

MAPAI AND THE ARAB-JEWISH CONFLICT, 1936–1939

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Abstract: The article deals with the attitudes toward the Arabs in the Labor movement and especially in Mapai during the Arab revolt. The article argues that the ongoing war conditions compounded by an exacerbating and increasingly played up tendency to dehumanize and delegitimize Arabs in Palestine between 1936 and 1939. From a historical perspective the main influence of those years lays in the mental and psychological impact they had on perceptions in Mapai that determined the increasing distance between the two peoples for many years to come.

Keywords: Arab revolt, Ben-Gurion, delegitimization, Jewish-Arab Conflict, Mandatory Palestine, Mapai, savage, Yishuv

The violent incidents that broke out between Arabs and Jews in Palestine in 1920, 1921, and 1929, lasted a few days each and mainly concentrated in towns and settlements. By contrast, the events of 1936–1939 lasted for many weeks and erupted in spurts of ever-increasing intensity, alternating with periods of relative quiet; most of them took place on the roads or in outlying regions. Due to the political power yielded by Mapai (Labor Party) and the Histadrut (Labor Federation), representatives of the Labor movement found themselves at the epicenter of the Yishuv's (the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine) and the Zionist movement's decision-making process. The positions and decisions of the party leaders contained substance beyond mere theory and polemic. Moreover, for many months their supporters bore the brunt of defense activity, as well as the burden of loss. The Mapai leadership had to formulate a policy that would be capable not only of guiding a large urban population at a time of crisis whose end was not in sight, but also of responding to the real threat faced by those who answered the call to settle the outlying regions of Palestine (Morris 1999: 129–160; Shavit 1983; Teveth 1985: 265–326).

The ongoing war conditions, compounded by an exacerbating and increasing tendency to dehumanize and delegitimize Arabs in the Yishuv's consciousness, ideas, and concepts, set in motion a far-reaching shift in the nature and content of the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine between 1936 and 1939. Slowly but surely,

the tendency to delegitimize and dehumanize the enemy that spread during that period through the Labor movement helped erode the fabric of a relationship woven over the years between Arabs and Jews. The movement's prevailing ideological belief in the possibility of peaceful coexistence with the Arabs suffered the most damage. It was gradually realized that the main objective of the Arab attacks was to hold the Jewish Yishuv in a state of paralyzing fear, which would block its ability to continue growing. The frequent acts of violence and the ensuing loss of life engendered a more extreme definition of the nature of the conflict, along with the belief that the conflict sprang from and was nurtured by fundamental traits in the Arab character (Bar-Tal 2007: 144–145, 212–218).

The perception of the “enemy” as one’s own inverse “mirror image” is a common pattern in societies engaged in an extended conflict. In this sense the Jewish-Arab conflict is not unusual compared to other ethnic and national conflicts of the twentieth century. Blotting out the enemy’s humanity while stressing his negative aspects helps fuel the conflict between the sides and tends to escalate during acute crises (Dower 1986; Harkabi 1972; Rieber 1991).

When the physical danger threatening the existence and identity of a social-national group becomes or is perceived as real, aggressive and even violent means are called for to forestall it. Part of the struggle against the enemy, its dehumanization and delegitimization, are underpinned by conceptual codes of speech, behavior, and mentality that represent the “other” as inferior, backward, and primitive. The attendant harsh verbal expressions and visual formulas easily distinguish between and sharply set off against each other the two adversaries’ aims, thinking patterns, and manner of action. These are used to quickly identify, characterize, and label, automatically and beyond any doubt, a vast range of political and human situations. They define the adversary group with utter certainty, blaming it exclusively for the conflict and the ensuing violence. As the conflict deepens the stereotypical images harnessed to back the struggle gradually acquire an independent life, blending emotional elements and half-truths inspired by historically embedded social blueprints. They lay the groundwork for the struggle’s justification, build the moral and intellectual infrastructure on which it thrives, and prepare the emotional-psychological mind-set required to strike the enemy on the battlefield. These images also sanction inflicting damage on the enemy’s daily civilian activities, within a range of contexts only very tangentially related to the controversy between the sides. As long as the conflict is latent or reined in and regulated by transient historical conditions and circumstances, the formation and existence of negative images about the adversary are of secondary importance. But when the conflict’s violent dimensions erupt, these images become crucial in shaping the conflict and determining its intensity, length, and chances for abatement (Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005: 116–141).

In Palestine the underpinnings of the Jewish-Arab socio-economic tension were laid during Ottoman rule (Kolatt 1983: 3–10; Shafir 1989: 45–90). In the realm of

politics and defense the tensions between the sides were shaped and exacerbated during the British Mandate. Romantic, exotic, and naive images that admire and marvel at the local Arab version of the “noble savage” had been common among some workers’ groups during the second aliyah, yet had all but disappeared by the early 1920s. Just before World War I, the fledgling national Jewish-Arab conflict already began using hostile images to justify the entrenchment of a position inimical to the possibility of coexistence between the sides (Be’eri 1985: 65–84; Mandel 1976: 43–44; Morris 1999: 42–48).

The increasingly sharpened national character of the Arab-Jewish encounter in Palestine relegated positive expressions like those mentioned above to the Yishuv’s margins. Palestine Jewish cultural products, be they in literature, education, drama, or film, highlighted the Arab as a culturally inferior figure with negative qualities. Arabs were depicted indiscriminately as a malicious *hoi polloi* living in a morally warped and socially unjust society. In this sense they constituted a contrasting inverse “mirror image” that underscored the uniqueness and advantages of the “new Jew” active in a new, progressive, modern, Western society in Palestine (Oryan 1996: 19–32, 113–120; Oppenheimer 2008: 52–74; Podeh 2002: 2–10, 26–30). An essential component of the Yishuv’s emerging Hebrew culture during the first decades of the twentieth century, this cultural element has its distinct historical moorings in the Palestine political reality of 1936–1939.

It is often assumed in historical research on Mapai, the dominant party in the Yishuv, that in those years its discussion on the type of conflict initiated by the Arabs focused on whether it could be defined as “riots” or a “revolt.” Riots are traditionally carried out by murderous gangs, whereas an Arab revolt could be construed as a nationalist uprising aimed at obtaining British recognition that Palestine was an Arab country and should remain so in the future. These were not insignificant, semantic differences but the result of different worldviews and considerations arising from political different agendas, which may also have been influenced by the positions held in the public arena (Gorny 1987: 250–255; Shapira: 1984: 253–255). Presenting the internal Mapai debate as one conducted around the axis “riots”/“revolt” diverts attention from an extremely important facet in the actual analysis of the events as they were discussed by the party leaders and experienced by many members of the Labor movement throughout the country. They viewed the nature of the conflict with the Arabs between 1936 and 1939 as one of a prolonged state of war.

“The Savage”: Delegitimizing the Arab

From the end of the nineteenth century, the attitude of the new Jewish Yishuv in Palestine toward the Arabs revolved around two issues. The first consisted of

colonialist paternalist arrogance, disdain, and condescension typical of the Europeans who saw themselves as representatives of “Western culture” and “progress,” as opposed to the lazy “Asian” barbarians, as expressed by Herzl’s promise, in *The Jewish State*, that “we shall serve as the cultural vanguard against barbarism” (Ben-Avram and Near 1995: 145–147, 150–151; Gorny 1987: 14–15, 30–35; Shapira 2004: 58–60). The other issue involved marked respect for the Arabs’ ability to work and make do with little, as well as for their military talents. Yitzhak Epstein described the Arabs as “courageous people, fully armed, wonderful marksmen, excellent horsemen, devoted to their people and, especially, to their religion”—an attitude reflected also in the attempts made by the Ha’shomer organization to emulate them.¹

A term that was often used in Zionist circles to describe the Arabs, whether in obvious admiration or in a tone of disdain, was “savage.” This term, which was often mentioned in literature of the First Aliyah (1881–1903), appears to have been a fairly accepted motif among European Jewry’s attitude toward the Arab inhabitants of the country, although Ahad Ha’am and others were firmly opposed to its use (Gorny 1987: 34; Laskov 1982: 66, 78–79; Shapira 1992, 42–43, 59). During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Labor movement used the term “savage” to define the mind-set, behavior, and activities of the Arabs, with special emphasis on the violence of the 1920s. As Berl Katznelson declared: “Whoever our deadly oppressors may be, whether savage bandits and rapists or commissioners of the dominant ‘culture’ [i.e., British officials], they shall not subdue us.”²

The vacillation between using the term “savage” as an accurate description of the Arabs and a fundamentally humanist approach to the enemy—based on an awareness of the harm caused by the conflict to the other side—is a recurring theme among Labor movement leaders. Moshe Beilinson, *Davar*’s main publicist on World War I, wrote on the expression of the humanist approach in the Labor movement, which can shed light on the phenomena discussed here—albeit in a different historical context—“these were not savage people that butchered each other for over four years, nor pagans, each sacrificing his brother on this cursed altar, but civilized nations, praising the name of living God and pathetically claiming to believe in mercy and love.”³

A notable expression of the way in which the Arabs were delegitimized and dehumanized by means of the term “savage” appeared in the wake of Shmuel Gutterman’s murder in Kfar Hasidim on 5 March 1932. *Ha’aretz* described the murder, which was perpetrated by members of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam during a time of relative quiet between the two peoples, according to the “civilization”/“savagery” paradigm: “The life of the man of work and culture still depends on what appears to be a miracle in this land on the ‘will’—for good or for evil—of the desert savages ... alongside whom we must carry out the work of the Yishuv and our own culture.”⁴ The Arab paper, *Palestine*, responded to this in a furious editorial:

If *Ha'aretz* is right, that the Arabs are “savage,” then *Ha'aretz* should know that the desert savage commits murder only when hungry or during a war of survival, unlike the urban wolves who commit murder in order to satisfy their lust for murder. The desert savages deserve respect for the fact that they commit their murders in daylight, face to face with their enemy, not like the urban wolves—in secret. Assuming that *Ha'aretz* is right in its claims that the unknown murderers were Arabs, does this justify calling all Arabs “desert savages”? Are there no cases of murder in other countries? Are there no cases of murder in the streets of Chicago, Berlin, Vienna and Paris and elsewhere? Why are Arabs accused of committing murder called savages, while the rest of the enlightened world is not given this name? The desert savages are proud of the fact that the number of murders in their midst is lower than that in the civilized countries, which, the Jews claim, are now protecting them.⁵

The relative calm that permitted this kind of polemic in response to the comparison of “civilization” with “savagery” came to a sudden end with the eruption of the Arab revolt on 19 April 1936. In a highly impressive eulogy at the funeral for nine victims of a murderous attack, Tel Aviv mayor Meir Dizengoff, one of the leaders of the so-called urban, liberal “civic sector” (*hugim ezrahiim*), declared: “Although our war is a war for peace, the war of a civilized nation, from the other side savages have arisen against us and it is because of them that the victims have fallen” (Slutsky 1973: 634–36). Dizengoff’s eulogy aroused furious responses from the Arabs. At a meeting in Jerusalem on 24 April, Ra’eb al-Nashashibi, leader of the Nationalist Defense Party, announced: “The Jews are saying that we are people of the desert and they are civilized. And I say that they are liars, they are the savages. The Arabs are the civilized ones and have morals and good intentions.” He was joined by the mayor of Nablus, Suliman abd al-Razak Tukan, who pointed out that “The Arab people, who the world knows as proud and generous of heart, protecting its neighbor and refugee and helping the weak and dispossessed, is not at all savage.” He also recalled how the Arabs had protected the Jews before World War I and opened their gates to them, when they were banished from other countries.⁶ Dizengoff was not expressing an opinion that was rare in Jewish society. Arieh Shenkar, one of the country’s leading industrialists, wrote a few days later: “No one doubts that Tel Aviv is a civilized town, whose inhabitants are all involved in their own work and labor and only the false and passionate imagination of a savage son of the east could imagine that we are conspiring to destroy Jaffa.”⁷ Under heavy pressure from Ben-Gurion and the warning voiced by Shertok at a meeting of Mapai’s political committee, according to which “when [you] translate expressions such as ‘occupation’ and ‘war,’ they do not come across as mere rhetoric,”⁸ Dizengoff deigned to modify his words. In an article in *Davar*, he denied having referred to the Arab people as “savages” and said that he knew that among this nation were good and noble people, even though it had produced murderers worthy of the

name “savage.”⁹ Dizengoff’s clumsy declaration did nothing to calm the situation, which was already aflame because of the increasing attacks on Jews throughout the country and the general strike declared by the Arab population. The polemic over Dizengoff’s declarations was significant because it was the last time Jewish and Arab leaders were able to debate publicly without the risk of being automatically tarnished by accusations of unforgivable treason for the mere attempt at contact and communication.

Michael Assaf, Mapai’s eminent expert on Arab affairs and editor of *Davar*’s Arab section, maintained that the Arab leaders are rightly vexed by the definition of Arabs as a “savage people,” which the Hebrew press attributed to Dizengoff. To buttress his claim he pointed out that at the time racial frenzy had seized, for example, a large segment of German society, “but would an intelligent person ever think of referring to the Germans as a ‘savage people?’” Several years later his rhetorical question would prove him bitterly wrong. In our context it is noteworthy that even Assaf, a Mapai member who staunchly advocated knowledge and understanding of Arab affairs as indispensable in a dialogue between the two sides, concomitantly published the following story. He once took the bus from Tel Aviv to Jaffa, where, along Ajami Street, he saw small groups of adults and children. The former kept silent and laughed whereas the children, running their hands across their throats to gesture slaughter, shouted “the Jews are our dogs” and “we’ll slaughter the Jews.” Assaf asked the Arab leaders wondered why the Arab people tolerated such behavior in their children, and why they would not put an end to this sort of upbringing, which could “only produce a savage person?”¹⁰ This goes to show that even someone well versed in Arab affairs, who had always advocated dialogue, saw fit to level such a harsh and indiscriminate accusation against Arabs. In light of the Arab revolt, the dehumanization of the individual Arab was thus gaining foot as a typical mental and behavioral blueprint in the Yishuv’s attitude to the people with which it was sharing the land.

The patterns of thinking that emerged in the Yishuv as a result of the continuous Arab attacks on the Jewish population bore testimony to the Jews’ despair at ever being able to conduct a dialogue with the Arabs. On 23 May 1936, a month after the riots erupted, Katznelson drafted the political conclusion that was to provide the determining motif in Mapai’s relations with the Palestinian Arab population for many years to come. He stated that he did not desire to live with them as neighbors even on the basis of political agreements, and added: “These people have a certain character. We can always expect fierce attacks from them.”¹¹ Katznelson’s words echoed Aharon David Gordon, the guiding light of the moderate approach in the Labor movement, in a private letter following the 1921 riots: “We must know clearly that *all* the Arabs are against us and will do everything in their power to destroy that which we have built and to exterminate us all, so long as they have the power to do so.”¹²

Even people in the Mapai party, who were clearly identified as politically moderate, tended to delegitimized political ties with the Arabs. Nahalal member Ya'akov Uri, one of the leaders of the moshav movement, concluded that "it's a lie that this is a clash between peoples and cultures. It is a clash between civilization and savagery, between the savage and order, between light and darkness." Yitshak Lufban compared "peaceful people, who, as they went innocently about their business, were overtaken by death," with the "murderers conspiring to bring about the destruction and ruin of our historic enterprise." Berl Locker provided a similar description of the Jews' desire for reconciliation with the neighboring people, but, "from every quarter there awaits a bullet from the desert." A.D. Gordon's daughter, Yael, advocated dialogue, but added patronizingly that, "we must not lower ourselves to their [the Arabs'] concepts; they should rise to ours." The Mapai magazine, *Ha'poel Ha'tzair*, published a poem by Asher Barash, which included the line "Hagar's son shrieks, drunk on killing."¹³

During the 1936–1939 revolts these descriptions of the character and objectives of "the Arab" became accepted as a given fact, even among Labor supporters. Evidence of how this political climate was formed can be learned from studying the literature aimed at new immigrants, the educational material for children, and the poetry of the period.

Following the 1936 murder of Martha Fink and Nehama Tzedek, nineteen-year-old nurses who worked at the Government Hospital in Jaffa, *Davar La'oleh* (a simplified version of *Davar*, published specifically for immigrants), asked: "Whom shall we talk with? With those who are no different from a beast of prey? With those for whom the sadism, the butchery, the blood and the knife were always an integral part of their psyche, but whom teachers, priests and leaders have now dressed in the clothes of heroes, of nobles and of saints?"¹⁴ Even the magazine of Ha'noar Ha'oved youth movement, *Ba'ma'ale*, bemoaning the fact that the hard-working Jewish hand, always held out in peace to the neighbors, was being rejected by "savages, thirsty for blood and destruction, inciters, robbers, arsonists and murderers," asked in bewilderment, "What can be said of the madness that has affected an entire people!"¹⁵ Some of this madness was also adopted by the Jewish side. The children, for example, adopted a "craze for throwing stones." At that time, according to the women's magazine *Dvar ha-po'et*, the most popular games among children were throwing stones, shooting arrows, and war between Jews and Arabs. School-age children, who did not normally include kindergarten children in their games, now invited them to join in, on condition that they agreed to play the part of Arabs. "In the games, the 'Arabs' set fire to fields; attack with knives and the 'Jewish' school children defeat them."¹⁶ Amalia, a fifteen-year-old girl, wrote in a kibbutz's paper about Jews of Jaffa, who had been "killed by desert savages" in April. She described how, on returning home from putting out a fire that had been started in a field, "your eyes are filled with hatred and contempt for those desert

savages who seek to assassinate you.” And in the evening “you stare at Mt. Gilboa for fear that the desert people are wielding an ax to destroy the trees planted by the settlers.”¹⁷ Dvora Dayan, writing about the night-time experiences of her children in Nahalal, described how, despite the suffocating heat, they would push their beds away from the windows. The younger one (Zohar) would ask to eat his supper in the dark. “This terrible period will pass. The country will rise once again to productive work, but how shall we heal the wounds of suspicion in the hearts of our children?”¹⁸ The seeds of suspicion and hostility were also planted in the hearts of the children by drawing their attention to what was interpreted in *Davar li’yeladim* (Davar for children) as the hatred of children of their own age on the other side: “Children, Have you noticed / the expression of hate / the incitement and the hate / the brawling of our neighbors’ children?”¹⁹

These comments, taken from various sources and addressed to diverse circles within the Labor movement, are by no means exceptional, although they reflect only one aspect of a complex picture. The overwhelming ethos remained the same, essentially defensive. Nonetheless, the recurring incidents testified to the existence of a fertile ground for generating opinions that deviated from the defensive ethos, which sought to play down the strength of Jewish-Arab differences and nourish a belief that Jewish settlement in Palestine could take place in peaceful ways. Together with its moral and ideological companion—evolutionism—the defensive ethos laid the foundations for fulfilling the Zionist ideal through a gradual process until the extent of Jewish settlement enabled a transition to an offensive ethos: the realization that force was destined to be the determining factor in the encounter with the Arabs and the fate of the Zionist enterprise (Shapira 1992: 109–110). One of the period’s classic songs represented the ethos in whose name the Labor movement wanted to contend with the renewed uprisings: “From morn to eve, from night to day, we shall constantly protect the tree of peace, from terrible crime, from sword and predator.”²⁰

These expressions of hatred toward the Arab indicated the emergence of such sentiments within the ideological and educational heart of the Labor Party, as well as a willingness to grant them open recognition. Beilinson hastened to point out that in the Arab camp, too, mothers wept at night and in their frightened children’s dreams, there also appeared a “murderer,” who did not take the form of an “Arab,” but of a “Jew.” It was an emotional fact, he warned, that would later turn into a political, social, and national fact. Although this article was among the most moving of the articles written by Beilinson, the need to publish it illustrates the extent to which the demonizing of the “other side” constantly undermined the ability of Jews and Arabs to coexist.²¹ But Beilinson remained a “voice in the wilderness.”

Some of the prominent figures who shape the Labor movement’s cultural world began to realize that events were driving the carefully nurtured humanist worldview to a dead end. The poet Ya’akov Orland described this feeling with pain

mingled with disappointment: “Woe to you, guardsman / before every Hebrew Uri and Moshe’le / and woe that I am disgraced before them/ for, with my own hands/ I planted in their innocent hearts, a belief in humanity.”²² According to Anita Shapira (1992: 229), the image of “desert savages” was reserved mainly for the most horrific events. As far as the Jews were concerned, the worst of these came on 2 October 1938, when within forty minutes a group of Arabs slaughtered nineteen Jews, including eleven children, in the Tiberius neighborhood of Kiryat Shmuel and defiled their corpses. David Shmeterling (Gilad) wrote a horrified description in the Deganya Alef kibbutz journal of the acts of “The Arab savages! Beasts of prey!” and bemoaned the bitter fate of the Jews who were destined to live as “birds abandoned to the hunters.” Shmeterling, who had previously wondered how the Labor Party had abandoned A.D. Gordon’s humanist image and urged that he be presented to the children as a “symbol of man,” now expressed horror at the terrible sights he had witnessed in Tiberius: “We shall stand, rifle in hand! We must muster strength. All faith in the nations, in mankind, has ceased, died.”²³

The tendency to label the Arabs bloodthirsty and devoid of human culture was not confined to Labor Party circles. It was echoed in liberal circles as well. Thus, for example, in wake of the aforementioned murder of the nurses, an editorial in *Ha’aretz* asked why no Arab municipality had tried even once to stop the outbreak of the violence of April 1936, “to influence its citizens and to remind them that even the offspring of a primitive people does not necessarily have to be savage.”²⁴ Using a similar tone, the Central Committee of the Hebrew Medical Federation in the Land of Israel blamed the murder of the nurses on “savage incitement in the Arabic press.”²⁵

In Mapai circles the enemy’s image, the character of the national conflict and forecasts as to its future were drawn in dark and dismal shades. Alongside the traditional vows that no scrap of land would be relinquished and the place of each fallen victim would be filled by thousands of Jewish immigrants, the warning to take the necessary care required by the security situation, and reproachful words against the British government, Labor Party members felt that they were under attack. Above all, the absence of any prospect of quieter times undermined their self-confidence and reinforced the sensation that they were doomed to remain entangled with the Arabs on the same piece of land. According to Pinchas Lubianiker (Lavon), leader of the Gordonia youth movement and the Hever Hakevutzut movement, “Many have fallen and many more will yet fall. ... if these acts of murder are the fruit of a ‘national movement’ then this movement is in the hands of human wolves.”²⁶ Lufban, whose adherence to a moderate approach to relations with the Arabs was well known, issued a similar warning: “It is inconceivable to think that every Arab in the land of Israel is a murderer ... but under existing circumstances, every Arab can be suspected.”²⁷ This concept was officially expressed in a statement published on 17 August 1936 by a gathering of the Assembly of Del-

egates (asefat ha'nivharim, the central representative body of the Yishuv), which was controlled by Mapai, and began with these words: "For 120 days the Jewish Yishuv is facing a *war* of blood and fire which has been forced upon them by the Arab leaders in the country by means of an instigated mob, and of an unruly youth which has been transformed into gangs of bandits. The agitation of religious and racial hatred has stirred up all the instincts of the desert and destruction. Human morality is being trampled upon. Every human accomplishment only provokes a passion for destruction."²⁸

The bloodier the riots, the more the recognition of the Arabs' legitimate right to conduct their national struggle was eroded within Mapai. Instead, Mapai disregarded the Arabs' suffering and demonized them. Lufban expressed this in a particularly extreme and passionate formulation that became common way of thinking in the annals of the conflict, according to which the death of a hundred or two hundred people does not cause the leaders of Arab terror and its perpetrators "the pain and mourning that the loss of a single Jewish life does to us."²⁹

"State of War": April–August 1936

The Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel, convened by the British government to investigate the first wave of riots, published its report in July 1937. It based its recommendation to partition the country as a way to solve the conflict on the central premise that "an irrepressible conflict has arisen between two national communities within the narrow bounds of one small country. About 1,000,000 Arabs are in strife, open or latent, with some 400,000 Jews" (*Palestine* 1937: 370). According to the official Hebrew translation of the Commission's report, the word "strife" was translated *milhama* or war (*Hartzat* 1937: 270). Even if the Hebrew word was not an accurate translation of the English version, its literal meaning faithfully reflected the prevalent climate of the period. During the first wave of rioting, between April and October 1936, eighty Jews were murdered (Slutsky 1973: 650).

Some of Mapai leaders chose to evade the issue of an escalating Arab uprising for internal political reasons and in order to reinforce their own national resolve. As Beilinson wrote in a *Davar* editorial with regard to the burning of farmers' fields: "Up to now we didn't know this savage 'weapon' that seeks to destroy the most precious fruits of the labor of the person who draws bread from the land." He found this kind of action compatible with the type of riots perpetrated by the Arabs, "which are not like a 'popular revolt' or 'mass uprising,' but rather a kind of terrorist organization, a kind of methodical activity by criminal gangs."³⁰ By denying the existence of an Arab revolt and Arab uprising in Palestine, Katznelson, Tabenkin, and Beilinson sought to avoid the path that, at that particular time, would lead to compromise with the Arabs, which they did not regard as serving Jewish

interests. Nonetheless, they did not ignore or fail to understand the developments within the Arab community, in spite of Tabenkin's furious comment: "Can attacks on children, destruction of roads, a total lack of human feeling toward the Jews be called an uprising?" At a general assembly at Kibbutz Ein Harod on 26 September 1936 he was forced to admit that although he did not believe that the movement had set out to be an Arab rebellion and uprising, it had become an important learning tool and an extremely important organizing force for establishing an Arab nationalist movement.³¹ Even when the first wave of violence abated in October 1936, Beilinson continued to argue with his colleagues in the Labor Party leadership, declaring that he was placing "Arab revolt" in quotation marks because "a myth of an 'Arab revolt' has been created in Palestine that I reject and that Zionism has to destroy." Beilinson explained that only a small part of the Arab community had participated in terrorism, and the rural population had not joined the Arab strike at all. He acknowledged that a Palestinian Arab people existed, but that its hostility toward the Jews had not reached the "level of an armed Arab revolt against the state."³²

The stance taken by these three people, as well as the claim that what was taking place was an Arab national revolt against the British—in Shertok's words, "at the moment what is happening in Palestine is an uprising, if not, then I don't know what an uprising is"³³—in practice served the same goal. The goal was to restrict the discussion within Mapai regarding the demand that the Mandatory Government make every effort to put an end to the Arab violence, so as not to draw attention to what was actually occurring: a direct clash between the mutual aspirations of two national movements to control the same piece of land at the expense of the British. Apart from the fact that the British had no intention of leaving the country, there were three basic reasons for obscuring the existence of a national conflict: the hope of achieving a Jewish majority via continued immigration; the desire to establish a self-contained Jewish community; and the urgent need for arms. All of these required British help and backing.³⁴

In the Zionist and Yishuv jargon of the time the term "war" was often used rhetorically to describe every dispute, regardless of its import or weight. It is no wonder that during the period under discussion, in which bombs, rifles, arson, strikes, and threats to restrict immigration had become routine, there was a constant need to invoke the term "war." It was meant primarily to harness the masses—especially those who were not close to the danger spots and who were more concerned with the pressing problems of earning a livelihood—to identify with the leadership's approach. However, unlike during other periods in the history of the Yishuv, in this case, as Ben-Gurion said in June 1936, "the Arab people has declared war on us—not with words but with bombs, rifles and guns, on the one hand, and by destroying the country's economy, on the other."³⁵

On more than one occasion, Ben-Gurion chose to turn the focus of the conflict in the Palestine triangle from the Jewish-Arab equation to the Arab-British front

and therefore used the term “revolt,” in order to avoid admitting that a military conflict was underway in Palestine between Jews and Arabs. At a May 1936 meeting of the Mapai Political Committee he insisted that this was the “revolt of a people” and that a police force was incapable of suppressing a movement in which many thousands of people were taking part.³⁶ By the beginning of July his view of the situation had become more extreme and he admitted to his colleagues in the Mapai leadership that “this is a war of the Arabs,” in which even more difficult stages could be anticipated.³⁷ This was indeed a war of an Arab national movement, which did indeed harm the Jews, but according to Ben-Gurion it was not they who were the object of attack, but the British. Ben-Gurion understood the situation very well, but was reluctant to acknowledge it because he knew that the political price to the Yishuv and the Zionist movement would be too heavy to bear. Thus he wrote: “I do not recognize a revolt against us, because it is not we who are ruling the Arabs, we are not the government, and so there is no right to revolt against us, because we have an a priori, axiomatic and irrefutable right to live, to work and to multiply.”³⁸ This reflected the de facto consensus between the two rival camps in Mapai, and, in a similar spirit, Katznelson said: “war has been declared, but we are not the warring side.”³⁹ Though 795 of the violent attacks between April and October 1936 had been perpetrated against British security and government forces, 1,996 had been against Jews, without considering the hundreds of additional attacks on Jewish property. During that period, only three people had been killed in direct attacks on the Jewish Yishuv. Over seventy-two people had been murdered at the onset of the riots in Jaffa, in ambushes and attacks on public transport.⁴⁰

If the term “riots” no longer reflected the situation in the country, and the “Arab revolt” was aimed at the British, the actual situation experienced by the Jews required an appropriate terminological definition (which is not to underestimate the existence or intensity of the Arab revolt against the British Mandate). Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek in the Jezreel Valley was one of the strongholds of the humanistic and peace-seeking Hashomer Hatzza'ir Hakibbutz Ha'artzi movement, representing the left wing of the Labor movement, whose members included several of the movement's leaders, including Ya'akov Hazan and Mordechai Bentov. Throughout 1936 the kibbutz had found itself having to contend with repeated arson attacks on its grain fields and surrounding woodlands, which caused enormous damage and the destruction of some 30,000 trees in the immediate vicinity. There were no direct attacks on the kibbutz, but almost every night there were isolated rifle shots among its houses. The kibbutz members became highly distressed and understood that the Arabs had adopted this method of attack in order to keep them in a permanent state of insecurity. One of the members kept a diary over a number of weeks in which he described the day-to-day events and general atmosphere. The author wrote that denying a community food by setting fire to its wheat fields was a “crime greater than murder.” Wondering whether there existed in Palestine “laws

of civilization or the laws of the desert,” he insisted that they would not hesitate “to fight our war and this war is a war of life or death” (*Ha’hursha* 1936). The mood of the times that emerges from the pages of this diary was not adorned in long-winded ideological formulations of the kind so prevalent in the Hashomer Hatza’ir movement, rather the language was plain and simple, sharp and clear: “there are forces that want to destroy the Jewish nation’s third temple.” Describing the nightly shootings in and around the kibbutz, the fields set on fire ever closer to the kibbutz, and the dozens of kibbutz members standing on guard day and night instead of focusing on their work and nurturing the kibbutz’s communal lifestyle, the author stated in a tone of resignation mingled with despair: “this state of war has become a normal situation.”⁴¹

Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek provides a microcosm that reflected Jewish life in many parts of Palestine. In a situation in which Jews were being murdered by the dozen, enormous amounts of property were being destroyed, and four thousand armed Jews were constantly on guard to protect the Yishuv and its inhabitants, a state of war had been created between the two peoples. Although the Jewish side restricted and adapted its reactions to its political requirements and to its objective situation as the weaker party both militarily and numerically in the Palestine triangle, this is not to say that it played a marginal role or that its contribution to the state of war should be underestimated. The continuing immigration, wide-scale arming, the increasingly self-contained Jewish economy, and the political struggle to stop the Arab violence were all perceived by the Arabs as hostile and aggressive policies.

Yosef Sprinzak, a leading Mapai moderate, pointed out that the fact that the Arabs had become accustomed to living a military life for weeks on end, were gaining military training and no longer feared the British army, “places our entire existence here in question.”⁴² This experience of war during the upsurge of violence in 1936, even before it had reached its height, was described by Shabtai Luzinsky in a letter to David Remez, a Mapai leader and secretary of the Histadrut. Luzinsky, a member of Moshav Atarot in the Jerusalem hills and one of the junior officers in the Haganah, skipped all the usual ideological rhetoric and wrote quite frankly:

We must get used to the fact that war has been declared on us; the most extreme kind of partisan war. There is a state of war against us and we must harness all our forces and our energies in order to face up to this war. We are alarmed that we already have 33 dead and are constantly asking “for how long”? And I would agree even to 100 or 200 dead, on condition that a port is established in Tel Aviv, that we take over the manufacture of plaster and stone and are no longer dependent on the Arabs, that we achieve an independent supply of vegetables and that we remove the Arab laborers and guards from the orange groves, and that we thereby increase the potential for immigration and prove that we are a force to be reckoned with

in the country. With all due sympathy for the injured parties, I say that we must discuss matters only from the perspective of their overall benefit to “all Israel,” and in the life of a nation, not only dozens but even hundreds of people are of little consequence. In short, I believe that we must lay everything in the balance, so long as we emerge the victors.⁴³

Against the background of the Mandatory Government’s June 1936 decision to take control of Jaffa (the main base of Arab insurgency), Mapai’s Political Committee held a debate on whether or not to acquiesce to Britain’s request for 100 Jewish laborers to help with demolishing Arab houses in the old city of Jaffa. Unlike most of his colleagues in the party leadership, Katznelson was in favor of helping the British: “It might appear somewhat brutal, but we are at war and we want the government to fight. . . . Had the government asked us to recruit hundreds of people to fight against the terrorist gangs, we would have done so without a word, although this would almost have been a Jewish Brigade.”⁴⁴

The Arab attacks increased in August 1936 and included murders, shooting, bombings, the burning of property and destruction of trees. Thirty of the eighty Jews murdered in 1936 fell during this one month. An editorial in *Ha’aretz* wailed that “in the north and in the south, throughout the country, all is slaughter.”⁴⁵ At secret meetings of the Mapai Central Committee on 22 and 24 August, Eliyahu Golomb who, as he declared during the discussion, “was in charge of leading the Haganah,” announced that he had reached the conclusion that the current issue was not the question of the Yishuv’s security, but “*the question of our very existence.*” According to him, the time had come to abandon the policy of restraint, because “*a war between two nations over the future of the country*” was now taking place and the Jews would fail if they were not willing to make sacrifices, as the Arabs were. With the backing of his counterpart in the Haganah leadership, Shaul Meirov (Avigur), and the expert on Arab affairs, Reuven Zaslani (Shiloah), Golomb suggested imposing “collective punishment on a whole criminal village.” In order to demonstrate his position, he went on to say that, following the murder of three Jews the previous day near Kfar Saba, hundreds of Jews should have taken up arms and attacked Kalkilya.⁴⁶ Katznelson agreed with Golomb that the Arabs had declared war on the Yishuv, but rejected his proposal for fear of direct confrontation with the British army. At the end of the debate, Golomb’s proposal was outvoted seven to four. Golomb responded to the vote by tendering his resignation from the post of Haganah commander; he rescinded under pressure from Katznelson.⁴⁷

In debates preceding the Mapai polemic, Shertok made it clear that it was not in the interests of Zionism to wail and arouse horror in the international press and public opinion over three murdered Jewish children in Safed, a bomb thrown into a Tel Aviv schoolyard, or the murder of nurses in Jaffa. The question was not whether such events were shocking, he said, but the political repercussions they carried. He

was convinced that Zionism had no need to impress the High Commissioner with “the weeping and the groans of the victims and to bewail the slaughter ... against us in order to awaken the human conscience,” as was the case in 1903 in Kishiniev. Sounding the alarm against discriminatory laws and murders, as the Jewish people had been accustomed to doing for generations, would only sabotage the interests of Zionism, whose objective was not to arouse public sympathy but to make it possible for Jewish immigration to continue, to develop the national home and to dream of a Jewish state. He argued that any aspirations to shock the world would undermine Zionism’s political interests, because such cries would prompt anyone standing on the sidelines to reach the objective conclusion that “it’s crazy for that people to go to that country when the situation there has reached such a point.”⁴⁸ Indeed, for the Zionist movement, the continued flow of Jewish immigrants into Palestine was the major consideration in shaping its policies vis-à-vis the riots. When Ben-Gurion summed up the first chapter of the Arab revolt, which ended in October 1936 after the intervention of Arab states, he noted in obvious surprise that Britain had decided, in principle, not to stop Jewish immigration “even if this causes a war to erupt in the country.” With a profound sense of achievement and fulfillment, he wrote that “the Hebrew nation has achieved the greatest political victory” since the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and its confirmation in the Mandate in 1922.⁴⁹ The Zionists’ hope of swiftly establishing a Jewish state based on the July 1937 Peel Commission partition plan was dispelled when the Arabs rejected the plan and resumed their attacks on Jews in September. The attacks intensified gradually, gangs of Arab fighters took control of various parts of the country for periods of time, and the British were forced to bring in more and more forces.

“State of War”: July–October, 1938

Arab violence against Jews in Palestine peaked during the summer of 1938, with 211 Jews murdered between July and October. One of the reasons behind the intensifying attacks was the unbridled counterattacks by the IZL organization in response to the execution of one of their members, Shlomo Ben-Yosef—the first Jew to be sent to the gallows by the British—on 29 June. A month after the execution, Katznelson said in desperation “this month has been a month of collapse, after 27 months of steadfastness.”⁵⁰ Sixty Jews were killed during July 1938, the largest number of casualties in a single month throughout the Arab revolt. According to IZL circles, the organization killed 140 Arabs during that same month, by means (among others) of laying powerful bombs devised by their “engineer,” Binyamin Zir’oni, in Haifa, Jerusalem, and Jaffa (Naor 1991: 121–122; Niv 1965: 90; Slutsky 1973: 801). The 7 July headline in *Davar*, which read, “The Country Is Full of Blood,” best summed up the situation in Palestine in those days.

The militant spirit reached its zenith during July 1938 meetings of the Mapai political institutions, when Yosef Sprinzak, the most moderate of the moderates, called for a Jaffa orange grove to be set on fire in retaliation for shots fired from there toward a Tel Aviv suburb. He predicted that if Tel Aviv were to be attacked, hundreds of bandits would invade it, causing panic to spread throughout the city, which lacked the necessary staunchness to withstand such an attack.⁵¹ In a different spirit and using a style reminiscent of Shabtai Luzinsky's 1936 letter, Shertok addressed the fourth conference of Mapai shortly before the escalation of the conflict:

As I see it, we must impose upon ourselves one demand and that is not to be horrified, not to be shocked at every act of terror and not to be shocked by the victims that fall among us and by the blood that is spilt every day. This is not a pogrom. We are not being led like lambs to the slaughter. This is war. We are in a state of war. The Yishuv is in a state of war. War takes certain forms, the Yishuv is attacked and it defends itself and also wages political attacks. But the basis fact is that this is a state of war, a war of survival and one that it wants to win. And in war, the victims are counted differently. What do 166 mean [since April 1936 some 150 Jews had been killed], or 300, were 300 to fall, what would 500 dead mean to a nation that is fighting for its future in the Land of Israel, its land?!⁵²

The casualty rate would soon catch Shertok in the trap of his own rhetoric. His 300 mark was reached and exceeded less than five months after he made his speech, and the 500 mark was crossed during 1939. But above all Shertok's words testified to the willingness that had matured within the Mapai leadership to declare unequivocally, in order to spread the message among the party's supporters throughout the country, that this was a war between two peoples both striving to achieve sovereignty over Palestine. Under these circumstances, the desire to put off acknowledging the open, frontal conflict with the Arabs (before the Jews achieved a demographic majority in the country), which had guided the Mapai leadership since the days of the Second Aliyah, was no longer valid.

Against this background, Ben-Gurion strove to instill in his fellow leaders the recognition that, notwithstanding the constant effort to belittle the image of the Arab fighters and the habit of referring to them as "gangs" or "terrorists," it was now necessary to face facts and accept that they were facing a national war against the Jews. Ben-Gurion was unequivocal, "Let us not delude ourselves: we are not facing terror—but war. This is a national war declared against us by the Arabs. Terrorism is but one of the means used in this war." Although he added that it was a primitive movement that stood behind the terror, he acknowledged that the movement was not devoid of dedication, idealism, and determination. When speaking publicly, "we disdain the Arabs' power ... But among ourselves, let's not ignore the truth. I insist on the truth, not out of respect for scientific truth—but out of a need

for political truth.” World War I, he said, had lasted over four years. “The Arabs’ war against us has been going on for two and a half years. Who can guarantee that it will end in two and a half years? It can last considerably longer.”⁵³

As a result of the damage caused by the Arab attacks, Zvi Yehuda, commander of the Nahalal bloc, demanded that Mapai’s Political Committee drop its policy of restraint in exchange for one of response. The overriding feeling in the party debates during the second half of July was that the Jewish military response to Arab attacks was not compatible with current needs. It was at that time that the Special Night Squads began operating under the command of the British officer Orde Wingate, who sympathized with the Zionist enterprise. Their activity was aimed at Arabs and Arab villages responsible for attacks on Jews. Shertok pointed out to his colleagues that if the Night Squads were not under the command of a professional British officer, the Arab gangs would beat them in battle, and Jewish fighters would be killed, which would further encourage the Arabs. However, he stressed that the Night Squads’ *modus operandi*, which did not always conform with the ethical rules accepted in the Haganah, “also came up against the internal inhibitions of the best of our people, who said that this kind of activity does not suit us, that it causes conflict with neighboring Arab villages.”⁵⁴ Shertok went on to report a proposal to provoke the Arab gangs into attacking Jewish settlements in the Jezreel Valley, the Jordan Valley, and Beth She’an Valley, and then to surprise them with a counterattack. He did not conceal from his colleagues that this kind of activity could lead to an attack on an isolated settlement that would be unable to defend itself. He rationalized his support for the proposal by saying that “we are in a state of war” and it was necessary to look at the big picture and be prepared to take risks for the sake of the overall aim. Even Lufban, the most extreme among the supporters of Mapai’s policy of moderation, admitted that in a situation in which the impression was that “Jews have been abandoned to murder” by the government, they could not be expected to behave “like Vestal Virgins guarding the fading embers of morality.” Tabenkin demanded that the Yishuv attack wherever necessary, even if this involved a risk of hanging, “as when we defended Bialistok [during the 1903 pogrom] we did not consider how the government would respond.” Lubianiker joined him by saying that the destruction of two settlements—no matter how small—would suffice to destroy the entire moral foundation of the policy of restraint and, with it, the authority of the Jewish Agency in the Yishuv. Ben-Gurion advised his colleagues not to allow the grave situation to unnerve them. “It is important for the Jews to understand that we are at war, that this is also a war for the Arabs who are fighting for their homeland ... ; they are fighting for their land, they are a savage people ... Probably many more Jews will fall. This is our war.” Nonetheless, Ben-Gurion insisted that it was not the security issue, but the political front that was of cardinal importance; and relations with the British, who were the determining factor in the entire battle.⁵⁵

In the Security Council, a special body that had been set up in the Histadrut in order to conduct closed debates on the deteriorating security situation, a fierce disagreement arose between Golomb and Tabenkin on 14 August. According to Golomb, the Arabs were no longer carrying out acts of terrorism; they were waging a national war, led by an Arab national movement. Tabenkin stated that he adhered to what he called his “conservative stance,” that this was still terror, that any other definition of the situation was tantamount to granting legitimacy to counterterrorism and all-out war. In fact, this was one more chapter in the ongoing dispute in Mapai over the nature of Arab violence and its political, social, and organizational motivations. Golomb replied to Tabenkin that he “very much wished that those who disagree with me were right, but my wishes do not determine reality. I did not build a theory out of convenience but rather from seeing the facts ... The Arabs are a nation and they have a desire for an independent life and independent rule. They understand this and are prepared to fight for it.” He added “restraint means restraint against savage instincts. Restraint means reinforcing all defense forces. We must not enter Arab villages in the vicinity of Ramat Ha’kovesh because this would mean randomly killing people and instilling hate in the heart of each and every Arab. With all my understanding that this is war, we must beware of such actions.”⁵⁶

The immediate reason for the dispute between Golomb and Tabenkin was the death of eight members of Kibbutz Ramat Ha’kovesh, near the Arab villages of Tira, Meiski, and Kalkilya, when a mine laid by Arabs exploded on the road leading from an orange grove to the kibbutz on 4 August. Ramat Ha’kovesh, one of the large kibbutzim belonging to the Kibbutz Hame’uhad movement, of which Tabenkin was the leader, had suffered from the violence in Palestine since the onset of the Arab revolt. Between May and September 1936, the kibbutz had been subject to almost daily shooting incidents, arson attacks, and destruction of citrus trees (*Ramat ha’kovesh* 1937: 29–31; Rivlin 1964: 55–130). The events of those months were but a rehearsal for the renewed attacks on Ramat Ha’kovesh between May and September 1938, during which the kibbutz lost fourteen of its members in shooting incidents and mine explosions on the way to and from work in the nearby citrus groves. The daily march to work—single file, keeping a suitable distance from each other—was compared by one of the kibbutzniks to “the maneuvers of an army field unit.” The prevailing mood among the kibbutz members after the events of 4 August 1938 was expressed by one of them who noted gloomily: “the [Arabs] have decided to destroy us and to erase our settlement from the map of Palestine.” Another member said that in Ramat Ha’kovesh someone setting out for his day’s work is seen as a “candidate for death.” In response to one of the members, who said “there’s a war in the country now—a war of nations,” Tabenkin insisted, “there’s a war in the country now, which makes use of terror.” The Arabs’ objective was “not to murder us all, but to shatter our nerves.”⁵⁷ Tabenkin’s words were not designed

to mitigate the horror and anger of the members of Ramat Ha'kovesh who were mourning their dead friends, but rather to make them aware of the nature of the limited conflict that was taking place, whose main objective was to weaken the enemy's resistance in a continuous battle with no end in sight. Probably more than anything else, one bleak forecast of Ben-Gurion's in a debate at the Histadrut Council that took place at the height of the bloodshed, reflects the general spirit of the times: "The losses are bitter, and they might continue for hundreds of years."⁵⁸

Conclusion

Mapai leaders were well aware, as the General Histadrut Secretary David Remez admitted, that an Arab nationalist movement had matured before their very eyes in 1936, "as wheat ripens in a heat wave,"⁵⁹ even though this awareness was expressed in various formulations in the guise of moral and ideological analyses. Contrary to the common Zionist saying that proclaimed "a land without a people for a people without a land," the violence of 1936 brought Remez to acknowledge that "we are coming here to plant a people in a land that already has a people." However, he refused to relinquish the hope of finding an original, decent, and moral solution to the relations between the two peoples in the optimistic spirit expressed by Herzl in *Altneuland* concerning the possibility of Arabs and Jews living together according to the cultural values of the two peoples.⁶⁰ This kind of flowery rhetoric, which continued to be voiced frequently in the years that followed, continued to be detached from reality, nurturing an illusion divorced from the real political situation.

But it was not only "wheat," in the form of a nationalist Arab movement rebelling against British colonialism and rising up against the aspiration to turn it into a Jewish state that ripened during that period. It also became legitimate among the Jews to utter expressions of hatred toward the Arabs and to view them all as bitter enemies against whom the Yishuv and the Zionist movement were destined to wage a life-and-death war. The declaration in a well-known pamphlet published by the Poalei Zion Party after the deaths of three Jews just before the establishment of the self-defense organization Ha'shomer in April 1909, that "The best of us are falling to the arrow of the Arab savage,"⁶¹ became a dominant attitude toward the Arabs in the Labor movement from 1936 on. It is no wonder that this pamphlet was included in *Kovetz Ha'shomer*, a book of memoirs by former members of Ha'shomer published in January 1937, and evoked extensive responses in the Yishuv. A month later Avraham Broides' popular poem *Yossef lives on* was published and was highly acclaimed by Zionist youth movements. First published on the front page of the working youth organ *Ba'ma'ale* and performed countless times at events and ceremonies, the poem included the line: "The emboldened Jewish lion will subdue the wild Amalek hailing from the desert."⁶² Here were two striking examples of the Arab's dehumanization and delegitimization woven into the myths of Ha'shomer

and of Yossef Trumpeldor, the hero fallen at Tel Hai. The emerging ethos of an independent Jewish military power in Palestine in the twentieth century was shaped at these two junctures as self-evident and as an expression of Mapai and of Labor movement political thinking and life-style patterns between 1936 and 1939.

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Notes

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4. "Al ha'perek: ma'ase ha'retzah ha'hadash" [On the Agenda: The New Murder Action], *Ha'aretz*, 7 March 1932.
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29. Yitshak Lufban, "Ishuv ha'da'at" [In a Level-Headed State of Mind], *Ha'poel ha'tsair*, 15 July 1938.

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32. CZA, Minutes of the limited Zionist Executive Committee, 14 October 1936.
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54. LPA, Minutes of Mapai Political Committee, 27 July 1938. See also Ben-Eliezer (1998: 25–26); Shapira (2004: 150–156).
55. LPA, Minutes of Mapai Political Committee, 27 July 1938.
56. Archive of Haganah History, Tel Aviv, 3/vahp/87, Minutes of the Security Council, 14 August 1938.
57. "Ramat ha'kovesh be'ithabkuta" [Ramat ha'kovesh in Self-Restrain], *Tzror*

- mikhtavim*, 28 August 1938; “Likrat hakhpalat ha’meshek veba’ishuv be’Ramat ha’kovesh” [In Preparation for Doubling the Settlement and the Community in Ramat ha’kovesh], *Tzror mikhtavim*, 23 September 1938.
58. LA, Minutes of the Thirty-Seventh Histadrut Council, 25–26 July 1938.
59. LPA, Minutes of Mapai Political Committee, 23 May 1936.
60. CZA, Minutes of the limited Zionist Executive Committee, 16 October 1936; Herzl (2004: 97–100).
61. See Kovetz (1937: 275).
62. Avraham Broides, “Od Yossef Hai” [Yosef Lives On], *Ba’ma’ale*, 25 February 1937.

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