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Consolidation, 1939–1947

The nine years between September 1939 and May 1948 were perhaps the most traumatic in Jewish history. World War II, the Holocaust, the problem of the Jewish refugees, the struggle to establish a Jewish state, and, ultimately, the emergence of that state were a series of events that left contemporaries stunned by their magnitude and breathless by their rapidity. If someone in the Jewish community in Palestine had prophesied in 1939 that Jews would have a state of their own within nine years, he would have been branded a visionary. There was no one who even imagined that the Jews of Europe were facing imminent destruction. Those who pondered the approaching war and its conjectured impact on the Jews in Europe thought in terms of previous conflicts and familiar types of calamity: hunger, refugees, the hardships of warfare, pogroms. Human imagination did not extend beyond that perimeter of possible catastrophe. The Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, the two foci of the era's ellipse, were conceived as the pole of destruction and the poll of redemption. "You are a last true kindness for those who lie still / And a grace of a first smile for those who survived, empty," wrote Nathan Alterman, describing the "morning star," that star of hope that would rise after the night of the slaying of the firstborn, in "Poems on the Ten Plagues," his first response to the Holocaust.[1]

Between these two momentous polar events lay a series of other significant developments. Rommel's forward drive in the West Egyptian desert (spring 1941 and 1942), a campaign that prompted the British authorities to make plans for a total pullback as far as Iraq, had a profound impact on the psyche of the Jewish community in Palestine. The Yishuv feared the worst and felt it was faced with a harrowing possibility: total physical annihilation, either by the future German occupiers or at the hands of the Arabs in Palestine, who were expected to cooperate with the Germans. At this same time, there were several key episodes in attempts to immigrate to Palestine: the cases of the refugee boats *Patria, Atlantic,* and *Struma.* Each in a different way, the fate of these ships reflected the absolute help-

lessness of the Jews. Another blow was the policy of the Labour government that had come to power in Britain in the summer of 1945. That policy was the total reversal of the pledges the party had made when it had been on the opposition benches; it disappointed the excessive expectations the Yishuv had entertained about the possible revocation of the White Paper in the wake of British victory in the war. Other salient factors in the evolving situation were the struggle against the British, acts of terror and British reprisals, the encounter with the remnant of European Jewry, and illegal immigration to Palestine.

Each of these individual events was powerful enough in its own right to stamp its imprint on an era. Yet now, in an extremely brief and concentrated span of time, all merged together. The 1940s had been marked by a succession of traumatic developments, creating an apocalyptic atmosphere, rich in messianic expectations. That mood was permeated by a mystic faith that the millions of victims and all the unspeakable suffering and anguish could not have been in vain: Some court of higher justice must duly recompense the Jewish people for its supreme ordeal.

The Zionist leadership was faced with a complicated mission: to convert those apocalytic expectations into hard political cash. More than in any other period, the people were ready to dedicate themselves to the struggle and make the requisite sacrifices. One of the pivotal questions of the era was, How can this readiness be directed into channels conducive to achieving political gains? As we shall see, the diverse interpretations as to the best way for advancing the Zionist cause led to bitter disputes, many of which have a relevance for what is the central topic here, namely, the use of force.

Time, Evolutionism, and the Final Goal

It is in the nature of war to disclose aspirations, desires and aims that otherwise lie buried in the deepest recesses of the human heart. That could be seen in the case of the Zionist movement during World Wars I and II. As will be recalled, World War I transformed the Zionist enterprise from one of dozens of ephemeral currents aspiring to realize nationalist goals into a recognized national movement, an ally of Great Britain in its takeover of Palestine. At that time, there were those in the Zionist movement who believed that the historic opportunity should be seized: It was necessary to create political faits accomplis as soon as possible in Palestine. The feeling that the war offered a special opportunity for accelerating the process and taking advantage of historical shortcuts was a natural conclusion, since the war had reopened discussion more generally on questions of government, sovereignty, and national borders. As I have mentioned, a messianic fervor had prevailed in Palestine during the recruitment campaign for the Jewish legion. The war created exaggerated expectations regarding the nature of the national home and the possible pace of its development (see chapter 3).

Zionism as a political movement was comparatively young, with little historical memory prior to the decade of World War I. That era was the matrix for Weizmann's leadership, who continued to serve as president of the Zionist Organization during World War II. Those years were also a formative period for David Ben Gur-

ion, Berl Katznelson, and Eliyahu Golomb, who enlisted in the Jewish Legion. Consequently, it was only natural that when they turned their attention to the possible impact of the new war on the fate of the Zionist project, they thought in concepts borrowed from their experience in World War I. Moshe Shertok, Golomb, Ben Gurion, and Weizmann carried on an untiring campaign to set up a Jewish unit within the framework of the British Army. Initially, it was supposed to be a division; but ultimately, after relentless Jewish pressure and unbelievable difficulties raised by the British authorities, the Jewish Brigade was organized in 1944. The stress on the importance of the participation of a Jewish combat unit, under a blue and white flag emblazoned with the Star of David, was a return to the old pattern of thinking that assumed that whoever participates in the war as a belligerent party would be entitled to a seat at the peace deliberations table. Their experience with World War I taught them that it was doubtful whether that principle would actually be applied in practice. Despite this, when they found themselves in a similar situation, they hurried to adopt the same instrument, hoping with its aid to spur change in the system of political forces. The truth of the matter is that they also had other objectives in mind, such as Jewish participation in the war against Hitler, or provision of military training for Jews from Palestine. Yet those objectives were obtainable by simply joining the British Army, which is what most of the recruits did in the early years of the war. However, the leadership attached paramount importance to the achievement of the desired status of a belligerent party and devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to its attainment. In the end, the Jewish Brigade participated in the Italian campaign on the River Senio. Yet its true importance would lie in another field: the encounter after the war with survivors of the camps in Europe. Meeting with the brigade members gave those survivors a sense of pride and national identity, firing them with the burning hope for speedy redemption in Palestine. As to the political hopes the leadership pinned on the brigade, these did not prove any better founded than hopes attached earlier to the Jewish Legion.

Though their historical experience led them to think in terms of World War I, the realities of the new war weighed down upon them, blocking out excessive hopes. The difference between the situation faced by the Jewish people during World War I and the present was enormous. At that time, both sides had courted the Jews as a potential source of political power. That had given the Zionist movement a certain latitude for maneuvering, and it proved able to exploit this to its benefit. However, in World War II there were no options for engaging in such maneuvers. Like it or not, Jews were obligated to give unconditional support to the Allied camp, since the adversary was the greatest enemy of the Jews of all time. Even in their own camp, the Jewish position was quite weak, as manifested by publication of the White Paper in May 1939. That document placed severe restrictions on immigration and land purchase by Jews in Palestine and stipulated that after a ten-year period, a Palestinian state was to be set up, based on majoritarian rule. It was clear that this proposed state would have an Arab majority. Right down to the outbreak of the war, there were angry protest actions in the Yishuv against the White Paper. With the eruption of hostilities, Ben Gurion coined the slogan "We must help the British in their struggle as if there were no White Paper, and we must resist the White Paper as if there were no war." In practical terms, however, the Zionist leadership aban-

doned the fight against Britain and dedicated itself to promoting maximum participation of the Jewish community in the war effort.

Nonetheless, one of the lessons learned in World War I was clearly applicable to the catastrophic circumstances of the new war, namely, the urgency of defining national goals and objectives. Shortly after the beginning of the war, ideas were expressed about the need for the Zionist movement to declare its war objectives. The first public discussion on these questions took place at the end of 1940, in a Mapai gathering at which Berl Katznelson gave the principal address. During the debate in 1937 on the partition plan proposed by the Peel Commission, Katznelson had been one of its outspoken opponents. He had contended that it was a mistake to push forward with the establishment of the Jewish state prematurely, since such an untimely birth was likely to be abortive. He had called for adherence to the mandate: As long as it was possible to progress in line with the accepted evolutionary method, one should continue with the work of building the land, and attempt to postpone final decisions on the fate of Palestine.[2] This had been a continuation of the line pursued by the Labor movement almost since the beginning of the 1920s. As I mentioned earlier, that line was manifested in the confrontation with Jabotinsky in 1931, when he had tried to push the Zionist movement to declare its final goal. Katznelson at that time was one of those bitterly opposed to any declaration of supposed final goals. He felt such a declaration had no practical value; rather, it was a superfluous provocation of the Arabs. Now, in December 1940, Katznelson came out in favor of declaring the final goal, namely, a Jewish state in Palestine. Concealing the banner of the Jewish state in previous years, he contended, had never meant the abandonment of that goal. Aside from a small number of Zionists who truly began to believe in the declared minimal objectives, no one, either Arab or British, ever thought that the Zionist movement would be satisfied with anything less than a Jewish state. Rather, it was the weakness of the movement and the lack of an international opportunity that dictated restraint in declarations. Now, he continued, two things had taken place that obligated the movement to speak up loud and clear. One was the White Paper, which effectively curbed the possibility of future evolutionary development; the other was the world war, which had reopened the account books of international politics. In the past, it had been possible to utilize all sorts of camouflage methods: "In political life, there are situations in which one acts according to the saying 'Everyone knows why the bride gets married, but [whoever mentions it talks dirty.]'"[3] But now, from the very day the Peel Commission declared that a Jewish state was a viable possibility, the Zionist movement was preempted from declaring any goal that fell short of it.[4]

Katznelson's speech was in effect the death knell of the evolutionary conception. He and his associates still preferred to keep on progressing at a slow pace in line with the evolutionary method. But international events and the development of the Arab national movement compelled them to make an early decision, which they thought they were not as yet ready for. The feeling was that time was no longer on the Jewish side; that the previous method had exhausted itself; and, most fundamentally, that a revolutionary situation had reappeared, offering an opportunity that the movement was obligated to seize by the horns.

At the 1940 Mapai conference, there was no discussion following Katznelson's

iconoclastic statements. However, there can be no doubt that his comments had an impact. Ben Gurion spoke in a similar vein on various occasions; and his views ultimatley crystallized into the Biltmore Program, adopted by U.S. Jewry in 1942 as the war aims of the Jewish people. The program spoke about establishing Palestine as a commonwealth, opening up the country to unlimited immigration after the war, and giving the Jewish Agency the authority to administer matters of immigration and the development program for Palestine. Its essential importance was that it presented a Jewish state in Palestine as the war goal of the Jewish people.

In November 1942, a few days before the terrible reports about the Holocaust were confirmed, there was an extensive discussion in the Inner Zionist Actions Committee in Jerusalem on the Biltmore Program. The deliberations touched on the basic questions of Zionist policy—namely the problem of time, of evolutionism versus revolutionary shortcuts—and ultimately arrived at the issue of the Arab question.

The preponderant majority of participants supported the Biltmore Program. Three were opposed to it: Meir Ya'ari, the Marxist leader of Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair; Shlomo Kaplansky, who had been an opponent of Labor leadership when it came to the Arab question ever since the conference at Ein Harod in 1924; and Sally Hirsch, the representative of Aliyah Hadasha (New Immigration), a moderate, liberal party with dovish views, whose electorate was composed mainly of voters of Central European origin. The opponents to the Biltmore plan represented only a small fraction of the Yishuv. But since what was at stake here was approval of a national program intended to serve as a symbol of national resolve, directed to the world at large, the debate was conducted as though two equal camps were involved, as if it was still possible by verbal persuasion to convince people to change their minds.

The dispute with Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair touched basically on the question of a shift from the evolutionary to the revolutionary method. The Biltmore Program assumed that immediately after the end of the war, there would be a massive wave of unlimited and nonselective immigration to Palestine. Since details about the extent of the Holocaust were as yet unknown, there were expectations that millions of refugees would seek a haven in Palestine and the possibility to begin a new life. Ya'ari viewed that as a departure from the method of limited and selective immigration, which had been pursued by the Zionist Organization since the mandate. In his eyes, the new method was dangerously close to revisionist thinking. As an example of the perverted thinking of the shortcut, he referred to the Nordau plan proposed in the early 1920s: It had envisaged the immigration of a half million Jews within the course of a year. The idea of abandoning the slow method of "acre by acre" in favor of the final goal, realized here and now, was something Ya'ari totally rejected. In its place, he proposed continuing on with the old system but pressing ahead more energetically. He was disturbed by the radical political declaration and the quick pace of implementation; in his view, this entailed abandoning humane and educational qualities. Ya'ari elaborated the point that a transition from evolutionary to revolutionary Zionism contradicted the aims of the Labor movement. But the main issue which all three principal opponents of the Biltmore Program agreed upon was the Arab question.

Since the suppression of the Arab Rebellion by the British in the summer of 1939, the Arab question had disappeared from the agenda of the Yishuv. The Arab community was busy nursing the wounds it had suffered over the course of three years of violent unrest. The mufti of Jerusalem, al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the principal leader of the Arabs in Palestine, had fled the country; and the leadership of the Arab National movement appeared to be weak and inactive. It went on record as opposed to the White Paper on the grounds that that document did not unequivocally prohibit immigration and spoke about the establishment of a Palestinian state only after a decade. Another uprising was out of the question, both for political and military reasons. It appeared that the British were coming closer to the Arab point of view. Although they were still quite far from meeting the Arab demands, the process was proceeding in a positive direction from the Arab perspective. On the other hand, Arab losses had been heavy, and time was necessary in order to recuperate from them. The war period, in which a large British army was stationed in Palestine and nearby, was not the proper time for an uprising, which would have been quenched immediately by heavy force. When the front approached Palestine and it looked like the British were going to lose the battle, panic spread among the Arabs who were British sympathizers; and support for the Axis powers rose. These matters were especially pronounced in connection with the pro-Nazi revolt of Rashid Ali al-Gailani in Iraq in 1941. On the whole, however, the Arab community in Palestine remained a passive element in the occurrences both during the war and afterward. The years 1939–1947 were apparently the longest continuous period of quiet and relative tranquillity in Arab–Jewish relations in Palestine since the 1920s.[5]

Just as the Arab question had been marginal and was only discussed sporadically prior to the rebellion, after it subsided the question was once again shunted to the periphery. Attention was focused on the difficult and demanding problems of the hour. As usual after a series of disputes, it seemed as though the subject had been exhausted and there was nothing new to add on the basic questions. Moreover, the White Paper effected a major shift in the front of struggle: from Jews against Arabs to Jews against the British. The Arabs were again relegated to a secondary role in public awareness and interest. Among the so-called mainstream of the Labor movement, there was a mounting sense of resignation; people accepted the notion that the riots had done much to instill, namely, that an irreconcilable clash of interests existed between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Acquiescence in its presumed irreconcilable nature was one of the factors that served to lessen interest in the Arab question beyond the functional sphere of security at that time. There were no longer discussions about the nature of the Arab problem and the question of what should be done to break down barriers between Jews and Arabs, whether it was possible to arrive at an accord, and so on—issues previously high on the Mapai agenda. It would appear that the general consensus regarding the dispute had abrogated the need to talk about it.

Our information on this point is derived principally from Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair sources that voice protest about it. Members of Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair repeatedly called on people to reject the fatalistic view that "as far as the bloody riots are concerned, there is an absolute law of necessary periodicity."[6] Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair

activists warned against the view (which they claimed was quite common among the Mapai leadership) "that there is a clash between two national movements in Palestine, one that cannot be bridged by any sort of accord."[7] They complained about the dangerous similarity they discerned between the views of the revisionists and those of the Labor movement: "The revisionists talked about the *sha'atnez* [the impossible mixing together of socialism and nationalism]; and in our own ranks, what has been victorious is the theory of the unresolvable clash."[8] The decline in interest in the topic of a joint union was symptomatic. That idea, initially promoted within circles of the Labor movement mainstream, had already changed in the 1930s into a cause espoused mainly by the Left within the Histadrut. Mapai had also invested a certain amount of effort in the idea, though it had kept a lower profile and, unlike Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair and Left Poalei Zion, had not pinned extensive hopes on the scheme. Now the idea of a joint union became identified as an issue exclusively of the Left, a remnant from an earlier period in which people had believed in class explanations of the Arab question and had placed their hopes in the general advancement of society, expecting that progress would eventually eliminate the unfortunate misunderstandings between Jews and Arabs in Palestine.

Awareness of the existence of an irreconcilable Jewish–Arab conflict contained a subliminal assumption that this was a Gordian knot and could only be cut by the sword. That fact was increasingly evident in discussions on the Biltmore Program. Significantly, that program itself made no mention whatsoever of the Arabs. It presented Jewish claims to Palestine as though the country belonged to the Jews exclusively and the Arabs had no part in its future. All the compromise formulas from the congresses of the 1930s were cast aside. These had attempted to placate the British and Arabs when it came to the aims of the Zionist movement in Palestine. In the decisive moment of truth, the movement stated its position openly and without diplomatic motives. "Ben Gurion's proposal completely disregards the fact that a million Arabs live here together with us—as if they did not exist at all," a shocked Ya'ari wrote in the internal organ of Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair.[9] It meant that the leadership was prepared for the possibility that the Jewish state would materialize against the will of the Arabs. Ya'ari, Kaplansky, and Hirsch found it hard to come to terms with that option, rejecting it principally on moral grounds. The idea of one people ruling over another was deducible from the Biltmore Program, since if it were realized, there would, at the very least, necessarily be a large Arab minority in the Jewish state. They viewed this prospect as aggressive, unethical, and at odds with the traditions of the Zionist movement. Ya'ari reminded Ben Gurion of his earlier proposals, presented publicly with much enthusiasm during the years when the latter believed in the feasibility of a Jewish–Arab accord.

The ethical considerations of the opponents of the Biltmore Program were mixed with practical ones. It was inconceivable, they argued, that the nations of the world would support the establishment of a Jewish state that would rule over Arabs. On the whole, it would be better if the British remained for a prolonged period in the land as a guarantee against Arab aggression on the one hand, and the potential injustice of a Jewish regime that would dominate Arabs on the other, emphasized Sally Hirsch. In his view, the Zionist movement was bifurcated into two opposed camps: "One camp aspires to peace, understanding, and consideration of the other

side" while "the second camp genuinely believes the problem can be solved by force."[10]

Unlike previous exchanges on the same matter, the discussion on this occasion was distinguished by its total candor and sober-headedness, devoid of any illusions. Katznelson seized on Ya'ari's comments, who claimed the Biltmore Zionists had a moral blind spot, since they wished to rule over another people: "It is possible that the desire to be a majority in a country in which another people is already the majority is foul. . . . If that is so, then we are foul" because beyond all the rhetoric that obscures the issue, the crux of the problem is that the Jews do not intend to deprive the Arabs of any rights as human beings, but they do wish to alter their political status in Palestine into that of the majority people. If there is a moral defect in this wish, then Ya'ari cannot wash his hands of it either, Katznelson argued, since he also wants a Jewish minority in Palestine. Katznelson was also at odds with the claim that the Labor movement had always valued evolutionary methods and opposed revolutionary steps. Not only did Ahdut ha-Avoda not reject Max Nordau's plan at the time, it even took pains to publish the proposal in its periodical *Kuntres*. Berl reminded his listeners that conceptions requiring shortcuts had been supported by the movement at the beginning of the 1920s. Sadly, the movement had given them up—because it was too weak to realize them, not because it thought they were defective. Now, since the "heavens"—frozen since the Balfour Declaration—had "opened up," the time had come to return to plans that had been stashed away for safekeeping. Now the movement and the moment were ripe to implement them, he contended.

Ben Gurion replied to the challenge raised by Hirsch regarding the use of force. "We are not yet living in the end of days, and require force to defend a good thing," he responded: "You can't disqualify force just because it's possible to put it to bad use." The battle of El Alamein had just been concluded: It had barely saved the Yishuv, preventing a German conquest of Palestine. In the Soviet Union, the cannon were thundering in the battle for Stalingrad. Ben Gurion's words had a special resonance in those days. He gave Hirsch a lesson on the history of Jewish colonization in Palestine: "When we came to Palestine, we didn't come to fight, kill, and be killed. We were idealists like you, and I think we have remained idealists. . . . We didn't come here to shed blood; and we saw that we had to, because we didn't want to be wards in Palestine." If the Jewish community in Palestine had no power of its own, he contended, the Arabs would obliterate it from the face of the earth. The crux of the matter was that there were no Arabs ready to accept any Jewish immigration to Palestine, no matter what its scope. The Arabs rejected the binational formulas of Ya'ari and his associates as much as the maximalist formulas espoused by the Biltmore proponents: "You are facing a situation you don't dare to look at realistically. There are no Arabs willing to agree to Jewish immigration, and we say to the world: Decide."[11] Ben Gurion and his associates assumed that after a horrifying world war, the victors would indeed be prepared to cut Gordian knots. By means of imposed decisions, they would resolve problems that were unamenable to solution by a negotiated accord. Palestine was one of the problem areas that required an imposed solution.

One of the topics raised during the debate on the Biltmore Program was the issue of population transfer, that is, the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine to one of the Arab countries. The topic had been first raised by the Peel Commission, which proposed an exchange of populations between Arabs who were living in the parts of Palestine designated as part of the future Jewish state and Jews from the areas set aside for the Arab state. The issue took on renewed relevance in 1941 after the publication of the platform of the British Labour party, then in opposition: It proclaimed the intention not just to rescind the White Paper but even to evacuate Palestinian Arabs to one of the neighboring countries as part of a comprehensive solution to the Palestine problem.

The transfer conception was based on what was assumed as positive experience in exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece in the aftermath of World War I. Other examples mentioned in the debate included the transfer of the Volga Germans by the Russian government during the war and the removal of the Tartars from the Crimean Peninsula. A slightly different case was that of Birobidzhan, the Soviet attempt to set up an autonomous Jewish region in Asia, which also involved population transfer. The lesson of the 1930s was that states should aspire to ethnic uniformity, since ethnic minorities with bonds to related ethnic communities beyond the border were a recipe for certain trouble. Everyone assumed that in the wake of the war, there would be population exchanges on a massive scale: The Czechs would demand the removal of the Germans from the Sudetenland, the Poles would evacuate Germans from the area of Danzig, and so on. The transfer concept was one of the ideas often raised in connection with the revolutionary changes that were expected to be acceptable to the international community in the aftermath of the war.

Berl Katznelson favored transfer as an integral part of an international agreement that would redraw borders between peoples and states in the postwar era. He emphasized that this would be a peaceful transfer of population based on a mutual agreement. In the wake of the riots against Jews that took place in Baghdad during the pro-Nazi uprising in 1941, a linkage was made between the idea of transferring Palestinian Arabs to other Arab countries and the transfer of Jews from Arab countries to the Jewish state. Ben Gurion's stance was more reserved. In 1937, he had been attracted by the proposal of the Peel Commission, among other things because it recommended transfer. However, in the 1940s Ben Gurion firmly opposed the idea of an imposed transfer plan. And since he did not believe the Arabs of Palestine would willingly agree to any large-scale transfer of population, he thought such schemes were nothing but castles in the air. The position of Mapai on the transfer issue was determined by pragmatism, without moralistic undertones. In contrast, people from Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair considered the idea of transfer morally objectionable and rejected it out of hand. According to their perspective, transfer was an act of compulsion, since there was no prospect that Palestinian Arabs would willingly agree to exchange a relatively developed country for one that was considerably less developed.[12]

It is possible to assume with a high degree of probability that if one of the Great Powers had volunteered to carry out a transfer of the Arabs of Palestine, very few

of the Zionist leaders would have opposed such a move. Yet the distance between being prepared to accept such an eventuality and the formal adoption of the transfer plan by the Zionist Organization was enormous. The traditional approach was that there was enough room in Palestine for many millions of Jews and one million Palestinian Arabs. This line was pursued not only in propaganda policy for external consumption but internally, as well. Unlike Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair, most Jews in Palestine were not opposed to transfer on principle. Nonetheless, it was not thought to be an absolute necessity. The mainstream viewed it as a good thing that one could, if need be, do without.[13]

The Biltmore Program sought to gain international approval and legitimation for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. It was clear to all that even if approval could be obtained from that "world court of justice," the Arabs in Palestine would not acquiesce in its establishment. Consequently, immanent in the acceptance of the Biltmore proposals was the recognition that a war between Jews and Arabs was inevitable. However, matters were not yet completely clear; and perhaps some of the participants in the deliberations still had a spark of hope that if there were an international decision favorable to Zionism, the Arabs would abide by it. The large majority supported the Biltmore Program with the understanding that in order to implement it, the use of force would be necessary. In contrast with World War I, in which the idea of Jews engaging in force stirred deep emotions and brought tears of joy to the eyes of many, this time it was a decision made with heavy heart but unflinchingly. The romanticism of the use of force, a feature that had characterized Zionism in its early period, gave way to a down-to-earth political attitude: Force was conceptualized, coolheadedly and soberly, as one of a gamut of means utilized by a political movement seriously intent on realizing its objectives.

As details about the Holocaust became known, the end of the war drew closer; and the widely accepted assumption that the war would give birth to a new world order seemed on the verge of realization, there was a feeling that the moment of truth was indeed at hand. In early 1944 Moshe Shertok, head of the political department of the Jewish Agency, published an article in which he sketched the policy of the Zionist Organization for the years to come. He described the contacts that had recently taken place with Arab leaders and the negative approach adopted by most of them in rejecting any agreement. Those few who did agree to talk with him said, "Let's fight, and we'll see who is victorious." Hence, he argued, the main Zionist effort should not be focused on the Jewish–Arab arena but on the international stage. The time had come for a major Zionist offensive: "Today the entire world is searching for big solutions . . . and people are preparing psychologically for broad conceptions, far-reaching conclusions, great efforts."[14] Moshe Sneh, a leader of liberal Zionism in Poland, who fled to Palestine when the war broke out and was integrated into the political–military elite of the community as the chief of the Hagana National Command, wrote in 1945: "If not now, when? If our national freedom in the land of our fathers is not restored to us even now, . . . from where can we draw the hope that this will ever materialize?"[15]

The end of the war did not lessen the sense of urgency. Alongside those for

whom the victory by the Soviet Union was a harbinger of a new socialist world order, there were others who deduced different lessons from the upheavals of recent history. The tragedy of the Jews had been that they believed in progress: "All those millions who died on the stake were victims of the illusions with which Jewish history has been replete over the course of recent generations." The first beginnings of the Cold War awakened fears of World War III. The Jews had no chance of surviving, contended Pinhas Lubianiker (later Lavon), a member of the Histadrut Executive and a prominent leader of Mapai, if they embarked upon that future war without a state. Consequently, "our very physical survival as a people may be decided in one generation, over the next 10, 15, [or] 20 years." The component of time became vital: "It appears that history's Master has given us very narrow and extremely tight limits for saving the Jewish people."[16]

It was significant that Lubianiker, one of the most important among the moderates in the Mapai leadership, also recognized the urgency of the moment. Although there were differences of opinion on the methods the movement ought to pursue, there was no difference when it came to an assessment of the concrete situation: The hour was fateful, and there was a limited amount of time at the disposal of the Zionist movement to translate plans into reality. Even those in whom every fiber revolted against forcing the issue by revolutionary means found themselves compelled to accommodate to a policy that was motivated by a sense of the necessity for immediate revolutionary change. Only relatively marginal groups, such as Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair, still believed in the old evolutionary methods, without final goals or shortcuts.[17]

The change in the concept of time was bound up with a transition to other methods of action. Quite naturally, this led to a new attitude toward the use of force. Up until World War II, the Zionist leadership had viewed physical power as a tool designed to provide an answer to the challenge of Arab militancy. They regarded it as a means to curb and prevent Arab action but not as a way to advance Jewish initiatives or to create new facts. There was already a certain ambivalence in this matter at the time of the Arab Rebellion. The ascent to Hanita and its settlement could not have taken place without the threat of force by the Jews. In other words, in this instance, force also created facts on the ground. Yet on the whole, matters were still blurred—ambiguous—and it was doubtful whether they were clear even to those directly involved. Up until the world war, the only organization that regarded physical force as a decisive factor in the "conquest" of Palestine was the IZL. Yet in 1944 Moshe Shertok proclaimed, "There was an era in the history of Zionism when we were unfamiliar with the language of force and its substance."[18] According to the principles of the defensive ethos, Jews were involved in the work of building the land and defended themselves if attacked. Now a new conception emerged: It is not enough to protect the existing Zionist achievements; it is also necessary to defend Zionist prospects in Palestine. The White Paper did not undermine "what we have now, but rather what can be in the future. For that reason, defense is not just of what exists. . . . The war is for the continuation of the Zionist enterprise."[19] Shertok described it in dialectical fashion, "When our fundamental concerns in Palestine are imperiled, uprising is a form of defense." He elaborated,

"protecting immigration is defense; preventing Arab rule in this country is defense."[20] Golomb remarked unpretentiously, "The task of Jewish defense is to facilitate the continuation of the Zionist process, to ensure immigration and settlement, even if we should need to use force against the Arabs or against the authorities."[21] Sneh noted, "Our forces must be arrayed in such a way that their first priority is the task of defending Zionism, while defending the country is of secondary importance."[22] In the framework of the refashioning of the objectives of the use of force, Golomb now defined "self-restraint" in a novel way: "Its meaning is, beside responding in kind to a blow we have received, also to have preventive means at our disposal."[23]

Salient changes occurred during the war years: The conception that viewed power as the guardian of the existing Yishuv receded, giving way to a new and broader one that viewed power as a legitimate means for ensuring the further development of the Zionist project. Force was to play a central role in realizing the political aims of the Zionist movement. The leadership of the Yishuv and the Zionist movement, at that time identical with the Mapai leadership, saw three possible lines of action that when combined, could hopefully guide the wrecked ship of the Jewish people to the safe shore of the state: continuation of the process of immigration and settlement, the struggle for world public opinion, and the establishment of a fighting force. "The combination of these three factors can lead to victory," said Moshe Sneh, commenting on what were, from that point on, the three principal weapons in the Zionist arsenal.[24]

The idea of the use of force to further Jewish interests in Palestine was not easily accepted. It sparked stormy discussion in the ruling party, Mapai, where the crucial decisions were actually made. From the beginning of the war, two central currents had emerged into prominence within Mapai, differing in respect to the question of the limits of the use of force. Paradoxically, the debate did not touch on the question of the employment of force against Arabs. As mentioned, that problem had been shunted aside and had been a peripheral issue since the outbreak of the war. Yet the Hagana and the Palmach were trained to prepare a fighting force oriented mainly toward engaging in operations against the Arabs. The Palmach, set up in 1941 within the framework of Jewish–British cooperation and under the shadow of imminent danger—namely, an invasion by Rommel—became the regular elite unit of the Hagana. Their training exercises were aimed at teaching recruits how to reconnoiter and move around in the Arab areas in Palestine, familiarizing them with their geography and topography, and teaching them how to prepare intelligence material on this terrain. Though there was an atmosphere of constant tension, the situation did not deteriorate into actual clashes with the Arabs. Instead, the basic physical might of the Yishuv was mainfested in confrontations with the British authorities.

After publication of the White Paper in 1939, there were a series of demonstrations that got out of hand, turning into bloody clashes with the British forces. During the war, brutal British searches for weapons in Jewish settlements, such as in Ben Shemen, Ramat ha-Kovesh, and elsewhere, were a common occurrence. An especially traumatic event at the beginning of the war was the episode with three boatloads of illegal immigrants—the *Milos,* the *Atlantic,* and the *Pacific*—ships

that arrived at the shore of Palestine in November 1940. The heads of the community and the Jewish Agency beseeched the authorities to allow the Jews to stay in Palestine, even if in detention, until the authorities were convinced that these people were, in truth, genuine refugees and not dangerous spies, as the British alleged. Their pleas were in vain. The high commissioner, Harold MacMichael, was determined to send them to Mauritius in order to set an example for all to see: The intended message was that there was no sense in continuing with illegal immigration. The passengers onboard the *Milos* and the *Pacific,* and some of those on the *Atlantic,* were transferred to the deportation ship *Patria.* Hagana members decided to prevent the sailing of the *Patria* by planting a bomb aboard that would cause damage to the ship. They hoped that the delay this would create would facilitate a change in decisions in London. The result was disastrous: The blast was much larger than expected; an enormous hole was blown in the ship, and nearly three hundred passengers perished. After intervention by Churchill, the high commissioner agreed that the survivors from the *Patria* could stay in Palestine. The rest of the *Atlantic* refugees, who were interned in the meantime in Atlit, were brought by force aboard two deportation ships and sent on a long journey to Mauritius. Their evacuation was accomplished by a show of brutal force that made even many of the British police officers flinch. General Nim, with whom Shertok had discussed the matter, expressed his shock that the Jews could dare to damage a much-needed ship like the *Patria* during time of war. Yet significantly, he was not perturbed in the least by the allocation of ships and other resources for sending refugees to Mauritius. This episode sheds light on the distorted attitude of the British in the Middle East at that time toward the Jewish question, in general, and the problem of Jewish refugees, in particular.[25] In any event, a major debate evolved in Mapai on the *Patria* and *Atlantic* episodes between what were dubbed the "activists" and the "moderates."

The concept of *activism* appeared for the first time during the debate on the Jewish Legion in World War I. The activists were Jews who wanted to take immediate action, rather than wait for events initiated by others. In a practical way, they were the ones who looked forward to the use of force and relished its prospect. That concept now reemerged, but in a slightly different meaning. The feeling was that the British had respect for Arab power yet disregarded the Jews, since they had no fear of them or their potential response. Already at the London conference in the winter of 1939, Ben Gurion had made statements designed to imply that the Jews were ready to make trouble for the British if they damaged Jewish vital interests. British behavior during this period only strengthened the activist faction in its belief that if Jews did not adopt a resolute and courageous position, the British would crush them completely. The actual ability at that stage to use physical force against the British was quite limited. It was manifested in violent demonstrations, in the determination to settle without a proper permit on land that had been purchased by Jews, and in the dogged struggle for continuing immigration during wartime. A difficult question was the proper response to searches for weapons in Jewish settlements, conducted energetically by the British in the early years of the war as if it was the principal military mission of the hour. Should the Jews resist the confiscation of their weapons, by force if necessary, or make do with passive resistance to

the searches? On the whole, the limits of the use of force were still very narrow: The Jews did not use weapons against the British, and all victims killed during the aggressive searches were Jewish.[26]

The principal question was whether the Jews should continue the struggle against the White Paper regulations or announce a moratorium until the end of the war in the hope that pro-Arab British policy would change after the war. In the view of the moderates, British policy derived from the exigencies of the hour (which required reconciliation with the Arabs) and was likely to be altered once circumstances had changed. "This White Paper emanates from a certain political constellation (Arab united front, Britain's fear of the Arabs) and will be equally short-lived," wrote Arthur Ruppin in his diary in May 1939.[27] The moderates demanded that tension with the British be reduced; Jews should be unconditionally loyal until the end of the war, assuming that the British government would ultimately change its policy.[28]

On the other hand, the activists viewed the policy of the White Paper as the result of a British assessment that the Jews had no choice but to resign themselves to an anti-Zionist policy, because they needed British protection against the Arabs. In their view, the only way to bring about a change in British policy was by ample demonstration of Jewish power and willingness to fight and suffer losses. This would make it clear to the British that to implement their policy would make it necessary for them to carry out acts of suppression on a large scale, and it was doubtful whether the British government would approve. The activists wished to pursue a policy of confrontation with the British on such crucial Jewish issues as immigration, settlement, and defense, in order to send them a clear message about what the absolute limits were, limits beyond which they were prepared to die and even to kill.

The moderates viewed the *Patria* episode as a manifestation of a lack of responsibility and the product of activist extremism: After all, it was argued, the government had wanted to send the ship to Mauritius, not back to Europe; and if Jews went to that island, they would probably survive.[29] In their eyes, the decision over the life and death of others seemed objectionable from a moral perspective, and they did not hesitate to cite it as an example of what the policy of force pursued by the activists could lead to. The activists, however, regarded the sending of the *Atlantic* refugees to Mauritius as the greater tragedy, since the Jewish community in Palestine had not resisted that action and had left the illegal immigrants without any support in their desperate struggle against the army and the police. They saw the *Patria* episode as a heroic tragedy, typical of the calamities that befall every movement of national liberation. In contrast, they viewed the *Atlantic* incident as an example of dishonorable behavior and national weakness that could generate additional brutal acts of suppression.[30]

The moderates belonged for the most part to the same circles that had earlier opposed the Jewish Legion. They had a moderate view of the Arab problem and were convinced proponents of the evolutionary approach. Politically, they were identified with the former Ha-Poel ha-Tzair. Outstanding among them were Yosef Sprinzak (later first speaker of the Knesset), Eliezer Kaplan (treasurer of the Jewish Agency and later minister of finance), Yitzhak Laufbahn (editor of the party weekly

Ha-Poel ha-Tzair), Pinhas Lubianiker (leader of the youth movement Gordonia and one of the heads of Hever ha-Kvutzot, later secretary general of the Histadrut and minister of defense) and Avraham Katznelson (one of the heads of the National Council). David Remez (secretary of the Histadrut and later minister of transport), who had been one of the leaders of the former Ahdut ha-Avoda, was also in the moderate camp. Against them stood a gallery of Mapai leaders who had formerly been members of the more militant party, Ahdut ha-Avoda, including Berl Katznelson, Yitzhak Tabenkin, Eliyahu Golomb, and Moshe Shertok. Ben Gurion, who was in the United States at the time (late 1940), gave them his unlimited support. Basically, the differences manifested here in temperament and psychological makeup were the same that had caused a rift between the two workers' parties in the 1920s, preventing them from finding a common language until 1930. The exmembers of the Ahdut ha-Avoda preserved the revolutionary spark of their youth. Activism for them meant not just the readiness to take action but also the bond with the world of messianic revolutionaries along the lines of the Russian *Narodnaya volya,* characterized by their willingness for self-sacrifice, a life in constant psychological tension, and a readiness to carry out the decisive revolutionary act. At the same time, members of Ha-Poel ha-Tzair were repelled by revolutionary ways; recoiled from any forms of violence; and regarded the slow, stable, quiet path as the one that would lead with certainty to the final objective while preserving the humanistic character of the movement and the desired ideal type of human being the movement wished to nurture.

In those years, an elite group was formed that believed the fostering of an independent Jewish military force was an objective of supreme national importance. That group included political leaders such as Berl Katznelson, Golomb, Tabenkin, Shaul Meirov (Avigur, head of the Mossad le-Aliyah Bet), along with men from the Hagana who enjoyed personal and political status, such as Moshe Sneh and Israel Galili. They constituted a significant pressure group for advancing the cause of a Jewish fighting force. The leaders of the Jewish Agency—Ben Gurion and Shertok—gave them their backing. Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, under the leadership of Tabenkin, provided the activists with encouragement and support and served later on as the political basis of broader activist circles.

Katznelson died in 1944, Golomb in 1945. A split shook Mapai in 1944; and the left wing, in which the dominant element was Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, left the party. As a result, the standing of the activists in Mapai declined significantly. Ben Gurion found himself the leader of a party with a strong moderate wing at a time when the policy he wished to apply was unmistakably activist in orientation. This was the background for the second great dispute between the activists and the moderates.

In the summer of 1945, when most of the world was celebrating the Allied victory over the Germans, the Jewish people was shocked by revelations about the true magnitude of the calamity that had befallen it. Members of the Jewish Brigade met with concentration camp survivors, and the first wave of those survivors began arriving in Palestine. The problem of the Jewish refugees—so few measured against the millions envisaged by the Biltmore Program but so many compared with the number that the mandatory government was prepared to let into Palestine—soon

became the central political question. The *displaced persons* issue was the battering ram with which the Zionist leadership would attempt to smash through the walls of the White Paper. Yet in the summer of 1945, matters were still enveloped in the uncertain fog of the future. It became clear that the British Labour government, which had issued exaggerated, radically pro-Zionist declarations when in opposition, was meanwhile unprepared to change the policies laid down in the White Paper. To a remark by Barbara Gould, a member of the British Parliament, that if bloodshed could not be avoided, then, for God's sake, it should be shed in the cause of justice and not injustice, Herbert Morrison, a Labour party leader, replied that in the case of riots, it depends on who can be placated more quickly.[31] These remarks made it clear to Ben Gurion and his associates that the court of justice whose verdict they expected would not be impartial. The official declaration of Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was published in November 1945; but it had been clear to Ben Gurion (in London at the time) already at the end of the summer that the hopes the Zionists had pinned on the new Labour government were unwarranted.

On October 1, 1945, Ben Gurion sent instructions to Moshe Sneh, chief of the Hagana National Command, to prepare for armed struggle against the British. In contrast with previous policy that limited itself only to defense of immigration, settlement, and the weapons of the Hagana, this time the struggle was supposed to lead directly to a shift in British policy. That would be effected by impressive acts of sabotage, meant to awaken world public opinion to the problem and even to signal to the British that the Jewish people were no longer prepared to acquiesce in the polices of the White Paper. "The White Paper is a declaration of war against the Jewish people. And our people, without its own government and oppressed, must fight—using all possible means," wrote Ben Gurion. He instructed Sneh to avoid casualties as much as possible and to abstain from personal terror but to retaliate for every person killed by the authorities.[32]

This was the beginning of the Hebrew Resistance Movement, the united underground movement of the Hagana, the IZL, and Lehi, which cooperated from October 1945 to July 1946. The first action associated with it was the freeing of the illegal immigrants imprisoned in the Atlit camp. That action was not a matter of controversy between the activists and the moderates. The latter now considered a "linked struggle" as the proper path. That expression denoted active mass opposition to any step by the authorities aimed against Jewish immigration and colonization. Attacks on British military installations involved in actions against illegal immigration, such as police boats or the radar station, were also considered permissible. However, on November 1, 1945, the Hebrew Resistance Movement for the first time carried out a military action that was not connected with illegal immigration. In that action, known as the Night of the Trains, railroad tracks were blown up at 153 points throughout Palestine. This was a show of force—of tactical capability to take action and military organizing talents—with an evident political purpose in mind. It raised the debate between the moderates and activists to new heights of intensity.

The person who initiated the shift in policy was Ben Gurion. In an impassioned speech he gave in Palestine at the end of November in response to the declaration by Bevin, he stated: "Like the British, there is also something that's dearer to us than life itself. I want to let Bevin and his associates know that we are prepared to be killed, and won't give up three things: the freedom of Jewish immigration, the right

to build our desolate homeland, and the political independence of our people in its own land."[33] This tone and policy struck a sympathetic chord with wide strata of the Jewish public in Palestine. He gave voice to the heartfelt sentiments of thousands when, in reference to the Holocaust, he said, "If [the Germans] had known that the Jews have power too, not all of them would have been slaughtered." His explanation of British policy as based on speculations about Jewish weakness and the consequent necessity to prove Jewish strength by a show of force found favor with a substantial segment of the Jewish community in Palestine.[34] One result of this policy was an increase in Ben Gurion's status as a national leader, also recognized by groups on the Right. There is no need to stress that he was backed in this matter by the entire active cadre of the Hagana and the Palmach, and by members of the Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, who supported the activist policy unanimously. Moshe Sneh, the Hagana chief who implemented that policy, enjoyed great popularity among the younger generation. In Mapai itself, the leadership was split on this question: and although it appears that the activist position won broader public support, there was stubborn resistance to it within the party bodies. After the Night of the Trains, the moderates did not hesitate to air their objections and opposition to the new line.

The most prominent leader identified with nonactivist views was Chaim Weizmann, president of the Zionist Organization. He was not informed about the change in policy; and after learning of the attack on the railroad lines, "Chaim was stunned, and a heavy depression descended upon him."[35] In his meeting with Bevin the morning after, he halfheartedly defended the position of the Jewish Agency, contending that the British policy had brought the Jewish community to the brink of despair and that this had served to weaken the Jewish Agency's hold over the community. In a letter addressed to the Yishuv, he was far more unambiguous in his criticism: "I must register my complete disapproval of violence as a means of attaining our legitimate ends." He called for continuing the struggle, using the means of "persuasion, negotiation, and constructive efforts" and for urging people to have faith that the moral impact of the Zionist cause would ultimately lead to victory.[36] In contrast, Harry Sacker, one of the members of the Zionist Executive in London, who had been known in better days for his moderate views, now stated that under the present circumstances, a bit of lunacy would not hurt, provided it was limited.[37]

In Palestine, *Mishmar,* organ of the party Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair, published a biting critique of the railroad raid; the article was described by the Hagana leaders as a "stab in the back."[38] Meanwhile, the official paper of Mapai, *Ha-Poel ha-Tzair,* carried an editorial that stated, among other things, "The use of violence and destructive force is not among the signposts of Zionism in the past, present, or future." Hence, "if those events on November 1 did in fact take place . . . , their meaning is that the alien forces plotting against us . . . have brought the Yishuv such disappointment that it is unable to maintain control of those among its ranks who are now wild with despair."[39] Actually, the paper's editor, Yitzhak Laufbahn, was far more critical of the policy of force pursued by the movement; but he tried to give a balanced expression to views within his party. But this is not how the article was understood. The rage of the activists against him surged, since the expression "wild with despair" was reminiscent of terminology they themselves had used to describe

the IZL and Lehi in a negative light. In addition, he portrayed the event as if it had taken place without the authorization of the party and proclaimed that the Labor movement rejected the use of force and violence on principle. The activists' campaign was piloted by Shaul Meirov; Eliezer Liebenstein, editor of *Milhamtenu* (Our War), the organ of the activist faction within Mapai; Levi Shkolnik (Eshkol, later prime minister of Israel); and members of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad who had not seceded from Mapai in the 1944 split. At the head of the moderates stood Pinhas Lubianiker, a brilliant debater, who acrimoniously attacked the tendency of his associates to romanticize the heroic struggle and rejected their argument that Mapai had forfeited the trust of youth because of the article denouncing the use of force. "Somebody thinks we may have to pay because of that article—I think we'll have to pay for the deeds," he challenged.[40]

After the Night of the Bridges in mid-June 1946, in which the bridges connecting Palestine with neighboring countries were blown up, Weizmann's patience snapped, and he wrote to Shertok, threatening he would resign if the leadership of the Jewish Agency did not cease the campaign of violence. It is true, Weizmann noted, that British provocations were extremely serious, indicating that the authorities had decided to abandon moral considerations and to rule Palestine by the power of the sword and the hangman's noose. Yet, he wrote, "it is not for us to imitate its methods. Our only force is moral force." Jews should not behave like other national movements, Weizmann argued, for both ethical and practical reasons. Consequently, if terror actions did not cease and no attempt was made to establish control over the dissenting factions (the IZL and Lehi), he would resign immediately.[41] The letter was delayed due to Weizmann's poor health; and two days after it was written, Operation Agatha took place, nicknamed by the Yishuv Black Saturday—a large-scale British attempt to suppress the Jewish community by force. It encompassed a series of repressive measures: the detaining of leaders, curfews, extensive arrests of young men, searches in the offices of the Jewish Agency and confiscation of documents, and searches for weapons and their confiscation. The British activity was violent and brutal. Weizmann vetoed any proposal to respond in force to British actions.[42] The blowing-up of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, headquarters of the Palestine government and the military command—carried out by the IZL and costing many lives—was, for all practical purposes, the final exploit of the united resistance movement. Sneh called for a renewal of the armed struggle against the British. In vain activists of the Hagana and Palmach fulminated about the cessation of military actions. Even the fiery speeches of Ben Gurion at the Zionist Congress in Basel in December 1946 did not change this fact. Indeed, Weizmann's speech at that same congress, in which he severely criticized the use of terror by Jews, was, in effect, his swan song. Among other things, he stated, "I warn you once again against taking short cuts, against following false prophets and will-o'-the-wisp generalizations and against the falsification of historical facts."[43] He was not reelected as president of the Zionist Organization. Yet his policy rejecting violent struggle was adopted by the congress. Sneh, who symbolized the policy of the resistance movement, resigned from his post as chief of the National Command of the Hagana. Public pressure in favor of violence did not result in its renewal. From that point until the beginning of the War of Indepen-

dence, the Hagana and Palmach limited themselves to actions connected solely with illegal immigration and settlement.

What had led to the ban on violence? Black Saturday made it clear to the leaders of the Yishuv that if clashes were to continue between the authorities and the Hagana, they would ultimately lead to the annihilation of the Jewish military force by the British. The reaction of the government proved that if the activists were gambling on British misgivings about applying their full might against the Jews, they were mistaken. The activists continued to contend that this was a natural stage in a national struggle, familiar from the history of other struggles, such as that of the Irish or the Boers—where, in the end, Britain had been compelled to sit down and talk. The moderates, however, rejected this argument, claiming that the activists were unable to point to a single political achievement that was the fruit of the use of force. On the other hand, it was alleged they were bringing about the destruction of the Jewish community.[44]

In the meeting arranged between the heads of the Hagana and Ben Gurion in Basel, during the Zionist Congress, Ben Gurion explained to them his motive for bringing to a halt what, by association with the European resistance movement, had been dubbed the "active resistance." He felt that the moment of truth for Jews and Arabs was fast approaching and prophesied that in that confrontation not only would the Arabs of Palestine take part, but the Arab states, as well. He argued that the defense forces had to be prepared for any eventuality. For that reason, it was permissible to annoy the British but "not to utilize means that would jeopardize the survival of the Yishuv, its growth, and the furthering of the constructive enterprise. This is the absolute limit." In respect to the principle of purity of arms, he stressed: "The end does not justify all means. Our war is based on moral grounds." He presented military force as a factor of secondary importance to building the land.[45] The need to preserve strength for the future confrontation with the Arab states and to prepare forces for such an eventuality was a concept still strange and seemingly unreal for the activists. Yet it appears this was the central consideration in Ben Gurion's thinking.

As was usual with persons motivated largely by moral considerations, on this occasion, as well, the moderates were careful not to use arguments drawn from the realm of justice to justify their position. Rather, they claimed that their motives were pragmatic, based on considerations of profit and loss. Weizmann was the only leader who, without any sense of shame, could announce he was disgusted by violence. As a convinced adherent of the teachings of Ahad Ha-Am, Weizmann believed moderation, a slow pace of construction, and moral qualities were the forces destined to lead the wrecked ship of Zionism to the desired shore. This was also the outlook of most of the other moderates. On this psychological foundation, a complete superstructure was erected: It consisted of proofs and arguments geared to persuading people of the utility of moderation when compared with the harm done through violence. Basically, what is evident here is a manifestation of a Jewish cultural tradition whose sources predated Zionism. That was one of the components shaping the approach adopted by the Zionist leadership to the issue of the use of force.

The resistance movement marked the end of one era and the beginning of

another. Even if the Zionist movement retreated from the use of force (as at the end of 1946), the fact had been established that force was one of a series of means available to the movement; and the use of such force was deemed legitimate. The debate between activists and moderates on the resistance movement was the last debate concerning the issue of the use of force. The closer the moment of decision came, the fewer moral scruples and objections were voiced to force as a legitimate means.

In January 1947, a month before the British government decided to bring the Palestine question before the United Nations, an anonymous article was published in *Alon ha-Palmah,* the official organ of the Palmach. The article, written apparently by one of the heads of the Hagana, was entitled "Values in the Thinking of the Hagana"; and it summed up the substantial changes that had occurred in the objectives of the Jewish defense force since the end of the war. The aim of defense in the past had been to protect the Jewish community from rioters. Later, the objective had changed from an orientation that was mainly physical to a political one: "to protect and defend the value of 'nationhood', epitomized by the concept *independence.*"

The underlying reason for this shift was largely a change in what was assumed to be the balance of power, meaning the strength of the Yishuv: "[That strength]—and today this means, among the *principle* factors, our armed force as well—does not justify our giving up [any] additional development of the Jewish Yishuv and its growth in ways which appear proper to the community." This style was typical of the change that had occurred. The legitimation of the use of force went hand in hand with the actual growth of the military arm and the deepening awareness of its potential impact as the hour for political decision approached.[46]

Educating the Young in Turbulent Times

The 1940s witnessed the coming of age of the sons and daughters of immigrants who had arrived during the Third and Fourth Aliyah and children who had come to Palestine during the Fifth Aliyah. Both socially and politically, this generation came of age under the fiery sign of Mars. Their childhood was spent in the shadow of the Arab Rebellion, their youth in the flash of the cannon in a world at war. As soon as they reached maturity, they were called upon to join the struggle for the establishment of the state and, later on, to fight the War of Independence. Their worldview and psychology were essentially shaped by these events.

Yitzhak Tabenkin was preoccupied with the question of how to educate youth under wartime conditions. Tabenkin, the founder and leader of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, the largest of the kibbutz movements, had enormous influence within the ranks of youth. He had emerged victorious in his struggle for the soul of the younger generation with Berl Katznelson during the late 1930s. Tabenkin's influence was not limited to Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad. It also encompassed youth organizations associated with the kibbutz movement, such as Ha-Noar ha-Oved, the largest of the youth movements in Palestine, and Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim, composed of secondary school students, the most original and "Palestinian" in character of the Yishuv youth movements.

During the 1940s Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad adopted the Palmach. It agreed to deploy Palmach units in its member kibbutzim, and was always prepared to protect the interests of this organization in the political bodies of the Labor movement. Over the course of the years, the Palmach was labeled "Tabenkin's salvation army," after "Timoshenko's salvation army," the nickname of a famous Russian unit during the war. The Palmach became one of Tabenkin's most important channels of influence among young people. Tabenkin was undoubtedly one of the educators who succeeded in shaping the image of youth at the time.[47]

A member of the Ahdut ha-Avoda party from the 1920s, both a Marxist and an anarchist, dogmatic in respect to his path yet at the same time free from any loyalty to a single dogma, Tabenkin combined ardent Zionism with a revolutionary socialist outlook. This amalgamation was of key importance in molding his attitude toward power. At the beginning of the 1930s, Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, like other left-wing groups around the world, viewed itself as part of the global pacifist movement, wishing to put an end to all wars. But the lesson of the 1930s had been bitter disappointment: States that had lost their fighting spirit and wished for nothing but peace and tranquillity found themselves face to face with aggressor nations. The latter exploited their longings for peace to further their own designs. The weakness manifest by the Western powers in confronting the Axis powers before the war and in its early stages seemed to Tabenkin irrefutable proof that pacificism had been a delusion. In the early war years, Tabenkin made considerable efforts to sever the bonds between his movement and the pacifist tradition. He contended that pacifism "was not motivated by love for humanity—rather, it wished to protect itself by sacrificing others." In his view, it was a bourgeois movement that wanted to ensure the peace of strong states at the expense of the weak. Its aim was to sanctify the existing social order and "formal" political democracy. Pacifism, Tabenkin challenged, wished to function as a kind of substitute for socialism: It was content with the survival of the capitalist order and for the sake of peace was prepared to give up social revolution. It had been born within the context of a decadent European civilization that for the previous two decades had fervently wished for nothing but peace and calm. Pacificism, Tabenkin argued, was synonymous with the unwillingness to fight for values. Pacifism encouraged people to abandon the conviction that there are certain things a man must simply fight for: "In this way, we arrived at a psychological state of mind that fostered nonopposition to evil." That psychological state of mind was not the product of ethical exaltation, Tabenkin contended, but the product of mistaken hope that evil in this way would befall others, rather than us. As proof of the moral limitations of pacifism, Tabenkin pointed to the fact that the pacifist movement had never undertaken to defend Jews.[48]

In Tabenkin's words, one can hear an echo of the atmosphere prevailing during the period of the Munich crisis in 1938 and the summer of 1939, when the question was asked in the press, Should one "die for Danzig"? The war-weariness of Europe's peoples after World War I was one of the decisive factors in strengthening the pacifist currents. Those currents, in turn, had created a highly influential movement opposed to rearmament. As a result, with the rise to power of the dictators in the 1930s, the major Western powers were unable to respond in kind to the German threat. They preferred to retreat from their obligations toward their weaker allies,

avoiding at all costs involvement in a war. This is how Tabenkin interpreted the Japanese invasion of China, the civil war in Spain, the Munich agreement, and the White Paper of 1939. All those events had been chains in a great world drama, in which the democracies preferred the disgrace of a cheap peace to the dangers of war. Yet in the end, they lost the peace anyway and went to war unprepared psychologically or militarily, lacking the conviction that one should fight to uphold basic values essential for a people's survival. For that reason, Tabenkin waged a war against pacifism, which he regarded as a false and misleading concept. Tabenkin began his reckoning with pacifism in June 1940 after the fall of France, when England was fighting for its survival and the fate of the world hung in the balance.

His approach to pacifism had implications for the Palestine arena as well. He felt that Brit Shalom and the organizations that had followed in its path were the local, domestic Palestinian version of the seductive delusion of pacifism. To assume that it was possible under the current circumstances to arrive at a peace accord with the Arabs was erroneous, Tabenkin argued. As a socialist, he wished to formulate a doctrine that took into account the possibility of a peace accord with progressive forces in the Arab world; yet he simultaneously assumed that under the given circumstances, such an accord was beyond reach. He thought that the world war was strengthening the hand of reactionary forces among the Arab population in Palestine and in the Arab world, since all parties to the conflict were wooing them, competing for their support. For that reason, the war would not lead to an increase in progressive forces among the Arabs; rather, the conservative camp would be strengthened, and they would attempt to take control of Palestine in the wake of the war. Parallel with this, the process in Palestine of a radicalization of the worker and the fellah was moving forward at a snail's pace. Until it reached maturity, the Yishuv faced constant clashes with the Arabs. Tabenkin drew certain educational conclusions from this assessment of the situation: "One should not educate Jews in Palestine in the illusion that in a world that lives by the sword . . . they might be able to avoid having to defend their enterprise, immigration, and, indeed, their very lives."[49]

Tabenkin's militant conception was an integral part of his socialist outlook. He believed in a socialism whose realization necessitated revolution, that is, war and bloodshed. As an educator, he was faced with a dilemma: How can one educate young people in the ideals of a militant socialism when the moment for revolution was not yet visible on the horizon? On the other hand, as a socialist Zionist whose goal was to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, he wanted to channel all the creative energies of youth into the activity of building the land. A kibbutz member, he wished to direct those youthful energies toward the task of building up Palestine along socialist lines. It would appear that this was constructive socialism at its best. Yet from his early youth, Tabenkin had been faithful to a more militant conception: the imminent revolution. In his eyes, revolution was not a distant ideal or a messianic dream but a genuine existential entity whose realization in the near future was beyond doubt. He remained loyal to that concept all his life.[50] In order to resolve the contrast between revolutionary consciousness and the desire to educate young people in its spirit with the necessity to build the land and channel youth toward the path of constructive socialism, Tabenkin denied the existence of

any contradiction between those two fundamentals. He argued that they were not alternatives: Rather, they were components that combined, leading *together* to the desired future order. The dialectical concept with which he resolved the inherent opposition between the two was *process.* "Socialism is not an act. It is a process," he stated: "It is a revolutionary process, not an evolutionary one—but it is not an act." Tabenkin was never in the least perturbed by a lack of consistency in his views. He did not feel obliged to espouse any specific paradigm. Rather, he borrowed eclectically from various different ideological frameworks, creating his own philosophy of life in keeping with his inclinations—and did not feel inferior to the great social theorists. The notion of a "revolutionary process"—which probably sounded like the proverbial squaring of the circle to orthodox Marxists—was, in Tabenkin's eyes, the bridge between the reality of creating in Palestine what was dubbed "constructive socialism" and his profound psychological affinity with the socialist revolution he anticipated.[51]

As Tabenkin saw it, socialism would be realized as a result of struggle and even war. Comparing the education received by middle-class circles in Palestine with that of the youth associated with him, he said: "We educated the young in socialist values that cannot be attained without a war. Maybe at the [Herzliya] Gymnasia there was education for evolution, but there was no socialist education. That's not how we educated." Socialism, in Tabenkin's view, was one of the concepts for which a man had to be ready to fight. "We endorse the use of force to defend our honor and values. For an idea, a person has to stand steadfast and employ force and even to be killed," Tabenkin proclaimed at the beginning of 1940 speaking at the convention of Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim. Attending a performance of the play *Jeremiah,* he felt a sense of alienness, since the drama expressed support for pacifist ideas and presented Jeremiah as an "ideologue of cowardice." He defined the education of his movement using the biblical phrase "Love thy Lord . . . with all thy soul and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). He viewed this kind of education as the antipodal antithesis of pacifism and commented, "A man has to fight for the right to live—by means of information, understanding, using a rifle, devotion, everything."[52]

Tabenkin distinguished between the use of physical force and violence: All violence was a (negative) use of force, while not every use of force was violence. He regarded the use of force as one of the legitimate means of social struggle. When one of the members of Ha-Tenua le-Ahdut ha-Avoda (the party Tabenkin founded after he split from Mapai in 1944) proclaimed that the Labor movement was against violence, since it was pacifist in essence, Tabenkin hastened to set things right: "I do not belong to a pacifist movement in any way. I support the use of physical force. I want the realization of ideas. . . . I don't regard peace as a goal and main value. There are values more important to me than peace. And I want our physical strength to serve as the basis for all our values." The role of physical force would, he argued, come to an end only after the achievement of socialism around the world and the realization of Zionism in Palestine.[53]

On the basis of the experience of World War I, Tabenkin understood that war on such a scale leads to traumatic social tremors in its aftermath. He expected that this would also be the case following World War II. Thus, Tabenkin envisioned a

prolonged period of wars, which would come to an end only after the final destruction of the capitalist system. The conclusion that he drew from this prognosis was that not only the generation then coming of age would still have to be prepared to fight but even their grandchildren. For that reason, it was not enough to educate the young, as past wisdom had assumed, to be good workers, diligent and creative: Now they would also have to be trained to be warriors. Characteristically, he found a dialectical definition for that: "Socialism has already come to the conclusion that constructive socialism must also be a fighting socialism."[54]

This, on the the plane of thought, was a translation of the transformation of the defensive ethos into another ethos—a kind of admixture of the old stance with the new offensive ethos. The new man Tabenkin wished to create was supposed to be *"a working man and a fighting man."* Tabenkin did not intend to neglect the component of work: That was the factor which would build socialism. Yet the element of fighting was necessary, since "our creation will not last for even 24 hours unless every day of building is accompanied by fighting prowess."[55] Tabenkin was well aware of the dangers of militarism and was careful to stress the difference between "fascist education" and "militant socialism." As contrastive examples, he cited Horst Wessel and Trumpeldor. For him, heroes like Garibaldi and Thaddeus Kosciusko were exemplary fighters; and he underscored their international ideals.

In this instance as well, Tabenkin utilized a dialectical formulation in order to prove that education for war was in fact education for peace. "Education for war, as contrasted with pacifism," he contended "is a war for a world without war, an antimilitaristic world." He characterized his demand as "militant antimilitarism." He claimed that the difference between his views and those of the revisionists, who were always in favor of military education, was that his pedagogical conception was not intended to teach young people to hate. The school must integrate Jewish and general humane values within a program of educational preparation for fighting: "The school must sow the seeds of hatred for the murderers of Tel Hai; but it also is obliged to teach about the Arabs, their faith, ideas, and language."[56] Just as he rejected the dichotomy of constructive versus revolutionary socialism, Tabenkin denied that there was a dichotomy between humanistic education and education for war. The dialectic resolved all contradictions.

Beyond formulas and definitions, he wanted to educate the young to be strong and courageous fighters, trained physically and mentally for the rigors of battle. He even spoke favorably about Spartan education. There was a considerable difference between that pedagogical ideal and the educational ideals of the 1920s, and even of the 1930s. According to the original myth of Tel Hai, the "people of work and peace" stood steadfast to defend the fruits of their labor; and their fight was meant to protect values acquired by the sweat of their brow. In Tabenkin's current conception, this was not enough. Fighting was indeed necessary in order to preserve what had been achieved but was even more necessary in order to progress on to the next stage of the war of liberation and beyond. That war would be both nationalist and socialist. The examples of Garibaldi and Kosciusko, which Tabenkin cited, were not accidental. They symbolized international socialism, which supported wars of national liberation. Translated into concrete concepts of the time and place, this meant a war for control of Palestine by the Jews. The potential objects of such

militance were the Arabs in Palestine and neighboring Arab states. His attitude toward Arabs was ambiguous: He declared his desire for peace; but he also, in a much more forceful manner, stressed the readiness for war and the need to prepare for such an eventuality. In calling for the preparation for war of the coming generation in Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, he was not referring to a conflict against Hitler: Rather, he meant the future war for Palestine that would come in its wake.

The model that served as a paradigm and source of inspiration was the Soviet Union. The attachment between Ha-Kibbutz he-Meuhad and Soviet Russia had developed in the 1920s. Admiration for Leninism, with its activist message and the legitimation of the use of force for the sake of a lofty goal that it bestowed were deeply implanted in the consciousness of the movement. Tabenkin admired the constructive impetus in the Soviet Union and had a tendency to close one eye to the deficiencies of the system there. The debate between him and Berl Katznelson in the 1930s revolved to a large extent around their differing assessments of the Soviet Union and its brand of socialism. Right from the start, Tabenkin's approach was lenient: When trees are felled, the chips will fly. For that reason, his attitude was relatively indulgent when it came to Stalinist tyranny. During the purge trials in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1930s, there was no genuine criticism voiced in the printed media of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad on events in the land of revolution.[57] The Molotov–Ribbentrop pact of August 1939 taxed the loyalty of Tabenkin's associates to the Soviet Union. Yet Tabenkin himself soon enough found explanations for the motives that had prompted the Soviets to sign the agreement and to justify the Soviet invasion of the tiny state of Finland, whose brave stand awakened sympathy in the hearts of young idealists. Tabenkin argued that the policy of the Western powers had pushed the Soviet Union into signing an agreement with Nazi Germany. Instead of working out a true alliance with the Soviets and embarking on a joint war against the Nazis, they attempted to divert Germany to attack in the East and spare the West. Tabenkin had no doubt that the war would eventually evolve into a confrontation between the Nazi forces of evil and the Soviet forces of light. But until the anticipated confrontation, the Soviets had to gain time in order to prepare for war and achieve control of strategic areas bordering on the Soviet Union. The vital national interests of the Soviets were what had prompted them to sign the otherwise inconceivable pact.

The idea that a socialist country was obligated to defend the interests of its people and land was two-edged: While sanctioning Soviet political–pragmatic behavior, Tabenkin was also giving his approval to the same kind of behavior in the Palestinian arena: "The fate of Russian socialism is bound up with their loyality to the interests of *Russia.* We, too, in our own lives, do not see the connection between socialism and nationalism differently, or between a socialist and his people." He added, "Would we consider someone a socialist who says he behaves in a socialist manner at the expense of his people, to that people's detriment?"[58] Just as Russia gave primacy to its national security over socialist values, socialists in Palestine should do the same. The concept of socialism in a single country, which posited a separate path to socialism for each people according to its specific circumstances, was a line propagated not only by Stalin: Tabenkin was likewise enamored of the idea. He forgave all of Stalin's brutalities on the grounds that a state struggling

under difficult conditions to implement socialism, while a hostile world is lurking to foil its efforts, is bound to make mistakes; yet those errors ultimately lead to greater progress. They are "human sacrifices for the elevation of mankind." It is true that the Zionist Socialist movement took a different path; it was able to afford those moral luxuries because it dealt with a small and select population and was not responsible for running a state. The inference was that the establishment of a state obligates one to make use even of immoral methods where deemed necessary.[59]

When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 and the war on the Eastern Front began in earnest, Russia's adherents breathed a sigh of relief. Solidarity with Moscow could now finally be freed of the burden of having constantly to apologize for Soviet policy. From that point on, the Soviet Union was the model for the way a people should act in wartime. Its total commitment to war and the willingness of its population to endure unlimited suffering and sacrifice, stirred Tabenkin's admiration. He was enthusiastic about the fact that the Russians had not shrunk back from blowing up the dam on the Dnieper River—one of the symbols of the construction of the new socialist Soviet Union. In contrast, he had nothing but contempt for the shameful handing over of Paris by the French to the enemy to prevent the destruction of the city at any price. In Tabenkin's eyes, the awe-inspiring readiness to sacrifice everything for the battle appeared to be a function of the vitality of regime, able to mobilize all the people's physical and mental powers for the sake of the supreme effort. This, in his view, was something the governments of neither Poland nor France had been able to achieve. It moved him deeply; and he thought it proper to inculcate the Yishuv, whose fate then lay in the balance, with a similar spirit.[60]

The war between Germany and Russia captured the imagination of the Jews in Palestine, especially youth. The majority of adults were from Eastern Europe, and a significant percentage had been born in czarist Russia. In their hearts, they had a warm corner of sympathy and affection for their country of birth, despite all the bitterness of their life there. Aside from sentiments about the past, there was the prosaic fact that Russia served as a land of refuge for hundreds of thousands of Jews who had fled there from Poland and the Baltic states. Solidarity with the Soviet Union against the Nazis came naturally. It encompassed very broad segments of the Jewish public in Palestine, even those who were hostile to the Soviet regime. The identification with the Soviets was especially strong among the same groups on the Palestinian Left who saw Russia as the land of the great revolution and remained faithful to it even after the difficult ordeals it subjected its faithful to. Now that Russia had joined the front ranks of those in the coalition against Hitler, the admiration and sympathy for the Soviet Union swelled to unprecedented proportions. The preponderant majority of the Left saw the Soviet Union as a paradigm, a model for imitation, and a source of legitimation. In the political domain, that admiration was expressed in the hope that the enmity on the part of the Soviet Union toward the Zionist project (which still characterized that regime) would disappear and the "partition" dividing the Zionist Left and the Soviet Union fall away. Tabenkin made predictions in this spirit as early as the summer of 1942, during the great defeats of the Red Army. Individuals from Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair and Left Poalei Zion harbored similar hopes. Things reached the ultimate in absurdity in the

spring of 1942, when in the convention of the Histadrut, Ya'ari, leader of Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair, raised the problem of the future political orientation of the Zionist Organization and called for an *orientation* toward the "forces of tomorrow" instead of Britain. His comments led one of the participants to remark (paraphrasing the Creator's reply to Moses and the children of Israel's song in praise of God after Pharoah and his soldiers had been drowned [Exodus 15]), "My deeds are cast into the sea, and you sing about orientation."[61]

The tendency was to find analogies between Russia at war and the struggle in Palestine. For instance, Tabenkin lectured teachers in Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad that they should emulate the Russians, who had resurrected the old Russian myths and national heroes, such as Dimitri Donskoi and Alexander Nevski, and taught about the history of its wars against the Tartars and the Teutonic knights, topics that had been buried away since the days of the revolution. Tabenkin called for educating children and youth in that same spirit, inspired by the romanticism of ancient heroes and exploits of valor, drawn from biblical tales, Josephus Flavius, and others. Education must inculcate knowledge of the geography and history of Palestine, utilizing heroic myths. The new Bible study, according to Tabenkin, should be in the spirit of Tchernichovsky, Berdichevsky, and Brenner, that is, the study of the Bible as a history book and a heroic myth. In addition, there should be instruction on the history of revolutionary wars of liberation fought by other peoples around the globe.[62] The policy of "transfer" carried out by Russia in the case of the Tartars of Crimea and the Volga Germans served as a corroboration that this method of action was a legitimate means to resolve national and ethnic problems. There was also an expectation that after the war, Russia would resolve the ethnic problems on its western border in a similar manner. This too was conceived by analogy as a kind of license for a similar solution in Palestine.

The image of the Soviet fighter was mobilized as a model for the image of the fighter in Palestine. In the summer of 1942 the Hagana was beset by a financial crisis that threatened the existence of its regular standing force, the Palmach. Initially, back in the spring of 1941, the Palmach had been supported by the British Army. Yet from the very beginning, it had been clear that this support was temporary and limited. In the summer of 1942, when the outcome of the battle between Rommel and the British Eighth Army in the western desert was still undecided, the future of the recruited Palmach forces was in doubt. Circles from the Center and Left in the Yishuv did not recognize the importance of the existence of an independent Jewish force and refused to allocate it the necessary funds. Discussion was about a force that amounted to some one thousand persons. This fact illuminates a salient aspect of public consciousness, namely, just how far a substantial segment of the Jewish population in Palestine was from actually thinking in terms of power and an armed force. In any event, Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad volunteered to give the Histadrut a loan for the purpose of maintaining the force and proposed ensuring its continued existence by absorbing units of the Palmach in the kibbutzim. The Palmachniks were required to divide their time between work and training exercises (nine days a month), and in this way to maintain themselves as a unit. This original arrangement sparked considerable opposition in the ranks of Palmach members: They were anything but enthusiastic about the idea of dedicating a large chunk of their

time to working in agriculture. In the discussions, Tabenkin and his associates repeatedly referred to the example of Russia in order to foster the sense of legitimacy of that arrangement. Analogies were made with Cossack villages, which had served as a standing source of recruitment for the army during the czarist period: men who were working their fields and could be mobilized quickly when needed. Comparisons were also made with experience gathered during the Russian civil war: Some units of the Red Army had maintained themselves then by supplementary labor. Those units were dubbed the "working army." As an illustration of the importance of agricultural labor for the war effort, examples were cited from the Soviet Union: Exceptionally industrious workers there were singled out for praise; women who cooked oatmeal for the soldiers were given special recognition; and even an actor who put on a performance for soldiers on the field of battle had been lauded for that action. The demand to include women in the ranks of the Palmach was legitimated by the fact that there were thousands of female soldiers serving as recruits in the Red Army. Tabenkin understood the importance of propagandistic-literary material for the war effort. "Work, weapons, and books" was the slogan he coined, citing Stalingrad, fighting for its life, as an example of the proper application of these three components in concrete practice.[63]

During the war and after, Russian literature was in vogue in Palestine: scores of books were translated from Russian to Hebrew. They enjoyed great popularity among young people in general and members of the Palmach in particular. This was literature that dealt with the Bolshevik revolution *(A Lone White Sail on the Horizon),* the growth of the new society in the Soviet Union *(Pedagogical Poem),* and the war (e.g., *Rainbow in the Clouds, The Young Guard,* and *Panphilov's Men,* sections of which were serialized in the Palmach bulletin). The Palmach bulletin published numerous war stories and even chronicles about the exploits of partisans in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The Russian war films communicated a message of popular heroism and told of simple people going forth to defend their homeland and the achievements of socialism. The figure of the partisan was a prime source of inspiration in the Palmach. The Russian army, though greatly admired, was not a suitable paradigm for emulation: The Palmach, after all, was an army without uniforms and poorly equipped and maintained itself by supplementary labor in various kibbutzim. There was no similarity between it and a regular army. In contrast, the myth of the partisan, the warrior without uniform, was especially appropriate for the situation of the Palmach and its state of mind.

The Palmach was an army with a civilian mentality. It was an army of volunteers, based on the idealism of its members and on its social cohesion. To a great extent, the Palmach embraced the social, cultural, and even educational patterns of the youth movement in Palestine. Its life-style and experience were quite similar to those of a group of young people living in a kibbutz, plus the added component of training exercises. In its daily life and routine, there was no particular emphasis on the military nature of the organization. On the contrary, the network of relations between the commanders and the ranks rested largely on the prestige of the former: Only rarely did they have to resort to formal discipline. The absence of uniforms and formal ranks also functioned to underscore the "civilian" character of the rela-

tions. The importance of shared experience and of the cultural component in the life of the Palmach units likewise pointed to the transfer of patterns from the youth movement to the army unit. Among other things, that atmosphere was meant to shield youth from the deficiencies of the *soldateska*—an expression used by immigrants from Eastern Europe to denote the negative traits and features of army life and barracks realities.

During the war, the Hemingway novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940, Hebrew translation 1942) was extremely popular. Its figure of the fighting guerilla in the Guadarrama Mountains of Spain conquered the hearts of the young in Palestine. The tactics of guerilla warfare were also a suitable paradigm for the underground nature of the Palmach and its limited means, and these were the fighting methods its members were trained in. The ideal of a popular yet resolute army, courageous and well prepared as fighters, focused on the partisan as its model. During the evenings around the campfire, which became the symbol of Palmach social camaraderie, Russian songs in Hebrew translation were often sung, including many partisan songs. Indeed, Russian songs were the most popular genre among Palmach members.

The aspiration to emulate the Russians did not result in slavish imitation. Components that proved unsuitable to conditions in Palestine in the eyes of the Palmach and its commanders were rejected. For example, the reintroduction of ranks and epaulettes in the Russian Army did not awaken any similar inclination in the Palmach. The iron discipline of "Panphilov's men"—whose commander had the power of life and death over his troops and did not hesitate to exercise it—was likewise not emulated in the Palmach, despite the fact that the novel about Panphilov was almost sacred literature among Palmach ranks. In the same way, education to inculcate hatred of the enemy was also rejected. In Russia and other countries with an active anti-Nazi underground, education to implant hatred of the foreign occupier was a pedagogical instrument designed to bolster the spirit of the underground. But the situation in Palestine was more complex: There was no debate about the need to teach hatred for Nazism and love of the motherland, along the lines practiced by the Russians. It was also clear that just as the Russians cultivated the consciousness in their fighting men that their cause was just, a similar consciousness should be fostered among Palmach fighters. But the Nazis were far away, a distant danger; the real enemy against whom the aggressive feelings of the young had to be channeled were the Arabs and British. Education aimed at instilling hatred for Arabs was likely to act as an impediment on the path to peace in Palestine: "No annihilation of the Arabs and no abysmal hatred for them; likewise, no annihilation of the British and cultivation of hatred for them either—these are the orientation of the Hagana." This fact also limited the possibilities for action open to partisans in Palestine. While their Russian or Yugoslav brethren, fighting against fascism, were allowed to use any means deemed necessary, the situation in Palestine differed. Due to moral and political considerations, their scope of action against the Arabs and British was circumscribed.[64] These directives, published in the Palmach bulletin, give the reader the impression that Palmach members were carrying the analogy too far: Their conclusions based on the analogy of the partisans were some-

what extreme, and even came dangerously close to the views held by members of the IZL and Lehi. For that reason, the Palmach leadership acted quickly to curb the application of the Soviet analogy.

The best example regarding the limit of Soviet influence is Tabenkin's opposition to sending young Jews to assist the Soviet Union during the war. In the first upsurge of enthusiasm for the Soviet Union after the German invasion in the summer of 1941, there were individuals on the Zionist Left who proposed that young people should be sent to assist the Soviet Union in its war against the invaders. Tabenkin replied succinctly that the place of those young people was at home, defending the front in Palestine. The Labor movement, which had looked askance at young people from Palestine volunteering for the civil war in Spain, took the same view in the case of Russia.[65] The attachment to the World Socialist movement, in general, and the Soviet Union, in particular, was secondary to the primacy of Palestine. If Tabenkin had been asked how this was ideologically compatible, he probably would have answered that this was in fact how the Soviet Union acted when it came to its own affairs.

The synthesis between nationalist activism and revolutionary socialism that Tabenkin preached captured the hearts of the young. During the world war, with the Muses silenced, diplomacy hamstrung, and the fate of peoples and countries left to be decided by the sword, it was difficult to expect young people to demonstrate pacifist leanings. The lesson that Palestinian youth had learned from the history of the 1930s was that it was possible to build socialism only by the use of force: "We will conquer this world not by parliamentary means but by force." There was bitter disappointment with evolutionary socialism: "I was educated that the change would come as a result of growth, influence, achievements—not as a result of violence and bloodshed. I don't believe in this now. I don't see any other way except by the use of force." This was a discussion, held in the council of Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim under the shadow of crisis in the wake of the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact and the Russian invasion of Finland. There were some disciples who had reservations about the Soviet regime and serious misgivings about the attack launched by the giant Soviet Union against tiny Finland. Yet the preponderant majority were agreed that the actions of the Soviet Union were not in contradiction with the moral code acceptable to the movement, namely, that there are situations in which the strong, by dint of necessity, are compelled to act against the weak. As an illustration, one of the young people mentioned the example of the strong hand taken by the Histadrut against all sorts of unions weaker than it. Basically, there was general agreement that the use of force was normative and that "power leading to socialism is moral." Consequently, it was easy to arrive at the conclusion, as did one of the participants, that "any assessment that advocates realization of socialism without force and without revolution is unethical, since it delays socialism. Nothing will be realized without the use of force."[66]

When adult ideas and states of mind are appropriated and internalized by young people, there is a tendency to adopt them in a one-dimensional manner: Their borrowed contours are circumscribed, clear-cut, and simple, lacking in sophistication or depth. This was also the case with Tabenkin's ideas. Tabenkin wished to impart an awareness of the legitimacy of the use of force as a means to

realize ideas. The emphatic version of those concepts, devoid of mitigating nuances, as expressed in the comments of his pupils, was the product of a process of simplification and radicalization which this idea underwent from one generation to the next. Nonetheless, these young people also felt the pain inherent in shifting from a belief in the brotherhood of peoples, love of man, and the hope of peace to a bald and brutal recognition that only by means of force was it possible to attain the cherished visions. The war led to ideas in strict opposition to the image of the world that had been inculcated in the youth movement even a decade earlier.[67]

The socialist revolution was still a distant dream. The immediate problem young people were faced with—and to which the aggressive lessons of the war were applied—was the future of Palestine. The leaders of the movement did not keep their assessment a secret: Following the end of the world war, there would be a decisive war for control of Palestine. In seminars with leaders of the Labor movement, young people were taught stark realities: "We are heading toward a war between two peoples." Should the Biltmore Program actually be realized and millions of Jews come to Palestine, "there is no doubt this will not be accepted quietly by the other people in the land." There was some reticence within the youth movement about teaching the perspective of a future war between Jews and Arabs. Yet there was something in the entire ambience of the war that opened the door to such observations, unacceptable in the past. This was an atmosphere that demanded clear-headedness, discarding any illusions, while faced with the wholesale undermining of all foundations of human society.[68]

The link between socialist activism and nationalist activism was almost taken for granted by Tabenkin's disciples. Actually, Tabenkin never distinguished between the two: Zionist socialism of the Ahdut ha-Avoda type always regarded the socialist and Zionist components as compatible and to be realized simultaneously. Among youth associated with Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, an identity was forged between the two: Whoever was opposed to the Soviet system and repelled by revolutionary socialism, was apparently also opposed to Zionist activism, that is, to clashes with the authorities, illegal immigration, and (particularly) the existence of an independent Jewish defense force. In the struggles between the left and right wings within Mapai, the moderates were classified as belonging to the forces on the Right. Indeed, there were some activists, such as Berl Katznelson, Golomb, Meirov, and Ben Gurion, who were in the so-called right-wing camp. But the young people considered them to be moderate leaders acting to curb the drive for action so characteristic of youth. "Moderation" was associated in their eyes with social democracy, a synonym for weakness and failure; with opposition to the cherished Soviet Union; with a faith in treacherous Britain. All these elements were contemptible in the eyes of the majority of the young. Not in vain, one of the youngsters in Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim commented that the moderate youth movement Gordonia had no prospect of attracting young people in Palestine since its educational orientation was not compatible with the spirit and mood prevalent among the youth there.[69]

In the autumn of 1943 a month-long seminar was held at Kibbutz Gevat for the "seniors" (eighteen-year-olds) of Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim. The speakers were the most prominent instructors and educators, as well as key political personalities. Apart from Tabenkin, Katznelson, Golomb, and lesser luminaries, the participants

included Eliezer Liebenstein, formerly a member of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad and now an activist on the right in Mapai, as well as Ernst Simon. Simon, along with other former members of Brit Shalom, Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair, and Left Poalei Zion, had established the group Ihud, another attempt to create a pressure group in the Yishuv for the cause of a Jewish–Arab accord. The confrontation at the seminar between Simon, Liebenstein, and the disciples was highly instructive regarding the thinking and outlook of the young people. Liebenstein and Simon presented the positions of the Arabs and the British to them. Liebenstein tried to explain that "acquiring a country of one people by another is a tragic affair for the Arab people. That has to be understood." He described the feeling of the Arab when a Jew acquired his land, comparing it to the feelings of a Jew when his land is transferred to Arab ownership. Simon attacked the Biltmore Program and in that connection stated: "We are entering a country populated by another people, and are not showing that people any consideration. The Arabs are afraid we may force them out of here. They hear ideas about transfer. And there is justified apprehension." He predicted that the Biltmore Program, if made a reality, would lead to war between Jews and Arabs, challenging the idea that it really meant the adoption of Jabotinsky's program by the Labor movement: "In the field of visionary politics, Jabotinsky articulated at an early juncture what most other Zionists were only thinking."

Simon's words provoked sharp reactions from the young seniors. They responded with animosity to his charge that the Jews, by coming into Palestine, were causing injustice to the Arabs. They asserted that Jewish settlement had led to a rise in the living standards of the Arab population and in so doing had spurred the development of their national consciousness. Simon's reply that economic benefits were no compensation for political damage did not seem to impress them. In contrast, they showed considerable interest in the idea of transfer. Simon rejected population transfer on ethical grounds and also did not think it was a practicable solution. One of the graduates responded with the question, "Which is more ethical, to leave Jews to be annihilated in the Diaspora or to bring them against opposition to Palestine and to carry out a transfer, even by force, of Arabs to Arab countries?" When Simon presented his view that acquisition of land from Arabs was only permissible if it did not involve eviction, one of those present shouted that Bet ha-Shita, the model kibbutz of Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim, was located on lands where Arabs had previously been settled and that they had not received alternative land. Yet where only a handful had lived before, there were now three hundred people. As to Jabotinsky, they argued that the difference between him and the Labor movement was not in the approach to the use of force but in the method of building up the land.

Liebenstein explained British policy in a sophisticated way. He presented the British Empire as moderationist: It tried to rule by a minimal use of force and thus pursued a line of compromise and concession. British policy in Palestine was not anti-Jewish, he contended—quite the contrary. That policy facilitated the development of the national home. The unfortunate matter was that from the moment it ran up against Arab opposition, British policy had searched for ways to arrive at a compromise. Their desire to appease the Arabs derived from the strength shown

by the Arabs in Palestine and especially from the massive Arab presence in the region as a whole.

Liebenstein's comments were given a cool reception. One of the young people asserted that his depiction of the British as sympathetic to the Zionist cause and the claim that they had a tendency to compromise was detrimental from the point of view of morale and education: It functioned to weaken the animosity toward the British, against whom it was necessary to struggle. The young men reiterated the view presented by Tabenkin and his associates: Britain was an imperialist power, part of the forces of the past, devoid of any virtue. Liebenstein tried to give the disciples a more complex picture of reality, one in which good and bad were intermingled. There was a need to fight against the White Paper but not to hate the British. If they had so wanted, the British could have suppressed the Jewish community in Palestine completely. "You have a sick attitude toward England," he declared. Simon likewise tried to impart a more balanced attitude to the British: "Among all the peoples, the British have done more for us than any others," he argued. Yet neither of them succeeded in persuading their youthful audience.

While Simon was looking for ways to avoid Jewish–Arab confrontation, Liebenstein felt it was unavoidable: "In the course of the coming years, it will become clear who owns the country." He presented Zionist policy as one that intended to create counterpressure to neutralize Arab pressure on the British. To that end, it would utilize an array of means, one of the most important of which was underground military power. Yet he stressed that this was not the only instrument. Though his conclusion was in keeping with the mood of the young people present, Liebenstein's explanations were at odds with their assumptions about the British. His level of sophistication was too complex, not compatible with their one-dimensional view of the world, a result of education and age.

Simon was bombarded with questions about his attitude toward the Hagana. He replied that he did not reject the use of force in principle. But he distinguished between defense and militarism, stating, "We're approaching the limit beyond which defense changes from a necessary evil into a complete ideology" and "From a situation where defense is seen as an indispensible necessity, we shift to one where it is viewed as a blessing in itself." As an example of this change in values, Simon referred to Tabenkin's approach.

There was a gaping abyss between Simon, the humanist faithful to European civilization of the era before World War I, and the young Palestinians, schooled in revolutionary socialism in the context of a country of colonization. A kind of double dichotomy emerged. When it came to the local arena, members of Ihud expressed their doubts about the ability of the Jewish people to solve without allies (i.e., without Great Britain) its gargantuan problems whenever the war ended. Yet they were optimistic when it came to the international arena. Every dark period in human history, Simon argued, had brought a counterreaction in its wake. Consequently, the world after the end of the war would be better than that which had preceded it. The young people, in contrast, expressed great optimism regarding the strength of the Yishuv and enormous confidence in its ability to decide the fate of Palestine by dint of its own power. Yet they were extremely pessimistic when it came to the world at large. "On what basis can we assume that the new world will

be better than that between the wars?" one of them challenged: "I fail to see any reason whatsoever that would warrant such hopes. . . . I have no faith at all in a liberal world that will supposedly arise on the ruins of this one." They repeatedly claimed, "We must be a power," referring to physical might.[70] The somber pessimism of the young and the rationalistic optimism of Simon and his associates were generations apart. They were separated by different cultural traditions and by the impact of reality as a formative factor.

On the declamatory level, the policy of rejecting education aimed at inculcating hatred for Arabs was still valid. Yet at the same time, there was increased reference to the struggle for the future of Palestine as an inevitable conflict. The gap between the peace declarations and the emphasis on the likelihood of war did not escape the attention either of the educators or their pupils. More and more, reference to the aspiration for peace and the desire for Jewish–Arab friendship became a kind of ritualized convention, repeated without any deep conviction.

Toward the end of the war, Shlomo Drexler (Derekh), one of the central figures in Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, summed up the dominant approach in his circle regarding the use of force in the following words: "The problem is not a theoretical, moral one. . . . In reality, there is no question about the use of violence or not. The problem is, Revolutionary or counterrevolutionary violence? In literature, in university lecture halls, in various kinds of frameworks divorced from real life, there is room for a philosophical discussion about violence or nonviolence. Within the social struggle, there is only one problem: What kind of violence?"[71]

Massada as a Myth of Heroism

One of the methods for probing changes in ethos is to examine changes in the body of myths in whose spirit youth is educated. The mythos that became central during the war years and was dominant even after its end was an ancient story of heroism: the myth of Massada.

As I have mentioned, Jewish tradition over the centuries had not looked favorably on the Massada myth. The tale is told by Josephus in *The Jewish War* and was not absorbed into Jewish traditional texts. It ended up in a reworked version in the *Book of Josippon* and did not enjoy particular popularity in rabbinical literature. The episode contained elements that were considered foreign to the spirit of traditional Judaism. The idea of dying for freedom, not to mention the killing of women and children for its cause, was not acceptable in Judaism. It was Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai who was depicted by tradition as the rabbi who saved Judaism, not Elazar ben Yair, the commander of Massada, who remained external to that tradition. In the Middle Ages, there had been examples of family murder and suicide as martyrdom; although these were not normative from the standpoint of Jewish halakhah, they were accepted by the rabbinical sages because of the state of mind of "with all thy soul and with all thy might" that they manifested and that the sages could not denounce.

At the beginning of Jewish historiography in the nineteenth century, Massada

was rediscovered by the Jews. It was given favorable mention by Berdichevsky and entered the pantheon of Ahimeir. During the 1920s there were several excursions by students from the Herzliya Gymnasia to Massada, but these apparently did not leave any lasting impression on the behavioral norms of youth in general in Palestine. The popular central myth of heroism in the Yishuv was that of Tel Hai—which, as I have mentioned, was embraced as a symbol by both the Right and the Left, each side emphasizing different elements.

In 1927 there was a watershed event in the evolution of the myth: the publication of Lamdan's poem "Massada." As I have noted (chapter 4), Lamdan used Massada as a symbol of salvation, an allegory for Palestine, to which pioneers from the lands of exile, beset by toil and torment, set forth. Massada (only at the end of the 1930s did the more accurate term Metzada (Fortress) become popular in Hebrew) was depicted as the last haven to which refugees flee, those who have escaped the hangman's noose in countries around the globe. Beyond the efforts that Massada necessitates, the conclusion is optimistic: "Go up the flame of dance / Again Massada shall not fall." Lamdan depicted the heroic epic of the Third Aliyah, Massada serving as the thread linking the destruction of the past and the hope for the future. From the time it was published, sections of the poem were a literary commodity much in demand in readings of the youth movements—all in the heroic–optimistic spirit of its author. The dialogue between the refugee and the guards upon the wall of Massada, that begins with the words: "Open, Massada, your gate; and I, the refugee, shall enter!" was meant to underline the tragedy of Jewish existence in exile, in contrast with the exaltedness of the last refuge. As Lamdan writes: "This is the limit. From here on, there are no boundaries."[72]

The year 1933 saw the publication of research by A. Schulten, the German scholar who had pioneered new directions in investigation on Massada. Yosef Klausner and Y. Bar Droma published a book in Hebrew entitled *Metzada ve-Giboreha* (Massada and its heroes) in 1937, and a trend began to integrate the Massada tale in stories for children. Nevertheless, the legend had still not taken on mythic proportions; nor was it incorporated within the educational context. In excursions now and again up to Massada by the disciples of the youth movements of Labor Palestine, there was a mixture of love for the land, the desire to discover the desert, the challenge of a trip to an unknown region, love of adventure, and the collective experience. There is no evidence of any special effort during that period to impart historical values associated with the site. Massada was a difficult destination in physical terms; and whoever made it to the top, was proud of scaling its heights and enthused about the awe-inspiring natural panorama that unfolded before him from its ramparts. Halfhearted attempts to read the ritual sections from the "Massada" could not compete with the desire to sleep of most climbers who reached the fortress—due to their sheer exhaustion.[73]

In the program of readings put on in the summer of 1939 in Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim, long sections of the poem were quoted, along with selections from *Bi-Vritekh* (In your Covenant) the 1937 booklet of Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim, and other literary works. Lamdan's "Massada" was quoted in connection with the topic of illegal immigration. The influx of illegal immigrants was a central educational theme dur-

ing that period, and sections from the poem were meant to highlight the resoluteness of the refugees yearning for the secure haven.[74] At this juncture, Massada was still an allegory for Palestine and its development.

At the Twenty-first Zionist Congress in late August 1939, a new tone was heard for the first time. In a version that anticipated the debate between the activists and the moderates, within a discussion on illegal immigration, Shertok lashed out at Rabbi Solomon Goldman from the United States. The latter had spoken in favor of Yohanan ben Zakkai and against Rabbi Akiva, one of the leaders of the Bar Kokhba revolt. Shertok referred to the great revolt and stated: "If our state was destined to be destroyed by Rome, it is preferable that this destruction came after a revolt. Blessed is our history, that gave us this dignity, this pride . . . as evidence that we are a people that will not surrender without a fight, a people prepared to shed its blood for its independence."[75] Up until that time, the positive presentation of the heroic failures of the Jewish war against the Romans had not been popular among Labor movement circles. Not that it was completely absent: Berdichevsky was regarded by Katznelson, Tabenkin and their pupils as one of their mentors, much more so than Ahad Ha-Am. But the fact was that these events were little discussed and certainly not in a positive light. Ever since Uri Zvi Greenberg and Abba Ahimeir had seized upon the myths of the destruction of the Second Temple and made them central components of their historical and political conception, the heads of the Labor movement had been careful about appropriating them for their own purposes. Moreover, those myths were not compatible with the defensive ethos, the urge to build the land, and the evolutionary perspective that dominated Labor thinking. Only after the cannon of World War II began to thunder, and the widespread feeling took hold that the White Paper had cornered the Zionist movement with its "back against the wall" (to allude to a famous article by that title that Katznelson wrote at the time), did the myths of desperate heroism begin to penetrate public consciousness and seep into the educational system.

The first two years of the war brought a series of traumata that had a major impact on education. The *Patria* episode stirred stormy debate among adults between activists and moderates. Young people, however, saw it as an example of desperate courage whose positive value was beyond any doubt. In February 1942 the refugee ship *Struma* sank in the Black Sea, where it had been sent by the Turkish authorities after all efforts to make the British agree to transferring these refugees to Palestine had proven fruitless. The turning away of Jews seeking asylum in Palestine was viewed by youth as not only a manifestation of inhumanity but a national humiliation, as well, requiring a response that was "not selective in its means." For example, members of Kibbutz Gennosar complained bitterly to the Histadrut that it had not activated them before the *Struma* disaster: "We would have been ready to sacrifice our lives in order to prevent that fate and that disgrace."[76] Thousands reacted like them, demanding that they be given the order to take action.

From the perspective of the adults, the most difficult trauma in those years (before the information on the Holocaust was verified) was the fear of a British withdrawal from Palestine. The first wave of such apprehensions swept the community in the spring of 1941, when Rommel was advancing in the North African desert. It

was repeated, perhaps even with greater intensity, in the spring and summer of 1942. In the light of the rapid advance of German units in Russia and the pullback of the British to Alamein in Egypt, there appeared to be a realistic possibility that the British could pull back as far as Iraq. The British officers with whom members of the political department of the Jewish Agency were in contact did not conceal the sense of panic spreading through their ranks. The question what the Jewish community in Palestine would do in such an eventuality was painfully difficult. The idea of a total or partial evacuation was not realistic. In the hasty confusion of a withdrawal, no one would devote the necessary logistic means for that purpose. There were those in the community who, in conjunction with Jewish leaders throughout Europe, thought in economic terms: They reasoned the Germans would like to exploit the productive capacity of the Jewish community in Palestine, and that if Jews would behave properly, toe the line, and not indulge in provocations, they might make it through a German occupation unscathed. Others, however, especially those identified with the activists, did not harbor any such illusions. Information from the Russian front on the inhuman behavior of Germans toward the Russian and Jewish population hinted at the fate awaiting the Yishuv if the misfortune of an occupation should befall them.[77]

In the ranks of the active leadership elite, concentrated in Mapai, the top echelon of the Hagana, and Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, ideas began to surface about a desperate last stand, the "final battle," whose negative outcome was certain. That last stand was destined to generate the myth of the Yishuv's heroism, a community destroyed in the fury of battle. That myth, in turn, would nourish the spirit of Jews for generations to come and serve as a source of pride and national vitality. In the dramatic discussions that took place at the beginning of July 1942 in Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, in which participants avoided looking each other in the eye, Galili spoke about the desire "to be a kind of Musa Dagh in Palestine, a sort of Massada," in the hope of "demonstrating Jewish dignity and avoiding a death in disgrace."[78]

The first book by the new publishing house Am Oved of the Histradut came into the shops in early 1941. Berl Katznelson, the editor of the new house, chose an anthology about Jewish heroism over the centuries. This is not one of the outstanding titles ever published by Am Oved, but its purpose was didactic: It was intended to teach young people that Jews in the past had found themselves ensnared in impossible, desperate situations and had died a heroic death. "Jewish heroism since the days of the destruction of the Second Temple," Katznelson wrote in his preface, "was heroism without any prospect for victory—the heroism of believers to whom God had hidden his face."[79] He ended his remarks with an attempt to distinguish between the tragic heroism characterizing Jews in the Diaspora and victorious heroism in Palestine, like that at Tel Hai. Though it might lose a battle, it would win the war. Yet it was doubtful whether that optimistic conclusion could be inferred from the book and stand up under the stress of those hard times. Galili considered this volume on heroism to be quite important and made sure that at meetings of the Hagana, sections from it were read aloud. He defined its topic as "Massada throughout the generations" and contended that it contained important educational values when perceived against the background of the era and the "days to come."[80]

Education glorifying heroic death was not popular within the ranks of the Labor movement, in contrast with the tradition espoused by Ahimeir, Greenberg, and their disciples. The lesson read in the fate of Trumpeldor and his comrades was "in their deaths, they bequeathed us life." The Zionist enterprise was not meant to be one more abortive heroic escapade of fasle messianism. Rather, it was a constructive project, nurtured, to be sure, by mystical ardor but making use of rational means. The preservation of strength and care not to squander it in lost battles were central values in the conceptual framework of the Labor movement. However, in light of the expected German conquest, all rational considerations paled; and the moment of truth arrived when the Yishuv would have to cease thinking in terms of utility and come face to face with tragic Jewish fate.

The book on Jewish heroism contained illustrations of martyrdom over the ages. Yet the concept of martyrdom as such found little echo among Palestinian youth. It dealt with events affecting Jews far from Palestine, in the Diaspora. Their motives were principally religious, despite the fact that the book tried its best to stress the national character of Jewish–Gentile confrontations. Martyrdom underscored Jewish weakness and helplessness and did not stir any empathetic feelings among Palestinian youth. In contrast, the Massada legend possessed all the necessary attributes for youth movement education: an impressive and remote site, distant from any populated area, inaccessible and requiring a long and arduous journey. It was a narrative about true warriors, men and women who had preferred death over surrender. It was a Palestinian heroic myth, interwoven with the cruel landscape of the Judean desert, awakening rich associations with the Bible.

At the end of 1941 a group from Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, distinguished by a number of men who in their youth had been the founders of Ha-Noar ha-Oved youth movement, made an excursion to the desert, placing special emphasis on Massada. This was not the first time that Shmarya Gutman, a member of Kibbutz Na'an and the animating spirit in the group, had scaled the Massada. While Massada had interested only a small number of dedicated enthusiasts in the 1930s, now a conscious attempt was made to transform it into a pilgrimage destination for youth groups, "in order to generate contact between Jewish youth and the fortress, whose educational value is inestimable."[81] This pioneering group initiated a second, longer ascent. January 1942 witnessed the first institutionally organized ascent to the Massada by members of the youth movements. The initiative and most of the young people (numbering nearly fifty) came from Ha-Noar ha-Oved. Yet from the very beginning, an attempt was made to transform the matter into a project involving all the youth movements of Labor Palestine. Thus, participants in this historic ascent were also drawn from the ranks of Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim and Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair. Before the excursion, participants attended a five-day preparation course. That course, besides concentrating on the route and topography, inculcated the teachings of the Massada legend. The excursion itself was brief, in contrast with previous trips to the desert, in which ascent to the Massada was the supreme achievement after a lengthy and arduous trek. This time, the emphasis was on Massada itself and its antiquities and on improving the trail by hewing out steps in its upper section. The excursion was thought to be historic. There was mention that the participants had brought "the good tidings of Massada." The trip symbolized

that "the chain of Massada had not been sundered," a nebulous paraphrase of a line from the Lamdan poem. It was decided that they would bring out a special booklet to immortalize the excursion. This constituted the first step in transforming the ascent to the Massada into a tradition in the youth movements.[82]

Right from the start, there was an element of ambivalence in the pedagogical message of Massada. Massada taught the grandeur of heroic death, the preference of voluntary death to a life in bondage. Despite all its romanticism, this was not a message the youth movement could utilize for educating its members. One of the blessings of youth is its inherent optimism. In the conditions of 1942, when even many adults found it difficult to face the dread of annihilation, young people found the idea of death and failure intolerable. Thus, already, the very first references to the ascent of the Massada were ambiguous. Among them was an article accompanied by a photo of the site in the journal of Ha-Noar ha-Oved, *Ba-Ma'ale,* on the eve of Passover 1942. (The ancient Massada suicides had taken place on the first day of Passover, and Ha-Noar ha-Oved had specifically picked that particular holiday for the yearly ascent to its top.) The paper spoke about the fate of the fortress defenders and the global struggle underway against fascism, stressing that Jews were always its first victims. Yet it also proclaimed, "Don't despair, members of Ha-Noar ha-Oved!"—adding, "Massada speaks to us today, too, since for us, all of Palestine is now a single Massada." This was a paraphrase of a line coined by Katznelson after Tel Hai: "All of Palestine is Tel Hai for us, *ancient mounds that live*" (emphasis mine). There was an inclination, in naming Jewish settlements in Palestine, to emphasize the symbiosis of destruction and rebirth by combining the word *tel* (ancient mound) with such words as *hai* (living), *aviv* (spring), and similar expressions. That symbiosis was now implied for Massada, as well, using the phrase by Berl Katznelson. In this way, it was transformed from a symbol of destruction to one linking a glorious past and a shining future. While reminding the reader of the dreadful times, the proclamation ends on the note of triumph: "The Massada camp will gird us for a life of labor, defense, and freedom. *Massada will not fall again!*"[83]

The piece "The Massada Message," which the participants read in the youth camp on the summit of the fortress, was in a style far removed from the low-key tradition of the Labor movement. A lofty tone predominated. The flowery language helped to blur the lack of clarity of its message. The Brennerian phrase "the last ones on the wall"—originally a reference to the last of those faithful to the Hebrew language—was applied here to the defenders of the Massada. The young people of Ha-Noar ha-Oved imagined themselves to be those last ones on the wall, but it was not clear which wall. They tried to mix the message of heroism coming from the war front, especially the Russian front, where Jewish partisans were also fighting, together with the tradition of heroism of Massada. Massada for them meant just a myth of heroism. The component of a community going down in flames was apparently at the back of the minds of the adults who propagated the myth in 1942 but definitely far removed from the youngsters' consciousness.[84]

Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim followed in the footsteps of Ha-Noar ha-Oved. They chose to ascend Massada during Hanukkah, in remembrance of the valorous deeds of the Maccabees, a more optimistic symbol of a heroic war. It is also possible that

they were influenced by the fact that the relatively cool weather during Hanukkah is more suitable for an ascent of Massada in the scorching Judean desert. In December 1942, when some 250 youths from Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim scaled the Massada, the news trickling in about the ongoing Holocaust was uppermost in the public consciousness. In a symbolic spirit, the young people brought a stone monument up with them to the summit. It contained the inscription "If I forget thee, Diaspora" and "In memory of the Diaspora, rolling in its blood," as reported in an article written after the event. Like Ha-Noar ha-Oved, Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim did not draw conclusions of despair from Massada. Lamdan's poem, with its positive messages, was the centerpiece of the "Massada ceremony" conducted at the site, which was concluded with the hora dance "God Will Build Massada." Even when the "Yizkor" prayer was being recited for the Diaspora, the conclusion was, "Every drop [of blood] that has survived is to be preserved for these hills and valleys—until the tree of Israel is planted once again in our land." The youths spoke about "constructive vengeance," not about the "final battle."[85]

The other youth movements soon followed suit. Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair and Gordonia, two groupings that represented antiactivist currents in the Labor movement, also fell under Massada's spell. On one of the first excursions of Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair to that region, grenades that had been placed in one of the backpacks as a precaution exploded, killing several youngsters. From that time on, the excursions to Massada by that movement were dedicated to the memory of the dead disciples. The excursion organized by Gordonia in 1945 fell victim to an attack by two armed Arab robbers who assaulted the defenseless convoy. Young men were killed, and property stolen. In response, the Youth Department of the Jewish Agency banned excursions to Massada that year. This was viewed by the young people as an affront to national honor and sparked strong protests.[86] Yet that prohibition was only temporary. The ascent to Massada was incorporated in the educational program of every youth movement within Labor Palestine.

Two components struggled for predominance: heroic pathos and the collective experience. There is no doubt that the importance of heroic pathos was on the increase. Comparing the low-key description in *Bi-Vritekh* with the experience depicted by later classes, there is no doubt that the latter had profound emotional experiences—expressions of solidarity with the heroes of Massada and with the historical romanticism of the site.[87] To the same extent, another significant dimension involved was the "togetherness," the "camaraderie," the dynamics of a group of youth under great tension, facing a test of their mettle. "It seems as though everything that is beautiful, social, and faithful, hidden in the heart of the 'group', a social body, has been revealed to us for the first time," one of the participants recorded after the journey and ascent to Massada.[88] First and foremost, it was the youth movement experience that prompted even the moderate movements to adopt Massada as the object of their excursions. There was no youth movement that could resist this social attraction. Ultimately, the trek served as a means for mobilizing the dynamics of the youth group to the communication of a national message. The psychoerotic experiences of youth blended with the historical–romantic impact of the site.

From 1943 on, Massada and Tel Hai became the two principal educational foci

in Ha-Noar ha-Oved. The two were so closely intertwined that in one of the issues of *Ba-ma'ale,* dedicated to the yearly excurions to Massada and Tel Hai, there was a large photo of Massada and, in a small circular inset, a photograph of Tel Hai. The caption underneath read, "The chain has not been severed—from Massada to Tel Hai." The spring was dedicated in the youth movement to extensive discussions on the topic of Jewish heroism in past and present. One theme included in these deliberations was Jewish settlement in Palestine and the central role of the Hagana. The stories of Massada and Tel Hai were the focal symbols in the educational program. Tel Hai changed from an emblem of steadfast defense of the soil to a symbol of the bravery necessary for the acquisition of a homeland. Massada, in contrast, also had certain political undertones, a dimension of struggle for national independence that had been absent from the humbler goals of the Tel Hai myth in the past. Massada and Tel Hai transmitted the message of activism according to Tabenkin: It was better to die than to live a life of bondage. He who fears and capitulates, like France, earns the disdain of the world. In contrast, "whoever endangers all and fights without temporary reservations, enjoys the taste of victory."

Despite the fact that Massada and Tel Hai ended in defeat, as symbols, they were meant to spark hopes of victory. Around these two myths, an entire web of allusions and tales of heroism was woven. That web of tales was created from stories about Jewish and Russian fighters in the world war, along with firsthand narrations of Hagana exploits in Palestine. This was also an opportunity to remind young people that when the world war was over, there would be a struggle for the homeland. All this was associated with the drive in the youth movement for recruitment to the British Army and, in particular, to the Palmach.[89]

Toward the end of the war, the issue of the struggle against the British became acute. During Passover 1944, a trip was organized to Massada dedicated to the struggle for "the liberty of Israel and its independence in a Jewish labor homeland . . . on the eve of the difficult and desperate struggle of those who wish to implement that document of treachery and deceit, the White Paper." Parallel with this, an excursion was organized to Tel Hai that according to the report, united the young disciples "into one camp, loyal and prepared to carry out the order of the hour."[90] In that same period, there was a renewal of another tradition of heroism, connected with the festival of Hanukkah, now termed Festival of Hebrew Bravery—the yearly pilgrimage to Modi'in, the home village of the Hasmonean family, including a visit to the graves of the Hasmoneans and explanations about the wars of the Maccabees.[91] A tradition of the Herzliya Gymnasia since the twenties, it was now also adopted by the youth movements. In 1945 leaders of Ha-Noar ha-Oved waxed poetic about Massada: "What else could the Jewish exiles take with them on their path of sorrow except the memory of Massada?" Actually, they knew that the Jewish people had forgotten Massada and for centuries had had no use for its memory. In fact, this is what made Massada the symbol of the new generation, "the great-grandchildren of its warriors, its heroes," who felt they had little affinity with Jews in the Diaspora, because the latter lacked any tradition of heroism and bravery.[92]

While in Ha-Noar ha-Oved, the Massada cult of heroism was characterized by an extremely high level of pathos, it was integrated in Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim within a methodical program of education, aimed at inculcating patriotism, along the lines

of *Bi-Vritekh*. At the festival of the movement held toward the end of 1944, there were pronounced motifs of heroism from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Hasmoneans, Gush Halav, and Yodefat, as well as Massada. By the same token, maps of the movement's trips and exhibits underscoring the role of the movement in settlement activity were also prominent.[93] Along with this there was a special educational program entitled "A Hebrew Boy in the War of National Liberation." This program surveyed all the Jewish myths of heroism, from the heroes of the Bible and Massada, on to Trumpeldor and those who were killed at Kibbutz Ramat ha-Kovesh during a brutal British search for weapons in 1943. Jewish passive bravery over the centuries was also recalled, in the spirit of the *Book of Jewish Heroism*. The struggle of pioneering youth in the ghettos was given prominence. But the heart of the program dealt with the role of youth in defense. Emphasis was placed on the combination of elements of work and defense, and the Palmach camps in the kibbutzim were held up as the desirable model.[94]

The various educational plans, programs, excursions, readings, ceremonies, and parties were not marked by any tone of nationalist aggressiveness. Nevertheless, the massive rise in the component of heroic myths in youth education was significant. The personal diary of one Palmach member depicts how the myth became a central component within the consolidation of group cohesion and ideological indoctrination: "Now I remember the first party. The Hanukkah party. They talked about our role. Our mission. They spoke about bravery, dedication, self-sacrifice. They praised the Maccabees. Warm feelings flooded your heart when you saw how people who were still strangers just the day before were coming closer together, feeling the common bond of responsibility."[95]

Up until the world war, the dominant mythos had been that of the pioneer and worker. That myth expected young people to be faithful workers on the soil of the homeland and to defend it if necessary. Now the message was communicated that the role of the worker continued to be important but was secondary to the role of the fighter. The message imparted by the heroic myths stated that youth was destined to carry to completion the Jewish struggle in Palestine—to fight a war of national liberation—and that this was the first national priority. Occasionally those two messages were combined together, as in the Birya episode in March 1946: The ascent to Birya by disciples of the youth movements, in defiance of British orders, emphasized both the value of the fighter and that of the settler. The clashes with British security forces helped to illuminate this aspect. Similarly, the eleven settlements that were established in the Negev in October 1946, whose defensive value was indisputable, also underscored the interdependence of the fighter and the pioneer. Yet even in these events, there was some shift in the center of gravity: Their chief importance lay not in the colonizing aspect but in their military–occupational value. This is how they were perceived by the young.

The central role of heroic myths among Palestinian Jewish youth is evident in a comparison of the educational programs of the youth movements with educational materials prepared at that same time, apparently by adults, for the Histadrut festival in December 1944. The old slogans, in the spirit of the defensive ethos, reappeared in the adult materials: "Our song is not blood, not battles, our song is life

and creativity!" and "One doesn't [re]build ruins by swords!" The hero was the pioneer; and the quotations from the fathers of the movement underscored the importance of immigration and settlement and disregarded the issues of defense and fighting. This program contained no manifestation of the pulse of the time and the events of the era and was in stark contradiction with the predominant trend in the youth movements.[96]

The penetration of historical romanticism into the educational fabric of the youth movements augmented the similarity between the educational content of Betar, the IZL, and Lehi on the one hand and that of the youth movements associated with Mapai or Ha-Tenua le-Ahdut ha-Avoda on the other. I have already noted that the literary and cultural sources were shared by both sides to a significant extent. Tchernichovsky, for example, enjoyed general admiration; and his poem "I Have a Melody," with its message about the "blood of the conquerors of Canaan" and the "melody of blood and fire" stirred strong emotions in both camps.[97]

Nonetheless, there was a key difference between the romanticism of the IZL and Lehi and that of the left youth movements. The romanticism of the Right was to a large extent abstract, out of touch with reality. In contrast, myths on the left were translated into terms that were palpable, visible, amenable to experience: concrete sites, landscapes, places of settlement. Concomitantly, there were two different types of the sense of ownership. One had its source in the romanticism of the past. The second derived from the reality of the present, in which the past served as a backdrop, a strengthener, a supplement to the basic feeling of actual ownership, deriving from the direct attachment to the land. When the poet A. Hillel described the generation of the Palmach, he depicted them all as adoring one beloved, a love that evoked no jealousy among them: "That beloved was the homeland, the country, the soil—*in its simplest meaning.*" The feeling of concreteness is conveyed in the following description: "They are waging the war for their love; out of true love—of the kind that is sucked with the thumb, absorbed with the songs of pioneers, stuck with the briar thorns in the bare leg!"[98] It was not by mere chance that they chose to make so many treks and excursions throughout the length and breadth of Palestine. They developed a new area of studies whose very name hinted at the erotic connection between them and Palestine: Yediat ha-Aretz (Knowledge of the Land).[99] It is doubtful whether these excursions began as part of an intentional plan to impart a sense of homeland; yet it is clear that in the 1940s, that educational effect was already taken into account in the Palmach and the various youth movements. The symbiosis between historical myth and concrete landscape resulted in a unique emotional bond between youth and the land.

Holocaust and Power

Beginning with the end of 1942, the Holocaust became a dominant element in the public agenda of the Yishuv. This does not mean that it penetrated consciousness, became a formative psychological or ideological factor, or shaped value orientations. Even more doubtful was people's actual ability to cope with the reality of the

Holocaust and internalize it. The attitude toward the Holocaust was manifested in two parallel domains: the sphere of principles and theory (grasping as a fact that one-third of the Jewish people was being annihilated) and the human–pragmatic sphere (meeting survivors in Palestine). Between these two domains lay a third, serving as a bridge, namely, the attitude toward what were termed "Jews of the Diaspora."

In a society with a high level of ideological tension like the Yishuv, it can be assumed that such a traumatic experience would leave its imprint on every mode of thought, worldview, and understanding of reality. Indeed, on the rhetorical-declarative level, there was not a speech that did not mention the Holocaust as a formative factor impinging on the consciousness of the generation. However, it is difficult to find an area where it actually functioned as a catalyst for a fundamental change, a different approach, a major shift in behavior. In the political sphere, the goals of the Zionist movement were defined and shaped well before reports about the Holocaust had been verified. When the Biltmore Program was approved, millions of the Jews it had envisaged absorbing into Palestine were already dead. The fact that the disaster became known did not lead to changes in existing plans. Rather, it led to growing pressure for their immediate implementation. The gap left by the murdered Jews was symbolically filled by the *She'erit ha-Pleta* (surviving remnant)—survivors from the camps and forests, repatriated returnees from Russia, and Holocaust survivors in the Balkans. They were soon joined by Jews from the Muslim countries.

The network of relations inside the various political parties in Palestine or between them and their rivals, does not suggest that any "earthquakes" occurred, either in the political–conceptual sphere or in the realm of human relations, preferred priorities, and norms. The Holocaust did not lead to a major change in worldview, relevant models, or basic ideological attachments. Whoever was "on the left" remained there, as did those "on the right." The cases of a major political or ideational shift as a consequence of grappling with the reality of the Holocaust were few and isolated. Moreover, they generally had to do with the experience of the individual, rather than with the collective. The split within Mapai, evident as early as October 1942, was not halted as a result of the Holocaust. When Mapam (United Workers party) was formed in January 1948 as a result of the unification of Ha-Tenua le-Ahdut ha-Avoda and Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair, its founders made it a point to depict the new political party as a product of the solidarity between the followers of both movements—a bond they said had emerged during the war and was manifested in the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. But the actual truth was different: The unification was the result of circumstances and developments in Palestine whose connection with events in the Diaspora was rather vague.

An examination of the methods of action of pioneering groups in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland after the war, reveals changes there in attitudes and methods of action. The attempts by leaders of the remaining youth movements in Poland to create new political frameworks, based on the lessons of the Holocaust, met with energetic opposition by the mother movements in Palestine that had remained faithful to older patterns of organization and ideology.[100] Indeed, certain adjustments were made in methods of Zionist action in the wake of the Holocaust:

Illegal immigration, which before the war was on a relatively small scale, now assumed a far greater importance and new proportions. Interest began in the immigration of Jews from Muslim countries, communities that up until the Holocaust had been at the periphery of Zionist activity. Nonetheless, it appears that the answer to the question whether and how the Holocaust changed the world of the Jewish community in Palestine between the years 1942 and 1948 is evident: It altered very little.

In order to internalize historical phenomenon on such a scale, time was needed to create the necessary distance for perspective. For matters to permeate from the external–declarative domain to the internal sphere and then (hopefully) to be translated into ideological and operative conclusions, it was necessary for years to elapse. The events of the 1940s followed each other in such rapid succession that no time was available to digest their import, and responses were nothing but external and shallow.

During those years, utilization of the Holocaust was designed to strengthen and encourage ideologies, views of the world, and self-images that presaged it. The concept *Negation of Exile* was one of the dominant components in Labor ideology in Palestine. A revolutionary movement's need to repudiate everything that had preceded it, to burn bridges to the past in order to gather together the necessary psychological strength for a revolutionary shift, was expressed in the total rejection of Jewish patterns of life in the Diaspora. The negation of exile negated two things: the status of Jews as an eternal minority within a majority people and the economic, social, and political structure of Jewish society (together with the social–psychological traits of the Jew as an individual). Zionist thinkers, beginning with Nahman Syrkin, Ber Borochov, and others of lesser importance, had been convinced that if the Jewish people did not undergo a process of regeneration in Palestine, it was doomed to destruction. That destruction had been expected to occur as a result of revolutionary changes in European countries. Such changes, it was envisaged, would lead to the expulsion of Jews from existing European society and to their erosion in the anticipated social and political struggles. "Catastrophic Zionism" (i.e., the awareness that Zionism had to be achieved quickly, since disaster was imminent for the Jewish people in Europe) was an accepted concept within the ranks of the Zionist movement right from its inception. The view of antisemitism as a dynamic and growing movement had been one of Herzl's conceptual innovations. The conclusion was that it was imperative to act speedily to remove Jews from the Diaspora before the catastrophe occurred.

The conception of catastrophe was opposed to the evolutionary view, which regarded the Zionist project as a slow-paced process, subject to the political and economic constraints placed upon it. There was a wide gap between the down-to-earth realism of the evolutionists and the messianic tension inherent in the catastrophic conception. Yet here, as in other cases, persons were compelled to come to terms with contradictory conceptual frameworks. The same circles of the Zionist–Socialist movement that accepted the catastrophic version (such as Ahdut ha-Avoda in the 1920s and the majority of Mapai until the split in 1944) accepted the evolutionary method as inevitable but did not abandon the catastrophic perspective. Catastrophe consciousness expressed the inner fears felt by the movement con-

cerning the fate of the Jewish people. In the face of events in the 1930s, this approach became more and more relevant. Leaders like Katznelson, Ben Gurion, Tabenkin, and many others articulated this sense of urgency. Significantly, however, the catastrophe they envisaged was not the Holocaust. They expected an increase in phenomena such as pauperization, starvation, lack of hope among youth, and the crumbling of Jewish society. No one thought in terms of actual physical annihilation.[101]

One of the outstanding features of the Palestinian Jewish community was its Palestinocentrism, that is, its tendency to perceive the Zionist project in Palestine as the center of creation. That conception derived from the fundamental Zionist creed that the haven being built in Palestine would ultimately bring the redemption of the entire Jewish people. The ongoing focus on the problems of this small community—to the point of disregarding other burning issues of the Jewish people—found its moral justification in this assertion. Consequently, when the war broke out, the first concern of Jewish leaders in Palestine was how to protect their own flock from the imminent storm. Concern for European Jewry was secondary. They assumed that the dangers facing the Jews there were no greater than those threatening the Palestinian Jews. The threat of a "night of Bartholomew" at the hands of the Arabs in the aftermath of a British defeat seemed more realistic and likely than a slaughter of the Jews of Europe. As long as Rommel's tanks were pounding on the gates of Egypt, the immediate danger threatening the Yishuv was at the top of the list of concerns of Jewish leadership; and the press reports about what was happening in Europe did not penetrate their consciousness.[102] After Rommel was defeated at Alamein and a German invasion averted—and reports on the Holocaust finally verified in November 1942—a slow process of accommodating the reality of the Holocaust to the framework of current ideas and terms of reference in the Yishuv began.

One of the commonly voiced responses was that the catastrophe had been anticipated from the start, that it was a more rapid and brutal realization than expected of catastrophic Zionism. One leader (presumably Moshe Sneh) claimed that "Hitler for me is no surprise. . . . He did not shake my Jewish and Zionist equilibrium one bit. Hitler was expected, he is law for the diasporic Jewry." He contended that the plight of Polish and Romanian Jewry before the war, the assimilation demanded of Jews in "countries of freedom," were in fact equivalent to their annihilation in the gas chambers![103] In contrast, Tabenkin blamed himself for not having been more alert to the handwriting on the wall, despite the awareness since the earliest period of Zionism "that Jewish existence would collapse during revolution. How is it that we did not preach catastrophic Zionism constantly and make it our slogan?" In 1946 Tabenkin already understood the chasm between what had been foreseen and what had taken place: "Apparently, we envisaged the catastrophe. But there were differing degrees of catastrophic prophecy among us and still are. We were probably most sensitive to the certainty of the Jewish catastrophe. We were unable to be calmed by the patience that was incessantly preached to us. Nevertheless, all of us, including those who felt it necessary to force the issue and the restless were cheated; we were led astray."[104] The view that saw the Diaspora as doomed to decline and the perspective that anticipated a physical annihilation were separated

by a different approach to the element of time: In the first instance, what was involved was a slow process; in the second, a sudden disaster. People were prepared psychologically and intellectually only for the first eventuality. Hence, the attempt to use familiar concepts to explain the Holocaust soon proved inadequate.

The leaders held up the old Zionist message as the sole viable answer to the Holocaust. Tabenkin stated: "Nothing else will save [Jews] other than this enterprise. . . . The only program is the Zionist one. Independence of this people in its own land, by its own labor, economy, weapons."[105] Galili told members of Ha-Noar ha-Oved: "We search in vain for new answers to the Holocaust of the Diaspora. The answers are inscribed on the banners of our movement and are established in its decisions and commandments. The answers were carved from the deep recesses of the life of the people and the land."[106]

Golomb posited the appropriate response to the Holocaust in another domain of action: recruitment to the British army. Such enlistment had been his special concern since the beginning of the war. Galili's solution was to advocate joining the Palmach. Tabenkin, in contrast, stressed the need for a broader approach: readying oneself for Zionist missions of any kind, with special emphasis on recruitment to all the branches of the security forces. Ben Gurion, since 1937 under the spell of the idea of a Jewish state, proclaimed that the Holocaust had been possible because "the Jews do not have any status in respect to statehood. There is no Jewish army, no Jewish independence, and no secure and open homeland." He regarded independence as the recompense for the historical injustice perpetrated against the Jews.[107] A radical expression of Palestinocentrism can be found in the following comments: "The question facing us is whether we will recognize that to fight for Zionism is a commandment no less [important] than to fight against Hitler—and indeed even greater."[108]

The spontaneous response in Palestine to the Holocaust was the impulse to go to Europe to come to the aid of the Jews there. Golomb raised the idea of "platoons of ghetto destroyers." The plan was that young people from Palestine would be parachuted into occupied Europe or make their way to the Jewish communities there through other avenues. They would bring a message of encouragement from Palestine and assist Jews in organizing for self-defense. There were two hidden assumptions underlying this idea: that Jews from Palestine were in fact able to accomplish what Jews in the Diaspora could not do by themselves and that the action would be carried out in cooperation with the British. The scheme proved abortive because the British had grave reservations about such adventurous ideas, which strengthened the Zionist claim that there was an inherent linkage between the distress of the Jews in Europe and the problem of Palestine. In Golomb's thinking, this proposal was linked with other attempts to strengthen relations with the British and deepen Jewish participation in the war.[109]

Their desire to aid the Jews of Europe notwithstanding, it became clear that it was not in the power of the Jews in Palestine to provide the assistance needed. The possibility of getting to Europe was conditional on British help, and all plans and ideas foundered on that practical necessity. The British had other priorities: They did not regard saving the Jews of Europe as one of their war aims and refused to allocate resources, even symbolic, for this purpose. Of all the proposed plans, the

modest one that was finally put into practice in 1944 involved sending in about thirty parachutists, meant to forge a link between underground fighters in the Balkans and the British, while establishing contact at the same time with Jewish survivors. The value of the parachutists was more symbolic than practical. A profound sense of helplessness predominated—of inability to provide a real answer to the burning question of the era. "Every response we have made," Tabenkin said, "all of them, taken together—one big, awful helplessness."[110]

It was natural for that helplessness to be projected onto the Allies. They were the only ones from whom assistance and salvation, if any were possible, might be forthcoming. The restrictions of the White Paper took on a sinister meaning: At best, that document was an expression of the lack of concern by the British for the massive murder of Jews; at worst, it constituted a manifestation of the close emotional proximity between British and Nazi attitudes when it came to antisemitic biases. Tabenkin asserted bitterly: "That is the same Pontius Pilate who washes his hands, claiming they've shed no blood. . . . No door was opened. No gate was opened. Palestine was not opened, England was not opened. America was not opened."[111] A poem by Alterman entitled "From All the Peoples," written at the end of 1942, began with the lines, "While our children were crying in the shadow of the gallows, / We did not hear the wrath of the world." It ended with the prayer of the murdered children before the lord of the universe, who collects their blood, "since no one cares to collect it apart from you." The final lines read "And you will demand it from the murderers, / And from those who were silent, as well."[112]

The fact that what was termed "the enlightened world" showed so little interest in the fate of the Jews served as a renewed and contemporary bit of evidence in support of Jewish skepticism about the non-Jewish world. The spontaneous attitude of Jews from Eastern Europe toward the Gentile, characterized at best by caution and suspicion and at worst by a sense of constant confrontation between the Jewish and Gentile worlds, was now enhanced, corroborated, and intensified. The feeling of total Jewish isolation, facing a world divided into persecutors and the indifferent, was the natural, almost self-evident result:[113] "The delusion from the era of the emancipation, namely, that members of the enlightened human species are responsible for each other and are also responsible to a certain degree for the fate of the defenseless Jewish race, has evaporated."[114]

Yet here, too, perspectives split along lines of ideological affinity and political loyalty. When Tabenkin set about to consider the Holocaust, he took pains to distinguish between the world of the "forces of tomorrow," which held out hope for the future of humanity, and the indifferent world of the Western democracies. For the believers in the Soviet experiment, the fact that hundreds of thousands of Jews who had fled to the Soviet Union to escape the advancing German armies had, indeed, found refuge there was an additional proof of the superiority of the Soviet system over the Western democracies. On the other hand, those who had been hostile to Bolshevik Russia ever since the 1920s did not change their attitude in the light of events. They stressed the fact that the Soviet Union had not allowed Jews from outside Russia to provide assistance to their brothers there except on a small scale. They underscored the destruction the Jewish community had suffered under the Soviet regime, both physical and psychological. The reality of the Holocaust did

not change the basic approach of any of them but served as a factor to bolster and encourage existing positions. This fact was highlighted after the war, when the leadership of Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair dismissed the firsthand evidence presented by its members who had spent the war in Central Asia and in the forests of Belorussia—regarding the extent of antisemitism in the Soviet Union and the horrors of the Soviet system in general.[115]

The sense of Jewish helplessness and frustration repeated again and again in comments by leaders of the Yishuv, supplemented by the feeling that the Gentile world had looked on indifferently as Jews were slain, were channeled into two complementary approaches. One presented the Jew as a sacrificial lamb, the perennial innocent victim of the violence of human society. The second was predicated on the belief that Jews could trust and rely only on themselves.

The Holocaust significantly enhanced the conviction that right was on the side of the Jews in the struggle for Palestine. It proved what happened to a people without a physical basis for its existence, whose voice is not heard in the council of nations, whose members cannot find safe refuge, a people without an army, without physical might. When juxtaposed to the tragedy of Jewish refugees—survivors of glorious Jewish communities that had gone up in smoke—the legalistic demands of Palestinian Arabs regarding their right to protection of their majority status rang hollow and seemed trivial by comparison. In a sarcastic poem that Alterman wrote about the last remaining certificate, according to the White Paper rules, left for the Zionist Organization, the poet called the reader's attention to "how a people, after the demise of the executioners, was dying at the hands of the bureaucrats" (the British). He commented ironically on Arab opposition to granting additional certificates:

> And how Arabia, in broad daylight,
> without even blushing, was quick to warn that the expanse
> between Iran and Saudi Arabia is too narrow
> to accommodate her.[116]

Indeed, this view had also been heard on occasion in the 1920s and 1930s. Yet now, in the light of the Holocaust, it seemed self-evident. The sensitivity for the needs of the other side and its rights weakened or, more accurately, became less important under the pressure of current events. Even on this issue, one can find the same camps as before the Holocaust. Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair continued to show sensitivity for the rights of the Arabs, as did Ihud. The Holocaust had no impact on their approach to the Arab question. The majority, especially the large camp of Mapai, also basically adhered to positions on the Arab question they had supported in earlier years. The difference was that the degree of attention and intellectual and emotional alertness directed toward the Arab question were now far more limited. The disaster of European Jewry and revelations of the Holocaust and the political struggle against the British following the war had drained consciousness and emotions and hardened people. The virtues of mercy and charity—up until then a part of their worldview—paled in the face of staggering events. The perspective of the Jew as victim functioned as a license for giving priority to the national interest over other considerations.

The Holocaust underscored the isolation of the Jew: The civilized world divorced itself from the last vestiges of justice and humaneness, and no power had come to the aid of the Jews in their hour of despair. Consequently, the Jew should not expect help. He had better do everything "by his own hands" (as in the subtitle of Moshe Shamir's *Chapters on Alik,* which presented his brother, Alik, as a model of a young Palestinian boy). "If you want the truth, we have nobody except ourselves!"—Tabenkin muttered in a moment of anguish.[117] During his May 1947 visit to Displaced Persons (DP) camps in Germany, he remarked, "We will shape our fate by our own strength only." Yet this did not prevent him from speaking in the same breath on behalf of educating the young in the spirit of internationalism.[118]

Alterman expressed widespread public opinion on the matter in his poem dedicated to a baby girl born on a ship of immigrants en route to Palestine. In commenting on the governments of the world, he noted:

> Their hands did not assist her.
> The heavens will testify.
> She even stopped asking about them.
> She was born on her own, and arrived on her own.
> In short, she took care of everything—on her own.[119]

This idea, likewise, was not new. Its source can be found in Pinsker's "Auto-Emancipation" of 1882, which recalled an ancient slogan coined by Hillel—"If I am not for myself, who will be for me?"—and called for its adoption for the present. The idea hinted at by Alterman—that the British not only did not promote the national home but even restricted its steps and curbed its development—was commonly accepted in the 1920s and 1930s. The concept of the Hagana, as an underground organization, was the product of the notion of self-reliance: Jews had no one to rely on except themselves. Nonetheless, the Holocaust affected this matter greatly.

One of the central lessons deriving from the experience of isolation and helplessness was that it was forbidden for the Jew to be weak: "We feel ourselves to be sons of a miserable people, murdered because of its weakness," commented Moshele Tabenkin, Yitzhak's son and a poet in his own right.[120] The weakness took on dimensions of an amoral attribute: "A powerless people in the physical sense has no biological right to exist; a people devoid of defense that does not carry weapons to protect itself, should not expect assistance from other quarters; a frivolous people that puts its trust in the moral calculations of humanity and the world is commiting suicide," wrote one of the members of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad: "The millions of Jews who were thrown into the furnaces paid for the sin of the weakness of *all* Jews: both those who were ensnared in the nets of death in the regions where Nazis carried out massacres and those under the rule of 'enlightened' humanity."[121] The conclusion derived from all this was simple, direct, and oriented toward force: "From the crematoria and graves a command bursts forth, for all Jews—*to become a power*—what the Holocaust has commanded us is to become a *Jewish power in Palestine.*" In so stating, Galili was not employing the term *power* in the restricted sense. He was referring to all components of Zionist activity in Palestine: "Land, settlement, defense, labor, and immigration—that is the guarantee for the Jewish future."[122]

But he made these remarks in the context of recruitment for the Palmach. The association was clear. Years later, in an encounter with Zivia Lubetkin, one of the leaders of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, Tabenkin declared: "Our dreadful fate compels us to be strong. To be weak, without power—that is something familiar to us from time immemorial; now we have no alternative but to strive to be powerful."[123]

Power was not meant as an answer to feelings of frustration and the desire for revenge, despite the fact that someone asserted: "We have no language to censure our murderers except for the language of vengeance and power."[124] The revival of a people, proud and free, in its land" was supposed to be the true revenge.[125] It appears that from the first moment the reports were verified, the leaders made conscious efforts to direct the feelings of enmity and rage into constructive channels and to guide youth toward finding satisfaction in the military frameworks within the community. This was conceived as a substitute for revenge aimed at the Germans, a desire for vengeance that was beyond the realm of attainment. The Palestinian arena was meant to absorb the psychological energy generated by the information on the Holocaust and to direct it into the struggle for gaining Jewish sovereignty over Palestine. There was some fear about nihilistic inclinations, likely to attract many young people to the organization of the "dissidents" (the IZL and Lehi), as a desperate response to a world casting off moral values—a world in which, in order to survive, one has to be rapacious, a wolf among wolves. For that reason, constructive activity was depicted as the true victory over the destructive forces that Hitler had unleashed against the Jewish people. The need for a powerful, positive ideal transformed the slogan coined by Ben Gurion and his associates—Jewish independence in Palestine as the war aim—into the pole of hope of national revival, the opposite of genocidal destruction.

The animosity toward the British, an integral part of the complex network of relations between the Palestinian Jewish community and the authorities, was exacerbated, taking on new and unprecedented strength and depth, in the wake of the Holocaust. All the frustration, despair, humiliation, and helplessness that marked the Jewish collective response to the Holocaust found an outlet in hatred for the Gentiles who were closest at hand, namely, the British. The charge that the policies of the mandatory government had led to the destruction of Jews or, at least, that those policies did not permit the saving of many who could have been saved, was not groundless. Apprehensions about an invasion of Jewish refugees flooding into Palestine, that would jeopardize the policies of the White Paper, played a paramount role in the insensitive attitude of the government to the plight of the refugees. In the domain of public opinion, what was decisive were the infuriating facts, such as the *Patria, Atlantic,* and *Struma* episodes and reports about relatives and friends who were desperately trying to reach the shore of Palestine while the British refused to permit their entry on the grounds that they were "nationals of enemy countries," likely to be Nazi spies. Within the circle of leadership, there were even more shocking experiences: endless negotiations to save children by bringing them to Palestine—discussions that in the end led to nothing. Heartlessness was demonstrated in connection with the *Struma* affair, British efforts to hinder the Yoel Brand mission to save Hungarian Jews, and other incidents.[126]

Despite all the mitigating assumptions historians are required to put forward in

assessing government actions and shortcomings under the pressure of wartime, it is nonetheless difficult to find many points that speak in favor of the Palestine government. The accusing finger pointed at the British was not exclusively the product of the hysteria of a helpless public that had a psychological need to direct its anger at the most proximate authorities. Rather, it was based on hard facts.

From the end of the war on, as it became clear that the British had no intention of revoking the White Paper and allowing Holocaust survivors to enter Palestine, rage against them surged, reaching previously unparalleled proportions. In the drama of the mid-1940s, the Arabs of Palestine played a quite marginal role. They dwelt somewhere in the background, necessitating a modicum of attention in the operative sphere, a domain toward which the various groups in the Jewish community still had differing attitudes. In contrast, the British were on a direct collision course with the Jewish community. It goes without saying that there was a certain difference in the phraseology used by the Hagana and Palmach in referring to the British as contrasted with the terminology customary in Lehi and the IZL. The latter were radical in voicing their hatred for the British, whom they tended to blame for the destruction of European Jewry. Likewise, they did not hesitate to make analogies between the Germans and the British, seeing a common basis to their actions. Such extreme statements were rare among Hagana and Palmach circles. Yet beyond certain differences in expression, manners, and a dispute on ways and means, the hatred of the British and the struggle against them gained a widespread following in the Jewish community in Palestine—most especially among young people, both on the right and on the left.

Nonetheless, it is doubtful whether the Holocaust contributed to a fundamental change in approach regarding the issue of the struggle against the British. Two conceptions developed, not necessarily contradictory. One, characteristic of the IZL and Lehi, as well as the youth groups associated with the Labor movement, described the conflict in Palestine in terms of the anti-imperialist struggle of the oppressed peoples (India, Indonesia) or else the European national liberation movements (Ireland, Poland, Italy). In that context, the Holocaust was of secondary importance. The second conception, current among leaders in the Yishuv, stressed the uniqueness of the Jewish fight for independence of a people not settled in its land. In this conception, there was more room for inclusion of the topic of the Holocaust. Yet both apparently conceived the struggle against the British as a struggle whose focus was in Palestine, driven by motives and interests that were basically Palestinian. From the Holocaust, it derived legitimation, emotional strength, and moral indignation that helped crystallize a national consensus around it. But the struggle was against the White Paper and on behalf of a pro-Zionist solution in Palestine. The British opposed these two objectives. The conflict was waged over these two issues, not over the emotions generated by the Holocaust.

One of the central lessons of the Holocaust was the very fact that it had happened. Among the factors underlying individuals' difficulty grappling with and coming to terms with the reality of the Holocaust was the absence of any historical precedents for the event. But once it had transpired, it created a new point of reference. Prior to Auschwitz, it had been an inconceivable idea. Now it became an integral part of the conceivably possible, a component within the psychological and

social fabric of individuals and peoples. The grave lesson drawn was that if it could happen once, it could happen again: "Therefore, our historical experience tells us today: It is possible to annihilate us, even in Europe, even in the proximity of all the civilized peoples, even when we are a concentrated population."[127] The Holocaust was not explained by supposedly "racial" traits of the German people but by the deeds of the fascist regime, the root cause of evil in the world, leading entire peoples to destruction. The view of the Holocaust as part of the world apocalypse made it easier to cope with. It was not only Jews who had been victims of fascism: Everything that was good and enlightened in the world fell victim to the forces of darkness. This view of the tragedy contained an element of slight comfort, and held out hope for a better future. Yet it simultaneously suggested a chilling prospect: that under certain circumstances, the Holocaust could reoccur. At times of revolution, for example, when institutions crumble and frameworks collapse, the forces that make the Jew, the eternal alien, into the scapegoat of a society in crisis could resurface. If the Holocaust did not derive from a unique constellation of circumstances but, rather, from the development of a social–political system subject to rational explanation, then the chance of another Holocaust could not be ruled out. When Tabenkin surveyed the postwar world in 1946, the tensions between the blocs, and the prosepcts for revolution and upheaval in Eastern Europe, he anticipated the possibility of additional cataclysmic convulsions. Given the danger of World War III, considered a realistic option by the Left, the fear of a reoccurrence of the Holocaust became a decisive component in the world picture.[128]

Although those who feared World War III had in mind a clash between the imperialist West and the forces of revolution, the idea of total annihilation was also applied to the Palestinian arena. When Ben Gurion, speaking in the Zionist Actions Committee in the summer of 1947, on the eve of the imminent political decision, discussed the threat of an attack on the Yishuv by the Arabs of Palestine together with the Arab states, he said, "At present, we are not facing acts of robbery and terror designed to disturb our work but, rather, a plan to uproot the Yishuv and liquidate the Zionist 'danger' by annihilating the Jews of Palestine." He added even more pointedly: "And let us not be frivolously optimistic. And let us not say what happened to six million Jews in Europe cannot happen to 650 thousand Jews in Palestine. . . . What happened in Europe can happen in Palestine, and in the near future." In recalling the slaughter of the Armenians during World War I and the killing of the Assyrians in Iraq in the 1930s, he argued that the philosophy of violence was not the exclusive legacy of the Germans and that there were precedents in the Middle East.[129] The impact of these analogies on the speaker and audience can only be surmised; but it is likely that in that particular historical context, it was enormous.

The fear that the Arabs in Palestine were plotting to annihilate the Jewish community there had surfaced for the first time in the wake of the 1929 riots (see chapters 4 and 5). The small size and weakness of the Yishuv at that time, amply evident in the riots, and the merciless killings in Hebron, Safed, and Motza, as well as various statements by Arabs, awakened the feeling that Arabs were planning one day to rise up and annihilate the Jews. Such fears were not voiced during the Arab Rebellion of 1936–1939, the most serious confrontation with Arabs prior to the war

of 1947–1948. There were reasons for that: The Yishuv had grown in size, had become far more self-confident, and was better equipped to defend itself. The fact that the British also protected the Jews quite effectively likewise contributed to allaying fears that the community might be totally wiped out. During World War II, however, such apprehensions were revived in the light of the open delight of the Arab community over British failures during the tense days that preceded Alamein. Arabs were not cautious in expressing their intention to settle accounts with the Jews in Palestine. It should be recalled that up until 1947, the Jews had not faced the Arabs without the British, who functioned as a buffer defense. Fears about what might happen should the British withdraw were not unfounded. Apprehensions returned about the possibility of an Arab "night of Bartholomew."[130] Thus, it was not the Holocaust that generated the anxiety of annihilation within the top leadership echelons of the Jewish community. Nonetheless, there is no doubt it served as an illustration and historical lesson that was not to be forgotten, a reminder that the nightmare that had terrified them was not the product of a sick imagination but had a harrowing and recent precedent in the expanses of civilized Europe.

Reports on the destruction of European Jewry spoke about millions who had gone to their death without resistance. The first witnesses to come from the field of slaughter were a group of women and children, Palestinian citizens, exchanged for a group of German citizens. They arrived in Palestine in November 1942, followed by a handful of members of the Polish He-Halutz, who came to Palestine in the course of 1943. Not only did they describe the cruelty of the Germans, but they also detailed the absolute helplessness of the Jews and the fact that they had not rebelled against their bitter fate. From the very first moment, Jews in Palestine found it very hard to digest this fact of Jewish passivity. The more distant they were from the realities of Jewish life in Europe, the younger their age, and the greater their involvement in military activity in Palestine, the more difficult it was for them to comprehend the situation of the Jews during the Holocaust.

The expression "like sheep to slaughter" was first used in connection with Jews in Nazi Europe going to their death in a leaflet published by Abba Kovner in the Vilna ghetto, where Jews were murdered as early as 1941. In that leaflet, he called on the Jews to resist—not to go passively like sheep to slaughter but to rise up against the Germans. In Palestine, the expression apparently began to appear in print in late 1942. In December of that year, a few days after the atrocities became known, Tabenkin appeared in the Histadrut council and expressed his stupefaction over the absence of manifestations of Jewish self-defense in Europe. The story of the destruction of the Jews of Radom was published in the press at that time. The report was based on the testimony of a witness who had come to Palestine and described how Jews were handed spades and ordered to dig their own graves. The question why that Jew, who knew that his fate and that of his family had been sealed, did not lift up his spade and strike the German soldier guarding him was repeatedly asked even by persons rooted in the reality of Jewish life in Eastern Europe and well aware of the abysmal isolation of the Jews at the hour of their death, separating them not only from their murderers but also from the whole non-Jewish population.[131] As time passed, the question accelerated: The death machine had been operating for more than two years. Jews should have been able to prepare

for self-defense, to find a way to defend themselves![132] Such "queries" plagued many of the veterans in the community in Palestine; but they were always careful to state that those Jews should not be judged. They even pointed to an analogy between the helplessness of the Jewish situation in the Diaspora and the sense of impotence that afflicted the Yishuv in the summer of 1942, when faced with the prospect of an occupation of Palestine by Rommel's divisions.[133] But as deep as their solidarity with the condemned Jews was, it was not total: "At that same council, we were tormented by the question, Why did the Jews act this way? And that left a shadow of terror," Tabenkin remarked in reference to testimony by a member of He-Halutz from "over there" presented at the convention of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad in 1944.[134]

From its inception, the Zionist movement had cherished the image of the "new Jew." Schooled in Bialik's "In the City of Salughter" and Brenner's "He Told Her," the prime characteristic of that new Jew was his readiness to fight for his life and for the abstract value of "Jewish honor." The willingness of Jews to go "like sheep to slaughter" was such a profound blow to the self-image of the Yishuv that doubts arose as to whether the Zionist movement had actually succeeded in fashioning another type of Jew, different from the "old," traditional Jew.

> That experience of annihilation without resistance bored in our hearts, ate away at us: Hadn't we started a new chapter in Jewish history? Hadn't we created a new type of Jew? Is there really no hope for the people, no hope for a change in values? Is this people really sentenced to eternal exile and slavery for ever, with nothing but its superiority of spirit and conscience?[135]

The entire structure of ideas that had been built since Bialik, Berdichevsky, and Tchernichovsky—from the time the great shift began, moving from a spiritual to an "earthy" Judaism—appeared like so much foam on churning waters in the face of the inconceivable submission of millions of Jews to their fate.

The expectation of manifestations of heroism from "over there" concealed feelings of guilt (almost unmentioned) over the failures of the Jews "here": The Jewish community in Palestine had proven incapable of infiltrating even a single Jew into Poland during the years of mass annihilation. There were only extremely loose and sporadic contacts between the Jews in Palestine and in Eastern Europe. An enormous gap had existed between the relatively tranquil life in Palestine during the later years of the war, the unprecedented economic prosperity there, and the ruin and destruction that had simultaneously ravaged Europe. Guilt was also felt because there were so few opportunities for deeds of valor in Palestine during the war years.

If this is the way veterans thought and spoke—men whose total identification with the Jewish people was beyond doubt—how must the young have felt? Right from the beginning, they had lacked empathy for the Jews of the Diaspora and any sense of spontaneous solidarity with them. The concept Negation of Exile that they were taught in school and in the youth movement was not interpreted and appropriated by them as a rejection merely of the minority status of the Jew or an opposition to the existing frameworks of Jewish life in the Diaspora. Rather, it was a rejection of the Jew himself—his characteristics and traits, traditional life-styles,

and attitudes toward his surroundings. When referring to European Jewry, the young Jews in Palestine tended to prefer abstractions, (as in the slogan "If I forget thee, Diaspora!)" to describing real flesh-and-blood persons. They were not referring to the Jews of Brest Litovsk, Psheitik, or Bendzin but to an abstraction—alien and not really the object of sympathy.[136] The expression "diasporic Jew" transmitted a whole complex of features that were regarded as objectionable in the eyes of Palestinian Jewish youth: distance and alienation from labor and nature and, most particularly, weakness and lack of physical abilities. It symbolized everything that youth in Palestine did not want or need to be.

The syndrome of "like sheep to slaughter" was more widespread among youth than adults. The former internalized the fact that those who had walked unprotesting to their death had been members of their own people. Their rage, humiliation, and pain existed on an abstract plane of national solidarity. They expressed these emotions in numerous statements and speeches on the external level of declaration. But when they left aside these generalizing exaggerations and penetrated to the plane of their concrete, deeper attitudes, they voiced negative criticism, repugnance, and even disgust: Those Jews had not acted in accordance with behavioral codes acceptable to Palestinian Jewish youth. "There are forms of abuse against which response is justified—without weighing the consequences," declared Moshele Tabenkin, contrasting those brought up in Palestine with the stereotype of Jews in the Diaspora: "I believe that there are . . . some psychological traits that are special to us, the generation of the Jewish Hebrew worker, raised and educated here in Palestine, . . . that would have placed each of us in the camp of the avengers, without further considerations or thought, even without any purpose."[137] Moshele Tabenkin presented the contrast between those educated in Palesine and in the Diaspora in terms of the spontaneously violent reply of the former in the event of abuse and the passive acceptance of judgment by the latter.

In a talk with members of Ha-Noar ha-Oved, Galili warned about the fact that "among Palestinian youth, there is a prevalent sense of superiority to young Jews from the Diaspora. There is also highflown rhetoric depicting youth in Palestine as the progeny of Judah Maccabee and Shimon Bar Giora." He challenged his young audience: "Has youth in Palestine already withstood those trials to which Jewish youth in the Diaspora has been subjected?" He demanded of them not to judge their brothers until they had stood in their place. Yet in the depths of his heart, Galili also shared the expectation that Jews would prove themselves and their mettle by engaging in armed struggle.[138] When, several years later, Yigal Allon summed up the experience of the Palmach, which he described as a "Palestinian product par excellence," he noted with caution, "Over a great many years, many of those born and raised in Palestine were affected by a lack of understanding when it came to the problems of the Diaspora and even by some sort of feeling of superiority toward its Jews."[139] The connection between the "feeling of superiority" and the fact that the Jews in Europe had failed to resist and fight becomes clear from his later comments.

It was natural that the same feeling of haughtiness and alienation found only rare expression in writing at the time.[140] Nonetheless, it was undoubtedly widespread. In later testimony by survivors, there is repeated mention of the sense of humiliation felt during the encounter with the disdainful approach shown by young

Palestinians, who did not hesitate to confront them with accusations about victims who went "like sheep to slaughter." Moreover, the majority of the survivors who appeared at various forums and spoke about their experiences found it necessary to comment on that question in apologetic tones. There are also traces of this in the belles lettres of the period, for example, in the description by Moshe Shamir in *Pirke Alik* (Chapters on Alik) of the protagonist's desire to join the British Army: "Something has to be done about the annoying matter of Hitler and his brownshirts. . . . We'll chop them down to size; so that they should know that Jews . . .—yes, there are also other kinds of Jews in the world, Jews who may even cut down mechanized Prussians." The legitimiation for this approach, even in a later era, is highlighted by the fact that this passage was included in the *Sefer ha-Palmah,* the canonical version of the Palmach experience, published in 1952.[141]

There was no particular "chemistry" generated in the encounter of Palestinian Jewish youth with the so-called She'erit ha-Pleta or, thereby, with the experience of the Holocaust. Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim, for example, did not initiate even a single meeting with survivors who managed to get to Palestine during the war.[142] One of the first female members of He-Halutz to make her way to Palestine and tell her story was Reniya Hershkovitz. She was invited to speak at youth meetings and gatherings of the Palmach and in kibbutzim. According to her own account, one Friday evening after she had finished speaking about the most horrible of history's many tales, the kibbutz members promptly got up, pushed the tables and chairs to one side, and, as though nothing had happened, started to dance.[143]

In 1946 a literary collection appeared, entitled *Yalkut ha-Re'im* (Friends' Anthology). It claimed to represent the spirit of the new Palestinian generation. One of the stories in the anthology was by Moshe Shamir, entitled "The Second Stutter" (Ha-gimgum ha-sheni). It was apparently the first literary reaction by a young Palestinian Jew to the destruction of European Jewry. The journal *Ba-Ma'avak,* periodical of the Circle of Young Palestine, praised the story, claiming that it gave an honest portrayal of the atrocities in the concentration camp from the perspective of the "Palestinian Jew, free, proud, healthy, who despises all sickliness." That young person "sees the sick sadism of the Nazi torturer—but also the bent-down, sick nature of the tormented victim." The salvation of the diasporic Jew comes when he is absorbed into a kibbutz in Palestine and becomes a new man. "Indeed, this is the most magnificent victory of the Palestinian generation," the article's author proclaimed, "to witness the healing and straightening of Diaspora Jews when they are absorbed in its life-style *and are assimilated to it.* This is a new meaning for the concept *immigration* [*aliyah,* 'ascent']. They are 'ascending' to us, to our level of internal health and freedom—without our having to 'descend' to the subjugation and servility of the Diaspora."[144]

It is difficult to overlook the internalizing of certain antisemitic concepts in this passage: "health" is to "sickliness" as "Palestine" is to the "Diaspora," and use is made of the same adjective to denote the diapsoric Jew and the Nazi. The Palestinian stereotype of the Jew in the Diaspora depicted the latter not only as inferior to the Palestinian Jew, but also as a pathological individual, plagued by physical and mental problems. This was the conceptual basis for the demand of "assimilation" among "healthy" youth in Palestine.

This radical attitude toward European Jewry was certainly not shared by everyone. Yet there can be no doubt that it was widespread among Palestinian Jews as a kind of emotional and psychological basis (not always fully conscious) and shaped to a significant degree their attitude toward the surviving remnant of Europe's Jews. One of the most famous sketches published during that period was by Yitzhak Sade, entitled *"Ahoti al ha-hof"* (My Sister on the Beach). It appeared several times in the Palmach bulletin and was subsequently included in *Sefer ha-Palmah.* One can view the piece as expressive of the "canonical" attitude toward the survivors. The sketch describes an encounter on the beach in Palestine between Sade and a young girl. She has a tattoo that reads "Only for officers." Afterwards it becomes clear that the girl was also sterilized by the Germans. She weeps, repeating over and over again: "Why did they bring me here? Do I deserve that young healthy men should risk their life for me?" Sade answers her in a tone of affection and encouragement: "Our love for you is true, you will be our sister, bride, mother." He ends the sketch with the words: "For the sake of my sisters, I am strong. For the sake of my sisters, I am brave. For the sake of my sisters, I will also be cruel. For your sake, everything—everything!"[145]

Symbolizing the Holocaust by means of a girl who was forced into prostitution was not accidental. Although such prostitution was marginal among the complex of atrocities of the Holocaust, it embodied a highpoint in degradation and perversity, especially in the eyes of young men, sensitive to sexual matters. It also symbolized the impotence of Jewish males in the Holocaust, their inability to protect their females. This image was in accord with the stereotypic analogy that preceded it, namely, that the Diaspora is feminine and weak while the Jewish community in Palestine is masculine and strong. The girl is the wretched opposite of the young, healthy men who risked their lives for her when they helped her descend from the illegal immigrants' ship at the shore. She is passive, they active. She receives, they give. She requires legitimation; and Sade, who here symbolizes the Palestinian Jewish community, provides her that legitimacy from the generosity of his heart. Her inferiority to those born in Palestine is manifest. The final chord is also important: Ultimately, the tragedy of Europe's Jews allows the young man to break free of accepted moral constraints: "For the sake of my sisters, I will also be cruel." It is likely that Sade simply wanted Palmach members to show more compassion toward the survivors. But the result was an additional confirmation of accepted stereotypes and moral justification for the offensive ethos so popular among youth.

After the close of the Twenty-second Zionist Congress, which was held in Basel in December 1946, Israel Galili and Yigal Allon wished to check on the *bricha* (escape) operation among refugees in Europe, and were accordingly smuggled into Poland. Galili was deputy chief of the Hagana National Command, and Allon was commander of the Palmach. They visited Auschwitz and He-Halutz training centers in the area and returned along the same route they had taken. In later years Allon showed interest in the life of Jews in the Diaspora that extended beyond the accepted general slogans of solidarity.[146] On a number of occasions, Galili spoke out in talks to trainees of Palmach and Ha-Noar ha-Oved against the contempt shown for the Jews of the Diaspora. In light of their positive attitude, the reaction of these two leaders of Palestinian youth to the reality of the destruction of European Jewry

is puzzling; for in their writings, it is impossible to find anything indicative of their immediate, spontaneous response to their encounter with the field of slaughter. Indeed, one can surmise that the evidence in Auschwitz was so depressing that their immediate reaction was silence. However, the fact that even after much time had passed, they never chose to comment on it, points in another direction. Many years later, Galili spoke about an intensification of their hatred for the Nazis after the visit. But aside from that, he did not mention a single impression—no episodes, no encounters with human experience. According to the testimony of their escorts, the two were extremely interested in the *technical* details of the *bricha* operation but in little else.[147] The actual experience of the Holocaust remained alien. It was absorbed in external fashion, on a rhetorical plane, but was not internalized and made a component of the collective identity of Palestinian Jewish youth.

In his last encounter with youth in the summer of 1944, Berl Katznelson made reference to this phenomenon: Young people were alienated from diasporic Jewry and unable to identify with it. Palestinian youth, Berl noted, showed an interest in partisans fighting in the forests of Russia. They were able to develop profound empathy with a story from the days of Ha-Shomer or a tale about the field squads or Wingate. They identified with stories from the time of the riots, attacks by Arabs, Trumpeldor, maybe even Bar Kokhba. But "the Palestinian young man is incapable of experiencing the general Jewish fate." As the greatest mentor of his generation, Katznelson had no illusions: "Our child," he stated, "grows up as the son of a new people, a special people. That which was written and spoken decades ago, in pride and haughtiness, is now coming true: that no desert generation and no offspring of the Diaspora will blossom here. Rather, what is being developed here is a new man."[148]

All the examples of topics mentioned by Katznelson that stirred the hearts of young people and generated emotional identity were centered on one key focus: fighting. Most of them touched upon events that had taken place in Palestine, generally within frameworks related socially and ideologically to those in which the young people were active. The only deviant example is connected with partisans in Russia. However, they were already identified as created in the image of the men of the Palmach, with the same value systems and patterns of response. When Ruzka Korchak, one of the fighters in the Vilna ghetto and also active as a partisan in the forests, met Yitzhak Sade in January 1945 in Palestine, he told her: "We'll be friends, I'm a partisan too."[149] Thus, it is not surprising that the only topic associated with the Holocaust that young Palestinian Jews could identify with was combat: the revolt in the ghettos and fighting in the forests.

On the eleventh of Adar 1943 Ben Gurion made an uncustomary appearance at the annual youth rally in Tel Hai. He began his address with the words, "Once again, we have gathered together at *Massada*—this Massada not of the latter days but of the pioneers." The description of Tel Hai as Massada was questionable, and Ben Gurion surmounted the logical refutation by the use of an idiom that sounded proper yet remained nebulous. All his comments had a double message. He spoke about the need to be prepared to die a Massada-like heroic death, yet emphasized that the aim was not a beautiful death but a beautiful life, in the spirit of Tel Hai. At that meeting, between descriptions in superlatives of the heroism of the leaders

of Tel Hai and Sejera, the settlement where Ha-Shomer was founded, Ben Gurion reported for the first time that news had been received about an uprising in the Warsaw ghetto (presumably the clash with German forces in January 1943). Referring to the rebels, he declared, "They learned the new philosophy that the leaders of Tel Hai and Sejera commanded us to fulfill—heroic death."[150]

Thus, from the very first moment, the ghetto uprising was drawn into the prevalent myths in the Yishuv. It contained all the components necessary to transform that uprising into a Palestinian tale of heroism. An awesome story of human glory, and the dearth of information about it (derived from German sources, Radio London, Kuybyshev, and channels of the Polish underground) did not detract from the exaltedness of spirit it engendered. It moved the veterans to the point of tears and provided a feeling of satisfaction and pride to the young. "We were thinking about a stand of that kind when the possibility of an invasion of Palestine was on the agenda," Golomb responded to the news, creating an identity between "there" and "here."[151] The telegram sent by the pioneering movement in Poland stated, "Men and women of the movement who are still alive are continuing to fight for the dignity of the surviving Jewish remnant in Poland." It touched a highly sensitive chord: National dignity, measured by the readiness to fight, a value that had been trampled under foot by Jews who went "like sheep to slaughter," was finally redeemed by the ghetto uprising. The contrast was stressed: The former were indeed deserving of pity, but they did not win external glory like the Jews who stood on the ramparts fighting for their dignity. The link between the rebels and He-Halutz pioneering movement added another layer of solidarity. It is no accident that *these people* had reacted differently. After all, they were the brothers of the movement in Palestine, deriving from it their strength, education, and inspiration. In referring to He-Halutz House in Warsaw, Lova Levita, an intellectual leader of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, noted, "Here a different life and different dreams were formed, *here they died differently*"[152] These fighters were depicted as Palestinian Jews who had not yet arrived in Palestine, not as the offspring of Jews of the Diaspora.

The bravery of the ghetto fighters provided an answer to the problem posed by the gravediggers in Radom. A statement by the Palmach command on the occasion of the victory over the Nazis on May 8, 1945 noted: "This we know: not all Jews dug their own graves. And the pioneering movement was the one to hoist the flag of revolt."[153] The ghetto uprising was lauded as the first battle in the war of the Jews, which would continue after the world war was finished and would end with a battle for Jewish independence.[154]

The revolt was integrated as a link in the chain of age-old Jewish heroism. The ghetto fighters were compared with the warriors of Massada and those of Betar. The symbolism of the fact that the revolt erupted on the first day of Passover, the same day Elazar ben Yair and his fighters on Massada had committed suicide, was emphasized. Beyond general reports and the telegram quoted, no one as yet had had any direct contact with the rebels. Nevertheless, their aims were explained to youth in the following way: "To avenge the blood of Israel, to establish the Jewish homeland, to build up Massada—symbol of Jewish heroism throughout the ages."[155]

The ghetto revolt underwent the reversal process characteristic of the treatment

of myth in the youth movements: From a symbol of destruction, it was transformed into one of revival and resurgence. The slogan "To build up Massada," (or, in its more common formulation, "Massada shall not fall again,") used often and liberally to summarize the lesson from the desperate battle of the ghetto, also hinted at the limits of the identification by young people with that battle. They were happy to identify with that courageous stand, but they did not understand or identify with the tragedy.[156] Youth rejected the message of despair, embracing only the content of heroism. In this way, even that tragic stand was incorporated as part of the ethos: "In their death they bequeathed us life."

The distinction between a worthy and a meaningless death, between falling in battle in the liberation war of the people and being a purposeless victim in the Diaspora, had been a frequent motif in the defensive ethos from its very inception. Now it served the tendency to set apart death "here" from death "there." On the first page of the January 1946 issue of *Mi-Bifnim,* organ of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, a passage was published from Yitzhak Katzenelson's "Poem of the Murdered Jewish People." The essence of this passage lay in the lines:

> O Lord in heaven, I cried in trembling:
> Why and for what did my people die?
> Why and for what did it die in vain,
> Not in war, not in battle?

Later in the issue appeared Tabenkin's eulogy for eight men from the cooperative settlements who were killed when the British opened fire while searching for illegal immigrants and weapons. "If we are destined to die prematurely, by the hand of man—*this is the way to die,*" Tabenkin announced.[157] The contrast between the two types of death gave a justification and meaning to the latter. In a eulogy in the Palmach bulletin on those killed in the attack by the Hagana on the British camp in Sarona of February 1946, the bereaved parents were told, "Your sons were not led helpless to the slaughter by oppressors" and that they died "so that crematoria will never again be built for the people of Israel."[158] The Palmach bulletin published a ballad by Alterman on the suicide of Saul defeated on the Gilboa. Its moral was, "A people defeated *on its own land*/will rise once again seven times over."[159] Every word penned in that period was loaded with associations to the Holocaust, partly intentional and partly unconscious. Underscoring the difference between a victim in the homeland and one in the Diaspora, as in the poem by Alterman, was significant, just as the publication of the ballad in the Palmach organ was significant.

Starting in 1945, a trickle of survivors of the ghetto and forest fighters slowly began to make their way to Palestine, people such as Ruzka Korchak, Eliezer Lidovsky, Abba Kovner. In August of that year, the first meeting took place in London between the leaders of She'erit ha-Pleta and the Zionist leadership. Zivia Lubetkin arrived in Palestine in the summer of 1946, Yitzhak Zuckerman (Antek) a year later, both leaders of the Jewish fighting organization in the Warsaw ghetto. From the very first moment of the encounter, a conscious effort was made by the activist elite to create empathy and a sense of solidarity for the ghetto fighters among Palestinian Jewish youth. Tabenkin set the tone for them, in his opening of the platform of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, especially for Zivia, whose testimony at the Yagur

convention in June 1946 became the "canonized" version of the Warsaw rebellion. She and Antek were revered and admired as symbolic figures. Yitzhak Sade and Yigal Allon met with them for long, soul-searching discussions; and found a common language, especially Antek and Allon. They invited the fighters to appear at Palmach meetings at all different levels.[160] Quite consciously, the legend was fostered of the fraternity of arms among the fighters "there" and "here." They were presented as Palmachniks by natural affinity:[161] "That was a meeting between brothers, a meeting of fighters; and one heart recognized its like."[162] Allon, commander of the Palmach, called it a meeting of "brothers in arms and ideas."[163] The Palmach bulletin published articles on the ghetto rebels, along with the song of the Jewish partisans, and stressed the close emotional affinity with them: "We will learn a great deal from them—and they also have something to learn from us."[164] The massive effort to impress on youth that these fighters were truly "our own flesh and blood" indirectly strengthened the contrasting widespread view that the *others* from "there" were *not* "of our kind."

Despite the pronounced fraternity and camaraderie, tensions were not lacking. The Palestinian Jews expected that the newcomers would recognize the superiority of the Palestinian ethos and conform accordingly: "When they speak *in this spirit*, the partitions separating us crumble"[165] stated the Palmach bulletin, impling that sometimes they don't and then the partitions remain. One issue carried an anonymous sketch, supposedly straight "from the mouth of an illegal immigrant." The piece portrayed a romantic picture of the encounter between two groups of fighters: On the shore, after the illegal immigrants had disembarked from the ship with the help of the local fighters, the convenant between them was forged.[166] It appears that this article was written by the bulletin editors in response to the accusation contained in the words of Zivia Lubetkin in Yagur (paraphrased in the sketch) to the effect that the emissaries of the Yishuv had not broken through to the Jews in Poland during the war. That accusation, previously voiced by Antek in the 1945 conference in London, was seldom referred to, if at all, by the young people.[167] The encounter on the shore was meant to symbolize that helping the illegal immigrants disembark and taking care of them removed this blemish from the shining armor of the fighters of the Yishuv and had opened a new chapter in relations between fighters "there" and "here." The ghetto rebels likewise resented talk about "like sheep to slaughter." They refrained from pointing an accusing finger at Jews who had chosen not to fight the oppressor and objected to the tendency among Palestinians to attribute a presumed moral superiority to those who chose to fight in the forests as compared with those who chose to stay and die with their people in the ghetto.[168] It appears that the common denominator between the Jewish fighters from Poland and Palestinian Jewish youth lay in the shallow layer of narratives about brave exploits and heroism, avoiding reference to such highly charged experiences as *Aktion, Umschlagplatz,* and liquidation.[169] In the last resort, even the rebels were affected by the feeling that the love they lavished on the Yishuv was not reciprocated.[170]

As any other topic associated with the Holocaust, the ghetto revolt was also presented as evidence in internal political debates in Palestine. One of the central lessons the activists drew from the fact that some fighters in Warsaw, Vilna, and Bia-

lystok had survived was that he who dares to fight has better chances of surviving than someone who fears for his skin and submissively accepts his fate. Tabenkin had asserted this even before the revolt as a reason in favor of Jewish self-defense.[171] Totally disregarding the unique circumstances of the Holocaust and the fact that ultimately, it was only due to chance that some of the leaders of the rebels survived, he drew an analogy between the supposed lesson of the ghetto uprisings and activism in Palestine. Even earlier, as in connection with the *Patria* episode, the activists argued that in the long run, taking risks prevents calamities, while passive acquiescence in one's fate eventually leads to greater disasters. Now the revolt was cited as conclusive proof of the thesis of resistance: "He who flees from danger—danger pursues him and catches up with him. He who faces danger—overcomes it."[172] This lesson was mustered as evidence to justify the position of the activists in the dispute between them and the moderates on the question of armed struggle. Fighting was presented not only as an obligation of honor and an instinctive, natural response of Palestinian youth but also as the effective path that would ultimately lead to victory.

The attitude of Palestinian youth to the uprising and the rebels symbolized the limits of its ability to identify with the Jewish people in the Diaspora. "The Jewish suffering in the ghetto is incomprehensible to us," Berl Katznelson noted bitterly. The revolt "brings the man of the ghetto closer to us, in line with our own terms of reference; it allows us to find some formula to hold on to, or, as someone said, to find relief—since this whole thing is so alien to us."[173] The traditional Jewish responses of acceptance of judgment and martyrdom in the effort to preserve humanity even under impossible conditions were incompatible with the self-image of the new Jew. For that reason, only the rebels were granted entry into the Palestinian pantheon. They were integrated within the offensive ethos and fructified it, as symbols and foci of emotional identification.

In 1945 a dispute on the Holocaust erupted within Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim. It appears this was the most serious debate held at the time in the Jewish community in Palestine on the question: Is it necessary to derive certain pedagogical implications from the Holocaust? On the face of it, the dispute centered on two alternative educational programs. In actuality it constituted a preparatory stage anticipating the breakup of Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim along the fracture lines of the split between the political parties Mapai and Ha-Tenua le-Ahdut ha-Avoda. Yet despite the political connotations, the debate was in keeping with youth movement tradition, an ambience in which educational values were taken very seriously. Discussions revolved around two educational conceptions. The first, prevalent in Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim since the late 1930s, proceeded from a socialist point of departure. It surveyed the development of human society in line with the *Communist Manifesto*, described the present and future in accordance with Marxist doctrine, placing the proletariat and the presumably forthcoming revolution at the center of attention. It then went on to examine the national question around the world, finally arriving at the Jewish question. Eventually it presented the inevitable conclusion, given the socialist and national perspective—Zionist Palestine as the answer to all problems, reconciling all contradictions. The second pedagogical conception started with an analysis of the present, focusing on Jewish history and Jewish nationalism. A large

chapter was dedicated to the Holocaust. After that, it proceeded on to the pressing problems of the day (the struggle for Palestine, the Jewish refugees, and the like). There was only marginal mention of socialism.

On one side of the arena were the conservatives. They contended that the Holocaust did not necessitate any revision in basic approach and worldview. The teachings of socialism had passed the test of events, proposed an explanation for the phenomenon of genocide, and even proved that the only hope for Jewish redemption lay in the socialist world order. They explained the Holocaust as resulting from the fascist regime, against which all the forces of socialism were locked in struggle. They claimed that the behavior toward the Jews of Soviet Russia during the war gave ample evidence that the world was not divided up according to conflicting nationalisms but, rather, according to principles of class. By giving the Jewish refugees a haven in its expanses, Soviet Russia proved the superiority of class solidarity over the principle of nationalism. On the other hand, the challengers argued that socialism had lost its relevance in the face of the cataclysmic events that had occurred. These days, every nation was focusing on its own affairs. Even Russia underwent change when confronted with the reality of the war and had resurrected long-forgotten national heroes and cultivated national myths, giving no heed to their "class value." The Jewish people had gone through a trauma that would continue to pursue it and whose implications must be taken into account. The first of these was that "the world closed its doors to us"—the solidarity of labor had proven to be impotent on the day of reckoning. Consequently, they asserted, we must turn to concentrate on ourselves, study our national culture, and make it the Archimedian point for comprehending the world. The old internationalism should be replaced by a new Jewish solidarity aimed at identifying with the fate of the Jewish people; conclusions should then be drawn about the pressing tasks that youth would have to carry out. The affinity for Russian (Gentile) culture, much in vogue among youth, was exaggerated and false: For example, everyone sings gustily about "Cossack horsemen," disregarding the fact that those same Cossacks abused Jews.

A substantial part of the dispute revolved around the question of instructing the young about the concept *negation of exile*. The "conservatives" did not see the Holocaust as a reason to change their attitudes toward what was regarded as negative in Jewish history and were opposed to romanticizing the shtetl and patterns of Jewish life destroyed in the Holocaust. National self-identification was not supposed to be founded on forgivingness, leniency, and softness, they argued, but on a clear and penetrating view of the shortcomings of Jewish society and the demand to change them in a revolutionary way. Moreover, one should not base attitude on national criteria but on class criteria: There are good and bad Jews, and the Holocaust had not altered that fact. On the other hand, those who demanded change contended that in the face of the destruction of European Jewry, the rejection of, and lack of understanding for Jews of the Diaspora had to change. While avoiding idealization, the time had nonetheless come for a more balanced attitude, presenting the history of the people and its relations with the surrounding world as the core of the educational agenda. By the same token, the matter of universal processes should be given marginal importance.

One of the focal points in these discussions was the topic of myth and symbol. Those who demanded change included discussion of Yavneh and Massada in their new curriculum plan, based on the contention that these were the two pivotal historical symbols that had nourished the spirit of the people in its exile. In this dispute, Massada played a role similar to that played in the past by the myth of Betar or the war against the Romans—indicating that it had indeed become the predominant myth of heroism. Proponents of the prosocialist program of studies opposed mentioning the two in the same breath. They ardently espoused the view that there was a fundamental and profound difference between them. Yavneh symbolized diasporic heroism, now flawed, while Massada was the positive symbol of activism and revolt against submissiveness. The attempt of those demanding change to suggest that the myths of Yavneh and Massada complemented each other was rather questionable. It appears that the authors of the educational program wished to legitimize the traditional forms of Jewish response, symbolized in Yavneh, as part of the broader framework of legitimation they wanted to impart to the diasporic history of the Jewish people. On the other hand, conclusions drawn from the Holocaust and the ghetto uprisings were not conducive to docile resignation as at Yavneh. Hence, a strange compound was fused, one that made no sense historically and was flawed by an internal contradiction.

Two sources feeding the offensive ethos emerged into clarity in the course of these discussions: the socialist–revolutionary and the Zionist–activist. The former described the struggle of the Jewish people for freedom in their own land as being one front among many in a powerful global battle being waged between the declining forces of capitalism and the rising forces of tomorrow. Symbols of Palestinian heroism were interwoven and integrated with socialist symbols: the red flag, May Day, Vienna 1934 in struggle, Madrid under siege, Stalingrad and the heroic Russian war. Local activism was conceived as part of a global movement altering the face of the planet. That movement provided the legitimation for the Jewish struggle in Palestine. The second described the civilized world as having turned its back on the Jews. Consequently, the Jews must tend to their own interests even at the expense of neglecting broader fronts. The symbols it wished to promote were Jewish par excellence, expressive of the age-old conflict between Jews and the Gentile world. Its legitimation for Zionist activism was derived from Jewish fate, the need to ensure that the Holocaust would not be repeated, and the immediate task of saving the surviving remnant of the Jewish people.

These diverse sources of sustenance did not lead to different operative conclusions. It is true that here and there someone warned about chauvinistic tendencies as a result of isolationist inclinations. Even these sporadic expressions did not refer to the Palestinian situation and Jewish–Arab relations; rather, they made reference to the tendency for cultural seclusion from the Soviet Union and the world of tomorrow that had surfaced in the discussion. Though divided in philosophical perspective, they did not differ in the domain of present-oriented activism. There was no difference whatsoever in positive attitude toward the offensive ethos between the disciples of Tabenkin, who stressed the socialist approach, and those of Katznelson, who stressed the nationalist one.[174]

The Holocaust played a secondary role in the formation of the offensive ethos. This ethos began to emerge during the Arab Rebellion and crystallized during World War II and its aftermath. It grew in the light of events in Palestine and evolved in the shadow of the anticipation of further occurrences. Its character was shaped by the awareness of the inevitable clash with the Arabs and the ongoing confrontation with the British. The "native" Palestinian identity of the youth that emerged in the second half of the 1940s appropriated the offensive ethos as its most pronounced trait and gift. If there was any event outside the boundaries of Palestine that had a decisive impact on the growth of this ethos, it was first and foremost World War II, which gave enormous impetus to the emergence of power-oriented concepts.

The further one gets from the Holocaust, the more it appears as an event of such magnitude that everything in its wake seems dwarfed by its shadow. For example, there is a tendency to describe the very establishment of the State of Israel as a direct result of the Holocaust. There is no doubt that in the political struggle after the war, the Holocaust had a major impact on U.S.-Jewish and world public opinion. Yet the argument that it was the dominant factor in the establishment of the state is not corroborated by the facts. It is sufficient to recall that a state had been proposed to the Jews in 1937 as part of the Peel Commission recommendations; and even before anything was known about the Holocaust, there was a proclamation that a Jewish state was the chief war aim of the Jewish people. It is also possible to imagine that if the Holocaust had not occurred, the pressure of the many more millions of living Jews would not have been inferior to the moral weight of the martyred dead. The tendency to explain phenomena by using the Holocaust is likewise a familiar argument in connection with formation of the offensive ethos. But a careful examination reveals that all of its Holocaust-associated components existed prior to that event. The Holocaust catalyzed an acceleration and intensification of certain states of mind, psychological proclivities, and approaches to reality but did not generate any new ones. It was central in providing moral justification for the power struggle by reinforcing the self-image of the Jew as eternal victim. The conclusion drawn that Jews must never permit themselves to get into a similar situation in which they are powerless was paramount in bolstering the claims in favor of a state.

The majority of the Palestinian Jewish community found it difficult to identify with Jews who had gone to their death "like sheep to slaughter." This was a blow to the self-image of the Jew that could not be coped with and resolved. A partial substitute lay in identification with the symbols of armed struggle in the Diaspora, namely, the ghetto uprisings. Parallel with this, psychological energy generated by the Holocaust was turned outward. The "externalization" of the Holocaust began—an open and unending account between Jews and other nations. The Holocaust did not foster a new human sensitivity or a different relationship between Jews among themselves. It did not lead to changes in worldview or fashion a new social or national conception. All these would have required an internalization of Jewish experience in the Holocaust; but this internal processing was not forthcoming, at least over the short term. Feelings of rage, frustration, and guilt were channeled into rhetorical statements, a conception of international relations based on sheer force, and a struggle for the fate of Palestine.

Activism as a Characteristic of Palestinian Identity

The last stages of World War II and its aftermath witnessed the emergence of a new consciousness: that of the Palestinian generation. This was a generation that took pains to distinguish itself from its fathers. It seemed different in its gait, characteristic movements, style of clothing, and hair. The fluent Hebrew it spoke was marked by a guttural accent, which emphasized the generation gap. Its idioms and slang were the product of a spoken language and local needs. The differences between the generations were not only external. When the parents took a good look at their sons and daughters, they perceived several features that gladdened their hearts, since the founders of Zionism had hoped and prayed for the advent of such a generation. These youngsters had a liberated attitude toward nature and were comfortable in its midst. Their bond with the land flowed from an instinctive identification with the homeland. They were happy to engage in physical labor and undertook it naturally, without much ado. For them, socialism or kibbutz life were something self-evident. The expressions "simplicity" and "naturalness" were frequently used to characterize this youth, while the generation of the fathers had been plagued by psychological complications and hangups. That generation was torn between attachment to its native land and loyalty to its adopted home, Palestine. It was beset by doubts about its abilities when it came to manual labor, and about its socialist perceptions. In contrast, the sons accepted the realities of their life with great simplicity, without complexes or the burden of excessive self-questioning. Life in Palestine, with the kibbutz experience as a part of it, came to them naturally. They had not been required to struggle for the values they accepted. These young people took for granted the teaching of their fathers and had no desire to revolt against it. That fact awakened mixed feelings among the adult generation. Although they were pleased to have successors, they would have preferred for their sons to have acquired their way of life by a process of struggle, assessment, and discovery, internalizing the values they adopted as their own. They were cognizant that an absence of such struggle and the acceptance of their parents' values in literal terms were phenomena characteristic of a postrevolutionary generation. Nonetheless, they were troubled by a certain sense of dissatisfaction, afraid the younger generation had acquired those values mechanically, without any profound inner conviction.[175]

Among the manifestations of the simplicity of youth was an abhorrence for high-sounding phrases, flowery rhetoric, and a brand of pathos that had been a characteristic mark of the older generation. They had a disgust for any display of emotions and asserted themselves by using simple, direct language and discarding conventions of politeness. On occasion, this degenerated into crudeness and arrogance. Their penchant for simple, unadorned behavior included an aspiration for honesty and sincerity in interhuman relations: They wished to tear down the barriers deriving from the duplicity of civilization. Pleasant manners were considered to be a false veneer used by bourgeois society to cover over its ailments and thought proper to be tossed onto the garbage heap of history. The type of the "tough guy," the sabra (a cactus tough and thorny outside but savory and sweet inside), became the ideal paradigm for Palestinian youth. That young person had nothing but disdain and contempt for "ideologies." He perceived them as characteristic of the

older generation, originating in the Diaspora—and thus of no consequence in Palestine. Ideologies were marked by much talk and little action; their time had ended, and now action was the order of the day. Soviet Russia, fighting heroically against the Nazis, became a model for this generation: an example of the superiority of deeds over words. It was much more interested in Stalingrad and the exploits of the partisans than in the intricacies of Marxism. "Ideology had been the yardstick of truth for the previous generation. The yardstick for the new generation is the task to be performed," stated Uri Avneri, editor of the journal *Ba-Ma'avak,* seen by many as a kind of manifesto of the new generation.[176]

The collective identity of Palestinian youth was marked by two outstanding characteristics: a "native" mentality and militant activism. "The special thing about this youth is that it is *Palestinian.* It was raised in this country, absorbed its spirit—and the country became part of its very essence," one commentator stated in a lecture entitled "The Floor—to the Palestinian Generation!"[177] The "Palestinian spirit" was believed to nurture physical and mental abilities, a new psychological structure, a different attitude toward reality. "The Palestine movement is . . . a movement creating its life in the land, from the land, through life in the land—not by means of instruments borrowed from other locales and conditions," asserted one of Tabenkin's disciples.[178] The Palestinian identity was marked by a strong sense of repulsion toward Diaspora Jews, coupled with a sense of alienation toward the older generation. The title of this lecture was not accidental. It was a paraphrase of a line penned by a very popular young poet, a member of the Palmach, named Chaim Guri, one of the typical representatives of the new generation. The original read, "The Floor—to Comrade Mauser." That idea was not restricted just to youth. Adults in those days also felt that the time for talking had passed and that might alone would bring about the desired change. From 1942 on, Nathan Alterman played a role in the Hebrew press that Beilinson had filled during the 1930s, that is, the role of the spokesman for the activistic Zionist consensus. As the Soviet tanks rolled across the Prussian border, he wrote,

> Those same cannon,
> In their booming voice,
> Easily teach the Herr Baron
> What all the treasures of ethics and poesy together
> Were unable to impart to him.[179]

Thus, it is not surprising that young people thought accordingly, infected by what Dov Stock (Sadan, an important writer and journalist) dubbed the "hubris of youth."[180]

"Our generation is a generation of struggle," Uri Avneri proclaimed: "We were raised and educated in the struggle of the riots. We grew to maturity in the struggle against the White Paper. And the struggle for control of Palestine is our principal pioneering goal."[181] Moshele Tabenkin admitted it was "true that ideological matters and abstract questions do not hold interest for each and every one of us. . . . But the affairs of Zionism and its realization, the question of our constant dignity and our steadfastness in the campaign—all these are imprinted upon our soul and in our blood."[182] The alert and activist segments of youth viewed activism as their

ideal. They saw the Yishuv as divided between the "good" (supporters of an active struggle against the British) and the "bad" (various types of weak-kneed individuals from the Right and Left, nurturing an "immigrant" mentality, lacking the true Palestinian spirit).

The militant mood was inculcated to a significant degree by the youth movements but especially by the organization that in the course of the 1940s became the focus of Palestinian youth: the Palmach. There was no framework that had a more decisive impact on the shaping of the image of youth than the Palmach. It was an organization of fighters, and it wished to be actively involved in battle. Its predominance was pronounced even in groups that were subject to opposing educational influences. Young people from Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair, schooled in humanistic traditions and the fraternity of all peoples, adopted to a significant degree the approaches prevalent in the Palmach. With sorrow and concern, mentors of Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair noted that the process of the struggle had enhanced "the feeling of alienness and animosity toward our neighbors" in their boys, while military training in the framework of the Palmach "created a certain experience . . . that was not conducive to advancing youth and strengthening those ideals that we had inscribed on our banner."[183] In the battle between ideology and reality as factors molding youth, there was no doubt about which was the stronger element at the end of the 1940s: Reality had gained the upper hand. Veterans of Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair noted with dismay that the dialectic expression they had coined, "militant humanism"—a kind of oath to keep away the evil spirits of the age—could not hold its own against the upsurge of deep-set impulses, the exaltation of power, and the decline in the role of ideology.[184]

The blatant activism of youth was one of the reasons why it followed Tabenkin. The divisions in political life in the Yishuv were not structured in terms of political issues. The great disputes on the Arab question or on partition cut right across the ruling party, Mapai, and the debate was conducted internally within party ranks. The question of activism had a similar fate in internal party disputes in the 1940s. The split in Mapai, already visible in 1942 and a fait accompli by 1944, came about as a result of a complex party dynamics, in which the attitude toward activism played a secondary role. The line that divided the two parties did not run between activists and moderates. To be sure, Ha-Tenua le-Ahdut ha-Avoda was militantly activist, but Mapai was only partly moderate. Youth found this ambivalence hard to digest. Ever since Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuhad had stood by the Palmach in 1942 and saved it from disbandment, and increasingly so after it provided housing in its kibbutzim for Palmach units, Tabenkin and his associates came to symbolize true activism in the consciousness of youth. They were highly suspicious of activism along the lines preached by Berl Katznelson or Ben Gurion—a stance allowing room for considerations of political utility. Due to the special circumstances in Palestine, the antiestablishment attitude so natural to young people took on the guise of an eagerness for battle. Added to this was the component of revolutionary socialism as an ideology of action. Activism in this version became a code of political identification.

The days of action of the Hebrew Resistance Movement were a time of exaltation and excitement for youth: at long last, the "old man," Yitzhak Sade, had given

the order, as recalled in a song of that era. Yet there were also elite groups within the ranks of youth that had reservations about armed struggle. A group of youth instructors in the boy scouts turned to Chaim Weizmann, who visited Palestine in the winter of 1946, with a request for encouragement and assistance for taking action against the new political line: "We are opposed to acts of terror [of the sort] that have recently been carried out in Palestine for purposes other than that of defending immigration and settlement." These young men, who were members in the Palmach, sought an avenue to influence their disciples in the youth movement toward the moderate direction they espoused.[185] Yet these were but a minuscule minority in their age group. The preponderant majority relished the prospect of armed action. It was a shining era that ended in bitter disappointment. The resignation of Moshe Sneh and the cessation of activity indicated that the moderates had the upper hand, to the deep dismay and sorrow of the Palmachniks. They felt they had been deceived, and that their cause had been betrayed. Beginning with the autumn of 1946, Palmach publications were interspersed with a number of critical comments on the dominant trend of moderation in the Yishuv. When the first buds of independent political consciousness emerged among the young—expressed, among other things, in the pages of the periodical *Ba-Ma'avak* (whose name, "In Struggle" was likewise not accidental)—they were linked with a demand that the fighters be given power, since they were the native sons and would be called upon to battle for independence of the homeland when the moment arrived. The moderates were asked to pass on the reins to persons who had grown up within the framework of the Hagana. "All Authority to the Defenders of the Yishuv" was the title of an article attacking the policies of Weizmann and his moderate associates after Black Saturday.[186]

During the world war, the militant attitude that was widespread among the youth groups associated with the Labor movement veered closer to views espoused by the IZL and Lehi. It is difficult to find any essential changes in the attitudes of the latter two organizations regarding the use of force when compared with their thinking in the late 1930s. Avraham Stern and his associates had been proponents of the concept of unlimited force even before they split from the IZL and set up Lehi, also known as the Stern Gang. In the first years of the war, this organization made a semantic distinction between "enemy" and "oppressor." Hitler was classified as an oppressor, while the British were enemies. They saw Hitler as one link in a long chain of persecutors of the Jewish people throughout the generations. In their view, a victory over Hitler would not solve the central problem of the Jewish people, a "lack of political status": "For that reason, we are not prepared to lose our forces on that nondecisive front of battle."[187] In contrast, the British stood directly in the path of the Jewish people leading to sovereignty in their own land. It followed that the principal means of struggle had to be directed against the British in order to dislodge them from Palestine. Stern, Israel Eldad-Sheib, Nathan Friedman (Yelin-Mor), and their associates carried the reasoning of Ahimeir, who saw the British as "alien occupier," to its logical conclusion. This was an extreme position in the line of Palestinocentrism: They held that it was of no importance to participate in the war against Hitler. Moreover, in line with the principle "My enemy's enemy is my friend," there was an additional avenue worth exploring: One could try to gain assistance from the Nazis against the true enemy, the British. That posi-

tion led directly to attempts by Lehi to forge contacts with the German authorities at the end of 1941.[188] This aspect of their approach was obviously in total opposition to the conception of Ahimeir and Uri Zvi Greenberg, whose commitment to the Jewish people was never in question. The attempt by Lehi to court the Germans proved abortive and led to nothing but casts revealing light on the psychological makeup of that group's leadership, and the contortions of morality they were drawn into as a consequence of their conception of power, in which the ideas of both Darwin and Nietzsche intermingled.

In the 1940s the Arabs played a secondary role in the thinking of Lehi. At the start of that decade, they considered Arab power negligible and asserted that Jews would have no trouble in countering any opposition on their part. In the second half of the 1940s, when Lehi embraced an anti-imperialist stance, they argued that there was no real conflict of interests between Palestinian Jews and Palestinian Arabs and that all the clashes that had occurred were the product of British agitation. They contended that when the Arabs came to realize that Jewish power was not directed against them but against the oppressive imperialist regime, they would cease being hostile. This conception was part of a broader change in orientation that began to make itself felt at that time in Lehi: a shift from attempts to forge an alliance with the Axis powers to a new reliance on the Soviets. Yet a certain ambivalence toward the Arabs remained: The covert assumption was that the Arabs were not a genuine adversary, since they were not truly a people: For that reason, they should not be regarded as a factor in deciding the future fate of Palestine. On the other hand, it was self-evident to Lehi members that if the Arabs nevertheless put up resistance, they would be suppressed by the Jews without hesitation and with a heavy hand.[189] The "minorization" of the Arab problem must be seen against the backdrop of the intensity of what, in Lehi's eyes, was the pivotal issue: British "foreign rule" in Palestine.

During the course of 1944 a process of shifting the emphasis from the Arab problem to the struggle against the British also occurred in the IZL when Menahem Begin, its commander, proclaimed a "revolt" even though the world war was still raging. The IZL was more moderate than Lehi in its attitudes toward the British: It called for a war not against the British people but against British policy, in order to effect a change in that policy. In contrast with the relative indifference of Lehi members toward events in Europe, Begin and his associates linked the "revolt" they had proclaimed to British behavior in the face of the destruction of European Jewry. The intensity of their hatred toward the British was explained by them as a response to the intolerable stand taken by the British toward the Jewish people during the war. On that point, the IZL's position was in harmony with the feeling of broad circles within the Jewish population in Palestine, which had strongly resented the British policy of closing the gates to Jewish refugees. Nonetheless, the principal reason for the IZL's attacks against the British starting in 1944 was not the situation in Europe. Rather, it was the feeling that nothing whatsoever had changed in British policy in Palestine and that it was therefore necessary to fight in order to bring about such a change.[190] The anti-imperialist ballast of Lehi did not win hearts and minds in the IZL ranks. The latter organization remained firmly planted in the ideological soil of revisionism, and was right-wing in its general world outlook.

The perception of the British as enemy number one of the Jewish people was

not an alien idea to the Palestinian Jewish youth affiliated with the Labor movement. At a convention of activists, Eliyahu Golomb, to his annoyance and surprise, encountered a position that he had been confronted with on occasion during his drive to persuade young people to enlist in the British Army. The Hagana and Palmach members stated their view that the war being fought by Britain in Europe was not the concern of the Jewish community in Palestine, since Hitler was fighting in Europe, and this did not affect the Jewish community here. As far as the danger of an Arab uprising was concerned, there was no need to prepare for such an eventuality, since they had already learned what was necessary during the Arab Rebellion. The central task on the immediate agenda, they asserted, was to prepare for war against the British.[191]

Hatred of the British and the struggle against them created a broad common denominator among Jewish youth. In the autumn of 1943 an ephemeral organization named Am Lohem (A Fighting People) was founded. Its membership included activists from the IZL, Lehi, the Hagana, and Palmach. Its importance was not in the domain of action, since the organization broke up before it had carried out its plan to kidnap High Commissioner Harold MacMichael. Rather, the significance of the grouping lay in the very fact that a basis could be found for a consensus between groups that were diametrically opposed from the educational and ideological point of view.[192] The more the IZL and Lehi intensified their war against the British, the greater was their prestige in the eyes of Palestinian youth. In a convention of youth groups affiliated with Ha-Tenau le-Ahdut ha-Avoda in 1944, Moshele Tabenkin spoke on behalf of the brave fighters of the IZL and Lehi, claiming that the young people in Ha-Tenau le-Ahdut ha-Avoda shared more ground with the IZL and Lehi than with the "moderates" in Mapai.[193]

The IZL and Lehi rejected the authority of the executive of the Jewish Agency, the body representing the Zionist Organization. The executive was certain that the separatist activity of these organizations was endangering its political strategy. While the main dispute with the IZL in the late 1930s had centered on the question of the limits on the use of force (which had a direct bearing on the question of restraint), the heart of the matter now was the issue of authority and discipline. For that reason, it proved possible in the autumn of 1945 to find a common basis for action within the framework of the Hebrew Resistance Movement. Even within this framework, the Hagana acted with far greater restraint than the two other organizations. The guideline in the Hagana of avoiding loss of life whenever possible was unacceptable to Lehi, while the IZL did not regard it as a reason to change plans for action. This became evident in the blowing up of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in July 1946. The more intense the struggle became, the greater was the willingness of those two organizations to attack British soldiers and kill them, with or without a direct reason. The Hagana was strongly opposed to attacking British soldiers indiscriminately.

The activist leadership of the Labor movement found itself walking a thin rope. On the one hand, it wished to maintain the militancy of youth and inculcate a martial spirit, since it was apparent that at some stage in the political struggle for Palestine, it would be compelled to employ its military prowess. On the other hand, it recognized the pedagogical and political dangers inherent in the power-oriented

mood of the young. Moshe Shertok gave a definition of the situation that well expressed the dilemma and its resolution: "We must reject the notion that opposes the use of force; likewise, we must repudiate the view that advocates placing all our trust solely in the use of force. Limitations are an important factor in the efficiency of power."[194] Ben Gurion added: "We have to realize that there are limits to our force, and we must also realize that we need our power—not only for resistance. We emphatically reject the anti-Zionist concept of 'Only this way'."[195]

Against the IZL slogan, "Only this way," the activist leadership of the Jewish community advanced the slogan "Also this way". That distinction contained a renewed emphasis on the importance of constructive action. "Immigration and settlement are the two tablets of our covenant with Zionism," wrote Galili in a letter to a friend, responding to propaganda by the IZL and Lehi. The latter, in the wake of the establishment of the Hebrew Resistance movement, had proclaimed that for all practical purposes, the Hagana had adopted their program. In response to that propaganda, the struggle for immigration (both legal and illegal) and settlement (with or without a permit) were presented as specific traits of the Hagana and Palmach, distinguishing them from the other organizations.[196] "There is a world of difference between a movement created for building up the land, for labor, for constructive purposes, forced to fight *as well* and a movement whose be-all and end-all is the use of arms," proclaimed Yitzhak Sade, a model figure for youth.[197] Along with the declaration that there would apparently be no way of avoiding the use of force if the Arabs attacked the community or if the British prevented the Jews from exercising their right of free immigration to Palestine. The leadership made clear that this was a necessity, nothing to take delight in and look forward to: "There is no need for a positive attitude toward terror in order to make use of force, to fight and to utilize terror *as a means*." These remarks by Eliyahu Golomb expressed the de facto acceptance of the use of force, along with the desire to restrain and curb the excessive enthusiasm regarding its employment spreading among the ranks of young Jews in Palestine.[198]

The instrument that was singled out to highlight the difference between the IZL and Lehi on the one hand and the youth affiliated with the Labor movement on the other was socialist identity. As during the years when dispute raged on self-restraint, now, too, this was the main vehicle utilized to curb the attraction of those organizations for young people. The historical link between them and the Revisionist movement, famous for its antisocialist policies (expressed in the slogan "Yes, break it up," coined by Jabotinsky in reference to the Histadrut), served as proof corroborating the fascistic character of the IZL and Lehi. Their terror acts were depicted as equivalent to those of the radical Right in Europe, especially the Nazis—as actions designed to take control of the Yishuv and institute a fascist regime there. "The hand that knew how to fire at Lord Moyne [British minister of state in the Middle East, murdered in Egypt by Lehi in 1944] was trained previously in the pogrom against the workers' club, against the kiosk and printing house of Yiddish papers, against the red flag and the hymn of the International," Tabenkin noted. In his analysis, the murder of Moyne pointed to a coming campaign of terror within the Jewish community, leading to the killing of its leaders, along the lines of the murder of Arlosoroff. "Gangs like that, if they are not stood up to, will come into

our homes and take control of us from within," he predicted.[199] This position was reiterated on innumerable occasions by leaders of all the left and center movements in Palestine, extending from Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair to Aliyah Hadasha. It functioned as a crucial component in the delegitimization of Lehi and the IZL and in portraying them as bodies beyond the pale of the Zionist consensus. The extortion of funds and acts of robbery perpetrated in the Jewish community in order to finance their actions, attacks against British without any consideration of possible injuries to innocent bystanders, and the murder of British in cold blood—these acts gave credibility to the thesis that these were organizations dedicated solely to the brutal use of force and whose ultimate goal was to take control of the Palestinian Jewish community.

On two occasions in the history of the struggle against the British, Ben Gurion and the leadership of the Jewish Agency did not shrink from using force against these organizations. The first such instance occurred in the autumn of 1944, in the wake of the murder of Lord Moyne. Alarmed that that assassination would slam shut the door on any prospect for a pro-Zionist solution initiated by Winston Churchill, the Zionist leadership did everything in their power to underscore their disgust with the deed. This was the source of the detention action against members of Lehi and, particularly, the IZL, which was the larger of the two groups and enjoyed broader public support. In a number of cases, the action—nicknamed by the IZL and Lehi the *Sezon* (hunting season)—even led to the handing over of underground members to the British security police. The *Sezon* was repeated in 1947. Palmach members were positively inclined to take action against the two underground groups. Schooled in Tabenkin's revolutonary socialism, they felt it was a sacred task to strike out at the fascists within the Jewish community. Their only reservation had to do with cooperating with the British security police, and the handing over of IZL members to them. When the leadership decided to terminate the *Sezon*, having become convinced that it had not led to a positive change in British policy, the Palmach was incensed that the action had been canceled before completion. There was a special mixture here of animosity toward the fascist "dissenters" and a naive belief that it was possible to solve complex political and social problems with a simple but powerful demonstration of resolve if only the leaders would act decisively. Galili noted a tendency among youth to look for simple, quick solutions: "Young comrades have pretensions about clear solutions and clear-cut policy. In all matters, what they basically want is a decisive battle—whether against the government, the 'dissenters', or the Arabs." He tried to convince his audience that the Zionist movement was not capable of effecting such decisions in any of these domains: "Young people are laboring under the illusion that a Jewish state already exists. From the rock of that illusion, it hews its conceptions of dignity, national tactics, and tactics of struggle, its conception of the national capability for action and the might of national authority." He stressed: "Youth does not have a true assessment of our strength, neither in itself nor in relation to other forces. It is attracted by the false glitter of erroneous concepts of national dignity."[200]

The propaganda against the IZL and Lehi raised, once again, a line of argumentation derived from the defensive ethos: The advantage of the constructive deed, of immigration and settlement as against the use of force. Galili's remarks

indicate that the same young people who had embraced the teachings of socialism and constructive principles and lived by their guidelines felt deep down that they were only of secondary importance. The Zionist order of priorities adhered to by the adults in the movement, to which they remained faithful until death, was not internalized in a similar manner by youth. They recognized the importance of settlement, especially if it entailed physical danger and risk. They acknowledged the significance of immigration, particularly if it was illegal and involved a demonstration of force. Yet their true enthusiasm was for fighting. Any talk about the limits of Jewish power in Palestine—requiring consideration of political factors and even of the other people in the land—were viewed by them as evidence of the flaws that marred the "desert generation." They thought they were in no need of allies or the support of world public opinion. They had no doubt that they were capable of conquering Palestine.[201] Confidence in the ability of Jewish power to tip the scales in favor of a pro-Jewish solution in the event of an armed struggle for Palestine was a predominant feature of youth right across the political spectrum.

Affected by the "hubris of youth," those young people were certain they were destined for great things. They had an inexhaustible faith in themselves and their ability to conquer the whole world and to decide the fate of Palestine. Their hands had not yet been scorched in the flames of reality, and they believed nothing was beyong their grasp. They viewed their fathers as a generation that had finished its role: Now it was their turn to leave their imprint on Jewish history. They did not regard themselves as trailblazers in the field of ideas. In that sphere, they had nothing new to add. Moreover, they were not plagued by moral dilemmas: Discussion of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor had ceased to stir any interest, even among the more intellectual Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair members.[202] They followed world events and took in their significance, but in a selective manner. Their universe was ultimately quite narrow and limited, restricted to the confines of Palestine.[203] They were men of action, without intellectual pretensions. Their intellectual simplicity joined with a power-oriented conception devoid of illusions. "If we have no strength, then all the other demonstrations, including our protest about the injustice done to us, will be of no consequence," proclaimed one of the leaders of Ha-Mahanot ha-Olim.[204] "This we know: in this world, sentiment and humanism have virtually no value," commented one young man from Ha-Noar ha-Oved on the eve of his recruitment to the Palmach.[205] A teacher in Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair voiced his worry about the relativistic outlook that had spread among youth, affecting its moral fabric.[206] Still, the socialism they had been educated in served as a barrier against inordinate chauvinism. But reality placed the humanist principles under a difficult test of credibility. In this context, revolutionary socialism in its Tabenkinian version gave a dimension of moral legitimacy to aggressive feelings and the eagerness for battle.

In the wake of the *Patria* disaster of 1940, Dov Stock wrote a letter to Berl Katznelson dealing mainly with the reaction of the young people to the occurrence. Stock was deeply shocked by the sheer callousness shown by young people toward the tragedy of nearly three hundred killed. One of the young men commented to him: "Look, what can be done? Accidents will happen." One of the instructors wrote a letter full of praise for the "clean job" that had been done and took no pains

to add "a few crumbs of sorrow for the dead, the injured, and shocked." Faced with the "hardening of the hearts, especially among youth," Stock felt "that Hitler has already been victorious in depth, if not yet in breadth."

Citing a line by Bialik—"Apparently you have oppressed us so greatly that we turned into wild animals"—he commented:

> This coarseness is the greatest of all tragedies, i.e., the point where the essential difference is canceled out between the oppressor and the oppressed and the soul of the oppressed [becomes] like the soul of the oppressor. I am fearful there are but few among us who can see this awful calamity coming; and most fail to sense that what they have fought against until now has begun to infiltrate their souls, is growing, ramifying and [that] one cloudy morning they'll discover to their chagrin that they've become the captives of "cruel spirits."

He ended his letter with the words, "My heart is like a wound, and I see that the last threads [of communication] have been severed."[207]

It is doubtful whether such a cutting judgment was appropriate and justified in the case of Palestinian Jewish youth. Yet there were components in that youth's makeup in contradiction with age-old Jewish traditions of love for man, mercy, and compassion. The horizons of that youth were narrow: Its limited field of vision excluded all those who did not belong to the familiar circle of experience and way of life in which it had been raised. These young people had profound friendship for persons close to their heart, showed a special gift for comradeship, were capable of devotion, and willing to sacrifice themselves in the hour of need. But when dealing with people outside that magic circle, the Palestinian youth was unable to apply those human feelings and humane virtues his father's generation had tried, with only partial success, to impart to him. If he harbored any feelings of tenderness, he did his best to conceal them. Externally, he manifested an attitude of objective functionalism and regarded the exhibition of human emotions as a contemptible weakness. His fanaticism and fighting spirit were vital factors in the decisive period of the birth of the state. Yet it was doubtful whether this was the ideal young man the Zionist thinkers had envisaged. "We don't want Jewish *shkotzim* [young, Gentile bullies]. We want a generation that will be able to carry upon its shoulders the spiritual burden of our socialist pioneering enterprise," proclaimed a key educator in Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair in January 1947. However, even he was aware of the internal contradiction between this lofty ideal and the aspiration for a "youth more healthy, simple, and rooted," fulfilling the national goals.[208] The synthesis between the demands of the time and the lessons of the age on the one hand and the phenomenon of a "native" generation on the other nurtured a new Jewish species: a Palestinian tribe, with a mental and psychological makeup that differed significantly from that of their fathers.