

Tel Hai and Kefar Giladi, both before and after the incident. Nonetheless, in the descriptions of the clash, the identity of the attackers was not pointed out; and at a later stage in the development of the myth, they were not alluded to at all. It is noted that an attack took place, that Trumpeldor was injured and died and other comrades of his killed (without any indication of the circumstances)—but nothing else. In the mythical narrative, it was not clear where the attackers came from or where they disappeared to. In the “canonical” description of the attack on Kefar Giladi that took place several days later, the story always was that the attackers demanded to check whether there were any French hiding at the place, just as they had requested at Tel Hai a few days earlier. This demand added a foreign, nonlocal touch to the Tel Hai episode, as though it did not derive from the sphere of relations between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. That is possibly the key to an understanding of the anonymity of the attackers in the myth that developed. The question of Jewish preparedness to fight and resoluteness of purpose was an internal Jewish matter that was bound up with the norms of Jewish behavior. The Arabs were marginal to the topic, as though not affecting its core. There was need to educate people in terms of a myth of staunch bravery and self-sacrifice. On the other hand, the self-image communicated by the myth was that of “men of work and peace,” who come with intentions to promote peace and development. If the attackers had been depicted in detail, they naturally would have constituted a focus for hatred. Since they remained anonymous—not just individually but even in respect to national origin—it was possible to educate people in terms of a myth of bravery without teaching them to hate. On the other hand, this placing of the attackers in a veil of obscurity also led to the delegitimization of them and their aims. They lost their human shape and form and became stereotypes. While the defenders of Tel Hai took on a dimension greater than life, their attackers were portrayed in flat and nebulous dimensions: a kind of symbol of the force of destruction pitted against the power of creativity and construction.

The 1920–1921 Riots and the Birth of the Defensive Ethos

If contemporaries had been asked whether Tel Hai marked a shift in their conception of Palestinian realities, they most probably would have replied in the negative: When the Tel Hai incident took place, Zionist hopes were still high, there were still expectations for a rapid colonization of Palestine by multitudes of Jews; moreover, there was still a solid trust in the British authorities. The events at Tel Hai were explained as deriving from the political confusion rampant in the region, involved in a struggle between the forces of Faysal and the French in Syria. Nothing of that kind could occur under a British administration—or such was the general assumption. But two events soon transpired that changed the vague, unfocused mood of the previous year into a new understanding of the situation, destined to serve as an emotional, psychological, and rational foundation for the accepted Zionist policies during the next fifteen years. When the shift in perspective came, it found a symbol, a parable, a paradigm in the myth of Tel Hai.

This marked the birth of the *defensive ethos*, a term that here denotes a complex

of attitudes, guiding norms, and ethical and educational concepts that shaped the worldview of a substantial proportion of the Jewish community in Palestine in respect to relations between them, the Arabs, and the British. Such an ethos is molded by a certain self-image of the individual in relation to his environment. Yet in a reciprocal fashion, the ethos reshapes that image as well. The dialectical relationship between ethos and reality derives from the constant tension between the principles a person is bound by, and feels committed to, and his actual everyday behavior. While the myth may be the product of a one-time event that affects human imagination and consciousness, the ethos is created slowly, the product of a process of clarification of ideas and fragmentary attitudes that crystallize in the course of time into a system of guiding principles. Such principles make up the implicit—or, at times, partially tacit—foundation of the ideological or political superstructure. The defensive ethos was also formed in this way. It was not explicitly formulated anywhere by any leader. Nonetheless, the ethos was central in the education of an entire generation. It determined social norms and was significantly responsible for the patterns of thought and behavior that evolved and even for the accepted rhetoric of the time.

The years 1920-1921 witnessed two outbreaks of Arab violence against Jews. The first, the disturbances during the al-Nebi Musa celebrations in April 1920, were limited to Jerusalem. A large angry crowd of Arabs surged through Jaffa Gate into the narrow alleyways of the Old City and attacked Jews whom it encountered along the way. There were also attempts by Arabs to assault Jews in the newer sections of Jerusalem. The second outbreak of violence occurred on May 1, 1921, and continued for several days. This time the center of trouble was Jaffa and the surrounding area. Fifteen young pioneers were killed in the Immigrants' House in Jaffa. Jewish passers-by were cruelly murdered. The writer Y. H. Brenner and five persons who were with him (two of them also writers) were murdered near their home in an Arab neighborhood near Jaffa. There was an attempt to attack Petah Tikvah; Kefar Sava and other small settlements were abandoned and set ablaze. Jewish property was pilfered.

The al-Nebi Musa disturbances took place under the unblinking eye of the British military regime that was charged with exercising supreme authority in Palestine until the signing of a peace treaty with Turkey. Modern research on the military regime has shown that its leaders, Field Marshal Edmund Allenby (at that time commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Forces) and Major General Sir Louis Bols, the chief administrator, were, to put it mildly, quite cool toward the pro-Zionist policies followed by the British government and even tried their hand at various manipulations aimed at bringing about what they considered a necessary volte-face. They wished to unite Palestine and Syria under Faysal's crown in order to strengthen the British toehold in the Middle East against the French and, conversely, to rid themselves of the Zionists. There is evidence pointing to the fact that this position on the part of the heads of the army was made known to Arab leaders and was taken into account by them. There was some basis to the Jewish claim that the authorities were hostile to them and were not fulfilling their obligation to stop incitement and nip angry disturbances in the bud. Just before the al-Nebi Musa celebrations, the army had been ordered to leave Jerusalem, a decision described

by the Palin report on the riots, an indubitably anti-Zionist account, as a serious mistake. Thus, it is no surprise that the Jews interpreted the attitude of the military regime to be one of support for the rioters and their objectives.⁸³

It appears that the British government saw the events in a similar light. A short time later, the decision was made in San Remo regarding the division of the Levant into spheres of influence between Britain and France. Palestine, including its northern section, was subsumed within the territory under British authority; and the Balfour Declaration was incorporated into the agreement between the Great Powers on the future of Palestine. Even though the peace treaty with Turkey had not yet been signed (due to the revolution of Ataturk), the military regime was disbanded. Herbert Samuel, one of the leading figures in the British Liberal party and a proclaimed Zionist, was appointed high commissioner for Palestine in June 1920. For the Jews, this constituted a kind of vindication of their complaints against the military administration and of their expectations regarding the British.

Yet the events of May 1921 erupted less than a year later, under the enlightened administration of Herbert Samuel. They were far worse than those of the previous year in respect to scope and number of victims. Samuel reacted vigorously, calling out the army, making numerous arrests and engaging in collective punishment, particularly the levying of fines on Arab villages involved in the attacks. Yet he also acted to assuage Arab opposition by his declaration of June 3, 1921, whose tone was conciliatory toward the Arabs. Samuel announced that Jewish immigration would henceforth be limited by the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine and that Arabs would be given representation in the legislative body to be set up in Palestine.⁸⁴ Samuel's policies were interpreted by the Jews as submission to violence and capped the process of accumulated disenchantment with the British authorities.

Whoever reads the press of that period cannot but be impressed by the intensity of the sense of grievance and anger among broad circles in the Jewish community in Palestine toward the British authorities. The 1920 disturbances called to mind analogies with the pogroms in Russia. "Will Jerusalem Become Like Kishinev?" shrieked the headline in one newspaper.⁸⁵ "The pogrom against Israel in Eretz-Israel is still continuing," Berl Katznelson proclaimed.⁸⁶ And Brenner quoted a passage from the poem by Bialik "Al ha-shehitah" (On the Slaughter): "The hangman! . . . you have an arm with an axe, and as for me—all the world is my gallows."⁸⁷ Following the disturbances in May 1921, Yavne'eli declared that the riots in Jerusalem the previous year were reminiscent of the Kishinev pogrom; and those of May 1921 reminded him of October 17, 1905 in Russia, the day that signaled the outbreak of the cruel anti-Jewish riots as part of the wave of reaction in the wake of the first Russian revolution.⁸⁸ Quotations from Bialik's "In the City of Slaughter" in the press strengthened the association with Kishinev.⁸⁹ When members of the Hagana were arrested by British officers, an analogy was immediately drawn between these arrests and those by Russian officers of members of Jewish self-defense units during the pogroms in Russia. This analogy occurred quite naturally to those whose youthful experiences were weighed down with painful memories due to the failure of Jewish self-defense efforts as a result of the intervention of the Russian army on the side of the rioters.⁹⁰

At the same time, the paper *Ha-Ivri* (The Hebrew) in the United States pub-

lished an article that denied any similarity between the disturbances in Jaffa and a genuine pogrom. The article stated that what had transpired in Jaffa was basically a number of skirmishes between Arab rioters and Jews defending their possessions—a depiction that was more suited for Zionist propaganda purposes in the Diaspora. This explanation provoked Kushnir's anger, who called the authors of the statement "charlatans," insisting there had been "a genuine, full-fledged pogrom in Jaffa."⁹¹ Yosef Aharonovitz also rejected any attempt to present the events as some sort of squabble: "In Jaffa, there was a murderous pogrom," he stated, "and it is impossible to turn participation in such riots into a matter of simple theft."⁹² The analysis of the events in terms of a model based on Jewish–Gentile relations was shared by moderates and activists alike. M. Gluecksohn responded to the 1921 disturbances with the statement, "This is a 'pogrom' Russian-style, an ordered pogrom organized right from the beginning in all gory details, a pogrom with scores of dead and hundreds of injured, with acts of violence and looting by masses of people, . . . with policemen participating in the acts of murder and pillage,"⁹³ while the activist Ben Gurion wrote, "We who experienced the pogroms knew quite well that without the wish of the authorities and their open or clandestine backing, actively or passively, the task of the pogrom cannot succeed." He went on to depict the riots as a pogrom, secretly encouraged by a segment of the authorities.⁹⁴

Use of the pogrom model derived initially from the availability of that paradigm to this particular public. Persons who had grown up in the Pale of Settlement knew and understood only one type of majority–minority relationship—a situation of domination in which the majority forces its supremacy on the minority by the use of force. The image of the Jew as victim contrasted with the image of the Gentile as murderer, as in Brenner's "He Told Her," was a constituent part of their self-image. Accordingly, Jewish weakness was the cause of the pogrom: "Wherever our numbers are few among many Gentiles, *we are in exile*, even in the place called the Land of Israel."⁹⁵ This was also how they explained the hatred of the Arabs toward Jews: in Palestine, like Europe, antisemitism was due to incitement: "It is a fact that the masses of Russians, Poles, and Arabs are capable of being incited against us and incessantly instigated to commit acts of murder and rape against us, without any limit."⁹⁶ The papers were full of reports about the terrible pogroms taking place at that time in the Ukraine, which had cost the lives of scores of thousands of Jews. The new states established after the war, such as Poland, Romania, and Hungary, were quick to express their newly won sovereignty by means of anti-Jewish riots. Quite naturally, it was assumed that what was taking place in the Ukraine, Poland, and Romania—and concomitantly in Palestine—had a common cause: hatred of the Jews, an enmity that bore no relation to Jewish actions or failings. Rather, according to Brenner, its source was that same curse of being a weak minority scattered among the Gentiles.⁹⁷

There was a double conclusion drawn from this analysis. On the one hand, it encouraged the self-image of the innocent victim, the sacrificial lamb. Zionism wished to liberate Jews from their self-image as victims; but in a paradoxical way, the situation that had developed in Palestine did a great deal to fuel that image, since it gave Jews an immanent sense of being the right side. On the other hand, the con-

clusion drawn was that Jews should do their utmost to liberate themselves from the curse of being a weak minority subject to the whims of the majority. Already shortly after Tel Hai, Shaul Meirov, one of the activist graduates of Herzliya Gymnasia and a central figure in matters of the Hagana, had declared, "We must be a force in the land." He was not referring to military might but, rather, to power in the sense of demography and colonization. Only the immigration of thousands of young Jews could significantly alter the situation in Palestine. The answer to the disturbances was a bolstering of the Jewish community and the expansion of the Zionist foothold in Palestine.⁹⁸

The central component in creating the analogy between pogroms in the Diaspora and riots in Palestine was the stance of the British authorities as perceived by the Jews. The pogroms in Eastern Europe were marked by the fact that they destroyed the sense of security that comes naturally to a person under a stable government. The Jews were not always able to prove that the authorities were really guilty of collusion in planning or carrying out the riots. Yet, from the point of view of the Jewish man in the street, it made no difference if the authorities, for reasons of their own, did not mete out severe punishment to the rioters or hesitated to take forceful steps against them. Nor did it really matter whether some local official, acting on his own or based on a distorted understanding of his superiors' intentions, took steps that could be interpreted as offering encouragement to the rioters—or, indeed, even assisted them. To the Jew, it was ultimately immaterial whether the army prevented Jews from responding against the rioters due to fears that such clashes would get out of hand. The decisive factor was the concrete reality: the fact that he and his family were being exposed to violence and that the authorities did not defend them. Supplement the picture by the arrests and trials of Jews who were found carrying arms or implicated in a fight, and the Jews had no need of any further proof of government policy. It was clear to them that this was an evil-minded, hostile government, which had handed over the Jews to the mercy of the rioters and then was brazen enough to sentence them for the crime of self-defense.

That same logic was applied to the British authorities in Palestine. When the military administration adopted a stance hostile to the Jews during the al-Nebi Musa riots, it became obvious to them that they were facing a familiar situation. First, the authorities reacted with excessive patience to the violent Arab demonstrations in favor of the crowning of Faysal in Damascus, disturbances that developed a strong anti-Zionist character. After that, during the riots, British official behavior was a mixture of indifference and criminal neglect. Finally, they arrested Jabotinsky and his men, who had tried to organize self-defense in Jerusalem. After the riots, they decided to calm the situation and withheld permission for the Jews to put on a large public funeral for the victims. As if that were not enough, most of the rioters were not brought to trial, while Jews caught carrying arms were punished with heavy sentences. Those stiff penalties were canceled only in the framework of a general amnesty that included both rioters and defenders. Thus, it is not surprising that Berl Katznelson referred to the dead victims by the ancient Hebrew expression *harugei malkhut* (those slain by the government). The phrase derived from the annals of Jewish martyrdom after the Bar Kokhba revolt and was used in reference to the Ten Martyrs executed by the Romans. He compared the order issued by the

authorities temporarily prohibiting Jews from entering Palestine to the command by the Roman emperor Hadrian forbidding Jews from entering Jerusalem following the Bar Kokhba revolt. The restrictions on Jews after the riots reminded Katznelson and his comrades of the events in Russia in the spring of 1882; after the “hot” pogrom in the south came the “cold” pogrom of the May laws restricting the area of Jewish settlement and heralding the end of the era of relative liberalism toward Jews. When describing the empty streets of Jerusalem during the funeral of the victims, Katznelson added, almost inadvertently, “There was only a Jew-baiting Russian Orthodox family standing on the balcony, looking on.”⁹⁹

When even more violent riots broke out under the administration of Herbert Samuel, spontaneous reaction patterns among those who had grown up in the Pale of Settlement were further intensified: Even a high commissioner who was Jewish and a Zionist had adopted policies similar to those of the Russian authorities. Once again, “Arabs murdered and looted, and the Jews are the ones held up as guilty and put on trial.”¹⁰⁰ The authorities came out with an explanation that the disturbances had been the result of clashes between Jewish communist and anticommunist demonstrators on May Day. Jews regarded this as sheer nonsense. How could an internal political quarrel among Jews result in horrible murders in a hotel for immigrants in Jaffa? Government communiqués spoke about clashes between Jews and Arabs and tried to play down the fact that the attacks had come solely from the Arab side. Arab policemen had taken active part in the riots and went unpunished. On this occasion as well, the British were quick to arrest Jews who, in defending themselves and their families, had injured their attackers. Stolen Jewish property was not returned, the murderers of Brenner and his friends were not brought to justice. The British put a stop to immigration, and even Jews already on their way to Palestine were returned to their ports of embarkation. Samuel’s speech on June 3, 1921 completed the picture: Once again, the rioters were being encouraged by the authorities—violence was rewarded, the victims punished.¹⁰¹

There is a debate among historians about Herbert Samuel’s policies. Some view his moderate approach as a factor that functioned to reduce Arab militancy and helped postpone the next outbreak until 1929. According to this perspective, his policies were not harmful to the development of the Jewish national home and actually furthered its development by creating a respite period of eight full years of peace—indeed, the longest unbroken span of peace in Palestine under the British.¹⁰² In contrast, others regard his appointment of al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni as mufti of Jerusalem and his attempts to establish a legislative council as vain attempts to appease the Arabs, actually fostering the radical forces among them at the expense of the moderates.¹⁰³ In the eyes of Jewish contemporaries at the time, Samuel was viewed almost as a national traitor, who had sold the Jewish birthright in Palestine for a proverbial mess of red pottage.¹⁰⁴

From that point on, the euphoric attitude toward the British did not reemerge. The view of A. D. Gordon, who right from the beginning had seen them as imperialist occupiers, interested solely and exclusively in what was good for their own rule in Palestine,¹⁰⁵ was shared by many. Again and again, complaints were heard that under the Turkish administration, life and property had been more safe and secure than under the British mandatory regime.¹⁰⁶ The Jews expected that the Brit-

ish would bring home to the Arabs, once and for all, that Palestine was meant for the Jews. Many argued that if the Arabs would finally realize that the authorities were determined to establish a national home for the Jews, they would accept the fact as inescapable and cease their opposition. The unsatisfied Jewish demand for the British to take a "strong hand" constituted an additional source of bitterness and suspicion.

Seemingly, one might have expected that the Hebrew press would be involved in a continuing debate with the Arab claims and arguments against Zionism, Jewish immigration, the Balfour Declaration, and so on. In actual fact, no such discussion developed in the Jewish press. Once again, the Arabs were accorded a marginal role in the great debate being waged in the Hebrew papers, this time with the British. The Arabs were presented in stereotypic fashion, as anonymous figures, a "wild mob," "agitators," or "effendis." There was no Jewish–Arab dialogue and, conversely, no Arab–Jewish dialogue. The two sides in the Palestinian triangle preferred not to establish any direct contact between themselves, but, rather, to communicate by the intermediary of the British administration. The reason was that each of the two sides claimed the land for its own. Any recognition of the adversary and his rights meant giving up the claim to exclusiveness of one's own rights. Yet indirectly, the manifestations of popular Arab nationalism had a significant impact on the Jewish side. As long as the "Arab national problem" existed only in potentia, members of the Poalei Zion party did not hesitate to preach openly and forcefully about the inevitable national clash looming on the horizon in Palestine. But when they were faced with the actual phenomenon, they suddenly stopped acknowledging its existence and began to come up with surrogate explanations for the presence of Arab opposition to the Zionist enterprise.

The early mandate period is characterized by, among other things, the fact that most of the Jews in Palestine shut their eyes to the emergence of an Arab national movement there. Viewing Arab hatred of Jews in terms of a European-style anti-semitism provided a simple and self-evident explanation for Arab manifestations of opposition to Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. The claim that anti-Jewish manifestations by large masses of Arabs did not derive from their own authentic interests but were, rather, the fruit of *agitation* (especially by Christian Arabs) was virtually a logical extension of this notion.¹⁰⁷ It was argued that in addition to the Christians, the effendis and the other Arab notables living by exploitation of the Arab masses were also to blame for the agitation. In Russia, as well, enlightened Jews explained the riots there by claiming that the masses had been stirred up by agitation, instigated to violence by reactionary priests and government officials.

The subject of the subliminal Arab–Jewish dispute centered now on whether Jews were causing any real harm and damage to the Arabs. The Jews argued that Arabs were spreading idle rumors about them: contentions that the Jews intended to rob the Arabs of their land, take their property, and even their women. Jewish immigration was portrayed as a project aimed at dispossessing the Arab population; and the Jewish community, which served as a source of income for Arab villages, was depicted instead as a source of exploitation and robbery. That kind of specious argumentation was easy for the Jews to deal with, since any informed person had

to acknowledge that Jews investing capital in Palestine were creating new jobs and promoting a rise in living standards there, including those of the Arab population. The credibility of Arab arguments suffered as a result.

Thus, the question apparently boiled down to a quite simple one in the eyes of the Yishuv: Was Jewish settlement harming the Arab indigenous population? It was commonly held that the Zionist movement was doing its utmost to assure that no harm came to individual Arabs. Yet this did not provide an answer to the pivotal issue, namely, To whom did the country rightfully belong? In actual fact, this was the central Arab claim: They demanded the right of possession of the land, including the prerogative to prevent Jewish immigration, which they viewed as a factor that in future might endanger their control of the country.

The Jewish response to that claim was ambiguous. Jews demanded their right to settle side by side with Arabs in Palestine, by dint of their historical claim, their current plight, and the promises they had been given. In 1919, when hopes were still flying high, Jabotinsky gave a speech before the Palestinian council, presenting a plan for a Jewish government in Palestine. He did not hesitate to make clear his conviction that that government would have to be exclusively Jewish. The meeting ended with cries, "It all belongs to us, all of it is ours!"¹⁰⁸ In 1920, Brenner made a distinction between Arab opposition to a future Jewish state—for which he had no satisfactory answer—and opposition to Jewish settlement in unpopulated areas. Brenner regarded the latter opposition as unjustified: "We are in the right here."¹⁰⁹ After the 1921 riots, Mordechai Kushnir, the most moderate of the moderates, wrote: "Whether the Arabs like it or not, Palestine is one of the countries open to European immigration. . . . They won't be able any longer to occupy the land simply by sitting with their legs crossed, under their Ishmaelian garb, smoking their waterpipes."¹¹⁰

From the early 1920s on, frequent use was made of the argument that the Jews wished to settle only in the areas not inhabited by Arabs. The Jews were not coming to dispossess the Arab community but, rather, to establish a Jewish community side by side. The land was spacious enough for both Arabs and Jews. Brenner protested, "Are all the expanses of Arab lands—half-deserted—too little for the Arab nation that it cannot tolerate the notion that Jews will come to settle in a land that was once the land of their fathers when, for some of these Jews, that settlement is a question of life or death?"¹¹¹ Both Jabotinsky and Brenner shared the idea that the existing world order, including the current division of lands, was not morally binding and was subject to change. The socialist Zionists espoused the notion that just as it was unjust for one individual to have great wealth while others starved, so it was unjust for one people (the Arabs) to have land without end while another (the Jews) was doomed to destruction, lacking any territory it could call its own.¹¹²

This argument came close to defining the existence of two systems of justice: formal and supreme. It did not negate the Arab point of view (as other arguments put forward by the Jews had) but set out priority scales based on the needs of two peoples. Existential necessity gave priority to the Jewish claim to settlement in Palestine over the Arab claim that it be kept for the Arabs alone. This approach was indicative of a subliminal level in the debate, with Arab arguments familiar from the Arab press. On the whole, the dispute was not carried on directly with the Arab

side. Rather, it was an internal Zionist debate on the question of the inherent justice of the Zionist claim to Palestine and whether it did or did not entail encroachment on Arab rights.

The clearer the magnitude of Arab opposition and the sensitivity of the British to that opposition became in 1920–1921, the greater was the tendency to focus Zionist arguments on the socioeconomic aspects of Jewish–Arab relations, disregarding the broader political issues. Characteristically, it was Brenner who gave the most pointed expression to this approach: “Perhaps tomorrow the Jewish hand writing these words will be stabbed,” he wrote prophetically: “Some ‘sheikh’ or ‘hajj’ will thrust his dagger into that hand in front of the British governor.” But Jews who remained alive would recount, “We are the victims of evil, the victims of the wicked desire to augment power and wealth, victims of imperialism. . . . Not ours. We had no imperialist ambitions. We did not want to create governments here. We only wished to settle desolate lands with Jewish immigrants, to establish a Jewish community side by side with that of the Arabs. The Arab laborer is our brother. . . . The day will come when there will be a strong tie between us, the workers of Israel, and them, the Arab workers.”¹¹³

This passage contains most of the main components of the defensive ethos: The Jews have no aspirations to rule in Palestine—they are coming to colonize the wilderness and to develop regions that to date have gone unploughed. They bring tidings of progress and development to the land, for the benefit of all its inhabitants. The clash of interests between Jews and Arabs is not the product of a genuine contradiction in interests between two peoples. Rather, it is the result of agitation and incitement by the reactionary elements among the Arab people, who are motivated by the fear of the progress and change now being ushered in by the Zionist colonization. In addition, the ruling power, guided by imperialist motives, has acted to undermine relations between the two peoples in Palestine: In order to maintain power, it is pursuing a policy of “divide and rule.” “Perfidious Albion” is infamous for such policies; thus, it is no surprise that its rule has led to Arab outbreaks against Jews. The likening of the high commissioner to Pontius Pilate put the final touch on this picture.¹¹⁴ In Palestine, as elsewhere, the Jews remain the weaker element, insulted and injured. But while the strength of antisemitism is growing throughout the world and Jews are losing ground everywhere, there is still hope in Palestine that in the distant future, the Arabs will understand their folly.

The passage highlights the major change that took place in self-image and understanding of the realities in Palestine during the early period of the British Mandate. During 1919 and 1920, Zionist hopes soared. It appeared as though all the dreams of Jewish independence in Palestine were on the verge of immediate realization. Yet it soon became clear that there was another claimant to Eretz Israel, who vented his anger in violent outbursts. These outbreaks exposed once again the true reality, namely, the existence of an active volcano threatening to erupt in Palestine. In his eulogy on the murdered Brenner, Rabbi Binyamin wrote: “Brennerkel! The volcano is still smoking, erupting, spewing forth its dark and fuming lava.”¹¹⁵

The ambiguous stand of the authorities toward these realities also became evident. There was a need to respond to this official stance on two planes: that of action and that of ideas. In the domain of action, the conclusion was “In your blood shall

you live!” The defiant slogan “In place of each one killed, thousands more shall come” began to circulate in the Yishuv soon after Tel Hai; it took on added meaning after the riots of 1920 and 1921. Following the 1921 disturbances in Jaffa, a poem by David Shimonovitz was published that gave vent to the action principles of the defensive ethos:

Do not mourn,
Do not lament,
In a time like this,
Do not lower your head . . .
Work, work!
Plowman, plow!
Sower, sow!
In a bad moment,
Double the toil,
Double the product.¹¹⁶

The optimistic aggressiveness of earlier years had vanished. People grit their teeth and braced for greater efforts. Yet this was not a return to the ethos of the Second Aliyah. At that time, no one had thought in earnest about the real possibility of a Jewish state in the near future. Now, in the secret recesses of the heart, hopes stirred for Jewish sovereignty. But the naive candor of the early years of the British Mandate did not return—a self-imposed censorship reigned supreme.

The realization that the establishment of the Jewish state would be a lengthy, tiring, unglamorous process intensified in 1922. The five previous years had been characterized by hopes for a “shortcut.” The revolutionary era catching fire then in Europe also cast its shadow on Palestine. Everyone talked in terms of historical breakthroughs. The messianic hopes that had sparked the men of the Jewish Legion were triggered by the belief that, in the course of but a few years, Palestine would become a Jewish state. It was in this mental climate that the aging Nordau suggested the idea of instantaneously transporting half a million young Jews to Palestine, accommodating them in temporary camps, like soldiers, until housing and work could be provided. In one fell swoop, he wanted to transform the demographic balance in Palestine in favor of the Jews, thus paving the way for Jewish sovereignty based on majority rule. Jabotinsky was also thinking along similar lines. When he developed his Plan for Temporary Government in Palestine in 1919, he assumed that the Jews were still a minority there and therefore that the British “trustee” should rule the country in the meantime. However, that arrangement was viewed as a transition phase on the way to full Jewish power in Palestine.¹¹⁷ His untiring campaign until 1922 for the survival of the Jewish Legion was also based on the hidden assumption that it was possible by a single act to change the balance of power in Palestine and to bring about the immediate establishment of a Jewish state. If an important leader like Jabotinsky, who lived in Palestine and was familiar with the situation, continued to think that it was feasible to change demographic and political realities within the course of a few years, it was no wonder that the Jews of Eastern Europe, who clutched passionately at any hope for salvation, gave the events an exaggerated interpretation. At the 1920 Zionist Convention in Lon-

don, the first Zionist gathering after the end of the war, representatives from Eastern Europe attended, carrying in their pocket lists of proposed ministers for the Jewish state that they assumed was about to be set up.

Ideas about a shortcut were not limited to the Right and Center of the Zionist movement. They were no less familiar, and perhaps discussed even more often, in the socialist wing of the movement. In their thinking, a nationalist vision was amalgamated with a socialist one: At the beginning of the 1920s, the small Labor movement in Palestine was inspired by an eschatological ecstasy bent on immediate realization of its vision of constructing a Jewish society based on socialism. The central concept of the *Ahdut ha-Avoda* party was the idea that it was possible to accelerate the pace of historical processes by the energetic efforts of a determined vanguard. A similar concept had been elaborated by Nahman Syrkin since the turn of the century and was current in Palestine already during the Second Aliyah, namely, that the Jewish entity in Palestine could be built up by following a socialist path. The success of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, which stirred the hearts of socialists in Palestine, provided a model for the implementation of the idea. Socialism and an independent Jewish government were, in their view, two interconnected and inseparable components. The two were to be realized here and now. The dimension of immediacy was immanent to the conception of a shortcut. Just as the revolutionaries in Russia did not wait until the historical process envisaged by Marx had come to fruition but forced the issue, the socialists in Palestine should, it was argued, also serve as the midwives of history and hasten revolutionary change there.

This was the idea behind Ben Gurion's proposal to establish the Workers Company of the General Labor Federation of Hebrew Workers in Palestine as a general commune. The workers would be members in that commune, work within its framework, and their needs would be provided for by the commune in egalitarian fashion. The Workers Company was meant to be a stimulus and lever for building Palestine as a Jewish socialist country. At that time, the *He-Halutz* comrades of the dead hero Trumpeldor set up a unit named the Brigade for Labor and Defense in Honor of Joseph Trumpeldor. Its objective was defined as that of "building up the land by means of a general commune." They were also certain that their vision could be made concrete reality within the span of a few short years.

In addition to the general enthusiasm for the Bolshevik revolution and the aspiration to emulate the Soviet experience in Palestine, the belief in a socialist shortcut drew its sustenance from the economic fact that private capital remained hesitant to invest in Palestine, an undeveloped country replete with risks and situated far from Europe in the Middle East. The Jewish middle class regarded Palestine as a kind of risky adventure that still had not proved its viability. Consequently, the main human resource available to the Zionist movement was the young pioneer, motivated in equal measure by national and socialist ideals. It was reasonable to presuppose that those young people would attempt to build a society in their own image. The Zionist Organization was preparing to set up a fund for the colonization of Palestine based on the generosity of the Jewish people—the *Keren Ha-Yesod* (Palestine Foundation Fund). Within a few years, the fund was supposed to raise some twenty-five million pounds sterling. The combination of national capital and young socialists prepared to implement their hopes made the idea of building a

socialist society in Palestine—here and now—an option that many considered feasible.¹¹⁸

Already in 1920, the sober-minded among the Zionists started to have certain doubts about the shortcut. The May 1921 riots galvanized a change in their thinking. Basically, this was the context of the dispute between Weizmann and Jabotinsky that intensified during those years, touching on the question of the limits of the possible from the Zionist perspective. Jabotinsky still believed that the Zionist leadership could induce the British to pursue policies that would facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national entity in Palestine at an accelerated pace. In contrast, Weizmann felt that the opportune moment from the Zionist perspective had already passed. The frozen sea of international politics (to use an expression coined by Lloyd George), which had thawed during the war, had frozen over once again. British public opinion had increasing reservations about costly policies abroad, resulting from the need to maintain an army and put down local uprisings. British policy in Egypt, Iraq, and Transjordan was aimed at providing a certain degree of independent government in return for guaranteeing peace and quiet and securing British strategic interests. Those interests were principally concerned with safeguarding open routes to India. (Oil did not appear as a central factor until after World War II.)¹¹⁹ Weizmann believed that under such circumstances, there were no prospects for the Zionist movement to tally up further achievements: Its immediate task was to mobilize its full strength to make the British fulfill their commitments contained in the mandate charter. The center of gravity of Zionist activity would, he believed, have to shift from political efforts to the sphere of settlement so as to provide a demographic, economic, and social base in Palestine. As a disciple of Ahad Ha-Am who found himself implementing Herzl's political program, Weizmann understood relatively early on (and sooner than many of his associates) that the revolutionary moment in the history of the movement had passed and that the time had come to return to the evolutionary *modus operandi*.

Arab opposition to the Zionist enterprise in Palestine was the central factor in shaping the cautious policy adopted by the British; consequently, it did exercise an indirect influence on Zionist strategy. Yet no less than this, the transition from the shortcut conception to an evolutionary policy was dictated by limitations in human and financial resources and the organizational capacity of the Zionist Organization during those formative years. It had no practical experience in organizing emigration or colonization work; and when it faced the Third Aliyah (1919–1923), it was totally helpless. The new immigrants were unable to find employment in Palestine. After a short time, the Zionist Organization sent a telegram to the Diaspora with the message *Don't come!* The great mountain of the Palestine Foundation Fund had labored and brought forth a mouse: After several years of fund-raising, a total of some two million pounds sterling was collected. Despite its impressive successes in the political domain, the Zionist Organization did not show great competence in mobilizing the Jewish people for the project of building up Eretz Israel. The transition to an evolutionary approach, labeled “one more acre, one more goat,” (an expression used derogatorily by some, in praise by others), was due as much to the obvious difficulties inherent in a project of mass immigration and of an urban European people and its colonization in the Eastern Mediterranean as to political problems.

Weizmann's victory in the Zionist Organization over Louis Brandeis and his faction—likewise in 1921—marked the ascendancy of the evolutionary approach. Brandeis and his associates thought in terms of large-scale, carefully planned activities. The first stage was aimed at establishing an infrastructure, only after which the actual colonizing activity would begin. The type of settler Brandeis envisaged was similar to that of the Puritans who had settled North America during the early colonial period. He did not take the constraints of Palestine into account, in particular the problem of timing: Postponement of immigration and colonization to a later date could have run up against unfavorable political circumstances that might have prevented colonization completely. The Zionist Organization had no experienced rural workers at its disposal, as called for by Brandeis. Rather, colonizing work was carried forward by the Zionist pioneers who were available, full of enthusiasm but lacking in experience—experience that could only be gathered by trial and error during the process of colonization. Jabotinsky supported Weizmann in his struggle with Brandeis but soon parted ways with him, unable to accept the latter's step-by-step policy, which he believed conflicted with Zionist interests.¹²⁰

Paradoxically, Weizmann obtained backing from the Palestine Labor movement. The crisis of the Third Aliyah (which peaked in 1923) brought home the realization that hopes for an *immediate* Jewish socialist state in Palestine had no basis. The sense of crisis had begun with Tel Hai and gathered credibility with the disturbances in 1920 and 1921. When organizational and economic constraints were added, many understood that the intoxicating days predicting the dawn of the messianic age were a thing of the past. Now, a gray and tedious period of slow and difficult labor set in, colonizing Palestine by means of a protracted process whose end could not be envisioned. Some were shattered by this realization. The Labor Brigade never recovered from the precipitous descent from the heights of a faith buoyed by the notion of the shortcut to the harsh and sobering realities of the everyday pedestrian problems that the Zionist movement had to grapple with. Others, such as the leaders of the Ahdut ha-Avoda party, adapted to the change with a grinding of teeth. Yet in their secret heart, there continued to burn the hidden ember of hope for the revolution to come—a revolution in both the Zionist and socialist sense.

The evolutionary conception was based on the assumption that time was on the side of the Zionist project and that Zionist policy had to be oriented toward gaining precious time for the purpose of building the Jewish infrastructure in Palestine. The defensive ethos was an integral component of the evolutionary concept: It provided the Zionist enterprise with the requisite breathing space in respect to the Arab problem and the clash with Arab nationalism. The interpretation of the Arab problem based on concepts derived from the domain of Jewish-Gentile relations in Eastern Europe transformed it: From a dispute between two peoples over one and the same piece of land, it was changed into a problem bound up with the backwardness of Arab society. Seen in this light, it was thought that the Arab problem would fade away with further progress and societal advancement. Ironically, the conclusion drawn from this approach was that an Arab national problem did not exist. Hence, after the 1921 riots, most of the editorials in the Zionist press in Palestine and abroad explained the events as the product of incitement.

One exception in this respect was a young leader of the Ha-Poel ha-Tzair party,

Chaim Arlosoroff. In an article published at that time, he noted that the Arab movement in Palestine lacked many characteristic attributes common to national movements in Europe. But, he argued, one key fact should not be disregarded: This was a genuine national movement that had the gift for mobilizing and organizing the masses.¹²¹ Both Arlosoroff and those who denied the existence of an Arab national movement drew a similar practical conclusion, although for different reasons. All wished to reduce tensions and return to a situation of peace and quiet in Palestine. Arlosoroff did not believe in the policy of the strong hand. He regarded a reconciliatory approach as the only effective way to engage in dialogue with the Arab National movement (which is why he had a favorable opinion of Herbert Samuel's policies). The others, in contrast, wanted peace and quiet as a means to settle the land without having to resort to the use of force.

There were several factors underlying the denial of the existence of the Arab problem that was prevalent during the first fifteen years of the British Mandate. First of all, the weakness of the Zionist movement in Palestine played a role. Even in the days of the Second Aliyah—largely a select group of idealistic immigrants—it was difficult for people to accept living in constant conflict with the Arabs. This was all the more true in the mandatory period, when the immigration was no longer composed of young, carefree pioneers but also included fathers of families, especially starting in 1924. The thought of life in the shadow of a volcano may have sounded romantic to youth, but for adults it contained an element that was frightening. At the end of the 1920s, Jews amounted to some 20 percent of the total population in Palestine. Those were not encouraging figures if one lived in the awareness of an unavoidable confrontation with the majority population. It was not farfetched to draw anti-Zionist conclusions from this demographic balance of forces. What was more natural than to suppress the reasons for the danger by presenting the disturbances as resulting from Arab misunderstanding of Jewish intentions, instead of a genuine clash of interests. Given the weakness of the Jewish community in Palestine, the perspective of peace was vital to the survival of the Zionist vision.

Zionist propaganda sought to present the Zionist enterprise to world opinion (particularly British public opinion) as a project of peace that could provide an answer to the injustice done by European peoples to the Jewish people. Accordingly, that solution could not involve large expenditures or unpleasant consequences, such as the oppression of the local population. The propaganda sketched an idealistic picture of a land being built by a unique colonizing enterprise, bringing peace, blessings, and progress to the entire region. Confronting the existence of an Arab national movement would have led to the conclusion that settlement of Palestine by Jews was likely to entail clashes with the Arab inhabitants. Such reasoning might well do harm to the international status and position of the Zionist movement, and reduce its public and political support. The Zionist interest in gaining valuable time necessarily meant avoiding the issue of a Palestinian Arab national movement.

Moreover, the Labor movement in Palestine in the 1920s needed to be reassured by a profound sense of the justice of its way, not only from the national viewpoint but also from the socialist perspective. The magnetic attraction of Soviet Rus-

sia was at its high point during that period. Alert and active young Jews in Eastern Europe were attracted by the sun of change rising in the East. In Palestine, the Jewish Labor movement was engaged in a difficult competitive struggle with the Left for the soul of Jewish youth. One of the issues that left-wing opponents seized upon in their attacks against the Zionists was the Arab question: Is the establishment of a Jewish society in Palestine harming the local Arab population? More generally, how does the Zionist movement plan to deal with the existence of an Arab majority in Palestine? On one occasion, a young leader of the underground Zionist youth movement in the Soviet Union met with one of the leaders of *Ahdut ha-Avoda*, who happened to be in Moscow at the time, and proceeded to bombard him with questions about the "Arab problem." Finally, the latter replied in Yiddish: "Listen, have you already solved the Jewish problem that you're bugging me so much with the Arabs?"¹²² If this is how Zionists who risked their lives for their Zionist principles felt about the issue, how much more would others who were on the borderline between Zionism and communism?

The struggle between Zionism and communism also continued among the pioneers who emigrated to Palestine. In the light of the disappointment after the failure of the shortcut approach, all the vulnerable points of the Zionist project were more accentuated, among them the "Arab question." The settlement of the Jezreel Valley, on lands purchased by the Jewish National Fund from the Lebanese Sursuek family, entailed the removal of Arab tenants. This left its psychological traces on the young socialists from the Labor Brigade who had come to settle in the place. The press avoided expressing those sentiments, due to internal censorship; but there can be little doubt that the question was often discussed in the tents pitched in the Jezreel Valley.¹²³ The boon of material progress Jews were bringing to Palestine could serve as a suitable answer to the embarrassment as long as the national consciousness of the Arab population there was rudimentary. But as soon as the problem could no longer be explained by economic, social, and cultural concepts and had to be faced as an issue of nationalism, the built-in difficulty became far more pronounced. How could a movement aspiring to justice, like that of the Zionists, find itself embroiled in a conflict with another national movement?

In paradoxical fashion, it was their comprehensive belief in the justice of national movements and the right of peoples to self-determination that ruled out the possibility of recognizing the existence of an Arab national movement. Openly acknowledging its presence would have engendered an intolerable welter of internal contradictions. In this regard, the defensive ethos provided an answer to extremely profound psychological needs. That ethos taught that the Zionist project was not one of conquest but, rather, of settlement. It was an enterprise of peace and brotherhood, aspiring to build a socialist society, holding out a hand of friendship to Arabs. For the time being, as Brenner commented, that outstretched hand had been rejected; but in the future it would be welcomed. Objectively, there was a class solidarity and unity of interests between Jewish and Arab workers; but the Arab ruling classes, for class interests of their own, had prevented the simple masses from understanding this fact.

This concept had already been broached by Brenner, on the eve of his murder, in his description of a meeting between himself and some Arabs in the orchards

near his home. He describes their appearance as inimical and alien, and they failed to return his greeting. Arabs occupied a low rung on the scale by which Brenner evaluated non-Jews. He certainly preferred Russians or Latvians, placing Arabs on the same level as the “Eastern Poles,” whom he despised. Yet he met one young Arab boy, a farm hand; and, in broken language, a conversation had developed between them. Now Brenner’s heart longed for that simple young man: “Working orphan! Young brother!” He wanted to have ties with *him*, not with the hostile *effendis*.¹²⁴

The defensive ethos repressed the basic facts of the existing confrontation between Jews and Arabs, painting it in comparatively optimistic colors. By obscuring the national character of that clash, this ethos proposed other alternatives for the system of future relations between the two peoples, based on economic and social cooperation. It transferred the potential for aggressive feelings from an entire collective to individuals in that community and acted to suppress any impulse for hatred. In a situation of colonization and national confrontation, that ethos advocated a perspective of peace and fraternity. In the eyes of the Zionist socialists, the fact that those who attacked Jews were largely simple workers did not compromise the class explanation, just as the fact that the rioters in Russia had been ordinary people did not prevent Jewish revolutionaries from admiring the Russian masses. The defensive ethos contained a satisfactory explanation for the contradictions of the present and held out hope for a better future.

One of the consequences of this approach was a mythologization of the Arabs. As long as Arabs remained alien to Jews and there was little direct familiarity, that explanation was able to retain its validity. The operative model of Jewish–Arab relations was not based on real, flesh-and-blood Arabs. Rather, it was nurtured by an abstraction, an image of the Arab created by the Jews for their own psychological needs. That apparently helps to account for a paradoxical fact: The Jewish community most distant from, and alien to, Arabs in Palestine was that of the socialist workers.

The defensive ethos blended well with the evolutionary approach in an additional sense, namely, its opposition to setting up an army. Disappointment with the legion had led to antimilitarism. The lesson of Tel Hai was that defense had to spring from labor. The Ahdut ha-Avoda party hoisted the flag of a popular militia, and established the Hagana organization in 1920. Later on, the Hagana was placed under the control of the General Federation of Jewish Workers in Palestine (the Histadrut), founded the end of that year. Brenner, who was present at the Kinneret convention of Ahdut ha-Avoda when the Hagana was set up, waxed uncharacteristically eloquent, using superlatives in his description of the men of the Hagana who had participated in the deliberations (apparently Eliyahu Golomb and Dov Hoz). “Happy the man who was privileged to have been at that occasion,” he wrote afterward.¹²⁵

Establishment of a Jewish organ for self-defense reflected a sobering awakening from the illusory hopes placed in the British administration and a return to patterns of traditional Jewish behavior toward the authorities. It also pointed to the fact that the Jews would be a minority in Palestine for a long time to come and would need to be defended against rioters. While Jabotinsky’s legion had been designed to dem-

onstrate Jewish superiority in Palestine, the Hagana was meant to conceal the true dimensions of Jewish military capabilities, clothing these in a system of construction and settlement. It constituted a kind of emergency instrument that can prove useful in difficult times but is better if not needed. The legion held out the prospect of a dramatic change in the status of Jews, one that in the end was not realized. The Hagana heralded a new recognition: It was now clear that Zionism would not be achieved by means of dramatic deeds but, rather, by small mundane acts devoid of glory, such as the purchase of land, one acre after the next, and of weapons, revolver after revolver. The barefooted revolutionary and the members of self-defense units from the Diaspora served as models for the Jewish defender in Palestine. The myth of Tel Hai—with its modest bravery, simplicity, and absence of symbols of power—left its impact on the landscape of Palestine and became the prime formative symbol of the defensive ethos.

All this might have been acceptable were it not for one fact: the basic difference between the reality in Palestine and Russia. Despite the minority status of Jews in Palestine, the relationship between them and the Arab majority bore little similarity to that between Jews and Gentiles in the Ukraine. As I have mentioned, the persistent self-image of Jews in Palestine was that they were a nation in embryo, the legitimate lords and masters of that land, aspiring to alter the balance of power there between Jews and Arabs. Although it contained elements similar to clashes between a violent majority and a persecuted national minority, the Jewish–Arab conflict in Palestine was ultimately a clash between two peoples competing for the same country. This fundamental political element was totally lacking in relations between Jews and non-Jews anywhere in the Diaspora. Jews in Palestine were not simply innocent victims and did not view themselves as such. Rather, they conceived themselves as fighters dying in a battle for their homeland. Hence, the model of relations between Jews and non-Jews from Eastern Europe was only externally applicable to realities in Palestine and did not, in fact, provide an answer to the fundamental problem. That was why even Brenner had contradicted himself when dealing with this issue. On the psychological level, there is no doubt that Brenner saw the Arabs in Palestine through the spectacles of the man who had written “He Told Her” and whose sister had been murdered in the 1905 riots in Russia.¹²⁶ All his life, he had sensed the dread of the volcano physically. He also despised the Levantine way of life and was anything but enchanted by the so-called magic lure of the East. At the same time, he was cognizant of the fact that in Palestine, Jews saw themselves simultaneously as both a majority and a minority: a majority in their claim for sovereignty, and a minority in their demand for protection. Thus, his explanation that the al-Nebi Musa disturbances were the result of imperialistic machinations by the British demonstrated a surprising lack of consistency.¹²⁷ His characteristically open-eyed and sober perspective, devoid of illusions regarding Jewish–Arab relations in Palestine, went through a certain metamorphosis in the last year of his life—as though he, too, had been wooed by the defensive ethos and had embraced it as a factual truth.

For the scholar, the defensive ethos poses certain difficulties. To what extent, for example, did the authors and promoters of this ethos genuinely believe in its fundamental structure? Those structural features included the self-image of the Jew

as victim, derived from the analogy to Jewish–Gentile relations in the Diaspora; presentation of the Jewish–Arab clash as a product of class agitation, holding out a positive perspective for the future; and accusations that the British were promoting the conflict for their own sinister motives. The concrete upshot of this was that the clash was accorded less importance and an optimistic belief was cultivated that Jewish settlement in Palestine could progress peacefully. These features appeared in various forms and contexts throughout the entire period of the mandate. At this stage, it is impossible to answer in an unambiguous manner the question to what extent they believed in it. Already in 1920, in his address to the delegation of Brit Poalei Zion, Yitzhak Tabenkin, one of the three leaders of Ahdut ha-Avoda (along with Berl Katznelson and Ben Gurion), used explanations integral to the ethos, such as suspicion regarding the foreign ruler, the negative role of the effendis in the framework of Jewish–Arab relations, and the need for self-defense. Conversely, Tabenkin had certain flashes of insight hinting at a different interpretation, such as the following: “Political necessities are forcing the leaders of Zionism to foster the illusion that we can settle the land peacefully and in agreement with the Arabs.”¹²⁸ In reference to Weizmann’s efforts to arrive at a general agreement with the Arabs, according to which the Jews would recognize Arab sovereignty in Syria in return for Arab abandonment of any claim to Palestine, Tabenkin declared: “I don’t believe in a compromise of that kind. Those are false hopes.” The frequent use of the concept *false hope* or *illusion* regarding a Jewish–Arab peace agreement is significant. He also added: “There are those who think the problem will be decided by war. But we are not strong enough for that.”¹²⁹ It would appear that at this point in time, Tabenkin did not share the optimism of the defensive ethos. However, he recognized that the Jews were still weak and rejected the possibility that a violent confrontation at that stage could decide matters in their favor. Consequently, despite his inherent pessimism, he adopted the practical conclusions drawn on the basis of the defensive ethos as an advisable approach, namely, settlement by peaceful means and expansion of the Jewish hold on the land.¹³⁰

These fragmentary comments by Tabenkin suggest the contours of a clandestine debate centered on the key questions of Zionist strategy that was apparently going on at the time, far removed from the limelight of the press. Was it possible to settle Palestine peacefully, or was a violent clash between Jews and Arabs inevitable? In the 1920s, all were apparently in agreement that it was too early to arrive at any conclusive answer. For the moment, the necessity of the hour was to push ahead with settlement of the land; and the explanatory line adopted had to be based on principles of the defensive ethos. There were those who honestly believed its principles, while others accepted only a portion of its elements. And there were some who apparently viewed it as, at best, an expedient propaganda line and an important instrument for education.