

GIDEON ARIEL and URI MILSTEIN

THE OASIS OF DREAMS

THE LEGEND OF HADASSIM

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Child Survivors
Hidden Children, Israel



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The OASIS OF DREAMS – THE LEGEND OF HADASSIM

GIDEON ARIEL and URI MILSTEIN

This story is dedicated to three beloved people, without whose influence I would now be trapped in a black hole rather than fulfilling my dreams:

To my childhood hero, Dani Dasa: a creator of folk dances and my sports instructor at Hadassim
Dani introduced me to the discus, and strengthened my belief, as a child, that I could one day represent Israel in the Olympics. It was only by virtue of my athletic skills that a scholarship for study in America -- and the infinite possibilities thereafter -- was granted to me. I have never looked back



To Yariv Oren (of blessed memory), my mentor and coach who befriended me as a young athlete, who encouraged me to overcome my shyness, and who gave me perhaps the greatest gift of all: self-confidence and hope



To Ann Penny, without whom I would never have reached the mountaintop. After 35 years of a creative collaboration I finally married her, and for the last two years she has been -- to my everlasting joy -- Ann Ariel.



Prologue

Hadassim, an enchanted village, a place where dreams were made. This special Youth Village was originally intended as a safe haven for Holocaust orphans and children of broken homes as well as a unique place for learning. As Hadassim children, we lived, studied, and grew to adulthood in a village welding seamlessly its teachers, studies, and culture of labor... Our lives, work and learning were one integral and continuous process. Most of us were children with bright futures but no histories: this disconnect from our past would be countered and healed by a holistic pedagogical method. As graduates of Hadassim, we look back on those precious years with awe and tears as we realize the magic and mysteries that evolved in that special place. Now, fifty-five years later, we've decided to write a book about this place, where the broken and lost were bound inextricably with the elite, nurtured together to health, to happiness, and allowed to dream. Its lofty goals and visions enkindled the hearts of mere children, but also represent the birth of a new Nation. We are the first generation of Israel and, as such, we reflect the dreams and aspirations of millions of Jews who came before us.

Our country, Israel, traces its birthplace to the ancient history of the Jewish people, a nation once dispersed throughout the world by overwhelming, conquering empires yet maintaining its traditions for generations. For two thousand years, the Jewish people dreamt of returning to their biblical homeland, the land of Abraham, Although there was always a Jewish presence in the land of Israel, the official rulers were conquering, outside powers -- Persians, Assyrians, Romans, Turks, and British. For thousands of years, the Jewish people were denied first sovereignty then homeland but never lost the dream of Israel, their home.

Most of us were born the year World War II began. Hitler and the Germans had decided on a "final solution" for millions of Jews by slaughtering them by any imaginable -- and the most efficient -- means. History is replete with similar attempts to dissipate or annihilate our people, yet the Jews have survived. Not even the vicious Nazi war machine could prevent those who survived from finding refuge in their ancient homeland of Eretz Israel. Many of these Shoah refugees were bloodied, orphaned from their families, friends, and native countries. In such distressed conditions, they returned to an ancient homeland now occupied by its most recent conquerors.

The United Nation decided that the acceptable solution was to divide a large portion of Palestine so that Arab and Jew would live side by side in what became Jordan and Israel, respectively. Unfortunately, their Arab neighbors felt differently, and chose war rather than Dialogue. The battles continue to this day,

Israel became a Jewish melting pot as Diaspora communities East and West forged a new life from the tattered remains of their oppressed past. This newest United Nations member became an integrated society of Europeans, Americans, South Africans, Australians, all joining with Jews hailing from the Arab World. The nation suddenly needed to cope with thousands upon thousands of holocaust survivors -- broken families who had suffered various tragedies, and the "lucky ones" whose loved ones were healthy, and intact. The dream of all Israelis, regardless of age, background, or experience, was a safe haven and home for all, education for their children, and the opportunity for success for all.

Many organizations were struggling at the time for a practical solution for the mass absorption of Diaspora Jews. One organization, WIZO Canada, concentrated on caring for the surviving World War II children. WIZO fundraised to create youth villages for the upbringing and education of holocaust children.

Hadassim was one of those villages. Hundreds of child-survivors were sent there. Dedicated teachers of vast intellectual breadth and various backgrounds also gathered in this wonderful place. Some children, for the first time in their lives, were able to find a safe home. Not only safe, but surrounded by love. In addition to the Shoah survivors came children of broken homes. Lastly, as its reputation for superior education and independence of thought cemented in Israel, the children of many scholars, embassy personnel, and wealthy families were also sent to Hadassim.

Three hundred youths of such varied backgrounds lived and breathed together in a unique society. They studied science, mathematics, literature, and history. They tended to their own lives and wellbeing through agriculture, animal husbandry, cheese making, and other chores of daily life. They pondered questions of philosophy and ran long distance. They wrote poetry and engaged in the visual arts, in music, in dance and theatre. They were pulled in by the vortex of the Dialogic idea, the spirit that governed the most enlightened educational philosophy of the time, deeply ingrained in their teachers --an idea that enabled the integration of life and knowledge, of the mind, senses and feelings, of teacher and student. A free, intimate and creative dialogue reigned between every individual, according to the network principle -- the very principle underlying the communicative function of the brain, allowing for infinite creative development. They made their own "government", and learned how to direct themselves ethically to achieve cooperation and practical solutions for all. Grown into adulthood, these children came to epitomize the first generation of the State of Israel. As the first children's group of the newly established state of Israel, they represent a unique integration of constituents which had never existed before and never has since.

The Oasis of Dreams, the Legend of Hadassim is the story of the Hadassim dream that incorporated a unique educational system with a varied and unparalleled collection of children. We, the authors, were students there during its first decade. Today, we reflect on the unprecedented miracle that took life in this place. The goal of our book is to share with you, dear reader, the magical experiences of the time and place that was Hadassim.

Part One: The Hadassim Miracle

In the middle of the 20th century, during the forties and fifties, the Israeli youth village of Hadassim was the center of an educational miracle the likes of which the world had never seen. Scarred children of the holocaust gathered with scarred children of broken homes to form one community of labor and discourse. Their years together brought them from darkness to light. They not only healed together, but many of them would eventually become leaders and pivotal movers in their diverse realms.

Hadassim's educational code was: creative dialogue. We, the authors, were fortunate enough to participate in this great educational adventure – one that, in our opinion, has few, if any counterparts in history. The miracle of Hadassim is contained in us, in everything we do. Like the proverbial man of Plato's Cave, who was able to attend to true reality and thus enlighten his fellows, we therefore felt obliged to put aside our lives and activities in order to tell our tale, the legend of Hadassim.

Let the reader judge if we have overstated our case.

We believe that readers will see eye to eye with us on the value of the Hadassim model. With today's technologies, that model can become a veritable engine for improving education not only in Israel, but the world over. Knowledge would then multiply in ways one could hardly imagine today, and in time produce a better world.



HADASSIM

Chapter One: The Normandy Effect

A. Bella's kiss

A cannon shell exploded inches above the heads of the burrow's captives. That, at least, was what it felt like on the dawn of June 6th, 1944. It might have been the first Katyusha rocket launched on Borislav in the Drohobitch region of western Ukraine. The town's residents, Ukrainians and Poles, were unaccustomed to the whistling of its flight and thunder of its explosion; but to the family holed in the burrow that thunder, no less frightening, seemed at first to offer the prospect of relief from the constant fear of exposure to the Gestapo. Awake in the day or dreaming at night, for the prisoners of that snug underworld the only question that mattered, to continue to survive or be condemned to Auschwitz, occupied every second of life.



The entry to the burrow

Unprepared for such brittle isolation, one punctuated by ear-splitting terrors enduring for months on end, the burrow dwellers went into shock. The bombs lodged from British and American planes had been nothing new, mundane events by comparison. But the function of the Katyusha is not to kill, but to shock - to blister the soul. People who sustain shock of this sort don't struggle; they hide, they crawl underneath somewhere and sit frozen. Katayushas had rendered many Germans equally soul-blistered at the very same moment on June, 1944. Nazi energy had lost height, trapped in its own whirlpool. That didn't show in the everyday conduct of the extermination-machine personnel; the effect was actually quite the opposite: the loss of energy spurred the maddened completion of Germany's swan song, the final solution.

The burrow dwellers leapt from their crumbled mattresses. After the initial shock, a surge of awful fright seized the adults, adding to the atmosphere of death that had settled over these last years. "God", a mumbling in Yiddish was heard, "Give us another day of life." A crack opened in the wall. The mother of the family (and of its survival), Genya Weiss, looked anxiously at the crack and shuddered as the thought hit her: they might be forced to leave their only shelter before the kindergarten floor caved in and buried them alive. "We've survived here for eighteen months, only to be buried alive by friendly fire from the allied forces," she mumbled and almost lost her mind.

Above the burrow stood the kindergarten where Bella and Shevach had spent the year before the start of the war - one year of happiness before the storm. Bella was the most beautiful girl in the kindergarten. Outside, on the playground -- near the swing which Bella had flown higher than anyone else, her nose in the clouds -- Shevach had once kissed her for the first time. The other children chanted, "Bella and Shevach are bride and groom!" and Bella delighted in the celebration naturally, as befits a queen. Shevach had spun with joy. Always, but always the memory of Bella remained in the background of his consciousness.

Five and a half years had passed since that kiss. Shevach the eleven year old wanted to keep dreaming about Bella, to relive his moments with the girl who had been his childhood, kindergarten wife until the third Action of October 1942¹. On that day, in the forest, a Ukrainian policeman wearing a bestial grin smashed her skull with his rifle. It was a bravura display for the benefit of his Gestapo companion, his supervisor, to prove beyond doubt his even more devout anti-Semitism. Bella sank down on the wet grass; her mother kneeled down above her, pressing as best she could against the outpouring of grief and agony, fearing for her own life. The Ukrainian shot them both, stole the mother's watch, and continued to quest after new prey. The Gestapo boss followed with pleasure: "Hitler is right...what wild beasts these Ukrainians are!" he thought to himself.

Vivid rumors of Bella's death flew among the Ukrainians, who then whispered details among the Jews with the hopeful remark that their day would soon come. Whoever hadn't understood the reality by then, understood it now. Bella had been the pride of the Jewish community: beautiful, wise, an extraordinarily talented pianist. (The musicians of the town had prophesied that she would inherit the mantle of Arthur Schnabel, the Jewish-Polish pianist and composer.) Her proud mother dedicated her whole life to her wunderkind.

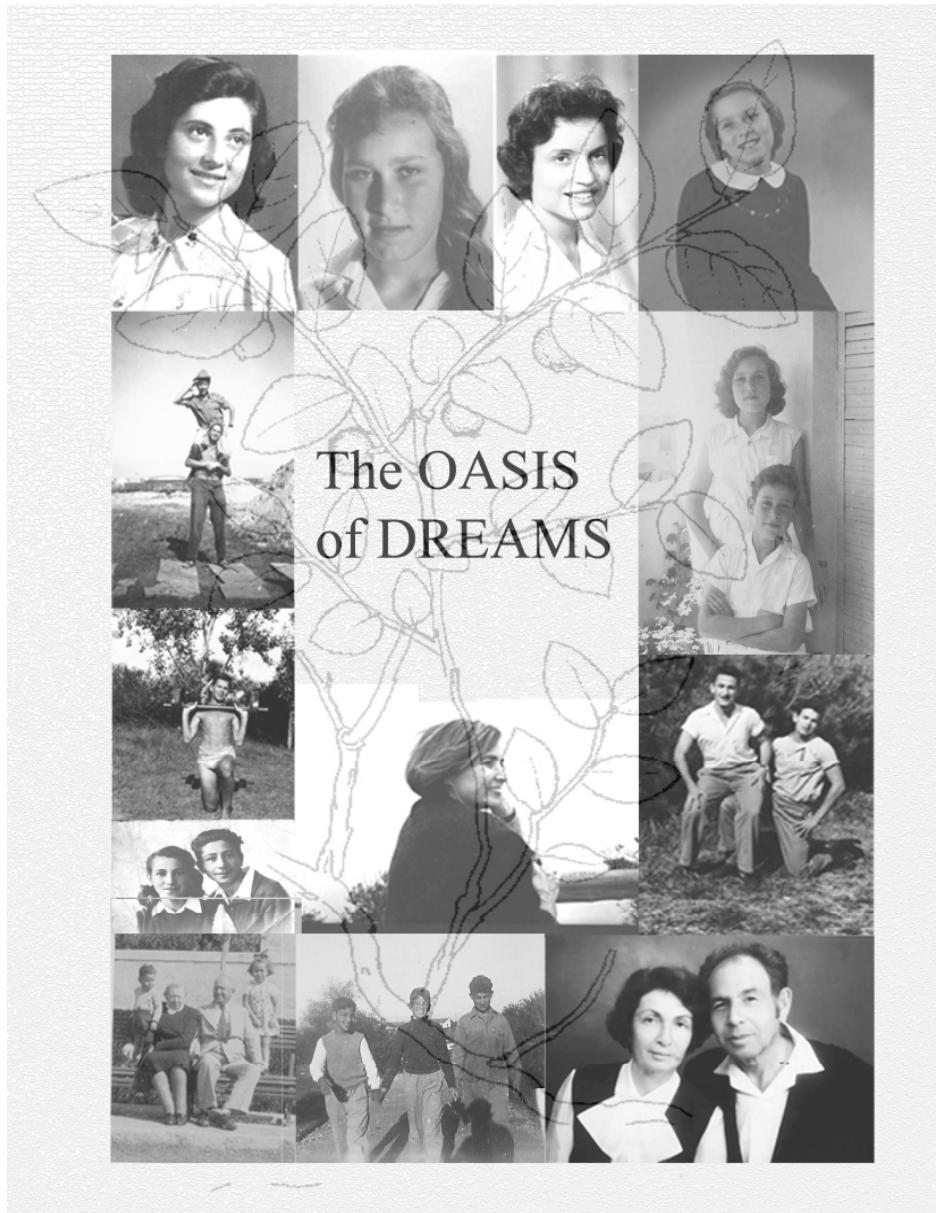
Even in the thunderous wake of the Katyusha, Shevach could barely open his eyes to a world without Bella. He heard the explosion as the slam of the rifle-butt on his beloved's head. A sensitive and tender-hearted child, he woke to his recurring dream every morning - even that morning, the sixth of June. His mind reeled with the same images: On June 22nd, 1941, while German troops were ambushing a small Russian force in Borislav, his mind's eye saw Bella, bowling at the kids' club in the wooded resort town of Zachodnitce, not far from the famous hot springs. Bella's throw brought all the dolls down, and she jumped for joy; suddenly, he felt a kiss on his cheek. It was the greatest kiss of his life. Just then, they heard the drone of a plane and ran quickly to the window, looking through the thick woods sheltering the wooden house. After several minutes, a bomb fell amongst the trees in the forest. Broken branches reached all the way to the window.



Shevac in Hadassim

Shevach wanted to freeze that kiss; it haunted him in his dreams even as his mother urged him to wake up and put on his clothes -- who knows? We might have to escape the cave... That kiss, coupled with the need to escape -- both have accompanied Shevach all his life. As he told me about Bella I could see her likeness in his eyes. Tears wet them: tears of Bella lying on the grass, then shot in the head; tears for Etti, his beloved wife, who succumbed to a deadly sickness only shortly before we met. Shevach, our childhood hero, tears in his eyes. Who would have thought?

¹ An "action" refers to the organized murder of Jews in the German occupied territories during the Second World War. In the 3rd action in Borislav, other than those murdered, about 1500 Jews were sent to Belzec, where the Ghettos were sealed and their exit forbidden. Jews made to work in the oil business were concentrated in labor camps in the town. (Source: the archives of Beit Hatefutsot, Museum of the Jewish Diaspora)



B. “Why are the flowers unhappy?”

Professor Shevach Weiss, an ex-Knesset speaker, was the outstanding student in the first decade of the youth village Wizo²- Hadassim at the turn of the fifties. Shevach is a holocaust survivor; in a four and a half-year span, from age six to eleven, the earth literally swallowed his childhood – shoved in house walls, submerged in the mud-holes, burrows and caves of the small Polish town of Borislav. Those years sharpened his insights but choked his feelings. Sixty one years later, at the age of seventy, he lost his beloved wife, Etti – the beauty queen of her graduating army-class, the breathing incarnation of a sabra-fantasy. Her death broke through the psychological barricade he’d created in order to survive, and without it his emotions erupted, Tsunami-like, flooding through the core of his personality. We understood that the trunk-roots of a man who seemed to our Sabra eyes as hard as a rock were never as strong as we once believed or imagined. We wanted to be like him and didn’t understand that he wanted to be like us.

Beginning with his arrival at Hadassim, in December 1947, joining a group of Holocaust child-survivors arriving only days earlier, with false certificates, on the ship “Transylvania”, he had tried to be the quintessential Israeli -- unbestowed with the secret that such a thing does not exist, had never existed except in the mythology created by the reality-detached minds of the founding generation. In Hadassim, Shevach cultivated the persona of the ultimate Israeli, a subconscious exaggeration that followed from an overwhelming desire to build a new life, a new nation. He became an excellent sportsman, a superb dancer, a brilliant student and youth-leader. But his functioning was a sort of hyper-function. It was artificial in a way, even non-Israeli, because the “Sabra” meant primarily a natural man to the point of lacking culture. Nevertheless, the ideal set by Shevach became a model for all of us. Gideon Ariel, for instance, became the Israeli champion and Olympian in disc throwing, largely because he was making an effort to emulate Shevach Weiss, the Hadassim champion.

In our eyes, Shevach was not really one of us, but something more; he held a grander stature – that of The Count of Monte Cristo, hero of the Dumas novel we were all reading then, in turns, organized by Ella Fogel, the librarian. Our generation worshipped heroes, and therefore, maybe, we weren’t critical enough.

Etti, in contrast, accepted him as Israeli in every way. She responded to him, not as a hero who had conquered the holocaust, but as a man – as if there was never a



Sevach in Hadassim



Etti accepted him as Israeli in every way

² WIZO – International Organization Of Zionist Women

holocaust. And when she died, after a severe illness, so too did Shevach's hope of becoming a genuine Israeli.

He now spends half his time in Poland, building a professorial chair for Judaism at the University of Warsaw, and there he is a cultural hero: he has published five books, is a regular columnist for an important newspaper, appears constantly in the electronic media, and has close ties with the state's leadership and with its intellectual and social elite. The country that once trammled his childhood is asking to compensate him, and he has accepted, partly because he feels that the Israeli people have never fully accepted him. No holocaust survivor but him could overcome the event only to return, as the Count of Monte Cristo, to do justice and confront those unimaginable crimes on their main theatre. Shevach Weiss, with all his metamorphoses and complexes, symbolizes the generation of the state³, and the Hadassim group of the fifties; Shevach's life is a condensed description of a whole generation. Therefore, our generation's autobiography starts with him.

On June 6, 1944, Shevach Weiss was about eleven years old. That very day, the tides of war began to turn. An inexorable pulse, whose source was Jewish hope, was interlaced with the allies' movements. A miracle unfolded - a window of relative calm between two storms on the Lamansh canal – allowing American, British and Canadian groups to land on the beaches of Normandy, almost to the point of suicide⁴, piercing the "Atlantian Wall" the German field marshal Edwin Rommel had built and fortified on the French beach. The meteorologists had assured Rommel of uninterrupted storms, and he had safely permitted himself a visit to his wife on her birthday, hundreds of miles away. The Jews' energy of hope intervened, and in that decisive moment no one was present to impose German command.



The miracle of Normandy

The miracle of Normandy occurred twenty months after the day that Shevach, with six members of his family and one neighbor, found refuge in a seventy-centimeter high burrow, under a kindergarten floor. Twenty months without sunshine, almost without movement, bereft of any real study. By then, Shevach had finished eleven cycles of *The Count of Monte Cristo* in Polish translation, and he imagined himself as Edmond Dantes, wrongly imprisoned for fourteen years at the Chateau d'If. He dreamed of crossing to the Russian side of the frontline, with his cousin, Shmill Vagman, and becoming a count. As of this writing, Shevach is chairman of The Yad VaShem Institute (Israel's chief holocaust memorial), and *The Count of Monte Cristo* is still the book of his life.

The 6th of June, 1944, was a Polish summer day, blazing with the color and savor of Polish and Ukrainian fields. Bees gathering nectar whispered to the flowers of the arrival of Russian troops not far from Borislav. Those flowers that followed

³ The sons of the generation that reached adulthood after the creation of the state of Israel in the end of the forties and fifties

⁴ Every attack on a brazen and fortified enemy consists of near-suicide. Only a few willingly attempt it, which is why armies award the finest ornaments to such heroes.

and then gazed after the Jewish family to the burrow, felt sorrow that they could no longer reach them, could no longer bear them good tidings. The kindergarteners in the world above were playing with the teacher in the playground.

“Why are the flowers sad?” asked one of the children.

“Because they want to tell us something, but we don’t understand their language,” the teacher answered. “Not to you, to the Jews under the garden,” replied the flowers, but neither teacher nor children understood their words. At the same moment, at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber was telling his students: “If human beings could dialogue with flowers, there would be no wars in the world.” One of his students was our beloved teacher, Michael Kashtan, who in 1940 had successfully escaped from Warsaw to Italy, and then to Israel, with all his family. Hearing Buber’s words, Michael thought: “Now the Jews need cannons, not flowers.”

The Yom Kippur War showed our generation that even with canons we have no dialogue.

In the world below, in the pale light that broke through the minute cracks between wooden beams supporting the walls, Shevach and Schmill were playing a war game, their consciousness and sub-consciousness seamlessly wedded to the energy of the collective unconscious.⁵ With the help of an atlas they’d brought with them to their previous hiding-place, they built a map-table of sand with Normandy on one end and Berlin on the other, similar to one they’d used in an earlier game which started in Moscow and ended in Borislav. During the previous, long months they’d tracked the progress of the Soviets to Borislav, coming ever closer to the sunlight. On that day, a telepathic message, sharpened by The Count Of Monte Cristo, made the eastern front somehow tiresome for them, and they decided to move the game westward, to their hero’s



Martin Buber:
“If human beings could dialogue with flowers, there would be no wars in the world.”

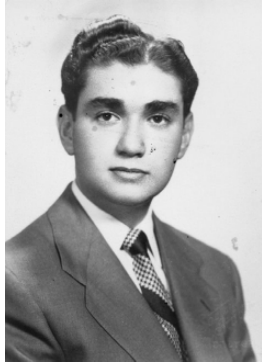
⁵ The collective unconscious:

Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious has often been misunderstood. In order to understand this concept, it is essential to understand his idea of the archetype, something foreign to the highly rational, scientifically-oriented Western mind; the collective unconscious could be thought of as the DNA of the human psyche. Just as all humans share a common physical heritage and predisposition towards specific physical forms (like having two legs, a heart, etc.) so do all humans have a common psychological predisposition.

However, unlike the quantifiable information that composes DNA (in the form of coded sequences of nucleotides), the collective unconscious is composed of archetypes. In contrast to the objective material world, the subjective realm of archetypes can not be adequately understood through quantitative modes of research. Instead it can only begin to be revealed through an examination of the symbolic communications of the human psyche—in art, dreams, religion, myth, and the themes of human relational/behavioral patterns. Devoting his life to the task of exploring and understanding the collective unconscious, Jung discovered that certain symbolic themes exist across all cultures, all epochs, and in every individual.

course of action.

Why precisely on the same day? Why did the children's attention divert to the western front just as allied forces marshaled their own western invasion, on the heel of lull in the storm? We think that a unified Jewish collective-consciousness directed all its energy to one time and place, affording the most auspicious conditions for victory.



Shmill Vagman

On the sand table, Shevach and Shmill were using lice (harvested of their own wild hair) for soldiers, waging war between Germany and the Allies. They knew the Russian Generals' names by heart. On that day they decided to practice the names of the American and British Generals (having learnt them from old newspaper-foil used to wrap food-supplies smuggled into the hole), eventually pitting allied forces against the Germans, Shevach as Eisenhower and Shmill as Rommel, attendant American and German lice vying for world domination. Eisenhower fitted Shevach better than Montgomery -- he was never suited for combat (having suffered from a genetic heart-defect all his life) but would later flourish as a puzzle-master in the military and in professional life. The two didn't know anything, of course, about operation "Overlord", and about the landing that day at Normandy. But the Normandy effect reached Borislav, it spread through the air and localized in the fifth dimension, the dimension of Meaning, the dimension of Consciousness, both self-examining (as Socrates said) and self-aware (as Leibniz formulated in his Monad Theory). The pervasive threat to life in their mud-holes had led Shevach and Schmill to the dimension of the Abstract, stirring within them the dormant and undetected energies of the collective unconscious. The limits of their consciousness were set: their sand-table game merged within them the conscious, sub-0conscious and collective-conscious energies in one field, as one continuity. Untamed by the system, they believed in miracles and were involved in creating one. This was one advantage of experiencing war.

In Hadassim, we admired Shevach but never understood the secret of his power. It is doubtful that even he understood. It is doubtful that he understands it now, as he lies groaning in pain at the Rothschild hospital in Haifa, treated with morphine for a torn left- thigh muscle. Shevach embodies the Jewish Phoenix, resurrected in Hadassim.

"We lived through June of 1944 to the pulses of salvation," Shevach remembers. "On that day the energies in the air were manifold, palpable – we touched them. After sixty years I still feel the touch. The people residing in the burrow weren't the only ones to sense an event full of glory, one that would radically change their destiny and the destiny of all Jews everywhere. Each Jew felt it. This was The Jewish connection of Normandy."

Shevach did not have an explanation for this

connection, for the dialogue between him and those mystical pulses, not then nor sixty years later. He is a man of political science and not a philosopher or a quantum physicist. But we have an explanation, although it may



We admired Shevach

be controversial, since it derives from the intuitive-analogue realm and not from the digital one. The controversy itself embodies somewhat this explanation, since in chaos there are no controversies, and our explanation is based on the human skill of translating chaos to perfect order, a skill which is the true preeminence of man. We believe that this translation is the quintessence of mankind's history.

The scientists in the film, "What's The Bleep Do We Know?" (2004)", especially Professor Alan Wolf – who specializes in quantum physics and consciousness – showed us how the Normandy effect might have evolved, and stimulated and inspired the ideas that have crystallized in this book: how consciousness influences and shapes "classical reality"⁶. Here is how we think the Normandy Effect took form:

1. A deliberative planning of operation "Overlord" created an energy of consciousness, which, together with the actions of the troops, of course, was one of the factors of the operation's success;
2. The success of the operation created optimism (a quantum-like phenomenon) among the allies and their citizens and among every Jew everywhere;
3. The optimism, which spread in the world immediately in a quantum-like mode, spurring momentum for action – including the planning and founding of Hadassim. This momentum happened instantaneously and continued on, thus still influencing us in writing this book;
4. The motives for the planning of Hadassim and the founding process were etched in its end result; they influenced the functioning of the youth village at least during its first decade, and they inform us insofar as we write about this period.
5. This is the explanation, if somewhat a mystical one - from the classical-scientific point of view, for the miracle of Hadassim, and at this point there is a need to stress the following: we owe nothing to classic science and its representatives, the scholastics; even if they are Nobel laureates or had their academy colleagues award them professorships. Since classicism is scholasticism, and scholasticism is static. A prize or a degree, once given, is static. We adopted the dynamic model of Odysseus, the creature of Homer' mind, the founding father of Greek science – and therefore, the founding father of science in general. From the point of view of Odysseus' (Homer's) anything is possible, and what is possible in Homer's consciousness already exists, not only in the Odyssey, but in the "classical world". The Jules Vern effect (the phenomenon of his fantasy's realization) is one of the foundations of this claim.

Our friend Shula Druker, who changed her name to Pratibha, and who is a psychology professor in the United States, specialized, among other things, in the culture of the Far East. This culture exposed the physical efficacy of consciousness

⁶ By "classical reality" we mean the understanding of reality accepted as the basic human paradigm, and which received its modern formulation in the Newtonian-mechanistic physics of the 17th century. Einstein represents the era of transition from the classical to the quantum model of reality. He is both a developer and opponent of that model.

long before Quantum physics was developed. Pratibha, who helped us analyze the surprising findings our research of Hadassim exposed, directed our attention to the importance of Number to consciousness: the number acts as qualitative bridge between the chaos of reality and our ability to understand its fragments. This is not to say that the ideas contained here represent Pratibha's insights; our road has progressed beyond hers in ways she might deem invalid.

The Greeks described Number as "rhythm". Carl Yung claims that numbers are archetypes which integrate the world of consciousness with the world of matter. Hence, it follows that the human being understands by means of numbers. We would understand the atmosphere only if we describe it in an equation, if we transform it from the analogue to the digital. The number is the means by which humans bridge the metaphysical to the physical, the holistic to the concrete, the synthetic to the analytical, and the right lobe of the brain to the left. It is by means of the number that man wanders from chaos to God.

6.6.1944 is the series of numbers in which the event of the Normandy pulsed, its pulsations from it filling the whole world. These numbers embodied the Hadassim option in the breadth of the universe. They helped realize it.

Our empirical research established Shevach Weiss's intuition, that all Jews everywhere somehow shared in a sense of anticipation for salvation, on that day and in proceeding days throughout June, 1944. Their anticipation for salvation enabled the Normandy operation, and together with the Normandy effect, created the Wizo-Hadassim Dream: it moved three Jewish women, Ester Zamora, Hadassah Samuel and Rachel Cogan, who met on the same day in Tel Aviv, to agree to establish a youth village-boarding school in Eretz Israel, in order to absorb in it the Children of the Holocaust.

While Shevach and Shmill were engaged in their own, real-time war simulation -- with the actual, critical phase of the cataclysmic war-of-all-time as background -- Jenya, Shevach's mother, was boiling the daily soup, made from one potato and two cabbage leaves, on the kerosene stove they'd smuggled along when they'd arrived inside the hole. They collected water from rain penetrating through the cracks. A few commodities were bought for them by a Mrs. Lesotova and the Fotanjena family, with the little bit of jewellery that remained of the treasure that enabled them to survive from the onset of the war. Before the war Jenya had helped Mrs. Lesotova and Mrs. Fotanjena in their studies, especially in Mathematics, and they duly repaid her by saving her family. From the point of view of the Weiss family, at least, the Pythagorean saying that everything is number is not mere rhetoric or phraseology. In other words, since number enables consciousness. to migrate from chaos to order -- hence, according to Pythagoras, the creation of the universe in Genesis is actually the creation of number -- the women who saved the Weiss family had been given insight to the orderly world by Genya's guidance: thus, as devoted Catholics, they were immensely thankful.

By June 1944 their treasury was almost empty. Meir, Shevach' father, estimated that in a month they would not have enough for groceries. He planned a nighttime ambush of a town jewellery store, whose loot would enable his family to survive. "The main thing is to save the family," he muttered to himself. Meir wandered if he should invite Beckman, the neighbor, to participate. Shevach volunteered; he had an ambition to lead, to redeem, to excel. Most of the Weiss

family was annihilated in the Holocaust -- the remaining nucleus was rescued solely by dint of Jena and Meir's resourcefulness.

Russian airplanes had air-raided and bombed the town and its surroundings for the last two months. The Polish oil wells and refineries that supplied oil for the Germans were in the vicinity. By 1944 the Germans were experiencing extreme oil shortages, threatening to stunt their war machine. Between the two world wars Borislav was known as the "California of Galicia", supplying around seventy five percent of the country's oil. The town's Jews were among the pioneers of the oil industry: by the 1820s Borislav's Jews had made the first oil-producing experiments in the region. During the 1860s and 70s, the production, refining and processing of oil was mainly in the hands of Jews. They engaged in drillings, transportation and supervision at the drilling sites, and by the end of the nineteenth century about three thousand Jews worked in Borislav's oil industry. Then, in the beginning of the twentieth century, five hundred of these Jewish workers immigrated to the United States, and developed the oil industry there.

On the sixth of June, Meir was watching the main road through the cracks; he noticed the Germans' irregular behavior: they were stringing telegraph wires on power utility poles; trucks full of soldiers and equipment appeared from the front line, parked in the town to fuel and then continued westward. "What is the meaning of this?" he wondered. "The flowers upstairs could tell me, if I were able to communicate with them. Maybe the Germans are transferring their forces to the western front to save Italy from collapse?" Meir could not have known, and not even the Germans in the eastern front knew what was happening at Normandy in that hour.

Suddenly, around nine in the morning, new kinds of uproars were heard, the sorts of which were never heard since the beginning of the war by any of the family. These were not the sounds of air raids. Meir guessed, "Maybe these are Russian Katyusha rockets. It means that the frontline is getting close to a range of twenty Kilometers. Liberation is at hand, there will not be a need to live by loot. Only don't get killed at the last moment!"

This stunning news made Shevach and Schmill agree that the good lice would prevail over the bad on the French front, since the Germans had already been pounded in the eastern front for at least a year since their losses at Stalingrad and Kursk.

Sixty years later Shevach, in a Mount Carmel house brimming with books and documents, tells us, "Starting on the sixth of June, 1944, we were living in the sound of the 'Messiah's footsteps', the throes preceding and heralding the advent of the Messiah. Father kept watching through the cracks for a 'poor man riding a white donkey' -- the appearance the Messiah was expected to take, according to Jewish tradition. The hissing of Katyusha rockets, the mass of explosions were absolutely terrifying, but thrilling also; the gales of destruction above were providential, they were the tides of God's reckoning, of ecstatic redemption. On the one hand we were afraid that four years of escape and survival would end with a Katyusha, but on the other we were happy because the army of deliverance was getting close and we would soon be saved. Borislav was liberated after five weeks, on the fourteenth of June. Finally, we could hear Russian voices and we crawled out of the cave into the sun. We were human skeletons -- our hair grown wild and unwashed, like cavemen; our eyes felt pierced by sunlight and our muscles unresponsive. Dad picked a flower and gave it to mom. She burst into tears and embraced me. I slipped away from her to observe the scene, thrilled with throbbing heart by the Russian military convoy.

Suddenly a command car withdrew from the convoy and stopped near us. A Russian major jumped from the car, approached my father in Yiddish and then, in Russian, turned to one of the soldiers, who brought a kettle out of the command car and poured each of us a full helping of thick and hot bean soup. I hadn't eaten such thick soup for five years. On that occasion I experienced a messianic salvation: in my eyes the Red army was, literally, the Salvation Army. It was for that reason that my brother became a communist, that I later learned the Communist Manifesto by heart, in Russian; it was for that reason that I spread Bolshevik ideas among the students in Hadassim, to the point of expulsion from the village. (My good friend, Amir, was the son of the principals, so they were afraid I would poison his mind.) I didn't realize back then that this very same Jewish-Russian officer who helped us would certainly be sent to Siberia after the war. Maybe, I hope, he escaped from the Soviet Union, and now lives in Israel.

"After the major left, father told us, 'If this was a messianic experience – then Israel is our goal. We will not stay in Europe any longer!'" Shevach summed up his experience of salvation with this declaration: . There I spent the best period of my life! Hadassim stitched up the torn pieces of souls of children who survived the Holocaust. We became normal people. This was an astounding educational success, the only one of its kind, and it should be studied."

That is what we've tried to do in this book – to describe an almost impossible educational undertaking, one which succeeded to an extent difficult to comprehend.

C. Hadassim Was My Paradise –

Just as Shevach and Shmil were engaging their

lice in battle on their sand table, and just as the assault on Normandy was launching forward, the seven year old Alex and four year old Metuka, together with sixteen relatives and friends, were holed in underneath a once comfortable villa. They were in the town of Zolkief in East Galicia, about thirty kilometers from Lvov, the district's capital. Only a tiny space was allotted to each of the eighteen -- forty centimeters in width and fifty in height – and eighteen months kept them on the most unimaginably thin, haphazard, uninviting mattresses, in near-absolute silence. No room for play, no sand-tables, nothing. Many of the Ukrainians living and working in the neighborhood would easily have reported them to the Gestapo, if they'd noticed anything unusual.

Zolkief had three oil factories, owned by three Jewish families: the Melmans, the Patronch and the Reitzfelds (Alex and Metuka belonged to the latter, on their mother's side). When the Germans occupied the town, the three families came together and dug a hole under the Melman's villa, in time broadening it into a respectable trench, their sole sanctuary during intermittent German actions. At one



"Eretz Israel for me is Hadassim"

point, the Gestapo broke into the villa, looted everything they could they lay their hands on -- wreaking a lot of damage, but leaving the families unbound and intact. After a while the German authorities handed the entire property to Valenti and Julia Back, a devoted Catholic couple of German-Polish stock. Julia had been the Melman's housemaid and friend before the war, and though her husband tended to err on the side of anti-Semitism (he supported the expulsion of Jews to Palestine) she allowed them to remain in their hideout, for religious reasons -- and for a high price; years of accumulated jewelry and gold, in return for a spare but sufficient trickle of food and supplies. Money ran short six months before the Russians liberated the town, but the Backs continued to provide food, in small quantities, of course, but enough for them to survive.

Metuka, our future classmate and standout ballerina of the Hadassim band in the fifties, stayed nearest the trench's entrance, under what had once been the Melman's living room. On June 6, 1944, she recognized the voices of Gestapo goons coming to search the house. Neighbors had noticed one of them tossing out refuse and informed on him, no doubt hoping for a reward. The Gestapo turned the house upside down for three hours, but found nothing. Miraculously, they'd neglected the living-room carpet that covered the entrance to their little hideout -- the families were safe. Then, at night, when it came time for one of the other boys to throw out the bucket of refuse, he heard another voice -- this one coming from the radio in the living room. The BBC announcer declared: "The Normandy landing has succeeded!"



Metuka

Alex: "It was a happy night. We felt, in the air, that we would survive that hell." A month later the town was liberated. Five more years had passed before Alex and Metuka arrived at Hadassim from the new immigrant's camp at Nataniah. Alex sums up his life story: "Life in Hadassim was like the garden of Eden. They transformed my sister and me from children broken by the holocaust, orphaned and illiterate, to normal people. And now I'm an air force reserve senior officer, a family man and ex-businessman. The hole underneath the Melman's house saved my life, but Hadassim was paradise for me, without reservation. Without Hadassim, I doubt if I could have endured."

Metuka: "Hadassim liberated me from fear and alienation. After coming there in 1949 I felt very quickly that I was like everyone else. Life there affected me wonderfully. After the Holocaust I was terror-stricken and haunted by nightmares. Then one day I awoke and I was in Hadassim, and my nightmares were no more."

This book will attempt to unravel the mystery of Hadassim's magic – how it managed to resurrect and invigorate Shevach Weiss, Alex and Metuka, and many of their friends. We are inclined to view Hadassim as the educational marvel of all time, deserving of emulation.

D. The Hadassim Dream

This is the story of the “Hadassim dream” that was born in a Siberian prisoners of war camp in 1914; that was first attempted, unsuccessfully, in Vetka in 1916 and Covno in 1918, and again in Afula in the early twenties; that took root in Jerusalem in the second half of the thirties and bore fruit in October 1939, one month after the Nazi invasion of Poland; that reached its full height only with the indelible imprint of the Normandy invasion, in June of 1944.

By means of a multi-dimensional, heart to heart “I-Thou” Dialogue, a youth-commune encompassing a total variety of backgrounds and personalities gave rise to unfettered creativity.

Two intellectuals above all shaped the vision of Hadassim: Moshe Max Schwabe, who specialized in the Ancient cultures of Greece and Rome, contributed the spirit of creativity inspired by the German Free Youth Movement⁷; and Martin Buber, one of the principal figures of the dialogic movement in philosophy, strongly influenced by the Hassidic movement, contributed the dialogic aspect. The fusion of those two fundamental elements made the dream possible.

The Hadassim dream brought together Athens, Rome and Jerusalem; warlike Sparta was not included. Hadassim's ideological parents were pacifists, members of “Brit Shalom”. Its founders and directors, Jeremiah Shapirah and Rachel Katabursky-Shapirah, had been followers of Schwabe and Buber in the twenties and thirties, and they brought with them the vociferously anti-martial strain they had learned. The flaw in that spirit was precisely that Athens, Rome and Jerusalem all contained Spartan elements. The rejection of the warrior in any guise; the neutralization of Spartan elements, not only in Hadassim but in our generation in general, created a vacuum filled by a myth of an inherent Israeli superiority in the Spartan art of war. What else could explain our overwhelming victories?

¹ The German Youth Movement (In German: *Die deutsche Jugendbewegung*) is a collective term for a movement for educational-cultural renewal beginning in 1896, with the undermining of the hierarchical structure of the German family and society caused by the Industrial Revolution.

Dialogic creativity was the germ of Hadassim's first odysseys – the odyssey of professor Shevach Weiss, to the heights of the political world; of the orphan Gila Almagor, to the peak of the theatre world; of holocaust survivor Dr. Avigdor Shachan, who laid bare the holocaust of the Jews of Bessarabia.

Dialogic creativity was the foundation for Dr. Ofra Shapirah Aloni's cancer research, and Dr. Micha Spira's brain research; for Shula Druker's work in Jungian Psychology, and her brother David Dror's in Medical Economy; for Professor Yitzchak Gal-Nur's contributions to political administration in Israel; for Dr Gideon Ariel's development of a new human biomechanics.



**Miriam Sidrans
Katzenstein's**

It was the origin of Miriam Sidranski Katzenstein's journey to the pinnacle of the Israeli sports world, and of sculptor Moshe Frumin's to the revival of ancient Israeli culture; of Hillel Granot's application of corporate models to the privatization of local government; of Nahum Feinberg's ascent to the mountaintop of the legal profession in Israel. It was the spring for my own trajectory -- the development of a new philosophy of history, and the lifelong study of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the underlying basis of human behavior.

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Together these represent the elite that built the state of Israel. Without Hadassim, many would probably have been lost, consigned to the margins of society. Hadassim breathed courage into their ascent. The evolution of Hadassim -- from its spawning vision in the minds of WIZO women all over the world, to the village of dialogic creation conceived by Jeremiah and Rachel Shapirah in Ben Shemen, to the fountain of magic from which we drank together in our school – is the theme to which this chapter on the Normandy Effect is dedicated.



Ofra Shapirah

The first children at Hadassim were Amir and Ofra Shapirah, the founders' kids. They arrived in July of 1947 to the sight of a palm tree on a sand hill, to the Guard's House Beit Hanun's groves and to the new skeleton buildings of the Swiss village in the Sharon plain. In August, eight holocaust survivors joined them, with small backpacks and frightened eyes after wandering endless "escape" routes through Europe from Poland to Czechoslovakia, to Austria and Italy and France – for two years. The Jewish settlement was then at its crystallizing peak. Hadassim, as a warm home for the holocaust children, was one expression of this peak.

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Children of broken homes, of diplomats and families consumed in government work, together with sundry "wild" kids cast away by frustrated parents, all combined with these young holocaust survivors in a melting pot Ben Gurion had never dreamt of.

In Hadassim the dream was realized.

E. The Generation of the State

Our youth was reared with the energies of 1947 -- of the culmination of the Zionist dream – but that drive ultimately weakened. Gideon Ariel remembers a conversation with Shlomo Fogel, a PALMACH scout and the organizer of the branch of crop-cultivation in the village. For us, Fogel symbolized the second generation of Zionism -- the Palmach, “The Sons’ Generation.”

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Gideon Ariel: “After our hay-stacking competition, which Shlomo won of course, we sat on the dunes under the eucalyptus tree, and Shlomo told me the story of his platoon’s



Shlomo Fogel

expedition to the Gilboa Mountains.

He said that as they’d passed near the Arab village of Ein- Dor⁸ he suddenly experienced a mystical vision: he saw, in his mind’s eye, the ancient Hebrew King Saul and his son Jonathan fighting the Philistines on the very spot where he stood. He saw them defeated, Jonathan falling in battle; he saw Saul fallen on his own sword. Shlomo swore then that the Philistines would never conquer us again. This ‘Ein–Dor’ vision moved and stuck to me. I told him, ‘I join you in your vow!’ From that day, I started and never stopped lifting weights with Shlomo. Later on, we were studying the Ein-Dor narrative with Shalom Dotan, our bible teacher, and when I recalled Fogel’s lesson and oath in class, Dotan praised me. But we didn’t understand, Fogel, Dotan and I, that without Spartan elements, there would never be hope of keeping that oath.

During the Yom Kippur War, when news reached us of the collapse of IDF defense lines on the Suez Canal and Golan Heights, we remembered Fogel’s oath – an oath characteristic of the whole Palmach Generation. It doesn’t seem to have helped.

⁸ Ein Dor is mentioned in the Bible. After the death of the Prophet Samuel, King Saul comes to Ein Dor to meet a woman medium who helps him contact the spirit of Samuel. The prophecy he receives is that his army will be vanquished and that he and his sons would die in battle. (Samuel 28:3-19)

By October of 1973, the start of the war, Fogel's generation had assumed their place atop the chain of command: Moshe Dayan, the minister of defense, David Elazar, IDF Chief Of Staff, Eli Zeira, director of Israel's military intelligence, Shmuel Gorodish, Chief of Southern Command, and Yitzhak Hofi, Chief of Northern Command. Each of them was caught entirely off guard; each was unprepared for the massive strike that nearly wrought another holocaust; each had failed in their offices. On the morning of October 17th, in "Akavish 52"⁹, after the regular force regiment 890 was gravely hurt and swept out by the Egyptians from the Chinese Farm area, I drew my bible out from my army kit and read from Bk. 1 and 2 of Samuel.¹⁰

Only ten years after my biblical lessons with Fogel and Dotan, I came to understand that neither had seen the real meaning of that "Ein-Dor" episode. It's hidden in David's Lament: "To teach the art of the bow to Judah's sons." The

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Uri in "Akavish 52"

Israelites lost because they feared the Philistines' use of bows in that battle. Three thousand years later the IDF defense formations collapsed, because its commanders weren't prepared for the anti-tank missiles used by the Egyptians and Syrians: they had absorbed the mythology of Israeli's messianic strength, the belief that Arab warriors would always flee from Israeli soldiers. That was the underlying principle of Israeli security theory until the eruption of the Yom Kippur War, and its roots go back to the genesis of Zionism. We have to understand that, lest we be conquered, and the third temple¹¹ perish, we must overcome the sin of pride – hubris -- and eradicate the feeling of superiority over the Arabs. We must overcome the sin of ignorance and study the realm of war, and not be satisfied

⁹ A field hospital area where wounded paratroopers were taken from the Chinese Farm battle.

¹⁰In 1 Samuel, 31 Saul takes his life. In 2 Samuel, 1- David hears about it and laments for him and for his son, Jonathan.

¹¹ This term has come to be used to describe the State of Israel. There were only two actual temples. The first was built by King Solomon, and remained standing throughout the days of the kingdom of Judah, some four hundred years, until it was destroyed in 586 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who also exiled the people of Judah to Babylon. After about fifty years in exile, the deportees from Judah were permitted by Cyrus, king of Persia, who had seized control of Babylon, to return home and rebuild the Temple. Despite many obstacles, the Second Temple was finally erected in Jerusalem by the returnees, led by Zerubbabel. It was consecrated around 516 BCE and remained standing for some six hundred years, till its destruction in the last phase of the 1st Jewish-Roman War, in the year 70 CE.

by common sense and personal experience.

On Yom Kippur, twenty six years after Hadassim's founding, Egyptian and Syrian armies surprised Israel and almost subdued her. Dayan, The minister of defense – the leader of the second generation – whispered in journalists' ears of "The end of The Third temple," and there was a basis for his claim. Dayan's was a genuine epiphany: he understood that his generation had failed; they had bequeathed to our generation – the sons of the third generation – the imperative of preserving the state without showing that it was in our power. We were in our thirties; most of us reserve soldiers, sent to the battlefield without psychic preparation and proper equipment. It was quickly clear that the principal political and military leaders, the sons of the first generation (Golda Meir) and the sons of the second generation (Moshe Dayan and Eli Zeira), had seriously miscalculated, and the soldiers of the regular army – the sons of the fourth generation – would be sacrificed to the Moloch¹² upon the shores of the Suez and the slopes of the Golan. It was given to us, the reserve soldiers of the third generation, to stand in the breach and stem the Arab flood with our bodies. The mission was purchased on a very heavy price, and our soul was scorched.

After letting our blood on the battlefields, we were incapable of taking command of the Israeli state. Ben Gurion and his generation's toughness hadn't stuck to us. The Yom Kippur War was both the greatest achievement of the Generation of the State and its greatest disgrace. Golda Meir – daughter of the first generation – had let us down. The third generation, which saved Israel from the brink of annihilation, lacked the further wisdom needed to take leadership in the future, to pull Israelis together for the same goal, to scan for flaws, learn lessons, and neutralize future existential threats; we turned instead to others of Golda's generation -- Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. They let us down too. We turned to the second generation – Yitzhak Rabin and Ariel Sharon: Rabin was murdered, Sharon collapsed, and the sons of the fourth generation took leadership – Binyamin Netanyahu, Ehud Olmert and Amir Peretz. The Yom Kippur War eroded our spirit; having thrown ourselves into the fire, against all selfish and personal considerations, we were left exhausted.

How is an educational dream realized? Rachel and Jeremiah Shapirah did it in the first thirteen years of the village's existence, by cultivating a dialogic commune.

¹² "King" - The sun god of the Canaanites and sometimes associated with the Sumerian Baal, although Moloch (or Molekh) was entirely malevolent. In the 8th-6th century BCE, firstborn children were sacrificed to him by the Israelites in the Valley of Hinnom, south-east of Jerusalem (see also Gehenna). These sacrifices to the sun god were made to renew the strength of the sun fire. This ritual was probably borrowed from surrounding nations, and was also popular in ancient Carthage.

They'd absorbed the dialogic spirit from Moshe Schwabe in the "Chugim" movement in Jerusalem and Martin Buber's lectures in the Beit Hakerem Seminary and the Ben Shemen youth village. Ideals are never realized completely, for their symmetry collapses on contact with reality. Nevertheless, what remains derives its meaning from the original ideal. The tendency to disregard the role of ideals is a characteristic of the one-dimensional man, and even in Hadassim their kind wasn't lacking. Allowing oneself to be swept up by whirlpools is the great story of the multi-dimensional man. We took it upon ourselves to describe our own narrative from the point of view of the fifth dimension – the dimension of meaning.

We learned, in Hadassim, the art of standing against the stream, and its benefit for life. It was burned into us at Hadassim. That's what we meditated on then, and tried to live up to in the following fifty years. Not everyone absorbed it, and not all who did made it happen. There are also those who remember the Hadassim days as their low point, Michal Aurebach and David Dror, for instance. Even Zafrira Shimel Hauber has strong reservations. "There was no Yanosh Korchack¹³ in Hadassim," she wrote to me. But she ignores the centrality of Martin Buber and Moshe Schwabe to the crystallization of Hadassim's dream. Buber and Schwabe were genuine Yanosh Korchaks and their influence affirms it. For Gideon Ariel, Alex Orly, Avigdor Shachan, Miriam Sidranski and Asher Barnea, Hadassim was a safety shore, and there they spent their most beautiful years.

The story of the Hadassim group is the story of The Generation of the State, who now pass the torch to the fourth generation.

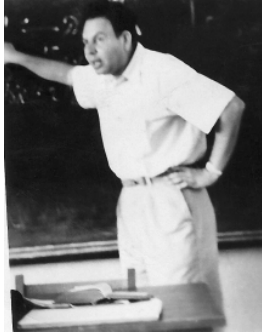
F. "Everything flows"

"*Panta rei* - Everything flows," intoned Shalom Dotan, beginning his lecture with Heraclitus "The Obscure" of Ephesus. "It's hard for man to accept the idea of a multidimensional flow, so he resumes again and again a static, one-dimensional worldview. Hence the march of folly in the world – our detachment from reality! One-dimensional folly underpinned French and British thinking when Nazi German shock troops, in operation "Scythe Stroke" in May of 1940, decimated the Allies' far superior and better equipped armies on the river Metz. Four years later, Germany fell victim to the same one-dimensional trap, enabling the British and Americans to land and subdue them on the beach of Normandy. Had the allies failed in Normandy, we couldn't have held Tikkun Leil Shavuot tonight, and many of the people sitting here wouldn't be alive."

¹³ A Polish Jewish humanist, writer and educator murdered together with the children of his orphanage by the Nazis. A doctor by profession, he left a career in politics to dedicate his life to educating children. He believed it was necessary to know the child's soul and believed in the child's right to be honored and respected in his own righty

“But there was never a chance they could fail,” Shevach Weiss interjected. “The operation was planned to the last detail, and it excelled especially in its logistical aspect.”

Dotan gave him an astonished look. He wasn’t used to being interrupted. “No Plan is foolproof. One must always assume the worst,” he answered.



“*Panta rei* - Everything flows,” intoned Shalom Dotan

Dotan always wanted to examine the empty half of the glass; his was the insight of the “*Homo Criticus*” – the Critical Man – a rare, albeit influential species of the *Homo Intellectualis*, in itself a rare breed of *Homo Sapiens* (a minor branch of *Homo Distractis* – the *Destructive Man*).¹⁴ Dotan was a rather bitter and angry man, but a fascinating lecturer, which was why Moshe Zeiri, the cultural coordinator of Hadassim, had suggested and Jeremiah Shapirah agreed that Dotan should introduce his central thesis at Tikun Leil Shavuot that night.

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Jeremiah had learned from harsh experience that it was better to prepare for the worst by being exposed to the worst. In his opinion, exposing the students to Dotan was merely one more eloquent application of this rule. Sometimes Dotan was gravely mistaken in his views, and it should be said to his credit that he generally acknowledged his mistakes – after all, according to the Platonic-Christian tradition to which he subscribed, reality (himself included) was fundamentally corrupt. Never known for a calm demeanor, he vehemently abstained from tentative or relativistic formulations. He interpreted reality in the image of pure ideas, and demanded fulfillment of pure ideals from students and fellows. Like Plato in Syracuse, Dotan failed to see (as Carl Popper observed in his book *The Open Society and its Enemies*) that the realm of pure ideas sits uncomfortably with concrete, day-to-day reality, often turning innocence into fanaticism in its wake. He acted as though he were an ultimate authority on people, never hesitating to diagnose colleagues and students alike. Many students, for that reason, had reservations about him; one of them, Professor Micha Spira, hates him to this day, half a century later. Dotan had declared Micha an intellectual failure – a “cognitive abortion,” in Israeli parlance -- who would never pass the matriculation exams for university. He went as far as lowering Micha’s test grades to ensure it, an unacceptable act, but Micha – ever more intelligent and courageous than Dotan – exposed the scandal when he demanded that his tests be rescored by neutral professors, who then produced rather higher marks. Dotan was forced to eat his hat, and continued, with grinding jaw, to lecture us on the ideas of the great philosophers.

¹⁴ I dealt with the anthropological genealogy of the different branches of the human race broadly – see, Uri Milshtein, “The End of Life”. Ramat-Efal, Sridut publishing house, 1994.

At the age of eighty, he published his book, “Chapters in Western Civilization,” the culmination of the ideas honed in dialogue and disputation with students at Hadassim. His ideas had shaped our development and ours, in turn, had ultimately shaped his. Even those embittered by his high-handedness and ethical lapses (like Micha and his beloved, Ofra Shapirah, the headmasters’ daughter who would follow him come hell or high-water) were symbiotic with him in a process of collective-dialogic growth, unusually intense even for Hadassim. That was precisely why Jeremiah and Rachel kept him in the village, the mutual criticism and disgust or the incident with Micha’s grades notwithstanding. Nothing would overrule the dialogic paradigm that reigned in Hadassim in the fifties

Looking at Dotan’s book, years later, I find traces of conversations we held on our strolls through the orchards and orange-groves between Hadassim and Even Yehuda. On one occasion we’d lost our way and found ourselves chased by dogs Gideon had raised among the citrus trees. One of them, “Spandau,” a German Sheppard, was especially ferocious despite his smaller size; Gideon had evidently tamed him to frighten the way his father had frightened him. At last, on our escape, we found ourselves in Kfar Neter. We saw Asher Bruner-Barnea, Yosef Tanner, Ephraim Shtinkler–Gat and Cilli working in Berkowitz’s field, picking peanuts. They hadn’t been receiving allowances from their parents – none were alive to send any. Ephraim’s parents were murdered in Auschwitz, but nobody was aware of that then. Ephraim just kept silence; every holocaust survivor in Hadassim kept silent. They were trying to burry the past and be Israeli in every way. Working in the fields of Kfar Neter allowed them to go to the movies with the other children. That encounter with the worker-boys suddenly brought Dotan and me back, for a moment, from philosophical flight down to the earth of reality. Yet, we returned to Hadassim conversing about Descartes.

My family was settled and in one piece; therefore, I could permit myself to engage in philosophy. Philosophical discourse had propelled Dotan to a life of criticism and reflection. So it was with me. There we were, two Socratic gadflies: he criticized everything and everyone. I criticized him, and he got very angry. Our relationship taught me that people who submit others and the world to criticism necessarily isolate themselves from the community. That was a formative lesson in my life.

In Hei Sivan¹⁵ of 1952, in my first Tikun Leil Shavuot in Hadassim, Dotan introduced his world view in a lecture about “flow”. Though Moshe Zeiri, the coordinator of arts and public events, had his doubts about the theme’s relevance to the occasion, Jeremiah’s final verdict was: this year we would focus on Dotan’s concept of “flow,” and if at least one student gains and is thereby impelled to some

¹⁵ The fifth day of the third month in the Jewish calendar, the day the Torah was given in Sinai according to Jewish tradition, celebrated each year in Shavuot.

good, it will have been worth it. Having grown up in a Hassidic court in Safed, Jeremiah came to believe that individual enlightenment can redeem the world.

We sat on mats in the library hall, near Shlomo Fogel's tractors' garage. It was 2 a.m., and Jeremiah was sitting with us, his eyes closed, focusing inward.

He was then a man of forty eight, a native of Safed, city of Kabalists; a descendant of the great protégé of the Besht¹⁶; and his life's dream had become flesh before his very eyes.



Tikun Leil Shavuot

Those eyes had something of The Lion¹⁷ in them; their glimmer spoke of Lag B'Omer¹⁸ in Mount Meron. I'd asked him once whether he had ever walked in the annual procession from Beit Abu in Safed to Meron. He seemed taken aback at first, unaccustomed as he was to having pupils approach him so informally; he was like a

¹⁶ Rabbi Israel (Yisroel) ben Eliezer, The Besht (acronym of the first two letters of his name), c. 1698 – May 22, 1760, is considered to be the founder of the spiritual movement of Hasidic Judaism. He was born in Okopy Świętej Trójcy, Poland, and died in Medzhybizh, Poland. He was a Jewish Orthodox mystical rabbi who is better known to most religious Jews as "the Holy Baal Shem" (der Heiliger Baal Shem in Yiddish), or most commonly, the Baal Shem Tov.

¹⁷ also known as Ari He-Ari ("The Lion"), Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534–July 25, 1572) was a Jewish scholar and mystic who was secretly believed by some to be the messiah (Mashiach ben Yossef to be more precise). He is the founder of one of the most important branches of Kabbalah, often referred to as Lurianic Kabbalah.

¹⁸ Lag B'Omer is a minor Jewish holiday commemorating a break in the plague during the lifetime of Rabbi Akiva.

god for most of us -- as if someone destined to lead a nation had casually strayed into our midst -- and his unspoken power tended to distance him even from other teachers. But he was clearly delighted that I'd worked up the nerve, and he answered that he indeed walked the path from Beit Abu to Meron everyday, in his heart. I used to write poetry then, and that image fascinated me. From that moment I never missed an opportunity to approach him, and he never missed an opportunity to lend me such images. Jeremiah lessons were often subliminal, rarely spoken; he was distant, but his works were present everywhere we turned.

Seated next to Jeremiah, like someone from a distant planet, was Chaim Bar-Nahum the story teller. Another graduate of Ben-Shemen, he had originally arrived there together with Dr. Lehmann from an orphanage in Covno. Back in those days Jeremiah, then the coordinator of the children's commune, had given Bar-Nahum the task of reciting Hassidic tales for the children on every Sabbath third meal¹⁹. Moshe Zeiri organized these meals and used to recite poems by Alterman²⁰ and Rachel²¹. But Bar-Nahum's tales were always the climax. Jeremiah and Rachel made it a point to be present on every one of those occasions.

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Chaim Bar-Nahum

Dr. Lehmann had once said the greatest blow to Ben-Shemen was losing Bar-Nahum to Hadassim. Once there, his role as story-teller was prominent, and Jeremiah came to depend on him for his reliability and integrity. At a certain point Bar-Nahum came to him with suspicions that some of the faculty were looking out for their interests at the children's expense, that stricter follow-up guidelines were necessary because "a free lunch may tempt even a saint." Nobody in Hadassim would normally dare tell Jeremiah such things. From that moment Bar-Nahum became Jeremiah's covert barometer and critic of the village.

The first eight holocaust survivors and their female

¹⁹ The Sabbath third meal begins in the late afternoon as the sun is setting, and it is called Sholosh Seudos, "three meals" in Hebrew, because it embodies all three meals.

²⁰ Nathan Alterman, (1910 Warsaw -1970) was an Israeli journalist, poet and translator. A neo-romantic poet using highly charged texture and metrical virtuosity, his magnum opus is "The Joy of the Poor."

²¹ Rachel Blubstein-Sela (September 20, 1890 - April 16, 1931), generally referred to simply as Rachel (or Rachel the poet), is one of the most important and popular Hebrew poets of modern times. Her art was used as an instrument by Zionist Bolshevism to enhance its political power.

instructor arrived by way of Wizo-Achuzat Yeladim²², on Mount Carmel in Haifa. Achuzat Yeladim was spread out over a large space along the border of the flora-enchanted Achuzat neighborhood that greeted every new pupil. When they finally arrived at Hadassim carrying their small rucksacks, Jeremiah led them into the temporary dining hall in Unit One's ground floor, an inviting tea pot, bread basket and flask of jam waiting on the table. They ate and drank together, and Michael Kashtan told them a fairy tale in Polish. Next to him sat his wife, Malka, their principal educator for the following three years. Ephraim Shtinklair-Gat, left without a mother and father, looked at Michael as though a prophet from the holy land. The first time he'd heard of such prophets was from Reuma Schwartz-Weismann at a holocaust refugee camp in Firten, Germany. Shevach Weiss imbibed and would go on to embody Kashtan's insights for the remainder of his life: as university professor, Knesset speaker, ambassador to Poland, and cultural hero in Poland. Years later, I saw him at a lecture by Yeshaiahu Leibowitz²³ on ethics and politics at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. Shevach told me then that Michael Kashtan's Polish fairy tale in that first hour at Hadassim was a rebirth for him.

I was then a child of twelve. My uncle, Moshe Shiponi, had been with Jeremiah and Rachel at the teachers' seminary in Jerusalem, and taught with them at the Scouts- legion and Teacher-Scout group, collaborating with Moshe Schwabe in planning the settlement of youth-villages all over the country. They were also colleagues at Ben Shemen. I was always very close to my uncle, and by early childhood I began to hear all about Rachel and Jeremiah and their common dream. I was wrapped up in my books and a little too precocious for my own good, so my mother eventually started complaining to my brother that I was driving her crazy with my arguments. My mother and I used to frequent the Habima Theatre²⁴, and on our way home on the bus she would analyze the show and I would explain to her why she was wrong. She would be furious. My uncle suggested that she send me to Hadassim: "Rachel and Jeremiah are not just ordinary teachers; they're the finest educators in Israel." That was how I found myself in the village of living dreams that Jeremiah and Rachel had built on the dunes of the Sharon valley. Of course, even Rachel and Jeremiah, and other teachers and friends would lose their minds with my argumentativeness, but more about that later.

²² Children's Estate

²³ (1903-1994) A multidisciplinary scientist, a philosopher and a sharp critic of Israeli society.

²⁴ (Hebrew – "the stage") The national theater of Israel. Founded in 1917 in Moscow and at first affiliated with the Moscow Art Theatre, it was one of the first Hebrew-language theaters. In 1926 the company left the Soviet Union and toured extensively for several years before settling in Palestine in 1931, and it was designated the national theater in 1958.



Uri and Metuka

To the prospect of study at Hadassim I reacted with indifference. Where I would be sent to study was immaterial; the locus of education, I believed, was the human journey within. “If I’m such trouble for you I’ll just get on the teacher’s nerves there,” I said, to which she reacted with mingled anger and affection – an attitude she retained toward me until her death at the age of ninety-six. I was always the beloved son, so I never developed an inferiority complex that might have interfered with doing what I alone thought was right. But doing the right thing never resulted in an easy life for me.

At Tikun Leil Shavuot I was sitting next to Metuka, craving to hold her hand. She, on the other hand, didn’t even know I existed – at least that’s how I felt. Her eyes were focused elsewhere: toward the destiny of the whole Jewish nation. For me she was the embodiment of Jewish revival after the holocaust.

I interviewed her twice for this book. She is as she was, both lovely and tough. She made an effort to remind me that Daphna Urdang’s compositions were always better than mine at Hadassim, but I still refused to accept defeat. “Is that why she never returned my affections?” I asked myself, sipping tea in her house in Holon. As I was leaving it almost seemed like she might fall into my arms and compensate me for all my longing for her back then, but she just pressed her hand to mine and said good bye. At least I got her hand. I always assumed, back then, that I was deserving of her love. I suppose she thought I was vain. In my mind I was the salt of the earth, and she the glittering Ballerina of the Hadassim troupe.

On Tikun Leil Shavuot, Metuka was mesmerized by the figure of Dotan, who reminded her of Valenti Back, the Polish owner of the villa underneath which she and seventeen other Jews had hidden for a year and a half. Tall if a bit slouched, his head brimming with silky-smooth curls, Shalom Dotan was the principal intellectual figure in our village. He was always the opposition, criticizing everything. Rachel and

Jeremiah not only tolerated but cultivated this opposition. It was their singular accomplishment to foster an atmosphere that combined both dreaming and criticism. But Dotan felt persecuted nonetheless, and still feels it today, as is his custom.

As he stood in front of us he exuded the pathos of a world-savior, as if every syllable held the secrets of the universe. He ended the lesson with this exhortation: “Here you are being trained to abide the flow, to understand its tendencies, its highs and lows; you are being urged to contribute something of yourselves to the general flow, and mainly – to resist the tide, to swim upstream, as only the dead are swept by it. Who wants to become a dead fish? Japanese culture sanctifies the fish that resist the current. That was one of the secrets of its power.” When he finished, no one raised his hand to respond; none of the usual dialogue took place. But Shalom seemed content. He believed, naively, that his points had been delivered and summarily accepted, but the deafening silence actually proved the contrary. When I interviewed him, fifty five years later, he conceded that his lesson could only have been grasped by those of the *Homo-Criticus* branch.

All of us remained on our mats, thunderstruck; we felt that in a moment heaven’s gates would open and the Shekhinah²⁵ would appear before us. Shevach approached me and asked if I had something to say (he was in the tenth grade at the time, working as one of the elder youth-guides). I told him I would put my thoughts in writing, and he said that I should read them on the next Saturday third-meal. Moshe Zeiri seemed to want to move ahead with the next phase of the evening.

G. Rabbi Pinchus Shapirah of Kuritz

Following Dotan’s lecture, Chaim Bar-Nahum spoke to us about Rabbi Pinchus Shapira of Kuritz, one of Jeremiah’s ancestors and one of Baal Shem Tov’s students. Rabbi Pinchus was active in the eighteenth century, and was considered one of the finest Tzadiks²⁶ and leading lights of his generation. His influence was immense as a teacher and leader of a sizable public, among them important leaders like Rabbi Zeev of Balta and others. It was said of him that he was unique among his generation for his great virtue. His commitment to truth was absolute. He was said to have declared that his own greatest labor, an uninterrupted period of twenty-one

²⁵ Shekhinah is the English spelling of the Hebrew word that means the glory or radiance of God, or God’s presence. It is derived from the Hebrew verb 'sakan' or 'shachan' - to dwell or to reside. (The Greek word 'skene' - dwelling - is thought to be derived from 'shekinah' and 'sakan'.) In classic Jewish thought, the Shekhina refers to extraordinary manifestation of divine spirituality at given times and locations, to the effect that, while Man is in proximity to the Shekhina, the connection to God is more readily perceivable by Man.

²⁶ **Tzadik** is the Hebrew word for "righteous one," and is a title generally awarded those considered the most righteous, such as a spiritual master or Reba. The root of the word *Tzadik*, is *Tzedek* (צדק), which means justice or righteousness

years, was the search for perfect knowledge and truth. “You can only imagine,” Bar-Nahum emphasized, “the nature and scope of truth Rabbi Pinchus ingrained in his followers. Jeremiah, his descendent, carries the mark of this light in Hadassim.” I asked myself then if Bar Nahum really meant what he was saying, if Jeremiah was genuinely a man of such untarnished virtue. I’ve always doubted the sincerity of those who declare themselves perfect and whole; my attitude is generally that such statements amount to sophistry and manipulation.

H. Rabbi Meir Simcha Weill

Professor Elyakim Weill rarely visited his two grandchildren, Shula and David. When he did, he refused to enter the village, sending for them from behind the entrance gate. Those short reunions between grandfather and grandchildren, their one oasis of family contact, would take place under a Doum palm tree. Their parents had just been divorced; Eva, Elyakim’s daughter, remained in Frankfurt while their father immigrated to the United States, after which he rarely made contact. David, needless to say, felt utterly deserted. Rachel and Jeremiah badly wanted to sooth him; their impassioned appeals eventually persuaded his grandfather not only to come inside the village, but to partake in the evening of Tikun Leil Shavuot with Shula and David. That desire to overcome his natural emotional restraint means his character was never so icy Prussian as most of his acquaintances, even his grandchildren, had thought. Incidentally, Moshe Schwabe, an old colleague of his from university days (whose four grandchildren were also at Hadassim), also helped Rachel and Jeremiah convince him to come.

After Bar-Nahum’s story, Moshe Zeiri asked Professor Weill if he had anything to say. He rose up from his chair, and began in a quiet but assertive voice:

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Shula and David

“The great ancestor of the Weill family was Rabbi Yaacov Ben Yehuda Weill, the finest pupil of the Maharil, Rabbi Yaakov Ha-Levi Molin of Mainz [1365 - 1427], the greatest German-Jewish Sage of his generation and a Halachic authority whose decisions still bear on current religious life. One opinion has it that his father came to Germany from Spain, so that the name ‘Weill’ derives from the Spanish town of Valls, near Tarragona. Meir Simcha Weill, my great grandfather, was the chief Rabbi in Prussia at the turn of the 19th century. The Jews were not yet conscripted into in the army, nor did they contribute money to the war effort. But when the Napoleonic Wars had begun to ravage Europe, Rabbi Weil gave patriotic sermons in Berlin’s Great Synagogue, and called for massive Jewish enlistment of wealth and arms. His sermons were effective: Jews began to contribute widely, and, what’s more, news of his sermons came around to King Friedrich Wilhelm III and his prime minister, Carl August Von Ehrenburg. They made such an impression on the king and prime minister that they

ordered their publication throughout Prussia. Then, in 1819, after victory over Napoleon, the Ehrenburg Laws were enacted, giving citizenship and property rights to the Jews of Prussia -- rights protected in earnest for a hundred years. The Weill family took great pride in this legacy.”

“After the First World War, hatred of Jews began to take hold as never before, reaching its climax in the holocaust. In an attempt to combat anti-Semitic propaganda, the Jewish community republished and disseminated Rabbi Meir Simcha Weill’s hundred-year-old sermons. It seems their impression on Hitler and his cadres wasn’t very strong.”

As he spoke, I glanced over at his grandchildren. I wasn’t at all sure whether Shula and David were proud -- that he had made such an effort to come, that he had decided to share his story. Perhaps they were wondering why, with so venerable a genealogy, they were being cast away from home; why their grandfather couldn’t raise them himself. No one had the chance to ask that question; Shula explained that Professor Weill, of old Prussian roots, was a very difficult man.

I. The Phoenix Sonata ²⁷

When Weill was finished, Zeiri asked Gil Aldema, the music teacher, to bring in the record-player. Hadassim had just received a new gramophone, a gift from WIZO women in Quebec. Gil, who had lost a leg in the Independence War, signaled for Shula to do it for him. She was still absorbed in her grandfather’s story, however, so Gil nudged her lightly on the shoulder and she quickly went to fetch it. In the silent interval, I occupied myself with the question: what is the source of Anti-Semitism? My conclusion was that among the Jews there is a prevalence of the *Homo Criticus*, while the *Homo Distractis* considers these to be a great threat and wants to be rid of them. Later, my conclusion was confirmed for me by my reading of Hegel and Nietzsche.

An ethereal whisper echoed in the hall. One subtlety Jeremiah always emphasized was the ability to discern a mere silence from a “heavenly whisper” – his description for the moments of silent, empty space in a piece of music, akin to the holding of one’s breath. “Such skill,” he used to say, “is the real test of cultivation in a man.” Jeremiah and Rachel loved classical music, and they used to organize

²⁷ A Mythical bird symbolizing rebirth. There are Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Egyptian, and Native American counterparts of the Phoenix, all identified with the sun. The main feature of the phoenix is that it is reborn through fire. Consumed in the flames, it is reborn from the ashes.

Saturday morning recitals with players from the Philharmonic, where Bach suites were usually the order of the day. Uri Shoham, a Philharmonic flutist, was a regular. Jeremiah would always select a special work for Tikun Leil Shavuot after consulting with Gary Bertini, Dov Zamir and Gil Aldema, the village's music teachers.



The hall was filled with the silver undulations of Beethoven's Opus 110 Sonata in A-flat. We were listening to a recording by the Polish-Jewish pianist and composer Arthur Schnabel, who had only died in the last year. Many teachers and pupils were holocaust survivors from Poland, and some had actually seen Schnabel perform before the war. Perhaps Jeremiah wanted to remind them of the sounds and scenes of their youth. Mainly, however, Jeremiah was making an effort to suffuse our souls with something incomparably tender and human. Partly owing to Schwabe's influence, our minds were being gilded by an Athenian education: music and athletics. But Jeremiah willfully discarded the third part of the original Trivium: Logic and Rhetoric. In one of his rare declarations, he put it thus: "Music and Athletics nurtured Solon and his laws, Pericles and his victories, Sophocles and his tragedies, Aristophanes and his comedies, Euclid and his geometry, Socrates and the anti-Sophist paradigm he developed, Plato and his Dialogues. What we need in Israel are intellectuals and politicians like that."

“And what about Rhetoric?” I asked.

”We want men of action. Rhetoric consists of ‘selling air,’ which Zionism rejects.”

“What about Politics?”

“Politics has no place in our educational system!”

These omissions constituted a basic flaw in our curriculum; without logic, especially, there would be no Solon, no Pericles and no Plato. Today I think Hadassim’s congenital distaste for theory, typical of Israel’s early educational establishment as a whole, ultimately stunted our generation’s full development.

The same goes for Politics: to sideline political theory is to ignore the study of the true function of human society. Our generation’s aversion to the subject partly accounts for a dismal failure in harvesting national leadership. The stability of British Democracy, by way of contrast, owes a great deal to the salience of political theory at the elite British schools.

At last the Beethoven Sonata arrived at the fugue, where everything flows from one source only to return; where the end yearns for the beginning. It became clear why Schnabel was considered the priestly interpreter of this Sonata. Jeremiah brought only the best.

Around 3 a.m., the tones emanating through the hall broke free and seized us, becoming as a Phoenix born again and rising from its ashes. Schnabel had pressed on the same chord again and again, tenderly at first, every one a little louder – then an ecstatic burst, the Phoenix engulfed in flames, its shattered heart breaking, rising into the deep, star-lit sky.

Even Gideon Ariel – otherwise obsessed with weight lifting – had tears in his eyes. Gideon was both inordinately strong yet vulnerable. His ten years were those of a child beaten by his father, his mother cruelly stolen from him, thrown into an asylum, far from where she could be of comfort. He looked at me uncertainly, and I looked back with understanding, both of us engrossed in the fugue in our own ways: his emotional, and mine intellectual.

When the music ended, Gila Almagor read aloud from a poem by Rachel, my celebrity aunt. Just as Gideon’s personality had been stunted and weighed down by his father’s abuse, mine was liberated and unleashed by these poems, which had accompanied me from birth. Two lines, read that night by Gila, are forever imprinted

in my memory: “Yet we departed in joyful procession strong to a distant road.” At the time I put more stock in Hamlet’s monologue, “To be or not to be,” with regard to our existential condition in young Zion. I even staged the play for Hanukkah in the sixth grade, before I came to Hadassim, with Anita Shapira²⁸ in the role of Gertrude and myself as Hamlet.

But today I understand that Rachel’s lines, though less dramatic than Shakespeare, fit our circumstances better. Whoever skipped Rachel and went directly to Shakespeare -- submitting to a winding search for truth unfettered by action -- lost his anchor in Zionist ground, and immediately became a Post-Zionist. The same damage was wrought by the Hebrew University, and its daughters all over the country, to the state of Israel: they gave birth to Post-Zionism before the Jews ever consolidated their home in the Middle East. Universal Humanism, the transcending of heritage and bonds, would come at the expense of Israel’s body. It was a dichotomy of mind and body which finds its tragic synthesis in death, rather than the unity of dream and action as an ethos in Rachel’s poem.

J. An empty notebook

Originality means swimming against the given currents, fashions and prevailing notions. It doesn’t always yield anything useful, but it is nonetheless a necessary condition for hope becoming reality. To be original means daring to be innocent²⁹; to lose one’s innocence is to be buried alive.

Hadassim was for the innocent.

The waves of Scholasticism have swept up the spiritually stillborn, like so many dead fish, and made them parasitic on the creativity of others. Scholasticism is the *sine qua non* of static, conventional culture; if one accepts it, one can’t help but degenerate.

One day, when I was in the tenth grade, Shalom Dotan had me over to his house to discuss philosophy, just the two of us. As Chava, his wife, set some tea and cookies for us on the table, I told him that he was a scholasticist, meaning that he stuck to the closed system of contemporary science against any new ideas. I took an entirely different line on the principal theme of Rene Descartes’ philosophy – what I saw as an attack on his own generation’s still slavish devotion to scholasticism – and I applied his radical critique further against any “system,” medieval or modern. Dotan

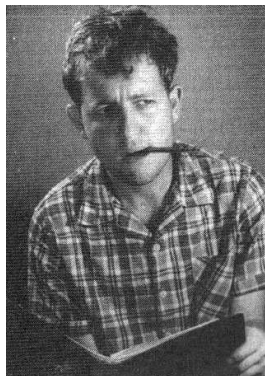
²⁸ **Anita Shapira** is founder of the Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israel Studies, Ruben Merinfeld Professor of the Study of Zionism and head of the Weizmann Institute for the Study of Zionism at Tel Aviv University.

²⁹ A definition formalized by the architect and inventor Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983).

approached Descartes in the scholasticist mold through and through, that is: uncritically. I, on the other hand, assimilated the arguments of the great Continental rationalist even as I challenged them, in skeptical dialogue. It scarcely mattered that Descartes had been dead for three hundred years. Out of earshot, our disputation transcended time and place.

Dotan quoted Descartes in his book: “from the moment I was old enough to question my teachers’ authority, I retired completely from the study of books. I decided never to search for more knowledge, except that which I could find within myself, or in the book of the world...not to believe anything I found to be true by dogma and custom.”

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Uri Milstein

Hours upon hours we spent, Dotan and I, both then and fifty years later, deliberating on the meaning of the catholic Descartes’ *Confessions*. I came back to see him recently, at his house in Even Yehuda. I wanted to reexamine his ideas and test our dialectical relationship, in case my memories of our long conversations had lost any semblance to reality in the intervening years.

Rachel Shapirah had undertaken to cut the Gordian knot between school and scholasticism. Hadassim held itself up as an undogmatic community that encouraged free thought, criticism and originality.

“Send Uri to Hadassim,” Rachel advised my uncle. “There we’ve kindled the melting pot of Ben Gurion’s dreams . Uri will have others besides his mother to grapple with. With us, he will enter a dialogic environment.” Rachel was right: she and Jeremiah Shapirah, Michael and Malka Kashtan, Zeev Alon, Shalom Dotan, Arie Mar, Shevach Weiss, Gideon Lavi, Daphna Urdang -- my counterpoint in each of them made me what I am. In a dialogic community, each affects all; in a dialogic community, the character of the system is framed not by the average and the common but by the highest level of synergy. Without dialogue, integration would indeed be useless. Hadassim had both.

The Hadassim vision, as yet an imperceptible reality, began to materialize in a quantum state amid the peculiar circumstances surrounding the Normandy landing on the sixth of June, 1944. The paramount question on the world’s agenda that day was: Hitler or Churchill? During the First World War, Hitler had been the lowly German corporal, decorated for temporary blindness suffered in chemical warfare; Churchill, the minister of the navy in Britain’s government, whose admirals had undermined his ingenious Gallipoli battle plan. Both knew to expect another round of war. The Germans would follow Hitler in his war preparations, weathering the calm before the storm. The British, meanwhile, would exile Churchill to the political desert and reduce their forces.

From our perfect hindsight, though, the British clearly enjoyed one advantage: Churchill lacked the double sin of Hubris and Ignorance. As he waited on the sidelines, he finally grasped the essence of victory in total war, the final conclusion of the Scharnhorst reform commission³⁰: the full mobilization of the national genius. With that sole, indispensable lesson he would bring Germany to its knees. After the British and French were overrun by the Germans in operation “Sickle Cut,” the Churchill’s countrymen crawled on their knees and begged him to take his place on



Churchill

the center stage. They understood that in their moment of truth they needed a Scipio Africanus, the *dictator* of Ancient Rome, not the prattle of politicians. Normandy would then be the Gallipoli of the Second World War, this time in reverse.

The Normandy miracle ensnared me when I was but four years old (more about that later). I have no logical explanation for that day, for why Rachel and Jeremiah

Shapirah, Avigdor Shachan, Gideon Ariel, Asher Barnea, Hillel Granot and I were all involved so deeply in the event

that bound us and many others to Hadassim. In the sixty years since, I’ve struggled to build a Gestalt³¹ for it, to reconstruct and explain that miracle. Only two years ago, I finally saw the hint of a connection between Normandy and Hadassim. I don’t comprehend it fully, and probably never will; nothing like full comprehension of



Gideon Ariel and Hillel Granot

something like this is possible, anyway. Even a partial understanding of it can hardly be defended by reference to classical logic. A miracle contravenes the very laws of physics – as God did when he answered Joshua’s prayer, “Let the sun stand still at Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ayalon” (Yehoshua 10:12).

Two years ago, I began to understand the superpositions³² of consciousness. It became clear to me that ancient physics was populated with all sorts of miracles. These were expelled from the Newtonian model along with *telos*, and an intricate, billiard-ball machine universe

remained. Miracles were snuck back in with the probabilities of Quantum Mechanics.

³⁰ A Prussian inquiry commission established after Prussian defeat at the hands of Napoleon in the battle of Jena, 1806.

³¹ A trend in psychology that stresses synthetic and holistic processes of thought, in opposition to the scientific, analytical model.

³² A Composition of Quantum states.

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Another year, and many emails and Skype conversations traversed between Coto De Casa in California and Ramat Efal in Gush Dan, before Gideon would finally persuade me – nearly force me, in fact -- to put these insights about Hadassim in writing. On that conversation, at 2:00 in the morning, he stoked the fiery memory of Tikun Leil Shavuot at Hadassim:

“This is my first memory of you, after you joined us in the fourth grade: you read a composition you’d supposedly written on the Normandy Invasion. We were all completely awestruck. Why, on earth, Normandy? We were used to writing about football games, field trips and Saturday night dances. I’d written about the discus. Your writing was polished, the ideas brilliant, the reading immaculate...”

“For half an hour we listened to your voice, the voice of a stranger now come into our world. When you were done, Michael Kashtan, asked for your notebook so he could show your piece to Rachel, the headmaster, and read it to the teachers’ council. You handed it to him with a wry, guarded smile, a silent manner of boasting – the pages were entirely empty. I was witnessing a miracle. It was a formative experience: you’d shaken me from my slumbers, given me intellectual energy and even put a bit of yourself in my mind. Chilli and Asher were also excited. Who in the class wasn’t? Even Kashtan, who looked like he was having trouble seeing straight. That same evening we all went over to his house and told him we wanted to write like that, too.”

“One writes according to his own inclinations, toward the realm in which his personality flows. Ofra in dance, Gila in theatre, Shevach in politics. Our unity impels us in every direction, and thus we reveal ourselves.”

“I told Dani Dasa about this incident at the time. He was helping me prepare for the Olympics. Although I was then only thirteen, Dani already believed me capable of representing Israel. ‘If you combine your imagination with Uri’s, the two of you will conquer the world!’ he used to say. And, indeed, I reached the Olympics in 1960, and thenceforth the road was open to the rest of the world.

Only two days ago, Iris came to visit me in Los Angeles, and together we surprised Dani at his home.”

“He reminded me of that conversation in 1952. From that very day, Uri, I knew that you would one day speak for all of us. And what I decide, I carry out. My commitment is absolute.”

Metuka, who used to sit next to Gideon in biology class, confirmed this last: “Gideon has absolute will power.” The nostalgia of Gideon, Chilli and Asher, for the “Other” with his empty notebook, is my everyday reality: the search for the physics of Dreams. And besides – Gideon was the national shot-put and discus champion; his discus record has remained unbroken for the last thirty years.

K. A Rung in Jacob's ladder

The waves of the Hadassim dream, born of resurgent Allied strength, spread like bursts of sunlight from Normandy to Toronto, to the Talabia quarter in Jerusalem, to the Ben Shemen Youth Village. They penetrated into the mind of Alexander Sutherland Neill in Summerhill and gave courage to the soldiers of the Jewish Brigade of the British Army. They took hold of the European landscapes and reached into the imaginations of countless Jewish children.

At that stage of WWII, a kind of boomerang syndrome had begun to take effect. Though no one was aware of it, the Prussian army's entropy had reached a critical low point, and as its functioning decayed, the level of order in the Allies' activity only drew more momentum. Churchill's leadership, in particular, was responsible for this. His turbulent flow enhanced Allied force.³³ Soviet collapse was thus delayed, allowing the Russians to hit hard on the Eastern Front.

Tolstoy had seen the connections between education, war and peace, demonstrated a century earlier in the Crimean War. Now those connections became even clearer to a group of people, mostly unknown to each other, spread out all over the world. They would now seize this rare window of time to fulfill a dream, an opportunity not given to many in history. God had once again intervened in the world to protect the remainder of his flock. The process of bringing up the Generation of the State would now begin, and the alliance of dreamers would now shape the first generation of Hadassim.

The boomerang recoiled on French ground, where a revolutionary spirit of old pushed back against Germany. A hundred thousand warriors landed on the beaches of Normandy, American fire and flesh. Though the Germans had already been blocked in 1942, in Al Alamein, Normandy was the watershed that marked the difference between annihilation and deliverance. It was the first step in our odyssey to Hadassim, our own battery charge that would take us first to Israel and, from there, back toward every direction of the globe. Education, after all, is nothing if not the drawing of energy on which life depends. But had the military operation failed (not an unlikely event, from the given data at the time), none of us would have survived, nor Israel, nor Hadassim. The miracle happened, and Churchill's Anglo-American dilettante army overcame the professional Wehrmacht. Operation "Overlord" was

³³ The Atomists of ancient times – Moschus of Sidon and Democritus in Greece – believed that atoms have turbulent motion. In the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche claimed that will consists in a wave that disturbs the calm of existence. Our view is that a powerful enough will, like turbulence, creates disorder, absorbs its periphery and forces itself upon its environment. Gideon learned about this kind of turbulent will, first as an athlete and then when he developed the field of computerized bio-mechanics in the service of sport.

thus the watershed of 20th century destiny, the sea from which all our rivers flow, whence all sources come.

Winston Churchill was alone to see reality for what it was, as early as the mid-1920s, and he warned his country of the specter that would one day haunt them from Germany. But his was an unwanted voice echoing from the desert, as British culture was then under the influence of post-war neo-Marxism and pacifism, trailing from the Frankfurt School and the Mount of Truth in Switzerland. Those currents would spread all over the world, even to Ben Shemen and Hadassim: Martin Buber, Moshe Schwabe and Elyakim Weill had been part of that Frankfurt milieu, and maintained it even beyond the First World War.

A decade later, Churchill the prime minister looked on the timing of the Normandy invasion with some reluctance. His preference was for the Germans and Russians to bleed each other dry as Western forces gathered strength on the sidelines. Convinced as he was that a conflict with the Soviet Union would follow inevitably on the heels of Nazi defeat, and equally aware of the disparity between inexperienced Allied forces and German professionals, he was weary of a Pyrrhic victory, and would have preferred not to rely on a *Deus Ex Machina*.

Churchill was no dove. Conspicuous on the table in his study, like a standard, was a tablet inscribed with the famous words of Heraclitus: “War is the mother of all things.” The British had misunderstood their greatest leader when they’d branded him a militarist and opted for Chamberlain, thereby nearly dooming the fate of Britannia.

Had Churchill’s strategy won out, there would have been less war – and still fewer Jews. The West might indeed have been spared the Cold War – including the Korean and Vietnam wars, as well as sundry Middle Eastern conflagrations. With one less superpower and less competition over Arab resources, European Jewry would then have been the sacrificial lamb for a future less cumbersome for both England and Israel.

Ever since WWI, Churchill had evinced something of a post-Gallipoli syndrome, a tendency to be cautious in the extreme; he would never forgive himself for that failure. As minister of the navy, he’d designed a plan to wrest control over the Dardanelle straits and thus end the war quickly. It’s safe to assume that Russia would have fought the idea bitterly, that had he succeeded the anti-German axis would have splintered (perhaps rewriting Russian history altogether, as Germany would then have had little reason to send Lenin to Moscow to foment revolution).

As it turned out, Churchill, rather unlike the prophet Bil’Am of yore, came to bless only to find himself cursing. The Gallipoli campaign was brilliantly conceived but scandalously executed, and Churchill’s lesson seemed to be that if British ground forces (but not the naval or air forces) weren’t strong enough to endure against a strong Turkish defense, they could hardly overrun the German barricades thirty years down the line.

Churchill was forever grateful to the Jewish brigade, the Zion mule corps of Joseph Trumpeldor that kept supplies running into ANZAC British army posts³⁴ and kept the Ottomans at bay. Had the Turks destroyed Churchill's Gallipoli forces entirely, the British might never have conquered the Middle East, and Israel would still be but a dream. Trumpeldor saved Churchill's career – and the prospect of a Jewish state in Eretz Israel. For his part, Churchill was thankful for the Jews, not without reservations, like every honest Englishman. We, on the other hand, will always thank Trumpeldor, unhesitatingly, without holding back; we have known God's infinity, as our forefather Abraham once knew it.

In 1944, it was the Americans, not the British, who were influencing the direction of the war. The Americans were in a hurry. Whereas the British had had a venerable tradition of war, had faced defeat squarely in the eye, the Americans had won every single war since their independence; they had never – not since their revolution – seriously pondered an external threat to their very existence. So they didn't understand what Churchill did – that American ground forces were just as ill-prepared as the British'. Given their near-infinite resources, however, they were nevertheless justified in moving quickly; the Jews were in a hurry, too: they wanted to save those of their brothers who had yet to be consumed in the gas chambers, Hitler's gift to the world. In such a way did the Jews ally with America, and their covenant of impatience persists to this day.



Normandy

The triumph of Normandy rescued the Zionists from the blitzkrieg of Hitler's anti-Semitic shock, and stirred them to imagine and hope for life after death. For that dream to be truly fulfilled, the children of the holocaust needed to be taken in and nourished to health. It was necessary to discharge the trauma that had been charged in them. Hadassim, it would turn out, was precisely that meaningful step up Jacob's ladder. It was the Canadian connection to Normandy that let Hadassim take flight: Canadian troops had fought in Normandy, and as stories and pictures of the invasion circulated in Canadian newspapers, the women of WIZO in Toronto decided to found the school that would become Hadassim.

L. "The Germans are on the run..."

I was four years old then, tall, chubby, with curly blond hair, sporting Russian shirts and dreaming I was Feodor Chaliapin³⁵. It was 1944, and given my accelerating

³⁴ The Australian and New Zealand corps of the British Army.

³⁵ A Russian opera singer, Feodor Ivanovich Chaliapin (1873 - 1938) was the most celebrated bass of the first half of the 20th century. Because of his powerful and

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size and precocious rhetoric, no one believed I could be so young. I suppose I was already in a hurry to develop and run with my ideas. I marched around and let loose a stream of opinions, critical of everything and everyone, angering all the adults. A wise-ass contrarian, in short. Albert Einstein once said the most important thing in life was never to cease asking questions. But not many would agree that they should *respond to* any and all questions, since we usually identify truth with our personal survival. (Perhaps Einstein, in this case as in many others, was an exception). Some suspected that I just liked embarrassing people, but I deny it: if anything could depress me, it was the idea that I was a burden to others. Nevertheless, I managed to infuriate all of my teachers, from kindergarten to my doctoral studies, to the point that they broke from me entirely. All of this held true for my experience at Hadassim, as well.

My first lucid memory was from the age of two and half or so. My mom had done something I considered foolish, and I remember the incident as strongly as I remember my reaction at the time. The way I saw my mother in that one moment is the core of that memory.

We were living in Yavneel in the low Galilee. Mom was teaching kindergarten while father was serving in the British army and fighting all over the Middle East. I'd spent the day wandering alone through a pea field at the foot of the mountain, questing after the philosopher's stone. The sensations of that day's journey are still very much with me, sixty three years later. I remember the rough, jagged lines of the rock that finally put a halt to it (I was only two, after all). When she found me, my mother consigned me to my crib – a punishment all too common for us humans, to shackle the body when we feel we have to control the brain. As she wiped my muddy footprints off the floor, I believe I told her something like this: "I'm being punished, but I still get to sit here and enjoy myself while you toil and clean after me in addition to all your other chores. So who won, then?!" (Maybe that's just something I wished I'd told her, but the memory stuck nonetheless.) Hearing her two year old taunting her from the safety of his crib would drive any mother crazy, and my mom was irascible enough as it was. So she duly went completely berserk.

I was always the insolent little boy for her, even when I was sixty and she ninety-seven. As far back as that day, in Yavneel, my baby's intuition knew when she was going to lose her temper. I realized that adults frequently mistake criticism for insolence; criticism exposes their Achilles' heels, and they have a tendency to conceal their weaknesses. This, unfortunately, relegated me to pain-in-arse status, and the temporary free-reign I was allowed in Hadassim came to an end with the ruckus over my dramatization of the "Lamed Hei" incident...

The war had sharpened my mind. My family had spoken constantly about everything that went on, and listening to them and the radio led me to form my own, often contrary opinions. I came to my own conclusions about the nature of the

flexible voice, together with his mesmerizing stage presence and superb acting ability, he is considered one of the greatest performers in the history of opera.

military and war, and arrived at Heraclitus' theory that "war is the mother of all" before ever hearing his name. I was always looking for that "x" factor, the missing element -- the Antithesis of Hegel's Dialectic. I decided that adults were foolish, that they held petty grudges and often quarreled for no good reason. It occurred to me that war was omnipresent, not only between nations but within countries and families. By the age of four I'd begun to formulate (in my own, childish taxonomy) the theory of inner threats, a necessary keystone for understanding human interactions.

Men will go about their business without really understanding themselves -- their own nature -- because they lack access to the dimension of meaning, something I'd begun searching for as far back as I can remember. The knowledge of fifth-dimensional meaning, unveiled by our ancestor Abraham, is greater than what everyday reality can offer. Apropos, Einstein is said to have quipped, "Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe." As I preferred not to remain stupid, I decided to examine why grown-ups fell so miserably short of fifth-dimensional wisdom. I could change the world, I thought, if only I could answer that riddle; at the very least, I'd be in a better position to alleviate some of society's disorders. I still believe that. Today I understand that the answer lies with archaic man's survival-mechanisms in the wild, adapted long ago to suit three-dimensional space.

I spent the better part of June 7th, 1944 with my maternal grandfather, Kalman Meirovitch. We spoke at length about the meaning of Normandy -- I remember it like it was yesterday -- sitting in the apartment bequeathed to my aunt, the poet Rachel, shortly before her premature death. My grandparents had inherited the apartment. Unfortunately, Batya (my grandmother) had been institutionalized by her son, a respected teacher at Ben Shemen and close friend of the Shapirahs, apparently for no other reason than her sexual promiscuity -- any instance of which was regarded as characteristic of nymphomania at the time. The truth was that she was made to suffer so that others could save face, to keep the family honor. I later confronted him about this issue, when I was twenty: why should a woman be punished for doing out in the open what was perfectly acceptable in private? He summed it up: "She was punished for anticipating her generation by thirty years. Today, I would never have done that to her." It was that kind of openness and willingness to acknowledge the truth that would endear him to his students and colleagues. Rachel and Jeremiah had wanted to have him at Hadassim, but he chose instead to study in England on a veterans' scholarship.

My grandfather, perhaps more than anyone else, took me seriously; it is after all the evolutionary function of grandparents to attend to posterity while their own children struggle to put bread on the table. Grandpa operated on the unpopular notion that the brain benefits from vigilant exercise, and he saw our interactions as opportunities to accelerate my cognitive skills, regardless of my (very young) age. The Danish philosopher, Kierkegaard, the man who developed the dialogic philosophy applied in Hadassim through the mediation of Martin Buber, was brought up the same way. It is the way I treat my own grandchildren.

It was my grandfather who first turned my attention to the fact that the outcome of WWI had hinged on Russia, not France; the Russians, he said, didn't know how to fight – but they didn't know how to lose, either. They would vanquish their enemies with their endless fields and eternal snow, enduring the costly victories that history had always dealt them. “The Russians are a nation that bled itself,” he mused. Grandfather had survived the war and the Communist revolution only by dint of stubborn initiative. He imported timber from Finland, and the government, revolutionary though it was, extended its gratitude. But as he was a religious man, and the communists weren't overly friendly to religion, he eventually immigrated to Israel.

When he heard me claiming that everything in Russia depended on Stalin, he looked appalled; he grumbled that Stalin wasn't a Russian at all, but an Asiatic Georgian. When the Normandy invasion had gone through and the radio announced that German soldiers were “on the run,” the phrase rang messianic in his ears. Years later, in Hadassim, when Shevach told me about his days in the burrow under the kindergarten, both of us agreed that operation “Overlord” in Normandy had stirred the messianic footsteps. In retrospect, the retreat of German soldiers doesn't surprise me one bit. After the Yom Kippur War, having studied the IDF's failure in October of 1973, I offered an explanation: professional German troops had collapsed because flaws had been concealed and lessons gone unheeded.

M. Flowers for Grandfather

Someone knocked on the door. “Come in,” my grandfather yelled with that glaring Russian accent, very much like the actor Aaron Maskin's. My parents' accents, too, betokened their unmistakably Russian origins, though they only spoke Hebrew.

Aaron Maskin had saved my life once, drawing me out of the pool in Kibbutz Afikim. I was only a year and a half old, and my brother, who was supposed to be watching me (father was serving in the British Army) decided to go for a swim. I drowned – and was reborn in Maskin's hands. It's possible that this event alone was jarring enough to allow me to regain the knowledge I had collected in a former incarnation.

Mother and I used to see Maskin onstage whenever he performed; we'd visit afterwards and thank him every time. He'd just rub his bearish paws on my head and say, “Uri, you were so swollen that you actually floated...had you been thinner you would certainly have drowned.” I remembered that day only vaguely, mainly just the muddy bottom of the pool – the kibbutz couldn't afford a pool floor – and I remembered receiving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on the couch grass.

The brightly handsome boy who now stood in our doorway, facing the courtyard, held a bouquet of white gladiolas in his hands. I looked at him and wondered how he knew that I liked Gladiolas, thinking he must have come to see me – or else, “why would he come for my grandfather?” I asked myself. Dad was with his squadron in Iraq just then, and mom used to bring white gladiolas home every Saturday night, the only decoration in our house besides piles of books and a photo of Aunt Rachel on the shelf. The boy stood tall, his eyes shining subtly, a smile of good tidings outlining his lips. I took one look at him and knew that all sorts of adventures were in store for us.

“Shalom, Mr. Kalman Meirovitz,” – his confidence was irresistible – “The mayor, Israel Rokach, has sent you these to mark the victory over the Germans. He adds the following message: ‘These flowers are not selective: they bloom in the city ruins as they do in the battlefields’.”

Isar Leib Blowstein, my great grandfather, was the man who originally financed the construction of the great synagogue on Allenby St. in Tel Aviv. Rokach, apparently, was not above ingratiating himself with Blowstein’s son, who he assumed was an influential man. I gather he was unaware that grandpa, his venerable ancestry notwithstanding, had very little to his name just then. I doubted whether the mayor had actually penned that rather graceful salutation; this boy, I thought to myself, must have an inspired head on his shoulders.

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I didn’t know then that the mayor had been carrying on an affair with this same boy’s mother, his secretary. I only came upon that important detail when the boy later joined me in writing this book, our adventure together.

Grandfather rose slowly up from his wide, Catherine the Great style chair, the sort that befits a wealthy timber merchant in Russia, and took a few heavy steps toward the boy.



Gideon Ariel

“What’s your name?”

Grandfather used to say that God is “in the details.” He saw every tiny incident as significant; God, he believed, watched over everything, and even this boy appeared here on divine decree. I was too captivated by Stalin and the war in those days to notice.

“Gideon Ariel.”

His voice conveyed both innocence and determination. Even then, as today, I paid more attention to nuances than content.

“How old are you?” grandfather persisted. Meanwhile, I was beginning to show signs of impatience. I didn’t understand yet that destiny is always summoning new possibilities.

“Six years old.”

“Big deal,” I thought to myself. What’s there to talk about with a six year old? Nothing could bring me more pleasure than an intelligent conversation. It’s why I stuck around with my grandfather in the first place, and it’s also why I spent so much time with his sister, Shoshanna. When I was twenty five and she seventy five, we used to meet for weekly conversations on philosophical method. She considered our meetings as lessons and even insisted on paying me.

“Six years old, and already working?!” Grandpa continued investigating.

“I have to do it to help my parents...” Gideon replied patiently. His voice strayed a bit when he said this.

It was immediately clear to me that he wasn’t telling the truth. I always thought a person was lying when they didn’t speak directly, forthrightly (evidently a super-human undertaking). As I looked a little closer, his hands had blue marks on them. Somebody – certainly his father – had introduced them to a ruler.

My father never hit me. My mother would slap me occasionally, whenever I’d gone and proved her wrong with my arguments and invite her temper. I was the victim, really, of my own arguments. It was why I got involved with Hadassim in the first place: so I wouldn’t be there to drive my mom crazy.

Grandfather didn’t really “get it” about the impatient soul of Israeli kids. Indulging his Russian grandfatherly ways, he ran his hands through Gideon’s dark, smooth hair and pinched his cheeks. He reached through his pocket watch and produced a ten-piastres coin. Ten piastres was a lot of money then. It was clear that Gideon was getting what he’d come for.

“You will be very rich one day,” grandpa declared. Gideon’s face erupted in a sunny smile; he was perfectly aware at his tender age of the productive power of wealth. Then my grandfather added, “But always remember: lack of money doesn’t mean you’ve failed, but lacking ideas is a prison one can never escape.”

Gideon's eyes were lit. Those proverbial words were the very momentum that would lift him up in the following sixty years. Young Gideon dreamt of striking it rich and driving his own American Cadillac. Later, in Hadassim, he would stick posters of the car over his bed. Grandfather's insight had etched in him the rare perspicacity for both money and ideas. In November 2005, as we worked on this book, Gideon told me that he was never interested in money as such -- he never bargained. He was interested only in the things one could do with money. I said it sounded like what someone with a lot of money would say. But he insisted: "That was my attitude even when I didn't have a single piaster in my pocket; and my father was horribly tightfisted, as you know. He kept kilograms of gold inside our apartment walls."

"You're a dreamer, but you'll achieve something, too," Grandpa told him.

I was somewhat jealous at that. "What about me, grandpa?" I asked.

"You will write books."

Years later, when he talked me into doing this book, Gideon reminded me of our first meeting in the Blowstein house on 38 Lilienbloom St. To this day I question whether that six year old delivery boy was really him. On the other hand, how else could he possibly recount the entire story from his house in Coto De Caza, to the last detail? Maybe he was fooling me now just as he had fooled my grandfather then; it isn't easy distilling reality from imagination, after all that time. As far as I knew, it could easily be a case of selective and recreative memory.

N. An Alliance in Tel Aviv

I recognized Gideon two days later, on the beach behind Herbert Samuel square. I realized I must have seen him there before, but I suppose I'd never taken special notice. Ever since that encounter in grandfather's house I felt a partnership of sorts between us. Tel Aviv was a very small town then, with nary a car on its windy roads. A normal day for me was spent with my girlfriend, walking the distance from Lilienbloom Street to Allenby Street down to the coast, stopping at the Great Synagogue so I could coax the treasurer into parting with a few piastres. (My great-grandfather had put up the money for the synagogue, after all.) We'd usually also pay a visit to Café Witmann to buy some ice cream on our way to the beach. But this time I'd gone alone.

"Ahalan, Gideon," I greeted him like a brother in arms.

He didn't really have time for me, just then -- he was right in the middle of a scuffle with this burly, red-freckled hothead. It looked like they were going to hit each other, so I rushed in between them. "Why fight now?" I scolded them. "All of

Tel Aviv is toasting the victory over the Nazis, and here you are, two children waving their fists at each other??” Part of me, of course, wished they’d ignore me and play out their little imbroglio for me anyway. I’ve always been one for a spectacle. The freckled boy growled, “No victory here! The Germans are the strongest in the world!” At this, both Gideon and I broke into raucous laughter – the other boy was clearly a Yekke³⁶, a German Jew, and quite proud of it -- and the fight was clearly over.

The freckled boy’s name was Asher Bruner. Diffused tension often gives way to strong friendship, and Gideon, Asher and I were soon lapping up ice-cream together at the pier. It was Gideon’s treat, paid for with the booty he’d only just taken from my grandfather. Gideon, unlike his father and his miserly ways, loved spending as much as he loved profit. The scene was typical summer youth, indescribably happy. Luckily, Asher still got to spend his rage on a poor sap who thought he could cut in front of us in line.

As we greedily swallowed up the rest of our ice-cream, we were drawn to the sounds of Dochi Carlo’s band in Café Filtz, the home away from home for Tel Aviv’s aristocrats and their darling children. Our eyes immediately found a dazzling girl in a red dress, sitting atop her bulky father’s lap, her glittery white shoes rocking about. “What’s your name?” Asher asked her. “Esther Korkidi,” she answered timidly. She seemed ready to join us, but her father glared at us and fixed her firmly back on his lap. As it happens, we would meet her again in Hadassim, several years later.

Gideon’s father, Moshe, was head of customs at the Jaffa port -- a convenient post for someone charged with stocking ammunition for the resistance. He’d helped provide weapons for Eliyahu Hakim and Eliyahu Beit-Tzuri, the LECHI men who assassinated Lord Moyne, the British Resident Minister for the Middle East, in Egypt. The gold Moshe stored inside his walls had come straight from the bank coffers the resistance had robbed to finance their operations. Gideon almost never saw his father, and when he did it was usually accompanied by abuse, of the sort that usually breeds “character”.

My father was in Iraq just then, serving on a Jewish unit that was preparing for the Italian front. Asher’s father was a war merchant, sailing to and fro on the Mediterranean. Three boys, all more or less out of their fathers’ reach. An alliance, then; a triad forged in common origins. We’d sneak around the shop on the nearby military base and swipe candy off the shelves – the English single-handedly ruined a whole generation of Israeli teeth with their candy, just when Israel needed teeth of steel. Of course, our generation was similarly weakened by our subservience to the leaders of the first and second generations of the state; for years we survived only by serving them, as not many would dare spit in the same wells whence they drank.

³⁶ A term East-European Jews invented to mock the more overtly bourgeois, punctilious German immigrants, who were later arrivals in Israel.

O. Shula and David's Grandfather

Shula and David Druker³⁷ came up in Hadassim with us. They were the grandchildren of Guthold Elyakim Weill, an oriental studies professor and the Hebrew University library director. Shula and her younger brother had lived with her mother, Eva, right across from Martin Buber in a second floor apartment in Talabia. Walter Eitan, a prominent leader in the Jewish Agency, lived on the same floor.



Shula and David

Our generation was caught between two poles: David Ben Gurion, the charismatic politician from Shechunat Poalim Alef³⁸ in Tel Aviv, who stood for an activist, nationalist socialism; and the no less charismatic Martin Buber, from Talabia in Jerusalem, who stood for a dialogic post-nationalism. Ben-Gurion embodied the sentiments of Jews and settlers all over the country. Buber represented a group of German émigré professors and professionals who came over in the twenties and thirties. These Yekke intellectuals, bundled together in the small neighborhood of Talabia, were brought up under the “Frankfurt School” in Germany.³⁹ They’d let go of the objectivist element characteristic of the later Marx in favor of his earlier destructive and revolutionary radicalism. Back in Germany, Buber, Weill and their friends had been active in the Zionist student movement, with its yellow-white-blue banner; some of them had also belonged to the Kantian Zionist club, centered in Rabbi Nehemiah Nobel’s house in Frankfurt. They carried those influences with them to a new school, the Talabia School, whose alumni would dominate the humanities at the Hebrew University for generations.

The confrontation between the ethos of the Talabia School and that of Ben-Gurion is the name of the dialectical game Israel has played for the last century. Ben-Gurion was the political father of all the sundry myth-made generals, all of whom failed on the battlefield but still managed, somehow, to curry public favor with their fairy tales. He built them up, and he made sure their lapses never found the limelight, all so they could carry his mantle when it came time to step down. In the end, he felt it was a failure on his part that he should be replaced with Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir, mere members of his entourage. Nevertheless, his success was absolute.

He had crowned our generals. His three favorites were Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak



**Shula and David's
Grandfather Professor
Elyakim Weill**

named herself Pratibha after her experiences in India. She in Hawaii. David took a Hebrew name, Dror. Today he is a family in Geneva, Switzerland.

neighborhood No.1”

his movement were all Jewish Social Scientists. All of them of Nazism.

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Rabin and Ariel Sharon, and it was they above all who thereafter molded Israel through its wars. Nothing molds the character of a nation more than war, which determines not who is right but who survives, as history has amply demonstrated time and again. “War has sated the desires of aggressive nations for six thousand years, and God has all the while wasted our blood to create the stars and flowers.”⁴⁰

In Israel it was Ben-Gurion’s generals who survived.

The Talabia School, led by Buber, framed the ideological bulwark of anti-war opposition and provided its language: that war exhausts our children and destroys our values. Buber had two prominent descendents come out of Hadassim: Shevach Weiss, who ascended to the ranks of the communist party, and Arie Bober, who got as far as MATZPEN⁴¹ before attending to the evolution of consciousness by drug-inducement in Rosh-Pina. The heroes of the Israeli New Left -- Uri Avneri, Yosi Beilin and Amir Peretz – grew out of Talabia’s garden bed without knowing it. As of this writing, Shimon Peres still straddles the fence between the Zionist poles; his fusion has been nothing but a monstrous *confusion*. Even Arik Sharon, who evacuated all the settlements of the Katif block, was an unwitting captive in Talabia’s net; his concession is emblematic of the triumph of the Yekke axis of Zionism.

In the end, Ben Gurion proved a talented engineer of state, but his national defense ideology went bankrupt.

Our generation – the Generation of the State – is built from an ideological compromise. Hence, Shimon Peres’ successes and failures are equally our own. We ourselves vacillated between the two poles; we internalized, in the War of Independence of Ben Gurion, the cruelties and lapses that were concealed from us, only to swing with the pendulum after the Yom Kippur War. One by one, Ben Gurion’s generals crossed over to the Talabia side: Moshe Dayan, with the Camp David Accords, Yitzchak Rabin, with Oslo, and Arik Sharon with the Katif Block evacuation. After the Six Day War, Ben-Gurion himself was more Buberian than Buber.

Our generation declined to strip the generals of their leadership because their reign was a chimera. Their entire goal had been to consolidate at the top and relish in their privileges, which appalled us. As circumstances changed, we failed to lead because we hadn’t nourished the body of Zion with a threat-neutralizing concept better than the anachronisms of Buber and Ben-Gurion. Hadassim stood for dance rather than intellectual evolution, for sports – instead of the study of security and survival. But nothing threatens our annihilation more than keeping to those anachronisms.

⁴⁰ Victor Hugo

⁴¹ Israel’s Socialist Organization, a libertarian-communist political movement

Hadassim's most prominent political alumnus was Shevach Weiss, and it's revealing that his career would be capped with the secondary role of Knesset speaker. Shevach complained to me that Israelis didn't really absorb him. On the contrary, I think he was absorbed only too well: along with others of the Generation of the State, he lacked true leadership. Creative dialogue, evidently, won't foster it. Shevach said the Diaspora had never left him; but Beni Peled, ex-commander in the air force, was on to something when he said the State of Israel had never left the Diaspora.

Shula and David's grandfather lived on Balfour St., a two minute walk from Markus St. Talabia was a Buberian mixed Arab-Jewish neighborhood, where the elites of both nations made their homes. Talabia epitomized the social model the émigrés brought with them: a bi-national state in Israel. They were the cream of the gentle-souled "Settlement," conquering the Humanities at the Hebrew University and thus the entire field in all of Israel. Whoever once ignored their potential long term influence is now eating his hat even as he rots in his grave. It is telling that the office of the president, the Israeli Science Academy building, the Jerusalem Theatre and the Van-Leer Institute all reside in Talabia.

Eva, Shula and David's mother, was (and still is) mentally ill, but her condition remained secret, undiagnosed and untreated, all in order to preserve the honor of Professor Weill – along with the honor of Talabia and the ambition for a sane Zionism. According to her daughter, Eva was a manic-depressive, a narcissist obsessed with collecting trivial objects who suffered from uncontrollable bursts of rage. She would occasionally even throw things at her children and injure them. But this very same woman, even at the age of ninety-one, was also supremely creative, intelligent – and, in our observation, manipulative. She was a case study for her daughter, Shula (later professor Pratibha Eastwood) in some sense. David has reservations for this diagnosis. The rest of the observations we leave to her two children.



Eva

Harry Leo Druker married Eva three weeks after they first met. He was still married to another woman when he'd fled from Germany, but she soon divorced him. Eva agreed to marry him because her lover – later her second husband – wasn't available, and she was determined to be married come hell or high water. Harry was drawn to the prestige of the Weill clan in Jerusalem. Consequently, there was no love lost between the two.

Harry was a dental student in Berlin before the First World War interrupted his studies, and he had finished his degree at the American University in Beirut with the support of his divorcee, whose "mixed" family was less vulnerable to Nazi persecution. With his diploma in hand in Jerusalem, he became disillusioned with his political marriage; according to Eva, Harry kept a mistress, behaving like a tyrant at home. When she decided she wanted divorce, professor Weill made sure that Harry would find every door in the city closed to him until he succumbed. The whole thing

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was so ugly that Eva even stopped Harry from seeing the children by piling up tables and chairs at the front door. Professor Weill and his daughter made such hell of his life that he left for America once the divorce was finalized.

Shula spent only a short time with her father on Markus St. At the tender age of two she was apparently too fat for his taste, and he imposed a strict diet on her. That “vacation diet” was the primary feature of their time together. He left a year later, and until the age of twenty-three she still pictured him as Paul Newman. After she invited him to her first wedding, he came to see her at Oranim Seminary, with his third wife and they remained close from that day until his death.

Eva, intelligent though lacking in education, is in the care of a Jerusalem hospital as of this writing. A woman conscious of her desirability, her relationships have been many (inspiring a curious hostility in Shula), including five marriages – and five divorces. Each of her husbands was dedicated to her, until they fled, or were made to flee. She evinced little interest in her children, however, and never took charge of their care, to the point where they stayed with their grandparents most of the time. In 1944, the year of Normandy, Professor Weill hired a nurse for his grandchildren.

Professor Elyakim Weill was a famous orientalist in Germany. In addition to being secretary to David Wolfson, president of the Zionist Organization (after Herzl’s death), he taught in universities in Berlin and Frankfurt, and until the rise of Hitler had been director of the German National Library. Then came Kristallnacht, by which time he was demoted to library custodian.

Back in Germany, he’d been very close to Buber as well as others: Professors Noah Turchiner- Tur-Sinai, Aqiva Ernest Simon, Gershom Scholem, the publisher Reuven Mass, the ophthalmologist Dr. Albert and his wife, the painter Anna Ticho. He was also connected to Dr. Siegfried Lehmann, the director of a Kovno orphanage (and later of Ben Shemen in Israel) and with the painter Ludwig Schwerin. After they arrived in Israel, most of these people were drawn to Talabia and belonged to the Ichud (Union), an association established to promote understanding between Jews and Arabs. The Weill household was the core ground of the organization, though Weill never met with any Arab intellectuals (despite speaking perfect Arabic) and once even demanded that his granddaughter (Shula) end her relationship with an Arab boy from Beit Safafa.

Now at home in Eretz Israel, Weill became director of the Hebrew University Library and professor in the oriental studies department, occasionally stopping by Yehudit Schwabe’s cozy restaurant on Ben Maimon Street for lunch. All five of his books are still used by students in his department. Though his grandchildren never wanted for anything, Weill wasn’t as generous in grandfatherly affection; Shula suspects that the death of his wife of plague, in 1918, stunted his capacity for love.

Losing their mother was doubly tragic for Eva and her brother, Getz, as they, too, lost access to Weill's heart. They were given a stepmother, Harriet, though the professor treated her more like a housemaid. In 1933, after Hitler took power, Weill sent Getz away to study engineering in England; the son, whose psychological issues had been ignored, eventually pleaded to return -- resorting to suicide when Weill refused. This second tragedy was something Professor Weill was always too ashamed to admit, and he covered it up by explaining that David had been killed in the London air raids.

David would eventually uncover the grim truth. The death of his son was a final blow to Weill's everyday emotional faculty. After Kristallnacht in 1938, the professor would send Eva to Israel, to study agriculture at the WIZO boarding school in Nahalal. The very last thing she wanted was to study agriculture.

Shula and David received some measure of love from their step-grandmother, Harriet, but even that much was limited by the unfortunate contempt with which she was held in the household. Martin Buber, however, was a wonderful source of unconditional love for Shula, and until she was sent with her brother to a foster home at the age of four, much of her time was spent around him.

Shula remembers: "Grandfather lived near what today is the prime minister's house. His landlord, Bulus Basil⁴², was a Christian Arab from Ramallah, and he used to join us for coffee whenever he came by for the rent. Our ground floor neighbors were Dr. Otto Oppenheimer, the top gynecologist in Jerusalem, and his wife Bettina, a well known Jerusalem photographer. Their house was the premier medical clinic for the city's important women. They didn't have any kids, but they had a dog, Jacky. A renowned ophthalmologist, Professor Michelson, lived on the second half of the ground floor. Grandfather's apartment was on the second floor, and right next door was an apartment that Hadassah Hospital kept for important visitors. Professor Privas, the hospital director-general, stayed there with his family for a long time. The Belkind family occupied the apartment right above ours, and the apartment next to theirs was kept by the state for Moshe Sharet after Ben-Gurion sacked him from his cabinet."

"I especially remember the five Yekke Professors -- Buber, Scholem, Bergman, Schwabe and grandpa -- lounging together in the Herncime, the male-exclusive room where they sat together at the round table, solving the world's problems, surrounded by grandfather's cigar-smoke. They analyzed the causes of the war, searched for solutions for the Arab-Jewish conflict and delved into the principles of Hasidism and Buber's "I-Thou" philosophy. Schwabe, old and sickly, but of keen mind, spoke softly and wisely. He explored the notions of reincarnation and knowledge by reminiscence, even suggesting that he himself had been a 4th Century Athenian philosopher in a past life. I believed those things with all my heart,

⁴² Shifra, my wife, a native Jerusalemite, remembers Bulus Basil's house as a palace.

propping myself on their feet under the table. Buber acted the doting, loving grandfather for me, sitting me on his lap and filling me with Hasidic songs and tales of old, telling me for the first time about the Baal Shem Tov and his greatest pupil Rabbi Pinkus Shapirah. The last thing I expected was that I would one day study with his offspring, Jeremiah Shapirah.”

“Buber loved me back; with him, I imagined that I was being nudged into the motherly womb by his affection. He wasn’t just a surrogate grandfather, but the loving mother and father of my earliest years, the only one who saw fit to nourish me with familial warmth. We laughed together. It was wonderful. He was a profound influence, not so much by what he said but through his attitude of “I-Thou”. I was his model, his experiment – and Hadassim was the application. It was only natural that I would move to Hadassim (though I was sent there at the prodding of a family friend, Professor Nagler). Ever after that Buberian period of my life, I always regarded the Dialogic insight as the most salient truth about the soul, and always searched for its deepest expressions. Buber was a genius; he originated the self-evident as an idea. “

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Shula

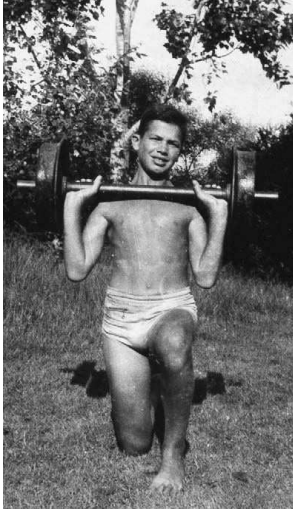
“The five of them met the day after Normandy, joined by Dr. Siegfried Lehmann (director of the Ben Shemen youth village) and the publisher Reuven Mass, whose son would later die leading the Lamed Hei squadron in the War of Independence. I wasn’t interested in the details of the war, but I understood from their conversation that an important reversal in the course of events had taken place. They pondered the meaning of Normandy, the future of the war and of the Jewish nation, the war of the sons of light and the sons of darkness. Buber suggested that Dialogue would eventually return to the realm of man. Shalom talked at length on the centrality of faith in life and in war especially. Bergman weighed in on the viability of Kant’s notion of eternal peace. They looked back fondly on the day, in their Berlin years, when they sabotaged the screening of an Anti-Semitic movie by releasing mice into the audience. Then Lehmann asked Buber to come to Ben Shemen the next day and lecture his team on the meaning of Normandy, and kissed me on the cheek as he stepped out the door. Grandpa would always come back to that day’s conversation, giving me more details of it each time.

P. The dialogic world

The Normandy landing shook all the Jews in the world, and not only them. Its layers of meaning penetrated to the core of all men, influencing all modes of thought. Even if every event has a certain influence, an event of such irresistible mass was earth-shaking. Naturally, such influence is unquantifiable, but no less irrefutable, and today evidence for it has a scientific foundation: Quantum Theory, and the notion

of physicist and mathematician Roger Penrose⁴³ that the nature of human consciousness suggests a quantum process. The landing in Normandy reverberated globally, and one process it set into motion was the founding of the Hadassim youth-village, with its unique characteristics.

In Eretz Israel two new Kibbutzim were then settled, despite the White Paper's⁴⁴ prohibition, in regions densely populated by Arabs: Kefar Etzion in Mount Hebron, and Beit-Keshet in the lower Galilee. Three more Kibbutzim were founded



**Shelomo Fogel taught
Gideon Ariel weight lifting**

near Kefar Etzion, altogether forming the Etzion Block, where some of the hardest battles of the Independence War were fought, to the Arabs' advantage. The Lamed-Hei⁴⁵ warriors fell on their way to the Etzion Block, an event which shook the entire Jewish settlement and later became a myth of heroism, forming the central pillar of the 1954 Independence Day celebrations at Hadassim. Consciously and sub-consciously, the myth of the "Lamed-Hei" shaped the character of Hadassim students – perhaps of its educators, as well. It certainly crystallized my own view regarding the centrality of war to human existence. It made me very akin to the philosophy of Heraclitus "the obscure", who proclaimed: "War is the father of all things."

Beit-Keshet was the first Kibbutz founded by

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the pioneer training group of Palmach⁴⁶ veterans, which founded most of the Kibbutzim in the second half of the forties. The Palmach were the elite of

the son's generation – the second generation of Zionism. Our group is of the generation of the state – the third generation. We were influenced by them, and rebelled against their hegemony.

⁴³ Sir Roger Penrose, born 1931, is an English Mathematical physicist and Emeritus W. W. Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford. He is highly regarded for his work in mathematical physics, in particular his contributions to General relativity and Cosmology. He is also a Recreational mathematics and controversial Philosopher.

⁴⁴ In the year 1930 The British Passfield-White Paper was issued in response to the civil strife of 1928-29 in Palestine. Bowing to pressure from the Arabs, Lord Passfield and the British retreated from their pledge to permit unlimited Jewish immigration and began to impose severe limits on the numbers allowed to immigrate. Illegal immigration continued. (History of the middle east data base, Ted Thornton)

⁴⁵ Thirty five warriors fell. The Hebrew letters Lamed&Hei (L&H) are equivalent to the number 35 according to Jewish numerology, the numerical system created by the writers of the bible and organizers of the canon, were there is a deliberate use of numbers as means of communication.

⁴⁶ The elite striking force of the Haganah, which was the underground military organization of the settlement in Eretz Yisrael from 1920 to 1948.

Some of our teachers and youth-guides were Palmach people, and they influenced us deeply. The handsome and strong Shelomo Fogel surpassed all of them as a Palmach and macho icon. He taught Gideon Ariel weight lifting. From weight lifting, Gideon moved to the discus and shot-put, and from those to discoveries about the mechanics of human motion. Shevach recalls his pervading influence: "Shelomo Fogel was an ideal figure for me. All my life I tried to imitate him." Shevach may have failed to assimilate fully for that very reason: Fogel, as force-exuding as he was, belonged to an archetype that had an emasculating effect on the third generation. By the next generation he was already somewhat of an anachronism.

After Normandy the British felt they no longer needed the Arabs. It was a window of grace, though not entirely dependable, in the British authority's attitude toward Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel. The authorities stopped preventing Jews from settling in regions forbidden by the White Paper, though some Jews, members of the pacifist Ichud (union) association, firmly opposed new settlements. Notable for his resistance was Dr. Siegfried Lehmann, the headmaster of the youth-village Ben Shemen, who declared: "Our triumph will not be accomplished this way. Zionism must not cause harm to the Arabs on its path to realization." Dr. Lehmann and his cohorts lacked political influence in those days, but their cultural and educational legacy was decisive, with long-term political implications. Shimon Peres and Shulamit Aloni were Lehmann's outstanding disciples – the primary spokesmen for the vision of the New Middle East. Shimon Peres wrote, "The two years I was there determined the course of my life. Almost everything I had later I received there...In Beit Shemen I met Martin Buber for the first time, that is to say, I heard his lectures...In Ben Shemen Dr. Lehmann was one of the leaders of 'Brit Shalom',⁴⁷ which demanded a new way of interaction with the Arabs".⁴⁸

Rachel and Jeremiah Shapira, Dr. Lehmann's team, founded Hadassim, and brought more people from Ben-Shemen with them.

On the 8th of July, the day the Allies conquered the city of Kan, Dr. Lehmann assembled all teachers and youth-guides of the youth village Ben-Shemen for a discussion-meeting on the national and educational meaning of the Normandy landing. Standing in the teachers' lounge, sampling tea and biscuits, the thirty-two assembled talked politics and current events. Conspicuous among them was a rather elderly man of eminence, adorned with thick beard and moustache like some biblical prophet. Two mesmerizing eyes flared from his forehead, availing him in the

47 Peace Alliance. A marginal political organization founded in 1925 by Jews from Jerusalem and elsewhere who were conjoined by a common belief in the cooperation between the Yishuv and the Palestinian Arabs, which they felt was not merely a moral necessity, but the only long term practical solution. They were influenced by the seminal Israeli writer Ahad-Haam, often referred to as the leader of spiritual Zionism. He was one of the earliest critics of the policies of the Zionist Movement, the title of his essay: "Lo zeh ha-derech" (This is not the way), quickly becoming a slogan of earnest criticism. The three most visible and forceful leaders of this organization, were Martin Buber, Judah Magnes and Ernst Simon. (source: "Peace Alliance's website)

48 Mordechi Naor and Dan Giladi, 'Ben- Shemen Youth –Village', Ben Shemen:1997

prospecting of souls. Intellectual energy in its undifferentiated glare erupted from him, blazing everyone in the room. Dr. Lehmann, long since captivated by his magnetic charm, attended to him as a child, gazing with awestruck eyes. No one at Ben-Shemen had ever seen the rigid, authoritarian Dr. Lehmann behaving this way. There was regal pomp in Buber's manner. Even his modesty was regal. It was obvious that he had handpicked his every article of clothing meticulously.

Martin Buber was born on the Danube River's shores, in Vienna, in the year 1878 – not far from the bridge that Napoleon had captured with dastardly cunning, seizing the capitol of the Habsburg Empire without so much as a battle or even the loss of a soldier.

The foolishness of war took root in Buber's mind from early childhood. Throughout all his childhood, the constant flow of the great river moved him to new realms of experience. The dialogic wave, one wave from the Buberian flow, reached Hadassim, and burned into each of us, though only few are aware of it.

When he was three years old, his mother fled with her lover to Russia, returning to see him only thirty years later, with her two daughters. His mother's early departure was to become a formative experience. The philosophy he developed is to some extent a rationalization of his mother's escape. He grew up in the home of his grandfather, a renowned scholar of the Midrash⁴⁹, Agadah⁵⁰, and of Medieval Jewish History. The answer he gave to a grandson despairing for his mother -- that his parents' marriage had disintegrated for lack of communication – was likely an attempt to safeguard the child from more sensitive details. Nevertheless, this sort of account, centering on communication, became the cornerstone of the grandchild's philosophical development, culminating in his philosophy of communication fifty years later. Living in the atmosphere of Hasidic learning in his grandfather's home, the young orphan began to view dialogue as a totalizing vision, and he would soon imbue among his fellow early-20th century Jewish intellectuals the imperative of combining a sense of Jewish history with their fidelity to the German, secular culture of man. After WWI, along with Guthold Elyakim Weil, he joined the Zionist-Kantian circle in Frankfurt, where he met with Siegfried Krakauer, one of the Frankfurt School's founders. During the same period he began to associate with the international group of artists and intellectuals who had founded a center for new art – pacifist, anarchist and leftist -- on the "Mountain of Truth" in Switzerland, near the village of Ascona⁵¹.

⁴⁹Midrash - Commentary, sermon, homiletic interpretation of the Scripture.

⁵⁰ Tale, myth, homiletic passages in Rabbinic literature

⁵¹ Ascona had been identified with radical, occultist, and countercultural avant-gardes. This story has now been detailed in Martin Green's *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture Begins in Ascona, 1900–1920*. Such was the notoriety of Ascona's Monte Veritas, the Mountain of Truth, as a center for experimental lifestyles and new forms of art and spirituality, that colorful characters were drawn there from across Europe and the United States. (Religion after Religion: Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade, and Henry Corbin at Eranos. Contributors: Steven M. Wasserstrom - author. Publisher: Princeton University Press. Place of Publication: Princeton, NJ. Publication Year: 1999. Page Number: 102).

In 1922, Buber published the book that would make him the most renowned Jewish philosopher and intellectual in Germany: "I and Thou". In it he criticized Western scientific-mechanistic culture, which he claimed depended on Immanuel Kant's concept of objectivity. Buber rejected the Kantian distinction between Mind and "phenomena," subject and object. He believed, in diametrical opposition, that a dialogue must be made with the world. Decades later, the people assembled at the meeting in Ben-Shemen speculated that Buber would analyze European events by means of his concept of "Dialogue", so they devoted discussion to that concept's foundations and context in anticipation of his lecture.

Dr. Lehmann and Buber were known to be colleagues in the left-wing association, Ichud, and some of the educators were reluctant to attend a lecture by a prominent leftist and extreme pacifist. Although they taught in Dr. Lehmann's institute, they were loyal followers of Ben-Gurion. Dr. Berl Catsenelson, the man who laid the foundations for a revolutionary and constructive Zionism (and a friend of Ben Gurion), said of Buber that he "...cares more about the Arabs' interests than Jews' lives." The incompatibility of nationalist and humanistic impulses had torn at Zionism from the start. Every generation made an effort to sweep the contradiction under the carpet, or else neutralize it before it burst out into the open with full force. All such trials failed, because the original generation of the founders was torn in its very heart: it yearned at the same time for the ideal, universal society and the loftiest nationalism -- irreconcilable goals that tore the west then, and tears it still.

Just prior to the meeting, a lengthy, heated discussion took place between Michael Kashtan, our bible and literature instructor, and member of the left wing of political Zionism (whose leaders were Ben Gurion, Berl katsenelson and Yitzhak Tabenkin), and Jeremiah Shapira, the youth-community leader and member of Mapai⁵², both voicing rather harsh criticisms of their celebrity guest-speaker.



Dr. Lehmann

Kashtan: "Thirty years ago, in Berlin, Buber was advocating the merger of Jewish history and identity with German culture. He never even considered breaking away from Germanism. As a Zionist, he apparently even tried to combine Zionism with Germanism. Only Intellectuals detached from reality could develop such ideas on such 'dialogue'. Clearly, he failed to read the writing on the wall: the anti-Semitic clamors and calls for Jewish extermination existed in the writings of Friedrich Hegel from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Only in 1938, with the noose already skinning his neck in Germany, Buber fled to Eretz Israel. Then, in a moment of truth, he decided to save his own skin. The moment his foot touched Israel, he resumed his perverse teachings and began advocating the closure of borders to other

⁵² Mapai (Hebrew) - The Israel Labor Party (Mifleget Poalei Eretz Yisrael). The party of David Ben-Gurion, first prime minister of the State of Israel, founded in 1930. The party held a majority and governed Israel until 1977, and again held power under Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres and briefly under Ehud Barak under various names and alliances - (Labor Party, Labor Alignment Party, Am Ehad). Mapai had a center-socialist ideology.

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Jews in order not to intrude on the rights of Arabs. Such a man should be excommunicated in my opinion, since his ideas would accelerate the end of Zionism!”

Jeremiah answered, “German Jews don’t understand Islam and the Arabs. Experience has taught that they never even properly understood the Germans and the West, despite their education. On the other hand, they are a little bit square. I was born in the old city of Safed, in the mountains of Galilee, and from an early age I was in everyday contact with Arabs. You might share a plate of humus with them in pleasure, but a true peace between Jews and Arabs in an independent Jewish state cannot exist, because it contravenes Muhammad’s injunction to the Moslems, which has lasted for thirteen hundred years.”

Kashtan: “Although Buber and Lehmann won’t admit it, there is a contradiction, in their eyes, between ‘being a Zionist’ and ‘being human’. They believe that the Zionist ambition to found a Jewish state in all of western Eretz Israel, where a million Arabs now live, is the equivalent of the Nazi ambition to extend to Eastern Europe...”

Rachel, Jeremiah’s wife, begged the two men to sit down, as the discussion was starting, and she interjected: “But - Buber, Lehmann and their Ichud party have no political influence, and their ideas are barely known.”

Kashtan sat down and replied, a little patronizingly and in spite of Rachel being his senior, “Rachel, dear, the British philosopher John Stuart Mill⁵³ determined that philosophy and ideas, superficially impractical, have great practical influence in the long term. Buber and Lehmann are planting the seeds of calamity in our culture by their distortion of Zionism and Herzl and Ben-Gurion’s strategy. They are devoted to the concept of spiritual Zionism, which is nothing but the continuation of the Diaspora in Eretz Israel itself. According to them, Zionism should be the continuation of Germanism in Israel. Even back in Poland, I could see the nature of German culture with my own eyes, before I escaped from it by the skin of my teeth. If we can’t bring a halt to this concept now, then in fifty years, when Ben Gurion and Buber are deep under the earth, Zionism will collapse. The analogies he draws between the labor party in Israel and the Nazis are intolerable.”

“He’s starting!” Rachel said as she put the palm of her hand to his, silencing him. “Everything should be tolerated.”

Lehmann began with a solemn tone: “Until my arrival in Israel I’d directed two institutes, one in the Berlin quarter, where Eastern European Jews lived, and the second in the heart of hearts of Eastern European Jewry, which is Litta, and there I worked with Professor Max Moshe Schewabe, who unfortunately cannot honor us tonight with his presence. In order to clarify why I chose precisely the environment of eastern European Jewry, whose vast majority was annihilated in this accursed war, I have to say something about a movement for which I felt a great sympathy. A circle of Jews of German origin materialized, guided by the idea that the Jew in Germany is uprooted from his people, without a homeland, and that he becomes a real Jew only upon returning to his people. The ‘people’, in our eyes, were the Jews to our east: in Poland, Litta, and in Russia. Our ambition was to unite with those masses. From them, we wanted to learn the Jewish language, manners, songs and folklore. On the

⁵³John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) an English philosopher and political economist, was an influential liberal thinker of the nineteenth century, he was an advocate of Utilitarianism.

other hand, we were Zionists, and we were under the influence of our guest this evening, Martin Buber.”

“But Buber opposed the founding of the state of Israel, because it would hurt the rights of the Arabs,” erupted Kashtan.

Lehmann gave Kashtan an angry look. Buber calmed him down:

“Let the young teacher say what he has to say. After all we are having a dialogue. Either you have a conversation or you kill. I am for conversation in any contest and in every situation. I am for conversation in all seasons and for any prize. A real utopia means life as a dialogue. Objectivity is expressed in analysis; the dialogic state of mind is expressed in synthesis, towards a new creation. Even God created the world in a dialogue between him and matter. When we will educate for creativity and not for understanding, which we cannot attain anyway, we will create a new world, we will temper wars, we will temper evil.”

Kashtan: “Would you have dialogue with Hitler?”

Buber: “Of course! If it would have been possible to have dialogue with him, the war would not have happened, nor the holocaust.”

Rachel: “Chamberlain, Britain’s prime minister, tried that and failed. It would have been better not to talk, but declare war immediately on Germany.”

Kashtan nodded in agreement.

Buber: “Hitler and Chamberlain treated each other as objects, tried to use each other. If they could only have elevated themselves to a relationship of ‘me’ and ‘you’, a true dialogue could have occurred. They would have begotten a new world, and a war would not have erupted.”

“And why were they not able to?” challenged Jeremiah.

“Because they hadn’t received the right education. Technological man educates for objectivity and not for a dialogic relationship with the world.”

Lehmann decided not to restrain the digression, resuming his introduction: “In Germany, we read every word in Buber’s book, and we were part of those thousands of Jewish youth who were led by Buber to immigrate to Israel. I am very happy to be able this evening to thank Martin for presenting his ideas to us. I am sure they will pollinate our own thoughts.”

Michael seemed intent on expressing some more reservation at this last comment, but Rachel nipped it in the bud, pressing her elbow into his waist.

“What is Man?” asked Buber, as if conversing with himself, then became silent.

No one answered. The subject didn’t interest Jews in Israel then, not even the teachers at Ben Shemen. Buber gazed into the empty space with penetrating eyes, then added that this wasn’t a rhetorical question.

When a response wasn’t forthcoming, he continued: “The distinctiveness of the human being is not in his reason, but in his ability to enter a conversation. A dialogue, with his fellow man, the other; and this is what I ask to do with you.” He moved his eyes from person to person as if to invite partners for creation.

Kashtan dared. He introduced himself, and replied, “Animals are engaged only in a war for survival. You asked ‘what is Man.’ So: Man, too, is an animal, trying to live, using dialogue in order to sharpen his awareness. That constitutes the preeminence of Man. The war erupted because we couldn’t neutralize threats, not because the leaders failed to carry on a dialogue. A dialogue isn’t an end in itself but an instrument. But not an exclusive one, and sometimes it doesn’t work. The landing in Normandy would be an anti-dialogic course of such neutralization. If there was dialogue in Normandy, then it occurred by means of bullets and bombs and not through conversation between people.”

Lehmann was astonished to hear such insight from one of his teachers, looking at him now as if for the first time.

Buber smiled at Michael, then responded: “Neutralization is an expression of the failure of a dialogue. The march of folly in history is a direct result of such failure. Indeed, your answer, Michael, is an attempt merely to contradict my words, my message -- not a genuine attempt at dialogue. The fundamental fact of human existence is dialogue between man and man.”

“Is it possible to hold dialogue with Hitler?” muttered Kashtan in a low voice.

“It is possible with anyone, but not successful with everyone. The preeminence of the realm of man, its distinguishing mark is primarily the possibility of an event between one person and another unique in the whole natural world. Unfortunately, this singular thing does not always happen. The failure to dialogue is the source of evil in the world. The expulsion from the garden of Eden stemmed from the failure of dialogue between Adam and Eve, and between both of them and God.”

Kashtan: “There is also dialogue between animals, maybe even between plants. Those dialogues are more sincere than dialogue between humans, which is often sophistic.”

Buber: “There is something to what you say. But plants and animals are simple systems, maintaining close connection between them but unable to rise to actual dialogue. For humans, on the other hand, language serves merely as a means for dialogue, and all the achievements of the mind have been born to the world by it. This discourse in which one man recognizes the sovereign otherness of the other, that is to say, treats the other as a human being distinct and complete who deserves his unique terms, occurs in the inter-personal realm. The true dialogue occurs in the relational field of self and other, not within the self, nor within the other, nor as a sum-total of both.”

“What is this Professor babbling about?!” whispered Michael to Rachel, who at this point was utterly captivated by Buber. Ignoring Michael’s whispered frustrations, she continued in the dialogue that was now taking shape between her and Buber, one which later manifested in everything she did in Hadassim. Buber continued,

“When a dialogue is held between two or more people, something new is created – existing solely between them, a unique and joined entity - that didn’t exist beforehand, and doesn’t exist within either of them. This new being inhabits the inter-personal realm. There is a distinction between this realm and the personal, which refers to the inner, psychic life of the person, which is the realm with which psychology is engaged. There is also a distinction between the inter-personal and the

inter-human, which deals with social processes that are not necessarily dialogic, for example: observation, analysis and utilization. How is dialogue distinguished from these? 'I' doesn't exist as an exclusive category, but always as part of a relation: 'I-You' Or 'I-Other.' When the 'I' relates as 'I-Other', it relates to the Other in partial way, as to an object of observation, analysis, utilization. When it relates as 'I-You', it relates to the Other on an intimate and authentic basis, experiencing him as singular and whole, without using him for its needs".

Rachel: "What do you mean exactly by the concept, 'Dialogue'?"

Buber: "I'll explain it to you with the help of an ancient Egyptian myth: Isis, the Egyptian goddess of magic, wanted to know the secret name of the god Ra in order to resurrect her husband Osiris. She sent a snake to bite the god, who suffered terribly and turned to Isis, to save him through her magic. The goddess explained that in order to help him he would need to tell her his secret name. But whoever knows a name controls its master's powers, something which he wouldn't allow. Since Ra continued to suffer, he invented an original solution: he gave Set, his twin brother, his secret name not verbally, in speech, but as if from heart to heart. Such transmission of intuitions, from heart to heart, is the deep essence of dialogue; God gave Moses the Torah in the same way. Socrates refrained from writing for that very reason, conveying his theories to his pupils in dialogues, and Plato and Galileo followed by putting their own ideas in dialogues. Hassidism returned Jews to their dialogue between God and between one another. Without Hassidism, Judaism would have devolved from nation to sect."

According to Buber's conception, totalitarian states relate to the public as to objects, not as to intimate friends, and therefore have no problem brutalizing their people in wars, as the purpose of an object is to serve its master's ends. In democratic states, on the other hand, the dialogue between governors and governed is more personal, and therefore democratic leaders are more careful with human life, pursuing wars only in defense. As a result, soldiers in democratic countries identify more closely with the state, fighting with greater energy and spirit. That, according to him, accounts for the British and Canadian triumph in Normandy despite the German's greater military professionalism.

Rachel asked him if it would be right to conclude from his theory that a revolution in the school system was needed, to sever the hierarchies and institute democratic relations -- not only between administrators and teachers but also between students and educators -- with dialogue from heart to heart. Buber answered that this was precisely the idea the "Mountain of Truth" people in Switzerland had, as did the International School in Germany, whose vision had been realized by British educator Alexander Sutherland Neill, in Summer-Hill in England.⁵⁴ Most professional

⁵⁴ **Neill, Alexander Sutherland**, 1883–1973, English educator. After teaching at state schools in Scotland, Neill became dissatisfied with traditional education. In 1924, he set up the progressive coeducational Summer hill School at Leiston, England. Among the school's experiments were optional attendance, a school parliament, and no religious instruction. Neill's works include *The Problem Child* (1927), *The Problem Family* (1949), and *Summer hill* (1960). His ideas, although controversial, continue to be debated.

educators in the world had opposed Neal's ideas, believing in the biblical mode of education: "He who spares the rod hates his son." According to Buber, it was necessary for the Jews of Israel to immerse themselves deeply in his ideas and adapt them to their situation. "David Ben-Gurion says that we will continue to exist only if we will be a chosen people, and I say that we will be a chosen people only if we give our children dialogic education!"

"Can you summarize your educational theory?" asked Rachel.

Buber approached her, held her hands, pierced into her eyes and said, "I have no theory: all I have done tonight was lead you to the window, open it, and point outside."

"Plato's allegory of the cave," mumbled Michael.

"Everything said after Plato is just crumbs that fell from his table," answered Buber, "these are my crumbs!"

"What should we expect to see through the window?" asked Michael, defiantly.

"That the fundamental fact of our existence is our relationship with others. That inter-personal relationships are the core of our social, psychic and spiritual existence, but are nevertheless so difficult for us. Our greatest need is mutual trust between man and his fellow man, among members of a group and between one group and another. Between Jews and Germans, Jews and English and Jews and Arabs. That is the inter-personal ontology."

Kashtan: "What you're saying reminds me of the anthropocentric philosophy of Max Schiller."

"Indeed. And I've also learned from Nietzsche, Shelling, Feuerbach, and the young Karl Marx, not to mention the world of Hassidism. I held dialogues with them all, and I hold them still."

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Lehmann intoned that the calamities of the Jews wouldn't end after the victory over Nazi Germany. Israel would soon have to absorb thousands of children, many of them orphans, and educate them to be mature adults in a peace-making, humanistic society. He turned to Jeremiah, a remarkably vigorous man: "Within a short time we will begin the founding of communities for young holocaust survivors. You will need to call upon your work of sixteen years at Ben-Shemen. Jeremiah," he added with an ironic smile, "you will need to restrain the severe personality you honed among the Hassidim in Safed." He seemed to utter this last instruction with less confidence, eyeing him a little questioningly. Jeremiah nodded and mumbled something. Rachel answered for him: "For the holocaust survivors, Jeremiah would do anything. We will build a Summer Hill in Eretz Israel."

The discussion ended an hour after midnight. Buber rose up as if about to pray. After sitting for so long he'd strained a tendon in his hip, and walking was evidently hard for him; some mistook his slightly pained expression for deep thought, an impression he seemed to confirm when he gathered his voice in final summation: "When the hour arrives that lonely man can no longer address the fallen, 'dead' God as 'You,' everything will depend on whether he can treat the God he knows as 'You', by saying 'You' with all his heart to his living fellows."

Buber was clearly aware that no one had understood this last. Indeed, it's doubtful if he himself understood it with the left, analytical lobe of his brain – it had uncoiled itself intuitively, had been forced upon him by the collective sub-conscious. He instantly recalled a conversation with Yung held on the “Mountain of Truth” in Switzerland, in 1912. Yung told him that the secret of creativity consisted in the miraculous dialogue with the collective unconscious, and Buber had always believed that Yung's word would not be the last on the subject. Ten years after our Ben-Shemen meeting, Jeremiah and Rachel hosted Buber in Hadassim. He told us then that the last word, for now, had been said in Hadassim -- in the dialogue between children of the holocaust, carrying within them the Jewish and global sub-conscious, and the Sabras, embodying the concrete consciousness of Eretz Israel. “The miracle of Hadassim is that it has made this dialogue possible. It failed in the Kibbutzim, in the city schools, and it failed at the Hebrew University. The Miracle of Hadassim will be a new educational paradigm.”

Dr. Lehmann drove Buber back from the Ben-Shemen meeting to his home in Jerusalem. On the way, Buber explained that the intent of that last, somewhat enigmatic pronouncement was to implant something in the audience. If harvested by one of them, a new world would be unveiled. Several years later, faced with the magical spectacle of Hadassim, Buber told Rachel and Jeremiah that they had indeed unleashed that new world.

His final words at Ben-Shemen became a seminal, formative experience for Rachel Shapirah; she had sown the very seeds Buber had deliberately offered. But she resolved to perfect her philosophy at Summer Hill before proceeding to the work of building the dialogic community of Hadassim.

Q. A Station in Summerhill

The Normandy landing blew winds of hope into the sails of Summerhill's founder and director, Alexander Sutherland Neill. Anxious about the prospect of Nazi invasion, he moved his school from the southern English coast all the way up to the quaint Catholic town of Ffestiniog in Northern Wales, where his educational methods stood out as heretical. The whole village did everything it could to humiliate him. In 1944, his wife (and co-founder of the school) lay dying, and Neill had become convinced that Totalitarianism had won. When information of the success of Operation Overlord reached him, however, he found his voice and told his daughter, Zoë: “Summerhill has won out – soon we'll return to our home on the shore and move the whole world closer to our spirit. If we fail, the Earth will perish in another world war.”



Alexander Sutherland Neill

In 1921, when Neill had originally founded an international school in Helero, Germany, he was part of a cadre of intellectuals under Buber's wing. Buber was preparing his book, *I and Thou*, and discussed it with him. The dialogic philosophy held Neill captive and would penetrate to the core of his educational outlook. He soon came to know Siegfried Lehmann, who was in charge of a Jewish orphanage in Kovno at the time. In 1944, Neill saw

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that Lehmann and his friends would want to help absorb and rehabilitate Jewish orphans after the Allied victory. He wondered whether Summerhill could prove useful in that endeavor. In 1946, he accepted Rachel Shapirah for a half-year course of preparation in his youth-village.

In Summerhill, Rachel began to understand that Neill's primary concern was not with teaching, per se, but broad educational and curricular method. The school was self-governing, and no class was mandatory. As he put it to Rachel: "My goal is to use the periods of childhood and adolescence to inspire wholeness and personal power. If we succeed, the children are able to choose their proper course of study themselves. They must have freedom – but not anarchy; they can do as they wish so long as they don't disturb their surroundings.

Eleven years after Normandy, towards the end of tenth grade, I decided to leave Hadassim for home in Tel Aviv and finish school somewhere more achievement-focused, to prepare myself more fully for university studies. Rachel was still the director of Hadassim then and she tried to dissuade me from going. We had a heart-to-heart talk, and I explained to her that I thought I was wasting my time in the village doing agricultural work, that the focus was too much on the social and cultural and not enough on intellectual matters. I was striving for knowledge, not folk dancing and concerts and sport.

Part of her argument for why I should stay rested on her recollection of her encounter with Buber in Ben Shemen all those years ago. She told me that it was on that very evening, two days after Normandy, that her educational conception crystallized: the full cultivation of the creative personality, not the attainment of knowledge. "Knowledge in itself is important," she said, "but is quickly worn out, since reality is constantly moving, its flow accelerating. Yesterday's knowledge can mislead in many cases, because by then reality has changed. Witness how we still fight yesterday's wars. Success in war, in politics or business follows from the grasp of the present flow – from conceptualizing our real-life situations in the process of ongoing dialogues, unsatisfied with memorization and mere doctrine. My effort goes to the heart of education, an active creative faculty, the merging of new data into insight."

"So what is the teacher's role supposed to be in this sort of environment?" I asked.

"Buber describes the dialogic relationship between educator and student as one of 'surrounding'," she answered. "The teacher surrounds the student, so to speak, by holding to the student's vantage point and his own simultaneously, without negating his identity. The issue isn't one of losing self or blurring boundaries – on the contrary. The issue is broad empathy, a true understanding of the student's world from the inside, without losing one's integrity. The student, in contrast, is aware only of his own point of view; the relationship, therefore, is asymmetrical by definition, but

the dialogic dimension persists nevertheless, and the teacher never loses sight of it, always aware of what occurs between them.”

“This ‘surrounding’ consists of three components, then: A) the dialogic relationship, only possible when the participants are willing to arrive at an open, spontaneous and honest mode; B) the willingness to experience the dialogue as a *shared*, mutual and co-incident mode; C) the teacher actively participates in the reality of the student and perceives it without losing sight of his own reality and that of the encounter. The potential to elevate the relationship to the dialogic dimension is purely in the educator’s hands, because of the asymmetry between them. The role of instruction is to help bring about the attitude of ‘surrounding,’ and thus to acknowledge its dialogic dimension.”

“You’re describing a utopia, the dream of Hadassim, but not Hadassim’s reality. No teacher in the village can ‘surround’ *me*, and sometimes it seems as if *I* surround *him*. Perhaps better people, like Yanosh Korchack, can ‘surround’ -- not Shlomo Aचितuv, nor Shalom Dotan, nor Avinoam Kaplan. The sheer title of ‘teacher’ doesn’t automatically impart ‘surrounding’.”

Rachel looked at me sadly and said, “I can see that life will be tough for you. Everyone will be against you.”

“Everyone is already against me here,” I answered. The dialogue was over.

The very next day, we paid a visit to Tel Mond Prison⁵⁵ to challenge the life-term convicts to a game of basketball. We’d voted for the trip in the student council against the majority of the teachers. Dani Dasa, the athletics instructor, conceived the idea along with Chili (Hillel), and they’d negotiated the plan with the warden in Even Yehuda. Hillel had told him that “playing against us would bring them to the light better than any other means.” Rachel supported us, recounting how kids at the Summerhill School had played soccer against prisoners.

On our way to the prison I told Gideon, Asher and Hillel that our game would be a “dialogue” in its own right, a dialogue with criminals. The real test would not be in the score but whether we could evoke something positive in the prisoners’ minds. Gideon, characteristically, asked me where I’d gotten this strange idea, and I told him about my conversation with Rachel and about her own with Buber in Ben Shemen. Hillel responded: “Now I understand the secret of Hadassim’s magic. What we’re doing is not learning, but holding dialogues that provoke insights. You’ve managed to show me the real nature of our village.”

Fifty years later we sat together in my study. Hillel, who had since stirred a revolution in local government by founding municipal corporations that privatized the

⁵⁵ Today the Hasharon Prison

local economic base (resulting in a higher level of service), brought back the memory of that bus ride. “Jeremiah and Rachel’s Hadassim was the single most important experiment in Buberian education the world over. Our group went on to become quite the creative bunch. It’s no coincidence that all of my ideas come out of moments of elevation stimulated by dialogue.”

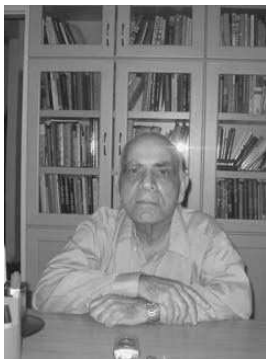
As soon as he left, I called Gideon, who was with his wife, Ann, on a safari tour in South Africa.

“Do you remember that conversation on the way to Tel Mond Prison?”

“Of course. I’ve held the Buberian kind of dialogues with Ann for thirty-five years, and each time I end up with a new bio-mechanical invention. I tell her again and again about that conversation when we were fifteen years old. It laid the road that I’ve followed ever since.”

R. Rebellion in Basra

A few days after the Normandy Invasion, on his way to a kindergarten in the Jewish neighborhood in Basra, in southern Iraq, Eli Shebo felt that the hour of triumph called for something, something special. A distinct intuition of that sort isn’t something you’d expect from a four year old; no doubt, the reader is expected to believe it utterly impossible except in the author’s own potent imagination, as it seems to imply a level of awareness that only develops in adulthood.



Eli Shebo

But the memory of this feeling, pure and whole, has stayed with Eli for longer than sixty years, which would also seem to strain even the realm of fiction. But when he told me about this feeling (which, in 2005, had occurred exactly sixty-one years earlier) I finally heard feelings of my *own* validated, feelings that had accompanied me for precisely as long. The same phenomenon applies for Gideon, my partner in this book.

Eli and I were close friends in Hadassim. Perhaps our similar inner lives had ensured that we would be close, but he could never explain the nature of those inner harmonies, not when he was four, not when he was sixty. Gideon and I can. The title of this chapter signals the events that were harmonically connected even though they stretched over the entirety of the globe. We locate the explanation in the Normandy Effect, a phenomenon of impact both wide and deep, especially for the Jews. We are well aware that not many will agree with our view, including perhaps Eli Shebo himself. On the other hand, the

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manifold similarities in various June 1944 events, ones already described along with those that will appear shortly, indicate that speculation of this sort is not unfounded

Rashid Ali's Pro-Nazi revolt broke out in Baghdad when Eli was only five months old. The British finally put an end to the havoc, but the Muslim pogrom had already cost the Shebo family its venerable house in Baghdad. My father, Abraham



Eli Shebo, Alex and Amiram in HADASSIM

Milstein, was with his unit in Iraq at the time, and was one of those on hand to help stem the bloodshed. Michal Auerbach's father was there, too – Michal was with me and Joseph Tanner in Hadassim when we snuck out to take part in the 1954 Independence Day celebrations on the streets of Tel Aviv. I happen to believe it was the military connection between our fathers that stirred us to go together.

Until my father and his friends

helped suppress Rashid Ali's revolt, Shebo and his nine family members were hidden in the house of an old Moslem neighbor.

Father told me all about it, because he was there himself, with the Shebo family in that house. The as yet non-verbal consciousness of the infant Eli had absorbed the negative impact of the violence, and not much later he was surrounded by family conversations concerning the burning of their house and the manifest danger they were all in. Thus a will to respond, an obstinate will of defensive reaction was spawned in him. By June of 1944 that will would already be fully mature.

When the revolt ended, the Shebo family uprooted themselves from Baghdad to Nazariah, the site of Ur Kasdim – Abraham's city. On a summer night, when he was but one and a half years old, he was playing with his brother when Eli suddenly slipped off the roof and fell three floors down to the ground. To his luck, he landed on soft ground and was unhurt. His family grew to believe that Abraham's spirit had inhabited the baby in Ur kasdim, and would continue to protect him – and perhaps us, as well – in Hadassim. But the fall was nonetheless traumatic for Eli: he went mute shortly thereafter, for the length of a year or so. His voice started coming back to him about the age of two – “and since then I won't shut up,” he told me as I interviewed him in my home. During that year of silence and shock, he was filled with the conversation of others, conversations on end about rebellion and the fire, and energies were slowly boiling within him that he could no longer contain. Perhaps it was the eternal poetry of Abraham's war with Nimrod – the fire set to pagan statues of old -- that also affected him.

From Ur Kasdim the family moved on to the port town of Basra. The constant flow of the family from place to place, and the frequent necessity to adjust, clearly accelerated the child's cognitive growth.

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Britain was still in possession of Basra in 1944, and British soldiers acted to preempt another rebellion by demonstrating unqualified sovereignty in the streets. Eli's father was working for the Iraqi train company. My father was there at the same time; Michael's father used to arrive there sometimes on his bus, carrying packages my father had sent for us from Basra. I remember getting sweets from him and sharing them with my kindergarten friend Nurit Gantz, a girl who also ended up in Hadassim.

My father once sent us a baked dish that the Shebo's had given him. I shared it with Nurit, of course. The Hadassim connection had begun to take shape...

In June of 1944 the British directors of the train company, the soldiers stationed in the city (my father among them) and the entire Jewish community – all celebrated the triumph of Normandy with abandon. My father would later tell me that he bought several bottles of wine, went all over the Jewish section of Basra and raised toast after toast with every Jewish family he could find, taking the opportunity to persuade them to immigrate to Israel. One of the houses he visited was the Shebo's.

Eli had absorbed the electric undulations of the moment and decided to act: during the afternoon, while the kindergarten teachers were changing shifts, he led all the children into the bathrooms and hid them here. No one could find them for long enough that the teachers began to panic. The "revolt" was undone when one of the girls started to cry.

The teachers punished Eli by having him walk around wearing a ridiculous clown's hat. Eli found after that incident that it was better to be a mischievous boy than an out an out rebel.

S. Stephan's Punishment

After Normandy, the British finally succumbed to pressure from David Ben Gurion to allow Jewish paratroopers to descend upon Slovakia and organize Hungarian Jews and partisans for resistance. Back in Britain, Churchill had secretly and ecstatically confirmed to Dr. Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, that an Independent Jewish State would soon arise in Eretz Israel. "This will be the plume in the pudding of the war," Churchill said. The two had been very close since WWI, when Weizmann's chemical inventions helped bolster British warfare.

Weizmann immediately reported the good news to Ben-Gurion. Churchill had extracted a promise from Weizmann to remain silent, though it stands to reason that both knew better than to take such a promise seriously. Churchill had simply disliked Ben-Gurion, who was much too vulgar for his taste. Nevertheless, preparations for a

Jewish State duly began, and in the autumn of 1944 the British established a Jewish brigade in its army to serve in Palestine. These warriors were the first Jews allowed to help their ailing brothers in Europe, and they were the first to help transport Jewish child-survivors to their new motherland – illegally, if necessary. It was not even clear at that stage what those childrens' fates would be.

One soldier in this brigade was Shlomo Achituv, later an instructor at Hadassim. “It was only with the arrival of the first refugees to Israel that we’d begun to hear some details of the holocaust. Then one night we were woken up and asked to volunteer clothes and blankets; a group of refugees had arrived, and the next day we learned they were partisan fighters from Vilna, led by a man named Abba Kovner. I’ll never forget it. We were gathered at the foot of the mountain, and we all sat there, motionless and bleeding, listening – and trying not to listen – to the words issuing from Kovner’s mouth, words that told of what had happened to European Jews and to Vilna’s own fighters.”



Shlomo Achituv

In March of 1944 the Germans and Romanians were in retreat through Transnistria (then part of the Ukraine), and they’d decided to exterminate what was left of the Jews en route, in the Ghettoes and wherever else they might find them. The Russians pressing at the rear were able to liberate some of them, those that were left – many of them hanging between life and death. Hitler was the first to call this region between the rivers Dniester and Bog “Transnistria,” and Romania acceded to the name as a gesture of good faith, though they were soon to discover that the district had long been part of the great Wallachian kingdom before it was lost to the Russians. General Antonescu, the slithery Romanian governor and Nazi client, transformed the region into a graveyard for Bessarabian and North Bukovinian Jews, as well as Romanian Jews (mainly those suspected of being communists), taking into consideration that Germany might well lose -- leaving Romania with uncomfortable questions about its missing Jewish compatriots.

Upon the launch of operation “Barbarossa,” Antonescu immediately expelled all of the Jews of Bessarabia and North Bukovina, damning them to torturous marches that would ensure a maximal death-count. Those who remained were relegated to the prisons of Transnistria, as if naked cold and hunger weren’t enough to extinguish them. All told, no less than 350,000 Jewish lives were taken (including 95% of Bessarabian Jews).

The Ukrainians of Transnistria relished their key role in these massacres, often overtaking even their German and Romanian masters in their hatred. One survivor of this grueling episode was Avigdor Shachan, later a student at Hadassim. While Gideon, Asher and I dallied on the Tel Aviv beaches (and while Shlomo Achituv and his friends prepared for the Italian front), Avigdor Shachan, with his mother and sister, was returning to his now Soviet-liberated Bessarabian village. By then, the

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Red Army had already recruited his father for the remainder of the war. Avigdor was eleven years old.

[Avigdor]:

We entered the village of Comarov. Some of the peasants had seen us coming and summoned their fellows to line the fences and stare at us with a mixture of pity, revulsion and palpable contempt. “Just go on and don’t look at them,” my mother whispered.

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We arrived back in my Grandfather’s old backyard. One of his neighbors, an old Ukrainian man, had long been plotting to take his land – he was always taunting him: “I’ll get your house one way or another, whether you like it or not!” – and it now appeared that he had made good on his threats. He had seized the property once all the Jews were forced to evacuate, and now he stood blocking our way at the entrance.

“What are you doing here?!” he thundered. “Why have you come back?!”

“My son would like to see his grandfather’s house again. We’re leaving for Palestine...”

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Avigdor

She seemed worried that he wouldn’t let us in. He came one step forward, then one step back into the house, and finally said, “Come in!”

So there I was, stumbling into the house with my mother behind me. I stepped into the room where we’d always celebrate Passover, the whole household together, listening as I (being the eldest) recited “Ma Nishtana”...I thought back on it, vaguely piecing it all together: the solemn dinner arrangement, grandpa sitting at the head, surrounded by his flock, his long beard unfurling his face; grandma and her daughters fussing around, putting all the dishes on the table...I’d committed the ‘four questions’ to memory and was preparing to ask them; I don’t really remember the Seder anymore, as we were usually so boisterous before dinner that when it came time for the reading we were sleeping like marmots...

I glanced around the room and at that big dinner table, picturing my grandfather seated in his chair, surrounded by the books, holy books that were even

now in front of me. When the Ukrainian man saw me staring at those books he softened his tone a bit. “Take as many as you want,” he told me. Back in the village of Brichani, where we’d stopped on our way back to Comarov a week earlier, we heard from our hosts – they’d arrived a week ahead of us – that the Ukrainians were peculiarly afraid of destroying the Jewish torahs, lest they be cursed. “So much for this ‘Good Gentile,’” I thought. I crouched over the pile and picked out one of the books at random. Then I whispered to my mother, “I’ve seen enough. Let’s go.” And so we left, without even saying goodbye.

As we crossed the village square on our way back to Brichani, we saw masses of peasants and their elders, wives and children assembling, apparently waiting for us. “Don’t stop!” my mother tried to whisper, and I clutched the book to my chest as I widened my pace. We kept walking, and they followed, surprisingly silent. Suddenly, one of them emerged from the pack, an old man. He was hunched up, with an earthy white beard and equally long, thin white hair. His wife stood next to him, tiny and bone-thin. Then the two of them approached and did something that resembled a dance, brushing up against me; the man kept alternately touching me with his fingertips and then kissing them, repeating this several times before his wife did the same.

After we’d walked a little farther, my mom glanced over at a woman standing by the roadside; then, careful to keep her pace, she turned to her and asked, “Who *were* those two?”

“What, you didn’t recognize them?! They’re Stephan and his wife... His six sons all volunteered for the war, and none of them came back. He believes it all happened because of your curse...”

After a long silence she added, with a wry smile, “He thinks if he touches your lucky son he’ll be forgiven, and more children born to him.”

A lightning shiver had run through my veins when I heard the name, “Stephan”. My feet began taking their own, longer strides, longer than I’d intended, and I tightened my grip on my mother’s hand. When the Ukrainians had finally stopped at the woods’ edge and disappeared behind us, mother slowed down a little and asked, “Do you remember him...?”

“Yes, I remember him, mother! *Of course* I remember...”

In the town of Chutin, on the morning before our forced march, carriages were lined up on the street waiting to carry off the elderly; father had run to look for one for my grandmother, Bella. Suddenly, he came rushing back and shouted, “Stephan, our neighbor from Comarov, is here with his carriage! He wants us to come!” And, just as suddenly, Stephan appeared from the mass of people, big and strong, a lock of

black hair dangling over his forehead, a large black moustache teasing his rosy cheeks. He came up to my mother, took off his hat, and said, his voice low:

“God forgive them for what they did to you.”

The Romanian soldiers in charge began yelling for us to start heading out, and father helped my grandmother, sister and me up onto Stephan’s carriage. The soldiers followed on either side of us, occasionally picking off the unlucky few who stumbled behind, unable to keep up; Ukrainian peasants, our fine neighbors, gathered to witness our humiliation, aiming rocks (and whatever else they could get their hands on) at the passersby. “To Palestine...Off to Palestine with you ‘Yids’...”

The march stopped suddenly when we arrived at the woods. The soldiers then began raiding all the carriages and dragged out the older passengers, whom they had evidently never intended to protect in the first place. Soon we heard echoes of rifle shots. Father quickly covered my grandmother in blankets and kept her hidden between us, and luckily we started moving shortly after. Around noon, the soldiers halted the march. “Rest the horses!” The peasants who had followed our procession took barley out for their horses and sat down to eat together. Stephan had joined them, and when he came back something had changed in him. Then he smiled, and with self-conscious irony he told us, “Apparently you aren’t being led to Palestine after all...on account of your crimes...at least, that’s what they’re saying...” By the time we started moving again, Stephan was humming a cheery peasant song.

Exhaustion began showing on people’s faces, and many fell and crawled to the side of the road, where they were shot on sight. Some had clearly lost their minds and began mumbling incoherently, running every which way and tearing at their clothes. By evening the march stopped at an open field. We lay on the wet ground, too tired for words and hungry beyond belief. Around midnight the soldiers returned from a party in the neighboring village and started hunting around for women. They finally let some of them go when a few of our men paid them off.

We continued at dawn. Stephan’s attitude had now fully revealed itself; as we approached his carriage, he looked at us and with transparent glee he muttered, “No, you aren’t going to Palestine...Hitler has finally made some sense of the world...All this time you’ve been stealing from us, and now you’ll pay...”

Father had helped grandmother onto the carriage, and as he started pulling up my sister the carriage jolted and they fell to the ground. Stephan had begun spurring on the horses without warning, intent on leaving without us. Other people who had slept close by quickly hauled their children up before it was too late. Father recovered quickly and caught up to them; he managed to get my sister back inside after tempting Stephan with his gold watch. Stephan stopped, looked at the watch and smiled to himself. “I suppose you won’t be needing it much longer, anyway...” They were off

again, and a much happier Stephan now picked up where he'd left off with his peasant song.

We kept running alongside them, and all the while Stephan amused himself, keeping slightly ahead, allowing us to catch up and then quickly spurring on the horses again. Thankfully, after a while we reached another forest. "Rest the horses!" came the familiar call. Stephan joined his Ukrainian brothers in the shadow of a nearby tree for a pleasant snack. Meanwhile, another man walked by, his fists coiled at his own head, issuing terrifying roars and clearly losing his mind. We finally gathered from his screams that a Romanian soldier, conspiring with the man's coachman, had turned his carriage aside and indulged himself in having at this man's wife with an axe. What was left of him now flailed wildly in front of us. News of it passed like a rustle of terror through the caravan...

It turned out not to be an isolated incident. Other peasants had taken advantage of their new powers, pulling whole families out from their carriages and killing them, inheriting their victims' wealth in the process.

Now fully terrorized, we were pushed along and the journey continued. One of our neighbors, hoping to have his children kept safe in the carriage for the remainder of the day, offered Stephan his wife's watch. Stephan gladly took it, his unctuous smile now a ritual. "Well, your wife probably won't need it, anyway," he said as he let it fall into his pocket.

The man pulled up his six year old son and four year old daughter, then gestured for his wife to hand him their baby daughter. Before he could put her back inside, however, the carriage suddenly lurched forward and the father slipped back, losing his grip on the baby. His wife leapt forward to catch her as both fell off the carriage.

As they lay there, helpless, a Romanian soldier came riding by. He stopped. The couple knelt beside their baby, looking up at him. Without a word, he shot all three of them and continued on his way. Stephen had pulled his horses to a halt to watch all this; he just stood there, playing with his moustache. Then he got back inside and started moving again. "Stephan! Stop!" my father yelled after him. "Don't you dare call me by my name, you filthy Yid..." he replied.

After a while the carriage stopped, and Stephan came down. I thought he was trying to untangle the ropes, but he was just taking his time. The rest of the carriages were already way ahead of us. My grandmother and sister, along with the newly orphaned boy and girl, sat in the carriage, waiting.

In the evening we stopped at a riverbed, just behind another small village. By now our thirst was overwhelming, and we literally attacked that foul water -- it would

have taken something unearthly to drag us from it. Then we spread out on the moist grass.

In the morning we were jarred awake by some Romanian soldiers. Waving their rifle-butts at us, they forced us to hurry and get moving before sunrise. “You lagged yesterday! We have a long road ahead of us!” they bellowed. By now there were only a few carriages left. As we got ready to leave, I saw the boy who had just yesterday lost his parents nudging his sister. He was trying to wake her up, but she wasn’t moving. My father walked over there, and then quickly came back and whispered something into my mother’s ear. Then she approached the boy, took his hand and suggested that he let her sleep, that she was still too tired. He started to move toward us, but then he stopped, feeling something in his pocket – a little doll – and he hurried back to put it in his sister’s hands.

Father helped everyone back onto the carriage, and then I heard Stephan mumble something. He started complaining loudly: “Everyone is getting richer here! Only *I* get stuck with these cursed rats...” When he sat back behind the horses, though, he discovered a new game, something to cheer himself up. He’d bring his whip up and pretend to hit the horses, but without warning he would aim backwards at my grandmother and the kids. The harder they wept, the harder he thrashed at them. He was utterly possessed.

Needless to say, by the time we heard the familiar call to rest the horses, our exhaustion was total. More rumors arrived, of myriad carriages turned over on the side of the road, the families inside slaughtered by axe-wielding Ukrainians.

Stephan was absolutely seething with madness. He put his whole weight into the reins, and as we crossed by a group of refugees he thrashed out indiscriminately with his whip. Finally we stopped, and father ran over to him. “Stephan, what’s happening to you?! We’re from the same village...” Then my mother came up to him. “Don’t you fear God, Stephan?!”

For a second, Stephan looked astonished. He stood there silently for a moment. Then he glared back at my mother, and spewing with the bitterest bile he roared at her: “You murdered Jesus, you cursed Jewish woman!! *You* murdered our God!”

That seemed to calm him down, at least for a while.

Towards the evening we could see more forest ahead of us. Slowly, it looked like Stephan was coming to a stop. Terror began to set in for us. Once again father tried to coax him, this time with my grandmother’s gold chain and some money. As he toyed around with the chain, Stephan suddenly landed on another form of amusement. He pulled to a stop and said the horses were tired.

He demanded that father start pushing.

A few of us went back and began pushing with him. Not content to merely watch, Stephan entertained himself further by offering some words of encouragement: “Harder...Harder...the horses are tired!!”

Back on the carriage, my grandmother couldn't stand it anymore, and finally pleaded with him, “What do you want of us, Stephan...” But he didn't even let her finish before he started lashing out at her with all his might. Father quickly ran back to pry him off her, pulling her out to safety.

Recovering his breath, Stephan flew back into a rage, cursing my grandmother. “I'm not afraid of your witchcraft, you dirty Jewish whore! Back in the village we believed that *this* little ogre,” and he pointed at me, “that this little shit had something holy in him, and we would touch him for good luck as he walked through our fields. We were fools! If you were holy people none of this would be happening to you! You aren't going to Palestine! You're going to Ataki-Mogilev! There you'll be shot! I have six sons -- as strong as oak, each one of them! When I get back to our village I'll have them volunteer to fight for Hitler so he can purify the world of you accursed Jews! Do you think anything I do here can compare to what happened to the Jews of Comarov?...Your father...” – he turned to my mom – “...they harnessed him to a carriage, and then your brothers were forced to push it all the way to Brichani... What a show this was...”

With that, my grandmother slowly picked herself up, wiping the blood off her face with her shawl, and with her head held up high she walked up to him and cried: “Stephan, listen! Listen to me now! For eighteen generations our family has been blessed by God. Remember what I tell you now: a day will come when unspeakable horrors will come down on your family. When that happens, you will never regain your sanity: you will roam the earth, from one place to the next, just to escape the things that will haunt you. But they'll never leave you. And this child...” – she pointed at me – “...my grandchild, *he'll* know, he'll see these things come to pass...” Then she turned to my father. “And I command you, my son, when it comes time and I can't go on, you must leave me. Don't delay for my sake.”

Stephan was laughing. Shaking his head, he walked right back onto the carriage.

We didn't go any farther that evening. After several days we finally arrived at Ataki-Mogilev near the Dniester River. We spent the night there on the floor of a synagogue. On its walls, desperate Yiddish words were inscribed in blood: “Oh Jews, say the Kaddish for us, for here we were murdered”...“My wife and children were shot here”...“Here, with me, ends my family line...”

I rested next to my grandmother, my head in her lap. “Grandma, will I really see Stephan punished?”

“For eighteen generations, my grandson, our family was blessed. And you, too, will carry that for future generations...” She held my head in her hands, and kept whispering, “...for eighteen generations...” That was the last we saw of Stephan – at least, until we came back...

The following day, father rented his own carriage from another Ukrainian. He helped my grandmother and sister onto it, along with the other boy, now struck with fever. Alas, just as he had lost his parents, and then his sister the previous day, it was now this boy’s turn to die that evening.



Avigdor and his sister

It was on the next day that we finally crossed the Dniester, whose silent waters now overflowed with corpses.

Today, Avigdor is a Military Historian in Israel. He studies the heroic history of Israel’s wars and contributes to the emergence of a culture of defense, one that will preclude another Holocaust and ensure that the Jews of Israel are never uprooted, that they never again suffer the fate of the Jews of the Ukraine.

T. Dialogue from Inferno

The Normandy Effect touched not only the free world, giving Jews hope and stirring them to life after the war, but also the Germans, and Hitler especially.

The German Field Marshal Gerhard Von Ronstadt, the man who once overwhelmed superior French and British numbers in three days, was asked what Germany could do after Normandy. His answer: “the war is lost, and peace should be sought without delay.” It’s possible that it was his own principles that brought about Germany’s Normandy failure in the first place. Four years earlier, he had fought and defeated British and French armies on the basis of limited aims: revenge for Germany’s humiliation in WWI, and raw military professionalism. By 1944, he and Rommel, along with other generals, both understood that support for Hitler had been a mistake. The absence of a turbulent flow of will among Germany’s military leaders had stunted their arts, whereas the combined flow of the personalities of Churchill, Eisenhower, Montgomery, Patton and Bradley had intensified Allied strength.

But the Allies had no reason to press for an immediate peace in the period following their Normandy triumph. Stalin even reversed his policy of assassinating Hitler: he surmised that the Third Reich could then survive long enough for the Allies to subdue Germany unconditionally.

Hitler didn’t flinch in the face of Ronstadt’s prognosis. He believed that he enjoyed a metaphysical link with the devil, one that would give Germany back the advantage. That his enemies had failed in their assassination attempts only strengthened his resolve. But Hitler was wrong. Indeed, though the Germans would still have enough left in them to win some limited engagements, they now stood no chance of winning the war.

While some Germans were already looking for an alibi and plotting to obscure sensitive information, Hitler was only more determined to accelerate the extermination of Jews at any cost. It was they who were ultimately responsible for the Christian ethics he hated so much. He would now turn his attention to the Jews of Hungary, who had so far been mostly untouched by the Holocaust.

Zeev Alon was the Hebrew teacher at Hadassim, and later its social coordinator and director. Prior to his immigration to Israel, in 1947, his name was Alexander Houft. The Normandy Effect touched him directly, through Hitler: his arrival at Hadassim would only come after he had endured Auschwitz.

Zeev was born in 1920, in the city of Munkatch – the mercantile capital of the Transcarpathian district of the Ukraine. The city had belonged to Hungary until 1920, to Czechoslovakia until 1938, and then to Hungary again until 1945. Half of its

population had been Jewish until the war, and the Zionist movement there was consequently very strong.⁵⁶

Zeev lost his father when he was five. He studied in Hebrew schools, and was active in the Beitar youth movement before graduating with honors in 1939. When the war erupted, the town was immediately annexed by Hungary and Zeev left to teach Hebrew in a nearby town. He returned in 1944 to help his sister manage the family restaurant. Hungarian Jewry had yet to suffer directly from the war.

Several days after Normandy, at seven in the evening, eight policemen broke into his home and arrested him. The authorities had designated a labor camp for the city's rich and powerful, and for other community leaders. Zeev was among the first to go. A month later he was sent to Auschwitz. Throughout the year he would endure continual abuse, though he was one of the few to survive. And if he survived, it was only by virtue of his natural ability to dialogue with his surroundings.

“What did you want to do when you grow up?” In 1997, Zeev was interviewed by the Yad Vashem institute, Israel's chief holocaust memorial. He was seventy-seven.

“I wanted to be a teacher.”

It was solely the hope of becoming a teacher, of preparing a better world, that helped him overcome the horrors that stained him, body and soul. And it was in Hadassim where the dialogic powers that had helped him survive Hitler's inferno would contribute most.

U. Decision in Montréal



Dr Rachel Kagan

On June 7, 1944, Dr Rachel Kagan, chairwoman of WIZO Israel, traveled to Tel Aviv from Haifa to visit an ailing Esther Zamora (the ex-chairwoman). In 1968, I interviewed Ms. Kagan for the biography I was writing about her friend from Odessa and Jerusalem, the poet Rachel. Her testimony was subsequently included in that book.

During that interview, I mentioned that I'd studied in

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⁵⁶ Source: Washington's Holocaust Museum's website

Hadassim for four years. She immediately put her hands around mine, leaned over and kissed my forehead. She told me about the original germ, in 1944, of the WIZO Hadassim Youth Village.

“The news about Normandy gave strength to Esther, who was already sick by that time,” Rachel recounted. Both of them assumed that hundreds of thousands of Jewish children, many of them orphans, would need rehabilitation after the war. There had already been talk of absorbing Jewish orphans from Poland in 1939, at the WIZO world conference of that year. Though the Holocaust wasn’t yet on the horizon, a heavy calamity had descended upon the venerable Jewish community of Poland with the outbreak of the war. The idea for a special kind of youth village in Israel was raised.

It is apparent from the protocols of those conference meetings that the delegates were *already* stressing that such a village would need to educate for the values of freedom, equality and brotherhood.

Now, with the success at Normandy, with the end of war in sight, Esther and Rachel decided it was time to actualize that vision. After meeting with her colleague, Rachel sent a telegram to Rebecca Sieff, President of World WIZO in London. Two days later she received the following reply telegram from Montreal:

Dear Rachel,

WIZO Canada will finance the construction and establishment of the youth village. Go ahead with your plans.

With your friends’ blessings,

Anna Raginsky

President

WIZO Canada

On June 20, Anna Raginsky summoned the WIZO Canada National Committee for an emergency session in Montreal regarding the “treatment of Jewish orphans after the war.” Board members from all over Canada had arrived, and no member was absent. According to the protocol, the president made the following remarks:

“The Allies have invaded France. Experts say that Nazi Germany will certainly be defeated, though no one knows exactly when. The victory will of course frustrate Hitler’s plans for his “Final Solution”. Many Jewish orphans, along with children whose parents will no longer be in a position to care for them, will be left throughout Europe.”

“We, who have been spared all this, must do everything in our power to provide these children with a warm home and the finest education, both of which might let them forget, even if not completely, the horrors they have lived through. Therefore, I propose that we finance the project already in motion in Hadassim. We will pay for the land, the construction, and the employment of the finest teachers in Israel, as well as everyday maintenance costs.”

“The estimated cost – half a million dollars.”

The proposal was accepted unanimously. The twenty-one members were committed to mobilize the needed funds. The Hadassim enterprise was underway.



The Hadassim enterprise was underway

Chapter Two: Children of Schwabe's Mind

A. Life of Labor in the Village

In the eight months from June, 1944 until February, 1945, the WIZO World Center in England undertook preparations for the village that would absorb the children of the Holocaust. After Poland was liberated, WIZO delegates went there to report on the conditions of Jewish orphans, many of whom had been shielded from the Nazis in convents. Some worried about the possible effect the orphans' stay with the nuns had yielded on their Jewish mindsets.

The Normandy Effect paved the way for the Holocaust-Children Effect. In February of 1945, the chairwoman of World WIZO, Hadassah Samuel, led a founding committee consisting of Rachel Kagan (chairwoman of WIZO Eretz Israel), Dr. Hanna Myzel (director of the WIZO School of Agriculture in Nahalal), Rosa Ginosar



(WIZO treasurer and Israel's first female attorney) and Miriam Ben Porat (WIZO fundraising director) that would find and elect a married couple to head their new school in Israel. The task of choosing the right couple would rest with Hanna Myzel, and ads for prospective directors promptly went out in newspapers all over the country. The destiny of Hadassim was now in her hands.

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Hanna Myzel

Hanna Myzel was born in 1883 in Grodno, in Russian Lithuania. She was enthralled with the Zionist idea as early as high school, where she was elected head of Chovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) at the age of eighteen, owing to her indefatigable dedication to the Jewish nation.

When she began university she chose Agriculture, a field not especially brimming with women in those days, especially not Jewish women. Her steadfast nature bristled at the notion that women weren't built for the difficult tests confronting Palestinian settlers. She believed women were equally capable of confronting harsh conditions, if only they had the right preparation. She was thus at the early vanguard of what later became a central pioneering tenet, characterized by intense commitment to agricultural science as a precondition for the successful settlement of Eretz Israel. Her studies in a boarding school in Niederlenz, in Switzerland, were intensely practice-oriented, as was her tenure at the faculty of natural sciences at the University of Besançon, in France (where she graduated cum laude). Her hierarchy of values consequently reflected the subservience of theory to practice: she believed strongly that one had to master the hoe and the pruning-hook before using a microscope.

Hanna immigrated to Israel shortly after her graduation, in 1909, and joined the Sejera farm, the first Jewish settlement in the lower Galilee, where she proved her

farming skills. In 1910, she planted olive and almond trees on Mount Carmel with fellow agronomist Blumenfeld. She had already been acquainted, years earlier, with the poet Rachel, my aunt; their early encounter would ultimately have a formative influence on both of them, each a central figure of Zionism in its pioneering stage. Now Rachel became Hanna's first pupil. She joined the farm, abandoning her philosophical and esthetic studies in Italy. She would later memorialize this period of her life in her poem, "Our Garden," which she dedicated to Hanna. Both of them also helped found another farm, this one for young girls in the Kinneret (The Sea of Galilee).

Near the end of the sixties, when I interviewed Hanna for my biography of Rachel, she told me that the root of Hadassim's success had been their insistence on grounding every student in a daily ritual of labor. This last was a point she remembers discussing with Rachel and Jeremiah Shapirah during their interview for the Hadassim post.

"The ethos of labor embodied in the pioneers of the second and third emigration secured the viability of Zionism," Hanna continued.

I disagreed. "This ethos diluted the intellectual strain in the Son's Generation."

"That strain only made it harder for the Jewish nation to survive," she insisted.

After the war, Hanna continued to work tirelessly toward her dream, her life-project: a girls' agricultural school in Nahalal. Eventually, with some help from the WIZO and the Zionist directorate, she was able to do it; World WIZO, along with WIZO Canada, agreed to fund the Nahalal School in 1924, and Hanna was thus a natural candidate to get the ball rolling with the second of WIZO's educational institutions in Israel.

On April 16, 1945, Dr. Hanna Myzel received Rachel and Jeremiah's joint curriculum vitae; the following are excerpts, beginning with Jeremiah's personal statement:

We are honored to include details pertaining to our preparation and pedagogical experience, per your request in our conversation of March, 18th, when Rachel and I initially came to interview for the head positions in the forthcoming WIZO school.

I received my education and training at the Teacher's Seminary in Jerusalem, during the years 1922-1927, and spent the following year, 1928-1929, teaching for a school in the Talpiot neighborhood, near Jerusalem. Throughout that period, I also

took an active role in Professor Schwabe's "Scout Legion" (later known as the Machanot Haolim), a great movement dedicated to steering youth towards pioneering and self-actualization. The nucleus of teachers that breathed the edifying air of Schwabe's legacy included both me and Rachel Katabursky; none of us was particularly satisfied with what passed for education in our town, so we aimed to establish a new learning institution, with new pedagogical foundations, that would also prepare students for working life in the country.

In order to fully prepare for that future venture, we left our teaching jobs in Jerusalem to join a community that was more in line with our educational vision. That community was the Ben Shemen Youth Village, then only two years old. It remains close to our hearts. Both of us were accepted there as teachers for the elementary school; I was twenty-six at the time, and she, twenty-four.

In those days, Ben Shemen still radiated with all the energy of the pioneering project. Its fresh educational atmosphere, the personalities of its leaders, Dr. Lehmann (the director) and especially comrade Polani (the elementary school and village coordinator), who we considered to represent the ideals we had absorbed from Schwabe – all of these positive factors inclined us to make Ben Shemen our home. Three of our colleagues have since left, but we have stayed.

In 1933, the youth village directorship passed into my hands, and in 1936, after comrade Polani left, comrade Katabursky took the school director position. Today, the youth village equals the largest institutions in the country (for ages 15-16) in terms of its population and scope of interests. I have also been a member of the school's general committee since 1933. I'll mention only some of the activities that have come under my care in that time: (A) supervising the worker's group – including all instructors and caretakers – on both pedagogical and practical levels; (B) chairing pedagogical councils; (C) helping the children form their social activities, frames of reference and self-direction; (D) tending to the everyday habits of the children in all aspects of their lives; (E) directing cultural activities (holidays, shows, musical activity, Saturday programs, et cetera); (F) Counseling other teachers regarding problematic children; (G) basic administrative work, like hiring and managing personnel; communicating with parents; dealing with housing questions, and the like; (H) Organizing student work schedules and facilities, and managing the farm.

As I said before, these were only a part of my overall duties.

I also came to believe that an institution like Ben Shemen, one dedicated to the upbringing of new immigrants and troubled youth, needed someone with a medical background that incorporated the new psychology. Thus, I eventually enrolled in psychology study – on a part-time basis for two years and then full time during a one-year sabbatical -- with the psychoanalyst Dr. Hirsh in Jerusalem, and at the

psychoanalytical institute founded by the late Dr. Eitingon⁵⁷. I also grounded myself in the relevant scholarship during this three year period.

All told, we've spent sixteen years in Ben Shemen, twelve of them in leadership positions (nine for Rachel). Our energies and creative passions have been bound up with this community; indeed, we were active partners in it from the beginning, spiritually and physically. And what we have given, we have received in equal measure.

Now we begin to feel the need for a new project, to fashion something anew with our own hands. Now, with the desperate demand of rising institutions for experienced, pedagogically grounded educators, a demand that can only accelerate with the growing population of émigrés, we believe our talents are more needed than ever.

For all the above reasons, we offer ourselves for the directorship of the new institute. Once our candidacy is accepted in principle, however, there will surely be other issues requiring further clarification.

Rachel added a note of her own to Jeremiah's letter:

Comrade Shapirah has already described the shared road we have treaded. It remains for me to add my own educational credentials, to elaborate on the method of action and experience I have accumulated over the last sixteen years at the Ben Shemen Youth Village.

After finishing my studies at the teacher's seminary in 1925, I dedicated one year's work to the youth movement already mentioned by comrade J. Shapirah. Starting in 1930, I worked at the youth village together with a core group of instructors who viewed themselves as pioneers in the realm of education. As the youth village was then a small institution in its initial gestation, our group was involved in every sphere of the children's commune, under the leadership of comrade Polani.

Up until 1936 I had worked purely as an instructor. In 1937, following comrade Polani's departure from the village, I was promoted to director of the school, which under my watch grew to encompass eight grades (certified by the department of education [part of the national board]) and two advanced years, the ninth and tenth grades, in addition to a special preparatory class for new immigrants.

⁵⁷ Dr. Max Eitingon was one of Sigmund Freud's most devoted and valued colleagues.

In total, the school now has 330 children and twenty teachers working full and part time.

In 1934, I took a year's sabbatical for advanced study in England, where I studied psychology and also had the special privilege to attend the new high institute for education in London. In the course of that year I also surveyed many of the most recent educational institutions.

With the exception of that research sabbatical, I only took two short vacations during the last decade, one in 1939 and the other in 1942, both of them also geared toward further preparation and advancement in my field. Thus I have a deep appreciation both for the techniques of pedagogy and the science of psychology.

I see my main role of school director as comprising the establishment and maintenance of a standard methodology, on firm pedagogical and psychological foundations. I attend to the other teachers according to the newest methods; I look after their instructional tendencies, with the goal of creating the proper educational atmosphere for the children.

Rather than taking this opportunity to lecture on method, I will only mention that the Ben Shemen School is one of the few in the country cited as a model for the new mode of teaching.

My current focus is on the integration of a curriculum encompassing ten grades, using the teaching method I have aimed at. At the end of my tenure, I intend to present my record for evaluation before this country's leading educational institutions.

I have done my best to relate the scope and essence of my role in the project I have dedicated myself to, one which I consider to have been my greatest blessing⁵⁸.

B. The Endeavor to Shape a Chosen People

The foundation board members (under Hanna Myzel) liked Rachel and Jeremiah Shapirah. But there were other, seemingly more qualified candidates. In order to come to a final decision, they met with Professor Moshe Schwabe, the head of the Classical Studies department at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and with Professor Ben-Zion Dinur, Beit Hakerem Seminary's principal, who taught Jewish History and was also close to Ben-Gurion.⁵⁹ Rachel Kagan had already met Schwabe

⁵⁸ These documents were given to me by our mutual friend, Micha Spira.

⁵⁹ He later became the first minister of education for the State of Israel.

and Dinur in Russia, in Vetka, after the two had escaped there from a POW camp in Siberia at the end of WWI. They had begun a school for war orphans there, in addition to starting a local branch of the Hechalutz (“Pioneer”) movement.

In Vetka, Schwabe had introduced Rachel Kagan to the principles of education that he had crystallized along with Dinur and others in Siberia, premised on one essential: the cultivation of the unseen and inherent talents of youth. Education, Schwabe would now remind Kagan, Hanna and her board, means the full stimulation of those inner abilities. The educator must peer into the child’s soul and discover its contents rather than merely project into it his schematic models of study. Youth ought to be nourished against the shifting sensibilities and trends of any given era. “I believe that it is possible to grow ideas in Man’s heart. The youth must be

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Professor Moshe Schwabe

brought to a state of chaos before ascending to creation. In youth lies humanity’s opportunity to build a new world, during that period when the young first begin to enter that immense social apparatus. Jeremiah and Rachel Shapirah will be able to direct the youth village towards that ideal. It will not only benefit the particular students under their wing – a worthy result in itself – but also reverberate across the whole generation that will ultimately build the Jewish state, something we can expect to happen quickly, within our lifetimes. A Jewish state will only endure with the right character, if its citizens are a people of virtue. Despite the many disputes I have with Ben-Gurion – especially on role of Israeli Arabs in a future state – both of us agree on this one overriding issue: the State of Israel ought to be the modern Athens. If you appoint Rachel and Jeremiah to head your village, they will have the power to achieve that vision, an enterprise of unique importance today.”

All the board members – especially Rachel Kagan – were captivated by Moshe Schwabe, and they chose in favor of the Shapirahs.

Rachel Kagan had come to Israel in 1919, on the ship “Ruslan” that inaugurated the third Russian wave of émigrés, subsequent to the war. Schwabe arrived from Germany later, in 1925, to join the Hebrew University, which would first open its doors that very year. Rachel saw a true mentor in him and the two had since enjoyed a close relationship.

Moshe Schwabe’s impact wasn’t limited to Rachel Kagan, of course; his ideas spread far and wide, influencing a whole generation of idealistic youth in the

Jerusalem of the twenties and thirties, Jeremiah Shapirah and his future wife Rachel Katabursky among them. Schwabe became the primary spiritual guide for the village of Hadassim when the village first opened its doors. Its educational character was indeed subject to him, until his death in 1956. It wouldn't be inaccurate to say that Rachel and Jeremiah were his spiritual children – the children of Schwabe's mind.

C. The Spiritual Leader

Hans Max Schwabe was born in 1889, in Halle An Der Saale, in the German province of Saxony. His father was an assimilated Jew, an animal trader who gave his four children the highest general education that could be mustered in their little town. At the age of ten, in elementary school, he was already displaying his prodigious memory, reading extended pieces by heart. By the age of twelve, during his first year of study in his classical gymnasium, he was already correcting his teacher's Greek. It was an experience that later converted him to Plato's theory of knowledge by reminiscence, and suggested to him that he had been an Athenian philosopher in a former incarnation -- perhaps even Plato.



HADASSIM

He also specialized in Graphology, attaining high levels in the art; he was purported to have once proven, to his friends, that he could deduce the sexual habits of the owner of any given handwriting sample. His father died while he was still at the gymnasium, and as the eldest son he was obliged to support the family as a tutor. Amazingly, he quickly became famous around town for his teaching acumen, and his services were more and more in demand as time wore on. The lesson in all this for Schwabe was that the educational process is significantly enriched when integrated with man's everyday survival activity – an insight that would later redound to our benefit at Hadassim, combining our study with ritual labor, two hours daily in elementary school and three in high school.

In Halle, Schwabe grew to be part of the German Free Youth movement, which wore the banner of freeing the youth from the bonds of traditional family and rigid academic discipline. It preached an organic, nature-loving creed, leaning on an outdoor education of music and dance. Schwabe would carry these values with him to Israel. According to Drora Aharoni (a Hadassim founder and assistant director), Schwabe's Free Youth credo lived in his bones as spiritual godfather to Hadassim, just as it had already penetrated deeply into the Jeremiahs' mindsets in the twenties.

When he was old enough, the Schwabe family moved to Berlin so that he could study at the finest high school there, under the greatest classical philologist of the age, Ulrich Von Wilmovitch Malendorf. After his marriage to Judith, a wealthy older woman (a welcome change to his financial state), Schwabe received his doctorate in Philosophy, in the year 1910. He was twenty years old. Meanwhile, Berlin's intellectual life had drawn him toward various radical socialist circles, wherein his world view really began to crystallize. His ideological flame was especially lit by Rosa Luxemburg, the Jewish matron of the radical wing of the German Social Democratic Party. He adopted her critique of Bolshevism, and believed with her in the direct participation of workers versus the supremacy of the party vanguard. He would later update that same critique to Israel's educational system and the subordination of students to teachers – maintaining that students should reach their own decisions on matters of curriculum and academic life. As far as Rachel Jeremiah was concerned, it was an idea whose time had come.

In 1914, Rosa Luxembourg sent Schwabe to spread revolutionary propaganda in then Czarist Russia. His contact man there was the Russian linguist Anatol Vassilievitch Loncharesky, an erstwhile pupil of Luxembourg at the University of Zurich during the 1880s. Schwabe would use the cover of a teaching position as an alibi; the Russian government was treating German radicals with ever growing hostility, much of it anti-Semitic -- it was clear that many had come to join the resistance -- and Russian intelligence even suspected that the German state had been subsidizing these provocateurs.

Nevertheless, Schwabe and others, with their German connections, were better off than their Russian comrades at the break of the Great War. Biographical notes left by one of Schwabe's students, Jonathan Hantka, reveal that his teacher was initially arrested in the round-up of alien revolutionaries and sent as a "civil prisoner" for compulsory work in the earth-swallowing Siberian marshes. Loncharesky eventually tapped his resources in Germany to have him transferred to a POW camp, and even helped him get his hands on a German-Russian study book, which he evidently swallowed up in no time.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Jonathan Hantka published his notes in a reprint of the first volume of the concordance of Yizhar Smilansky's *Midnight's Caravan*.

Mira Spira, his daughter, tells us that his stay at the camp brought Schwabe together with Ben-Zion Dinur, the Russian-Jewish historian⁶¹. He had been sent to the camp on suspicion of revolutionary activity, along with the renowned Jewish conductor Hermann Scherchen⁶² (who had just finished a concert series with the Petersburg Orchestra at the onset of the war), a suspected German spy. It was Dinur who would convince Schwabe of the historical justice of Zionism, and teach him Hebrew.

The three of them, the Schwabe triad, undertook to exploit their internment in a rather unlikely fashion: educating their fellow prisoners -- lecturing them daily on history, philosophy and music. My uncle, the violinist Uriel Goldstein (husband to the poet Rachel's sister, and father of the pianist Ella Goldstein), saw it with his own eyes, and by his account the level of discourse at this "school" was such that some of the prisoners blessed their own captivity. The triad of professors also took to brainstorming on the proper education for the new generation, the intellectual mechanism they would help forge to prevent future outbreaks of world-consuming wars. In the end, they believed the rigid discipline of their day had severely purged their contemporaries of their critical habits, preparing them instead for unwavering obedience in battle. They agreed that academics should be stressed less heavily than freedom, creativity and reflection; that it was well not to underscore military history and martial virtues, to stray quite deliberately from the tradition that venerated generals.⁶³ They would hold to the values of the German Free Youth, which originated in the breakup of German social institutions following the industrial revolution. Its rebellious attitude fit them well – a rebellion of youth against arbitrary family discipline and inauthentic social and cultural values, on behalf of truth, simplicity and nature. To this mix of sensibilities they added the principle of personal actualization, which they thought was indispensable to the task of restoring human values.

[Uriel Goldstein]:

Schwabe was a Jewish anarchist with a rare charm. It was an experience of a singular kind to hear him talk. He had the rare cultural depth to be able to spot connections between seemingly unrelated subjects. But more fundamentally, everything was part of one whole system to him, and therefore everything intertwined and interacted – despite appearances to the contrary. The intellectual's role, according to him, was to trace those

⁶¹ Nothing is mentioned of his affair in Dinur's memoirs.

⁶² Hermann Scherchen was a student of the great composer, Arnold Schonberg. He was principal conductor of the Konigsberg symphony orchestra until the advent of Hitler's regime, after which he left Germany. Near the end of WWII, he came to visit Schwabe and Dinur in Israel, using the opportunity to conduct the Israeli Philharmonic. The pianist Ella Goldstein, a relative of mine, was the soloist in those concerts.

⁶³ This is the current Israeli attitude.

connections in order to recognize the whole – and then act on it. He was forever beset with worshippers who drank his words in like they were water.

“The true heroes,” he used to say, “are the intellectuals -- not the swordsmen and politicians; the prophet Samuel -- not King Saul; the Greek poet Homer -- not the Greek knight Achilles; the Athenian philosopher, Plato -- not Leonidas, king of Sparta; the German poet Johan Wolfgang Goethe -- and not Otto von Bismarck!”

On the other hand, Schwabe utterly worshipped Napoleon, because he saw him as one of the few in history who understood the true nature of war. Schwabe’s personality contained inner tensions, as with every revolutionary; a new establishment would need to replace the old when revolution had come and gone, and someone would have to be there to enact it.

On the question of such establishment, Schwabe was a utopian through and through, and as with any utopian he was capable of stirring processes but not building systems.

Dinur seemed to turn every Jew he met in Siberia into a Zionist. He believed it possible, with the right education, to establish a brave new communist world in Israel. Miriam Spira’s notes tell us that, after a year or so, the three of them escaped to Vetka, six hundred kilometers northeast of Moscow, where they founded a Hebrew school on the bedrock of their new principles. They re-opened the offices of the Zionist Organization (they had closed down during the war), and installed a new branch of the Hechalutz (“The Pioneer”) movement. Word of their activities soon spread far and wide, from one end of Russian Jewry to the other and stirred much excitement.

Rachel Kagan had been a central figure of Zionist activism in Odessa, especially in the realms of education and social welfare, and she would now travel to Vetka to witness for herself the goings-on of the Schwabe triad. As it turned out, she ended up befriending them, and in later years they would figure heavily in her deliberations on the issues that would confront WIZO.

With the Communist revolution at the twilight of 1917, and the Bolshevik colossus looming large, the old Siberian prisoners found themselves free again and fugitives no longer feared capture. Schwabe, now properly liberated, found his way to Moscow and met with the revolutionary victors: the same cause he had originally been sent to support now held the reins of government. There he reunited with Loncharesky, now the first communist minister of education, who by now had heard all about Schwabe’s educational successes in the prison camp and in Vetka. The minister was particularly impressed by the Siberian prisoners’ revolutionary enthusiasm, and he offered Schwabe to head the adult-education division at the ministry. Though somewhat tempted by this, Schwabe had embraced the full sweep

of Zionism during his three years with Dinur, and his immediate ambition was to organize large-scale immigration to Israel from Germany. The lure of Germany, the lure of his wife who he now hadn't seen for three years, was too great. Schwabe declined the offer and headed west, with Locharsky's copy of Sophocles, his parting gift, in his pocket. (The very same book now sits in Schwabe's library in Jerusalem, now preserved in the National Library.) But before he left, he agreed to serve as a conduit between the revolution in Russia and the new revolution soon to be launched in Germany.

By 1918, Schwabe had returned to Berlin, where according to his daughter he now turned his focus to Jewish emigration. That process would soon pulsate strongly from Kovno, then the capital of newly independent Lithuania⁶⁴, but Schwabe never went there in person; he had already thrown himself into the mix of movements clamoring for an end to war. Running head on into that whirlpool, he entered the Spartacists League⁶⁵ of Karl Liebknecht and his old mentor, Rosa Luxemburg, accompanying her to München, in Bavaria. There, he found himself joining ranks with Jewish journalist Kurt Eisner, and embraced his revolution as minister of education in his new "Socialist Republic". Yehuda Levy, one of his future disciples in the "Scout Legion" in Jerusalem, would later write about this tumultuous episode:

"In order to truly grasp the secret of his affect on us, you need to know more about him. His was among the core of the revolutionary "Spartacists," and when the young separatist group attained power at the end of WWI Schwabe became the minister of education. He once showed me a copy of the official government newspaper where his educational dictates were once displayed for all and sundry. Still, he was a pacifist to the bone; his heart was as far as can be imagined from violence and bloodshed. He was an unswerving idealist who believed education had the power to give rise to a new world."



HADASSIM

"How all of that had anything to do with the Spartacists and communist government isn't clear to me, but apparently he was important to them, since his role was central. Still, he wasn't connected with their propaganda organs, he wasn't a

⁶⁴ The city's Lithuanian name is Kaunas. The country's second largest city, it resides between the rivers Nemunas and Neris. It served as the capital in the years 1920-1939. Twenty-five thousand Jews, a quarter of the population, lived there at the start of the twenties.

⁶⁵ A Marxist faction named after the man who led the largest slave revolt against the Roman Republic.

spokesman – he had no part in demagoguery or “connections”. He was raised to the revolutionary limelight by his moral and intellectual character alone.”

“Soon there were stirrings of a counterrevolution. Schwabe once told me that he began keeping a revolver curled up on the corner of his desktop -- a revealingly blasé manner of dealing with the prospect of an attack. When the government fell in due course, Schwabe escaped back to Russia, only to be horror- struck by how badly the revolution had gone there. “You can’t build a new world on human corpses.” Sensing he no longer belonged, he grew a beard and snuck back far into Siberia where no one would trouble him, somehow finding his way to Kovno with his wife, Yehudit, and two children. There the education minister, Rozenboun, made him his deputy.”⁶⁶

In his new role, Schwabe founded and directed the Hebrew Gymnasium, for which he was both a director and language instructor – he taught Russian, English, Lithuanian, French, Greek and Latin – in addition to leading the Lithuanian branch of the Hechalutz. One of the teachers under him at the Gymnasium was my uncle, Moshe Shiponi. Moshe told me that Schwabe was quickly recognized as the philosopher and educational man of action that he was. He laid the foundation stones for democratic education. “He explained to us again and again that true democracy can’t exist without democratic education.”

The poet Lea Goldberg was a student in Schwabe’s Gymnasium. Her journal, published in 2005, shows that he was there at least beginning in 1921. In an entry from January 1st, 1924, she writes, “All of the teachers and children in our department



Lea Goldberg

are excellent. I love history above all, and our teacher, Schwabe, is the best one at our school.” In October of the same year she noted that Schwabe had left. It seems she had something of a crush on him. On October 31, she wrote “I’ve felt something strange in the last few days. There’s nothing now that he’s gone – a few days ago, I was lying in bed when suddenly it occurred to me that he seems alien, far from me now, because I no longer love him. And I was right – nothing remains of my love for him. But I don’t regret that, I couldn’t hope for it to be otherwise: I loved him so strongly and yet so hopelessly for three years. That couldn’t endure forever. ‘No,’ I would always tell myself, ‘I don’t love him...or maybe I do...’

until there seemed to be no one else. And everything feels so empty; when I think that I might never find someone else I could love like that, anyone. (I’m not talking about someone like mother or Dinah.) Mr. Schwabe is so distant already. But I don’t know him at all, I’m utterly indifferent towards him...everything is so empty. My mood has changed so much. Everything is so different, now.”⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Yehuda Halevy quoted in *The Hamachanot Haolim’s Years*, Hakibbutz Hameuchad publishing house, 1975, pages 146-147.

⁶⁷ *Lea Goldberg’s Journals*, edited by Rachel and Arie Aharoni, (Sifriat Hapoalim 2005). Gideon Ariel’s mother’s name was Tova Goldberg, and the family

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In 1963, I took a comparative literature course with Lea Goldberg at the Hebrew University. Her lecture hall in the Myzer building on the Givat Ram Campus was always full, the aisles on either side lined with auditors and students, taking their place on the floor, under the windows...

She used a microphone to lecture, her voice soft and subtle. When she heard that the poet Rachel was my grandmother's sister, and that my mother had tended to her during her sickness, she asked me over to her home in the Rehavia Neighborhood in Jerusalem, and we spoke at length about Rachel and the character of her poetry. She asked me where I'd studied, and her expression turned reflective when I mentioned Hadassim. "Hadassim was the life's fulfillment of the wisest man I ever knew," She said. "It was Moshe Schwabe who developed the theory of creative-dialogic education, and it was in my Kovno where he began to implement it. I was there in his gymnasium. But it was the first decade of Hadassim that really saw the fruit of his work. His four grandchildren all studied there. One of them, Micha Spira, was widely acknowledged to be a genius in our university; but he was actually the material epitome of his grandfather's ideal – and it appears you are, too, my dear..."

The democratic principles of education begun with Schwabe and Dinur in Vetka, and developed by Schwabe and Lehmann in Kovno, rose high in reputation in their day -- especially in the Jewish world, where it took flight in similar projects. One salient and immediate outcome was the youth village near Givat Hamore in Afula, founded by a BILU member, Israel Belkind, in 1923.⁶⁸ Belkind brought together 140 Ukrainian children orphaned in the pogroms, while the South African Zionist Federation began pitching for money and recruits for the rehabilitation of other such orphans.⁶⁹ These children would be brought up together in Afula, their minds bred with Hebrew and mathematics, and agriculture, too.

In 1924, the youth village saw the arrival of the educator Shneur Zalman Pugatchov, a man who disdained strict methods in favor of a radical autonomy combined with a stress on labor and traditional Jewish values.⁷⁰ He wanted to

originally immigrated to Israel from Kovno. According to what we know about Tova and Lea Goldberg, our guess is that they were cousins. It is possible, therefore, that the great poet Lea Goldberg is a distant cousin of Gideon Ariel.

⁶⁸BILU - a group of Jewish idealists who aspired to settle in the land of Israel, with the eventual aim of establishing a national Jewish homeland. The pogroms of 1881-1884, along with the anti-Semitic "May Laws" issued by Tsar Alexander III in 1882, prompted a mass emigration of Jews from the Russian Empire. More than 2 million Jews fled Russia between 1880 and 1920. The vast majority of them immigrated to the United States, but some decided to immigrate to Israel.

⁶⁹ Aaron Ben Barak, *In The Roads of Motherland*, Nahalal: 1972,pg. 189-191

⁷⁰ Nadav Mann, *We Were Children and That Was Long Time Ago*, ynet, April 1st, 2005.

“educate a new man, who will subordinate his private needs to the collective, whose heart will awaken to everything good,” but what he perceived at the village was orthodox discipline – and an even more orthodox distrust of wild, uproarious children. His educational plan wasn’t uniformly accepted, as there were teachers who clearly departed from his ideas. Ultimately, their hostility sabotaged his programs, and that set the stage for a heated clash between Israel Belkind (the founder) and the rest of the workers which led him to retire from the village.

At the dawn of the thirties, then, Pugatchov packed his bags and the youth village closed its doors, partly on account of built-up acrimony over various disputes, partly for lack of money.⁷¹ That failure teaches us that one idealist isn’t enough, that an educational community of this kind requires an idealistic directorship, one fully prepared to tread an idealistic path. It took twenty years, but the right leaders were eventually found: Rachel and Jeremiah Shapirah, directors bred under Moshe Schwabe’s watch.

In 1924, Schwabe sailed with his whole family to Egypt, and from there traveled to Israel through the Sinai, in Moses’ footsteps. He had accepted the invitation to teach Greek and Latin at the Hebrew University, which was set to open within a year. Schwabe took part in the university’s opening ceremonies on Mt. Scopus and soon begun his teaching there, simultaneously founding his Scout Legion, where he would preside over the trajectories of Rachel and Jeremiah.

Years later, Hadassim’s founding board members would meet with Schwabe in his office at the university, along with Dinur and Dr. Lehmann.⁷² Rachel Kagan made some initial remarks about the opening of the new village, and proceeded to inform everyone that the first order of business was finding an especially capable person to direct the village. Never before had there been anything like this educational project, she reminded them, just as there had never been Holocaust survivors to heal and bring up anew: merely “good” people would not do, though there was room for doubt whether anyone they could find would measure up to the task at hand. Nevertheless, it was a national priority that the Hadassim project should succeed in the end.

They agreed that one director would never suffice for the community; it was simply impossible to really excel in one field without losing ground in others, and the requirements of the present project demanded talent of unique breadth as well as depth. It was Professor Schwabe who suggested appointing a married couple, both of

⁷¹ Shevach Adan, *the First Israeli Educational Children’s Societies and Their Origins*. Generation to Generation, Anthologies for the research and documentation of Jewish educational history in Israel and the Diaspora, No 17, 2000.

⁷² Rachel and Jeremiah weren’t aware of such a meeting. Before they were accepted as co-directors, they had been concerned that Dr. Lehmann would be angry to learn of their candidacy, so they initially applied without his knowledge.

them educational experts, and he had clearly had the Shapirahs in mind for the mission. “I know them two well. Their presence was a salient one in the Teacher-Scout group, which was active within my Scout Legion in Jerusalem. Rachel is a first rate educator, and has done wonders with the school at Ben Shemen. Jeremiah has been no less successful directing the youth commune there.” Rachel Kagan remembered them back from when she lived on Hanevi'im St. in Jerusalem. Schwabe had brought them over one day to meet her and her roommate, the poet Rachel.

Dr. Lehmann concurred with Schwabe's assessment, and added that he would regret losing the Shapirahs in the event they were appointed to Hadassim. At that point, Professor Dinur (now at the Beit Hakerem teacher seminary) opined that a show of hands was required for the selection, to honor the absent voices of Holocaust survivors, who would have no say in this one way or the other.

The Board members agreed in principle to hire joint directors, a married couple, for Hadassim, and after some additional consultation it was decided to advertise for “experienced educators” in the Haaretz newspaper. Thus, Rachel and Jeremiah applied for the post without ever knowing their names had already been mentioned in the first place.⁷³ After several months of vacillation by the board, Rachel and Jeremiah Shapirah were finally awarded their posts.

D. Jeremiah Shapirah

Jeremiah was born in Safed in 1904, the elderly son of Rabbi Moses and Judith Shapirah. Malka, his only sister, was born seven years later. His grandfather had arrived with the wave of Hassidic immigration to Eretz Israel in the eighteenth century. The connection of Jeremiah to Hassidism's renovators and leaders partly explains the attention he gave to the artistic aspect of life, expressed in dancing and singing and in the celebration of Israel's holidays at Hadassim – like Tikun Leil Shavuot⁷⁴ -- spheres in which Rachel was less involved.



Jeremiah Shapirah

Even his mother, Judith, was a fifth generation Israeli, a daughter of a family that long emigrated from Austria but kept their Austrian passports to ensure the protection of the Austrian consulate in Israel. The deep-seatedness of Jeremiah's lineage in Eretz-Israel explains his root-firm attitude towards its people, land, and culture; a rootedness he transmitted to all of us. Even for those of us now living

⁷³ Drora Aharoni testified that Yael and Ludwig Posner (later the math and physics professors) were among the candidates.

⁷⁴ Shavuot is considered the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. *Tikkun Leil Shavuot* is the custom of staying up the entire night (*leil*) of Shavuot studying with the community in order to re-experience standing on Sinai.

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abroad, the sense of Eretz Israel and its culture remain enveloped in a way that could only have been Jeremiah's bequest.

Rabbi Shapirah was the delegate in Safed's Hassidic community for gathering contributions from Diaspora Jewish communities. Jeremiah and Malka grew up practically fatherless most of the time. Jeremiah began study at Heder⁷⁵ at the age of three, and from an early age had to help support the family: cash flow was light during his father's travels abroad, and he would provide enough only for basic needs upon his return visits. Jeremiah learned from early childhood the meaning of the phrase, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread"⁷⁶ -- without work there is no life. He applied this lesson at Hadassim, structuring daily work-duties for students.

During the First World War the family suffered hunger, as did the majority of the Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel. But in 1917 a typhus plague hit the city, and Rabbi Moses, against his wife's protests, sent her and the twelve year old Jeremiah and five year old Malka to stay with distant relatives in Austria. Judith had urged strongly against her husband's decision, that he was leading her to her grave, but he refused to have any of it and nearly tossed her from Safed, as there was no other way for her and the children to survive the hunger and pestilence -- he would surely die, but she must save his seed. Judith begged that he should go with them. He denied her wish, insisting that he would stay with his community for better or worse.

Judith and her two children wandered on the roads, from Israel to Syria then Turkey, and from there on a train to Vienna through the Balkans. Austria had taken fantastic tolls in the war, so their relatives weren't happy to attend to uninvited guests from Israel. It soon transpired that Judith herself had contracted typhus; she was hospitalized in a convent, refused to eat un-kosher food and died because of it. Then Jeremiah got the disease, consigned to the same convent. During his long weeks of sickness, as he hung between life and death, his six year old sister sat on the convent stairs, praying for his recovery, as he was now to her as a father and mother. Forty years later, when Jeremiah lay dying from cancer in the Tel Hashomer hospital, Malka sat unmoved at his bedside night and day.

Jeremiah recovered in the convent, and with his sister in hand wandered through an Austrian winter among snowy villages -- until they reached an orphan kids' camp. The boy Jeremiah showed leadership, organizing in work teams his young fellows, disparate subjects of a starved Hapsburg empire, searching and stealing food from sundry villages. Once, digging the earth for potatoes, they were caught by the police. Jeremiah, only thirteen and the leader, went to prison. Again, Malka spent several days on the jail's stairs, nourished by the small trails of leftover food given to her by the guards, until her brother's release.

⁷⁵ Religious elementary school

⁷⁶ Man's curse for eating from the fruit of knowledge, Genesis 3:19

The war was over in November of 1918. Learning of his wife's death and his children's wandering trials; he crossed the ocean to search for them in Austria. Unable to locate them, he heard a rumor that they'd reached Russia, followed them eastward and got stuck in the revolution. He continued to search after them in Russia to no avail, then, in 1919, returned to Israel by the ship "Ruslan" – as it happens, the very ship that took Rachel Cogan, one of the women who would later help found Hadassim, to Israel. They met on board, and she told Rabbi Shapirah about the educational project of Schwabe and Dinnur in Vetka.⁷⁷ They couldn't know then that his son, Jeremiah, would go on to realize the Vetka dream in Hadassim with her help. Moses returned to Safed, married Golda, a widowed cowgirl from Yesud Hamaala from the Fein family. The two agreed that she would give her daughter from her first marriage for adoption, and that should his children successfully return from Europe they would be raised by his sisters in Safed.

In reality, Jeremiah and his sister had actually arrived in Holland, not Russia. A family of Dutch farmers adopted them, and during the next two years the children shared the family's labor in the fields; by the end, agricultural work was burnt into their personalities. At sixteen, Jeremiah decided to return with his sister to Israel. He hired himself out for day-labor to other farmers, saved money, and bought two ship tickets. In 1920, when he was sixteen and his sister nine, they returned to Israel. To their disappointment they discovered that their father had remarried and wouldn't take them in. Jeremiah studied for a short while in a Yeshiva, then moved to Jerusalem and studied in a Mizrachi⁷⁸ Seminary for religious teachers. But the disappointment from his father's ill-treatment was so immense that Jeremiah became an atheist, and moved to study in the Beit Hakerem Seminar. The history teacher there was Ben Zion Dinnur.

One of the students at the seminar was Moshe Shiponi, my uncle. The two became very good friends, and Jeremiah told him the story of his wanderings in Europe. When it was decided to send me to Hadassim, my uncle shared them with me, telling me, "Europe toughened Jeremiah. Don't start anything with him!"

"The tougher someone is, the more he interests me," I answered. "I feel that Jeremiah and I will become friends."

My Uncle looked at me with smiling eyes, not saying a word.

⁷⁷ Rachel Cogan met The Hebrew University Professors Max Schwabe and Ben Zion Dinnur in the school for war orphans they founded in Vetka, Russia, where they'd fled from a Siberian prisoners of war camp. There they introduced to her their philosophy of education conceived in Siberia, according to which the most important educational principle is the discovery and development of the child's inner faculties, without the forcing of schematic models of study.

⁷⁸ A religious Zionist movement

Years later, when I was fifteen, I raised with Jeremiah the issue of the “Lamed Hei” myth as the theme of an educational project I wanted to initiate at Hadassim. For the sake of this project I proposed to travel – with Gideon Lavi and alone - all over the country. Rachel was angry because of the risk involved. Jeremiah calmed her down: “Traveling from Austria to Holland is much more risky.”

E. Rachel Katabursky Shapirah

Rachel was born in 1906, in the Ukrainian town of Brestov. Her parents, Ben-Zion and Esther Katabursky, were dedicated Zionists. The town was situated on an island in the river that historically divided Germany, Poland and Russia -- a tenuous fault line that had once again changed hands.



**Rachel Katabursky
Shapirah**

Napoleon had made Brestov his temporary headquarters in 1812, when he first pierced through the borders of Russia. Half of the town’s population was Jewish, the other half Ukrainian. The Jews mostly stuck to the area surrounding the Polish estate which had long ago owned the municipality. By the 20th century, however, the only thing left of it was its past -- its legends, its ancient gardens and trails which had long impregnated youthful fancies. Rachel would remember those gardens when it came time to build Hadassim, endeavoring to reconstruct a similar atmosphere for the children.

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The Kataburskys owned a local grocery store, but it barely even subsisted alongside her father’s Zionist enterprise, which mostly consisted of treating their profits as fodder for charity. Without a doubt, Ben-Zion was an idealist: common good would always trump private interest. It was a trait he handed down well to Rachel, who in turn demanded it of her teachers at Hadassim, who of course promptly did the same for us in the forties and fifties. The subordination of private to public is rare, rare enough that Judaism insists on ascribing it to the worthy few, the Lamed Vav Tzadikim.⁷⁹ Yet it was this very idealism, rare though it was – the idealism of Rachel’s faculty team -- that lay behind the success of the Hadassim experiment.

Hebrew was the primary language in the Katabursky household, a place that served as the hub of Zionist activity. Meetings were held, plans for immigration brewed, and idealism at its most innocent was the essence of every waking hour. They discussed the ideas of Herzl⁸⁰ and read from Ahad Ha’am⁸¹ and Bialik⁸². The

⁷⁹ The “Hidden Righteous” or Lamed Vav Tzadikim is a notion rooted in the more mystical dimensions of Judaism.

⁸⁰ Theodor Herzl (May 2, 1860 – July 3, 1904) was a Jewish-Austrian journalist who became the founder of modern political Zionism.

⁸¹ Asher Ginsberg (1856-1927), one of the great pre-state Zionist thinkers.

Katabursky's occasionally played host to visitors from Israel, who would tell of the settlements and new Moshavim and Kibbutzim. Such encounters were inevitably going to shape Rachel's character. Indeed, the idea of participating in the Zionist apogee in Israel would occupy her from a very young age.

It was natural then, that Rachel study at the Tarbut ("Culture") School, where, again, Hebrew was primary. She was active from the get-go in the town's Zionist youth movement, taking to the streets with her friends and posting signs that read "Speak Hebrew" around the Jewish neighborhoods. She wrote a play about the land of Israel which was performed in town, with profits going to help holy land emigrants. When she was done with elementary school, her father sent her to learn English in Rovno – it was a common assumption then that English would be the formal language of Israel – where she also joined a pioneer training group.

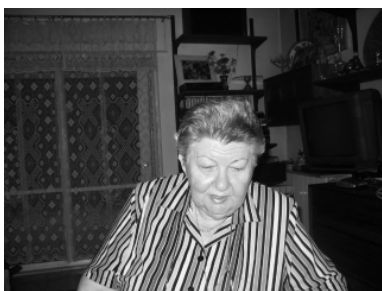
Ben-Zion died in 1920, but not before stipulating in his will that his family immigrate to Israel. And it wasn't long afterwards, in 1923, that Rachel fulfilled her end of the contract, leaving with the rest of her Rovno pioneer group. She eventually settled in with her aunts in Jerusalem and began study at the Mizrachi⁸³ and Beit Hakerem seminaries. She was seventeen. Her mother and sister, Bluma, followed her to Israel shortly thereafter.

It was in Beit Hakerem that she met Jeremiah. In 1925, Rachel, Jeremiah and Moshe Shiponi met Schwabe for the first time. Influenced by his ideas and persona, the three of them founded the Scouts Legion and Teacher-Scout group with Joseph Meyuchas and other seminary colleagues.

Moshe Shiponi recounts: "Unlike Jeremiah, Rachel was a rationalist. It wasn't Schwabe's intuition or analysis that appealed to her. Rationalism idealism put her far above the others in the Scout Legion, second only to Schwabe himself. The dialogue on the fundamentals of human behavior and education took primarily place between them, and she would later apply the concepts she'd mastered to her oversight of the Ben Shemen School."

⁸² Hayyim Nahman Bialik, one of the greatest Hebrew poets of all time. Bialik is considered Israel's national poet, though he didn't live to witness the birth of the state.

⁸³ World Mizrachi Movement - the religious Zionist organization that encompasses the educational, social welfare and settlement activity of Israeli society.



Drora Aharoni

Drora Aharoni, her assistant in Hadassim, remembers her: “Rachel was very wise and caring woman, and she was extremely devoted to what she felt was her mission in life. I learned a great deal from her, including the elements of what I now see as my professional attitude. She showed me what *not* to do, and how to change direction when things went awry. She had no trace of a class consciousness, she didn’t behave like a “schoolmaster” – toward the students or the other teachers. If she stepped into a messy classroom she wouldn’t start preaching about cleanliness – she would take hold of a broom and sweep. Her comportment with respect to her faculty team was respectful brand of stewardship: she taught, influenced, conversed -- and they would go her way. Rachel was a rational-dialogic type.”

F. The Scout Legion

In 1925, Rachel and Jeremiah entered the seminary for teachers in Jerusalem, subsidizing their study by enlisting as coordinators for the original Boy Scout movement⁸⁴, an institution drawn on British lines at the beginning of the Mandate. The scouts were mainly focused on football, uniforms and ties, drills and exercises, ropes, nature excursions and campfire songs. It was more or less the same with all the branches across the country. The purpose of the institution was to keep the kids busy after school to allow the parents some leisure.

By the end of 1925, Schwabe had landed in Jerusalem and stirred up something of a revolution, to boot. Joseph Meyuchas, later a legion deputy-head, remembers how he first learned about Schwabe: “Moshe Shiponi, who was in our circle at the time, had already known all about Schwabe’s educational work in Kovno, so one day he approached him. ‘How, indeed, does a man like you, who came here straight from the university – how is it even possible for an intellectual like you to be standing on the sidelines?’ Moshe suggested to him that he might want to look into the local scout units and convinced him to meet with us. He came out with us one

⁸⁴ The Hebrew Scouts Movement was founded immediately after World War One as a combination of the British scouting model and certain other educational principles, mostly deriving from central European youth movements.

evening in the Shneller woods.⁸⁵ Yehuda Halevy, one of the students, remembers that first encounter.

[Yehuda]:

One evening, after we'd already stolen and gathered up all the barrels in the neighborhood and started a bonfire in the Schneler woods, our smoke hurling up the sky as we yelled and yawped in youthful glory, a peculiar man snuck into our circle. He began introducing himself and asking questions – 'What are you doing here' et cetera – and at first we thought he was just another teacher, so we sort of shrugged him off dismissively and yelled smart-aleky comments and sharp-edged questions of our own back at him. But he played along, treating our responses as if they hadn't really been directed at him personally. You would say something that clearly sounded like it meant 'alright – you can go away now...' and he would just play off it and continue the conversation. 'Okay,' he would say, 'you think so, eh? Let's see where that thought takes us.' It made you careful to keep your comments deliberate, not arbitrary. It seemed more and more like there was something special in his attitude.

Then he started telling us about the youth groups in Germany, the massive movement that centered on singing, on ritual nature trips, on vigorous freedom and liberty. 'Indeed,' he told us, 'the entire host of youthful discoveries, a whole world of self-expression opens up to everyone in their adolescence, and so you, too – all of you – are also beginning to really identify your natures, your true selves, sitting here with each other, enjoying your stolen barrels and campfire.'" He kept stressing the word, 'stolen', repeating it several times -- but never in an accusatory way, never scolding. He seemed to treat it like it was just 'self-expression,' a normal part of being young. At some point he asked us when we planned on another outing, and when no one answered very specifically he made sure to fix the precise time we would get together again in the Shneller Woods.

It was on his second meeting with us that he really started teaching. He spoke of a power hidden in each of us. We all stood there speechless, as if struck blind by an unbidden yet inexorable truth -- as if 'America' had suddenly presented itself to us. We, who were so used to being flip and contemptuous with each other, were suddenly being told that there was something solemn, something untouchable in each of us. He not only lectured, but also bade us speak our minds, fleshing out and developing whatever ideas came out that he found interesting. Many of us began to feel pulled to him; the group that gathered around him that day felt a new content taking shape. It all got started there. Not everyone stuck around; as time wore on, and things

⁸⁵ Kafkafi, *The Hamachanot Haolim Years*, pg 201.

began to feel ever less familiar, a few probably didn't like what they saw and decided it was time for them to move on.

We were only used to the practical kind of scouting at the time, something akin to physical education classes in school. That was the way scouting was done at the time. So our unique departure from this regiment began with Schwabe, and it only happened because he wasn't really part of the scouting consensus at the time. He was an outsider. Soon his influence spread like wildfire, the flames catching on and moving from one lock of youthful hair to the next. Boy of all sorts and places, from all over Jerusalem's neighborhoods, began swarming to the scouts in unprecedented numbers.⁸⁶ With help from Jeremiah, Rachel and other youth-guides, Schwabe began reorganizing all the scout units – until then completely separate from the school system – under one framework, which he called the 'Legion'. It was a real thorn in the sides of his contemporary schoolmasters and scout leaders. They went after him with everything they could muster, accusing him of being an anti-Zionist and a youth-corrupting communist.

Speaking before the Legion council in February, 1926, Schwabe analyzed the character of the new youth movement he had consolidated from the old. The Legion was gathered to discuss the campaign of defamation against him in addition to the specific demand that he be expelled from the movement:

“What we do in our groups is not a game, but a way of life based on mutual criticism and understanding; it is also a kind of society, whose ideal is a viable Eretz Israel.”⁸⁷

The principle of 'education through labor' was something Schwabe developed in Vetka and Kovno; it really began to crystallize, however, in the Jerusalemite Legion and in his Teacher-Scout group.

The principle would come to full fruition in Hadassim.

Joseph Meyuchas remembers: “Schwabe was all but wrapped in a halo in those days; no one had really led the scouts before him – who were those erstwhile leaders, anyway? Graduate students, teachers, government functionaries, all with ties to the “Yehuda Hatzair” in America, all working part time. And here comes someone who had come all the way from Germany to accept a professorial chair at the university; he descends from Mt. Olympus yet he walks and talks freely amongst us, taking us seriously, raising us up to lofty heights. His earnestness made a deep impression on us Jerusalemite boys. It was inspirational.”

⁸⁶ Kafkafi, *The Hamachanot Haolim Years*, pg 143-146.

⁸⁷ Kafkafi, *The Machanot Haolim Years*, pg 165

What was the secret of his power?

It was conversation. And even in this he differed significantly from others. He had an extraordinary knack for getting young people to talk. He would get 300-400 of them to talk, in huge conferences with the whole assembled legion – he would just line them up around him in a circle, though it felt like he was talking to everyone. He put more emphasis on dialogue within smaller groups, as it would give each person an opportunity, by sheer conversation, to solve his individual and social problems and learn to respect others.

It was in personal interviews, above all, that he really touched people. Kids would brag about it -- ‘I have a meeting with Moshe soon!’ -- and they would all but live on the treasures of those conversations for weeks afterward.

The central value Schwabe wanted to promote was self-actualization through pioneer settlement. But his vision involved a larger framework that would include both collectives and educational settlements. He was certain that only a self-contained, village-oriented educational institution would succeed in building a full, vital knowledge up from the foundation. It was only in such a place that the right teachers could begin to implement his ideals, but, even more, he really hoped to see a whole *chain* of such institutions. He wanted his educational dream writ large -- a whole society built on the fundament of his educational ideals. Still, it wasn't something he believed dogmatically; the main thing for him was to see individuals become creators, pushing for their own ideas with fearless devotion...

The Teacher-Scout group was founded by Schwabe's Legion graduates (in parallel with the “Guards” who would eventually construct Kibbitzim in the Izreel Valley). They nurtured the tendency to inaugurate youth villages as new settlements. The group went to Shfeya first, and the director there was eager to receive them – “We'd love to have you!” he said – but eventually Dr. Lehmann was consulted, and he urged them to aim for something more. It was this group that would pitch their tent in Ben Shemen and bring Schwabe's ideas to life for us...⁸⁸

The main activists in the group were Rachel and Jeremiah Shapirah, who eventually married in 1927. During a Legion conference dedicated to educational issues, Rachel was heard to say that “we are something different and apart from the traditional scouts. Uniforms betoken militarism, they say...but our foundation is the individual...Our leadership doesn't take the form of hierarchical military structures, but originates from self-leadership, though I doubt if a large community can really function without command. Every scout has the right to object to a command – not in the same moment, but the next day. We will hold to what we've said, that we want

⁸⁸ Kafkafi, *The Hamachanot Haolim Years*, pg 201-205

everyone to express themselves as they see fit but still give society its due consideration...we need only observe other societies to see plenty of [undesirable] habits; and we rebelled against those outside values that we could no longer identify with, filling our lives with our own content instead. But some people have concluded that our rejection of those outside values mean we shouldn't trouble with morals and habits at all, which simply isn't true. It is imperative that we build things anew – a positive code of conduct. Children always find symbols to express themselves by, so if we want our children to identify with our kind of existence we need our own symbols to help them.⁸⁹”

In 1930, Teacher-Scout leaders met in Schwabe's home in Jerusalem to discuss future plans. No one had expected to see the beautiful young girl with piercing eyes who greeted them there. “This is Tova Goldberg,” Schwabe introduced her. “She's one of the students at the seminary, and she has some startling ideas. But I'll let her tell you about them herself.” No one had ever seen her before, but they were all looking at her now. “Our times are witnessing a technological revolution that will soon change everything,” she began, “the revolution of record-players and the cinema. It will soon make it possible to introduce our children to the greatest scientists and artists of the age, to their thoughts, their greatest plays and performances, their innermost experiences. Our education will have to adjust accordingly, unless we prefer staying behind our own students. If we can't be trained to use these new instruments of communication, our values will die with us, since we will then be unable to transmit them to future generations.”

My uncle was present at this meeting, and he tells me that everyone was floored by her presentation; these were dedicated educators, yet they were suddenly forced to see themselves as having partaken of the same educational stream our ancestors had used thousands of years ago. “Combining teaching with new technology was an astonishing and revolutionary idea,” he explained to me. “This astonishing seminary student would later turn out to be your friend's mother – Gideon's mother. But today she's made to stay within her hospital bedchambers in Haifa. It's a sad story.”

“What do you think of her son?” He asked. “He's obsessed with sports,” I replied.

“That's a pity. What a waste.” I wasn't sure if he meant the mother or the son.

⁸⁹ Kafkafi *The Machanot Haolim Years*,pg 201-205

More than twenty years later, Professor Schwabe was still critical of the lack of technological integration at Hadassim. As he told his grandson, Micha Spira, “[Hadassim] still doesn’t make use of the relevant educational tools: film, photography, slide projector” Teaching methods all over the world have seemingly lagged behind in the same respect; teachers simply haven’t been able to adjust -- technologies have utterly outpaced the abilities of teachers to adapt and integrate them into the curriculum. This disconnect between technology and general culture (including educational culture) is one of the factors behind our society’s dangerous instability. The last chapter of this book will try to address this question in depth, and perhaps offer solutions by suggesting how the Hadassim model can be combined with the Gideon Ariel’s bio-mechanical model.

G. “To Restore to Them What They Lost...”

At the end of 1945, the foundation-board appointed Rachel and Jeremiah Shapirah as co-directors of Hadassim. The two got in touch with the architect Jenyah Averbuch and the engineer Zeev Baron and agreed on construction plans for the youth village, to be built on the Jewish National Fund’s lands between the citrus plantations of Even Yehuda and those of an Arab family, the Hanuns. Jeremiah wanted the village to be “on the lies of a Swiss village, so that children coming to us on the heels of the Holocaust will find a world as beautiful as the one they remember before the war.” The Shapirah’s enthusiasm for the project, predictably enough, was a plague on the architect and engineer, who began work immediately,

In December of 1946, World WIZO held its eleventh conference in Basel. Scores of Jewish women leaders were gathered for the first time since after WWII. Some of them were also delegates at the 39th Zionist Congress, which was being held simultaneously in Basel. Kagan, at the time head of the Jewish Agency’s social department, was among those dual-attendees. Delegates at the congress were mired in matters of party intrigue; Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Jewish Agency, had successfully carried through the impeachment of Chaim Weizmann, president of the Zionist movement, from every single one of his prior posts, and Kagan was among those who voted against him on this issue. In his maneuvers she saw the writing on the wall for the quality of political discourse in the prospective state. Ben-Gurion had won, of course, as he almost always would: there has never been a greater Jewish politician in the modern era.

The WIZO conference, on the other hand, had very little by way of the personal. The delegates were volunteers, and as such they worked tirelessly for nothing beyond the success of their endeavors. The atmosphere there was sacral, and that sense of solemn mission would adhere to the platform on which Hadassim was founded. The preeminent agenda at this point was still the recruitment of efforts from various branches of the organization for the settlement and care of hundred of thousands of Jewish children, survivors of the Holocaust – the future of the Jewish nation. Meanwhile, the unseemly goings-on at the Zionist congress represented the future *calamity* of the Jewish nation. The two conferences, side by side, embodied in conspicuous fashion the two faces of Zionism: dogmatic factionalism versus earnest

volunteerism and self-sacrifice. But spirited giving won out over factionalism -- in time for the State of Israel to come into being -- just in time for Hadassim to open its doors. In her lengthy speech, Rachel Kagan said, among other things: "Jewish children have survived underground these last few years; they lived like moles, and many of them remained illiterate, their childhood lost, their personalities collapsed. Most of them lost their joy for life and their trust in their fellow man; and yet without such trust, life loses its value! Without such trust, we will never build a state! Not one that won't succumb to corruption, in any case. It is therefore *our* national, historical and human trust to compensate them, to restore to them what was lost. Never has there been a national project of such magnitude, never in all of history! If we even *partially* succeed, that will have been a miracle.

The miracle happened in Hadassim. Shevach, Metuka, Alex and Avigdor would go on to lead flourishing lives, guided by humanistic values. They would give -- for their families, for their nation and for their state, as if they'd never known the Holocaust at all.

At the closing conference session, Anna Raginsky, president of Hadassah-WIZO in Canada, handed Hadassah Samuel a check for ten thousand Canadian dollars -- the second installment for the construction and maintenance of Hadassim -- and committed to transfer an additional sum in six months' time. It is well to remember that ten thousand dollars in 1946 were equivalent to ten million today. "Comrades from Eretz Israel! No effort can be spared for this project. We will give you every sum -- any sum," the president of WIZO Canada stressed.

Hadassah Samuel was overwhelmed by this monumental gesture: "I am so deeply committed to this venture. This will be the most important mission in my life, more important than the caretaking work I did with child refugees after the First World War. But what a difference this will make...what a difference!" Hadassah erupted in tears, and Anna embraced her and started crying too.

At the closing speech, Rebecca Seif (then president of World WIZO) mentioned that construction and organization of Hadassim would be underway in the coming year and a half, revealing in full the nature of the project. "A myrtle ["Hadass" in Hebrew] is a flowing bush with shining leaves and yellow-white flowers. The leaves, flowers and fruit yield an oil used in the medical and cosmetic industries. More than this, a branch of the myrtle bush is one of the four species which we are commanded to bless during the Sukkot holiday. It is a blessing that will now accompany the children of our institution. There has never been a more important cause -- nothing could be more important than resurrecting the innocence of the children whose parents were murdered right in front of their eyes. It's not something we've been taught to do in school, and it isn't something our schools of education have covered. But with God's help we will do our part, and it will succeed. We simply have no other choice!

H. “An Unearthly Real”

When the Basel conference was over, WIZO’s general council convened in Jerusalem in January, 1947, with Professors Buber, Schwabe and Dinur in attendance. A central issue was the opening of the Hadassim school year in September. The first idea was to design Hadassim exclusively for Holocaust survivors, but the council decided against this after some consultation with various education professionals. It became clear that isolating those children from the rest would be disastrous, and ultimately the idea of a Hadassim melting pot gained ground – a joint body of Holocaust survivors and otherwise troubled kids, intermixed with children of privilege – as a mechanism to supply Israel with a new man, sane and powerful in spirit, faithful to his people and country.

Martin Buber explicated his views on dialogic education, while Moshe Schwabe spoke at length about the new model teachers, the concept of the pioneer educator that had taken root in his Teacher-Scout group. Rachel handed out copies of her credo:

A life in the country, in nature, far from the urban morass, develops a healthier, more open and more innocent personality. It develops a kind of religious devotion to life, a subconscious and benevolent fusion with the universe. It conduces to a life within a social framework, which demands consideration for others and nurtures a sense of responsibility for others. A relationship between teachers and students, one that is less rigid and formal than what prevails in urban schools today, engenders a democratic rhythm of life for our youth, a democratic attitude that will inevitably manifest in better decision making and social contribution in adulthood. A regiment of daily work will greatly influence not only the child’s attitude to labor but a respect for the laborer as well as productivity in general. It is our belief, then, that an overly intellectual program is insufficient to build a harmonious personality. We must leave room for self-expression and self-discovery in the arts, in physical education and social activity. A person’s merit will then be judged not only in terms of his intellectual skill but also according to his talents in the above categories. That way, even a student who doesn’t excel in his studies will still be appreciated for his dancing or social dedication. It is important for us as a small nation to cultivate superiority in all the different cultural and scientific fields: the absolute number, not only the relative number of our superbly educated men must be high.

Rachel Kagan recounts the meeting:

“Buber, Schwabe and Rachel Shapirah made a huge impression on the comrades. Later, as they dined at the King David Hotel, they were heard to say that if these were indeed the new intellectuals and educators of the Jewish settlement, then a strong Jewish state would indeed arise and persevere.

“We visited Hadassim the next day. Once we’d passed the settlement at Even Yehuda, we stepped off the bus and walked down the rough, sandy road down another

800 meters. We came upon a mammoth palm tree; there the road curved sharply leftward, and we continued until we saw an old house where the plantation guard lived. The foliage was somewhat characteristic of the desert, the slow, monotonous pace of tickle-grass cradling the dunes all the way up toward the palm tree. On the left: a citrus plantation and an old concrete, high-arched fence stretching beyond it, interlaced with rusty iron bars. On the right, at the foot of the palm tree, a Bedouin tent woven of black goat-hair and stretched out on wooden poles, two Canaanite canines dozing beside it, uttering perfunctory, meager protest-barks at the passersby...

“Sixty meters east, a small well in the shadow of an apple tree, with a half-built water tower nearby. Downhill we passed two finished buildings and then two more building skeletons, finally reaching a slithery, curved riverbed, about one meter deep. The surface at the foot of the hill was red, fertile ground, no doubt accumulating for centuries as the water settled down the gulf. You could see holes in the walls of the riverbed, the little nesting grounds of bee-eaters and green songbirds. Just beyond, about one hundred and fifty meters uphill, was Beit Hanun A – the first in the line of houses belonging to a rich Arab family. At the time of our visit there were tenants occupying the house who toiled on the family fields, which stretched to Netanya’s southern limits. Further south stood the first houses in the Yemenite neighborhood of Ein Yaakov, the closest neighboring settlement to Hadassim – a haphazard string of houses, really, more like a staggered extension of Kfar Neter -- surrounded by a rusty, ruptured fence. Maps and sketches in hand, Rachel, along with the architect, Jenya Averbuch, and the engineer, Zeev Baron, explained what the village would eventually look like. It sounded like something out of this world – an unearthly real. There were some slight protests about building it closer to civilization.”

I. In the Eyes of the Founders’ Child

Amir Shapirah was born in 1938. He would accompany his parents from the days of the Scout Legion through Ben Shemen to their death in Hadassim, in the sixties.

[Amir]:

My parents learned a great deal from Dr, Lehmann. They were young and he was an accomplished man. Mother tried to transmit to Hadassim the same spiritual current she found in Summerhill, Neill’s spirit: the psychic bond of teacher to student, the student viewed as part of a whole. The student would be led to evolve according to his potential; the distance between teacher and student would be undermined, and replaced with intimate ties.”

“In mother’s eyes, education was a holistic process. She stood for a ‘themes’ method in teaching: rather than learning geography and history separately, she would approach one theme from different sides, in all its

various aspects. That way of teaching, she thought, would actually mirror the world as it was, without artificial distinctions between modes and disciplines.

“She believed that grades promote injustice: every student would advance at his own pace. Grades brought an element of unhealthy competition; they created unnecessary psychological distress for those who weren’t yet strong, causing tension between students and diminishing from the atmosphere of brotherhood she had worked to instill. She used short comments, like “advancing nicely,” instead of grades, maintaining that students would be more likely to feel they weren’t in competition with others, but in cooperation.”

I don’t remember any real family or personal disputes, but mother and father would usually argue about educational issues, reserving Friday and Saturday nights for such discussions. Father was the one who pushed for more discipline. There was an undefined and unwritten division of labor: mom took the pedagogical side and father stuck to the administrative side, having studied psychoanalysis with Dr. Hirsh – a rare pursuit among teachers. He had gone through analysis himself, so his level of self-awareness was unusually high. Consequently he was able to avoid any serious quarrels with mother. The psychological and methodological aspects of education were left in her hands while he focused on running the village.

Father maintained two explicit educational goals: shaping the student’s personality, and enriching him with values that he considered important on a personal level, namely, Jewish values (and an affinity with Jewish tradition). These goals were most clearly embodied in the holidays: every holiday was treated methodically, which also meant that no student was allowed to leave while a holiday was observed. We read from the Book of Ruth in Shavuout, and held strictly to the traditional Tikun Leil Shavuout ritual. The tie for him wasn’t with religion, as such, but with values and heritage. The ritual aspect didn’t interest him, but justice, honesty, charity and faith in one’s fellow man, did.

The value of labor: he was especially concerned with imparting to students the importance of labor, not as a burden but as a birthright.

Esthetics: it might be that on this issue he was influenced directly by Dr. Lehmann. Father stressed the value of art, music and theatre. Lehmann had a pedantic streak, as did father – but neither of them felt above the “small things”. Big things consisted of small things: father was extremely methodical.

Father stressed order. He was intent on observing the law, which for him was one expression of order. Mother, on the other hand, emphasized the value of the child's soul, his psychic wholeness; she was concerned with providing him with the right vehicles for his development, and that development in itself wouldn't be a burdensome process. She was willing to fight for that cause, for the individual student, against the rest of the faculty team if necessary – or if she felt that an injustice had been done to a student, that his feelings weren't being respected, that he wasn't being treated as a whole. Given father's stress on order, this led to clashes over what punishments were right, for which incidents and for which individuals. Once, for instance, when a pack of students snuck out to go the movies in Netanya (which was against the rules), mom wouldn't abide any talk of punishing them. It was out of bounds for her.

J. Normal Life

Toward the end of 1946 and through the first half of 1947, Rachel and Jeremiah tended to the construction of Hadassim and recruitment of instructors, agricultural coordinators and administrators. In July, 1947, the Shapirahas made their last trip back from Ben Shemen and moved in, temporarily, in what was then the only complete building (in unit four). More people followed, taking up residence in the other rooms, including Drora Aharoni, who had just graduated with honors from Beit Hakerem Seminary in Jerusalem. She had also gone through her preparations at Ben Shemen under Rachel, who subsequently assigned her as her personal assistant and then deputy.

The nine year old Amir together with his seven year old sister, Ofra, were the village's first students. As far as they were concerned, the transition from Ben Shemen had been utterly atrocious. Amir remembers how nighttime seemed to belong to the pack of jackals that couldn't wait to leap into the few buildings that now intruded on their space. He remembers the clamoring choir of marsh frogs one kilometer westward, in Beit Hanun B, and the 'toot-toot' rumbling of the water pump engine. The Arab tenants over at Beit Hanun used to light a campfire every night, which only exacerbated the unease.

[Ofra]:

We arrived from the tender shades of Ben Shemen to this barren ditch of sand, with these acrid new white houses and all that. Construction was still ongoing; dry sand interlaced with narrow ditches that needed to be hopped over constantly.

And while we were trying to adjust, the adults were busy with preparations for the first group of children. Mother and Father explained to

me that these children had wandered over all the way from Europe, that war had destroyed their homes and families, but they had nevertheless survived, miraculously. They had been collected, one by one, from their caverns and hiding places, to be brought here to their new home. Our job was to be their new family, to restore the joy that was taken from them.

The night before the big day I could hardly keep my eyes closed. A huge weight had been placed on my tiny shoulders: to take in these new kids and help them as much as I could.

In August 1947, the first of these children of the Holocaust arrived with their instructor, Masha Zarivetch. Their previous trip had been from the Warburg Estate in Belkanza, near Hamburg, a transitional camp for war-orphaned led by Reuma Schwartz-Weizmann. They had traveled to Paris and from there to Marseille, and from there they sailed to Haifa on the ship "Providence". After a short stay in WIZO-Achuzat Yeladim on Mt. Carmel, they were met by Rachel Shapirah and shortly thereafter boarded the train to Hadassim.

[Ofra]:



I remember the train arriving bearing heavy dust clouds. The kids descended, one by one, all of them wearing uniforms – khaki shorts and scout's blue ties. The boys wore khaki pants and the girls wore blue folded skirts. They were very organized, the older kids helping the younger, and it was clear they were comfortable with responsibility and self-discipline. The image I'd had of frightened, powerless children disappeared quickly. They were my age, maybe a little older, but despite this I felt extremely small beside them. Who was I, anyway, that they would ever need my help?

One of the eight kids was Aliza Swartzwald-Bar, a slight, extremely thin orphan girl. "Each of us stepped off the train with a small bag carrying all our possessions. We were greeted by Jeremiah, Rachel and their daughter, Ofra. We **Malka Kashtan** were finally able to set everything down, to settle into a normal existence. The endless trails had come to an end. It was time for studies to resume, and we didn't know Hebrew. Malka Kashtan taught us, a charming, beautiful woman with wonderfully flowing hair. The very first lesson, Ofra sat next to me, waved hello and opened her bible. We felt like equals again..."

"Hadassim was the best thing that could have happened to us."

