, but now the sovereign state could enforce it on all citizens.

Between the two World Wars the British government adopted a laissez-faire policy in Palestine, which meant that the country had a free economy. There were no selective protective tariffs on imports that gave preference to countries purchasing Palestinian produce, there was no progressive taxation, and interference in market forces was minimal. This nonintervention policy provided no incentive for developing Jewish industry and enterprise.

World War Two brought about a dramatic change. Following the lead of the British government, which instituted both rationing and controls on economic activity, the Mandatory government instituted food rationing and price controls. It set economic controls and priorities—for example, prioritizing investment in industrial production vital to the British war effort in the Middle East while prohibiting housing construction—that facilitated the development of Jewish industry. That industry began to grow without having to compete with European imports, which the war made unavailable. Solel Boneh, the Histadrut's construction firm, moved into the military construction market all over the Middle East, building roads, airfields, and army camps, and became a huge company.

The control and rationing system in Palestine was relaxed when the war ended, and its legal basis was annulled by the withdrawal from the sterling bloc. But after six months of galloping inflation in 1948, the controls were reinstated, at the same time as the Mandatory legislative system was adopted in Israel.

In Europe the transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy was made slowly and cautiously in order to avoid a repeat of the shocks created by the discharge of soldiers after World War One. Furthermore, until the Marshall Plan was instituted in 1948, there was a shortage of cash that made importing vital commodities difficult. In Britain the Labour Party was in power; it nationalized key industries and did not hesitate to intervene in the national economy. Basic commodities were rationed, on the grounds that the state must take care of all its citizens and ensure equal distribution of the foodstuffs and energy sources the country had available. This policy was driven by the bitter experience of the Great Depression, which was thought to derive from the state's failure to intervene to regulate the economy. Unlike the Western democracies, which had difficulty deal-

ing with the crisis, the USSR and even Nazi Germany seemed to have planned their economies prudently, and to know in particular how to combat the destabilizing factor of unemployment, which had hit the democratic countries hard. The theories of John Maynard Keynes, who supported state intervention by channeling resources into the economy to ensure employment—thereby creating demand to drive the wheels of production—were applied in the United States during Roosevelt's presidency and later in devastated postwar Europe.

In the decade after the World War, the principle that the state should play a central role in directing the national economy was prevalent in Western countries. The Israeli government's directed economy was therefore not exceptional. To the country's leadership it seemed natural and obvious. Graduates of the various socialist schools of thought, these leaders saw state involvement in the economy as the way to achieve just distribution and create the egalitarian state they aspired to. And above all, centralized control of capital allocation seemed to be the way to ensure planned, accelerated development.

The leaders tended to be skeptical of the various economic theories. Since the beginnings of Zionist settlement in Palestine, most of the experts who had examined the economic feasibility of the Zionist enterprise had said it would never work. But these prophecies of doom had not come to pass. Accordingly the political and social leadership believed that the laws of economics did not apply to the Zionist enterprise. This notion was particularly evident in Ben-Gurion's skeptical attitude toward the economists' recommendations. When an advisory committee appointed to plan a city in Beersheba concluded that it was unfeasible, he simply dismissed the committee and established a new one. To such skepticism he added deep suspicion of the free market, driven as it was by the goal of financial gain, not the need to build the nation.

The state's first years were marked by severe shortages. Foreign currency reserves were very low. The government used accounts in sterling that had been frozen in Britain during the War of Independence and were gradually released, so that Israel had access to all of them by 1952, to purchase food and fuel abroad. Import of capital, which was based on donations by world Jewry, was far below the needs of the war and immigrant absorption. The government printed money in an inflationary manner to cover its local expenses. In 1948, 40 percent of the gross domestic product was invested in war costs. Imports, however, were dependent on the availability of foreign currency—and it had simply run out. Between 1949 and 1952 stocks of food and fuel were close to zero. The country's ability to function rested on the manipulative talents of the economic leaders, who managed to bring in fuel tankers and grain ships on short-term credit.

The urgency and pressure felt by the heads of the Israeli Finance Ministry, compared with the reckless optimism of the political leadership, which, as we

have seen, tended to deride the laws of economics, was expressed in a famous quote attributed to a senior Zionist leader: "I'm talking about the budget and they're singing 'Hatikvah.'"[1] In 1949, to deal with the shortages and price increases, the government decided on an austerity policy—food rationing and price controls. A year later the system used in Britain was adopted, and footwear and clothing were also rationed. The austerity policy was appropriate to the socialist concept of sharing the burden of immigration absorption equally among the entire population. Yet no freeze was imposed on wages, which were linked to the cost of living index (a system instituted during the World War in response to inflationary price increases), which also increased annually, due to the annual negotiations between the Histadrut and the employers.

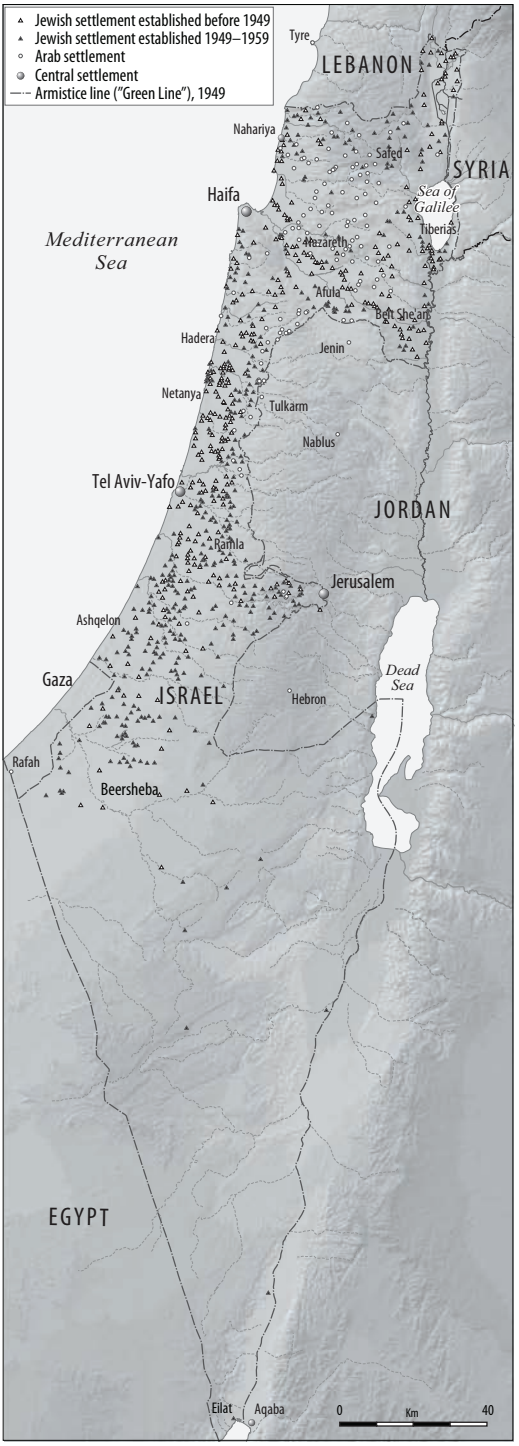
At first the veterans among the population accepted the austerity measures with understanding, but not for long. After the armistice was signed in spring 1949, they felt both relaxation—the war was over—and resentment against the government's regime of controls. The pressure of surplus cash in the hands of a public that had no way to spend it led to the emergence of a black market, an expression of consumer disenchantment and a refusal to accept austerity. Demand pressures eroded the austerity policy, and all attempts at control failed while prompting increased public disaffection toward the government's economic policies—proving that ignoring the laws of economics is not always a good idea. The unrealistic exchange rate between the Israeli lira and the US dollar (0.35 lirot to a dollar) increased import costs, adding to the impact on the dwindling foreign currency reserves. On top of this, the Korean War caused a global price rise.

The result was an insufferable situation of simultaneous controls, rationing, and inflation. In 1952 the heads of the Finance Ministry succeeded in convincing the government that despite opposition from the left, the time had come for a policy change. The government agreed to stop printing money and imposed a 10 percent tax on all cash and deposits held by the banks. The lira's exchange rate was cut threefold, a move that was repeated in April 1953, when it was set at 1.80 lira to the US dollar. This rate was maintained for almost a decade. The suppressed inflation that characterized Israel during the years of austerity was arrested, and although the level of foreign currency reserves was still dire, the rehabilitation of the economy now got under way. In 1950 Israel received its first US loan. Nineteen fifty-two saw the first external financial resources that were guaranteed for a decade: the Independence Loan (Israel Bonds) purchased by American Jewry, an American aid agreement, and a reparations agreement with West Germany (discussed later).

From the Mapai leadership's perspective, the situation existing after the establishment of the state provided the tools for both rapid development and the

creation of a welfare state. As we have seen, before statehood most of the capital invested in the country was private, and most of the land in Jewish hands was privately owned. Water sources, electricity, and natural resources not controlled by the British authorities were owned by private companies. Now, with the flight—or expulsion—of the Arabs, 625,000 acres of unowned land now suddenly belonged to the state, which was both the inheritor of state lands and the entity responsible for what was termed "abandoned property." Abandoned property was broadly defined so that it also applied to the land of some Arabs who had remained within Israel's borders. Over 90 percent of the country's land was now state-owned. The government also controlled the import of capital, most of which was now public. All these factors gave the state financial levers and means of production for its planned projects. It could choose the location of projects and the industries it wanted to invest in according to the national priorities it chose. Even when it did not invest directly in specific enterprises, it could use grants, subsidies, import licenses, and allocation of foreign currency to direct foreign investors to invest in industries and locations of its choosing. There were not many such investors in those first years; they appeared mainly in the 1960s.

Zionist tradition gave precedence to agriculture and construction. In the four years from 1948 to 1951, 270 agricultural settlements were established, of which 100 were immigrant moshavim. The number of settlements founded during this period equaled the number established in the entire seventy years of Zionist settlement in Palestine (see map 5). From 1943 to 1951 the number of people engaged in agriculture doubled, even though their proportion among all those employed did not increase. By the end of the 1950s, 400 agricultural settlements had been created. The goal was to ensure the geographic distribution of Jewish settlements on the extensive tracts of land vacated by their Arab inhabitants—along the borders, in the Jerusalem corridor, and in the northern Negev. Agriculture was also supposed to supply food to the population, which, as noted before, had doubled due to mass immigration. There was also the influence of Zionist ideology, which viewed agriculture as a therapeutic occupation since it brought alienated Jews closer to the soil of the homeland, helped them strike roots in it, and habituated them to manual labor. The availability of means of production, land, water, and workers—unskilled new immigrants—made agriculture the quickest and most effective solution to the problem of immigrant employment and housing, while also meeting the state's security needs along the borders and providing food for the growing population. The settlement enterprise during those years was vast. Agricultural production between 1949 and 1952 doubled. At the same time, as part of the effort to disperse the population, some thirty townships were established in different parts of the country that were designated "development towns."



MAP 5.
THE NEW SETTLEMENT MAP, 1948–1959. (SEE PLATE 5.)

The government's control of the import of capital enabled it to initiate and direct the industries it preferred to develop. Until 1955 the chosen sector was agriculture. In 1956 the period of agricultural shortages ended and a period of surpluses ensued. At the same time, it became clear that agriculture wasted water, an important and scarce resource. The appointment of Pinchas Sapir as minister of trade and industry marked a new direction: investing in the development of local industry. Industry was built with the aid of subsidies, friendly currency rates, protective tariffs, and government investment. Most of the factories built were devoted to textiles based on a local raw material, cotton grown in the northern Negev. Staffed by unskilled workers, these factories provided employment for the inhabitants of the development towns, which had been created without a productive infrastructure.

According to socialist theory, the infrastructure of production should be in government hands so that it can be exploited for the benefit of the nation. The government controlled energy sources, transport, and water. It acquired the Palestine Potash Company and founded the Dead Sea Works. It acquired the Electric Corporation. It founded El Al Israel Airlines and the Zim Navigation Company. It built a new port at Ashdod. It acquired the Haifa oil refineries. The road and rail networks underwent accelerated development. In line with the Zionist vision, the government invested national capital in major irrigation projects: the Yarkon-Negev project and the National Water Carrier (see maps 5 and 6). The latter project, which brought water from the Sea of Galilee to the Negev, turned extensive arid tracts into fully irrigated land, providing farmers with means of production that raised their standard of living. The draining of Lake Hula—thousands of acres that had been part lake and part marshland—seemed to be a good example of a Zionist dream come true. In this case, however, the initial enthusiasm for developing the area turned out to be based on a fallacy. The drained soil was uncultivable, and draining the lake destroyed a unique natural habitat. Part of the Hula area was reflooded in 1990. In this respect Israel resembled other countries engaged in accelerated development during the 1950s, without awareness of the ecological cost (e.g., the Aswan Dam in Egypt and development projects in the USSR).

These massive state investments in infrastructure led to unprecedented growth in the Israeli economy, at an average annual rate of 10 percent over fifteen years. The government did not nationalize the companies that built the infrastructure, a step that might have put off potential investors. It bought them, and then many became limited liability companies, under public control. The government provided state guarantees and also set product prices. In 1951 the defense budget was cut drastically to divert resources to immigrant absorption. But after 1955, given the need for military procurement following the Egyptian-Czech arms deal (dis-

cussed later), the defense budget was increased to 7.5 percent of the state budget. A large part of this defense budget went to the local market, thus increasing government involvement in it even more. The establishment of the defense industry added yet another arena to state involvement in the economy. During this period the public (government) sector constituted some 20 percent of the Israeli economy.

At the same time, the Histadrut sector also developed. The Histadrut construction arm, in the shape of Hevrat Ha'ovdim, became stronger and grew in agriculture, construction, and industry. Between 1949 and 1954 the number of kibbutzim doubled and their population increased by 60 percent. Their production capability and output also doubled, and some saw the beginnings of industry. Most of the immigrant moshavim also came under the Histadrut umbrella. Marketing and purchasing in this sector was cooperative, giving it considerable bargaining power. Solel Boneh was the state's contractor of choice on major projects, since it had the required experience and know-how. It built public housing, power stations, roads, and settlements. No other company in the market was able to compete with its means of production or even its implementation capacity. In the second half of the 1950s, Hevrat Ha'ovdim also began to establish and acquire companies in the areas of defense, heavy industry, and consumer goods. During this period the Histadrut sector, at about 20 percent of the economy, was as large as the public one.

Ben-Gurion's and his colleagues' former notion that private capital was directed solely toward profit, with no national goals, moderated as the years passed. The Jewish investors in Israel Bonds and the major Diaspora donors to Israel had a capitalist outlook and viewed the public economy and the state's control of it with suspicion, even distaste. After 1950 economic relations with the United States became closer, further softening Israeli attitudes toward private capital. Tax regulations were enacted to encourage capital investments by nongovernment investors. In the second half of the 1950s, private capital began flowing into Israel, both from Jewish investors and as individual reparations from Germany. Private entrepreneurs received government assistance if they went into industries that the government sought to develop, in the development areas it defined. The policy was to encourage building factories in the outlying areas or close to ma'abarot (transit camps) and development towns, in order to provide employment for the immigrants. The government invested heavily in these enterprises, and in some cases this investment was economically indefensible. But for Minister of Trade and Industry Pinchas Sapir, employment and development came first; he was not concerned about profitability until later. The Investment Authority he initiated was designed to enlist Jewish investors abroad for industrial development. In the first half of the 1960s, it raised hundreds of millions of dollars. Thus

a cooperative model developed that included both private and public economies. The two types of economy relied on government aid through a policy of tariffs and taxation against competing imports, special rates of exchange that benefited the developing industries, grants to development areas, and so forth.

A high percentage of the capital that flowed into the country was channeled into investment and development. But a considerable part of it was diverted to consumption. During these years the standard of living of the entire population rose substantially: between 1955 and 1966 per capita consumption increased by 221 percent. The issue of finding the correct balance between raising the standard of living—which over time benefited the vast majority of the population, who took part in a growing festival of consumption—and allocating resources for development is one that economists still ponder. Had part of the resources not been diverted to consumption, it is quite possible that a huge wave of people would have left the country. However, this allocation did divert foreign capital from the investment in infrastructure and development for which it had been designated, in order to raise the standard of living.

The wider the Hevrat Ha'ovdim's wingspan extended, the more pronounced were the internal contradictions between the Histadrut's role representing the trade unions (salaried workers) and its role as an employer. During the period of mass immigration, when thousands of unemployed exerted pressure on the labor market to lower wages, the Histadrut contended that immigrants must be absorbed into the economy on the same pay rates that European workers got. It vehemently refused to agree to a wage cut, even during the deep unemployment of the early 1950s. Local workers' councils prevented workers from the transit camps from offering to work at lower wages. This policy benefited the veterans and well-to-do workers, and harmed the weaker workers and new immigrants. At the same time, Histadrut enterprises were supposed to be profitable, and applying Histadrut wage principles, coupled with rigid rules on hiring and dismissal, did not make it easier for these enterprises to stay profitable. The Histadrut deserves credit for its dedication to its national mission, and for establishing factories in development areas where private capital refused to go, despite promised government support. But tensions among salaried workers, factory managements, and the Hevrat Ha'ovdim executive were endemic in the Histadrut from this point on, and ultimately caused a clash of interests within it.

The National Insurance Law, enacted in 1953 on the initiative of Minister of Labor Golda Meir, was at the time considered wasteful, something the country could not afford. But this law became the basis of Israel's social safety net, which guaranteed the entire population old-age and disability pensions, paid maternity leave, occupational accident insurance, and later, additional rights. Impressive economic growth combined with maintenance of low wage differentials among

salaried workers made late 1950s Israel one of the most egalitarian noncommunist countries. The Israeli welfare state considered educating its citizens for productive work a premier national mission. Thus, for example, both the government and the Histadrut strongly opposed unemployment insurance, which was perceived as encouraging a life of unproductive decadence. Instead there was a policy of full employment, even though it meant introducing workfare, which had no economic value.

But as the economy, and the division of labor within it, became more sophisticated, groups of workers began demanding their own separate organizations and wage scales. They rejected the Histadrut wage scale, which tied pay levels mainly to seniority and the number of family members. In the late 1950s engineers, doctors, and high school teachers all demanded guarantees of higher wages relative to blue- and white-collar workers. The Histadrut had difficulty accepting these claims, which it believed would harm its policy of relative equality. It tried to demand that the wage agreements would freeze the existing differentials between the various professions, so that if one group got a raise, all the other groups would get raises in the same proportion. However, it was completely unrealistic to expect the professionals to agree to such a proposal. Given its historical socialist-Zionist perception that divided the professions into "productive" and "nonproductive," the Histadrut was more inclined to support wage claims in industry, agriculture, and construction than in service professions. But the service sector was growing and Histadrut control was waning.

Part of Ben-Gurion's statism concept was recognition of the importance of science as a national resource. Given the tremendous demographic superiority of the Arab states, he had always believed that one factor that would guarantee Israel's existence was its ability to harness the population's intellectual, technological, and scientific abilities to benefit society. This perception was based partly on deep-rooted pride in the Jewish genius, expressed in constantly citing the high percentage of Jewish Nobel laureates and the Jewish contribution to world culture. Promoting science and scientists agreed with statism in that its goal was the creation of a meritocracy based on individual achievement. The idea was to position Israel among the countries of the modern, secular, progressive West. The policy of nurturing the scientific elite was manifested in considerable investment in higher education during the first years of the state. When Israel was established there were two institutions of higher learning, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Technion–Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa. The Weizmann Institute of Science came later as a research institute. Recognition of the state's needs for an educated population to fill posts in public administration and to create a stratum of engineers and technicians, researchers and inventors, led to national investment in developing higher education and making it accessible to

the Israeli middle class. In just a few years several more universities appeared: Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv University, the University of Haifa, and Beersheba University (which later became Ben-Gurion University of the Negev).

One area where scientific achievements were applied was agriculture. Efficient use of irrigation, development of new varieties of crops, adaptation of nonindigenous varieties to local agriculture, and modern cultivation methods made Israel one of the world's most renowned and advanced countries in agricultural development. In the 1960s Israel sold its cultivation methods to developing African states. Scientific capability was also directed to the defense industry. The establishment of Rafael, the Armament Development Authority, was another example of the vision of Ben-Gurion, who was prepared to collaborate with academic researchers and invest in scientific development, even at a time when the state was short of resources in general and foreign currency in particular. Numerous technologies developed for the defense establishment were afterward integrated into industrial production, thus increasing Israel's export capability.

In the early 1960s several major national projects were completed, including the National Water Carrier, the Dead Sea Works, Ashdod Port, and the nuclear reactor near Dimona. Also during this period, there were few candidates for immigration, which usually brought prosperity from investment in absorbing them. Israel's balance of payments deficit increased, and attempts were made to reduce it through devaluation and the abolition of multiple exchange rates (in 1962 an exchange rate of three lirot to the US dollar was introduced), under the banner of "economic independence." But these attempts failed. The plan to reduce the deficit while economic growth continued backfired. After the major projects mentioned before were completed, the government did not embark on new ones. The resulting reduction of economic activity, together with attempts to prevent wage increases, led to a slowdown, a standstill in gross national product, and increased unemployment, which this time hit mainly the relatively well-to-do middle class and young academics. So many people left the country that a joke circulating at the time—about a sign at Lod Airport reading "Last one out, please switch off the lights"—entered national folklore. The planned economic slowdown turned into a recession that spiraled out of control. The recovery occurred rapidly, in the wake of the Six-Day War.

Would development at the level that occurred in Israel, under conditions of war and mass immigration, have been achievable without government direction? This question remains controversial among economists. But under the conditions of the early 1950s, the question was likely not even relevant. Until mass immigration stopped in 1952, Israel was in a state of emergency that resembled a war situation. Even afterward, it could find no private entities that were either able or willing to shoulder the burden of settling remote areas (since that made

MAP 6. THE NATIONAL WATER CARRIER, 1964. (SEE PLATE 6.)

no economic sense); training thousands of unskilled immigrants; absorbing sick, disabled, and uneducated populations; building transport, water, and electrical infrastructures; and providing health services, education, and housing to a population unable to pay for them.

Despite all its drawbacks, the directed economy seems to be what enabled the State of Israel to develop at an accelerated pace that became a shining example for developing nations. In 1963, 97 percent of the population had running water, and 93 percent had electricity. Private consumption had increased by 200 percent since 1948. The number of first-grade pupils rose from 17,137 in 1949 to 55,301 in 1963. The number of hospital beds increased from 4,626 in 1948 to 17,612 in 1964. Per capita gross national product rose by 232 percent between 1950 and 1963. It is doubtful that these achievements would have been possible without a directed economy. It is true that the standards of integrity were different from those of today, and there is no doubt that "our people" received preference in everything pertaining to project or resource allocation and that *protektsia* was standard practice. But there were no such acts of corruption as the theft of national resources, as perpetrated by the rulers of some developing nations and even some developed ones. The heads of government in Israel maintained a modest lifestyle and their integrity.

Yet one cannot dismiss the bitterness, hostility, and alienation engendered by the encounter inherent in such a system between citizen and bureaucrat. In government ministries, the employment service, the sick fund clinics, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry, there was perpetual negotiation between all-powerful officialdom and the citizen who needed its services and benefits. One side displayed a lordly attitude, while the other experienced humiliation and dependency. The citizen who had to stand like a mendicant in the corridors of power wound up associating all the system's flaws and weaknesses with the ruling party. Mapai, which had been responsible for the Israeli economy's phenomenal success, drew fire from everyone disillusioned by the Zionist dream. All the malaises inherent in immigration and absorption were laid on its doorstep. In this way impatience with the system turned into anger with the labor movement.

NOTES

1. David Horowitz, *Hayyim bamoked* (At the Heart of Events), Ramat Gan: Masada, 1975, p. 108. The leader in question was Motzkin.

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10 THE GREAT ALIYA
MASS IMMIGRATION

The phenomenon that had the most profound long-term ramifications for shaping the image of Israel was the immigration that occurred in waves during the state's first two decades. Particularly significant was the wave that arrived during its first three years. For decades this aliya was known as "the mass aliya," but recently the custom has taken hold of calling it "the great aliya," as if the word *mass* implied a somewhat derogatory attitude. The sensitivity toward the character of this aliya revealed by that change in nomenclature hints both at the immigrants' sense of deprivation and humiliation and at an attempt to conciliate and bring them closer, to heal the wounds of the past. This mass immigration was an enterprise of vast proportions undertaken by a new regime intoxicated by the knowledge that it now held the reins of power and believing it could realize all its dreams. At the same time, this enterprise was a painful example of lack of consideration for human need, giving the benefit of the collective priority over the welfare of the individual, and belief in the power of ideology to shape a new human and a new nation.

The wave of immigrants that inundated Israel as early as 1948–1949 was dubbed "a cloudburst." In the Middle East rain is a blessing, but a cloudburst can also bring devastation. During the heroic illegal immigration struggle, the main Zionist slogan had been "free immigration." Now that vision was coming to pass; immigrants were reaching the Jewish state. But it abruptly became clear that despite the intense expectation and the rhetorical anticipations of the arrival of this aliya, no one was actually prepared for the tremendous mass of humanity pouring into the country.

The first to arrive were from the displaced persons camps in Germany, the survivors of European Jewry who, after nine years of war, wandering, suffering, and the loss of family and home, now hoped they had found a permanent haven. In addition the British now opened the gates of the detention camps in Cyprus where illegal immigrants intercepted on their way to Palestine were held, and all the detainees came to Israel. As this group took their first steps in the country, the Bulgarian government granted exit permits to its Jewish citizens. Bulgaria was a member of the Communist bloc, which was already closed off to Western Europe by the Iron Curtain. The Jews of the USSR had been denied the right to leave the country since the 1920s, and every exit permit from an Eastern bloc country was considered an irrevocable opportunity. Now, with no prior warning, an entire

community—its leaders, its young and old—was about to immigrate to Israel. Obviously they could not be told, "Wait a while!" The same urgent need to snatch an opportunity that might never be repeated existed in Poland and Romania. The governments of both these countries were completely unpredictable; one day they allowed people to leave, the next day leaving was prohibited, the day after—allowed again. Memories of the war and what followed, of murder and pogroms perpetrated by local populations, were still fresh in the minds of immigrants and Israelis alike. The Yishuv leaders' feelings of guilt and helplessness during World War Two regarding the Jewish catastrophe in Europe were now channeled into a broad national consensus. Waiting was out of the question. All Eastern European Jews who wanted to leave and could leave must be brought to Israel.

There were other communities of Jews as well who faced danger at home and sought to immigrate to a country of their own. Throughout the Middle East and North Africa, relations between Muslims and Jews had been strained, especially since the establishment of the Jewish state and the War of Independence. In Egypt, Iraq, and Yemen tensions rose between Jews and their neighbors due to hostility from both the government and the street. The tradition of aliya to the Holy Land had brought the Jews of Yemen to Palestine in a thin trickle since the time of the First Aliya. Now they came in thousands. From small, remote townships in the mountains where they felt especially vulnerable, and from Sana'a and other cities, they streamed into Aden, the British colony at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The British agreed to allow the Yemenite Jews to remain in Aden on condition that the State of Israel evacuate them as quickly as possible. The airlift of Yemenite Jews to Israel was dubbed "Magic Carpet," and it aroused enthusiasm for the young state's newfound capabilities.

Just as the Jews of Yemen landed in 1949, tens of thousands more Jews began arriving from Tunisia, Turkey, and Libya. In Libya there was a pogrom against the Jews, and the entire community wanted to emigrate. The immigrant camps, particularly Sha'ar Ha'aliya (gate of immigration) outside Haifa, were bursting at the seams. There was no immigrant housing. The housing shortage since the end of the World War was not yet over, and now a quarter of a million new arrivals had to be provided with housing, food, and employment. The housing problem was partially solved by settling about 130,000 immigrants in abandoned Arab villages and towns: Jaffa, Haifa, Tiberias, and Ramla. The housing was not ideal, but it put a roof over people's heads. The first mass aliya immigrants, from Bulgaria and the DP camps, were considered privileged in that they settled in the center of the country, close to sources of employment and reasonable schools. But that was only the start of the big wave.

In March 1950 the Iraqi government announced that it would allow Jews who wished to emigrate to leave, if they waived their citizenship. This law was to

remain in force for one year only. It was the conclusion of a protracted process that began with Iraq's independence in 1932. Since the turn of the century—and especially under the British Mandate—the country's proud and successful Jewish community had modernized and integrated into the Iraqi economy and culture. But heightened Arab nationalism and the effects of the national conflict in Palestine had increased tension between Jews and Muslims in Iraq. Now the Iraqi Jews, who felt rooted in their homeland, found their economic and civil status undermined. Where they had been citizens with equal rights, they were now dependent on the grace and favor of the government. Whereas until the 1940s the majority of the community had considered itself part of the Iraqi people, this identity was now destabilized in the face of hostility from the government, the media, and the masses. Some educated young Jews joined the Communist Party and looked to regime change in Iraq as the only way out of their frustration. Others turned to Zionism. The Zionist movement in Iraq had been active since 1943, gaining support from eager young people.

The law allowing emigration was intended to bring about the departure of several thousand Jews whom the government saw as an active core of incitement among the Jewish population, as well as of poor Jews who had nothing to lose. The Iraqi government estimated that about 10,000 people would emigrate, while in Israel the estimates ranged from 30,000 to 40,000. Shlomo Hillel (an Israeli born in Iraq who was an emissary of "Hamossad Le'aliya" there) estimated that some 70,000 would immigrate. No one imagined that 120,000 would come. But once registration began it snowballed. As more and more people registered to immigrate, others increasingly feared what might befall them if they remained as a small, persecuted minority. Meanwhile, in order to stop the emigration, the authorities began to limit the amount of money and valuables allowed to leave the country. Finally, in March 1951, they froze Jewish assets in Iraq and prohibited emigrants from taking anything out. Immigration to Israel, which had begun slowly (at the same time as another wave of immigrants from Romania), ultimately became a panicked flight during which an affluent, well-established community became penniless refugees. In 1950–1951 the entire Iraqi Jewish community immigrated to Israel. In contrast with the Orientalist romanticism of Operation Magic Carpet, this time the airlift operation was given the biblical code name "Ezra and Nehemiah," after the leaders of the Jews who returned from the Babylonian exile during the reign of Cyrus.

The Israeli government had limited control over the process of immigration. Unexpected political situations such as those in Iraq, Poland, and Romania impelled the immigration of hundreds of thousands of people whom the Jewish state could not turn away. In his memoirs Shlomo Hillel describes a conversation in which Levi Eshkol, the Jewish Agency treasurer, told him, "Tell your good Jews

[in Iraq] that we shall be very pleased for them all to come. But they shouldn't hurry. At the moment we have no absorption possibilities. We don't even have tents. If they come, they'll have to live in the street." Ben-Gurion, on the other hand, forcefully rejected claims that Israel had limited absorption capacity: "We must bring the Jews of Iraq and all the other dispersions that are prepared or have to immigrate, as soon as possible—without considerations of property and absorption possibilities."[1] Attempts by the government and the Jewish Agency to introduce qualifications for immigration failed. Prohibitions against the sick, the disabled, and people unable to work were opposed by the immigration emissaries in the various locations. Nor were the authorities in Eastern Europe prepared to accept limitations on immigration on grounds of health. The percentage of immigrants in the mass aliya who needed welfare assistance was particularly high. The daily *Haboker* wrote: "This aliya was brought here without selection. There are many who have been stricken by fate, the aged, elderly, infirm, chronically sick, disabled, and other social cases . . . people who have no will to work, who lack the understanding and the patience to overcome the basic conditions here."[2]

By 1950 the situation in the immigrant camps was intolerable. The director of the Shaʿar Haʿaliya camp described it thus:

> The immigrants were locked in, surrounded by barbed wire fences, and guarded by armed police. At different periods the crowding in the wood and stone huts left by the British Army reached brutal levels. Three times a day they stood in long lines for their food ration. The lines wound for kilometers around the medical and customs services. On more than one occasion the immigrants had to wait for hours for their turn in the bathhouses, while the latrines overflowed. There was not always sufficient water in the camp, there were frequent power cuts, and at night the camp was in total darkness. . . .[3]

The immigrant camps were supposed to provide temporary housing until the immigrants were processed and moved to permanent housing. But there was nowhere to move them to. Construction of immigrant housing lagged far behind the number of new arrivals, and was also held up by the shortage of foreign currency. At a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive, Dr. Giora Josephthal, who was in charge of the Agency's immigrant absorption department, said, "When fifty men and women, old people and children, are in one dormitory, an impossible atmosphere is inevitable. These are conditions of humiliation in which we cannot hold people. . . . In a short while the good human material that comes to the camps sinks into depression, until the people do not have the strength to do anything but cry quietly. . . ."[4]

In addition to making immigrants miserable, the camps imposed a very heavy burden on the Jewish Agency's meager budget. Their inhabitants were not sup-

posed to leave until they moved to their permanent location. They did not work and were fed by the camps' kitchens. Life in the big dormitories without privacy and the possibility of living a family life demoralized people. Thus arose the idea of the maʿabara (pl. maʿabarot), the transit camp. Until permanent housing was built, immigrants would be transferred to temporary housing where each family would have its own unit. The father would be able to go out to work and earn an income, the mother would be able to cook for the family, and the children would go to school. The maʿabarot were to be an intermediate stage between the immigrant camps and permanent housing: a vast improvement in the immigrants' living conditions, the first stage of their productive life in Israel.

However, it was soon evident that conditions in the maʿabarot were not much better than in the camps. The maʿabara housing units were tents, tin shacks, tarpaulin or wooden huts—of any material that could be used for rapid, cheap construction. The buildings were small and temporary, so they had no electricity or water. Washing facilities and toilets were in communal buildings. "My first encounter with the maʿabara was with a group of youngsters. When I asked where the showers were, they were astonished by this odd question, and replied, 'We haven't showered since we left the Beit Lidd camp.' In the whole camp there were two faucets for everyone. About a thousand people. The toilets had no roof and were infested with flies. Corrugated iron buildings for showers had been erected, but in the absence of water they too had been turned into toilets." This was one journalist's description of his encounter with the Migdal-Gad maʿabara.[5] His account was one of the less repellent given by the maʿabarot's detractors.

Up to the end of 1950, sixty-two maʿabarot were built, housing some 100,000 people. At the end of 1951, after three years of mass immigration, the number of maʿabara inhabitants reached 220,000 (out of more than 250,000 people in temporary housing). There was constant turnover: from the aircraft or ship to the camp, and thence to the maʿabara. Some immigrants preferred the camps, where they received their daily food ration plus free health and education services, to the maʿabarot, whose inhabitants had to work for a living. Employment in the maʿabarot consisted of small-scale trading within the maʿabara itself or of workfare, which was subsidized employment in afforestation, road building, or construction of permanent housing for the maʿabara inhabitants. This low-paid, temporary work did not guarantee a future livelihood but was designed to avoid idleness, which the country's leadership considered the leading cause of degeneration and corruption. They believed that every effort must be made to prevent it.

On top of the shock of immigration, unfamiliarity with the mysteries of Israeli bureaucracy, and not understanding the language, the maʿabarot inhabitants had to undergo proletarianization. They were compelled to get used to physical work, which in their countries of origin was considered demeaning. Some with initia-

tive (and sometimes with certain means) left the camps, were helped by relatives or friends, found work, and broke out of the institutionalized absorption process. Harshest of all perhaps was the experience of the Iraqi immigrants in the maʿabarot. The Holocaust survivors and Cyprus detainees had reached the country after years of living in camps, the Yemenite immigrants had traveled far and spent time waiting in camps before immigrating, and the North African immigrants had been in transit camps before reaching Israel. For the Iraqi immigrants, however, only a flight of several hours separated a spacious, pleasant house from the depressing wretchedness of a tarpaulin-walled shack in the maʿabara. Not by chance did several writers emerge from the Iraqi aliya whose experience of Israel was burned into their consciousness through the maʿabara, which they described in their works.

The second half of 1952 saw a sharp drop in immigrant numbers, due, among other things, to the news of absorption difficulties. For the next three years the absorption system was able to catch its breath and plan and execute an evacuation of the maʿabarot. Over the next six years most of the maʿabarot were demolished and their inhabitants moved to permanent housing. As had also happened in the immigrant camps, when the maʿabarot were vacated quite a few people refused to leave, either because their relatives remained there, it was close to their place of work, it was familiar and reasonably comfortable, or because after years of dependency, independence seemed intimidating. Much as when the DP camps in Germany were vacated, some people who lacked education and were socially less competent remained as welfare cases, while those with initiative and energy quickly seized the opportunity to rebuild their life.

The tremendous difficulties created by this aliya gave rise to a conflict between the people in charge of overseeing the process of bringing in immigrants and those responsible for absorption once the immigrants arrived. The second group demanded that the flow of immigrants be based on absorption capacity. They warned that the intolerable conditions in the immigrant camps and maʿabarot were creating a human catastrophe. To them the uncontrolled aliya policy, which reflected a willingness to sacrifice individual people for the sake of "ingathering of the exiles," was irresponsible. On the other side, the people in charge of immigration saw the disintegration of entire communities: people cut off from their homes and familiar environments, who had abandoned their work. These activists could not just stop this process in the middle—in some cases they had initiated it themselves. For them any limits on immigration undermined their "holy work"—not to mention leaving thousands of immigrants in the limbo of transit camps with no possibility of going back home.

MIZRACHIM AND VETERAN ISRAELIS

In 1950, for the first time since the modern return to Zion began, the majority of immigrants came from Muslim countries. During the Yishuv period 90 percent of immigrants were from Europe. In the first and second years of mass immigration, the Ashkenazim were still in the majority. But from 1950 onward most immigrants were Jews from the Middle Eastern and North African countries. In 1952 some 60 percent of ma'abarot residents came from Muslim countries, people who were later given the blanket name "Mizrachim" (lit., Easterners). Although the Moroccan immigrants were just a small minority in the wave of mass immigration, they received particularly bad press. There are some grounds for the belief that some of the Moroccan immigrants in that first wave had come from the *mellahs*, the ghettos of the major cities, where harsh conditions of poverty and social disintegration prevailed. This group included some criminal elements who were labeled "Morocco knife" (due to their supposed propensity to pull a knife at the slightest provocation), as well as a large number of aged and disabled. Younger people, and those who had the means, chose to remain in their homeland. In the early 1950s French rule in North Africa was still stable and the region's Jewish communities were not threatened.

Given the absorption difficulties, and based on an assessment that in certain countries no rescue aliya would be necessary, in November 1951 the Jewish Agency Executive introduced selective immigration from countries where immigrants could be chosen. Rescue aliyot and immigrants able to fund their own absorption were exempt from restrictions. To a great extent the restrictions were based on the same principle of absorption capacity that had been in force during the Mandatory period. In the early days the state gave immigration priority to young people with military training who could join the IDF-Gahal (an acronym for *Giyus Hutz La'aretz*, overseas recruits). But after the war all restrictions on immigration had ended. Now the new regulations limited the majority of immigrants to families in which the breadwinner was younger than thirty-five. Those without means or a profession were required to work in agriculture for two years. Approval for immigration required a medical certificate that gave the candidate a clean bill of health. These criteria were not strictly adhered to, and as time went by they were relaxed. The age limit was raised to forty, a disabled person in a family was allowed to immigrate if the family had an active breadwinner, and so forth.

The saying that Israelis love immigration but not the immigrants was especially true of mass immigration. The veteran Yishuv had undergone numerous travails and suffered losses during the years of struggle and the War of Independence. Both ordinary people and elites were exhausted and longed for respite. The establishment of the state and mass immigration opened paths to rapid advancement for veteran Israelis in government, the army, education, and so

forth. From the start of the wave of mass immigration, the Israeli public displayed quite limited willingness to volunteer to help with immigrant absorption. The statism concept that so many of the Yishuv elite had challenged now released the objectors and their comrades from responsibility for national missions. In theory they wanted a return to the standard of voluntarism, but in practice they were not willing to volunteer themselves. It is quite possible that the whole matter of ingathering of exiles on such an enormous scale seemed strange and intimidating to them, beyond what they were capable of coping with.

A few here and there did volunteer. Women's organizations were active in the Shaʿar Haʿaliya camp helping the new immigrants. The moshav movement sent hundreds of volunteers to help in the new immigrant moshavim (discussed later). The kibbutz movement took in Youth Aliya children. But these were negligible minorities, as is demonstrated by the failure of a call to Yishuv veterans in the winter of 1951 to host immigrant children in their homes after the maʿabarot were hit by severe flooding. Hundreds, not thousands, of households responded. When the maʿabarot were built, the authorities sought to locate them near established communities that would provide both services and employment for the immigrants. But the stronger and more established the municipal authority, the more easily it managed to keep the maʿabarot at arm's length. Thus there was only one maʿabara in the Tel Aviv area, and Ramat Gan did not permit the construction of maʿabarot in its jurisdiction. So the maʿabarot were built near relatively weak towns that could be forced to accept government authority, but these towns had difficulty providing the immigrants with the services and employment they needed.

Veteran Israelis were oblivious to the new immigrants. Uriel Simon described the alienation between the two worlds thus:

> A person rides on a train and sees the landscape of his country, and in it—the maʿabara. The maʿabara with its numerous gleaming tin shacks crowded together around the stinking latrines seems like a wound in the flesh. Disheveled children dressed in tatters stand at the roadside and wave to him with their little hands. For a fleeting second their eyes meet, and he sees the glint of their eyes, but he does not raise his hand in reply. He prefers to remain alien and distant, he fears the contact.[6]

The immigrant camps and the maʿabarot were a world unto themselves, with which only a few veteran Israelis came into contact. They read about what was happening there in the newspapers. The articles described a foreign, frightening country: rubbish and filth, wretchedness, apathy, idleness, and a life of degeneration.

Veterans looked at absorption difficulties as part of the suffering required to attain the Land of Israel. "When we came to this country" became a catchphrase veterans used to justify the hardships faced by the new immigrants. The veterans

had already endured their own hardships and were not willing to return to an emergency regime; in fact the failure of the austerity measures was partly an expression of their rebellion against these new decrees being imposed upon them. The dramatic descriptions in the press of the camps and maʿabarot did not generate sympathy for the immigrants, but rather a sense of alienation and fear, as if the camps posed a danger to the settled country. The image of the immigrants as filthy and suffering from chronic and other diseases only heightened this fear. When a polio epidemic hit the country, some said the immigrants had brought it with them.

The veteran Yishuv was alarmed: was the Zionist enterprise in danger of extinction? Were these waves of immigration, which it had not asked for, about to inundate the country? Even Ben-Gurion, who supported continuing immigration unconditionally, wrote:

> "The emerging Jewish people" of which Herzl thought and on which he built his Zionist policy and activity was in fact the Jewish people in Europe. . . . The state was established and did not find the people that had awaited it [that is, the people who were awaiting the state perished]. For hundreds of years the Jewish people were faced with a question or a prayer: could a state be found for the people? No one dared ask the terrifying question—would a people be found for the state when it came into being . . . ? And this question is in fact the question of questions for the State of Israel that has been founded in our time.[7]

Israel was supposed to be a modern state oriented toward Europe and the West, yet now it was stuck in the mire of the immigrant camps.

The negative images of immigrants—for example, "human dust"—did not differentiate between Holocaust survivors and immigrants from the Islamic countries. Would the veteran Yishuv be able to mold this great human mass into its own image? Numerous articles in the press expressed concern over what might happen: "Bringing in tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of people unsuitable for Israel did not strengthen the state, or bring benefit to the Yishuv, did not provide a better hope for the future, and also did not benefit the people themselves, who in very many cases are far more unfortunate and embittered here than they ever were among their neighbors overseas," wrote Shmuel Ussishkin in *Haboker.* The stigma attached to the immigrants was not restricted to the bourgeois right-wing faction represented by *Haboker*. "A Yishuv with numerous sick, decadent, and unrestrained elements will not withstand the social and security tests that await us. . . . Undermining the health and the psychological and moral balance of the Yishuv—the core of future generations—is recklessness that will swiftly rebound at us in a terrible way," asserted *Davar,* the Mapai newspaper.[8] A public furor erupted over a series of articles by *Ha'aretz* journalist Aryeh

Gelblum, who spent a month in an immigrant camp disguised as an immigrant. He used negative stereotypes to describe all immigrants, but he reserved the worst ones for the North Africans, particularly those from Morocco. Even reporters who defended the immigrants did not go out of their way to compliment them. But whereas Gelblum assumed that it was impossible to change these ignorant, primitive people, others believed that through education and patient molding of their personalities, these immigrants could be transformed into worthy citizens.

In one of his articles Ben-Gurion writes: "The dispersions that are being terminated [that is, entire communities, such as the Bulgarian and Iraqi Jews, that were liquidated through immigration to Israel] and which are gathering in Israel still do not constitute a people, but a motley crowd, human dust lacking language, education, roots, tradition or national dreams. . . . Turning this human dust into a civilized, independent nation with a vision . . . is no easy task, and its difficulties are no less than those of economic absorption."[9] These remarks make two assumptions. The first is that it was possible to turn every Jew into a model citizen like the best of the veterans. He repeated this over and over. He was said to have remarked that he awaited the appointment of a Yemenite chief of staff—a statement that was characteristic, for Ben-Gurion aspired to the formation of one nation, unified in one culture, with standards worthy of the modern world. His second assumption involves a recognition that in the initial stages of immigrant absorption the state was concerned solely with immigrants' physical needs: a roof, food, health services, and minimal education. It did not invest similar efforts in socialization processes.

AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT TOWNS

The immigration "cloudburst" of the early 1950s interrupted government plans for national population distribution. Concentrating most of the Jewish population in the three big cities—Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa—and in the area between Hadera and Gedera seemed to go against the national interest from the standpoint of security, economics, and culture. It also appeared to be a mistake in terms of quality of life. Aryeh Sharon, an architect and director of the planning department in the prime minister's office, drew up a plan designed to rectify this problem by directing new immigrants to the development areas: the Galilee, the Jerusalem corridor, and the Negev. Sharon explained that Jews had become concentrated in the big cities during the Yishuv period because land was not available for settlement in all parts of the country. Now this could be remedied with two types of settlement. The first, agricultural settlement, was as we have seen the traditional Zionist priority. It was therefore determined that 20 percent of the

population should be farmers. Accordingly five hundred new settlements were established in the first five years of the state, and 13 percent of the new immigrants were settled in them.

The second type was urban settlement. This was an innovation, something the Zionist movement had not yet initiated. Although most of the Jewish population preferred city life, ideologically the city was considered an obstacle to creating the new Jew—a hothouse for propagation of a petite bourgeoisie, whose existence hindered the needs of building a nation. The Sharon Plan was based on a perception prevailing in Britain at the time, a lesson learned from World War Two, of the vulnerability of large concentrations of people during air raids, as well as of the inherent disadvantages of big cities—filth, slums, alienation, and so forth. The new concept involved building small- to medium-sized cities based on meticulous regional planning that would take into account population distribution, security, urban aesthetics, the economy, and society. This was the planning basis for the development towns. In the years between 1948 and 1964, more than thirty of these townships were established.

During the Yishuv period agricultural settlement had been the privilege of those with private capital who could purchase a citrus grove or vineyard, or of groups of pioneers who waited many years until they were allowed to settle on the land, and in the meantime underwent "agricultural training." Either way, agriculture was a conscious choice people made. No longer. Except for a minority of the graduates of agricultural training who went to kibbutzim, the 13 percent of immigrants who were sent to rural locations had not chosen pioneering settlement. At first an attempt was made to select the candidates for settlement and organize them into groups according to their skills and wishes, but the process rapidly became completely random, as the following testimony demonstrates:

> At the immigrants' camp we were approached with a proposal to go to a village. When we asked where the village was, we were told, "In the Tel Aviv area." We liked the location and agreed to go. We had no idea what a moshav was. We were happy to get away from the immigrants' camp. The truck left the Beit Lidd maʿabara first thing in the morning, and the journey lasted for many hours. After a long ride along dirt roads . . . through wide-open spaces with neither bush nor tree, we reached a small tent encampment in the early evening. The people refused to get off the truck. They said they had been promised a village near Tel Aviv, not at the end of the world. After an argument the family elder got up and said, "I'm getting off. This is my land and this is where I shall be buried." Once the old man got off, so did his family, and they were followed by the others. When the driver saw that they had all got off, he started the truck and drove off. That's how the settlement of [Moshav] Patish began.[10]

Elements of this testimony recur in dozens of others: the deceit by the authorities; total ignorance of what a moshav was; shock at seeing the wilderness to which the newcomers were brought; and, left with no choice, acceptance of the situation.

The arrival of the mass immigration led Ben-Gurion to call upon the kibbutz movement to open its doors and give the immigrants jobs. However, this suggestion contradicted the kibbutz's guiding principle of "self-labor"—that is, to not employ hired labor. The kibbutzim refused, leading to a clash with Ben-Gurion. In a speech in the Knesset on January 16, 1950, he declared himself "ashamed and embarrassed" by the kibbutz movement's attitude toward immigrant absorption. In a way the establishment of immigrant moshavim was Ben-Gurion's response to the kibbutzim's refusal. Settling thousands of immigrants with neither experience in nor inclination toward agriculture—which in their native countries was considered an inferior occupation—was an extremely daring experiment whose chance of success was unclear.

During the Mandatory period a precondition for settlement on the land was having a consolidated group of young people who were prepared both mentally and physically for the hardships awaiting them. This type of settlement required a prolonged training period for people who were already ideologically committed. The leaders of the kibbutz movement now contended that without a selection process for candidates, there was no chance that settlement would succeed. Experience had taught them that even after extensive training, many people left the kibbutzim, because of the hardship of the life, social tensions, or personal reasons. The notion that one could establish an agricultural settlement based on a random group of people, usually from the same family or region, but sometimes from several different places, who had no prior training, mental preparedness, or any knowledge of agriculture whatsoever, contravened all the historical experience accumulated during the Yishuv period. The kibbutz movement wanted nothing to do with this process, and in rejecting it chose to lose its central place in Israeli society.

It was the veteran moshav movement that came to the aid of the new settlement process. During the Yishuv period this movement was relatively weak and less prestigious than the kibbutz movement. Now its finest hour had arrived. The moshav, in which the smallholding belonged to the family, was more suited to the mind-set of Eastern European immigrants, for whom the kibbutz was reminiscent of the hated kolkhoz (collective farm), and even to immigrants from Muslim countries, for whom collectivism of any kind was anathema. Foremost in the minds of the settlement authorities was having the Jews till the soil and establish a Jewish village; all the rest of the moshav requirements were temporarily put on hold.

The encounter with the wilderness where they were sent stunned the new moshav settlers. During the first years they were monitored by Jewish Agency Settlement Department advisors, who helped them deal with Israeli bureaucracy, represented them before various government bodies, and mediated between them and the agencies responsible for allocating resources to start their farms. In the second stage, instructors who belonged to the moshav movement answered Ben-Gurion's call to come live in the new moshavim and help acclimatize the new farmers, emphasizing social and cultural absorption. The beginnings were very difficult. In the Negev settlements there was a delay in laying the water pipe to the moshavim. Attempts at farming were doomed to failure, and the settlers had to bring in water from great distances for drinking and other household needs. Electricity was also delayed, and not every settlement had a generator. Until the settlements were connected to the grid, it was impossible to use machinery or install milk coolers in the new cowsheds. Plowing was done with mules until a tractor arrived some time later. But the settlers did not know how to maintain agricultural machinery, and until one of them was taught to repair the tractor, it stood idle.

The settlers' lack of experience was exacerbated by the inexperience of the settlement authorities, who did not know which crops were suitable for each location, what was economically viable, and what was obsolete. In addition to vegetables, which the farmers grew beside the houses and later expanded for marketing, the advisors introduced sugar beet and cotton, industrial crops that increased both economic capability and arable land. There were also some attempts at fruit growing, especially grapes and deciduous fruit, but until the settlers had learned what worked and what did not, it was not clear whether farming had a future. In the meantime, and until agriculture yielded a return, the settlers made a living by building their own houses and local infrastructure.

The settlements were far from main roads, and public transport reached each moshav only several times a week. Most settlements had a nurse, but only occasional visits from a doctor; the doctor had no car, and neither did the settlers. The Jewish Agency built public institutions—a school, synagogue, and meeting room—as well as permanent housing, which at first was extremely spartan. The Jewish Agency's management was vital for teaching settlers the new, foreign reality, and it worked to benefit them. But as a result, the settlers saw themselves not as owners of smallholdings but as the Agency's hired workers, exempted from responsibility for the farm and its machinery and livestock. Thus, for example, in some moshavim the settlers neglected the cows they had been given to start a dairy farm, since these cows "belonged" to the Jewish Agency. On the other hand, they nurtured and raised the calves, which were "theirs." Chickens allocated to develop the poultry industry were eaten. Seed potatoes met the same fate. Cheat-

ing the Agency about the number of workdays completed was accepted practice, nothing to criticize. The settlement authorities had little faith in the settlers, and allocated the land designated for them in stages according to progress in the moshav's agricultural capacity. Often there were confrontations with neighboring kibbutzim, which took over the land in the interim, then refused to turn it back over to the moshavim.

A considerable conceptual gap separated the settlers from their advisors. The advisors had been raised on the principle of collective action—mutual assistance among settlers, common use of machinery, and organized marketing through Tnuva (an agricultural produce cooperative). All these principles were foreign to the new settlers. For them the bottom line was the kinship unit. Moshavim that included people from different backgrounds never became cohesive, and in the end some settlers left. Those who remained tried to bring in new settlers from their own families. Consequently the moshavim developed on the basis of the expanded family unit—the *hamoula* (clan). Instead of a group of pioneers linked by ideology, the kinship unit became the glue of the new moshav. The advisors also tried to introduce a culture of democracy—an elected committee and a transition to self-management. But in many cases internal frictions led to frequent changes in the committee, and it took several years for a culture of self-management to develop. In the moshavim that did become cohesive and had stable populations, a community was shaped within five years, and an authentic local leadership emerged. These moshavim became prosperous as early as the 1960s.

The new moshavim altered accepted practices in the moshav movement in particular, and the Hevrat Haʿovdim in general. They refused to accept Tnuva's marketing methods, which set the price of agricultural produce when it arrived in the city and delayed payments due to the farmers. Instead the moshavniks sold their own produce and established their own purchasing and marketing organizations, freeing themselves of Tnuva's "guardianship." As they became socialized and learned the economic and social system, they adopted the country's standard political operating procedures, and in the 1960s one could find representatives from the new moshavim among the leadership of the moshav movement, and even of Mapai. In the 1970s the new moshavim prospered and were considered a great success story.

As we have seen, the development towns were established at the same time as the new moshavim. Contrary to the population distribution plan, some were built near the maʿabarot. Thus, for example, Or Yehuda was built near Lod on the basis of the maʿabarot in the area. The first sign of development towns being located for purposes of population distribution was the establishment of Kiryat Shmona and Shlomi in the Galilee, and Yerucham in the Negev. The first to settle in these towns were people from the maʿabarot, who agreed to move to relatively

enhanced housing there. But the vast majority of ma'abarot inhabitants preferred to remain in the center of the country.

The end of French rule in Morocco and concerns about the country's new nationalist regime brought a new influx of North African immigrants in 1954 and 1956. This time the authorities sought to avoid its mistakes in absorbing the first wave. They informed the immigrants about the difficult conditions in advance and even had them sign an agreement to settle where they were sent. This wave of about 70,000 immigrants in 1954 and 1956 was sent to the outlying areas as part of an operation dubbed "From Ship to Village." Some immigrants went to the Lachish district, in the southern part of the country, a well-planned region including both moshavim and townships intended to serve as urban centers, where the housing that awaited them was equipped with household utensils and means of production. Throughout this process the immigrants remained passive; their voices were not heard. A woman described her journey to Ofakim as follows: "We stood by the ship's rail, our eyes streaming with tears as on the horizon we saw Mount Carmel. We reached Haifa and were immediately loaded onto a rickety truck. We drove for the rest of the day. We came to a gloomy place, not knowing what it was or what it was called. We refused to get off the truck. After a few minutes of commotion, arguments, my husband David was arrested by the local police. That was our welcome. . . ."[11]

This description of the well-oiled bureaucratic process that left the immigrants with no choice of avoiding the path laid out for them recurs in the words of the organizers: "In the years that we absorbed . . . Jews from North Africa, they were like putty in our hands. We took them from the boat and sent them directly to settle. We didn't ask them what they wanted and it worked. The experiment with a hundred thousand people sent to settlement was a success."[12]

When immigration from Poland was renewed in 1958, following a wave of antisemitism, the population distribution policy was suspended. Because many of the immigrants had relatives in Israel, *landsleit* (people from the same town), and friends, there was a different attitude toward them. Moreover, while immigrants from the Muslim countries could not return to their homelands, the absorption authorities assumed that the Jews of Poland or Hungary (whence immigrants had come after the Soviet suppression of the 1956 revolt) had the choice of not leaving their country, returning to it, or even going somewhere else. Therefore, if the authorities wanted them to stay in Israel and encourage other Eastern European immigrants (there was always the hope of immigration from the USSR), they must be allowed appropriate absorption conditions. Thus the majority of European immigrants were absorbed in the center of the country, while the outlying areas were settled mainly with immigrants from Africa and Asia.

Ever since Mandate times, there had been poor neighborhoods on the out-

skirts of the big cities—Kerem Hateimanim near the Carmel Market in Tel Aviv, Neveh Tsedek and Neveh Shalom on the edge of Jaffa, and the Hatikva neighborhood in south Tel Aviv. The Nordiya neighborhood of shacks and crates remained in the heart of the city for many years. After the War of Independence these poor neighborhoods expanded and even overflowed into new areas. In all the cities the residents of neighborhoods on the margins between Jews and Arabs had fled for their lives during the war. A large portion of them found refuge in abandoned Arab villages and neighborhoods whose residents had also fled. Thus the Salameh neighborhood near Tel Aviv was established on the site of an abandoned Arab village. In the heart of Tel Aviv a poor neighborhood was established where the village of Jamusin had been, whose new residents rejected all the proposals to relocate them. Jerusalem saw the establishment of Musrara and Katamon. All these overcrowded neighborhoods had inferior, unrenovated housing and lacked adequate public services. Their advantage was proximity to the city centers, which gave their residents hope of employment and a reasonable standard of education. Overcrowding in these neighborhoods increased once many residents of the maʿabarot, development towns, or moshavim decided to leave the places where they had been sent and seek their fortunes in the big city. In a poor neighborhood one could always find somewhere to live, either for free or very cheaply.

In 1959 social protest accompanied by rioting broke out for the first time in Israel's history. The driving force behind it was young Moroccans from Haifa's Wadi Salib neighborhood. The riots were a manifestation of the resentment of young people who had grown up in Israel and served in the IDF—some had even fought in the War of Independence—over the lack of possibility for employment and advancement and the failure to recognize them and their needs. The riots revealed that the poor neighborhoods on the city's outskirts, with their concentrations of young people from the Mizrachi ethnic communities who had left the maʿabarot and settlements in the outlying areas, were a powder keg that could explode. Moroccan immigrants made up only 30 percent of the residents of Wadi Salib, but they were the majority of the unemployed and welfare cases. The protest died quickly after minor adjustments were made to the wages of workfare workers and child allowances were provided. But it was the first time that the ethnic problem—the connection between ethnicity and poverty, ethnicity and marginal populations—had emerged into the spotlight.

The press reports on the Wadi Salib riots in no way deterred the large wave of immigrants from Morocco that arrived between 1960 and 1964. Nor did these reports induce the absorption authorities to stop this immigration, even though they perceived the Moroccans as very troublesome, posing a threat of disorder. Researcher Yaron Tsur believes that while the Moroccan immigrants blamed "the

Poles"—a derogatory term embracing all Ashkenazim—for their hardships, their attitude toward the Jewish state nevertheless remained positive and patriotic. That is, the power of Jewish nationalism, rendered more potent by the instability and insecurity of Jewish life in Morocco, coupled with an economic crisis there, was stronger than grievances against the Israeli authorities and resentment of their attitude toward the Moroccans. At the same time, the government's decision to continue the immigration of more than 100,000 Moroccan Jews showed how the sense of national responsibility overcame reservations about the immigrants' character. The State of Israel could not turn its back on the largest Jewish community remaining in an Arab state, whose well-being hung by a thread and depended on those authorities' benevolence. Also, the Jewish state's need to strengthen its Jewish population was more important than any social or ethnic reservations.

The majority of the 1960s immigrants were sent to the development towns, where they became the bulk of the population. These towns were designed to serve as intermediaries between the big cities and the outlying agricultural areas, commercial and cultural centers for the surrounding kibbutzim and moshavim. The problem was that parallel to the development towns, regional councils had been set up that performed these same functions. The towns were supposed to be garden cities, but their aesthetic standard was very low, since the city centers had not been developed and no commercial or cultural services had been created there. Most of these towns remained small, under 20,000—the population level that had been set to assure the residents adequate municipal services. In many, there was no local leadership that felt any responsibility toward the residents. Population turnover was high, and attempts to bring in residents from the veteran Yishuv were unsuccessful. The schools were neglected and lower in quality than the regional council schools to which the kibbutzim—and even the new moshavim—sent their children. The main problem in most development towns was the highly unsound employment infrastructure. Only at the end of the 1950s with the establishment of industry, including the labor-intensive textile industry, were some development towns able to break out of the cycle of chronic unemployment and show signs of recovery.

There were, of course, differences among the towns. Beersheba became the capital of the Negev, and to all intents and purposes a fully developed city. The same was true of Ashdod, whose port gave it a tremendous developmental boost, and Ashqelon, which combined tourism and industry. Arad and Carmiel, the last two development towns to be established, were founded on planning that had been improved by the lessons learned from previous mistakes. But it was not until the late 1960s that the development towns established in the early 1950s achieved stability in population and employment, and acquired some cultural

institutions. Until then they were poor and backward, and this image remained with them for a long time. The immigrants from Eastern Europe, mainly Romania, who were sent to these towns right at the start, managed to leave them for greener pastures. The result was to heighten the sense of insult and deprivation felt by the remaining residents and at the same time reinforce the connection made by the "first Israel" between the Mizrachi (mainly Moroccan) population of these towns and the poverty and neglect rampant there.

Each wave of immigration looks up to those who came before it and tramples those who came after it. In Israel the absorption process was tempered by the national ethos, which wanted and welcomed the immigrants. The state was responsible both for encouraging the immigrants to come and for directing and regulating them once they arrived. It is hard to think of another country that has invested so much in its immigrants. Therefore, the country wore both the coronet of its successes and the crown of thorns of its failures. The attempts to force upon the immigrants the task of settling the outlying areas—a mission the veteran population would not undertake—had some success, but led to a great deal of bitterness and hurt.

The society that took in the immigrants did not intend to humiliate or harm them by using them as human putty. On the contrary, it believed that the faster it could bring these people from their premodern communities into the wonders of modernity, the better it would be both for them and for the State of Israel. Thus the absorption authorities did not hesitate to eradicate ancient customs, disrupt age-old social structures, and destroy accepted traditional orders. The majority of immigrants from the Islamic countries loved and respected religious tradition. The basic social structure in those countries was the patriarchal family. Respect for the elderly, the synagogue, and accepted customs—from dress and food to marriage ceremonies and religious ritual—had all been part of life for generations for most people. The immigration process disrupted the family and undermined the authority of the elders and the heads of families. Religion lost its dominant status, and the immigrants' entire way of life came under attack.

There were some elements in the immigrants' culture that Israeli society simply considered unacceptable; for example, the marriage of young girls, polygamy, and women's inferior status in the family. In these cases the clash between the old and the demands of the new was inevitable. But with respect to all the other aspects of the Mizrachi immigrants' culture, it is doubtful that accelerated modernization was necessary. Israeli advisors, teachers, and army officers tried to impose norms and behavioral standards on the immigrants that collided with what they had brought from their home countries. The values of deferring gratification and what sociologists call "the achievement syndrome," typical traits of the modern Westerner, were alien to many immigrants, who had difficulty adapt-

ing to them. The initial encounter led to a tendency among the younger generation to assimilate into the native-Israeli group, a process later known as *hitashkenazut* (becoming Ashkenazi). But as time went by, as the immigrants began to feel more at home in Israel and surer of their identity as Israelis, they recalled past insults and the pain of losing their identity on the way toward Israeliness, and demanded that lost elements of their original culture be recognized as legitimate.

It was not just immigrants from Islamic countries who lost their pre-immigration cultural roots. For Eastern European immigrants the encounter with the culture of the veteran Yishuv, different from what they had grown up with, required changes in their way of thinking, as well as in behavioral and cultural norms. But since most had come from a Jewish society destroyed by the war and the Holocaust, the reshaping of identity that occurred in Israel was less traumatic than for those whose identity was only destabilized when they encountered Israeli reality.

A 1966 conference at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem made one of the first attempts to reflect on "the melting pot" policy and its outcomes. In contrast to their initial hostile reactions to the shock of mass immigration, the Yishuv veterans by now had a more balanced view of the moshavim and development town settlers as "reluctant pioneers," as well as some understanding of their absorption difficulties and their suffering. The sociologists and anthropologists who participated raised the possibility of a shift away from the melting pot policy, which created a "pressure cooker" that forced rapid changes in traditional cultures, to what they called a "*cholent* pot" (referring to a traditional Jewish stew, usually simmered slowly overnight). That is, they recommended slowing down the process of modernization and conducting it with consideration of and sensitivity to immigrants' traditional culture, leadership, and entire social structure.

This was the first discussion of the possibility that an Israeli culture would eventually emerge that would be pluralistic, not exclusively that of the Yishuv. The conference participants were not entirely sure what a pluralistic culture would be like, but raising the question expressed their discomfort with the cultural coercion exerted toward the immigrants and was coupled with a demand that the immigrants' right to a sort of autonomy be recognized. This debate also raised for the first time the inherent contradiction between two national objectives: population distribution and *mizug galuyot*, integration of different communities. The outlying areas were populated mainly with Mizrachi immigrants, and the center of the country by Ashkenazim. The immigrants preferred to live in homogeneous settlements based on the kinship unit, which provided some consolation in the face of the hardships of absorption. Only 2 percent of veteran Israelis went to live in the outlying areas. "Today the Yishuv has nothing to be proud of. The values it glorified before the establishment of the state are pres-

ently only declarations," asserted Mordechai Ben-Porat, a former member of the Mossad Le'aliya and himself an Iraqi immigrant.[13] Ben-Porat was referring to the veterans' unwillingness to answer the state's call to go live in the outlying areas, but it seems his words can also be applied to the veterans' attitude toward the mass immigration enterprise in general.

SOCIALIZATION AGENTS: SCHOOL, ARMY, POLITICS

After the period in the early 1950s when the authorities lost control over immigration, the process became organized and regimented, but it still disregarded the need for socialization. As we have seen, the authorities had instead focused on basic needs. The rest was supposed to take place on its own. Yet a socialization process appeared, not complete, not perfect, whose effectiveness increased as the years went by. The main socialization agents were the school, the army, and politics. In the initial enthusiasm that attended the arrival of thousands of immigrants, the "workers' stream" worked resolutely and with dedication to establish an education system in the immigrant camps. There was immediate protest, for the teachers did not hesitate to tell students to cut off their sidelocks, throw away their hats, and turn their backs on religious tradition. Boys and girls sat together in the same classroom and learned not to respect the traditions of their forebears. The teachers, graduates of the labor movement, considered this a vital step on the path to modernization. But to the religious parties it amounted to forcing religious Jews into apostasy, touching the issue closest to their hearts. It was inconceivable that observant Jews in Israel should not receive a religious education and instead be forced to learn in a nonreligious setting.

Those most affected were the Yemenite Jews, who were very observant. The attempt to educate them in a secular spirit—or provide a religious education under the aegis of a nonreligious body like the Histadrut—was perceived by the religious parties as coercion. The issue had more than spiritual importance, since the religious parties saw the observant immigrants as a source of political power that would enable them to enlarge their faction. Mapai, for its part, sought to extend its own electoral influence through education in the spirit of the labor movement. Both sides claimed the right to educate the children of Israel. The compromise reached in the end was that the immigrant camps housing Yemenite Jews would have religious education provided by a religious stream, while in the other camps the parents could choose the stream in which their children would be educated, in response to various promises of material benefits made by the two political factions.

The problem became more complex with the move to the ma'abarot, where the same conflict recurred. These disputes combined Kulturkampf with a fight for votes, and ultimately led to a government crisis and the dismantling of the educa-

tion streams and the establishment of state and state-religious education, both under the authority of the Ministry of Education. The disunity among the ruling elite on this question and the interparty struggle for the immigrants' votes supplied an important lesson in Israeli power politics. In an immigrant country the school is generally the most powerful agent of socialization, but in Israel it wound up having only limited influence, either because of the separation of nonreligious and religious or because it lost the educational momentum it had established in the prestate years.

Another socialization agent of the first order was the IDF. It was in the army that young immigrants met the children of veteran Israelis, and even if the Israelis displayed considerable arrogance toward the newcomers, their shared military service nurtured a fraternity between the two groups. Immigrant soldiers returning home from service brought different behaviors, new insights, and a better understanding of the meaning of Israeliness. As a result, clashes occurred between the older generation, which remained loyal to patriarchal tradition, and the younger generation, which rebelled against it.

The third socialization agent was the political system. In the 1960s there were already people from the mass immigration waves within the political parties—including the ruling party—and among the municipal authorities. Some had even been given senior posts. The new immigrants were courted by all the parties, and their electoral power acquired particular potency as part of the socialization process. Just as veteran Israelis knew how to promise the earth in return for voting the "right" way, the newcomers quickly learned that they could reverse the roles and demand their slice of the political pie because they represented a broad public. Integration into politics demonstrated understanding of the mysteries of the Israeli government and the ability to use the democratic system for the benefit of victims of the absorption system.

Was there discrimination against the Mizrachim? Did the European immigrants enjoy better absorption conditions than their fellows from the Islamic countries? The Eastern European immigrants did have several advantages. First, they arrived earlier and were given housing in the abandoned Arab towns and neighborhoods in the center of the country. Second, this aliya comprised mostly young people—a consequence of the selection process imposed by the Holocaust—and almost no elderly people. Families were small, and in many cases the women went out to work. In some cases the family's economic situation was further boosted by reparations payments from Germany, which began arriving in the late 1950s. These immigrants were less educated than those from Eastern Europe who had arrived before the war, but better educated than those from the Islamic countries. They also had subjective advantages; the people who managed

PLATE 1.
ZIONIST SETTLEMENT IN THE FIRST AND SECOND ALIYA PERIODS, 1882–1918

PLATE 2.
THE PEEL COMMISSION
PARTITION PLAN, 1937

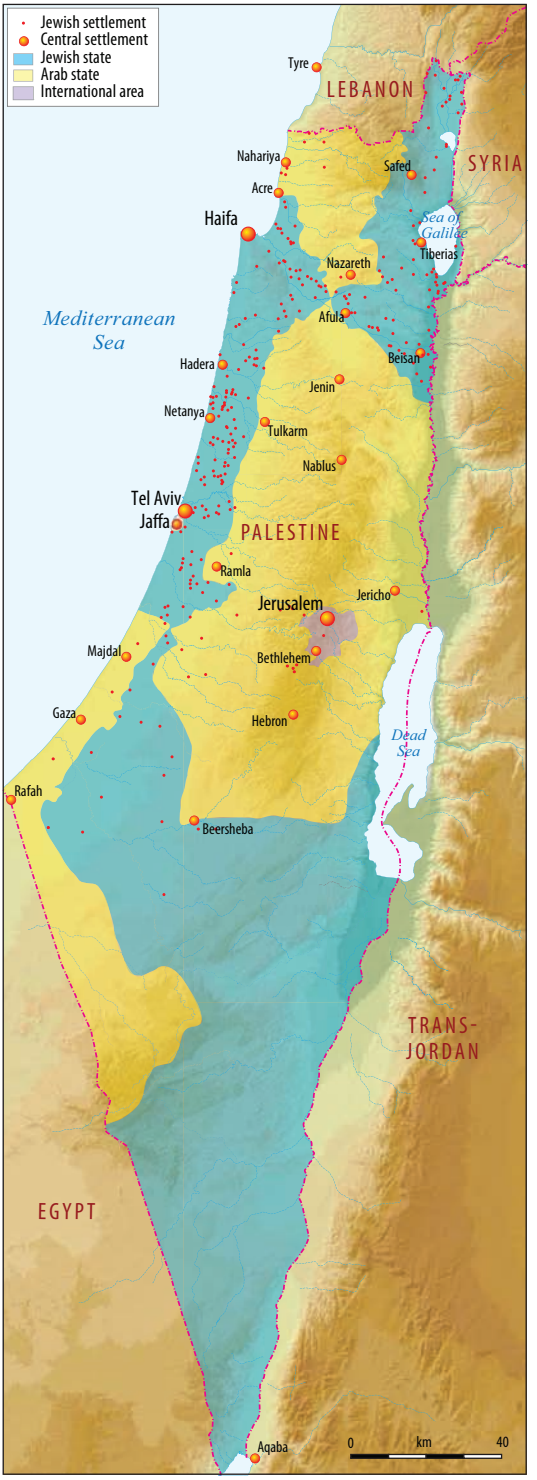
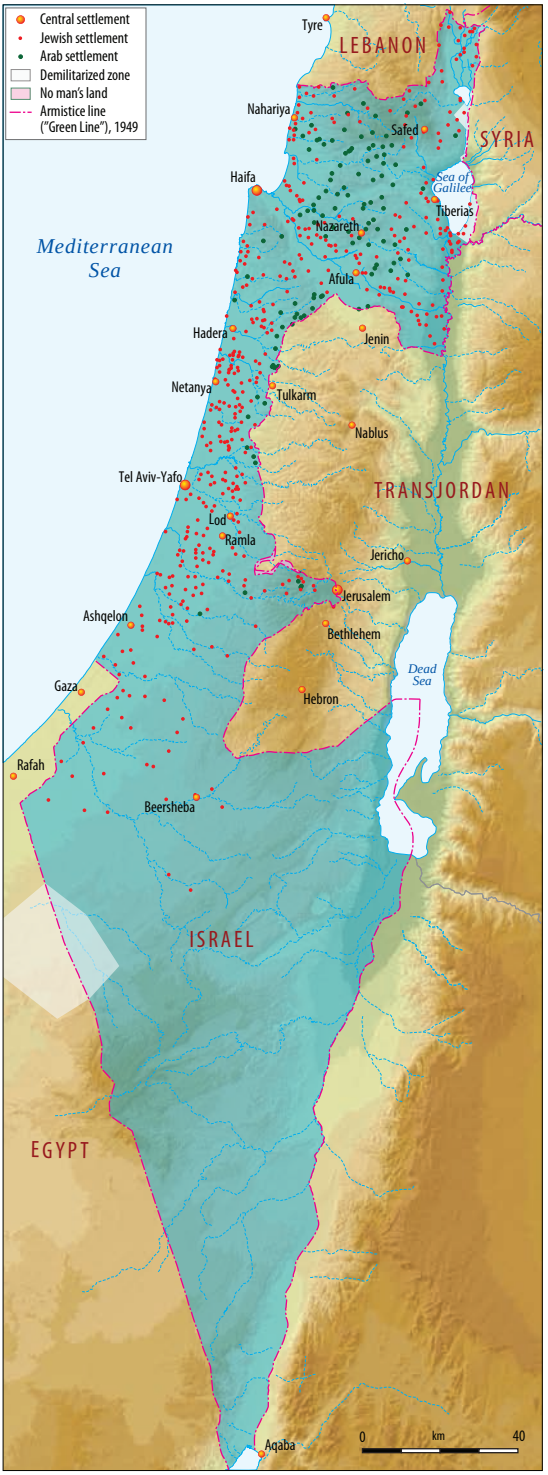


PLATE 3.
THE UNSCOP PARTITION PLAN, 1947

PLATE 4.
THE 1949 ARMISTICE AGREEMENT GREEN LINE BORDERS



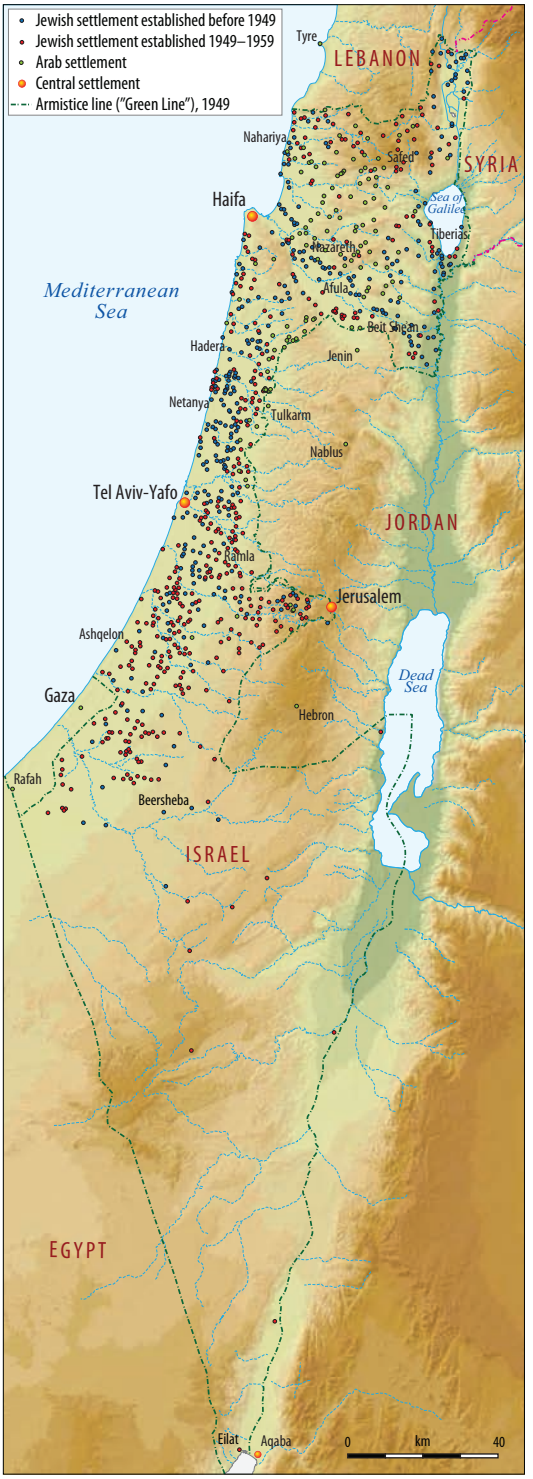


PLATE 5.
THE NEW SETTLEMENT MAP, 1948–1959

PLATE 6. THE NATIONAL WATER CARRIER, 1964

PLATE 7. THE POST–SIX-DAY WAR BORDERS, AND SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, 1967–1977

PLATE 8. THE ALLON PLAN, JULY 1967

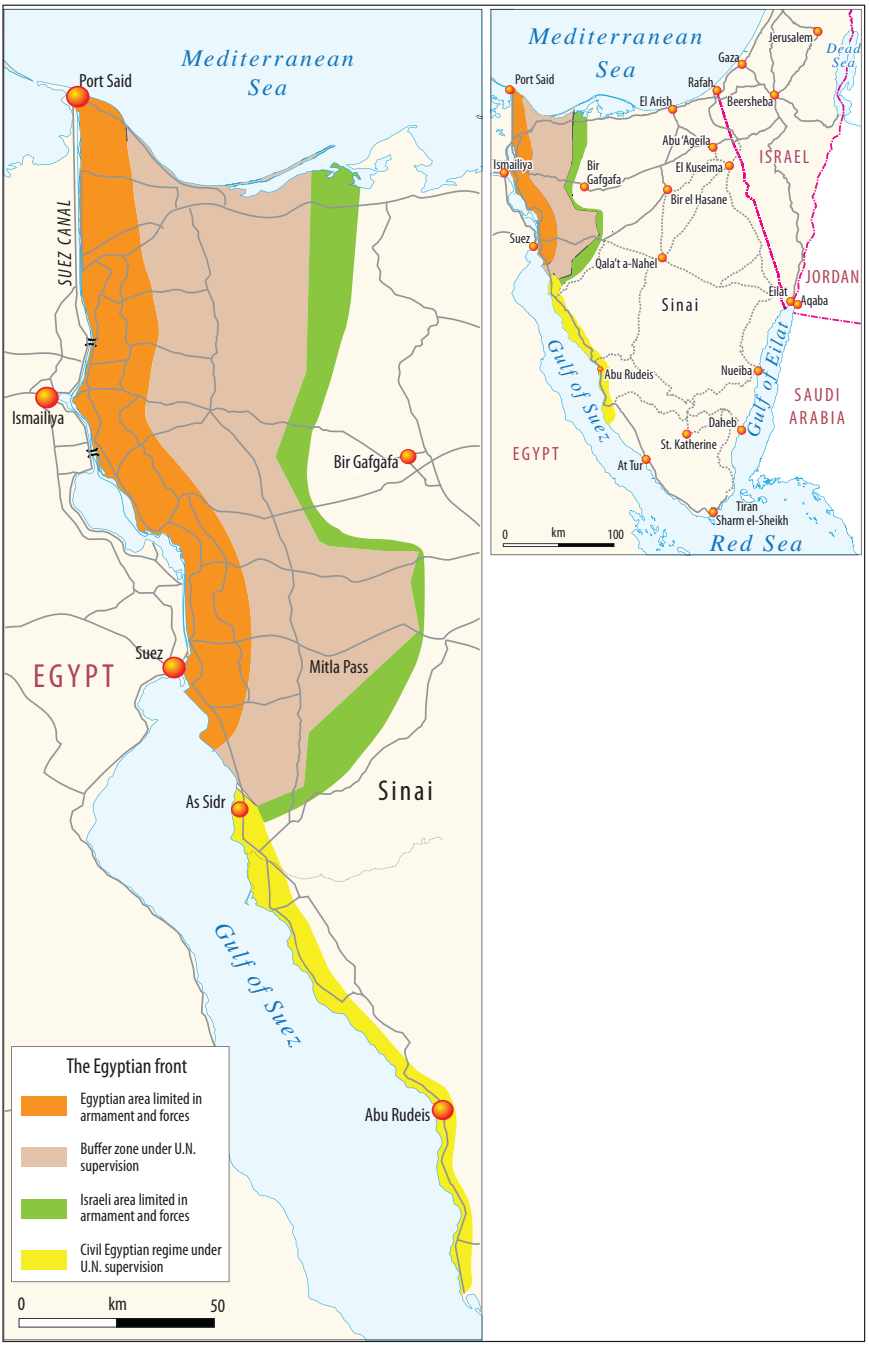


PLATE 9. THE ISRAEL-EGYPT INTERIM AGREEMENT, 1974

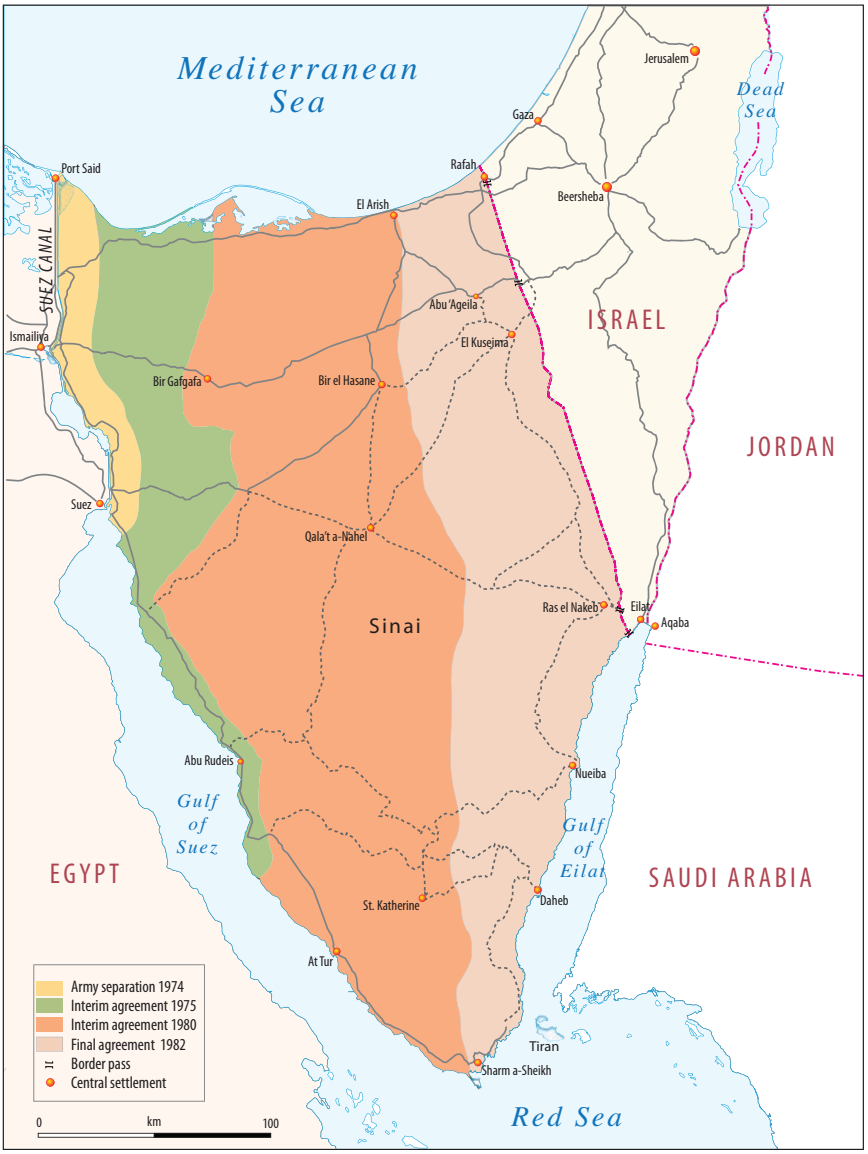


PLATE 10. THE POST–CAMP DAVID ACCORDS MAP, 1978

PLATE 11. SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, 1977–1988

PLATE 12. THE OSLO ACCORDS MAP, 1993

their absorption came mainly from Eastern Europe. Yiddish was the lingua franca of European Jews, and it made contact between the immigrants and the representatives of Israeli bureaucracy much easier. Even if there was no intentional discrimination, there was a certain advantage for those whose language was understood. Furthermore, as suggested earlier, many new immigrants had relatives, friends, or *landsleit* with contacts in Israeli social networks. In a society where *protektsia* was common currency, people with contacts enjoyed an advantage. Moreover, as we have seen, after the 1958 aliya from Poland it was accepted practice to give Eastern European immigrants better absorption conditions out of concern that otherwise they would not come, or would leave Israel, thus discrediting aliya.

Immigrants from Islamic countries came with large families, often including elderly people. Most families had a single breadwinner. The later they came, the more likely they were to be settled far from the center of the country. Their level of education was very low, and most had no profession suited to conditions in Israel. Those who had already been modernized in their countries of origin (like the city dwellers from Iraq) succeeded in finding their way in Israel, and within only a few years managed to achieve economic stability, higher education, and a prominent place in the Israeli intelligentsia. But the vast majority were forced to traverse a long, agonizing obstacle course. Moroccan immigrants in particular had great difficulty. The entire Moroccan community did not immigrate to Israel; its elite, which had been part of the educated urban bourgeoisie in Morocco and was successful in business, chose to immigrate to France or Canada. It was thus members of the lower socioeconomic levels of the Moroccan community who arrived in the first two waves of immigration to Israel. They were uneducated and had no professions or skills suited to a modern economy. When members of the Jewish-Moroccan middle class, imbued with French culture, came to Israel in the 1960s, they found themselves the objects of stereotyping that encompassed all Moroccan immigrants. Moroccan Jews had internalized the concept of colonial order, which put Europeans at the top of the scale. They came to Israel with feelings of resentment toward Europeans that were manifested, among other things, in a sense of being insulted and discriminated against. The fact that they lagged behind in comparison to other immigrants heightened their bitterness and rage. They perceived the demand that they accept the values of the society that took them in, that they change and adapt to modernity, as an insult and a refusal to accept them as they were—a rejection that was both social and cultural.

The State of Israel accepted overall responsibility for absorption. Could it have avoided the paternalism and bureaucracy that made the system so hated by immi-

grants? The system's disadvantages seem to have been built in to its mission. It would not have been possible to transfer many different populations, so culturally diverse, in such a short time, to a poor country with no resources and no experience of taking in masses of people without direction from above, in a process that did seem semi-military. Nor could such a process have been accomplished without destroying existing patriarchal, religious, and cultural traditions, without impugning the immigrants' dignity, and without profound misunderstandings of the most basic human relations and social patterns.

In every immigrant country immigrants accept such experiences as self-evident, part of the conditions of immigration. But not in Israel. Immigrants to Israel saw themselves not as aliens seeking a new homeland but as members of the Jewish nation returning to their own homeland. They expected a warm, sympathetic welcome from their brethren, and never anticipated diminished status, damage to tradition and family structure, or insult and patronization. The gap between their probably utopian expectations and the reality they encountered caused great rancor. Nor did their sense of deprivation, discrimination, and affront dissipate with the years; it was handed down from generation to generation as part of Mizrachi culture in Israel. As it turned out, the first generation of immigrants developed a sense of pride as the years passed and a self-image of being settlement pioneers in the outlying areas. It was their children, educated by the state, who internalized the feelings of insult and rage, which they made the basis of their identity. When they reached adulthood, these youngsters undermined the country's existing order.

Israeli society of the mid-1960s was unlike that of 1948. It was far more diverse, both ethnically and culturally. The ruling Ashkenazi socialist veteran elite was no longer unified. The struggles within it, together with changes in the cultural climate resulting from greater contact with the outside world than in the past, led to the rise of individualist trends. The power of the collective as a formative factor was in decline. This society, in which the hold of the old socialist culture was waning, was now disposed to show greater tolerance and acceptance of pluralism. This shift made possible the slow, painful completion of the absorption process. From then on the question no longer focused on "absorption" but on a "gap" between haves and have-nots.

NOTES

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3. Yehuda Weissberger, *Shaʿar Haʿaliya: yoman haʿaliya hahamonit, 1947–1957* (Shaʿar

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5. Yitzhak Yaʿakobi, *Davar*, 10.10.1950.

6. Uriel Simon, "Haʿolim hahadashim veanahnu" (The New Immigrants and Us), *Haʾaretz*, 27.10.1953, cited in Orit Rozin, *Hovat haʾahava hakasha: yahid vekoloktiv beYisrael bishnot hahamishim* (Duty and Love: Individualism and Collectivism in 1950s Israel), Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and Am Oved, 2008, p. 245.

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8. Shmuel Ussishkin, *Haboker*, 16.11.1951; Eliezer Livneh, *Davar*, 9.11.1951, cited in Moshe Lissak, *Haʿaliya hagedola bishnot hahamishim: kishlono shel koor hahitukh* (Mass Immigration in the Fifties: The Failure of the Melting Pot Policy), Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1999, pp. 62–63.

9. Ben-Gurion, "Yihud veyiʿud," p. 25.

10. Testimony of Habib Sharbaf in Devorah Hacohen, *Hagarin vehareikhayyim: hityashvut haʿolim banegev baʿasor harishon lamedina* (The Grain and the Millstone: The Settlement of Immigrants in the Negev in the First Decade of the State), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1998, p. 96.

11. Testimony of Hannah Maimon in Avi Pikar, "Mi vami haholkhim: ikhlusan shel ayarot hapituah" (Who Is Going: Populating the Development Towns), in Zvi Zameret, Aviva Halamish, and Esther Meir-Glitzenstein (eds.), *Ayarot hapituah* (The Development Towns), Idan 24, Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2010, p. 201.

12. Testimony of Yehuda Braginsky, in Avi Pikar, "Mi vami haholkhim: ikhlusan shel ayarot hapituah" (Who Is Going: Populating the Development Towns), in Zvi Zameret, Aviva Halamish, and Esther Meir-Glitzenstein (eds.), *Ayarot hapituah* (The Development Towns), Idan 24, Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2010, p. 207.

13. "Mizug Galuyot" (Integration of immigrants from different countries of origin in Israel), conference at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, October 25–26, 1966, Jerusalem: Magnes, 1969, p. 163.

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II CULTURE AND NORMS IN AN EVOLVING SOCIETY

The State of Israel's first nineteen years were marked by tremendous dynamism, rapid change, and conflicts touching on both ethos and culture. In a panoramic view this period appears as the heyday of the national ethos. Israelis saw the state as the realization of the Zionist idea and the age-old vision of Jewish redemption. This positive attitude was manifested in public enthusiasm for the IDF, a broad consensus around retaliatory actions taken along the borders (see next chapter), the elation produced by the 1956 Sinai Campaign, and the lyrics of popular songs performed by the IDF entertainment troupes. An up-close look, however, reveals cracks in the seemingly monolithic national ethos, and new voices can be heard hinting at changes within it.

One way the state consolidated its new ownership of the land was by erasing all traces of its former owners. Arab villages and towns were given Hebrew names. The aim was to Judaize the map of Israel by eliminating the last vestiges of the Arab places and supplanting them with new settlements. The new names were sometimes based on the previous Arabic names, but with a Hebrew pronunciation. Efforts were made to restore the old Hebrew names of biblical, Mishnaic, and Talmudic locations that were known by Arabic versions of these names. In other instances Jewish place-names from the time of the First and Second Temples were identified, and the new settlements were named after them.

Archeology played a leading role in Judaizing the map. The goal was to prove Jewish ownership of the land in ancient times by uncovering the past, then make the present appear a natural progression from it. In cases where no connection with the Jewish past was found, the new settlements were named after Zionist leaders or notable Jewish and non-Jewish personages who had helped establish the state. Often in the mixed towns, streets named after Muslim or Ottoman heroes were replaced by names with Jewish connotations. Thus the main street in Jaffa became Jerusalem Boulevard. Even though Arabic was one of the state's official languages, together with Hebrew and English, it vanished from the map, except for the Arab villages in Samaria and the Galilee. But the ancient Arabic names did not always disappear in practice. The members of the Government Names Committee tried in vain to erase from memory names like Talbiyeh, Malha, Katamon, Wadi Salib, or Cabri. The inhabitants preferred to use the old familiar names, not the synthetic ones dictated by the committee.

It was the era of Hebraization, not only of settlement names but also of per-

sonal names. Ben-Gurion was among the small minority who had Hebraized their names as early as the Second Aliya period. The vast majority of his colleagues kept their original names, which expressed their connection with family, birthplace, and the past. But for Ben-Gurion immigration to Palestine symbolized rebirth. (He stipulated that his gravestone should bear only the dates of his birth and death, and the inscription: "Immigrated to Eretz Yisrael in 1906.") Now Ben-Gurion demanded that army officers and state officials undergo the same process he had, insisting that the IDF generals Hebraize their names for the swearing in of the general staff. Thus Yigael Sukenik became Yadin, Yigal Paicovich became Allon, and Shimon Koch, Avidan. "I changed my name a few days ago, and thus also changed my status," wrote Uri Heinsheimer of the new Ministry of Justice, who chose the name Yadin.[1] Many new immigrants, especially the younger ones, also took part in this symbolic shedding of their old identity, adopting a new one they felt was more suited to the place and time. The Hebrew name rid them of an ethnic Diaspora identity and built a bridge into the nascent Israeli society. In most cases the decision to adopt a new name was collective, made by the whole family. At the same time, there were many who preferred to keep their old name with its memory of the past. For Holocaust survivors, keeping their names meant preserving the names and memories of the families that had perished. Thus Hebraization of people's names succeeded only partially, and mostly in the army and government officialdom.

At the time the state was established, some 70 percent of the Jewish population spoke Hebrew. With the arrival of the waves of mass immigration, this percentage dropped. Very few immigrants spoke Hebrew. Even though those from Yemen, for instance, knew Hebrew from their heder lessons, it was not a spoken language for them. The women, who had not studied in the heder, knew neither the spoken language nor how to read and write. The need to teach Hebrew to the thousands of immigrants as a vital tool for integrating them into social, economic, and cultural life was self-evident. But achieving this objective called for considerable human and other resources, as well as willingness on the part of the immigrants to devote time to it. *Ulpanim* (sing., *ulpan*, schools for intensive Hebrew study) were established in the immigrant camps. The teachers were mostly also new immigrants who had been teachers in their native countries. Over the years tens of thousands of students passed through the *ulpanim*, mainly educated and professional people. The IDF also established an *ulpan* to ensure that its soldiers could communicate in Hebrew. Other, less intensive Hebrew courses were often taught by volunteers or by women soldiers who were inexperienced as teachers and tried to work with tired, dejected people who were not always up to the task. The recurring calls for volunteers to teach the language to adults indicate that such volunteers were scarce.

The city streets were a mélange of languages. To give the immigrants a sense of what was going on in the country, state radio, Kol Yisrael (the voice of Israel), introduced broadcasts in their languages, but only as a partial, temporary solution. Meanwhile foreign-language newspapers thrived. Dozens of newspapers and magazines in various languages were published. Libraries in every language imaginable opened in the cities. Theater and other forms of entertainment were presented in Yiddish. The Hebrew-language zealots were alarmed: foreign languages were taking over the public arena! This reaction was a throwback to the Yishuv period, when the Legion of the Defenders of the Language protested the use of German or Yiddish in the street. The danger now seemed even greater: what would be the fate of Hebrew among an immigrant population about to become the majority? This concern was greatly overblown, for in fact the inculcation of Hebrew was at its height through the children, who learned it at every educational level and brought it home with them, sometimes refusing to speak to their parents in their mother tongue. Humorist Ephraim Kishon, a new immigrant from Hungary who learned Hebrew in Israel and within a few years made it his creative instrument, once wrote that in Israel the children teach their mothers their mother tongue. This pithy phrase reflected the reality of an immigrant country where tremendous forces promoted integration into the hegemonic culture.

Given this reality it is difficult to understand the fears of the Education Ministry officials who banned any Yiddish daily newspaper from being published until 1957 (they permitted weeklies and papers that appeared no more than three times weekly) and tried to prohibit the establishment of a permanent Yiddish theater in Israel. The rivalry between Yiddish and Hebrew had come to a tragic end with the Holocaust, when Yiddish-speaking Jews were murdered. In the reality of life in Israel, Yiddish culture was a remnant of a society that was no more. Even the struggle against it was no longer relevant. Yet in the early 1950s the opening of a local Yiddish theater in Tel Aviv was prohibited (although performances by artists from abroad were permitted). Even Ben-Gurion, that Hebrew-language stalwart, who had vehemently opposed the use of Yiddish in the Yishuv public arena, found no reason to prevent people whose cultural language was Yiddish from enjoying a performance in that language. But the government did not agree with him, and doomed the Goldfaden Theater to closure. Only after its founders petitioned the High Court of Justice and won their suit did the theater become a permanent fixture.

The story of Yiddish in Israel is the story of the melting pot policy in miniature, a policy whose zealous implementers believed that immigrants from all the diasporas must relinquish—immediately and unhesitatingly—the cultures and traditions they had brought with them and adopt the local ethos and its culture. It was an unrealistic policy. In actuality the immigrants created cultural "niches" that

supplied their cultural desires and needs. These niches were not intended to replace Israeli culture but existed alongside it, each a kind of "God's little acre" belonging to the immigrants from one of the diasporas.

EMBLEMS OF STATEHOOD

With the work of instilling the ethos at its height, the national symbols appropriate to a sovereign state had to be renewed. Remaining from the prestate period were the blue and white flag, designed by Herzl after the tallith, and "Hatikva," the Zionist anthem, which took on a more profound meaning once it became known that it had been sung by Jews on their way to the crematoria in the death camps. To these symbols was added the state emblem, selected from dozens of designs submitted to a competition. The design, after the menorah plundered from the Temple by the Roman victors, was based on its depiction on the Arch of Titus in Rome—another link between the present and the historical past. Postage stamps, banknotes, and coins—all the symbols of sovereignty that in older countries were taken for granted—were all devised anew, "for the first time in two thousand years."

During these two decades, too, the national holidays and remembrance days were set: Independence Day, Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers, and Holocaust Remembrance Day. Independence Day is the fifth of the Hebrew month of Iyyar, the day the British high commissioner left Israel (June 14, 1948). A few years later the preceding day was made Memorial Day, a decision that originated in spontaneous initiatives by bereaved families, gained the support of local authorities, and in time was given an official seal of approval. Having Memorial Day and Independence Day so close together evoked mixed feelings, and some even objected that the rapid transition from mourning to festivity dampened the celebrations. But the influence of the bereaved families and the local councils prevailed; their commemoration ceremonies honored the proximity of mourning and joy as the epitome of life in Israel, in the spirit of "In thy blood, Live" (Ezekiel 16:6).

Mount Herzl in Jerusalem was chosen as the national memorial site. The National Military Cemetery is located there, with the pantheon of the nation's leaders, including Herzl, whose remains were re-interred there in a state ceremony, and the graves of those Israeli prime ministers and presidents who did not choose another burial place for themselves. The cemetery's design and the tombstone models follow those of similar memorial sites in Europe. The stones are uniform, to underscore the equality of all the deceased. The landscape architecture evokes calm and serenity. On Independence Day Eve the lighting ceremony of twelve torches symbolizing the Twelve Tribes of Israel is held on Mount Herzl. At first the ceremonies were military in character, but as the years went by the civil element was highlighted. The annual ritual-repetition of the same format and

texts created a national tradition ex nihilo, for in Jewish tradition there were no ceremonies of this kind. After the Six-Day War a ceremony at the Western Wall was added. There is a clear difference between the two. The Western Wall ceremony is a religious one, in which the "God who is full of compassion" prayer is recited and the Yizkor memorial prayer is intoned in its traditional form, while the Mount Herzl ceremony is essentially secular and emphasizes the national character of the state. At the latter the Yizkor recitation is an adaptation of the one written by Berl Katznelson in memory of the Tel Hai fallen, which opens with the words "May the people of Israel remember," not "May God remember." The ceremony is accompanied by songs from the Zionist tradition.

In the religious-Zionist stream synagogues, Independence Day was marked with the Hallel prayer of praise and the prayer for the welfare of the state. In the early days of the state, attempts were made to institute an Independence Day "Seder," after the Passover Seder, a festive family meal accompanied by the story of the miracle of the establishment of the state, but this concept did not spark people's imagination. The Independence Day Eve celebrations sought to emulate the excitement of November 29, 1947, when throngs of people spontaneously danced in the streets. In the early days Israelis loved to celebrate in public; they went into the streets and formed dance circles. As time went by, the spontaneity of circle dances slowly waned and gave way to stages with performing artists intended to elicit joy through audience involvement. Over the years the celebrations became increasingly private. Initially people held private campfire picnics and parties in their homes; later Independence Day became a family celebration in the heart of nature.

One characteristic of Independence Day during this period was the encounter between the citizens and the army. In 1949 a military parade through the streets of Tel Aviv was planned. However, overenthusiasm among the citizens and organizational inexperience combined to thwart expectations. Thousands of people poured onto the parade route, and the parade was remembered in national folklore as "the parade that did not march." Its goal was to display Israel's military might. During those decades the Warsaw Pact countries and the Arab states held impressive military parades. Even a democratic country like France held military displays. In Israel the parade was the most popular show in the country. People took up their places along the route on the previous evening, and despite crowds and discomfort, thousands always showed to cheer the marchers. The citizens' enthusiasm for the columns of soldiers, the armor, and the air force flyby was not an expression of militarism—either overt or covert—but of the Jews' need to actually see the military might that protected them. It was a source of both pride and security; there was something comforting and gratifying in this display, which spoke to broad sections of the population. After the demonstration of the

IDF's military might in the Six-Day War, the parade became superfluous and was canceled after the 1968 Independence Day.

Among the symbols of the state, the IDF played a leading role. Conscription was universal, except for the few thousand yeshiva students, the Arab minority, and women who requested exemption on religious grounds. Both left and right saw the IDF as the people's army. Even opposition intelligentsia circles, such as Uri Avneri and his ilk, retained a soft spot for the IDF from their younger days and did not include it in their criticism of the regime. Reserve service provided an egalitarian experience that spoke to all levels of society. Service in elite units, such as the paratroopers, the Nahal Brigade (an acronym for *Noar Halutzi Lohem*, Fighting Pioneer Youth, commonly known as "The Nahal"), as air force pilots, and later in the Golani Brigade and the Armored Corps, was considered an entrée into Israeli society, and people from "the second Israel"—new immigrants—saw a military career as an advancement opportunity. The army was mobilized for national missions such as helping in the maʿabarot during flooding and teaching Hebrew to new immigrants. While the political parties were suspected of protectionism, the army was seen as standing above political rivalries and as an institution where, despite the accepted military hierarchy, equality was a value.

The army's national standing and great prestige were nurtured by its own promotional organs: its newspapers and radio station, and especially its entertainment troupes, led by the Nahal troupe. Their songs and sketches played a leading role in the culture of the time, and became part of the national folklore. For example, their patriotic songs became part of the youth movements' repertoire. They encouraged volunteering for military missions, dedication, and willingness to sacrifice, but they also mocked military service and extolled yearnings for peace. The country's leading writers and composers wrote songs for the troupes. Thus Naomi Shemer was discovered with her first song, "A Wandering Singer," which became an instant hit. For decades artists and entertainers who first appeared in the army entertainment troupes moved on to the broader world of entertainment and theater. Salah Shabati, the hero of a sketch by Ephraim Kishon that was first performed by the Nahal troupe and became a classic, had a long career that was continued on film. The character is currently interpreted as deriding the new immigrants and impugning their culture. But in the original context Shabati appears as a shrewd popular hero who succeeds in thwarting all the pathetic attempts by representatives of the old culture, in the shape of kibbutzniks, to teach him their values and outsmarts them.

The Nahal unit combined intensive military training with kibbutz life. It was a sort of state version of the Palmach, which had also combined these two missions. The Defense Service Law stipulated that every soldier serve at least nine months in agricultural work, an unabashed attempt to instill "proper" character

in the soldiers. All sides of the Knesset eagerly endorsed this law. But it turned out that the law could not be implemented, because soldiers were needed for military duties. Thus the Nahal Brigade was founded and staffed by graduates of the youth movements in organized agricultural training core groups (*gar'inim*), which did part of their military service in the kibbutz. The Nahal, which was considered an outstanding combat unit, also established kibbutzim along the borders and gained public praise.

The Nahal's status provides an example of the ambivalence toward the ethos that was also evident during those years. After the state was established, the veteran elites, especially the kibbutz movements, tended to devote themselves to their own particular interests. This preference for a private-movement agenda over the national one was a result of the fatigue experienced by these notable fighters for society, particularly in the wake of the War of Independence, which had exacted from them a heavy human and financial toll. The great national mission had been accomplished; the state was a reality. It now appropriated the special roles that the kibbutz movements had played during the Yishuv period. Meanwhile the kibbutz movements could not find a way to reach the hearts and minds of the new immigrants, and were losing their ability to recruit new members. They also had difficulty defining their national roles in the new reality. The Nahal was somewhat of a substitute for the pioneering training groups in the Diaspora that had perished in the Holocaust. But its prestige could not conceal the diminished roles of the kibbutz, whose members were demanding that their standard of living be raised and that the kibbutzim, which had been damaged during the war, be restored. The youth movements were active in the cities, as they had been in the prestate period, although they did not attract large numbers, and most of their members left before enlisting in the Nahal. The movements continued educating members in socialist-Zionist ideology and fostering a simple lifestyle—the blue shirt, the *sarafan*, the girls' long braid, sandals, no makeup, folk dancing, and the old Russian songs.

YOUTH CULTURE AND "BEN-GURION'S STATE"

Parallel with the youth movements a "salon" youth culture emerged, whose adherents were fans of Elvis Presley, Cliff Richard, and Paul Anka. Followers of European fashion, they discovered American jeans, did ballroom dancing, and were not overly preoccupied with ideology. There was no Chinese wall between the cultural styles of these two groups of young people, and they moved in either direction according to their inclination. Western culture took a long time to reach Israel. Foreign travel was expensive and restricted by the shortage of foreign currency. But fashion arrived via newspapers, magazines, and the cinema, and music by means of records. In the 1950s translated literature included war novels

published in the United States at the time: James Jones's *From Here to Eternity*, *Battle Cry* by Leon Uris, *The Naked and the Dead* by Norman Mailer, and Irwin Shaw's *The Young Lions*. The works of Jack London and John Steinbeck became best sellers, together with popular American literature translated into Hebrew during this period. These books replaced the Soviet war novels of the previous decade.

The cinema was the most popular form of entertainment. Westerns nurtured the myth of the wide open spaces and became part of local culture, to the point where one journalist claimed that the Palmach had been founded by Yitzhak Sadeh and Gary Cooper. After the War of Independence educated young people traveled to France to learn French culture, and some even went to the United States; they brought these foreign influences back with them. Although the left considered Western culture decadent and doomed to extinction, it was also the heart's desire of the young people who grew up in the 1950s.

Rhetorically the collectivist ethos reigned supreme and was fostered by the press, the radio, and even literature. *First Person Plural*, the title of a novel by Nathan Shaham, was typical. But at the same time, an individualist ethos appeared. It did not contravene the patriotism or willingness to sacrifice of young people seeking a challenge, but it did conflict with the old social frameworks that emphasized the peer group and society at large, as opposed to the individual. One example of this individualist ethos is the recurrent attempts by young people to reach Petra, an enthralling Nabatean, non-Jewish site in Jordan. Hiking to Petra was a contemporary substitute for the Palmachniks' adventure of "conquering" the land on foot, which also carried the meanings of crossing borders and daring to shatter conventions. Author Naomi Frankel wrote in wonderment about Meir Har-Zion, the ultimate ranger, whom Moshe Dayan called the best Jewish fighter since the time of Bar-Kokhba: "What is the source of the extraordinary drive to break limits and conventions, to tread paths yet untrodden by man, to reach mountain summits, to be the first and only one in places that man has never seen, and to always have the feeling of free expanses?"

The transition from the Land of Israel to the State of Israel imposed a practical and spiritual boundary upon young people, who felt they had missed out on the challenge of fighting the War of Independence and that no daring missions were left for them. Today the frustration of "the young and the restless" is channeled into treks in Nepal, South America, or India. But then the borders were closed. "It is small wonder that out of the disappointment of the borders the lust for freedom was born," a yearning for "the feeling of free expanses," Frankel writes.[2] The hike to Petra was an attempt to break the siege, to raise the bar in terms of danger and courage, which was attractive despite—or because of—the fact that people had already been killed by Jordanian border guards, and it was clear that

making this hike involved more than just a hint of Russian roulette. It was the Israeli version of the romance of danger, suited only to individualists prepared to shatter conventions and reject social authority. The hiker was the new lone hero, just like the one riding into the sunset in the Westerns.

From the perspective of today, the Israeli reality of that period seems revolutionary, as it reshaped a territory and created a nation. But to those who grew up during the Yishuv period and to some who fought in the War of Independence, the period was a great disappointment. It was now the day after the establishment of the state, and the true Zionist revolution had become routinized. The thrills of the underground, the personal sacrifices, jails, demonstrations, illegal immigration, and a desperate war were no more. It was time for quotidian work, for which some were unprepared both mentally and culturally. The disillusionment syndrome experienced by soldiers home from the war when they realize that life goes on, that the hopes for a new and better world were exaggerated, is well known around the world. To some of the 1948 soldiers, the state seemed to be a distortion of everything they had fought for. The former Palmachniks never forgave Ben-Gurion for dismantling the Palmach. The shameful dismissal from the army of their commander, Yigal Allon, was an added insult.

Young people from both left and right demonized Ben-Gurion and rejected "Ben-Gurion's state." The Zionist left, which had founded the Mapam party in 1948, was in thrall to the USSR (from which it did not free itself until at least 1956), which added fuel to the fires of its hostility. It held Ben-Gurion responsible for neutralizing the roles of the revolutionary avant-garde by appropriating their former assignments for the state, and also for diverting the Israeli ship of state toward the West. To the young left-wing intelligentsia, these were unpardonable sins. *Masa*, the left's cultural weekly, expressed its frustration and rage against Ben-Gurion's state—which was not the state its adherents had prayed for. For their part the Etzel and Lehi fighters thought Ben-Gurion had usurped the leadership position that they, as native-son fighters, deserved. Their hostility toward him was intensified by memories of the Saison ("the hunting season," an operation in 1944 when the Haganah had handed over Etzel fighters to the British) and the *Altalena* affair; these events had been formative for them. They portrayed Ben-Gurion as an evil, demonic ruler who would stoop to any nefarious act of villainy.

In the 1950s two literary circles and the work they produced became the focal point of a youthful opposition that was united more by hostility toward Ben-Gurion's state (a phrase that attributed far more power to the prime minister than he actually possessed, but that founded a myth) than by any ideology of its own. The two movements were the writers of the Palmach generation and those linked to "Canaanite" circles. The Palmach-generation writers (Chaim Gouri, Aharon

Megged, Moshe Shamir, Yigal Mossinsohn, Hanoch Bartov, Amir Gilboa, and others) had come to the forefront as early as the 1940s. In the 1950s most were connected with *Masa*, and their work presented the experience of "the native sons," the young people brought up in the country in an era of struggle and war. Most members of this group were far removed from the experiences of Israelis who had come from the Diaspora. Moshe Shamir's *With His Own Hands: Elik's Story*, published in memory of his brother Elik who fell in the War of Independence, opens with the words "Elik was born of the sea." This sentence became a literary watchword, defining the quintessential sabra, or native-born Israeli: born of the sea on the shores of Tel Aviv, without a past, without connection to the Jewish people. In vain Shamir contended that this was not his intention; all he meant was that his brother loved to spend time on the Tel Aviv beach. The sentence took on a life of its own, especially after literary scholar Gershon Shaked used it as the title of a chapter about that generation's work in his book on the history of new Hebrew literature.

This was the first generation of writers for whom experience in Palestine and Israel was dominant. These young writers' connection with world literature at the time was filtered through the USSR. They were influenced by Soviet war literature in Hebrew translation, and their own work replicated "socialist realism," the dominant genre in Moscow. It suited the demands of readers who sought a literary representation of the heroic Zionist saga. And the swell of books published after the War of Independence generally met readers' expectations. Any criticism of the Zionist-socialist ethos was halfhearted, and the heroics portrayed conformed to the accepted narrative (Moshe Shamir's *He Walked in the Fields*, Nathan Shacham's *They'll Arrive Tomorrow*, Yigal Mossinsohn's *Gray as a Sack*, *Sands of the Negev*, and *A Man's Way*, and Uri Avneri's *In the Fields of Philistia*). The exception was two stories by S. Yizhar published as early as 1949, "Hirbet Hiz'ah" and "The Captive," which highlighted moral dilemmas in relation to the Arabs and particularly the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs. Yizhar's monumental novel *Days of Ziklag*, which documents the attempts of a squad of Jewish soldiers to hold on to Hirbet Mekhaz, a Negev hilltop post that changed hands seven times, was published toward the end of the 1950s. In this book the myth of the native-born fighters of 1948 reaches its zenith; yet Yizhar also begins to shatter the myth. He leaves it unclear whether Hirbet Mekhaz is the biblical Ziklag to which David fled before Saul, or just another anonymous ruin lacking any biblical splendor.

The second notable literary movement was the "native" one. Canaanism was a literary, social, and political phenomenon—a daring attempt to create a local identity ex nihilo, separate from the Jewish people and Jewish history in the Diaspora, but connected to the ancient peoples of the Fertile Crescent. The foun-

der of the group, disparagingly dubbed "Canaanites" by the poet Avraham Shlonsky, was Yonatan Ratosh, a native of Poland. Ratosh was an extreme right-winger, close to Etzel and Lehi circles. A gifted poet, he attracted disciples from both left and right who united around the magical notion of an Israeli identity as a branch of the ancient Semite identity, with roots deeply planted in the Middle East. Ratosh envisioned the Hebrews as the ancient lords of the peoples of the region, and Hebrew as the dominant language that would again bring them under its wing. His concept involved an assertion of dominance over the Arabs, taking it for granted that they would have to accept Hebrew rule, either freely or through coercion.

Ratosh gave voice to a yearning for a local identity that would free young people from the complex connection with Jewish history, which in the 1940s was perceived by youth born and bred in the country as lacking glamour and electrifying events, debasing, tedious, and unconnected with the emerging Israeli experience. Haim Hazaz's emblematic story *The Sermon*, published in 1943, in which the protagonist Yudke suggests a divorce from Jewish history, matched this mood. In the local identity of the youth, Ratosh saw the kernel of a new nation that would break its link to its mother-parent, Judaism. The nation would have a nonreligious identity, territory- and language-dependent, that would appropriate the genealogy of a mythological past. The Canaanite concept was born against the backdrop of 1930s archeological finds in Iraq and Syria that revealed an enchanting world of governance, art, literature, and other forms of culture that appeared to be connected with Hebrew antiquity. However, this connection was not with the Hebrews' belief in one god or their relation to the Halakha, but with a pagan, aggressive culture rich with primal passion and beauty.

Since the early days of the Yishuv in Palestine, there had been tension between the emerging local identity and the waves of immigration that disrupted it. As early as the Second Aliya, groups of young people in the moshavot saw themselves as masters of the land by virtue of being "the natives." During World War Two this identity was reinforced by the ceasing of immigration, and especially by the emergence of a large generational cohort of young people raised in the country. This sense of identity was the basis of the support Ratosh received from the young intelligentsia who challenged the Zionist ethos. Zionism, born in the Diaspora, had been designed to provide a solution to the existential dangers faced by the Jewish people in the era of nationalism. Its rejection of the Exile meant rejecting the presence of a Jewish minority among belligerent, militant majority peoples, as well as an existence detached from the soil and a productive life, which made the Jews dependent on another people. It sought to completely alter Jewish reality. This was the approach of Berdyczewski and Brenner, the great turn-of-the-century "rejecters of the Exile." It was also the approach of Ben-

Gurion, who always said he "rejected" the Exile. At the same time, the Zionist movement still saw itself as a link in the chain of generations of the Jewish people.

The Canaanites, on the other hand, were not committed to the Jewish people in any way whatsoever. They saw themselves, rather, as the beginnings of a new people emerging in the Land of Israel. Just as the United States grew as a nation of immigrants who had been severed from the societies they came from and established a new entity, so the Hebrews in Israel would be a new nation, detached from its parent. The Canaanites were small groups of intellectuals, far more prominent in the local culture than their number warranted, who had some peripheral supporters. The writers and poets Benjamin Tammuz, Moshe Dor, Aryeh Sivan, Amos Kenan, and Aharon Amir, leading lights among the "native sons," identified with Ratosh's ideology. Chaim Gouri was attracted to it for years, although he did not subscribe to it. Even so, he contended that in the heart of every person born in the country and educated in the labor movement's secular schools, the seeds of Canaanism germinated.

In the early 1950s the movement's journal, *Alef*, was launched. These were the years in which the literature of Canaanism flourished as a counterpoint to that of the "Palmach generation." This intentionally local literature described the landscape and the writers' experiences. It had no ideology or specific worldview, neither the Zionist-socialism that drove the Palmach generation writers nor socialist realism. Instead it displayed a willingness to embrace different poetic, even fantastic, schools of literary thought and style.

Although this was ostensibly the Canaanites' finest hour, in fact the foundations of Ratosh's doctrine had already been destroyed. The initial sproutings of local identity had been swept away on the waves of mass immigration that reached Israel in the early 1950s. As we saw, the newly arrived immigrants were strangers to the local mentality. Many, especially the Mizrachim, had a connection with tradition and religion that collided with the Canaanites' fervent secularism. The immigrants' links to the Jewish people were central to their identity, and their immigration was a physical expression of those links. There was no room in an immigrant country for the haughty nativism of the Canaanites and their supporters, especially since they were now a negligible minority in that country. Not surprisingly the "natives" were hostile toward the new immigrants, who had changed the country's physical and human landscape; they felt they had lost "their" country. S. Yizhar, the greatest of the 1948 generation of writers, made his works a memorial to the Eretz Yisraeli identity, portraying the young people who fought in the War of Independence and describing the landscape of the old homeland: Arab villages hidden in the folds of the hills, the romance of the citrus groves and water holes—all that existed before the beautiful virgin land was

inundated by masses of immigrants and accelerated Israeli development put an end to the enchanted past. This romanticism, which shaped Yizhar's identity and that of many of his contemporaries, was alien to the new immigrants.

ISRAELI SOCIETY, THE MEANING OF THE PAST, AND MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST

New nation-states usually tend to highlight the memory of the past to support the legitimacy of the present. Thus in the first decades of Israeli statehood, history was at the center of cultural experience. The Bible played a leading role as the book extolling the connection between the people and its land and the glory of Jewish antiquity. It was considered not only proof of the Jews' right to their country but also a source of universal ideas that Judaism had bestowed on the world. Teachers used Bible stories to bring their students face to face with the landscapes of the ancient homeland, with rulers and fighters, and also with prophets who fought against the rulers' callousness and for social justice. From the time of the earliest Zionist settlement in Palestine, the Bible was a cultural and educational resource reflected in fiction, poetry, idioms, and biblical verses that entered the spoken language and enriched it. Historical novels based on biblical stories, already popular in the Yishuv period, made the biblical past real.

Actualizing the biblical past became even more important after statehood. The establishment of the state, the war, mass immigration, and the conquest of large tracts of the country were described in terms drawn from the Bible: ingathering of the exiles, the wilderness generation, the conquest of the land in Joshua's time, David and Goliath. Ben-Gurion, who before statehood had barely mentioned the Bible, now began quoting it extensively. At the 1949 conference of the Jewish Society for the Study of the Land of Israel and Its Antiquities, he elevated the Bible to the status of single canonical text: "The Jewish nation's enterprise and education will in the future be founded upon these two things: the Land and the Book."[3] The IDF's conquests made the Bible a part of contemporary reality, Ben-Gurion contended, and Joshua became his most admired hero. Archeology played a major role in concretizing the Bible; the country's expanses were now opened to Israeli archeologists who, declared Ben-Gurion, could clarify obscure biblical events. The cardinal importance of archeology, however, was that it turned past into present and validated the historical continuity of the Jews in the Land of Israel.

The Bible remained a potent force in Israeli culture, at least until after the Six-Day War. The Bible Quiz testing biblical erudition, which became a main event of the Independence Day celebrations, competed in popularity with the IDF parade. Archeology became a popular hobby that attracted thousands of volunteers every year to digs and conferences. Archeological finds were interpreted as validating

biblical stories and transforming them from myth into historical sources. The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered on the eve of the War of Independence, reached Israel and led to a flood of enthusiasm over this first-century CE source that was identical to the text of the Hebrew Bible. In 1965 the Shrine of the Book was inaugurated in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem; the scrolls are housed there as a symbol of the state. Enthusiasm for archeology was not limited to finds attributed to the First Temple period. The excavations at Masada, which corroborated the stories of Josephus about rebels who fought the Roman legions, generated great enthusiasm and became a pilgrimage site. The discovery of the Bar-Kokhba Letters and the remains of his soldiers in the Judean desert in 1960 was an event of national importance.

In the traditional prime minister's broadcast to the nation on Independence Day Eve in 1961, Ben-Gurion mentioned the two most significant events of the past year: the discovery of the remains and letters of Bar-Kokhba's soldiers in the Judean desert and the trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann, which had opened in Jerusalem a few days earlier. These two events symbolized two seminal mythologies of the state: the first, Israel's distant past in its own land and the war the Jews fought for freedom, and the second, the recent destruction, the Holocaust. The first mythology represented Jewish history as a history of a territory and the nation that lived there as a sovereign people, while the second emphasized the historical continuity of Jewish life in the Diaspora, the Jewish tragedy, and the mission of Israel as a state of refugees and a living monument to the memory of those who perished. The coexistence of these two mythologies in Ben-Gurion's address implied the covert competition between the native identity based on territory and Jewish identity based on the history of the people.

Even before it became a state, Israel had presented itself as fighting for the rehabilitation of the Holocaust survivors. It embraced the Holocaust as a formative myth of the state and saw itself as representing both the living and destroyed Jewish people. This claim originated in the ideology of Zionism, which saw itself as the legitimate representative of the entire nation. The concept that the state was given to the Jews as a form of reparation for the great catastrophe that befell them in World War Two was groundless, but it gained credence both at home and abroad as a justification for statehood. The struggle to establish the state was inextricably combined with the struggle to open the country's gates to the Holocaust survivors as the only place where they would be wanted and able to rehabilitate their lives. About two thirds of the Holocaust survivors immigrated to Israel. Thus the memory of the Holocaust and its place in the Israeli ethos was of cardinal importance.

In the early days of the state, Israeli society's attitude toward the memory of the Holocaust was complex. Most of the veteran Jews had come during the decade

before World War Two. Ninety percent of the Jewish Yishuv was from Europe, and the vast majority had parents and siblings in the countries where the atrocities were perpetrated. It would not be an overstatement to say that the majority of the adult population of the Yishuv suffered repressed trauma in the wake of news of the Holocaust. In the meantime the veterans focused their energies on the struggle to establish the state and then the War of Independence. The norm adhered to by the bereaved of the War of Independence—stiff upper lip, not showing one's feelings, not expressing pain or sorrow—was also adopted with regard to the Holocaust. Since it was a collective catastrophe, it was seldom spoken of. When some 250,000 Holocaust survivors joined the population, they talked a great deal about the atrocities and described what they had experienced. But as time went by, they fell silent. The listeners found the stories difficult to hear, and the speakers preferred to keep them to themselves. This silence—or repression—had a pragmatic value. People had to start a family, build a home, acquire a profession, and raise children, and memories of the past were apt to thwart this determined effort to rebuild their lives. The survivors' vitality, the speed with which most came back to life, was quite remarkable. The memories from "there" remained buried deeply in their consciousness until, once the tasks they had enlisted all their mental fortitude for were completed, the memories resurfaced.

Much later, when memory of the Holocaust had become a constant presence in Israeli life, assertions were made that in the 1950s the Holocaust survivors had been silenced and attempts made to consign the Holocaust to oblivion. Recent studies refute these claims and make it clear that the survivors worked incessantly to perpetuate the memory of their dear ones, their friends, and their communities. Survivors were active in Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority, founded in 1953, and made every effort to direct it toward commemoration and documentation. Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day is part of the Yad Vashem Law, whose detailed regulations were enacted in 1959. Like Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers, it was marked by a siren that stopped all traffic in the country for a two-minute silence and by remembrance ceremonies held in schools and cemeteries and at the monuments erected in memory of the communities that perished. Poems from Alterman's "The Seventh Column" of World War Two—"When Our Children Cried," "On the Boy Avraham," and others—were recited each year as part of the rituals. Monuments were built and forests planted in memory of the dead. A publishing enterprise for commemorative community books was set up as early as the 1950s. Kibbutz movement commemorative institutions, also initiated by survivors, were built in Lohamei Hageta'ot, Givat Haviva, and Tel Yitzhak. In the 1950s writers and poets, including Amir Gilboa, Abba Kovner, and Uri Zvi Green-

berg, published works focused on mourning the loss. Notable among them is Gilboa's poem "Isaac":

> At dawn, the sun strolled in the forest
> together with me and father, and my
> right hand was in his left.
>
> Like lightning a knife flashed among
> the trees. And I am so afraid
> of my eyes' terror, faced by blood on the
> leaves.
>
> Father, father, quickly save Isaac so
> that no one will be missing at the
> midday meal.
>
> It is I who am being slaughtered, my
> son, and already my blood is on the
> leaves. And father's voice was smothered,
> And his face was pale.
>
> And I wanted to scream, writhing not
> to believe, and tearing open my eyes
> And I woke up.
>
> And my right hand was drained of
> blood.[4]

This poem reverses the Sacrifice of Isaac; the father, not the son, is the sacrifice, and the son is forced to look on helplessly, unable to save him. "And my right hand was drained of blood": the Yishuv was thought of as the Jewish people's right hand, but when catastrophe struck that hand could not save them.

The Holocaust and the survivors were brought to mind every day on Israel radio's Relatives Search Bureau, which for decades has located missing relatives. Occasionally the whole country shed a silent tear when it heard of families who had despaired of ever finding their loved ones being reunited.

The Holocaust was also a constant presence on the public agenda. The year 1950 saw enactment of the Nazi and Nazi Collaborators Punishment Law, which led to the trials of several dozen Jews who had served as *kapo*s in the death camps and were identified by survivors in Israel. One was even sentenced to death, though the sentence was not carried out. In 1952 Ben-Gurion put the reparations agreement with West Germany on the agenda for Knesset approval, causing a public furor. On one hand, the state was almost collapsing under the strain of absorbing mass immigration and urgently needed resources. On the other, negotiating with a country of murderers seemed like selling the national honor for

lucre. Two slogans were popular at the time. Those who supported negotiation asked, "Hast thou killed and also taken possession?" (1 Kings 21:19). Their opponents challenged them with "Remember what Amalek did unto thee" (Deut. 25:17). These opponents, led by Menachem Begin, organized a violent demonstration that they ended by storming the Knesset, an event remembered in Israeli democracy as the first time a debate in the house was forcibly stopped.

A prominent feature of this controversy was a political divide that was later also associated with controversies over commemoration of the Holocaust. Right and left joined forces against the Mapai-led center. Mapam and the Communist Party considered West Germany not only a country of murderers but also a puppet of the hated West. Ben-Gurion justified relations with West Germany by describing it as "a different Germany." But to the parties of the left it was a fascist state—though they did not, of course, take the same view of East Germany, which had shrugged off its responsibility for the Holocaust and was not prepared to compensate the Jewish people. The right, led by Begin, exploited the reparations controversy to regain ground it had lost in recent elections.

The same political division recurred in the next controversy, known as the Kasztner trial. The matter centered on Malkiel Grunewald, an eccentric Jew in the Mizrachi party, who published a pamphlet accusing Yisrael (Rudolf) Kasztner, a former member of the Hungarian Aid and Rescue Committee, of collaborating with the Nazis in order to facilitate the escape of his family and friends. The attorney general charged Grunewald with defamation of character. The brilliant, uninhibited attorney Shmuel Tamir turned the trial upside down and the plaintiff into the defendant; the trial became a series of allegations against Kasztner, and implicitly against Mapai, whose members had headed the Jewish Agency Executive, which had been unable to save the Jews. Trial testimony revealed rescue attempts, negotiations with Eichmann, the desperate situation of Hungarian Jewry, and Kasztner's own partial success rescuing Jews. But Tamir, a former Etzel member and avowed Ben-Gurion hater, shaped the story in such a way as to present one side as the nation's heroes—that is, the Etzel and other underground fighters in Palestine plus the ghetto fighters in Europe—and the other side as the subservient members of the various Judenrate (Jewish councils), who fawned upon the Nazis and ultimately collaborated with them in the annihilation of their own people. Tamir himself represented the heroic, courageous, fighting Israeli and Kasztner the wretched, weak Diaspora Jew. In the atmosphere Tamir created, even people whom Kasztner had saved did not dare testify on his behalf. In his verdict exonerating Grunewald, Judge Benjamin Halevy asserted that "Kasztner sold his soul to the devil." This Faustian statement cost Kasztner his life; he was assassinated in 1957. The state appealed to the Supreme Court and Halevy's verdict was overturned, but for Kasztner that decision came too late.

The Kasztner trial, which had extensive media coverage, manifested the politicization of the memory of the Holocaust. Kasztner was presented as a member of Mapai; Mapai was portrayed as identical with collaborators both at home and in the Diaspora; and the two extremes of the political spectrum—right and left—cast themselves as courageous fighters who defended the honor of Israel. In vain poet Nathan Alterman tried to counter this simplistic argument, which revealed complete dissociation from and misunderstanding of the impossible situation of Jewish leaders under Nazi rule. Public opinion railed against Kasztner. Amid the incitement against Mapai and Kasztner, the extreme right-wing Tamir and Uri Avneri, formerly of the right but now in the peace camp, forged the alliance discussed earlier. Avneri now mobilized his magazine, *Haʿolam Hazeh*, to disseminate propaganda against Kasztner and Mapai. In opposition to the Diaspora Jew symbolized by Kasztner, Tamir and Avneri presented the figure of the new Jew—brave and dedicated to society. Their message expressed both the ideology of rejection of the Diaspora and that of the proto-Canaanite movements. Only in the 1980s was Kasztner rehabilitated in Israeli public opinion.

It is evident, then, that the Holocaust was constantly on the public agenda throughout the 1950s. Yet it is doubtful that this topic interested either the young people raised in Israel or the new immigrants from the Mediterranean countries. In general these groups saw the Holocaust as a reality belonging to another place and time, having nothing to do with the life of the young state. It did not shape their consciousness, but was relegated to generalized phrases like "the six million," "the annihilation of European Jewry," and "Nazi Germany." It did not touch the soul, was not experienced in terms of human beings with whom they could identify, but remained alien and detached. Such a schematic picture of the Holocaust made possible accusations that the Jews "went like lambs to the slaughter" or did not rush to immigrate to Palestine before the destruction—accusations that the younger generation, with the callousness and lack of understanding typical of youth, did not hesitate to make. The fate of individual Jews who found themselves at the mercy of tremendous forces that deprived them of control over their own lives and those of their loved ones did not interest or move them. The ghetto fighters, who were seen as incorporating the spirit of Eretz Yisrael within the Diaspora, became part of Israeli mythology. But the majority of the Jewish people who were exterminated were seldom mentioned. The popular press, such as women's weeklies and political party papers, did publish personal stories of loss and rescue, human kindness and compassion, not just tales of heroism. But in the so-called quality papers such as *Haʾaretz*, these stories were hard to find.

The turning point for incorporating Holocaust remembrance into the ethos of the State of Israel came with the Eichmann trial. In May 1960 Ben-Gurion an-

nounced that Adolf Eichmann had been captured by Mossad agents and brought to Israel to stand trial. The country was electrified. Ben-Gurion saw the trial as an opportunity to educate young Israelis about what had happened to their people. But he did not anticipate the excitement, the floods of tears, the tidal wave of identification that engulfed the entire country. The survivors who took the stand unfolded in their testimony the entire scope of the Holocaust, the pain and humiliation, the displays of humanity and bestiality. Purists like Hannah Arendt considered these testimonies superfluous since they were not relevant to Eichmann specifically. But it was these personal testimonies, not the piles of documents on the prosecution table, that had an impact on listeners' imaginations. The transistor radio became the constant companion of youngsters and adults alike, who followed the trial broadcast with their emotions running high. For the first time the Holocaust stopped being "theirs" and became "ours."

This turnaround in public opinion made Yonatan Ratosh and Uri Avneri intensely hostile toward the trial. They called it a show trial staged by Ben-Gurion that distorted the nature of the Holocaust as specific to Jews, whereas it should have been presented as the first step of a German grand plan to exterminate many peoples. The Holocaust had universal significance, they insisted; it was not an exclusively Jewish catastrophe. Ratosh shrewdly discerned that the pendulum of identity politics was swinging from the native to the Jewish side, and memory of the Holocaust was anchoring it there. He realized that the Eichmann trial was dashing his hopes of renewing the native identity whose development had been arrested by the mass immigration. Holocaust memory reinforced young Israelis' connection with the real Jewish people, instead of an invented native one.

The developments that followed the Eichmann trial certainly justified Ratosh's concern. After the trial young Israelis raised in the country began moving slowly but steadily back to their Jewish identity. The first indication of this shift was Chaim Gouri's report on the trial. He wrote it as a man reporting on his people, their pain, catastrophe, and debasement; he identified with them, rather than standing against them as Hannah Arendt had done in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. In 1965 Gouri published *The Chocolate Deal*, which describes Holocaust survivors, and since then he has remained engaged with this subject.

Writer Benjamin Kammerstein, who had changed his name to Tammuz after the mythological Canaanite god, now began a journey back to the identity of his forebears. He shunned attempts to distinguish between "Jews" and "Israelis," expressing shame whenever he encountered such distinctions. His return to traditional Jewish identity was completed with the publication in 1971 of his book *Ya'akov*, whose title—the generic name of the Jew—suggests his return from pagan vistas to Jewish remembrance. In the book he severs his connection with

Ratosh's doctrine, which he presents with bitter irony, and reconnects with his grandfather, a traditional Jew whom he portrays as the real hero for having maintained his Jewish identity in the Diaspora. "'Aren't you ashamed of me, Ya'akov?' Grandfather asked. 'I'm proud of you, Grandfather,' I replied. 'You were a giant, getting up in the morning in the snow of that foreign land, in the harsh frost, to bring food to your family's table. . . . Your heroism is more terrible and more beautiful than anything I am likely to accomplish anytime on the soil of this country,'" since "'Here we don't need great heroism . . . it's home . . . only outside it, in the foreign expanses of church towers and wolf-forests, does a man need true heroism.'"[5] Numerous writers raised in Israel, who had initially been alienated from the old Jewish identity, followed the same path.

The appearance of the "generation of the state"—young people raised and educated after 1948—was a milestone in the process by which Holocaust remembrance entered into public consciousness. The book *The Seventh Day*, which presents the experiences of young people, mainly kibbutzniks, before and after the Six-Day War, reflects how powerfully the Holocaust shaped this generation's consciousness. "Whenever I see a terrified Jew, a picture or a word remotely reminiscent of all this [the Holocaust], I regret every minute I spent in the army without taking the fullest advantage to become more efficient, more dangerous," a young man wrote to his girlfriend in 1963 after reading Ka-Tzetnik's *The House of Dolls*. The man was killed in the Six-Day War.[6] The fear of destruction, which had been nonexistent during the War of Independence, appears as a formative feeling among the soldiers of the 1967 war. Yehuda Amichai, a poet who belongs chronologically to the Palmach generation but mentally to the "generation of the state," expressed the contrast between the two generations: "The War of Independence generation was detached from the Diaspora . . . and here I shall hint that the Six-Day War generation is living far more in awareness of the Holocaust, of an emotional connection with the entire Jewish people . . ."[7]

The concept "generation of the state" also defined a new literary identity. In the 1950s young poets such as Nathan Zach and David Avidan, and critics like Dan Miron and Gabriel Moked, directed their wrath against Nathan Alterman. Their attacks were designed to undermine the spiritual authority of the modernist poets of the Shlonsky school, who ruled the roost of literary taste, and to put an end to the high lyrical style committed to the national ethos. In its place they wanted poetry without pathos or verbal fireworks that emphasized personal, private, everyday experiences. Instead of Alexander Blok, much admired by the Shlonsky-Alterman generation, they took T. S. Eliot as their model.

These poets also heralded the appearance of a new literary generation. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the works of young writers who had reached adulthood after statehood began to be published. Confronting the writers of the

"native-son" generation were new faces such as A. B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz, who made their mark on Hebrew literature with their first published works. They drew their inspiration not from Russian literature but mainly from English and American works. They described experiences grounded in Israeli reality, with a tendency toward describing "the first Israel," which they had come from. Turning their backs on Zionist heroism, they replaced it with antiheroes, doubts, and fears—for example, the description of the emergence of the repressed memory of Israeli Arabs in A. B. Yehoshua's *Facing the Forests.* At the same time, Aharon Appelfeld, a Holocaust survivor who came to Israel as a teenager, was gaining literary prominence. He brought a different voice from the lost reality of European Jewry, a monument to the destruction. Shimon Ballas, a native of Iraq who began writing in Arabic and shifted to Hebrew in the 1960s, described life in the ma'abara and the anguish of absorption in Israel. He blazed a trail for other writers like Sami Michael and Eli Amir, whose works appeared a decade later.

Meanwhile the writers of the previous generation matured, changing their positions and writing style. Each in his or her own way became part of the new wave of Hebrew literature. Unlike the single voice of Hebrew culture in the state's first years, a multitude of voices now described personal experiences and did not believe that their role was to validate the Zionist ethos.

After the Holocaust the ideology and worldview of "rejection of the Exile" declined. What was the point of criticizing and rejecting a reality that no longer existed? The life of Jews in Western countries, especially the United States, did not conform to the exilic model. Despite its prominence in prestate rhetoric, "rejection of the Exile" was never widespread among the population of the Yishuv, most of whom had come to Palestine not because they wanted to change their way of life but either to save themselves or to live among Jews. This was even truer after the mass immigration. Those immigrants were not Diaspora rejecters, nor did they come to Israel because they rejected the Diaspora way of life. On the contrary, they hoped to continue that way of life in Israel, with an improved standard of living and existential security. Although the youth movements continued educating in the spirit of "rejection of the Exile," they were a negligible minority. The schools continued teaching Hazaz's *The Sermon*, but without its former Canaanite context; when the Hebrew literature syllabus was updated, the story vanished from the curriculum. This period also saw the appearance of *Shdemot*, a literary journal published by young kibbutz members who wanted to become familiar with the Jewish bookshelf and study Jewish philosophy and history. In the latent rivalry between the "archeological" Hebrew identity and the historical Jewish identity, the Eichmann trial marked a reversal of trajectories, as the first began to decline and the other to rise. This shift gained momentum in the coming years.

NOTES

1. Uri Yadin's diary, 14.9.1948, *Sefer Uri Yadin: ha'ish ufo'alo* (In Memoriam: Uri Yadin), Aharon Barak and Tana Spanitz (eds.), Jerusalem: Bursi, 1990, p. 50.

2. Meir Har-Zion's diary (*Pirkei yoman*), Tel Aviv: Levin-Epstein, 1969. Introduction by Naomi Frankel, p. 10.

3. Bulletin of the Jewish Society for the Study of the Land of Israel and Its Antiquities, fifteenth year, 3–4, 1950, p. 121.

4. Amir Gilboa, "Isaac," *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*, T. Carmi (ed. and trans.), New York, 1981, p. 560.

5. Benjamin Tammuz, *Ya'akov*, Ramat Gan: Masada, 1971, p. 97.

6. *Siakh lohamim, pirkei hakshava vehitbonenut* (The Seventh Day), Avraham Shapira (ed.), Tel Aviv: 1968, pp. 167–168.

7. Yehuda Amichai, address at the writers' conference marking Israel's twentieth anniversary, 16–17.4.1968, *Daf* (the Writers Union bulletin), May 31, 1968.

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12 POLITICS, PEACE, AND WAR

On April 29, 1956, Roʿi Rothberg, a member of Kibbutz Nahal Oz on the Gaza Strip border and the area commander, rode out on his horse to inspect the kibbutz fields. The kibbutz, founded by former members of the Nahal Brigade in 1953, had since suffered incursions and attacks by its Palestinian neighbors. The Strip was densely populated with Arab refugees, including some from the villages whose lands the kibbutz occupied. On that spring morning Rothberg saw a group of Arabs harvesting wheat in the kibbutz fields and rode toward them to drive them away, as he had several times in the past. But this time the harvesters disappeared and were replaced by armed men who shot Rothberg, smashed in his skull, and dragged his body into the Gaza Strip. When UN observers returned the body to Israel, it was clear that it had been abused.

Roʿi Rothberg's funeral in the kibbutz was attended by Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan, who delivered a eulogy at the graveside that shaped Israelis' sense of identity, at least until the Six-Day War. While expressing understanding of the reasons why the Palestinian refugees hated the Jewish settlers, and even compassion for them, Dayan highlighted the dilemma of Zionist settlement. "We are a generation that settles the land and without the steel helmet and the cannon's maw, we will not be able to plant a tree and build a home," he asserted. "This is the fate of our generation. This is our life's choice—to be prepared and armed, strong and determined, lest the sword be stricken from our fist and our lives cut down." He concluded by describing Roʿi as a young idealist who sought peace: "He was blinded by the light in his heart and he did not see the flash of the sword. The yearning for peace deafened his ears and he did not hear the voice of murder waiting in ambush." Alluding to Samson, the biblical hero, Dayan said of Rothberg: "The gates of Gaza weighed too heavily on his shoulders and overcame him."[1]

The story of Roʿi Rothberg encapsulates Israel's security problems and policy in the country's first decade. The armistice agreements signed at the end of the War of Independence with Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon were supposed to be temporary agreements leading to peace treaties. For this purpose the UN convened the Lausanne Conference in 1949, but these American-mediated negotiations revealed wide gaps separating the parties, making it abundantly clear that peace was not within reach in the near future. The Arabs, who had always viewed the Jews as feeble and pitiful, were stunned by their resounding defeat, which exposed their weakness and humiliated them in their own eyes and the eyes of the world. But the defeat did not alter the balance of power in the

region. The Jews were a small minority in the Middle East, while the Arabs commanded vast expanses of territory, the region's oil, and a population far greater than Israel's. For them accepting control by a non-Muslim entity over part of Palestine—especially since that entity created a physical divide between the Arab states in Africa and those in Asia—was inconceivable. They saw the defeat as a temporary setback, the result of structural weaknesses in Arab society, to be rectified by the removal of the reactionary regimes in the Arab states, thus preparing them to erase the invasive, foreign entity from the map of the Middle East.

The rhetoric of the Arab media and rulers focused on a "second round"—another war that would eradicate the shame of 1948. They saw the armistice agreements not as a preface to peace, or even just a termination of the state of war (as is mandated under international law), but as an interim arrangement put in place to block Israeli aggression until the time of reckoning arrived. In the meantime they felt entitled to do what they could to make life a misery for the Israelis without actually going to war, which they still felt unable to win. The Arab League announced an economic boycott of Israel, which deterred numerous Western companies from trading with Israel lest the Arabs impose a similar boycott on them. In a flagrant breach of international law, Egypt prohibited Israeli vessels from using the Suez Canal, and swiftly closed the Straits of Tiran to vessels carrying "strategic materials" to Israel, including oil. The international community protested, but accepted the situation. The Arab interpretation of the armistice lines as temporary meant that Arab refugees retained indisputable, abiding rights to their lands and that Israel was using both the land it had occupied and the water rights illegally. The Arabs also asserted that under the armistice agreements the Palestinians retained the right to fight against their dispossession, and that the Arab states would not stop supporting the Palestinians. Israel, for its part, viewed the armistice lines as legitimate borders grounded in a document approved by the international community that demarcated the territory of Israeli sovereignty. Within those borders Israel was entitled to take any action it deemed fit—which meant that it could establish settlements and settle Jews on land that Palestinians had held. The Israelis also asserted that the armistice bound the Arab states to prevent their forces, both regular and irregular, from taking hostile action against Israel, which was entitled to live in peace within its borders.

These differences in perception manifested themselves in several ways. The Arab states did not consider themselves obligated to stop incursions into Israeli territory by their inhabitants. In the armistice agreements with Egypt and Syria, Israel had agreed to the establishment of demilitarized zones in disputed areas, but the interpretation of "demilitarized" differed on either side of the border. Israel viewed these zones as its own, with the proviso that deploying army units in them was prohibited. The Arabs, meanwhile, opposed Israel's cultivation of

previously Arab-owned land in the demilitarized zones. The Israelis made every effort to establish their sovereignty right up to the border, even though this led to clashes with the Syrian and Egyptian armies. It was in one such border clash that Roʿi Rothberg encountered his murderers.

While the Arab states were not ready for peace negotiations, an armistice situation was also convenient for Israel, since any peace negotiations would likely involve demands for wide-ranging Israeli concessions. Discussing Israel's tactics at the Lausanne Conference with aides, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett remarked, "An official peace with the Arab states is not a vital necessity for us," then added, "Of course we too want peace, but we should not run, we must walk."[2] There were several principles from which the Israeli government, supported by a broad public consensus, would not budge: no withdrawal from the Green Line, as the 1949 borders were known; no return of the Arab refugees; and West Jerusalem remaining the capital of Israel. These demands reflected the geographic and demographic advantages Israel had gained in the long, difficult 1948 war, and it was resolved to hold on to them at all costs. For their part the Arabs did not propose to recognize Israel even within the 1947 borders (of the UN partition plan), but continued to demand its total elimination. The Israelis felt that any concession they made would only be the prelude to demands for further concessions. And indeed at one point Israel agreed to absorb a specific number of Arab refugees, but as expected the negotiations came to nothing.

By 1950 the Israeli government's optimism regarding the chances of any progress toward a peace agreement during the Rhodes armistice negotiations, and even at the Lausanne Conference, had vanished. It was replaced by pessimism that saw Arab hostility toward Israel as a permanent factor that Israel must learn to live with—not through negotiation but by strengthening the country demographically, building a solid economic infrastructure, and boosting its military power. In other words the armistice agreements made it possible to shift attention from the military to the civil sphere, which was critical for building up Israel's long-term power. Dayan's eulogy at Roʿi Rothberg's funeral expressed a bitter but sober recognition of the fact that in order to survive, the State of Israel would be forced to live by the sword for at least a generation.

Despite all the talk of a "second round," until 1955 there was no sign that the Arab states were planning a war against Israel. In 1952 the Free Officers Movement had staged a coup in Egypt, and the new government was engaged in an anticolonial struggle to rid the country of the British. Jordan's King Abdullah tried to reach a peace agreement with Israel, but the negotiations foundered repeatedly, either because of Israeli intransigence on minor details or because the king felt he lacked the power to see such a dramatic step through, given that half his country's population was Palestinian. His assassination in 1951 because

of his negotiations with Israel removed the subject from the agenda. Syria had undergone internal struggles and regime changes. Since the assassination of Husni Za'im no new ruler had risen who was willing to talk peace, but Syria showed no belligerence either. In the early 1950s there was a decline in preparedness and alertness in the IDF, but these were also years when a total Arab threat was more rhetorical than actual.

The more pressing problem was what was termed "routine security." Every night Arab refugees infiltrated into Israel. At first they came out of yearning for the fields and houses they had left behind, to collect forgotten possessions, and to harvest crops. The residents of the moshavim along the border feared these nocturnal visitors, who soon began stealing agricultural equipment, livestock, or crops. In those early years the borders were only sparsely settled, and army patrols did not prevent the infiltrations, which swiftly became a plague. Between 1949 and 1951 there were about ten thousand infiltrations a year, and the IDF instituted an iron-hand policy. During these two years the orders were very aggressive, allowing soldiers to fire at any suspicious movement at night. Several thousand infiltrators were killed. They then began coming in armed and willing to return fire. From there it was only a short distance to violent incursions whose goal was mainly robbery and theft. Worse, the infiltrators did not refrain from murdering civilians, and gangs of robbers terrorized Israel's border settlements. Often when darkness fell moshav residents gathered in one central building in order to feel safer. In addition, after a hard day's work they had to take guard shifts. Some moshavim were completely abandoned out of fear of the infiltrators.

In March 1954 the Ma'ale Akrabim (scorpions' pass) massacre cast the decline in security in the border settlements into stark relief. A bus returning along the Arava road from celebrations marking the fifth anniversary of the conquest of Eilat was ambushed by infiltrators at Ma'ale Akrabim. The attackers not only shot at the bus, but they boarded it and murdered everyone who appeared to be still alive. Three survivors lived to tell the tale. This murder for the sake of murder endangered all traffic on the main road to the Negev settlements. Between 1949 and 1956 more than three hundred Israelis were killed by infiltrators, thousands were wounded, and property valued at many millions was lost.

The Israeli government held the infiltrators' countries responsible for stopping them. The Jordanian government seems to have made sincere efforts to reduce the number of infiltrations from its territory. But the borders were long, the strength of the Arab Legion was limited, and its ability to control the borders was only partial, particularly since the local population considered the Israelis sworn enemies and sympathized with the infiltrators. After 1956, when the British officer cadre was dismissed from the Arab Legion, discipline in the Jordanian army grew lax, and Arab Legion units even collaborated with the infiltrators.

Along the Gaza Strip border Egyptian army units not only collaborated with the infiltrators but also initiated infiltrations. Israel retaliated with IDF reprisals across the border. However, it was not easy to identify the attackers, so the Israeli response was directed against what were called the "terrorists' villages," and most often the casualties of the reprisal raids were not the guilty parties. This "environmental" punishment hit peaceable citizens, arousing hatred and, many believed, strengthening citizens' sympathy with the perpetrators while failing to stop the infiltrations.

These reprisals ceased after the Kibya operation in 1953. Carried out by the IDF's elite Unit 101 commanded by Ariel Sharon, this operation resulted in the killing of dozens of villagers, women and children who were hiding in houses blown up by the troops. Even if Sharon's contention that his men did not know that the villagers were in the houses were true, it could not erase the stain of inflicting grave harm on a civilian population, an act that sparked rage worldwide and a harsh debate in Israel as well. After the Kibya operation the IDF's reprisals were directed against military or police targets while avoiding attacks on civilians. On the border with Jordan these reprisals had a moderating effect. On the Egyptian border, however, the authorities encouraged infiltration and sabotage, with the conscious goal of harassing Israel and preventing the armistice lines from being converted into permanent borders. The response to Israeli reprisals in the Gaza Strip was heightened aggression and constant escalation by both sides, leading ultimately to the 1956 Sinai Campaign.

The reprisal raids led to fierce debate among the Israeli leadership. On one side the advocates of security activism, headed by Ben-Gurion, Dayan, Peres, and many others, viewed the reprisals as a vital tactic not only to stop the infiltrations but also to arrest their incessant undermining of the 1949 borders, combined with attempts to weaken Israeli sovereignty within those borders. This group also argued that the reprisals curbed notions of a "second round" that might arise should the IDF lose its deterrent capability. During the first years after the armistice agreements were signed, the best of the War of Independence commanders left the IDF. The army consequently experienced a period of disorganization and weakness that manifested itself in operational difficulties such as a bitter and unsuccessful battle at Tel Mutilla near the Sea of Galilee to destroy a Syrian force that had taken a position in the demilitarized zone, which exacted numerous Israeli casualties. When Dayan was appointed chief of staff in December 1953, he made efforts to improve the IDF's fighting ability and spirit and nurtured elite units such as 101, the paratroopers, and the Airborne Nahal as models for the entire army. The reprisals put the IDF's operational ability to the test, while also demonstrating its military capability to the Arab states. Moreover, Israel at the time was still an immigrant country that had not coalesced into a

nation. Public opinion was aroused by the infiltrators' outrages. Thus the reprisals were also meant to reassure the home front—to prevent erosion of faith in the leadership's and army's ability to protect the citizens and to boost public morale.

On the other side were the moderates, led by Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett. The foreign minister and Ben-Gurion agreed on the main issues: Israel must not relinquish the Green Line borders; it must oppose the return of Palestinian refugees; and the status of West Jerusalem as the capital was sacrosanct. Nor were they divided on the basic fact that peace was unlikely with the Arab states in the near future. But Sharett disagreed with the prime minister about reprisals. He thought that even if there was no chance of peace at present and Arab hostility continued, Israel must avoid actions likely to fan the flames of hatred. He was thinking not that the conflict could be ended but rather that its intensity could be lowered through a cautious policy that avoided provocations.

Sharett had faith in the international community and sought to rely either on the UN or aid from the Western powers against Arab aggression. As foreign minister he was more sensitive than Ben-Gurion about Israel's international status. Ben-Gurion was quoted referring derisively to the UN as "Um-Shmum" (*um* is the pronunciation of the Hebrew acronym for "UN"). Sharett, however, had not forgotten that it was a UN resolution that granted international legitimacy to the establishment of the state, and he hoped to continue relying on international bodies. He saw the reprisals, each of which incurred international censure, as an obstacle to strengthening Israel's international standing. Yet he too, as prime minister between 1953 and 1955, approved several reprisal raids. He regarded them as unavoidable, since he had no other way to respond to the harm inflicted on Israeli citizens.

In February 1955 a reprisal launched by the IDF against the Egyptian army in the Gaza Strip became relatively large scale. Dozens of Egyptian soldiers were killed. Researchers are divided on the historical importance of this operation. Some contend that it brought about a critical change in the attitude of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser toward the conflict. They believe that until then, the Egyptian army and intelligence in the Strip, which encouraged sabotage in Israel, conducted only limited local initiatives. But Nasser perceived the army's failure in the Gaza action as a national insult, and its effect was to escalate the violence coming from the Strip. From this point on Nasser activated units of fedayeen (Ar., men of sacrifice)—guerilla and terror fighters trained by the Egyptian army who operated inside Israeli territory, killing civilians, destroying installations, and undermining security both along the border and inside Israel. According to these scholars, the Gaza operation led Nasser to reinforce the Egyptian army through a major arms deal with Czechoslovakia signed after the opera-

tion. They also think that Israel's military leadership had already decided on a preventive war against Egypt, and that its provocative actions were intended to draw Egypt into attacking Israel.

Other scholars contend that Nasser's engagement on the Israeli front resulted from the conclusion of negotiations with the British over their evacuation of Egypt and the Suez Canal, which enabled him to promote himself as leader of the pan-Arab movement. Provocation of Israel was designed to present him as the Palestinians' patron. Nasser's decision to approach the Eastern bloc, as manifested in his request for offensive weapons from Czechoslovakia, had apparently been made earlier as part of his move to become the pan-Arab leader. Egypt was soon to instigate rioting in Syria and Jordan, in order to destabilize these regimes and bring the Nasserists into power. Researchers holding this view say that even as the Gaza operation was taking place, an Egyptian military delegation was in Russia. According to them, Nasser used the Gaza operation as a pretext for his swing to the Eastern bloc, an act that constituted a fundamental strategic shift that had far-reaching effects on the Middle East for almost twenty years. Either way, 1955 was a year in which the status quo created by the armistice agreements became shaky.

From Israel's establishment until the Sinai Campaign, the Great Powers did not consider Israel's existence as permanent or the 1949 borders as fixed. As the waves of immigration flooded the country and transformed the reality within it, discussions in the corridors of power held open the possibility of dramatic changes in the map of the Middle East. By late 1949 the USSR, which as we have seen supported the establishment of Israel and even aided it in the War of Independence with arms shipments from Czechoslovakia, had reverted to its traditional anti-Zionist line. The reasons for this were complex, but not least among them was the enthusiasm displayed by the Jews of the USSR toward the new state and the feelings of nationalist identification that riveted them when Golda Meir arrived in Moscow as Israeli consul. Initially Israel endeavored to maintain a policy of neutrality between the Eastern bloc and Western nations in the Cold War. Israel's desire to keep the USSR's goodwill derived above all from its desire to keep the gates of the Eastern bloc open for Jewish immigration. The USSR itself prohibited Jews from leaving, since allowing them to immigrate to Israel was tantamount to admitting that people were turning their backs on the Soviet paradise. But from time to time Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania allowed their Jews to immigrate to Israel, either because of internal policy considerations (new outbreaks of antisemitism) or because the Israeli government paid foreign currency for each immigrant. In any case the Israeli policy of neutrality was short-lived; in 1950 Israel shifted toward the Western camp by voting in favor of dispatching a UN force to the Korean War.

Aside from abhorring the tyrannical Soviet regime, Ben-Gurion needed American assistance in the form of food surpluses, financial aid, and also tax exemption for American Jews' donations to Israel. But beyond these practicalities he wanted the United States as a strategic ally. He was full of justifiable suspicion toward Britain. At the same time, the Israeli leaders held the United States in high esteem and strove to develop strategic relations with it, either through a mutual defense pact or by allowing the Americans to make use of Israel's economic and industrial infrastructure in the event of a global conflict. However, the Israelis' intensive courtship received no response from the other side. From the outset President Eisenhower's administration had been involved in establishing alliances in the Middle East that would block Soviet influence. It believed that an alliance of any kind with Israel would ruin any cooperation with the Arabs, pushing them into the arms of the USSR. The West's courtship of Nasser was not reciprocated, but the United States and Britain continued to seek ways to conciliate the Arabs with peace initiatives for which Israel would pay the price, hoping thereby to remove this irritating factor from their relations with the Arabs.

INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION AND THE SEARCH FOR ALLIES

The events of 1955 demonstrated Israel's international isolation and its ongoing failure to find a strategic ally. In that year the Baghdad Pact among Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, and Britain was established, and Israel, understandably enough, was not invited to participate. Some virulent anti-Israeli resolutions were passed at the Bandung Conference of African and Asian Nations. Nasser was one of the stars of this conference, to which Israel was also not invited. Concurrent with this international cold shoulder, Britain and the United States proposed a new peace initiative based entirely on Israeli concessions. This plan, dubbed Operation Alpha, arose out of a British-American agreement to work toward getting Israel to give up a large portion of the Negev to Egypt and Jordan, in order to create a land bridge between the two Arab states. Carving up the Negev with an Arab corridor had been a constant British goal ever since the 1947 partition plan, which assigned the entire Negev to Israel. In addition to part of the Negev, Nasser was promised appropriate economic and military aid. The plan also required Israel to allow a large number of Arab refugees to return and to pay compensation to the rest. The reward for all these concessions was to be a "nonbelligerency accord." The Israelis were given nebulous guarantees that the West would defend the state's existence and that the Arab boycott would end.

Israel was not a party to this intrigue; it was simply presented as a fait accompli and pressured by the Western powers. Ben-Gurion rejected the plan, but so did Nasser. Meanwhile in the summer of 1955 fighting along the Gaza Strip border

intensified, and in September Egypt announced the Czech arms deal. The Alpha plan fell apart, but it did not disappear completely. In November 1955, in the traditional Guildhall speech, British prime minister Anthony Eden called upon Israel to agree to a border somewhere between the 1947 and 1949 borders. Israel took this speech as a British attempt to undermine the very existence of the state. It showed that Israel was still thought of as a fleeting episode on the Middle Eastern map, or at least a fluid entity whose borders were not fixed.

It was clear that the Egyptian-Czech arms deal had destabilized the balance of power in the Middle East. Suddenly a leading Arab state possessed weapons that gave it a qualitative edge over Israel. The Israelis considered this situation a threat to the state's very existence. The "second round," which until then had appeared purely theoretical, was now a distinct menace, and Israel urgently sought a source of advanced weaponry. A halfhearted request to the Soviets was rejected outright, and an approach to the Americans fared little better. After months of foot-dragging, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles informed the Israelis that they would be supplied with arms only if they agreed to concessions (in the shape of Alpha, or worse) that would lead to peace with the Arabs. The British response was similar. It was France that came to Israel's rescue. At the time France was engaged in a struggle in its North African colonies against national liberation forces supported by Nasser, who angered the French by aiding the Algerian rebels. Thus France's aid to Israel was intended to hurt this common enemy. In summer 1956 French aircraft and tanks arrived, restoring the balance of power, which now perhaps tipped in Israel's favor, since the Israelis were able to deploy the new hardware much faster than the Egyptians had their Soviet weapons.

In early 1955 the constant tension along the Israeli-Egyptian border, Nasser's rising international status, and his declarations of commitment to armed struggle against Israel all led to a feeling in the Israeli high command that a preventive war against Egypt was unavoidable. Such a war would lead to Israeli control of the Gaza Strip, open the Straits of Tiran, and perhaps even give Israel control of the Gulf of Eilat coastal strip leading to the straits. The idea of a preventive war was based on Israel's military vulnerability. Because Israel was so small, an enemy initiative could cut the country in half across its breadth, or roll armored columns to within a few dozen kilometers of Tel Aviv. Therefore IDF doctrine was that any war must be fought on enemy territory. But how to ensure this?

At a cabinet meeting in March 1955, Ben-Gurion (who had resumed the post of minister of defense) proposed that Israel conquer the Gaza Strip. His proposal was rejected by a one-vote majority led by Prime Minister Moshe Sharett. Some historians contend that this attempt by Ben-Gurion shows that Israel was not truly committed to the 1949 status quo, and that beneath its apparent agreement to the Green Line borders ran an undercurrent of hope that those borders could

be expanded to Israel's advantage. It is true that among both the activist circles of Ahdut Ha'avoda (which split from Mapam in 1954) and the right-wing circles of Herut there were still longings for the Greater Land of Israel. What is more, Dayan seems to have been fairly close to the activists' position. But those who attribute irredentist aspirations to Ben-Gurion seem to misunderstand the reality.

Ben-Gurion viewed the achievements of 1949 as optimal given Israel's political situation, and defended them with all his might. Toward the end of the War of Independence, he rejected Yigal Allon's proposals to conquer the West Bank, which at the time was militarily achievable. He was sensitive to the demographic problem of governing hundreds of thousands of Arabs, and did his utmost to avoid that snare. He therefore was not enthusiastic at the prospect of Israel governing the Gaza Strip. He had maintained the status quo of the armistice agreements until this moment, and he was willing to conquer the Gaza Strip now *not* out of a desire to recover territory but because routine security problems posed constant challenges to the stability of the borders, aside from being a nuisance. On top of this he saw Nasser's belligerence as a real threat to Israel's security.

To a great extent Israeli public opinion accepted the Green Line as the border of the state. The advocates of the Greater Land of Israel were a small minority; most of the population had immigrated to Israel after 1948, were unfamiliar with the idea of the "Greater Land," and certainly harbored no yearnings for it. A few months after the cabinet rejected Ben-Gurion's proposal, the news of the Egyptian-Czech arms deal arrived, and from that point on Ben-Gurion directed most of his efforts to finding an arms supplier. The preventive war plan was off the agenda, much to the ire of Chief of Staff Dayan.

In the following year Ben-Gurion pursued an extremely cautious policy, avoiding any provocation of Egypt until the French arms were secured. He even acceded to UN secretary general Dag Hammarskjold's request that IDF patrols be withdrawn to half a kilometer from the border to prevent escalation. In his eulogy of Ro'i Rothberg, Dayan protested Ben-Gurion's withdrawal order: "Beyond the furrow of the border, a sea of hatred and desire for revenge is swelling, awaiting the day when serenity will dull our path . . . the day when we will heed the ambassadors of malevolent hypocrisy who call upon us to lay down our arms. . . . Although we have sworn a thousand-fold that our blood shall not flow in vain, yesterday again we were tempted, we listened, we believed."[3]

Jordan's Hashemite dynasty had a tradition of cooperation with the Jews, first against the mufti during the Mandatory period and now against Nasser's pan-Arabism. Israel and Jordan had common interests. For example, they wanted to divide Jerusalem between them, in contravention of the UN demand that the city be international. However, the young King Hussein had difficulty dealing with Palestinian agitation in the West Bank and even within his own army. As men-

tioned before, when the British officer cadre was removed from the Jordanian army in 1956, hostile actions launched against Israel from Jordanian territory increased. In summer 1956 Israel initiated a number of reprisal raids along the Israel-Jordan border. The last of these, in Qalqilya, swelled into a large-scale operation. Tension between Israel and Jordan—and between Israel and Britain, Jordan's patron—reached new heights. Israel uneasily followed developments in Jordan. Iraq, too, was under Hashemite control with Britain as its patron, and fear that the Iraqi army would enter Jordan supported by Britain was very real. Toward the end of the War of Independence, the Iraqi forces had withdrawn from the West Bank without an armistice agreement between Iraq and Israel, and Israel viewed a renewed Iraqi presence in Jordan as justification for war.

THE SINAI CAMPAIGN AND ITS AFTERMATH

At this point there was a new development. In July 1956 Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, directly threatening the vital interests of Britain and France. His act opened a window of opportunity for a previously unimaginable alliance among France, Britain, and Israel. This strategic alliance for the first time delivered Israel from its international isolation. France and Britain sought to topple the Nasser regime, which undermined their status in the region, and retake control of the Suez Canal. For the Israelis the alliance ensured aerial cover in a war against Egypt, quiet along the border with Jordan, no Iraqi army in Jordan, and the support of two major powers at the UN. Israel's agreed-upon role was to fire the first shot, providing Britain and France with an excuse to take over the Suez Canal and "protect" this international waterway. It was an opportunity to strike at Nasser under favorable conditions. Yet Ben-Gurion hesitated until the very last minute, and it took all the powers of persuasion of Chief of Staff Dayan and Ministry of Defense Director General Shimon Peres to get him to agree to the plan. Fearing a British betrayal Ben-Gurion demanded an agreement in writing among the three partners. And his fears were indeed justified, for Prime Minister Eden made sure that all British copies of the agreement were destroyed so that he could deny any collusion. However, copies were archived in Israel and France.

Operation Kadesh, or the Sinai Campaign, began October 29 and was a great Israeli military success. Within a week Israeli forces had taken the entire Sinai Peninsula and come within ten kilometers of the Suez Canal, as had been agreed with the British and French. The two Great Powers, however, procrastinated; their military operations were inefficient, and they advanced into the canal area extremely slowly. But their airpower did hit Egyptian airfields. At the same time, the USSR and the United States, together with the UN, joined forces to oppose the operation. Both East and West claimed to be anti-imperialist; the era when the European powers could get away with gunboat diplomacy had ended

with World War Two. Joint pressure exerted by the Soviets and Americans, who were resolved not to allow the two declining powers to benefit from their collusion, ultimately forced Israel, along with the French and British, to withdraw. The resounding failure of the Suez operation (termed Operation Musketeer) ended Anthony Eden's career and caused the fall of Guy Mollet's government in France. Nasser remained in power and his prestige soared, since both Middle East and third-world public opinion hailed him as the man who had defeated the colonialist powers. He explained Israel's defeat of his army by saying he had ordered his troops to withdraw to the canal to defend it against the British and French.

When the fighting ended, Ben-Gurion announced in the Knesset that the armistice agreement with Egypt was dead and would not be renewed. He allowed it to be understood that he would demand territorial changes along the Israel-Egypt border, particularly the Sharm el-Sheikh coastline. In this moment of elation over the IDF's impressive successes, he even referred to the "Third Kingdom" of Israel. Only a few days later, though, in response to a threatening note from Russian premier Nikolai Bulganin, he was compelled to explain that the campaign's objective had been preventing fedayeen incursions from the Gaza Strip and ensuring freedom of passage in the Gulf of Eilat, and that Israel had no territorial claims on Egypt. The brunt of the pressure came from the United States, which supported Secretary General Hammarskjold's demand for a complete Israeli withdrawal. Israel fought a bitter diplomatic battle, mostly against the UN and the American administration. It demanded genuine guarantees of freedom of passage in the Gulf of Eilat, and also that restoration of Egyptian control over the Gaza Strip be prevented so that the border would remain quiet. In the face of pressure from the UN and United States, both asserting that the aggressor should not be rewarded, Israel soon withdrew unconditionally from the Sinai Peninsula. It continued to hold Sharm el-Sheikh, the coastal strip to Eilat, and the Gaza Strip; four months later, after protracted negotiations, it withdrew from these areas as well.

As a result of the Sinai Campaign, the UN established a peacekeeping force whose mission was to ensure that Israel's two objectives were attained. Israel demanded a guarantee that this force would not be evacuated until peace was achieved, but Hammarskjold rejected this demand. He claimed that the presence of the peacekeeping force on Egyptian soil was subject to Egyptian consent. Should the Egyptians wish it to leave, they would have to submit a request to the UN, but their sovereignty over Egyptian territory should not be restricted. After extremely tough negotiations, and a threat of American-supported UN sanctions against Israel, informal understandings were drafted between Israel and America. The United States recognized Israel's right to freedom of passage in the Gulf of Eilat and agreed that if that right were infringed, Israel would be entitled to

exercise its right to self-defense. Israel also demanded demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula and prohibition of renewed deployment there by the Egyptian army. These two demands were informally accepted by the United States. Israel's third demand, that Egypt should not reassume control of the Gaza Strip, was never implemented; an Egyptian governor entered Gaza immediately after the IDF withdrawal.

On the face of it Israel emerged from the Sinai Campaign with no real achievements. World public opinion was highly critical of the Suez operation, which was perceived as a final attempt by two declining powers to resume positions of influence in the Middle East. Israel appeared as the third side of this failed triangle of collusion. Israel did not receive the guarantees it demanded in return for its withdrawal; instead it got only halfhearted, informal promises from the United States. Egypt again controlled Gaza, and the presence of the UN peacekeeping force in the Gaza Strip and Sharm el-Sheikh was dependent on Egypt's goodwill. Nor was the Sinai Peninsula recognized as demilitarized. But in reality the Sinai Campaign was a turning point in Israel's standing in both the Middle East and the world. The IDF's power and military capability convinced the Great Powers that Israel was there to stay, and would not disappear from the map. The 1949 borders, previously seen as subject to bargaining, were now set in the eyes of the world, which also accepted Israel's stance that there would be no withdrawal from them. Even though Nasser claimed victory, he fully understood the weaknesses that his army displayed in the Sinai Campaign.

For the next decade the Israel-Egypt border was generally quiet. The fedayeen ceased operations from Gaza, and there was no massive Egyptian army presence there. While the Egyptians did not formally agree to demilitarize the Sinai Peninsula, in fact they kept armored troops out of it. Nasser was occupied with setting up the United Arab Republic (UAR) with Syria—a union that ultimately failed—and with subversion in Jordan and other pro-Western states in the region. In 1960 the de facto demilitarization of Sinai was tested when Nasser moved sizable armored and infantry forces (500 tanks and 50,000 troops) into eastern Sinai. The IDF was caught by surprise, but after a partial mobilization of reserves, it managed to deploy a force of some hundred tanks and infantry units to face the Egyptian force (Operation Rotem). This confrontation was kept secret, enabling Nasser to withdraw his forces without harming his prestige. His choice to withdraw confirmed that Sinai was in fact demilitarized. The Gulf of Eilat remained open to Israeli vessels, which over the following decade helped strengthen relations between Israel and the Asian and African states. The Port of Eilat's prime importance was as the destination of oil from Iran, Israel's main source of fuel and thus vital to its economy and security.

Although the Sinai Campaign produced no real territorial gains or official

undertakings for Israel, the decade of relative quiet resulting from the new reality the campaign had created made it possible to develop the economy and absorb immigrants. The difficult negotiations that followed the campaign created a shift in international public opinion and the positions of the powers that bore fruit later, when Israel faced difficult decisions on the eve of the Six-Day War and afterward. Though the United States gave Israel no real guarantees, it made one halfhearted promise that Israel would benefit from making concessions and withdrawing. As it became more involved in the region—invoking the Eisenhower Doctrine and intervening militarily in 1958 against radical subversion in Lebanon—the United States accorded Israel a passive role, but one of an ally. The radicalization of Arab states—as evidenced in the establishment of the UAR (1958–1961), a revolution in Iraq and the rise of Abd al-Karim Qassem as ruler, and Nasser's unceasing threats to the regime in Jordan—demonstrated Israel's status as an island of stability in the region whose presence as a silent supporter of the pro-Western states such as Jordan and Lebanon helped them resist subversion. In 1958 Israel agreed to a request from Britain for permission to fly British paratroops to Jordan through Israeli airspace; this exchange reflected Israel's new status. Israel was resolved to protect the Hashemite regime in Jordan; if it was undermined, Israel would have to conquer the West Bank. "We all pray three times a day for King Hussein's safety and success," declared Foreign Minister Golda Meir to her British counterpart, Selwyn Lloyd.[4]

The upsurge of the pan-Arab movement led by Nasser worried the region's non-Arab states. Immediately after the revolution in Iraq, Turkey sought to strengthen its ties with Israel, with the Israelis seeking to counterbalance Arab power in the region with an "Alliance of the Periphery" that included Ethiopia, Iran, and Turkey. It was not a genuine alliance, but bilateral cooperation between Israel and these countries was vital for the security of the sea-lanes to Israel and the oil supplies it needed.

During this peaceful decade France remained both an important ally and Israel's main arms supplier. Ben-Gurion fully understood that this cooperation was expedient and would end when the war in Algeria did. France had both historical and current interests in the Arab states, particularly Syria and Lebanon, ties that conflicted with its relations with Israel. In 1962 General Charles de Gaulle decided to leave Algeria, and thereafter Israel's relations with France were put into question, as the Israeli leadership was aware would happen. Still, until 1967 France remained Israel's main arms supplier. Israel also received American arms through West Germany as well as Hawk missiles directly from the United States—a historic decision made by President Kennedy that lifted the de facto American embargo on supplying arms to Israel. Nevertheless the Israeli Air Force's dependency on French Mirage aircraft turned these jets into an Israeli

national symbol. It was also France that helped Israel develop its nuclear facility near Dimona, an enterprise in which Israel invested resources and technology in the hopes of counterbalancing the greater demographic and territorial strength of its neighbors. The Kennedy administration's attempts to stop the development of the Israeli nuclear facility failed, and Israel adopted a policy of equivocation regarding its nuclear capability, while giving assurances that it would not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East.

A unique relationship developed between Israel and West Germany. On one hand, memory of the Holocaust and its role in shaping Israeli identity had deepened over the years. The history between the Jewish people and Germany lived on in Israeli consciousness. On the other hand, during those years very few countries offered a helping hand to Israel, and West Germany was notable among those that did. Relations began with the reparations plan, which, as noted, was extremely controversial in Israel. The Israeli government had tried to avoid direct negotiations with the Germans by addressing its claim for reparations for Nazi iniquities to the Western occupation governments. But in October 1950 the Allied occupying powers informed Israel that the state of war with Germany had ended and referred the Israelis directly to the German authorities, who were willing to conduct negotiations in secret. As a precondition Israel demanded a statement from the German government recognizing the German people's collective guilt for the Holocaust. The draft that Germany finally agreed to spoke of the guilt of the *majority* of the German people for the Holocaust and its obligation to compensate the Jewish people both morally and financially, in accordance with West Germany's ability.

A "claims conference" was established to represent the world Jewish organizations, which agreed to allow Israel to take the lead. Nachum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, was the chief negotiator with West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer. An uproar ensued over whether Israel should negotiate directly with Germany, but in the end the Knesset decided to allow it. An unofficial Israeli legation was set up in Germany, and in September 1952 the first reparations agreement was signed in Luxembourg. This agreement, which was implemented over twelve years, formed the basis of the slow but sure development of relations between the two countries. Aside from its moral component, the agreement rescued Israel from a deep economic and financial crisis. It supported the development and building of infrastructure and provided funds to pay for fuel and other vital materials.

To avoid embarrassing Adenauer during the Eichmann trial in 1961, Ben-Gurion tried to ensure that no mention was made of Hans Globke, the German chancellor's trusted aide, who had helped draft the racist Nuremberg Laws during the Nazi period. In the early 1960s the Mossad, headed by Isser Harel, re-

ported that there were German missile experts in Egypt. Although Foreign Minister Meir was alarmed, Ben-Gurion played down the danger of their activity (and in the end was proved right). Relations with Germany continued to develop; it was Germany that served as a pipeline to Israel for American tanks that had been used by NATO. Whenever ties with Germany were exposed—as when the Germans sold arms to Israel or vice versa—new controversy and a government crisis erupted in Israel. Nevertheless, through this pattern of open crises and covert cooperation, the special relations between the two countries moved forward.

In 1960 a historic meeting took place between David Ben-Gurion and Chancellor Adenauer, both seen as symbols of nations reemerging from the shadow of a terrible past. These two great men, both in their autumnal years, met at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, a place remote in history and time. There the secret arms deal between Germany and Israel was agreed upon. When it was revealed in 1965, leading to a crisis in relations between Egypt and Germany, the German government decided to stop supplying arms to Israel but at the same time to establish diplomatic relations with the Israelis, bringing the two countries' ties into the open. Because of Germany's central place in Europe and NATO, Israel's relations with it had particular importance.

WATER, DEVELOPMENT, AND POLITICS

Since the early days one of Israel's most acute problems had been water. Even before statehood the renowned soil conservationist Prof. Walter C. Lowdermilk had drawn up a plan to carry water from sources in the north to the arid Negev. An Israeli water engineer, Simcha Blass, proposed a similar plan. Before the state was established such plans seemed utopian; they had little chance of implementation. After 1948 large-scale schemes to carry water from the Sea of Galilee and the River Jordan became operative. The River Jordan and its sources (the Banias, Hatzbani, and Dan Rivers), plus its Yarmuk tributary, were part of the Jordan Valley catchment area and passed through four countries: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel. Division of water rights among the four had the potential to provide either an opening for a peace treaty and cooperation or grounds for hostilities and war. Developments led mainly toward hostility. Since the water-supply plans would help Israel modernize and enable it to absorb many more immigrants, thus making it stronger, the Arab states attempted to block them.

In the early 1950s Israel learned of plans by Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan to exploit the waters of the Hatzbani, whose source is the Lebanese Hermon, the Banias—which flows from the Syrian Hermon—and the Yarmuk, on the border of Jordan, Syria, and Israel. These sources were outside Israel's borders, so it could not prevent these plans from being implemented. As it turned out, they were never carried out. In the meantime Israel embarked on the Lake Hula drain-

age project, intending to divert the northern River Jordan, then building a national water carrier from the Sea of Galilee to the Negev. Attempts to begin the work in a demilitarized zone disputed by Syria and Israel led to military clashes with the Syrians, and the UN Security Council prohibited Israel from working there. Israel continued the Hula drainage project in another location, and in the meantime its representatives held protracted negotiations with their Syrian counterparts on the armistice committee on division of the water rights, but these talks ended in failure.

At the same time, Syria and Jordan embarked on a joint project to exploit the waters of the Yarmuk, which flows into the River Jordan south of the Sea of Galilee. They obtained mostly American financing to build a dam at their common border. Israel tried through diplomatic channels to dissuade the Americans from funding this project, in which Israel had no share, even though it had rights to Yarmuk waters that flowed into the Jordan. The Americans were convinced to withdraw their support. Another Israeli attempt to divert the waters of the Jordan in a demilitarized zone, near the Bnot Yaʿakov bridge, led Syria to protest to the UN Security Council. Under pressure from the UN and the United States, which threatened to impose economic sanctions, Israel stopped work on this project.

Until 1953 Israel's efforts to exploit the Jordan catchment area waters were unilateral. Having learned the lessons of its two failures, Israel now attempted to act through initiatives that had international approval, above all from the United States. The Americans hoped that a development program benefiting all the states in the region, which they would partly finance, would dispel the hostility between the Arabs and Israel and lead toward peace. The program was also designed to help settle and rehabilitate the Arab refugees in Jordan. Eric Johnston was the American envoy who conducted the negotiations on this program, which centered on a plan to divide the waters of the Jordan and the adjacent rivers. The Yarmuk was designated an Arab river, with part of its waters assigned to Israel. The River Jordan was to be Israeli, with part of its waters assigned to Jordan. The Yarmuk and Banias were dedicated solely to irrigating the land on the Jordanian bank of the Jordan Valley. The region's main reservoir would be the Sea of Galilee, whose waters would be divided 60 percent to Jordan, 30 percent to Israel, and 5 percent to Syria. Two hydroelectric power stations would be built, one in Jordan and the other in Israel.

For Israel this program had several advantages. First, it represented Arab recognition of Israel's water rights, and indirectly acceptance of its existence as a political entity. Second, it held out—as the Americans hoped—a possibility of reducing the level of Arab hostility, as well as a solution for some of the refugees. Finally, Israel hoped the United States would fund the project generously. Thus Israel was prepared to eat humble pie and share its reservoirs with Jordan, and

even Syria. Its Arab neighbors, however, saw things differently. Syria and Lebanon had no urgent need of the Jordan waters. They could supply their needs from other sources without having to pay the price of recognizing Israel's rights. The Jordanians needed the water provided by the development program, but did not dare embark unilaterally on a plan that included recognition of Israel. Thus Johnston's program remained on the drawing board. Over the next few years Israel, chastened by past experience, followed the scheme that the program outlined. So did Jordan, which built the East Ghor Canal that carried water to the east Jordan Valley and for the first time enabled agricultural settlement in this arid area. These two countries covertly collaborated on water supply, and this collaboration, together with Israel's moderate conduct, bore fruit when Israel decided to build the National Water Carrier in 1956 and Jordan did not oppose it.

When it was complete, the National Water Carrier began at the Sea of Galilee and proceeded some 130 kilometers to Rosh Haʿayin, where it connected with the Yarkon-Negev system, which had been built earlier as far as Mitzpe Ramon on the Negev Plateau (see map 6). The carrier was Israel's most important development enterprise and opened up settlement possibilities in the arid Negev. For this reason the Arab states did not look kindly on it. Ben-Gurion predicted they would embark on a "third round" to thwart its operation, but that did not happen.

In the early 1960s Nasser was embroiled in a civil war in Yemen. He was supported by the Soviets, and the other side by American-backed Saudi Arabia. With 50,000 Egyptian soldiers bogged down in what was dubbed "Egypt's Vietnam," Nasser could not become entangled in a war with Israel. His star had been on the wane since Syria's secession from the UAR in 1961. Then in 1963 the leftist Baʿath party seized power in Syria. Egypt refused to accept the legitimacy of the new regime, whose leaders had been involved in annulling the Syrian-Egyptian union, and did not establish diplomatic relations with it. In order to create a situation that would force Nasser to talk with it, the Baʿathist regime announced that it would go to war against Israel to prevent it from using the water carrier. To frustrate this Syrian adventurism, in early 1964 Egypt convened an Arab summit that decided to divert two Jordan tributaries (the Hatzbani and the Banias) and dry up the carrier. This diversion would be done on Syrian and Lebanese soil, with the oil-producing states providing the financing. These inter-Arab agreements were also supposed to create a joint military command headed by Egypt.

From this point on Syria played a leading warmongering role in the Middle East. The earthmoving operations preparatory to diverting the Jordan tributaries were done within range of Israeli tanks. The Israelis initiated incidents in the demilitarized zones, and each time the Syrians opened fire on Israeli agricultural workers there, Israel retaliated by destroying the earthmoving equipment. The

Syrians retaliated in turn with heavy shelling of the Jordan Valley settlements, and the settlers became accustomed to life in bomb shelters. The Syrians' elevated position on the Golan Heights gave them a clear advantage in targeting the settlements lying exposed in the valley below. Israeli artillery did not always manage to reach the Syrian batteries. At a certain point the Israeli Air Force was deployed against the Syrian artillery. This inherently escalatory situation worsened even further because the Syrians wanted to create a crisis that would compel Egypt to end its political boycott of the Baʿath regime and come to Syria's aid. The Soviets considered the Baʿath regime much more their client than Nasser, who scrupulously maintained his independence from the Soviet bear hug, even though the Soviets had furnished arms and other military aid for his attack in Yemen and even financed the construction of the Aswan Dam, his crown jewel. The clashes between Syria and Israel over diversion of the Jordan tributaries entered Israeli national memory as "the War over Water."

In 1959 another factor entered this complex equation with the founding of the Fatah, which adopted the mission of committing terrorist acts in Israeli territory. After 1948 the Palestinians had all but disappeared from the political map of the Middle East. Jordan had taken control of the West Bank, and since the area had a Palestinian majority, Jordan claimed to represent the Palestinians. In fact, it "Jordanized" the West Bank, emphasizing Jordanian identity at the expense of Palestinian identity. The creation of the Fatah was designed to lay down a challenge to Israel and restore to the international agenda the Palestinian claim to replace the Israeli entity with a Palestinian one. In striking at Israel the Fatah intended to draw international attention to the Palestinian issue. But it also challenged Jordan, under whose control the majority of Palestinians lived. After the 1964 Arab summit the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded, under the leadership of Ahmed Shukeiri, as both an umbrella organization for Palestinian organizations including the Fatah and the representative of the Palestinian entity. Shukeiri was supported by Nasser.

The Fatah power base was in Syria, which as we have seen sought to heighten tensions in the region. Thus after 1964 Syria encouraged the Fatah to strike against Israel. The first Fatah strike was against a National Water Carrier installation. Although the terrorists came out of Syria, they entered Israeli territory from Jordanian-controlled areas. In the summer of 1966 a radical branch of the Baʿath party seized power in Syria, heightening tension along the border. Although Israel knew where the terrorists were launching their attacks from, it was unable to act against the Syrians, partly because of Soviet support of the Damascus regime. Israel continued its artillery exchanges with Syria in the Jordan Valley and the Golan Heights. In November 1966, following an incident in which three IDF

soldiers were killed, Israel retaliated with a large-scale daytime ground operation against the village of Samoʿa to the east of Mount Hebron. Forty-one houses were demolished, and Jordanian soldiers and civilians were killed.

The Israeli government led by Levi Eshkol—one of the more moderate politicians in the state's history—approved the operation even though it knew that while the terrorists' tracks led to Mount Hebron, the people who had sent them were in Damascus. It hoped that the operation would motivate King Hussein to take action against the Fatah activists. But the result was the opposite. Palestinian public opinion in Jordan was incensed by what it saw as the regime's failure to protect its Palestinian citizens. There were violent demonstrations in the West Bank that endangered Hashemite rule. The incitement against Hussein, who was viewed as both pro-Western and the rival of the radical regimes in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, reached new heights. At the same time, tension rose in northern Israel with increased aerial activity by the IDF against Syrian emplacements. In April 1967 there was a dogfight between Israeli and Syrian fighters that began over the Golan Heights and ended over Damascus. Six Syrian aircraft were shot down, and all the Israeli planes returned safely to base after performing a victory roll over Damascus.

The Israeli public was unaware of the inter-Arab politics and the Syrian Baʿath government's attempts to force Nasser to recognize and stand with it. Ten years of relative quiet without threats to their country's existence led Israelis to hope that the era of conflict had passed, and an era of peace was approaching. In 1965 Tunisian president Habib Bourgiba made several statements supporting recognition of Israel's right to exist within the 1947 borders. His statements caused an uproar in the Arab League, which flatly rejected them. But to the Israelis this was the first sign of a crack in the wall of Arab hostility. Although Israel was not prepared to withdraw to the 1947 borders, the very fact that an important Arab leader had raised the idea of conciliation was a refreshing novelty.

Abie Nathan was a colorful Tel Aviv bohemian and a pilot who had come to Israel in 1948 and volunteered for the air force. In March 1966, explaining that he had been influenced by Bourgiba's call for peace, Nathan organized a petition calling on Israeli and Egyptian leaders to meet face to face and resolve the problems between the two states, which he planned to hand to the Egyptian president. Seventy thousand people signed the petition, including numerous Israeli Arabs. Nathan took off in a light aircraft for Cairo via Cyprus. When it was mistakenly reported that his plane had crashed on landing, the entire country held its breath. In the end Nathan's mission failed, since Nasser refused to see him, but on his return home he was given a hero's welcome. Abie Nathan's peace initiative was naive, but it did express Israeli citizens' yearning for peace.

NOTES

1. Moshe Dayan, *Avnei derekh* (My Life), Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Idanim and Dvir, 1976, p. 191.

2. Moshe Sharett, Israel State Archives, box 2446, file 6/a.

3. Dayan, *Avnei derekh*, p. 191.

4. Report by the British foreign secretary on his talks with Golda Meir, PRO, FO 371/134348, cited in Mordechai Bar-On, "Status kvo lifnei—o aharei? He'arot parshanut limdiniut habitahon shel Yisrael, 1949–1958" (Status Quo Before—or After? Commentary Notes on Israel's Defense Policy, 1949–1958), *Iyyunim bitkumat Yisrael* (Studies in Israeli and Modern Jewish Society: The Yishuv and the State of Israel), vol. 5, Sdeh Boker, 1995, p. 108.

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PART IV

1967–1977

A DECADE OF WAR

13 SIX DAYS THAT CHANGED THE MIDDLE EAST

The Six-Day War—termed by the Arabs "the June War," yet another in the sequence of full-scale armed conflicts known only by their dates in the Arab narrative—broke out without premeditation on either side and without anyone having predicted that it would occur when it did. It exemplifies a case of a deteriorating security situation resulting from loss of control, which inevitably leads to a clash. It also reveals the limitations of military intelligence, the failures of diplomacy, and how choices made by leaders at crucial moments determine the course of history.

Every nineteen years the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars coincide. In 1967 nineteen years had elapsed since the state was established, and Independence Day, which is always celebrated on the fifth of Iyyar, fell on May 15 as it had in 1948. The annual IDF parade was held in a different city each year, and in 1967 it was Jerusalem's turn to host. Since the armistice agreements forbade bringing heavy weaponry into Jerusalem, the IDF did not display its armor and the parade was low-key. During the procession onlookers noticed that Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin was handed a note, which he passed to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. It said that Egyptian armored units had entered Sinai.

This news was part of a chain of events that had begun several days earlier. It started with intelligence passed to Syria and Egypt by the Soviets saying that Israel had massed twelve brigades in northern Israel and was about to attack Syria. At the time Israel had no plans for such an attack and no forces massed in the north. But the Russians refused to listen to the Israeli denials. Eshkol tried in vain to get the Soviet ambassador to visit Northern Galilee and see for himself that no forces were gathered there. American intelligence sources also denied the presence of Israeli assault forces on the Syrian border. But the Russians persisted, maintaining that Israel planned to attack Syria and topple its Baʿathist regime. Even the absence of armored units in the IDF parade was interpreted as evidence that they were concealed somewhere along the northern border.

The question of why the USSR conveyed this misleading intelligence has yet to be given an adequate answer. What *is* clear is that the situation on the northern border had deteriorated over the previous year, due to the Syrian attempts to divert the Jordan water sources, Israel's consequent reprisals, and Fatah actions supported by Syria. All these events aroused Syrian and Soviet suspicions of a large-scale Israeli response. The Soviets considered the radical Baʿathist govern-

ment their most loyal client in the region, and concern for its fate drove Russia to mobilize Egyptian aid for it. In 1966 an Egyptian-Syrian mutual defense pact had been signed, and Nasser now had to uphold his end of the bargain.

His situation was complicated. A large part of his army remained mired in Yemen, and his status as the undisputed leader of pan-Arabism had been in decline since the dissolution of the UAR. On the home front the termination of American aid had led to economic difficulties. After the 1966 Israeli operation in Samoʿa, Nasser had stirred up the Palestinians against King Hussein. Now the king had an opportunity to reciprocate. He claimed that Nasser was hiding behind the UN peacekeeping force at Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gaza Strip instead of coming to the assistance of his Arab brethren. This Jordanian claim was in line with demands from the upper echelons of the Egyptian army to expel the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) and cast off the restrictions that Egypt had agreed to informally when the Israelis evacuated Sinai in 1957. The army assured Nasser that it could withstand a confrontation with the IDF and defeat it. Now that the Soviets were saying that Israel was threatening Syria, Nasser felt he must take action. His first step was to send Egyptian armored units into Sinai. This was the content of the message passed to Rabin at the IDF parade.

The next three weeks entered the Israeli lexicon as "the waiting period." At first the Israelis hoped that this breach of the de facto demilitarization of Sinai could be resolved through quiet diplomacy and low-key military action, enabling Nasser to withdraw his forces without losing prestige, as had happened in the early 1960s in Operation Rotem. But this time the Egyptian army's entry into Sinai was accompanied by vociferous propaganda disseminated by the Arab media in order to heighten the effect of the military move and underscore its significance. A quiet Egyptian withdrawal was out of the question. The next step was a natural progression from the first one. Nasser demanded of the UN secretary general that he evacuate the UNEF from the Gaza Strip, Sinai, and the Straits of Tiran. Secretary General U Thant, who had not been involved in the 1957 negotiations—and it is doubtful that he was aware of the complexity of the situation—announced that the UNEF would be withdrawn immediately. Later a debate focused on whether Nasser meant a complete withdrawal of the UNEF, or simply redeployment further from the front line. But the decisive fact was that these areas were under Egyptian sovereignty, and the UNEF presence there depended on Egyptian consent. Once this consent was withdrawn, the UNEF had no legal basis for remaining.

U Thant's quick agreement to withdraw the UNEF obliged Nasser to take further action; it was inconceivable that Egyptian troops would sit at the Straits of Tiran and allow vessels flying the Israeli flag, or sailing to Israel, to pass unhindered. On May 23 Nasser announced a blockade of the Straits—an inevitable

outcome of the UNEF evacuation. All Israel's Sinai Campaign gains had been erased in the span of eight days. Nasser's prestige was never greater—all his previous failures were now forgotten and he acquired the status of a knight fighting for the pan-Arab cause who would eliminate the Israeli presence from the Middle East. In Arab states from North Africa to Iraq, the media hailed Nasser's triumph and predicted the imminent end of the Zionist entity. In the streets of the Arab capitals, there were stormy rallies of support for Nasser, with slogans calling for him to throw the Jews into the sea.

Israel was not entirely free of responsibility for creating the tension. About a month before Independence Day, the clashes with the Syrians on the northern border had escalated as a result of the downing of the Syrian planes in the dogfight over the Golan Heights. In the following weeks there were more than ten incidents involving Fatah terrorists from Syria. On the eve of Independence Day, Prime Minister Eshkol and Chief of Staff Rabin made statements that sounded like threats to Syria. These statements were not essentially different from those made in past Independence Day interviews, but the Syrians interpreted them as a promise of a large-scale Israeli reprisal for Syrian support of the Fatah's guerilla actions against Israel. As the waiting period began, the actions of Israel's government telegraphed a discouragement and weakness that helped heighten the tension and convince the Egyptians that they could move to the brink without fear of an Israeli response.

After the withdrawal from Sinai and the Straits in 1957, Israel had defined the blockade as a casus belli. Now the government headed by Levi Eshkol sought a way to open the Straits of Tiran without resorting to force. At the same time, it sought allies among the Western powers in case Israel was attacked by Egypt or forced into a war. The prime possible ally was the United States. In 1957 the Americans had not undertaken to keep the Straits of Tiran open as an international waterway, but they had recognized Israel's right to self-defense should Egypt close them. Now a massive diplomatic effort got underway to prevent the outbreak of a war that might lead to confrontation between the two superpowers. The Soviet-led Eastern bloc considered Nasser's victory its own and demanded that Israel accept the loss of its 1957 gains. The Western nations, on the other hand, displayed no resolve. French president Charles de Gaulle, taking this opportunity to restore France to the status of a Great Power, demanded talks among the Four Powers. At the same time, he warned that Israel should not dare go to war and announced an embargo on arms to the Middle East—a move that mainly affected Israel, which was equipped with French weaponry and needed spare parts. US president Lyndon B. Johnson was a friend of Israel, and in 1957 when still a US senator he had opposed the Eisenhower administration's pressure on Israel. But now he was mired in the Vietnam War, facing fierce opposition to this awful war at home, and the last thing he needed was another front.

Concern over a confrontation between the superpowers intensified. During the first weeks of the waiting period, Israel did not gain the support for which it had hoped from the United States, which focused on stopping the Israelis from attacking and preventing an outbreak of fighting in the Middle East. The Israelis sought two assurances: that there be no recurrence of the American pressure of 1957, and that should war break out, the United States would prevent Soviet military involvement. The American administration proposed the Regatta Plan, whereby an international flotilla would break the blockade and ensure freedom of passage through the Straits. But it rapidly emerged that no countries were prepared to send naval vessels to engage in such an effort. Instead it was proposed that the International Court of Justice in The Hague hold a thorough, prolonged hearing, then rule on whether the Straits were an international waterway or Egyptian territorial waters, as the Egyptians claimed. This solution would ensure Egypt of victory without a shot being fired. Israel's deterrent capability was now dead in the water, for two "redlines" of its policy—demilitarization of Sinai and keeping the Straits of Tiran open—had been crossed without an Israeli response. In the meantime the IDF mobilized its reserves. The two armies faced each other along the Egyptian border. For the Israelis this situation was unsustainable; the entire fabric of normal life was destabilized, economic activity was frozen, and tension was at a peak.

Israel now knew difficult times. The frenzy gripping the Arab states, the threats of destruction heard from the Arab media from morning till night—especially on radio and television (Israel did not yet have its own TV network, but picked up Arab broadcasts)—created an eve-of-Holocaust atmosphere: once again, they were coming to annihilate the Jews. PLO chairman Ahmed Shukeiri declared, "In the event of a conflagration, no Jews whatsoever will survive."[1] Again the discourse of World War Two rang out loud and clear, for Israelis perceived the apparently neutral stance of the Western countries as abandonment of their weak ally, leaving it at the mercy of the aggressor. Over and over commentators compared Israel to Czechoslovakia, which the Western powers had abandoned to the Nazis when the Munich Pact was signed. The French *L'Express* ran the headline "Mourir pour Akaba?" (To die for Aqaba?), raising associations with "To Die for Danzig?" a headline that had appeared on the eve of World War Two. The newspaper's answer was that a world war should not be risked for Israel's sake. On June 3, 1967, the British magazine *Economist* stated:

> The simple fact is that we have no honest call to fight the Arabs because they have on one count, however important, out-manoeuvred Israel. The West is committed to Israel's preservation as a viable state and would fight if that were threatened. But a loss of a gain that Israel won from its Sinai campaign (helped

by the Anglo-French action at Suez) is not the same as Israel's destruction. . . . The Israelis are not any longer arguing from a position of obvious strength. . . . President Nasser has to choose between being a local Arab Bismarck and a statesman with a claim to world stature. The Israelis have the unhappier and lesser choice of seizing the ball of peace if and when it is thrown at them.[2]

Deep, almost palpable anxiety gripped the people of Israel. Hundreds of thousands of them had either experienced the Holocaust or lost their families in it. The Eichmann trial a few years before had deepened awareness of the Holocaust in all Israelis, and with it the fear of annihilation. Rumors predicted tens of thousands dead in the approaching conflict, and the terror of air raids on population centers increased the sense of helplessness and fear. The Western powers' feeble response and the belligerent, arrogant, triumphant voices from the Arab states created a feeling of isolation and siege. The only ally to stand unreservedly with Israel was the Jewish people. For the first two weeks of the waiting period, American Jewry did not realize that this was a genuine crisis. Then the Arab threats against Israel's very existence slowly penetrated their consciousness. "Will there be another Auschwitz, another Dachau, another Treblinka?" wondered philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel.[3] Mobilization for Israel was extraordinary. There had not been such warm and unequivocal expressions of identification with and support for the people of Israel by American and European Jewry since 1948. Support took the form of donations, an emergency appeal, rallies, and attempts at political pressure, especially in Washington. Jewish solidarity was heartwarming and particularly notable in view of the cold shoulder Israel received from the rest of the world.

The army's mood contrasted sharply with that of the public. The IDF command did not doubt that it could beat the Egyptian army, especially if it was able to attack first. However, it estimated that although the battle would end with an Israeli victory, there would be thousands of casualties. The IDF General Staff pressed for approval for going to war, but the government could not reach a decision. A vote held on May 27 ended in a tie between those advocating immediate action and those who wanted diplomacy to run its course. Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, who favored immediate action, did not want to make such a fateful decision by casting the prime minister's deciding vote, and chose to wait. On May 28 he announced this decision on the radio.

This announcement, which entered Israeli lore as "the stammering speech," since Eshkol was unable to decipher the text before him and stumbled over his words, added to the already high tension in every Israeli home that evening. Eshkol's delivery demonstrated weakness, as did his announcement that the waiting period would continue. Israeli public opinion, particularly as expressed

in the media, lost its faith in his leadership abilities just at this moment of crisis. Since the beginning of the waiting period, some public figures, including opposition leader Menachem Begin, had proposed bringing Ben-Gurion back from his self-imposed exile in Sdeh Boker. But Ben-Gurion thought Israel should not go to war without one of the powers as an ally, as it had in 1956. He excoriated Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin, who sought his advice, contending that his belligerent statements and mobilization of reserve units in the first stage of the waiting period (even though the mobilization was limited) had led Israel into a trap under unfavorable conditions. He demanded entrenchment and waiting.

Torn between a dithering government and a General Staff spoiling for a fight, and hurt by the rebuke from Ben-Gurion, the chief of staff collapsed and was ordered to rest for twenty-four hours. He returned to his duties on May 23. After May 28 public pressure for a change of leadership was channeled into the political system, and cabinet members demanded that the defense portfolio (which Eshkol held in addition to being prime minister) be transferred to someone with a security background. The front-runner was Moshe Dayan, the victor of the Sinai Campaign. At the same time, the National Religious Party (NRP) was pressing to enlarge the government to include Gahal (*Gush Herut-Liberalim*, Herut-Liberals Bloc, founded in 1965) and Rafi (*Reshimat Poalei Yisrael*, Israeli Workers List), the party that had split from Mapai in the wake of the Lavon Affair. On June 1 this was done, and a "national unity government" was formed. Menachem Begin was appointed minister without portfolio and Dayan became minister of defense.

On May 30 King Hussein jumped on the bandwagon of pan-Arab nationalism. He was aware that Syria and Egypt constantly undermined him, depicting him as a pawn of imperialism and the West. But in view of the public enthusiasm (particularly among Palestinians) in his own country, and anticipating an imminent conflict, Hussein felt he had no choice. If he did not join the struggle, he would lose his legitimacy in the eyes of his people, whether Egypt won or lost. He flew to Egypt and signed a mutual defense pact with Nasser. He even placed his army under Egyptian command and allowed Iraqi army units into his territory. Numerous historians see this pact as the straw that broke the camel's back, as it related to Israel's patience, for the threat against Israel's long, vulnerable eastern border was intolerable. The entry of the Iraqis into Jordan was another cause for anxiety; liaison between the Jordanian and Egyptian armies heightened the sense of siege.

The waiting period was supposed to give President Johnson an opportunity to explore every avenue for opening the Straits of Tiran by peaceful means. As the days went by, it became clear that this hope was futile and that the American idea of a flotilla to break the blockade was a pipe dream. Meanwhile for the Israelis the problem of the Straits became secondary to the confrontation of the two fully mobilized armies on the southern border, with no possibility of disengagement

on the horizon. The Americans would not give Israel the green light to attack, but intimated that they would not oppose Israeli action. Meir Amit, head of the Mossad, flew to the United States on May 31 to ascertain the American position and returned to Israel with an "amber light." The United States, he said, would not "sit shivah" (that is, mourn—referring to the seven-day Jewish mourning period) if Israel attacked Egypt. The fear of a recurrence of American pressure on Israel as in 1956 was weakened, though not completely dissipated.

On June 2 the new Israeli government decided to go to war. On June 5, after three weeks of waiting, the IDF launched its offensive.

The Six-Day War was the shortest and most exceptional of all Israel's wars in terms of the scope of the victory, the relatively low casualty figures, and the area occupied. Israel was drawn into this war under duress and without preplanned objectives, and its developments were determined by ministers, public opinion, commanders on the ground, and the fortunes of war. Israel went to war in order to defeat the Egyptian army and open the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. It ended the war in complete control of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula as far as the Suez Canal. Within three hours the Israeli Air Force destroyed the Egyptian air force. It then turned its attention to destroying the air forces of Syria and Jordan. It was this aerial victory that decided the outcome of the war. Within two days the Egyptian army in Sinai had been dealt a decisive blow and was in retreat, with the IDF on its tail. Dayan had wanted to halt ten kilometers from the canal in order to prevent its being closed, since this complication would hurt Israel's relations with the Great Powers. But the campaign developed in such a way that the IDF reached the banks of the canal.

The war with Jordan developed at the same time. On the first day the Jordanians shelled Jerusalem and along the length of the border with Israel. Israel wanted to avoid a war on several fronts and had no aggressive intentions toward Jordan, so Eshkol sent a message to King Hussein stating that if he kept out of the fighting and stopped the shelling, Israel would fully uphold the armistice agreement. But instead the shelling of Jerusalem intensified, shells hit the Ramat David air base, and the Jordanians attempted to take the high commissioner's residence (housing the UN observer team), which commanded southern Jerusalem. As a result, the government was drawn into making decisions that led to the occupation of the West Bank. The first order was to ensure access to Mount Scopus, an Israeli enclave in Jordanian territory, which it was feared would be unable to withstand an Arab Legion attack. The order was then extended to include East Jerusalem, but not the Old City, then finally the entire West Bank.

Once the fighting in Sinai and the West Bank was over, the cabinet discussed whether or not to take the Golan Heights. Throughout the war Syria had made no real attempts to attack Israel and aid Egypt or Jordan, apart from continued

shelling of the Jordan Valley settlements. The cabinet hesitated, fearing Soviet intervention if Israel attacked Syria, especially in view of the Israeli successes against Egypt. On the other hand, Syria had started the imbroglio that led to the war, and continued shelling the Jordan Valley throughout it. The Jordan Valley's inhabitants composed a pressure group that pushed for occupying the Heights. A majority in the cabinet favored taking the Heights, with Dayan opposed. The UN was pressing for a ceasefire—which the Arabs rejected again and again, demanding first an unconditional Israeli withdrawal to the lines of June 4—and it seemed time no longer remained for a war against Syria. But in the early hours of June 9, the fifth day of the war, Dayan circumvented the prime minister and the chief of staff and issued a direct order to Commanding Officer of the Northern Command David Elazar to conquer the Golan Heights. Occupation of the Heights, which command the Jordan Valley and Eastern Galilee, took less than two days.

The six days of fighting changed the face of the Middle East. Israel was transformed from an underdog under threat of destruction to a regional power whose positions had to be taken into account. The majority of the Golan Heights' inhabitants left with the Syrian army, but in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip close to a million Palestinians stayed on.

During the first nineteen years of Israel's history, it had accepted the armistice borders as permanent. Some did dream of a Greater Israel within the original Mandatory borders. Begin's Herut party continued to demand all of Western Eretz Yisrael. In Hakibbutz Hameuhad, too, led by Yitzhak Tabenkin, yearnings for a Greater Israel had not faded. But even these organizations effectively accepted the reality of the partitioned country and did not translate their yearning into a political plan of action. As the years went by the attachment to a Greater Israel dimmed. The generation that had grown up in the young state neither knew nor desired Greater Israel. Most of the population consisted of immigrants who had arrived after 1948, who knew no other reality than the armistice borders. When Gahal was founded, its platform did not include the Herut clause about Greater Israel, which had damaged Herut's legitimacy among the general public because it seemed like warmongering.

On Independence Day Eve, May 12, 1967, *Ma'ariv*, a popular evening paper, published an interview by Geula Cohen, a former Lehi fighter, with David Ben-Gurion, who had retired to Sdeh Boker. Cohen asked, "Mr. Ben-Gurion, what will you tell your grandson today when he asks you, 'Grandpa, what are the borders of my homeland?'" Ben-Gurion responded, "Well, I will answer him, 'The borders of your homeland are the borders of the State of Israel as they are now. That is all.'" And he added, "There are no absolute borders. Had the Arabs accepted the UN resolution [of 1947], our borders would have been reduced . . . 'Historical borders' is a concept for the coming of the Messiah." Cohen per-

sisted, "Would you encourage an Israeli child to write a song of longing for a greater Jerusalem?" "If he wants to write it, he should write it," Ben-Gurion answered dryly. "I would not write one."[4]

The unconditional withdrawal from Sinai in 1957 had reinforced Israelis' acceptance of the Green Line, the armistice borders. This does not mean that the 1948 generation—the graduates of Hakibbutz Hameuhad or the Etzel and Lehi—harbored no latent dreams of a Greater Israel. But it is doubtful that those dreams drove the shapers of policy, and they were certainly not a motivation for the generation of the state. Yet a hidden ember remained, and it burst into a great flame during and following the Six-Day War. The decisions to extend the fighting against Jordan, and especially to conquer Jerusalem, which Ministers Begin and Allon had urged, were not made solely for strategic reasons. The assault on Jerusalem was motivated by emotions that went beyond political needs. When the paratroops arrived at the Western Wall, their deep feelings made them weep. These were not religiously observant troops, and the shofar blasts sounded by the IDF chief rabbi, Shlomo Goren, did not speak to them. But something in that encounter with Jewish history, with the Wailing Wall, shook them to the very roots of their being.

It is rather interesting that the National Religious Party headed by Moshe Chaim Shapira held the greatest concerns about going to war and had opposed any aggressive Israeli move. Shapira opposed the conquest of Jerusalem on the grounds that once Israel entered the city, it would be unable to leave. He meant that public opinion would force it to remain there, and that would be Israel's undoing in the international arena. And indeed the enthusiasm that engulfed the entire Jewish people, in Israel and the Diaspora, with the conquest of Jerusalem, highlighted hidden desires and previously unsuspected levels of consciousness and identification.

As a result of this storm of emotions, after the cabinet discussed the outcomes of the war on June 19, it announced that Israel was willing to withdraw from Sinai and the Golan Heights in return for peace agreements with its neighbors, but did not include Jerusalem and the West Bank in this offer. Instead it said that the West Bank territories would be the subject of negotiations with Jordan. The announcement underscored the difference between the Sinai Campaign and the Six-Day War. This time Israel saw its territorial gains as a lever for achieving peace with its neighbors, and the "land for peace" formula was drafted. For the first time since the 1948 war, the Israelis felt they had something to give up in return for peace. However, removing the areas west of the River Jordan from the formula left the possibility of peace talks with Israel's most suitable partner, King Hussein of Jordan, open to question.

Given the severe trauma the Israeli public had lived through on the eve of the

war, the euphoria that followed the brilliant victory was natural. Tremendous relief joined with pride in the achievement and the hope that this war would be the last. Dayan announced that he was awaiting a phone call from the Arab rulers. His phone did not ring. What the Israelis saw as a victory of the weak and beleaguered over belligerent adversaries was to the Arabs an appalling humiliation, damaging to the national honor and calling for vengeance and "another round" to erase the shame. The Khartoum Conference held in September 1967 and attended by eight Arab states declared three "Nos": no recognition of Israel, no negotiations, and no peace. What has been taken by force will be restored by force, declared Nasser, who had momentarily lost his composure and resigned, then returned to office boosted by his people's mass demonstrations of support. Although Israel had proved itself capable of defeating the Arabs, it could not force peace upon them. The basic balance of power between the small state and its numerous powerful neighbors was not altered by the Six-Day War. The USSR replenished the stockpiles of arms and equipment lost by Egypt and Syria. After only a few months their arsenals had been restocked. However, the Khartoum Conference resolutions also hinted for the first time that diplomatic steps to return the territory occupied in the war might be possible. These mixed signals—of war, directed at Arab public opinion, and of negotiations, muted and hesitant, directed toward the West—led to contradictory interpretations of the Arabs' positions.

Israel's victory was also interpreted as a victory of the West over the USSR and its satellites. Soviet arms had failed against Western weapons systems. The Soviets' false reports on Israeli troop concentrations in the north, and later their unqualified support of Nasser and buttressing of the Egyptians' belief that they could win the war, had induced Nasser to take his provocative actions. Yet at the same time, the Soviets' involvement remained limited, since they were unwilling to become involved in actual fighting. The United States and the USSR agreed to avoid direct military involvement and maintained a precarious balance between themselves. Thus the Soviets limited their own action to breaking off diplomatic relations with Israel. The Eastern bloc countries, except for Romania, followed suit, as did some African states.

After many months of negotiations all the parties succeeded in formulating a draft resolution acceptable to the UN Security Council, which on November 22, 1967, was passed as UN Security Council Resolution 242. The Arabs would not accept a resolution that bound them to either recognize or negotiate with Israel. They demanded an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all territories it had occupied in the war. Israel refused to accept this condition and demanded recognition, peace, and a withdrawal to "secure and recognized boundaries." The Great Powers maneuvered between these differing demands. The resolution stressed that territories must not be annexed by war, but also that

action should be taken to create "a just and lasting peace" among all the countries of the region. Israel was to withdraw "from territories occupied in the recent conflict," while the Arabs were to relinquish the state of war and recognize and respect the sovereignty and integrity of the countries of the region (i.e., Israel) and their right "to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries." Additionally freedom of shipping had to be guaranteed and the refugee problem resolved. A UN special envoy would travel to the region to move these arrangements forward.

The English version, considered the official version of the resolution, mentions withdrawal "from territories" (see previous paragraph)—that is, not necessarily from *all* the territories. However, the French version adds the definite article, allowing an interpretation that withdrawal included all the territories, which is how the Arabs interpreted it. Egypt and Jordan accepted the resolution immediately. Israel agreed a few weeks later, and Syria accepted it only after Hafez al-Assad assumed rule. The Palestinians rejected the resolution out of hand, since they were mentioned only indirectly, in the reference to the refugee problem.

An unforeseen outcome of the war was the reemergence of the Palestinian problem. After the War of Independence the Arab states and Israel had appropriated the territories assigned to the Palestinian state in the UN resolution of November 1947. The Palestinians had no national representation. Their attempts to reenter the international arena as an entity in their own right began with the founding of the Fatah and PLO. At this stage the Palestinians demanded all of Western Palestine, and would not accept the existence of the State of Israel. After the Six-Day War, Israel found itself ruling over more than a million Palestinians. For the first time since the early 1950s, the Israelis came face to face with the Palestinians, who until then had lived across the border, far from the Israeli public's consciousness. This encounter now sparked debates over the refugees' hardships, and even about Israel's duty to contribute to resolving the problem. At the same time, the PLO now had a wide scope for action against Israel inside the occupied territories and could undertake a war of liberation, as other nations under foreign rule had done. The awakening of Palestinian nationalism was a direct result of the Arab states' failure to destroy Israel militarily. The PLO now embraced the idea of a protracted armed struggle in the form of guerilla warfare, as the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) had done in Algeria.

NOTES

1. "Mourir pour Akaba," *L'Express*, June 5–11, 1967, p. 15. Cited by Benjamin Kedar, "Milhamot kenekudot mifne bahistoria" (Wars as Turning Points in History), in Asher Susser (ed.), *Shisha yamim—shloshim shana: mabat hadash al milhemet sheshet hayamim* (Six Days—Thirty Years: New Perspectives on the Six-Day War), Tel Aviv, Am Oved, and the Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israel Studies, 1999, p. 25.

2. "Can Nasser Make Peace?" *Economist*, June 3, 1967, pp. 994–995, cited by Benjamin Kedar, "Milkhamot kenekudot mifne bahistoria" (Wars as Turning Points in History), in Asher Susser (ed.), *Shisha yamim—shloshim shana: mabat hadash al milkhemet sheshet hayamim* (Six Days—Thirty Years: New Perspectives on the Six-Day War), Tel Aviv, Am Oved, and the Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israel Studies, 1999, pp. 25–26.

3. M. L. Urofsky, *We Are One: American Jewry and Israel*, Garden City, NJ: 1978, p. 350, cited by Menachem Kaufman, "Hashpaʿat milhemet sheshet hayamim al hitpathuta shel hamagbit hayehudit hameuhedet" (The United Jewish Appeal in the Six-Day War), *Yahadut Zemanenu* (Contemporary Judaism), vol. 9, Jerusalem, 1995, p. 210.

4. Geula Cohen, "Be'arba einayyim im David Ben-Gurion" (Tête-à-tête with Ben-Gurion), *Maʿariv*, 12.5.1967.

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14 THE AGE OF EUPHORIA, 1967–1973

After the Six-Day War the face of Israel changed. The deep, pervasive anxiety of the three-week waiting period gave way to euphoria: "We were like unto them that dream" (Psalms 126:1). Suddenly Israel was a world celebrity. No longer a sleepy country in a remote corner of the Middle East, it was now the focus of events of global significance. Journalists and TV crews flocked to Israel from all over the world. They were followed by thousands of volunteers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, who were excited by the military feats of this small country against all its aggressors. The volunteers found places in kibbutzim, helping with seasonal work, replacing youngsters serving in the army or mobilized for reserve service. They brought to Israel the flavors and trends of the larger world. The partial isolation Israel had experienced in its first nineteen years—both because outsiders lacked interest in it and because its shortage of foreign currency restricted foreign travel for its citizens—was well and truly over.

Israel was now a regional power governing a million Palestinians and territory four times larger than it had before the war. This situation created a range of difficulties that remained on the public agenda for the next decade and beyond. The first was security. The victory had not brought the longed-for peace but had worsened relations between Israel and its neighbors. The relative quiet of the prewar decade did not return. Only a few months after the war ended, Palestinian terrorist attacks commenced in Israel and against Israeli targets abroad, reaching their peak with the murder of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972. In March 1969 the "War of Attrition" along the Suez Canal began; it continued until August 1970.

Rule over the new territories became a leading topic in Israeli political discourse. What would be done with the occupied territories? Were they a bargaining chip to induce the Arabs to make peace with Israel, or were they a vital strategic addition to the security of the state? Jewish settlement in the territories fit the Zionist impulse and myth, according to which the Jewish plow determined the borders. Should the Green Line borders be extended through Jewish settlement in the occupied territories, or should Jews settle only in sparsely populated Arab areas, according to security needs? And finally there was the cultural-moral debate about ruling another people: was it justified and, if at all, under what conditions? Messianic overtones, religious and secular alike, soon imbued these debates.

Jewish communities throughout the world, particularly in America, shared the

MAP 7. THE POST–SIX-DAY WAR BORDERS, AND SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, 1967–1977. (SEE PLATE 7.)

elation and the joy of deliverance in the wake of the victory. The sense of a common destiny between Israel and the Jewish people had never been stronger. During the waiting period even Hannah Arendt, not known for her empathy for Israel and the Israelis, expressed anxiety over their fate. The Jews in the Diaspora felt like proud partners in the IDF's victory, and demonstrated this in displays of identification with the state and visits to Israel, as well as a surge in donations. There was also a wave of aliya of tens of thousands of Jews from Western countries.

Although the USSR had severed its relations with Israel after the war, this did not deter Soviet Jews from demonstrating support for their brethren in Israel. A swell of enthusiasm swept through these "Jews of silence." After the Six-Day War, Jews in the USSR embarked on a public struggle for the right to immigrate to Israel. Until then all activity on behalf of Soviet Jewry had been underground for fear of harming the Zionist activists in Russia. But now these activists gave the signal to shift to overt public activity. In November 1969 Prime Minister Golda Meir read from the Knesset podium a letter from eighteen Jewish families in Georgia who publicly claimed their right to immigrate. In 1971 an international congress was held in Brussels to mobilize world public opinion on behalf of the struggle, under the biblical supplication that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had turned into a political slogan—"Let my people go."

Russian Jewry's struggle for its right to immigrate to Israel was heroic. Activists in the USSR founded groups to study the Hebrew language and Jewish history, tradition, and religion to bolster Jewish national consciousness. They held meetings in woods outside Russian cities, with Hebrew sing-alongs, discussions on Israel, and readings of various texts. Israel, which in 1953 had established Nativ, an underground network aimed at reinforcing Jewish national consciousness in Russia, assisted covertly. Now thousands of Jews submitted applications to leave the USSR and immigrate to Israel, most of which were denied by the authorities, and the "refuseniks," the name given to those whose applications were denied, were dismissed from their jobs. Neither unemployment nor police harassment deterred them from fomenting agitation that threatened to spread to a widening circle of opponents of the regime.

In the United States a large public movement of Jews and non-Jews alike emerged in support of Soviet Jewry, which reached its climax with the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment passed by both houses of Congress. Sponsored by Senator Henry Jackson, the amendment denied economic benefits in trade relations to countries that restricted freedom of emigration and other human rights. While it is doubtful that the amendment actually helped increase immigration—which diminished after it was passed—the discussions surrounding it in the years before passage apparently influenced the Soviets to allow Jews to leave. Possibly they wanted to get rid of the aliya activists by allowing them to leave, then reclos-

ing the borders. Either way, in the first half of the 1970s about a quarter of a million Jews were allowed to leave the USSR. The majority—some 160,000—were absorbed in Israel, and the rest went to other countries.

This new wave of aliya was accompanied by generous donations from Western Jews to aid its absorption. The government also spent large sums in order to redeploy the army in the new territories to meet the new threats that arose after the war. Oil wells in Sinai now supplied about half of Israel's fuel needs. All these factors led to accelerated economic growth that replaced the stagnation and recession of the early 1960s, which had caused unemployment and diminished economic activity.

The Green Line border between Israel and the West Bank was now opened to two-way traffic, with both sides displaying intense curiosity about the other. Israelis flooded the West Bank markets, where they bought goods and commodities at far lower prices than in "Little Israel." Israeli tourist traffic clogged the West Bank roads. The 1948 generation revisited the sites of their battles, where they reminisced and shed tears for comrades who had not lived to see this day. People who had come to Israel after the War of Independence were now able, for the first time, to encounter the expanses of Greater Israel and the historical sites etched in the collective memory: the Temple Mount, the Western Wall, the Cave of Machpelah (Cave of the Patriarchs), and Rachel's Tomb. In addition to Masada, a pilgrimage site from the Yishuv period, they could visit Herodion and Gamla, forts also renowned as Jewish strongholds in the war against the Romans. The remains of Avshalom Feinberg of the Nili spy network, who had perished under mysterious circumstances on his way to Egypt in World War One, were now discovered on the Rafah border, where a palm tree had grown from a date seed he supposedly had left there. The romance of this tree competed with that of the oak tree remaining in the destroyed Etzion Bloc, now the site of renewed Jewish settlement by the sons and daughters of its evacuees. Areas that had been closed to Israeli archeologists were now opened to research that would enrich knowledge of the antiquity of the Jews in their land.

Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan was now a celebrated symbol of Israeli daring and defiance. His face with its black eye patch graced newscasts and magazine covers. World famous, he also became the most admired statesman in Israel. Dayan sought to maintain a "soft" occupation of the West Bank that interfered as little as possible in the lives of the Arabs. The IDF was in charge of security, but everything else remained under the jurisdiction of Jordanian law. Local government was in the hands of the mayors appointed by King Hussein (until the municipal elections of 1976). Within a short time peace and public security in the West Bank were ensured. Still shocked by the defeat, in the first months after the Israeli occupation the Palestinians displayed no resistance.

They were surprised by the enlightened attitude of the occupiers, whom Arab propaganda had portrayed as human beasts. In Hebron inhabitants anticipated Jewish vengeance for the 1929 massacre, and when it did not materialize there was both a sigh of relief and a willingness to cooperate with the occupier in returning to normal life.

The war disrupted the connection between the West Bank and the rest of the Arab world. The natural market for local produce was Jordan. Palestinian merchants began shipping agricultural produce from the west bank of the River Jordan to the east bank, with the trucks crossing the river through its shallow, end-of-summer waters since the bridges had been destroyed. What began as a local initiative, supported by IDF officers, became the basis of Israeli administration policy. Dayan understood the importance of the link between the two banks of the river, and he was also aware of the economic importance of the Palestinian farmers marketing their produce in Jordan and from there to the Gulf states. Once repaired, the Jordan bridges carried heavy traffic in both directions and became the lifeline of the West Bank. At the same time, tens of thousands of Arab workers from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank began looking for work in Israel. The major construction enterprises, renewed after the war, required workers. Army bases built in the occupied territories, fortifications along the Suez Canal, the new settlements in the territories, all provided work for Arab laborers and generated prosperity in the West Bank.

Moshe Dayan believed that what he called "enlightened occupation" would ensure Israeli control of Arab-populated territories over the long term, without the need to resort to significant force. This concept grew out of his belief that economic interest could mitigate national conflicts, and also from his perception of the Palestinians as a population that had never been totally independent and would likely accept the Jewish occupiers if they acted wisely and respected the Palestinians and their customs. Dayan opposed annexation of "the territories" (which Israelis referred to as either "occupied" or "liberated," depending on their viewpoint). Israel did annex East Jerusalem and its environs in accordance with a law passed by the Knesset. Later, in 1981, the Golan Heights also became subject to Israeli law. Three Arab villages in the Latrun enclave were demolished and their inhabitants expelled, and the road to Jerusalem was relaid on their sites, on the assumption that any future political settlement would include this minor territorial adjustment. But otherwise Israel steered clear of any change in the situation existing in the West Bank.

Israel avoided annexation both in the hope of reaching some kind of accommodation with Jordan and also out of reluctance to grant citizenship to a million Arabs, which would change the state's demographic makeup and jeopardize its character as the Jewish state. This fear was clearly evident from day one of the

occupation. Ben-Gurion spoke openly about returning all the occupied territories, except for Jerusalem, in return for peace. Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz went even further, demanding a complete, unilateral Israeli withdrawal, even without a peace agreement, because of the moral corruption the occupation brought with it. The appearance of thousands of Arab workers all over Israel aroused opposition from groups that during the Yishuv period had subscribed to the ideology of "Hebrew labor." Nevertheless the belief that in the Jewish state Jews should occupy all social strata had eroded, and a reality reminiscent of the socioeconomic stratification in colonial societies was created, in which the majority of agricultural and construction workers were Arabs.

The general euphoria that followed the victory manifested itself mostly in two ways, one vociferous, arrogant, and patronizing, the other low-key. The first appeared in victory albums published after the war that lauded the IDF and its commanders, turning them into celebrities and media darlings. A number of books published after the war related the heroics of various soldiers and units. Among these the most noteworthy was Shabtai Teveth's *The Tanks of Tammuz.* It described the troops of "the Division of Steel"—the armored division commanded by Major General Yisrael Tal—focusing on the brigade commanded by Colonel Shmuel Gonen. The book exalted the heroism of the brigade's officers and men—many of whom were to leave their mark in future wars—and became immensely popular. It plucked the heartstrings of an Israeli public longing for exemplary figures from the recent war, heroes of the "state generation" who replaced the heroes of previous generations.

The victory albums exploited the popularity of the IDF and its commanders while broadcasting uninhibited triumphalism, saturating the public with expressions of the IDF's superiority, the preeminence of its command echelons, and the pitifulness of the Arabs. The commanders emerged from the relative anonymity that until now had characterized the defense establishment and became household names. The tendency to refer to these figures by their nicknames reflected the public's sense of familiarity with the military leadership: "Arik" (Ariel Sharon), "Talik" (Yisrael Tal), "Gorodish" (Shmuel Gonen), "Dado" (David Elazar), "Motta" (Mordechai Gur), and so forth.

In summer 1967, at a ceremony held in the amphitheater of the Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which had been abandoned for nineteen years, Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin received an honorary doctorate. He delivered an address in which he laid out a very different approach toward victory: avoiding triumphal displays, emphasizing the heavy cost of the war for the victors and the suffering of the vanquished, and sharing the triumph among the whole army, while extolling the values of morality and the spirit. This spiritual attitude was also evident in the emblematic book of the time, *Siah Lohamim* (sol-

diers' talk, whose English title is *The Seventh Day*), which was seen as an expression of undercurrents of feeling in Israeli society. The soldiers had returned home from the war silent and saddened, and the kibbutz movement decided to conduct a series of interviews with its sons who had come back stunned by their experiences. The movement had sustained many casualties; approximately one quarter of the total fatalities were kibbutz members, five times their proportion in the population. The interviews were intended to encourage the soldiers to unburden themselves of their painful memories. The initiative had come from the editorial board of *Shdemot*, the kibbutz movement's literary digest, which since the early 1960s had sought to infuse the kibbutzim with Jewish tradition and the Jewish library. Among the interviewers and interviewees were Amos Oz, Muki Tsur, Abba Kovner, and the book's editor, Avraham Shapira. *The Seventh Day* appeared in October 1967 as an internal kibbutz movement publication. However, talk of it spread, and the demand for copies was great. It was soon published for the general public and became part of the Israeli canon.

The Seventh Day gave expression to the "minor" voice in Israeli society, the values of the generation that had not fought in the War of Independence but had grown up after it in "Little Israel" with the fear of annihilation and the terror of war. The youngsters who fought in the War of Independence had had no fear of defeat in the war and what it might entail. But it was evident that consciousness of the Holocaust had entered the psyche of the younger generation. Their awareness of what the Jewish people had undergone in Europe during World War Two led to two conclusions: that the Arab threats of throwing the Jews into the sea were real, and that it was their duty to defend the nation, to prevent a recurrence of mass extermination and degradation of the Jewish people's human dignity. "All of us agree that both our fighting spirit and our strength in this war sprang from the certain knowledge that the Arabs were bent on a war of annihilation," said Yariv Ben-Aharon.[1] A few years before the war, Ofer Feniger wrote to his girlfriend:

> . . . I sit at the memorial evening for the victims of the Holocaust, staring into the eyes of the survivors who are sitting near me, and their entire being expresses helplessness and hopelessness. . . . Out of all this horror and helplessness I feel arising within me a tremendous will to be strong, strong to the brink of tears, strong and keen as a knife, composed and terrible and dangerous. This is what I want to be! I want to know that never again will those vacant eyes stare from behind electrified fences! Only if I am strong will they not do so! Only if we are all strong; strong, proud Jews! Only if we never again allow ourselves to be led to the slaughter.[2]

Feniger was killed in the paratroopers' battle for Jerusalem.

The feeling that they were fighting for their home, their family, and their

extended national family was a source of strength and of the willingness to sacrifice. At the same time, their knowledge of the Holocaust made them sensitive to the tragedy of the other side. Encounters with fleeing enemy troops inspired not the intoxication of victory but pity for those unfortunate men who had been sent into the killing fields and most likely had families awaiting their return. Encounters with Arab refugees, women and children loaded down with their belongings and seeking escape from the battlefield, aroused in them associations with Jewish refugees vainly seeking refuge in the World War. Paradoxically the same world of values and associations that pulsed in these soldiers and endowed them with the mental fortitude for battle also made them sensitive to the enemy's pain. They felt no hatred toward the Arabs; they were able to muster feelings of hatred toward Germans, but not toward the enemy they had fought.

The encounter with Greater Israel aroused contradictory feelings in these soldiers. Having been brought up on the Bible as a central cultural resource, the expanses of the Land of the Bible, particularly Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, and the Western Wall, stirred deep feelings whose very existence often surprised them. What moved them was the contact with parts of Jewish history, the connection with the mytho-historical past. Some graduates of Hakibbutz Hameuhad (which before 1948 had supported the idea of Greater Israel) expressed hope that the uncompleted mission of 1948 would now be fulfilled. But they were a minority. For most the excitement of the encounter with parts of the Jewish past did not include a desire to rule these territories. In fact some felt that the old Israel had been lost in those new expanses: "We've lost our little country," which is " . . . good and beautiful. . . . I have practically no emotional ties to the broad areas we hold today," said one of the interviewees.[3]

The sense of alienation from the new territories became more acute when soldiers encountered their Arab inhabitants. At the end of Independence Day in 1967, which fell on May 15, singer Shuli Natan had performed Naomi Shemer's "Jerusalem of Gold" for the first time. The song had been commissioned by Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek for the Israel Song Festival that evening. During the waiting period, and even more so during the six days of the war, the song became a national anthem sung by soldiers at the Western Wall and everywhere that the conquest of Jerusalem was announced. In it Shemer speaks of a Jerusalem with dry cisterns and an empty marketplace, alluding to prayers and folktales describing the Land of Israel in general and Jerusalem in particular as an enchanting bride awaiting in desolation her groom—the Jewish people—who will come and redeem her. This mythic description left no room for reality, as was evident to anyone looking through binoculars from West to East Jerusalem during the nineteen years preceding the Six-Day War. Now Jerusalem-born Amos Oz described his renewed encounter with the city:

These things cannot be expressed in words. Again I say that I loved Jerusalem in its entirety, but what does this mean? It is like a love affair, a contradictory, tortuous force; she is mine and yet strange to me, conquered but hostile, devoted yet inaccessible. . . .

But the city is inhabited. People live within her streets, and they are strangers, I do not understand their language, they are there—in their homes—and I am a stranger who comes from without. . . . And their eyes hate me, wish me dead. The accursed stranger . . .

All my soul, I desired to feel in Jerusalem as a man who has dispossessed his enemies and returned to the patrimony of his ancestors. The Bible came to life for me: the Prophets, the Kings, Temple Mount, Absalom's Pillar, the Mount of Olives. . . . I wanted to be part of it all, I wanted to belong.

Were it not for the people. I saw enmity and rebelliousness, sycophancy, amazement, fear, insult and trickery. I passed through the streets of East Jerusalem like a man breaking into some forbidden place. Depression filled my soul.

City of my birth. City of my dreams. City of my ancestors' and my people's yearnings. And I was condemned to walk through its streets armed with a submachinegun like one of the characters from my childhood nightmares. To be a stranger in a very strange city.[4]

One conversation, held at the Merkaz Harav yeshiva headed by Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, the spiritual guide and mentor of the national-religious youth, was not included in *The Seventh Day.* Editor Avraham Shapira explained later that he found the views aired at the meeting so shocking that he decided to publish its transcript separately in *Shdemot.* Several participants in that conversation expressed the belief that the Days of the Messiah were at hand—an event that would later be defined as "the dawn of redemption." They acknowledged that on the eve of the war none of them had expected its glorious results or hoped for the conquest of Jerusalem and the other parts of the Land of Israel. But now they saw what had happened as the hand of God and the gradual revelation of a divine plan. "I have a feeling of impending surprises, there's a tension in the air. I feel that something is happening, leading up to something great," said Dov Bigun.[5] In contrast to the *Seventh Day* interviewees' compassion for the columns of fleeing Egyptian soldiers, this group thought, as one put it, that when anyone sought to kill the Jewish people, "for me it is a mitzvah to kill him and disperse all the columns in the Sinai desert, and those that flee—to kill them before they even reach the [Suez] Canal."[6] When the speaker was asked about Judaism's injunction to love one's fellow man, he replied that those fleeing today would come back to fight tomorrow, and so they should be killed. In clashes between nations

there was no room for compassion. These speakers displayed hatred of the Arabs and total indifference to their plight, and they rejected the humanist faith in the existence of common ground between Jews and non-Jews. They became the core group that seven years later founded the Gush Emunim (bloc of the faithful) movement.

Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun, a founder of the Har Etzion yeshiva in Allon Shvut, subsequently explained the ideological difference thus revealed between the *Seventh Day* interviewees' and the religious Zionists' schools of thought as one of man versus land. One gave primacy to human values, and the other to the value of land. Both these schools belonged to the idealistic minority in Israel, a leadership elite that represented the generation of the state. Here, for the first time, was revealed the schism within this group that in the future would shred Israel's social and political fabric.

The Merkaz Harav people were not the only ones struck by "the burst of light" (an expression used by Hanan Porat, a leader of Gush Emunim). After the war, in September 1967, a manifesto published by the Movement for Greater Israel declared that "we" were not permitted to relinquish any part of the Greater Land of Israel: "We are bound by loyalty to the integrity of our country . . . and no government in Israel has the right to surrender that integrity."[7] The manifesto was signed by some of the country's leading intellectuals, including Uri Zvi Greenberg, S. Y. Agnon, Nathan Alterman, Chaim Gouri, and many others. Not a single representative of the generation of the state was among them. Most signers were from the labor movement—not only Hakibbutz Hameuhad and its supporters but also the Mapai mainstream, as well as a new devotee of Greater Israel and former member of Hashomer Hatza'ir, writer Moshe Shamir. The initiative was led by Nathan Alterman, a leading poet of the Yishuv and the state who, in his political poems, gave expression to Israel's lived experience. In the 1950s, as we saw, he fought against the "military government" and was distinguished by his moral approach to politics. He was a supporter of Ben-Gurion, to whom he remained loyal during the affair that tore Mapai apart. Now he took a different path that totally contravened the position of his guide and mentor, who saw no possibility of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel other than as one part of that divided territory.

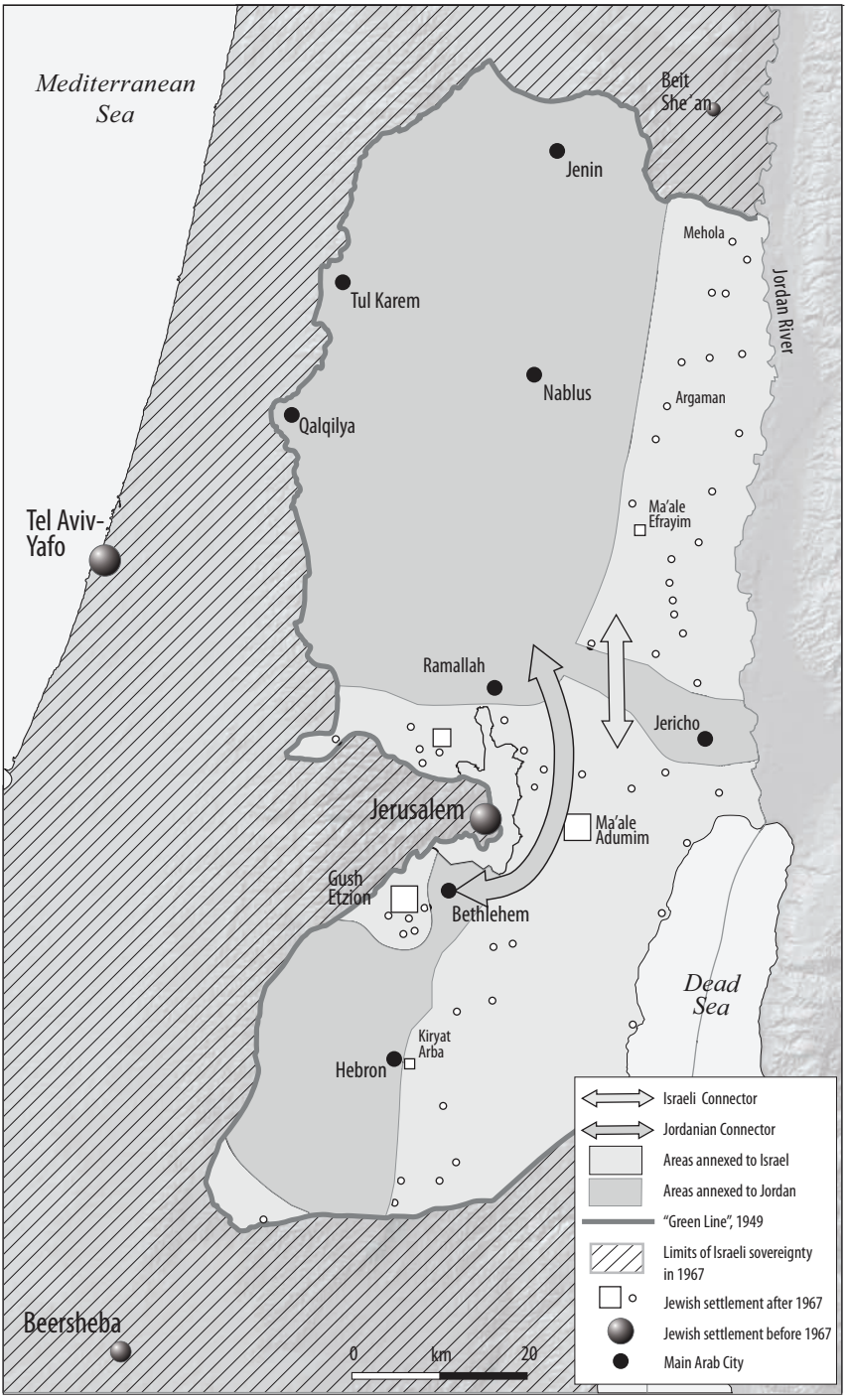
It seems that younger people who reached adulthood after the state was founded were less affected by the exultation that the war generated than the older generation, who after nineteen years of the state's existence still retained the notion of a Greater Israel. But this was not true of the religious-Zionist youth, who now became captivated by messianism. Rejecting the concept that Zionism was a political movement with clear, rational goals, they represented it as the first stage along the path toward enacting the divine plan for redemption of the Jewish

people. The political expression of their infatuation was the strengthening of what was known as "the Mafdal (National Religious Party) Youth" led by Zevulun Hammer, whose slogans supported Greater Israel and opposed territorial compromise. This was a 180-degree turnaround; until then the NRP was considered a decidedly dovish party. It was led by Moshe Chaim Shapira, who had opposed going to war in June 1967, and during the fighting had even recommended that East Jerusalem should not be occupied.

So far the desire for new territory had manifested itself through settlement in areas thinly populated by Arabs, in accordance with what became known as the Allon Plan. Yigal Allon of Hakibbutz Hameuhad, the greatest field commander of the 1948 war, had tried at war's end to persuade Ben-Gurion to occupy the entire West Bank. He now changed his mind and devised a plan aimed at striking a balance between the demographic constraint that mandated avoiding rule over Arabs and what he perceived as the country's security needs. *Defensible borders*, the phrase that became current in the contemporary political discourse, alluded to the need for revisions in the Green Line borders that would become "secure and recognized borders" according to the wording of UN Security Council Resolution 242. To guarantee that Israel had "defensible borders," it had to control the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley, the Rafah Approach area, and southern Mount Hebron (see map 8). These regions, then only lightly populated by Arabs, were to be open to Jewish settlement, on the assumption that they would remain under Israeli control after a peace agreement was signed.

While the Israeli government did not officially accept the Allon Plan, it became the basis for Jewish settlement in the territories until 1977. Nahal outposts were established on the Golan Heights and in the Jordan Valley and the Rafah Approach, and these in time became civilian settlements. The town of Yamit was built in the Rafah Approach area (see map 8). To these should be added the Etzion Bloc, resettled because of the sentimental value attached to its fate, and Jerusalem and its environs, which as we have seen were annexed to Israel. New neighborhoods were built in Jerusalem, such as Gilo in the southern area of the city and Ramot in the north. Settlement in the occupied territories was carried out mainly by nonreligious kibbutz and moshav core groups, continuing the settlement surge from the early days of the state that had come to a halt in the early 1960s.

In 1968 the government faced for the first time a situation in which settlers flouted its authority and settled in the heart of an Arab-populated area. A group of religious Jews led by Rabbi Moshe Levinger celebrated the Passover festival in Hebron and refused to leave. Political advocates from disparate circles such as Gahal, the NRP, and even the Labor Party immediately sprang to their defense. The group remained in the city. This was the first sign of what would happen seven years later.



MAP 8. THE ALLON PLAN, JULY 1967. (SEE PLATE 8.)

A recurring motif in *The Seventh Day* was the hope that the Six-Day War would be Israel's last. Yet the speakers also acknowledged that there was little chance of this, since every ten years or even more often, a new conflagration would flare up; the Arabs would not resign themselves to humiliation and the loss of their territory. The Jews were able to win a war, but could not bring about peace. This pessimism sounded dissonant amid the contemporary euphoria and the high hopes prevalent after the war, but it was justified by the events to come.

Both sides in the conflict radicalized their positions. The Israeli government, which on June 19, 1967, had expressed willingness to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights in return for peace, now backed away from that decision when the telephone call Moshe Dayan expected from the Arab leaders did not come. As we have seen, the September 1967 Khartoum Conference attended by eight Arab states issued its three "Nos": no peace, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with it. Even so, for the first time there was talk that the territories lost by the Arabs might be restored by diplomatic means, but the media focused on extreme statements that blocked the avenue to talks.

After a few months of quiet, clashes flared on the Egyptian and Jordanian borders. The Egyptians tried to compel an Israeli withdrawal from the Suez Canal by shelling IDF forces, which took heavy losses. In addition to constructing fortifications along the canal (the Bar-Lev Line, named after Israeli chief of staff Chaim Bar-Lev), IDF units raided Egyptian positions on the western bank of the Gulf of Suez with the goal of deterring the Egyptians and stopping their artillery, in which the latter held a clear advantage. Once it became evident that this was not preventing the heavy shelling, the air force was deployed, first on a limited scale and then with raids deep inside Egypt, which hit military installations and infrastructure. The cities along the canal were turned into heaps of ruins, and hundreds of thousands of Egyptian refugees fled toward Cairo. The Egyptians responded by soliciting deepened Soviet involvement. The Russians supplied them with large quantities of arms, surface-to-air missiles, and their latest aircraft. Russian technicians and military personnel came to train the Egyptians to operate this new weaponry. Concerned about a conflict with the Soviets, Israel ceased bombing deep into Egypt after April 1970. On the eve of the ceasefire, which came into force on August 8, 1970, there was a battle between the two air forces, with the Egyptian planes piloted by Russians. Five were downed.

There is disagreement over when the War of Attrition (Nasser's term) began. Some date it to fall 1968 with the first border clash, and others say March 1969, after which the battles raged for almost eighteen months. Either way, the border with Egypt was both dangerous and stormy until the end of the War of Attrition. This war tested the IDF's ability to withstand a prolonged battle with heavy casualties (more than seven hundred Israelis were killed). The IDF endured this

long and difficult conflict, but after the glory of the Six-Day War victory it seemed both purposeless and hopeless.

Meanwhile the border with Jordan was also turbulent. Starting in fall 1967 Palestinian terror groups began organizing, encouraged by the PLO, which hoped to rouse the West Bank population into a guerilla war against the occupation. The population, however, was generally passive and did not rise to the challenge. The PLO then took upon itself the task of organizing for resistance. The "open bridges" over the River Jordan were open in both directions, and arms, materiel, and personnel were smuggled across them into the West Bank. Terrorist acts against civilians inside the Green Line and in Jerusalem were perpetrated. In an attempt to deter the PLO, the IDF launched the Karameh operation in March 1968. Karameh was a small village in southern Jordan that housed both the PLO headquarters and Yasser Arafat, who had replaced Ahmed Shukeiri as head of the organization. It was a large-scale operation aimed at destroying PLO infrastructure in the area. But the operation was not a success. The Jordanian army intervened, and dozens of its troops were killed, together with more than a hundred terrorists. The other terrorists dispersed in the area. The IDF lost some thirty men as well as several tanks and one aircraft, a high price to pay for what was at best a mediocre achievement. The terror organizations claimed great success; their men did not flee for their lives but stood their ground and fought well, even inflicting losses on the invincible IDF. From a propaganda standpoint Karameh was the foundation story of the mythology of Palestinian resistance.

Soon the PLO and the other terrorist organizations reverted to operating from Jordan, using that Palestinian-majority country as a base for attacks against Israel. The Palestinians shelled the Beit She'an Valley settlements, which for a long time had to black out their homes at night. The IDF returned fire and also deployed the air force. The agricultural strip to the east of the River Jordan was completely destroyed. The PLO grew stronger in Jordan as it in effect appropriated the Hashemite kingdom for its own use. Actions against Israel, terrorist strikes against international aviation, and the Israeli retaliations all threatened the king's rule and the security of his kingdom. In September 1970—"Black September"—King Hussein deployed his forces against the terror organizations, and after a bloodbath drove them out of his kingdom. The border with Jordan became quiet, and the terrorists transferred most of their activities to south Lebanon.

The never-ending war and the daily casualty figures published in the press had a very depressing effect on public opinion. Israel had a national unity government headed by Golda Meir, who had replaced the late Levi Eshkol. To avoid an internal struggle between doves and hawks (terms imported from the American Vietnam War lexicon), the Labor Party decided (in the argot of the time) not to

decide. Until real negotiations were held with an Arab state, the government of Israel should not lay out its territorial claims. As Golda Meir declared, "The 'what' will come when the 'who' appears." American plans for an imposed settlement, such as one proposed by Secretary of State William Rogers that spoke of an Israeli withdrawal to the borders of June 4, 1967, and peace agreements with Arab states, were rejected by Israelis and Arabs alike. The Israeli government's declared policy was that it would examine every opening for and possibility of peace. But the actual stance was that the Arabs were not prepared to recognize Israel's existence, so there was nobody to talk to and no peace on the horizon.

In the larger world these were turbulent years that influenced what was happening in Israel. Student demonstrations in Europe and the United States, mass rallies against the Vietnam War, social unrest in America, the challenge posed to American bourgeois values by the "flower children," the development of youth culture as opposed to adult culture, and opposition to every authority structure in society—especially the cult of patriotism—were all extremely potent developments that were absorbed by the somewhat puritanical, naive culture of idealistic Israeli youth. These trends and ideas were brought to Israel by the volunteers who flooded the kibbutzim and by media reports on events in Europe and the United States.

The new trends found fertile soil. In the wake of the Six-Day War, the relatively stable Israeli society lost its anchorage. Between the depth of anxiety and the euphoria of victory, between the deep relief of victory and the realization that peace was not yet in sight, the face of the country changed, and very rapidly. The economic growth that followed the war widened the gaps in society. The norms of making do with little and of egalitarianism that had existed (at least in theory) in the smaller Israel eroded. Israeli society seemed materialistic, avaricious, and hedonistic. The standard of living rose. Particularly notable were the nouveaux riches who had accumulated their wealth from constructing fortifications and army camps. Immigrants from the USSR, who unlike the North African immigrants of the early 1960s now benefited from enhanced absorption conditions, aroused hostility from residents of poverty-stricken neighborhoods and evacuees from the ma'abarot, who saw this as ethnic discrimination.

In 1971 there appeared in Jerusalem a group of social activists assisted by social workers who worked with street gangs in the poor neighborhoods. Calling themselves "the Black Panthers" (another term imported from the United States), they organized stormy demonstrations under slogans demanding an end to discrimination by the Ashkenazim against the mainly North African Mizrachim. Israel had not seen an ethnically oriented social protest since the Wadi Salib riots of 1959. A meeting between representatives of the Black Panthers and Prime Minister Meir only heightened the distance between the two sides. The

Panthers left the meeting feeling that the prime minister saw them not as the core group of a political movement (as they saw themselves) but as marginal youth in need of rehabilitation. After a violent Panthers demonstration in Jerusalem's Sacher Park at the Mimouna celebrations (a North African Jewish tradition), Golda Meir was quoted as saying "They are not nice," a remark that was never forgotten and never forgiven.

Still the government was not indifferent to the socioeconomic problems that had been exposed. That year's budget included increased funding for education and welfare. A prime ministerial commission established to examine the situation of deprived children and youth revealed grave economic hardship among immigrants from Asia and Africa that required immediate attention. The commission submitted its findings in June 1973. The outbreak of the Yom Kippur War that October shifted attention from social problems to security and political matters. However, the Black Panther movement can be seen as marking the beginnings of ethnic protest in Israel, and the issue has remained on the agenda ever since.

The appearance of a marginal "new left" group, Matzpen, heralded a new phenomenon: Israelis raising doubt about the righteousness of statehood. No longer the old communist or socialist left, for the new left the USSR had lost its luster after invading Czechoslovakia in 1968. The heroes of the new left were Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Ho Chi Minh, and third world guerillas fighting against Western capitalist enslavement. In the Israeli arena it was the Palestinians who captured the imagination of the new left, which saw them as oppressed people fighting a popular war against Western imperialism and post-1967 Israel as strong, sated, and belligerent. Forgotten was the left's support of Israel as the state of Jewish refugees, forgotten the fight against antisemitism. From now on they considered Israel to be on the wrong side of the barricades in the struggle for freedom and the deprived of the world. Matzpen espoused new left positions and applied them to the local scene. This was no longer criticism of some government policy, but criticism challenging the very legitimacy of Israel's existence, since its establishment was bound up with injustice to the Palestinians.

Marginal groups such as Matzpen and even the Black Panthers were extremely small and unable to inspire popular trust. The vast majority of Israelis from both left and right, whether or not they agreed with all their government's actions, had faith in its assurance that it would leave no stone unturned in its quest for peace, and that the never-ending war Israeli youngsters faced along the borders was a "war of no choice." But in early 1970 internal tensions coupled with an erosion of morale among young people due to the war-without-end and its numerous fatalities erupted in a series of events. That April it transpired that Nachum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, was putting out feelers to

Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, seeking to hold a meeting with him. It is unclear whether there was anything in these contacts and whether Goldmann really was invited to Cairo. What is clear is that the government of Israel, headed by Golda Meir, took a dim view of Goldmann's attempt at diplomacy and his flaunting of himself as the uncrowned foreign minister of the Jewish people. Goldmann took advantage of his freedom to go to places where official Israel was barred from sending an envoy. Nor did he always act after consulting the Israeli government or in accordance with its wishes. As scholar Meir Chazan writes, Goldmann's initiative was in the twilight zone of diplomacy.

For our purposes it does not matter whether the meeting in Cairo could have taken place. What is important is the storm that blew up over what the public saw as the government's refusal to give Goldmann its blessing for a possible peace opening that should not be missed. Bitter controversy raged in the papers between Goldmann's supporters and opponents. A group of fifty-six Jerusalem high school students sent a letter to the prime minister warning, "We and many others are therefore wondering how we can fight in a permanent, futureless war, while our government's policy is such that it misses chances for peace."[8] Unlike the American opponents of the Vietnam War who went to Canada to avoid the draft, most of the signers of this letter enlisted in combat units a few months later and served on the Suez Canal front.

The letter, which became known as "the Twelfth-Graders' Letter," drew powerful reactions of support and opposition among Israeli youth. Israeli society then embarked on a political discourse on peace, which until then had been avoided. At the same time, the Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv staged a satirical review by Hanoch Levin titled *Queen of the Bathtub*. Apart from its use of obscene language and extremely crude imagery (influenced by the new permissiveness), which disgusted the audience, the piece was a trenchant antiwar satire, the likes of which had never before been seen in Israel. At one point it accused fathers of sacrificing their sons to war. It is doubtful if other democratic countries would have allowed the staging of such a performance at a time when the cannons were thundering. Both the vehement protests from audiences and the general public outcry against the play, alongside support for the play and its messages and for freedom of expression, highlighted press coverage for more than a month.

Symbolically connected with this event was the performance of "Song for Peace" by an army entertainment troupe. Composed as an anthem by Yaʿakov Rotblit and inspired by *Hair*, this song spoke in the name of the fallen in the War of Attrition and called for peace activism (in the vein of "Give Peace a Chance"): "Let the sun rise / And give the morning light / The purest prayer / Will not bring us back." It concluded: "Don't say the day will come / Bring the day / because it is not a dream / And in all the city squares cheer only peace." It aroused the ire of

IDF Head of Central Command Rehavam Ze'evi, who forbade its performance. The song has since become the anthem of the Israeli peace movement.

Israeli society's soft underbelly was now exposed: the psychological difficulty of withstanding a protracted war, the sensitivity to the loss of life, and the longing for peace. The vast majority of Israelis believed they were in a "war of no choice" and must grit their teeth and serve in the IDF to the best of their ability. Although the media highlighted the budding of the dovish left, in fact the government's assertion that there was no one to talk to, and in the meantime nothing to talk about, had almost wall-to-wall support. Still the lengthy three-year period of compulsory military service, the frequent call-ups to reserve service, and especially the lists of the fallen all hurt morale. The joy of victory was replaced by deep frustration. The Israeli consensus maintained under the Labor Party was now challenged on both social and political fronts. The damage to the national ethos was still limited to cracks, but they presaged what was to come.

NOTES

1. *The Seventh Day: Soldiers Talk about the Six-Day War*, Tel Aviv and London, 1970, p. 122.
2. Ibid., p. 172.
3. Ibid., p. 159.
4. Ibid., pp. 218–219.
5. Conversation at the Rabbi Kook yeshiva, *Shdemot* 29, Tel Aviv, 1968, p. 16.
6. Ibid., p. 19.
7. Greater Israel manifesto, 22.9.1967, published in all the Israeli newspapers.
8. Meir Chazan, "Yozmat Nachum Goldmann lehipagesh im Nasser bishnat 1970" (Goldmann's Initiative to Meet with Nasser in 1970), *Studies in Zionism and the State of Israel*, vol. 14 (2004), p. 277.

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15 THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, 1973

On October 6, 1973, Yom Kippur, the air raid siren sounded all over Israel, marking the beginning of a new era, though at the time no one imagined this. The Yom Kippur War—or the October War, as the Egyptians called it—was a watershed in both Israeli and Middle Eastern history. Perhaps even more than the Six-Day War, it reshaped Israel's self-image, as well as its political and social space and its relations with its neighbors.

No one in Israel or the West expected war to break out in the fall of 1973. In September 1970, about a month after the War of Attrition ended, Nasser died suddenly and was succeeded by Anwar Sadat, one of the least prominent among the officers who led the 1952 coup in Egypt. Diplomatic and intelligence reports described him as a "gray" man, lacking both drive and leadership. The assessments claimed that he was incapable of initiating a new political line or, alternatively, a war. For the three years between fall 1970 and fall 1973, the Israeli-Egyptian border remained quiet. In the first month after the War of Attrition ceasefire, which was intended to freeze the existing situation, the Egyptians deployed surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) along the Suez Canal in a flagrant breach of the ceasefire agreement. Israel's protests were fruitless, since the Egyptians ignored American demands that the missiles be withdrawn and Israel did not consider them sufficient reason to break the ceasefire.

Israel had not correctly assessed the depth of the Egyptians' shame and humiliation over the occupation of the Sinai Peninsula and the defeat of their army. Their willingness to instigate clashes with the Israelis, and then the War of Attrition soon after the end of the 1967 war, should have provided Israel with sufficient evidence to realize that Egypt, the largest and strongest of the Arab states, would be unable to accept the status quo over time. The deployment of the SAMs along the canal was another hint of Egypt's belligerent intentions. But complacency reigned in Israel due to the scale of the 1967 victory, which led to conceit and arrogance in the IDF high command. The military leadership considered the Egyptian army inferior and incapable of sacrifice and perseverance. An intelligence "conception" emerged, holding that as long as the Egyptian army was not being supplied with Scud tactical ballistic missiles capable of hitting the Israeli home front and advanced military equipment that would give it an advantage over the IDF, the Egyptians would not attack. This assessment was based on controversial intelligence reports. Was the source credible, or was the information passed on by a double agent to mislead the Israelis? The intelligence chiefs

contended further that the Egyptians would not dare attack, because they knew the IDF would trounce them. But even if the Egyptians did attack, they would mount only a partial effort that the regular IDF units could handle until the reserves were mobilized. Reserve mobilization required forty-eight hours.

In early 1971, not long after he had succeeded to the presidency and consolidated his position, Sadat sent out feelers hinting at a change in the Egyptians' line, suggesting an attempt to reach an agreement with Israel, ostensibly in negotiations on extending the ceasefire along the Suez Canal, which was to end within three months. In November 1970 Moshe Dayan spoke publicly about a mutual reduction of Israeli and Egyptian forces along the canal, and even an Israeli withdrawal to some distance from it to enable Egypt to clear the canal, reopen it to shipping, and rebuild the cities along its banks. This move was designed to lessen the pressure on Israel to reach a settlement on the basis of a complete withdrawal from the occupied territories, and also to ensure continuation of the ceasefire. Furthermore such an arrangement would encourage the Egyptians to keep the border quiet.

Dayan's proposals were greeted unenthusiastically in Israel since they involved withdrawing to some degree from occupied territory without a peace agreement. But Sadat, continuing Dayan's line of thinking, made a proposal of his own: if Israel agreed to withdraw to the El Arish–Ras Muhammad line (approximately in the middle of Sinai) and transfer the area to Egyptian control, including military control, he would extend the ceasefire, open the canal to shipping, rebuild the canal cities, and even allow an international force to remain in Sharm el-Sheikh to ensure free passage through the Gulf of Eilat. Israel, however, was unwilling to withdraw to the Mitla and Giddi passes and allow the Egyptian army to cross to the eastern bank of the canal. Even though an interim agreement would not impose conditions on a future final agreement, both sides were afraid to take a step that might weaken their negotiating positions on a final agreement. Israel feared withdrawal without an advance accord on a peace treaty at the end of the process. Sadat demanded an advance agreement on an overall withdrawal to the June 4, 1967, borders and conditioned a peace treaty on resolution of the Palestinian problem.

The American mediators believed that the positions of the two sides were too far apart to facilitate an agreement. The stalemate continued for the next two years and was only broken after the Yom Kippur War. In the soul searching that took place in Israel after the war, and considering that the interim agreements reached after it were very similar to those proposed by Sadat, the question was asked whether Israel had made a tragic mistake by rejecting Sadat's 1971 proposals. This is one of those questions a historian has difficulty answering. The situation before the war bore no resemblance to the situation afterward, with

regard both to Sadat's position and ability to take dramatic steps, and also to the government of Israel and its insights on the situation and its possibilities. Before the war, could Sadat have agreed to an interim arrangement without a statement on a final settlement? Would the Israeli government have been justified in relinquishing territory in exchange for an ambiguous nonbelligerency agreement without a peace treaty? These questions will remain open for historians to consider. In the context of 1971 they were linked to the Israeli and American leaders' prewar assessment and limited trust in Sadat and his intentions.

Over the next two years the United States was engaged mainly with other regions of the world. The Middle East was the backyard of international policy. Sadat reinforced his position in Egypt. He declared that 1971 would be a "decisive year," but it passed without the ceasefire being broken despite the failure of talks on the interim agreement. In July 1972 Sadat demanded that the Soviet Union withdraw its military advisors from Egypt, a clear hint to the United States of his intention to change his orientation. Sadat recognized that he needed American support in order to force Israel to withdraw, but at this stage the Americans showed no interest in breaking the Middle Eastern stalemate. They, like the Israelis, believed that should there be an armed conflict, Israel would easily defeat the Egyptians.

Egyptian planning of the October War was based on Sadat's assumption that if he managed to occupy any territory on the other side of the Suez Canal, he would break the stalemate and change the status quo. The Egyptians intended for their army to cross the canal in large numbers all along the line, then dig in along a narrow strip, ten to fifteen kilometers in width, under a SAM umbrella. For the Egyptians the trauma of the Six-Day War had been the stunning victory of the Israeli Air Force, which had exposed the Egyptian ground forces to aerial attack. Now the Egyptians sought to defend themselves against a similar possibility by densely shielding their army with SAMs, which would neutralize the Israeli Air Force's superiority. Egyptian planning for the war was tested in maneuvers, the most significant of which took place in April 1973; it led the IDF to declare a high alert and mobilize reserves. Later it emerged that this series of maneuvers was in fact drilling the Egyptian army in crossing the canal, and was also designed to mislead the Israelis and dull their alertness with false alarms. Repeatedly crying wolf would ultimately make them inattentive toward any signs of an imminent attack. In April 1973 Sadat and Syrian president Hafez al-Assad agreed on the war plan. On September 25 King Hussein warned Golda Meir about an imminent coordinated Egyptian-Syrian attack. He did not mention a precise date. His warning followed a Cairo summit where he had learned of the joint war plan. The role assigned him was to prevent an Israeli attack on Syria through northern Jordan.

All the signs on the ground pointed to the Syrians' and Egyptians' belligerent

intentions. The massing of Egyptian troops along the Suez Canal and their deployment of bridges close to it were clear indications of imminent attack. Large Syrian armored forces were observed along the Golan Heights border with Syria. Dayan commented that the numbers of the massed forces could cause a heart attack. But Israeli intelligence continued to maintain that there was a "low probability" of war since the conditions Sadat needed for an attack had not been attained. This assessment was a combination of complacency and exaggerated self-confidence, which assumed at least a forty-eight-hour warning even if war did break out, ensuring the time needed to mobilize the reserves.

On Friday, Yom Kippur Eve, the Israeli cabinet convened for an emergency meeting. Intelligence had been received that left no doubt that war with Syria and Egypt would break out the following day. The intelligence spoke of war beginning at 6 p.m. In fact it broke out at 2 p.m. In that Friday discussion Chief of the General Staff David "Dado" Elazar requested permission for a preemptive air strike against the massed Egyptian and Syrian forces. The cabinet refused, to prevent Israel from appearing as the aggressor. The cabinet warned the US administration that war was imminent, stating that Israel had no intention of launching a preemptive strike. At the same time, the cabinet decided on limited mobilization of the reserves. Fortunately an additional armored brigade had moved onto the Golan Heights a few days earlier, which proved critical in halting the Syrian assault.

The Yom Kippur War was the reverse of the Six-Day War: instead of a swift, dramatic victory, there were large numbers of casualties, loss of control and misreading of the battlefields, in-fighting among the generals, and absence of credibility. Everything that could go wrong did. The Syrians' swift advance led to urgent, traumatic evacuation of Israeli settlements on the Golan Heights. In an era of armored warfare, the myth of settlements defending territory no longer applied. The command post at the Nafakh base fell to the Syrians. Mount Hermon was taken by Syrian commandos. There were only small armored units—a few tanks, a company here and a company there—between the Syrian tanks and the Jordan and Hula Valleys, which halted the Syrian advance thanks to sacrifice by their crews. For two days the situation in the north seemed dire. The air force had difficulty operating due to the Syrian missiles. Only with the arrival of the reserves and the beginning of reorganization did the battle to retake the Heights get under way, followed by an IDF offensive that took the war beyond Kuneitra and on the road to Damascus. By the eve of the ceasefire, the IDF had retaken the Mount Hermon stronghold vital for observation of Syrian territory.

The Egyptian crossing of the Suez Canal began with an intense artillery barrage of the Bar-Lev Line strongholds. Although there had been an early warning, the troops were caught unprepared for an assault. Egyptian forces crossed the

canal under cover of their artillery. Some of the Israeli troops in the strongholds were killed, some were taken prisoner, and others managed to find their way back to the IDF lines. The Israeli Air Force, occupied in halting the Syrian and Egyptian advance, took heavy, unexpected losses from the SAMs. The Egyptian army's strategy proved itself effective. In the early stages of the war, the need to provide assistance to the ground forces prevented the Israeli Air Force from taking out the missile bases, increasing aircraft losses. The loss of the pilots was far graver than the loss of the aircraft. Since the Six-Day War the prevailing perception in the IDF had been that the air force would be the decisive factor in a war. Both training of and investment in infantry and armored forces had been somewhat neglected. For example, the Israeli troops had no night vision equipment, and the Egyptians did. The Egyptians' Russian-made Sagger antitank missiles decimated the Israeli armor since the Israelis had no tactical response to them. The IDF's equipment was shown to be out of date, and some was even unavailable; the emergency stores, opened when the reserves were mobilized, were frequently found to be half empty. The hurried mobilization under emergency conditions exposed the flaws in the IDF's logistical setup.

As usual, success has many fathers, while failure is an orphan. The Yom Kippur War gave rise for the first time in Israeli military history to a "war of the generals," as Head of the Southern Command Shmuel (Gorodish) Gonen—a legendary hero of Shabtai Teveth's *The Tanks of Tammuz*—continually clashed with his predecessor, Ariel (Arik) Sharon, who now led a reserve division under Gonen's command. Gonen, who had taken up his appointment the summer before the war, could not seize control of his front and did not function well. His tactics were those of a divisional commander, not the head of an entire command. For his part Sharon was disinclined to obey orders from either his direct superior or even the chief of the General Staff, and directed his division's operations as he saw fit. The "war of the generals" took place as bitter battles raged in the first days of the war, with the IDF not yet adapted to the new combat conditions.

The first five days of the war found Israel in a defensive holding position, but still launching localized counterattacks on both fronts. On October 8, based on unverified intelligence and an erroneous reading of the situation, the IDF launched a counterattack on the southern front that ended in failure. That was probably the most difficult moment of the entire war. Tanks were destroyed and their crews killed, planes and their pilots were lost. Dayan lost his self-possession and prepared to announce "the destruction of the Third Temple" at a press conference. Golda Meir, who had been warned of Dayan's intention by a newspaper editor, stopped him from making the announcement. Concerned by the loss of combat equipment, she made a dramatic personal appeal to US president Richard

Nixon to airlift military equipment to Israel, hinting that the state was in grave danger. Nixon agreed, and the airlift began on October 14.

In the meantime the cabinet and General Staff made a decision about priorities: to tilt the balance to the Syrian front, which was the most dangerous due to its proximity to Israeli population centers, and meanwhile to remain on the defensive on the Egyptian front. Once it had contained the Syrian attack and regained most of the Golan Heights, the IDF launched a counterattack there on October 11, and within three days the situation had changed beyond all recognition. When the fighting ended the suburbs of Damascus were within IDF artillery range. In the south, between the failure of October 8 and October 14, the IDF continued its defensive tactics while making every effort to prevent attrition of its forces. On October 14 the Egyptian army abandoned its original plan to remain under its missile umbrella and launched an armored attack in Sinai. In this battle the Egyptian army lost some 250 tanks, and the IDF only 20. With the weakening of the Egyptian army and the defeat of the Syrians on the Golan Heights, the time had come for an Israeli offensive. It began with IDF forces crossing the canal, continued with the conquest of its western bank, and ended with the outflanking of the Egyptian army. When a ceasefire was announced on October 22, the IDF controlled the roads to Cairo and Damascus. The IDF exploited Egyptian breaches of the ceasefire after the announcement to complete its encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army. The ceasefire came into force on October 24.

The first days of the war were the gravest. During this time the myths of the IDF's power and fighting ability and the Arabs' weakness and combat inferiority were shattered. Not only had the Egyptians and Syrians caught Israel by surprise—Israel, which boasted of particularly superior intelligence—but in the fighting itself the IDF could find no response to the Sagger missiles deployed ingeniously and courageously by Egyptian troops. The armor and air force suffered heavy losses. The fall of the canal strongholds, with many of their defenders either captured or killed by the Egyptians, was a severe blow to morale. Images of the prisoners shown on television shook the myth of the brave, strong sabra who never surrendered. Throughout the years of the state, this myth had defined the accepted pattern of behavior of the sabra, who was supposed to embody a stark contrast to the Diaspora Jew who meekly submitted to his oppressors.

Approximately half the causalities occurred in the first five days of the fighting. Some 2,300 men fell in the war (another estimate puts this figure at 2,600) and more than 5,000 were wounded (according to another estimate, 7,500). Some 100 aircraft were lost and close to 1,100 tanks were disabled, 400 of which were completely destroyed. The Arabs, however, lost about 370 aircraft and 2,250

tanks, about 15,600 of their troops were killed, and some 8,700 were taken prisoner (compared with 300 Israelis). But Israel was shocked by both its losses and the slowly penetrating realization that there were moments in the war when the state's very existence appeared to hang by a thread. One of the papers published a wordplay on the Hebrew word *blima,* which means defensive action and is also part of the idiom "hanging by a thread."

In the first days of the fighting, the public had no idea what was happening on the two fronts and continued to believe that the IDF would "break their bones," as the chief of the General Staff promised. As the war went on and the Egyptians broadcast images of the Israeli prisoners, the Israeli public realized that this war was different, not the unending parade of achievements they had been accustomed to since 1956. Poet Yehuda Amichai wrote: "The October sun warms our dead. / Grief is a heavy wooden board, / tears are nails."[1]

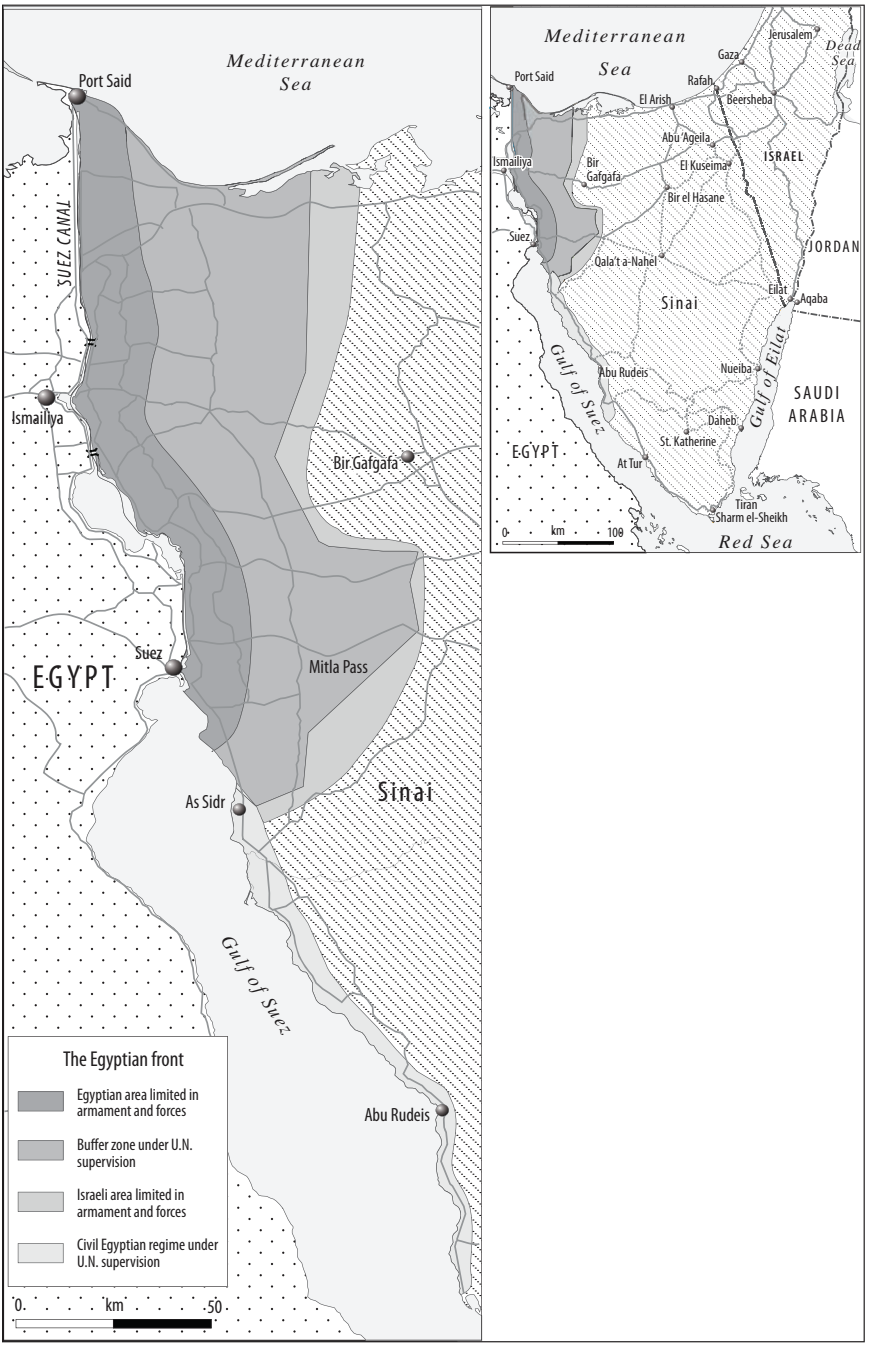
The war ended with the Israeli and Egyptian forces interlocked. Israel was unable to release its reserve units, making a return to normal life extremely difficult. The encircled Egyptian Third Army needed supplies, which Israel provided in small quantities under the aegis of the UN. The situation could not continue for long; both sides had an interest in disengagement. Israeli forces had reached Kilometer 101 on the Suez–Cairo road, where on October 28 General Abdel-Ghani el-Gamassi and Brigadier General Aharon Yariv met for direct negotiations, the first of their kind in Israeli-Egyptian relations. The two negotiators represented their countries' leaders—Anwar Sadat and Golda Meir—and reported back to them throughout the talks. Their behind-the-scenes partner was US secretary of state Henry Kissinger.

One outcome of the war was the enhanced status of the United States in the Arab world, since Sadat was convinced that although the Soviets could supply him with arms, they were unable to exert pressure on Israel to withdraw. Israel, on the other hand, was isolated and dependent more than ever on the United States, leaving it vulnerable to American pressure. The European countries had not shown support for Israel in its hour of need, and would not help with the American airlift. During the war, on October 17, the Arabs had announced an oil embargo in protest against American aid to Israel, causing an unprecedented rise in oil prices. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil cartel reaped vast profits, but the Arabs also recognized the need to talk with the Americans. Kissinger, who before the war had been seldom involved in Middle Eastern affairs, now developed the concept that an agreement between Israel and the Egyptians would constitute the foundations of further agreements between Israel and the nations of the Arab world; that such an agreement should be made step by step without creating unrealistic expectations on both sides; and that the United States must play a leading mediating role between the two sides.

The formal framework for the agreements was to be an international conference in Geneva, initiated by Nixon and Kissinger and attended by the Soviets as part of the US-USSR détente. But the real negotiations between the parties would be mediated by Kissinger, who would control the entire process. The talks at Kilometer 101 were progressing well, with Gamassi and Yariv finding a common language. Here the six clauses that would be the basis of the disengagement were agreed on. They covered prisoner exchange, supplies to the Third Army, and removal of the Egyptian blockade of the Bab el-Mandeb Straits imposed at the beginning of the war, which partially blocked passage to the Gulf of Eilat. Egyptian forces would remain in a ten-kilometer-wide strip to the east of the Suez Canal. Israel would withdraw from the territory it had occupied west of the canal, and also from a twenty-kilometer-wide strip to its east. A ten-kilometer-wide buffer zone between the IDF and the Egyptian army would be occupied by a UN Emergency Force (UNEF) to supervise implementation of the ceasefire and the disengagement. Forces on both sides would be reduced to seven thousand troops. At one stage the direct talks at Kilometer 101 were stopped under pressure from Kissinger, who wanted the Geneva Conference to reap the rewards for reaching an agreement. The agreement was signed in Geneva on January 18, 1974. Its outline formed the basis of future agreements between Israel and Egypt. The lesson learned from the direct talks at Kilometer 101 was that this format enabled rapid progress in negotiations. It was not forgotten.

It was more difficult to achieve a military disengagement agreement with Syria. Following prolonged negotiations, which deteriorated, leading in March 1974 to a war of attrition along the border, an agreement was signed in Geneva on May 31, 1974, whereby Israel undertook to withdraw from the territory it had occupied in the war (UNEF troops would be stationed there), prisoners were exchanged, and the Syrians undertook to reduce their forces along the border. Although it was both the aggressor and the losing side, Syria insisted on a territorial gain similar to what Egypt obtained in Sinai: Israeli withdrawal from some of the territory occupied in the 1967 war. Long, arduous negotiations ensued, with Kissinger shuttling between Jerusalem and Damascus. Israel eventually agreed to withdraw from the ghost town of Kuneitra and hand it over to the Syrians, and the Syrians waived their demand for additional territory. This Israeli concession facilitated the disengagement agreement. Thus the Yom Kippur War came to an end.

The October War was inscribed in Egyptian history as a great victory that expunged the shame of the 1967 war. The crossing of the canal by Egyptian forces and their entrenchment on its western bank, with the IDF unable to prevent this or drive them out, were etched in the Egyptian collective memory as brilliant successes, as they indeed were. The rebuilding of the Egyptian army,



MAP 9. THE ISRAEL-EGYPT INTERIM AGREEMENT, 1974.
(SEE PLATE 9.)

which demonstrated its combat ability and achieved its objectives, restored Egyptian national pride. A museum commemorating the victory was built in Cairo. The anniversary of the war replaced the anniversary of the officers' coup as a national holiday and was marked by a celebratory military parade. The myth of the October War was vital in building Sadat's status in Egypt as the leader who reestablished the country's preeminence in the Arab world. Sadat's enhanced position would enable him to reach a peace agreement with Israel without considering the positions of either the other Arab states or the Palestinians.

Despite the surprise factor and the bitter failures of the first days of fighting, the Yom Kippur War ended in a great Israeli victory. But that is not how Israeli public opinion perceived it. On the eve of the Six-Day War, Israel had been in a state of deep anxiety that was transformed overnight into euphoria by the brilliant victory. On the eve of the Yom Kippur War, Israel was profoundly complacent, and as a consequence of the war this complacency turned into depression. An entire nation mourned the thousands of fallen and wounded and sank into a national trauma whose traces did not dissipate for decades. Faith in the leadership—led by the Israeli Labor Party, which had been so much the center of national decision making since 1933 that to the national psyche it seemed eternal—was now irretrievably lost.

Faith in the military leadership was also shaken. Since the Six-Day War the IDF's commanders had been seen as almost legendary figures able to overcome any enemy. The media crowned these invincible generals as the world's best. Public opinion went along with the media's arrogance and conceit and tended to believe the slogans. It was both easy and comforting to feel safe and protected by the IDF. And then came the war that took the IDF commanders by surprise and proved the IDF's superior intelligence to be flawed. The reserves were mobilized late. The army was badly equipped. The "war of the generals" erupted. All these lapses undermined the image of the IDF and its leadership. Israel returned to its psychological condition before the Six-Day War: a small country in constant existential danger. It was "the twilight of the gods."

The military disengagement agreements with Syria and Egypt, including the UNEF mandate, were initially set to last for six months and later were periodically extended. March 1974 saw the lifting of the Arab oil embargo on the United States, but the entire Western world had entered a period of economic instability, a vortex of inflation and unemployment, as a result of OPEC's dramatic increases in the price of oil. The Americans sought to strengthen the close ties that had developed between them and Egypt, with the aim of weakening Soviet influence in the Middle East and boosting moderate trends in the Arab world. This required that they continue buttressing the interim agreements by further positive steps. An attempt at an interim agreement between Israel and Jordan was unsuc-

cessful; King Hussein demanded the Jordan Valley, but the Israelis would not concede security control over it. They made a counterproposal: a functional share of authority in the West Bank, in which King Hussein would be responsible for civil life and the Israelis for security. Hussein was unable to accept this proposal, for he would have been condemned for collaborating with the Israeli occupation. A resolution was passed at the 1974 Rabat Arab Summit recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, thus expropriating Hussein's authority over the West Bank. With the Syrians, the possibilities of a further interim agreement on the Golan Heights were limited both because of the nature of the terrain and because Assad displayed no interest in the idea. Kissinger's attention therefore focused quite naturally on advancing the agreement between Israel and Egypt.

In the meantime the White House had a new occupant. Nixon resigned in the aftermath of the Watergate affair and was replaced by Vice President Gerald Ford, who had been appointed to the vice presidency following the resignation of Spiro Agnew. In Israel Yitzhak Rabin was appointed prime minister (see following chapter). The Rabin government was attacked from without by a vociferous opposition, and from within by ministers who did not accept Rabin's authority. The government appeared divided and incapable of making decisions. It was in this situation that Kissinger attempted to mediate between Sadat and Rabin in order to achieve a more stable agreement regarding Sinai, which would contain elements ensuring quiet in the long term. The Israelis wanted to remove Egypt from the circle of hostility to obviate any possibility of a future attack on two fronts. Egypt wanted both the Sinai territory and to advance its relations with the United States. It demanded the strategically important Mitla and Giddi passes and control of the Sinai oil fields. Israel was prepared to accept a smaller withdrawal and in exchange demanded abrogation of the state of war between Israel and Egypt.

Kissinger began shuttling between Israel and Egypt, employing all his diplomatic skills to narrow the gaps between the two sides. But Sadat would not commit himself to ending the state of war, and Israel refused to withdraw beyond the eastern slopes of the passes. At a certain stage Sadat was inclined to accept an alternative formula to nonbelligerence: "nonuse of force." Israel was ready to return the oil fields, but the two sides disagreed on the coastal strip that would connect the oil fields with Egyptian territory. The territorial issue of the passes remained unresolved, and in March 1975 the talks collapsed. Kissinger hinted that in the absence of an agreement hostilities would be resumed and the oil embargo reimposed, but the Rabin government rejected these threats. This refusal to buckle under American pressure enhanced Rabin's prestige among the Israeli public. But it did not improve the situation. Kissinger tacitly placed the blame for the failure of the talks on Israel, and President Ford spoke of "a

reassessment" of the special relationship between Israel and the United States. The supply of arms and other aid to Israel was held up. However, American public opinion sided with Israel, limiting the pressure that the administration, which faced reelection, could exert. In May 1976, seventy-six US senators signed a letter to the president demanding that Israel's economic and military needs be met.

For their part both Israel and Egypt were interested in making progress toward an agreement. In the summer of 1975 negotiations were resumed under Kissinger's vigorous mediation. Israel agreed to the compromise formula of "nonuse of force" and nonrenewal of hostilities for an unlimited period. It also agreed to withdraw beyond the Mitla and Giddi passes, but held on to the ridge commanding them. Early warning stations on the Israeli and Egyptian sides, staffed partly by American civilians, were designed to prevent a surprise attack. Most of the territory relinquished by Israel remained a buffer zone controlled by UNEF. The Egyptians were given sovereignty over the territory vacated by Israel, but their forces remained reduced, as were the Israeli forces beyond the buffer zone (see map 9). In the future these elements of demilitarization, reduction of forces, and early warning stations staffed by American civilians were also effective components of peace agreements between the countries. The interim agreement signed on September 4, 1975, also stated that disputes between the two countries would be resolved peacefully and that the Egyptians would permit nonmilitary cargoes from and to Israel to pass through the Suez Canal, which was reopened in June 1975. The agreements created a situation in which both sides had a great deal to lose if hostilities were resumed. They constituted a signal of Egyptian willingness to enter into bilateral agreements with Israel.

The factor that remained outside any framework of talks was the PLO. Israel and the United States agreed that talks with the PLO were out of the question so long as the organization did not recognize Israel and UN Resolutions 242 and 338. As we have seen, the PLO was forced out of Jordan in 1970. Despite engaging in terror attacks to attract the world's attention, the PLO did not succeed in shaking Israel's hold on the occupied territories. It did, however, have some surprising successes in the international arena after the 1974 Rabat summit resolution recognizing it as the representative of the Palestinian people. Yasser Arafat was invited to address the UN General Assembly on November 13, 1974, and the PLO was granted observer status at the UN. The following year the General Assembly passed a contemptible resolution that equated Zionism with racism while undermining the very legitimacy of the Jewish state. These developments correspondingly heralded the PLO's increasing legitimacy in world public opinion.

Meanwhile, two developments of regional importance occurred during the 1975–1976 civil war in Lebanon, fought mainly between Christians and Muslims. First, the Syrians entered Lebanon to put a stop to the killing between the two

sides. Israel accepted this action as long as the Syrians did not move south of the Litani River. Second, the Palestinians, who supported the radical Muslim left in Lebanon, were pushed out of most parts of the country. They were now concentrated in the Sidon and south Lebanon area, which was inaccessible to the Syrians due to Israeli opposition. Within a few years this area became the PLO's base and headquarters—"Fatahland"—from which it launched its guerilla and terror attacks against Israel.

With Jimmy Carter's election to the US presidency, it became clear to Israel that despite its agreements with the previous administration that the PLO would not be a partner in talks as long as it did not recognize Israel, the new president viewed the Palestinian problem as the heart of the conflict and sought to bring about a change in Israel's positions. The talks between Rabin and Carter were extremely thorny. The new administration also adopted a different concept for managing the Middle East conflict. American policy since 1973, led by Kissinger, had been oriented by the conviction that it would be easier to reach agreement with each Arab state separately and that an attempt to reach an overall settlement was doomed to failure, since any joint discussion would increase pressure from extremists. Therefore Kissinger avoided reconvening the Geneva Conference after its ceremonial opening in early 1974. This policy was also aimed at neutralizing active Soviet participation in negotiations, on the assumption that the Soviets would only lead the Arabs to radicalize their positions. The Carter administration, inexperienced and driven by a profoundly religious belief that it could bring about an inclusive peace, deviated from all these policy guidelines. Thus within a year all the partners to negotiations on the interim agreements had changed, except for Sadat. The time had come for a reshuffle.

NOTES

1. Yehuda Amichai, "Shirei eretz tzion Yerushalayim" (Songs of Zion: Jerusalem), *Me'ahorei kol zeh mistater osher gadol* (translated by Ted Hughes as *Amen*), Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Schocken 1985, p. 8.

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16 ISRAELI SOCIETY AFTER THE YOM KIPPUR WAR

When the Yom Kippur War broke out, Israel was in the midst of an election campaign in which Golda Meir's slogan claimed that the country's situation had never been better. Given the war and its aftermath this choice of slogan was rather ironic. The elections were postponed until late December 1973 and held while the country was still in shock and while the disengagement negotiations were taking place. The Alignment (Hamaʿarakh) comprising the Labor Party reestablished in 1968 as a unified party with Mapam, Rafi, and Ahdut Haʿavoda lost five seats in the Knesset, dropping from fifty-six to fifty-one. This weakened it but did not cause its loss of hegemony. The Likud (comprising Gahal and some small right-wing parties), appearing in these elections for the first time, won thirty-nine seats (Gahal had won twenty-six in the 1969 elections). The result was a substantial shift in the balance of power between left and right.

Golda Meir, however, managed to form a coalition with the National Religious Party. She insisted that Moshe Dayan continue as minister of defense. The Israeli public, whose pressure had brought about Dayan's appointment to the defense portfolio on the eve of the Six-Day War, had put almost unlimited faith in Dayan as the man in charge of Israel's security. Now their idol had let them down. It was a painful, difficult, unforgiving disappointment. Initially Dayan refused to join the government. However, Meir saw his refusal not as a bowing to public opinion, which blamed him for the failures, but as an attempt to torpedo the government she had worked so hard to form. Dayan eventually capitulated and joined the government.

In the meantime public pressure had led to formation of the Agranat Commission, an independent commission of inquiry chaired by a Supreme Court justice, which was to determine who was responsible for the *mehdal* (failure or great blunder) of the army being taken by surprise and unprepared for war. The commission's report apportioned blame among Chief of the General Staff David Elazar, the head of military intelligence and several of his aides, and Head of Southern Command Shmuel Gonen. The chief of staff and the other IDF officers were relieved of their duties. The commission chose not to blame the civilian leadership, a verdict received angrily by broad segments of the public, who expected justice to be meted out to the political leadership. The soldiers back from the war took part in mass demonstrations outside the government offices under the slogan "Dayan—Resign!"

In the face of this public outcry, Golda Meir resigned on April 11, 1974, mandating the resignation of her government. The Labor Party central committee convened to elect her successor. The party's veterans and its left wing (formerly Ahdut Ha'avoda) favored Yitzhak Rabin. Shimon Peres, a close friend of Dayan, was the candidate of another section of the party and its right wing (formerly Rafi). Rabin won by a small margin. A new government was formed in June 1974 by Rabin, the Six-Day War chief of the General Staff, who had recently completed his tenure as Israel's ambassador to Washington, DC, and had served in a minor ministerial post in Golda Meir's previous government. Although he was inexperienced as a politician, his nonparticipation in the decisions leading up to the Yom Kippur War was a point in his favor. Shimon Peres was named minister of defense.

Thus, almost unnoticed, a change of generations took place in Israel's leadership. Golda Meir came from the "founding generation" that had immigrated to Palestine in the early twentieth century and been part of all the enterprises and travails preceding statehood. It was a resolute, tough generation of leaders formed by the crises of the Yishuv period, World War Two, and Israel's wars. When Levi Eshkol died in 1969, the baton of leadership should have been passed to the native-son generation that fought in the War of Independence. But out of fear that a contest between the two candidates, Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, would tear the party apart, Golda Meir was chosen as an interim measure to defer the internal struggle. With Golda's departure the veterans' generation, which saw itself as personally responsible for the fate of the Zionist enterprise, left the political stage.

After the Yom Kippur War Israeli politics moved from the corridors of power and the established frameworks of Israeli democracy into the street. Political protest as a permanent event, expressed in demonstrations and mass pressure on the government aimed at influencing policy, was previously unheard of in Israel. There were protest movements such as the Black Panthers and a women's demonstration at Mapai headquarters calling for Dayan's appointment as minister of defense on the eve of the Six-Day War, but they were fleeting or small in scale. Now for the first time movements appeared that succeeded in mobilizing the masses in repeated demonstrations. This phenomenon seems linked to the appearance of television in Israel. The Yom Kippur War was the first of Israel's wars to take place in the television era. The immediacy of visual information brought the war and its horrors into every home, creating a sort of virtual community of participants in the experience that united the troops at the front and their families at home. Initially the demonstrations comprised only a few people, but the telecasts showing the demonstrators and their placards turned a relatively marginal phenomenon into a central one in Israeli life. Because of this exposure they gained momentum week by week.

The first wave of protest movements called for Dayan's head. Participants came from left and right alike, soldiers and bereaved families, demanding that the man they considered responsible for the *mehdal* take responsibility for it. As noted, the Agranat Commission report placed all the blame on the military, while exonerating the political leadership that gave the military its orders. Until then the principle that a leadership was obligated to take public responsibility for its acts and omissions had not been put into practice in Israeli politics (and it is doubtful that it was strictly adhered to in Western democracies). It was inconceivable that Ben-Gurion would be called upon to resign after defeats in the War of Independence. The Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was not viewed as a failure of President Roosevelt's. In terms of the sensitivity of both the public and the leadership to the leaders' obligation to own up to mishaps, blunders, and failures, and also the ability of public opinion to influence the centers of government, 1974 was a watershed year. The demand that the leadership assume responsibility for a failure, especially if it involved loss of life, recurred in Israeli politics from then on.

Together with this protest movement, which did not represent a specific political group, another new movement appeared: Gush Emunim. It originated in spontaneous organizations of young yeshiva students, especially from the Merkaz Harav yeshiva, students from *yeshivot hesder* (yeshiva programs that combine advanced Talmudic studies with service in the IDF), graduates of the Bnei Akiva religious youth movement, devotees of Greater Israel from both religious and nonreligious camps, and veterans of settlement in the occupied territories (Hanan Porat from the Etzion Bloc; Rabbi Moshe Levinger from Hebron; and Yehuda Harel from the Golan Heights). Fully aware of the despair and pain prevailing among the Israeli public in the aftermath of the war, they discerned that the government was willing to make territorial concessions in Sinai and the Golan Heights and feared that the bitter war with its numerous casualties would lead the government to yield to American pressure for an Israeli withdrawal.

As we have seen, since the Six-Day War the Israeli public had been divided on the future of the occupied territories between those who saw them as collateral held by Israel until the Arabs saw fit to reach a peace agreement and those who asserted, "Liberated land shall not be returned" and "Not one inch." The left viewed the war and its terrible cost as the result of unwillingness to compromise and withdraw from territory in exchange for an agreement (for even less than peace) and demanded flexibility regarding territorial concessions. The right, especially the founders of Gush Emunim, saw the war as proof of the Arabs' resolve to destroy Israel and concluded that there should be no concessions or policy that might be construed as submitting to pressure, since that would only invite further, unending pressure. To the right the war and its outcome was a

great victory, the likes of which had not been seen since 1948; they paid no attention to the weaknesses it had exposed or, even more to the point, the price it had exacted.

The circles that founded Gush Emunim came mainly from the national-religious bloc. Gershon Shafat, a founder-member, wrote that despair and pain had evoked in the members "new hope for a new beginning, a beginning derived from unshakable faith in The Creator and the command imposed on us to go forward."[1] These assertions are appropriate to a messianic movement guided by a hidden divine commandment revealed only to its adherents, which ignores reality in the name of a loftier truth. They do not involve rational consideration of what is possible and desirable; rather, they impose a concept of faith on reality and act in accordance with it. This frame of mind ran counter to the fundamental Zionist concept that viewed the return to Zion as a project coming to fruition in the real world, while abiding by the real world's constraints.

For Gush Emunim the natural channel for political activity was the NRP. Yet although the party's "youngsters," led by Zevulun Hammer and Yehuda Ben-Meir, were stronger, the party was not controlled by its Greater Israel devotees, and its positions were politically moderate. Its leadership, headed by the experienced veteran Yosef Burg, sought to continue the party's "historical alliance" with the Labor Party. Gush Emunim and the younger leaders demanded that the NRP not join Golda Meir's government after the December 1973 elections unless she agreed to form a national unity government. The Labor Party rejected this idea, since such a government would undermine any possibility of an agreement with Egypt and Syria. And that was precisely what Gush Emunim wanted. Once the group's members realized they would be unable to act through the NRP, they chose an extra-parliamentary strategy. The disengagement negotiations with Egypt indicated that the danger they had predicted in any progress toward an agreement was imminent, for it was clear that Israel would be compelled to concede territory. Although it was difficult to contend that Sinai or the Golan Heights—both outside the borders of the historical Land of Israel—were "the land of our forefathers," the willingness to relinquish territory occupied in the Six-Day War pointed to a trend that in time was likely to affect Judea and Samaria.

The first demonstrations against the disengagement agreement were organized by right-wing intellectuals and political activists. But Gush Emunim swiftly made its mark on these actions. In contrast with the small number of participants in the right's demonstrations, and especially the difficulty people had in continuing to demonstrate over time, Gush Emunim mobilized settlers from Judea and Samaria and the Golan Heights and "settled" outside the Knesset and the prime minister's office. They came one day with their wives and children, set up a temporary encampment, and by the next morning some two thousand peo-

ple in prayer shawls were standing beneath the windows of the cabinet conference room, an image that was immediately broadcast on television. Gush Emunim's mobilization capability was total. It was not restricted by either financial constraints or another agenda. Each time Kissinger shuttled to Israel, he was met by stormy demonstrations and roads blocked by Gush Emunim.

During the difficult negotiations with Syria in May 1974, when it appeared that the sticking point between Israel and Syria was the fate of Kuneitra, settlers from the Golan Heights established an unsanctioned "settlement" in a bunker in the deserted town. The first ones were nonreligious members of kibbutzim and moshavim. Once they realized that their movement, Hakibbutz Hameuhad, did not support them, they handed the settlement over to a Gush Emunim group that had undertaken to establish a permanent settlement, with the proviso that if the government demanded that they move to another location, they would do so. And that is what happened. Kuneitra was eventually vacated, but Keshet, the illegal settlement, became a permanent settlement on the Golan Heights in Israeli territory. Thus was set a precedent of establishing a settlement without government approval, and receiving that approval retroactively. It was a lesson that would not be forgotten.

At this early stage the Gush Emunim modus operandi was already set: mass mobilization of settlers, yeshiva students, and other students from the national-religious education system; use of the settlements' logistical resources to mobilize and maintain demonstrations; long-term protests; and illegal settlement with the help of supporters or quasi-supporters from the military and political establishments. What made this effort possible was the religious fervor that drove the Gush leadership and endowed it and its supporters with extraordinary mental fortitude at a time of waning confidence and loss of direction in Israeli society. Poet Yehuda Amichai gave expression to the connection between the trauma of the war and the strengthening of messianic movements: "This is a country whose dead are in the earth / In place of coal and gold and iron / They are the fuel for the coming of messiahs."[2]

The hard core of the Gush was small, as was evident during the Rabin government's term of office when the same Elon Moreh core group settled in different locations as a protest against the government's refusal to permit Jewish settlement in the heart of Judea and Samaria. It was a sort of wandering group of activists that initiated settlement at a specific location, announced the action through social and study networks to mobilize supporters, and then, once they had embarrassed the government, which had them removed, would plan their next settlement in a different location. Each time a political decision was on the agenda, the Gush communication network would heat up and go into action to mobilize the masses. During the negotiations on the interim agreement with

Egypt, Gush demonstrators accompanied Kissinger throughout his stay in Israel, making life a misery for him and his bodyguards and chanting antisemitic epithets such as "Jew-boy" (an allusion to a Jew in the service of non-Jewish rulers).

It was not only the self-sacrifice of the Gush and the eagerness of its youngsters to take part in its demonstrations as a break from their daily religious study routine (especially since this allowed boys and girls to engage in joint activities and hike all over the country) that worked successfully for the movement. It was also the government's indecisiveness in the face of the Gush activists' resolve. That indecisiveness accompanied settlement activity from the start. When Rabbi Levinger refused to leave Hebron, he was supported by Yigal Allon, even though settlement in that city contravened the Allon Plan. Settlement in the Etzion Bloc resonated with the mythology of the loss of the bloc in the 1948 war and received government approval after pressure was exerted. Gush Emunim adamantly refused to settle within the borders of the Allon Plan, which although not officially accepted by the government was the de facto guideline for Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria. Defiance of the prohibition of settlement in the densely Arab-populated heart of Samaria was a declaration of intent: the government must be prevented from compromising on areas of the historical Land of Israel.

The inhabitants of the settlements along the River Jordan, in the Rafah Approach, and on the Golan Heights, settlements established in accordance with the Allon Plan, gave the Gush Emunim settlers a tailwind as well as moral and material support. To those settlers and their supporters, the messianic fervor of Gush Emunim and their mobilization to settle the Land of Israel were a continuation of the enthusiasm of the labor movement settlers along the borders. The two types seemed similar: the fruit of youth movement education with the same simplicity, the same direct approach, the same straight-talking sabra Hebrew. To all appearances only the yarmulke and observance of the commandments separated the pre-Six-Day War settlers, the later "Allon Plan settlers," and the new settlers who operated on the other side of the Green Line and usually challenged governmental authority. Gush Emunim exploited their similarity with the other settlers to bolster their legitimacy in the eyes of Labor ministers. What is the difference between Jewish settlement in Afula and in Samaria, they argued. Both had the same degree of legitimacy, deriving from the Jewish people's right to its homeland. They swiftly developed the notion that they were the true successors of the early pioneers, a legitimate branch of the tree of Zionist pioneering that had settled the country. They had received the torch from the nonreligious pioneers, who had lost their fervor and whose time was past. Now the time of religious Zionism had come, which was raising the banner of the new pioneering. "Handing over the torch" symbolized what they perceived as an essential change needed

in Israeli culture: the shift from secular to religious hegemony. Not only were these new settlers the implementers of the Zionist pioneering endeavor, they were also the forerunners of Israeli culture, owning "the full cart" of traditional Jewish culture, as opposed to the nihilistic secular Jews, who had lost direction and whose cart was empty of values and true meaning.

During 1975 evacuation of illegal settlers from areas of Judea and Samaria was a permanent part of the IDF's daily routine, a recurring ritual that neither side took very seriously. This nonchalance came to an end with a clash at the Sebastia settlement, initiated by Gush Emunim. In early December 1975 hundreds, and perhaps more, Gush Emunim members and their supporters went to the old railway station at Sebastia, stubbornly insisting that they would remain there, in contrast to previous instances when they had agreed to leave. All attempts at persuading them to leave voluntarily so as to avoid military force were fruitless. It was also clear that if the army evacuated them forcibly, they would reenact the same performance a few weeks later. As the settlers remained in place, the fear of the need to use force against them heightened. The press began to show sympathy for these young people who did not flinch from the harsh living conditions, remaining on-site with their wives and children, exposed to the wind, rain, and cold. The television images highlighted their self-sacrifice. Nor was the army eager for the confrontation that would occur if it had to evacuate them by force. A compromise began to emerge that the government eventually accepted. A thirty-family group of settlers would be housed in the nearby Kadum army camp, and the army would provide them with employment.

This was a breakthrough for Gush Emunim: the beginnings of settlement in Samaria. "Some would call this the course of history. The believers will call it realization of the will of Divine Providence," wrote Gershon Shafat, a leading player in this drama.[3] As for the government, it suffered a harsh blow to its authority. During the discussions that ultimately led to the compromise with Gush Emunim, the memory of the *Altalena* and the need to impose the state's authority were evoked. But Rabin was not Ben-Gurion, and his government, which relied on a small majority in the Knesset and was divided between supporters of Rabin and Peres, did not dare undertake an action that might lead to Jewish bloodshed caused by other Jews. In the midst of this crisis, representatives of Jewish communities in other parts of the world convened in Jerusalem to express their solidarity with Israel in the wake of the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism. Rabin was understandably reluctant to present them with a scene of the IDF using force against Jews. Gush Emunim's victory in the Sebastia affair proved that a small but determined minority, prepared to go to the brink of violent confrontation, could impose its will on a vacillating government.

The Rabin government did not enjoy many good days. As part of the interim

agreement with Egypt, Rabin obtained a package of economic benefits, as well as large allocations of advanced weaponry that the United States had agreed to supply, above and beyond what Israel had received in the past. But the war cost Israel $8 billion, a vast sum that severely depleted the country's foreign currency reserves and led to a huge deficit in its balance of payments. The rise in oil prices and the resulting global economic crisis also burdened the Israeli economy. The government had to cut its spending and lower the country's standard of living. Tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs. In the Rabin government's first year, annual inflation passed 50 percent. To curb inflation and improve the balance of payments, the lira was substantially devalued. At the end of 1975 the rate of exchange was nine lirot to the dollar, compared with 4.2 lirot to the dollar before the emergency economic program. Inflation began to drop but was still above 30 percent annually.

But while the economy showed signs of recovery and the gross national product rose, the lowering of the standard of living and high unemployment, together with continuing inflation, did nothing to boost the government's popularity. Economics experts argued that these measures were vital for economic recovery, but the public refused to accept this. There were demonstrations by the Black Panthers and other protest organizations. Workers called upon to tighten their belts responded with a series of strikes that hit the economy and prevented implementation of some of the government's reforms. In the medium and long terms, the reforms in taxation, subsidies, wages, export incentives, and devaluation ultimately benefited the economy. But in the short term they aroused public hostility.

An atmosphere of gloom and dissatisfaction pervaded the country, remnants of the national trauma of the war. Israelis neither forgot nor forgave the Labor Party for the *mehdal.* The conflicts between left and right sharpened when "territorial compromise" and "not one inch" occupied a permanent place in the headlines—even though no Arab leader had shown himself open to territorial compromises. Fears of the PLO's rise in the international arena and Zionism's loss of legitimacy were also worrying. In addition the Rabin government was damaged by several serious cases of corruption involving figures connected with the Labor Party. These affairs further damaged the government's reputation. There was a sense of loss of direction. In 1975 Yehonatan Geffen gave expression to this feeling in a pop song titled "Yakhol Lihyot Shezeh Nigmar" (Perhaps it's over): "They say it was great here before I was born / And everything was just wonderful until I arrived." He enumerates a series of Zionist symbols from the Mandate period, such as Little Tel Aviv and the sand dunes, the swamps and the mosquitoes; quotes lines from old Zionist songs like "For This Is Our Land"; and contrasts nostalgia for the past with the present: "They say that there was a

wonderful dream here once / But when I came to see I didn't find a thing. / Perhaps it's over."

In 1968, when the Labor Party was formed as a union of Ahdut Ha'avoda, Rafi, and Mapai, the former two factions, which had left the party in the previous generation, had ostensibly "come home." But actually the wings of the party were strengthened at the expense of the old Mapai. Mapai's decline had begun with the Lavon Affair, in which the party's veterans fought one another fiercely, with Ben-Gurion and Pinchas Lavon leading the fray—prepared, like Von Kleist's character Michael Kohlhaas, to destroy the party for the sake of justice. Mapai, which had been the anchor of every political alliance, gradually faded away, leaving the arena to the two wings, which were preoccupied mostly with competing with each other. The political moderation and keen sense of reality that had characterized the historical Mapai—together with a total commitment to the public interest, as its leaders understood it—won the party the trust of broad segments of the Israeli public, who saw it as a balanced, responsible force that could navigate Israel to a safe haven. But now the public felt that the party had lost its moorings, its leadership was weak and divided, and it was not providing direction to a nation in crisis.

In the reality of the 1970s, with the emergence of a new middle class comprising people from the liberal professions, businessmen, and various types of contractors, and clearly oriented toward capitalism, the old socialist slogans sounded hollow. The Rabin government's attempts to institute social norms promoting accurate income tax statements and to fight what was known as the "black economy" hit the middle class and did not inspire sympathy for the government. Israeli welfare policy functioned to prevent wide socioeconomic gaps in Israeli society, which up to the early 1970s maintained (relative to Western countries) a high level of equality. Now arguments were heard for a free market economy and a decrease in state involvement. Intellectuals and businessmen demanded that the socialist ethos be replaced by a Western liberal ethos emphasizing individual rights and freedoms, as opposed to the rights of the collective. There was a feeling that the Labor Party had run its course and it was time for a change of government.

The corruption scandals that rocked the country during those years also undermined trust in the government. The standards expected of a government changed; what had been acceptable in the early years, such as the use of state resources to advance the Histadrut economy, was now rejected out of hand, and Israel accepted the conventional governmental norms of Western countries. The corruption cases exposed the existence of the old norms, but also highlighted the transparency of the new norms that were now expected from the government. Television broadcasts focused on the scandals, emphasized government weaknesses, and presented the leaders as laughingstocks, especially in the satirical TV

revue *Nikui Rosh* (head cleaning), which became very successful. Satirizing government figures was another new, previously unknown practice.

The Arab population of Israel underwent a shift in identity and a psychological change as a result of its encounter with the Arabs of the occupied territories. At first the Israeli Arabs boasted of their economic achievements compared with those of their brethren from the West Bank. But as time went by, their identification with the Palestinian people became stronger, while their sense of identity as Israeli citizens weakened. This process gained impetus due to the Yom Kippur War and the dramatically heightened international status of the PLO. During the Nasser period pan-Arabism was popular among Israeli Arabs. When he died, they mourned him as a symbol of pan-Arabism. But the Arab states' military failures and the relatively scant attention paid to the Palestinian issue weakened this nationalist pan-Arab connection, and Palestinian identity became the shaper of Israeli Arabs' national character.

This change was revealed in reduced support for moderate Arab politicians who considered the existence of the State of Israel a fait accompli and sought to integrate into it. The moderates fought for equal rights and to raise the status of the Israeli Arabs, while maintaining channels of communication with the authorities and avoiding confrontation with them. Most were represented by parties associated with either the ruling party or Mapam. Now Arab public opinion perceived them as servants of the Jews who were not fighting the battle for Palestinian rights. The parties allied with the Jewish sector declined. Rakah (New Communist List), composed mainly of Arabs, rose, in comparison to Maki (Israeli Communist Party), whose members were Jews. Unlike the PLO, whose covenant claimed rule over all of Western Palestine and removal of Jews who came to the country after 1918, Rakah was loyal to the Moscow line that recognized Israel's right to exist. However, it underwent processes of radicalization that were also influenced by increased Soviet support of the PLO. Rakah studiously avoided illegal activities and restricted itself to protests, parliamentary activity, and publications. It warned of discrimination against the Arab minority, but at this stage did not encourage people to take to the streets in protest, fearing it would lose control of them, which might lead to suppression by the authorities. Attainment of equal rights was at the top of the Israeli Arab agenda, and since Rakah had championed this cause for years, its status was enhanced.

The increased radicalization of the Arab citizens of Israel arose from several factors. The first was demographic growth. In 1949 some 150,000 Arabs lived in Israel. By the mid-1970s this figure had reached half a million. This population increase created a sense of increased power. Second, the behavior of the Arabs of Judea and Samaria influenced the Arabs of Israel. In the first half of 1976, there was a flood of demonstrations in the West Bank due to the PLO's heightened

status and the Palestinian population's growing identification with it after the Rabat summit. In addition radical PLO supporters were elected in the municipal campaign held in April 1976. The Gush Emunim settlement at Kadum and other, government-initiated settlements also enraged the Arab population. On television the Arabs of Israel saw their West Bank brethren hurling stones and Molotov cocktails at IDF soldiers and learned from their methods. Third, the situation of the Israeli Arabs caused discomfort. Members of the Arab intelligentsia compared themselves with the university graduates on the West Bank, noted the comparatively high standard of high schools there, and realized they were in an inferior position. From that point on Israeli Arabs no longer compared their situation with what it had been before Israeli statehood, but with the progress made in the Jewish sector. The leaders claimed that discrimination was practiced against Arabs in the education system and in allocations for building classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sports facilities. They also came out against the minimal teaching standards, which they claimed were designed to keep the Arabs ignorant so as to provide manual laborers with low status and low wages. The Ministry of Education was accused of discrimination against the Arab heritage in its curricula in order to obscure Arab national identity. These claims were not unfounded.

A central issue in the propaganda and protests of Rakah and the radicals was the Arab village. Although agriculture in the villages had advanced, irrigation projects were undertaken, and houses had running water, the protest leaders contended that the Arab farmers were discriminated against with respect to government guidance and aid and marketing conditions. A core problem they raised was land. In Palestinian culture the land (*al-'ard*) is not just a means of production but a symbol of possession; there is an unbreakable bond between the farmer and his land on both personal and political levels. The land is the homeland. It was not by chance that at the end of the 1950s a nationalist movement named Al-'Ard appeared in the Arab sector. It was outlawed. In the 1950s the state expropriated large tracts of land for development. Throughout the 1960s and up to the mid-1970s, there were no expropriations, yet the sensitivity toward land continued, and Rakah promoted this issue as a central component of the local identity.

In the summer of 1975 there was news of government plans for the "Judaization of Galilee" that would include expropriation of certain lands. The Arabs perceived the term "Judaization of Galilee" as a plot aimed at neutralizing their dominance in this region, which had an Arab majority. Village committees were set up to defend the land. In February 1976 news emerged of a government decision to expropriate some 5,000 acres, of which 1,750 were Arab-owned and the rest either Jewish-owned or state lands. The decision also spoke of compen-

sating the landowners and the possibility of land exchange. But neither the fact that the expropriation was relatively small nor the attempt to soften the blow with compensation prevented the ensuing uproar. On March 30, 1976, the Committee for the Defense of Arab Lands, run by Rakah and other nationalist entities, declared a general strike—Land Day—"as an expression of the genuine anger beating in the soul of our people against the policy aimed at uprooting us from every piece of land we own."[4] During the strike the protesters threw stones and cans of burning kerosene at the security forces and erected barricades of rocks and burning tires on the roads. The curfew imposed on the Galilee and Triangle villages was not observed, and the protesters clashed with police and army forces. In shooting incidents six Arabs were killed and dozens wounded, along with numerous policemen and soldiers.

Since then Land Day has become a key date on the calendar for the Arabs in Israel, the Palestinians in the occupied territories, and even the Palestinian diaspora, as a symbol of national solidarity and unity of objective. And since then the agenda of the Israeli Arabs has included the demand to establish a Palestinian state side by side with the State of Israel as an expression of the Palestinian right to self-determination. Land Day and its associated events exposed the Jewish public to the bitterness and outrage of the Arabs of Israel. But it is doubtful that it helped bring the majority and minority closer together. The Jews saw Arab violence as a demonstration of the government's loss of control and of the urgent need to increase the number of Jews in Galilee. From the Rabin government's point of view, Land Day was another development that weakened its status.

In July 1976 the government did have a gratifying moment when an elite IDF unit freed the hostages from a hijacked airliner in Entebbe, Uganda. This Air France plane took off from Israel and was hijacked after a stopover in Athens, then flown to Uganda, whose ruler, Idi Amin, cooperated with the hijackers. The hijackers demanded the release of terrorists held in Israel, Germany, and other countries. After a few days of anxiety during which the government authorized Rabin to negotiate with the hijackers, the IDF formulated a plan to free the hostages, who were being held six thousand kilometers from Israel. The government approved the operation. Hercules transport aircraft carried the IDF force, and the mission was accomplished with very few casualties. It was a daring operation, executed in exemplary fashion. For a day or two Israel forgot its day-to-day troubles and the depression that had prevailed since the war and celebrated the operation's success, which garnered superlatives in the world press. But the reprieve did not last long.

In December 1976 the first F-15 aircraft arrived in Israel and received a state welcome. Rabin viewed their arrival as an expression of the warm relations he had nurtured with the American administration, and wanted to highlight it. Unfortu-

nately the aircraft arrived on a Friday afternoon. The welcoming ceremony, with an aerobatic display, ran late, and it seems that desecration of the Sabbath by the government ministers and the heads of the army occurred. The ultra-Orthodox parties submitted a motion of no confidence in the government. The NRP now found itself between a rock and a hard place; in the end most of its members abstained in the Knesset vote and did not support the government. Rabin accused them of dereliction of the principle of collective responsibility, to which all ministers were subject. He dismissed three NRP ministers and, using the vote as a pretext to dissolve the government and hold new elections, which he hoped to win with a larger majority, tendered his own resignation to the president. The new elections were set for May 17, 1977.

Rabin's move was initially seen as promising in light of his popularity after the Entebbe operation. But everything went rapidly awry. At a meeting with Rabin the newly elected President Carter did not hesitate to publicly express support for the idea of "a Palestinian homeland." The press reports on the meeting indicated that previous agreements between Rabin and the American administration had not been taken into consideration, and that the president had exerted brutal pressure—bordering on insult—on the prime minister. At home Shimon Peres again announced that he would run against Rabin at the party central committee, even though Rabin was an incumbent prime minister. Rabin won again at the committee, albeit by a very small majority, reflecting diminishing support.

A new party, Dash (a Hebrew acronym for Democratic Movement for Change), was formed, which expressed the public's dissatisfaction with the existing parties and leadership. Dash was proof of the decline of the socialist ethos and the rise of the civil-liberal one. A typical centrist party representing the educated middle class, it was joined by fragments of parties such as the liberal Shinui (change) and the right-wing Hamerkaz Hahofshi (the free center). Its main power lay in the list of impressive figures from industry, the security establishment, and academe who joined it. Dash was headed by former chief of the General Staff Yigael Yadin, now a professor of archeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Yadin, the uncrowned prince of Israeli politics, had been asked more than once to join one party or another in a leadership role, but he remained a tantalizing enigma since he never dipped his toes into the hot water of politics. Dash seemed an attractive alternative to the Labor Party, whose star had dimmed. Rabin, the successor of the old guard, could not convince the Israeli public that he was a real leader capable of meeting the challenges the country faced. Dash, with its impressive, experienced figures from the important fields of security, economics, and policy, appeared to have strong potential for leadership. It offered an agenda that was moderate-liberal in terms of civil society, and moderate-activist from a security angle. Surveys showed a meteoric rise in its apparent

support from voters. On top of everything, in March 1977 Rabin was hit by a scandal involving a bank account in dollars that his wife continued to hold in New York after he had completed his term as ambassador in the United States. Israeli currency regulations at the time forbade Israelis to hold foreign accounts. Deciding to stand by his wife, Rabin withdrew his candidacy and was replaced by Shimon Peres. Thus did the Israeli political system move into the 1977 elections.

NOTES

1. Gershon Shafat, *Gush emunim: hasippur me'ahorei hakla'im* (Gush Emunim: The Story behind the Scenes), Beit-El: Beit-El Library Publications, 1995, p. 33.

2. Amichai, "Shirei eretz tzion Yerushalayim," p. 12.

3. Shafat, *Gush emunim: hasippur me'ahorei hakla'im*, p. 220.

4. *Al-Ittihad*, 9.3.1976, cited in Eli Rekhess, *Hami'ut ha'aravi beYisrael: bein communism leleumiyut aravit, 1945–1991* (The Arab Minority in Israel: Between Communism and Arab Nationalism, 1945–1991), Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University and Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1993, p. 80.

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PART V

1977–2000

PEACE, WAR, & INDECISION

17 BEGIN IN POWER

In the run-up to the May 1977 elections, Israeli television adopted the British practice of the exit poll. As voters left the polling station, they were asked to recast their vote in a sample poll. Through statistical analysis of the results, the pollsters could get an indication of the election results shortly after the polling stations closed. When the television executives saw the exit poll results, they could hardly believe their eyes. The Likud (comprising Gahal and some small parties) had won forty-four seats and the Alignment only thirty-two. At first they thought the exit poll results were wrong, but as the real results flowed in it became increasingly clear that the unbelievable had happened. For the first time since the establishment of the state, Mapai, or the Labor Party, would not be the majority party in forming the government. At eleven that evening TV anchorman Chaim Yavin announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, an about-turn!" coining a Hebrew phrase that took its place in Israeli politics and culture.

Likud leader Menachem Begin waited until all the results were in before going with his wife, Aliza, to Likud headquarters, Metzudat Ze'ev (Jabotinsky), where the victory celebrations were already in full swing. Chaim Yavin described the scene, with men in suits and ties replacing the Alignment people and their informal attire; the sloppy style of dress typical of leftists was no more. The building shook to the rhythmic chanting of "Begin, Begin." Begin put on a yarmulke and intoned the Shehehiyanu blessing (used to celebrate special occasions), thanked his wife, children, and grandchildren, and then quoted from President Lincoln's second inaugural address: "With charity for all; with firmness in the right . . ." The yarmulke, the blessing, the family references, the use of ceremony were previously unknown in Israeli politics. The anchorman hit the nail on the head when he smilingly remarked, "We'll have to get used to a new style."

Begin is apparently the only leader in the history of democracies who lost eight elections and won the ninth. When the Etzel was disbanded he founded the Herut party, a fighting opposition to the rule of Mapai and the left. The transition from underground fighter—or, as the international press liked to call him, "terrorist"—to parliamentarian did not gain Begin the public recognition he had hoped for. Until the 1960s his party won fewer than twenty Knesset seats, whereas Mapai won more than forty. Begin had difficulty surmounting the legitimacy obstacle, and Ben-Gurion did everything he could to prevent him from achieving public trust. The Herut platform, which asserted, "The Jordan has two banks, and both

belong to us" (in the words of Jabotinsky, the founding father of Revisionism), aroused fear in Israelis of an irredentist party that would lead the nation into war.

Over the years there was a slow, almost undetectable retreat from this maximalist slogan that reduced the claim to the west bank of the Jordan; even this represented an aspiration that did not mandate action. At the time the 1949 lines were the accepted borders. When Gahal was founded in 1965 (as noted, a union of Herut with the liberals, a centrist middle-class party), Begin refused to stop mentioning the territory of the historical Land of Israel (reaching as far as the Jordan), but the liberals viewed this as saber rattling that was out of line with their moderate foreign policy. As a compromise the issue was mentioned in the introduction to the platform as a commitment solely of Herut, not the united party, to the "integrity of the homeland" doctrine. The slow retreat from commitment to Greater Israel represented an acceptance that, for the vast majority of the Israeli public, Greater Israel was a distant dream, not a political platform. As noted before, Ben-Gurion's objective was to prevent the man whose militant aspirations and ways of operating he considered a danger to Israel's very existence from being accepted as a legitimate actor on the political stage. "The man sitting next to Dr. Bader" [in the Knesset] is how Ben-Gurion referred to Begin. Ben-Gurion's phrase "without Herut and Maki" was aimed at preventing the radical right and left from joining coalitions. For several years the Ministry of Defense refused to recognize that Etzel and Lehi veterans were entitled to pensions and allowances equal to those received by their Haganah counterparts. This unjustifiable but temporary discrimination later became the source of an entire myth of discrimination.

Begin had adopted a political style that was unacceptable in Israel. In a speech he gave at a demonstration against the reparations agreement with West Germany in January 1952, he fired up the audience with expressions vilifying Ben-Gurion and an implied threat of violence. After the speech, as described in earlier chapters, the demonstrators marched to the Knesset building and stoned it, ironically just as Begin himself was addressing the plenum. Begin was penalized with a three-month suspension from the Knesset. After that demonstration he moderated his rhetoric and increasingly stressed his commitment to democracy and the rule of law. He campaigned for the 1959 elections to the Fourth Knesset under the slogan "From Opposition to Government," holding well-attended public meetings all over the country. On the day before Election Day that year, he toured the poor neighborhoods of Tel Aviv in an open car, escorted by motorcycle outriders. This idea had been introduced by the Herut campaign manager, who got it from the United States, but in Israel it was seen as the exhibitionism of a Mussolini-style right-winger.

Begin infused his speeches with biblical expressions, prophetic spirit, and

high-register rhetoric disconnected from reality. His critics claimed he was pompous, but he aroused enthusiasm among the masses. On all domestic policy issues he was ready to use demagoguery against the government. On foreign policy he was prepared to support every belligerent action by the government but not withdrawals or concessions. More than once his repeated failure to gain the people's trust aroused dissatisfaction in his own party, but each time his leadership was challenged he promptly expelled the challenger from the party. Herut was a "family" party, whose leadership had been forged when the Etzel was underground. There was an intimacy among the veterans, who accepted Begin's leadership unquestioningly. Most of the members came from Poland, and Begin's authoritarian style matched the conventional practice in the nationalist movements of that country between the two World Wars.

Begin and Herut's breakthrough from the wilderness of delegitimization to the center of the political arena took place on the eve of the Six-Day War. As the country's fate seemed to hang in the balance, Begin—in a belated recognition of Ben-Gurion's extraordinary powers of leadership—magnanimously proposed that Ben-Gurion be brought back from retirement in Sdeh Boker and into the government. Ben-Gurion did not return to government, but that was the beginning of a process of conciliation between him and Begin, whose Polish nobleman's mien charmed the old leader's wife, Paula, who had a soft spot for him. In the negotiations over creating a national unity government on the eve of the war, the NRP demanded a place for Gahal, and for the first time Begin was appointed one of its ministers without portfolio. In this way Begin and Herut emerged from the deep freeze and became suitable political partners. When Golda Meir formed her government in 1969, she invited Gahal and Begin to join it, lending real credence to their legitimacy; while the earlier appointment in 1967 could have been construed as an emergency appointment, this was recognition of Begin and his colleagues as worthy members of government.

The Six-Day War transformed the Herut platform from a distant ideal into reality. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip were in Israel's hands. Henceforth Begin worked assiduously to ensure state rule over all of the historical Land of Israel. He was a party to the government decision of June 19, 1967, expressing willingness to concede Sinai and the Golan Heights in return for peace agreements. But he did not agree to a similar arrangement with Jordan regarding the West Bank. In 1970, when the government of Israel informed UN mediator Gunnar Jarring that it was willing to implement UN Security Council Resolution 242, which included the principle of nonannexation of territories occupied in war, he forced Gahal to leave the government by threatening to split the party if his stand was not accepted.

The Yom Kippur War was the momentous event that brought about the demise

of labor movement rule. The public perceived the *mehdal* as an expression of the Labor Party's political ineptitude, and this led to a loss of the faith that was the party's most valuable asset during its years of rule. People viewed it as the natural ruling party, which knew how to steer the ship of state to a safe haven. For the first time the war raised doubts about this image, which until then had not wavered in the face of opposition attacks from left and right alike. The Rabin government began its term of office under the heavy cloud of these doubts. Its weakness, the internal struggles between Peres and Rabin, and the cases of corruption exposed during this period damaged the government further. The media, particularly television—which until the Yom Kippur War had displayed moderation in criticizing the government—now embraced the practices formulated by American television during the Vietnam War and the Watergate affair. Television became a central tool for exposing the government's flaws and weaknesses, and through pithy and even venomous satire it contributed to undermining the Labor Party's image as the party destined to rule. In the 1977 elections voters on the left shifted mainly to Dash, which won fifteen seats and became the third-strongest party. This vote expressed labor voters' disgust but did not represent an essential change in their political worldview—certainly not acceptance of Begin's positions on Greater Israel.

BEGIN'S FIRST TERM AND THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS

Begin brought to government an authoritarian style unknown in Israel since Ben-Gurion's time. After the previous government's weakness this style seemed like a breath of fresh air, inspiring confidence and restoring the sense that the captain was indeed safely navigating the ship. Begin was a man of opposites, and he was either admired or despised. He was capable of grand gestures yet also of pettiness. A lawyer by profession, he scrupulously respected the courts and the rule of law. But he was also capable of indulging in endless polemics and legal hairsplitting. He was a man of honor who boasted that he always kept his promises, but in fact he had no qualms about breaking them when he considered it necessary. He vowed that no Arab would be dispossessed of his land as a result of Jewish settlement in the occupied territories, and abided by that promise. At the same time, he visited the settlers at Elon Moreh and declared, "There will be many more Elon Morehs." Always conscious of the importance of symbols, Begin insisted that official publications not describe the West Bank as "occupied" or "Israeli-held" territories. Instead they had to use biblical names that consolidated the Jews' connection with these areas from time immemorial: Judea and Samaria.

The coalition Begin formed included the NRP (which won twelve seats) and Agudat Yisrael. Dash joined later. This was the first time since 1952 that an ultra-

Orthodox party was a coalition member. In contrast with the heritage of Jabotinsky, which was essentially secular, Begin observed Jewish tradition. Even when he did not observe the commandments, he adopted a style that projected sympathy and respect for tradition. His speeches were peppered with "God willing" and verses from the prayer book; his head was always covered on occasions that called for it, and also on those that did not. When the ultra-Orthodox requested that El Al not fly on the Sabbath, he quickly acceded to this request as self-evident. He increased allocations to the yeshivas, resulting in the growth of the class of unemployed yeshiva students to a scale previously unknown in the history of Israel. He also canceled the cap on the number of yeshiva students exempt from military service (which Ben-Gurion had set at 400 and Dayan increased to 1,500); since then the number has increased to tens of thousands.

Begin had a far higher level of Holocaust awareness than any prime minister who preceded him. As one who had left Poland with the outbreak of World War Two and whose family perished there, he identified with the annihilation of the Jewish people under Nazi rule with every fiber of his being. As a prime minister committed to the interests of the country, he relinquished his tough stance against relations with Germany—one of the European countries most friendly to Israel—but the images that shaped his psyche were associated with the Jewish trauma of World War Two. After the elections, when he met with American Jewish leaders—mostly liberals concerned about his nationalist militancy—he won them over with his Yiddishkeit, his profound connection to the Jewish past, the Yiddish he sometimes used, and his deep identification with the Jewish people. He spoke not of "Israelis" but of "Jews." Subjected to international criticism over Israel's bombardment of Beirut in the 1982 Lebanon War, he evoked Holocaust images. When the media published an image of a wounded Palestinian girl, he placed on his desk the well-known photograph of a Jewish child in Warsaw facing armed, jackbooted German soldiers with his hands raised. He likened Arafat to a new Hitler plotting the annihilation of the Jewish people. During his critical meetings with President Carter, he made use of deep pathos, evoking the memory of his lost family, which cast a deep silence over the room.

Some viewed such behavior as exaggerated theatricality, a cheapening of the Holocaust that vitiated its uniqueness and moral power. But others saw it as an extraordinary adeptness at persuasion that put Begin's adversaries in their place. The popular 1980s slogan "The whole world is against us" was a reaction to the unbridled, one-sided criticism leveled against Israel by the world media during the first Lebanon War, criticism spiced with genuine antisemitism. But it was also influenced by Begin's leadership style, which framed Israel and the Jewish people as the constant targets of unfair judgment by the nations of the world, which were resolutely trying to damage Israel. This was a return to traditional

Jewish ways of thinking, in the vein of "It is a given law; it is known that Esau hates Jacob."

Begin's rise to power marked more than a change of government. It symbolized a move to center stage of new classes, another culture, a different historical narrative. Begin touched a sensitive spot in all those who saw labor movement Israeliness as arrogant, alienated, and alienating, as an identity contrary to their own. The immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s, particularly those from North Africa, brought with them a heavy load of disadvantages that became yet more burdensome during their absorption difficulties in the maʿabarot and development towns, as they were required to quickly adopt a modern, secular, Western culture. One component of this shift was the breakup of the patriarchal family, which entailed diminished status and an erosion of respect for the father. For these immigrants Begin, the underdog of Israeli politics, represented the man who had succeeded in turning the tide. He wore a suit, spoke politely, and demanded courteous behavior—accepted practice in elite Mizrachi circles. His authoritarianism was a replacement for the eroded authority of the father. His oratorical ability was unparalleled, and his willingness to stand up to the whole world spoke to them. But what spoke to them even more were his virulent attacks on the Alignment—the source of all their absorption hardships—blaming it for all the real and imagined humiliations they had suffered. Many Mizrachi Jews enthusiastically received Begin's demonization of the Alignment in his speeches; he was putting into words all their feelings of being discriminated against. His use of religious idioms and respect for religion were aligned with their value system, which contrasted sharply with insolent sabra secularism. Begin's "Jewishness" and his tendency to emphasize tradition lent him a certain familial intimacy for the Mizrachi Jews, most of whom kept a warm place in their heart for family tradition.

Begin placed the Holocaust firmly at the center of Israeli discourse. Some Holocaust survivors took this as an opportunity to demand their rightful place in the national narrative, recognition of their contribution to the establishment of the state and their participation in the War of Independence. But many others joined the campaign demonizing the old Israeliness. The survivors' claims covered a wide range. There were allegations that during the World War the Yishuv leadership was not sufficiently aware of what was happening in Europe and did not try to help the European Jews during the Nazi occupation; that in Israel the survivors had faced a rejecting and disdainful attitude, resistance to hearing their stories, and accusations that they had "gone like lambs to the slaughter"; and that the memory of the Holocaust had been suppressed in the first decades after the World War.

This was a political struggle that became a fight for commemoration. As we

have seen, allegations that the Yishuv leadership did not stand up and fight for European Jewry had been made by the Etzel as early as the 1940s. After the fight against the reparations agreement, Herut adopted an image as the party that had cared for the Jews of Europe, unlike hard-hearted Mapai, which was prepared to sacrifice national honor for German money. At the same time, at the Kasztner trial the right-wing attorney Shmuel Tamir presented the survivors as collaborators with the Nazis, the diametrical opposite of the proud sabras. In his telling only the ghetto fighters were worthy of respect. The Eichmann trial transformed these images and turned the Holocaust into a central element of Israeli identity.

Now Begin positioned the Holocaust as a unifying factor with respect to the old Israeli identity, opposing that identity with a new one whose images were far more connected with Diaspora petit bourgeois culture (which he extolled) than with the supposed proletarianism of the labor movement. He sought to build a new genealogy that no longer relied on Petach Tikva and Sejera, à la Ben-Gurion, but on Warsaw, Berdichev, and Casablanca as the sources of Israeli identity. Furthermore, if until then the Etzel and Lehi had been excluded from the story of the establishment of the state, now the record was set straight. According to Begin, without the Etzel's fight against British rule the state would not have come into being; Mapai, he contended, had conceded the integrity of the country out of its weakness and lack of resolve. Begin cast himself as the true patriot who had prevented an internecine war during "the hunting season" and the *Altalena* episode, whereas the left had no qualms about handing over the underground heroes to the British. Begin and his colleagues inculcated this narrative, a combination of truth and lies, hyperbole and self-persuasion, through speeches to an audience of admirers, most of whom had not even been in the country when these episodes took place and accepted this propaganda as though Moses had brought it down from the mountaintop. The extent to which Begin used the battles of the past to ensure legitimacy in the present can be seen in his creation of a commission of inquiry to reexamine the 1933 murder of Chaim Arlosoroff, head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department. The Revisionist narrative described the accusation that members of Betar had committed this crime as a "blood libel."

"The fighting family"—Begin's circle of close Etzel comrades, who had accompanied him down the thirty-year-long road during which he did not rise to power—was an exclusive club that accepted no one who did not have the same background and the same education and worldview formulated in the Etzel. The problem was that in order to become a party of the masses, Herut, and later Gahal, had to open itself to the new immigrants. Some of these immigrants had been members of Betar abroad, raised on the worldview whose foundation was Greater Israel, anti-leftism, national honor, and adulation of Jabotinsky as

founding father. But for most North African immigrants, it was the encounter with Begin that offered the prospect of leadership, an opportunity for advancement and belonging, and a link with the founding myth of the state. The opening of Gahal, and later the Likud, to the activists of the development towns and distressed neighborhoods was not well received by the old Betar elite, which felt rejected by the newcomers, who in addition did not always fit the image of "Hadar," which Jabotinsky had defined as "outward beauty, respect, self-esteem, politeness, faithfulness. . . ." But as the years went by the majority of the old leaders were no longer able to manage the party. Researchers Uri Cohen and Nissim Leon contend that on the eve of the about-turn, the Mizrachim held a large majority in the party central committee. Membership on this committee was a reward for people active in the local party branches. These branches created party loyalty among a young, dynamic elite that rose from the rank and file and was the mobilizing force that brought masses of voters to the polling stations. They were the people who carried Begin to power.

By contrast with the Likud's dynamism, the Labor Party was tired, crumbling from within, lacking authoritative leadership, and suffering from a loss of self-confidence. It did not go on the attack and exploit Likud scandals, such as the Tel Hai Foundation deficits that Begin tried desperately to pay off in the year before the about-turn. To Labor Party supporters Begin's theatricality and rhetoric looked like unconvincing demagoguery, but no one among the party's membership was capable of fighting him with his own weapons. The restrained, matter-of-fact style of the native-son generation, which was now part of the movement's leadership, could not compete with Begin's dramatics, which engaged his audiences' emotions and expressed their desires. The doubts he cast on the labor movement's place in the history of the Yishuv and the state stunned its members.

The Labor Party of the 1970s, which boasted of its social-democratic leanings, was a party of intellectual elites, liberal professionals, and upper-class salaried workers. It was not a party of the working masses; they voted for the Likud. The Labor Party's socialism involved a high level of state involvement in the economy with the goal of achieving maximum equality. This trend diminished after 1967, but Israel remained one of the world's more egalitarian countries. Although the state provided an impressive social safety net for its citizens, it did not turn this benefit into all-conquering propaganda. The party's ideology centered on the individual's commitment to the state and spoke of the citizen's obligations but not his or her rights. It fostered "the common good" but not the interests of the individual. For his part Begin championed a discourse of individualism, grounded in the question "What does the state give me?" not "What do I give the state?" In his Knesset speech presenting his government, Begin asserted that "much work, perhaps even hard labor, is imposed upon us. We, my colleagues and I, shall do

that work with dedication, loyalty, in good conscience, with a sure heart and in the belief that with God's help we shall ameliorate the lot of our people."[1] This statement contravened the entire ethos of the labor movement, which was based on belief in the masses rising to the challenge—not on a leadership that was their patron.

Begin's first government disappointed the Herut veterans. The major portfolios went to people who had not come up through the party ranks. Ezer Weizmann, architect of the Israeli Air Force and nephew of Israel's first president, Chaim Weizmann, who had managed the Likud's successful election campaign, was appointed minister of defense. Minister of Finance Simcha Ehrlich was a bland moderate from the liberals. Ariel Sharon, whose party Shlomzion with its one seat swiftly joined the Likud following its victory, was appointed minister of agriculture. (Begin was quoted as saying that if Sharon were given the defense portfolio, he would surround the Knesset with tanks.) Sharon took upon himself the task of expanding settlement in the occupied territories. When Dash joined the government, Yigael Yadin was appointed deputy prime minister. Begin surprised the Israeli political system by bringing in Moshe Dayan, who had been vilified since the Yom Kippur War, from the political wilderness and appointing him foreign minister. It was a brilliant move designed to lend the government international legitimacy.

The Western countries were stunned by the Israeli election results. Begin was branded a dangerous extremist. *Time* noted that "Begin" rhymes with "Fagin," a blatantly antisemitic remark to which Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek responded, "*Time* equals slime." A boatload of Vietnamese refugees who had sailed from port to port, since no country would take them in, found safe haven in Israel on Begin's orders; he saw them as a reminder of the Jewish tragedy of World War Two and the world's indifference toward it. This charitable act neutralized Begin's terrorist image in the world press, particularly in Britain. In light of the attacks on him and the fears he aroused in the world media, his moderateness and courtesy were a pleasant surprise. But what mainly worked in his favor was the peace process.

Begin did not believe in partial arrangements with the Arab states and had vehemently opposed the interim agreements Rabin achieved. He wanted a historic breakthrough: a peace agreement with the biggest, most important Arab state—Egypt. Hints that he was willing to compromise on territory can be detected in the platform he dictated to his party in January 1977 before his rise to power. It expressed an intention to compromise on Sinai and the Golan Heights while asserting that west of the River Jordan there would be no foreign rule but rather autonomy for the Arab inhabitants. Dayan's appointment as foreign minister was a signal of Begin's interest in negotiating with the Arab states, above all

Egypt. At his first meeting with President Carter, Begin said that he accepted UN Security Council Resolution 242—to which his opposition in 1970 had caused his resignation from Golda Meir's government. He initiated a meeting with Romanian president Nicolae Ceauşescu, and sent Moshe Dayan to meet with King Hussein, the Shah of Iran, and King Hassan II of Morocco, under whose sponsorship Dayan met with Egyptian deputy prime minister Hassan Tuhami. The cumulative effect of these meetings led to the greatest surprise of the century: Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.

In an address to the Egyptian parliament on November 9, 1977, Sadat laid aside his written text and added two short sentences on negotiations with the Israelis: "I am willing to go to the ends of the earth for peace, even to their house, the Knesset, and talk to them. We have no time to waste."[2] This declaration was greeted with thunderous applause, which showed that the audience had not fully comprehended its revolutionary significance. Begin understood it himself only when a journalist pressed him for his response, saying that all the news agencies had already circulated the dramatic news. Always at his best when called upon to play a role in a drama, Begin did not disappoint: "I will gladly meet with Sadat anywhere, even in Cairo, and should he want to come here he will be welcomed." These words were construed as an official response and broadcast by Kol Yisrael.

The drama was heightened a few days later when CBS broadcast parallel interviews with the two leaders, presenting the adversaries as partners in negotiations that would take place within a few days. In his interview Begin used the words that became a slogan: "No more war, no more bloodshed." The two protagonists in this performance were aware of the effect of its symbolism, the importance of gestures, the groundbreaking nature of their moves, and the power of their psychological influence. Sadat believed in the need to break down the psychological barrier of the Israelis' lack of trust in Egypt, and his visit to Jerusalem and appearance in the Knesset were aimed at eliminating that barrier. The international media turned the event into a drama of paramount importance that reached every home, making Sadat and Begin familiar cultural heroes in the Western world.

There followed days of sublime intoxication. The Israelis could not believe their eyes. The man who symbolized "not one inch," absolute refusal to compromise, had invited Sadat to Jerusalem—and precisely at this time, when Begin was prime minister, Sadat was willing to accept the invitation. Begin's popularity soared. There were voices, such as that of Chief of the General Staff Mordechai Gur, expressing fears of an Egyptian deceit portending an attack such as that of 1973, but they were quieted by Begin and drowned in the enthusiasm engulfing the Israeli people. On November 19, 1977, Sadat's plane landed in Israel. The entire nation was glued to its television sets, watching the incredible scene of the Egyptian president's plane touching down in Lod, with red carpet and guard of

honor awaiting him, together with government ministers, former prime ministers, leaders of the opposition, and other dignitaries. Israeli and Egyptian flags fluttered in the breeze. The aircraft's door opened and the Egyptian delegation began descending the steps. Last to appear was President Sadat, elegant and erect. Begin welcomed him and escorted him down the red carpet. The citizens of Israel were ecstatic. If Sadat wanted to persuade them of his peaceful intentions, he had won them over in a single dramatic gesture. In the era of television, politics was a drama played out to an audience of millions, and Sadat's visit to Jerusalem was the height of drama. When somebody remarked that the story would end with the two heroes receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, Golda Meir quipped, "I don't know about the Nobel Prize, but they certainly deserve an Oscar."

As Israeli journalist Teddy Preuss wrote, the peace process began with a climax—Sadat's visit—and all that followed was somewhat of an anticlimax. And indeed nothing compared with the impact of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. In an unofficial conversation between Begin and Sadat at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem that same evening, both sides undertook to abandon the path of war and espouse negotiation to resolve problems from then on. Israel would withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula, which would remain demilitarized. This unwitnessed conversation later created controversy. Begin claimed he had spoken of transferring sovereignty only over part of Sinai, since he intended to keep the Israeli airfields and the settlements in northern Sinai and the Rafah Approach, including the town of Yamit. Sadat contended that he had not committed Egypt to demilitarize the whole of Sinai, but only the area east of the Mitla and Giddi passes. These issues emerged once the elation over the historic meeting had died down and the two sides embarked on negotiating the details of the agreement.

The day after Sadat's arrival in Jerusalem, it was already clear that the negotiations would be arduous. Sadat delivered a tough address in the Knesset in which he demanded Israel's withdrawal from all the territories occupied in the Six-Day War and "a just solution of the Palestinian problem"—two demands that were unacceptable to any of the Zionist parties. Begin responded with a vigorous speech reiterating his willingness to work for peace with Egypt. With respect to the demand to restore the Palestinians' rights, he spoke of the rights of the Jews and the lessons of the Holocaust, but still said that for his part "everything is open to negotiation." Both sides clung to what the other wanted to avoid: Sadat insisted on linking peace with Egypt and peace with Syria and Jordan, as well as "the rights of the Palestinians" (which he did not define in detail), and Begin sought a separate peace agreement with Egypt while adhering to the principle of Greater Israel and avoiding foreign rule west of the River Jordan.

If in the initial enthusiasm it seemed an agreement could be reached swiftly,

this possibility dissipated as the discussions went on. Pressure on Sadat from home and abroad increased. The Arab states attacked both him and his peace policy. In Egypt the opposition's voice was raised in a union of young left-wing intellectuals with the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, and Sadat did not feel he had the freedom to relinquish any of his principles. Begin, for his part, was ensnared in his lifelong loyalty to the Greater Israel ideology. The negotiations became protracted and exhausting, eroding both sides' belief in the peace process. As time went by, what began as a sense that the wings of history were beating wound up with the parties mired in clauses and subclauses, with no sign of a breakthrough.

From a very early stage in the negotiations, Begin tried to circumvent the obstacle of the Egyptian demand to establish a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, which for him was totally unacceptable. The formulation he brought to the table involved granting autonomy to the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories, which Israel would not annex. There would be no foreign rule west of the Jordan, but neither would Israel claim what Begin viewed as its historical right to sovereignty over Greater Israel. From Begin's point of view, he was making a tremendous concession. The idea of autonomy was in line with his political outlook, which drew on Jewish experience as a national minority in Eastern Europe, where the Jews had sought autonomy but not sovereignty.

Begin proposed to Carter, and later to Sadat, that Israel would abolish military government in the occupied territories and grant autonomy to their inhabitants. They would be able to manage their lives as they chose, but Israel would reserve the right to purchase land there and settle on it, and would also administer security. This formulation appeared and reappeared in various versions at the negotiating table. President Carter, who was a partner to the negotiations and became more deeply involved once it emerged that the process was bogged down and needed US help to extricate and advance it, supported Palestinian rights to self-determination and backed Sadat in this goal. Begin was entrenched in his positions of not allowing the PLO to gain a foothold in the occupied territories and not committing himself to anything that might be construed as agreeing to a Palestinian state, especially the return of the 1948 refugees to the territories. A main bone of contention was Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. Begin refused to commit himself to stopping settlement, but Sadat would not move forward until agreement was reached on this matter.

A strong protest movement against Begin's policy emerged in Israel, asserting that the country was missing an opportunity for peace with Egypt because of the Greater Israel ideology. The movement appeared in March 1978 when the negotiations were deadlocked. It began with a letter to the prime minister signed by 348 reserve officers, many of whom were combat veterans. The writers expressed

grave concern over the deadlocked negotiations, which could lead to another war in which they would be forced to shed their blood. The letter was published and aroused broad public support. Within a few days a voluntary movement of young people was organized and joined by tens of thousands. Denying any political affiliation, the movement had one demand: Peace Now. Its bumper-sticker slogan, "Better Peace than the Greater Land of Israel," appeared on thousands of cars all over Israel. Its demonstrations drew tens of thousands. The movement was an expression of the tremendous impact of Sadat's visit on Israeli public opinion.

As October 1978 approached—marking the date of the renewal of the UNEF mandate in Sinai, and a year since Sadat's visit to Jerusalem—grave fears emerged in Jerusalem and Washington that Sadat might withdraw from the peace process and undertake a spectacular military action, as he had done in 1973. President Carter decided on a dramatic action of his own. He invited both sides to Camp David for a conference that would take place with the delegations completely isolated from the media, in the hope that the intensive interaction would yield an agreement. "It proved to be the decisive, most difficult and least pleasant stage in the Egypt-Israel peace negotiations," Moshe Dayan wrote. "All three parties had to resolve agonizing psychological and ideological crises in order to reach an agreed arrangement."[3] The Camp David summit lasted thirteen days, from September 5 to 17. Until the last moment there was no certainty that it would end with an agreement. Each day brought its own crisis, each day the feeling that the two sides had reached an impasse and it would be better to go home. And each day someone called for a little more forbearance, a little more patience, in order to reach a positive conclusion. Both sides feared being accused of causing the failure of the talks, and both sought American support for their positions. This gave President Carter and his aides wiggle room, enabling them to exert pressure on both sides to ultimately make the required fateful decisions. But beyond the tactics and strategies, what tipped the balance was the basic desire of both Begin and Sadat to bring a peace agreement home to their people. This desire enabled them to surmount the obstacles of mistrust, the internal and external pressures, the difficulty of changing their entrenched positions and taking a risk.

Two framework agreements were signed at Camp David, meant to form the basis of the peace treaty whose details were to be agreed upon within three months. Begin agreed to suspend new settlement during the three-month period. This undertaking was later construed by Carter as a total commitment, which Begin ostensibly breached. But it seems that the Egyptians understood the undertaking to be limited.

One framework agreement dealt with the principles of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. With a heavy heart and grave misgivings, Begin agreed to

relinquish the settlements in Sinai and the Rafah Approach, as well as the airfields. As a sort of compromise with himself, Begin stated that the Knesset would have to ratify these concessions. The Americans eased this particular burden by agreeing to build two alternative airfields in the Negev, to be completed before the withdrawal. The American early warning station in Sinai would be dismantled, but UNEF would remain there and be removed only with the agreement of the two sides and the unanimous agreement of the Security Council. Sinai would be only partially demilitarized, to the east of the passes, but the sides would be separated by a wide buffer zone. For their part the Egyptians agreed to begin normalizing relations—which they had initially said would only happen after an Israeli withdrawal from the whole of Sinai—and that when the first stage of the withdrawal was completed (nine months after the signing of the treaty), the sides would exchange ambassadors. The Suez Canal would be opened to Israeli shipping, and Egypt would establish trade relations with Israel, including the sale of oil.

The second framework agreement covered the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Egypt recognized Israel's security needs in both areas. Israel agreed to terms it had never before accepted. It undertook to grant full autonomy to the Palestinians in the occupied territories, while reducing Israeli military government there. Autonomy would last five years, after which negotiations would be held on the future of the territories. Israel reserved the right of veto on security matters there, nor did it waive its right to claim sovereignty over the area. But it was also stated that any solution to the problem of the territories must recognize "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and its rightful claims" and that both inhabitants of the territories and nonresident Palestinians would take part in any negotiations on the area's future.

The Camp David Accords were not greeted with the same enthusiasm as Sadat's visit. In Israel and Egypt alike, the treaty's opponents highlighted the concessions the leaders had made, not their achievements. In Israel the decision to withdraw to the international border and to the dismantling of the settlements and airfields was received with incredulity. Giving up the settlements went against Begin's promises on the eve of the summit and contravened the Tel Hai myth, according to which "One does not give up what has been built." Actually there were settlements that had been abandoned for various reasons and others that Israel had been forced to give up in the War of Independence. But the voluntary surrender of settlements that had been built by government decision was unprecedented.

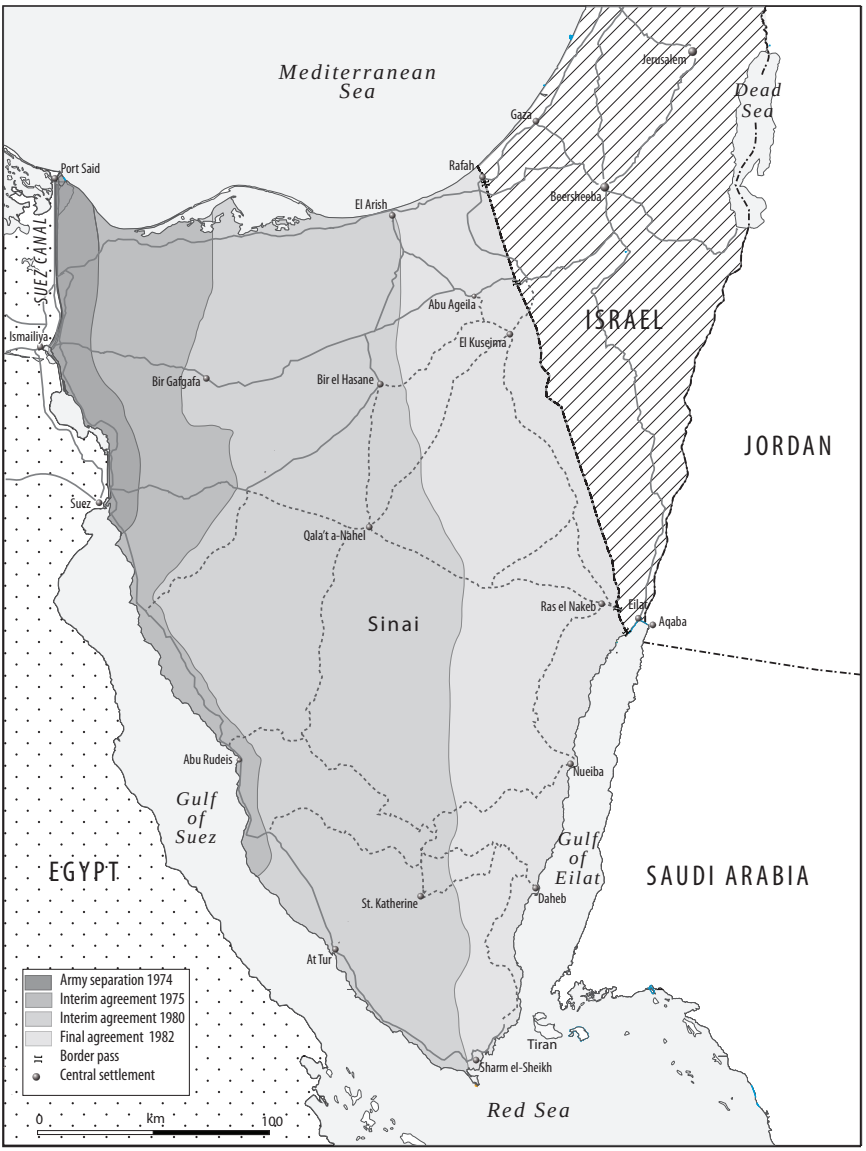
Although Begin would not withdraw from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, it was clear that the withdrawal from the Sinai and Rafah Approach settlements was a portent of what was to come: settlements are not sacred, and just as they can be established, they can be dismantled. The threat to the settlers was ob-

vious, and they wasted no time reacting to it with vehement opposition to the agreements. Moreover, in the twelve years since the 1967 war, Israelis had been hearing about the importance of the strategic depth that Sinai gave the country, and now Israel was conceding it in one fell swoop. It was now Begin's close friends and movement comrades who vigorously attacked him. The achievements of the peace treaty and the normalization of relations with the most important Arab state were overshadowed by the slaughter of Israeli sacred cows that had been nurtured for years. Sadat did not have an easy ride either. His having obtained a promise of a complete Israeli withdrawal from Sinai did not mollify the opponents of peace in Egypt, nor did it lead to moderation of the attacks against Sadat by the other Arab states, including the pro-Western ones.

The Knesset debate on the Camp David Accords was raucous. Only Begin, with his authority and standing in his party, could have compelled the majority of Likud members to ratify the accords. "The nation is suffering birth pangs. True, every great venture is born in anguish," Begin responded to the right's attacks. "This is the greatest turning point in the Middle East, which has come with the possibility of signing a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. The anguish does not surprise me. I have no complaints about the demonstrations."[4] Even the NRP, most of whose members voted in favor of the accords, did so because it trusted that if Begin had decided to withdraw it was because he probably had no alternative. The Labor Party and Dash supported the accords, although with reservations about one clause or another. The chance of peace outweighed the numerous concessions involved.

This was not the end of the chapter. Now the framework agreements had to be formulated into a final peace treaty, and the problems left open by the vague wording of the Camp David Accords came to the surface. Israel insisted that normalization of relations should commence at the time stipulated, irrespective of when the autonomy negotiations with the Palestinians were concluded. Egypt demanded the opposite. This was another version of the basic discussion: was the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt linked to the autonomy agreement, or was there no linkage between the two? Israel demanded removal of the linkage. Egypt insisted that it be kept. Egypt had mutual defense treaties with Arab states in the framework of the Arab League. Israel demanded that priority be given to the peace agreement with it over Egypt's Arab League commitments. Israel was concerned that should it respond militarily to Syrian or Jordanian provocation, Egypt would be duty bound to come to their aid and the peace agreement would collapse. Egypt feared that a commitment to giving the agreement with Israel priority would be seen as betraying the Arab cause.

In addition to these basic issues, there were practical problems such as supplying oil to Israel once the Sinai oil fields were evacuated. The American-mediated



MAP 10. THE POST–CAMP DAVID ACCORDS MAP, 1978. (SEE PLATE 10.)

negotiations, held at Blair House in Washington, ended in stalemate. A further round of talks also ended in failure. It was only when President Carter flew to the Middle East and threw all his weight and prestige onto the scales that he succeeded in facilitating a breakthrough, after the two sides had almost despaired of surmounting the obstacle posed by the final details. The treaty was brought before the Knesset for ratification on March 20, 1979, and provoked one of the most protracted debates in the history of the House, but the treaty was eventually ratified by a decisive majority. In his speech from the podium, Dayan said, "The Egypt-Israel peace treaty . . . is not a pastoral idyll. . . . But it is a realistic peace treaty set in the context of current realities, and designed to bring about relations between two neighboring countries." From the Arab standpoint it was an acceptance of Israel's existence.[5] On March 26, 1979, about a year and a half after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, the peace treaty was signed on the White House lawn.

The treaty stipulated dates for a withdrawal in stages from Sinai, with Israel remaining in the eastern part of the peninsula and not vacating settlements and airfields until the completion of a two-year trial period. During this period negotiations on Palestinian autonomy would be held. Normalization of relations commenced immediately after the first stage of the withdrawal, and ambassadors were exchanged. Over the next two years the treaty faced some difficult tests: Sadat's assassination, Israel's war in Lebanon, and the collapse of the autonomy talks. But it held firm and is in force to this day. The majority of Egyptian elites—including intellectuals, media figures, and religious leaders—never became reconciled with Israel. Nor did the peace between the two governments extend to their populations, with cultural exchanges and friendly relations. Yet the Middle East seems different since then, and the peace between Israel and Egypt lies at the basis of its stability.

The peace treaty with Egypt was the zenith of the Begin era. He gained stature both at home and throughout the world. Together with Sadat he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. But within his own bloc he found himself under attack for surrendering the settlements and recognizing the Palestinians' legitimate rights and just demands. He had difficulty facing the settlers, since in his eyes they were the pure, idealistic element of the right. While he dismissed criticism from the left, criticism from the right hurt him; his heart was with Greater Israel and the settlement enterprise. Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon adopted an aggressive settlement policy that included establishing settlements in the heart of Arab-populated areas, in order to thwart the possibility that one day a Palestinian state would be established. In contrast, Minister of Defense Weizmann wanted the settlements built entirely in large blocs without expropriating land. Dayan asserted that although it was permissible for Jews to settle anywhere in the Land of Israel, settlements with no security importance should be avoided. The govern-

ment accepted Sharon's proposal that settlements should be created wherever possible, and Begin was inclined to support him, even when his plans deviated from what the government had approved. The opposition of Yadin, Dayan, and Weizmann, who represented more moderate positions within the government, was not pleasant to him.

Begin appointed Minister of the Interior Yosef Burg to chair the autonomy talks, thus signaling that the West Bank was an internal Israeli matter. It was also a signal to Dayan that his role in the government was over. He resigned six months later. Begin replaced him as foreign minister with the former Lehi leader Yitzhak Shamir. Shamir's extremist positions were evident in his vote on the peace treaty: he abstained. His appointment marked the end of moderation and compromise, and the autonomy talks died a painless death. In the meantime, in May 1980, Weizmann angrily resigned, saying that cuts to the defense budget put Israel at risk, and that Begin's performance was seriously flawed. In addition to his role as prime minister, Begin assumed the defense portfolio, which he held for fourteen months.

Politically the first two years of the Begin government were marked by the peace process, from which it gained both prestige and popularity. But the economic situation was its Achilles' heel. In October 1977 Minister of Finance Simcha Ehrlich presented a new economic plan aimed at introducing sweeping liberalization into the Israeli economy and turning it from a government-planned economy into a free one. The liberal perception was that all the malaises of the Israeli economy sprang from excessive government involvement and that market forces and private enterprise should be given free play, which would ultimately result in economic growth. Subsidies on basic goods were canceled, as were foreign currency restrictions, and for the first time the citizens of Israel were allowed to hold foreign currency and trade in it. A free-floating rate of exchange for the lira was instituted that would self-adjust according to supply and demand. For the first time people who could afford it were able to travel abroad for pleasure without paying travel tax and with no restriction on the amount of US dollars they could legally take out of the country.

Liberalization in the import of commodities should have led to price reductions, but the hope that government revenue would increase accordingly proved premature. Rising demand for consumer goods led to price hikes. Cancellation of the subsidies caused price rises in basic commodities, which hit the poorer sections of the population—the Likud's support base. The dollar rate of exchange rose drastically, leading to price rises in imported products. Linking wages to the cost-of-living index, which was intended to compensate salaried workers for the price rises and which remained in force after liberalization, led to spiraling inflation that the Ministry of Finance had difficulty controlling. Between 1977 and

1980 the rate of inflation rose from 42.8 percent to 132.9 percent. The Ministry of Finance did not take the steps that the transition to a free market required. Government spending was not cut substantially enough. Privatization of public companies, intended to drive private enterprise, was done only on a small scale, for fear of harming the poorer sections of the population.

Begin was not well versed in economics, and he tended to accept his ministers' complaints about the Finance Ministry's attempts to cut their budgets. In the two years that followed the introduction of the new economic plan, his failure to back Finance Ministry policy led to an increased deficit in Israel's balance of payments, from nine hundred million to 3.4 billion dollars. The economy was on the brink of disaster. Ehrlich resigned—the first of several finance ministers to be replaced in the Begin governments. Yigal Horowitz, who had resigned from the government because he opposed the peace treaty, now came back as minister of finance. He adopted a rigorous spending policy and had no qualms about making cuts that might hit the lower classes. But here he encountered opposition from the prime minister, who refused to cancel subsidies and stubbornly insisted on raising certain wages.

One of Horowitz's actions was to replace the lira, whose very name recalled Israel's Mandatory past, with the shekel, the ancient Hebrew coin that appears in the Bible. (The rate was set at ten lirot to one "old shekel." In the second stage the rate was 1,000 old shekels to one "new shekel," so that one new shekel equaled 10,000 lirot.) Horowitz hoped making money more scarce would arrest inflation, but it did not happen. Horowitz left the government in disgust. "The world already sees Israel as an economic cadaver," Dayan asserted.[6] In January 1981 Begin appointed his third finance minister, Yoram Aridor, who believed that his role was "to ameliorate the lot of our people." Instead of belt-tightening and cutting government expenses, he thought he could fight inflation by loosening the reins. Removing customs duty and tax on consumer goods would lower prices and increase trade, which in turn would hopefully lead to more government revenue. An unparalleled consumer fest ensued. Middle- and lower-class families rushed to buy color TV sets, VCRs, and cars. Galloping inflation continued, and the new Israeli currency kept losing value. But the public mood changed from the gloom of frugality to enjoyment of heightened consumerism, which also increased the state's tax revenues. Before Aridor instituted his economic policy, the Likud seemed likely to lose the election scheduled for summer 1981, but Begin now appeared to have a renewed chance of remaining in power.

Throughout 1980 and in early 1981, Begin seemed to have lost the energy needed to function as prime minister. He suffered a mild stroke and episodes of depression. Nobody dared speak publicly about the state of his health. In April 1981 the Histadrut elections were held in the wake of Aridor's success. To every-

one's surprise the Likud emerged as a force still to be reckoned with. It gained 25 percent of the votes cast in the bastion of the left. Begin recovered overnight and began to campaign energetically. Although public meetings were now considered passé, Begin returned to the city squares and the masses and drew encouragement and energy from the displays of enthusiasm that greeted him all over the country.

Begin had no qualms about releasing the genie of ethnic hostility from the bottle and used it without a second thought as a means of political incitement. The level of incitement against the Alignment and demonization of it in this campaign, with verbal violence that sometimes spilled over into physical violence against Alignment representatives, was unprecedented. The hostile behavior of Likud supporters made it difficult for Alignment activists to hold election meetings in the development towns and city neighborhoods. The climax came at a mass rally held on election eve in Kikar Malkhei Yisrael (now Rabin Square) in Tel Aviv. After describing one movement as a "red" movement that would bring the Soviets into Israel and the terrorists into Judea and Samaria, and the other as "blue and white" and a protector of the homeland, Begin seized upon a silly remark made at an Alignment election rally held at the same place the previous evening. An entertainer had called the Likud supporters "Tshachtshachim" (a derogatory epithet for Moroccans). Coming from Begin's lips the entertainer's words became a symbol of the left's derogatory attitude toward Mizrachi Jews, and he called on his followers to rouse their friends and vote Likud en masse to erase this insult to an entire section of the Israeli population. His words were received with thunderous applause in support of the Likud and hatred of the left.

A few weeks before the elections, in June 1981, the Israeli Air Force destroyed the Iraqi Osirak nuclear reactor. The decision to bomb the reactor, which at the time seemed risky and perhaps even unnecessary, was a courageous one on Begin's part, and in retrospect few would doubt that it served the world well. During the 1977 change of government, Rabin informed Begin of intelligence reports indicating that the Iraqis were building a nuclear reactor with French assistance. Efforts to stop the reactor's construction both diplomatically and by sabotage had been unsuccessful. In the meantime the Iran-Iraq War broke out and the Iranians attempted to bomb the reactor, causing only minor damage. Begin considered nuclear weapons in the hands of an enemy state an existential threat to Israel, which was extremely vulnerable due to its small area. In a confidential letter to Begin, opposition leader Shimon Peres, who had heard about the plan to bomb the reactor, cautioned against it. He viewed it as endangering Israel's relations with the United States and Egypt.

Begin was aware of the risks of attacking the reactor, but contended that the predicted risk to Israel if it did not attack was far greater. He feared that if the

Alignment won the elections, the reactor would remain standing. The decision to attack it was not an easy one, and there were differences of opinion within the Israeli defense establishment. There was also no guarantee that the operation would be successful. In the end the operation did succeed, with no losses. In response the United States delayed the supply of warplanes to Israel, but apart from that relations were not impaired. Sadat, who had been updated by the Israeli ambassador on the operation and Begin's reasons for it, treated it leniently. Nothing succeeds like success, and Saddam Hussein's brutal regime was not well liked in the Middle East. Peres accused Begin of using the attack on the Iraqi reactor as a form of electioneering. Begin responded by revealing Peres's confidential letter and attacking him. Begin did not destroy the reactor in order to get elected, but afterward he used the operation's success as an additional weapon in his election arsenal.

BEGIN'S SECOND TERM: THE LEBANON WAR AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF ISRAELI SOCIETY

The elections held at the end of June 1981 were close. The Likud retained a one-seat advantage (48–47), enabling Begin to present a government backed by 61 Knesset members (out of a total of 120). This slender victory was evidence that the 1977 about-turn had not been a chance event, but reflected a profound political and social change. Aryeh Naor, secretary of Begin's first government, analyzed the results thus: "Israel's new world of symbols based on the heritage of religion and faith is rooted in the new generation of the state. The secular worldview and the Alignment's ideas of territorial compromise are alien to this generation, a large part of which grew up in the reality of Greater Israel."[7]

Begin's first term in office ended on a positive note. The peace treaty with Egypt cloaked Begin in the mantle of the man of peace, the resolute leader capable of making difficult decisions. The bombing of the Iraqi reactor added further proof of his leadership ability and resolve. To his supporters the expansion of the settlement enterprise was an additional success. Another in his government's list of achievements was a neighborhood rehabilitation project. Before the 1977 elections Begin had promised that if elected he would take action to rehabilitate Israel's deprived neighborhoods. This project was funded not by the state budget but by donations from Diaspora Jewry. Begin's appeal to Jewish communities throughout the world to help defeat poverty in Israel was well received. Instead of turning the project and its funds over to the usual groups, such as the Jewish Agency, direct contact was established between the donors and the neighborhood or development town that would receive the funds. Involving Diaspora Jews in the project helped strengthen ties between the major donors and the Israeli right, but apart from that this enterprise was important in renewing solidarity

between the Diaspora communities and Israel and bringing the Ashkenazi donors and the Mizrachi residents of the neighborhoods closer. The neighborhood rehabilitation project focused on raising the standard of housing and reducing overcrowding. Efforts were also made to enhance the aesthetic aspect of the neighborhoods and build playgrounds and gardens. In many cases the improvement in the environment caused increased awareness among residents, reinforcing their interest and involvement in caring for their neighborhood. From every point of view this was a worthy enterprise.

On the debit side of Begin's first term was the deterioration of the economic situation. The heroic attempt to shift from a government-directed economy to a liberal one in a single leap, without a safety net and the necessary related measures, led the Israeli economy to the edge of the abyss and undermined the country's stability.

The 1981 elections and the composition of the new government reflect the shift from a right-wing government, whose leader sought to be remembered in history as the man who brought peace to Israel, to an extreme right-wing government, whose leader now began to actualize the old worldview he had held before coming to power. The first government included Dayan, Weizmann, and Yadin, who among themselves and with Begin constituted a system of checks and balances. In his second government Begin, whose health was failing, lacked these moderating forces. Ariel Sharon—the man Begin had earlier been reluctant to put at the head of the security establishment—was appointed minister of defense, and Yitzhak Shamir, a dyed-in-the-wool rightist, became foreign minister. The chief of the General Staff was Rafael (Raful) Eitan, who accepted Sharon's authority. It was a lusterless government without heavyweight figures who could push back against Sharon's influence. Nor were there other military men in the government who could serve as a counterweight. (Minister of Communications Mordechai Zippori came from the military, had served as deputy defense minister in the previous government, and had tried to rein in Sharon, but he did not have equal status in Begin's eyes with the illustrious General Sharon.) The external political arena had also changed. Sadat was assassinated on October 6, 1981, and President Reagan replaced President Carter. If Begin's first term was marked by peace, his second would be marked by war.

As we have seen, after the civil war in Lebanon the PLO and its fighters had relocated to south Lebanon. Israel would retaliate against terror attacks on Israelis by attacking the PLO, who retaliated in turn with Katyusha rocket attacks on the northern border settlements. IDF ground operations against the terrorists brought short-term quiet to the area. Since the mid-1970s Israel had been fostering a Christian militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), in south Lebanon, which helped hold the PLO in check. In Lebanon relations deteriorated between

the Syrians and the Christians, especially the Phalangists, led by the Gemayel family. The Christians sought Israeli aid against the Palestinians in Lebanon, who together with the radical pro-Syrian left tipped the scales in Lebanon's ethnic and religious conflicts against the Christians. As prime minister, Rabin had vigorously refused to be drawn into military action to aid the Christians; the same stance guided Weizmann when he was minister of defense. But when Begin became minister of defense, he decided to aid the Christians—not just indirectly by supplying military equipment but also with direct military action. Begin reasoned that Israel could not allow a minority to be annihilated by a violent majority. But the Christians were not a helpless minority, and certainly not paragons of virtue. Begin's ostensibly moral rationale for Israel's initial military involvement in the Lebanese civil war was aimed at influencing President Reagan, but Reagan was unimpressed. Begin's and Sharon's ally in the American administration was Secretary of State Alexander Haig; Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger had serious reservations about the Israelis' saber rattling.

Begin and Sharon, who wanted to ensure Israeli control over Judea and Samaria, believed that weakening the PLO in Lebanon, and perhaps even removing its headquarters from the country, would likely also weaken the Palestinians and force them into a formula for autonomy that would guarantee an Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for generations. In the meantime Israel's security elite reinforced its ties with the Christians, who sought to draw Israel into a war in Lebanon by leading the Israelis to believe that they would be directly involved in the fighting themselves. Opinion was divided in the Israeli security establishment regarding the Christians' trustworthiness. Would they indeed play their part in an Israeli attack and drive the Palestinians out of Beirut? The Christian leadership, including Bashir Gemayel (who unlike his pro-Syrian brother Amin was considered pro-Israeli), did not conceal its reservations about an open alliance with Israel. Even as Israeli military aid flowed into the Christian-held ports in northern Lebanon, these leaders refused to publicly support a partnership with Israel. Even more to the point, they did not want to appear to be fighting at Israel's side. They saw themselves as part of the Arab world, and in the way of Lebanese Christians from time immemorial, they maneuvered between the rival camps, with their primary commitment being to themselves.

Two plans for military action were formulated: "Big Pines," which envisioned the possibility of occupying a large part of Lebanon, reaching the Beirut–Damascus road, and joining up with the Christians; and "Little Pines," which involved occupying a forty-kilometer-deep buffer zone in south Lebanon—that was the range of the rockets deployed by the PLO at the time. Following a massive bombardment of the Galilee panhandle settlements, especially Kiryat Shmona, in the summer of 1981, which led large numbers of residents to evacuate their town, an

American-mediated agreement was reached to ensure quiet along the northern border. Begin and Sharon then began looking for an excuse for an attack in Lebanon that would alter the balance of power. The attempt to obtain government approval for Operation Big Pines failed; Begin remained silent, while Sharon was unable to enlist a massive majority for an all-out war. Sharon realized that in order to get approval, he would have to present the smaller-scale plan. But he concealed his intention to expand that plan in the course of the fighting. The IDF high command was alerted in advance that the plan might be expanded and told to prepare the forces for a "rolling" stage-by-stage operation. Then an assassination attempt on the Israeli ambassador in London by a member of the Abu Nidal organization provided Begin and Sharon with their rationale. The head of the General Security Service tried in vain to explain to the cabinet that Abu Nidal belonged to a breakaway branch of the PLO and did not represent PLO policy. The prime minister cut him short, insisting that this terrorist outrage justified going to war against the PLO.

This was a war Begin had wanted for a long time. "The alternative to this operation is Treblinka, and we have resolved that there will be no more Treblinkas," he asserted dramatically on June 5, 1982.[8] In a lecture delivered in August 1982 at the College of National Security, he spoke in favor of "a war of choice." In Begin's assessment all Israel's wars, except for the 1948 war, the War of Attrition, and the 1973 war, had been wars of choice. According to him, every preventive or preemptive strike, or even a war resulting from the crossing of redlines, was a war of choice. With this rationale he put the Lebanon War in the same category as not only the Sinai Campaign—though Ben-Gurion had undertaken it out of fear of Egypt's intensified armament and then withdrawn as soon as he saw the reaction of the two superpowers—but also the Six-Day War, which all Israelis saw as a war initiated by Egypt. In this expanded definition of the term *war of choice*, Begin sought legitimacy for going to war in Lebanon. He justified a war of choice by saying it obviated a war of no choice later. "There is no moral diktat that a nation must, or is entitled to, fight only when its back is to the sea or it is on the brink of the abyss."[9] This concept contradicted a very basic ethos in Israeli society: the defensive ethos, which shaped the worldview of generations of fighters in the Yishuv and the state. For that ethos war must always be a war of necessity, in which the nation stands on the brink. In the end neither Israeli society nor the IDF accepted Begin's redefinition of this ethos.

To what extent Begin subscribed to Sharon's concept of a stage-by-stage rolling war is a bone of contention between Begin's admirers and critics. What *is* certain is that Begin gave Sharon's actions his approval, sometimes before an action and on other occasions afterward. When the IDF invaded Lebanon, Begin was convinced the operation would last only a couple of days and cause few

casualties. He was not familiar with either maps or military actions. For example, like other members of his government without a military background, he believed Sharon's prediction that outflanking the Syrian forces in the Bekaa Valley would force them to retreat and not clash with the IDF. But all the IDF officers who saw the plan realized that they were going to war with the Syrians. Sharon explained to Begin and his cabinet members that expanding the war from forty kilometers from the border to Beirut, and from clashes with Palestinians to attacking the Syrians, was necessary to protect IDF troops and avoid losses. Foreign journalists who interviewed Begin during the fighting found it hard to decide whether he was a liar or simply incompetent, for he did not know what was happening on the battlefield. After all his denials, which were based on Sharon's misleading reports, the individual who informed Begin that the IDF was already in Beirut was American mediator Philip Habib.

The war gradually expanded. Instead of being a limited battle with the Palestinian organizations, it became a large-scale war that included fierce armored battles against the Syrians, taking out the Syrian ground-to-air missile array in Lebanon, and bitter fighting in the Sidon refugee camps and later the Beirut camps. The IDF's entry into West Beirut following a two-month siege of the city was intended to exert pressure on Arafat to take his headquarters and fighters out of Lebanon. In the meantime the Palestinian civilian population of West Beirut suffered as a result of heavy bombing and disruption of electricity and water supply until the PLO and the Syrian forces inside the city agreed to evacuate it in August 1982.

In presenting the operation to the government, Sharon had estimated there would be a few dozen Israeli casualties, in complete contradiction of the much higher estimate made by IDF officers, whose view was not brought before the government. The war exacted close to five hundred Israeli casualties by the time just before the PLO evacuated Beirut. This was the first IDF entry into an Arab capital, and it was accomplished almost clandestinely, without the government discussing it.

This was the first time the IDF went to war not to thwart a security threat, but to bring about a new political order in the Middle East through unlimited use of Israel's military might. Sharon's plan was that Bashir Gemayel would be elected president of Lebanon under cover of Israeli tanks, and then Lebanon would be the second Arab state to sign a peace treaty with Israel. The Syrians would be forced to withdraw from the country, and the Palestinians would have to evacuate to Jordan in large numbers. Sharon's dream was that Jordan would become Palestine, leaving the entire west bank of the River Jordan in the hands of the Jews. Begin shared this dream, which is apparently why he continued to back Sharon, even though his cabinet colleagues rebelled against Sharon's use of

unlimited force, carried out without government approval. When Begin met with Bashir Gemayel in Nahariya during the ceasefire on September 1, 1982, he realized to his chagrin that Gemayel had no intention of changing his relations with Israel from a secret liaison into a legal marriage, and that he would neither make peace with Israel nor openly cooperate with it. The Syrians stated that they had no intention of leaving Lebanon. When Bashir Gemayel was assassinated on September 15, 1982, the IDF entered West Beirut to prevent acts of vengeance, but gave the Phalangists permission to enter the refugee camps. The Phalangists avenged Bashir's death with a massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Hundreds of innocent Palestinians were killed. Although the Israelis were not directly involved in the massacre, the fact that they were in charge made them responsible for the inhabitants' safety—and they never assumed this responsibility. The massacre aroused a furor in Israel and around the world, and opposition to the war reached new heights (discussed later).

After August 1982 the IDF had no real mission in Lebanon, but a way of withdrawing from it that would preserve the forty-kilometer buffer zone in south Lebanon after the retreat could not be found. The longer the IDF remained in Lebanon, the deeper it sank into what came to be called "the Lebanese mire." The wars between ethnic and religious groups in Lebanon did not stop. As an army of occupation the IDF came into close contact with the local population and aroused hostility among various groups. When the IDF invaded Lebanon its columns had been greeted by joyous crowds throwing rice in welcome. Now the troops became sitting ducks for terror attacks and incessant sniper fire. A war that was supposed to last only a few days had become protracted and resulted in heavy losses. Although the PLO had vacated Beirut and south Lebanon, the organization was not broken and its headquarters, now in Tunis, continued to be the political entity representing the Palestinians. While the Syrians had been dealt a heavy blow, they proved themselves a worthy adversary of the IDF. They did not withdraw and remained leading players in the Lebanese theater.

The war in Lebanon, especially the bombing of Beirut, provoked tremendous opposition in Israel and throughout the world, and heightened awareness of the Palestinians' plight. After the war President Reagan demanded that Israel withdraw from the West Bank and that it be returned to Jordan—an issue that had not previously interested him. If Begin and Sharon had hoped the war would strengthen Israel's position in the occupied territories, what transpired was the opposite. The draft peace treaty agreed upon by Israel and Amin Gemayel, who was elected president of Lebanon in May 1983, was thwarted by the Syrians. The draft was clearly not worth the paper it was written on. And it was evident that Sharon's strategic concept never had a leg to stand on. As in the past, Israel could win the war but was incapable of imposing peace.

In September 1983 the IDF began a gradual withdrawal from Lebanon, with local guerilla forces snapping at its heels. Amal, the moderate Shi'ite militia that had been weakened in the war, was now replaced by Hezbollah, a radical Shi'ite militia whose objective was not only to drive the IDF out of Lebanon but also, with Iranian support, to fight Israel incessantly. The IDF withdrawal from Lebanon continued until June 1985, when the force deployed along the international border while continuing to control a narrow buffer zone on the Lebanese side, where the Christian-commanded SLA operated, helping maintain security along the border. Six hundred seventy Israeli soldiers were killed during the war, and between 1982 and 2000 (when the IDF made its final withdrawal to the international border), a total of 1,216 soldiers were killed in Lebanon. Close to 18,000 Arabs were killed in the Lebanon War, of whom at least 10,000 were Syrian troops and Palestinian fighters.

The Lebanon War was a watershed in the history of Israeli society. It was the first war to be prosecuted without a consensus. In the first stage of the fighting, both the public and the media thought the campaign was similar to the 1978 Litani Operation, which had been launched as a reprisal for a terrorist outrage perpetrated on Israel's coastal road. The IDF had crossed the border into Lebanon, carried out a punitive action, and returned to Israel. The thinking this time included the possible establishment of a buffer zone to prevent Katyusha rocket attacks on the northern settlements. As initially presented to the public, the operation had almost wall-to-wall support. Once it emerged that the operation was exceeding its predetermined limits, public and military support eroded. The right was infuriated by criticism of the war in the media. It contended that a government at war should not be criticized, on the model of Begin's own restraint when he was in the opposition. A celebrated article published at the time was titled "Quiet, There's Shooting."

The problem was that until that time, the governments of Israel had been to the left of the opposition, which was militant—always willing to support military operations, but not withdrawals. This time the shoe was on the other foot; the government was to the right of the opposition and went to war without speaking openly and honestly to the opposition about its objectives. As the war progressed, a mutual feedback loop of information and reaction developed between the army and civilians. Armored brigade commander Colonel Eli Geva resigned his command and refused to take part in the assault on Beirut—the first time in the history of Israel's wars that a senior officer refused to obey orders. Geva's action reflected the frustration and unease pervading the army. The troops felt they were fighting for objectives far beyond what was necessary to defend Israel. Soldiers reacted bitterly: "People definitely feel that they gave life and limb not in the defense of Israel, but for a whim."[10] They also felt that there had been manipulation of the

media by the government; what was being reported to the public was not what they were seeing on the ground. By the same token what the public saw on their TV screens at home and in the international media did not jibe with what the commanders were saying.

The IDF is an army built on its reserve soldiers, citizens called to the flag. This means no real distinction exists between civilian and military reality. The sense of phony reports from the top down, from the army to civil society, and from the civilian leadership back to the army severely impaired trust in both directions. The rising number of casualties suffered for objectives that appeared dubious and unacceptable to large sections of the public—and even to the army—aroused opposition to an operation such as the entry into West Beirut, in which urban fighting would certainly exact a high toll in casualties. Apart from that, the brutality of the actions in Beirut and the bombing with its attendant civilian casualties enraged both troops and their officers who saw these actions as abandonment of the intrinsic values of the IDF's principle of "purity of arms" and protecting human life.

The Sabra and Shatila massacres sparked a conflagration among the Israeli public. The possibility that the IDF was even indirectly responsible because it stood aside and did not intervene during the Phalangists' action in the camps subverted the army's image as moral in the eyes of soldiers and civilians alike. Suspecting that a massacre was taking place in the camps, IDF Radio reporter Ron Ben-Yishay had called Sharon to inform him of his fears. Sharon did nothing. The shocked reporter sent a personal letter to Begin:

> If you do not take steps, standing on the sidelines while civilians are being massacred will become the norm in the IDF and the State of Israel. The damage to the IDF's morality and self-image will be grave. Should IDF soldiers and citizens of Israel cast doubt on the rightness of our position and the moral validity of our actions, it will erode their motivation. And motivation, Prime Minister, is the rampart standing between my three daughters and millions of Arabs, most of whom seek to erase us from the map.
>
> . . . The curly head of one of the slaughtered girls bore an amazing resemblance to that of my four-year-old daughter, Tamar. It is inconceivable that a Jewish soldier or civilian should not lift a finger while women, old people, and children are being murdered, whatever their identity might be.[11]

Begin did not reply to Ben-Yishay's letter. But the storm continued to rise. Senior army officers demanded that Sharon accept ministerial responsibility and resign. A huge demonstration in Tel Aviv (the *Ha'aretz* newspaper estimate put the number of participants at 400,000, although government supporters claimed there were only 150,000) called for a commission of inquiry into Israel's respon-

sibility for the massacre. Not only people on the left, but on the right as well, were shocked and joined the demonstration. By and large the media supported the demand. At first Begin responded with the supercilious remark, "Goyim kill goyim and they blame the Jews." But in the face of the anger inside Israel and mounting world criticism, he gritted his teeth and agreed to establish a state commission of inquiry.

Since the 1981 elections the atmosphere in the Israeli street had taken on a belligerent, violent aspect that became more extreme by the day. The settlers fumed at the government for agreeing to evacuate the Rafah Approach settlements. The government initiated settlement campaigns to demonstrate its resolve on Judea and Samaria. These campaigns were met with opposition from the Peace Now organization, which viewed the settlements as the principal obstacle to peace, since they made any reasonable territorial compromise impossible. Peace Now managed to enlist thousands of demonstrators against settlement in Judea and Samaria. The right retaliated with hate propaganda directed against the left in general and Peace Now in particular, presenting them not only as traitors to the national cause but PLO sympathizers to boot.

The Lebanon War led to cracks in the nation's unity and raised hostility between right and left to an unprecedented level. As the left became more radical, extremist protest organizations appeared. One was Yesh Gvul (which can be translated as "there is a limit," "the border exists," or "enough is enough"), which called for refusing to serve in Lebanon. Another group, Soldiers against Silence, reported to the media on harm inflicted on the Arab civilian population. Strangely enough it was the moderate Peace Now movement—whose members, as patriots, did not wish to cause a split in the army by refusing to serve in Lebanon and continued to serve there—that drew the heaviest fire from the right, probably because of its ability to recruit people. Accusations against it ranged from treason to receiving funds from Saudi Arabia.

In February 1983 the Kahan (aka Cahan) Commission, formally known as the Commission of Inquiry into the Events at the Refugee Camps in Beirut, published its report. It leveled harsh criticism against the prime minister and recommended that Sharon be dismissed as defense minister. The chief of the General Staff escaped punishment since he was about to conclude his period of duty in the post. However, Sharon had no intention of going quietly. Populist support of him soared. His supporters called on Begin to disregard the commission's recommendations. Meanwhile Peace Now organized a rally that marched through the streets of Jerusalem to the government complex and demanded Sharon's dismissal. The marchers, many of whom were soldiers recently returned from Lebanon, passed through a hostile mob that attacked and spat at them. The police tried to shield the marchers, but the counter-demonstrators were too

strong. One counter-demonstrator threw a grenade into the column of marchers. Emil Grunzweig, a reserve officer who had fought in Lebanon, was killed and seven others were wounded. This was the first time that a Jew had been killed in the State of Israel by another Jew because of his political beliefs. It was a grim moment for Israeli democracy.

The temperature of the public debate in Israel rose to unheard-of heights. Redlines, which in the past both camps had been careful to observe, were now crossed. Demonstrators from the left massed outside Begin's residence chanting, "Begin, Murderer!" and holding aloft placards listing the number of casualties, which increased from day to day. The Peace Now demonstrations and the counter-demonstrations by government supporters inflamed the Israeli street. Sharon resigned as minister of defense and was appointed minister without portfolio. And in the meantime the bloodshed in Lebanon continued, with seemingly no way out. The distance between the front in Lebanon and the home front seemed greater than ever. A soldier complained:

> You come back. You've been dying to come home with lots of stories to tell and stories you don't want to. You cross the border and it seems that the war was in the Falklands. It finishes you. Israel's blooming. Everything's in bloom. Right after the news about what's happening in Lebanon they talk about the drop in share prices because of the war in Lebanon, and the dollar rising. And you're dying to talk to people you're certain think like you, and there's nobody to talk to.[12]

The political, ethnic, cultural, and social schisms in Israel were accentuated during Begin's second government. The public battle raged on several levels: political legitimacy, historical memory, and the appropriate future image of Israeli society. One focus of the struggle was the status of the kibbutz. The kibbutz was the crown jewel of the labor movement's social creativity. It combined a vision of equality, devotion to society, and recruitment for national missions. The values prized by the kibbutz were physical labor, a simple lifestyle, a culture of low-key restraint, and making do with little. There was no other sector in Israeli society whose values so opposed those of Begin and the culture he represented.

Begin realized that if he wished to change the narrative of the state, he would have to undermine the status of the kibbutz as the most important creation of Zionism. He leveled deadly criticism at the kibbutzim: they lived off the fat of the land, and their wealth originated in resources allocated to them by governments of the left, resources that had been kept from the development towns. As with every stereotype there was a grain of truth in this one, but no more than a grain. The kibbutzim had earned their relative financial robustness with hard work, and for many years had endured harsh conditions. However, their pastoral appear-

ance highlighted the contrast between them and the development towns and nearby ma'abarot that had been neglected and whose residents clearly sensed their seemingly modest neighbors' patronizing attitude toward them, so the prime minister's words fell on willing ears. After the 1981 election campaign, in which kibbutz members rallied to help the Alignment, Begin intensified his attacks on them, which were greeted enthusiastically by the majority of Mizrachim. In the minds of the right, the left's protests against the war were interlocked with the kibbutzim's role as bastions of the leftist elite. The fact that the number of kibbutz members among the combat troops exceeded by far their relative proportion in the population did not prevent the incitement against them.

In the fall of 1982, at the height of the Lebanon War controversy in Israel, author Amos Oz embarked on a journey through the country during which he encountered both the "old" and the "new" Israel. In Beit Shemesh, a development town where Begin's standing bordered on sainthood—"He is our father," one resident said—Oz confronted the pain and insult experienced by people who tried to maintain a traditional culture as they encountered modernity: "Why don't you ask who taught the kids, while they were still in transit camps, to make fun of their parents, to laugh at old people, to ridicule their religion and their leaders? Why don't you ask, first of all, who taught Oriental Jews that money's the most important thing in life? Why don't you ask who invented theft and fraud? Who invented the stock market? But [Kibbutz] Tzora has its image and Beit Shemesh has its image, and that's the fault of the reporters and all those mudslingers from the television, and the professors."[13] By contrast, a veteran kibbutz member responded to such accusations thus: "Tell them not to believe the agitators. We don't have any castles of gold here, we haven't cheated anyone. They ought to know that, in general, under Begin's government we feel angrier and more insulted even than they felt under our government. Why do they make us out to be monsters? Exploiters? Patronizing? Corrupt? Traitors? . . . Do you really think they believe what Begin puts into their heads?"[14]

The old elites felt increasing estrangement and hostility toward the new regime. The Alignment government had been furious over how it was presented on television, but apart from complaining it did nothing to restrict freedom of speech. The same cannot be said for the Begin government. The Israel Broadcasting Authority television staff now worked under government supervision of a kind not seen in the media since the 1950s. They felt like a minority under siege. Intellectuals, media figures, and writers felt that "their" country was disappearing and being replaced by a country that was not theirs. After the War of Attrition, songwriter Ehud Manor had written "I Have No Other Country," which included the words, "I will not stay silent / Because my country has changed her face / I will not give up reminding her / And sing in her ears / Until she opens her eyes." This

song was rereleased in the 1980s and embraced as a protest against the Lebanon War. Journalist Nachum Barnea described the mass grief during Yigal Allon's funeral at Kibbutz Genossar in 1980:

> I see a great deal of longing for what is known as the beautiful, sabra Israel, not Begin's mystic Israel or Ehrlich's shopkeeper Israel. The radio played Rachel and Naomi Shemer's Kinneret [Sea of Galilee] songs, and the eyes of an entire generation filled with tears. And it is all sincere and authentic, yet worrying. It is no good thing that thirty- and forty-year-olds mourn the country they live in. They are not weeping for the passing of an important figure, but for themselves, for their feeling that they had a country that was theirs and is no longer.[15]

In 1984 Amos Kenan published a surreal novel, *The Road to Ein Harod,* describing Israel under the dictatorial regime of a military junta that takes over the country and expels all the Arabs. The hero attempts to reach the surviving free Israel in Kibbutz Ein Harod. The novel was an expression of the left's angst in the wake of the Lebanon War.

Amos Oz's 1987 novel *Black Box* expressed the literary and poetic regret at the loss of the old sabra culture being replaced by rising Mizrachi nationalism and religiosity. It describes a triangle in which a woman shifts between two men—her first husband, a courageous military man and academic who is dying of cancer, and her second husband, a North African Jew and religious teacher who acquired a basic Hebrew and Jewish education that is displayed in the fragments of verses from which he constructs his language. The first husband, representing the Zionist left, gradually fades away, while the second, representing the new Israel, neither educated nor rooted in the local experience, remains the epitome of vitality. It is he who claims as his own the beautiful woman torn between the two, who symbolizes the country and the Israeli experience. The novel is both a lament for a disappearing world and an acceptance of the new reality, joined with a recognition of the old covenant's loss of vitality.

Another literary work mourning the loss of the old Israel is Meir Shalev's 1988 novel *The Blue Mountain.* This book, which traces the lives of several generations of members of a Jezreel Valley moshav, can be interpreted as an elegy for the Zionist dream whose loss is demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that after all the people fallen in battle and all the idealism, the moshav makes money by selling plots to Diaspora Jews wishing to be buried in the soil of the Holy Land. This novel, too, ends on a note of acceptance. Its protagonist, who shocks the entire moshav with his promiscuity, finds true love with a girl from an ultra-Orthodox family that has come to the moshav, and with it he puts down renewed

roots. But despite the novel's relatively optimistic conclusion, it is a sad book about a reality that is no more.

During 1983 Begin lost his zest and the mental fortitude required of a prime minister. He increasingly withdrew into himself, was not active in cabinet meetings, did not respond to his colleagues, and made no suggestions whatsoever. On August 28, 1983, at the weekly cabinet meeting, Begin announced his decision to resign. "I can't take it anymore," he said, without further comment. Was he in a state of depression because of how the Lebanon War had evolved? Did the casualty numbers hurled at him by the demonstrators outside his residence break his spirit? Or perhaps he was simply tired of carrying the burden of government. Begin gave no explanation. It was the end of an era.

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4. Aryeh Naor, *Begin bashilton: edut ishit* (Begin in Power: A Personal Testimony), Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth, 1993, pp. 182–183.

5. Dayan, *Breakthrough*, pp. 225–226.

6. Shilon, *Begin*, p. 326.

7. Naor, *Begin bashilton: edut ishit*, p. 230.

8. Shilon, *Begin*, p. 374.

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10. Ruvik Rosenthal (ed.), *Levanon: Hamilhama ha'aheret* (Lebanon: The Other War), Tel Aviv: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1983, p. 86.

11. Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Milhemet sholal* (Israel's Lebanon War), Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1984, p. 346.

12. Rosenthal, *Levanon: Hamilhama ha'aheret*, p. 88.

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14. Ibid., p. 185.

15. Nachum Barnea, *Yorim ubokhim: al politika'im, generalim, itona'im ve'od ohavei atzmam* (They Shoot and They Cry), Tel Aviv: Zmora Bitan Modan, 1981, p. 220.

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18 THE STALEMATE YEARS
A CHANGING ISRAELI IDENTITY, 1984–1990

When the Likud won only one seat more than the Alignment (the Labor Party and Mapam) in the 1981 elections, Begin was still able to form a coalition government, while the Alignment could not. In the 1984 elections the Alignment won three seats more than the Likud, but once again it was unable to form a government, since the Likud could muster a majority in the Knesset. In the 1988 elections the stalemate between the two major parties recurred. Throughout the 1980s the Israeli electorate refused to give either party exclusive power. There was no longer a party with a clear majority that constituted the basis of a governmental coalition. Given the election results Labor and the Likud were compelled to reach a compromise and form joint governments. From 1984 to 1990 Israel was led by national unity governments comprising the two major parties together with several satellite parties. (Mapam left the Alignment following the establishment of the first national unity government.)

The first national unity government, established in 1984, tried to create the political conditions that would enable it to withdraw Israeli forces from Lebanon (see the previous chapter) and put Israel's economic house in order. The Israeli economy's malaise had begun in 1973. The heavy security burden that followed the Yom Kippur War, coupled with the global energy crisis, arrested growth, accelerated inflation, and increased the national debt. The years between 1975 and 1985 are considered the Israeli economy's "lost decade," with no significant growth at all. In 1984 inflation soared to an annual 400 percent, the balance of payments deficit worsened, and Israel's foreign currency reserves dwindled. All the measures adopted by the various finance ministers failed to halt rising prices and devaluation of the currency. Banks had recommended that their customers purchase bank shares, and in 1983 the bank shares bubble burst. The shares lost their value overnight, and thousands of households and businesses were left destitute. Despite the trend toward liberalization and a market economy—which meant reducing government involvement in the economy—the government was forced to intervene to prevent a crash and in effect nationalized the banks.

In 1985 the government led by Shimon Peres adopted an emergency plan to stabilize the economy. Government spending was cut, employees were fired, subsidies were canceled, the rate of exchange and wages were frozen, and super-

vision was imposed on the prices of products and numerous services. The link between salaries and the cost-of-living index was temporarily frozen and the real wage value dropped. Additionally an amendment to the Bank of Israel Law prohibited the bank from extending credit lines to the government—i.e., from printing money. For the first time the Arrangement Law (also known as the Economic Policy Law) became part of the State Economy Basic Law, enabling accelerated passage of regulations and reforms in the broad framework of the stability plan. This combination of measures stabilized the currency; toward the end of the year, the rate of inflation dropped to 30 percent and continued to drop. The US administration supported these drastic measures with a special grant aimed at easing the balance of payments problem. The public reacted with understanding and restraint, which led to a slight drop in the standard of living. There was a feeling that fundamental change must come to avoid economic collapse. From then on the economy started to recover and economic growth resumed. In the framework of resumed growth, the government increased its promotion of liberalization and a market economy. The creation of easy terms for private capital investment in the economy and the beginnings of integration into the global economy created opportunities that formed the basis for renewed growth.

Hevrat Haʿovdim, the Histadrut's economic arm, could not adapt to these economic and political changes. Since statehood the Histadrut had embraced a broadening economic policy, which involved ensuring full employment and relatively high wages, especially in the peripheral areas of the country, and nondismissal of workers. The Histadrut economic leadership had assumed that it was carrying out a national mission and that its economic capabilities were secondary to its social tasks. This perception was fine before 1977, when the state would bail out failing Histadrut enterprises. But it did not work in an economy managed by a government unsympathetic to the Histadrut economy, which declared its intention of introducing liberalization and a capitalist economy run along lines of profit and loss, managerial efficiency, and competitiveness.

The problem was that after the about-turn, the heads of the Histadrut economy feared confrontation with the workers, most of whom were Likud supporters, and because of this political consideration they did not implement the required efficiency measures in their factories. As a result, the Histadrut economy took upon itself commitments it was unable to fulfill. Instead of closing down failing enterprises, lowering wages where necessary, and letting workers go, the Histadrut leadership transferred profits from its successful enterprises to the failing ones and engaged in financial manipulations that concealed the size of the real deficit. While inflation was at its height, these leaders managed to maneuver between the losses. But once the economy stabilized, the sheer magnitude of the Histadrut economic crisis emerged. As part of the reforms vital to encouraging

growth, the government sought to reduce the scope of the economy under public or government control. It did not extend assistance to Histadrut enterprises, since it wanted to restrict the Histadrut to being a trade union and annul its unique character, dating from the Yishuv period, as both the workers' representative and a major employer. At the end of the 1980s, the Histadrut was forced to sell off many of its enterprises and reduce its involvement in the economy.

The agricultural labor settlements went through a similar process. Many kibbutzim that had taken out loans during the inflationary period could not meet their commitments. The entire kibbutz movement was in danger of collapse. In the 1990s, hoping to improve their efficiency and adapt to the spirit of the times, numerous kibbutzim embarked on a privatization process, dividing their common property and abrogating the principle of equality within the kibbutz. From now on income and expenses were personal, not collective. Still the privatized kibbutzim continued to maintain a social safety net for their members. Collectivism disappeared from more than half of the kibbutzim, and in fact they became community settlements. The moshav movement also suffered crises, and many moshavim faced bankruptcy. The economic collapse that followed the labor movement's political failure added further to the Israeli left's feeling of despair and loss of direction. In the competition between a planned and guided economy and a free market, the collapse of the USSR at the end of the decade lent the decline of the socialist perspective a universal dimension.

The 1981 elections saw the appearance of Tami (an acronym for *Tnu'at Masoret Yisrael,* Movement for the Heritage of Israel), an ethnic Mizrachi party representing mainly Jews of Moroccan origin. Ever since statehood, ethnic parties had attempted to break in to the Israeli political arena. Here and there ethnic lists had managed to gain representation in the Knesset, but until 1981 no ethnic party succeeded in attaining real political influence. Ethnicity was considered contradictory to the national ethos because it perpetuated the division of Jews by country of origin. Zionism sought to meld people from the various diasporas into a single entity with a collective identity expressed in a national culture, symbols and rituals, and a common ethos. It saw ethnicity as a relic of the Diaspora past, counterproductive to the task of building a nation in Israel.

The basic concept was that of the melting pot: bringing all the Jewish diasporas under one cultural roof and having them all adopt the principle of progress, a nonreligious national worldview, and Hebrew language and culture. All Jews from the diasporas were called upon to shed the characteristics of their former culture and unite under the banner of the state and its symbols. An ethnic schism was clearly evident as early as the 1950s (the "second Israel," the Wadi Salib riots, the Black Panthers, recurring debates in the media and government institutions on the subject), but it was hoped that these were fleeting events that

would disappear with time. The constant increase in mixed marriages between Ashkenazim (communities of European origin; as the years passed, Jews from Bulgaria and Greece, whose origins were Sephardi, were considered Ashkenazim because they embraced European culture) and Mizrachim (communities originating in the Islamic countries) was considered by the "first Israel" as proof that the ethnic divide was narrowing. In turn the image of ethnic integration was accepted as proof that a single nation was being formed in Israel and that ethnic schisms were weakening.

One factor in the Likud's rise to power in 1977 was the "second Israel's" anger toward the veteran Ashkenazim. This said, the Mizrachim's choice of the Likud could be construed as adoption of the national principle as dominant, since the Likud was a national party, not an ethnic one. But the de facto legitimacy given the ethnic schism by Begin in the 1981 election campaign, in which he accused the Alignment of insulting and discriminating against the Mizrachi communities, broke a taboo in Israeli politics. It was no longer "un-Israeli" to make ethnic claims. Tami's breakthrough into the Knesset as an ethnic party heralded a change in the rules of the game. The fact that Tami won three seats at the expense of the NRP was an expression of the discrimination felt by the Mizrachim in the NRP. It proved that the ethnic schism was alive and kicking, more strongly than before. In contrast with the Black Panthers, who used socioeconomic slogans and had no qualms about resorting to violence, Tami's slogan was "Stand tall!" This phrase represented not only a socioeconomic agenda but also a cultural one: restoration of the Mizrachim's lost honor and cultural heritage. But Tami did not last long. Organizational and personal problems among its leadership led to its dissolution and absorption into the Likud.

In 1984 Tami's place as Israel's ethnic party was taken by Shas (an abbreviation of *Hitahdut Hasefaradim Haʿolamit Shomrei Torah*, the Worldwide Sephardi Association of Torah Guardians). Shas was formed as a coalition of city rabbis, rabbinic authorities, heads of yeshivas, and rabbis from the Mizrachi Repentance Movement, under the leadership of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, who was Sephardi chief rabbi of Israel between 1973 and 1983. It was an ultra-Orthodox Mizrachi party that developed under the aegis of the Lithuanian stream of Agudat Yisrael led by Rabbi Eliezer Schach, but it swiftly took on its own character and no longer needed the patronage of that Ashkenazi party, which had discriminated against the Mizrachim, besmirched their honor, and deprived them of allocations.

"Shas stands at the center of three crossroads that divide Israeli society: religious, ethnic, and economic-class," asserts the scholar Aviezer Ravitzky, "but at the root of all of them there are also basic factors of identity and loyalty, worldviews and beliefs, traditions and ways of thinking, and also deep tensions of diversity vs. uniformity, custom vs. book, Jewish law vs. Kabbalah, community

autonomy vs. halakhic authority, veterans and the 'well to do' vs. yeshiva students and 'people strengthened in belief.' "[1] Although many Israelis tend to view Shas through a political lens as a movement that exploits its electoral power to obtain benefits for the ultra-Orthodox Mizrachi sector, the party is more thoroughly understood as part of a movement of religious awakening and rejuvenation that draws its power from the attraction of masses of Mizrachim—especially those of Moroccan origin—to popular religious tradition. Many Shas voters are not ultra-Orthodox. However, the entire Shas leadership *is* ultra-Orthodox, although their orthodoxy differs from that of the Ashkenazim. Many ultra-Orthodox Mizrachim serve in the army and consider themselves true Zionists. They believe that non-religious Jews have deviated from the path of true Zionism and should be returned to the fold of religion, which is identical to nationality. On the whole, many Shas voters combine ethnicity, religiosity, and nationalism with low socioeconomic class and level of education.

Nissim Leon, a researcher of ultra-Orthodox Mizrachim, believes that Shas represents a specific model of how Mizrachi Jews deal with modernity. In contrast with modernization processes in Europe, which involved a schism between "religion and life," the modernization brought to the Middle East and North Africa by the European colonial powers—France or Britain—resulted in decreased observance of the commandments but not loss of faith or formation of a competing religious system (as the Conservative and Reform schools did in the West). Religion remained the principal marker of Jewish identity, and tradition was strictly observed. Zionism in these countries joined forces with religion in the fight against the secularization and assimilation encouraged by the colonial government.

By contrast, the Zionist State of Israel was an agent of secularization that sought to convert nationalism—as opposed to religion—into the key to identity. In the first and even the second generation after their immigration, the Mizrachim tended toward a moderate-traditional religious position: observance of their forebears' tradition, attending the neighborhood synagogue, studying a chapter of Talmud now and again, and honoring their parents, but without zealotry. Traveling on the Sabbath, going to soccer games, attending a state-religious school, wearing Western attire, and serving in the military were all considered legitimate. Inclinations toward ultra-Orthodoxy appeared between the second and third generations after immigration, after the first generation had passed.

Both internal and external factors gave rise to this trend. Immediately after World War Two, the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael became active in the North African Jewish communities in an effort to replenish its numbers following the death of millions of Ashkenazi believers in the Holocaust. (Zionist activity there had similar motives.) At the same time, Mizrachi ultra-Orthodoxy appeared in

Palestine on the initiative of the Porat Yosef yeshiva in Jerusalem, which was founded early in the Mandatory period. Graduates of the Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox yeshivas and the Porat Yosef yeshiva made up the leadership and educational core that would eventually establish Shas. A former Porat Yosef student, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, an eminent rabbinic authority with great influence in contemporary Mizrachi communities, endowed the movement with prestigious leadership and religious authority. Thus Shas grew as a religious movement striving to curb modernization processes and the move away from tradition that the Israeli reality imposed on the Mizrachim.

The separate framework of Mizrachi ultra-Orthodoxy was created by several factors. First, as the ultra-Orthodox Ashkenazi communities rehabilitated themselves after the catastrophe of the Holocaust, grew demographically, and restored their self-confidence, the contrasts between ultra-Orthodox Ashkenazim and Mizrachim became more pronounced. Fewer and fewer Mizrachim could obtain places in the leading Lithuanian yeshivas, and discrimination against them heightened in such areas as arranged marriages (they were considered suitable only for candidates with a defect), the schools, and appointments as religious judges and heads of yeshivas. They were also restricted to an inferior position in the ultra-Orthodox leadership. Although the Mizrachim provided Agudat Yisrael with its electoral power, they were not rewarded for their ability to recruit votes.

Second, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, a scion of an Iraqi family, developed the concept of restoring Mizrachi Judaism to its former glory, in the form of a demand that in Israel the prevailing version of religious laws should be that compiled by Rabbi Yosef Caro, who wrote the *Shulhan Arukh* (authoritative code of Jewish laws). This concept embodied a claim that the Sephardi version of the Halakha (and also its form of prayer) was superior to the Ashkenazi version, which in the 1950s and 1960s Mizrachi rabbis had tended to accept as universal. Ovadia's concept also demanded that the diverse versions used by immigrants from various eastern diasporas (Iraqi, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, and Tunisian) be annulled in favor of a single, unifying Sephardi/Mizrachi version. Thus Rabbi Ovadia's claim involved a confrontation not only with the Ashkenazi side of the religious fence but also with Mizrachim who observed those diverse local traditions. Rabbi Ovadia's charismatic power, his renown as a rabbinic authority, his high office as chief rabbi, and the numerous enthusiasts who saw him as the ultimate religious authority of the Mizrachi bloc combined to make him the undisputed leader of Shas.

Third, Shas met the needs of a large group of Mizrachim who sought religious experience, a mystical thrill, spiritual elation. The Tnu'at Hateshuva (Repentance Movement), formed under the auspices of Shas, became a broad popular move-

ment that suited a new breed of rabbis whose power lay not in religious scholarship but in renewal of the synagogue as a social center with traditional religious characteristics and community activities. The Tnu'at Hateshuva rabbis who organized spiritual awakening and "strengthening" events for audiences of thousands appealed mainly to people's feelings and religious imagination. They promoted popular religious beliefs—which included mystical elements supposedly connected to tradition but that were in fact a modern Israeli invention unknown in their native countries—as opposed to halakhic scholarship and modernism both. These rabbis expressed their audience's animosity toward Israeli society's blatant secularism, its modern achievement-oriented life that necessitated a secular education, and Israeli elites' arrogance toward them.

In the 1984 elections Shas won four seats; in 1988 and 1992, six; ten in 1996; and seventeen in 1999. At its peak it won more seats than the other two religious parties (Agudat Yisrael and the NRP) combined. Shas's attitude toward the Zionist state was more moderate and cautious than that of Lithuanian ultra-Orthodoxy. It chose to enter government coalitions, even in governments led by the left. It also supported the Chief Rabbinate, an Israeli state institution, which Agudat Yisrael rejected. Shas's sympathetic attitude toward the state reflected the relatively moderate political attitude of a broad range of voters outside the ultra-Orthodox hard core, who were not strictly observant and whose worldview was nationalistic, as well as Shas's own ability to exploit its position as the pivotal party between the two major parties in order to obtain economic and political benefits for its supporters. Unlike Agudat Yisrael, which behaved like a sect striving to protect its closed territory, Shas set out with strong missionary objectives, striving—at least in theory—to convert Israeli society in its entirety to an ultra-Orthodox one in its own image. Its participation in governments was aimed at constructing a lever for involvement in the affairs not only of its followers but also of Israeli society in general as the party worked to impose its positions on issues such as "Who Is a Jew," religious conversion, observance of the Sabbath in public places, and so forth.

The weakening of the Israeli welfare state that followed liberalization and the transition to a free market economy gave Shas an opportunity to widen its influence. It established a network of schools, kindergartens, and charitable and welfare institutions that were funded by the public purse but run in the spirit of Shas, to heighten the religious commitment of a broad population that formed its electoral pool. Inserting itself into the opening created by the retreat of Israeli statism, Shas succeeded in recruiting a following that went far beyond the scope of ultra-Orthodox Mizrachim. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef's motto of restoring Mizrachi Judaism to its former glory involved granting priority to Rabbi Yosef Caro's version of religious judgment as embodied in the *Shulhan Arukh*. But the general

public perceived it in a far broader context as a demand to restore the characteristic behavior, tradition, and culture of immigrants from the Islamic countries. This response was an expression of the affront felt by numerous Mizrachim, whose memories of home and childhood had been rejected by the secular Israel, the Zionist-religious NRP, and the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael.

The tolerant, relaxed framework of traditional religiosity, which ultra-Orthodoxy found hard to accept, served as the basis of a broad missionary "campaign of awakening" aimed at bringing Shas closer to the *mithazkim*—people in outlying areas of the country who were returning to religion through the Shas Repentance Movement. A new stratum of popular religion emerged, propagated by its preachers, popular Kabbalists who seemed to call for a return to halakhic observance but actually preached a simple, unadorned religious faith at the expense of halakhic polemics. Broad popular strata of believers who had been unable to find a place in the ultra-Orthodox yeshivas, and were also disinclined to adopt the ultra-Orthodox way of life, were swept up in the waves of the Repentance Movement. Its preachers appealed to the masses, either at events attended by thousands or through videocassettes that conveyed their messages. Together with their religious message, they preached no confidence in the legal system and modern science; gibed at the left-wing, veteran, nonreligious Ashkenazi elites; attacked the media that presented the positions of the old elites; and rejected in its entirety everything connected with the old Israeliness. The culture of the Repentance Movement provided Shas supporters with their own narrative, an interpretation of their own reality. The symbiosis between the Shas political system, which obtained public funding for its devotees, and the Repentance Movement, which recruited masses of voters, was the source of Shas's electoral power.

Shas represents the new identity politics that first appeared in Israeli society in 1977. Neo-Marxist researchers view the economic class divide as the main source of Shas's potency. But for those involved in the movement, the driving force is first and foremost religious, and it is fueled by ethnicity. The appearance of Shas and its growth into Israel's third-largest party by the end of the twentieth century is an expression of the weakening of the Israeli identity shaped by the statism and melting pot of the 1950s, and the appearance of a multicultural society. In this society a struggle is taking place between various groups that compete to shape the cultural and political agenda of the state. In the 1980s it seemed that the focus of this struggle was between the nonreligious and religious groups in Israeli society. The absence of a single leading party and the stalemate between the two major national parties left room for parties with particular interests, such as the religious parties. The struggles took place in the economic arena over how the national cake would be sliced. The nonreligious public saw the efforts of the ultra-Orthodox, including Shas, to increase budgetary allocations for their own

benefit as raiding the public purse for the sake of elements in the population who demand rights without fulfilling their duties to the state.

The secular-religious schism increasingly appeared in every issue related to the settlements in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. During these years the settlers' messianic tendencies went through ups and downs. Whereas the core of the Yesha (the Hebrew acronym for Judea, Samaria, and Gaza) Council remained loyal to the notion of statism and continued to consider the State of Israel the most important instrument of redemption, on the margins there were signs that the council's authority was weakening. As we have seen, initially Gush Emunim was an extra-parliamentary movement whose activity deviated from established party politics, and it felt justified in imposing its own agenda on the political system by means of mass pressure and breaking the law. Seeds of trouble sprouting from the refusal to accept majority rule were inherent in the ideology of the Gush, which believed it was undertaking a national-religious mission whose importance bestowed upon it the right to act at the margins of Israeli democracy.

Starting at the end of the 1970s, an underground settler group began taking action. It started with a messianic plan to usher in redemption of the Jewish people by blowing up the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. The struggles between Jews and Muslims over ownership of the Temple Mount area sacred to both religions had begun in the Mandatory period. After it occupied the West Bank, Israel appropriated the Western Wall for the Jewish people, evacuated the inhabitants of the Mughrabi Quarter whose homes were in the adjacent alleys, and built the spacious square by the Wall where thousands congregate on Jewish festivals. Moshe Dayan left the Temple Mount area itself under the management of the Muslim *waqf* (religious endowment). Over the years religious influence over the Western Wall area increased. Originally a national-religious symbol, it became a sort of synagogue, with men and women separated, where the Rabbi of the Western Wall ensured appropriate religious observance.

As the Wall area became more Orthodox, its status as a national symbol diminished. Writer A. B. Yehoshua drew a contrast between "The Mount"—Mount Herzl, the secular Israeli national pantheon, the site of the military cemetery and resting place of Zionist thinkers such as Herzl and Jabotinsky, as well as prime ministers and presidents—and "The Wall," the focal point of the alternative, religion-based Jewish identity. This contrast is not only between religion and secularism, tradition and modernity, but also between using the past to shape an agenda for the present and engaging with the future. "The Mount" represents the Israel that strives to be part of the family of nations, whereas "The Wall" symbolizes Jewish particularism, a return to the isolation of the ghetto. Keeping in mind the enthusiasm that gripped the entire country on hearing Colonel Mordechai Gur's announcement in 1967, "Temple Mount is in our hands," the distance felt

MAP 11. SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, 1977–1988. (SEE PLATE 11.)

by secular and intellectual Israel from the Wall symbolized its disillusionment over the receding likelihood of peace, the reality of the occupation, and rising religious forces in Israeli Jewish society whose power was difficult to assess.

The existence of a national-religious group of young people who saw blowing up the Al-Aqsa mosque as "expunging the abomination," a visionary messianic mission that would bring redemption closer, can be construed as symbolizing the distance in the Zionist camp between religious and nonreligious Jews. It is also an indication of the messianic tension in these extremist groups, which lost sight of Zionism as a political movement firmly rooted in the real world and turned it into one focused on realizing a divine plan. In 1982 Israel vacated the Yamit region in accordance with the peace treaty with Egypt. To the redemption visionaries this was the end of their world; the evacuation was proof that redemption was in retreat and that "the redeeming end" was not on the doorstep. They consequently backed off from readying the Temple Mount for the rebuilding of the Temple, which was the next step in their plan.

The plans to blow up the Temple Mount mosques did not become operational. But they nourished a group of "devotees" for whom the idea of using force to advance Jewish rule in the occupied territories had merit. Starting at the end of the 1970s, this group engaged in vigilante action whose perpetrators were never caught. These settlers believed that the National Guidance Committee of Arab mayors in Judea and Samaria was responsible for organizing resistance and terrorist activities against them and the Israeli authorities. In 1980, following an attack on settlers in Hebron that resulted in several dead and wounded, several members of the group decided to kill Arab mayors in revenge. The action was well planned and involved dozens of people, most of whom did not know exactly what they were part of. Two mayors lost their legs, and an IDF sapper who attempted to defuse an explosive device intended for a third mayor lost his sight.

Revenge actions became a recurring pattern. After the murder of a yeshiva student in Hebron, a shooting took place against students at the Hebron Islamic College that resulted in many dead and wounded. At first the Israeli authorities did not activate the General Security Service (GSS) against "the Jewish underground," as the assassins were dubbed by the Israeli media. But after the Islamic College incident, Begin ordered the GSS to find the murderers. In 1984 the GSS exposed an "underground" plot to blow up five buses and their passengers and arrested the perpetrators in the nick of time. They were found guilty and given jail sentences.

The escalation in the activities of the "underground"—from the attack on mayors thought to be responsible for terrorist outrages, to the attack on innocent students at a college with anti-Jewish, Islamic leanings, to an attempted attack on innocent bus passengers—was sobering. Following these events the members of

the Yesha Council performed a moral stocktaking that exposed the undercurrents within it. The majority opposed the underground's actions, which they considered counterproductive for most settlers' efforts to coexist with the Palestinians without waiving the right of Jews to settle in Judea and Samaria. But others welcomed the underground's actions. They found support in the person of Rabbi Meir Kahane, who had immigrated to Israel from the United States in 1971 and was elected to the Knesset in 1984 on a ticket supporting radical religious ideology and acts of terrorism against Arabs.

Increasing religious militancy was also evident in a change in the national-religious ideology. If under governments of the left the religious parties had been content with defending substantively Jewish matters such as marital law, "Who Is a Jew," and Sabbath and kashrut observance in public places, now they insisted on becoming central partners in molding the national culture. They had had enough, they declared, of being the kashrut inspectors in the buffet car of the Zionist train. They now wanted to drive the train. The Ministry of Education, which had always been in the hands of a Labor Party minister, now became the domain of national-religious ministers. In practice this had relatively little impact on the secular curricula, but it had cardinal importance symbolically. The secularists saw the religious parties' increasing dominance of the Ministry of Education as a real threat to the secular character of state education.

Among the religious Zionists, particularly the settlers, a trend evolved of stricter observance of Jewish religious law. Bare legs, short sleeves, and joint activities by boys and girls in the national-religious Bnei Akiva youth movement gradually vanished. The "Ani Ma'amin" (I believe) was sung together with the national anthem at military ceremonies in religious IDF units. And sometimes only the religious song was sung. Sometimes female singers had to cancel performances before an audience of religious soldiers, since *Kol be'isha erva* (a woman's voice is nakedness). Most of the heads of the Zionist *yeshivot hesder* (which, as noted, combine advanced Talmudic studies with military service) came from an ultra-Orthodox background and influenced their students to adopt more stringent religious observance. In some religious-Zionist circles there was a call to obey *da'at Torah* (opinion of the Torah, meaning the rabbis' orders) on worldly matters such as the evacuation of territories—thus blurring the separation that had existed in religious Zionism since the 1920s between the sacred, which was the rabbis' domain, and the profane, the domain of secular leaders, i.e., politicians.

The seeping of ultra-Orthodox modes into religious Zionism heightened the contrasts between religious and nonreligious Jews in the national arena. On the public level, debates were held on "the full cart" of Jewish culture. It was Rabbi Schach, the most eminent "Lithuanian" rabbinic authority, who declared that observers of the commandments had a full cart, while that of secular Jews was

empty. This assertion challenged the entire secular Jewish and Hebrew culture that had been created in the previous century. The nonreligious public felt threatened by the increasing militancy and aggressiveness of the religious sector.

The equilibrium between right and left diminished the power of the political system, since the sides neutralized each other. At the same time that extra-parliamentary activity increased through the activities of Gush Emunim and the settlers, Peace Now, and the Shas-sponsored Repentance Movement, two parallel phenomena emerged. On one hand, people grew inclined to abandon the public sphere and stay at home. This was an expression of public disenchantment with political activity and the possibility of influencing political processes in the country. It was also a consequence of the increasing effect of television, which became the Israeli "tribal bonfire." Until the 1990s Israeli television had only two or three channels. Watching television created a sort of imagined community comprising the majority of the Israeli public. Air-conditioning, which became common in Israel with the rise in the standard of living, made outdoor rallies and gatherings far less attractive than before. Meanwhile radical groups on both left and right rallied their devotees to street theater actions. Television brought every dramatic event in the street into people's homes. Extra-parliamentary and weird events acquired disproportionate importance, and the media reporting on them reinforced the public's sense that the leadership was weak, lacked credibility, and had lost control.

The vacuum created by the diminished power of the political system was filled by the judicial system, whose increasing power first became evident in the 1970s. A series of issues was decided not by the government but by the court. Notable examples were the state commissions of inquiry (the Agranat Commission after the Yom Kippur War, and the Cahan Commission after the Sabra and Shatila massacre), whose decisions were binding upon the governments because of public pressure. The Supreme Court became the citizens' recourse for complaints against the arbitrariness of the authorities, not only regarding human rights as in the 1950s but also on matters of culture and policy. It was the Supreme Court that decided to allow television broadcasts on the Sabbath eve, and that the Elon Moreh settlement was illegal and should be evacuated. During the 1980s the Supreme Court stopped automatically approving IDF and GSS petitions regarding administrative detentions and land expropriation in the occupied territories. Although they were not Israeli citizens, the Arab residents of the territories were granted the right to petition the Supreme Court. Institutions such as the IDF, the police, and the GSS lost the right to organizational autonomy and defense against legal action.

One of the turning points in the new era of judicial ascendance was the Bus No. 300 affair of 1986. It began when terrorists made a failed attempt to hijack

the bus. According to the IDF spokesman, the terrorists were killed. However, journalists on the scene reported that they had seen two terrorists being led away by security forces personnel. It later emerged that they had been interrogated and then killed by GSS interrogators. The GSS tried to cover up its involvement. Its operatives' testimony before the court was proved to be false, which undermined the judges' belief in GSS reports. When the affair was exposed, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, his deputy Shimon Peres, and Minister of Defense Rabin did not agree that GSS operatives should stand trial, as the attorney general demanded. The attorney general was consequently forced to resign. His successor agreed to accept a plea bargain in which the state president would pardon the accused before they were brought to trial.

That was the last time that the Israeli government was able to dismiss the attorney general. This particular struggle between the judicial and political systems ended with an ostensible victory by the government, but in reality the affair underscored the fact that government authorities are subject to the law, and also the primacy of the judicial over the political system. Since then the judicial system has not taken the testimony of the IDF, the GSS, and the police for granted, and these organizations are not exempt from judicial review.

The Supreme Court took up a line of judicial activism that ran counter to previous custom in the Israeli justice system. Until the 1980s the Supreme Court considered itself authorized to interpret laws in the framework of legal precedents while remaining loyal to the letter of the law. After that it began adopting an interpretation nourished by what the judges felt were normative values in Israel as a Jewish democratic state, as set out in the Declaration of Independence. It was a shift from judicial formalism to activism: the Supreme Court sought to participate in shaping the character and values of the state. "It is extremely doubtful that there is another judicial institution in the world, with the exception of the Supreme Court of the United States, whose activism and involvement in matters of policy is so great," asserted jurist Amnon Rubinstein.[2] One manifestation of this judicial activism was to extend the scope of *locus standi*, the right of a citizen or body to plead before the Supreme Court. In the past this right had been granted only to those with an interest in or a direct connection with the petition. Now any matter of public interest could be brought before the Supreme Court by any citizen—which meant that the court could review the executive and even the legislative branch. "Everything is justiciable," stated Justice Aharon Barak, president of the Supreme Court from 1995 to 2006.

This change was clearly influenced by the American justice system. In the early years of the Israeli state, judges came from a continental legal tradition. Now the source of influence was the United States, where many Israeli jurists studied law. The American justice system views the state warily and seeks to restrict its power,

while encouraging individualism at the expense of commitment to the community. The Israeli Supreme Court promoted a similar liberal agenda, whose judicial manifestation was the enactment of two basic laws in 1992: Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty and Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation. Since statehood it had been commonly agreed that instead of a constitution, which stood no chance of being passed, the Knesset would enact a series of basic laws. These laws would have higher status than regular legislation (although this has never been categorically stated) and could only be annulled by a plurality in the Knesset. The Knesset passed these two basic laws a few days before the 1992 elections, almost without public debate. They form the basis of the "legislative revolution" in Israel that was promoted by Justice Barak in the 1990s.

The two basic laws constitute the Israeli "declaration of human rights." Before they were enacted, basic liberties were protected by the Declaration of Independence, whose legal status is unclear. After their passage these two basic laws became the foundation of justice. Standing above the Knesset's regular legislation, they grant the Supreme Court the right to annul a law passed by the Knesset if that law infringes equality or individual liberties and rights, according to Justice Barak's interpretation.

These laws also include the definition of Israel as "a Jewish and democratic state" in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. These two elements, representing the essence of the State of Israel, were the subject of stormy controversy centering on the balance between them. Justice Barak defined the Jewish character of the state in Zionist terms: the Law of Return, the national anthem, the flag and emblem, the Hebrew language and culture, the Jewish calendar, and the Jewish festivals. Defining Jewish character in these terms was appropriate to the secular perception of the Jewish character of the state, but incompatible with the religious circles' perception of Judaism, which demanded deepening the state's Jewish character through halakhic law and tradition. In addition the Israeli Palestinians (as the Arabs of Israel now tended to call themselves), as well as Jewish post-Zionist groups (discussed later), contended that there was an essential contradiction between the character of Israel as a democratic state and its character as a Jewish state, which manifested itself in preferential treatment of Jews—the Law of Return, for example. This issue is still on Israel's agenda (discussed later).

The increased power of the judicial branch resulted from diminished faith in the political system. Greater judicial power was frequently promoted by the media, which had also become increasingly militant. Investigative journalism scrutinizing the government developed mainly in the 1980s as awe of the authorities gradually dissipated. A new generation of young journalists emerged who were loyal to neither left nor right, but only to freedom of the press and their own

professional advancement. They had a soft spot for the judicial branch, which shielded them from the politicians, and accepted the power of the Supreme Court as both desirable and appropriate. The old party press, which usually expressed its owners' political positions, could barely survive with the advent of economic liberalism. One by one the party newspapers faded, closed, and were replaced by electronic media and local newspapers. The local papers were shallower and had no commitment to national values. What interested them above all was their own media and economic success. Only *Ha'aretz* remained as a privately owned independent paper promoting a patently liberal agenda. There were also two evening papers, *Yedioth Ahronoth* and *Ma'ariv.* All three, especially *Ha'aretz*, gave unqualified support to the judicial system.

Judicial activism and support by television and the press for liberal trends reflected, among other things, the decline of the republican ethos that had characterized Israel in the 1950s and 1960s, and the rise of a Western liberal, mainly American, ethos. In the republican ethos the citizen has both obligations and rights. It emphasizes the collective, not the individual; public interest, not individual rights. The first Israeli identity was grounded in this ethos. Events as early as the 1950s heralded the decline of collectivist values and the rise of individualism. However, the zeitgeist was still influenced by World War Two and the Cold War, and nationalist winds still blew in the West. In Israel patriotism held great power to shape people's character. Tension over security and the existential anxiety that remained as its near-constant echo in Israeli society slowed the casting off of commitment to the public interest. Thus the population remained willing to enlist in the army and share the burden of reserve duty.

Only after the Six-Day War did fresh winds begin blowing that undermined the ideology of "the besieged and the just," in the words of poet Chaim Gouri, and raised doubts about the justness of the Zionist enterprise. Begin's rise to power, economic liberalism, consumer culture, and the rise in the standard of living shattered the pillars of the old ethos. New elites, both religious and nonreligious, who had never accepted the republican ethos and preferred a religious-Jewish ethos (on one hand) or a liberal-Western one (on the other), now came to the fore. From right and left emerged forces that sought to shape a different Israeli identity. The ultra-Orthodox, the national-religious, the Shas Mizrachim, the liberal intellectuals all strove to ensure their role in shaping the public sphere in Israel and formulating the national agenda. The multiculturalism that grew out of these struggles seemed not only an inevitable fact, part of reality, but also an ideal. In the context of the current diversity, the old Israeli identity seemed too uniform, as though dictated from above and suppressing other forms of identity.

Although the old elites had lost political control, and their role in creating the national ethos was in decline, they still dominated the economy, the army, higher

education, the media, and the judicial system. Yet loss of status, frightening images embodied by political adversaries, concern over the rise of the power of masses influenced by nationalist and religious worldviews all combined in a fear that democracy would be lost in Israel. In the opinion of scholar Menachem Mautner, the 1980s were characterized by anxiety among liberals (that is, the old elites) about an assault by the antidemocratic right on the centers of power in Israeli society. These liberals saw the Supreme Court in particular and the judicial system in general as the defenders of Israeli democracy, the last bastion protecting the character of Israel as a democratic state. Therefore they did not protest against the Supreme Court's judicial activism impairing the Knesset's status as the legislative branch and the executive's autonomy, but supported the judicial system in all its confrontations with the government. The representatives of the ultra-Orthodox and Shas had good reason to complain that the Supreme Court's insistence on equality prevented them from exploiting their political power to obtain economic benefits for their supporters. The court presented itself as an institution anchored in Israel's basic values, which was navigating the state through the populist trends in the Knesset.

Like other intellectual vogues, postmodernism was imported into Israel from the United States in the late 1980s. The concept that there were no hierarchies of either values or culture appealed to those who felt that the old Israeli culture prevented them from giving expression to their memories of home, language, customs, and lifestyle that over the years had been cloaked in a haze of nostalgic romanticism. Multiculturalism combined well with postmodernism. Postmodernism held that there was no cultural canon, and popular and high culture had equal value. Good and evil, sublime and lowly, truth and lies, beautiful and ugly were all relative; such judgments derived from particular value systems and did not represent universal truths. This concept not only fit well with multiculturalism but also with television's increased status as a molder of national culture.

The history of Mizrachi songs and music demonstrates the changes that took place in the Israeli identity. Until the 1980s radio and television were dominated by Land of Israel songs and Hebrew nostalgia. Mizrachi performing artists, who had been shunted away from the center of Israeli culture to the margins of the markets where their cassettes were sold, protested their exclusion in vain; the Israeli media programmers did not provide them with a stage. But now, with the rise of Mizrachi political power, greater public awareness of past discrimination against Mizrachim, and the new openness to extra-Western cultures, Mizrachi music—especially pop music, a mixture of East and West, now defined as "Mediterranean-style music"—conquered the discos, the wedding halls, and, finally, television and radio.

At the same time, the Mizrachim demanded that their cultural tradition be

made part of the historical narrative of the Jewish people, and also of Zionism. The Ministry of Education and the universities rose to the challenge. Initially they made only token attempts, but slowly researchers and studies began appearing that engaged with these issues, and chapters of Jewish history that had previously not been appropriately represented were now unearthed and included in the national narrative. At the same time, the feminist revolution took place in the United States and rapidly reached Israel. Here, too, multiculturalism offered an advantage. Amid the continued existence of patriarchal societies, such as the Arab society and parts of the Jewish one, the women of Israel began demanding their rightful place in the economy and the cultural sphere. The increasing number of women entering the labor market—since increasing the standard of living required that both husband and wife go out to work—and the rise in the standard of education, which opened new types of employment to women, led to changes in family relations and relations between the sexes. In this regard Israel was no different from other Western countries.

A phenomenon that occurred toward the end of the 1980s and reached its peak in the 1990s was the appearance of post-Zionism and the "new historians," young scholars researching the War of Independence and the early years of the state. Their studies were based on documents pertaining to these years, which were now being released by the Israeli state archives. These scholars, each from a different point of view, challenged the Zionist narrative of the War of Independence and the establishment of the state, emphasizing the catastrophe that had befallen the Arabs of Israel—the Nakba. Some of these studies were significant, and with time their findings were integrated into the new insights on the Israeli past. However, this historical debate was characterized by a tone of sanctimoniousness and rage: "We were misled, they sold us a tissue of lies. The establishment of the State of Israel was grounded in original sin committed against the Palestinians." These moralizing scholars stressed one segment of the reality and ignored others.

The appearance of the new historians coincided with the appearance of postmodernist thought that challenged the claim of historical writing to be a discipline seeking to get as close as possible to the truth. The translators of postmodernism into Israeli terms were the post-Zionists, who saw writing history as a "narrative," i.e., a narrative pattern that adapts itself to its consumers and to the present. Every nation, every social group has its own narrative. Therefore there is no Zionist "history" but rather a Zionist "narrative" that bases the righteousness of Zionism on the spirit of the old labor movement ethos, while ignoring the injustice that the fulfillment of Zionism imposed on the Arabs, the Mizrachim, Holocaust survivors, women, and so on and so forth.

Some post-Zionists wanted Israel to discard its "Zionist" character—in other

words, to stop giving preferential treatment to Jews, to be a democratic country like any other, and to stop discriminating against its Arab citizens, who feel like poor relations or second-class citizens in the "Jewish and democratic" state. They contended that the Zionist era had come to an end, and the time had arrived for Israel to become "a state of all its citizens." Hidden beneath this slogan was the demand that Israel turn away from Europe to the Middle East, sever its special relationship with world Jewry, and abrogate the Law of Return. On the symbolic level this meant changing the national anthem—whose words refer solely to Jews—the flag, and perhaps at a later stage, also the name of the state, since that clearly connects it to the Jewish people.

Other post-Zionists asserted that the whole idea of a Jewish nation-state—or any nation-state—is obsolete, given the supranational trends of the European Union and the trends toward globalization throughout the world. They contended that a Jewish nation-state contravenes Jewish history, since by their very nature the Jewish people are a diaspora people, and the Zionist enterprise perverts their character. Some even claimed that there was no such thing as the Jewish people; there was only a Jewish religion, and Jewish nationality was a modern invention of Zionism. Others highlighted the injustice Zionism caused the Mizrachi Jews, asserting that bringing them to Israel destroyed their Diaspora communities, undermined their patriarchal family structure and cultural tradition, and turned the Mizrachim in Israel into hewers of wood and drawers of water. There were even those who claimed that the Mizrachi Jews were Arabs of the Jewish faith who were uprooted from their own land by Zionism.

Feminists asserted that Zionism suppressed women's contribution to the national culture, prevented them from being heard, and even sentenced them to a hard fate in a foreign land. Still others claimed that the State of Israel did not do enough to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust and that, until the Eichmann trial in 1961, Israeli culture had not given the Holocaust its appropriate place in the national narrative. The parade of those deprived by Zionism became never-ending. Anyone who felt unfortunate, or victimized by the circumstances of life, swiftly presented his or her wretchedness as the result of discrimination originating in Zionism. "Zionism" became the universal punching bag for all the injustices against individuals and groups alike brought about by modernity, emigration, nationalism, or simply the changing times.

These challenges to Israeli nationality were laid down from the right by Jewish ultra-Orthodoxy, and from the left by universalism supported by liberalism and individualism. But these two extremes encompassed only a minority of the Israeli people. Most Israeli Jews took their Israeli nationality for granted and did not feel that it contradicted the secondary identities within it. A person could be Israeli and national-religious, a Shas voter, a liberal supporter of the Supreme Court, or

any other type of democrat. In public opinion surveys conducted between 1970 and 1990, the vast majority of respondents defined their principal needs as spending time with their family and feeling proud of having a state. Even though the majority said they were nonreligious, the traditional patterns of family life—celebrating the festivals together, Sabbath eve dinner, and rites of passage—continued to construct the Israeli family and create a conservative social pattern. While the importance people ascribed to the needs of the collective at the beginning of the period diminished at its end in favor of personal needs, these two elements—family and nationality—continued to occupy first place on Israelis' list of priorities.

During this period the average Israeli enjoyed three additional years of study and more than an hour of extra leisure time a day, indicating a rise in the standard of living. The lion's share of the extra leisure time was taken up by television, which as we have seen—for better or worse—became the great socialization agent. Israelis ranked hikes in the country as their favorite leisure activity, while young Israelis tended to go on long trips to the Far East or South America after completing their military service. Foreign travel became a sort of Israeli rite of passage, now that it was available. If Petra was the romantic ideal of intrepid youngsters in the 1950s, in the 1980s it was replaced by treks in South America.

Some veteran writers described the decline of the republican ethos with joy, others with something akin to Schadenfreude. Ya'akov Shabtai's 1977 novel *Past Continuous* is in essence a grotesque gravestone for the old dogmatic socialist culture, and the reader has difficulty telling whether the author regrets or is happy for its loss. Yehoshua Kenaz's books reflect the transition from nationalist-collectivist values, which often created unendurable pressure on the individual (*Infiltration*), to the postmodernist society in which anything goes, values decay, and a perplexed older generation watches an alien, meaningless reality (*Returning Lost Loves*). As the previous chapter showed, the books of Amoz Oz and Meir Shalev address the loss of the old ethos with painful resignation.

Other writers brought to life corners of Israeli reality, and even Jewish Diaspora reality, that had not previously been illuminated. David Grossman gave a different voice to the memory of the Holocaust and also to the new immigrants who rebuilt their homes in Israel (*See Under: Love, The Book of Intimate Grammar*). Aharon Appelfeld returned to the scenes of his childhood in World War Two Europe and depicted the inner world of a survivor who had never freed himself of that world. Haim Be'er portrayed a childhood in ultra-Orthodox Jerusalem (*Feathers*) and later the confrontation between the religious and secular worlds of 1950s Israel (*Et Hazamir* [A time for trimming]). Writers began to appear whose description of their Israeliness centered on the psychological and cultural worlds of women immigrants from the Islamic countries. Ronit Matalon and Dorit Rabin-

yan described the new Israeliness that does not grieve the passing of the old ethos, but anchors itself in the multiculturalism of the new Israel and gives it both expression and legitimacy.

THE INTIFADA

On December 8, 1987, a truck driver caused a fatal accident in the Gaza Strip. Four people were killed and many injured. The driver was an Israeli Jew and the victims were Palestinian. Within hours a rumor spread throughout the Strip that the driver was a relative of a young Israeli who had been killed by Palestinians a few days previously, and the "accident" was intentional revenge. The rumor had no basis in fact, but it caught like wildfire. Mass rioting on a previously unknown scale erupted in the Gaza Strip. The rioters did not flinch from confrontation with Israeli security forces and ignored a curfew order. The riots quickly consumed the Gaza Strip and within days the West Bank was also inflamed. Thus the Intifada (Ar., literally "shaking off") began.

As in previous instances of spontaneous mass outbursts, the Israeli authorities were taken completely by surprise. Even the PLO leadership in Tunisia was caught off guard. But in retrospect it appears that the Intifada was an eruption foreordained. As we have seen, the first years after the Six-Day War were those of Moshe Dayan's "enlightened occupation." The Palestinians, stunned by the defeat and occupation, were surprised by the Israelis' tolerant attitude toward them, which counteracted the fears fed by horrific anti-Israeli propaganda. The open bridges made possible continued economic activity in the West Bank, and even allowed people loyal to King Hussein to continue receiving Jordanian support. Israeli tourism in the occupied territories, as well as the employment of tens of thousands of Palestinians in "Little Israel" (the western side of the Green Line border), channeled money into the territories and raised the standard of living there.

But this prosperity came to an end. The global energy crisis in the early 1970s and the difficulties experienced by the Israeli economy between 1975 and 1985 led to an economic slowdown in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Employment in Israel decreased relative to the previous decade. The early 1980s saw a drop in world oil prices, and many Palestinians who made their livelihood in the Gulf states stopped sending money to their families. Emigration from the West Bank, which in the 1970s had limited demographic increase, dropped drastically because there was less demand for workers in the oil-producing countries. Thus a situation was created combining population growth (also as a result of the improved health care system) with reduced income and employment.

Israel did not invest in economic development in the territories and blocked attempts to develop local industry for fear of competition with Israeli-made

goods. Israel treated the territories as a closed economy that had to cover its spending with its income. Nor did it invest the taxes it collected for trading permits, work, income, and so on for the benefit of the territories' inhabitants. At the same time that the Israeli standard of living fell in the early 1980s, Jordan enjoyed economic growth, and the people of the territories compared their situation with the higher standard of living across the river. Starting in 1967 seven Arab universities were established in Judea and Samaria that became centers of ideological agitation fomented by the intellectual leadership against the leadership of the notables. A class of young, educated, middle-class people emerged who were unable to find work commensurate with their education and were forced into inferior employment in Israel—yet another cause of bitterness.

The encounter between the Palestinians from the territories and the Israelis engendered neither liking nor admiration. On the contrary, it heightened anger and hatred, which sought an outlet. At checkpoints, the bridges, and major crossroads, the Palestinians faced soldiers who humiliated them with security checks, which they found insulting, and with their manner of address, which included taunts and curses. Officials from the Israeli civil administration (which replaced military government) would send Palestinians back and forth to get licenses and permits for anything they needed to do. And on top of all this, the settlers behaved in a domineering way and exacted collective punishment every time individuals threw stones or Molotov cocktails. The army tried to stop the settlers' vigilante actions, but the settlers responded arrogantly, even publicly insulting senior officers and disregarding their orders.

The Palestinians watched and learned. Those who worked in Israel had hard, low-paid jobs in construction or dish washing in restaurants. The average employer's attitude toward them was a mixture of arrogance and disdain. There were of course employers who behaved differently, but such was the general picture painted by the testimonies of workers who later became Intifada activists. The Palestinians learned to speak Hebrew, but their acquaintance with the Israelis bred hostility, pent-up rage, and hatred.

The increasing nationalist tension resulting from constant friction with Israelis and the sense of insult and oppression, combined with the economic crisis, created what scholar Gad Gilbar termed "the double deprivation syndrome." Until the early 1980s Israeli policy makers took care to avoid a situation in which nationalist frustration was linked to economic hardship. Yet the Israeli governments of the 1980s did not take measures to prevent this explosive situation from developing. The hardships of a broad spectrum of the population in the Gaza Strip, where sources of livelihood were scant and dependence on work in Israel absolute, were the fuse that ignited the conflagration.

Anyone paying attention to the events on the ground could have predicted the

outcome. In the year before the outbreak of the Intifada, breaches of the peace rose by 100 percent compared with the previous year. Many acts of terrorism that year were perpetrated spontaneously by young people without backing from any organization—a reflection of the undercurrents of agitation. When the 1987 rioting broke out, the authorities estimated that it would abate within a few days. For the first ten days of the Intifada, Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin, who was on a visit to Washington and the American Jewish communities, did not return home, at first because he thought there was no urgent need and later because he feared his return would be construed as a victory for the demonstrators. It also took the PLO leadership ten days to realize that what was happening in the territories was a popular uprising that gained momentum by the day.

In those first days the army's response was hesitant. For one thing, its available forces in the territories were very small; until then the Israeli authorities had not needed shows of force in order to rule. For another, they were confronting a new and completely unfamiliar phenomenon: massed demonstrators who had overcome the psychological barrier of fear of the troops, were undeterred by soldiers firing into the air, risked physical injury in clashes, and destroyed installations, telephone lines, and any sign of Israeli rule. The army had no real experience of confrontations with a civilian population. At the beginning women and children were the soldiers of the Intifada, and the stone and Molotov cocktail were the main weapons. The IDF stocks held very few smoke and tear gas grenades, and large quantities had to be urgently ordered from the United States. The army's irresolute response fanned the flames of the demonstrators' passion and self-confidence.

The dominant force in the Gaza Strip, where the rioting broke out, was not the PLO but a new player—Hamas. Hamas was the Palestinian wing of the militant Muslim Brotherhood, which had originated in Egypt and aspired to establish a great Islamic state. Hamas asserted that the rule of all the infidels, Jews and Christians alike, was doomed to extinction. When the day came, rule over all of Palestine would be transferred to the Muslims, and the Jews would be expunged. The Hamas worldview saw no place for Israel in the Middle East, and its propaganda was replete with antisemitic messages. Nevertheless Hamas received support from Israel, which viewed it as an actor in the Palestinian arena that would weaken the PLO-led secular national movement, which to the Israeli policy makers appeared far more dangerous.

Hamas, led by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, avoided terrorist action and devoted its efforts to educating the Palestinian population in the spirit of Islam, to returning young Palestinians attracted by Israeli permissiveness to the religious fold, and to establishing charitable and welfare institutions to provide education and health services. Hamas emphasized integrity and avoiding corruption—a model

the PLO certainly did not follow—as well as avoiding drugs and alcohol. It succeeded in establishing a range of welfare institutions in the Gaza Strip (and to a lesser extent in the West Bank) on which its clients came to be dependent. The Islamic message of an ascetic, egalitarian state that promised redemption found receptive ears in the refugee camps and the poor neighborhoods on the outskirts of the cities, whose inhabitants' lives held no glimmer of hope. Even before the outbreak of the Intifada, Hamas had proved its power in the Strip with a takeover of the Islamic Al-Azhar University, Gaza's institution of higher education. A struggle for the university between Hamas and the PLO ended in a Hamas victory, and although the new administration was not recognized by Israel, the university continued to expand.

Thus Hamas had the benefit not only of mass support from the poorer sections of the population, but also of a cadre of Islamic intelligentsia that served it well in its battle for Palestinian public opinion. Hamas took over the Gaza Strip's *waqf*, which provided the organization with both financial leverage and an instrument of social influence. When the riots broke out, the flags raised in the Gaza Strip were not those of the PLO but the green flags of Islam. The activists in the field convinced Sheikh Yassin that Hamas policy must be changed. The jihad (holy war) to exterminate Israel should not be postponed until after the Islamic nation was fully indoctrinated, as Hamas policy before the Intifada dictated; instead immediate action should be taken. In the Intifada Hamas proved that its terrorist and fighting abilities were on a par with the PLO's, while it used a mixture of nationalist and Islamic slogans. Hamas became a serious rival to the PLO for leadership of the Palestinian national movement.

The Intifada leadership (Unified National Leadership of the Uprising—UNLU) established in the West Bank consisted of unknown young people who took command after the traditional leadership had either been arrested or ceased to act. They were educated people who had grown up under Israeli occupation and were acquainted with the limitations of Israeli military and civil capabilities. These young people attempted to promote civil disobedience through refusing to pay taxes or to accept Israeli civil administration permits or services. But such action proved too difficult for the Palestinian public, and the initiative failed. The rise of this local leadership threatened the status of the PLO leadership in Tunisia. The PLO swiftly took the young people under its authority to protect its position as the exclusive leader of the Palestinian movement. The young people needed both its legitimacy and the funds it provided, and they accepted Arafat's authority as the symbol of Palestinian nationalism.

The Intifada was also a social struggle waged by the proletariat, the inhabitants of the refugee camps and the tin shack neighborhoods, against the emerging Palestinian middle class. The proletariat imposed commercial strikes on the

merchant class and prohibited marketing goods to Israel or purchasing goods from it. The Palestinians stopped working in Israel. This increased economic hardship but assured the Intifada plenty of demonstrators.

In the Intifada's first months the Palestinians avoided using firearms against IDF troops. Although there were numerous attempts to snatch weapons from soldiers, it was only at a later stage that the Palestinians began shooting. As we have seen, the Intifada was mainly a battle fought with stones and Molotov cocktails. This had a strong effect on world public opinion, which saw stone-throwing youths facing well-armed soldiers. The international media depicted Israel as Goliath assailing the Palestinian David. In its first eighteen months the Intifada restored the Palestinians to the Western world's awareness. They were carried on waves of sympathy, and the coverage did damage to Israel's international image.

In the later stage of the Intifada, the conflicts within Palestinian society emerged and the united front deteriorated. Violence perpetrated within Palestinian society against collaborators with Israel—which was also an opportunity for settling personal scores—impaired national unity, just as it had during the Arab Revolt in the Mandatory period. Acts of terrorism began, injuring the movement's international standing. The fact that Arafat did not condemn these acts, even though he had undertaken to stop them as a condition for the dialogue he conducted with the United States starting in 1988, led to the end of that dialogue. The biggest Palestinian mistake of all was to support Saddam Hussein when he invaded Kuwait. What is more, the Palestinian community in Kuwait also supported Saddam and collaborated with him. As a result, some 350,000 Palestinians were expelled from the Gulf states, leaving only 20,000 there. This catastrophe erased the achievements of the Intifada in world public opinion (discussed later).

Israeli right-wing circles, including some Likud ministers, assumed that the popular uprising could be subdued by force—and if moderate amounts of force did not work, greater force was called for. But the IDF high command was aware that both Israeli public opinion and Israeli law imposed restrictions on the army's actions. The IDF could not open fire on a demonstration by women and children; that was immoral and illegal and would contravene everything the army stood for. For the first time in its history, the IDF found itself accused by the political leadership of not carrying out the mission it had been ordered to execute. What was more, for the settlers the army's cautious approach reflected the political views of the IDF's senior officers, who were affiliated with the Alignment. Chief of the General Staff Dan Shomron said it was impossible to subdue the rioting without brutal action against civilians—which the IDF would not engage in—and that the solution must be a political one. The settlers construed this as a call for a political arrangement that would require territorial compromise, or some other arrangement in the territories that they would find unaccept-

able. The settlers, whose travel on the roads of Judea and Samaria made them easy targets for the terrorists, demanded that the army provide them with total security, something the IDF had never promised the citizens of Israel.

The army deployed thousands of troops in the territories. The occupation was no longer inexpensive, as it had been while the forces there were limited. Now, instead of training for the next war, the entire army scurried from house to house in the Arab towns and villages trying to catch stone-throwing children. The orders against the use of firearms required a different tactic, and the army began to use batons. Minister of Defense Rabin was supposed to have said, "Break their bones." It is doubtful that Rabin actually uttered these words, but that was how the troops—frustrated by incessant chasing after Molotov cocktail, stone-throwing Palestinians—understood the use of batons. The television images were difficult to watch. American Jews who saw them were shocked by the sight of soldiers brutalizing Palestinians and began raising doubts about Israel's conduct. Shomron demanded that the IDF stop these brutal acts. In the end Israel would have to live together with the Palestinians and must take care to avoid hatred. For the same reason he did his best to avoid collective punishment. But increasing violence called for a more stringent response. The harshest punishments were demolition of homes and expulsion of Palestinian activists from the country.

The IDF was caught between a rock and a hard place. The settlers and their sympathizers accused it of failing to quell the Intifada; these accusations opened the door to formation of private militias in the territories. Organizations on the radical left such as Yesh Gvul, which called on soldiers to refuse to serve in the territories, accused the IDF of losing its human and ethical bearings. These attitudes toward the IDF reflected the schism that had developed in Israeli society over the occupation and the territories.

The Intifada was not restricted to the territories outside the Green Line. Proudly and anxiously the Arabs of Israel watched the uprising of their brethren in the occupied territories and its suppression by Israel. In December 1987 the Committee of Arab Mayors in Israel, a sort of umbrella organization of Israeli Arabs, organized "Peace Day," during which a general strike in the Arab sector showed its solidarity with the Palestinians over the border. Israeli Arabs also printed posters that the Intifada leadership in the West Bank could not print lest the printing press be discovered by the GSS. When Israel confiscated the bank accounts of associations in the territories that transferred PLO funds, Israeli Arabs transferred money to the Intifada leadership through their own accounts in Israeli banks. In densely Arab-populated areas, such as the Galilee or the Little Triangle, stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at cars. PLO flags were flown openly in the villages. A Nazareth police station was attacked in full daylight. On several occasions the intercity highway that passed through the Arab-populated

area of Wadi 'Ara was blocked by local residents. These violent incidents and demonstrations occurred in the first three months of the Intifada. The leaders of the Arab community in Israel then condemned the violence and acted quickly to restore calm.

The Israeli Arabs' defiance was a protest encompassing two issues: the ongoing occupation and lack of recognition of Palestinian identity, and discrimination against them. This discrimination took the form of low budgetary allocations to the Arab local councils, compared with those given Jewish councils, the low standard of education, and the lack of educational and recreational facilities. The exclusion of Arabs from Israeli government jobs and the lack of channels for their voices to be heard regarding national issues heightened their sense of alienation from the state. Nationalist feelings strengthened as the population of Israeli Palestinians increased. At the end of 1987 they numbered 750,000 (including 130,000 in East Jerusalem), approximately 17 percent of the population. Demographic growth increased their self-confidence, and contact with the West Bank Palestinians sharpened their sense of identity and national pride. However, for Israeli Palestinians it was enough to express solidarity with their brethren. They did not accept the aspiration of the Sons of the Village, a radical, extraparliamentary movement, to bring the Intifada into Israeli territory.

However, the geographic concentration of the Israeli Arabs in two areas where they constituted the majority and had their own national leadership, coupled with the antagonistic behavior of some toward the Jewish majority, created suspicion among that majority that they intended to demand that their areas be annexed to a Palestinian entity in the West Bank.

Before the outbreak of the Intifada, the right felt that the status quo could be maintained; settlement building could continue without granting representation to the Palestinians. At the same time, the left believed that the solution was to return the territories to King Hussein, with territorial adjustments based on security needs, while keeping Jerusalem for Israel. For a time both sides saw no problem in maintaining the status quo. But the Intifada proved that there was no longer such a thing as an inexpensive occupation and that the status quo could not be maintained, since the Palestinians would no longer accept repression and the loss of their land, water, and self-respect. Repression was too expensive, costing Israel not only money and loss of life, but also serious damage to its international standing.

The radicalization of young people in the West Bank during the Intifada, plus the Islamization of the Palestinian proletariat, alarmed King Hussein, who saw a prospect of uprising crossing the River Jordan into his own kingdom. In 1987 he had signed the London Agreement with Foreign Minister Peres, which proposed an international conference aimed at opening the way to "the Jordanian option,"

an agreement between Israel and Jordan on the fate of the Palestinians. But Prime Minister Shamir, adhering to the principle of Greater Israel, rejected this agreement. About a year later King Hussein announced a disengagement from the western bank of the River Jordan. On July 31, 1988, he relinquished the West Bank, abrogating its connection to the Hashemite Kingdom, thus pulling the rug out from under the Alignment and its proposals for territorial compromise with Jordan.

With Hussein's disengagement, and Israel's refusal to recognize the Palestinians as partners to a discussion on their future, Israel was now left face to face with them, lacking the Jordanians as another partner with which to negotiate. Three months later, in November 1988, Arafat declared Palestinian independence, and King Hussein recognized the virtual Palestinian state. The PLO announced that it accepted UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which recognized the Palestinians' right to self-determination and their right to a state side by side with Israel, as the basis for its participation in an international conference to resolve the conflict in the Middle East. The PLO's acceptance of the UN resolutions and its announcement that it would renounce terror opened the door to a dialogue between it and the United States. This indirect PLO recognition of Israel's right to exist side by side with a Palestinian state was an expression of the "stages theory" developed by the PLO: at this point, for pragmatic reasons, it was able to accept Israel's existence without abandoning the distant vision of Greater Palestine. This maximalist outlook led many Israelis to view the PLO with suspicion. For their part Palestinians suspected that the stages theory would eventually lead to acceptance of what to them was only a partial achievement—a state in part of Palestine and abandonment of the ultimate objective. In this respect there was a certain similarity between Israeli and Palestinian thinking. Both sides wanted the whole country. Given the reality, both were prepared to accept less, but without relinquishing their great vision.

After the mid-1980s the demographic problem became more acute due to the drastic reduction in Palestinian immigration to the Gulf states. The need to safeguard the character of Israel as a Jewish state over the long term clashed with the Greater Israel vision. Some right-wing circles began proposing the "transfer" idea—deportation of Arabs—but this idea was entirely unacceptable to the great majority and lacked mainstream support. Israel therefore faced two choices: grant Israeli citizenship to all Palestinian Arabs, which within twenty years would make the Jews a minority in their homeland, or return to the partition solution and establishment of two states in the historical Land of Israel. The late 1980s and early 1990s were years of reformulating Israel's political priorities.

NOTES

1. Aviezer Ravitzky (ed.), *Shas: hebetim tarbutiim vera'ayoniim* (Shas: Cultural and Ideological Perspectives), Am Oved and the Yitzhak Rabin Center, Tel Aviv, 2006, p. 9.

2. Amnon Rubinstein, "Hamishpatizatzia shel Yisrael" (The Judicialization of Israel), *Ha'aretz*, 5.6.1987, cited in Menachem Mautner, "Shnot hashmonim—shnot haharada" (The 1980s—The Anxiety Years), *Iyunei mishpat* (Legal Studies) 2, 2 (November 2002), p. 653.

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19 THE DECADE OF HOPE, 1990–2000

The fascinating events of history do not divide equally into decades. Some decades are unexciting, with very few noteworthy occurrences, while in others unexpected events come fast and furious, one on the heels of another. They change reality and establish a new world scene that could not have been predicted a few years earlier. The 1990s was such a decade.

The first reality-shaping event was the collapse of the USSR. In 1989 Russian head of state Mikhail Gorbachev's new policy ending confrontation between East and West changed the paradigm of international relations. This sudden reversal on the threshold of the 1990s marked the end of the post–World War Two era, in which Europe was divided between the two blocs and the Cold War shaped the international system. The USSR's hostility toward Israel and its firm alliance with the radical Arab states, demonstrated by arms supply and constant support in the UN, was over the years a permanent feature of international relations in the Middle East. Egypt had been outside the Soviet sphere of influence since 1972. But Syria, the terror organizations, and Iraq enjoyed almost unqualified support both from the Soviets and from the Communist bloc Eastern European countries loyal to Moscow's political line.

The USSR's meltdown created a new political reality in the Middle East. The patron of the anti-West "confrontation states" renounced confrontation and displayed openness to a new alignment of forces. This meant no more unlimited arms supply and no more political support for countries hostile to the West. One of Gorbachev's first acts, in 1989, was to change Russia's emigration policy. Russian Jews could now leave the country. In the early 1990s some 800,000 immigrants reached Israel. For Israel this mass aliya was a source of great optimism, hope for social and political renewal, and economic growth. But it dealt a harsh blow to the confrontation states and the terror organizations and their hopes of wearing Israel down.

In August 1990 President Saddam Hussein of Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait, a country that controlled major oil resources and was of immense strategic value to the West. The invasion of this small Persian Gulf country boded ill for the other oil emirates in the Gulf, and even for Saudi Arabia. The industrialized world's dependence on Middle Eastern oil required that it respond to Saddam Hussein's arbitrary act, which threatened not only oil supplies to the industrialized West but also the entire Middle Eastern political order. US president George H. W. Bush exploited the fortuitous political constellation created by the

absence of East-West confrontation to form a war coalition to liberate Kuwait. The Arab states were invited to join. There had been hostility between Egypt and Syria since the signing of the Camp David Accords, which Syria viewed as a betrayal of the Arab front against Israel. Now the Syrians found themselves in the same camp that the Egyptians had once occupied. The disintegration of the USSR placed Syria in a position in which it needed American support. Its participation in the coalition against Saddam Hussein signaled its interest in moving closer to the only remaining superpower, as well as its fears of Iraq becoming too powerful and threatening Syria's eastern border.

By contrast, the Palestinians stood by the PLO-supported Saddam Hussein, whom they saw as the strongman challenging the West and the existing political order. Not only did the PLO openly support Iraq; so did the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians, as well as Palestinians who worked in the Gulf states and had lived there for many years. In fact, as we saw, the Palestinians in Kuwait collaborated with the Iraqi invader, resulting in the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from the Gulf states after Kuwait was liberated. King Hussein of Jordan, who found himself between the Iraqi Scylla and the Palestinian Charybdis, expressed tentative support for Saddam Hussein and did not support the Western coalition.

Saddam Hussein announced that should the Americans take action against him, he would retaliate by launching missiles at Israel. In turn Israel readied itself for the possibility that the Iraqi missiles would carry chemical warheads, for the Iraqis had used poison gas in the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s. Thus "the sealed room" entered the Israeli lexicon. The population was instructed to completely seal a room in the house, equip it with water, a radio, and a telephone, and on hearing the air raid siren shut themselves inside and put on their gas masks. This was a complete change in the rules of behavior from previous wars, when the ground-floor shelter or the basement was the preferred option. The sealed room, or what is now known as the *mamad* (an acronym for "protected home space"), was designed to meet the need to take shelter quickly from missiles. In January 1991 the coalition countries launched their attack on Iraq, and missiles began falling on Israel. Close to forty hit, but they were conventional missiles; the feared chemical warheads did not appear. Fortunately the missiles were not accurate, and quite miraculously there were very few casualties, although there was extensive damage to buildings.

The government of Israel, headed by Yitzhak Shamir, was in a dilemma. The Israeli ethos required that an attack on Israeli citizens must receive an Israeli military response. However, the United States warned Israel not to interfere, since the fragile coalition was likely to fall apart if the Israelis became involved. There was also the question of what form of response Israel could make. With all

the might of the United States deployed against Iraq, an Israeli air strike would likely not make much of an impression, and the risks were very great. To persuade Israel not to retaliate, the Americans supplied it with Patriot surface-to-air missiles to intercept the Iraqi Scuds. It is doubtful that this weapons system provided an effective response to the Scuds, which stopped hitting Israeli cities once coalition forces occupied their launch sites. But this display of American support was highly significant for public morale. Nevertheless some ministers and the army's senior officers found it hard to accept being passive, which seemed like a return to pre-Zionism and prestate Diaspora behavior patterns. The left-leaning literary critic Dan Miron published an article titled "And if There Is an IDF—Let It Appear Immediately" (a paraphrase of one of Bialik's poems of rage) protesting acceptance of the Iraqi attack without Israeli retaliation.[1] But this was Yitzhak Shamir's finest hour. This veteran Lehi fighter and former Mossad operative remained unmoved by calls for Israeli action, and decided that under the circumstances the government should adhere to the principle of restraint.

The Gulf War exposed the Israeli home front's wartime vulnerability. The citizens of Israel had not endured aerial attack since the 1948 war. Now, with the advent of modern weaponry, the home front was exposed. Some Israelis reacted to the missile attacks by leaving greater Tel Aviv for distant Eilat or even Jerusalem, which was thought to be immune from Saddam's missile attacks. Hotels in the areas out of missile range enjoyed full occupancy. But most people were either unable to leave or did not want to, and continued their daily routine as best they could.

The fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, ushered in a new era in European history. The Eastern and Central European countries freed themselves from the yoke of their communist regimes and embarked on the road to a free market and an open society. As part of their new orientation, they also formed cordial relations with Israel, especially the countries that swiftly adopted democracy, such as the Czech Republic and Poland. The United States became the world's only superpower. Its impressive victory over Saddam Hussein and liberation of Kuwait boosted its standing in the Arab world. The countries that had not supported it were now at a disadvantage. Having backed the wrong side in the Gulf War, the PLO was more vulnerable than ever. The Israelis never forgave the Palestinians for dancing on their rooftops as Saddam's missiles hurtled above on their way to Tel Aviv. But the general international atmosphere was one of conciliation and goodwill. Amid this unique situation the United States initiated the Madrid Conference. "If there was to be an American moment in the Middle East, this was surely it," said Aaron David Miller, a member of the US State Department negotiating team for peace in the Middle East.[2]

The idea was to hold an international conference under the joint auspices of the United States and Russia, attended by the Arab states, Israel, the UN, and the European Community. The goal was to develop measures to move toward negotiations on Middle East issues. Traditionally Israel was suspicious of such international conferences, which it saw as a means of exerting pressure on it, and demanded instead bilateral negotiations with the Arab states. To overcome this reluctance, it was decided in advance that the Madrid Conference would be solely a ceremonial prelude leading to direct negotiations between Israel and the Arabs. Israel opposed the participation of an official Palestinian delegation, and even more participation by the PLO, which the Israelis had defined as a terrorist organization; Israeli law at the time prohibited holding talks with it. After pressure was exerted on both Jews and Arabs by US secretary of state James Baker, a compromise was reached: there would be no separate Palestinian delegation, but Palestinians from the West Bank would be part of the Jordanian delegation. It was clear to all the parties that the PLO leadership in Tunisia would be pulling the delegation's strings. The result was that unofficially, under the guise created by the Jordanian delegation, Palestinians and Israelis sat around a negotiating table together for the first time.

King Hussein, who wanted reconciliation with the United States after his questionable behavior during the Gulf War, was eager to join the conference. He had maintained contact with Israeli politicians for years, and thus saw no reason to boycott negotiations with Israel. The hard nut to crack was Syria, which under Hafez al-Assad was the most intransigent country, unwilling to recognize Israel, sign agreements with it (the Syrians even evaded signing the 1974 interim agreement), or shake the hand of an Israeli statesman. Kissinger had commented in the past that it was impossible to make war in the Middle East without Egypt, and impossible to make peace without Syria. Thus Syria's appearance at the conference was of particular importance. Its participation in the Gulf War on America's side heralded a real change in its policy. Syria needed both Saudi money, which it received after the war, and American political support.

Mollifying both Syria and Israel required diplomacy and verbal acrobatics. The basis for the Madrid negotiations was UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The Syrians interpreted Resolution 242 to mean that Israel's complete withdrawal from territories it had occupied must precede any negotiations. Israeli prime minister and Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir held fast to the "not one inch" policy, and with respect to peace, he demanded "peace in exchange for peace." He therefore vehemently opposed the principle of "territory in exchange for peace" that formed the basis of Resolution 242. These words were omitted from his invitation to the Madrid Conference, but appeared in the one sent to the Arab states. It is therefore hard to say that the solemn gathering in Madrid bore a

message of peace on its wings. Nevertheless the very fact that Israelis, Syrians, and Palestinians attended was certainly revolutionary. Dennis Ross, the White House Middle East peace envoy, wrote: "Prior to the Madrid peace conference, the question was: Could negotiations ever take place? Afterward, it was: Could the negotiations ever produce peace?"[3]

Elections were held in Israel in June 1992. The electorate was tired of the right's government. Corruption scandals overshadowed its last years, as summarized by the left's election slogan, "Corrupt Politicians—Out!" Beyond this, the spirit of the time, as noted, was one of conciliation and consultation. Catholics and Protestants held talks in Northern Ireland; in South Africa the white minority relinquished its control of the government and opened the door to democracy. The effect of the zeitgeist was reinforced by perceptions of the national interest. Because of the Shamir government's stubborn opposition to negotiations with the Arab states and the Palestinians, and its refusal to stop building settlements—or even to report on this building to the Americans as it had promised to do—the Bush administration decided to delay granting guarantees in the sum of $10 billion that Israel needed to secure loans to absorb the mass immigration from the former Soviet Union. Shamir enlisted the help of the Jewish lobby in the US Congress, but in vain. Congress accepted the administration's policy, and Israel could not change the White House stance.

It is impossible to estimate how much the US loan guarantee issue affected Israeli voters, but it probably did have some effect. Worsening relations with the United States, the continuing Intifada, the Gulf War, and the "sealed room" all made Israelis long for a different policy. Yitzhak Rabin, the Labor Party's candidate for prime minister, promised in his campaign that—in contrast with the government's political stagnation—he would reach an agreement on autonomy with the Palestinians within six to nine months. Although unrealistic, this promise marked a change in Israel's political line. It was a commitment to a policy that would strive to reach a political arrangement with the Palestinians. However, Rabin announced when campaigning in the Golan Heights that he was not contemplating withdrawal from that area. This commitment would return to haunt him.

The Labor Party led by Rabin won forty-four seats and the Likud thirty-two. Meretz (a far left-wing Zionist party) won twelve seats, and Shas won six. With the help of the Arab lists, which won a total of five seats, the left had a majority bloc in the Knesset. A coalition was formed comprising Labor, Meretz, and Shas, with the support of the Arab factions. This coalition was shaky from the outset, and as the Rabin government made far-reaching decisions on the peace process, its flimsy majority in the Knesset evaporated. Despite the Rabin government's relatively weak political base, it was one of the most important governments since the establishment of the state. Rabin was returning to the premiership

fifteen years after his first term, at which time he had been a relatively young, politically inexperienced prime minister. Now he was back at the top after a prolonged tenure as minister of defense, a post in which he gained both experience and prestige. To the Israeli public he was "Mr. Security," the man who knew how to protect Israeli interests and could be trusted to make the right decisions on security. Public trust in Rabin's personality, his integrity, his undiplomatic propensity to speak the truth, and even his appealing shyness was a political asset of the first order that served him well in the difficult times ahead. Rabin in his second term was self-confident and committed to making a change. "I shall navigate," he asserted in his victory speech, projecting to the public the feeling that this time he really did intend to lead.

THE PEACE PROCESS

Rabin set as his objectives changing Israel's national agenda and kick-starting the peace process. Although not convinced that peace was within reach, he was prepared to examine the possibilities. In his first meeting with the newly elected American president, Bill Clinton, the two men found a common language and instinctive mutual trust. Rabin told the president of his intentions, and Clinton promised to help him reduce the inherent risks. Two avenues of action were open to Rabin: negotiations with President Assad of Syria or negotiations with the Palestinians. A peace treaty with Syria held solid strategic advantages: if Syria were outside the circle of hostility, the rejectionist front would collapse, the terror organizations in Damascus would have to find a new patron, the possibility of a Syrian-Iraqi alliance would fade, and the road to an agreement, even a peace treaty with Lebanon, would open.

Such a move would considerably strengthen American policy in the region against Iraq and Iran, the West's two enemies, and favor Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. But Israel would have to pay a high price: withdrawal from the Golan Heights, evacuation of settlements, and the need to convince the Israeli public that this measure did not pose unreasonable risks to Israel's security. The Golan Heights border had been quiet since 1974, and given the price of peace with Syria, most Israelis preferred continuing the "no peace, no war" situation, even though it meant continued clashes with Hezbollah in Lebanon. On the other hand, reaching an agreement with the Palestinians would address the painful core of the Israeli-Arab conflict—its initial cause—and would likely change the relations between Israel and the Arab world. International criticism of Israel focused on its relations with the Palestinians. Rectifying these relations would bring about a dramatic change in Israel's international standing. An agreement with the Palestinians would require mutual recognitions. Israel would recognize the Palestinians' national rights and the PLO as their representative, and the

Palestinians would recognize the State of Israel as a fact of life. Both sides would commit themselves to peaceful relations. The Palestinians would have to renounce violence and terror and amend the Palestinian Covenant to align with an era of peace. The question was whether such an agreement was achievable and what its price would be.

Rabin stipulated several preconditions to such an agreement. To begin with, it must be implemented gradually, along the lines of the Camp David Accords. The initial agreement would not touch upon the issues of Jerusalem and the settlements. Responsibility for security would remain in Israel's hands. The issue at hand was Palestinian autonomy, and in the meantime the sovereignty issue would remain ambiguous. All the knotty problems would be left for discussion in the framework of the permanent status agreement; negotiations on that agreement would begin three years after the first agreement was signed and be concluded within two years. The breakthrough in the first agreement would come with mutual Israeli and Palestinian recognition and Israel's willingness to recognize Arafat and the PLO as partners in governing Judea and Samaria. This agreement would put an end to the Intifada, reduce the level of hostility between Israel and the Palestinians, and enable Israel to gradually disengage from the Palestinians. Relations between the two nations in such a small country required partition and establishing two separate entities that would eventually become two states. The Israelis feared that without separation a binational state would be established, which would spell the end of the Jewish state. The Palestinians saw a state of their own both as the focal point of national identity and as compensation for loss of the Palestinian entity after the 1948 war.

Rabin deliberated between the Syrian and Palestinian options, assuming that he would be unable to push through two such far-reaching agreements in his present term of office. The Americans were also divided on priorities. President Clinton, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and Dennis Ross, along with Martin Indyk and other members of the peace negotiations team thought the Syrian option had more plausibility and more chance of success. Aaron David Miller and Daniel Kurtzer, also on the team, preferred the Palestinian option. Rabin thought there was a better chance of rapidly reaching an agreement with the Syrians and therefore prioritized this option. In 1993 he entrusted Warren Christopher with a "pledge" of hypothetical agreement to a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for a peace and security "package" from Assad: security arrangements on the Golan Heights, including an Israeli early warning station, demilitarization of the area, redeployment of the Syrian army to the outskirts of Damascus, and a deal on water. He also made several other demands. The agreement between Israel and Syria must be bilateral and not conditional on other agreements between Israel and the Arabs, and the

peace should be real peace, including normalization of relations, exchange of ambassadors, and open borders. Finally the withdrawal had to be implemented in three stages over five years, with normalization commencing after completion of the first stage. Evacuation of the settlements would take place in the final stage.

To a great extent Rabin tailored his demands to the terms of the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt. But Assad was not Sadat; he did not have Sadat's willingness to take dramatic steps, demonstrate magnanimity, and make grand gestures, and he vehemently opposed the Camp David Accords. Meanwhile more than ten years had elapsed since they were signed. According to Assad's American interlocutors, he found it difficult to accept that his achievements in an agreement with Israel, coming more than a decade later, would not outdo Sadat's. During the negotiations in Washington he therefore haggled over every point. He refused to take even one small step toward Sadat's brand of open diplomacy in order to convince the Israeli public that his intentions were serious and that withdrawal from the Golan Heights would not endanger Israel's security. He was not satisfied with an Israeli withdrawal to the international border, as had been agreed with Egypt, but demanded "the June 4, 1967, borders." In the early 1950s the Syrians had taken the El-Hamma area, which according to the 1949 armistice agreement was Israeli territory, and also the northeastern corner of the Sea of Galilee, even though the agreement made the entire Sea of Galilee and a ten-meter strip of its eastern shore Israeli territory. Assad demanded an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, claiming that it had been occupied by force of arms. But he would not apply the same logic to the Israeli territory conquered by Syria before June 4, 1967.

Assad assumed that his willingness to accept Israel's existence and renounce war against it was a large enough concession to the Israelis and it was his right to receive the Golan Heights in return. But the Israelis would not concede this strategic asset without guarantees of the Syrians' peaceful intentions. Despite the intransigent negotiating style of Assad and his representatives, the American negotiators were optimistic; they interpreted Assad's responses as hard bargaining positions that were nevertheless accompanied by willingness to ultimately reach a peace agreement. Rabin, however, thought that Assad's negotiating style was leading to an impasse, and in any event did not herald a breakthrough in the near future. Assad and his representatives would not accept direct negotiations with Israel, but instead demanded an American presence and mediation. This left room for an assumption that what the Syrians actually wanted was American support, and they had entered the negotiations for this reason, with no intention of concluding them with a peace agreement.

Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres had divided up the negotiating responsibili-

ties. Peres was in charge of the multilateral negotiations that were a continuation of the Madrid Conference, and Rabin led the Syrian negotiations. The negotiations with the Palestinians in Washington, which lay at the heart of the multilateral negotiations, led nowhere. At the same time, a pair of Israeli academics was holding informal but top-secret talks with PLO representatives in Oslo. These talks were more positive. They were informal and nonbinding, but it was clear that both sides were reporting back to leading figures in their respective political systems and receiving their approval for proposals on the negotiating table. Peres updated Rabin on the progress of these talks and was given his blessing to continue the contacts, held under the auspices of the Norwegian government. Once these negotiations made some progress, Uri Savir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, was dispatched to conduct the talks. His presence marked a shift from unofficial to official talks.

As at the Camp David talks, in Oslo, too, the guiding principle was gradual development. The negotiators' basic premise was that at this stage a final status agreement was unachievable. Thus the first stage should set a time after which final status negotiations would begin. In the meantime the trust so vital to such an agreement must be established through mutual recognition, developing cooperation on security, and establishing an autonomous Palestinian governance institution, the Palestinian Authority (PA), which would gradually be given control. Following a "declaration of principles," whose effect would be enhanced by the public drama attending this mutual recognition and commitment to peaceful, neighborly relations, an "implementation agreement" would give Arafat the position of head of the PA, and he would be granted governance of Gaza and Jericho as a token of Israel's intention to transfer rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinians led by the PLO.

In August 1993 the Israeli and Palestinian delegations in Oslo reached agreement and updated the Americans. For the second time in the history of the peace process between Israel and the Arabs, the parties had reached agreement without American involvement, the first occasion being the negotiations that led to Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. Rabin agreed to talk with the PLO once he realized there was no other authoritative Palestinian partner with whom an agreement could be reached. He would have preferred Jordan or a delegation of West Bank and Gaza Arabs, but Jordan had completely disengaged from the West Bank, and the local notables followed Arafat's orders. Arafat was prepared to reach an agreement since he had no other option. He no longer had USSR support, the Gulf War had cut him off from Saudi Arabian and Gulf state subsidies, and Syria had signaled its intention of reaching a peace agreement with Israel. At that moment it seemed Arafat might miss the boat if he did not reach an agreement with Israel before Syria did. Thus a window of opportunity opened and led to the Oslo Accords.

The excitement that ensued over the news of the Oslo Accords was reminiscent of the drama of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. Yesterday contact with the PLO had been prohibited; today it was a partner to mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestinians. This new about-turn was an event of tremendous magnitude, and once again was heard the beating of the wings of history. In September 1993, on the White House lawn before an audience of hundreds and world media, Rabin and Arafat signed the Declaration of Principles, which included mutual recognition and opened the way to the establishment of an autonomous Palestinian Authority. A radiant President Clinton, wearing a tie with a trumpet design that called to mind the trumpets that brought down the walls of Jericho, guided the two historical adversaries into a handshake staged to symbolize the transition from hostility to cooperation. Even Rabin's slight hesitation before shaking the terrorist Arafat's hand—conspicuous in all the television broadcasts—was received as an authentic expression of this revolution in relations.

The whole world was euphoric at this scene heralding a new era in the Middle East. But even amid those unforgettable moments, some details cast a pall over the festive spirit. Behind the scenes Arafat had exerted last-minute pressure to amend clauses of the accords in his favor, driving Rabin to distraction. Moreover, Arafat appeared at the ceremony in his khaki uniform, his trademark keffiyeh, and a three-day beard. Although it seemed he was simply maintaining his customary attire and appearance, he was broadcasting a specific image to the Palestinians: even though he was signing an agreement with the Israelis and shaking Rabin's hand, he was not discarding the combat fatigues that had made him the symbol of the armed struggle. It was a portentous omen.

In May 1994 the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area (Cairo agreement) was signed in Cairo, in the presence of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. It gave Arafat the Gaza Strip and Jericho, enabling him to make a triumphal entry into Gaza. But at the last minute, in front of the international media, Arafat tried to avoid signing the border map of the enclaves to be transferred to his rule, and only Mubarak was able to prevail upon him to do so. On September 23, 1995, the third interim agreement was signed, detailing future Israeli withdrawals, security cooperation between the parties, an agreement on the construction of a Palestinian airport and seaport in Gaza, and an agreement on economic cooperation between Israel and the PA. This signing climaxed the series of agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. Despite their mutual suspicion, Rabin and Arafat reached a degree of mutual trust and cooperation on security as well as economic and cultural cooperation.

The Oslo planners prided themselves on the principle of gradual development, which was supposed to give both sides time to adapt to the dramatic changes, examine each other's functioning, and bring along their respective publics. In

MAP 12. THE OSLO ACCORDS MAP, 1993. (SEE PLATE 12.)

retrospect, however, this principle was the accords' undoing. Each side saw different things in the interim stages. The Palestinians were interested in how quickly they could establish the Palestinian state and the particular area it would occupy. The Israelis wanted to see how the Palestinians functioned as state builders. Meanwhile not one of the knottier problems—Jerusalem, refugees, borders—was addressed. None of the agreements mentioned the settlements. Although Rabin opposed settlement in densely populated Palestinian areas, massive settlement construction continued, especially in the neighborhoods around Jerusalem. For his part Arafat made no effort to prevent terrorism. It was a combustible situation. In February 1994 a religious Jewish doctor who had settled in Hebron opened fire on Arab worshippers in the Cave of Machpelah (Cave of the Patriarchs). He killed and wounded scores before he himself was killed. It was an act of provocation aimed at derailing the Oslo Accords, and given the delicate situation surrounding the accords, this act of Jewish terrorism was indeed a serious blow to the peace process. Proposals were made in the Israeli cabinet to evacuate the Hebron settlers. But in the end Rabin did not take this measure, in order to prevent a worsening of the hostility on the right.

The rejectionist organizations headed by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad vehemently opposed the PLO policy of conciliation with Israel. They were determined to undermine the accords through terrorism. April 1994 saw the start of a series of suicide bombings that hit Jews all over the country. This Islamic terrorism undermined the Israelis' belief in the Oslo Accords and in Rabin's peace policy. Israeli public opinion, which had supported Rabin, began to veer to the right. Arafat, unwilling to confront his adversaries in the Palestinian opposition, refused to condemn the terrorist outrages. The Israelis and Americans tried in vain to convince him that terrorism was harming the Palestinians and disrupting their chance of establishing a state of their own. He refused to embark on a struggle that would cause a rupture in Palestinian society over the Oslo Accords. It is also possible that Arafat adopted the methods of guerilla fighters in Vietnam and elsewhere who did not cease fighting and acts of terrorism while conducting peace negotiations.

Rabin's response to the violence was to argue that the terrorist organizations were seeking to stop the political process, and they should not be allowed to win by doing so. He was determined to advance the process. Despite Arafat's suspicious actions, signs also suggested that Israelis and Palestinians were coming closer together. Two years of intensive negotiations had created a certain degree of intimacy and mutual understanding. Efforts to establish a Palestinian police force after the Cairo agreement led to talks between the heads of the Israeli and Palestinian military establishments, which only a short while earlier had been inconceivable. But it is doubtful that the Oslo Accords made the life of the Pales-

tinian person in the street any easier, since Israel's reaction to the acts of terrorism was to close the occupied territories, set up roadblocks, and increase its military presence outside the areas transferred to the PA. These measures made movement difficult for the Palestinians, and the economic growth that peace was supposed to engender did not meet expectations.

On the Israeli side a complicated reality emerged. As the peace process progressed, tension mounted between the Israeli left and right. As far as the settlers were concerned, the very willingness to recognize the Palestinians as a national and political entity and thus to transfer to them (even on a limited scale) areas of the Land of Israel was world-shattering—a betrayal of their fundamental values. For the 150,000 settlers who existed at the time, there could be no forgiving what they termed "the crimes of Oslo." The settlers' struggle against the Rabin government constantly straddled the thin line between civil resistance and protest—legitimate actions in a democratic society—and incitement, overt or disguised, to illegal acts of violence and even murder. The settlers led a broad public campaign that involved demonstrations, both legal and illegal. A permanent, vociferous protest was maintained outside the prime minister's residence, and Rabin frequently needed a police escort to enter. Heavy vehicles blocked the country's roads, particularly during visits by American administration officials. In the newspapers there was an unremitting smear campaign against Rabin and his government.

The nonreligious right was swept along on this wave of hostility and confrontation. Representations of Rabin and Peres as "traitors" began to appear in public places. A poster at a demonstration by the right showed Rabin wearing Arafat's uniform. Certain rabbis declared that anyone handing over areas of the Land of Israel to the government of murderers was a traitor, and as such subject to *din rodef* (lit., "law of the pursuer")—that is, he should be killed.

The backdrop to this inflamed mood was the fragility of the Rabin government. As mentioned, Shas was a member of the coalition and ensured the government's majority in the Knesset. Although the Shas leadership (Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and Minister of the Interior Aryeh Deri) supported the Oslo Accords and did not oppose the transfer of territory to Palestinian rule, the party's rank and file thought differently. Shas voters supported the right-wing bloc, and Shas's being part of a government of the left contravened their beliefs. When the Oslo Accords were brought to a Knesset vote, Shas abstained. This was a signal that pressure from the party's faithful would lead it to resign from the government. After Deri's own resignation, following charges of corruption filed against him, Shas did resign. Now the Rabin government held only fifty-eight seats in the Knesset and was dependent upon the support of the Arab members.

From here on, the settlers accused the government of making decisions fateful

for the Jewish people when the government hung by a thread. They claimed it was enlisting support by offering perquisites to Knesset members and that it did not have a Jewish majority. The right's delegitimization of the Oslo Accords did not deter Rabin. Determined to complete the initiative he had begun, he did not let their protests make him change course. He displayed neither sensitivity to nor empathy for the settlers' heartache at seeing their world shattered. On the contrary, at every confrontation he displayed both his disdain for them and his determination not to be diverted from his course.

Amid all the commotion following the implementation of the Cairo agreement, Arafat's arrival at the Palestinian Authority, acts of terrorism perpetrated by Islamic organizations, and vociferous protests by the Israeli right, in October 1994 a festive ceremony was held on the Jordan-Israel border in the Arava Desert. In the presence of President Clinton, King Hussein, Rabin, and many other dignitaries, a peace treaty was signed between Israel and Jordan. Jordan was a natural candidate for a peace treaty with Israel. Once Jordan relinquished the West Bank, the territories in dispute between it and Israel were very small, and accelerated negotiations ironed out all the two nations' differences. Jordan had waited until the successful implementation of the Cairo agreement before agreeing to take part in peace negotiations. The fact that President Clinton had promised King Hussein to write off his kingdom's debts also helped advance the process. The king had been concerned about the reaction from Damascus if he signed a peace treaty without the Syrians. But as the talks between Israel and Syria dragged on with no agreement being reached, Hussein felt he might miss the right moment for peace.

The treaty with Jordan was the third to be signed between Israel and an Arab entity. It contained precedents that, with goodwill, could serve as a model for additional peace treaties. Israel restored territory it had held beyond the international border to Jordan, which promptly leased it back to Israel. There were also territorial exchanges. Israel also undertook to provide Jordan with an annual quota of water to ease Jordan's water problems. In stark contrast with the Oslo Accords, the treaty with Jordan was universally welcomed in Israel. But it would not have been signed without Oslo.

Only Syria remained outside the peacemaking circle. Attempts had been made to renew negotiations with Syria since the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993. In the spring of 1995, amid the uproar in Israel over the Oslo Accords, "the Stauber Document" was published setting out an Israeli-Syrian peace plan, including an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Although this document was hypothetical, it added fuel to the already highly flammable Israeli atmosphere. This time it was the Golan Heights settlers and their sympathizers from the moderate Israeli center and left who joined ranks against the government. The Golan set-

tlers were mainly nonreligious Labor Party supporters. They did not reject the possibility of a withdrawal from the Golan Heights, but the conditions they placed on such a move would have rendered it totally unacceptable to Assad. The antigovernment campaign, under the slogan "The people are with the Golan," gained momentum; it succeeded in enlisting figures with a celebrated military past and considerable standing among the cultural elites. These were Yitzhak Rabin's Palmach comrades, who now cast doubt on his reasoning. Over and above this personal attack, the Third Way, as this movement was called, further undermined the government's stability, since several Labor members of the Knesset had allied themselves with it.

On November 4, 1995, at the end of a mass rally in support of the prime minister and the peace process, an assassin fired three shots and murdered Yitzhak Rabin. Although the writing had been on the wall since public threats had been made on the prime minister's life, and mystical religious ceremonies had been conducted to enlist divine forces to kill him, it seems that very few people took the notion of a prime minister of Israel being assassinated by a Jew seriously. This was a taboo whose breach was inconceivable. The shock was tremendous. The bullets that killed Rabin injured the very tissue of Israeli democracy, exposing its vulnerability and pointing to the need to heighten awareness of what is legitimate in a political debate, and what is not. Accusing fingers were pointed at the religious-Zionist sector, from whose midst the murderer had come and from which the most serious incitement had emanated. The sobering effect of the murder cooled the fervor of the public debate, reduced the level of violence, verbal and physical alike, and restored a degree of sanity and consensus to public discourse in Israel. Disagreements on the future of the territories, the peace process, and Jewish-Arab relations did not disappear, but the incitement coming from the right became less extreme. Phrases like "Rabin is a murderer," "Rabin is a traitor," or "*din rodef*" were now excluded.

All the world's great leaders, led by President Clinton, attended Rabin's funeral to pay their last respects to the martyr of the peace process and express their support for it and their hope that Rabin's successor, his comrade and adversary Shimon Peres, would follow in his footsteps. And indeed Peres sought to pursue the same path. The Oslo II Accords, the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which Rabin signed in September 1995, were successfully implemented, and the IDF withdrew from West Bank cities and areas were transferred to PA control.

The pendulum of diplomatic activity now swung back to Syria. The Wye Plantation talks, held at the end of 1995 with active mediation by the Americans, yielded some progress, though not a breakthrough. Itamar Rabinovich, the Israeli ambassador to Washington and the Rabin government's chief negotiator

with Syria, contends that Assad reacted bad-temperedly to the Israeli proposals and the American mediation and blocked any progress, while US negotiator Martin Indyk claims that great progress was made. But a spate of violence and terrorism that occurred during the talks led to their collapse. Rabinovich believes that the Syrians signaled to the terrorist organizations and Hezbollah that they were free to act against Israel. Indyk, for his part, says the violence was instigated by Iran, which wanted to derail the peace process and gloated over Rabin's death.

Either way, while the Wye Plantation talks were taking place, four severe terrorist outrages occurred in Israel within the space of a few days, and the Syrians refused to publicly express regret over them. At the same time, Hezbollah planted roadside bombs in the security buffer zone in Lebanon, killing IDF soldiers. Peres was forced to retaliate with Operation Grapes of Wrath, which was prematurely terminated after a stray Israeli shell killed approximately one hundred Lebanese and Palestinian civilians. Public opinion in the Arab states and the West raged against Israel, which was forced to withdraw from Lebanon without defeating Hezbollah. Syria enjoyed embarrassing Israel and winning points in the negotiations. But it did not take into account what was bound to happen as a result of these events. The date set for elections in Israel was fast approaching. After Rabin's murder the Israeli public leaned toward the left, and Peres's victory seemed assured. But the recent terror attacks changed the country's mood. In the June 1996 elections Peres lost by a small margin to Benjamin Netanyahu, the new, charismatic leader of the Likud. The momentum of the peace process, which had been maintained since the Madrid Conference, and especially since the 1992 elections, was arrested.

The Arab states greeted the halting of the peace process with sighs of relief. The Egyptians, Jordanians, and Syrians all had reservations about the ideas of "a new Middle East" (an expression coined by Peres), economic cooperation, and joint projects between Israel and its neighbors. To Peres these ideas heralded peace and development in the region, but the Arab regimes looked on them without favor. What to Israeli eyes was the blessing of peace was construed by its future partners as an attempt to establish Israeli hegemony in the Middle East. The pace at which normalization of relations under the auspices of the peace process was proceeding—including economic conferences in Casablanca and Amman, where Israel played a leading role—intimidated the Arab states and made them want to decelerate the process. Assad opposed both the conferences and the vision of a new Middle East, which he viewed as conflicting with the Arab character of the region. "Why is the Middle East being established?" asked Assad. "The Middle East does exist. The strange thing is that the Middle East is being presented as an alternative to Arabism. . . . We as Arabs certainly reject this."[4]

Patrick Seale, Assad's semiofficial biographer, analyzed the deeper reasons behind Assad's reluctance to engage in the peace process. The Israeli version of normalization would expose Syria to Israeli influence and require greater openness to a free market, with exchanges of people and goods that would likely alter the character of the Syrian state as it had been shaped by Assad's radical Ba'ath party. Furthermore, Seale maintained, while Israel saw peace as a lever to increase its influence in the Middle East, to Assad it represented a way to block Israel, "to shrink its influence to more modest and less aggressive proportions, which the Arab players in the Middle East could accept and live with."[5]

During his election campaign Netanyahu had promised to abide by the Oslo Accords. Now he had to prove that he did indeed recognize the previous government's international undertakings. Netanyahu was in an inherently contradictory situation. On one hand, he was supported by a right-wing militant bloc whose declared intention was to wreck the agreements. On the other, he wanted to maintain good relations with the Clinton administration, whose objective was to advance the peace process. His attempt to satisfy both sides turned both against him. For his part Arafat thought that from now on his negotiating partner would be the American administration. To ensure its support he did something he had not done previously: he embarked on a vigorous antiterror campaign, arresting Hamas activists and threatening their centers of activity. As a result—and also perhaps as a result of a tacit agreement between Arafat and Hamas—Israel was quiet and the suicide bombings ceased. It appears that Iran and its agents, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, saw no call to escalate the situation since in any case the peace process was not progressing. Arafat was therefore able to present himself in the American arena as the one who upheld his side of the agreements, while Netanyahu, without renouncing Oslo, refused to advance the peace process. Arafat suddenly appeared to be the reliable partner, and Israel the one whose policy was dubious.

In September 1996 Netanyahu opened the Western Wall Tunnel, a tunnel adjacent to the Wall that dated to the Hasmonean period, to the Israeli public. This act, done without giving prior notice to the PA, released from the bottle all the genies of Arab suspicion about Israel's intentions of taking over the Temple Mount. Bloody clashes erupted between rioters—who included members of the Israeli-trained Palestinian police force—and IDF troops, resulting in dozens of dead and wounded. The Americans swiftly mediated between the two sides and orchestrated a ceasefire. Having extricated Netanyahu from this imbroglio of bloodshed, the Americans demanded that he fulfill the Peres government's undertakings on an Israeli withdrawal from Hebron. He squirmed and tried to obtain easier terms for Israel, but ultimately signed the Hebron Agreement (1997), and IDF forces were redeployed in the City of the Patriarchs. This move

constituted recognition of the international legitimacy of the Oslo Accords by the Israeli right.

The negotiations continued at a snail's pace, but were not terminated. Although talks on the final status agreement did not begin on the date set in 1996, a positive development emerged. After intensive mediation efforts by the American administration, and long and arduous negotiations, in October 1998 an agreement was signed at the Wye Plantation on IDF redeployment in the West Bank that transferred an additional 13 percent of West Bank territory to the PA. American observers conjectured that a tacit understanding existed between Arafat and Netanyahu, such that Netanyahu would transfer relatively small areas to the Palestinians in return for peace and quiet. Yitzhak Molcho, Netanyahu's chief negotiator, likened this policy to swallowing frogs: you can swallow ten little frogs but not one big one.

Netanyahu had severe credibility problems. He made promises to both moderates and radicals in his government that he was unable to keep. The right demanded that he abrogate the Oslo Accords, which he could not do. They viewed the Wye Agreement as breaking a promise. Because of his political bind, he had promised progress in political moves furthering the peace process to his moderate partners, and they were frustrated because none had materialized. The Likud began to crumble from within, and splinter parties that had joined it withdrew, reducing its support in the Knesset. In an effort to prevent the fall of his government, Netanyahu called for a vote of confidence. A loss would mean new elections, a move incumbent Knesset members are usually loath to accept. But on this occasion the right pulled the rug out from under Netanyahu. It voted against him, the government fell, and Netanyahu was forced to hold national elections.

The May 1999 prime ministerial elections were won with a handsome majority by Ehud Barak, the leader of the Yisrael Ahat (One Israel) party, a union of the Labor Party and other small parties. The Israeli electoral system had been changed after 1996, and the electorate now voted directly for prime minister. The hope was that this system, more like the US presidential election system, would create more stable governments. But the actual effect was increased fragmentation. In the Knesset elections the major parties won a reduced number of seats, which benefited small and medium-sized parties. Yisrael Ahat won twenty-six seats, the Likud nineteen, Shas seventeen, and Meretz ten, with the remaining seats divided among numerous small parties that won between two and six each. Along with direct voting for prime minister, the old parliamentary structure was maintained, allowing voters to split their votes, casting one vote for the prime minister and another for the party of their choice. The expectation that direct elections for the premiership would neutralize the need for coalition haggling turned out to be a tragic miscalculation. Direct elections for the premiership

would soon be annulled, and the old system of electing a party list restored. However, the return to the old system no longer resulted in the two-party system that had governed Israeli politics in the 1980s.

At a mass postelection victory rally, Barak's supporters chanted, "Just not Shas." That party was identified with public figures who had been indicted on corruption charges. It had the image of a vested-interest party concerned solely with the welfare of its voters and was politically unreliable. But Barak had no choice. He had to deal with Shas and also persuade leftist Meretz—which had promised its voters not to join a coalition with Shas—to join the coalition on the basis of renewed peace negotiations. The coalition also included the Center party (a new party formed by ex-Likud moderates and notable figures from the political center), the ultra-Orthodox Yahadut Hatorah (Torah Judaism), and Yisrael Baʿaliya (a play on "Israel" and "aliya"), the party of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. It was a loose coalition. In September 1999 Yahadut Hatorah left in protest against nonobservance of the Sabbath, and in June 2000 Meretz departed after a dispute with Shas, although it continued to support the government for the sake of the peace process. When Barak left for the Camp David summit in July 2000 (discussed later), Shas and Yisrael Baʿaliya also left the coalition. Then the Center party began to crumble. Thus despite his impressive election victory, Barak was left with no real political support base.

Barak was not a man of small measures; Netanyahu's "little frogs" method was not for him. He saw himself as a leader continuing Rabin's legacy, ready to make great decisions á la Ben-Gurion, and set himself the objective of putting an end to the Israeli-Arab conflict. In contrast to cautious Rabin, who chose a step-by-step approach with constant attention to the outcome of each measure, Barak sought to reach the final status agreement with one grand gesture. He considered the incremental territorial concessions that transferred small parts of the West Bank to the Palestinians without receiving concessions in return a strategic error, since Israel was losing bargaining chips without any real return. He delayed continuing to implement the already-signed agreements on the assumption that for a few short months, until final agreement was reached, it was not worth creating tension with his coalition partners, which might endanger his government. In any event he intended to resolve all the thorny issues and achieve a final status agreement that would mean "the end of the conflict" with the Palestinians. The tension between Barak's far-reaching objectives and his limited political abilities would lead to his failure.

On the face of it, the time was ripe for taking great measures. It was President Clinton's last year in office, and he wanted to leave the Israeli-Arab peace treaty behind as his great legacy. Voices coming out of Damascus hinted at a dramatic change in President Assad's position. Ailing and unsure how to handle the ques-

tion of turning his position over to his son, Assad now sought to reach an agreement with Israel before he did so. For a moment a window of opportunity opened with Syria. In January 2000 peace talks between Israel and Syria were held in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The discussion revolved around the June 4, 1967, lines, and at the decisive moment Barak retreated. He refused to approve Rabin's "pledge." It is unclear whether this refusal was a negotiating tactic—since agreeing in advance to such a withdrawal would have significantly reduced his room to maneuver—or whether he wanted to avoid an agreement that would force Israel into total withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Barak was prepared to concede the El-Hamma enclave, but would not give up absolute sovereignty over the Sea of Galilee, one of Israel's most important water sources.

Possibly a public opinion survey in Israel made it clear to Barak that such a concession would not gain the broad support he expected. In any event he did not make this difficult decision. Nevertheless the negotiations continued. A summit in Geneva in March 2000 between Clinton and Assad was supposed to iron out the last difficulties and draw up the outline of the final agreement. But that is not what happened. A chance leak from the Israeli side about the Syrians having agreed to an Israeli early warning station on the Golan Heights after the withdrawal caused a negative reaction among the Syrian intelligentsia, which most likely deterred Assad. The Syrian leader then backed out of previous agreements, as well as all the changes in his position that had fed Israeli and American optimism. He seems to have decided that ensuring his son's succession and simultaneously reaching a peace treaty with Israel was beyond his powers. The negotiations with Syria ended in total failure. Assad died in June 2000, and an Israeli-Syrian peace treaty dropped from the agenda.

The failure of the negotiations with Syria had far-reaching effects. Barak had promised his voters that he would put an end to the constant bloodletting in Lebanon and withdraw the IDF from the security buffer zone along the border, which had remained under Israeli control since the 1985 withdrawal. A withdrawal following an agreement with Syria would have been received as a welcome outcome of the peace process. Now the unilateral Israeli withdrawal on May 24, 2000, without talks with either Syria or Hezbollah, was construed as a victory for Hezbollah, which made sure to snap at the tail of the retreating army, thus reinforcing the image of its triumph.

This so-called victory bore implications regarding Hezbollah's position in Lebanon. Hezbollah contended that as the organization fighting Israel for the liberation of Lebanese soil, it had legitimate reason to continue maintaining its own army there. In addition Syria's continued support for the Islamic terror organizations headquartered in Damascus weakened the Palestinian forces seeking peace with Israel. Hezbollah's boasting about the success of armed struggle

against Israel touched a chord among young people in the West Bank, who over the six years since the Oslo Accords had been under the corrupt rule of the PA and without an independent state. It seems that Arafat was also impressed by the Hezbollah model. Hezbollah's violence had succeeded without either negotiations or concessions. Perhaps this was the way to achieve an enhanced agreement with the Israelis; it therefore made sense at least not to rush into an agreement.

During this period a sort of pendulum swing had also occurred between negotiations with Syria and negotiations with the Palestinians. Each knew that it might be the last negotiating partner on the road to an agreement with Israel, which would weaken its bargaining position. Now that the Syrian option was evidently off the agenda, negotiations with the Palestinians would clearly be more difficult than before. And time was running out; President Clinton's last year in office was nearly over.

During that last year Israeli and American participants in the peace process disagreed on the preferable track for negotiations. Those who supported making progress with the Palestinians viewed the negotiations with Syria as lost time that would later be missed in reaching an agreement with the Palestinians. On the other hand, an agreement with Syria depended on one man's decision and appeared to be within reach. While negotiating with Syria, Barak continued holding a slow dialogue with the Palestinians, who complained that he was taking them for granted. The agreed-on date for the opening of negotiations on the final status came and went, and negotiations continued slowly. By the spring the two sides were still far from any kind of path that would lead to an agreement.

The summer of 2000 saw preparatory talks for a summit at Camp David between Arafat, Barak, and President Clinton. Since the summit was to negotiate an end to the conflict, issues avoided by the sides in the earlier rounds of talks were put on the table for the first time: Jerusalem, borders, and refugees. Until then there had been no real discussions on Jerusalem between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Jews had cherished the city, the Temple Mount, and the Western Wall for two thousand years. Haram al-Sharif (Ar. lit., noble sanctuary, or Dome of the Rock) was Islam's third most sacred site after Mecca and Medina; it was the place from which the Prophet Muhammad had ascended to heaven. The Palestinians had in mind not only a Palestinian state, but a state whose capital was Jerusalem. How could such a profound historical conflict be resolved? There had been good reason to leave discussions on Jerusalem to the final stage of the negotiations. But now the moment of truth had arrived, and the question was whether a compromise could be found between the two sides' contradictory desires.

The issue of the borders was also explosive. The Israelis wanted to control the Jordan Valley in order to protect Israel from invasion from the east. Conceivably

this issue could be resolved by replacing control with suitable security arrangements, but on the question of the Arab refugees of 1948, no Israeli government could compromise. The "right of return" that the Palestinians continued to claim—and had educated generations of children to cling to—conflicted with the very existence of Israel as a Jewish state. A compromise could be reached on bringing Palestinians into the future Palestinian state, and also on allowing a token number of refugees into Israel. All these issues had to be part of an agreement ending the conflict. As background to this developing discussion, intelligence reports intimated that without an agreement, an eruption of violence by the Palestinians could be expected.

Barak's political position was precarious. His government lacked a parliamentary majority and relied on the support of Meretz and the Arab factions, which were outside the coalition. As mentioned earlier, on the eve of Barak's departure for the Camp David summit, Shas and Yisrael Ba'aliya left the coalition in protest against his policies. Achieving an "end of the conflict agreement" could lead to a dramatic change in the Israeli public's mood and a different political constellation. But with time running out before the end of Clinton's term in office and the Barak government's dire situation, it was clear that Barak needed an agreement at Camp David far more than Arafat did. Oddly enough, in this situation the ostensibly weaker side, the Palestinians, held a far better bargaining position.

The long, tortuous Camp David negotiations were later analyzed by both participants and critics. If beforehand the slow progress had led to frustration and tension between the two sides, with neither fulfilling its promises, now the effort to reach a final "end of the conflict" agreement proved to be "mission impossible." It is likely that mistakes were made by both parties. The tactics adopted by Barak, who at first kept his cards close to his chest but rapidly gave in to American pressure and was willing to reveal his redlines, were certainly miscalculated. Barak's assumption that he could make his final proposal at the outset and expect the other side to accept it exposed both his lack of negotiating finesse and his impatience to reach an agreement. On the other side, the more the Americans pressured the Palestinians to put a counterproposal on the table, the more firmly they adhered to the UN resolutions on the June 4, 1967, lines and UN Resolution 194 on the refugees and refused to make a compromise proposal. At the preparatory talks the Palestinians had shown themselves willing to leave blocs of Jewish settlement in place in return for territory. Now the proposal that they receive 92 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip angered them. The Israelis also conceded control of the Jordan Valley and were prepared to accept security arrangements and an international force along the Jordan line.

The most difficult issue of all was Jerusalem. Relinquishing Israeli sovereignty over all of Jerusalem ran contrary to everything the Israelis had said since 1967.

Repartition of Jerusalem was an idea that no Israeli leader had previously uttered. But now Barak rose to the challenge. He was prepared to offer the PA the outer Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, the Muslim and Christian Quarters in the Old City, and even to give Arafat custodianship of Haram al-Sharif. The Israelis would retain the Jewish neighborhoods built after 1967, the Jewish and Armenian Quarters in the Old City, the Western Wall, and sovereignty over the subterranean Temple Mount. By any yardstick Barak's proposal was revolutionary. But Arafat would not even consider it. Unlike his American and Israeli interlocutors, Arafat was in no rush. While Barak displayed tremendous courage, in the end he failed since he was unable to convince Arafat that there was no chance of further concessions. And perhaps Arafat feared that making any concession on Jerusalem would enrage Muslims throughout the world and even lead to his being assassinated.

There were several important achievements at Camp David. For the first time the outline of the final status agreement was made clear to both sides. The Israelis learned that the Palestinians would demand almost the entire area of the West Bank plus exchange of territories in return for agreeing to leave the settlement blocs in place. Israel would not control the Jordan Valley but would have security arrangements to secure its eastern border. The Palestinians accepted the Jewish neighborhoods around Jerusalem, the settlement blocs, and Israeli control of the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall. Barak's proposals on Jerusalem placed the issue of the city on the Israeli public's agenda, and made Israelis aware that there would not be peace with the Palestinians without a creative compromise on Jerusalem. As Martin Indyk wrote, had Camp David been defined as a preparatory summit, it could have been considered a great success, not a resounding failure. However, if that had been the case, Barak would not have made his revolutionary proposals, which he made because he assumed this was the decisive stage of the negotiations. He failed to take into account that his interlocutor saw the summit not as a framework for ending the conflict but as a trap intended to force him to accept an imposed solution. What enabled Arafat to evade this trap was the issue of sovereignty over the Temple Mount, which he presented as an insurmountable obstacle to any compromise whatsoever.

The first Camp David summit had ultimately been a success because Sadat and Begin wanted it to succeed and so were prepared to compromise. The second summit failed because only one of the leaders intended to reach an agreement. Arafat did not see himself as being free to make a difficult decision, either because he did not think his supporters at home were ready for it, because he feared the reaction of the Arab states, or because he thought he would be killed the day after the signing. One thing is certain: he did not prepare the Palestinians for the fact that the final agreement would involve compromises. The incitement in the

Palestinian media and the PA's education system had continued throughout the decade of peace negotiations. Public opinion was not prepared for the possibility of an agreement that would not only give the Palestinians a state but would require them to make several concessions to the Israelis. Barak had carried out the psychological preparation of the Israeli public while he was at Camp David, by means of systematic leaks of all the Israeli concessions. Not so the Palestinians; they took all the Israeli concessions for granted and did not acknowledge that Israel, too, had legitimate claims.

A revisionist article by Robert Malley, a former special assistant to President Clinton for Arab-Israeli affairs, and Lebanese intellectual Hussein Agha corroborated this analysis. The article set out to undermine the version of events disseminated by Clinton, Barak, Dennis Ross, and others, which blamed Arafat for the failure at Camp David. Malley and Agha attempted to explain why the Palestinians did not submit a proposal of their own, and even rejected the Clinton track (discussed later), which offered them terms that went far beyond Barak's Camp David proposals. They wrote: "Most Palestinians were more resigned to the two-state solution than they were willing to embrace it; they were willing to accept Israel's existence, but not its moral legitimacy. The war for the whole of Palestine was over because it had been lost. Oslo, as they saw it, was not about negotiating peace terms, but terms of surrender. Bearing this perspective in mind explains the Palestinians' view that Oslo itself is the historic compromise—an agreement to concede 78 percent of Mandatory Palestine to Israel."[6]

Was the Camp David summit a failure foretold? The opinion prevailing in the Israeli security establishment throughout the period starting with the Oslo Accords was that as long as the matter at hand was interim agreements, Arafat could sign them. But once it was time to negotiate the final status agreement, Arafat had four principles on which he would not budge: a Palestinian state within the June 4, 1967, borders, Jerusalem as its capital, sovereignty over the Temple Mount, and the "right of return." Arafat foresaw the approaching collision and made preparations for a violent clash with Israel. From the outset this concept, which Itamar Rabinovich terms "deterministic," cast doubt on the possibility of an "end of the conflict" agreement. It was the other side of Malley's and Agha's coin. Meanwhile the Israeli radical left accused Barak of flawed negotiating, excessive haste, and being inconsiderate of Arafat—that is, they argued that tactical errors caused the failure.

Some argue that his years at the Palestinian Authority demonstrated to Arafat that what awaited him at the end of the road was a relatively small, poor state burdened with economic and social problems, and that he preferred the romanticism of the struggle rather than the dejecting routine of being president of the Palestinian state. So long as there was no peace, he was a national hero, a media

figure at whose door the world's luminaries came calling. Once there was peace, interest in the Palestine liberation movement would die, his historic role would come to an end, and all that would remain was the quotidian internal friction in the Palestinian camp, the corruption, and the subversion. At the decisive moment he chose yesterday's world with its thrills and risks rather than the world of tomorrow, which necessitated a change of mind-set and image and learning to live in peace. He preferred to return to Gaza from Camp David as a hero who had challenged the Americans and Israelis, assuring himself broad public support. The fact that he had not brought peace was not a black mark against him.

Clinton and Barak did not give up hope after Camp David; they continued their contact in order to reach an agreement, with Barak, who viewed an agreement as his only hope of survival in the upcoming elections, occasionally retreating from the redlines he had set himself to more conciliatory positions. As Aaron David Miller noted, redlines turned pink. But the more Barak conceded, the higher Arafat raised the bar.

On September 28, 2000, opposition leader Ariel Sharon toured the Temple Mount. His visit was coordinated with the Palestinians, and Sharon accepted the restriction they imposed and did not enter the mosques. The tour passed relatively quietly. But the next day about 20,000 Muslim worshippers on the Temple Mount erupted into violent rioting. The Israeli security forces responded with small arms fire, and after that the rioting spiraled out of control. On the eve of the rioting, the Israeli authorities had learned that violent demonstrations would be held on the Mount, and they informed the Americans. US secretary of state Madeleine Albright warned Arafat of consequences and tried to persuade him to prevent the demonstrations. It emerged later that he did not lift a finger. As suggested before, some contend that Arafat had intended to resort to violence from the outset if he did not get what he wanted at Camp David. Others argue that he had always needed the drama of violence to attain Palestinian independence "in blood and fire," in accordance with the PLO's basic concept. In any event Arafat never relinquished the option of violence throughout the entire peace process. He never declared that violence was illegitimate, and whenever he was called upon to take action against it he did so against his inclinations.

Now Sharon's tour of the Temple Mount provided Arafat with an excellent opportunity to bolster his position by using force, and also to prove that his hands were tied with regard to Haram al-Sharif. But violence is a tiger that is difficult to ride. The television images ostensibly showing Israeli soldiers killing a twelve-year-old named Muhammad al-Durrah (it was never determined whether the boy really was killed by IDF soldiers) ignited Palestinian and Arab public opinion against Israel. In Ramallah two Israeli reserve soldiers held in the police station after driving into the city by mistake were lynched. The bloodied hands of the

jubilant murderers were shown on television and sent shock waves through Israeli public opinion. The IDF used harsh measures to quell the riots, in which numerous members of the Palestinian security forces (which Israel had helped train and equip) participated.

October 2000 was full of traumas. The outbreak of the Second Intifada, which entered the Palestinian lexicon as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, further reinforced the myth of Israeli designs on Haram al-Sharif and destroyed both hopes of peace and Israel's trust in the Palestinians. Serious rioting by Israeli Arabs broke out on the Israeli side of the Green Line. The riots raged throughout Galilee and the Triangle, and in Jaffa, raising fears for the safety of the Jewish inhabitants of the Galilee *mitzpim* (small community settlements). The Wadi ʿAra roads were blocked; there was destruction of property, and attacks targeted vehicles, institutions, and settlements. Before the rioting was suppressed, twelve Israeli Arabs, one Palestinian, and one Jew were killed, scores were wounded, and a rift was opened in Jewish-Arab relations within Israel. For a short time it seemed Israel was on the brink of ethnic clashes between Jews and Arabs. Israelis found it hard to believe that these events had not been coordinated with what was happening in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. And on top of all this, three IDF soldiers were abducted by Hezbollah on the northern border, and a reserve officer was taken in Europe. Israel seemed to be in the center of a circle of fire blazing on all its borders. The public lost faith in the government's ability to ensure people's safety and security. Given his government's uncertain status Barak decided to hold new prime ministerial elections without dissolving the Knesset. The date set was February 2001.

Under the shadow of the violence, desperate attempts to reach an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians continued. In the final days of his presidency, Clinton made one last effort to mediate between the sides. "The Clinton Parameters" summarized the core issues between the Israelis and Palestinians and offered a compromise proposal that took into account the sensitivities and needs of both sides. It was a well-balanced proposal that went a long way toward meeting the Palestinian demands—farther even than the Camp David proposals. The Taba summit was convened in January 2001 on the initiative of Egyptian president Mubarak. The government of Israel accepted the parameters in principle, but with some reservations on certain clauses. Arafat did not want—or was unable—to bring himself to accept the parameters. One of the Palestinians remarked to Dennis Ross, "We needed David Ben-Gurion and we got Yasir Arafat."[7] The summit ended in impasse, Clinton completed his term of office, and in the Israeli elections held on February 6, 2001, Ariel Sharon was elected prime minister by a large majority. At this point the peace process was over.

The Intifada raged on. Thousands of Israelis and Palestinians paid with their

lives. The Second Intifada was a blood-soaked affair, with most of its Israeli victims being civilians killed by suicide bombers. The dream of peace and an end to the conflict faded. The feeling was that there was no alternative other than defense of the nation and the state. The Israeli left and center, which had supported the peace process, could not comprehend Arafat's behavior. If the two sides had not reached an agreement, negotiations should have continued, but there was no reason for violence. The right said, "We told you so." The radical left contended, "We didn't do enough." Average Israelis felt betrayed. They were fighting for their lives, and they had no compassion for the other side.

Did the peace process fail? There can be no doubt that it collapsed, leaving both sides profoundly disillusioned. In Israel the Intifada destroyed the left, dealing it a blow from which it has not recovered. After the decade of hope, however, relations between Israel and the Arab states, and Israel and the Palestinians, had changed radically. The peace treaty with Jordan and the creation of some degree of relations with the Gulf emirates and with Maghreb states were steps toward Israel achieving legitimacy and Arab acceptance of its existence as a political entity in the Middle East. The Arab League peace initiative announced in 2002 was perhaps evidence of this change. The Arab League countries proposed a comprehensive peace with Israel, whose terms would be agreed upon in negotiations.

In his summing up of the failure of the peace process, Dennis Ross had cited one reason as the Arabs' perception that their willingness to accept Israel's existence was a major concession that obliged Israel to make numerous concessions without an Arab commitment to make compromises of their own. Recognizing that Israel had legitimate needs and that achieving peace required compromises on both sides was part of the educational process of the peace negotiations. Have both sides internalized this point? The future peace process will reveal whether they have or not.

Israeli-Palestinian relations have also changed dramatically. The mutual recognition deriving from the Oslo Accords led to the sides getting to know each other and talking, creating a certain degree of intimacy between the Israeli and Palestinian political and security elites, among whom the previous sense of foreignness and the demonization have diminished. There is doubt whether this change has reached the popular levels. Even so, the difference between the previous alienation and present relations is impressive. The idea of two states for two nations, which in the 1990s was taboo, is now espoused by the majority of the Israeli public and forms the basis for the major parties' peace platforms, either categorically or implicitly. Today the majority of Israelis realize that it is impossible to rule another people over a long period and they accept that safe-

guarding Israel's character as a Jewish state necessitates disengagement from most areas of Judea and Samaria, as well as the Gaza Strip (the disengagement from which occurred in the mid-2000s). It can be said that the failed negotiations prepared the Israeli public for the need to compromise with the Palestinians and recognize their national needs. Changes in consciousness, particularly in harsh and prolonged conflicts such as the Israeli-Arab conflict, do not come about overnight; they need time, permanence, and maturation. Only the future will show if the seeds that sprouted in the 1990s bear fruit in coming decades.

ISRAEL IN THE 1990S

The change in Israel's economic character between the 1950s and 1990s can be summarized in the following facts: in the last decade of the twentieth century, only 2 percent of the working population was engaged in agriculture, and agricultural produce accounted for only 2 percent of the country's exports. By the end of its first fifty years, Israel had been transformed from a country whose symbol was the Jewish farmer plowing and sowing his fields in accordance with the Zionist ideal into an industrialized country proud of its cutting-edge, high-tech industry. Despite limited water resources, optimal exploitation of those resources and the land enabled Israel to provide food for its constantly growing population and even exports to Europe. But it is doubtful that the founding fathers of Zionism imagined that the return of the Jew to nature and physical labor would last no longer than two generations. In the 1990s Israeli exports were based on industry and services, diamonds, tourism, and, last on the list, agricultural produce.

The economic revolution of the 1990s was marked by a shift from traditional industries such as textiles, machinery, construction, mining, and fertilizers to knowledge-intensive high-tech industries. The traditional industries were labor intensive, did not require a high level of specialization, and in most cases paid relatively low wages. The high-tech industries that flourished in the 1990s required higher education, a background in science or technology, and human capital. Their employees were individualistic, creative, and prepared to work hard for a relatively high salary. They made no long-term commitment to the company, and the company made no commitment to its employees. The Israeli high-tech sector of the 1990s was in internet-related fields, life sciences start-ups, and medical projects. Their success was the combined result of many years of investment in research and development, institutions of higher education that laid the scientific foundations for knowledge-intensive industries, and the influence of defense industries that invested in R & D projects in which a large number of first-generation high-tech entrepreneurs acquired their skills and ideas.

Free trade agreements with the European Union and North America opened the door to investment in Israeli projects by international companies. Rescinding of the last restrictions on foreign currency trading also promoted free trade.

The privatization trend that began in the 1980s continued, gaining momentum. The Histadrut-owned companies, and the kibbutzim and moshavim as well, were used to operating in a framework of state-subsidized credit. Once subsidized credit was discontinued as a result of the state's shift away from direct guidance of the capital market, the Histadrut-owned companies, moshavim, and kibbutzim were unable to operate in an expensive credit market and faced bankruptcy. Histadrut-owned companies collapsed and were sold to private ownership. The Histadrut became a voluntary trade union that workers were no longer obliged to join. High-tech workers were not organized in the Histadrut; it had lost its sway over elite employees and was limited to workers in vital services such as the Electric Corporation, water provision, and traditional industries. With the arrival of foreign workers in Israel to fill positions in agriculture and care services, the Histadrut lost yet another market segment.

In the early 1990s Chaim Ramon, a senior Labor Party figure, left the party to form an independent list in the Histadrut whose goal was nationalizing medical services—in other words, taking the Kupat Holim health maintenance organization (HMO) out of Histadrut hands. He won a majority of votes in the Histadrut elections. In the reformed health system all citizens would pay a health tax to the state, which would provide them with a basket of medical services that they could obtain at the HMO of their choice. Thus privatization was combined with nationalization, and it had a dramatic effect on worker-Histadrut relations. What had led many workers to membership in the Histadrut was the medical services provided by its HMO. Now the connection between the two was severed. Workers could choose their own medical service provider, and Histadrut membership meant only membership in a trade union. The resulting drastic drop in Histadrut membership revealed the weakness of socialist ideology among workers. After medical services, other institutions were privatized: retirement funds, pension funds, the banks, the post office, communications companies, and the national airline. No longer was there public or state ownership of public assets. Instead Israeli and international tycoons appeared who acquired the assets up for sale, buying themselves a position of influence over the country's economic and political centers of power.

Israel adapted to globalization, which in the 1990s became the name of the game. International companies penetrated Israel, and Israelis invested and operated throughout the world, where open markets welcomed their entrepreneurship. The peace process brought about a significant weakening of the Arab boycott of Israel, and contacts between Israel and other countries in the region

(Morocco, Tunisia, and the Gulf states) led to economic projects and encouraged growth. The positive political climate brought to Israel investors who had avoided investing there during the years of tension. Western European countries that before the peace process had harbored reservations about Israel's policy toward the Palestinians now "discovered" Israel and became more open to contact with it. The Eastern European countries, now open to the West, were also fertile soil for economic and other relations. Israel's balance of payments, which had been one of the economy's weak points, reflecting its dependence on American aid and Jewish donations, went from negative to positive, with the Bank of Israel holding substantial foreign currency reserves. Israel's reliability in the world's credit markets attracted international investors whose investments ranged from $5 to $10 billion a year.

During these years the standard of living rose, but there was also a growing gap between those whose talents were suited to the new reality and those unable to integrate into the new economy. From one of the world's more egalitarian societies in the 1960s, Israel turned into one of the least egalitarian in the 1990s. The two main pockets of poverty were the ultra-Orthodox, whose "society of learners" members did not enter the labor market, and the Arabs, who were subject to social and security restrictions on their integration into the Israeli economy.

A revolution also took place in the social climate. In the past it had been generally accepted that a salaried worker in Histadrut or government employ had a lifetime position. The upheavals in the economy caused by privatization shattered this social convention. Workers' mobility increased, but so did uncertainty regarding their place of work. Companies that had been considered the bedrock of the Israeli economy went bankrupt, changed hands, or streamlined their workforce. The high-tech companies did not ensure permanent employment, and many of them vanished as quickly as they had appeared. A basic element of Israeli society—a stable domicile and place of work, closeness to the extended family, a children's peer group that stayed together from kindergarten to the army; the entire range of familiar connections that made people feel rooted in their place and in society—was suddenly undermined. Although there was greater opportunity and a higher standard of living, something important, which perhaps compensated for the constant sense of danger with which the citizens of Israel live, had been lost.

Two quality-of-life enhancements further eroded the Israeli sense of familiarity and connection. The first: air-conditioning. For eight months of the year, the Israeli climate (especially in light of global warming) demands the use of air-conditioning. Israelis try not to leave this controlled climate. The vast majority of homes are air-conditioned, as are workplaces, cars, and even tractor cabs. The big malls also provide a climate-controlled environment. With the advent of air-

conditioning, the outdoors, the street—the most common place for human encounter in the past—became less popular. Although the outdoor cafés remain, their patrons prefer the protected climate indoors in the summer. As a result, Israelis' exposure to one another has diminished. Each social group shuts itself up in its own neighborhood, and within the neighborhood, in its own home. Thus the rise in the standard of living has led to citizens becoming alienated and distanced from one another.

The second element was the introduction of multichannel television. Instead of the two or three channels that had previously competed for Israelis' attention, there were now innumerable channels to watch. In previous decades television had been "the tribal bonfire" at which everyone enjoyed the same experience, observed the same events, and heard the same commentary on reality. Now television lost this identity-forming role. Instead the multiplicity of languages, cultures, trends, and interests coming out of the small screen gave the divided society affirmation and encouragement. In the past, state-run television had assumed the role of finding a balance between fostering high culture and complying with the wider public's desire for entertainment. Now the multiplicity of voices popularized, vulgarized, and trivialized culture.

Youth culture of the 1990s was nourished by television and influenced by American culture as presented on the small screen. It was a universal culture without roots in the here and now. Scholar Gadi Taub writes, "This culture really did seek with all its heart to believe that it could escape from here, to belong to some supranational MTV republic of viewers of *Seinfeld* and *Murphy Brown*, but at the same time it knew full well that this republic is nonexistent."[8] The demise of Zionist-socialist ideology created an ideological vacuum that the youth found hard to fill. Writer Orly Castel-Bloom opens her *Story* with the words, "I have a story that I have nothing to say about."[9] Life had suddenly become meaningless, an apparent fulfillment of the song "I'm Lying on My Back" written by Ya'akov Rotblit in 1983:

Without to be or not to be
I'm just here
Without anything worth
Dying for
Without hope and without despair
I just watch
The world like a tourist
And it's so beautiful.

The song displays a universal existentialism. In a way it affirms the success of Zionism's program of normalizing the Jews to be like other people. The sense of

security and loss of existential fear conferred by the might of the IDF; the death of idealism and ideology; and the appearance of a generation with no past and no future, interested solely in the present, were all elements of this "normalization." But was that what the Zionist thinkers had envisioned? Indeed the distance traveled by the Zionist enterprise, from the early twentieth-century poem about the son, the new Jew, rebelling against his parents to the late twentieth-century generation's song of total if somehow unsettling acceptance of the serenity of the present, demonstrates how the Zionist revolution not only succeeded but became routine.

The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin opened a gaping hole in this bubble of MTV-style existence. Unable to stop crying, the youngsters gathered by the thousands in the Tel Aviv square where Rabin was assassinated during the seven-day mourning period, lit memorial candles, and sought to be at one not only with the leader who had died but also with an experience of something with meaning, that was not empty of content. They tried to find a connecting thread with a broader public and to set a target in life. The murder and the experience of togetherness that followed were reference points in their lives. Many of them came to view peace as their life's mission. Others volunteered for social activist causes. In the development towns appeared core groups of religious and nonreligious people who had left the cities and kibbutzim and wanted to live in these towns and help their residents move ahead. This was the new volunteerism in turn-of-the-century Israel. The future will show whether it heralded a new wave of idealism, or whether it will remain a marginal event in Israeli life.

The opening of Soviet Russia in 1989 initiated the most comprehensive wave of aliya ever to reach Israel. At almost a million people, in absolute terms it was bigger than the great aliya of the early 1950s. Whereas the fifties' aliya doubled the number of Jews in the country, the new wave made up about 17 percent of the Jewish population. There was a vast difference between the host society of the 1950s, which was poor and lacked the resources for such large-scale absorption, and that of the 1990s, with its expanding, flourishing, solidly based economy, which received very generous loans rooted in American guarantees in the sum of $10 billion for immigrant absorption. However, the immigrants of the 1950s came to a society with a solid value system directed toward building a nation and rapidly developing the state. In contrast, the 1990s immigrants came to a divided society, split between religious and nonreligious, Mizrachim and Ashkenazim, left and right, each camp with a different vision of the future.

Since the aliya from Germany in the 1930s, Israel had not encountered a group of immigrants who were so well educated and represented such impressive human capital as the aliya from Russia. In Israel during those years stories were heard of mathematics departments in leading Russian universities being emp-

tied and hospitals vacated by their doctors. Like the aliya from Germany, the Russian immigrants as a group had a higher level of education than that of the host society (60 percent of the immigrants held academic degrees, compared with 30 percent of Israelis). And like the German aliya, the Russian immigrants lacked knowledge and education about Jewish heritage. Two or three generations of communist rule had erased almost every vestige of Jewish culture and consciousness. The aliya from Russia in the 1970s (about 200,000) had come mainly from the peripheral states, such as the Baltic states, which had been under Soviet rule only since 1939, or from Central Asia. In these regions an active Jewish memory and a Zionist tradition still prevailed. This was not true of the 1990s aliya, which came from the Slavic heartland (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine) and the major cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev). In these regions the Jews had been acculturated to Soviet mores for many years, mostly quite successfully. The Jews who came to Israel knew they were Jews, but except for the national-ethnic connection it is doubtful that they had much of a concept of Jewish culture, either religious or secular.

The 1970s Russian immigrants had fought for their right to emigrate from the USSR and came to Israel out of choice (many of their brethren chose to immigrate to the United States). But like the 1930s immigrants from Germany, many of the 1990s Russian immigrants did not come to Israel out of ideology or Zionist fervor. Most wanted to leave Russia because of its political instability and the economic crisis besetting it. They came in the wake of Gorbachev's great changes, perestroika (rebuilding) and glasnost (openness). Their bitter experience of the past had taught them not to rely on the gates remaining open, and they hastened to leave Russia. Many would have preferred the United States, but Washington imposed quotas on immigration from Eastern Europe, fearing a mass wave of immigrants from the collapsing Eastern bloc. For many, therefore, Israel was the default. What catalyzed this aliya was the fact that many candidates for immigration had relatives in Israel, who helped make the distant foreign country seem more welcoming.

Israel of the 1990s was very different from the centralized state of the 1950s whose elites subscribed to a collectivist worldview. It was a country that supported a free market, private enterprise, privatization of services, and a reduced role for the state. At the same time, the 1990s immigrants were an educated group who had no difficulty adapting to the concepts of a modern society and economy. Therefore they were absorbed on a "do it yourself" basis, or as it was officially termed, through "direct absorption." The state did not assign the immigrants to places of residence or employment and allowed them to choose their own HMO. In the 1970s it was customary to keep immigrants in absorption centers for many months, where they were given Hebrew lessons, professional

placement, referral for housing, and health and welfare services. They were also given tours of the country, lectures, and so forth to socialize them and help them adapt to the culture. The process of leaving the hothouse of the absorption center was slow, dependent on when the newcomers obtained housing and employment. Now the new immigrants were given a sum of money equivalent to the value of the services they would have received at an absorption center and had to set their own priorities for spending it. Responsibility for absorption was thus transferred from the state to the individual, the local authority, or to voluntary organizations, in accordance with the policy of privatizing services.

The presence of the Russian immigrants doubled the number of engineers and doctors in Israel. Not all the doctors managed to pass the Ministry of Health professional competency examinations and were compelled to accept a lower status and find work in the paramedical professions or some other field. Emigration usually entails a lowering of status, and the Russian aliya was no exception, at least in its first decade in Israel. But the absorption of this aliya was a great success, and by the end of the decade the unemployment rate among the immigrants was similar to that of the general population.

The Russians brought with them vast technological and scientific knowledge. As discussed, the 1990s saw the emergence of high-tech as one of Israel's leading industries and export sources. Without the aliya from Russia it is impossible to comprehend Israel's conversion to a high-tech power within just a few years, with companies traded on Wall Street and extraordinary economic successes on a global scale. The immigrants demonstrated originality, entrepreneurship, and adaptability to the free, open market. But neither did they shrink from hard physical work, if only to provide for their families with dignity. The aliya from Russia was one of the factors in Israel's economic prosperity in the first half of the 1990s. A wave of immigration is usually attended by an economic boom arising from population growth, the need to invest in order to absorb it, and ultimately the immigrants' contribution to the economy. This wave of aliya came during the peace process, and political optimism fell naturally into place with the optimism that a wave of immigration brings.

The immigrants from Russia did not "divorce" the country of their birth. Connection with the *Rodina* (motherland), Russian culture, and preservation of the Russian language were all important to them. Direct absorption did not require them to be socialized into Israeli culture and society. In contrast with the previous aliyot from Eastern Europe, which the Soviet seclusion policy had cut off from their native countries, the new immigrants were enabled by the collapse of the USSR to maintain contact with friends and family in the old country. Two-way traffic rapidly developed: former USSR citizens came to Israel to examine the possibilities of immigration and absorption, and Israeli citizens visited the old

homeland. Performances by Russian entertainment troupes, theater, and music were in great demand, and they, too, helped preserve the cultural links with Russia.

These immigrants, who came from the Russian Jewish intelligentsia in the big cities, had great interest in nurturing Russian high culture in Israel. Russian-language dailies and high-quality magazines appeared. Readers' demand spawned many publishing houses specializing in Russian-language books. Cultural links and a common language, as well as social interaction among the immigrants, soon created a Russian Jewish community in Israel. These immigrants, who in their native country had not known a community life, for whom virtually any form of association had been forbidden, now established a flourishing community in Israel grounded in Russian culture. This was a phenomenon not seen among immigrant groups in the past. The immigrants from Germany had indeed tried to preserve German language and culture, and to a certain extent succeeded in doing so in towns and neighborhoods where they lived in relatively large numbers. But that culture had no public presence, since German was the language of the Nazi oppressor, and its use was unacceptable. It is doubtful whether the immigrants from the Arab countries—except for the Jewish intelligentsia from Baghdad—participated in their Arab neighbors' secular culture, and in any case the basis of their cultural world was not Arab culture, but Jewish tradition.

The Russian immigrants' desire for a Russian-speaking community that preserved Russian culture did not encounter criticism from the establishment. Unlike the country of the melting pot period, 1990s Israel was a pluralistic society that looked with tolerance on the immigrants' cultural otherness and even granted it legitimacy. There were, however, popular complaints that the Russians spoke only Russian among themselves and excluded Hebrew speakers from their conversation. This habit reflected the collapse of the cultural hegemony of the "first Israel," and its having become resigned to a divided society with no basic consensus about values and culture.

To some degree the Russian immigrants looked down on Israeli culture. They were dissatisfied with the standard of science education in Israel and disapproved of the liberal educational atmosphere in Israeli schools. The familiarity between teachers and students, the low standards of discipline, and the fact that values were not taught troubled them. They therefore established their own education system, either through extra enrichment lessons or by setting up a network of schools and kindergartens in accordance with pedagogical methods they considered acceptable. These schools amazed the veteran Israelis with their high level of achievement. The schools taught in Hebrew but included lessons in Russian language and culture. The immigrants also enriched Israeli culture with various projects; the Gesher (Bridge) Theater, established by Russian immi-

grants, is one of Israel's leading theaters. The Russian aliya also upgraded classical music. Musical ensembles appeared in the peripheral areas, a manifestation of the immigrants' interest in and need of high culture.

The community's cohesiveness and internal communication through the highly developed Russian press were a superb foundation for the development of political organizations. The influence of the Russian aliya on election results was felt as early as 1992. That year the immigrants, who were said to constitute the pivotal bloc between right and left, voted for Rabin because of the absorption difficulties under the Shamir government, which had not received the American guarantees needed for absorption. The Russian immigrants were positioned on the margin between the nationalist-religious and the nonreligious-liberal blocs. Mostly nonreligious, they were sensitive to discrimination against those who were not considered Jewish according to Jewish law. The Law of Return grants immigrants' rights to grandchildren of Jews who are not necessarily Jewish themselves, and also to spouses who are not Jewish. As a consequence, about 25 percent of the immigrants were not considered Jewish according to Jewish law, and faced troubling questions about their status, rights, their own chances of marriage in Israel and those of their offspring, and also their right to a Jewish burial. The rabbis had hardened their position on conversion, demanding observance of the religious laws afterward. That requirement made this option a possibility for very few. Clashes with the ultra-Orthodox over Sabbath observance, the sale of nonkosher meat, and similar issues led to this population becoming a natural ally of the nonreligious bloc.

At the same time, the Russians were suspicious and hostile toward the Arabs, which put into question their support for the nonreligious-liberal camp. During their first decade in Israel, their political position was ambiguous. As noted, in the 1992 elections they supported the Labor Party. In 1996 an immigrants' party appeared for the first time—Yisrael Baʿaliya, led by Natan Sharansky, the refusenik hero of the 1970s. The separation of the vote for prime minister and party enabled the immigrants to vote for a party that would take care of their particular interests while also expressing their new Israeli identity by voting for a national prime minister. In 1999 many cast their vote for Barak, whose illustrious military record impressed them. In that election Yisrael Baʿaliya won six seats, and another immigrants' party, led by Avigdor Lieberman, Yisrael Beitenu (Israel is our home), won two seats. The Russians were also active in the municipal sphere and achieved positions of power and influence in areas where they constituted more than 20 percent of the population. As we saw, Yisrael Baʿaliya was a coalition partner in the Barak government, but left it on the eve of the Camp David summit. The Russians felt no affection for anyone with ties to a socialist past, so from the outset they viewed the Zionist left with suspicion. But they did respond positively

to Rabin and Barak, both of whom had a military image that symbolized Israeli patriotism.

As time went by, however, the Russians displayed a right-leaning tendency, as is apparent in the rise of Avigdor Lieberman. Apart from Lieberman's personality and organizational ability, the Russians' support for him grew out of the mentality of people who had been citizens of a great power. The immigrants viewed Israel's relations with the world in general, and with its Arab neighbors in particular, through a lens similar to the one through which citizens of the USSR had perceived the world. Their old country had reacted forcefully and belligerently to real or imagined threats. The fact that Israel was not a great power, and required a different approach, did not impress the majority of the immigrants. The split in Israeli society over existential questions and cultural issues made it possible for a niche immigrants' party to achieve a significant power position. The Russian immigrants' tendency to protect their social and cultural uniqueness and their use of the press and voluntary organizations to form a community provided them with the tools to create a political framework that could protect their interests. No other aliya seems to have been able to achieve comparable self-awareness and political influence within only ten years.

Some sociologists prophesy that the integration of the Russian aliya into Israeli society is doomed to fail. They maintain that this integration will remain superficial and functional, and that the current cultural and social isolation from veteran Israelis will prevail. An examination of Israeli history suggests a different outcome. The socialization and acculturation processes that take place in the Israeli education system, military service, workplaces, and so forth are indeed weaker as compared with those of the 1950s and 1960s. But even in their current condition, these processes are bound to prevail, and the Russian immigrants' tendency toward isolationism and exclusivity will disappear within one or two generations. This prediction is based on the past experience of Israeli society, and is conditional upon this process not being undermined by unforeseen events.

At the same time as the Russian aliya, tens of thousands of immigrants from Ethiopia reached Israel. There are many and varied conjectures regarding the origins of the Jews in Ethiopia, who were known as "Beta Yisrael" (community of Israel). According to their own legend, they are the progeny of Jews from the Land of Israel who went down to Ethiopia with the Queen of Sheba and her son Menelik, who was sired by King Solomon and became emperor of Ethiopia. Some hold that the first Jews came to Ethiopia after the destruction of the First Temple, when the Jews exiled from Jerusalem journeyed southward and settled in Yebu (Elephantine) in Upper Egypt. These Jews were unfamiliar with Jewish oral law and detached from rabbinic Judaism. They observed part of the Torah commandments and upheld a tradition different from the one accepted in Judaism

since the Second Temple period. Contact was established with them in the early twentieth century, and some reached Palestine.

Doubts regarding the Ethiopians' Judaism initially prevented the State of Israel from taking any action to bring them to the country. In 1973 Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef declared that they were indeed Jews, and in 1975 they were recognized as entitled to immigrate under the Law of Return. Various Jewish organizations then embarked on a campaign to convince the government of Israel to bring the Ethiopian Jews to the country. At the same time, because of the unstable political situation in Ethiopia, the Jews began fleeing to southern Sudan, where there were UN refugee camps. News reached Israel of these refugees' grave situation, and Mossad operatives were dispatched to facilitate their immigration. During the 1980s some 17,000 Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel, including in the airborne Operation Moses, which delivered close to 7,000. In Operation Solomon in 1991, the government of Israel flew nearly 40,000 Ethiopian immigrants to Israel in one week, for fear that Ethiopia's political instability would put them at risk.

The Ethiopian immigrants were absorbed differently than were the Russians. Theirs was a religious culture but very different from the Judaism accepted in Israel. As part of the rabbinic confirmation of their Judaism, they were required to participate in a token ceremony of "return" to Judaism in which the men had to undergo symbolic circumcision. This requirement cast doubt on their Judaism, causing them—particularly the *kaises*, the community's religious leaders—great offense. In a later episode it became known that the Israeli health authorities were not using blood donated by Ethiopian immigrants for fear of contagious diseases. This incensed the immigrants, who developed rancorous feelings that they were being discriminated against.

The Ethiopian immigrants' socialization and adaptation to life in Israel was relatively difficult and protracted. Assuming that immediate exposure to modern life without proper preparation would cause numerous difficulties for the Ethiopians, the immigrant absorption centers adopted the custodianship method used in the 1970s. For the first two years the children were sent to state-religious schools, on the premise that this educational stream was more suitable than the nonreligious one. Later the parents were allowed to choose the stream they wanted. The government invested much effort in absorbing the Ethiopian immigrants; the cost of absorbing an Ethiopian immigrant was estimated as twice that of a Russian immigrant. The epic of the trek to Sudan in the 1970s, in the course of which many hundreds died, and its stories of heroism form the basis of the Ethiopians' identity as Zionists and Israelis and blend well into the notion of suffering and heroism accepted in Zionism. But their identification with Israel was full of problems because of a profound sense of otherness that deepened in

reaction to the host society's reservations. The transition from the small village in the mountains of Ethiopia to the industrialized, achievement-oriented Israeli society was accompanied by crises in family life, in parent-child relations, and between the parents themselves.

The government and voluntary organizations remain aware of the need for tolerance and allocation of special resources for absorbing the emigrants from Ethiopia. There is somewhat less awareness among the wider population that is called upon to send their children to school with Ethiopian children or live next door to them. Here a reluctance to accept the immigrants' foreignness and their difficulties adjusting to the new reality can be detected. What the future holds is impossible to predict, but the relatively small scope of the Ethiopian aliya leaves room for optimism regarding their integration into Israel's diverse human mosaic.

The 1990s were characterized on one hand by increasing multicultural trends, tolerance toward the other, and a strengthening of the liberal elements of society. On the other, there were heightened tensions among the different sectors of society. The debate surrounding the concept of "Israel as a Jewish and democratic state," which appeared in the Basic Laws of 1992, focused on two rifts that divided Israeli society: between religious and nonreligious Jews, and between Jews and Arabs. The concept of a Jewish and democratic state posits that there is no inherent contradiction between the democratic and Jewish elements of the Israeli identity. A state can be the state of the Jewish people—that is, a state with a Jewish majority, which by its very nature will preserve that majority, whose dominant culture has Jewish characteristics, including the language, calendar, Hebrew culture, symbols, and rituals. Together with maintaining this Jewish character, the state will preserve democratic values such as equality, the rule of law, and participation in political life by all sections of the population.

With respect to the concept of the state as Jewish, there were those seeking to emphasize the universal values inherent in a democracy, who wanted to increase trends toward equality and liberalism, individual rights, and defense of minorities and the weak. They were usually, but not exclusively, nonreligious Jews. The extreme radicals among them tended to highlight the democratic element at the expense of the Jewish one in the equation. Thus the post-Zionists wanted the State of Israel to divest itself of its commitment to the Jewish element and become a neutral, civil society blind to ethnic identity, a "state of all its citizens."

In contrast, two groups sought to emphasize the national-religious-particularist character of the Jewish state. The first consisted of the religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews. The second included nonreligious Jews who were similarly unwilling to preserve and enhance the rights of non-Jews. They did not stop at defining the Jewish state as a state with a Jewish majority and a public space with a Jewish cultural character, but demanded that the state's Jewish nature be

strengthened. This would mean separating Jews from those who are not Jewish according to halakhic law and reinforcing the halakhic justice system and the religious courts. Both groups sought to strengthen the Jewish element at the expense of the democratic one.

Accordingly Rabbi Meir Kahane, founder of the outlawed racist Kach (thus) party, contended that there was an inherent contradiction between a Jewish state and a democratic one—that in fact democracy was in conflict with the state's Jewishness. What was more, some ultra-Orthodox Jews, an important group on this side of the issue, considered secular law normatively inferior to the Halakha. Their commitment to democracy was conditional, and they challenged state law from time to time in favor of the "Opinion of the Torah" or the Halakha. The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the incitement that preceded it demonstrated that fringe groups in Israeli society have no qualms about taking the law into their own hands when they believe there is a conflict between their own system of norms and the country's law.

As for the second rift over the definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state—that between Jews and Arabs—the Jewish population takes Israel being the Jewish state for granted. The vast majority does not doubt the basic justness of Zionism, which sought to build a home for the Jewish people in its ancient homeland. The Law of Return, which grants preferential citizenship rights to Jews and their offspring over other immigrants, seems to the Jews to express the nature of the state as the ingatherer of the Jewish exiles. It is this concept that makes the population of Israel willing to accept the absorption of mass aliyot, despite occasional outbreaks of resentment, as for example when the Mizrachi lower classes felt threatened by the Russian aliya or when the Ethiopian aliya imposed a heavy financial burden on Israeli society. Preserving a Jewish majority in the country is a prerequisite for maintaining this Jewish and democratic character. From the Jews' point of view, this is self-evident. The State of Israel therefore opposes the "right of return" of Arab refugees and also tries to block Arab immigration to Israel from the occupied territories. The fact that the Jews constitute about 80 percent of the citizens of Israel does not allay the feeling of threat regarding this majority's continued existence, given the demands by the Arab refugees and the high rate of population increase among the Israeli Arabs.

For those Arabs this situation appears as a mirror image. To them ensuring a Jewish demographic majority continues the process begun in 1948, which made them a minority in their own land. Over the years the Arabs developed a rhetoric of a "native" minority whose "nativeness" accords it special rights. They have instituted a series of memorial days—Nakba Day, Land Day, Al-Aqsa Intifada Day—that have become the focus of a national myth emphasizing their victimhood at the hands of the Zionist state. Some scholars, such as sociologist Sammy

Smooha, maintain that most Israeli Arabs have a pragmatic attitude toward Israel. They have accepted Israel's existence as the Jewish state, and as citizens seek equal opportunities and cultural autonomy. Others incline toward a less optimistic evaluation. But at least insofar as the Arab population's positions are represented by its leadership, it is not willing to accept the definition of Israel as a Jewish state. According to the Israeli Arab leadership and the intellectual elite, the Arabs of Israel are prepared to accept Israel's existence as a democratic state, but not as a state realizing the Jews' right of self-determination as a nationality—in other words, a Jewish state by definition. They demand that the Law of Return be rescinded, since for them it represents discrimination in favor of the Jews and against the country's Palestinians. They also demand a greater degree of autonomy in education and in managing life in the towns and villages where they constitute a majority.

In the early 1990s Israeli Arabs also made claims for territorial autonomy in Galilee and the Triangle, which they later altered to a demand for nationwide autonomy in education, religion, and culture. Over the years an intelligentsia has emerged among the Arabs of Israel that is fully familiar with state law and ably protects Arab rights. The Supreme Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel, composed of representatives of Arab local authorities, Arab members of the Knesset, and representatives of Arab nonprofit and human rights organizations, constitutes the de facto leadership of this sector, which has an impressive ability to mobilize supporters. The Arabic-language media, television stations, and the internet, in both Israel and the Arab states, boost nationalist trends among the Arab minority. Over recent decades the trend toward Islamization within this minority has strengthened considerably, in parallel with a similar trend throughout the Middle East. The demographic growth of the Arab minority in Israel, which in the year 2000 numbered about 900,000, heightens its self-confidence. Paradoxically this growing self-confidence is evidence that Israeli Arabs are internalizing the Israeli democratic ethos, which enables them to use their numbers to achieve rights and equality.

During Israel's economic development and the increase in the associated liberal trends, the gap in education and income levels between the Arab and Jewish sectors continued to exist. This gap was due to several factors: the constraints imposed on employment of Arabs in security-sensitive industries, Jewish employers' preference for hiring Jews, the low level of education among the Arabs, and the very low participation of Arab women in the labor market. In addition government allocations to the Arab sector for education, development, and industrial projects are far lower than those for the Jewish sector. Discrimination is slowly but surely diminishing, and among Jews there is growing recognition of the need to prevent discrimination in the future. But the prospect of civil equality

in the future does not satisfy the Arab public, and a prominent sector of its elites demands a basic change in the identity of the state as a condition for them to accept it.

The definition opposite to "a Jewish and democratic state" is, as suggested earlier, "a state of all its citizens"—that is, a state that is neutral with respect to nationality and ethnicity, whose citizenship will be solely secular-Israeli. Within the framework of such a citizenship, the entire population would be subject to a single standard in the immigration laws. In fact this would be "a state of all its nationalities," since the Arabs demand recognition as a national group, partnership in decisions pertaining to them, regional autonomy, and equal status for the Arabic language. As an interim stage, the Arabs of Israel seek recognition as a minority with intrinsic minority rights, such as recognition of their organization as a national organization, their leaders' right to represent them on the national stage, and cultural and educational autonomy.

The opposition of the Israeli Arabs—or Israeli Palestinians, in more recent parlance—to recognition of Israel as a Jewish state is reflected in Israeli-Palestinian relations. Many Arabs of Israel vehemently oppose Palestinian recognition of Israel as the Jewish national state in the same way that Palestine will be the Palestinian national state. The Israeli Arabs see themselves as citizens of the state, and as such eligible for all the rights that status gives. But they do not recognize the Jewish state per se as their state, as representing them too. One reflection of this lack of representation is that they do not serve in the IDF; the state exempted them because it doubted their loyalty and also to avoid a situation in which they might find themselves fighting their brothers. But this attitude also appears in their leadership's opposition to young men and women doing any form of so-called national service, such as civil service—even though it would benefit their own people—in hospitals, welfare institutions, and so forth, since such service embodies recognition of the state's authority over them. Their rationale is that "national service" was imposed without their having been consulted. They demand equal rights without the imposition of "national service."

Israeli Arabs' identification with the Palestinian issue has become radicalized, and they are prepared to stretch to the limit their rights under Israeli democracy. Part of their leadership believes it has the license to publicly express its identification with the anti-Israel side, even when Israel finds itself in a state of war with that side—as with Hezbollah, Hamas, or the Palestinian Authority. On the other hand, the Israeli Arabs bitterly oppose suggestions regarding repartition of the country, including transfer of Arab-populated areas on the Israeli side of the Green Line to the PA in return for the West Bank settlements; they accuse the Israelis of racism. The political, economic, and social instability of Palestinian society compared with Israeli democracy (despite all its shortcomings) and the

economic advantages the state affords its citizens make such an exchange option unacceptable to the Arabs of Israel. Nevertheless they continue to refuse to recognize Israel as their state as long as it maintains its Jewish-Zionist character. As a rule the Arab leadership opposes participation by the Arabs of Israel in terrorist acts, but some view violence as a legitimate means of advancing political aims, as manifested in the provocative incitement by these leaders leading to the outbreak of violence in October 2000 described earlier. Even after this traumatic rioting, these leaders would not condemn the use of violence. These events renewed the Jews' deep suspicion of the Arab minority. At the same time, the Arabs of Israel were enraged when the security forces behaved toward them with the same forcefulness used against Palestinians in the occupied territories, instead of with the care due even to violent demonstrations by citizens of the state. The result was to further distance the two communities from each other.

Overall during the 1990s, tensions increased between veteran Israelis and new immigrants, religious and nonreligious Jews, and Arabs and Jews. Mass immigration brought to the surface latent tensions over the nature of Jewish-Israeli identity and in relations between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority. During those years controversy raged between the "new historians," who stressed the injustice done to the Arabs by the establishment of the State of Israel, and historians who saw the new historians' version of the story as both one-sided and a distortion of history. This debate formed a sort of cultural echo around the peace process, posing once again the basic questions of Jewish-Arab relations and raising anew conflicting perceptions of Jewish-Israeli identity.

To mark Israel's celebration of its fiftieth anniversary in 1998, the state television channel aired a documentary series covering those fifty years. The series, *Tekuma* (rebirth or revival), was a continuation of a 1981 series titled *Amud ha'esh* (pillar of fire), which covered the fifty years between the First Zionist Congress and the declaration of the state. *Amud ha'esh* expressed a consensus; it described the Zionist narrative of the history of the establishment of the state. In contrast, *Tekuma* was a critical series that sought to reflect not only mainstream positions but also the views of oppositional movements in Israeli society. Regarding the Israeli-Arab divide it attempted to address not only the Jewish version of the history of the state but also the Arab version. Particularly controversial was the segment on the PLO and the terrorist organizations, which some sections of the public thought tilted too much toward the Arab side. The Jewish-Arab conflict became a popular subject in the arts, theater, cinema, and television. The Israeli cultural scene cultivated the subject of the injustice Israel had inflicted on the Arabs with incessant self-flagellation, in the spirit of the "culture of guilt and remorse," as poet Chaim Gouri termed it.

After the collapse of the Eastern bloc, tours of the death camps and Jewish

commemorative sites in Poland became part of the syllabus for high school students. The journey to Poland was intended to reinforce Israeli youth's awareness of the Holocaust, bring them together with American Jewish youth, who also participated in these tours, and promote a culture of remembrance of the Jewish past. As part of the public debate on post-Zionist identity, the lessons the youngsters should be taught on the tours were debated. Should they be specific to the Jews, along the lines of "the whole world is against us," or universal, in the vein of *If This Is a Man,* by Primo Levi? Should the tours foster latent Jewish existential fears, or reinforce liberal trends against racism and hatred of the other, and for human rights?

The tours did seem to succeed in affirming the young people's Jewish identity, preserving the memory of the Holocaust, and making that memory tangible, due to the participation of Holocaust survivors, who described their personal experiences in the years of horror and turned the foreign scenes of the death camps into something the students could relate to personally. The Holocaust became an integral part of Jewish identity in general and Israeli identity in particular, shared by all Israelis, as well as common ground connecting them with Diaspora Jewry. There was something symbolic in the fact that Chaim Topol played the role of Salah Shabati, the popular hero from the Islamic countries, in the 1950s, and then from the late 1960s onward portrayed Tevye the Milkman, the representative of the Eastern European shtetl Jew who perished in the Holocaust. Israel appropriated the community of remembrance of the Jews who perished as a sort of non-Israeli past that serves as a common emotional foundation for all the Jews of the world.

Side by side with a common Israeli identity, there existed a divided society—or perhaps a society of diverse cultural communities, each of which sought to preserve its uniqueness. The power of the unifying ethos weakened (although it did not disappear), and, when it briefly seemed that the peace process would make it less necessary to strengthen national identity, it was doubtful how solid national solidarity actually was. Increasing materialism resulting from economic growth and the rise in the standard of living alienated those who did not participate in the festival of consumerism. Instead of national solidarity and identity, globalization and multiculturalism became the watchwords. However, the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada confronted Israeli society once again with the existential facts of life in a region that is in perpetual turmoil.

Would the rude awakening from the hopes of peace and tranquility that characterized the 1990s—as represented in Rotblit's song—bring in its aftermath a new solidarity and greater social and cultural cohesiveness? Would the October 2000 clash between the Arab minority and the Jewish majority lead to a rupture or to renewed understanding of the need to find a way toward coexistence? Those ques-

tions have only been answered in part. As we move into the second decade of the twenty-first century, we can likely expect all of the above—and also its opposite.

NOTES

1. In his poem "On the Slaughter," Bialik writes: "If there is justice—let it appear immediately!" The poem was written in 1903 as an almost instantaneous response to the Kishinev pogroms that erupted at the termination of the Passover festival that year. Chaim Nachman Bialik, *Hashirim* (The Poems), Avner Holtzman (ed.), Israel: Dvir, 2004, p. 248.

2. Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace*, New York: Bantam Books, 2008, p. 14.

3. Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005, p. 45.

4. *Al-Ahram*, 11.10.1995, cited in Itamar Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace: The Israeli-Syrian Negotiations*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 195.

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AN INTERIM SUMMARY

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When Herzl published *Der Judenstaat*, many criticized him for linking the fate of the Jewish people to the establishment of a political entity of its own. These critics believed that the Jewish people's ability to exist for thousands of years without such an entity was a virtue worth preserving. Many Jews considered modern nationalism a shameful relic of a bygone era, a reincarnation of tribal particularism that created international tensions, increased separation between nations, and contradicted the steady march of history toward a universalist future in which differences originating in religion, race, or nationality would be eradicated, and a spirit of amity would prevail among humankind. In such a world the Jews would find their place without their own separate entity. Herzl, however, thought that in the era of nationalism, with each nation struggling against others to secure a place in the sun by achieving political independence and defining its national identity—and defining this identity such that the Jew remained extraneous to it—the Jews had no choice but to enter the arena of nationalism and try to create a place for themselves in it.

From the perspective of one hundred years, the course of history seems to incline more toward justifying Herzl's assessment rather than that of the universalists. It is true that globalization trends, open borders, the waves of emigration flooding the world all weaken national identities, alter them, and create supranational structures such as the European Union, which sought to erase the enmities that had caused two world wars and create an inclusive European alliance. Yet transnational trends are under constant attack by forces of particularism that refuse to accept globalization and economic and cultural uniformity. With every economic or political crisis, forces emerge that seek to preserve local identity, a unique culture, and the historical memory of a common past. Splinter groups emerge claiming the right to self-determination and destroy the inclusive units they belonged to in the past. Yugoslavia was broken down among its peoples, Czechoslovakia was divided into two states, nations rose from the ruins of the Soviet empire, including some that never had a discrete identity, and the Basques struggle interminably for autonomy. Europeans are concerned by the increasing Islamization of minorities from Islamic countries who have settled in Europe, and this Islamization is itself a reaction to trends toward uniformity and loss of local identity in European society. Given these developments it seems that the predictions that nationalism would disappear that greeted *Der Judenstaat* were premature.

The establishment of the Jewish state was one of history's rare miracles. A diaspora nation that had not had a political tradition for centuries, had learned how to survive in different climates and under a variety of regimes, and lacked its own power base succeeded within a very short time in laying the foundations for existence in a harsh country, far from economic centers and resources of culture and knowledge. Within half a century the Zionists gained international recognition for the entity they had founded, established a state, gathered in its exiles from the four corners of the earth, and created ex nihilo a vibrant democracy, a modern economy, an impressive defense force, and a flourishing, challenging culture.

It is difficult to find a national movement whose beginnings were less auspicious than those of the Zionist movement, yet today it is considered one of the most successful national movements in history. The Zionist movement had not just to fight the other national claimant to Palestine—the Palestinians. It also had to change the Jewish mentality—Jews' perception of themselves and the world—and create a different Jewish identity that would draw on religious tradition and the Jewish past but also be anchored in the modern world, use logic and reason, and be grounded in the belief that an individual and a people can change destiny and reality. Modernizing the Jewish people went hand in hand with realizing Zionism.

The Zionist movement's ability to enlist the idealistic element of the Jewish people—its youth—resulted from a onetime historical conjunction between the needs of the Jewish people and the spirit of an era in which nations fought for their freedom, empires declined, new states rose, and readiness for self-sacrifice for the good of the nation was part and parcel of the zeitgeist. This was also an era of faith in the possibility of reforming the world, in revolution that would end exploitation and injustice and lead to the kingdom of heaven on earth. Idealism springing from the grand hope of a just society, together with the struggle for national realization, constituted the driving force behind the Zionist movement's momentum in its early days, before it had a tangible basis in Palestine. These idealists, known in the Zionist lexicon as *halutzim* (pioneers), were an avant-garde who made up only a negligible percentage of the Jewish people, but it was they who created the symbols and new images with which Jews could identify and furnished the living example showing that Jews could exist as a nation in the Land of Israel. While most of the Yishuv did not belong to this minority, it accepted the minority's guiding norms, which provided the justification, the path, and the founding myths. It was the *halutzim* who created the role model, hegemonic culture, and dominant ethos of the nation-building process.

The road to fulfillment of the Zionist vision was paved by the twentieth century's great revolutions and catastrophes. World War One, the Bolshevik Revolu-

tion, and the rise of Nazism transformed the Zionist movement from a small group of idealists into a popular movement of people seeking refuge and national identity. It was not the Holocaust that led to the establishment of the state; the state was established despite this catastrophe. The nation whose central branch had been severed by genocide—the branch that had created multivalent Jewish cultures and was the Jewish people's main reservoir of human resources—succeeded, through a heroic upwelling of the will to live, in rising from the ashes, rejecting vengeance, and summoning up its remaining strength to build the Jewish state and society in the Land of Israel. The State of Israel has become the symbol of the Jewish people continuing to live despite catastrophe, a concise expression of the lust for life and vitality of a nation that was on the verge of annihilation. The ability to translate the energies born of great despair into acts of creation and rebuilding made Israel the Jewish people's post-Holocaust rehabilitation project—including those Jews who chose to continue their lives outside it but who believed that the Jews deserved a state of their own.

The Zionist-Israeli project was never consensual. Before World War Two Zionists were a minority among the Jewish people, just like other national movements at the beginning of their roads. After the state was established, various elements of the Jewish population that made their home in Israel adopted different visions of the future. The socialist-pioneering elite that established the state envisioned a just, egalitarian society in which the state was guide and mentor. The state guided the economy, the building of the nation, the nature of its culture, and its formative ethos. In contrast, the Israeli center and right nurtured a worldview of free enterprise, minimal state intervention in economic life, and Western culture. Until the 1970s, with respect to formative ethos and cultural character, the differences between these two streams of thought seem to have been relatively small. Meanwhile running parallel to these two visions were the religious faith, patriarchal tradition, and ethnic identity brought by the immigrants from Islamic countries. For them the mobilizing power of Zionism arose from association with the world of Torah, legend, and messianic belief.

As the State of Israel passed through its embryonic stages and the Zionist revolution became routinized, the pioneering structures that had supported it at the beginning—without which it might not have been able to absorb aliyot and build an economy and society despite severe shortages and a hostile environment—became superfluous. The time had come to be like all the Western countries. This process occurred in tandem with a change in the Western zeitgeist. The crisis period of World War Two and its extension through the Cold War were over. With the rise in the standard of living and the advent of consumerist culture, it was time to lounge in the armchair in front of the television set. The about-turn of 1977 brought a shift from the pioneering mentality to the center-

right worldview—with the latter also captivating the immigrants from Islamic countries, who construed the socialist-elite ethos as a repressive and insulting interference by government bureaucracy in every facet of their life. The slow but sure decline of the socialist vision for the future led to economic growth, entrepreneurial innovation, and integration into the global economy, but it also entailed the loss of the original egalitarianism and social creativity and the dissolution of individual commitment to the state. At the end of the second millennium, Israel increasingly resembled the industrialized Western countries, with all their advantages and disadvantages.

Israel's establishment and existence were and are accompanied by conflict with the Palestinians and the Arab world. The Jews did not return to an empty land. But it was a land that was relatively sparsely populated, and before World War One it was hard to detect nationalist inclinations in its inhabitants. Nevertheless the Palestinians' encounter with Jewish nationalism heightened their awareness of the differences between them and the Jews as well as the presence of a competition for possession of the country. This encounter in fact constituted a vital element in the formation of their national identity. The Palestinians considered the country theirs alone and were unwilling to share it with people they viewed as foreign invaders. The Jews, too, saw themselves as owners of the land, and while they were prepared to allow the Arabs to live in it, they would not countenance sharing ownership. Eventually it became clear that in the race between fulfillment of the Zionist enterprise and formation of the Palestinian national identity and its violent eruption, Zionism was losing. Only then did the Jews agree to partition the country and establish two states, Jewish and Arab. The Arabs, however, did not agree to relinquish their exclusive right to the country and refused to share it. Encouraged by the Arab states' involvement in the conflict, they believed that ultimately the problem would be resolved by force. The collapse of Arab society, the Arab armies' failure in the War of Independence, and the Nakba were revolutionary developments that the Arabs had never imagined. For the Zionists this was the moment when Zionism proved its ability to create a state capable of withstanding a war of survival.

For the Jews the flight or expulsion of the Arabs was an unpredicted but welcome outcome of a war they had not initiated and that cost them heavy casualties. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict did not begin with the 1948 war, but in Arab eyes the war was emblematic of the deprivation inflicted on them by Zionism, which had dispossessed them of their country. The role reversal between Jews and Arabs, with the Jews becoming the majority and the Arabs the minority, was the source of a trauma that still affects the Palestinians. Until 1967 they hoped that "the next round" between Israel and the Arab states would turn back the clock. Since then, and particularly since the 1973 war, they have been forced to accept

Israel as a fact of life. But at the same time, they have never viewed it as a legitimate entity in the Middle East. According to the Arab narrative, Zionism is not a national movement of the Jewish people. For the Arabs there is no such thing as a Jewish nationality but only a Jewish religion; or, in a less harsh interpretation, the Israelis are a nationality, but world Jewry is not. Zionism is therefore not the Jewish people's liberation movement but rather a form of white colonization that stole a country from its native inhabitants.

The outcome is that at the present stage of history the Palestinians are prepared to suffer Israel's existence in the Middle East as an inalienable fact but not to see it as justifiable. Hence their difficulty in reaching a peace agreement, since Israel demands reciprocity and acceptance of its basic demands: that the Arabs relinquish the myth of the "right of return" and the eternal nature of the conflict and recognize Israel as the Jewish national state.

Yet it seems that since Sadat's visit to Jerusalem the delegitimizing of Israel in the Middle East has diminished somewhat. The Zionist movement has come a long way from its modest beginnings to the Arab League's offer of recognition and peace. Despite all the bitterness and violence on both sides, the Land of Israel has not experienced genocide or mass killings such as those that occurred in some European countries, even as recently as the 1990s. Compared with other national conflicts, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains limited, even considering the settlements and Israel's repression of a popular uprising or, on the other side, suicide terrorism. Since Israel is the stronger side in the conflict, it can be said to deserve credit for the moral restrictions it has imposed on itself in this struggle.

Since 1967 the occupation of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip has cast a shadow over Israeli society. The polarization between the supporters of Greater Israel and those favoring "territory for peace" has changed Israeli politics. Whereas previously the division between left and right reflected different social outlooks, now in Israeli politics the signifier of identity—dove or hawk—is one's position on the occupied territories. The dominance of this conflict has shunted aside the issue of further integrating Israeli society itself. The disappointments of the peace process have enfeebled the Israeli left. However, the resulting shift was not to the right but to the center. There is a new, sober readiness for peace among the majority of the Israeli public, but without the messianic fervor that characterized the early 1990s.

An outsider observing Israel today sees a divided society, a decrease in national solidarity, struggles among the various sectors, a weakness in its cohesive tissue. But this view from outside is apt to lead to an erroneous analysis. Was the assessment that Israeli society was crumbling and needed just one last small blow to kill it off that impelled Arafat to intensify the Second Intifada? As it turned out,

when this society full of disparities faces danger from without, it summons the mental fortitude to close ranks, find a common denominator, and muster the courage to face its attackers. Each time this happens, voices are raised asking: why do these wonderful qualities of volunteerism and patriotic devotion only appear at times of crisis?

In the first decade of the third millennium, two books were published in Israel that can serve as guides through the tangle of the Israeli ethos. The first was Amos Oz's *A Tale of Love and Darkness*; it was followed a few years later by David Grossman's *A Woman Flees Tidings*. From the early days of the Zionist enterprise, Hebrew literature has been a seismograph registering the movement's mood and dominant ethos, as well as its conscience and guide. In the 1980s the depression and confusion resulting from the loss of values and consensus in Israeli society were expressed in literary works that described the fear of chaos and the pain of losing the public space to which the earlier literature had been devoted. In the 1990s this vacuum became the subject of the new literature that engaged with nothing.

Now, in response to the failure of the peace process and the Second Intifada's outburst of violence, these two great novels reappropriated the public sphere for literature. Amos Oz tells the story of his family, while at the same time relating the Zionist meta-story. A family of immigrants from Europe puts down roots under the scorching sun of Eretz Yisrael, in an environment hostile to young plants accustomed to greenhouse conditions. The encounter causes suffering and pain but also leads to individual and social redemption and the building of a new world. That is the essence of the Zionist story. Grossman's book describes the unceasing invasion of private space in Israel by the public one, and the impossibility of separating the two. The mother who flees her home in order to avoid seeing the IDF officers coming to inform her of her son's death on active service, and the father of the young man suffering from combat fatigue and torture in the Yom Kippur War, are figures forged in the furnace of Israeli reality. Love of country, coping with the hidden layer of existential anxiety, maintaining a semblance of humanity are all typical motifs in Hebrew literature since the beginning of the twentieth century. Literature that documents nothingness has been supplanted by literature committed to the nation, to society, to all that is human.

Israel is a success story of global proportions; it is a vital, vibrant society with a dynamic economy and an academy that has gained international recognition for standing at the forefront of research, a critical democracy with extreme freedom of speech and insolent and invasive media that never hesitate to expose all the government's weaknesses. Despite constant complaints in the media about human rights, Israel displays sensitivity on these issues, not only to a greater degree

than all other Middle Eastern countries but also more than most of the world's democracies, especially when they feel threatened. Israeli culture is rich, multifaceted, innovative, and constantly renewing itself, with constant confrontations within it between high and popular culture, European and American culture and Mizrachi culture, secular and religious Jewish culture, and so forth—all of which reflect its mosaic of cultural life. Yet Israel still faces world criticism to a degree hard to discover elsewhere. Every action taken by the government of Israel, and every one of its failures, is immediately censured with expressions usually reserved for dark regimes. There is great empathy for the Palestinian issue, while the other side of the coin is ignored.

Many claim that the hostility toward today's Israel is a modern reincarnation of hatred of the Jews, the old antisemitism. If this is true, then it seems Herzl was mistaken in his belief that turning the Jewish people into a people like any other, with its own state recognized by the family of nations, would end antisemitism. But even if this basic premise of the father of Zionism turns out to be wrong, and in the end Israel's existence as an independent Jewish state with military might is fraught with risks and does not ensure the existence of the Jewish people, the great Zionist adventure was and is one of the most astonishing attempts ever made at building a nation: taking place democratically, without coercion of its citizens, during an incessant existential war, and with no loss of the moral principles that guided it.

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