

ISRAEL

A HISTORY

PART IV



1967–1977

A DECADE
OF WAR

13 SIX DAYS THAT CHANGED THE MIDDLE EAST



The Six-Day War—termed by the Arabs “the June War,” yet another in the sequence of full-scale armed conflicts known only by their dates in the Arab narrative—broke out without premeditation on either side and without anyone having predicted that it would occur when it did. It exemplifies a case of a deteriorating security situation resulting from loss of control, which inevitably leads to a clash. It also reveals the limitations of military intelligence, the failures of diplomacy, and how choices made by leaders at crucial moments determine the course of history.

Every nineteen years the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars coincide. In 1967 nineteen years had elapsed since the state was established, and Independence Day, which is always celebrated on the fifth of Iyyar, fell on May 15 as it had in 1948. The annual IDF parade was held in a different city each year, and in 1967 it was Jerusalem’s turn to host. Since the armistice agreements forbade bringing heavy weaponry into Jerusalem, the IDF did not display its armor and the parade was low-key. During the procession onlookers noticed that Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin was handed a note, which he passed to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. It said that Egyptian armored units had entered Sinai.

This news was part of a chain of events that had begun several days earlier. It started with intelligence passed to Syria and Egypt by the Soviets saying that Israel had massed twelve brigades in northern Israel and was about to attack Syria. At the time Israel had no plans for such an attack and no forces massed in the north. But the Russians refused to listen to the Israeli denials. Eshkol tried in vain to get the Soviet ambassador to visit Northern Galilee and see for himself that no forces were gathered there. American intelligence sources also denied the presence of Israeli assault forces on the Syrian border. But the Russians persisted, maintaining that Israel planned to attack Syria and topple its Ba‘athist regime. Even the absence of armored units in the IDF parade was interpreted as evidence that they were concealed somewhere along the northern border.

The question of why the USSR conveyed this misleading intelligence has yet to be given an adequate answer. What is clear is that the situation on the northern border had deteriorated over the previous year, due to the Syrian attempts to divert the Jordan water sources, Israel’s consequent reprisals, and Fatah actions supported by Syria. All these events aroused Syrian and Soviet suspicions of a large-scale Israeli response. The Soviets considered the radical Ba‘athist govern-

ment their most loyal client in the region, and concern for its fate drove Russia to mobilize Egyptian aid for it. In 1966 an Egyptian-Syrian mutual defense pact had been signed, and Nasser now had to uphold his end of the bargain.

His situation was complicated. A large part of his army remained mired in Yemen, and his status as the undisputed leader of pan-Arabism had been in decline since the dissolution of the UAR. On the home front the termination of American aid had led to economic difficulties. After the 1966 Israeli operation in Samo'a, Nasser had stirred up the Palestinians against King Hussein. Now the king had an opportunity to reciprocate. He claimed that Nasser was hiding behind the UN peacekeeping force at Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gaza Strip instead of coming to the assistance of his Arab brethren. This Jordanian claim was in line with demands from the upper echelons of the Egyptian army to expel the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) and cast off the restrictions that Egypt had agreed to informally when the Israelis evacuated Sinai in 1957. The army assured Nasser that it could withstand a confrontation with the IDF and defeat it. Now that the Soviets were saying that Israel was threatening Syria, Nasser felt he must take action. His first step was to send Egyptian armored units into Sinai. This was the content of the message passed to Rabin at the IDF parade.

The next three weeks entered the Israeli lexicon as “the waiting period.” At first the Israelis hoped that this breach of the de facto demilitarization of Sinai could be resolved through quiet diplomacy and low-key military action, enabling Nasser to withdraw his forces without losing prestige, as had happened in the early 1960s in Operation Rotem. But this time the Egyptian army’s entry into Sinai was accompanied by vociferous propaganda disseminated by the Arab media in order to heighten the effect of the military move and underscore its significance. A quiet Egyptian withdrawal was out of the question. The next step was a natural progression from the first one. Nasser demanded of the UN secretary general that he evacuate the UNEF from the Gaza Strip, Sinai, and the Straits of Tiran. Secretary General U Thant, who had not been involved in the 1957 negotiations—and it is doubtful that he was aware of the complexity of the situation—announced that the UNEF would be withdrawn immediately. Later a debate focused on whether Nasser meant a complete withdrawal of the UNEF, or simply redeployment further from the front line. But the decisive fact was that these areas were under Egyptian sovereignty, and the UNEF presence there depended on Egyptian consent. Once this consent was withdrawn, the UNEF had no legal basis for remaining.

U Thant’s quick agreement to withdraw the UNEF obliged Nasser to take further action; it was inconceivable that Egyptian troops would sit at the Straits of Tiran and allow vessels flying the Israeli flag, or sailing to Israel, to pass unhindered. On May 23 Nasser announced a blockade of the Straits—an inevitable

outcome of the U N E F evacuation. All Israel's Sinai Campaign gains had been erased in the span of eight days. Nasser's prestige was never greater—all his previous failures were now forgotten and he acquired the status of a knight fighting for the pan-Arab cause who would eliminate the Israeli presence from the Middle East. In Arab states from North Africa to Iraq, the media hailed Nasser's triumph and predicted the imminent end of the Zionist entity. In the streets of the Arab capitals, there were stormy rallies of support for Nasser, with slogans calling for him to throw the Jews into the sea.

Israel was not entirely free of responsibility for creating the tension. About a month before Independence Day, the clashes with the Syrians on the northern border had escalated as a result of the downing of the Syrian planes in the dogfight over the Golan Heights. In the following weeks there were more than ten incidents involving Fatah terrorists from Syria. On the eve of Independence Day, Prime Minister Eshkol and Chief of Staff Rabin made statements that sounded like threats to Syria. These statements were not essentially different from those made in past Independence Day interviews, but the Syrians interpreted them as a promise of a large-scale Israeli reprisal for Syrian support of the Fatah's guerilla actions against Israel. As the waiting period began, the actions of Israel's government telegraphed a discouragement and weakness that helped heighten the tension and convince the Egyptians that they could move to the brink without fear of an Israeli response.

After the withdrawal from Sinai and the Straits in 1957, Israel had defined the blockade as a *casus belli*. Now the government headed by Levi Eshkol sought a way to open the Straits of Tiran without resorting to force. At the same time, it sought allies among the Western powers in case Israel was attacked by Egypt or forced into a war. The prime possible ally was the United States. In 1957 the Americans had not undertaken to keep the Straits of Tiran open as an international waterway, but they had recognized Israel's right to self-defense should Egypt close them. Now a massive diplomatic effort got underway to prevent the outbreak of a war that might lead to confrontation between the two superpowers. The Soviet-led Eastern bloc considered Nasser's victory its own and demanded that Israel accept the loss of its 1957 gains. The Western nations, on the other hand, displayed no resolve. French president Charles de Gaulle, taking this opportunity to restore France to the status of a Great Power, demanded talks among the Four Powers. At the same time, he warned that Israel should not dare go to war and announced an embargo on arms to the Middle East—a move that mainly affected Israel, which was equipped with French weaponry and needed spare parts. US president Lyndon B. Johnson was a friend of Israel, and in 1957 when still a US senator he had opposed the Eisenhower administration's pressure on Israel. But now he was mired in the Vietnam War, facing fierce opposition to this awful war at home, and the last thing he needed was another front.

Concern over a confrontation between the superpowers intensified. During the first weeks of the waiting period, Israel did not gain the support for which it had hoped from the United States, which focused on stopping the Israelis from attacking and preventing an outbreak of fighting in the Middle East. The Israelis sought two assurances: that there be no recurrence of the American pressure of 1957, and that should war break out, the United States would prevent Soviet military involvement. The American administration proposed the Regatta Plan, whereby an international flotilla would break the blockade and ensure freedom of passage through the Straits. But it rapidly emerged that no countries were prepared to send naval vessels to engage in such an effort. Instead it was proposed that the International Court of Justice in The Hague hold a thorough, prolonged hearing, then rule on whether the Straits were an international waterway or Egyptian territorial waters, as the Egyptians claimed. This solution would ensure Egypt of victory without a shot being fired. Israel's deterrent capability was now dead in the water, for two "redlines" of its policy—demilitarization of Sinai and keeping the Straits of Tiran open—had been crossed without an Israeli response. In the meantime the IDF mobilized its reserves. The two armies faced each other along the Egyptian border. For the Israelis this situation was unsustainable; the entire fabric of normal life was destabilized, economic activity was frozen, and tension was at a peak.

Israel now knew difficult times. The frenzy gripping the Arab states, the threats of destruction heard from the Arab media from morning till night—especially on radio and television (Israel did not yet have its own TV network, but picked up Arab broadcasts)—created an eve-of-Holocaust atmosphere: once again, they were coming to annihilate the Jews. PLO chairman Ahmed Shukeiri declared, "In the event of a conflagration, no Jews whatsoever will survive."¹ Again the discourse of World War Two rang out loud and clear, for Israelis perceived the apparently neutral stance of the Western countries as abandonment of their weak ally, leaving it at the mercy of the aggressor. Over and over commentators compared Israel to Czechoslovakia, which the Western powers had abandoned to the Nazis when the Munich Pact was signed. The French *L'Express* ran the headline "Mourir pour Akaba?" (To die for Aqaba?), raising associations with "To Die for Danzig?" a headline that had appeared on the eve of World War Two. The newspaper's answer was that a world war should not be risked for Israel's sake. On June 3, 1967, the British magazine *Economist* stated:

The simple fact is that we have no honest call to fight the Arabs because they have on one count, however important, out-manoeuvred Israel. The West is committed to Israel's preservation as a viable state and would fight if that were threatened. But a loss of a gain that Israel won from its Sinai campaign (helped

by the Anglo-French action at Suez) is not the same as Israel's destruction. . . . The Israelis are not any longer arguing from a position of obvious strength. . . . President Nasser has to choose between being a local Arab Bismarck and a statesman with a claim to world stature. The Israelis have the unhappier and lesser choice of seizing the ball of peace if and when it is thrown at them.²

Deep, almost palpable anxiety gripped the people of Israel. Hundreds of thousands of them had either experienced the Holocaust or lost their families in it. The Eichmann trial a few years before had deepened awareness of the Holocaust in all Israelis, and with it the fear of annihilation. Rumors predicted tens of thousands dead in the approaching conflict, and the terror of air raids on population centers increased the sense of helplessness and fear. The Western powers' feeble response and the belligerent, arrogant, triumphant voices from the Arab states created a feeling of isolation and siege. The only ally to stand unreservedly with Israel was the Jewish people. For the first two weeks of the waiting period, American Jewry did not realize that this was a genuine crisis. Then the Arab threats against Israel's very existence slowly penetrated their consciousness. "Will there be another Auschwitz, another Dachau, another Treblinka?" wondered philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel.³ Mobilization for Israel was extraordinary. There had not been such warm and unequivocal expressions of identification with and support for the people of Israel by American and European Jewry since 1948. Support took the form of donations, an emergency appeal, rallies, and attempts at political pressure, especially in Washington. Jewish solidarity was heartwarming and particularly notable in view of the cold shoulder Israel received from the rest of the world.

The army's mood contrasted sharply with that of the public. The IDF command did not doubt that it could beat the Egyptian army, especially if it was able to attack first. However, it estimated that although the battle would end with an Israeli victory, there would be thousands of casualties. The IDF General Staff pressed for approval for going to war, but the government could not reach a decision. A vote held on May 27 ended in a tie between those advocating immediate action and those who wanted diplomacy to run its course. Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, who favored immediate action, did not want to make such a fateful decision by casting the prime minister's deciding vote, and chose to wait. On May 28 he announced this decision on the radio.

This announcement, which entered Israeli lore as "the stammering speech," since Eshkol was unable to decipher the text before him and stumbled over his words, added to the already high tension in every Israeli home that evening. Eshkol's delivery demonstrated weakness, as did his announcement that the waiting period would continue. Israeli public opinion, particularly as expressed

in the media, lost its faith in his leadership abilities just at this moment of crisis. Since the beginning of the waiting period, some public figures, including opposition leader Menachem Begin, had proposed bringing Ben-Gurion back from his self-imposed exile in Sdeh Boker. But Ben-Gurion thought Israel should not go to war without one of the powers as an ally, as it had in 1956. He excoriated Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin, who sought his advice, contending that his belligerent statements and mobilization of reserve units in the first stage of the waiting period (even though the mobilization was limited) had led Israel into a trap under unfavorable conditions. He demanded entrenchment and waiting.

Torn between a dithering government and a General Staff spoiling for a fight, and hurt by the rebuke from Ben-Gurion, the chief of staff collapsed and was ordered to rest for twenty-four hours. He returned to his duties on May 23. After May 28 public pressure for a change of leadership was channeled into the political system, and cabinet members demanded that the defense portfolio (which Eshkol held in addition to being prime minister) be transferred to someone with a security background. The front-runner was Moshe Dayan, the victor of the Sinai Campaign. At the same time, the National Religious Party (NRP) was pressing to enlarge the government to include Gahal (*Gush Herut-Liberalim*, Herut-Liberals Bloc, founded in 1965) and Rafi (*Reshimat Poalei Yisrael*, Israeli Workers List), the party that had split from Mapai in the wake of the Lavon Affair. On June 1 this was done, and a “national unity government” was formed. Menachem Begin was appointed minister without portfolio and Dayan became minister of defense.

On May 30 King Hussein jumped on the bandwagon of pan-Arab nationalism. He was aware that Syria and Egypt constantly undermined him, depicting him as a pawn of imperialism and the West. But in view of the public enthusiasm (particularly among Palestinians) in his own country, and anticipating an imminent conflict, Hussein felt he had no choice. If he did not join the struggle, he would lose his legitimacy in the eyes of his people, whether Egypt won or lost. He flew to Egypt and signed a mutual defense pact with Nasser. He even placed his army under Egyptian command and allowed Iraqi army units into his territory. Numerous historians see this pact as the straw that broke the camel’s back, as it related to Israel’s patience, for the threat against Israel’s long, vulnerable eastern border was intolerable. The entry of the Iraqis into Jordan was another cause for anxiety; liaison between the Jordanian and Egyptian armies heightened the sense of siege.

The waiting period was supposed to give President Johnson an opportunity to explore every avenue for opening the Straits of Tiran by peaceful means. As the days went by, it became clear that this hope was futile and that the American idea of a flotilla to break the blockade was a pipe dream. Meanwhile for the Israelis the problem of the Straits became secondary to the confrontation of the two fully mobilized armies on the southern border, with no possibility of disengagement

on the horizon. The Americans would not give Israel the green light to attack, but intimated that they would not oppose Israeli action. Meir Amit, head of the Mossad, flew to the United States on May 31 to ascertain the American position and returned to Israel with an “amber light.” The United States, he said, would not “sit shivah” (that is, mourn—referring to the seven-day Jewish mourning period) if Israel attacked Egypt. The fear of a recurrence of American pressure on Israel as in 1956 was weakened, though not completely dissipated.

On June 2 the new Israeli government decided to go to war. On June 5, after three weeks of waiting, the IDF launched its offensive.

The Six-Day War was the shortest and most exceptional of all Israel’s wars in terms of the scope of the victory, the relatively low casualty figures, and the area occupied. Israel was drawn into this war under duress and without preplanned objectives, and its developments were determined by ministers, public opinion, commanders on the ground, and the fortunes of war. Israel went to war in order to defeat the Egyptian army and open the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. It ended the war in complete control of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula as far as the Suez Canal. Within three hours the Israeli Air Force destroyed the Egyptian air force. It then turned its attention to destroying the air forces of Syria and Jordan. It was this aerial victory that decided the outcome of the war. Within two days the Egyptian army in Sinai had been dealt a decisive blow and was in retreat, with the IDF on its tail. Dayan had wanted to halt ten kilometers from the canal in order to prevent its being closed, since this complication would hurt Israel’s relations with the Great Powers. But the campaign developed in such a way that the IDF reached the banks of the canal.

The war with Jordan developed at the same time. On the first day the Jordanians shelled Jerusalem and along the length of the border with Israel. Israel wanted to avoid a war on several fronts and had no aggressive intentions toward Jordan, so Eshkol sent a message to King Hussein stating that if he kept out of the fighting and stopped the shelling, Israel would fully uphold the armistice agreement. But instead the shelling of Jerusalem intensified, shells hit the Ramat David air base, and the Jordanians attempted to take the high commissioner’s residence (housing the UN observer team), which commanded southern Jerusalem. As a result, the government was drawn into making decisions that led to the occupation of the West Bank. The first order was to ensure access to Mount Scopus, an Israeli enclave in Jordanian territory, which it was feared would be unable to withstand an Arab Legion attack. The order was then extended to include East Jerusalem, but not the Old City, then finally the entire West Bank.

Once the fighting in Sinai and the West Bank was over, the cabinet discussed whether or not to take the Golan Heights. Throughout the war Syria had made no real attempts to attack Israel and aid Egypt or Jordan, apart from continued

shelling of the Jordan Valley settlements. The cabinet hesitated, fearing Soviet intervention if Israel attacked Syria, especially in view of the Israeli successes against Egypt. On the other hand, Syria had started the imbroglio that led to the war, and continued shelling the Jordan Valley throughout it. The Jordan Valley's inhabitants composed a pressure group that pushed for occupying the Heights. A majority in the cabinet favored taking the Heights, with Dayan opposed. The UN was pressing for a ceasefire—which the Arabs rejected again and again, demanding first an unconditional Israeli withdrawal to the lines of June 4—and it seemed time no longer remained for a war against Syria. But in the early hours of June 9, the fifth day of the war, Dayan circumvented the prime minister and the chief of staff and issued a direct order to Commanding Officer of the Northern Command David Elazar to conquer the Golan Heights. Occupation of the Heights, which command the Jordan Valley and Eastern Galilee, took less than two days.

The six days of fighting changed the face of the Middle East. Israel was transformed from an underdog under threat of destruction to a regional power whose positions had to be taken into account. The majority of the Golan Heights' inhabitants left with the Syrian army, but in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip close to a million Palestinians stayed on.

During the first nineteen years of Israel's history, it had accepted the armistice borders as permanent. Some did dream of a Greater Israel within the original Mandatory borders. Begin's Herut party continued to demand all of Western Eretz Yisrael. In Hakibbutz Hameuhad, too, led by Yitzhak Tabenkin, yearnings for a Greater Israel had not faded. But even these organizations effectively accepted the reality of the partitioned country and did not translate their yearning into a political plan of action. As the years went by the attachment to a Greater Israel dimmed. The generation that had grown up in the young state neither knew nor desired Greater Israel. Most of the population consisted of immigrants who had arrived after 1948, who knew no other reality than the armistice borders. When Gahal was founded, its platform did not include the Herut clause about Greater Israel, which had damaged Herut's legitimacy among the general public because it seemed like warmongering.

On Independence Day Eve, May 12, 1967, *Ma'ariv*, a popular evening paper, published an interview by Geula Cohen, a former Lehi fighter, with David Ben-Gurion, who had retired to Sdeh Boker. Cohen asked, "Mr. Ben-Gurion, what will you tell your grandson today when he asks you, 'Grandpa, what are the borders of my homeland?'" Ben-Gurion responded, "Well, I will answer him, 'The borders of your homeland are the borders of the State of Israel as they are now. That is all.'" And he added, "There are no absolute borders. Had the Arabs accepted the UN resolution [of 1947], our borders would have been reduced . . . 'Historical borders' is a concept for the coming of the Messiah." Cohen per-

sisted, “Would you encourage an Israeli child to write a song of longing for a greater Jerusalem?” “If he wants to write it, he should write it,” Ben-Gurion answered dryly. “I would not write one.”⁴

The unconditional withdrawal from Sinai in 1957 had reinforced Israelis’ acceptance of the Green Line, the armistice borders. This does not mean that the 1948 generation—the graduates of Hakibbutz Hameuhad or the Etzel and Lehi—harbored no latent dreams of a Greater Israel. But it is doubtful that those dreams drove the shapers of policy, and they were certainly not a motivation for the generation of the state. Yet a hidden ember remained, and it burst into a great flame during and following the Six-Day War. The decisions to extend the fighting against Jordan, and especially to conquer Jerusalem, which Ministers Begin and Allon had urged, were not made solely for strategic reasons. The assault on Jerusalem was motivated by emotions that went beyond political needs. When the paratroops arrived at the Western Wall, their deep feelings made them weep. These were not religiously observant troops, and the shofar blasts sounded by the IDF chief rabbi, Shlomo Goren, did not speak to them. But something in that encounter with Jewish history, with the Wailing Wall, shook them to the very roots of their being.

It is rather interesting that the National Religious Party headed by Moshe Chaim Shapira held the greatest concerns about going to war and had opposed any aggressive Israeli move. Shapira opposed the conquest of Jerusalem on the grounds that once Israel entered the city, it would be unable to leave. He meant that public opinion would force it to remain there, and that would be Israel’s undoing in the international arena. And indeed the enthusiasm that engulfed the entire Jewish people, in Israel and the Diaspora, with the conquest of Jerusalem, highlighted hidden desires and previously unsuspected levels of consciousness and identification.

As a result of this storm of emotions, after the cabinet discussed the outcomes of the war on June 19, it announced that Israel was willing to withdraw from Sinai and the Golan Heights in return for peace agreements with its neighbors, but did not include Jerusalem and the West Bank in this offer. Instead it said that the West Bank territories would be the subject of negotiations with Jordan. The announcement underscored the difference between the Sinai Campaign and the Six-Day War. This time Israel saw its territorial gains as a lever for achieving peace with its neighbors, and the “land for peace” formula was drafted. For the first time since the 1948 war, the Israelis felt they had something to give up in return for peace. However, removing the areas west of the River Jordan from the formula left the possibility of peace talks with Israel’s most suitable partner, King Hussein of Jordan, open to question.

Given the severe trauma the Israeli public had lived through on the eve of the

war, the euphoria that followed the brilliant victory was natural. Tremendous relief joined with pride in the achievement and the hope that this war would be the last. Dayan announced that he was awaiting a phone call from the Arab rulers. His phone did not ring. What the Israelis saw as a victory of the weak and beleaguered over belligerent adversaries was to the Arabs an appalling humiliation, damaging to the national honor and calling for vengeance and “another round” to erase the shame. The Khartoum Conference held in September 1967 and attended by eight Arab states declared three “Nos”: no recognition of Israel, no negotiations, and no peace. What has been taken by force will be restored by force, declared Nasser, who had momentarily lost his composure and resigned, then returned to office boosted by his people’s mass demonstrations of support. Although Israel had proved itself capable of defeating the Arabs, it could not force peace upon them. The basic balance of power between the small state and its numerous powerful neighbors was not altered by the Six-Day War. The USSR replenished the stockpiles of arms and equipment lost by Egypt and Syria. After only a few months their arsenals had been restocked. However, the Khartoum Conference resolutions also hinted for the first time that diplomatic steps to return the territory occupied in the war might be possible. These mixed signals—of war, directed at Arab public opinion, and of negotiations, muted and hesitant, directed toward the West—led to contradictory interpretations of the Arabs’ positions.

Israel’s victory was also interpreted as a victory of the West over the USSR and its satellites. Soviet arms had failed against Western weapons systems. The Soviets’ false reports on Israeli troop concentrations in the north, and later their unqualified support of Nasser and buttressing of the Egyptians’ belief that they could win the war, had induced Nasser to take his provocative actions. Yet at the same time, the Soviets’ involvement remained limited, since they were unwilling to become involved in actual fighting. The United States and the USSR agreed to avoid direct military involvement and maintained a precarious balance between themselves. Thus the Soviets limited their own action to breaking off diplomatic relations with Israel. The Eastern bloc countries, except for Romania, followed suit, as did some African states.

After many months of negotiations all the parties succeeded in formulating a draft resolution acceptable to the UN Security Council, which on November 22, 1967, was passed as UN Security Council Resolution 242. The Arabs would not accept a resolution that bound them to either recognize or negotiate with Israel. They demanded an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all territories it had occupied in the war. Israel refused to accept this condition and demanded recognition, peace, and a withdrawal to “secure and recognized boundaries.” The Great Powers maneuvered between these differing demands. The resolution stressed that territories must not be annexed by war, but also that

action should be taken to create “a just and lasting peace” among all the countries of the region. Israel was to withdraw “from territories occupied in the recent conflict,” while the Arabs were to relinquish the state of war and recognize and respect the sovereignty and integrity of the countries of the region (i.e., Israel) and their right “to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.” Additionally freedom of shipping had to be guaranteed and the refugee problem resolved. A UN special envoy would travel to the region to move these arrangements forward.

The English version, considered the official version of the resolution, mentions withdrawal “from territories” (see previous paragraph)—that is, not necessarily from all the territories. However, the French version adds the definite article, allowing an interpretation that withdrawal included all the territories, which is how the Arabs interpreted it. Egypt and Jordan accepted the resolution immediately. Israel agreed a few weeks later, and Syria accepted it only after Hafez al-Assad assumed rule. The Palestinians rejected the resolution out of hand, since they were mentioned only indirectly, in the reference to the refugee problem.

An unforeseen outcome of the war was the reemergence of the Palestinian problem. After the War of Independence the Arab states and Israel had appropriated the territories assigned to the Palestinian state in the UN resolution of November 1947. The Palestinians had no national representation. Their attempts to reenter the international arena as an entity in their own right began with the founding of the Fatah and PLO. At this stage the Palestinians demanded all of Western Palestine, and would not accept the existence of the State of Israel. After the Six-Day War, Israel found itself ruling over more than a million Palestinians. For the first time since the early 1950s, the Israelis came face to face with the Palestinians, who until then had lived across the border, far from the Israeli public’s consciousness. This encounter now sparked debates over the refugees’ hardships, and even about Israel’s duty to contribute to resolving the problem. At the same time, the PLO now had a wide scope for action against Israel inside the occupied territories and could undertake a war of liberation, as other nations under foreign rule had done. The awakening of Palestinian nationalism was a direct result of the Arab states’ failure to destroy Israel militarily. The PLO now embraced the idea of a protracted armed struggle in the form of guerilla warfare, as the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) had done in Algeria.

NOTES

1. “Mourir pour Akaba,” *L’Express*, June 5–11, 1967, p. 15. Cited by Benjamin Kedar, “Milhamot kenekudot mifne bahistoria” (Wars as Turning Points in History), in Asher Susser (ed.), *Shisha yamim—shloshim shana: mabat hadash al milhemet sheshet hayamim* (Six Days—Thirty Years: New Perspectives on the Six-Day War), Tel Aviv, Am Oved, and the Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israel Studies, 1999, p. 25.

2. "Can Nasser Make Peace?" *Economist*, June 3, 1967, pp. 994–995, cited by Benjamin Kedar, "Milkhamot kenekudot mifne bahistoria" (Wars as Turning Points in History), in Asher Susser (ed.), *Shisha yamim—shloshim shana: mabat hadash al milkhemet sheshet hayamim* (Six Days—Thirty Years: New Perspectives on the Six-Day War), Tel Aviv, Am Oved, and the Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israel Studies, 1999, pp. 25–26.

3. M. L. Urofsky, *We Are One: American Jewry and Israel*, Garden City, NJ: 1978, p. 350, cited by Menachem Kaufman, "Hashpa'at milhemet sheshet hayamim al hitpathuta shel hamagbit hayehudit hameuhedet" (The United Jewish Appeal in the Six-Day War), *Yahadut Zemanenu* (Contemporary Judaism), vol. 9, Jerusalem, 1995, p. 210.

4. Geula Cohen, "Be'arba einayim im David Ben-Gurion" (Tête-à-tête with Ben-Gurion), *Ma'ariv*, 12.5.1967.

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14 THE AGE OF EUPHORIA, 1967–1973



After the Six-Day War the face of Israel changed. The deep, pervasive anxiety of the three-week waiting period gave way to euphoria: “We were like unto them that dream” (Psalms 126:1). Suddenly Israel was a world celebrity. No longer a sleepy country in a remote corner of the Middle East, it was now the focus of events of global significance. Journalists and TV crews flocked to Israel from all over the world. They were followed by thousands of volunteers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, who were excited by the military feats of this small country against all its aggressors. The volunteers found places in kibbutzim, helping with seasonal work, replacing youngsters serving in the army or mobilized for reserve service. They brought to Israel the flavors and trends of the larger world. The partial isolation Israel had experienced in its first nineteen years—both because outsiders lacked interest in it and because its shortage of foreign currency restricted foreign travel for its citizens—was well and truly over.

Israel was now a regional power governing a million Palestinians and territory four times larger than it had before the war. This situation created a range of difficulties that remained on the public agenda for the next decade and beyond. The first was security. The victory had not brought the longed-for peace but had worsened relations between Israel and its neighbors. The relative quiet of the prewar decade did not return. Only a few months after the war ended, Palestinian terrorist attacks commenced in Israel and against Israeli targets abroad, reaching their peak with the murder of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972. In March 1969 the “War of Attrition” along the Suez Canal began; it continued until August 1970.

Rule over the new territories became a leading topic in Israeli political discourse. What would be done with the occupied territories? Were they a bargaining chip to induce the Arabs to make peace with Israel, or were they a vital strategic addition to the security of the state? Jewish settlement in the territories fit the Zionist impulse and myth, according to which the Jewish plow determined the borders. Should the Green Line borders be extended through Jewish settlement in the occupied territories, or should Jews settle only in sparsely populated Arab areas, according to security needs? And finally there was the cultural-moral debate about ruling another people: was it justified and, if at all, under what conditions? Messianic overtones, religious and secular alike, soon imbued these debates.

Jewish communities throughout the world, particularly in America, shared the



MAP 7. THE POST-SIX-DAY WAR BORDERS, AND SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, 1967-1977. (SEE PLATE 7.)

elation and the joy of deliverance in the wake of the victory. The sense of a common destiny between Israel and the Jewish people had never been stronger. During the waiting period even Hannah Arendt, not known for her empathy for Israel and the Israelis, expressed anxiety over their fate. The Jews in the Diaspora felt like proud partners in the IDF's victory, and demonstrated this in displays of identification with the state and visits to Israel, as well as a surge in donations. There was also a wave of aliya of tens of thousands of Jews from Western countries.

Although the USSR had severed its relations with Israel after the war, this did not deter Soviet Jews from demonstrating support for their brethren in Israel. A swell of enthusiasm swept through these "Jews of silence." After the Six-Day War, Jews in the USSR embarked on a public struggle for the right to immigrate to Israel. Until then all activity on behalf of Soviet Jewry had been underground for fear of harming the Zionist activists in Russia. But now these activists gave the signal to shift to overt public activity. In November 1969 Prime Minister Golda Meir read from the Knesset podium a letter from eighteen Jewish families in Georgia who publicly claimed their right to immigrate. In 1971 an international congress was held in Brussels to mobilize world public opinion on behalf of the struggle, under the biblical supplication that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had turned into a political slogan—"Let my people go."

Russian Jewry's struggle for its right to immigrate to Israel was heroic. Activists in the USSR founded groups to study the Hebrew language and Jewish history, tradition, and religion to bolster Jewish national consciousness. They held meetings in woods outside Russian cities, with Hebrew sing-alongs, discussions on Israel, and readings of various texts. Israel, which in 1953 had established Nativ, an underground network aimed at reinforcing Jewish national consciousness in Russia, assisted covertly. Now thousands of Jews submitted applications to leave the USSR and immigrate to Israel, most of which were denied by the authorities, and the "refuseniks," the name given to those whose applications were denied, were dismissed from their jobs. Neither unemployment nor police harassment deterred them from fomenting agitation that threatened to spread to a widening circle of opponents of the regime.

In the United States a large public movement of Jews and non-Jews alike emerged in support of Soviet Jewry, which reached its climax with the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment passed by both houses of Congress. Sponsored by Senator Henry Jackson, the amendment denied economic benefits in trade relations to countries that restricted freedom of emigration and other human rights. While it is doubtful that the amendment actually helped increase immigration—which diminished after it was passed—the discussions surrounding it in the years before passage apparently influenced the Soviets to allow Jews to leave. Possibly they wanted to get rid of the aliya activists by allowing them to leave, then reclos-

ing the borders. Either way, in the first half of the 1970s about a quarter of a million Jews were allowed to leave the U.S.S.R. The majority—some 160,000—were absorbed in Israel, and the rest went to other countries.

This new wave of aliya was accompanied by generous donations from Western Jews to aid its absorption. The government also spent large sums in order to redeploy the army in the new territories to meet the new threats that arose after the war. Oil wells in Sinai now supplied about half of Israel's fuel needs. All these factors led to accelerated economic growth that replaced the stagnation and recession of the early 1960s, which had caused unemployment and diminished economic activity.

The Green Line border between Israel and the West Bank was now opened to two-way traffic, with both sides displaying intense curiosity about the other. Israelis flooded the West Bank markets, where they bought goods and commodities at far lower prices than in "Little Israel." Israeli tourist traffic clogged the West Bank roads. The 1948 generation revisited the sites of their battles, where they reminisced and shed tears for comrades who had not lived to see this day. People who had come to Israel after the War of Independence were now able, for the first time, to encounter the expanses of Greater Israel and the historical sites etched in the collective memory: the Temple Mount, the Western Wall, the Cave of Machpelah (Cave of the Patriarchs), and Rachel's Tomb. In addition to Masada, a pilgrimage site from the Yishuv period, they could visit Herodion and Gamla, forts also renowned as Jewish strongholds in the war against the Romans. The remains of Avshalom Feinberg of the Nili spy network, who had perished under mysterious circumstances on his way to Egypt in World War One, were now discovered on the Rafah border, where a palm tree had grown from a date seed he supposedly had left there. The romance of this tree competed with that of the oak tree remaining in the destroyed Etzion Bloc, now the site of renewed Jewish settlement by the sons and daughters of its evacuees. Areas that had been closed to Israeli archeologists were now opened to research that would enrich knowledge of the antiquity of the Jews in their land.

Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan was now a celebrated symbol of Israeli daring and defiance. His face with its black eye patch graced newscasts and magazine covers. World famous, he also became the most admired statesman in Israel. Dayan sought to maintain a "soft" occupation of the West Bank that interfered as little as possible in the lives of the Arabs. The IDF was in charge of security, but everything else remained under the jurisdiction of Jordanian law. Local government was in the hands of the mayors appointed by King Hussein (until the municipal elections of 1976). Within a short time peace and public security in the West Bank were ensured. Still shocked by the defeat, in the first months after the Israeli occupation the Palestinians displayed no resistance.

They were surprised by the enlightened attitude of the occupiers, whom Arab propaganda had portrayed as human beasts. In Hebron inhabitants anticipated Jewish vengeance for the 1929 massacre, and when it did not materialize there was both a sigh of relief and a willingness to cooperate with the occupier in returning to normal life.

The war disrupted the connection between the West Bank and the rest of the Arab world. The natural market for local produce was Jordan. Palestinian merchants began shipping agricultural produce from the west bank of the River Jordan to the east bank, with the trucks crossing the river through its shallow, end-of-summer waters since the bridges had been destroyed. What began as a local initiative, supported by IDF officers, became the basis of Israeli administration policy. Dayan understood the importance of the link between the two banks of the river, and he was also aware of the economic importance of the Palestinian farmers marketing their produce in Jordan and from there to the Gulf states. Once repaired, the Jordan bridges carried heavy traffic in both directions and became the lifeline of the West Bank. At the same time, tens of thousands of Arab workers from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank began looking for work in Israel. The major construction enterprises, renewed after the war, required workers. Army bases built in the occupied territories, fortifications along the Suez Canal, the new settlements in the territories, all provided work for Arab laborers and generated prosperity in the West Bank.

Moshe Dayan believed that what he called “enlightened occupation” would ensure Israeli control of Arab-populated territories over the long term, without the need to resort to significant force. This concept grew out of his belief that economic interest could mitigate national conflicts, and also from his perception of the Palestinians as a population that had never been totally independent and would likely accept the Jewish occupiers if they acted wisely and respected the Palestinians and their customs. Dayan opposed annexation of “the territories” (which Israelis referred to as either “occupied” or “liberated,” depending on their viewpoint). Israel did annex East Jerusalem and its environs in accordance with a law passed by the Knesset. Later, in 1981, the Golan Heights also became subject to Israeli law. Three Arab villages in the Latrun enclave were demolished and their inhabitants expelled, and the road to Jerusalem was relaid on their sites, on the assumption that any future political settlement would include this minor territorial adjustment. But otherwise Israel steered clear of any change in the situation existing in the West Bank.

Israel avoided annexation both in the hope of reaching some kind of accommodation with Jordan and also out of reluctance to grant citizenship to a million Arabs, which would change the state’s demographic makeup and jeopardize its character as the Jewish state. This fear was clearly evident from day one of the

occupation. Ben-Gurion spoke openly about returning all the occupied territories, except for Jerusalem, in return for peace. Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz went even further, demanding a complete, unilateral Israeli withdrawal, even without a peace agreement, because of the moral corruption the occupation brought with it. The appearance of thousands of Arab workers all over Israel aroused opposition from groups that during the Yishuv period had subscribed to the ideology of “Hebrew labor.” Nevertheless the belief that in the Jewish state Jews should occupy all social strata had eroded, and a reality reminiscent of the socioeconomic stratification in colonial societies was created, in which the majority of agricultural and construction workers were Arabs.

The general euphoria that followed the victory manifested itself mostly in two ways, one vociferous, arrogant, and patronizing, the other low-key. The first appeared in victory albums published after the war that lauded the IDF and its commanders, turning them into celebrities and media darlings. A number of books published after the war related the heroics of various soldiers and units. Among these the most noteworthy was Shabtai Teveth’s *The Tanks of Tammuz*. It described the troops of “the Division of Steel”—the armored division commanded by Major General Yisrael Tal—focusing on the brigade commanded by Colonel Shmuel Gonen. The book exalted the heroism of the brigade’s officers and men—many of whom were to leave their mark in future wars—and became immensely popular. It plucked the heartstrings of an Israeli public longing for exemplary figures from the recent war, heroes of the “state generation” who replaced the heroes of previous generations.

The victory albums exploited the popularity of the IDF and its commanders while broadcasting uninhibited triumphalism, saturating the public with expressions of the IDF’s superiority, the preeminence of its command echelons, and the pitifulness of the Arabs. The commanders emerged from the relative anonymity that until now had characterized the defense establishment and became household names. The tendency to refer to these figures by their nicknames reflected the public’s sense of familiarity with the military leadership: “Arik” (Ariel Sharon), “Talik” (Yisrael Tal), “Gorodish” (Shmuel Gonen), “Dado” (David Elazar), “Motta” (Mordechai Gur), and so forth.

In summer 1967, at a ceremony held in the amphitheater of the Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which had been abandoned for nineteen years, Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin received an honorary doctorate. He delivered an address in which he laid out a very different approach toward victory: avoiding triumphal displays, emphasizing the heavy cost of the war for the victors and the suffering of the vanquished, and sharing the triumph among the whole army, while extolling the values of morality and the spirit. This spiritual attitude was also evident in the emblematic book of the time, *Siah Lohamim* (sol-

diers' talk, whose English title is *The Seventh Day*), which was seen as an expression of undercurrents of feeling in Israeli society. The soldiers had returned home from the war silent and saddened, and the kibbutz movement decided to conduct a series of interviews with its sons who had come back stunned by their experiences. The movement had sustained many casualties; approximately one quarter of the total fatalities were kibbutz members, five times their proportion in the population. The interviews were intended to encourage the soldiers to unburden themselves of their painful memories. The initiative had come from the editorial board of *Shdemot*, the kibbutz movement's literary digest, which since the early 1960s had sought to infuse the kibbutzim with Jewish tradition and the Jewish library. Among the interviewers and interviewees were Amos Oz, Muki Tsur, Abba Kovner, and the book's editor, Avraham Shapira. *The Seventh Day* appeared in October 1967 as an internal kibbutz movement publication. However, talk of it spread, and the demand for copies was great. It was soon published for the general public and became part of the Israeli canon.

The Seventh Day gave expression to the "minor" voice in Israeli society, the values of the generation that had not fought in the War of Independence but had grown up after it in "Little Israel" with the fear of annihilation and the terror of war. The youngsters who fought in the War of Independence had had no fear of defeat in the war and what it might entail. But it was evident that consciousness of the Holocaust had entered the psyche of the younger generation. Their awareness of what the Jewish people had undergone in Europe during World War Two led to two conclusions: that the Arab threats of throwing the Jews into the sea were real, and that it was their duty to defend the nation, to prevent a recurrence of mass extermination and degradation of the Jewish people's human dignity. "All of us agree that both our fighting spirit and our strength in this war sprang from the certain knowledge that the Arabs were bent on a war of annihilation," said Yariv Ben-Aharon.¹ A few years before the war, Ofer Feniger wrote to his girlfriend:

. . . I sit at the memorial evening for the victims of the Holocaust, staring into the eyes of the survivors who are sitting near me, and their entire being expresses helplessness and hopelessness. . . . Out of all this horror and helplessness I feel arising within me a tremendous will to be strong, strong to the brink of tears, strong and keen as a knife, composed and terrible and dangerous. This is what I want to be! I want to know that never again will those vacant eyes stare from behind electrified fences! Only if I am strong will they not do so! Only if we are all strong; strong, proud Jews! Only if we never again allow ourselves to be led to the slaughter.²

Feniger was killed in the paratroopers' battle for Jerusalem.

The feeling that they were fighting for their home, their family, and their

extended national family was a source of strength and of the willingness to sacrifice. At the same time, their knowledge of the Holocaust made them sensitive to the tragedy of the other side. Encounters with fleeing enemy troops inspired not the intoxication of victory but pity for those unfortunate men who had been sent into the killing fields and most likely had families awaiting their return. Encounters with Arab refugees, women and children loaded down with their belongings and seeking escape from the battlefield, aroused in them associations with Jewish refugees vainly seeking refuge in the World War. Paradoxically the same world of values and associations that pulsed in these soldiers and endowed them with the mental fortitude for battle also made them sensitive to the enemy's pain. They felt no hatred toward the Arabs; they were able to muster feelings of hatred toward Germans, but not toward the enemy they had fought.

The encounter with Greater Israel aroused contradictory feelings in these soldiers. Having been brought up on the Bible as a central cultural resource, the expanses of the Land of the Bible, particularly Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, and the Western Wall, stirred deep feelings whose very existence often surprised them. What moved them was the contact with parts of Jewish history, the connection with the mytho-historical past. Some graduates of *Hakibbutz Hameuhad* (which before 1948 had supported the idea of Greater Israel) expressed hope that the uncompleted mission of 1948 would now be fulfilled. But they were a minority. For most the excitement of the encounter with parts of the Jewish past did not include a desire to rule these territories. In fact some felt that the old Israel had been lost in those new expanses: "We've lost our little country," which is ". . . good and beautiful. . . I have practically no emotional ties to the broad areas we hold today," said one of the interviewees.³

The sense of alienation from the new territories became more acute when soldiers encountered their Arab inhabitants. At the end of Independence Day in 1967, which fell on May 15, singer Shuli Natan had performed Naomi Shemer's "Jerusalem of Gold" for the first time. The song had been commissioned by Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek for the Israel Song Festival that evening. During the waiting period, and even more so during the six days of the war, the song became a national anthem sung by soldiers at the Western Wall and everywhere that the conquest of Jerusalem was announced. In it Shemer speaks of a Jerusalem with dry cisterns and an empty marketplace, alluding to prayers and folktales describing the Land of Israel in general and Jerusalem in particular as an enchanting bride awaiting in desolation her groom—the Jewish people—who will come and redeem her. This mythic description left no room for reality, as was evident to anyone looking through binoculars from West to East Jerusalem during the nineteen years preceding the Six-Day War. Now Jerusalem-born Amos Oz described his renewed encounter with the city:

These things cannot be expressed in words. Again I say that I loved Jerusalem in its entirety, but what does this mean? It is like a love affair, a contradictory, tortuous force; she is mine and yet strange to me, conquered but hostile, devoted yet inaccessible. . . .

But the city is inhabited. People live within her streets, and they are strangers, I do not understand their language, they are there—in their homes—and I am a stranger who comes from without. . . . And their eyes hate me, wish me dead. The accursed stranger . . .

All my soul, I desired to feel in Jerusalem as a man who has dispossessed his enemies and returned to the patrimony of his ancestors. The Bible came to life for me: the Prophets, the Kings, Temple Mount, Absalom's Pillar, the Mount of Olives. . . . I wanted to be part of it all, I wanted to belong.

Were it not for the people. I saw enmity and rebelliousness, sycophancy, amazement, fear, insult and trickery. I passed through the streets of East Jerusalem like a man breaking into some forbidden place. Depression filled my soul.

City of my birth. City of my dreams. City of my ancestors' and my people's yearnings. And I was condemned to walk through its streets armed with a sub-machinegun like one of the characters from my childhood nightmares. To be a stranger in a very strange city.⁴

One conversation, held at the Merkaz Harav yeshiva headed by Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, the spiritual guide and mentor of the national-religious youth, was not included in *The Seventh Day*. Editor Avraham Shapira explained later that he found the views aired at the meeting so shocking that he decided to publish its transcript separately in *Shdemot*. Several participants in that conversation expressed the belief that the Days of the Messiah were at hand—an event that would later be defined as “the dawn of redemption.” They acknowledged that on the eve of the war none of them had expected its glorious results or hoped for the conquest of Jerusalem and the other parts of the Land of Israel. But now they saw what had happened as the hand of God and the gradual revelation of a divine plan. “I have a feeling of impending surprises, there's a tension in the air. I feel that something is happening, leading up to something great,” said Dov Bigun.⁵ In contrast to the *Seventh Day* interviewees' compassion for the columns of fleeing Egyptian soldiers, this group thought, as one put it, that when anyone sought to kill the Jewish people, “for me it is a mitzvah to kill him and disperse all the columns in the Sinai desert, and those that flee—to kill them before they even reach the [Suez] Canal.”⁶ When the speaker was asked about Judaism's injunction to love one's fellow man, he replied that those fleeing today would come back to fight tomorrow, and so they should be killed. In clashes between nations

there was no room for compassion. These speakers displayed hatred of the Arabs and total indifference to their plight, and they rejected the humanist faith in the existence of common ground between Jews and non-Jews. They became the core group that seven years later founded the Gush Emunim (bloc of the faithful) movement.

Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun, a founder of the Har Etzion yeshiva in Allon Shvut, subsequently explained the ideological difference thus revealed between the *Seventh Day* interviewees' and the religious Zionists' schools of thought as one of man versus land. One gave primacy to human values, and the other to the value of land. Both these schools belonged to the idealistic minority in Israel, a leadership elite that represented the generation of the state. Here, for the first time, was revealed the schism within this group that in the future would shred Israel's social and political fabric.

The Merkaz Harav people were not the only ones struck by “the burst of light” (an expression used by Hanan Porat, a leader of Gush Emunim). After the war, in September 1967, a manifesto published by the Movement for Greater Israel declared that “we” were not permitted to relinquish any part of the Greater Land of Israel: “We are bound by loyalty to the integrity of our country . . . and no government in Israel has the right to surrender that integrity.”⁷⁷ The manifesto was signed by some of the country's leading intellectuals, including Uri Zvi Greenberg, S. Y. Agnon, Nathan Alterman, Chaim Gouri, and many others. Not a single representative of the generation of the state was among them. Most signers were from the labor movement—not only Hakibbutz Hameuhad and its supporters but also the Mapai mainstream, as well as a new devotee of Greater Israel and former member of Hashomer Hatza'ir, writer Moshe Shamir. The initiative was led by Nathan Alterman, a leading poet of the Yishuv and the state who, in his political poems, gave expression to Israel's lived experience. In the 1950s, as we saw, he fought against the “military government” and was distinguished by his moral approach to politics. He was a supporter of Ben-Gurion, to whom he remained loyal during the affair that tore Mapai apart. Now he took a different path that totally contravened the position of his guide and mentor, who saw no possibility of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel other than as one part of that divided territory.

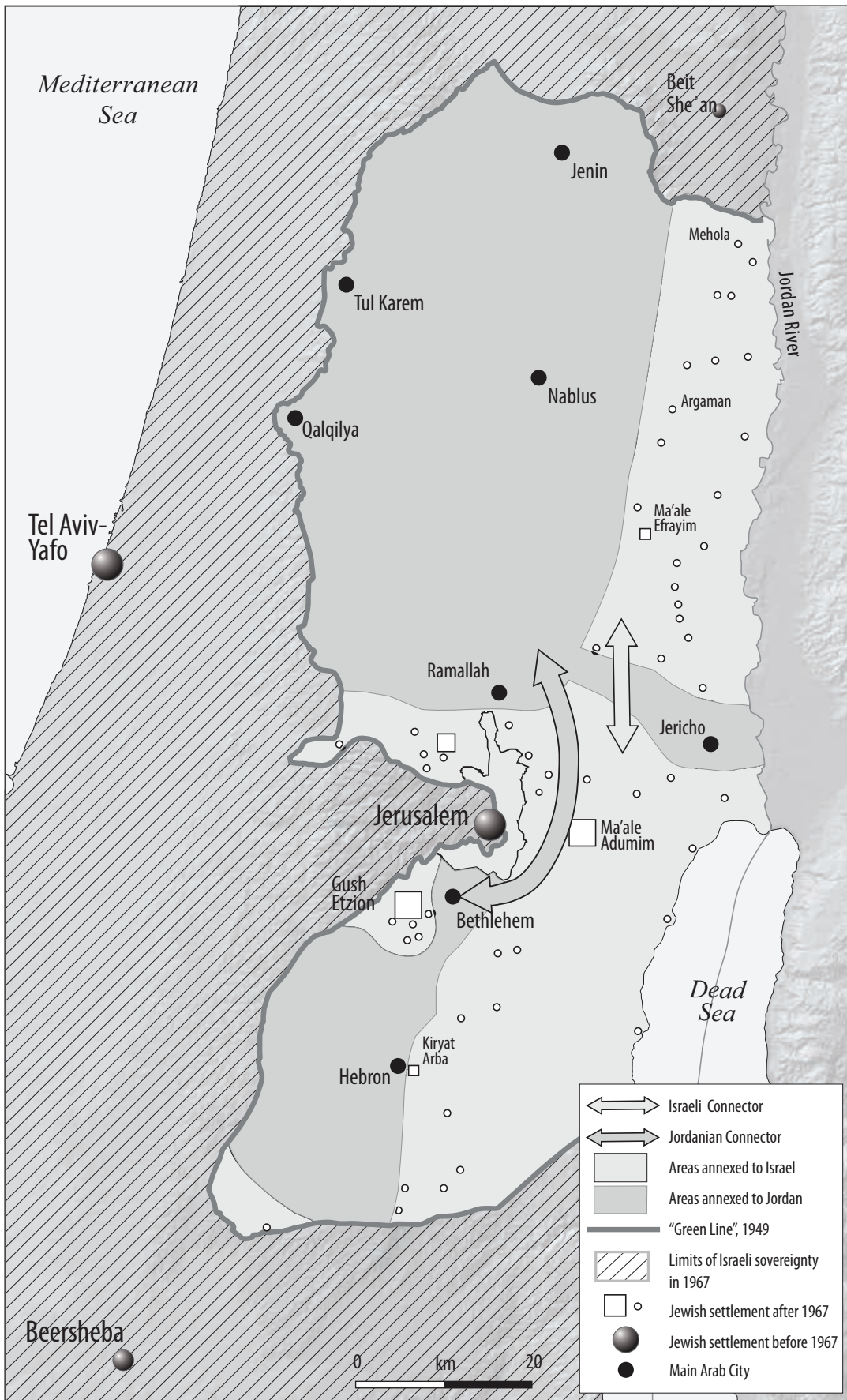
It seems that younger people who reached adulthood after the state was founded were less affected by the exultation that the war generated than the older generation, who after nineteen years of the state's existence still retained the notion of a Greater Israel. But this was not true of the religious-Zionist youth, who now became captivated by messianism. Rejecting the concept that Zionism was a political movement with clear, rational goals, they represented it as the first stage along the path toward enacting the divine plan for redemption of the Jewish

people. The political expression of their infatuation was the strengthening of what was known as “the Mafdal (National Religious Party) Youth” led by Zevulun Hammer, whose slogans supported Greater Israel and opposed territorial compromise. This was a 180-degree turnaround; until then the NRP was considered a decidedly dovish party. It was led by Moshe Chaim Shapira, who had opposed going to war in June 1967, and during the fighting had even recommended that East Jerusalem should not be occupied.

So far the desire for new territory had manifested itself through settlement in areas thinly populated by Arabs, in accordance with what became known as the Allon Plan. Yigal Allon of Hakibbutz Hameuhad, the greatest field commander of the 1948 war, had tried at war’s end to persuade Ben-Gurion to occupy the entire West Bank. He now changed his mind and devised a plan aimed at striking a balance between the demographic constraint that mandated avoiding rule over Arabs and what he perceived as the country’s security needs. *Defensible borders*, the phrase that became current in the contemporary political discourse, alluded to the need for revisions in the Green Line borders that would become “secure and recognized borders” according to the wording of UN Security Council Resolution 242. To guarantee that Israel had “defensible borders,” it had to control the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley, the Rafah Approach area, and southern Mount Hebron (see map 8). These regions, then only lightly populated by Arabs, were to be open to Jewish settlement, on the assumption that they would remain under Israeli control after a peace agreement was signed.

While the Israeli government did not officially accept the Allon Plan, it became the basis for Jewish settlement in the territories until 1977. Nahal outposts were established on the Golan Heights and in the Jordan Valley and the Rafah Approach, and these in time became civilian settlements. The town of Yamit was built in the Rafah Approach area (see map 8). To these should be added the Etzion Bloc, resettled because of the sentimental value attached to its fate, and Jerusalem and its environs, which as we have seen were annexed to Israel. New neighborhoods were built in Jerusalem, such as Gilo in the southern area of the city and Ramot in the north. Settlement in the occupied territories was carried out mainly by nonreligious kibbutz and moshav core groups, continuing the settlement surge from the early days of the state that had come to a halt in the early 1960s.

In 1968 the government faced for the first time a situation in which settlers flouted its authority and settled in the heart of an Arab-populated area. A group of religious Jews led by Rabbi Moshe Levinger celebrated the Passover festival in Hebron and refused to leave. Political advocates from disparate circles such as Gahal, the NRP, and even the Labor Party immediately sprang to their defense. The group remained in the city. This was the first sign of what would happen seven years later.



MAP 8. THE ALLON PLAN, JULY 1967. (SEE PLATE 8.)

A recurring motif in *The Seventh Day* was the hope that the Six-Day War would be Israel's last. Yet the speakers also acknowledged that there was little chance of this, since every ten years or even more often, a new conflagration would flare up; the Arabs would not resign themselves to humiliation and the loss of their territory. The Jews were able to win a war, but could not bring about peace. This pessimism sounded dissonant amid the contemporary euphoria and the high hopes prevalent after the war, but it was justified by the events to come.

Both sides in the conflict radicalized their positions. The Israeli government, which on June 19, 1967, had expressed willingness to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights in return for peace, now backed away from that decision when the telephone call Moshe Dayan expected from the Arab leaders did not come. As we have seen, the September 1967 Khartoum Conference attended by eight Arab states issued its three "Nos": no peace, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with it. Even so, for the first time there was talk that the territories lost by the Arabs might be restored by diplomatic means, but the media focused on extreme statements that blocked the avenue to talks.

After a few months of quiet, clashes flared on the Egyptian and Jordanian borders. The Egyptians tried to compel an Israeli withdrawal from the Suez Canal by shelling IDF forces, which took heavy losses. In addition to constructing fortifications along the canal (the Bar-Lev Line, named after Israeli chief of staff Chaim Bar-Lev), IDF units raided Egyptian positions on the western bank of the Gulf of Suez with the goal of deterring the Egyptians and stopping their artillery, in which the latter held a clear advantage. Once it became evident that this was not preventing the heavy shelling, the air force was deployed, first on a limited scale and then with raids deep inside Egypt, which hit military installations and infrastructure. The cities along the canal were turned into heaps of ruins, and hundreds of thousands of Egyptian refugees fled toward Cairo. The Egyptians responded by soliciting deepened Soviet involvement. The Russians supplied them with large quantities of arms, surface-to-air missiles, and their latest aircraft. Russian technicians and military personnel came to train the Egyptians to operate this new weaponry. Concerned about a conflict with the Soviets, Israel ceased bombing deep into Egypt after April 1970. On the eve of the ceasefire, which came into force on August 8, 1970, there was a battle between the two air forces, with the Egyptian planes piloted by Russians. Five were downed.

There is disagreement over when the War of Attrition (Nasser's term) began. Some date it to fall 1968 with the first border clash, and others say March 1969, after which the battles raged for almost eighteen months. Either way, the border with Egypt was both dangerous and stormy until the end of the War of Attrition. This war tested the IDF's ability to withstand a prolonged battle with heavy casualties (more than seven hundred Israelis were killed). The IDF endured this

long and difficult conflict, but after the glory of the Six-Day War victory it seemed both purposeless and hopeless.

Meanwhile the border with Jordan was also turbulent. Starting in fall 1967 Palestinian terror groups began organizing, encouraged by the PLO, which hoped to rouse the West Bank population into a guerilla war against the occupation. The population, however, was generally passive and did not rise to the challenge. The PLO then took upon itself the task of organizing for resistance. The “open bridges” over the River Jordan were open in both directions, and arms, materiel, and personnel were smuggled across them into the West Bank. Terrorist acts against civilians inside the Green Line and in Jerusalem were perpetrated. In an attempt to deter the PLO, the IDF launched the Karameh operation in March 1968. Karameh was a small village in southern Jordan that housed both the PLO headquarters and Yasser Arafat, who had replaced Ahmed Shukeiri as head of the organization. It was a large-scale operation aimed at destroying PLO infrastructure in the area. But the operation was not a success. The Jordanian army intervened, and dozens of its troops were killed, together with more than a hundred terrorists. The other terrorists dispersed in the area. The IDF lost some thirty men as well as several tanks and one aircraft, a high price to pay for what was at best a mediocre achievement. The terror organizations claimed great success; their men did not flee for their lives but stood their ground and fought well, even inflicting losses on the invincible IDF. From a propaganda standpoint Karameh was the foundation story of the mythology of Palestinian resistance.

Soon the PLO and the other terrorist organizations reverted to operating from Jordan, using that Palestinian-majority country as a base for attacks against Israel. The Palestinians shelled the Beit She’an Valley settlements, which for a long time had to black out their homes at night. The IDF returned fire and also deployed the air force. The agricultural strip to the east of the River Jordan was completely destroyed. The PLO grew stronger in Jordan as it in effect appropriated the Hashemite kingdom for its own use. Actions against Israel, terrorist strikes against international aviation, and the Israeli retaliations all threatened the king’s rule and the security of his kingdom. In September 1970—“Black September”—King Hussein deployed his forces against the terror organizations, and after a bloodbath drove them out of his kingdom. The border with Jordan became quiet, and the terrorists transferred most of their activities to south Lebanon.

The never-ending war and the daily casualty figures published in the press had a very depressing effect on public opinion. Israel had a national unity government headed by Golda Meir, who had replaced the late Levi Eshkol. To avoid an internal struggle between doves and hawks (terms imported from the American Vietnam War lexicon), the Labor Party decided (in the argot of the time) not to

decide. Until real negotiations were held with an Arab state, the government of Israel should not lay out its territorial claims. As Golda Meir declared, “The ‘what’ will come when the ‘who’ appears.” American plans for an imposed settlement, such as one proposed by Secretary of State William Rogers that spoke of an Israeli withdrawal to the borders of June 4, 1967, and peace agreements with Arab states, were rejected by Israelis and Arabs alike. The Israeli government’s declared policy was that it would examine every opening for and possibility of peace. But the actual stance was that the Arabs were not prepared to recognize Israel’s existence, so there was nobody to talk to and no peace on the horizon.

In the larger world these were turbulent years that influenced what was happening in Israel. Student demonstrations in Europe and the United States, mass rallies against the Vietnam War, social unrest in America, the challenge posed to American bourgeois values by the “flower children,” the development of youth culture as opposed to adult culture, and opposition to every authority structure in society—especially the cult of patriotism—were all extremely potent developments that were absorbed by the somewhat puritanical, naive culture of idealistic Israeli youth. These trends and ideas were brought to Israel by the volunteers who flooded the kibbutzim and by media reports on events in Europe and the United States.

The new trends found fertile soil. In the wake of the Six-Day War, the relatively stable Israeli society lost its anchorage. Between the depth of anxiety and the euphoria of victory, between the deep relief of victory and the realization that peace was not yet in sight, the face of the country changed, and very rapidly. The economic growth that followed the war widened the gaps in society. The norms of making do with little and of egalitarianism that had existed (at least in theory) in the smaller Israel eroded. Israeli society seemed materialistic, avaricious, and hedonistic. The standard of living rose. Particularly notable were the nouveaux riches who had accumulated their wealth from constructing fortifications and army camps. Immigrants from the USSR, who unlike the North African immigrants of the early 1960s now benefited from enhanced absorption conditions, aroused hostility from residents of poverty-stricken neighborhoods and evacuees from the ma’abarot, who saw this as ethnic discrimination.

In 1971 there appeared in Jerusalem a group of social activists assisted by social workers who worked with street gangs in the poor neighborhoods. Calling themselves “the Black Panthers” (another term imported from the United States), they organized stormy demonstrations under slogans demanding an end to discrimination by the Ashkenazim against the mainly North African Mizrahim. Israel had not seen an ethnically oriented social protest since the Wadi Salib riots of 1959. A meeting between representatives of the Black Panthers and Prime Minister Meir only heightened the distance between the two sides. The

Panthers left the meeting feeling that the prime minister saw them not as the core group of a political movement (as they saw themselves) but as marginal youth in need of rehabilitation. After a violent Panthers demonstration in Jerusalem's Sacher Park at the Mimouna celebrations (a North African Jewish tradition), Golda Meir was quoted as saying "They are not nice," a remark that was never forgotten and never forgiven.

Still the government was not indifferent to the socioeconomic problems that had been exposed. That year's budget included increased funding for education and welfare. A prime ministerial commission established to examine the situation of deprived children and youth revealed grave economic hardship among immigrants from Asia and Africa that required immediate attention. The commission submitted its findings in June 1973. The outbreak of the Yom Kippur War that October shifted attention from social problems to security and political matters. However, the Black Panther movement can be seen as marking the beginnings of ethnic protest in Israel, and the issue has remained on the agenda ever since.

The appearance of a marginal "new left" group, Matzpen, heralded a new phenomenon: Israelis raising doubt about the righteousness of statehood. No longer the old communist or socialist left, for the new left the USSR had lost its luster after invading Czechoslovakia in 1968. The heroes of the new left were Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Ho Chi Minh, and third world guerillas fighting against Western capitalist enslavement. In the Israeli arena it was the Palestinians who captured the imagination of the new left, which saw them as oppressed people fighting a popular war against Western imperialism and post-1967 Israel as strong, sated, and belligerent. Forgotten was the left's support of Israel as the state of Jewish refugees, forgotten the fight against antisemitism. From now on they considered Israel to be on the wrong side of the barricades in the struggle for freedom and the deprived of the world. Matzpen espoused new left positions and applied them to the local scene. This was no longer criticism of some government policy, but criticism challenging the very legitimacy of Israel's existence, since its establishment was bound up with injustice to the Palestinians.

Marginal groups such as Matzpen and even the Black Panthers were extremely small and unable to inspire popular trust. The vast majority of Israelis from both left and right, whether or not they agreed with all their government's actions, had faith in its assurance that it would leave no stone unturned in its quest for peace, and that the never-ending war Israeli youngsters faced along the borders was a "war of no choice." But in early 1970 internal tensions coupled with an erosion of morale among young people due to the war-without-end and its numerous fatalities erupted in a series of events. That April it transpired that Nachum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, was putting out feelers to

Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, seeking to hold a meeting with him. It is unclear whether there was anything in these contacts and whether Goldmann really was invited to Cairo. What is clear is that the government of Israel, headed by Golda Meir, took a dim view of Goldmann's attempt at diplomacy and his flaunting of himself as the uncrowned foreign minister of the Jewish people. Goldmann took advantage of his freedom to go to places where official Israel was barred from sending an envoy. Nor did he always act after consulting the Israeli government or in accordance with its wishes. As scholar Meir Chazan writes, Goldmann's initiative was in the twilight zone of diplomacy.

For our purposes it does not matter whether the meeting in Cairo could have taken place. What is important is the storm that blew up over what the public saw as the government's refusal to give Goldmann its blessing for a possible peace opening that should not be missed. Bitter controversy raged in the papers between Goldmann's supporters and opponents. A group of fifty-six Jerusalem high school students sent a letter to the prime minister warning, "We and many others are therefore wondering how we can fight in a permanent, futureless war, while our government's policy is such that it misses chances for peace."⁸ Unlike the American opponents of the Vietnam War who went to Canada to avoid the draft, most of the signers of this letter enlisted in combat units a few months later and served on the Suez Canal front.

The letter, which became known as "the Twelfth-Graders' Letter," drew powerful reactions of support and opposition among Israeli youth. Israeli society then embarked on a political discourse on peace, which until then had been avoided. At the same time, the Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv staged a satirical review by Hanoch Levin titled *Queen of the Bathtub*. Apart from its use of obscene language and extremely crude imagery (influenced by the new permissiveness), which disgusted the audience, the piece was a trenchant antiwar satire, the likes of which had never before been seen in Israel. At one point it accused fathers of sacrificing their sons to war. It is doubtful if other democratic countries would have allowed the staging of such a performance at a time when the cannons were thundering. Both the vehement protests from audiences and the general public outcry against the play, alongside support for the play and its messages and for freedom of expression, highlighted press coverage for more than a month.

Symbolically connected with this event was the performance of "Song for Peace" by an army entertainment troupe. Composed as an anthem by Ya'akov Rotblit and inspired by *Hair*, this song spoke in the name of the fallen in the War of Attrition and called for peace activism (in the vein of "Give Peace a Chance"): "Let the sun rise / And give the morning light / The purest prayer / Will not bring us back." It concluded: "Don't say the day will come / Bring the day / because it is not a dream / And in all the city squares cheer only peace." It aroused the ire of

IDF Head of Central Command Rehavam Ze'evi, who forbade its performance. The song has since become the anthem of the Israeli peace movement.

Israeli society's soft underbelly was now exposed: the psychological difficulty of withstanding a protracted war, the sensitivity to the loss of life, and the longing for peace. The vast majority of Israelis believed they were in a "war of no choice" and must grit their teeth and serve in the IDF to the best of their ability. Although the media highlighted the budding of the dovish left, in fact the government's assertion that there was no one to talk to, and in the meantime nothing to talk about, had almost wall-to-wall support. Still the lengthy three-year period of compulsory military service, the frequent call-ups to reserve service, and especially the lists of the fallen all hurt morale. The joy of victory was replaced by deep frustration. The Israeli consensus maintained under the Labor Party was now challenged on both social and political fronts. The damage to the national ethos was still limited to cracks, but they presaged what was to come.

NOTES

1. *The Seventh Day: Soldiers Talk about the Six-Day War*, Tel Aviv and London, 1970, p. 122.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 218–219.
5. Conversation at the Rabbi Kook yeshiva, *Shdemot* 29, Tel Aviv, 1968, p. 16.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
7. Greater Israel manifesto, 22.9.1967, published in all the Israeli newspapers.
8. Meir Chazan, "Yozmat Nachum Goldmann lehipagesh im Nasser bishnat 1970" (Goldmann's Initiative to Meet with Nasser in 1970), *Studies in Zionism and the State of Israel*, vol. 14 (2004), p. 277.

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15 THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, 1973



On October 6, 1973, Yom Kippur, the air raid siren sounded all over Israel, marking the beginning of a new era, though at the time no one imagined this. The Yom Kippur War—or the October War, as the Egyptians called it—was a watershed in both Israeli and Middle Eastern history. Perhaps even more than the Six-Day War, it reshaped Israel’s self-image, as well as its political and social space and its relations with its neighbors.

No one in Israel or the West expected war to break out in the fall of 1973. In September 1970, about a month after the War of Attrition ended, Nasser died suddenly and was succeeded by Anwar Sadat, one of the least prominent among the officers who led the 1952 coup in Egypt. Diplomatic and intelligence reports described him as a “gray” man, lacking both drive and leadership. The assessments claimed that he was incapable of initiating a new political line or, alternatively, a war. For the three years between fall 1970 and fall 1973, the Israeli-Egyptian border remained quiet. In the first month after the War of Attrition ceasefire, which was intended to freeze the existing situation, the Egyptians deployed surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) along the Suez Canal in a flagrant breach of the ceasefire agreement. Israel’s protests were fruitless, since the Egyptians ignored American demands that the missiles be withdrawn and Israel did not consider them sufficient reason to break the ceasefire.

Israel had not correctly assessed the depth of the Egyptians’ shame and humiliation over the occupation of the Sinai Peninsula and the defeat of their army. Their willingness to instigate clashes with the Israelis, and then the War of Attrition soon after the end of the 1967 war, should have provided Israel with sufficient evidence to realize that Egypt, the largest and strongest of the Arab states, would be unable to accept the status quo over time. The deployment of the SAMs along the canal was another hint of Egypt’s belligerent intentions. But complacency reigned in Israel due to the scale of the 1967 victory, which led to conceit and arrogance in the IDF high command. The military leadership considered the Egyptian army inferior and incapable of sacrifice and perseverance. An intelligence “conception” emerged, holding that as long as the Egyptian army was not being supplied with Scud tactical ballistic missiles capable of hitting the Israeli home front and advanced military equipment that would give it an advantage over the IDF, the Egyptians would not attack. This assessment was based on controversial intelligence reports. Was the source credible, or was the information passed on by a double agent to mislead the Israelis? The intelligence chiefs

contended further that the Egyptians would not dare attack, because they knew the IDF would trounce them. But even if the Egyptians did attack, they would mount only a partial effort that the regular IDF units could handle until the reserves were mobilized. Reserve mobilization required forty-eight hours.

In early 1971, not long after he had succeeded to the presidency and consolidated his position, Sadat sent out feelers hinting at a change in the Egyptians' line, suggesting an attempt to reach an agreement with Israel, ostensibly in negotiations on extending the ceasefire along the Suez Canal, which was to end within three months. In November 1970 Moshe Dayan spoke publicly about a mutual reduction of Israeli and Egyptian forces along the canal, and even an Israeli withdrawal to some distance from it to enable Egypt to clear the canal, reopen it to shipping, and rebuild the cities along its banks. This move was designed to lessen the pressure on Israel to reach a settlement on the basis of a complete withdrawal from the occupied territories, and also to ensure continuation of the ceasefire. Furthermore such an arrangement would encourage the Egyptians to keep the border quiet.

Dayan's proposals were greeted unenthusiastically in Israel since they involved withdrawing to some degree from occupied territory without a peace agreement. But Sadat, continuing Dayan's line of thinking, made a proposal of his own: if Israel agreed to withdraw to the El Arish–Ras Muhammad line (approximately in the middle of Sinai) and transfer the area to Egyptian control, including military control, he would extend the ceasefire, open the canal to shipping, rebuild the canal cities, and even allow an international force to remain in Sharm el-Sheikh to ensure free passage through the Gulf of Eilat. Israel, however, was unwilling to withdraw to the Mitla and Giddi passes and allow the Egyptian army to cross to the eastern bank of the canal. Even though an interim agreement would not impose conditions on a future final agreement, both sides were afraid to take a step that might weaken their negotiating positions on a final agreement. Israel feared withdrawal without an advance accord on a peace treaty at the end of the process. Sadat demanded an advance agreement on an overall withdrawal to the June 4, 1967, borders and conditioned a peace treaty on resolution of the Palestinian problem.

The American mediators believed that the positions of the two sides were too far apart to facilitate an agreement. The stalemate continued for the next two years and was only broken after the Yom Kippur War. In the soul searching that took place in Israel after the war, and considering that the interim agreements reached after it were very similar to those proposed by Sadat, the question was asked whether Israel had made a tragic mistake by rejecting Sadat's 1971 proposals. This is one of those questions a historian has difficulty answering. The situation before the war bore no resemblance to the situation afterward, with

regard both to Sadat's position and ability to take dramatic steps, and also to the government of Israel and its insights on the situation and its possibilities. Before the war, could Sadat have agreed to an interim arrangement without a statement on a final settlement? Would the Israeli government have been justified in relinquishing territory in exchange for an ambiguous nonbelligerency agreement without a peace treaty? These questions will remain open for historians to consider. In the context of 1971 they were linked to the Israeli and American leaders' prewar assessment and limited trust in Sadat and his intentions.

Over the next two years the United States was engaged mainly with other regions of the world. The Middle East was the backyard of international policy. Sadat reinforced his position in Egypt. He declared that 1971 would be a "decisive year," but it passed without the ceasefire being broken despite the failure of talks on the interim agreement. In July 1972 Sadat demanded that the Soviet Union withdraw its military advisors from Egypt, a clear hint to the United States of his intention to change his orientation. Sadat recognized that he needed American support in order to force Israel to withdraw, but at this stage the Americans showed no interest in breaking the Middle Eastern stalemate. They, like the Israelis, believed that should there be an armed conflict, Israel would easily defeat the Egyptians.

Egyptian planning of the October War was based on Sadat's assumption that if he managed to occupy any territory on the other side of the Suez Canal, he would break the stalemate and change the status quo. The Egyptians intended for their army to cross the canal in large numbers all along the line, then dig in along a narrow strip, ten to fifteen kilometers in width, under a SAM umbrella. For the Egyptians the trauma of the Six-Day War had been the stunning victory of the Israeli Air Force, which had exposed the Egyptian ground forces to aerial attack. Now the Egyptians sought to defend themselves against a similar possibility by densely shielding their army with SAMs, which would neutralize the Israeli Air Force's superiority. Egyptian planning for the war was tested in maneuvers, the most significant of which took place in April 1973; it led the IDF to declare a high alert and mobilize reserves. Later it emerged that this series of maneuvers was in fact drilling the Egyptian army in crossing the canal, and was also designed to mislead the Israelis and dull their alertness with false alarms. Repeatedly crying wolf would ultimately make them inattentive toward any signs of an imminent attack. In April 1973 Sadat and Syrian president Hafez al-Assad agreed on the war plan. On September 25 King Hussein warned Golda Meir about an imminent coordinated Egyptian-Syrian attack. He did not mention a precise date. His warning followed a Cairo summit where he had learned of the joint war plan. The role assigned him was to prevent an Israeli attack on Syria through northern Jordan.

All the signs on the ground pointed to the Syrians' and Egyptians' belligerent

intentions. The massing of Egyptian troops along the Suez Canal and their deployment of bridges close to it were clear indications of imminent attack. Large Syrian armored forces were observed along the Golan Heights border with Syria. Dayan commented that the numbers of the massed forces could cause a heart attack. But Israeli intelligence continued to maintain that there was a “low probability” of war since the conditions Sadat needed for an attack had not been attained. This assessment was a combination of complacency and exaggerated self-confidence, which assumed at least a forty-eight-hour warning even if war did break out, ensuring the time needed to mobilize the reserves.

On Friday, Yom Kippur Eve, the Israeli cabinet convened for an emergency meeting. Intelligence had been received that left no doubt that war with Syria and Egypt would break out the following day. The intelligence spoke of war beginning at 6 p.m. In fact it broke out at 2 p.m. In that Friday discussion Chief of the General Staff David “Dado” Elazar requested permission for a preemptive air strike against the massed Egyptian and Syrian forces. The cabinet refused, to prevent Israel from appearing as the aggressor. The cabinet warned the US administration that war was imminent, stating that Israel had no intention of launching a preemptive strike. At the same time, the cabinet decided on limited mobilization of the reserves. Fortunately an additional armored brigade had moved onto the Golan Heights a few days earlier, which proved critical in halting the Syrian assault.

The Yom Kippur War was the reverse of the Six-Day War: instead of a swift, dramatic victory, there were large numbers of casualties, loss of control and misreading of the battlefields, in-fighting among the generals, and absence of credibility. Everything that could go wrong did. The Syrians’ swift advance led to urgent, traumatic evacuation of Israeli settlements on the Golan Heights. In an era of armored warfare, the myth of settlements defending territory no longer applied. The command post at the Nafakh base fell to the Syrians. Mount Hermon was taken by Syrian commandos. There were only small armored units—a few tanks, a company here and a company there—between the Syrian tanks and the Jordan and Hula Valleys, which halted the Syrian advance thanks to sacrifice by their crews. For two days the situation in the north seemed dire. The air force had difficulty operating due to the Syrian missiles. Only with the arrival of the reserves and the beginning of reorganization did the battle to retake the Heights get under way, followed by an IDF offensive that took the war beyond Kuneitra and on the road to Damascus. By the eve of the ceasefire, the IDF had retaken the Mount Hermon stronghold vital for observation of Syrian territory.

The Egyptian crossing of the Suez Canal began with an intense artillery barrage of the Bar-Lev Line strongholds. Although there had been an early warning, the troops were caught unprepared for an assault. Egyptian forces crossed the

canal under cover of their artillery. Some of the Israeli troops in the strongholds were killed, some were taken prisoner, and others managed to find their way back to the IDF lines. The Israeli Air Force, occupied in halting the Syrian and Egyptian advance, took heavy, unexpected losses from the SAMs. The Egyptian army's strategy proved itself effective. In the early stages of the war, the need to provide assistance to the ground forces prevented the Israeli Air Force from taking out the missile bases, increasing aircraft losses. The loss of the pilots was far graver than the loss of the aircraft. Since the Six-Day War the prevailing perception in the IDF had been that the air force would be the decisive factor in a war. Both training of and investment in infantry and armored forces had been somewhat neglected. For example, the Israeli troops had no night vision equipment, and the Egyptians did. The Egyptians' Russian-made Sagger antitank missiles decimated the Israeli armor since the Israelis had no tactical response to them. The IDF's equipment was shown to be out of date, and some was even unavailable; the emergency stores, opened when the reserves were mobilized, were frequently found to be half empty. The hurried mobilization under emergency conditions exposed the flaws in the IDF's logistical setup.

As usual, success has many fathers, while failure is an orphan. The Yom Kippur War gave rise for the first time in Israeli military history to a "war of the generals," as Head of the Southern Command Shmuel (Gorodish) Gonen—a legendary hero of Shabtai Teveth's *The Tanks of Tammuz*—continually clashed with his predecessor, Ariel (Arik) Sharon, who now led a reserve division under Gonen's command. Gonen, who had taken up his appointment the summer before the war, could not seize control of his front and did not function well. His tactics were those of a divisional commander, not the head of an entire command. For his part Sharon was disinclined to obey orders from either his direct superior or even the chief of the General Staff, and directed his division's operations as he saw fit. The "war of the generals" took place as bitter battles raged in the first days of the war, with the IDF not yet adapted to the new combat conditions.

The first five days of the war found Israel in a defensive holding position, but still launching localized counterattacks on both fronts. On October 8, based on unverified intelligence and an erroneous reading of the situation, the IDF launched a counterattack on the southern front that ended in failure. That was probably the most difficult moment of the entire war. Tanks were destroyed and their crews killed, planes and their pilots were lost. Dayan lost his self-possession and prepared to announce "the destruction of the Third Temple" at a press conference. Golda Meir, who had been warned of Dayan's intention by a newspaper editor, stopped him from making the announcement. Concerned by the loss of combat equipment, she made a dramatic personal appeal to US president Richard

Nixon to airlift military equipment to Israel, hinting that the state was in grave danger. Nixon agreed, and the airlift began on October 14.

In the meantime the cabinet and General Staff made a decision about priorities: to tilt the balance to the Syrian front, which was the most dangerous due to its proximity to Israeli population centers, and meanwhile to remain on the defensive on the Egyptian front. Once it had contained the Syrian attack and regained most of the Golan Heights, the IDF launched a counterattack there on October 11, and within three days the situation had changed beyond all recognition. When the fighting ended the suburbs of Damascus were within IDF artillery range. In the south, between the failure of October 8 and October 14, the IDF continued its defensive tactics while making every effort to prevent attrition of its forces. On October 14 the Egyptian army abandoned its original plan to remain under its missile umbrella and launched an armored attack in Sinai. In this battle the Egyptian army lost some 250 tanks, and the IDF only 20. With the weakening of the Egyptian army and the defeat of the Syrians on the Golan Heights, the time had come for an Israeli offensive. It began with IDF forces crossing the canal, continued with the conquest of its western bank, and ended with the outflanking of the Egyptian army. When a ceasefire was announced on October 22, the IDF controlled the roads to Cairo and Damascus. The IDF exploited Egyptian breaches of the ceasefire after the announcement to complete its encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army. The ceasefire came into force on October 24.

The first days of the war were the gravest. During this time the myths of the IDF's power and fighting ability and the Arabs' weakness and combat inferiority were shattered. Not only had the Egyptians and Syrians caught Israel by surprise—Israel, which boasted of particularly superior intelligence—but in the fighting itself the IDF could find no response to the Sagger missiles deployed ingeniously and courageously by Egyptian troops. The armor and air force suffered heavy losses. The fall of the canal strongholds, with many of their defenders either captured or killed by the Egyptians, was a severe blow to morale. Images of the prisoners shown on television shook the myth of the brave, strong sabra who never surrendered. Throughout the years of the state, this myth had defined the accepted pattern of behavior of the sabra, who was supposed to embody a stark contrast to the Diaspora Jew who meekly submitted to his oppressors.

Approximately half the casualties occurred in the first five days of the fighting. Some 2,300 men fell in the war (another estimate puts this figure at 2,600) and more than 5,000 were wounded (according to another estimate, 7,500). Some 100 aircraft were lost and close to 1,100 tanks were disabled, 400 of which were completely destroyed. The Arabs, however, lost about 370 aircraft and 2,250

tanks, about 15,600 of their troops were killed, and some 8,700 were taken prisoner (compared with 300 Israelis). But Israel was shocked by both its losses and the slowly penetrating realization that there were moments in the war when the state's very existence appeared to hang by a thread. One of the papers published a wordplay on the Hebrew word *blima*, which means defensive action and is also part of the idiom "hanging by a thread."

In the first days of the fighting, the public had no idea what was happening on the two fronts and continued to believe that the IDF would "break their bones," as the chief of the General Staff promised. As the war went on and the Egyptians broadcast images of the Israeli prisoners, the Israeli public realized that this war was different, not the unending parade of achievements they had been accustomed to since 1956. Poet Yehuda Amichai wrote: "The October sun warms our dead. / Grief is a heavy wooden board, / tears are nails."¹

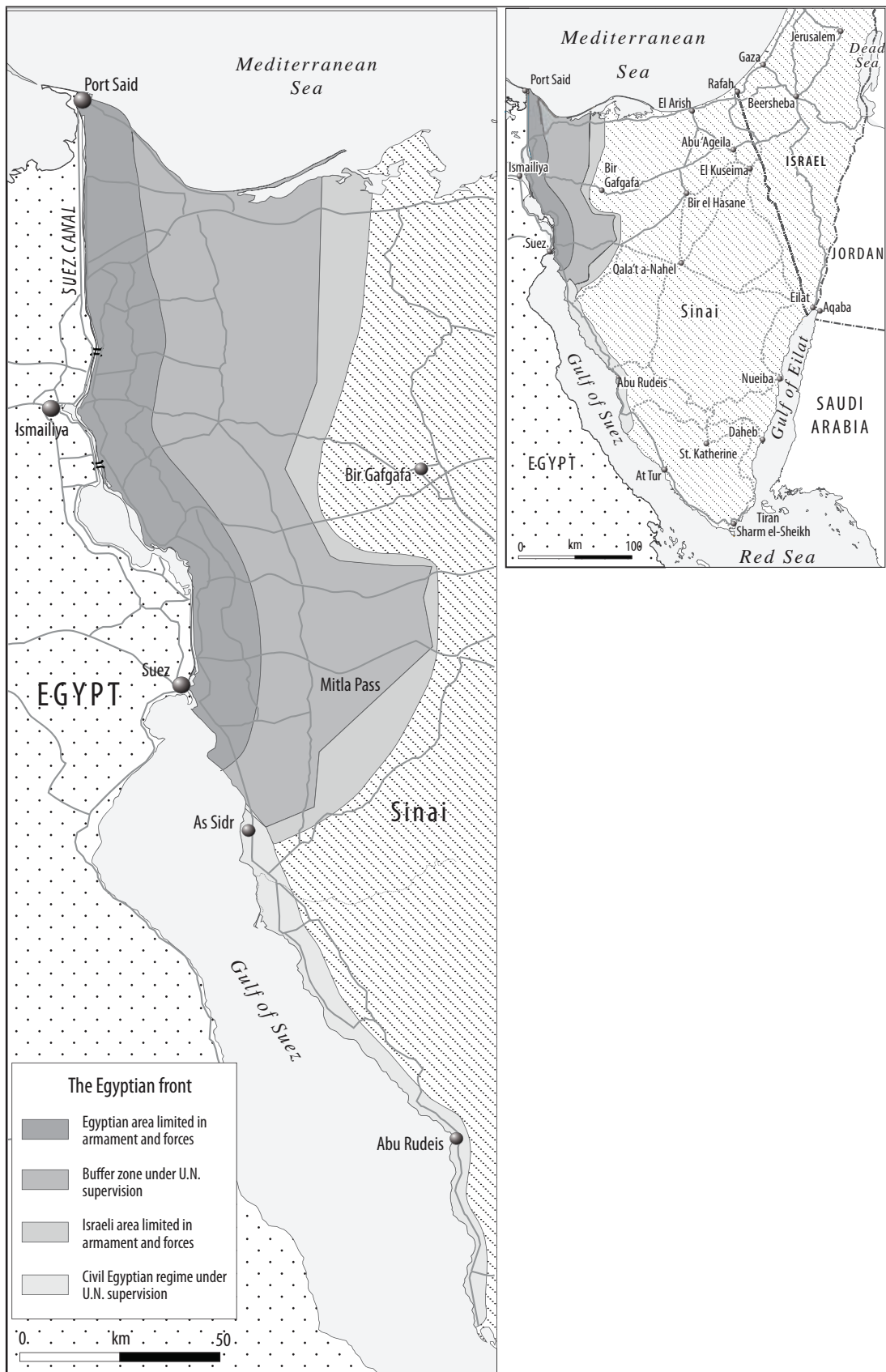
The war ended with the Israeli and Egyptian forces interlocked. Israel was unable to release its reserve units, making a return to normal life extremely difficult. The encircled Egyptian Third Army needed supplies, which Israel provided in small quantities under the aegis of the UN. The situation could not continue for long; both sides had an interest in disengagement. Israeli forces had reached Kilometer 101 on the Suez–Cairo road, where on October 28 General Abdel-Ghani el-Gamassi and Brigadier General Aharon Yariv met for direct negotiations, the first of their kind in Israeli-Egyptian relations. The two negotiators represented their countries' leaders—Anwar Sadat and Golda Meir—and reported back to them throughout the talks. Their behind-the-scenes partner was US secretary of state Henry Kissinger.

One outcome of the war was the enhanced status of the United States in the Arab world, since Sadat was convinced that although the Soviets could supply him with arms, they were unable to exert pressure on Israel to withdraw. Israel, on the other hand, was isolated and dependent more than ever on the United States, leaving it vulnerable to American pressure. The European countries had not shown support for Israel in its hour of need, and would not help with the American airlift. During the war, on October 17, the Arabs had announced an oil embargo in protest against American aid to Israel, causing an unprecedented rise in oil prices. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil cartel reaped vast profits, but the Arabs also recognized the need to talk with the Americans. Kissinger, who before the war had been seldom involved in Middle Eastern affairs, now developed the concept that an agreement between Israel and the Egyptians would constitute the foundations of further agreements between Israel and the nations of the Arab world; that such an agreement should be made step by step without creating unrealistic expectations on both sides; and that the United States must play a leading mediating role between the two sides.

The formal framework for the agreements was to be an international conference in Geneva, initiated by Nixon and Kissinger and attended by the Soviets as part of the US-USSR détente. But the real negotiations between the parties would be mediated by Kissinger, who would control the entire process. The talks at Kilometer 101 were progressing well, with Gamassi and Yariv finding a common language. Here the six clauses that would be the basis of the disengagement were agreed on. They covered prisoner exchange, supplies to the Third Army, and removal of the Egyptian blockade of the Bab el-Mandeb Straits imposed at the beginning of the war, which partially blocked passage to the Gulf of Eilat. Egyptian forces would remain in a ten-kilometer-wide strip to the east of the Suez Canal. Israel would withdraw from the territory it had occupied west of the canal, and also from a twenty-kilometer-wide strip to its east. A ten-kilometer-wide buffer zone between the IDF and the Egyptian army would be occupied by a UN Emergency Force (UNEF) to supervise implementation of the ceasefire and the disengagement. Forces on both sides would be reduced to seven thousand troops. At one stage the direct talks at Kilometer 101 were stopped under pressure from Kissinger, who wanted the Geneva Conference to reap the rewards for reaching an agreement. The agreement was signed in Geneva on January 18, 1974. Its outline formed the basis of future agreements between Israel and Egypt. The lesson learned from the direct talks at Kilometer 101 was that this format enabled rapid progress in negotiations. It was not forgotten.

It was more difficult to achieve a military disengagement agreement with Syria. Following prolonged negotiations, which deteriorated, leading in March 1974 to a war of attrition along the border, an agreement was signed in Geneva on May 31, 1974, whereby Israel undertook to withdraw from the territory it had occupied in the war (UNEF troops would be stationed there), prisoners were exchanged, and the Syrians undertook to reduce their forces along the border. Although it was both the aggressor and the losing side, Syria insisted on a territorial gain similar to what Egypt obtained in Sinai: Israeli withdrawal from some of the territory occupied in the 1967 war. Long, arduous negotiations ensued, with Kissinger shuttling between Jerusalem and Damascus. Israel eventually agreed to withdraw from the ghost town of Kuneitra and hand it over to the Syrians, and the Syrians waived their demand for additional territory. This Israeli concession facilitated the disengagement agreement. Thus the Yom Kippur War came to an end.

The October War was inscribed in Egyptian history as a great victory that expunged the shame of the 1967 war. The crossing of the canal by Egyptian forces and their entrenchment on its western bank, with the IDF unable to prevent this or drive them out, were etched in the Egyptian collective memory as brilliant successes, as they indeed were. The rebuilding of the Egyptian army,



MAP 9. THE ISRAEL-EGYPT INTERIM AGREEMENT, 1974.
 (SEE PLATE 9.)

which demonstrated its combat ability and achieved its objectives, restored Egyptian national pride. A museum commemorating the victory was built in Cairo. The anniversary of the war replaced the anniversary of the officers' coup as a national holiday and was marked by a celebratory military parade. The myth of the October War was vital in building Sadat's status in Egypt as the leader who reestablished the country's preeminence in the Arab world. Sadat's enhanced position would enable him to reach a peace agreement with Israel without considering the positions of either the other Arab states or the Palestinians.

Despite the surprise factor and the bitter failures of the first days of fighting, the Yom Kippur War ended in a great Israeli victory. But that is not how Israeli public opinion perceived it. On the eve of the Six-Day War, Israel had been in a state of deep anxiety that was transformed overnight into euphoria by the brilliant victory. On the eve of the Yom Kippur War, Israel was profoundly complacent, and as a consequence of the war this complacency turned into depression. An entire nation mourned the thousands of fallen and wounded and sank into a national trauma whose traces did not dissipate for decades. Faith in the leadership—led by the Israeli Labor Party, which had been so much the center of national decision making since 1933 that to the national psyche it seemed eternal—was now irretrievably lost.

Faith in the military leadership was also shaken. Since the Six-Day War the IDF's commanders had been seen as almost legendary figures able to overcome any enemy. The media crowned these invincible generals as the world's best. Public opinion went along with the media's arrogance and conceit and tended to believe the slogans. It was both easy and comforting to feel safe and protected by the IDF. And then came the war that took the IDF commanders by surprise and proved the IDF's superior intelligence to be flawed. The reserves were mobilized late. The army was badly equipped. The "war of the generals" erupted. All these lapses undermined the image of the IDF and its leadership. Israel returned to its psychological condition before the Six-Day War: a small country in constant existential danger. It was "the twilight of the gods."

The military disengagement agreements with Syria and Egypt, including the UNEF mandate, were initially set to last for six months and later were periodically extended. March 1974 saw the lifting of the Arab oil embargo on the United States, but the entire Western world had entered a period of economic instability, a vortex of inflation and unemployment, as a result of OPEC's dramatic increases in the price of oil. The Americans sought to strengthen the close ties that had developed between them and Egypt, with the aim of weakening Soviet influence in the Middle East and boosting moderate trends in the Arab world. This required that they continue buttressing the interim agreements by further positive steps. An attempt at an interim agreement between Israel and Jordan was unsuccessful.

cessful; King Hussein demanded the Jordan Valley, but the Israelis would not concede security control over it. They made a counterproposal: a functional share of authority in the West Bank, in which King Hussein would be responsible for civil life and the Israelis for security. Hussein was unable to accept this proposal, for he would have been condemned for collaborating with the Israeli occupation. A resolution was passed at the 1974 Rabat Arab Summit recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, thus expropriating Hussein's authority over the West Bank. With the Syrians, the possibilities of a further interim agreement on the Golan Heights were limited both because of the nature of the terrain and because Assad displayed no interest in the idea. Kissinger's attention therefore focused quite naturally on advancing the agreement between Israel and Egypt.

In the meantime the White House had a new occupant. Nixon resigned in the aftermath of the Watergate affair and was replaced by Vice President Gerald Ford, who had been appointed to the vice presidency following the resignation of Spiro Agnew. In Israel Yitzhak Rabin was appointed prime minister (see following chapter). The Rabin government was attacked from without by a vociferous opposition, and from within by ministers who did not accept Rabin's authority. The government appeared divided and incapable of making decisions. It was in this situation that Kissinger attempted to mediate between Sadat and Rabin in order to achieve a more stable agreement regarding Sinai, which would contain elements ensuring quiet in the long term. The Israelis wanted to remove Egypt from the circle of hostility to obviate any possibility of a future attack on two fronts. Egypt wanted both the Sinai territory and to advance its relations with the United States. It demanded the strategically important Mitla and Giddi passes and control of the Sinai oil fields. Israel was prepared to accept a smaller withdrawal and in exchange demanded abrogation of the state of war between Israel and Egypt.

Kissinger began shuttling between Israel and Egypt, employing all his diplomatic skills to narrow the gaps between the two sides. But Sadat would not commit himself to ending the state of war, and Israel refused to withdraw beyond the eastern slopes of the passes. At a certain stage Sadat was inclined to accept an alternative formula to nonbelligerence: "nonuse of force." Israel was ready to return the oil fields, but the two sides disagreed on the coastal strip that would connect the oil fields with Egyptian territory. The territorial issue of the passes remained unresolved, and in March 1975 the talks collapsed. Kissinger hinted that in the absence of an agreement hostilities would be resumed and the oil embargo reimposed, but the Rabin government rejected these threats. This refusal to buckle under American pressure enhanced Rabin's prestige among the Israeli public. But it did not improve the situation. Kissinger tacitly placed the blame for the failure of the talks on Israel, and President Ford spoke of "a

reassessment” of the special relationship between Israel and the United States. The supply of arms and other aid to Israel was held up. However, American public opinion sided with Israel, limiting the pressure that the administration, which faced reelection, could exert. In May 1976, seventy-six US senators signed a letter to the president demanding that Israel’s economic and military needs be met.

For their part both Israel and Egypt were interested in making progress toward an agreement. In the summer of 1975 negotiations were resumed under Kissinger’s vigorous mediation. Israel agreed to the compromise formula of “nonuse of force” and nonrenewal of hostilities for an unlimited period. It also agreed to withdraw beyond the Mitla and Giddi passes, but held on to the ridge commanding them. Early warning stations on the Israeli and Egyptian sides, staffed partly by American civilians, were designed to prevent a surprise attack. Most of the territory relinquished by Israel remained a buffer zone controlled by UNEF. The Egyptians were given sovereignty over the territory vacated by Israel, but their forces remained reduced, as were the Israeli forces beyond the buffer zone (see map 9). In the future these elements of demilitarization, reduction of forces, and early warning stations staffed by American civilians were also effective components of peace agreements between the countries. The interim agreement signed on September 4, 1975, also stated that disputes between the two countries would be resolved peacefully and that the Egyptians would permit nonmilitary cargoes from and to Israel to pass through the Suez Canal, which was reopened in June 1975. The agreements created a situation in which both sides had a great deal to lose if hostilities were resumed. They constituted a signal of Egyptian willingness to enter into bilateral agreements with Israel.

The factor that remained outside any framework of talks was the PLO. Israel and the United States agreed that talks with the PLO were out of the question so long as the organization did not recognize Israel and UN Resolutions 242 and 338. As we have seen, the PLO was forced out of Jordan in 1970. Despite engaging in terror attacks to attract the world’s attention, the PLO did not succeed in shaking Israel’s hold on the occupied territories. It did, however, have some surprising successes in the international arena after the 1974 Rabat summit resolution recognizing it as the representative of the Palestinian people. Yasser Arafat was invited to address the UN General Assembly on November 13, 1974, and the PLO was granted observer status at the UN. The following year the General Assembly passed a contemptible resolution that equated Zionism with racism while undermining the very legitimacy of the Jewish state. These developments correspondingly heralded the PLO’s increasing legitimacy in world public opinion.

Meanwhile, two developments of regional importance occurred during the 1975–1976 civil war in Lebanon, fought mainly between Christians and Muslims. First, the Syrians entered Lebanon to put a stop to the killing between the two

sides. Israel accepted this action as long as the Syrians did not move south of the Litani River. Second, the Palestinians, who supported the radical Muslim left in Lebanon, were pushed out of most parts of the country. They were now concentrated in the Sidon and south Lebanon area, which was inaccessible to the Syrians due to Israeli opposition. Within a few years this area became the PLO's base and headquarters—"Fatahland"—from which it launched its guerilla and terror attacks against Israel.

With Jimmy Carter's election to the US presidency, it became clear to Israel that despite its agreements with the previous administration that the PLO would not be a partner in talks as long as it did not recognize Israel, the new president viewed the Palestinian problem as the heart of the conflict and sought to bring about a change in Israel's positions. The talks between Rabin and Carter were extremely thorny. The new administration also adopted a different concept for managing the Middle East conflict. American policy since 1973, led by Kissinger, had been oriented by the conviction that it would be easier to reach agreement with each Arab state separately and that an attempt to reach an overall settlement was doomed to failure, since any joint discussion would increase pressure from extremists. Therefore Kissinger avoided reconvening the Geneva Conference after its ceremonial opening in early 1974. This policy was also aimed at neutralizing active Soviet participation in negotiations, on the assumption that the Soviets would only lead the Arabs to radicalize their positions. The Carter administration, inexperienced and driven by a profoundly religious belief that it could bring about an inclusive peace, deviated from all these policy guidelines. Thus within a year all the partners to negotiations on the interim agreements had changed, except for Sadat. The time had come for a reshuffle.

NOTES

1. Yehuda Amichai, "Shirei erez tzion Yerushalayim" (Songs of Zion: Jerusalem), *Me'ahorei kol zeh mistater osher gadol* (translated by Ted Hughes as Amen), Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Schocken 1985, p. 8.

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16 ISRAELI SOCIETY AFTER THE YOM KIPPUR WAR



When the Yom Kippur War broke out, Israel was in the midst of an election campaign in which Golda Meir's slogan claimed that the country's situation had never been better. Given the war and its aftermath this choice of slogan was rather ironic. The elections were postponed until late December 1973 and held while the country was still in shock and while the disengagement negotiations were taking place. The Alignment (Hama'arakh) comprising the Labor Party reestablished in 1968 as a unified party with Mapam, Rafi, and Ahdut Ha'avoda lost five seats in the Knesset, dropping from fifty-six to fifty-one. This weakened it but did not cause its loss of hegemony. The Likud (comprising Gahal and some small right-wing parties), appearing in these elections for the first time, won thirty-nine seats (Gahal had won twenty-six in the 1969 elections). The result was a substantial shift in the balance of power between left and right.

Golda Meir, however, managed to form a coalition with the National Religious Party. She insisted that Moshe Dayan continue as minister of defense. The Israeli public, whose pressure had brought about Dayan's appointment to the defense portfolio on the eve of the Six-Day War, had put almost unlimited faith in Dayan as the man in charge of Israel's security. Now their idol had let them down. It was a painful, difficult, unforgiving disappointment. Initially Dayan refused to join the government. However, Meir saw his refusal not as a bowing to public opinion, which blamed him for the failures, but as an attempt to torpedo the government she had worked so hard to form. Dayan eventually capitulated and joined the government.

In the meantime public pressure had led to formation of the Agranat Commission, an independent commission of inquiry chaired by a Supreme Court justice, which was to determine who was responsible for the *mehdal* (failure or great blunder) of the army being taken by surprise and unprepared for war. The commission's report apportioned blame among Chief of the General Staff David Elazar, the head of military intelligence and several of his aides, and Head of Southern Command Shmuel Gonen. The chief of staff and the other IDF officers were relieved of their duties. The commission chose not to blame the civilian leadership, a verdict received angrily by broad segments of the public, who expected justice to be meted out to the political leadership. The soldiers back from the war took part in mass demonstrations outside the government offices under the slogan "Dayan—Resign!"

In the face of this public outcry, Golda Meir resigned on April 11, 1974, mandating the resignation of her government. The Labor Party central committee convened to elect her successor. The party's veterans and its left wing (formerly *Ahdut Ha'avoda*) favored Yitzhak Rabin. Shimon Peres, a close friend of Dayan, was the candidate of another section of the party and its right wing (formerly *Rafi*). Rabin won by a small margin. A new government was formed in June 1974 by Rabin, the Six-Day War chief of the General Staff, who had recently completed his tenure as Israel's ambassador to Washington, DC, and had served in a minor ministerial post in Golda Meir's previous government. Although he was inexperienced as a politician, his nonparticipation in the decisions leading up to the Yom Kippur War was a point in his favor. Shimon Peres was named minister of defense.

Thus, almost unnoticed, a change of generations took place in Israel's leadership. Golda Meir came from the "founding generation" that had immigrated to Palestine in the early twentieth century and been part of all the enterprises and travails preceding statehood. It was a resolute, tough generation of leaders formed by the crises of the *Yishuv* period, World War Two, and Israel's wars. When Levi Eshkol died in 1969, the baton of leadership should have been passed to the native-son generation that fought in the War of Independence. But out of fear that a contest between the two candidates, Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, would tear the party apart, Golda Meir was chosen as an interim measure to defer the internal struggle. With Golda's departure the veterans' generation, which saw itself as personally responsible for the fate of the Zionist enterprise, left the political stage.

After the Yom Kippur War Israeli politics moved from the corridors of power and the established frameworks of Israeli democracy into the street. Political protest as a permanent event, expressed in demonstrations and mass pressure on the government aimed at influencing policy, was previously unheard of in Israel. There were protest movements such as the Black Panthers and a women's demonstration at Mapai headquarters calling for Dayan's appointment as minister of defense on the eve of the Six-Day War, but they were fleeting or small in scale. Now for the first time movements appeared that succeeded in mobilizing the masses in repeated demonstrations. This phenomenon seems linked to the appearance of television in Israel. The Yom Kippur War was the first of Israel's wars to take place in the television era. The immediacy of visual information brought the war and its horrors into every home, creating a sort of virtual community of participants in the experience that united the troops at the front and their families at home. Initially the demonstrations comprised only a few people, but the telecasts showing the demonstrators and their placards turned a relatively marginal phenomenon into a central one in Israeli life. Because of this exposure they gained momentum week by week.

The first wave of protest movements called for Dayan's head. Participants came from left and right alike, soldiers and bereaved families, demanding that the man they considered responsible for the *mehdal* take responsibility for it. As noted, the Agranat Commission report placed all the blame on the military, while exonerating the political leadership that gave the military its orders. Until then the principle that a leadership was obligated to take public responsibility for its acts and omissions had not been put into practice in Israeli politics (and it is doubtful that it was strictly adhered to in Western democracies). It was inconceivable that Ben-Gurion would be called upon to resign after defeats in the War of Independence. The Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was not viewed as a failure of President Roosevelt's. In terms of the sensitivity of both the public and the leadership to the leaders' obligation to own up to mishaps, blunders, and failures, and also the ability of public opinion to influence the centers of government, 1974 was a watershed year. The demand that the leadership assume responsibility for a failure, especially if it involved loss of life, recurred in Israeli politics from then on.

Together with this protest movement, which did not represent a specific political group, another new movement appeared: Gush Emunim. It originated in spontaneous organizations of young yeshiva students, especially from the Merkaz Harav yeshiva, students from *yeshivot hesder* (yeshiva programs that combine advanced Talmudic studies with service in the IDF), graduates of the Bnei Akiva religious youth movement, devotees of Greater Israel from both religious and nonreligious camps, and veterans of settlement in the occupied territories (Hanan Porat from the Etzion Bloc; Rabbi Moshe Levinger from Hebron; and Yehuda Harel from the Golan Heights). Fully aware of the despair and pain prevailing among the Israeli public in the aftermath of the war, they discerned that the government was willing to make territorial concessions in Sinai and the Golan Heights and feared that the bitter war with its numerous casualties would lead the government to yield to American pressure for an Israeli withdrawal.

As we have seen, since the Six-Day War the Israeli public had been divided on the future of the occupied territories between those who saw them as collateral held by Israel until the Arabs saw fit to reach a peace agreement and those who asserted, "Liberated land shall not be returned" and "Not one inch." The left viewed the war and its terrible cost as the result of unwillingness to compromise and withdraw from territory in exchange for an agreement (for even less than peace) and demanded flexibility regarding territorial concessions. The right, especially the founders of Gush Emunim, saw the war as proof of the Arabs' resolve to destroy Israel and concluded that there should be no concessions or policy that might be construed as submitting to pressure, since that would only invite further, unending pressure. To the right the war and its outcome was a

great victory, the likes of which had not been seen since 1948; they paid no attention to the weaknesses it had exposed or, even more to the point, the price it had exacted.

The circles that founded Gush Emunim came mainly from the national-religious bloc. Gershon Shafat, a founder-member, wrote that despair and pain had evoked in the members “new hope for a new beginning, a beginning derived from unshakable faith in The Creator and the command imposed on us to go forward.”¹ These assertions are appropriate to a messianic movement guided by a hidden divine commandment revealed only to its adherents, which ignores reality in the name of a loftier truth. They do not involve rational consideration of what is possible and desirable; rather, they impose a concept of faith on reality and act in accordance with it. This frame of mind ran counter to the fundamental Zionist concept that viewed the return to Zion as a project coming to fruition in the real world, while abiding by the real world’s constraints.

For Gush Emunim the natural channel for political activity was the NRP. Yet although the party’s “youngsters,” led by Zevulun Hammer and Yehuda Ben-Meir, were stronger, the party was not controlled by its Greater Israel devotees, and its positions were politically moderate. Its leadership, headed by the experienced veteran Yosef Burg, sought to continue the party’s “historical alliance” with the Labor Party. Gush Emunim and the younger leaders demanded that the NRP not join Golda Meir’s government after the December 1973 elections unless she agreed to form a national unity government. The Labor Party rejected this idea, since such a government would undermine any possibility of an agreement with Egypt and Syria. And that was precisely what Gush Emunim wanted. Once the group’s members realized they would be unable to act through the NRP, they chose an extra-parliamentary strategy. The disengagement negotiations with Egypt indicated that the danger they had predicted in any progress toward an agreement was imminent, for it was clear that Israel would be compelled to concede territory. Although it was difficult to contend that Sinai or the Golan Heights—both outside the borders of the historical Land of Israel—were “the land of our forefathers,” the willingness to relinquish territory occupied in the Six-Day War pointed to a trend that in time was likely to affect Judea and Samaria.

The first demonstrations against the disengagement agreement were organized by right-wing intellectuals and political activists. But Gush Emunim swiftly made its mark on these actions. In contrast with the small number of participants in the right’s demonstrations, and especially the difficulty people had in continuing to demonstrate over time, Gush Emunim mobilized settlers from Judea and Samaria and the Golan Heights and “settled” outside the Knesset and the prime minister’s office. They came one day with their wives and children, set up a temporary encampment, and by the next morning some two thousand peo-

ple in prayer shawls were standing beneath the windows of the cabinet conference room, an image that was immediately broadcast on television. Gush Emunim's mobilization capability was total. It was not restricted by either financial constraints or another agenda. Each time Kissinger shuttled to Israel, he was met by stormy demonstrations and roads blocked by Gush Emunim.

During the difficult negotiations with Syria in May 1974, when it appeared that the sticking point between Israel and Syria was the fate of Kuneitra, settlers from the Golan Heights established an unsanctioned "settlement" in a bunker in the deserted town. The first ones were nonreligious members of kibbutzim and moshavim. Once they realized that their movement, Hakibbutz Hameuhad, did not support them, they handed the settlement over to a Gush Emunim group that had undertaken to establish a permanent settlement, with the proviso that if the government demanded that they move to another location, they would do so. And that is what happened. Kuneitra was eventually vacated, but Keshet, the illegal settlement, became a permanent settlement on the Golan Heights in Israeli territory. Thus was set a precedent of establishing a settlement without government approval, and receiving that approval retroactively. It was a lesson that would not be forgotten.

At this early stage the Gush Emunim modus operandi was already set: mass mobilization of settlers, yeshiva students, and other students from the national-religious education system; use of the settlements' logistical resources to mobilize and maintain demonstrations; long-term protests; and illegal settlement with the help of supporters or quasi-supporters from the military and political establishments. What made this effort possible was the religious fervor that drove the Gush leadership and endowed it and its supporters with extraordinary mental fortitude at a time of waning confidence and loss of direction in Israeli society. Poet Yehuda Amichai gave expression to the connection between the trauma of the war and the strengthening of messianic movements: "This is a country whose dead are in the earth / In place of coal and gold and iron / They are the fuel for the coming of messiahs."²

The hard core of the Gush was small, as was evident during the Rabin government's term of office when the same Elon Moreh core group settled in different locations as a protest against the government's refusal to permit Jewish settlement in the heart of Judea and Samaria. It was a sort of wandering group of activists that initiated settlement at a specific location, announced the action through social and study networks to mobilize supporters, and then, once they had embarrassed the government, which had them removed, would plan their next settlement in a different location. Each time a political decision was on the agenda, the Gush communication network would heat up and go into action to mobilize the masses. During the negotiations on the interim agreement with

Egypt, Gush demonstrators accompanied Kissinger throughout his stay in Israel, making life a misery for him and his bodyguards and chanting antisemitic epithets such as “Jew-boy” (an allusion to a Jew in the service of non-Jewish rulers).

It was not only the self-sacrifice of the Gush and the eagerness of its youngsters to take part in its demonstrations as a break from their daily religious study routine (especially since this allowed boys and girls to engage in joint activities and hike all over the country) that worked successfully for the movement. It was also the government’s indecisiveness in the face of the Gush activists’ resolve. That indecisiveness accompanied settlement activity from the start. When Rabbi Levinger refused to leave Hebron, he was supported by Yigal Allon, even though settlement in that city contravened the Allon Plan. Settlement in the Etzion Bloc resonated with the mythology of the loss of the bloc in the 1948 war and received government approval after pressure was exerted. Gush Emunim adamantly refused to settle within the borders of the Allon Plan, which although not officially accepted by the government was the *de facto* guideline for Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria. Defiance of the prohibition of settlement in the densely Arab-populated heart of Samaria was a declaration of intent: the government must be prevented from compromising on areas of the historical Land of Israel.

The inhabitants of the settlements along the River Jordan, in the Rafah Approach, and on the Golan Heights, settlements established in accordance with the Allon Plan, gave the Gush Emunim settlers a tailwind as well as moral and material support. To those settlers and their supporters, the messianic fervor of Gush Emunim and their mobilization to settle the Land of Israel were a continuation of the enthusiasm of the labor movement settlers along the borders. The two types seemed similar: the fruit of youth movement education with the same simplicity, the same direct approach, the same straight-talking sabra Hebrew. To all appearances only the yarmulke and observance of the commandments separated the pre-Six-Day War settlers, the later “Allon Plan settlers,” and the new settlers who operated on the other side of the Green Line and usually challenged governmental authority. Gush Emunim exploited their similarity with the other settlers to bolster their legitimacy in the eyes of Labor ministers. What is the difference between Jewish settlement in Afula and in Samaria, they argued. Both had the same degree of legitimacy, deriving from the Jewish people’s right to its homeland. They swiftly developed the notion that they were the true successors of the early pioneers, a legitimate branch of the tree of Zionist pioneering that had settled the country. They had received the torch from the nonreligious pioneers, who had lost their fervor and whose time was past. Now the time of religious Zionism had come, which was raising the banner of the new pioneering. “Handing over the torch” symbolized what they perceived as an essential change needed

in Israeli culture: the shift from secular to religious hegemony. Not only were these new settlers the implementers of the Zionist pioneering endeavor, they were also the forerunners of Israeli culture, owning “the full cart” of traditional Jewish culture, as opposed to the nihilistic secular Jews, who had lost direction and whose cart was empty of values and true meaning.

During 1975 evacuation of illegal settlers from areas of Judea and Samaria was a permanent part of the IDF’s daily routine, a recurring ritual that neither side took very seriously. This nonchalance came to an end with a clash at the Sebastia settlement, initiated by Gush Emunim. In early December 1975 hundreds, and perhaps more, Gush Emunim members and their supporters went to the old railway station at Sebastia, stubbornly insisting that they would remain there, in contrast to previous instances when they had agreed to leave. All attempts at persuading them to leave voluntarily so as to avoid military force were fruitless. It was also clear that if the army evacuated them forcibly, they would reenact the same performance a few weeks later. As the settlers remained in place, the fear of the need to use force against them heightened. The press began to show sympathy for these young people who did not flinch from the harsh living conditions, remaining on-site with their wives and children, exposed to the wind, rain, and cold. The television images highlighted their self-sacrifice. Nor was the army eager for the confrontation that would occur if it had to evacuate them by force. A compromise began to emerge that the government eventually accepted. A thirty-family group of settlers would be housed in the nearby Kadum army camp, and the army would provide them with employment.

This was a breakthrough for Gush Emunim: the beginnings of settlement in Samaria. “Some would call this the course of history. The believers will call it realization of the will of Divine Providence,” wrote Gershon Shafat, a leading player in this drama.³ As for the government, it suffered a harsh blow to its authority. During the discussions that ultimately led to the compromise with Gush Emunim, the memory of the *Altalena* and the need to impose the state’s authority were evoked. But Rabin was not Ben-Gurion, and his government, which relied on a small majority in the Knesset and was divided between supporters of Rabin and Peres, did not dare undertake an action that might lead to Jewish bloodshed caused by other Jews. In the midst of this crisis, representatives of Jewish communities in other parts of the world convened in Jerusalem to express their solidarity with Israel in the wake of the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism. Rabin was understandably reluctant to present them with a scene of the IDF using force against Jews. Gush Emunim’s victory in the Sebastia affair proved that a small but determined minority, prepared to go to the brink of violent confrontation, could impose its will on a vacillating government.

The Rabin government did not enjoy many good days. As part of the interim

agreement with Egypt, Rabin obtained a package of economic benefits, as well as large allocations of advanced weaponry that the United States had agreed to supply, above and beyond what Israel had received in the past. But the war cost Israel \$8 billion, a vast sum that severely depleted the country's foreign currency reserves and led to a huge deficit in its balance of payments. The rise in oil prices and the resulting global economic crisis also burdened the Israeli economy. The government had to cut its spending and lower the country's standard of living. Tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs. In the Rabin government's first year, annual inflation passed 50 percent. To curb inflation and improve the balance of payments, the lira was substantially devalued. At the end of 1975 the rate of exchange was nine lirot to the dollar, compared with 4.2 lirot to the dollar before the emergency economic program. Inflation began to drop but was still above 30 percent annually.

But while the economy showed signs of recovery and the gross national product rose, the lowering of the standard of living and high unemployment, together with continuing inflation, did nothing to boost the government's popularity. Economics experts argued that these measures were vital for economic recovery, but the public refused to accept this. There were demonstrations by the Black Panthers and other protest organizations. Workers called upon to tighten their belts responded with a series of strikes that hit the economy and prevented implementation of some of the government's reforms. In the medium and long terms, the reforms in taxation, subsidies, wages, export incentives, and devaluation ultimately benefited the economy. But in the short term they aroused public hostility.

An atmosphere of gloom and dissatisfaction pervaded the country, remnants of the national trauma of the war. Israelis neither forgot nor forgave the Labor Party for the *mehdal*. The conflicts between left and right sharpened when "territorial compromise" and "not one inch" occupied a permanent place in the headlines—even though no Arab leader had shown himself open to territorial compromises. Fears of the PLO's rise in the international arena and Zionism's loss of legitimacy were also worrying. In addition the Rabin government was damaged by several serious cases of corruption involving figures connected with the Labor Party. These affairs further damaged the government's reputation. There was a sense of loss of direction. In 1975 Yehonatan Geffen gave expression to this feeling in a pop song titled "Yakhol Lihyot Shezeh Nigmar" (Perhaps it's over): "They say it was great here before I was born / And everything was just wonderful until I arrived." He enumerates a series of Zionist symbols from the Mandate period, such as Little Tel Aviv and the sand dunes, the swamps and the mosquitoes; quotes lines from old Zionist songs like "For This Is Our Land"; and contrasts nostalgia for the past with the present: "They say that there was a

wonderful dream here once / But when I came to see I didn't find a thing. / Perhaps it's over."

In 1968, when the Labor Party was formed as a union of Ahdut Ha'avoda, Rafi, and Mapai, the former two factions, which had left the party in the previous generation, had ostensibly "come home." But actually the wings of the party were strengthened at the expense of the old Mapai. Mapai's decline had begun with the Lavon Affair, in which the party's veterans fought one another fiercely, with Ben-Gurion and Pinchas Lavon leading the fray—prepared, like Von Kleist's character Michael Kohlhaas, to destroy the party for the sake of justice. Mapai, which had been the anchor of every political alliance, gradually faded away, leaving the arena to the two wings, which were preoccupied mostly with competing with each other. The political moderation and keen sense of reality that had characterized the historical Mapai—together with a total commitment to the public interest, as its leaders understood it—won the party the trust of broad segments of the Israeli public, who saw it as a balanced, responsible force that could navigate Israel to a safe haven. But now the public felt that the party had lost its moorings, its leadership was weak and divided, and it was not providing direction to a nation in crisis.

In the reality of the 1970s, with the emergence of a new middle class comprising people from the liberal professions, businessmen, and various types of contractors, and clearly oriented toward capitalism, the old socialist slogans sounded hollow. The Rabin government's attempts to institute social norms promoting accurate income tax statements and to fight what was known as the "black economy" hit the middle class and did not inspire sympathy for the government. Israeli welfare policy functioned to prevent wide socioeconomic gaps in Israeli society, which up to the early 1970s maintained (relative to Western countries) a high level of equality. Now arguments were heard for a free market economy and a decrease in state involvement. Intellectuals and businessmen demanded that the socialist ethos be replaced by a Western liberal ethos emphasizing individual rights and freedoms, as opposed to the rights of the collective. There was a feeling that the Labor Party had run its course and it was time for a change of government.

The corruption scandals that rocked the country during those years also undermined trust in the government. The standards expected of a government changed; what had been acceptable in the early years, such as the use of state resources to advance the Histadrut economy, was now rejected out of hand, and Israel accepted the conventional governmental norms of Western countries. The corruption cases exposed the existence of the old norms, but also highlighted the transparency of the new norms that were now expected from the government. Television broadcasts focused on the scandals, emphasized government weaknesses, and presented the leaders as laughingstocks, especially in the satirical TV

revue *Nikui Rosh* (head cleaning), which became very successful. Satirizing government figures was another new, previously unknown practice.

The Arab population of Israel underwent a shift in identity and a psychological change as a result of its encounter with the Arabs of the occupied territories. At first the Israeli Arabs boasted of their economic achievements compared with those of their brethren from the West Bank. But as time went by, their identification with the Palestinian people became stronger, while their sense of identity as Israeli citizens weakened. This process gained impetus due to the Yom Kippur War and the dramatically heightened international status of the PLO. During the Nasser period pan-Arabism was popular among Israeli Arabs. When he died, they mourned him as a symbol of pan-Arabism. But the Arab states' military failures and the relatively scant attention paid to the Palestinian issue weakened this nationalist pan-Arab connection, and Palestinian identity became the shaper of Israeli Arabs' national character.

This change was revealed in reduced support for moderate Arab politicians who considered the existence of the State of Israel a *fait accompli* and sought to integrate into it. The moderates fought for equal rights and to raise the status of the Israeli Arabs, while maintaining channels of communication with the authorities and avoiding confrontation with them. Most were represented by parties associated with either the ruling party or Mapam. Now Arab public opinion perceived them as servants of the Jews who were not fighting the battle for Palestinian rights. The parties allied with the Jewish sector declined. Rakah (New Communist List), composed mainly of Arabs, rose, in comparison to Maki (Israeli Communist Party), whose members were Jews. Unlike the PLO, whose covenant claimed rule over all of Western Palestine and removal of Jews who came to the country after 1918, Rakah was loyal to the Moscow line that recognized Israel's right to exist. However, it underwent processes of radicalization that were also influenced by increased Soviet support of the PLO. Rakah studiously avoided illegal activities and restricted itself to protests, parliamentary activity, and publications. It warned of discrimination against the Arab minority, but at this stage did not encourage people to take to the streets in protest, fearing it would lose control of them, which might lead to suppression by the authorities. Attainment of equal rights was at the top of the Israeli Arab agenda, and since Rakah had championed this cause for years, its status was enhanced.

The increased radicalization of the Arab citizens of Israel arose from several factors. The first was demographic growth. In 1949 some 150,000 Arabs lived in Israel. By the mid-1970s this figure had reached half a million. This population increase created a sense of increased power. Second, the behavior of the Arabs of Judea and Samaria influenced the Arabs of Israel. In the first half of 1976, there was a flood of demonstrations in the West Bank due to the PLO's heightened

status and the Palestinian population's growing identification with it after the Rabat summit. In addition radical PLO supporters were elected in the municipal campaign held in April 1976. The Gush Emunim settlement at Kadum and other, government-initiated settlements also enraged the Arab population. On television the Arabs of Israel saw their West Bank brethren hurling stones and Molotov cocktails at IDF soldiers and learned from their methods. Third, the situation of the Israeli Arabs caused discomfort. Members of the Arab intelligentsia compared themselves with the university graduates on the West Bank, noted the comparatively high standard of high schools there, and realized they were in an inferior position. From that point on Israeli Arabs no longer compared their situation with what it had been before Israeli statehood, but with the progress made in the Jewish sector. The leaders claimed that discrimination was practiced against Arabs in the education system and in allocations for building classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sports facilities. They also came out against the minimal teaching standards, which they claimed were designed to keep the Arabs ignorant so as to provide manual laborers with low status and low wages. The Ministry of Education was accused of discrimination against the Arab heritage in its curricula in order to obscure Arab national identity. These claims were not unfounded.

A central issue in the propaganda and protests of Rakah and the radicals was the Arab village. Although agriculture in the villages had advanced, irrigation projects were undertaken, and houses had running water, the protest leaders contended that the Arab farmers were discriminated against with respect to government guidance and aid and marketing conditions. A core problem they raised was land. In Palestinian culture the land (*al-'ard*) is not just a means of production but a symbol of possession; there is an unbreakable bond between the farmer and his land on both personal and political levels. The land is the homeland. It was not by chance that at the end of the 1950s a nationalist movement named *Al-'Ard* appeared in the Arab sector. It was outlawed. In the 1950s the state expropriated large tracts of land for development. Throughout the 1960s and up to the mid-1970s, there were no expropriations, yet the sensitivity toward land continued, and Rakah promoted this issue as a central component of the local identity.

In the summer of 1975 there was news of government plans for the "Judaization of Galilee" that would include expropriation of certain lands. The Arabs perceived the term "Judaization of Galilee" as a plot aimed at neutralizing their dominance in this region, which had an Arab majority. Village committees were set up to defend the land. In February 1976 news emerged of a government decision to expropriate some 5,000 acres, of which 1,750 were Arab-owned and the rest either Jewish-owned or state lands. The decision also spoke of compen-

sating the landowners and the possibility of land exchange. But neither the fact that the expropriation was relatively small nor the attempt to soften the blow with compensation prevented the ensuing uproar. On March 30, 1976, the Committee for the Defense of Arab Lands, run by Rakah and other nationalist entities, declared a general strike—Land Day—“as an expression of the genuine anger beating in the soul of our people against the policy aimed at uprooting us from every piece of land we own.”⁴ During the strike the protesters threw stones and cans of burning kerosene at the security forces and erected barricades of rocks and burning tires on the roads. The curfew imposed on the Galilee and Triangle villages was not observed, and the protesters clashed with police and army forces. In shooting incidents six Arabs were killed and dozens wounded, along with numerous policemen and soldiers.

Since then Land Day has become a key date on the calendar for the Arabs in Israel, the Palestinians in the occupied territories, and even the Palestinian diaspora, as a symbol of national solidarity and unity of objective. And since then the agenda of the Israeli Arabs has included the demand to establish a Palestinian state side by side with the State of Israel as an expression of the Palestinian right to self-determination. Land Day and its associated events exposed the Jewish public to the bitterness and outrage of the Arabs of Israel. But it is doubtful that it helped bring the majority and minority closer together. The Jews saw Arab violence as a demonstration of the government’s loss of control and of the urgent need to increase the number of Jews in Galilee. From the Rabin government’s point of view, Land Day was another development that weakened its status.

In July 1976 the government did have a gratifying moment when an elite IDF unit freed the hostages from a hijacked airliner in Entebbe, Uganda. This Air France plane took off from Israel and was hijacked after a stopover in Athens, then flown to Uganda, whose ruler, Idi Amin, cooperated with the hijackers. The hijackers demanded the release of terrorists held in Israel, Germany, and other countries. After a few days of anxiety during which the government authorized Rabin to negotiate with the hijackers, the IDF formulated a plan to free the hostages, who were being held six thousand kilometers from Israel. The government approved the operation. Hercules transport aircraft carried the IDF force, and the mission was accomplished with very few casualties. It was a daring operation, executed in exemplary fashion. For a day or two Israel forgot its day-to-day troubles and the depression that had prevailed since the war and celebrated the operation’s success, which garnered superlatives in the world press. But the reprieve did not last long.

In December 1976 the first F-15 aircraft arrived in Israel and received a state welcome. Rabin viewed their arrival as an expression of the warm relations he had nurtured with the American administration, and wanted to highlight it. Unfortu-

nately the aircraft arrived on a Friday afternoon. The welcoming ceremony, with an aerobatic display, ran late, and it seems that desecration of the Sabbath by the government ministers and the heads of the army occurred. The ultra-Orthodox parties submitted a motion of no confidence in the government. The NRP now found itself between a rock and a hard place; in the end most of its members abstained in the Knesset vote and did not support the government. Rabin accused them of dereliction of the principle of collective responsibility, to which all ministers were subject. He dismissed three NRP ministers and, using the vote as a pretext to dissolve the government and hold new elections, which he hoped to win with a larger majority, tendered his own resignation to the president. The new elections were set for May 17, 1977.

Rabin's move was initially seen as promising in light of his popularity after the Entebbe operation. But everything went rapidly awry. At a meeting with Rabin the newly elected President Carter did not hesitate to publicly express support for the idea of "a Palestinian homeland." The press reports on the meeting indicated that previous agreements between Rabin and the American administration had not been taken into consideration, and that the president had exerted brutal pressure—bordering on insult—on the prime minister. At home Shimon Peres again announced that he would run against Rabin at the party central committee, even though Rabin was an incumbent prime minister. Rabin won again at the committee, albeit by a very small majority, reflecting diminishing support.

A new party, Dash (a Hebrew acronym for Democratic Movement for Change), was formed, which expressed the public's dissatisfaction with the existing parties and leadership. Dash was proof of the decline of the socialist ethos and the rise of the civil-liberal one. A typical centrist party representing the educated middle class, it was joined by fragments of parties such as the liberal Shinui (change) and the right-wing Hamerkaz Hahofshi (the free center). Its main power lay in the list of impressive figures from industry, the security establishment, and academe who joined it. Dash was headed by former chief of the General Staff Yigael Yadin, now a professor of archeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Yadin, the uncrowned prince of Israeli politics, had been asked more than once to join one party or another in a leadership role, but he remained a tantalizing enigma since he never dipped his toes into the hot water of politics. Dash seemed an attractive alternative to the Labor Party, whose star had dimmed. Rabin, the successor of the old guard, could not convince the Israeli public that he was a real leader capable of meeting the challenges the country faced. Dash, with its impressive, experienced figures from the important fields of security, economics, and policy, appeared to have strong potential for leadership. It offered an agenda that was moderate-liberal in terms of civil society, and moderate-activist from a security angle. Surveys showed a meteoric rise in its apparent

support from voters. On top of everything, in March 1977 Rabin was hit by a scandal involving a bank account in dollars that his wife continued to hold in New York after he had completed his term as ambassador in the United States. Israeli currency regulations at the time forbade Israelis to hold foreign accounts. Deciding to stand by his wife, Rabin withdrew his candidacy and was replaced by Shimon Peres. Thus did the Israeli political system move into the 1977 elections.

NOTES

1. Gershon Shafat, *Gush emunim: hasippur me'ahorei hakla'im* (Gush Emunim: The Story behind the Scenes), Beit-El: Beit-El Library Publications, 1995, p. 33.
2. Amichai, "Shirei erez tzion Yerushalayim," p. 12.
3. Shafat, *Gush emunim: hasippur me'ahorei hakla'im*, p. 220.
4. Al-Ittihad, 9.3.1976, cited in Eli Rekhess, *Hami'ut ha'aravi beYisrael: bein communism leleumiyyut aravit, 1945–1991* (The Arab Minority in Israel: Between Communism and Arab Nationalism, 1945–1991), Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University and Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1993, p. 80.

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