

*Anita Shapira*

## **Hirbet Hizah**

### Between Remembering and Forgetting

Woe to the generation that has to commit the acts of “Hizah” and flees the pain of their recounting.

—Ephraim Kleiman

Memory—what, how, and when we remember—continues to fascinate scholars. It is elusive, complex, and difficult to define. Collective memory sits at the divide between the conscious and the subliminal, acknowledgment and denial, history and psychology. Currently in vogue is the construct of a “usable past”: collective memory as a product of national-cultural manipulation, which embeds those portions of the past that reinforce society’s self-image and foster its interests and agendas. This conception rejects the notion of spontaneous processes at work in the formation of collective memory. But if conscious intent does shape memory, who are its agents? What are their tools? In democracies, moreover, there is never one single guiding hand. How does the open arena of conflicting interests impact on memory’s configuration? When is a particular event stamped in memory? What processes catalyze its fixing; what forces act to submerge it? If the “usable past” ministers to present interests, what happens to past segments that do not serve current goals? Are they relegated to oblivion? Or do past and present interact dynamically, transforming memory as changing circumstances impact on public consciousness?

Memory confounds historical consciousness. The gray area between consciousness and memory is especially evident when dealing with topics hard to face, such as the departure/flight/removal/expulsion of Arabs in Israel’s War of Independence. This essay deals with changing representations of the past and the interrelation of memory and reality. The subject is explored by examining public attitudes over time toward an Israeli classic, “The Story of Hirbet Hizah” by S. Yizhar.

For several years now, I have shown sections of the tale’s TV version to university students as an opener for discussion of the differing war

narratives currently debated by historians. The students' head-on encounter with the 1948 expulsion of Arab villagers is invariably greeted with shocked silence. That reaction is surprising: after all, "The Story of Hirbet Hizah" has been part of the high school curriculum since 1964 and a matriculation elective, and its TV premiere in 1978 unleashed fierce and lengthy debate. Yet, nearly a decade later, Benny Morris could style himself as the man who had exposed Israel's original sin with *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*.<sup>1</sup> The public was indignant, as if they had just heard of the Palestinian refugee problem and Israel's role in its creation. Is our public memory so short-lived? Questions about awareness are raised also by the students' surprise and unease: years have passed since the publication of and controversy over Morris's book. The issue was papered over by the media and resurfaced with the 1998 television documentary series, *Tékumah* (Revival).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, many Israelis still react as if the subject didn't exist, is unknown, or is under wraps—best not mentioned. It is my thesis that Israeli attitudes toward the "Story of Hirbet Hizah" over the years can serve as a litmus test for the vagaries of remembering and forgetting that help form public memory.

The relationship between literature and history is complex. In the heyday of classic Rankeanism, to "tell it as it was," belles lettres would probably not have been a legitimate source for the description of reality. Today, however, with the increasing recognition of the limitations of the historical method, historians are readier to also utilize fiction to illuminate political, social, or psychological truths. Literature not only reflects reality but is a means of embedding specifics in public imagination and collective memory. More so than history, it acts on the senses, creating verbal and visual images and associations that shape the collective psyche. The seeming disparity between historical and literary reality enables readers to separate fictional portrayals from factual accounts. Literary worlds and characters can be viewed as universal, removed from place and time and grappling with eternal questions: justice and injustice, humanity and inhumanity, life and death. Readers can focus on the artistic dimensions, disregarding reality. "The Story of Hirbet Hizah" lends itself to all of these analyses; the choice of analysis sheds light on what the public does or does not wish to know.

### **The Tale and the Author**

"The Story of Hirbet Hizah" tells of the expulsion of inhabitants from an Arab village at the end of the War of Independence by an Israel De-

fense Forces (IDF) unit acting under orders. Most of the residents have already fled; only women, children, and the elderly remain. The young soldiers are callous, uncouth, bored, indifferent—neither particularly brutal nor especially compassionate. They have been ordered to “burn–blow up” the houses and “arrest–load up–and drive away” (34) the population, an order they carry out to the letter, shattering the valley’s natural beauty and tranquillity.

A whole, ancient way of life is suddenly swept away: “Mattresses . . . cooking embers . . . yard implements . . . still brimming with everyday cares and concerns . . . as if things could still return to normal” (48). Green fields, shady gardens, vegetable beds—upon all “descends . . . the grief of orphanhood. . . . Fields that will not be harvested, crops that will not be watered . . . as if it had all been for nothing” (68). The villagers gradually absorb the enormity of the calamity, and the demolition of their homes spells out its finality. They are submissive, though here and there a proud protest is heard. The eviction is replete with humiliation: residents are forced to trudge through a puddle en route to the waiting vehicles and to abandon their belongings, even blankets (for warmth), and all the while the background din of demolition punctuates the finality of their plight—it would not be undone.

The narrator balks: “If this has to be done, let others . . . defile their hands. . . . I can’t. But at once another voice spoke out within me, taunting: ‘Oh you’re so high-minded . . . so so noble’” (65). The commander’s response that “it’ll be all right,” that “immigrants will come . . . and take . . . and work [the land]” (76), wrests the narrator’s bitterest protest: “‘Colonizers,’ screamed my guts. ‘Hirbet Hizah isn’t ours! No right was ever bestowed by the barrel of an MG 42’” (77). The stream of refugees awakens Jewish associations: “Exile . . . what have we done here today, what?! We Jews sent others into exile.” In counterpoint to the “boxcars of exile,” Yizhar hears the echoing footsteps of other expellees and the “rebuke of the prophet of Anatot, rumbling like ominous, distant thunder” (75). The tale climaxes in the concluding sentence “And when stillness closes in on all, and none disturbs the hush, and this will be the soundless din beyond silence—then God will come forth and go down to the valley . . . to see whether their outcry is justified [Gen. 18:21]” (78).

Hirbet Hizah was not the name of an actual village. Does the tale describe a unique incident? Or does it symbolize the land emptying of its Arab inhabitants in the wake of the war—whether by choice, out of fear, in flight from the encroaching front, or by forcible IDF eviction? A hint is provided by the mute cry of the bare villages, “the song of objects stripped of soul . . . of human action raw and wild again . . . of . . .

unforeseen cataclysm, frozen as . . . a curse unspoken. . . . Is anyone really to blame here—or what?!” (41). If this is not just a random village but stands for all the vacant villages and towns, then the narrator’s cry, “Hirbet Hizah isn’t ours!” applies to all of Palestine, every town and hamlet conquered by the Jews in the course of the war.

Yizhar believed unwaveringly in the right of the Jewish people to return to their land. That same month he also wrote “Midnight Convoy,”<sup>3</sup> a paean to the Zionist enterprise and the “new Jew.” The convoy’s breakthrough into the Negev saves besieged Jews, rerouting the war from a hateful bloodbath to a peaceful path, “a war in which you just open up a new road in the land. . . .” Here, too, Yizhar is aware of the emptied landscape: “A land too large . . . its fields inimical . . . still bearing its owners’ distinctive scent . . . a different toil, a different desire, a different love . . . ancient . . . its heart still beating with its fellahin.”<sup>4</sup> Yet he is reconciled to the revolution that has come about without the narrator’s involvement. At the story’s end, he recognizes that “it was naive to believe that [peaceful] convoys would save us. Convoys . . . don’t get you space, freedom, peace. Oh, Mama, how we’ll still have to die.”<sup>5</sup> In “Hirbet Hizah,” Yizhar protests against injustice and the loss of humanity—of both the expelled and the expellers. But he does not say whether it might have been possible to act differently and, if so, how. When the narrator complains, “it’s . . . not right,” one of the tale’s “tougher” characters asks: “So what do you suggest?” He replies: “I don’t know” and is told to “shut up” (66).

The narrator is caught between his basic humanism and his national ideals. Yizhar’s mentor, A. D. Gordon, had taught individual redemption and elevation, as well as national deliverance. Socialist Zionism saw no inherent contradiction between the people already on the land and the new settlers. Of course, that ignored the basic conflict between the Arabs, who saw themselves as the rightful owners of the land, and the Jews, arriving to lay claim to their ancient patrimony. But Yizhar trusted in the rectitude of this claim all his life: the Jews returning to their ancient homeland had the right to settle there. Pioneer toil bestowed the right to Palestine—a right albeit circumscribed by the rights of the inhabitants. He saw prewar Jewish settlement in Palestine as a pure, grand enterprise. His adored older brother—killed in a 1940s motorcycle accident with his Arab assistant riding tandem—had been buying up land from Arabs piecemeal for Jewish settlement. Yizhar did not consider such amicable acquisition morally dubious. What happened after the state’s establishment, however, the wielding of military might to gain the upper hand, was a different story.

S. Yizhar was born into a family of settlers in Rehovot, a farming village that employed Arab workers, where Jews and Arabs lived and worked side by side. The orchard, the clang of the water pump, and the Arab fellah were an integral part of his everyday world, harmonious, organic, beautiful, and whole. The abrupt disappearance of the Arabs shattered that image—leaving him with a lifelong nostalgia for the lost world of his youth. Prestate Palestine was redolent of gardens, cultivated fields, and Arab and Jewish villages, a pastoral existence in an ancient biblical landscape. Rehovot, tranquil and rural, was removed from the pace of modernization and the massive influx of immigrants that would rub out old patterns. The destruction of the Arab village marked the end of halcyon days. As the literary critic Uri Shoham put it: “Ahmed was killed along with his brother, their motorcycle smashed to bits, and then the War of Liberation and the establishment of the ‘kingdom’ completely obliterated the myth of ‘In the beginning.’”<sup>6</sup>

Yizhar found it hard to warm to the waves of Jewish immigrants that inundated the new state with their alien ways, destroying the land’s primeval beauty and charm. Asked in the spring of 1990 at what point the old world had vanished, Yizhar told the interviewer: “When a new generation arrived that needed land—and fast. [Jewish] refugees . . . brought with them another world with its own laws. Here was a landscape of sand paths, thorn hedges. It was pretty romantic, but didn’t have much practical value. So it began to fade, and that whole world came to an abrupt, forcible end. . . . That lost world lives on inside me. . . . It had a certain . . . equilibrium. What followed is still a mess.”<sup>7</sup> Yizhar liked to quote Nathan Alterman: “On the seam between era and era / Fortune let Jews / See a land bare / No tree no water as barrier / See a land bare / Like the scene of its beginning, the scene of its end.”<sup>8</sup>

He saw the War of Independence as a watershed, the start of sovereignty and the end of the bare land in which Jews and Arabs had together sought refuge from the midday sun. The magnificent young soldiers of the War of Independence, whom he so loved, were “the last to behold the naked, passive, fatal landscape.”<sup>9</sup> The open expanses were pillaged by immigrants.<sup>10</sup> As early as 1952, the critic David Kenaani noted, “Yizhar was attached to a specific landscape (southern Palestine), social class (peasants), age group (youth), psychological type, and moment in time.”<sup>11</sup>

Yizhar mentioned the Holocaust in only one later tale and then only marginally.<sup>12</sup> Yet in “Hirbet Hizah,” on the threshold of the new era, he touches on the Holocaust and the new immigrants. The latter have

come to supplant the Arabs. The Holocaust is invoked symbolically: the machine gun, that can bestow no right to Palestine, is a German MG; the vehicles carting off the villagers to the Gaza Strip are “boxcars.” These allusions, however, are far less convincing than the prophetic echoes of Anatot and God’s descent into the valley to ascertain the truth of Sodom’s outcry, which end the story. Yizhar’s biblical resonance always rings true. While his allusion to Holocaust refugees is superficial, offhand, and unfavorable, his scriptural evocation is basic to his human understanding and outlook, which are ravaged by the invading “barbarians.” Hirbet Hizah was an unsavory consequence of the birth of statehood: the transition from the intimate, closed, appealing Jewish society in interaction with the Arab community to a mass society of immigrants, vulgar, graceless, and alien.

Statehood was also a watershed between the moral innocence of a community under the protection of British bayonets and the realities of a sovereign state acting in a manner inconsistent with the pacifist moral code of socialist Zionism. “The War of Liberation . . . was the positive end of an age, but, morally . . . also the negative end. Till then, we had known that some things are not done . . . certainly not by Jews. My tale, ‘Hirbet Hizah’ . . . which has angered everyone for almost 50 years now, is about things that before the War of Liberation I believed we Jews couldn’t do.”<sup>13</sup> “In the war . . . people lived in a myth. There was only one solution. When the war began, the naive faith of those young men received its first slap in the face. People seized and plundered. Arabs were ousted. And we . . . had believed that Jews could never expel others.”<sup>14</sup>

Alterman, in his famous poem (1950) protesting the security forces’ brutal handling of Arab infiltrators, nonetheless concedes: “You don’t build a state with white gloves. The job’s not always clean and noble.”<sup>15</sup> By contrast, Yizhar in “Hirbet Hizah” was shocked by his encounter with *raisons d’état*: “The shock of a romantic dreamer. . . I had never imagined there could be such things.”<sup>16</sup> Amid the huge controversy that erupted after the 1978 TV airing, Yizhar, for the first time, commented on his motives for writing the story.

I wasn’t writing as Jew versus Arab . . . but as someone hurt, because something happened there that I was completely unable to reconcile myself with. There was only one thing inside me—outrage . . . [and] the expulsion of residents and demolition of village homes shook me to the very core. . . . The conflict is also between that person’s past, education . . . outlook . . . con-

ception of Zionism—that always said the Arabs would not be evicted, that we would live together in peace—and the realities depicted.<sup>17</sup>

Yizhar did not deny the “no choice” aspect of the War of Independence; it was a war of defense, of life or death. But he was revolted by the new violent methods, the deviation from his values. He swung between justifying Zionism and his love for the young warriors on the one hand, and hostility to the state and hatred of war on the other, a dissonance obvious in his behavior. The author of “Hirbet Hizah” was also an intelligence officer in the Giv’ati Brigade. He knew about expulsions and had held his tongue. Later, as a Mapai Member of the Knesset (MK) in the darkest period of the military government (which Israel instituted to supervise its Arab minority), he may have condemned Israel’s treatment of its Arab citizens at Young Mapai meetings, but he never spoke out publicly.<sup>18</sup> Nor did he condemn retaliation against infiltrators, some of whom were hapless refugees attempting to return to their homes. In literature, he took the high moral ground, but in everyday life he came to terms with the realities of statehood and was silent.

Why did he write “The Story of Hirbet Hizah”? His only essay on the topic, “Be-Terem Aharish” (Before I Fall Silent), appeared during the controversy over the TV airing and begins with his artistic philosophy: “Fiction does not mirror reality, document real life or . . . any real state of affairs.” A writer takes material from reality and fashions it into an autonomous construct. Yet at the end of the essay he noted: “Everything I wrote about in a story that recently has been the subject of much negative discussion . . . is, sadly, reality. . . . Everything . . . is reported accurately, meticulously documented, from the operation order on a specific date right down to the last details.”<sup>19</sup>

Here he claimed that the story was authentic. But in a newspaper interview he gave at the same time he refused to disclose the name of the actual village, stating that it was fiction, not reportage—which is why he wanted it to remain “abstract.”<sup>20</sup> He totally rejected the idea of “Hirbet Hizah” as a metaphor for the Land of Israel: “There’s no need for a story’s specifics to represent the general . . . the total . . . or all the historical events of a people and country at a given time.”<sup>21</sup> He vehemently denied allegations that he had questioned the Jewish right to the Land of Israel and noted that Hirbet Hizah was an exception, not the norm, though he admitted that there had been other such incidents.<sup>22</sup> His oscillation—between viewing “Hirbet Hizah” as a symbol or reportage, as

imaginative fiction or a snapshot—reflected his difficulty with the arbitrary nature of state power, which shapes the destinies of its sons and enemies alike, changing reality by means of the sword.

### The First Controversy, 1949–51

“The Story of Hirbet Hizah” was written in May 1949, with the battlefields still smoking and the dead barely buried. It was published the following autumn, along with “*Ha-Shavui*” (The Prisoner), in the *Hirbet Hizah* collection of stories when the public was still reeling from grief and the staggering losses. Judging by its sales and published criticism, it was a success. By April 1951, it had sold an impressive 4,354 copies,<sup>23</sup> quite a best seller at the time, and it had been widely reviewed, mostly favorably.

Although most critics lauded Yizhar’s literary qualities and poetic gift, they differed over content and interpretation. The tale sparked public debate among the generation of ’48 and that of their fathers, and while distinctive views were espoused by Left and Right the controversy did not develop along either generational or political lines. Most of Yizhar’s readers seem to have come from the ranks of the combatants, his own generation, and most of the written critiques from an older group.

Most praised the author’s candor, courage, and voice of conscience in speaking out against the unacceptable actions of the magnificent young men who had put their lives on the line for the sake of their people. Shalom Kremer wrote in *Moznayim*: “It augurs well for the young generation that in the heat of battle, its humane conscience was not numbed.”<sup>24</sup> Dov Ber Malkhin was stirred by “our very own” literary creation but remarked on “our reflected image . . . twisted and terrifying, and that humane-Israeli conscience . . . that hovers over all and gives no respite.”<sup>25</sup> Shay Pnueli saw the age-old Jewish heritage of compassion for all God’s creatures.<sup>26</sup> HaShomer HaTza’ir’s Moshe Silbertal stressed “the protest of a conscience that cannot accept double standards . . . a faith in humankind that cannot be stilled even on the battlefield.”<sup>27</sup> S. Uriel noted the author’s anguish as a man of truth and conscience and felt that Israelis should be proud “that a literary work of such merit was produced in our midst during the armistice itself, smoke still rising from the ruins of ‘Hirbet Hizah.’”<sup>28</sup> Leah Goldberg admired the story’s honest attempt to understand the enemy and especially its “civil courage.”<sup>29</sup> Ya’akov Fichmann, like others, was troubled by the tale’s image of Jewish society

in Palestine: “When the time came for us to be different, we *weren’t*.”<sup>30</sup> Concern about Israeli society is a common motif: “Isn’t our own human image forfeited when we fail to see it in another?” asked A. Anavi.<sup>31</sup> Another critic thought Yizhar’s stories showed that independence had also produced savagery and trampling of fundamental moral values.<sup>32</sup> Someone else wondered: “Wasn’t victory a human defeat that will destroy us if we fail to overcome it?”<sup>33</sup>

What had caused “our pure youth who defended us so valiantly” or the warriors “who . . . by nature and nurture must be reckoned among the promoters of light”<sup>34</sup> to perpetrate the barbarous acts described in the story? How had they become apathetic toward others’ suffering, killing for the pleasure of the hunt, displaying stupidity and even sadism? The reason, of course, is “the terrible nature of all war,” wrote Fichmann, and Leah Goldberg followed suit. She accepted the expulsion as “dictated by necessity. . . . But the human tragedy . . . casts a recurring light of terror on the bare facts of our existence.”<sup>35</sup> This distinction between the human and political planes enabled critics to deal with the symptom—the soldiers’ conduct—rather than the primary fact of expulsion. Fichmann differentiated between wartime necessities and the mindless arrogance of the expulsion order,<sup>36</sup> that is, the problem was specific and localized. Moshe Silbertal shared this view.<sup>37</sup> The distinction between unavoidable (thus ethical and permissible) necessity and the caprice of a perverse officer allowed Fichmann and his associates to dismiss “Hirbet Hizah” as an isolated case.

Many contemporaries, however, considered it symptomatic. In June 1950, *Ner* (the organ of the “dovish” Ihud Association, headed by Martin Buber) commented:

“Hirbet Hizah” is a parable. There were many stories, even more *brutal*. . . . I still see the . . . *Arabs of Lydda and Ramle* leaving for exile. The . . . human suffering was awful to behold, wretched souls, desperate and disheartened; and even more horrible was the desecration of our human image, turned beast, robbing . . . their *last coins*, coercing them, disdainful of their pain and suffering.<sup>38</sup>

A few critics believed the matter should not have been exposed. Moshe Stavi-Stavsky accused Yizhar of dishonoring the IDF, causing the Israelis grief and the enemy joy.<sup>39</sup> Others complained of imbalance: the Arabs emerge as innocent lambs, the Jews as near fiends. Was the shepherd

in “The Prisoner” really so innocent? Don’t we all know about innocent lambs that alert enemy forces (an allusion to the thirty-five soldiers killed in January 1948 on their way to the Etzion Bloc after jeopardizing their lives by sparing a shepherd)? As for “Hirbet Hizah,” how did Yizhar know that those hapless creatures would not have posed a vital security threat? Yizhar was one-sided; he had not mentioned Arab atrocities.<sup>40</sup> Let’s not forget that had we lost, no law, no protector, would have come to our aid, and the Arabs would have totally destroyed us.<sup>41</sup> What’s more, the war was over, but there was no peace: “From exile, ‘Hirbet Hizah’s’ inhabitants still lie in ambush, exploiting our pity, ready to counterfeit the seal of our compassion.”<sup>42</sup> Occasionally there were references to the Holocaust, such as Pnueli’s: “The hour may not yet be ripe . . . for ‘Hirbet Hizah’s’ mute cry . . . because . . . the spilt blood of our brethren still cries out, drowning [it] out.”<sup>43</sup>

D. B. Malkhin also praised Yizhar’s literary merits while expressing reservations about the theme: “Why, of all the episodes of Israel’s war for liberation . . . did the author choose this one?”<sup>44</sup> The dilemma may have been shared by Noah Tamir, who observed: “It’s appalling that Yizhar’s style inspires credibility, yet the description is untruthful because one-sided.” The intent was moral, the result the reverse.<sup>45</sup>

In the summer of 1949 and the fall of 1950, *Sulam*, the Right’s intellectual periodical, edited by Yisrael Eldad, published a series of essays by Mordechai Shalev “On Israel’s War Literature,” which discusses “Hirbet Hizah.” Shalev accepted the description of Jewish youth in the stories of the generation of ’48 as authentic. This was a generation without vision, for whom the homeland was not an ideal; consequently, its sons suffered from emptiness, from lack of roots, “cut off from a whole world of historical and Land-of-Israel values.”<sup>46</sup> They were cynical and unoriginal. The writers of ’48 depicted sabras as the proverbial cactus, rough on the outside, but soft within; Shalev saw this as a cheap artistic and psychological device intended to conceal the truth: “Among Israeli youth, the biggest best-kept secret is their total confusion.” They are afraid to think but love to search their souls, “they have no goals and are going nowhere” except toward dependence on their elders. “This perplexity also [underlies] the well-known argument of ‘no choice.’ If you believe in nothing—there is nothing to fight for [except survival].” But worse still, their confusion and emptiness led to sadism, a common motif in the war literature, especially in the descriptions of senseless animal slaughter. It is a childish sadism, a substitute for more mature hatred. “The sabra warrior’s lack of hatred for the enemy . . . does not spring from humanism, but primitivism.

The sabra is not above, but beneath, hatred. . . . Israeli youth are still not humane enough to . . . hate their enemies.”<sup>47</sup>

This article led up to Shalev’s piece on “Hirbet Hizah.” He slammed Yizhar’s inability to explain the psychological changes in his heroes: “Pure souls trying to conceal that purity,”<sup>48</sup> who suddenly turned into “sadists worse than the Nazis. Because the Nazis at least had a theory of race, while Yizhar’s characters murder from boredom.”<sup>49</sup> The roots of the sadistic emptiness were to be found in the ethical values of Yizhar’s old heroes. Ethics of “no choice” engender passivity and emptiness. Shalev, ironically suggests that since Israelis went to war because attacked, and not for gain, Yizhar doesn’t understand why they must go on fighting when no longer under attack: “Yizhar’s work is further proof that the lack of positive hatred goes hand in hand with sadism.”<sup>50</sup> Shalev and his right-wing associates attributed this sadism to immaturity: true maturity means that you see the enemy as an enemy and act accordingly, from a commitment to national aims, not hamstrung by aimless soul searching.

A tenuous mutual esteem linked Shalev and Baruch Kurzweil. An observant liberal Jew, Kurzweil lauded Yizhar’s stories for their moral pathos, their rejection of narrow-minded, antihumanistic nationalism,<sup>51</sup> but he, too, explained the tale in sado-masochistic terms. The systematic destruction of the Arab village, he noted, showed “the perversion of meaning, of genuine life into its satanic and insane antipode.”<sup>52</sup> The efficient, exacting execution of the order reminded him of the zeal of Kafka’s bureaucrats. His closing note was reminiscent of Shalev: “Here is the source of desperation and cynicism. After all the lofty ideals, only sadism and masochism remain.”<sup>53</sup> He attributed the emptiness of the “native sons” to their alienation from Jewish tradition and history.

The sadism motif was shared by reviewers on both Left and Right, liberal and nationalist. This made it possible to accept Yizhar’s ethical critique, feel shocked by the psychology and mentality of young Israelis, and point out how war ravages the values of youth. But it also enabled them to sidestep the story’s real issue: the expulsion of Arabs, a subject that was neither taboo nor censored. The archaeologist Shmaryahu Gutman’s eyewitness reportage in “Lydda Departs for Exile” had been published in almost real time,<sup>54</sup> and a number of the writers cited here did comment on expulsions—though briefly. Most dealt solely with the moral mettle of the Israeli soldier.

One passionate exception was Kibbutz ‘Ein Harod’s David Maletz, an author and Mapai member whose son had fallen in the war. Like most, he began with praise, “S. Yizhar is a powerful writer,” and then got

straight to the sore point: “Precisely because the details . . . are so powerful and cruelly truthful . . . [the book] awakens an outcry all the way to heaven; we expelled . . . and took possession. . . . [T]hese are very disturbing thoughts.” But “why single out Hirbet Hizah? . . . We all had a hand in the expulsion, all grabbed what we could.” All the “splendid labor settlements, building a new life, a new society, socialism—we’re all its heirs,” including Yizhar, “not in Hirbet Hizah, but . . . in Rehovot . . . amid empty, abandoned villages.” Ya’akov Fichmann is able to live in Tel Aviv today “only thanks to our [emptying and inheriting] of Jaffa.” What’s the moral difference between Hirbet Hizah and Jaffa, Lydda, Ramle, and hundreds of villages, merely that in this instance there was an “operation order” whereas in others the terrified population fled the cannon’s roar? And even those who fled mistakenly, without cause, from fear—should we now allow them to return? All Israelis, Maletz argued, “share in that great edifice of our independence constructed over the past two years—on the ruins of their empty homes. That’s the reality, and we can’t shut our eyes to it. No nice words can help, no self-righteousness.” “Hirbet Hizah” was not simply a literary work: “Either you accept the brutal, soul-searing conclusion of the tale [namely, accepting the return of the refugees at the expense of jeopardizing the state]—if not, then sometimes there’s more moral courage in keeping a tight lip than in speaking out.” The truth behind Hirbet Hizah and other villages is “the tragic, bitter, cruel fact, that has cost us thousands of victims, of our beloved dead, and has cost them suffering and loss. . . . The fact that at a decisive point here in the land we were faced with the existential choice: us or them.” It was not the Jews who forced that choice, Maletz argued. Even today, anyone who calls for the return of the Arab refugees knows it means “the extinction of Jewish life . . . in this last haven of refuge.” This background, “with all its bitter tragedy for us and for them—is completely missing in Yizhar’s story.”<sup>55</sup>

Maletz’s article in *Davar*, the Histadrut daily, elicited responses from both Right and Left. *Sulam* was delighted with his “moral fortitude.”<sup>56</sup> The religious daily *HaTzofeh* cited him as corroboration that “in life-or-death situations . . . one cannot yield to . . . compassion”—and, just incidentally, used the brutality of “Hirbet Hizah” to chastise secular youths for having turned their backs on the Torah.<sup>57</sup> *HaPo’el HaTza’ir*, Maletz’s own party’s paper, condemned his sweeping accusation, arguing for a distinction between necessity and sadism,<sup>58</sup> while the communist *Kol Ha’Am* coupled his article with *Sulam*’s acclaim to situate Maletz alongside Louis Ferdinand Céline, André Malraux, and Knut Hamsun in the fascist camp.<sup>59</sup>

In the summer of 1950, Mapam's Menahem Dorman, a staunch leftist, took a different tack, starting with the upheaval the war had wrought on Yizhar's childhood landscape. For Yizhar, Hirbet Hizah's "organic" Arab peasants "had been like native sons."<sup>60</sup> The "cruel, radical, transformation of the landscape [of his youth] provides a powerful motive for Yizhar's moral rebellion against the expulsion." The shattering of his "nonexilic" childhood world awakened in him ancient layers of Jewish memory. He experienced exile as though something deep within himself had been exiled. Arabs and Jews had fused as people persecuted and exiled. Examining the story as Yizhar's "bill of indictment," Dorman asserted that the war had been a watershed for both peoples laying claim to the land and had destroyed the Arab community. Indeed, the events in "Hirbet Hizah" had occurred in most Arab locales—and even more violently. The power of Yizhar's tale, he said, was the fact that the narrator sought no personal exoneration, for "the accuser is among the accused." Addressing the crux of the matter, Dorman noted: "That war, forced upon us," ultimately became one stage of the return to Zion, which was a creative, selfless endeavour shared and borne by all of Yizhar's protagonists. "We did not return to this land as colonizers." And, although the realization of Zionism did not cause the war, the historical circumstances that developed were such that victory became "an absolute precondition for its continuing realization." Whereas in peacetime the end does not justify the means, "war overturns this . . . in relations between enemies." In the War of Liberation,<sup>61</sup> the eviction of Arabs was a necessary condition for victory—the alternative being "the danger of total annihilation"—just as was the self-sacrifice of thousands of young men who accepted the rule that in war all means are justified, including their own deaths. Dorman thus drew an analogy between the Arab and Jewish calamities—both were a consequence of war, in which all means justify victory. The destruction of "Hirbet Hizah" may not have been necessary, but that of other villages was: "When one's very existence is at stake the law of war knows no pity." In attempting to explain the paradox of Yizhar, pacifist and anarchist, poet of the Zionist enterprise yet author of its indictment, Dorman revealed his Marxist convictions. Yizhar did not properly appreciate the dialectical process. Sometimes peace can be achieved only through war, and man's rule over his fellow man can be abolished only by assuming state power. In Dorman's view, the problematics of "Hirbet Hizah" were bound up with Yizhar's aversion to war in general and his "special participation in the crisis of transition to statehood and Israeli rule in this land."

Like Maletz, Dorman did not skirt the ethical-moral question. He conceptualized the war, victory, and its aftermath as part of a historical process, almost deterministic, beginning with the advent of Zionism and evolving toward a finale in the 1948 war between two peoples who laid claim to one disputed piece of land.

In 1952, David Kenaani praised “Hirbet Hizah” and “The Prisoner” and stressed their social impact: “Amid a dulling of conscience . . . these stories were a breath of fresh air.”<sup>62</sup> Yizhar was a “pure soul” who did not accept social authority and protested against wrongdoing. But this is also his weakness, since he addresses sporadic brutality but not the larger question: “If the expulsion was absolutely necessary . . . a person must be brutal. . . . But if the War of Liberation could have succeeded without brutality—it is unacceptable.” Kenaani, also a Marxist, contended that certain situations call for “burning, killing, expelling.” Expulsion is justified if it is based on a conviction that it will ultimately lead to a better social order. Toward that end, we must strive to mend and reform human society, not merely lament its shortcomings. Yizhar’s protagonists are socially wanting; they do not aspire to a better world, living solely in the present imperfect, without past or future: “And by exempting themselves of real social responsibility, they end up irresponsible.” Yizhar and his heroes are noble-minded souls with a dead-end melancholy: “They engage, not in self-criticism, which leads to decisive action, but in self-analysis, stewing in their own juice.” They shun intellectual pursuits, shy away from ideology, and want no part of Zionism or any other “causes.” Any decent person can instinctively distinguish between good and bad. But in the chaos and contradictions of war, one needs a compass, an ideology, a clear orientation. Like Dorman, Kenaani linked Yizhar’s crisis and that of other war veterans to the state’s creation, the transition from the Yishuv’s sense of moral integrity to the built-in contradictions of sovereignty. And he called for ideological commitment, not Yizhar’s vague humanistic anarchism.

In the early 1950s, intellectuals and critics addressed the expulsion issue openly, apparently with few misgivings about giving the enemy cause to rejoice. Yizhar may have felt that he was seen as the “class tattletale,” but the story itself enjoyed great success, sparked lively debate, and was used by youth movements and kibbutzim to stage mock “literary trials.”<sup>63</sup> The book’s impact was endorsed also by the Ihud’s Gavriel Stern, who reported on its reception by “progressive Arab elements.”<sup>64</sup> An unsigned article, “What Is the Solution?” in a Nablus Arabic weekly (December 31, 1949) raised the possibility of a genuine peace with Israel, causing a minor sen-

sation among readers. The author noted the strong love of peace in the heart of the Jewish people, as manifested by the popularity of “Hirbet Hizah,” and appealed for Jewish understanding of Arab motives, especially the refugee problem. “We must acknowledge this as a serious attempt to . . . find common ground,” Stern concluded, “and we owe this to Yizhar’s bold self-criticism. One daring deed leads to another.”

Despite the enormous interest “Hirbet Hizah” generated among Yizhar’s contemporaries, no one of that sabra generation wrote any real critique of it apart from Mordechai Shalev. How must one interpret this silence? Sabras were writing books and stories about the war, POWs, acts of brutality, and so on, but Yizhar’s was the only published story to describe an expulsion. The soldiers were well aware of the facts Yizhar described, but these were not memories that instilled pride, scenes they enjoyed discussing. They read the tale, and perhaps many, as Stern suggested, identified with its content. But rather than explore the wounds they preferred to store away the memory, veil it in forgetfulness. They did not wish to thrash out moral conundrums. They were weary, eager to put the war with all its blood, sweat, and filth behind them as quickly as possible—especially its most inglorious, oppressive chapter: the expulsion. When friends met, the subject did not come up. By contrast, their fathers, who had played no direct role in the expulsion and had no painful memories or agonizing images, were able to speak more freely.

For these young Israelis, the War of Independence was their formative experience. Having gone through its desperate battles, they had no doubt that it had been a just defensive war of *eyn breerah* (no choice) and did not need to be told so. They shrank from the rhetoric to the point of being branded cynics.

The transformation of Jewish youth from Zionist to cynical is reflected in the astounding metamorphosis of the word *Zionist*<sup>65</sup> from the name of a movement of regeneration and rebirth to a derisive term for bombastic rhetoric about any values. When the age-old vision had to descend to the plane of mundane reality and spill the blood of both its champions and enemies, its radiance faded. And when the dream became profane substance, the very possibility of dreaming was suddenly abrogated, the option to embrace any theory or teaching.<sup>66</sup>

They spurned revealing conversation, did not bare their emotions, and formed a cynical shell to help them come to grips with the loss of comrades, with bereavement. They were caught up in a process of reorientation in the fledgling state, and many found adjustment difficult. The

suppression of painful memories of the expulsion was a component of the process, psychologically similar to the suppression of memory by Holocaust survivors—a mechanism of rehabilitation and adaptation.

When “Hirbet Hizah” first appeared, the expulsion was seen primarily as an internal Israeli moral problem. But as the political significance of the refugee problem became ever clearer, and peace, seemingly so near in 1949, grew ever more distant, Israelis were more and more inclined to emphasize Arab responsibility for the problem. It gravitated from the sparring ring of internal debate to the arena of international politics, where the expulsion, an acknowledged fact of war in the early 1950s, became almost a state secret—albeit, shared by many. The government’s interest in blurring the question, and the desire of many 1948 war veterans to suppress what Ephraim Kleiman would one day call “unpleasant memories,” coalesced.

The debate on “Hirbet Hizah” was limited to Hebrew readers who could contend with Yizhar’s demanding style: veteran Israelis, educated intellectuals, and some of the native sons,<sup>67</sup> all of whom had lived through the expulsion. The daily influx of immigrants, however, radically changed Israel’s population (from some 650,000 on the eve of the 1948 war to 1.4 million in 1951). For them, the War of Independence was a grand epic of national valor, a saga they wished to absorb into their own heritage and new identity. They were unfamiliar with prestate realities and regarded Arabs as an evil presence lurking beyond the armistice lines, eager to undermine the new life they had laboriously begun to build. They did not see a struggle between two peoples, Jews and Palestinians, for the same turf; they saw an Arab-Israeli conflict, a clash between Israel and the Arab states. For the great majority of the Israeli public, then, Yizhar’s intimate, neighborly, Jewish-Arab bond was irrelevant. The immigrants found abandoned towns, moved in, and settled in them. Their main concerns were to put a roof over their heads, find some means of livelihood, and start a family, all the workaday worries of an immigrant society. The dislocation of immigration was daunting enough, both for Holocaust refugees and for those from Arab countries. They were unfamiliar with the story of Hirbet Hizah—and likely did not ask questions about the empty towns and villages in which they embarked on new lives. Refugees from Eastern Europe had accepted the so-called *Heimatvertriebene*, the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia and Poland in the wake of World War II, as a fait accompli: the aggressor had lost and paid the price, while those from the Middle East had also left behind homes and vacated neighborhoods where others

had moved in. In any event, they were not a part of the founding narrative: they arrived after the state's establishment. Years would pass before they, too, would be able to relate to the republic of Hebrew letters and its heated disputes.

By 1949, S. Yizhar was clearly the most important writer of the Palmah generation, a reputation enhanced by his 1958 antiwar epic, *Yemei Ziklag* (The Days of Ziklag), which again infuriated some critics and provoked vehement reactions from the Right and Left.<sup>68</sup> Most people could not cope with the novel's 1,134 pages; David Ben-Gurion told Yizhar that he'd read about 130 pages and felt that Israeli youth "were better than that."<sup>69</sup> Unexpectedly, it did not win the Bialik Prize. Two judges noted: "The freedom fighters are stripped of all positive attachment to our people or homeland" and "Yizhar presents Israeli youth as having no ethical or human values."<sup>70</sup>

Yizhar nonetheless was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize for 1959. At the ceremony, he said he had just tried to tell a story—not *the* narrative of the War of Independence. He had not intended to offer solutions to the generation's problems or to write a panegyric to Israeli youth.<sup>71</sup> But he was read otherwise. Yizhar had focused on the critical divide between individual and community, personal morality and the demands of society. In a fledgling state that felt besieged, as was Israel at the end of its first decade, readers found it difficult to accept his opus as mere fiction with little bearing on the present. A book so harsh in its attitude toward battle and the cost of human life, a book that invoked the *'akeda*—Abraham's readiness to sacrifice Isaac—could not be received as if it dealt with a random incident. Like "Hirbet Hizah," it was read as fact, not fiction, and imbued with a significance beyond its specifics.

Two years later, the critic Dan Miron shifted the focus from the historical to the purely literary. In "Hirbet Hizah" and "The Prisoner," he identified a shift from the impact of war on the conscious self to a rude encounter with human fate, "which is why the author has only a minimal interest in the inner self."<sup>72</sup> Concentrating on technique and the narrator's psyche, Miron hardly mentioned the fabula—the events at "Hirbet Hizah." This analysis, in 1961, may have already reflected the growing marginality of the problem of Palestinian Arabs for most Israelis. It was a relatively calm interlude, with Jordan controlling the West Bank. "Hirbet Hizah" had apparently lost its earlier relevance as the reflection of a pressing moral problem. The tale could be dealt with as any literary work.

This may help explain why the education ministry's decision in 1964 to incorporate it and "The Prisoner" into the high school syllabus and Bagrut matriculation raised no public objection. Although it is difficult to unearth teacher or pupil reaction, Menashe Duvshani's digest of the story sheds light on its presentation. Starting with its novelty—Jewish expulsion of others rather than Jewish suffering—he notes that the sense of power and desperate atmosphere of war sometimes drove our young men to unacceptable, unnecessary conduct, denounced by Yizhar as the moral voice of the noble Israeli soldier. Duvshani outlined the plot, gave details of the expulsion, noted that "we should feel [and admit] that we have committed an injustice we could not prevent," and set down the story's five basic elements as actions, psychological experience, natural landscape, style, and conscience.<sup>73</sup> If classroom lessons actually followed these outlines, pupils had to come face-to-face with the question of the expulsion even if Duvshani presented what was described in the story as a departure from the norm. Still, teachers could choose between "Hirbet Hizah" and "The Prisoner," which was better suited for the classroom. It was shorter, tighter, and posed no problem of official policy or expulsion, merely the inhumane behavior of soldiers toward a captive and the dilemma of whether or not to free him.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, high school literature helped instill a national consciousness, dealing with the Jewish shtetl and late-nineteenth-century European Jewry and guiding pupils toward Zionism. The new literature syllabus, however, including Yizhar's stories, emphasized aesthetics and psychology, relegating historical content to the educational dustbin. Hence, even if "Hirbet Hizah" were taught, teachers could be expected to dwell on descriptions of nature, colloquial speech, and narrator difficulties and to gloss over thematic elements.

Questions in the matriculation examinations probed such aspects as "the human struggle for truth" (summer 1979); "the mental and psychological anguish . . . of the characters"; and "the manifestation and shaping of human grief, suffering, and affliction." But Yizhar was grouped together with other writers, and pupils could elect which opus to discuss (summer 1980). In one case (summer 1980), the question was more historical: "The background of place and time for the events in the stories . . . and their significance." Yizhar again shared the list with others, as was true also the following year, and again there was a choice.<sup>74</sup> The inclusion of his story in the syllabus may thus have been more theoretical than real.

## The Second Controversy, 1978

The Six Day War ushered in a new chapter in Israeli-Palestinian relations. The problem that had lurked beyond the borders since 1949 now became Israel's major challenge. Yizhar entered the political fray, speaking out against the occupation and the nationalist movement for a "Greater Israel." His essay on "the poets of annexation" distinguished between Israelis who see people in the West Bank and those who see only territory. Echoing the machine gun that bestowed no right, Yizhar protested: "You don't gain a country by means of weapons. Any such acquisition is unjust." Jewish sensitivity to refugees resurfaced, as in 1949: "The refugee question, or dispossession, touches and is binding on all Jews. . . . [I]f there is a 'Jewish sensibility,' this is where it surfaces to stare us in the face." As if in delayed response to Maletz, Yizhar now argued that it made no difference that the Arabs had started the war, that we held out the olive branch, that our sacrifices had been huge, or that in the international arena might makes right, nor that we were expelled, banned, ousted, and dispossessed again and again through the ages. Ultimately, what remains is the question of occupation and the people there—a question of our own sense of justice.<sup>75</sup>

The public's identification of the author of "Hirbet Hizah" with the political thinker who wrote on the poets of annexation cropped up after the Yom Kippur War at a gathering of kibbutz twelfth graders. Yizhar was dumbfounded by the youngsters' antagonism toward the basic Zionist ethos, their questioning of the duty to defend the homeland, and their doubts about Jewish identity and Jewish historical rights to the Land of Israel. Troubled by the nihilistic currents, Yizhar published a summary of the questions and the complaints voiced, accusing the school system of failing to provide youngsters with the mettle and spiritual fortitude to persevere. The pupils, teachers, and educators rushed to the defense. They claimed that *he* had steered the discussion toward loaded questions and paid attention only to *negative* opinions. Kibbutz Kabri's twelfth graders published an open letter, summing up the charges against him with a pointed question: "And whom do you blame for these questions, for the young's lack of self-confidence? Only our teachers, educators, and the people around us? Why not ask yourself about the influence of the author of 'The Prisoner,' 'Hirbet Hizah,' and the piece on 'the poets of annexation' on this state of mind?"<sup>76</sup>

This is one of the few bits of evidence of the impact of "Hirbet

Hizah” on the beliefs and opinions of the younger generation that grew up along with the state and its interpretation of the story. Another comes from Yizhar’s appearance before troops during the Lebanon War (1982). After the commanding officer introduced him, a single voice pierced the darkness: “How I hate him, right from the time we studied ‘Hirbet Hizah’ at school!”<sup>77</sup>

Paradoxically, as long as he was associated with Mapai, the identification of Yizhar the writer with Yizhar the politician remained limited. In those years, until he left Parliament in 1965, he seldom took a public stand on political or controversial affairs. The great change came after the Six Day War with Yizhar’s fervent attack on the advocates of Greater Israel. At the time, he was involved in academic research on inculcating values and advocated independent thinking rather than indoctrination. The debate he sparked owed more to a misunderstanding of his views than to design. But all this was still quite tame. The real furor was to erupt in 1978 around the airing of the TV version of “The Story of Hirbet Hizah.”

The film idea originated with director Ram Levi in 1972, when it was rejected on the grounds of a weak teleplay. He broached it again in 1977, as part of an Israeli drama series for the state’s thirtieth anniversary, and was given the go-ahead.<sup>78</sup> That August the daily newspaper *Ma’ariv* reported that the shooting had been completed. In July, the Executive Committee of the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) had raised objections to its screening, but the film was referred to and approved by the IBA’s plenum.<sup>79</sup>

Between that decision and the broadcast, however, Israeli politics underwent a revolution: for the first time, a right-wing government came to power, headed by Menachem Begin (in 1977). Officials at the IBA firmly denied that they were under political pressure to shelve the film and pointed out that misgivings about the prospective broadcast were not restricted to the Right.<sup>80</sup> Yet there is no doubt that the tension surrounding it stemmed from the network’s confusion and insecurity over the historic change of government.

For several months, there was a hush. Meanwhile, Anwar Sadat had come to Jerusalem and the peace process with Egypt had begun. The screening had been set for January 16, 1978, but the Israel-Egypt Political Committee was to meet in Jerusalem that day and the IBA Executive Committee deemed the moment inopportune for so sensitive a subject.<sup>81</sup> Its postponement aroused no response. The controversy over showing the film erupted in earnest in February, as a new crisis in the

talks with Egypt impacted on domestic Israeli politics and bolstered the Right. Meanwhile, in a bid to soften the anticipated public criticism, the board slotted the film on a prestigious talk show. This would allow for broad discussion of the issues, provide a platform for all shades of political opinion, and place the story in its historical context. News of the scheduling caused an enormous uproar. Two MKs (from the Labor Alignment and Agudat Yisrael) tabled an urgent motion for discussion. The head of the Knesset Education Committee (Labor) invited Yizhar to a forum on the film and broadcast, even though he was not directly involved in the production. Two members of the IBA Executive Committee (from Likud and the National Religious Party [NRP]) formally appealed the decision to broadcast, which entailed reconvening the plenum to review the issue.<sup>82</sup>

While everyone was embroiled in argument, the new NRP education minister, Zevulun Hammer, decided at the last minute to scrap the broadcast, which united the entire Left behind the demand to show it. The dispute shifted from content to a discussion of IBA autonomy, the principle of government noninterference in cultural affairs, and freedom of expression. Meretz MK Yossi Sarid declared that “Israel’s free-speech flag has been lowered to half-mast”;<sup>83</sup> *HaAretz* reported that Prime Minister Begin was perplexed by the education minister’s decision, though this was not corroborated by other sources;<sup>84</sup> artists, politicians, and the Writers Association mobilized, including Yizhar;<sup>85</sup> television employees staged a forty-minute solidarity strike; and Amnon Zikhroni, a lawyer, petitioned the High Court of Justice against the minister (the hearing having been deferred until after the convening of the plenum). At the same time, thirteen members and deputies of the Histadrut Executive (all Labor) openly backed the minister, saying that they did not consider his action antidemocratic, and Israel TV broadcast an emotional demonstration against the film by the nationalist-religious Bnei Akiva Youth, with one youngster complaining that it showed IDF soldiers beating Arabs.<sup>86</sup> While these players squared off, American TV crews took to the countryside to find the real Hirbet Hizah.<sup>87</sup> Yizhar’s old story was suddenly the talk of the day again. Two dailies vied for the right to publish it in installments, and *Ma’ariv*, the paper most opposed to the broadcast, won out. There was a report that the Arabs in the territories (the historically loaded designations of Judea and Samaria were not yet in common currency) were much puzzled by the entire business. Arabs did not see the story as any great revelation—after all, they knew of hundreds of such incidents, they said. But the furor over freedom of expression gave

them an opportunity to point out that there could be no real democracy on one side of the Green Line while it was being systematically trampled on, on the other.<sup>88</sup>

At this stage, discussion centered on the legality of the minister's postponement of the broadcast. The substance of the film receded into the background; front and center were occupied by the fate of Israeli democracy. Formally, legally, the minister had apparently not overstepped his brief.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, there was some logic to the argument of the advocates of postponement, that the principle of freedom of expression and artistic creativity did not apply to national public television; the medium was, from the start, not open to the entire public but based on selectivity according to criteria of professionalism and guidelines of content.<sup>90</sup> The demand to uphold a majority decision made by the IBA Executive Committee was formally justified, but the decision to screen the film reflected the majority opinion of a board appointed by a government defeated in the elections of 1977.<sup>91</sup> One right-wing periodical termed the intended screening a "scorched-earth tactic" of the preelection Executive Committee.<sup>92</sup> Basically, however, in the climate of 1978 it was hard to imagine that a film would be censored for political reasons. Even the writer-journalist Benjamin Galai, who was identified with the Right, commented that "there was only one thing worse than the decision to air the film *Hirbet Hizah*—not to air it."<sup>93</sup> So it was no accident that about a week after the minister decided to block the film, the IBA plenum voted to broadcast it. On 13 February 1978, the film was shown, as planned, on *The Third Hour*, hosted by philosophy lecturer Yermiyahu Yovel.

The screening sharpened the controversy but refocused discussion on the actual content: did the story represent a general phenomenon or an "aberration" (*harig*)—a new term. Did it reflect historical truth, stretch the truth, or present a one-sided picture? Why did Israel State Television not show Arab atrocities as well? Why pick at old wounds? Was it right to again expose past traumas or was it better to leave them until the reign of peace? What should we say to the Arabs, to our children, to our grandchildren? Opponents also included prominent Laborites, who said the film distorted the image of the War of Independence. Still, there was artistic criticism as well: most of the detractors thought the film poorly done; most of the champions lauded its cinematic virtues.

*Ma'ariv* devoted the most space to the issue. Basically, the newspaper condemned the story and the broadcast while ostensibly seeking a "bal-

anced” approach. In a telephone survey it conducted after the screening, most viewers expressed misgivings about the broadcast. Not so Ya‘akov Shimshon Shapira, a former (Labor) justice minister: it was wrong to block the film, he said, “since everything it contained was well-known material readily available in print.” The film “portrayed the war’s tragedy, a side that must be squarely faced. It is wrong . . . to avoid that confrontation.”<sup>94</sup> *Davar* journalist Teddy Preuss argued similarly: refugees were a universal phenomenon in the wake of war; it happened everywhere. Fourteen million Germans had been expelled from the eastern territories annexed by Poland, tens of millions of Moslems and Hindus had been displaced with the creation of India and Pakistan, half a million Finns had been expelled from Karelia when it was annexed by the Soviet Union, Greeks had been ousted from Cyprus—and then there were the millions of Jews. The approximately seven hundred thousand Palestinian refugees were not unique. The film highlighted the inherent tragedy of war, and “it would be hypocrisy on our part to claim that the 1948 war was any different.” The conflict had already been immortalized in thousands of works that dealt with “the clash between humane individual sentiments and the interests of national survival.”<sup>95</sup> Preuss considered the expulsion an unavoidable by-product of the war, not praiseworthy but certainly not something to be hidden, avoided, or justified by blaming the Arabs: “What can be done if two peoples are fighting, not about how to slice an egg, but . . . for life and death?”

The right-wing theorist Yisrael Eldad made a similar point: “There is a Jewish people, [and] it longs for and must return to its ancient homeland. The Arabs, rightfully or not, are opposed to this. That’s the underlying reason for these wars.” Not content with this, he intimated that Yizhar and his followers had in effect decided against the establishment of a Jewish state if it entailed injustice toward Arabs.<sup>96</sup> Returning to his essays of the 1950s, he reiterated the whole panoply of iniquities perpetrated against Jews: the Holocaust, Arab wrongdoing, and British misdeeds during the Mandate. He also elaborated the offenses of the Allies against innocent German civilians, all this in order to argue that such “sensitivity to the injustices done an enemy people that seeks our blood . . . as the resonance of an absolute sense of justice—such selectivity is rather sick.” After rehashing all the old arguments, Eldad raised the topical sore point: Israel was engaged in a struggle to win over world opinion. International public opinion had been looking for moral justification for its support of the Arabs, in any case fueled by the clout of Arab oil, in the global propaganda struggle. That had now been conveniently supplied by the story

and film: “The State of Israel arose on [the ruins of] ‘Hirbet Hizah’—that’s how the story and film will be received abroad . . . Jewish and Israeli evidence . . . straight from Israeli public TV.” In the same vein, but more moderately, Ya‘akov Karoz predicted that the film would likely bolster the U.S. State Department’s charges of Israeli human rights offenses in the occupied territories.<sup>97</sup> The journalist Yosef Lapid remarked that “even if the Fatah Information Bureau were run by a genius, he couldn’t have come up with anything better.”<sup>98</sup> These comments reflected the relevance of the story and plot: the controversy was not about what happened in 1948 but about what was happening “here and now.” Advocates of Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria feared that the story from the past could be used to denounce this policy in the present; opponents of the policy could use the story to oppose settling the territories.

This was a new line of reasoning against *Hirbet Hizah*: damage to Israeli propaganda and the image of Israel it sought to project. Ya’ir Burla’s article in *Ma’ariv* was typical.

For years, our information services have been seeking to disseminate . . . our argument abroad: that we didn’t come here to dispossess anyone, that we weren’t to blame for the wars but were forced to act in self-defense. That we didn’t expel the Arabs: most of those hundreds of thousands who left their homes in the War of Independence did so responding to the “advice” of the Arab leadership, promising them a return on the heels of the victorious Arab armies. This is how we have argued again and again because it’s the truth.<sup>99</sup>

Burla said that the world would see the film “as a confession of guilt straight from the mouth of the accused, in . . . a film that looked like a documentary, a confession that all our actions since the start of the return to Zion were based on dispossession, murder of the innocent, and expulsion of old men, women, and children.” Benjamin Galai was more literary: “Any Frenchman, Englishman, Russian or American seeing the film must agree that there’s something rotten in the State of Israel.”<sup>100</sup> The idea of collateral damage to Israel’s information and propaganda efforts pointed to a changing self-awareness since the War of Independence; the expulsion, once a proper subject for discussion, was now beyond the pale, internally taboo as well. Moreover, it was argued, discussion of that past expulsion undermined Israel’s right to exist. This reasoning blurred the crucial distinction between a just Zionism and a

Zionism based on force. An all-or-nothing approach emerged: if we acknowledge the expulsion of the Arabs, Zionism as a whole, from its very inception, is illegitimate. Thus, the image created for propaganda purposes abroad percolated into local self-awareness, acting as a kind of anaesthetic to block out the unpleasant bits of national memory. A new version of memory was created based on a favorable reprocessing of the past. It was not false, but it ignored the episodes that clashed with the self-image fostered by official state propaganda, doing its utmost to dim and block them out.

Eldad, who witnessed the events of 1948, swung between propaganda considerations and his natural instinct for truth, justifying his position by the necessity of survival. Burla, by contrast, presented an “improved, reconditioned version,” simpler, one dimensional, in tune with changing norms, and necessary because what had been acceptable in the stormy world of 1948 was less so in the calmer world of the late 1970s. The widespread norm of expelling civilian populations from territory that changed hands as a result of war may be convincing to those who were alive then but not to the generation raised in the latter half of the twentieth century, when norms that favored greater understanding for the “loser,” regardless of fault, prevailed.

The same issue of *Ma'ariv* featured a piece by Ofra Yeshe'a, claiming that the film revealed nothing new and “the practical considerations behind the expulsion of a hostile Arab population are . . . still relevant to events taking place right now.” Commenting on the clash between *Hirbet Hizah's shmulik*s (tough guys) and *mikhas* (good guys), she says: “Not to worry, Shmulik will always be victorious, and Mikha will even help him win. It's better not to seal Mikha's mouth.” Every war has innocent victims, including 1948. On the question of propaganda, she underscored the paradox of the Right: on the one hand, proud and indifferent to what the gentiles have to say since, in any case, “the whole world is against us”; and, on the other hand, overly sensitive on the subject of “self-incrimination.” Yeshe'a brought the debate back to the present, saying it was not *Hirbet Hizah* that was damaging Israel's good name: “If it is shameful to dispossess someone of land, we can also be ashamed of [settling] Shiloh and Rafah Approaches.”<sup>101</sup> Amos Oz wrote in a similar vein. He said the Right was inclined to act harshly in relation to Arabs but to denounce talking about it: “Those wolfish creatures treat the war's horrors like the pious bourgeoisie treats sexual exploits: act whenever opportunity knocks, but talk about it only in the male wolf pack. Not, God forbid, in front of children or neighbors. What would become of our good name?!”<sup>102</sup>

In Oz's view, the basic point of Yizhar's story was not the fate of the Arabs but the narrator's unease over the rupture between his two value systems, humanity and patriotism. The lesson, according to Oz, was not to abandon either system but to wage war on war itself. The analysis is reminiscent of Fichmann's and Goldberg's, focusing on humanistic sensibilities and sidestepping the problem of expulsion. But Oz took it a step farther. He saw a real danger in the fact that "we behave as though we were hiding a dead body in the basement . . . burying a sore that will only fester." Zionism is a just movement whose practical realization entailed certain acts of injustice—a necessary prerequisite for state building. This does not vitiate Zionism's basic justice, but only on condition that "convenience or plain callousness do not tempt us to derive from unavoidable past evils a license to commit further injustices." Mapam's Gadi Yatziv also mobilized the past for present battles. In 1949, it was important for "Hirbet Hizah" to shed light on the tragedy in which we were caught up against our will. Survival meant setting aside moral considerations. But the state's establishment created a new situation. It freed us of the compulsion of "no choice." "Today things can be different. We can live in security and peace—without ruling over others, without administering their lands or consigning them to exile."<sup>103</sup>

Characteristic of the Left's position on *Hirbet Hizah* (occasionally articulated by Yizhar as well) was that it was, purportedly, an "aberration" in the heat of battle.<sup>104</sup> Yermiyahu Yovel had made a similar point on *The Third Hour*, and Oz, too, had started his article this way. The aberration argument featured also on the other side of the political divide: numerous critiques of the film had charged that the TV version had not presented Hirbet Hizah as an exception. In response, writer Amos Keinan decried the hypocrisy of "the children of a 'bananas-and-cream Zionism,'" who contend that Zionism had never sinned. "I saw the columns of refugees we ordered to leave, as did everyone who fought in this land. . . . There are still people around who were soldiers back then, and it's both ridiculous and shocking to think that we can tell stories and sweep ourselves and our War of Liberation right under the carpet."<sup>105</sup> Keinan evinced no guilt feelings: it was a life and death struggle over this land, and it resulted in the State of Israel. But the time had come to decide to end the war and fix a border at the Green (armistice) Line. This was the path to peace and justice. In an interview to *'Al HaMishmar* at the same time, Yizhar also disassociated himself from any sense of guilt, suggesting that it was a poor counselor in peace negotiations with the Arabs.<sup>106</sup>

As the shadows of the past mingled with the present, memory and

politics began to fuse. Neither the story's literary merit nor the film's artistic quality was at the heart of the debate. The main issue was "we and our neighbours." The changes in Israeli society and the political realities after the Six Day and Yom Kippur wars retrieved the topic from history's archives with renewed vigor. Political and religious radicalization and polarization between Left and Right, between advocates of a Greater Israel and would-be negotiators with the Palestinians—everyone was drawn into the vortex of the dispute over *Hirbet Hizah*. Predictably, the "Young Guard" of Mapam came up with the slogan, "Dig in Shiloh and you'll find Hirbet Hizah." An activist of the religious Right countered: "Sink a spade in Shiloh and you'll find proof of Jewish life there long before the Arabs." And, for good measure, he added: "Many of HaShomer HaTza'ir's settlements are built right over a 'Hirbet Hizah.'" <sup>107</sup>

The polarization of Israeli society led to a "meeting of the extremes." Yitzhak Shalev of the far Right and members of Matzpen, the far Left, did not stop at the 1948 expulsion but presented Zionism as a movement founded on dispossession and injustice from its very inception, intrinsically oblivious to morality and ethics.<sup>108</sup> In response, several 1948 war veterans came forward to explain the expulsion in the war's broader context. Writer Hanoah Bartov commented on the differences in historical memory between the generation of '48 and the generation that grew up afterward in the new state. When Yizhar's story was first published, contemporaries were quite familiar with the military background, the need to fight time and again for control of the roads and passes commanded by Arab villages. That backdrop, still vivid and vital to readers in 1949, was absent from the film. "The film was taken out of its historical context,"<sup>109</sup> causing distortion or what the philosopher Nathan Rotenstreich termed "overemphasis on a single aspect" of reality.<sup>110</sup> Moshe Carmel, commanding officer of Northern Front in the War of Independence, mused about "how present-day concerns and pressing needs becloud the view of past events as they really were."<sup>111</sup> Carmel did not idealize. He acknowledged the outrages committed in the fury of war but attributed them to the nature of war itself, and no war is immune. In contrast to the expulsions, Carmel cited the example of Haifa, where Jewish leaders had asked Arabs to stay and go on living there; the Arabs had chosen to follow the ill-conceived advice of their leadership and go into exile.<sup>112</sup> Carmel and Bartov attempted to sketch a balanced picture shaped by the memories of people who had lived through the events. But the memories of war are not uniform. It is no mere coincidence that it was Carmel who spoke out; in his Northern Front there

was no policy of expulsion (by war's end, his area of jurisdiction had the largest Arab population in Israel). By the same token, it is no accident that other key commanders in the 1948 war did not go public with recollections of 1948 tainted by Hirbet Hizahs.

Yizhar's aura as the most important writer of the "native sons" seems to have shielded him from frontal attack. It was easier to fault the film as slanted,<sup>113</sup> especially as its quasi-documentary cinematography lent it a credibility that blurred its fictitiousness. Similar criticism had been leveled at the story thirty years earlier. The interplay of truth and fiction, history and literature, returned to center stage. Someone stepped forth, claiming to be the officer who had given the expulsion order in Yizhar's story (though he knew only the film version).<sup>114</sup> As for the filming location (chosen for its antenna-free, authentic look), the village of Midiya was later identified as the home of villagers who had killed IDF soldiers (and mutilated their bodies) during the Second Truce in September 1948.<sup>115</sup> By a curious equivalence, the expulsion from Hirbet Hizah seemed to be offset by the outrages of Midiya's fellahin.

Yizhar's own statements, as mentioned earlier, nourished the post-modern amalgam of truth and fiction, past and present. This intrusion of literature into real life did not particularly please the poet Haim Guri. Yizhar had erred, he said, in claiming that the plot depicted concrete reality. Guri did not seek to sweeten the pill: "I still think that the events the story deals with are well known to the generation of '48," but the story "was both distant and very near, a fusion of various incidents, its theme bound up with the irreconcilable clash between the absolute and the historical." He would have preferred to confine it to the literature of 1948 rather than imbuing it with current significance: "Long live literature if it has the power to unleash such a controversial storm, especially on TV." But "woe to literature if it is thus invoked as a political-historical component of such a controversy." Ultimately: "Let the story be. Life is not a bed of roses! Hebrew literature of that period would be poorer without it!" Literary merit seems to have compensated for the "irreconcilable clash." Yizhar inclined toward the absolute, Guri, toward the historical.<sup>116</sup> But this attempt to distinguish between the story's artistic dimension and its political implications stood in complete contrast to the reception of "Hirbet Hizah" since 1949.

The dispute galvanized the broader public as well, as indicated by letters to the editor in four dailies (albeit a limited empirical measure of public opinion). While all the papers professed objectivity and openness to opposing opinions, their predominant editorial views were hardly a

secret. *Ma'ariv* was the most steadfast against the film's broadcast; *Yediot* expressed a similar, though more balanced, position; and *Davar* and *HaAretz* supported the screening. In all the papers, most of the letters were negative about the film, its airing, the IBA, and the "left-wing mafia" that allegedly controlled it; many praised the minister's (abortive) decision to scrap it. Even in the left-wing press, most writers expressed serious reservations about the film, regarding it as an expression of self-hatred and sick self-criticism that reflected unfavorably on the state and its armed forces for all the world to see. Majority opinion was summed up in *Davar*: "The airing . . . offends the sensibilities of thousands of people opposed to the unruliness of a handful of leftists who use the medium as they . . . see fit, to the detriment of the State of Israel."<sup>117</sup> Many also pointed to the inappropriate timing—while delicate negotiations with Egypt were under way. Others protested (whether in earnest or ironically) that films would now be made on Deir Yassin, Qibya, or Kafr Qassim, the sites of the most notorious Israeli atrocities. Still others demanded that it be balanced by broadcasts about Arab atrocities against Israelis.

One letter writer, Lena Kichler-Silberman, the author of *My Hundred Children* (which describes her rescue of Jewish children during the Holocaust), had neither read the story nor seen the film but reacted to Yizhar's TV statements. She objected to the analogy between trucking Arabs off to exile and transporting Jews in boxcars to death. She called on him to destroy the film, arguing that it could play into the hands of Israel's enemies.<sup>118</sup> Immigrants from Soviet Russia complained that the film was a boon to Soviet anti-Israel propaganda.

Readers did not merely criticize the film but attacked what they saw as its portrayal of the War of Independence. The question of Hirbet Hizah being an aberration came up again; the IDF was commended for its humane comportment and relative restraint, as opposed to soldiers' conduct the world over, and some lauded the image of Israelis struggling with their consciences. Only sporadically was there an echo of the suppressed story: Yosef Liyubin, the grandchild of Hadera pioneers and a 1948 war veteran, wrote that the film had left a bad taste in his mouth because of its untruths. Hirbet Hizah was not an aberration, he said. The soldiers had to do what they did in keeping with the general rule of striking first against those who come to kill you. They still have nightmares, but, if need be, they would do the same again because the expulsion was a necessary military measure. Liyubin protested that the war discourse had been expropriated from the combatants, who were well

aware of the necessities, by politicians, professors, and the like who were “chasing wondrous butterflies in green meadows.”<sup>119</sup>

Zehava Neumann, a philosophy student born eight years after the War of Independence, wrote: “At school we were taught that we had bought land from the Arabs, turned swamps into orchards and, in 1948, had tried to dissuade the Arabs from leaving.” Teachers interpreted “The Prisoner” and “Hirbet Hizah” as a welcome display of sensitivity to injustices and proof that Israelis are not saints, but that we learn from our mistakes: “What will I say now to people who claim that we founded a state on the bodies of the Arabs we evicted? Is what we were always taught a lie?”<sup>120</sup>

The letters by Liyubin and Neumann reflect a generational difference. For the generation of '48, the memories, however painful, were part of their own lives and did not dent or diminish the justice of that difficult war. But Israel's school pupils had been taught a benign historical narrative that sidestepped the tragic complexities of the war. So that when they came up against reality—accidentally, almost, due to the furor raised—they found it difficult to deal with. In the foreground were Jewish offenses against Arabs, while the force of circumstances faded in a haze. The Israeli worldview in 1978 was markedly different from that of 1948. Born and raised in a strong Israel, now an occupying power, sensitive young people newly exposed to “Hirbet Hizah” began to question the justice and humanity of Zionism, the justification for the state's existence. It was a relatively small minority, though culturally not insignificant. By contrast, the majority of the public was unprepared to acknowledge that the Arabs had suffered a catastrophe, preferring a one-sided version of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

One of the features of the discourse on “Hirbet Hizah” was the active participation of writers and the virtual silence of historians. “The Story of Hirbet Hizah” had a considerable impact on post-1948 Hebrew literature. The surfacing of a suppressed past is treated, for example, in works by A. B. Yehoshua (“Opposite the Forests,” *The Lover*) and Amos Oz (*My Michael*). But in historical inquiry the War of Independence languished on the margins. Archives were still sealed, and, aside from general eyewitness accounts, it is doubtful that historians could have contributed anything substantial. In this sense, fiction had the advantage; it could deal with the ethical issues unfettered by historical fact.

The issue of remembrance, of coming to terms with and recognizing the suffering inflicted on the Arabs by the state's establishment—without disavowing the “bottom line, that either the justice of our cause

or the fact that the injustices committed were a matter of survival”—was the key question of a compelling essay by Ephraim Kleiman, in 1948 a diffident young soldier and thirty years later a professor of economics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.<sup>121</sup> Kleiman proceeds from personal recollections to an analysis of the expulsion before grappling with the issue of memory: “This country is full of people who suppress memory; every Israeli has his own Hirbet Hizah” (24). Kleiman’s story is about the “cleansing” of the Negev by Druze soldiers at winter’s end in 1949, of Bedouin tribes defined as semihostile. He does not present the Bedouins as saints or the Druze as devils. It was a kind of drama in which everyone played a role assigned by fate. The reaction of the Jewish soldiers to the mission echoes Yizhar’s story almost word for word: “‘Dirty rotten business,’ some guy cursed. And when no one responded, he said again—‘dirty, rotten job.’” The platoon commander, older, from a Galilee farming community, knowing Arabic, and familiar with Druze customs, replied: “Dirty rotten job . . . but someone has to do it.” “But why . . . me?” the first soldier asked. And the commander replied: “So that you’ll know what you’re doing . . . get it. . . ? So that you won’t be able to sit by and enjoy the fact of a Jewish state, and pretend that you don’t know how it came about. . . . If you’re ready for dirt to be done for your sake, you have to be ready to do it yourself” (24–25). Six months later, when Kleiman read Yizhar’s story, he found that it expressed his personal experience (25).

Kleiman also tried to analyze and explain the flight and expulsion of Palestinian Arabs in 1948: “The incident I have described, and our attitude toward it, cannot be understood without the backdrop of the Arab population’s mass flight in the War of Liberation” (25). He explains the start of the flight by the natural desire of the civilian population to flee the area of hostilities. Second, even before the Deir Yassin Massacre (on 9 April 1948), the Arabs were terrified of Jewish maltreatment: “Perhaps . . . they projected onto us the punishment that the average Arab wished on us” (25). Third, the Arab Higher Committee encouraged the Arab population to evacuate areas conquered by the Jews:<sup>122</sup> “That encouragement transformed individual flight into a national exodus” (25).

On the Jewish side, Kleiman continued, views on the expulsion were initially mixed. At the local level, commanders wanted to remove from the war zone a population that might aid the enemy. Nor did they want to have to deal with the needs of an occupied civilian population, preferring to remove it. At the political level, the Partition Plan had left an Arab population of about half a million within the borders of the

Jewish state. It is not clear if the Yishuv's leaders had given serious thought to this problem and its resolution (massive Jewish immigration, a future population transfer?) or if, in their enthusiasm at the prospect of independence, they had simply disregarded the demographics. The Arab flight took them by surprise. Initially, they were apprehensive (as in Haifa). But they soon understood the opportunity it presented for an almost completely Jewish state: "What, till then, had been a by-product on the Jewish side, or the result of a local initiative, ultimately became deliberate policy" (25). In Kleiman's view, Haifa marked the turning point for evacuation on the Arab side and Ramle and Lydda for expulsion on the Jewish side. Here, too, the eviction began as a local initiative designed to remove a hostile population from the war zone and avoid taking responsibility for civilian needs. The commanders also hoped that the stream of refugees would confound the Arab Legion's military measures: "But the scope of the evacuation, and its systematic handling, indicates that the decision . . . had been made at the highest levels, reflecting policy" (25). Kleiman's conclusions, based on impressions, conversations with contemporaries, memories, and similar sources, are not essentially different from Benny Morris's comprehensive analysis, which was based on archival evidence and published in 1988.

As long as the Arab population was ousted in the heat of battle, no ethical problem was posed for the soldiers. But expulsions such as that of the Bedouin encampment after hostilities had died down aroused the total opposition of some, while others saw the force of circumstances as justice: "Most of us, however, were well aware of the inherent contradiction between our use of force and our inbred values, of the clash between the slogan of 'purity of arms' and, in this case, not individual hot-headedness but rather society's cold calculation" (27). The majority reaction was that it was a dirty job, but it had to be done. The total faith and respect that the young felt for the leadership contributed to their readiness to execute the expulsion orders. They reasoned that if their leaders, who had schooled them in humanistic values, had decided on an operation, they had certainly thought it through carefully. That faith began to waver among most of the young only at the end of the War of Independence. Nor could the generation of '48 accept that the war had been a historical necessity. They believed it had been forced on the Jews and expulsion was one of the consequences of that duress: "We never asked ourselves: had there not been a war, would we not have aspired (or been compelled) to achieve the same results?" (27).

Two more factors helped salve the consciences of the combatants.

The outrages committed by the Arabs, the slaughter of the wounded and mutilation of the dead, kindled vengeance and acrimony and chalked up a debt of blood to be balanced with expulsion. The second factor was Arab alienness, otherness. They looked different, miserable, part of a different cultural world. That alienation made it hard for Israelis to identify with their suffering: “The young do not have much compassion, especially for what strikes them as alien” (27).

On the problem of suppressed memory, Kleiman compared our criticism of others for the suffering they inflicted on us with our self-criticism for the suffering we caused others. The latter requires far greater moral courage. The force of Zola’s “J’Accuse” in the Dreyfus affair sprang from the fact that a Frenchman was denouncing the injustices of the French government. The bid to conceal the truth—even if in the name of an ostensibly worthy cause such as keeping up morale or defending the troops’ good name or national honor—ultimately corrupts because the measures of concealment lead to further evils. Truth will out, and the attempts at denial or suppression only heighten the sense of a warped morality compounded by anger over concealment, lies, and hypocrisy (29). For the sake of a healthy society, Israel must deal with the suppressed memories and integrate them into collective memory, Kleiman asserted. In 1986, his article appeared in English.<sup>123</sup> But neither version struck a responsive chord. The generation wasn’t ready for it.

### **Interim Epilogue**

The 1978 controversy was not cathartic but rather the reverse. This is a clear example of the mutual interaction between the present and collective memory. At the end of the 1970s, the antagonism between Israel’s two main political currents, Left and Right, deepened. The primary divisive issue became the question of “we and our neighbors,” with the topic of expulsion “present in/absent from” the domestic debate: present, since otherwise the screening of a film based on an Israeli classic would not have caused such a public uproar, absent since the topic was barely mentioned in the discussion. The soul-searching, merciless candor and also compassion (for the Palestinian cataclysm) expressed in the major essays of the first debate were virtually absent from the second round. Even Yizhar now described “Hirbet Hizah” as an aberration and protested against blaming Israel. Basically, the first debate had revolved around moral issues: the character of the Israeli soldier, the moral disposition of

Israeli society, what is permitted, what is forbidden in time of war, the force of circumstances, and victory and tragedy. By contrast, the second debate centered on political issues. What serves the purposes of Israeli image making and information? What aids the aims of enemy propaganda? What is the legitimate national narrative? Who and what represent Israeli patriotism? Was Zionism morally flawed from its inception, founded solely on national egoism? Or was it corrupted by war and we must restore its humanity? The first debate looked to the past, taking personal stock at the end of Israel's most difficult war. The second stemmed from problems in the present and looked to the future—namely, the fate of the settlements in Judea and Samaria. In both, there was no lack of pretense, hypocrisy, and smugness. But there is no doubt that in the second round the hypocrisy level was higher.

Frustration with the fact that military victories brought no neat solutions to existential problems of state survival and security, the intractable problem of the Palestinians, the ongoing terror and violence—all these acted on Israelis to quench any compassion for the vanquished enemy, sympathy for their plight, and readiness to recognize the overall picture of interrelations, all of which had been present in the first discussion of “Hirbet Hizah” in 1949. Gone was the hidden kernel of empathy that springs from the immediacy of a problem and that characterized many of the combatants of 1948. It was the heyday of self-righteousness.

Despite the public uproar over the TV showing, it is doubtful that the “empty land” had penetrated Israeli consciousness. Thousands of people who had not read the story now viewed the film, yet many of them saw it as “just another (rather bland) war movie” rather than the portrayal of a crucial historical experience. Literature's fictitiousness combined with the notion of aberration to blur the element of reality. Many commentators preferred to stress literary and artistic features rather than the concrete background, contributing to the suppression of the memory of expulsion. Despite the enormous exposure given the expulsion, the events grew more distant with the passage of time, and new concerns, such as the war in Lebanon and the Intifada, relegated it to the margins of memory. With the exception of relatively small circles in the republic of Hebrew letters or the Israeli intelligentsia, the subject barely existed in Israel's collective awareness. Or, more precisely, it was there but in limbo—not totally forgotten, not consciously remembered.

Between the English publication of Benny Morris's book in early 1988 and its Hebrew version in 1991, the first Intifada broke out, lending the work a dramatic energy: the relevance of past sins to present iniqui-

ties. The Palestinian problem bore its way into public consciousness as a pressing national problem and has remained so ever since in Israeli society and politics. The (temporary) mellowing of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation in the wake of the Oslo accords, and mutual recognition, made Israel more amenable to acknowledging the other side's suffering. The timing of Morris's publication was almost uncanny. The endless discussions in the 1990s on the New Historians (a term he coined) and the discourse on "post-Zionism" bared, before the public, an array of painful questions about Israel's relations with its neighbors. Nonetheless, by the end of the 1990s there did not seem to have been any heightened public awareness of the IDF's 1948 expulsion of a portion of Palestine's Arabs. Historiographical efforts to address the topic met the same fate as Yizhar's tale: partial oblivion or dimming of memory. It lived on among a small intellectual class but did not seep through to broader Israeli circles. Every year university freshmen "discover" that past anew. It does not exist, on its own strength, in collective memory but is submerged and resurfaces over and over again.

The suspension of memory, or denial, is a well-known phenomenon. The remembrance of the Holocaust provides a striking example. For decades, Israeli society put off dealing with the memory in any real, personal sense. Years had to pass before both the survivors and Jewish society were able to confront the horror face-to-face. But this example applies only partially for it involves victims coming to grips with their own experiences and the ability of society to assimilate the terrible memories of some of its members into collective memory. The Arab expulsion involves the memory of suffering we caused others. As Kleiman observed, there is a fundamental difference between recognizing injustices you have suffered and injustices you have caused.

A more apt example is French society's confrontation with the memory of the Vichy regime and its integration, as a controversial chapter, into French history. This process has begun only recently, expressed *inter alia* in the acknowledgment of French collective responsibility for the wrongs of that regime. But here, too, there is only a partial parallel between Israel's attitude toward the 1948 war, with all its lights and shadows, and the French attitude toward the World War II era. The one crucial difference that may help explain Israel's ongoing suspension of memory is that the Vichy period in French history belongs entirely to the past. As the generation personally involved passes away, fewer restraints inhibit frank discussion, and this discussion impinges on the present only marginally, a kind of domestic purging with no IOUs.

By contrast, Israeli-Palestinian relations are still topical—politically, socially, and culturally—reaching down to the roots of Israeli society and present-day reality. This is no academic discussion of events long past but a pivotal issue on the agendas of the Israeli state, the Palestinians, and the Middle East as a whole. An acknowledgment that not all Palestinian Arabs left of their own accord is likely to be interpreted as Israeli accountability for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. Yes, the blame for starting the war rests squarely with the Arabs and consequently, so common (Israeli) wisdom has it, their suffering is mainly of their own making. But Israeli unease over dealing with the memory of expulsion stems largely from the insight that the discussion is relevant to current political realities. It is far easier to contend with remembrance of a past that has become inoperative, that is, having no immediate implications for the present, than with a past that still challenges the present.

Furthermore, the question of collective memory in immigrant society warrants separate investigation. The dynamic processes of collective memory are clearly more complex than in stable societies with a strong sense of national identity. The connection with the “dominant” image of the past is problematic. Many immigrants may not regard it as part of their own past. The accepted image of the War of Independence in Israeli society is associated with the “nuclear Jewish community,” that is, the “old-timers” who preceded and promoted statehood. This image, in every decade, is inculcated by the state school system in youngsters who, to one degree or another, have internalized the old ethos and the myths that express it. But for other strata of Israeli society their Israeli identity is bound up with their own formative experiences and those of their parents and only to a limited extent with the War of Independence. As Israel’s demographic mix changes, so, too, does the conception of the past and the importance accorded specific episodes. In this dialectical process and the integration of new components into Israeli identity amid constant change and reconfiguration, the chapters in state history that do not forge a common identity are omitted from memory. “The Story of Hirbet Hizah” is one such chapter.

Collective memory’s incorporation (or exclusion) of “Hirbet Hizah” sheds light on a broader issue: ethics and the right of the Jews’ state to exist. Although the founding fathers held that Israel exists for Jews, and not in order to demonstrate its moral superiority over other nations of the world, they were nevertheless impelled by moral aspirations. Even Ben-Gurion, that great political pragmatist, paid lip service to the aim of making Israel a “light unto the nations.” At some level, he may even have

believed in it as a mission to be realized after Israel had achieved lasting security. Yizhar's approach—demanding from Zionism a commitment to absolute ethical norms and rejecting “reasons of state” as a justification for wrongdoing—reflects the same aspirations, emanating from the age-old traditions of a small, persecuted people that exalted and embraced moral principles in its conduct toward the weak and the stranger. This was the only way Jews could survive and keep their self-respect in the jungle of the world's peoples. Prior to the state's establishment, they did not have to put those principles to the practical test. Inevitably, however, the double standard in conduct toward Jews and Arabs aroused both associations with the Jewish condition in the diaspora and pangs of conscience. As time passed, it became more difficult to reconcile key questions: how to educate the young in patriotism and the unique value of a Jewish state as the first expression of Jewish independence in nearly two thousand years and at the same time recognize the toll that independence exacted from both Jews and Arabs. The more the less pleasant aspects of the War of Independence were cloaked in oblivion, the greater was the sense of guilt. What was not talked about became, as Amos Oz put it, a skeleton in the national cupboard. The recognition that some Palestine Arabs had been expelled by the IDF in the War of Independence seemed to undermine the self-image of a state founded on moral principles.

The question of expulsion has never been a secret. At times, it was discussed more openly, at other times more self-righteously. But a society that for decades has included “The Story of Hirbet Hizah” in its high school syllabi cannot be accused of trying to bury the traumas of 1948. This is on the conscious level. On the subliminal level, however, collective memory has not absorbed the messages of the story. The memory of expulsion continues to hover in the twilight zone between conscious and unconscious, between repression and recognition. We prefer not to remember it, just as we would anything unpleasant that is disturbing, oppressive, or damaging to our self-image. “Hirbet Hizah” has remained an unpleasant memory.

## NOTES

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library; and especially to my translator, Bill Templer, who, as usual, did an excellent job with very difficult materials.

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The author of “Sipur Hirbet Hizah,” in *Sipur Hirbet Hizah* [The Story of Hirbet Hizah] (Tel Aviv, 1989), S. Yizhar (Yizhar Smilansky), has been acclaimed since the late 1930s as the most talented prose writer of the native sabra generation. Hereafter, page numbers of the passages quoted from the Hebrew text appear alongside the quotes in parentheses.

1. Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949* (Cambridge, 1988).

2. *Tekumah* was a controversial history series on Israel State Television (IST) aired as one of the state’s fiftieth anniversary events.

3. S. Yizhar, “Shayara shel hatzot” [Midnight Convoy], in Yizhar, *Sipur Hirbet Hizah*, 113. The only collection of Yizhar’s stories to appear in English is *Midnight Convoy and Other Stories* (Jerusalem, 1969), which does not include “The Story of Hirbet Hizah.”

4. Yizhar, “Midnight Convoy,” 108.

5. *Ibid.*, 178.

6. Uri Shoham, “Ha-‘arava ha-ptuha, ha-pardes ha-sagur” [Open Plain, Shut Orchard], *Siman Kriah* 3–4 (1974): 339.

7. Yigal Sarna, “Ha-arets she-hayta ve-enenna” [The Land That Was and Is Gone], *Yediot Aharonot*, 27 April 1990 (interview with S. Yizhar).

8. Nathan Alterman, “Ki-ve-yad sufa” [As if by Storm], in *Ir ha-Yona* [Town of the Dove] (Israel, 1978), 120. Yizhar cited the poem in interviews with Sarna and the author. It is echoed also in interviews in Shmuel Hupert, “Gam hallelujah ve-gam rekvi’em” [Both Hallelujah and Requiem], *Yediot Aharonot*, 10 December 1993; and Yotam Reuveni, “Shi’ur moledet” [Homeland Lesson], *Yediot Aharonot*, 26 April 1985.

9. Reuveni, “Homeland” (interview).

10. Sarna, “The Land” (interview).

11. David Kenaani, “Ba-shayara u-ve-tzida” [In and along the Convoy], in *Yizhar: Mivhar Maamrei Bikoret ‘al Yetzirat* [Selected Critical Essays on Yizhar], ed. Hayim Nagid (Tel Aviv, 1972), 79. First published in *Orlogin* 5 (1952): 45–65.

12. S. Yizhar, “Gilah,” in *Tzedadiim* [Sidelines] (Tel Aviv, 1996).

13. Hupert, “Hallelujah” (interview).

14. Reuveni, “Homeland” (interview).

15. Nathan Alterman, “Tzorkhei bitahon” [Security Needs], in *Ha-Tur ha-Shvi’i* [The Seventh Column], vol. 2 (Tel Aviv, 1954), 269.

16. Eti Hasid, “S. Yizhar, ‘al ha-shtika” [Yizhar’s Silence], *Hadashot*, 20 November 1987.

17. Hayim Nagid, “Katavti et ‘Hirbet Hizah’ lo ke-Yehudi mul ‘Aravi, ela ke-adam she-nifg’a” [I Wrote “Hirbet Hizah” Not as Jew versus Arab but as Someone Hurt], *Ma’ariv*, 10 February 1978.

18. See Y. Adam, “Madu’a nimna’ta, S. Yizhar?” [Why Did You Refrain, S. Yizhar?], *BaSha’ar*, 20 July 1950, which questions the silence of the author during the strong-arm searches in Abu Ghosh.

19. S. Yizhar, "Be-terem aharish" [Before I Fall Silent], *Yediot Aharonot*, 24 February 1978.
20. Nagid, "I Wrote."
21. Yizhar, "Before I Fall Silent."
22. Nagid, "I Wrote."
23. Letter from the Sifriyat Poalim publishing house to S. Yizhar, 14 April 1951. Folder: Hirbet Hizah, Sifriyat Poalim Archives.
24. Shalom Kremer, "Al ha-sipur ha-Yisraeli ha-tza'ir" [On the Young Israeli Story], *Moznayim*, August–September 1957.
25. D. B. Malkin, "Hirbet Hizah," *MiBifnim* 14, nos. 2–3 (January 1950): 465. The allusion is to Y. H. Brenner.
26. S. Y. Pnueli, "'Al sipurav ha-hadashim shel S. Yizhar" [On Yizhar's New Stories], *Dorot* 1 (September 1949).
27. Moshe Silbertal, "Kol koreh mi-Hirbet Hizah" [A Call from Hirbet Hizah], *BaSha'ar*, 13 October 1949.
28. S. Uriel, "Shnei sipurei hafuga le-S. Yizhar" [Two Tales of Truce by Yizhar], *HaAretz*, 21 October, 1949.
29. Leah Goldberg, "Ha-sifrut ha-'Ivrit bi-shnat tav shin tet ve-reishit tav shin yod" [Hebrew Literature in 1949 and Early 1950], *Shivat Tz'iyon* 1 (1950): 361.
30. Ya'akov Fichmann, "Be-'einei adam" [Through Human Eyes], *Davar*, 13 January 1950.
31. A. Anavi, "Hirbet Hizah le-S. Yizhar" [Yizhar's Hirbet Hizah], *Ashmoret*, 17 November 1949.
32. M. Roshuld, [Untitled], *Be Terem* 12–13 (November–December, 1949): 75.
33. Sh. Eli, "Agav kariat ha-sipur 'Hirbet Hizah' le-S. Yizhar" [On Reading Yizhar's "Hirbet Hizah"] *Ner*, 29 June 1950 (reprinted from *Shdemot*).
34. The first quote is from Fichmann, "Through Human Eyes," the second is from Yosef Aricha, "S. Yizhar: Hirbet Hizah," *Davar*, 11 November 1949.
35. Fichmann, "Through Human Eyes"; Goldberg, "Hebrew Literature."
36. Fichmann, "Through Human Eyes."
37. Silbertal, "A Call."
38. Eli, "On Reading."
39. Moshe Stavi-Stavsky, "S. Yizhar ha-kri'a be-sefarav" [Reading Yizhar's Books], *HaAretz*, 11 May 1951.
40. See Menachem Talmi, "Musar haskel—le-mi?" [A Moral—for Whom?], *Ashmoret*, 15 September 1949; Sh. Hagai, "'Od 'al Hirbet Hizah" [More on Hirbet Hizah], *BaSha'ar*, 23 February 1950; Noah Tamir, "S. Yizhar ve-Hirbet Hizah" [Yizhar and Hirbet Hizah], *Bitzaron* 23, no. 10 (September–October 1950): 62–64.
41. See Yitzhak Rav, "Zimrat Ha-aretz" [Song of the Land], a photocopy of which is in the Hirbet Hizah folder at Sifriyat Poalim, though no source or date is given. The censure is mentioned ironically by Moshe Shamir, who praises Yizhar in "Sefer hadash le-S. Yizhar" [A New Book of Yizhar's], *BaSha'ar*, 25 August 1949.
42. Pnueli, "New Stories."
43. Ibid.
44. Malkin, "Hirbet Hizah."
45. Tamir, "Yizhar."

46. Sh. [Shalev] Mordechai, "Dvar ha-hayalim ha-aforim—o tahlifim le-hazon" [Voice of the Gray Soldiers—or Alternatives to the Vision], *Sulam* 2 (May 1949).
47. Sh. [Shalev] Mordechai, "Mevukha ve-sadizm" [Confusion and Sadism], *Sulam* 5 (August–September 1949).
48. S. Yizhar, "Al snob ve-'al . . ." [On Snobs and on . . .], *HaAretz*, 5 August 1949.
49. Sh. [Shalev] Mordechai, "S. Yizhar: Hirbet Hizah," *Sulam* 7 (November–December 1950).
50. Ibid.
51. Baruch Kurzweil, *Bein Hazon le-vein Ha-Absurdi* [The Vision and the Absurd] (Jerusalem, 1966), 391.
52. Ibid., 357.
53. Ibid.
54. Avi-Yiftah, "Lod yotzet la-golah" [Lydda Leaves for Exile], *MiBifnim* 13 (March 1948–April 1949).
55. David Maletz, "Ometz musari, mahu?" [What Is Moral Courage?] *Davar*, 3 March 1950. All the preceding quotes are from this article.
56. Y. Ahidov [Israel Eldad], "Hedei Hirbet Hizah" [Echoes of Hirbet Hizah], *Sulam* 12 (March–April 1950).
57. Shin. Yud. Nun. "Ha-ketza'akata?" [The Truth of the Outcry?], *HaTzofeh*, 10 March 1950.
58. Yitzhak Zimmermann, "Hirbet Hizah ve-ometz musari" [Hirbet Hizah and Moral Courage], *HaPo'el HaTza'ir*, 26 April 1950.
59. A. Gavrielit, "Sulam ve-David Maletz" [*Sulam* and David Maletz], *Kol Ha'Am*, 24 March 1950.
60. Menahem Dorman, "Al S. Yizhar" [On S. Yizhar], *MiBifnim* 14, no. 4 (August 1950): 571–84. The following quotes are from this article.
61. The War of Liberation, so termed by that generation, and the more official and neutral War of Independence have become loaded Zionist terms. War of 1948 is more neutral. The term used in Palestinian discourse is Al-Nakba (The Catastrophe).
62. Kenaani, "Convoy," 57–83. The following quotes are from this work.
63. Information on this is scattered and hard to locate. I happened upon two references, one in the *Ha-'Oved Ha-Tziyoni*, 30 March 1950, reporting on a trial staged by Zionist Youth, the other a mock trial held at Kibbutz Mizra.
64. Gavriel Stern, "Sifrut u-politika (beshulei 'pulmus Yizhar)" [Literature and Politics (on the Edge of the "Yizhar controversy")], *'Al HaMishmar*, 25 May 1951. The following quotes are from this article.
65. The difference is a single letter and single sound in Hebrew: *Tziyoni* and *tzini*.
66. S. Uriel, "Mei'ever le-Tziyonut, mei'ever le-tziniut" [Beyond Zionism, beyond Cynicism], *Molad* 6, no. 31 (October 1950): 59.
67. Addressing the Hebrew Writers Association on the state's tenth anniversary, in *Davar*, 10 April 1958, Yizhar estimated that his readers represented no more than a fifth of the country's adult population.
68. See, for example, Michael Asaf, "Korim kotvim 'al Yemei Ziklag" [Readers Write about *The Days of Tziklag*], *Davar*, 3 October 1958; Yisrael Eldad, "Bavu'at hatoda'a mul zerem ha-historya" [The Reflection of Consciousness vis-à-vis the Stream of History], *Sulam* 10 (September–November 1958).

69. S. Yizhar, interview with the author, 5 March 2000.
70. "Se'ara sviv Pras Bialik" [A Storm over the Bialik Prize], *Ma'ariv*, 31 December 1958.
71. S. Yizhar, "Yizhar 'Al Yemei Ziklag" [Yizhar on *The Days of Tziklag*], *Al HaMishmar*, 22 May 1959.
72. Dan Miron, "'Arba'a sipurei milhama shel Yizhar" [Four War Stories by Yizhar], *La-Merhav*, 21 April 1961.
73. Menashe Duvshani, *Shi'urim be-Sifrut Ivrit u-Klalit le-Vatei Sefer Tikhoniym* [Lessons in Hebrew and General Literature for High Schools], pt. 2, according to the new curriculum of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Tel Aviv, 1969), 202–7. The following quotes are from this work. I am grateful to Nava Eisen and the staff of the Archives of Jewish Education in Israel, at Tel Aviv University, who kindly placed educational material at my disposal.
74. Bagrut (matriculation) papers in Hebrew and general literature, 1979, 1980, 1981, collection of the Archives of Jewish Education in Israel, Tel Aviv University, 7.99–9. A sample check at the Israel State Archives and the archive of matriculation exams at the Ministry of Education and Culture showed a similar trend in exams in later years.
75. S. Yizhar, "'Al meshorerei ha-sipuah" [On the Poets of Annexation], *HaAretz*, 8 December 1967.
76. The questions of the twelfth graders were published in *Davar*, 19 April 1974; and *Shdemot* 54 (spring 1974): 62–63. Their responses appeared in *Shdemot* 55 (summer 1974): 74–75.
77. Hupert, "Hallelujah" (interview).
78. Gideon Alon, "Ha-krav ha-sheni 'al Hirbet Hizah" [The Second Battle for Hirbet Hizah], *HaAretz*, 10 February 1978.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Yosef Waxmann, "Ha-netiya hi lidhot et hakranat *Hirbet Hizah*" [The Tendency is to Postpone the Screening of *Hirbet Hizah*], *Ma'ariv*, 7 August 1977. According to Waxmann, TV directors Yitzhak Livni, Aaron Zuckerman, and Mordechai Kirschenbaum also had misgivings. In a recent discussion with the author, Livni denied this.
81. Yaakov Karoz, "Ha-lekah ha-tov shel ha-se'ara" [The Moral of the Storm], *Yediot Aharonot*, 17 February 1978.
82. For details on all the developments, see Alon, "Second Battle."
83. Amos Carmel, "Hirbet Hizah: Hagah shel ha-demagogiya" [Hirbet Hizah: Carnival of Demagoguery], *Davar*, 2 February 1978.
84. Gideon Alon, "Begin hebi'a pli'a 'al hahlatat ha-sar le-'akev hakranat *Hirbet Hizah*" [Begin Expressed Surprise at the Minister's Decision to Hold up *Hirbet Hizah*'s Screening], *HaAretz*, 8 February 1978.
85. Yizhar Smilansky, "'Et la-kum ve-limhot" [Time to Stand up and Protest], *Davar*, 2 February 1978.
86. Television interview with Yizhar, 7 February 1978; television report, "Bnei Akiva neged *Hirbet Hizah*" [Bnei Akiva against *Hirbet Hizah*], 8 February 1978.
87. "Agudat Ha-Sofrim koret la-'amod 'al mishmar ekron hofesh hayetzira" [The Writers Association Calls for Creative Freedom], *Davar*, 10 February 1978.
88. Dani Rubinstein, "Hedei Hirbet Hizah ba-rehov ha-'Aravi" [Echoes of Hirbet Hizah on the Arab Street], *Davar*, 13 February 1978.

89. Carmel, "Hirbet Hizah."
90. Ibid.
91. Yisrael Eldad, "Hirbet Hofesh" [The Destruction of Freedom], *Yediot Aharonot*, 10 February 1978.
92. U. Ephraim, "Ba ba-'et" [At the Same Time], *BeEretz Yisrael*, February 1978.
93. G. Binyamin, "Divrei shtut u-ma'asei kessel" [Folly and Stupidity], *Ma'ariv*, 10 February, 1978.
94. Survey by *Ma'ariv* conducted after the airing of *Hirbet Hizah*, reported in "Yotzeh dofen, harig u-mazik" [Unusual, Deviant, and Damaging], *Ma'ariv*, February 14, 1978. The entire paragraph is based on the survey.
95. Teddy Preuss, "Im atah lo yode'a az tishtok" [If You Don't Know, Shut Up], *Davar*, 14 February 1978. The following quotes are from this article.
96. Eldad, "Destruction."
97. Karoz, "The Moral."
98. Yosef Lapid, "Herpat Hizah" [The Shame of Hizah], *Ma'ariv*, 14 February 1978.
99. Ya'ir Burla, "Tapuah mur'al matnat ha-televisiya" [Poison Apple, Television's Gift], *Ma'ariv*, 16 February 1978. The following quotes are from this article.
100. G[alal] Binyamin, "Be'ita she-lo be-'itah" [Untimely Kick], *Ma'ariv*, 17 February 1978.
101. Ofra Yeshua, "Ma yomru ha-Goyim?" [What Will the Non-Jews Say?], *Ma'ariv*, 16 February 1978.
102. Amos Oz, "Hirbet Hizah ve-sakanat nefashot" [Hirbet Hizah and Mortal Danger], *Davar*, 17 February 1978. The following quotes are from this article.
103. Gadi Yatziv, "Ha-Tziyonut shel Hirbet Hizah ha-yom" [Hirbet Hizah's Zionism Today], *Davar*, 23 February 1978.
104. See Nagid, "I Wrote."
105. Amos Keinan, "Lishtol 'atzei zayit" [Plant Olive Trees], *Yediot Aharonot*, 17 February 1978.
106. Yehiel Hazak (moderator), "Lo le-hishtaker mi-ashma" [Don't Get Drunk on Guilt], interview with S. Yizhar, *Al HaMishmar*, 17 February 1978.
107. G. Amitay, "Ahavat amim ve-ahavat ha-am" [Love of Nations and Love of the Jews], letter to the editor, *Yediot Aharonot*, 16 February 1978.
108. According to press reports, Shalev's comments were broadcast on *The Third Hour* in a postscreening discussion of the film; IST's film archives contain no copy of the program. Matzpen's well-known views are mentioned in Zvi Shiloah, "Ha-televisiya lo timkor toztarta" [IST Can't Sell Its Product], *Davar*, 2 March 1978.
109. Hanoch Bartov, "Mehandesei ha-nefesh" [Engineers of the Soul], *Ma'ariv*, 17 February 1978.
110. H. L., "Hirbet Hizah ve-hinukh ha-dor" [Hirbet Hizah and the Generation's Education], *Bitzaaron* 68 (April 1978). The author quotes Rotenstreich.
111. Moshe Carmel, "Paneha ha-me'uvatim shel Milhemet ha-Shihur" [The Distorted Face of the War of Liberation], *Davar*, 19 February 1978.
112. Ibid.
113. See, for example, Yaakov Malkin, "Ha-tasrit har'a ve-ha-mazik shel Hirbet Hizah" [Hirbet Hizah's Bad and Harmful Script], *Ma'ariv*, 17 February 1978.

114. Gil Kesari, "Hayiti ktzin hamivtz'a be-Hirbet Hezaz" [I Was the Operations Officer at Hirbet Hezaz], *Ma'ariv*, 17 February 1978.

115. Reuven Shapira, "Krovei ha-halalim: Toshvei ha-kfar ratzhu be-ahzariyut 23 mi-lohamei mishlat 219" [Families of the Fallen: Villagers Brutally Murdered Twenty-three of the Fighters at Command Post 219], *Davar*, February 28, 1978.

116. Haim Guri, "'Arav, 'Arav" [Arabia, Arabia], *Ma'ariv*, 3 March 1978. The following quotes are from this article.

117. Mordechai Herzog, letter to the editor, *Davar*, 6 February 1978.

118. Lena Kichler-Silberman, "Mutav she-yushmad ha-seret mi-she-yesuknu hayei ha-am" [Rather the Film Destroyed Than the People Endangered], letter to the editor, *Ma'ariv*, 13 February 1978.

119. Yosef Liyubin, "Makhiv akh hekhrahi," letter to the editor, *HaAretz*, 21 February 1978.

120. Zehava Neumann, "Al gufot ha-'Aravim she-silaknu" [On the Bodies of the Arabs We Evicted], letter to the editor, *Yediot Aharonot*, 19 February 1978.

121. Epraim Kleiman, "Hirbet Hizah ve-zikhronot lo ne'imim aherim," *Proza* 25 (1978): 28. Hereafter, the page numbers of passages quoted from the Hebrew text appear in parentheses following the quotes.

122. Benny Morris (*Birth*) claims that there was no general instruction from the Arab authorities to evacuate the villages and towns in order to avoid suffering during the fighting and then to return later with the victorious Arab armies. But such a general directive need not have been broadcast on the radio, something for which Morris could find no evidence. It would have been enough for the notables in each settlement to have given a signal.

123. Epraim Kleiman, "Khirbet Khiz'ah and Other Unpleasant Memories," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 40 (1986): 102-18.