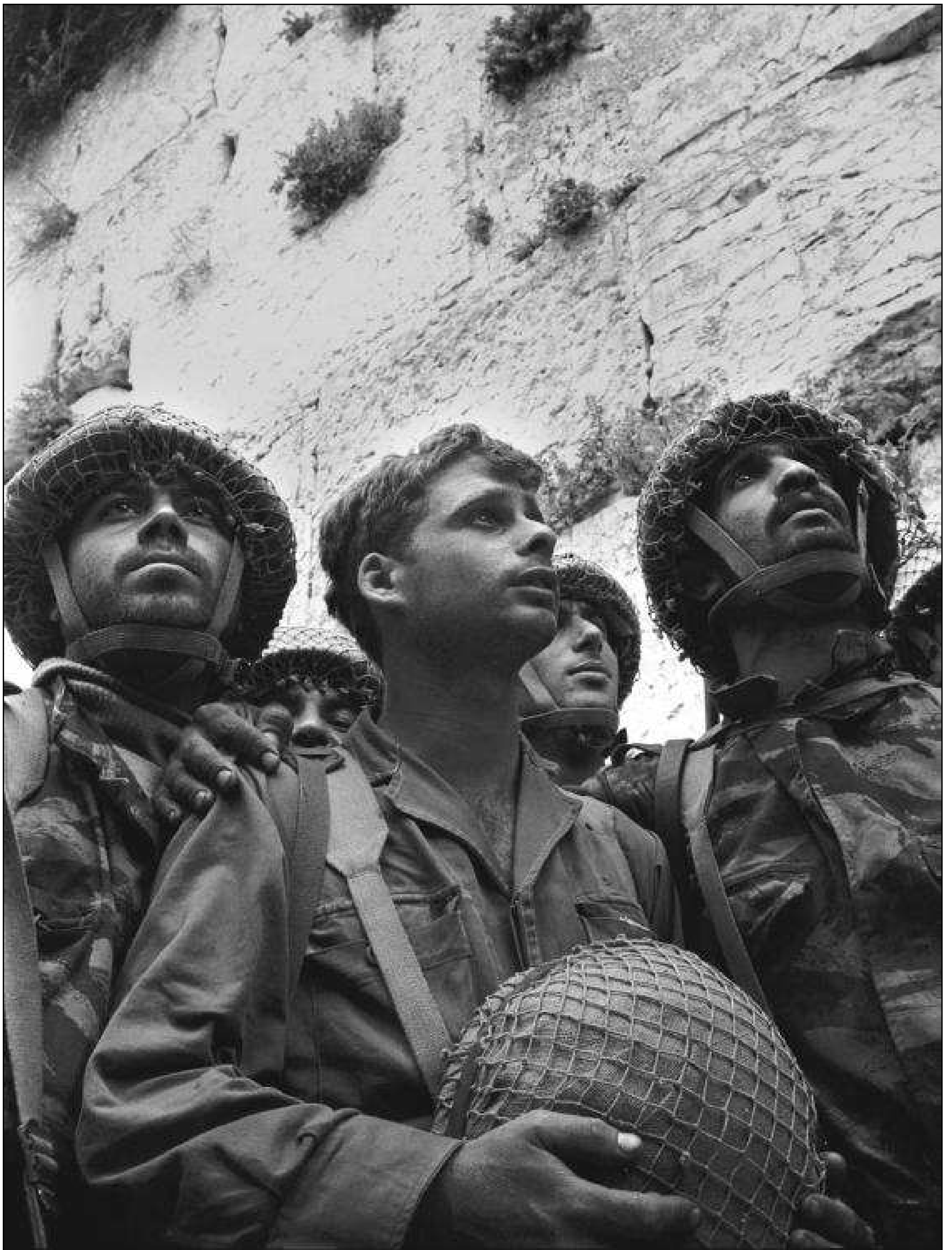
Chapter Two

From Zero to Hero: the Construction of the Body of the Nation as David vs Goliath



2.1
Building the Nation: the *Palmach* Generation from the 1948 Independence War to the 1967 Six Days War

> In the beginning the IDF created the soldier, and the soldier created the nation (Charles S. Liebman and Eliezer Don Yehiya, 1983).

From the Second World War to the First Arab-Israeli War[1]

As Kimmerling describes in his accurate work (Kimmerling, 2001, pp.36-40), during the Second World War, the Jewish-Arab conflict reached an almost complete stalemate. The country was turned into a large military base for British and Allied troops, contributing to the economic rehabilitation of both communities. Each community knew that the war was an interim period before the decisive struggle over control of the land resumed. American President Roosvelt promised self-determination for all people in Palestine, and the Arabs and the Jews each understood this promise in terms of their own claims and aspirations.

During the war, however, Jewish claims became much more vigorous as a result of the dreadful years of the *Shoah*, in which the Nazis and their collaborators managed systematically to exterminate approximately six million European Jews. In the postbellum years, the international community felt a strong obligation to compensate the Jewish people for the horrors of the Nazi genocide, and for the fact that the Allies had done little to avoid or reduce the extermination of the Jews.

In the meantime, anti-British Jewish resistance increased. Alongside the semi-official Jewish militia, the *Hagana*, two additional underground organizations also gradually developed. The "National Military Organization", known by its Hebrew acronym *Etzel* or *Irgun*[2], was

[1] Reflecting two different historiographies, Israeli-Jews call the events of 1948 the "War of Independence" (in Hebrew מלחמת השחרור, *Milhemet HaShihrur*) and Palestinians use the name *al-Nakba,* literally "the Catastrophe".

[2] *Irgun* (ארגון) is the abbreviation of הארגון הצבאי הלאומי בארץ ישרא, literally "National Military Organization in the Land of Israel", and is commonly referred to as *Etzel* (אצ"ל), an acronym of the Hebrew initials. It was a Zionist paramilitary group that operated in the British Mandate of Palestine between 1931 and 1948. The *Irgun* policy was based on what was then called Revisionist Zionism, which was founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Some of the better-known attacks by the Irgun are the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on 22 July 1946 and the alleged massacre at Deir Yassin (carried out together with *Lehi*) on 9 April 1948.

established in 1931. The “Israel Freedom Fighters” (known by its Hebrew acronym *Lehi*[3]) which had a more radical orientation, split from the *Irgun* in 1940.

Between 1944 and 1947, these two radical organizations conducted a full-scale guerrilla war against British and Arab targets, including the use of terror tactics aimed at individuals.

When the Second World War ended, and the British Mandate of Palestine terminated, the question of who would rule Palestine remained.

In 1947 the United Nations nominated a committee to investigate the Palestinian problem and offer recommendations to the General Assembly. The majority of the committee called for an end to the mandate and the creation of an Arab state and a Jewish state, with Jerusalem under international control. These recommendations served as the basis for the November 29, 1947, partition decision adopted by the UN General Assembly, known as Resolution 181(fig.2.1).

The Zionist Organization accepted the resolution, regarding it as the realization of the Zionist vision of the establishment of an independent Jewish state in part of *Eretz Israel*.

The Palestinian Arabs rejected the resolution, considering it an unacceptable transfer of their lands to European immigrants and settlers.

With the UN Resolution, the British prepared to leave the territory, in expectation of chaos. The mandate was terminated on May 14, 1948 (the Fifth of *Iyyar* in the Jewish calendar), and David Ben-Gurion established this date as Israel’s Day of Independence.

A day later, troops from several surrounding Arab states (Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Transjordan) began their invasion of Palestine. The first stage of the war was marked by the initiative and relative superiority of local Palestinian forces, reinforced by the neighbouring Arab states who joined forces in the “Arab Liberation Army”.

Fig. 2.1 1947 UN Resolution 181
(Courtesy of *Koret Comunications)*

[3] *Lehi* (לח"י) acronym of לוחמי חרות ישראל, literally “Fighters for the Freedom of Israel”, was the smallest and most radical of Mandatory Palestine's three Zionist paramilitary groups. *Lehi* split from the *Irgun* in 1940.

The principal aim of the IDF at this time was to ensure control over the territories designated by the United Nations for the Jewish state, and over free movement between Jewish settlements on roads controlled by Arab villages. The plan also took into consideration the Jews' inability to spread their forces among hundreds of Arab villages. The logical consequence of this was the destruction of almost all conquered Arab villages and the banishment of their inhabitants beyond the borders of the presumed Jewish state.

At the end of the 1948 war, the number of Palestinian refugees was estimated to be between seven and nine hundred thousand. Most of their villages, towns, and neighbourhoods had been destroyed or were repopulated by veteran or newly immigrated Jews. Refugee camps were established in all of the surrounding Arab lands, slowly creating a Palestinian exile, or *ghurba*.

In the aftermath of the war of 1948, the remaining local Arab community was mostly rural, located in the central mountain area, in what later became known as the West Bank (of the Jordan River) or, according to the Biblical tradition, "Judea and Samaria".

Whereas the Jewish state was to have received 14.000 square kilometres under the UN partition plan (fig.2.2), 21.000 square kilometres fell under the state of Israel's control after the signature of all armistice agreements in 1949 and the drawing of the "Green Line"[4] (fig.2.2).

Fig. 2.2 1949 "Green Line" armistice
(Courtesy of *Koret Comunications)*

[4] The "Green Line" refers to the demarcation lines set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between Israel and its neighbors' (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The "Green Line" is also used to mark the line between Israel, and the territories captured in the Six-Day War, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula (the latter has since been returned to Egypt in 1979). The name derives from the green ink used to draw the line on the map while the talks were ongoing.

Building the Nation and National Identity

The war of 1948 was a relatively costly one for Jewish Israelis in terms of causalities, with about 1% of the total Jewish civilian and military population killed.

As a result of this trauma, a new state civil religion, with its own cults, ceremonies, calendar, holidays, and commemorations was constructed around the military.

The statist policy resulted in the consolidation of the *Mapai*[5] party, under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion[6], which shifted its pre-state hegemonic yet *Palmachnik* Zionist-socialist policy to what was termed *statism* (*mamlachiuyout*). The statist policy resulted in the consolidation of Mapai's dominance over the state apparatus, through the constitution of a unified statist education system, and unified statist army.

As Kimmerling argues (Kimmerling, 2001, pp.94-102), the purpose was to create a new collective identity. Central to this new identity was the idea of the state and the melting pot doctrine. This presumed that the primary goal of state agencies such as the school system, youth movements, and, particularly, the military was to create a uniform new Israeli person and personality.

The creation of this new identity became a necessity for the preservation of the stability and continuity of the initial social order of the *Yishuv*. The veteran population regarded the new Jewish immigrants from Europe both compassionately and also suspiciously as Holocaust survivors. They were viewed as "wrecked people" with a "Diaspora mentality" and were suspected of channeling their suffering into anger against the veteran Israelis, without being aware of the heroic efforts of the veteran ascetic pioneer of the *Yishuv*.

Fig. 2.3 David Ben-Gurion proclaiming independence beneath a large portrait of founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl (picture taken by Robert Capa).

[5] *Mapai* (מפא"י), an acronym for *Mifleget Poalei Eretz Yisrael* (מפלגת פועלי ארץ ישראל), literally, the *Workers' Party of Eretz Yisrael*. This was a left-wing political party in Israel, and was the dominant force in Israeli politics until its merger with the Israeli Labor Party in 1968.

[6] David Ben-Gurion, born on 16 October 1886 in Poland, died 1 December 1973, was the founder of the state of Israel and also Israel's first Prime Minister (fig. 2.3).

The other part of the mass immigration, those who immigrated from Arab lands, reached a critical mass of about half a million immigrants during the first decade of the state, upsetting the system even more. These Jews from Arab and Muslim lands initially remained largely outside the Zionist nation-building project. From the perspective of the European *ashkenazi* veterans, the mass immigration of *mitzrachi* Jews threatened to “levantinize” the *Yishuv*, downgrading it to the “low quality” of the surrounding Arab states and society.

In order to put the melting pot doctrine into practice, the military became the center of the civil religion. Not only was the military assigned the task of waging war and ensuring ‘national security”, but it was also to be the major mechanism for creating the new Israeli man. As Kimmerling puts it: “This was a creature similar but not identical to the mythical *sabra.* […] Healthy, muscular, a warrior, industrious, hard-working, rational, modern, Western, secular, educated (but not intellectual), and obedient to the authorities” (Kimmerling, 2001, p.101). According to Kimmerling, from this perspective, most of the secular veteran population were consciously or unconsciously recruited as agents of the prevailing Zionist *ashkenazi* hegemony. Even without any explicit directives from the top, both sides regarded most encounters between veterans and new immigrants as “corrective experiences” of homologation, in order to build the “body” of the nation, as we can see, for example, in this representative poster to collect weapons during the Suez Campaign in 1956 (fig. 2.4).

In the Israeli context individualism had a negative connotation, while collectivism was generally perceived in a positive manner. As Weiss puts it: “the individual body became a microcosm of the national body politic” (Weiss, 2002, p.20). According to Weiss, on the political level, the most blatant example of embodiment is the military occupation. The occupied territories, particularly the Gaza strip and the West Bank, which were occupied in the 1967 War (fig.2.5), have been “embodied” within Israeli territory: the body of the nation has engulfed these territories, practically appropriating them while excluding their Arab inhabitants (Weiss, 2002, p.16).

Fig. 2.4 *Weapons for the IDF: the Defense Fund,* Poster made by Korand Grundman, 1956

The Six Day War[7] *and the Occupation Euphoria*

After the 1956 *Suez Crisis*[8], Egypt agreed to the stationing of a UNEF (United Nations Emergency Force) in the Sinai to ensure all parties would comply with the 1949 Armistice Agreements. In the following years there were numerous minor border clashes between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

At the beginning of May 1967, Nasser received false reports from the Soviet Union that Israel was massing troops on the Syrian border. Nasser began massing his troops in the Sinai Peninsula on Israel's border, expelled the UNEF force from Gaza and the Sinai and took up UNEF positions at Sharm el-Sheikh, overlooking the Straits of Tiran.

Israel reiterated declarations made in 1957 that any closure of the Straits would be considered an act of war, or justification for war. Nasser declared the Straits closed to Israeli shipping on May 22–23. On May 30, Jordan and Egypt signed a defense pact. The following day, at Jordan's invitation, the Iraqi army began deploying troops and armored units in Jordan.

On June 1, Israel formed a National Unity Government by widening its cabinet, and on June 4 the decision was made to go to war. The next morning, Israel launched *Operation Focus*, a large-scale surprise air strike that was the opening of the Six-Day War.

Israel completed a decisive air offensive in the first two days, and then carried out three successful land campaigns. The air campaign caught Egyptian aircraft still on the ground. It crippled the Egyptian, Syrian and Iraqi air forces, destroyed Jordan's Air Force, and rapidly established complete air supremacy, which accelerated subsequent victories on land. The Sinai ground campaign from June 5–8 broke through Egyptian defenses, blocked their escape, and imposed disastrous losses, leading to Egypt's unconditional acceptance of a cease-fire on June 9.

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[7] Representing two different historiographies, Israelis call the events of June 1967 the "Six-Day War" (in Hebrew: מלחמת ששת הימים) and Palestinians *an-Naksah,* literally "the Setback".

[8] The *Suez Crisis*, also referred to as the *Tripartite Aggression*, and by Israelis as the "Sinai War", was a war fought by Britain, France, and Israel against Egypt, beginning on 29 October 1956. The attack followed Egypt's decision of 26 July 1956 to nationalize the Suez Canal. Britain and France were also strongly opposed to Nasser's plan to annex the Sudan, while Israel feared that Egypt intended to launch an attack against it in March or April 1957, with Soviet support. The three allies, especially Israel, were mainly successful in attaining their immediate military objectives, but pressure from the United States and the USSR at the United Nations and elsewhere forced them to withdraw. Britain and France completely failed in their political and strategic aim of controlling the canal. Israel fulfilled some of its objectives, attaining freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran and the pacification of the Egyptian-Israeli border through UNEF.

From June 5–7, Israel seized Jerusalem, Hebron, and the entire West Bank from Jordan. The battle with Syria for the heavily fortified Golan Heights lasted from June 9 to June 10.

Fig. 2.5 Israeli “borders” after 1967 War (Courtesy of *Koret Comunications)*

At the time, most Israelis perceived this war as a pre-emptive strike against the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian armies.

Contrary to the relatively stable cease-fire agreements which followed the War of Independence and the 1956 *Sinai Campaign*[9], the 1967 war was followed by Egypt’s War of Attrition [10]against Israel (1967-71). This consisted of sporadic yet ongoing military clashes along the cease-fire border by the Suez Canal, as well as by guerrilla and terrorist activity on behalf of the different Palestinian organizations, which operated mainly in Jordan, and the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

These intermittent military and guerrilla activities continued until the next major war in October 1973. Nevertheless, as Kimmerling argues, for Israel, conquering the entire territory of mandatory Palestine, as well as the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights of Syria, was an opportunity to revitalize its character as an immigrant settler society. The capture of many holy places in the Jewish religion, which had been controlled by the Jordanians until 1967, served to strengthen religious and messianic sentiments, chauvinistic orientations, and the settlement drive

[9] See note 7

[10] The War of Attrition, in Hebrew: מלחמת ההתשה (*Milhemet haHatashah*) was a limited war fought between Israel and Egypt from 1967 to 1971. Following the 1967 Six Day War, there were no serious diplomatic efforts to resolve the issues at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In September 1967 Arab states formulated the “Three Nos” policy, barring peace, recognition or negotiations with Israel. Egyptian President Abdel Nasser believed only military initiative would compel Israel or the international community to force a full Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai, and hostilities soon resumed along the Suez Canal. These initially took the form of limited artillery duels and small-scale incursions into the Sinai, but by 1969 the Egyptian Army was prepared for larger scale operations. On March 8, 1969, Nasser proclaimed the official launch of the War of Attrition, characterized by large scale shelling along the Canal, extensive aerial warfare and commando raids. Hostilities continued until August 1970 and ended with a ceasefire, the frontiers remaining the same as when the war began, with no real commitment to serious peace negotiations.

within Jewish society. On the one hand, the captured territories were defined as strategically vital for the future defense of Israel. On the other hand, they were considered exchangeable for peace (Kimmerling, 2001, p.47).

Moreover, a kind of feeling of euphoria reigned after the Six-Day War. As Israel Harel puts it: “There was a feeling of relief; the human joy of victory, pure and simple. And yes, a feeling of elation because, in addition to having been saved from annihilation, we had also arrived - Moshe Dayan[11] put those feelings best - at the places the people had longed for over thousands of years (fig.2.6). And there was also a rational conclusion: There would not be another opportunity to slice across our narrow hips, and that our security was assured for a long time to come” (Israel Harel, *Haaretz*, 2007, June 10)

Fig.2.6 1967’s entrance by Uzi Narkiss, Moshe Dayan, and Yitzhak Rabin, in the Old City of Jerusalem, with the Lion's Gate behind them (picture taken by Ilan Bruner).

The so-called post Six Day War “euphoria” not only characterized Israeli politics after 1967, but also the politics of representation of Israel, until the totally unexpected 1973 Yom Kippur War.

In the following section I will analyze the politics of representation of the “Spatial Liberation” and the “Popular Fascination” in the years between the War of Independence and Yom Kippur War.

[11] Moshe Dayan, (20 May 1915 – 16 October 1981) was the fourth Chief of Staff of the IDF (1953–1958), He went on to become Defense Minister and later Foreign Minister of Israel and became the fighting symbol to the world of the State of Israel .

2.2 Building David: Spatial Liberation and Popular Fascination

> The biblical story of David and Goliath, again an account of the few versus the many, is likewise used to mobilize citizens into a state of perpetual conscriptions and a feeling of stage (Weiss, 2002, p.85).

Building the Flag

As Zalmona argues, in the 1950s and 1960s Israeli art was deeply influenced by a predominant ideology which was sustained by the values of heroism and machismo, the warship of military might, and the preference granted to the public and the collective over the personal and the individualistic (Zalmona, 2006, p. 248).

One of the more iconic photos created in the service of the Zionist dream is the picture of the raising of the Ink Flag (fig.2.7), taken by the soldier Micha Perry in Eilat on 10 March 1949. On March 5, 1949, Israel launched Operation Ovda and, five days later, the IDF reached the west side of Aqaba (the biblical Elath), and captured it without a battle.

This act completed the occupation of the Negev Desert, allocated to their government under the United Nations partition plan, and was the last operation of Israel's War of Independence.

Fig.2.7 Eilat, March 10, 1949. *Raising of the Ink Flag.*

The improvised flag was made on the order of Negev Brigade commander Nahum Sarig, when it was discovered that the Brigade did not have an Israeli flag on hand. According to the daily *Yedioth Akhronot*, the flag was painted by Pu'ah Barkol, the secretary of Nahum Sarig. Pu'ah told the reporter: “One day before our arrival to Um-Rashrash [today Elat], the brigade commander, Nahum, told me 'we must prepare a flag'. We were a *Palmach* brigade and we didn't deal too much with ceremonies, so we didn't have a flag. I had a white sheet and I painted it with a branch and cotton balls dipped in ink. We weren't used to see [sic] the flag so we had an

argument how it should be painted: how far are the stripes from the ends and how the *Magen David* is made, with stripes or fully colored. Nobody thought about keeping the flag. It was duplicated but the original is long gone...." (*Dov Gutterman,* 15 March 2009).

This image, documenting a founding moment in Israeli collective visual memory, is itself a remake of Joe Rosenthal's famous photo of raising the American flag in Iwo Jima, taken on February 23, 1945 (fig.2.8).

Fig.2.8 Iwo Jima, taken on February 23, 1945, *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima*, by Joe Rosenthal

As Miron argues, the cultural establishment of Israel had its eyes fixed on the western horizon: "This was a new west, no longer the one of the interwar era, but of the cold war". According to Miron, Israeli culture, which was created after the nascent state was consolidated, assimilated much of the legacy of Zionist, pre-state culture. First of all, it was from the matriarchal Zionist culture that it inherited its occidental and international orientation (Miron, 2006, p.291-292).

Spatial Liberation and Popular Fascination: Israel Goes West....

A phenomenon that came into being with the State of Israel after the Independence War was the freedom of travel.

As the American scholar of Israeli cinema Gloria Jacob-Arzoni argues, not only were vast waves of immigration arriving to the new state, but it was also now possible for the population of the *Yishuv,* as well as anyone else, to go abroad: "the country was free of the restrictions imposed by the British Mandate and so the influence of the great wide world began to filter into the little provincial *Yishuv*" (Jacob-Arzoni, 1975, p.99).

Suddenly students of arts, music, as well as directing, could go and work in the "old" Europe and in the "new" world of the United States.

In 1948 the Tel Aviv Museum of Art shows the first exhibition of "New Horizons", a group of veteran and older artist, promoted the idea that Israeli culture was actually part of international culture and as such, necessitated a deep dialogue with prevalent European abstract art-currents.

In the works of Yohanan Simon (1905-1976), representing life in the Kibbutz and during the Independence War, we can see the influence by European artists like Fernand Léger, like in Fig.2.9, *Waiting for the bus*, 1949 (fig. 2.9). Also the painting by Marcel Janco (1895-984), which describes the life of soldiers during the Independence War, was influenced by Picasso's Guernica, like in *Death of soldier*, Marcel Janco , 1948 (fig.2.10).

Fig.2.9 *Waiting for the bus*, Yohanan Simon, 1949

According to Zalmona, in the 1960s the State of Israel became utterly and entirely westernized in terms of the culture and social process that shaped society. The exclusion of the Oriental from the intrinsic Israeli identity, both the personal and the collective, became a fact. In the aftermath, the foundation of the State in 1948, and the war against the Arab States, the citizens of those states were considerate enemies or, in the best of the cases, as the declared other (Zalmona, 2006, p. 249).

This is elucidated by the example of the well-known Israeli painter Nachum Gutman. In his earliest works the Arab becomes the model of belonging, of stability, of existential natural roots in the land (see p.36). After the outbreak of the War of Independence, however, when Gutman volunteered as a painter and served in IDF, there is a discernible shift. Gutman's drawings at this time depicted the *palmachnik* soldiers of the

Fig.2.10 *Death of soldier*, Marcel Janco, 1948

War of Independence. As we can see from his work (fig.2.11), more than attempting to portray the nature of war, he wanted to paint and to remember the vitality, the spirit of youth and euphoria, the beauty of the soldiers connected with the beauty of the landscape that they conquered.

After the Six Day war, the 1967 military triumph created an atmosphere of national arrogance and a feeling that military dynamism might provide the solution for all kinds of political problems. According to Shohat, the war brought economic prosperity through various capital investments and support from the United States, along with the availability of cheap labor from the occupied territories. This resulted in an increase in the standard of living, which in fact mainly benefited the upper and middle class (Shohat, 1987, p.103).

Capitalist values of consumerism became dominant in all classes, replacing the old socialist ideologies. Paralleling the political and military spheres, the American orientation of Israeli society became evident in advertising styles, trends interior design and in boutiques. The new styles replaced the earlier, more Middle-European, cultural orientation.

Nevertheless, one of the crucial effects of the Six Day War was to point out Israeli inadequacies in terms of the production of television programming. In Israel at the time, instructional television was very good, but general television was non-existent.In1967, as Jacob-Arzoni describes, in less than a year after Six Day War, general television went on the air. The supporters of television had been greatly helped by the foreign news teams who were covering the war and shooting films, all of which the Israeli public never got to see. Before 1967, the American public was far better informed as to what was going on during the crucial days of the war than the Israeli public was (Jacob-Arzoni, 1975, pp.131-132).

Fig. 2.11 *Palmachnik*, Nachum Gutman, 1949

As Shlomo Arad, one of the most notable Israeli photojournalists active during the Six Day War told me in an interview that we had in Tel Aviv on February 3, 2009: “the Six Day War was

both the end and the beginning of an era, in the good and in the bad meaning. However, suddenly Israel came of age, and the entire western world was looking to Israel like a young hero, like David fighting against Goliath, represented by the neighboring Arab countries. And this was also the main representation in the most important international weekly news magazine", as we can see in some covers representing the IDF Minister Moshe Dayan as the hero of the country (fig.2.12, 2.13).

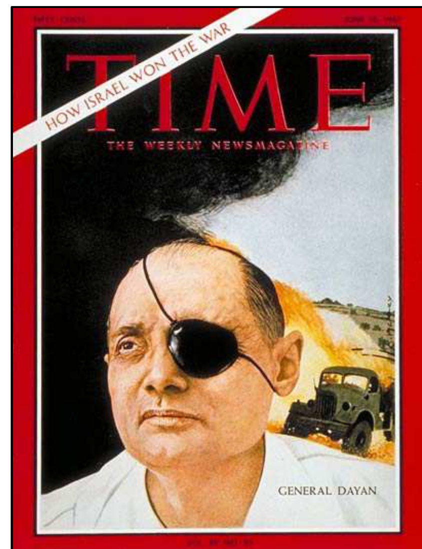

Fig. 2.12 *Time* cover, June 1967

The most well-known of these was the iconic image on the cover of *Life* magazine, depicting a grinning, tousle-haired Israeli soldier, holding high a captured Egyptian Kalashnikov as he bathes in the Suez Canal, celebrating Israel's victory in the 1967 war (fig.2.14). The picture, taken by Denis Cameron in the Suez Canal at the conclusion of the Six Day War, became part not only of Israeli history, but even of international history, even though it was taken "by mistake". As the soldier who is depicted declared in Lanzaman's 1994 documentary *Tzahal (IDF)*: "even if this iconic picture was representing a war-hero, I was just cooling down in the Suez".

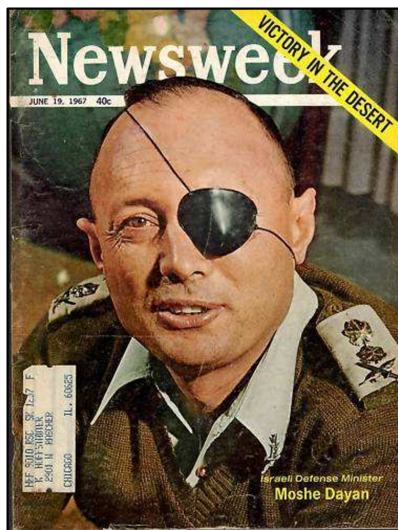

Fig. 2.13 *Newsweek* cover, June 1967

Nevertheless, the *Life* cover iconized the conflict for the times, and this picture became one of the iconic representations of the Israeli soldier as the biblical hero figure of King David. According to the Bible (1 Samuel 17:1-58), when the Philistine army invades Judah, a young boy, David, hears the Philistine giant Goliath challenging the Israelites to send their own champion to decide the outcome in single combat. He is victorious, striking Goliath in the forehead with a stone from his sling. Goliath falls, and David kills him with his own sword and beheads him.

Fig. 2.14 *Life* cover, June 1967

How Does it Happen that Paratroopers Cry?

In the history of Israel (and of Israeli art) the most representative picture of the figure of the Israeli soldier as David is "The three paratroopers at the Western Wall" (fig.2.15), taken by David Rubinger on June 7, *1967*, the last day of the Six Day War, when IDF Paratroopers reached Jerusalem's Western Wall shortly after its capture.

The Western Wall of the Temple which is all that remains after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E, known as the "Wailing Wall" in many countries and languages, became the new national symbol overnight. A whole generation had grown up after the establishment of the State of Israel who had not even seen the Wall, and in their imaginations it lived and grew with the stories of their elders. As Larry Collins and Dominique LaPierre describe in their notable book *O Jerusalem*: "At ten o'clock in the morning on Wednesday, the seventh of June, 1967, the paratroopers broke through. The scene that was enacted there will on recorded time in the pictures and films and stories of that historic moment" (Collins and LaPierre, 1973, p.268).

Shot from a low angle, the faces of (left to right) Zion Karasenti, Yitzak Yifat and Haim Oshri are framed against the wall. Something in their faces, perhaps a combination of exhaustion and uplift, caught the eye of news photographer David Rubinger. He lay on the ground and photographed the paratroopers, who appeared, in the subsequent photograph, almost statuesque. As the Israeli journalist Yossi Klein Halevi argues, though the newspaper captions claimed the paratroopers were gazing up at the Wall, they were in fact standing with their backs to it, looking off into the distance, at an object or a scene beyond the photograph's reach (Klein Halevi, 2007).

Fig. 2.15 *The three paratroopers at the Western Wall*, David Rubinger, 1967

During an interview that I had with Rubinger on July 27, 2009, in his house in Jerusalem, he defined this picture as his "signature": "Is not my best picture but is mine [sic] signature. The Wall had been taken twenty minutes before. Shots were still being fired and soldiers cried. The space between the wall and the buildings in front of it was very narrow, so I had to lie down to get a shot of the wall itself, when the paratroopers walked by

and he took several shots of them.. But this photograph connects the old and the new, hope with stones that have been bled."

Yitzak Yifat, a twenty-four-year-old reservist about to begin medical school, is the center point of the photograph, and not only because he is physically positioned there. Among his friends, only Yifat's face is truly memorable; the faces around him seem to blur into his. That is partly because he alone has removed his helmet, revealing the civilian beneath the soldier. Yifat also allows himself to appear vulnerable. While the men around him are tight-lipped, suppressing emotion, his mouth is open, as if trying to express the ineffable, like a David exhausted but triumphant after a long fight against Goliath.

According to Klein Halevi, the image endures, in part, because of the humility it conveys: "at their moment of triumph, the conquerors are themselves conquered. The paratroopers, epitome of Zionism's 'New Jews', stand in gratitude before the Jewish past, suddenly realizing that they owe their existence to its persistence and longing. Rubinger's photograph catches a precise historical moment: The return of the last two thousand years of Jewish history to the Zionist story. Many of the paratroopers identified themselves as Israelis first, Jews only a distant second; some weren't quite sure whether they identified as Jews at all. And yet it is at the Wall of all places, symbol of the quietism of exile, where secular Israelis become reconciled with their Jewishness. As one paratrooper put it, 'At the Wall I discovered that I'm a Jew'" (Klein Halevi, 2007).

"How does it happen that paratroopers cry?" asked the paratrooper Haim Hefer in the popular poem "The Paratroopers Cry" he wrote in 1967 after the battle for Jerusalem:

> How does it happen that they touch the wall with great emotions?
> How does it happen that their weeping changes to song?
> Perhaps because these boys of nineteen, born at the same time as the state,
> Perhaps because these boys of nineteen carry on their shoulders two thousand years.

One of the most famous Israeli actors representing the heroism of David was Asaf Dayan (fig.2.16), the son of the, even more famous, General Moshe Dayan.

As Shohat argues, the 1967 war and the IDF itself became objects of this kind of "popular fascination", capturing the imagination of the Western world, leading producers, both Israeli and foreign, to attempt to reproduce the "splendid war" on the screen. The Americanization of Israeli culture, in fact, also affected the heroic-nationalist films, which acquired the epic style

and "larger than life" heroes of Hollywood war films. As Shohat put it, "the epic scale can be seen as the cinematic rendering of the sensation of spatial liberation when a physically small country overcomes the siege situation and expands, a fact of immense psychological import for the Israeli collective unconscious, generating a feeling of liberation from the terror of encirclement" (Shohat, 1987, p.104-106).

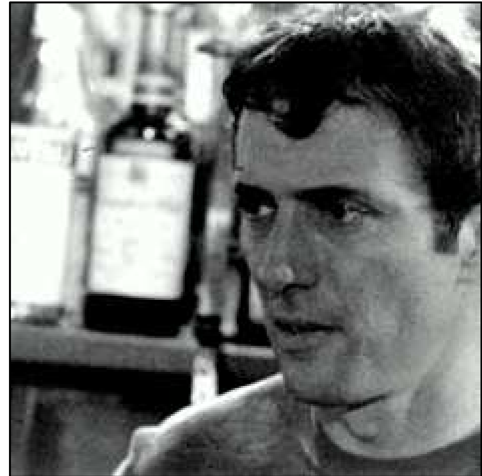

Fig. 2.16, Assi Dayan

While the *Sabra* was a characteristic example of Zionist Realist cinema, the figure of the soldier as David, created in the 1950s and 1960s, during two decades of military conflict and successes, became the prototype film of the heroic-nationalist genre, as we will see in the next section.

2.3 Ethnographying the Heroic-Nationalist Cinema of the Fifties and Sixties

"Si vis pace, para bellum"
(They Were Ten, 1960)

"Israel is not a State, it is just a mental
state" (Every Bastard is a King, 1968)

Just like in the Westerns: Post Independence War Films

According to Ben-Shaul, the cinematic conception of the War of Independence is distinguished by a dual and contradictory structure. On the one hand, the legitimization of the war is portrayed by its correlation with the long history of Jewish persecution, thus presenting war as a *no choice* and *no way out* situation. On the other hand, the war is presented as the means through which the historical situation of the Jewish people changed precisely because of Israel's military strength, its national independence, and the inseparable experiences of war and socio-cultural nomenclature. The War of Independence, in fact, soon became a central subject in the dominant statist ideology of *Mapai* and its dependent cultural apparatus of the time, which incorporated and reproduced this ideology. Consequently, it also became the subject of films produced during the 1950s and early 1960s, film that were mostly directed by foreign directors or recent immigrants who were strongly committed to Zionist culture (Ben-Shaul, 1997, pp.13-14).

The British filmmaker Thorold Dickinson, for example, initially invited by the army film unit (established in 1948 by the IDF to commission instructional films for the army), started directing *The Red Background* (*Hareka haAdom*, 1953), a documentary on the infantry.

Through a US-Israel big-budget co-production, in 1955 he produced his first feature, ***Hill 24 Doesn't Answer*** (*Giva 24 Eina Ona,* fig.2.17). The film had commercial success both

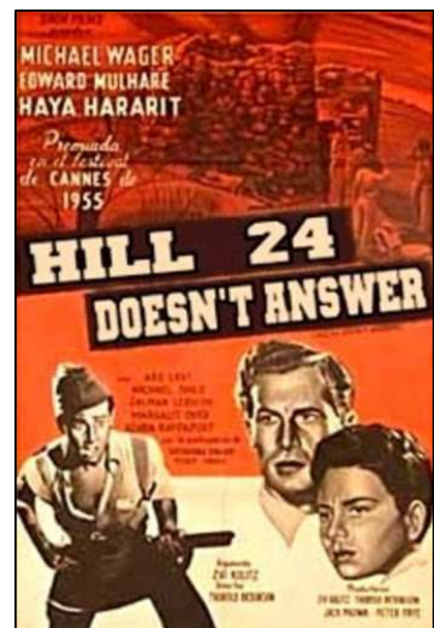

Fig.2.17 *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer,* 1954

in Israel and abroad and won two honourable mentions in the Cannes Film Festival.
Based on stories by Zvi Kolitz, the film revolves around the personal stories of four fighters: an Irishman, an American-Jew, a *Sabra* and a *mitzrachi* woman, assigned to defend a strategic hill outside Jerusalem, Hill 24, just few hours before the UN ceasefire in the 1948 war.
Not by chance, the movie opens with an image of a strategic map of Israel. Arrows pointing out the various directions of Arab attack on Israel illustrate the Israeli *topos* of a nation under siege. In addition, as Shohat argues, the male voice-over that explains the movement of the forces implies a status of “true-telling” and a documentation of facts, while simultaneously assuming the specific Israeli perspective (Shohat, 1987, p.58).
Then the film moves into its presentation of the four major characters, first seen in close-up shots identifying them as dead, while an off screen voice recites their names and provides a transition to the time when they were still alive, before their mission. Within this general flashback, three additional flashbacks structure the film into three distinct episodes.
In the first episode, devoted to the Irishman, the flashback begins in the pre-state days of illegal seaborne transport of Holocaust survivors. While working for the British Mandate police in preventing Jewish immigration and following suspected underground operatives, the Irishman falls in love with the beautiful *mitzrachi* woman, who is herself a member of the underground. As Shohat points out, she is privileged by many close-up shots, which not only emphasize her beauty, but also encourage spectatorial identification with her passionate declarations (Shohat, 1987, p.65). One example is the close-up during the dialogue in which she asks the British police: “We only want home and peace. Is that too much to ask?”
After the Israeli Declaration of independence, the Irishman not only joins the woman he loves, who has become an IDF soldier in the meantime, he also joins the struggle of her country.
The second episode chronicles the *Bildung* of the American Jew to Zionism. The education of the American evolves through several phases within the flashback. These are from his first visit to Jerusalem before the establishment of the State, to the birth of the State of Israel, when he joins its army to fight in one of the landmark battles of the 1948 war: the struggle for the old city of Jerusalem. As Shohat argues, indeed, it is in the fabled old city of Jerusalem that he is initiated into the last phase of his Zionist apprenticeship, shedding his assimilated past and returning to his Jewish origins (Shohat, 1987, p.67).

The third episode takes place largely in the southern zone, during the battle with Egypt and focuses on the character of the *Sabra*. He is portrayed as a humanistic soldier who takes pity on his enemy, whom he assumes to be a wounded Egyptian soldier, only to discover, under the Egyptian army uniform, that he is a German Nazi. Nevertheless, the *Sabra* takes care of the wounded enemy even when he discovers he is a Nazi.

The film finishes with the four characters fighting together to defend Hill 24, and, before dying, raising the Israeli Flag on the hill. Completing the narrative circle, the film returns at the end to the images of the dead protagonists, bringing to a climax the spectator's full identification, in contrast to the earlier, relatively distanced emotions towards the unknown dead soldier of the opening sequence. According to Shohat, the death of the protagonists is allegorically compensated by the rebirth of the country: the ultimate protagonist of the film (Shohat, 1987, p.59).

The Zionist rhetoric of the film is further emphasized by the ordering of the episodes, the first of which is devoted to the Irishman, becoming a Zionist "for love", the second to the American, becoming a Zionist as a Jew, and the last and briefest to the *Sabra*, who is *a priori* convinced of his role, and his country's role, within history. As Shohat points out, the Nazi sequence at the end offers the final clinching argument within the didactic allegorical thrust to the *Bildungsroman.* The defence of the hill immediately following the Nazi sequence suggests that Israel fights the Arabs in the spirit of "never again" (Shohat, 1987, pp.65-70).

Following this movie, the Arab-Nazi link also became a relevant theme in other films. For example, the 1959 ***Pillar of Fire*** (*Amud haHesh*, fig. 2.18), also set during the 1948 war, tells the story of a small pioneering southern kibbutz's defence against the superior number of Egyptian tanks. As Shohat argues, the image expressed in the film title evokes the Auschwitz death apparatus, a point confirmed by one of the film's central characters, Moshe, a Shoah survivor, who is reminded of Auschwitz' smoke chimneys when he sees a pillar of smoke rising from a burned tank (Shohat, 1987, p.70).

Fig.2.18 *Pillar of Fire*, 1959

This movie, directed by the Jewish-American Larry Frish and co-produced by the Geva studios, Kibbutz Revivim and the IDF, combines elements of melodrama and romance, often found in films of this genre, in order to highlight the motive of sacrifice of the individual for the sake of the homeland. When trying to break through the siege most of the soldiers are killed. Only a young American Zionist, David, who comes as volunteer to fight in the War of Independence, and a *sabra* who is in love with him, Rachel, are left in the outpost. Rachel finds herself in the difficult position of having to choose between saving her wounded lover and the desperate need to warn the struggling town of Beersheva of the approaching danger.

Fig.2.19 *They were Ten,* 1960

Nonetheless, in spite of her sacrifice, the movie finishes with the battalions of Egyptian tanks on their way to Tel Aviv, highlighting the never ending state of siege of the Jews even after the Shoah. This is also suggested by the "blooming the desert view", which is seen through the barbed wire surrounding the kibbutz.

The theme of the fresh memories of the Shoha and the continuous state of siege come back in 1960's ***They were Ten*** (*Hem Hayu Asara* fig. 2.19) by Baruch Dienar. Based on the diaries of early Zionist settlers who came to Ottoman Palestine from Tsarist Russia in the 1880's, Dienar's first film drama, tells of the efforts of a group of pioneers struggling with the harsh natural conditions, handling the obstructionism of the Turkish authorities and dealing with the resentment of the neighboring Arabs.

Also in this case, the state of siege by the Arabs and the memories of pogroms in Tsarist Russia echo the Shoah, as results during a scene among some settlers following an attack by the neighboring Arabs: "We'll hide in a Ghetto, just like in Russia and Poland!". Nevertheless, not all the settlers give up or decide to use force, but some of them believe in restraint: "we must live peacefully and quietly

Fig. 2.20 The character of Manya in *They were Ten*

with them" declares Yosef, the group's presumed leader.

Anyhow, because of the continuous conflict not only outside but also inside the group, some of them left and not all who remained survived, such as Manya, the wife of Yosef. The film portrays Manya (fig.2.20), the only women among nine men living in over-crowed conditions, as a substitute mother who takes care of the needs of all the pioneers. According to Shohat, as pioneer woman, mythologized into the status of Great Mother, the only lovemaking between Manya and Yosef during the film takes place outdoors, and leads to her pregnancy. Fulfilling the ultimate woman-mother role of producing a child, she dies shortly thereafter, suffering the fate of the frontier woman in many Western films (Shohat, 1987, p. 48).

As Ben-Shaul argues, if, on one hand, she dies because her husband was busy defending the settlement and was thus unable to assist her, on the other hand, this latter sacrifice which results from the woman's death during childbirth is blessed by nature. This is indicated by the gradual increase of raindrops signaling the end of the drought. This blessing, in fact, implies that her death was not in vain: "her giving birth in the land, her death for the land and her burial in the land, implies the settler's ultimate right to live on the land in harmony with the nature"(Ben-Shaul, 1997, p.63).

In this sense, as Neeman points out, the complex narrative allows for ambivalence regarding the commune and the Zionist project in general (Neeman, 2001, p.277). Further, the film's treatment of the Jewish-Arab conflict, even though the Arabs are portrayed as primitive natives in a similar mode to the American Western, is more complex than in earlier films. It even includes Arabic and French dialogue between Yosef and the Sheikh. Indeed, the relationship between the two leaders of the two different groups (and cultures) turns out to be founded on a mutual exchange: if the Sheikh is presented as familiar with western culture, Yosef also, as per the Orientalist-Zionist approach to Arab culture, is presented riding Arab horses and wearing the Arab *keffiyeh.*

However, beyond the character of the Sheikh, the image of the other Arabs are exotic and peripheral as in all the others films of the heroic-nationalist genre, in which Arabs are generally anonymous enemy figures similar to the portrayal of native Americans in Western movies.

Also the representation of the *ethnoscape*, with clear parallels to the American Wild West, takes place on a different frontier, the one of *Eretz Israel* and the Arab village seen in the distance and from the point of view of the newcomers.

According to Shohat, this movie like the other two movies I analyzed previously, perpetuates the classic cinematic dichotomy in war or Western genres by which the enemy's very anonymity is an integral necessity in the construction of his abstract evil character. As a kind of structuring absent-presence within the specific Middle Eastern context, the Arab nonexistent history also implies a lack of solidified national identity. In *Pillar of Fire*, in fact, Arab soldiers do not appear. They are seen at a literal distance, as merely agents of violence. In *Hill 24 doesn't answer* the Arabs are almost always presented in a long shot and never privileged with close-up. During battles, the camera is usually literally on the side of the Israeli soldiers, virtually suturing the spectator into a pro-Israeli position (Shohat, 1987, pp.59-61). As Shohat puts it, "the Western connections of the Israeli protagonist is a device partially designed to make the film's didactic thrust palatable to Western audiences through the assumed intimacy and sympathy of 'us' versus 'them'" (Shohat, 1987, p.64).

Just like in the New Wave Movies: Post Six Day War Films

The West-East/Us-Them discourse that started in Post War of Independence film reaches its peak in Post Six Day War Films. According to Ben-Shaul, characterizing the cinematic attention to war in this period is a narrative structure consisting of two circles, the outer circle dealing with Israel at war and the inner circle dealing with a conflict between the individual and society. Two different casual connections are generated within the films between both circles. One articulates the argument that because the Arab world (and consequently the world at large) is against Israel, the aspiration to lead a private non-collective life is impossible or irrelevant. The other claims that not only is individuality possible, and even necessary for Israel to survive the negative behaviour of the Arab world against it, but that it will also lead the western hemisphere to side with Israel. This will be the result of the similarities between the Israeli concept of individuality and western ideology, which will encourage the western world to perceive Israelis as belonging to the west. Moreover, the war with the Arab world might and should be derived from political-cultural differences between east and west and therefore the difference between the Israeli west and the Arab east should be emphasized within that context.

As Ben Shaul argues, on a formal level, Israeli cinema in the Sixties is characterized by reflexivity and marked western cinematic intertextual quotations, quoting narrative structures that are characteristic of French and Italian *new wave* cinema. This formal structuring of the

films is the formal implementation of the emerging belief in western liberal autonomy (Ben-Shaul, 1997, pp.23-25).

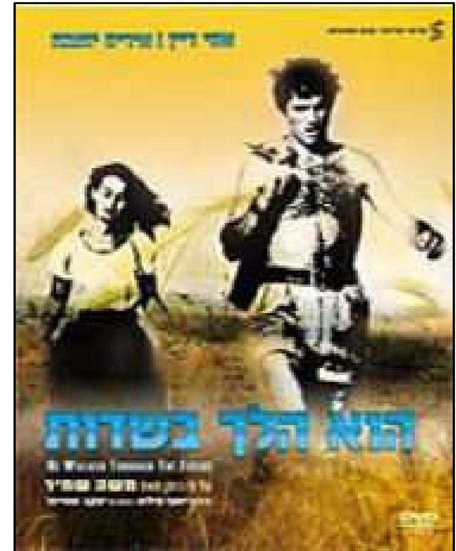

Fig. 2.21 *He walked through the Fields*, 1967

One of the central figures of the Israeli new wave is Uri Zohar. Born in Tel Aviv in 1936, after serving in the entertainment group of the IDF, Zohar's introduction to film was as an actor in the heroic-nationalist *Pillar of Fire* in 1959. Six years later, in 1965, Zohar's first solo directing credit was for the film *Hole in the Moon*, a parody that pokes fun at the myths portrayed in the earlier Zionist films. As Kronish points out, the technique of a film within a film is used to portray dreams and fantasies which take on concrete characteristics, which parallel the "miracle" of Israel, the dream which has become reality (Kronish, 1997, p.36).

Deeply influenced by the surrealist style of the Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini, this movie became the turning point in Israeli cinema, and is strictly connected with the historical turning point determined by the 1967 war. This is well represented by the character of Uri, in 1967 Yosef Millo's movie ***He walked through the Fields*** (*Hu Halakh BaSadot*, fig.2.21).

According to Kronish, Uri's personality reflects the new emphasis on the individual in Israeli society, combined with the heroism and self-sacrifice which was necessary during the period of the Six Day War (Kronish, 1997, p.51).

Based on the 1947 novel by Moshe Shamir, the 1967 screen adaptation, in fact, is told in flashback as a young soldier, returning from the battlefields of the 1967 war, reflects on the story of his parents: his mother, Mika, a new immigrant holocaust survivor, and his father, Uri, a young *kibbutznik* interpreted by Assi Dayan, the son of the General Moshe Dayan (fig.2.22). Assi Dayan's performance in the role of Uri made him an Israeli icon.

Fig.2.22 Assi Dayan playing Uri in *He walked through the Fields*

According to the flashback, in 1946 Uri volunteers for a bridge bombing mission, a *Palmach* operation against the British. He is killed in action while Mika is pregnant with their child, who becomes the young

protagonist of the framing narrative. According to Neeman, the film departs from Shamir's novel not only in its employment of a framing story but also in highlighting Uri's concerns with private life rather than with national issues, thus reflecting the 1960s bias towards individualism. As a transition film, in fact, it still advocates self-sacrifice for the homeland but at the same time projects the norms of the State, demystifying the utopian ideals of the *kibbutz* and the *Palmach*'s partisan spirit (Neeman, 2001, p.279).

As the Israeli scholar of cinema studies Nurit Gertz highlights in her accurate analysis about the discrepancy between the book and the film, two decades and three wars separated Shamir's novel and Millo's cinematic adaption of it. Beyond the battles and the years, Uri is completely modified and his beliefs and his relations with his society are transformed.

If in the book he strives for harmony between his national-societal values and his private world, in the movie he fluctuates between these two value systems, and neither he nor the director seems to know how to integrate them. If in the first half of the movie Uri finds meaning only in his love of Mika, in the middle of the movie, he suddenly changes into a "regular" hero.

If in the book the army was presented as an alternative collectivity alongside the work in the *kibbutz* and social life, in the movie the shift to war is a switch to another world, which provides the hero with another option that is alien to everything that had previously constituted his world.

The discrepancy between the hero's focus on his private world and the sudden outburst of patriotic heroism reflects a discrepancy between the various models that the movie adopts and is unable to integrate with any coherence. As in some other movies of those years, the nationalistic convention was already beginning to clash with a different convention making its way into Israeli films: the individualistic themes of a bourgeois consumer society (Gertz, 1995, pp.22-25).

According to Shohat, some of these films, although focusing on the 1967 period and its aftermath, did not employ the war genre, but used the war and its consequences as mere background for psychological drama (Shohat, 1987, p.105), notably the 1968 film by Uri Zohar ***Every Bastard is a King*** (*Kol Mamzer Melech,*

Fig.2.23, *Every Bastard is a King,* 1968

fig.2.23), which was co-produced by Noah Films with IDF contributions.

Fig.2.24 Yehoram Gaon (on the right) playing Yehoram in *Every Bastard is a King*

The movie tells the story of Roy Cummings, an American journalist who comes to Israel to cover events on the eve of the 1967 war. Accompanied by his Israeli-born girlfriend, he is shown around the county by Yehoram (played by Yehoram Gaon[12], fig.2.24), who decided to become a driver-guide after "the war finished, the *kibbutz* era finished and now in this country every bastard is a king". In the first part of the movie, the only hero in this time of decadence is the figure of Ralphi Cohen, a pacifist restaurant owner who makes a solo flight to Egypt, there to hopefully commiserate with Abdel Nasser. This is a dramatization of the real story of Abie Nathan, which occurred during the Six-Day War of 1967.

Slowly Cummings befriends Ralphi and Yehoram, who when the war breaks out, reports for duty and becomes a hero when he rescues a wounded soldier. Impressed by the people he meets, Cummings develops empathy for Israel, particularly influenced by his experiences during the war and feeling himself part of the people. The war sequences include documentary newsreel footage and reconstruction of an actual armoured tank battle. Zohar employs strategies from Hollywood war films and presents war as the ultimate adventure, in which the enemy is little more than the faceless shadow of an invisible Goliath fighting against an Israeli soldier stuck alone in a tank in order to defend his country like the young David.

At the film's climax, Cumming loses his life stepping on a mine. He does not die on the battlefield, like a hero, but just by chance walking in a field. The movie finishes with his girlfriend listening to his tape recorder, where he declares: "Israel is not a State, it is just a mental state".

[12] Yehoram Gaon, popular singer and actor, became a star in several film of this Post-Six Day War period, always playing the role of the brave soldier.

In this movie like in *He walked through the fields*, the official narrative was still the national one, which attempted to fuse all points of view into a single one. However, as Gertz puts it, "these films were unable to fully render the collectivism. The very use of language, as Bahbha argues, necessitates expressing the social instability that actually exists" (Gertz, 2005, p.68).

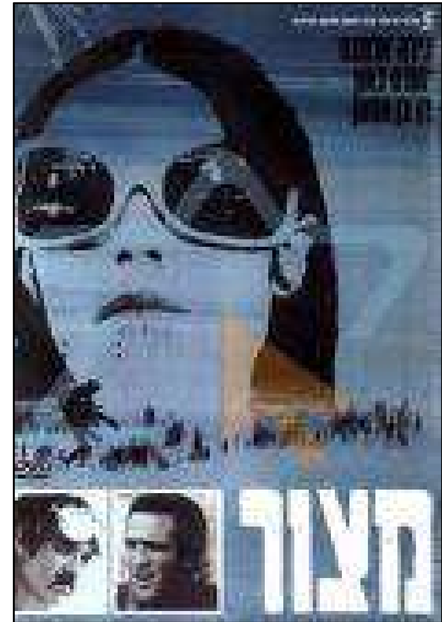

Fig.2.25 *The Siege*, 1969

One of the other films representing those years of transition is the 1969 movie by Gilberto Tofano ***The Siege*** (*Matzor*, fig.2.25). As Yacob-Arzoni points out, Emanuel Bar Kedma, the film critic of *Yediot Aharanot*, defined this film as "the social, psychological study of a war widow within such a study of the general nation mood of the country throughout the War of Attrition" (Jacob-Arzoni, 1975, p.224).

The movie stars the beautiful Gila Alamagor as Tamar, a war-widow and mother of a young child and Yehoram Gaon as Eli, the best friend of her husband, who continues to keep touch with her as if her husband, an officer killed in action during the 1967 Six Day War, was still alive.

Tamar lives her loneliness in a state of mental siege until the appearance of a bulldozer driver, David, a typical *kibbutznik* (fig.2.26), who brings her love and new hope, only for it to be crushed when he is called up for reserve duty at the Suez Canal. The story ends with the radio news about an incident in which two bulldozer drivers were killed. As Tamar frantically sets out to search for David, the film is intercut with clips of news events, violence, war and rioting. As Kronish argues, Gila Almagor (fig.2.27), both in her role as Tamar and in real life, becomes a symbol for an entire nation in distress. In fact, the film concludes with her putting on make-up on the set of the film as reality creeps in and the crew listens to the news on the radio about Israeli soldiers being killed by terrorists (Kronish, 1996, p.50).

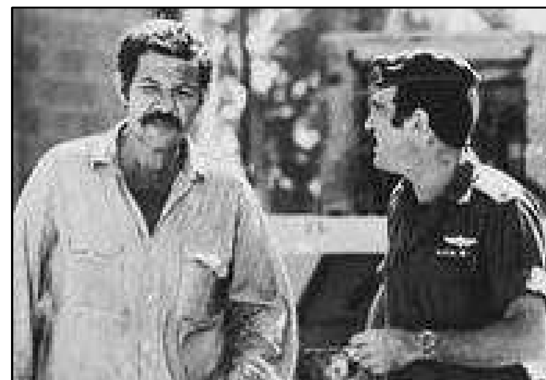

Fig. 2.26 Eli and David in *The Siege*

According to the heroic-nationalist genre Tofano merges dramatic scenes with documentary footage and incorporates radio announcements to create a claustrophobic mood in order to depict, as Ben-Shaul highlights, Israeli society as a whole as being “under siege” (Ben-Shaul, 1997, pp.26-33). Nevertheless, as Neeman points out, this is the first movie in the heroic-nationalist genre that focuses on a female character rather than a male hero, and on issues such as family and intimacy (Neeman, 2001, p.292).

Fig. 2.27 Gila Almagor in *Matzor*

Beyond the under siege-narrative, in fact, another narrative space, which slowly comes to dominate the film, clearly articulates the idea that Israel is primarily a western country and shares ideals of western liberal individualism. The first transition to this space occurs in the busy street of Tel Aviv, where we see Tamar wearing European-style clothes, smoking a cigarette while rock music can be heard in the background. As Ben-Shaul argues, the intercut between the dominant westernized space and the collective space of her husband’s friend shifts as the time develops from implementing the public state of siege to implementing the ideas that military life is different from civilian life, that soldiers and civilians have distinct functions, that ultimately Israel is a western democracy where the army follows and serves civil life, characterized by reflexivity and western cinematic intertextual quotations. As Ben-Shaul put it, “the film progressively, formally and thematically shifts its initial conception of war as siege and the collective social paradigm as its necessary correlate, to a conception of war as part of an international struggle between east and west. This is correlated with an emerging individualistic western oriented paradigm (Ben-Shaul, 1997, pp.28-30).

Talking about the relationship between *ethnoscape* and *bodyscape,* this movie, like all the post-1967 heroic-nationalist films, maintains the same Zionist ideological line as its predecessors. This includes the dichotomy of “good” Israeli protagonists versus “evil” Arab antagonists, focalization through *Sabra* heroes, the suturing of the spectator into a pro-Israeli perspective through point of view shots, and non-diegetic celebratory epic music. However, according to Shohat, the pre-1967 emphasis on Zionist apologetics and on the didactic moralism of the

Bildungsroman subplot is also minimized in the post-1967 films. Rather than have the hero explain his nation's history and justify its stance, the new films present the *Sabra* warrior in his now clearly defined historical role as a kind of military engineer fighting for his homeland (Shohat, 1987, pp. 108-109).

Following the 1967 war, Israeli collective identity was represented in a transformed state, in which the figure of the pioneer was ultimately superseded by the figure of the warrior man of arms. As Neeman argues, the identity and image of the collective group, which is central to the narrative of Israeli films, began to evolve accordingly and the idea of the pioneering group constantly engaged in constructing a socialist and egalitarian new society was supplanted by tales of a company of warriors purportedly engaged in self-defence (Neeman, 2002, p.152).

The heroic-nationalist period of Israeli filmmaking began to draw to a close with the new self-criticism and introspection which followed the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when Israeli films no longer concentrated on heroic missions, but on psychological problems stemming from wartime, including difficulties within IDF.

In the next chapter, I will analyze the *Mekhdal* of the IDF during the Yom Kippur War and how this influenced Israeli politics and Israeli national and personal identity during the years between the Yom Kippur and Lebanon Wars.