

The Murder of Moshe Barsky: Transformations in Ethos, Pathos and Myth

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‘This Jew is the greatest political Zionist after Herzl’. These were the words with which Chaim Weizmann honoured Naphtali Hertz Barsky during a public Zionist meeting organized by the French Zionist Federation in Paris in March 1914.¹ While Weizmann appears never to have mentioned Barsky again in his letters, speeches or in his autobiography, his words made a considerable and memorable impact. How did Hertz Barsky earn such great praise? It was all due to one letter he wrote after the death of his son, Moshe, in Degania. The circumstances that led him to write the letter and some of the main motifs in it, which illuminate an important part in our understanding of the lives of the Jews in Eretz Israel in the last 100 years, form the subject of this paper. It also reflects the following observation by the poet Nathan Alterman (referring to the Second Aliyah, which bears a more indirect relationship to the present discussion): ‘The great change that took place in this episode of Jewish history was made up, more than in any other revolutionary epoch, out of the life-stories of private individuals’. We shall follow one of these personal narratives, whose fate over time is instructive of this period and, to an extent, beyond it.² Like all myths the changing needs of society caused the Barsky myth to be rewritten, as in each period it yielded different meanings.³

The drama of Moshe Barsky may well have been lost to our memory were it not for his indirect link to Moshe Dayan. Moshe Dayan’s parents, Dvora and Shmuel Dayan, belonged to the so-called Second Aliyah and were amongst the founders of the first Kvutzah, Degania. They named their son, the second child to be born in Degania, for Moshe Barsky who had been killed only eight months after arriving in Palestine. Moshe Dayan was to begin his autobiography with these words: ‘My name, Moshe, was born in pain’.⁴

Dayan, well versed in the Bible and aware of the way Biblical references tended to be incorporated into the founding mythologies of the Jewish

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people, was alluding to God's punishment of Eve ('In pain thou shalt bear children', Genesis 3:16). By using this analogy, Dayan unconsciously ensured himself a place in the Jewish pantheon. The reference in this case was actually two-fold: to Eve and to Moses. Similar Biblical parallels were evoked for Joseph Trumpeldor, too, according to Yael Zerubavel, with a similar objective.⁵

Moshe Barsky's name is an unfamiliar one in Israel, today. The research on memorial practices over the past two decades has ignored him. Much of this work focuses on the myth of fighting and death. Hallowed sites of struggle (like Massada, Tel Hai the revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto and the ships carrying illegal Jewish immigrants to Palestine); paramilitary organizations (such as 'Hashomer', 'Nili', 'Hagana', 'Etzel' and 'Lehi') and the wars fought by the State of Israel take centre-stage in these studies. But even though Barsky fought and was killed, his death did not constitute a sufficiently exceptional case to become enduringly enshrined in the collective memory. Nonetheless, three factors whose relative influence changed over time—his father's letter, his connection to Degania and his famous namesake reflect the ethos of an entire period, engendering a myth which will be narrated below.

Academic research considers the products of war, like sites of historical events, memorial statues, ceremonies, modes of experiencing bereavement and loss, books commemorating those who have fallen in battle, etc., as a constitutive component of the national narrative and political culture. George Mosse argued that the eternalized dead serve as symbols to those who are alive, thereby helping the latter to make sense of the present, to cope with its demands and to control it. Eliezer Witztum and Ruth Malkinson have argued that the Hebrew expression 'In dying they commanded us to live', offers a good description of the social significance of death and determines the mutual relations between the bereaved individual and society.⁶

This phrase was coined in 1897, by the poet Chaim Nachman Bialik, both to emphasize and to laud the readiness of Jews to die in defence of their faith.⁷ In the course of time, this motto was adopted for the cause of Jewish national revival and it came to be frequently used in the Israeli media as a tribute to those who have fallen in battle. It gave secular expression to the nation's rebirth and served as a mythical defence against fear, as well as against alternative interpretations of bloody events. The phrase turns on the dilemma that refers, on the one hand, to the simple command to live, but, on the other, to the injunction to be prepared to die for the fatherland. In Judaism, the social obligation to perpetuate the memory of the dead, which is accompanied by the glorification of those who have died in battle, is used as a myth-making mechanism. Under the nationalist-Zionist movement, this has undergone secularization, a process that occurred in the era of the Second Aliyah in Eretz Israel.

The martyrological ethos that evolved in this period tied individual uniqueness to collective fate: the significance of individual deaths was articulated in terms of their contribution to the pioneering enterprise of the nation.⁸

ETHOS AND MURDER

One of the founding principles of Zionism is that Jews should live in Eretz Israel. But from the outset this notion had to negotiate between two poles. On the one hand, there was the call for Jews to relocate to Eretz Israel so as to free themselves from anti-Semitism and to help build a firm base for the Zionist enterprise. On the other, there was the physical danger that threatened Jewish life in the country. At times this tension rose to the surface, at other times it was overshadowed by political, and other, victories. An awareness of it, however, was deeply ingrained in the very ways of thinking that characterized Zionism.

From the start of Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel in the early twentieth century, there were—increasingly frequent—expressions of opposition from the Arab population, which evolved gradually into a full-scale conflict. Their commitment to the soil of the homeland stressed the need for a physical presence in Eretz Israel as the foremost goal of the Jewish nationalist movement; their readiness to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the people's existence in their homeland, and the commitment (in the form of an oath) that those who fell would be replaced by others who would persevere until the objective was attained.

These motifs, which evolved as a result of the many ordeals that were visited upon the Jewish population of Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, derive from three sources: the Jewish tradition of commemoration and eternalization, whose ritual reflection is the Yizkor prayer; the role of the heroic martyr in Christian culture and western civilization, whose suffering and death are an integral part of a 'new world order' while at the same time giving ideological sense to historical events and processes; and universal models of reference to those who have fallen in battle for the sake of the fatherland and the sovereignty of the nation, which evolved in the wake of the French Revolution.⁹ Popular songs form an illustrative context for these developments. Thus, a song entitled 'The Oath' was frequently sung in the *Bund* organization, and subsequently in the Poalei Zion movement in a number of versions, which all expressed a zealous commitment to the party's cause and struggles. One of the revolutionary songs that was frequently sung in the *Bund*—especially on occasions like funerals or memorial meetings—concluded on the following note: 'And if you fall, my brother, and die, and should your loved eyes be closed, then I shall wrap you in the red flag and join the bloody struggle'.¹⁰

This motif of active self-defence was imported from Russia during the Second Aliyah, and merged with the ethos of settlement, of pioneering and of the Hebrew language and culture, which all originated mainly in Eretz Israel. These ideals, which formed the basis of the socialist pioneer's attempt to evolve a new social structure, drew in particular on three literary texts: Yaakov Cahan's lyric 'Ha-biryonim' (The Jerusalemites), Bialik's poem 'Be-ir Ha-hariga' (In the City of Slaughter) and Yosef Haim Brenner's short essay, 'Hu Amar La' (He Told Her).¹¹ In order to insert these ideals into the norms that guided the workers in their daily struggle, concrete, available myths were needed. These would help them translate their fundamental principles into real-life examples, which in turn would spur them to produce a reality fitting their beliefs. Individual effort was the most important component of these myths. The ethos of self-defence was translated into images of individuals carrying arms and defending their honour.¹² One of the myths generated in this transition from abstract theory to everyday life centred on the cemetery, symbolizing an eternal link to the Land of Israel. A short story, 'The First Grave' by Shlomo Tsemakh—one of the first members of the Second Aliyah—is an early expression of this ethos. Published in 1912, at a time when the Jordan Valley settlement was making its hesitant first steps, this story describes how the first Jewish grave dug near the Jordan river enables a close spiritual connection with the land's soil.¹³

The gap between the lofty promise of a massive rush of pioneers and the reality of a paucity of people haunted the life of the Yishuv throughout the first half of the twentieth century. It became especially poignant in the period of the Second Aliyah when the subject was discussed *ad nauseam*. In his story 'Bein mayim le-mayim', published in 1910, Yosef Haim Brenner described the memorial meeting in Yaffo dedicated to 'the watchman from Yezreel' (in the Galilee). The florid language, which Brenner lifted straight from contemporary usage and put into the mouths of his heroes, has become famous. Especially notable are the words of the representative of Poalei Zion. With some exaggeration, he stated: 'Every movement demands sacrifice and we are all ready to fill the ranks and take the place of the dead.'¹⁴ Such a call to re-occupy the places of those who had fallen was often seen in Poalei Zion publications. Following one series of attacks on Jews, the party's paper wrote: 'Our friends are falling and their places remain vacant ... Who will take their places? ... From the hands of our comrades the hoe was lost and the gun fell, let us come in their stead and work.'¹⁵

At a meeting of Hapoel ha-tsair, in 1911, participants complained: 'Why is it that now of all times, when the need for Hebrew workers is so great, there are none to be found?' Menachem Mendel Shmueli (also called Mamashi) responded by saying that as long as they could find one honest working man, the people's continued existence in its land would be

ensured, and so there was no reason for despair. In fact, the first grave that was dug in Kvutsat Kinneret was that of Mamashi.¹⁶ And at the end of a visit at Yesod Ha-maaleh in 1912 which Joseph Klausner, from Russia, made as part of his tour of Palestine, he exhorted the settlement's teacher as follows: 'Stand on guard! We are all soldiers in the army of our people . . . Do not relinquish your place here until we arrive from there to fill it up!'¹⁷

In the above quotations one can find the rather artificial phraseology in which 'Hebrew labour' was usually celebrated and the inflated heroism of the worker at the forefront of national revival. Still, one should not mistake these words for empty gestures, creating a fictive reality for purely manipulative reasons.¹⁸ Prominent among the prevalent imagery was the notion of the 'few' who were fighting a fateful struggle against all odds. And this became one of the founding concepts of Israeli culture. Unlike in other periods, and on other occasions, in the history of Zionism and Israel, the sense of being a small minority was justified.¹⁹ A change in this predicament could only be achieved by increased immigration and this only happened in the early 1920s.

But in addition to expressing the isolation of the small community, these words also reflect a major historical fact about the serious distress of living under continuous threat. The generation of the Second Aliyah suffered from existential anxiety concerning the future of their endeavour as well as their own personal fate in this adventurous journey, which had removed them from the Europe of their childhood. Naturally, this was one of the most troublesome problems for the early members of Degania, which was founded in October 1910. One way of coping with this isolation, that was developed in Degania and other workers' settlements, was a passion for communal singing and dancing which was intended to make them forget 'any doubt and fear that there may be no tomorrow after this day'.²⁰ However, even song and dance could not occlude the greatest, unrelenting fear of all—death at the hand of Arab assailants.

This was the fate of Moshe Barsky, whose grave was the first to be dug at Degania. Barsky, and his sister Channa, had come to Degania on the advice of Sara Malkin, a well-known pioneering women of the Second Aliyah and one of the founders of Degania. They met her on the boat, while still on their way to Palestine and she had ordered them to go 'straight to Degania!'²¹ On 22 November 1913 Barsky was ambushed by Arabs when making his way back from Melachmiya (today's Menachamiya), where he had gone to fetch medicine for Shmuel Dayan. Dayan had just returned from Beirut, then the most advanced centre of medicine in the Middle East, where he had received treatment for a severe ear and nose infection resulting from a mosquito bite in his right ear. But on his return to Degania, the incision left by the operation had opened causing profuse bleeding. Barsky had volunteered to bring the medication that was urgently required and had left riding a mule. When attacked by Arabs, he had succeeded in

sending the mule safely back to Degania and had apparently killed one of his assailants, but he finally collapsed and bled to death. Two days later, the Arabs avenged the death of their comrade and killed Yosef Saltzman from Kinneret.²²

Shmuel Dayan wrote an obituary for Barsky in *Hapoel ha-tsair*: 'Will he rest peacefully in this dust? But dust is not pleasant to rest in! And it is only through the blood of his murderers that the voice of his young blood which is crying out to us from the earth can be silenced'.²³ The workers, however, steered clear of the trap of blood-revenge. All they could do for the time being was to express bitterness as a way of coping with their anger.²⁴ News of the murders of Barsky and Saltzman reached a delegation of rabbis, who were visiting the settlements of the Galilee, while they were in Merchavia. Rabbi Yosef Hayim Sonnenfeld eulogized the victims by quoting from the Bible: 'Our hands have not shed this blood' (Deuteronomy 21:7). He was followed by Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacoheh Kook, who made a very emotional speech, referring to the verse: 'For he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people' (Deuteronomy 32:43). Some days later the delegation reached Degania where it surveyed the local religious arrangements although it omitted to visit Barsky's grave. Whatever the reason—lack of interest, lack of time, or the fact that Rabbi Kook as a Cohen was prohibited from visiting a cemetery—the men of religion did not visit the grave of the young pioneer whose murder had led to them to deliver such emotional sermons.²⁵

Shmuel Dayan wrote to the Barsky family in the Ukraine on behalf of Kvutsat Degania, to inform them of the fate of their loved one.²⁶ Barsky's grandfather replied to the people of Degania and to his grandchildren in Eretz Israel: 'In the times of the Hasmoneans, when one brother fell, the others increased their efforts even further'.²⁷ Moshe's father, Hertz Barsky, answered in a similar vein:

Honoured comrades of Kvutsat Degania! I received your precious letter, written in blood and tears, in which I read true words coming from loving and affectionate hearts that are knit together through a spiritual bond that can never be broken. Dear brothers! What we could never have wished for has powerfully smitten us. Yet I have faith that you will not be discouraged. On the contrary! It is my hope that the memory of my son, may he rest in peace, will only add to your strength and courage while fighting this holy war until we shall finally realize our great idea, for the sake of which my son sacrificed his soul and his blood. Brothers to the cause! I do not only wish to express my gratitude for your participation in my sorrow, I also would like to comfort you, as 'my grief is also yours'. For let us hope together that the blood of our great sacrifice—the blood of my son and your brother Moshe—will be

accepted by the Lord and come to be the last sacrifice on the altar of our sacred ideal! With blessings of Zion and condolences, holding you in high esteem and hoping to meet you.²⁸

This letter was published in *Hapoel ha-tsair*, together with an editorial note which concluded as follows: ‘The young brother of Moshe [Shalom] has arrived, handsome and fresh like him, industrious and wholly dedicated to work. Such spiritual elevation—sending a second son to the place in which the first son fell—is reserved only for those who have a complete and beautiful soul.’²⁹ Hertz Barsky’s letter was reprinted in *Ha-olam*, and gained much attention in other papers, such as *Ha-tsifra* and *Ha-cherut*, due to Weizmann’s speech in Paris.³⁰ Dayan’s eulogy on Barsky and the father’s letter were included in the various renderings of the *Yizkor* collection, which appeared in the United States in 1916 and subsequently in Europe. This collection, which was especially popular among young Zionists, was pivotal in the dissemination of the ethos and the myth that evolved around the son’s mission and the father’s letter.³¹ The Barsky family continued, over time, to migrate to Eretz Israel from the town of Skvira in the Ukraine. In June 1914, Tova, the mother, together with her children Pasha, Miriam and Israel, arrived. The father, along with his son Aharon, stayed behind for some time in order to liquidate the family’s fishing business and flour mill and their arrival was further postponed by the outbreak of World War I. Aharon arrived in Palestine in 1920, and the father arrived, finally, in April 1921. After some time he founded the family home in moshav Bet Yechezkel.³²

The Barsky family’s defiance, whose underlying motto was ‘We shall not be intimidated!’, coincided with the early formative principles of the Second Aliyah. The family fully answered the implicit expectation that it set an example and even offer a model of the ‘strong’ family, which proudly carries the responsibility for the memory of their fallen son and perpetuates this memory in the spirit of current social ideals.³³ The reverberations and admiration that these events stirred up also indicate the depth of the insecurity felt by the settlers at the start of their endeavour. Of course, words and statements alone could not alter this situation or the resulting sense of helplessness.

These were the days before the emergence of consistent Arab attacks against the Zionist settling of the land. Arab displeasure at, and increasing antagonism towards, the growing Jewish presence directed itself at the swelling flow of immigrants rather than Zionism’s political objectives.³⁴ But neighbourly relations from time to time descended into local violent outbreaks whose potential for national conflict was on people’s minds. The fact that Barsky had not easily surrendered and had actually struggled with his attackers, indeed, killing one of them, made it the more attractive for Jews to identify with his fate and glorification.³⁵ The circumstances of his

death contributed to the effort to instil amongst the settlers an awareness of the necessity of carrying arms and using them when the need arose, with the general, long-term aim of deterring the Arabs.

The murders of Barsky and Saltzman had a considerable influence on some of the key figures in the formation of the defence tradition of the Jews in Eretz Israel. For Dov Hoz and Eliahu Golomb, who had just completed their high school studies and were, at the time, working at Degania, the murders constituted a concrete and cruel encounter with the realities of life in Eretz Israel.³⁶ Trumpeldor, upon hearing of Barsky's murder, hastened from Yaffo to Degania, where he subsequently worked for a number of months.³⁷ Yitzhak Tabenkin came to work in Kinneret following the murder of Saltzman, who had been a close friend.³⁸ Levi Eshkol, upon reading Hertz Barsky's letter, made up his mind to act upon his intentions and emigrated to Palestine.³⁹ And, finally, Moshe Dayan's parents decided to name their newborn boy after Barsky, thus forging an indestructible link between the Barsky episode and the man who was to become among other things Israel's chief-of-staff and minister of defence, and the personal embodiment of the Israeli doctrine of prioritizing military and security interests which was at its height between the 1950s and 1973.

When looking at relations between the Jewish settlers in Eretz Israel and Diaspora Jewry, one should consider two types of lessons that were drawn from Barsky's murder. One centred on the question of whether it was worthwhile to die. Yosef Baratz, one of the founders of Degania, wondered: 'How many Jews were slaughtered and killed in that town [Skvira] and its environs? Like dogs they were hurled into the pit. And to what avail were all these sacrifices? What was the benefit? With what can we console the parents of these boys and girls? Barsky's parents found their consolation'.⁴⁰

The second focuses upon the very ethos under discussion, namely, the importance of the physical presence of Jews in Eretz Israel and the yishuv's call that more and more should come and join the endeavour. More than a year prior to Barsky's murder, two of the most prominent thinkers amongst the Jewish workers in Eretz Israel once more put their minds to this issue in a forum that explicitly addressed Diaspora Jewry, *Ha-zman*, a newspaper published in Vilna. Brenner, who had initially mocked Poalei Zion's emotional calls for Jews to make aliyah, had later joined those who demanded that Jewish Diaspora youth rush to Eretz Israel: 'In the Galilee and Judea Jewish watchmen are sick and dying from malaria', he wrote, 'yet there is no one to take their place . . . Where are you? Heroes, why do you not come here?'⁴¹ Yaakov Rabinovitz, who was affiliated with Hapoel ha-tsair, wondered: 'Will such a handful do? And will a nation claim its land by lies and hollow phrases?' In contrast to Brenner, however, Rabinovitz also noted that 'It has not yet happened that when a Jewish watchman was killed he was not immediately followed by another Jewish

watchman who occupied the perilous place in the dead man's stead'.⁴² This dichotomy was also revealed by the reactions to Barsky's murder. *Ha-achdut*, the organ of Poalei Zion, was quick to complain: 'The soul exhausts itself with this thought: the very few are coming to an end and others do not arrive to fill their places'.⁴³ But Trumpeldor struck an entirely different note when he reported the incident to his friends in Russia. He let them know that the posts of the fallen men (Barsky, Saltzman and Feldman) had been reoccupied and he stated with encouraging enthusiasm: 'And so it should be in Eretz Israel! The ranks have been replenished. Work is proceeding in orderly fashion. Israel will not be a widower. Heroism has not passed away'.⁴⁴ Yaakov Rabinovitz responded similarly to a main feature dedicated to Moshe Barsky's murder and his father's letter, published in the *Juedische Rundschau*, the German Zionists' newspaper, under the heading: 'Heroes': 'What will the father feel other than offence when faced with such loud agitation? Here you have a Jew who expressed his aspirations as one should . . . What is there to shout about?'.⁴⁵

This sense of isolation in the yishuv came to an end in the early 1920s with the arrival of the Third Aliyah. But the Tel Hai incident and the bloody clashes of 1921 illustrate the repeated logistical and political problems of sending people to a place of danger—even though there was no dearth of young pioneering manpower. In both the above cases, it was promised that the one who had fallen would be replaced by thousands who would take up his labours—'And never', wrote Yaakov Cahan in a poem, 'never, will we move from there!'⁴⁶ These ecstatic words had been preceded by many years of hardship which were very clearly felt in Degania's struggle to cope with Moshe Barsky's death.

DEGANIA'S BARSKY

The sources that mention Moshe Barsky depict him as an energetic young man who was popular in Degania, at the time a community of between 20 and 30 people. Their nickname for him was Mishka and occasionally they allowed him the most responsible job of all: watch duty.⁴⁷ As already mentioned, his death led to the foundation of the local cemetery. The trauma of his murder strengthened the sense of community of the young settlement, while in the longer run it contributed to the consolidation of the group as an enduring human and social organization. Barsky's murder deeply affected Degania. Members of the Ha-shomer organization were called in to boost the defence of the site of the violent incident. Usually Degania distanced itself from their activities. Members believed in guarding themselves and followed the moderate line of Hapoel ha-tsair, a movement they preferred to the more militant Ha-shomer that was associated with Poalei Zion. As a way of thanking them for their effort, the Ha-shomer men were regaled—at the end of a heavy day—with 'food fit

for angels' (omelettes, in fact), which prompted the following comment from one of their company: 'Grab it and stuff yourselves, guys! Now is your opportunity! Tomorrow when they feel calmer and things quiet down they won't even let us in, just like before!'⁴⁸

Degania, however, did not settle for a temporary solution. Led by its most dominant member, Yosef Busel, Degania together with Kinneret initiated the foundation of a regional defence committee for the Galilee, with the aim of restoring a sense of security. At the same time, members of Degania were sent across the Jordan river several times in an attempt to pursue the killers, although without success.⁴⁹ However, Barsky's murder affected Degania in more than merely practical ways.

Although, in the period at hand, such matters were hardly mentioned, let alone placed on record, it is now known of three romantic affairs or situations which add another dimension to the Barsky affair. The first of these included unsubstantiated speculation about Channa Barsky, Moshe's elder sister. Following the murder, an official investigator (a Jewish policeman from Tiberias) cross-examined Shmuel Dayan. He suspected that there might have been a romantic connection between Dayan and Channa. The rumour was that Moshe had objected to the relationship and was, therefore, sent out under false pretences, in order to be murdered. This accusation was forgotten with the help of some bribes and brandy.⁵⁰

Esther Raab, one of Shmuel Dayan's oldest friends from before Degania and later a renowned poet, was at the centre of the second romantic constellation. Raab arrived in Degania to join the workers just a few weeks before Barsky's murder. Maybe she had moved to Degania in the hope of renewing, or even deepening, her friendship with Shmuel Dayan. Dayan, however, had in the meantime developed a relationship with Dvora Zotolovsky. The 19-year-old Raab became friendly with Moshe Barsky, maybe because they were close in age while the other members of Degania were already in their twenties and more experienced. Years later Raab recounted how she was working in the kitchen when Barsky stepped in and handed her a bouquet of white and pink Yardenon flowers that grew on the banks of the Jordan river. Raab thanked him and then he left on his mule to fetch medication for Shmuel Dayan.⁵¹

The third and last relationship involved Dvora Zotolovsky, a good-looking young woman who was the star of social life in Degania. Ultimately, she was rejected for membership in the community and she left Degania in mid-October 1913, at the end of the threshing season. Many years later this story was told in a play by Nathan Alterman, 'Kinneret, Kinneret', which was first performed at the opening of the Cameri Theatre on 30 December 1961. One of the central scenes of the play (which concerns a 'romantic and innocent love story') seems to reproduce a conversation between Shmuel and Dvora, which refers to Moshe Barsky, but without mentioning his name. Here the Shmuel character

(called Mordechai) speaks about ‘your lover who is [buried] under the hill’ and the scene comes to a climax with the following words: ‘Everybody agrees that sometimes a man will shoot at his enemy’.⁵²

Yaakov Horowitz, the editor of *Ha-aretz*’s literary and cultural supplement, surely spoke for many when he asked: ‘What’s the provenance of this story about such a gallant knight who goes to his death in order to make space for the man she [the heroine] loves?’⁵³ Alterman, in writing this play, actually made a pastiche out of a number of real-life episodes without sticking to one historical truth. It is in this light that one should consider his reference to Barsky. In fact there is no reliable evidence for any of these three relationships. All we have is one small surviving fragment, namely a sentence Trumpeldor wrote two days after Moshe Barsky’s murder: ‘The last time I saw him [Barsky] there [in Degania] was when he came to accompany Dvora’.⁵⁴ So even though Alterman used his imagination freely (as he himself admitted)⁵⁵ not everything he wrote was invention.

The romantic tales may have originated (indirectly) from visits made—separately—by Dvora and Shmuel to the Barsky family in Skvira. They left Eretz Israel when local physicians failed to cure Shmuel’s ear and his pain increased. In December 1913 he sailed for Europe, to look for proper medical treatment. In mid-January 1914, Dvora followed him to visit her family in Russia. Their visit to the Barsky family testifies to the seriousness of their grief and their wish to remember Moshe. It also shows their appreciation of Moshe’s family’s response to the murder. The bond between the Dayan and Barsky families endured, and later Tova Barsky would occasionally come to help Dvora—who was now Dvora Dayan—with her children and the work on their farm in moshav Nahalal when Shmuel was away on his travels. Dvora and Shmuel returned from Europe in August 1913 and they were married some weeks later. Their son, Moshe, was born in May 1915.⁵⁶

On the eve of Shmuel Dayan’s journey to Europe for medical treatment there were lengthy debates at Degania’s treasury about covering his expenses. Dayan later argued that since the community made difficulties in agreeing to cover the cost, he had decided to travel to Vienna on his private account. The medical treatment he underwent there cost him 52 francs and 25 cents. Contrary to Dayan’s version, Degania actually paid for the medical treatment, and the decision to do so was reached before he set out for Europe.⁵⁷ Thus the Barsky murder led to a change in one of the components of mutual help in kibbutz society, namely, participation in health-care. Until then, collectivism had been practised in relation to labour and the kitchen. Other expenses, such as clothing, shoes, cultural activities, assistance to relatives, etc. had been met on an individual basis. The exception in Degania was formed by the nine members of the so-called Hadera Commune who shared one account.⁵⁸ It may have been the shock of Barsky’s murder that caused the members of Degania to shoulder

Shmuel's expenses jointly; maybe in an attempt to cope with their repressed guilt they came up with a constructive social act, which was to solidify their mutual commitment.

With Barsky's murder the group confronted certain problems, which it had hitherto been spared. One such problem—which from then on continuously troubled the workers' settlements—was that of the duration of the mourning period; specifically, how much time should elapse after a tragic event before festive public celebrations could be resumed? This question was particularly thorny in such a close-knit community where everybody knew each other. At the end of Degania's sowing season, in January 1914, it was spontaneously decided to mark the event with a party, which included the traditional singing, dancing and shooting in the air. One of the members, Yerucham Klivanov, was upset that the comrades could celebrate and wrote this to Dayan who was recovering in Vienna: 'Had Mishka risen from his grave . . . he may have concluded that he had sacrificed himself in vain, for this was evidence that the comrades ignore [his death] and do not believe it necessary to give him the appropriate respect, or at least a semblance of it'.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, Barsky's grave became a place of pilgrimage for the group. At times of crisis they would assemble near the grave and make their confessions, clear their consciences, and reaffirm their group identity. In 1916, Degania saw a period of serious ideological-social fermentation. Heated debates were conducted about the collective's social identity. The sharp disagreements resulted in a temporary paralysis of the most fundamental component of their joint endeavour: communal labour. Busel called together six, apparently founding, members and they met at Barsky's graveside. The meeting managed to quell the mutual animosities and consolidated the social structure.⁶⁰ But tensions of a more personal and private nature, too, found their sometimes less than happy solution at Barsky's grave. Zvi Reznick, a member of the group, chose to commit suicide there on 23 March 1918.⁶¹ Subsequently he was buried alongside Barsky.

When Busel drowned in the Sea of Galilee in August 1919, life in Degania came to a standstill. A few months later, Tanchum Tanpilov announced his wedding to his girlfriend Chaya, and thereby offered a way out: all workers in the Galilee were to participate. At the wedding party joy and pain intermingled. This is what Yaakov Berkovitz, a founder member of Degania, wrote to the new couple on the occasion of their wedding on Tu B'Shvat, 1920:

Degania experienced one special spring, which has been deeply engraved in all our hearts. This was when not even one of our branches had been broken off. This was when all of us were alive and healthy, sharing and convinced of the same ideas . . . Since then we have already buried one of

our saints, Mishka Barsky, the boy. Tender but strong strings stretched from down in his grave straight into our hearts. It was an unbreakable bond.⁶²

For the community's members, the new cemeteries in Degania and Kinneret were testimony of their bond and commitment to the land. It must be stressed, however, as Rachel Katzenelson noted on the eve of the *Ha-gedud Ha-ivri* volunteers' departure to Egypt in mid-1918, that these places of burial were not originally meant to function as some sort of glorious national sites, since, of course, they first of all connoted death—in sharp contrast with the basic objective of the pioneers, which was to create new Jewish life. She wondered: 'When did we bury our dead with a ritual, with superficial pomp? When Degania accompanied its first murder victim [Barsky] to the grave, it did not even ask the workers from [neighbouring] Kinneret to join'.⁶³ In the days of the Third Aliyah Degania's graves were said to symbolize the history of the Hebrew settlement of Palestine, as a place where pioneers could restore their spirit and rekindle their motivation, a site that gave direction to young newcomers who had arrived to work in Eretz Israel. Concluding a series of articles describing the story of the first kvutso, Baratz writes: 'And there, in a quiet corner where the Jordan river rolls its waves year after year . . . stands a handful of headstones which speak out and tell'. With regard to Moshe Barsky he says that he 'fell victim to a band of robbers while defending national property'⁶⁴—the national property in question being, of course, the mule, which belonged to the Eretz Israel office.

Lova Levitte, an ardent Marxist who was to be one of the central figures in the Ha-kibbutz Ha-meuchad movement, visited Degania in 1924. Degania's cemetery left a strong impression on Levitte, who had arrived in Palestine only a few months earlier. By that time there were over 20 graves, mainly of people who had committed suicide or had been killed on watch duty. His feeling was that the cemetery emanated 'a sense of the gravity of life, of its seriousness', giving expression to a reality 'in which things of consequence are happening'.⁶⁵ This was in line with what Ben-Tsion Yisraeli, a founder-member of Kinneret, wrote in 1938, at the height of the Arab Revolt: 'Let us remember, brothers, Yosef [Saltzman] whose blood braced our covenant with this soil and commanded it to live. Look how the graves of Yosef and Barsky are surrounded by a vitality of land and of people . . . Let us hope to draw the strength to overcome today's attackers and murderers too!'⁶⁶

Such stories of heroic self-sacrifice were greatly valued as instructive tools for the education of the young in Eretz Israel and, perhaps no less important, of their parents, some of whom had only recently arrived in the country. For both the younger generation and their parents, the cemeteries and funeral ceremonies provided a concrete, physical dimension to the

process of socialization, creating a collective memory that could endow meaning to current events.⁶⁷ At the same time, through these repeated ceremonies, kibbutz society gradually developed its own mode of mourning.

MYTH, COMMEMORATION AND FORGETTING

Once the story of Moshe Barsky as an historical episode had ended, it entered the realm of myth, where meanings are manipulated to serve a variety of purposes. This can be seen as a case study of the process whereby messages evolve on the basis of traditional sources and recollections among the target population and become part of the culture. The urge to re-write the past so as to give appropriate expression to the sense of pride of those who participated in its shaping inevitably generates historical error. Such deviations from historical fact can, however, shed light on the way cultural identity is created through manipulation of the past.⁶⁸

Contemporaries regarded Chaim Weizmann as having played a primary role in the making of the Barsky myth. His praise for Barsky's father as the 'greatest political Zionist after Herzl' was the conclusion he drew from the story of Barsky's death, turning one family's tragedy into an exemplary national lesson:

We Jews have not as yet made many sacrifices: that is why we own only two per cent of the Palestinian soil. What value there is in real sacrifice, the example of a Jew from Kiev will show you; his name is Barsky. One of his sons, a worker, was killed on Palestinian soil, at Degania. The bereaved father writes a letter of comfort to the workers in Palestine and sends his second son into this most dangerous life to take the place of the fallen one. This is the continuation, writes the bereaved father. And it is this Jew who is the greatest political Zionist after Herzl.⁶⁹

A gifted leader, Weizmann was familiar with the art of exploiting a specific case for his political purposes: polishing, refining and distilling it in such a way as to help construe and direct the aspirations—explicit and implicit—of his contemporaries while at the same time serving his own immediate goals. From the Barsky episode he filtered out the pain and bereavement and emphasized the rewards lying in store for those who made sacrifices for the sake of their nation's revival. He thus fulfilled a great need for a society that was in the process of becoming a well-defined and consolidated national group. Such a society's receptiveness to dramatic narratives combining symbol and parable was a major ingredient in constructing the desired representation of the here and now. In referring to Barsky's father's letter, Weizmann appropriated the family's private fate and turned it into a national narrative. Indeed, it is impossible to foresee to what purposes a historical event will be put, and by whom. In our case, the political power

of the Barsky myth was carried not only by the inhabitants of its place of origin, Degania, but also by others who resorted to its mythical pattern.⁷⁰

In early 1924, on the tenth anniversary of the murder, Shmuel Dayan gave a second eulogy. He also cited Barsky father's letter, but took the liberty of rewriting it with an explicit political message:

The pain is great and enormous, [but] we shall not cry and eulogize. Dear sons! Work hard and with hope in your hearts so that our people will reinforce your settlement. We are sending you our second son, Moshe's brother, who will fill your ranks and the place where our son fell. Moshe's death is bringing us all to Eretz Israel. We are coming!⁷¹

Dayan's version of the letter sounds like something out of Brenner's 'Between Water and Water'—though without the latter's aim of revealing the fakery and deception, the hollowness and pomposity that often characterized contemporary discourse. As Barsky's father moved to Eretz Israel only in 1921, after taking care of the family business, Dayan's eulogy made him vulnerable to the accusation that he had presented himself too flatteringly as a pioneer and a Zionist, posing as someone willing to sacrifice his personal interest for the good of the community.⁷² Moreover, in terms of style, Dayan replaced the letter's original, ornate language, which yields a sense of human warmth, presenting the Jewish national revival in Eretz Israel as a kind of legend, with short, clear formulations. Dayan also dropped Hertz Barsky's expression of hope that this would be the last sacrifice.

Instead, he inserted the promise that another brother will take the place of the first one and the commitment to immigrate to Eretz Israel. Dayan's 'improved' version of the letter was designed to suit the national ethos and the nation-building narrative. Thus, certain representational patterns that were associated with Moshe Barsky's life and death came to be more prominent than the events themselves since they enabled the contemporary collective image to be articulated more sharply. And even though this enterprise required a certain amount of 'poetic license', the episode on the whole retained its authenticity. The newly produced text remained generally faithful to the original course of events and the message it contained. The reconstruction, as well as the intentional and conscious bias applied to the basic facts, reflected the experiences of that generation. They both articulated and responded to existential needs, which required a history that would serve as a guide in turbulent times.⁷³

It was not only the passing of time that was reflected in Dayan's speech but especially changes in the conditions of the yishuv: 'Guns are hardly seen anymore in the fields, and the sound of gunfire is rare' and he noted that Degania had expanded and new settlements had appeared in its vicinity⁷⁴ (Dayan himself was by then already one of the founders, first of Degania II and then of Nahalal). The essential difference between Dayan's

first eulogy, in which he called for revenge, and the second, resided in a feeling that at the end of a decade marked by adversities, the Jews' ability to ensure their basic existence in Eretz Israel could not longer be doubted. This achievement of the yishuv—to persuade those who joined the endeavour that it was a substantial enterprise, no longer in its experimental stages and capable of offering a real solution to the Jewish question—was of course also recorded in print. In 1927, on the instigation of the Jewish National Fund, the Dvir publishing company published an anthology, edited by Yaacov Fichman, and dedicated to the history of Eretz Israel, entitled *Sefer Ha-aretz* (Book of the Land).

The very publication of this anthology implied that something significant had been achieved in Eretz Israel, that this could be observed, recounted and set down as the history of an era. In the late 1920s and the 1930s *Sefer Ha-aretz* was a popular bar mitzvah gift. In this book, as well as later in *Sefer Ha-gevurah* (Book of Heroism) and *Sefer Toldot Ha-haganah* (Book of the History of the Haganah), the murder of Moshe Barsky and his father's subsequent letter were mentioned. The latter text even went as far as arguing that the father's letter illustrated how Eretz Israel, at the end of the Second Aliyah, functioned like a lighthouse for many Jews, young and old, in the Diaspora.⁷⁵ The myth to whose creation both Weizmann and Dayan had contributed thus withstood the test of time and became incorporated in the treasure-box of memories of the Second Aliyah, entering the collective memory as one of the most stirring parables of the yishuv era.

Barsky's figure, his importance, and that of the myth he represented—all this fell into obscurity during the 1930s. Though he had been identified with Hapoel ha-tsair, he was not mentioned in a special anthology published by the Histadrut under the auspices of Achdut Ha-avodah as early as the mid-1920s.⁷⁶ Nor does he appear in the writings of those of the workers' movement leadership who came from the same political and ideological orientation: Berl Katzenelson, David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Tabenkin. It was Degania—whose special status was also somewhat eroded as more and more settlements were established and became increasingly affiliated to country-wide movements—that remained the main source of preserving and immortalizing the fate of its first fallen comrade. Yosef Baratz remarked that 'for a certain time, Moshe Barsky became a famous tale' thanks to his father's letter which became widely known throughout the Jewish world, 'However, twenty years have passed since. We have gained scores and hundreds of additional victims'.⁷⁷

Roland Barthes has pointed out that such myths, precisely because of their historical character, can relatively easily be re-shaped by history, changed, taken apart and even made to disappear.⁷⁸ Indeed, World War II, the Hebrew Revolt Movement and the War of Independence presented new situations that required new heroes whose stories would fit the changing

reality. Thus the myth of the exceptional individuals who were ready to fill the places of those who had fallen, together with the myth of the pioneer, vanished from public consciousness and made room for the myth of the warriors who died in the struggle for the establishment of the state. The latter myth, which evolved over the years, in fact came to serve the very same goal as Barsky's memory had previously done, namely, giving practical meaning to the Jews' aspiration to settle in Eretz Israel.

ADDING A PARODIC ELEMENT TO THE BARSKY TRAGEDY

Besides the nationalist pathos and the tragic circumstances that informed the construction of the Barsky myth, other elements worked to undermine the very basis on which the myth was created. Exaggerated and extravagant statements tended to endow a parodic element to the pathos of the tragic murder of Moshe Barsky as, for example, when Weizmann compared Barsky's father to Herzl; when the rabbis made exalted speeches about the murdered man but did not even visit his grave when they were in Degania; or when Shmuel Dayan translated Hertz Barsky's letter into the clichés of a political statement. The Barsky story also had a more prosaic dimension. Harry Friedenwald, president of the American Zionist Federation between 1905 and 1910, was moved by Barsky's story to make an unusual gesture. As he explained in a letter to Arthur Ruppin, director of the Eretz Israel office in March 1914: 'I read the report about the sad death of Moshe Barsky and the beautiful letter by his father, and I hereby enclose a check for his comrades which they may use as they see fit, in memory of his name'.⁷⁹ The money was intended as modest compensation for the loss suffered and in appreciation of the dignity with which it was borne (it is not known whether this donation ultimately arrived at Degania).

The link between Moshe Dayan and Moshe Barsky also became more elaborate over time. Avner Falk has cast doubt on whether Shmuel and Dvora named their son in order to commemorate Moshe Barsky since Shmuel Dayan's younger brother—the youngest child of the family—had died in childhood, and his name had been Moshe, too.⁸⁰ This, of course, does not mean that the couple's choice of the name Moshe was not connected with the Barsky tragedy, in which Shmuel was so closely connected. However, no such doubts were left in the dramatic version presented in an article by Yosef Lapid, entitled 'Anecdotes About Our Army's Top Brass', published in the daily *Maariv* in 1957:

General Moshe Dayan was born in circumstances that already foretold his later life. It happened 42 years ago when Degania's Dvora Dayan started having contractions. Moshe Barsky, the watchman, saddled his horse and drove into the night, to Tiberias, to fetch the midwife. He never

reached his destination. Arabs killed him on the way. And while he was bleeding to death, Dvora gave birth, naming the boy for the fallen watchman—Moshe, Moshe Dayan.⁸¹

Another *Maariv* journalist, Uri Cesari, was very moved by this article, because in 1914, when he was a 13-year-old boy, he had written a four-part play about Degania which centred on the Barsky affair. The play itself had been lost, but two weeks after Lapid's piece appeared, Cesari praised 'my young colleague who, in his charming column, took a heap of birth certificates and blew the dust off a fascinating and moving historical episode ... This is how the life of the Chief of Staff, the youngest ever, began. From the very outset, when he was still in diapers, fate already marked his life with the stamp of the symbolical'.⁸² How did Lapid's version (and its confirmation by Cesari) affect the Barsky affair? It is generally accepted that the 1950s were characterized by a transition from the yishuv period's dominant collectivism to greater individualism. It is not surprising that this phenomenon should also be reflected in some of the myths that survived beyond the foundation of the state.

Some of the generation's leaders and educators like Ben-Gurion, Yaacov Hazan and Abba Kovner, reconstructed their family history and the story of their own youth, especially by making their fathers appear more important than they had actually been so that their 'polished' biographies would better fit their adopted ideology and new status.⁸³ Barsky's case is linked to this tendency. Lapid, probably quite innocently, brought the Barsky myth back to life but in subservience to a new one, and by means of a story with little relation to the actual facts. Both the timing and circumstances of Barsky's death were refashioned in order to support the birth of a new myth—that of Moshe Dayan. The biographical-mythical pattern in which dramatic mystery shrouds the birth of future leaders—as in the stories of Moses or Jesus—can here be observed in its Zionist guise.

The historical record of the first years of Degania reveals the tense relations that existed between Yosef Baratz and Shmuel Dayan. Baratz belonged to the founding group, the Hadera commune, while Dayan joined the group at a later stage.⁸⁴ Their rivalry was reflected in their way of representing the Barsky case. In his books about Degania, Baratz always took care to include the original version of Barsky-senior's letter,⁸⁵ while Dayan, until the late 1950s, continued to circulate his doctored version.⁸⁶ When the kibbutz decided to publish its own history in 1961, the authors were confronted with these two versions of Barsky's father's letter. How were they, from their distance in time, to decide which one to use? Rather than making the effort to clarify the matter, they combined the two letters into one. Shabtai Teveth, in his biography of Moshe Dayan, also resorted to this solution.⁸⁷ Shmuel Dayan's version was cited by Moshe Dayan, Avner Falk, and the country's official commemorative publication *Yizkor*, in which

those who have fallen in Israel's wars are remembered.⁸⁸ Baratz's version was cited by Yaakov Fichman and Yosef Shapira, who was born in Skvira, the Barsky hometown, and who was the historian of Hapoel ha-tsair.⁸⁹

The core of the myth that came to be associated with the Barsky family involved sending another son, Shalom, to take Moshe's place. Here, too, it is necessary to distinguish between myth and reality. None of the sources that deal with the Barsky episode can be trusted on this subject. On receiving the news of Moshe's death, his father sent a telegram with the following words: 'Be comforted, sons!' This message reached Degania exactly one month following the murder. Why did it say 'sons' and not 'daughter'? The answer to this question can be found in a letter by Trumpeldor, written in the midst of these events: 'His younger brother came from Russia these days to fill Moshe Barsky's place (he only heard of his murder once he was here)'.⁹⁰

CONCLUSIONS

Research on the formation of the collective memory of the yishuv and of the first decades of the state is constantly expanding. The present article has sought to contribute to this research by describing the evolution of a founding ethos and myth through focusing on one individual. It has not considered an exceptional historical event or a great leader, but a simple person, Moshe Barsky, who did nothing outstanding in his lifetime. When he died, however, his figure was appropriated for the public cause. By rendering the ethos of dedication to the soil of the fatherland, it became a significant component in the immortalization of the Second Aliyah. For a while, the circumstances of Barsky's death stirred the collective memory of the times but then the episode was forgotten. Still, as Nachman Ben-Yehuda has claimed, there is always the possibility of re-kindling old patterns and myths and adjusting them to present exigencies, so long as there are those who preserve the memory of the past.⁹¹ The ethos and myth that came to be linked to Barsky retained some vitality because the historical background, of the Jewish people's existential struggle for its right to live in Eretz Israel, has remained relevant nearly nine decades on. Both mythical and factual elements connected with Barsky enabled the story of his death to be revived years later and, in a different context, through its insertion into the life-story of Moshe Dayan.

The history of the Barsky family illustrates the early form of the Zionist myth. Hertz Barsky, as we saw, arrived in Palestine in 1921, and changed his name to Herzl. In the same spirit as that in which he had educated his children—boundless giving without taking anything from the community—he expressed his thanks, a few months later, to Degania, which had supported his family financially during the crisis years of the World War I and after.⁹² Barsky founded Kfar Yechezkel's general store and later worked

in the *Histadrut* organization until his death in 1942. On the celebration of his sixtieth birthday he said that the greatest privilege of his life had been to see that ‘none of my sons is living off the “spoilt food” of “Luft Geschaefte”, and that they are all workers who make their living with their own hands’.⁹³

On the eve of Hertz Barsky’s arrival in Eretz Israel, his daughter Pasha married Matityahu Shtein, a member of Ha-shomer. The two had been working together in the Gedud Ha-avoda in Migdal, planting trees for a forest in memory of Trumpeldor. Brenner officiated as rabbi during the wedding. Chaim Weizmann visited the workers on the morning of that day, 23 January 1921, but was not present during the evening’s ceremony. He may well not have been aware that it was to take place. Such are the whims of history. The occasion was recorded in a letter written by Mordechai Chadash—a letter that seems to be inspired by the same psychological motives that had guided Hertz Barsky when he wrote his letter to Degania. It also includes motifs that are reminiscent of those that Alterman later used to forge the characters in his play ‘Kinneret, Kinneret’, whose ‘perversities—at least those that were manifest—were mainly directed toward the peculiar self-sacrifice and commitment to the exhausting, lonely labour to which they dedicated their lives’.⁹⁴ Also evident in Chadash’s letter is the restrained romanticism that was so typical of this generation, and even more so the aspiration to settle in Eretz Israel which was shared by all the heroes in this drama. Most impressively, the tone of the writing, which mixes reserve and emotion, makes it one of the most beautiful letters of the period expressing the pioneers’ love for the land and their desire to become part of it.⁹⁵

NOTES

1. See Chaim Weizmann’s speech before a public meeting organized by the French Zionist Federation in Paris, on 28 March 1914, in Barnet Litvinoff (ed.), *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, Series B, Papers, Volume I, August 1898–July 1931, Jerusalem, 1983, p. 118.
2. Nathan Alterman, ‘Bimkom hakdama le “Kinneret Kinneret”’ (‘Instead of introduction to “Kinneret Kinneret”’), *Bama’agal (In the Circle)*, Tel Aviv, 1971, p. 69.
3. David Ohana and Robert S. Wistrich, ‘Nohechut ha-mitosim ba-yahadut, ba-tsiyonut, u-ba-yisraeliut’ (‘The presence of myth in Judaism, Zionism and Israeliness’), in David Ohana and Robert S. Wistrich (eds), *Mitos-ve-zikaron, gilguleyha shel ha-toda’a ha-yisraelit (Myth and Mythology: Transfiguration of Israeli Consciousness)*, Tel Aviv, 1996, p. 15.
4. Shmuel Dayan, ‘Biglal yatush—Ha-kever ha-rishon be-Degania’, *Davar*, 24 February 1959; Shabtai Teveth, *Moshe Dayan*, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1971, pp. 11–12; Moshe Dayan, *Avney derech*, Jerusalem, 1976, p. 17.
5. Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, Chicago, 1995, pp. 86–88.
6. George L. Mosse, ‘The Cult of the Fallen Soldiers: National Cemeteries and National Revival’, *Zmanim* (Spring 1981), pp. 3–14; Eliezer Witztum and Ruth Malkinson, ‘Shchol ve-hantsacha: ha-panim ha-kfulot shel ha-mitos ha-leumi’, in Ruth Malkinson, Shimshon Rubin and Eliezer Witztum (eds.), *Ovdan ve-shchol ba-chevra ha-yisraelit*, Jerusalem, 1993, p. 238.
7. Chaim Nachman Bialik, ‘Im yesh et-nafshech la-da’at’, in Dan Meron (ed.), *Shirim*, Tel Aviv, 1983, pp. 405–406; Anita Shapira, *Cherev ha-yona*, Tel Aviv, 1992, p. 148.

8. Oz Almog, 'Andartaot le-challaley milchama be-yisrael: nituach semiologi', *Megamot*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (1991), p. 207; Emmanuel Sivan, *Dor tashach: Mitos, diyukan ve-zikaron*, Tel Aviv, 1991, pp. 175–177; Maoz Azaryahu, *Pulchaney medina: chagigot ha-atma'ut ve-hantsachat hanoflim 1948–1956*, Kiryat Sdeh Boker, 1995, p. 20; Ilana Shamir, *Hantsacha ve-zikaron: darka shel ha-chevra ha-yisraelit be-itsuv nofey ha-zikaron*, Tel Aviv, 1996, p. 27; Idith Zartal, *Ha-uma ve-ha-mavet, historia, zikaron, politka*, Or Yehuda, 2002, p. 36.
9. Sivan, *Dor Tashach*, pp. 172–176; Shapira, *Cherev ha-yona*, pp. 145–146; George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, Tel Aviv, 1994, pp. 46–47; Eyal J. Naveh, *Crown of Thorns, Political Martyrdom in America from Abraham Lincoln to Martin Luther King Jr.*, New York and London, 1990, pp. 1–3, 71–80.
10. Samuel Eisenstadt, *Prakim be-toledot tnuat ha-poalim ha-yehudit*, Vols. 1 and 2, Tel Aviv, 1970, pp. 35–40; A. Litvak, *Ma she-haya*, Eyn Charod, 1945, pp. 188–195; Mendel Singer, *Bereshit ha-tsiyonut ha-sotsialitit*, Haifa, n.d., pp. 236–239.
11. Shapira, *Cherev ha-yona*, pp. 57–65.
12. Sivan, *Dor tashach*, pp. 175–177.
13. S. Tsemakh. 'Ha-kever ha-rishon', *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 19 March 1912. As often happens the author, needing a certain geographical distance from the incident in order to describe it properly, wrote the story during the time he spent in Paris studying agronomy.
14. Yosef Chaim Brenner, 'Beyn mayim le-mayim', *Ktavim*, Vol. 2 (1978), p. 1192; Shapira, *Cherev ha-yona*, pp. 116–117.
15. 'Korbanot chadashim', *Ha-achdut*, 21 July 1911.
16. Yosef Chaim Brenner, 'Tsiyonim', *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 28 August 1911.
17. Yosef Klausner, 'Olam mit'haveh (rishmey masah be-erets Israel)', part IV, *Ha-shiloach*, No. 30 (January–June 1914), p. 425.
18. On this issue see Yossi Mali, 'Jacob Burckhardt—ha-historion ke-shamran naor', *Tsiyunim*, Vol. 38 (Summer 1991), p. 43; Hannah Naveh, 'Dyukan ha-kvutsah agav orcha: Haya o lo haya?', in Yehudit Bar-El, Yigal Schwartz and Tamar S. Hess (eds.), *Sifrut ve-chevra ba-tarbut ha-ivrit ha-chadasha*, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, 2000, pp. 83, 96, note 6.
19. Nurith Gertz, *Shvuya be-chaloma: mitosim ba-tarbut ha-yisraelit*, Tel Aviv, 1995, pp. 13–14.
20. Aliza Shidlovsky, 'Chevley klita', in Bracha Chabas (ed.), *Sefer ha-aliya ha-shniya*, Tel Aviv, 1947, pp. 556–557.
21. Moshe Smilansky, 'Dmuyot me-ha-aliya ha-shniya', *Ha'arezt*, 23 May 1947.
22. Dayan, 'Biglal yatush'.
23. S. Dayan, 'Moshe Barsky, zal', *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 26 December 1913.
24. A letter from Yosef Busel to the Eretz Israel Office, 26 January 1914, The Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem (CZA), KKL3/85a.
25. "'Eleh masa'ay", Masa ha-rabanim le-moshavot ha-galil be-shnat 1914', in Yitzhak Raphael (ed.), *Zikaron 'Reiha'* [Rabbi Avraham Hacohen Kook], Jerusalem, 1986, pp. 16–48; Simcha Raz, *Malachim ke-bney adam*, Jerusalem, 1994, pp. 392–393.
26. S. Dayan, 'Eser shanim', *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 30 January 1924.
27. Smilansky, 'Dmuyot'.
28. *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 13 February 1914. Hertz Barsky's letter was written on 30 December 1913.
29. Ibid.
30. Hertz Barsky's letter, having been published in *Hapoel ha-tsair*, also appeared in *Ha-olam*, on 5 March 1914, and this is probably how it came to Weizmann's attention. Weizmann's words about Barsky, in turn, were quoted in *Ha-tsifra* on 1 April 1914, and in *Ha-cherut* on 20 April 1914.
31. Y. Zerubavel, Y. Ben-Zvi and A. Chasin, *Yizkor*, Newark, 1916, pp. 86–87; A. Chasin and D. Ben-Gurion, *Yizkor*, Newark, 1916, pp. 136–143; *Yizkor*, Lodz, 1918, pp. 75–80. The original *Yizkor* collection, edited by Alexander Ziskind Rabinowitz, was published in December 1911, prior to Barsky's murder. See on this, Jonathan Frankel, 'Sefer Yizkor mi-shnat 1911—heara al mitosim leumi'im bitkufat ha-aliya ha-shniya', *Yahadut Zmaneynu*, Vol. 4 (1988), pp. 67–96.
32. Yisrael Bar, *Bonim bayit*, Tel Aviv, 1976, pp. 65–69.
33. See also Witztum and Malkinson, *Shchol ve-hantsacha*, p. 243.
34. Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I*, Los Angeles, 1976, pp. 55–56.

35. Ben-Tsiyon Dinur (editor in chief), *Sefer toldot ha-hagana*, I, part 1, place of publication unknown, 1954, pp. 70, 197.
36. Letter from Eliyahu Golomb to Rivka Golomb, 6 December 1913, in Eliyahu Golomb, *Hevyon Oz*, Vol. 1, Tel Aviv, 1953, pp. 80–83.
37. Letter from Yosef Trumpeldor to his friends, 11 November 1913, in Menachem Poznansky (ed.), *Mi-chayey Yosef Trumpeldor*, Tel Aviv, 1945, p. 112.
38. Uri Brenner, *Yitzhak Tabenkin ba-hagana (ad 1924)*, Ramat Efal, 1976, pp. 2–3.
39. ‘Levi Eshkol’, in Nachman Tamir (ed.), *Anshey ha-aliya ha-shniya*, Vol. 6, Tel Aviv, 1974, p. 239.
40. Yosef Baratz, ‘Esrin shana’, *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 17 November 1933.
41. Yosef Chaim Brenner, ‘Ha’ala, michtav me-eretz yisrael’, *Ketavim*, Vol. 3 (1912), p. 598 (originally published in *Ha-zman*).
42. Ya’akov Rabinovitz, ‘Me-olameynu’, *Ha-zman*, 31 January 1912.
43. ‘Moshe Barsky, Yosef Saltzman’, *Ha-achdut*, 28 November 1913.
44. Letter from Trumpeldor to his friends, 10 December, 1913, in Poznansky (ed.), *Mi-chayey Yosef Trumpeldor*, p. 113. Yaakov Feldman was murdered in Sajera on 7 December 1913.
45. Yaakov Rabinovitz, ‘Reshimot’, *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 27 March 1914.
46. Yaakov Cahan, ‘Lo nazuz...’, *Kitvey Yaakov Cahan: Shirim*, Tel Aviv, n.d., p. 115. The poem was composed in remembrance of Brenner and the other victims of the Yaffo riots; ‘Al kvareynu ha-chadashim’, *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 12 March 1920. On the lack of people in Tel Chai and during the 1921 riots, see Nakdimon Rogel, *Tel Chai: Hazit bli oref*, Tel Aviv, 1979, pp. 64–170; Dinur, *Sefer toldot ha-hagana*, Vol. 2, part 1, Tel Aviv, 1975, pp. 95–100.
47. N. Kamnetzky, ‘Moshe Barsky’, in Cheshin and Ben-Gurion, *Yizkor*, p. 140.
48. Ben-Yocheved (Pinchas Schneecorson), ‘Im “Sefer ha-shomer”’, *Ba-mifneh*, 19 April 1937; Yosef Baratz, *Kfar al gdol ha-yarden*, Tel Aviv, 1960, p. 18.
49. A letter from Bentsiyon Tschernomorsky (Yisraeli) to the Eretz Israel Office, December 1913, CZA, KKL3/102a; Yisrael Bloch, ‘Mi-reshit Kineret ve-Degania’, in Chabas (ed.), *Sefer ha-aliya ha-shniya*, pp. 408–409.
50. Dayan, *Im chatsi yovel shanim shel degania*, p. 195; Bloch, *Mi-reshit Kineret ve-Degania*, p. 409; Dayan, ‘Biglal yatush’.
51. Ehud Ben-Ezer, *Yanim shel leana u-dvash, sipur chayeha shel ha-meshoreret esther raab*, Tel Aviv, 1998, pp. 185–186.
52. Nathan Alterman, *Kineret, kineret*, no place, 1962, pp. 42–43; Alterman, ‘Bimkom hakdama le “Kineret, kineret”’, p. 68; Shidlovsky, *Chevley klita*, p. 557; Teveth, *Moshe Dayan*, p. 22.
53. Letter from Yaakov Horowitz to Nathan Alterman, Alterman archives at the *Katz Institute for the Study of Hebrew Literature*, Tel Aviv University, n.d.
54. Letter from Trumpeldor to his friends, 11 November 1913, in Poznansky (ed.), *Mi-chayey Yosef Trumpeldor*, p. 112.
55. Alterman, ‘Bimkom hakdama le “Kineret, kineret”’, p. 68.
56. Dayan, ‘Biglal yatush’; Dvora Dayan, ‘Chaverteynu bat ha-dor ha-kodem’, *Dvar ha-poelet*, 31 January 1943; author interview with Amihud Carmiel (Channa Barsky’s son).
57. Dayan travelled to Austria and once he recovered he went on to Joshkov, Ukraine, where he was born and which was not very far from Skvira. Shmuel Dayan, *Al gdol yarden ve-kineret*, Tel Aviv, n.d., p. 146; Letters from the Eretz Israel Office to Kvutsat Degania, 12 and 19 February 1914, CZA, KKL3/85a, L2/364; letter from Yosef Busel to the Eretz Israel Office, 24 December 1913, CZA, KKL3/85a.
58. Yosef Baratz, *Degania ‘aleph’*, Tel Aviv, 1947, pp. 22–23.
59. Letter from Yerucham Klevanov to Shmuel Dayan, 31 January 1914, *Degania A Archive*, file on Shmuel and Dvora Dayan.
60. Tanchum [Tanpilov], ‘Im Busel’, *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 3 August 1923; Muki Tsur, ‘Yosef Busel’, in Zeev Tsachor (ed.), *Ha-aliya ha-shniya—ishim*, Jerusalem, 1997, p. 44.
61. Zvi Reznick’s letter and CV, *Degania A Archive*; Dayan, *Im chatsi yovel shanim shel Degania*, p. 158; Baratz, *Kfar al gdol ha-yarden*, p. 75.
62. Letter from Ya’akov Berkovitz to Chaya and Tanchum Tanpilov, *Degania A Archive*, Tanchum Tanpilov file. The letter is undated; Tsur, ‘Yosef Busel’, p. 48.
63. R.K. (Rachel Katzenelson), ‘Al ha-hitnadvut’, in R. Katzenelson, *Divrey poolot—me’asef*, Tel Aviv, 1929, pp. 75–77.
64. Yosef B. (Baratz), ‘Degania’, *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 2 May 1921; Y. Lufban, ‘Le-zikaron’, *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 18 July 1921.

65. Lova Levitte, *Be-eyn charod le-ragley ha-gilboa 1924–1928*, Tel Aviv, 1983, p. 31. Levitte arrived in Eretz Israel on 13 July 1924.
66. Ben-Tsiyon Yisraeli, 'Mi-divrey yameynu', *Davar*, 28 October 1938.
67. Azaryahu, *Pulchaney medina*, pp. 111–114; Mordechai Bar-On, 'Lizkor ve-le-hazkir—zikaron kolektivi, kehilot zikaron ve-morasha', in Matityahu Meisel and Ilana Shamir (eds.), *Dfusim shel hantsacha*, Tel Aviv, 2000, pp. 20–23, 30–31.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 38; David Lowenthal, 'Fabricating Heritage', *History and Memory*, Vol. 10, No.1 (Spring 1998), pp. 10–11.
69. Weizmann's speech before a Public Meeting organized by the French Zionist Federation in Paris, on 28 March 1914, in Litvinoff '(ed.), *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, Series B, Papers, Volume I, August 1898–July 1931, p. 118.
70. See also, Hannah Naveh, "'Po ani over. Nitsav le-yad ha-even": Pratiyut ve-intimiut ba-evel ha-leumi', in Meisel and Shamir (eds.), *Dfusim shel hantsacha*, pp. 50, 59; Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Tel Aviv, 1998, p. 275.
71. Dayan, 'Eser shanim'.
72. See Hannah Naveh's analysis of Brenner's story 'Agav orcha', in Naveh, *Dyukan kvutsati*, p. 94.
73. *Ibid.*
74. Dayan, 'Eser shanim'.
75. Yaakov Fichman (ed.), *Sefer Ha-arets, antologia shel erets yisrael*, Tel Aviv, 1927, p. 256; Yisrael Hailprin, *Sefer Ha-gvura*, part 3, Tel Aviv, 1950, p. 337; Dinur, *Sefer Toldot Ha-bagana*, Vol. I, part 1, pp. 249, 311.
76. Shmuel Yavnely and Eliezer Sheyn (eds.), *Mesila—sefer limud ve-kriya le-gdolim*, Va'adat tarbut shel ha-histadrut, Jerusalem, 1924.
77. Miryam Singer, 'Erev Zikaron', *Ba-ma'aleh*, 8 December 1933; Baratz, 'Esrin shana'.
78. Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 248.
79. Arthur Rupp, *Pirkey chayay*, Tel Aviv, 1968, Vol. 2, pp. 89–90.
80. Avner Falk, *Moshe Dayan—ha-ish ve-ha-agada, biographia psicoanalitit*, Jerusalem, 1985, pp. 44–45.
81. Y. Lapid, 'Tshizbatim al tsameret tsahal', *Maariv*, 25 September 1957.
82. Uri Cesari, 'Drama be-Degania', *Maariv*, 16 October 1957. Dayan was Chief of Staff between December 1953 and January 1958.
83. Shabtai Teveth, *Ha-shanim ha-ne'elamot ve-ha-chor ha-shachor*, Tel Aviv, 1999, pp. 20–36; Zeev Tzachor, *Hazan—tnuat chayim*, Jerusalem, 1997, pp. 15–16; Dina Porat, *Me'ever la-gashmi—parashat chayav shel Abba Kovner*, Tel Aviv, 2000, pp. 38–39.
84. Dayan, *Im chatsi yovel shanim shel Degania*, pp. 101–103; Dayan, *Al gdot Yarden ve-Kineret*, pp. 87–89, 141–142.
85. Yosef Baratz, *Degania*, Tel Aviv, 1929, p. 40; Baratz, *Degania 'aleph'*, pp. 30–31; Baratz, *Kfar al gdot ha-Yarden*, pp. 73–74.
86. Dayan, *Im chatsi yovel shanim shel Degania*, p. 195; Dayan, 'Biglal yatush'; Dayan, *Al gdot Yarden ve-Kineret*, p. 175.
87. Kvutsat Degania Aleph, *Darka shel Degania*, Tel Aviv, 1961, pp. 70–71; Teveth, *Moshe Dayan*, pp. 11–12.
88. Dayan, *Avney derech*, p. 17; Falk, *Moshe Dayan—ha-ish ve-ha-agada*, p. 51; *Yikzor—parshiyot chayeheim ve-motam she ha-noflim ba-derech le-bakamat medinat Yisrael—1860–Nov. 29, 1947*, place of publication unknown, 1992, p. 193.
89. Fichman (ed.), *Sefer ha'arets*, p. 256; Yosef Shapira, 'Hakrvat ha-ben ve-gvurat ha-av', *Hapoel ha-tsair*, 19 November 1963.
90. Letter from Trumpeldor to his friends, 10 December 1913, in Poznansky (ed.), *Mi-chayey Yosef Trumpeldor*, p. 113.
91. Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Massada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel*, Madison, Wisconsin, 1995, p. 302.
92. Hertz Barsky's letter to Kvutsat Degania, 11 August 1921, *Degania A Archive*, Moshe Barsky file; Bar, *Bonim bayit*, p. 67.
93. Yosef Shapira, 'Tsiyun le-nefesh—Herzl Barsky', *Tlamim*, April 1943.
94. Alterman, 'Bimkom hakdama le "Kineret, Kineret"', p. 68. Brenner was chair of the cultural committee of Gdud Ha-avoda.
95. See letter from Mordechai Chadash to Shlomo Kinarti, 24 January 1921, in Muki Tsur (ed.), *Kol ha-drur al beyti—Channa ve-Shlomo Kinarti*, no place, 2000, pp. 60–64.