1984

The political unification of the Israeli Army

Michael Uhry Newman
Portland State University

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<https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.5465>

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Michael Uhry Newman for the Master of Arts in History presented August 24, 1984.

Title: The Political Unification of the Israeli Army.

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

[REDACTED]

Dr. Jon E. Mandaville

[REDACTED]

Dr. Frederick M. Nunn

[REDACTED]

Dr. David A. Horowitz

[REDACTED]

Dr. Thomas M. Poulsen

The essay charts forty years of Zionist history to illuminate the remarkable evolution of Israel's unified, apolitical army and Israel's "democratic civil-military tradition," forged in the fires of opposing military styles, ideological rivalry, competing underground forces, war and civil war.

During the years 1907-1919, the Yishuv acquired two different military traditions, the Pioneer-Soldier tradition and the Professional

tradition. During 1920-1931, the presence of the British Mandatory power and rising Arab Nationalist violence produced a third military tradition the "Underground," first developed by the early Hagana, woven into the fabric of the Socialist-Zionism. During the period 1931-1936, the Hagana became a focal point in the political polarization of the Zionist movement, producing the Rightist underground, the IZL (the Irgun). By early 1937, the Right and the Left each possessed undergrounds separated by oceans of ideology.

The Arab Revolt and the oscillating British policy in the years 1936-39 militarized the rival Jewish undergrounds. By the summer of 1939, violent, dramatic revolution in Palestine seemed imminent. United against British immigration policies yet divided in their strategies for the future of Jewish Palestine, the IZL and the Hagana faced the choice of forming a united Jewish resistance or of engaging in a futile civil war.

During 1939-1945, the Yishuv struggled to help defeat the Axis powers, defend the Yishuv, promote the immigration of Jewish refugees, and accommodate an oscillating British policy. From this collage emerged distinct underground military bodies of the far Right and of the far Left. The far Left spawned the development of the Palmach, which, despite competition between the far Left bloc and Ben Gurion's MAPAI, became the elite corps of the Hagana. From the militant Right, two schisms evolved, the LHI (the Stern Group) and the IZL under Menachem Begin-- each armed with differing ideology, tactics, and purpose, yet both dedicated to ending the British Mandate. In 1944, the growing strength of the IZL and LHI "revolt" conflicted with the Anglo-Zionist

diplomacy, precipitating a joint Hagana-British campaign, the "Season," against the "dissidents." In 1945, the Season ended in failure, as the official Yishuv waited for the unveiling of post-war British policy.

During the post-war period, 1945-1946, Britain's anti-Zionist policy united all the undergrounds in a "Jewish Resistance Movement." Despite internal tensions, the underground union endured for nine months. But the dramatic events of the summer of 1946 fractured that unity. During 1946-1947, the Hagana-Palmach and the IZL-LHI forces waged independent and conflicting campaigns. But by 1948, escalating Arab-Jewish violence drove the IZL and Hagana-Palmach together, in an uneasy alliance for the sake of "national" survival.

From May 1948 through 1950, the new State of Israel struggled against the Arabs, as Ben Gurion struggled to dissolve the underground organizations. In the spring of 1948, Ben Gurion eliminated the confusion in the Hagana-Palmach command structure, placing himself in the role as political and military leader of Israel. In the summer, the LHI dissolved and the IZL was destroyed in a showdown with the IDF in the "Altalena Affair." Yet the IZL and LHI continued to fight in Jerusalem until the IDF forced their total disbandment in the late summer. Finally, Ben Gurion mustered the political clout to disband the Palmach. As the War of Independence ended, Ben Gurion gained a political mandate to shape the new Army. During 1949-1950, Ben Gurion engineered the IDF into a united and professional army, under the ultimate command of the civilian government. By 1950, the seeds of Israel's "democratic civil-military tradition" were implanted.

The essay utilizes mostly secondary sources and memoirs, weaving

political and military history together into thorough account of the political unification of the Israeli Army.

THE POLITICAL UNIFICATION OF THE ISRAELI ARMY

by

MICHAEL UHRY NEWMAN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
HISTORY

Portland State University

1984

TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH:

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of Michael Uhry Newman
presented August 24, 1984.

[REDACTED]

Dr. Jon E. Mandaville

[REDACTED]

Dr. Frederick M. Nunn

[REDACTED]

Dr. David A. Horowitz

[REDACTED]

Dr. Thomas M. Poulsen

APPROVED:

[REDACTED]

Dr. Bernard V. Burke, Head, Department of History

[REDACTED]

Dr. Jim F. Heath, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

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PREFACE

The essay involves over forty years of Zionist history, a complex history which has been examined, researched, discussed, and written about prolifically. To carve a meaningful and unique thesis from the wealth of historical material, this essay is imbued with several important limitations. The cutting edge of the thesis only grazes such significant topics as British-Zionist relations, Arab-Zionist relations, and Zionist-International politics without thorough examination. Complex and still highly controversial events-- such as the bombing of the King David Hotel, the attack on Deir Yassin, or the Altalena Affair-- are key events to the development of the thesis, but the essay rarely attempts to arrive at a decisive judgment regarding specific details. In the interest of simplicity, only the most essential military and political events are mentioned. The essay also relies on a very traditional historical approach by attributing the opinions, decisions, and actions of a group to their leaders. Within these parameters, with the help of these "limitations," the essay hopes to cut a useful historical channel to explore the political evolution of the Israeli Army.

I wish to extend my thanks to the Portland State University History Department for its assistance and to the faculty for their excellence. I offer my special thanks to my advisor, Dr. Jon Mandaville. And I express my warmest and deepest appreciation to my family and to my wife, Elaine, for their support and love.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The preservation of the representative, civilian government's control over the military structure is the cornerstone of a democratic civil-military tradition, and a democratic civil-military tradition is one of the foundations for a stable, unified democracy. In Israel, this fundamental democratic civil-military tradition persists. Despite six major wars, despite an intense domestic security situation, despite the polarization of Israeli politics, despite the constant involvement of the Israeli population with the military, "the Israeli formula for civil-military relations remains intact." ¹

Israel's democratic civil-military tradition is particularly significant in view of the fact that the Israeli Defense Force, or the IDF, plays such an enormous role in Israeli society. The IDF defends, educates, socializes, and unifies Israel. The IDF remains a symbol of pride for the vast majority of Israelis who, at some level, participate in the armed services. The IDF is a symbol of constancy, of solidarity, of unity. The IDF's role and image in Israeli society clearly contributes to the IDF's emergence as the one of the most powerful small armies in the world. The IDF's character is particularly unusual when compared to the armies of various other young nations which have emerged in the post-World War II period. As Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister and chief architect of the IDF, noted:

Israel is almost the only country in the region...of the Middle East and the wider region of Asia and North Africa where the army plays no role in politics. As we live in a democratic state, every Israeli soldier has the right to vote and the right to be a member of a political party and any other legal organization. But the army itself, as the defense force of the country, sees itself only as an executive instrument of the elected representatives of the people, and they alone can tell the army what to do and what not to do. In this respect, it is, of course, the same as any old-established democratic country in the world, but this, like democracy, is quite an accomplishment for a young country.

The achievement of a unified army under the control of a representative government is remarkable given Israel's circumstances: the continuing threat of war and of terrorism, the constant social and economic crises, and the intensity of political and ideological conflicts. Given the immense popularity of Israeli generals and given that almost the entire society, filled with diverse and uncompromising viewpoints, participates in the army, Israel appears as fertile soil for military corruption, military bullying in the political arena, armed revolt or coup d'états. Yet after over thirty-six years of statehood, the IDF has never truly crossed the line separating civil authority from military responsibility. The military has sometimes abused its power, but governmental and judicial inquiries, and Israel's free press, have often castigated soldiers, commanders, generals, Chiefs of Staff, and Defense Ministers. The Israeli representative government, the Knesset and the Cabinet, retains power and ultimate command over the army. In essence, Israel has successfully established a democratic civil-military tradition.

The establishment of Israel's democratic civil-military tradition appears even more remarkable in the light of Zionist history. Israel's military tradition evolved, not in centuries but in forty years, within

a culture long dispossessed of a military heritage, forged in the fires of opposing military styles, ideological rivalry, competing underground forces, war and civil war.

NOTES I

¹Amos Perlmutter, Military and Politics in Israel: 1967-1977

(London: Frank Cass & Company Ltd., 1969), Vol.II, p2.

²Moshe Perlman, Ben Gurion Looks Back (New York: Simon and

Schuster, 1965), p151.

CHAPTER II

DEFENSE ORIGINS OF LEFT AND RIGHT

Not since the Bar Kochbah revolt in 135-36 C.E. did there exist an independent Jewish army and the image of the Jew as a "Warrior." After the expulsion of the Jews from the Land of Israel, they endured 1800 years in the Diaspora as, more often than not, an oppressed minority dispossessed of the right to own land and subjected to the passions of the ruling majority. Within this context of the "Exile," the Jewish people developed a rich and varied cultural tradition, but no tradition of Jewish soldiership. For generations, lacking rights to own land and to be citizens, Jews found no role as a soldier with no land nor rights to defend. The soldier usually became the symbol of the oppressing majority and rarely a Jewish symbol. But the Zionist movement of the nineteenth century stressed the return of the Jewish people to the land, to till the land and to build upon the land. From the genesis of Zionism there existed the implicit notion that if Jews were to again possess land and autonomy, then they eventually would need to organize themselves as a community to defend their land and their rights.

In Ottoman Palestine of the late nineteenth century few armed Jewish watchmen existed within the scattering of the isolated rural settlements which, along with the small urban religious communities, composed the Jewish Yishuv (settlement). These settlers, particularly the independent farmers, showed little interest defying Ottoman

authority and establishing a cooperative, independent Jewish defense organization. These farmers usually hired Moroccan or Circassian guards to protect their property from robbers and brigands roaming the countryside. The roots of collective Jewish self-defense are found in the first decade of the twentieth century with the coming of the "Second Aliya," composed of Eastern European Jews infused with Socialist-Zionism. Many of these immigrants had participated in revolutionary activities in Russia and the majority were members of the Poale Zion Party (Workers of Zion) established in 1902. The Jews of the "Second Aliya" established collective settlements in the Galilee and Judea based on the belief that the redemption of Jewish people required their return to physical labor and to the soil. These settlements concentrated on the task of developing the soil and their Socialist communities, and initially followed the example of the independent farmers by hiring Arab watchmen. Yet, their commitment to community self-sufficiency, to the "Land," and to creating a new "physical Jew" would eventually lend itself to the creation of organized Jewish self-defense. ¹

In September, 1907, ten men gathered in Jaffa, Yitzak Ben-Zvi, Israel Giladi, and Israel Shochat among them, to establish a society called "Bar Giora" dedicated to the concept of Jewish self-defense and repudiating the practice of hiring non-Jewish defenders. Bar Giora began its defense work at Sejera, in the Galilee, while Shochat traveled to various settlements trying to convert them to the idea of Jewish self-defense; but the vast majority of the Yishuv remained cool to the idea of an illegal Jewish defense organization. In late 1908 the Young

Turk Revolution brought a loosening of Ottoman authority in Palestine which was preceded by widespread violence and crime. The Jewish village of Mescha dismissed its Moroccan guards and hired two members of Bar Giora whose effective defense work strengthened Bar Giora's reputation within the Yishuv. In 1909, Shochat and his comrades expanded the organization to include more settlements and renamed themselves "HaShomar" (the Watchman). ²

By 1910 most of the collective Jewish settlements in the lower Galilee were being protected by HaShomarim cells. By 1914 HaShomarim were hired to protect many collective communities in Samaria and in Judea, and they were even active on several major coastal, independently owned, plantations. At its peak, HaShomar was composed of about 200 members and possessed about 100 men on call for active duty. Regardless of their acceptance of the mercenary-like method of being hired as watchman, HaShomar did so in order to spread their belief in Jewish self-defense. They remained wedded to the ideals of Socialist-Zionism. They considered themselves the vanguard of the activist, nation-building, Left. They were a cohesive group dedicated to Socialism, Jewish Nationalism, and self-defense. Their headquarters at Sejera, in the Galilee, represented a model of Socialist and Jewish Nationalist achievement. Despite their growing numbers and reputation, HaShomar consciously remained a voluntary, nonprofessional security force in keeping with their philosophy that all Jewish farmers were capable of self-defense. Their appeal remained limited: HaShomar's union with Socialist ideology repelled independent farmers, middle-class urbanites, and the religious; and HaShomar's individualist, elitist, and

aggressive tone alienated orthodox Marxists and Pacifists, generating friction between them and many egalitarian communities. Furthermore, HaShomar remained illegal under Turkish law and no single event had occurred to inspire mass Jewish self-defense throughout the Yishuv. ³

When World War I broke out in the summer of 1914, many HaShomarim urged the Turkish government to form Jewish military units in the interest of gaining post-war recognition for Zionism in Istanbul. At first, the Turkish government agreed to a proposal submitted by HaShomarim Ben-Zvi and David Ben Gurion, and began training about forty volunteers near Jerusalem; however, the Turks, wary of Jewish loyalties and connections, preceded to expel about 18,000 Palestinian Jews and arrest many of the HaShomarim. As the war progressed, Turkish policy hardened against the Yishuv. The Jewish community suffered terrible hardships and thousands died of starvation. After the Turks discovered in September, 1917, the espionage network known as "NILI," directed by the Aaronson family and Avshalom Feinberg, which informed on Turkish military activity in the region for British intelligence, only the imminence of the Allied invasion saved the entire Yishuv from Turkish retaliation. Some HaShomarim survived brutal mistreatment in Turkish prisons for the duration of the war, but HaShomar only symbolically survived as an organization until it officially dissolved in May, 1919. Still, the former HaShomarim remained an influential political bloc in the 1920s which continued to advocated a militant, leftist program for the Yishuv. ⁴ Though HaShomar failed to become a mass Jewish self-defense force, it had provided an example of independent Jewish armed resistance, most significantly, amongst the rural collective

settlements. For the entire Yishuv, Bar Giora and HaShomar spawned a rich heroic legacy and cast a new image of the modern "Jewish warrior."

World War I provided many young Zionists with military experience in the British Army and produced much of Zionism's future leadership. Jewish involvement with the British forces began with the approximately 10,000 Palestinian Jews expelled by the Turks in March, 1915 who found asylum in Alexandria, Egypt. Two young Jews, Joseph Trumpeldor, a Russian Army veteran, and Vladimir Jabotinsky, who came from Odessa, joined the refugees in Alexandria to advocate the immediate formation of a "Jewish Legion" to fight for the Allies against the Turks. Both Trumpeldor and Jabotinsky envisioned that Jewish participation in a British conquest of Palestine would obtain the support of the British Empire for the Zionist cause. By the end of 1915, after successfully overcoming stiff resistance from the British military authorities towards the founding of a Jewish Legion, Trumpeldor and Jabotinsky managed to achieve British consent for a transportation unit called the "Zion Mule Corps." A total of 650 Palestinian Jews volunteered for the Zion Mule Corps, including Ben Zvi and David Ben Gurion. Under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel John H. Patterson, the Zion Mule Corps served with distinction in the ill-fated British invasion of Gallipoli.

Throughout 1915-1916, Jabotinsky and Chaim Weizmann, a prominent British scientist who was rapidly gaining stature as Zionism's foremost representative in London, continued to push the British authorities to form a Jewish combat battalion to participate in the inevitable Allied offensive in Palestine. By the end of 1916, the remainder of the Zion Mule Corps gained the status of a "Jewish Legion," but was transferred

to the British Isles to guard the "home front," where it soon disbanded in early 1917, refusing to fight in the Irish Rebellion. Though Jabotinsky and Trumpeldor continued to press for a Jewish combat battalion, the British War Office remained suspicious and hostile to the idea of an Allied Jewish force involved in any way in the Palestine campaign. 5

Yet by mid-1917, Weizmann was gradually drawing support for Zionism and a Jewish Legion in London. In the Spring of 1917, the British War Office finally approved the formation of a Jewish regiment, the 38th Royal Fusiliers, recruited from the Jewish refugees in Alexandria, including 120 of the original Zion Mule Corps. In October the 38th accompanied Allenby in the invasion of Palestine. During the struggle in Palestine, Weizmann achieved the culmination of his diplomatic efforts with British statesmen in London when the Balfour Declaration was proclaimed on November 2, 1917, which promised British support for Zionism and which seemingly, justified Jewish military cooperation with Allenby's forces. By December Allenby's troops conquered most of Palestine including Jerusalem, but the Turks still possessed the north and Allenby's offensive stalled.

While the British prepared for the future northern offensive, Jabotinsky concentrated on recruiting Jews from the Palestine community which was still recovering from Turkish wartime occupation. By that summer, Jabotinsky and other Legionnaires managed to assemble over 1,000 recruits from the Palestine community. From the Palestine recruits and from over 2,700 Jewish volunteers from England, Canada, and America, the 39th and the 40th Battalions were also formed in the winter and spring

of 1918. In the spring, the Jewish battalions were assigned to guard the Jordan Valley and, in June, the 38th was transferred to Jerusalem. At this stage, Jewish troops amounted to more than 5,000 men or over one-sixth of Allenby's total force. ⁶

In response to the pleas of Patterson, the British War Office reluctantly permitted the Jewish battalions to participate in the northern offensive launched in the fall of 1918. As the battle drew to a close, Trumpeldor envisioned the Jewish Legion as an essential tool to develop the Yishuv, while Jabotinsky perceived of the Legion as the instrument for obtaining influence with the British Government. Yet, with Allenby's victorious offensive, Anglo-Jewish military cooperation had reached its zenith. Soon after the British signed the armistice with Turkey on October 31, British collaboration with the Jewish soldiers became a liability to British occupation policy. Despite the protests of Zionist leaders, the Jewish Legion underwent a process of swift demobilization, completed in the summer of 1919. Nevertheless, the Jewish Legion experience had given military to training thousands of young Zionists and instilled a British military mentality into many who emerged as the post-war leaders of the Yishuv. ⁷

By the end of World War I, two distinct military traditions were already cemented into the foundations of the Yishuv: the HaShomar or "Pioneer" tradition residing primarily within many collective settlements and the Jewish Legion or "Professional" tradition inculcated into many who fought with the British Army. The HaShomar tradition merged together Socialist-Zionism and Jewish self-defense, in the fashion of the G'dud HaAvodah (The Labor Legion), armed labor battalions

who extended Jewish settlement into hostile regions, which originated in 1917 under the leadership and inspiration of Trumpeldor. The G'dud HaAvodah stressed the primacy of the "Pioneer-Soldier" in Zionism's "conquest of labor" and "conquest of the land." The Jewish Legion tradition, advocated by Jabotinsky, fostered the regard for non-political, professional soldiers dedicated solely to national self-defense. Jabotinsky advocated a Jewish Army recruited from the entire Yishuv population, to serve to make the Yishuv a valuable ally to the British and, ultimately, to guard a Jewish nation. Yet these military-political outlooks remained dormant as British occupation of Palestine solidified, promising imperial authority and protection to the Yishuv. 8

Post-World War I Palestine witnessed the establishment of the British Mandate, the formation of the Yishuv's community government under the auspices of the Mandatory regime, and the intensification of Arab Nationalism. The Yishuv's representative bodies, the newly formed "Zionist Executive in Palestine" (later called the Jewish Agency) and the "Vaad Leumi"(National Assembly), because of their proximity to the Mandatory government and because of the faith of leaders like Weizmann, believed in Britain's commitment to building a Jewish National Home and that British forces in Palestine would safeguard the Yishuv. The Arab riots of 1919-1921 shocked the Yishuv which had complacently depended upon the Mandatory Government's protection.

The Arab Nationalist wave of violence which began in the Galilee in late 1919 caught Jewish northern settlements off guard. The 300-400 Jewish Legonnaires who remained in the British Army were confined to

their barracks, while former Legionnaires who tried to organize an improvisational defense of the Yishuv were often arrested by British Mandatory Police. In February of 1920, attacks of Arab guerrillas intensified in the Galilee. Northern settlements improvised independent and disorganized defenses. Among those killed in the attack on Tel Hai was Trumpeldor, regarded as the proto-type of the modern Jewish "Pioneer-Soldier."

At the same time, since the British remained unwilling to forcefully suppress the violence and most of the Yishuv leadership remained uncertain of how to react within the context of the Mandatory regime, Jabotinsky initiated the formation of former Legionnaires and other followers into the Yishuv's first "Hagana," or defense group. Jabotinsky's Hagana countered Arab violence in April by defending the Jewish side of Jerusalem. But when Jabotinsky's Hagana went on the offensive, storming the gates of Jerusalem's old city, they were stopped and arrested by the British authorities.

For his leadership efforts in defending Jerusalem in the spring of 1920, Jabotinsky's political followers consider him the "founder of the Hagana." Although his defense group of the spring of 1920 was not the direct parent organization of what would later be called the "Hagana," it was the first showing of urban self-defense within the Yishuv. Jabotinsky's defense efforts did exemplify the need and the possibilities for Jewish self-defense in spite of the Mandatory presence and opposition; however, the urban middle-class, their livelihood seemingly entwined with their Arab neighbors and with Mandatory authority, remained reluctant to engage in organizing illegal

self-defense. Even after the bloody riots in Jaffa, in May of 1921, which claimed 47 Jewish lives and wounded 148 until the British Police finally suppressed the violence, the Jewish urban middle-class remained unconvinced by Jabotinsky's example and failed to mobilize an underground defense group. ⁹

Meanwhile, the mounting Jewish deaths and casualties in the countryside, where the Mandatory Police proved either unwilling or unable to offer adequate protection, forced the leaders of the Yishuv's rural collective settlements to react. In June 1920, the Achdut HaAvodah Party, composed mostly of constituents from the former Poeli Zion Party under the leadership of Ben-Gurion and representing the majority of the rural collective settlements, established a Defense Committee which allocated funds for the procurement of arms and the training of officers. The Achdut HaAvodah committee, headed by Eliyahu Golomb and Dov Hoz, envisioned broad-based "Workers' Militias" organized at the local level, among the various collective settlements and labor unions, on a purely voluntary basis and lacking any centralized authority. The scheme appealed particularly to the collective rural settlements, isolated from the protection of the Mandatory police forces, because the scheme followed in the spirit of the HaShomar tradition, easily meshing with the structure of Socialist-Zionism.

As the largest party within the "Histadrut," (the general federation of labor founded in 1920, composed of both socialist and non-socialist unions throughout the Yishuv), the Achdut HaAvodah Party eventually gained marginal financial support for their defense group from the Histadrut. At the same time, factions of G'dud HaAvodah and

ex-HaShomarim challenged the Defense Committee, attempting to establish a more militant defense organization and direct the Yishuv down a more Marxist-revolutionary path. But Ben Gurion, Golomb, and the moderates prevailed within the Histadrut. By June of 1921, the militant far Left accepted the authority of the Defense Committee, which became loosely tied to the Histadrut and, therefore, to a relatively broad political base.

Despite a lack of sufficient funds and chronic arms procurement problems, the early Hagana began training officers, purchasing illegal weapons, and building secret armories by the end of 1920, under the command of Yitzhak Sadeh and Golomb. But since Palestine remained relatively peaceful in the years 1922-1928, the early Hagana remained small and subordinate to the concern for agricultural development. The early Hagana remained localized, with no mobile units and with an entirely defensive military posture, dependent on the socialist settlements for funds, weapons caches, and manpower. From its inception, the Hagana was rooted in the rural collectives and in the Socialist-Zionist movement. 10

Because of its association with the Achdut HaAvodah Party and the collective settlements, the early Hagana encountered opposition from different sources. Some smaller parties of the far Left opposed the early Hagana on pacifist principles or because some believed that Jewish militancy interfered with the goal of international proletariat solidarity. The religious parties felt uncomfortable with the entire notion of the Jewish militancy as a product of the "abhorrent" secular-Zionist culture. But by far the strongest resistance to the

early Hagana came from the conservative urban middle-class and right-wing parties which feared the emergence of a "Red Militia" germinating in the rural socialist collectives. The violence of 1919-1921 illuminated a profound gulf in self-defense attitudes within the Yishuv among political and regional lines. The opposition to a unified Jewish underground defense organization was symptomatic of the deep divisions within the Yishuv and the Zionist movement over Zionism's political-social-economic goals. ¹¹

Indeed by the 1920s, the polarity of the Zionist Movement, between the Right and the Left, began to emerge. The dichotomy became accentuated within the Yishuv by both the growth of the Labor Movement, pro-socialist in varying degrees, and the growth of a non-socialist middle-class. The "Third Aliya," 1919-1925, added thousands of Eastern European Jews, committed to Socialist-Zionism and agricultural labor, to the ranks of the Yishuv. This group, who regarded themselves as the elite cadre of Socialist-Zionism, had a tremendous impact on the development of institutions of the Zionist Left; in particular, the formation of HaKibbutz HaMeuchad (United Kibbutz Movement) which swiftly became the largest Socialist-Agricultural movement and the most enthusiastic advocate for vigilant self-defense units of the Hagana based in the collective settlements: a military-political program descending directly from the HaShomar tradition. ¹²

The Third Aliya also contained thousands of mostly Polish Jews of middle-class backgrounds who settled in the three major cities: Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem. This urban middle-class organized non-socialist unions which joined the Histadrut, and formed centralist

or right-wing parties represented in the Vaad Leumi and in the WZO, the World Zionist Organization. The largest rightist party, the Revisionist Party, founded in 1925 by Jabotinsky, opposed the posture of the WZO towards the British Mandate and the influence of the socialist parties upon the character and destiny of the Yishuv. Jabotinsky attacked the "Practical Zionist" guidelines set by WZO President Weizmann, of the centralist General Zionist Party, for the gradual development of the Yishuv based on land purchases in Palestine from funds collected from the contributions of World Jewry, under the protection and authority of the Mandatory regime. Jabotinsky and the Revisionists advocated "Political Zionism," pressuring Britain politically to facilitate a massive Jewish immigration to Palestine and demanding full Anglo-Zionist partnership in establishing a Jewish state which would be politically and economically allied to the capitalistic West. The Revisionist platform called for Jewish hegemony over "greater Palestine" both sides of Jordan River (including Transjordan) enforced by a legal, professional, national Jewish Army: a political-military program descending from the Jewish Legion tradition. ¹³

The wave of Arab Nationalist violence which struck Palestine in 1929 again caught the Yishuv unprepared and overturned many of popular assumptions about defense. The British Mandatory forces, offguard, responded to the violence after most of the damage to lives and property had been done. London's political response attempted to appease Arab Nationalists, symbolized by the Passfield White Paper of 1930, which restricted Jewish immigration and land purchasing by the Zionist movement, apparently refuting the promises implicit in the Balfour

Declaration. Largely because of Weizmann's diplomacy, the Passfield White Paper was revoked, but the episode illustrated to the Yishuv at large that Great Britain possessed her own interests in Palestine apart from Zionist aspirations. The unmistakable shift of British policy triggered a growing awareness that, on critical matters of community survival, the Mandatory government could not be relied upon and that the Yishuv must become more self-reliant.

The 1929 riots revealed the inadequacy of the Hagana as developed in the early 1920s. Without proper coordination of units, training, and arms, local Hagana units stationed at the rural settlements managed to repel most attacks in the countryside, but they could not prevent the slaughters in Hebron and Safad, nor the attacks on Jewish businesses in Jerusalem and in Tel Aviv. Both sides of the political spectrum voiced support for expanding the Yishuv's self-defense. ¹⁴

The Histadrut, which had assumed increasing responsibility for funding the Hagana, requested the Jewish Agency to form a Defense Committee composed of representatives from all political parties in proportion to their strength. In theory, the proposal's approval created a "National Command," a Yishuv-wide, underground defense organization under the legally elected Yishuv government. In reality, the Hagana remained under the sponsorship of the Histadrut. Ben Gurion, then Secretary-General of the Histadrut, and Chaim Arlosoroff, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, called for the enlargement of the Hagana in the settlements and in the cities. In 1930, the Hagana solicited funds directly from the WZO Congress in Geneva. Despite the growing strength of the Left in Palestine, in the

Histadrut and in the Vaad Leumi, the power in the WZO in the early 1930s still rested with Weizmann and the centralist General Zionists. The General Zionists still believed in the ultimate protection of the British Mandate and stressed the financing of the Yishuv's economic, demographic, and social development over defense spending. In addition, the General Zionists, supported by the right-wing parties, objected to giving the Socialists additional military power and a monopoly over the Yishuv's defense. The Center and the Right successfully blocked the proposal. ¹⁵

The Hagana remained financially tied to the Histadrut which was increasingly dominated by the Socialist-Zionist Left. The failure of the Hagana to gain the financial backing of the WZO triggered an effort by former HaShomar militants to force the Histadrut to split from the WZO. Ben Gurion, Golomb, and other moderates defeated this proposition, but these tensions between the Left and the WZO at large damaged the Yishuv-wide appeal of the Hagana. The Hagana continued to suffer from a shortage of funds, from a difficulty recruiting new immigrants, and, with few exceptions, from problems with establishing units in urban areas. The Socialist collectives remained the Hagana's strongholds, particularly the collective settlements of Kibbutz HaMeuhad (United Kibbutz Movement), and the Hagana's "National" Headquarters consisted of one small office in Tel Aviv. While the Hagana did manage to recruit some non-Socialist, defense-minded, urbanites, they generally saw it as an auxiliary police force for those times when Mandatory protection failed; whereas the rural Socialists viewed the Hagana as the nucleus of the Yishuv's defense. The Hagana, by attempting to solicit defense

funds from the WZO and establishing a "National Command" under the Jewish Agency, had taken the first steps toward creating a unified defense force to protect the entire Yishuv; however, the Hagana, still linked to the collective settlements for manpower and to the Histadrut for funds, remained entrenched within the Socialist-Zionist Movement. ¹⁶

The Hagana's entrenchment in Socialist-Zionism caused a rupture of the organization in 1931. Ignited by a controversy in the Jerusalem branch of the Hagana between Socialists and non-Socialists over tactics in response to Arab rioting and a secret weapons cache of Hagana weapons and ammunition, the majority of the non-Socialists split from the Hagana and formed a separate defense organization called "Hagana B". The Hagana B unit in Jerusalem was soon joined by units in Safad, Haifa, and Tel Aviv, eventually amounting to some 2500 members. Under the leadership of Avraham Tehomi, Hagana B tried to maintain a non-political posture, in the Professional-Jewish Legion tradition, and avoid any alliance with a specific party or bloc.

Yet, constantly threatened by the Hagana to return their weapons and to disband, and without a political platform, Hagana B remained an isolated, ill-equipped, and ineffectual force. Remaining politically neutral proved impossible. Desperate for funds, Tehomi contacted Jabotinsky in Europe to suggest a military organization backed by the Revisionist party, but Jabotinsky still envisioned a legal Jewish Army sponsored by the British and rejected the scheme. Tehomi failed to recruit many troops from the unaffiliated rural and urban middle-class, while groups of "Betar," the Revisionist youth movement, in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem responded enthusiastically. Eventually, Tehomi signed a

recruitment and cooperative agreement with Betar cells. Since most of his troops were General Zionists, Mizrachi (religious), and Betarim or Revisionists, Tehomi could not prevent Hagana B's gradual drift to the Right. The formation of Hagana B, and its subsequent move towards the Right, further emphasized the Hagana's identification with the Left, weakened the Hagana's platform to serve as the sole "National" defense organization, and symbolized the growing polarization of the Socialists and non-Socialists in the Yishuv. ¹⁷

In the 1930s, the Socialist-Zionist movement continued growing in numbers and political influence. The world political climate favored the enthusiastic growth of Socialist movements. Both the Fourth Aliya (1925-1930) and the Fifth Aliya (1930-1938) brought thousands of Socialist-Zionists from Eastern Europe who boosted the strength of the agricultural collectives and Socialist labor unions in the developing cities, so that the strength of Socialist-Zionism expanded beyond rural-urban lines. By the mid-1930s, the labor parties represented the largest bloc in both the WZO and the Vaad Leumi. In 1933, the Labor bloc accounted for 44% of the seats in the WZO. The appeal of the Labor Movement was broadened by the creation in 1930 of the MAPAI party, a result of the merger of the two largest Socialist parties in the Yishuv, Avdot HaAvodah and Hapoel HaTzair. In 1931 MAPAI captured 47% of the vote in the Vaad Leumi. Under the leadership of Ben Gurion and Arlosoroff, MAPAI became less oriented towards an orthodox Socialist ideology and more oriented towards Zionist-Nationalist concerns, summarized in Ben Gurion's motto, "from a class to a nation." By 1941, MAPAI was composed of 20,000 members, 65% of whom came from rural

settlements and 35% from the cities. Ben Gurion viewed himself as a "synthetic" Zionist, who welded together a coordinated political and practical program. Ben Gurion led a broad coalition of Socialist-Nationalist-Zionists under the banner of MAPAI which dominated Yishuv politics for three decades, and which also dominated the leadership of the Hagana. ¹⁸

Paralleling the growth of the Labor Movement in the early 1930s, the Hagana managed to increase illegal arms purchases, placed local units under a regional command, formalized its officer training, and, perhaps most importantly, instated training in field-defense rather than static defense behind fixed positions. Mobile military tactics implied the Hagana's national, rather than strictly local, security concerns. Behind the competent leadership of men like Golomb and Yitshak Sadeh, the Hagana slowly overcame the problems of an underground defense organization, riding on the shoulders of the growing Socialist-Zionist movement. ¹⁹

The 1930s also witnessed the continued growth of the Revisionist Party both in Palestine and in the Diaspora. The Fifth Aliya brought middle and upper-class Polish and German Jews, allowed to escape Nazi oppression until 1938, who settled in urban centers of Palestine and boosted the ranks of right-wing parties. The Revisionist Party strengthened its roots with the development of Jabotinsky's Betar youth movement, which grew swiftly in the 1930s, numbering 78,000 members in twenty-six different countries by 1938. The movement emphasized military education and training, party discipline and uniforms, and mass gymnastics and processions, very much in the style of the great Fascist

movements sweeping the world. Yet Jabotinsky, Betar, and the Revisionists were not Fascists, for they were democratic in ideology and in practice; but their emphasis on industrial and entrepreneurial development of the Yishuv, on a "maximalist" vision for a Jewish State, and on the alliance of Jewish Palestine to "Western Capitalism" placed them at odds with Socialist-Zionism. ²⁰

In the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine and in the WZO, mirroring the international political climate, fear and hostility fermented between Right and Left, between the Socialist-Zionist movement and the Revisionist movement. Socialist-Zionists considered the Revisionists to be "Fascists," and the Revisionists considered the Socialist-Zionists "Bolsheviks." In June of 1933, Arlosoroff's murder intensified the hatred between the Left and the Right. Although the three Revisionists accused of the crime, Avraham Stavsky, Zvi Rosenblatt, and Abba Ahimer, were tried and acquitted by a Mandatory court, the Leftist press and leadership vehemently condemned Jabotinsky, Betar, and the Revisionists. The suspicion and hatred ran so deeply following the Arlosoroff murder that the Labor parties ostracised the Revisionists from the 1933 WZO Congress. Immigration certificates, distributed by the Jewish Agency, were refused to Betarim. Refusing to recognize the WZO's authority, Revisionists applied directly to the British officials for certificates. The WZO countered with economic sanctions against the Revisionists while Jabotinsky ordered his followers to boycott WZO funds and institutions. Labor disputes between Socialist and non-Socialist unions intensified. Betar and Socialist youths fought in the streets. Yet in the constant, and crucial, propaganda war, with both Right and

Left vying for the Yishuv's support, the Left controlled the more established media apparatus: printing presses, newspapers, and radio stations. The Jewish Agency possessed official status granted by the British and the backing of Zionism's international fund raising apparatus, the "Jewish National Fund" and the "National Fund." The Zionist "establishment" in Palestine successfully forced Jabotinsky into the role of an outsider. ²¹ "The unrelenting social and economic hostility between the two groups was never to be dissipated, not even in the most critical moments of national survival." ²²

During 1934-1935, there were attempts at reconciliation between the Revisionists and Labor. In 1934, Jabotinsky and Ben Gurion met in London to discuss a conciliatory agreement between the Revisionists and the Labor Movement. They reached an agreement based on : an understanding that all parties must refrain from warfare, slander, libel, and insult, and confine themselves to ideological discussion; a compromise between the Histadrut and the newly founded "National Workers Federation," the Revisionist's trade and labor union, concerning labor disputes, strikes, and arbitration; and the suspension of the two year boycott on the funding for the Revisionist Party and immigration certificates for Revisionists-Betarim. The agreement was ratified by the Revisionists. But Yitzhak Tabenkin, leader of Kibbutz HaMeuchad which was rapidly gaining influence within the Histadrut, had formed a coalition with the left-wing parties, HaShomar HaTzair and Left Poale Zion; this far Left bloc was disenchanted with the compromises of Ben Gurion and MAPAI, which they saw as a betrayal of the Socialist-Pioneering tradition. Tabenkin's far Left coalition forced

the Histadrut to reject the Ben Gurion-Jabotinsky agreement in 1935. The rift between Right and Left could not easily be bridged. ²³

The Arlosoroff murder and the ensuing propaganda battle, coupled with the rise of anti-Semitic Fascism in Europe, diminished the popularity for the Right within the Yishuv. In the 1934 elections of delegates to the WZO Congress, the Revisionists received only 11% of the vote compared to 49% for the Labor parties. Unwilling to defer to the power of Socialist-Zionism in the WZO, as some non-Socialist parties did in the interest of unity, Jabotinsky organized a separate institutional structure to present a constant political-ideological challenge to the "establishment" of the WZO. After a referendum held by the Revisionist Party in 1935, the majority followed Jabotinsky to form the New Zionist Organization, or NZO, while a small minority, represented by the United Zionist-Revisionist Party remained in the WZO. The NZO, organized along the same democratic lines as the WZO, eventually represented a world constituency of over 713,000 members, even larger than the WZO with 635,000 members, though most of the NZO's support resided in the Diaspora. ²⁴ Jabotinsky achieved complete emancipation from the discipline of the WZO, the Jewish Agency, the Vaad Leumi, and the Histadrut. Conciliation had failed and the political gulf between the Left and the Right widened.

Disenchanted with Weizmann's "minimalistic" approach to the Yishuv's development, convinced that the British must be pressured to establish a Jewish State, and prophetically sensing the need to save European Jewry from growing anti-Semitism, Jabotinsky and the NZO adopted a platform calling for immediate mass Jewish immigration to

Palestine and the development of a military organization capable of achieving those ends by force. The activist Right found the seed for such an organization in the Hagana B.

By the mid-1930s, Hagana B, renamed "Irgun Z'vai Leumi," (National Military Organization) or IZL, was dominated by Revisionists and Betarim. Jabotinsky suggested to the IZL leadership that the organization be brought under party discipline and profit from the NZO's backing of funds and manpower. Hagana B under Tehomi had not decisively broken with the Hagana's policies and had been careful to exclude pro-Jabotinsky Revisionists from positions of command. In 1935, Tehomi attempted to rejoin the Hagana. The organizations remained reunited for three weeks until a incident involving the stoning of a Betar parade triggered the nullification of the agreement. By the spring of 1937, Tehomi became convinced of the need for Hagana unity in critical times. A power-struggle ensued between a Tehomi led faction and a more militant faction committed to Jabotinsky. Tehomi tried to merge the entire organization with the Hagana, but the militant Betarim and Revisionists had become the majority of the corps. The result was a split in April between Tehomi's faction of 500-1000 men who returned to the Hagana fold in July of 1937 and the remaining 1500-2000 men who composed the pro-Jabotinsky IZL led by young militants such as Avraham Stern and David Raziell. IZL became the military organization of the militant Right which possessed a program and a strategy independent and distinct from the Yishuv "establishment" and the Hagana. 25

During the years 1907-1919, the Yishuv acquired two fundamentally different military traditions, the Pioneer-Soldier tradition and the

Professional tradition. During 1920-1931, these two traditions remained subordinate to the presence of the Mandatory power. Rising Arab Nationalist violence threatened the Yishuv and produced a third military tradition, the "Underground," first developed by the early Hagana. The small, early Hagana became woven into the fabric of the Socialist-Zionism. Hence, during the period 1931-1936, the political orientation of the Jewish underground became a focal point in the political-ideological polarization of the Zionist movement. By early 1937, the Right and the Left each possessed underground armies separated by oceans of ideology and loyalties.

Notes II

¹ Howard M. Sacher, A History of Israel (New York: Knopf, Inc., 1979), pp. 67-80; and Gunther E. Rothenberg, The Anatomy of the Israeli Army (New York: Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1979), p. 20.

² Sacher, pp. 80-81; and Amos Perlmutter, Military and Politics in Israel: Nation Building and Expansion (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1969), pp. 3-4; and Rothenberg, p. 21.

³ Sacher, p. 81; and Perlmutter, pp. 4-5; and Rothenberg, p. 21; and William Frankel, Israel Observed (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980), p. 267.

⁴ Sacher, p. 213; and Perlmutter, p. 5; and Rothenberg, p. 21; and Frankel, p. 267.

⁵ Sacher, pp. 91-92; and Perlmutter, p. 6; and Rothenberg, p. 22.

⁶ Sacher pp. 112-115; and Rothenberg, p. 22; and Perlmutter, p. 8.

⁷ Sacher pp. 112-115; and Rothenberg, p. 22; and Perlmutter, p. 8.

⁸ Perlmutter, p. 3 and p. 5.

⁹ Sacher, p. 123 and p. 184; and Joseph B. Schechtman, Fighter and Prophet: The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story, The Last Years (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company Inc., 1961), p. 442; and Rothenberg, p. 22.

¹⁰ Sacher, p. 213; and Rothenberg, p. 24; and Perlmutter, p. 6 and pp. 12-13.

¹¹ Rothenberg, p. 23.

¹² Perlmutter, p. 15.

¹³ Sacher, p. 185; and Schechtman, p. 443.

- 14 Perlmutter, pp. 13-14.
- 15 Rothenberg, p. 24; and Perlmutter, p. 13.
- 16 Sacher, p. 214; and Rothenberg, p. 24; and Perlmutter, pp. 13-14.
- 17 Edward Luttwak and Dan Horowitz, The Israeli Army (London: Cox and Wagman Ltd., 1975), p. 9; and Eitan Haber, Menachem Begin (New York: Delacorte Press, 1978), pp. 88-89; and Walter Laqueur, A History of Zion (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p. 374; and Schechtman, p. 443.
- 18 Sacher, p. 159; and Peretz Merhav, The Israeli Left (London: A.S. Barnes and Company Inc., 1980), pp. 102-103.
- 19 Rothenberg, pp. 24-25.
- 20 Laqueur, p. 374; and Luttwak and Horowitz, p. 10.
- 21 Haber, p. 42; and Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, The Origins of Israeli Polity, Israel under the Mandate (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 34 and p. 46.
- 22 Sacher, p. 188.
- 23 Perlmutter, p. 16; and Merhav, p. 104.
- 24 Haber, p. 43; and Horowitz and Lissak, pp. 102-103; and Sacher, p. 184.
- 25 Luttwak and Horowitz, p. 12; and Samuel Katz, Days of Fire (Garden City: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1968) pp. 14-16; and Haber, pp. 88-91; and Schechtman, p. 447.

CHAPTER III

GROWING MILITARIZATION OF THE UNDERGROUNDS: 1936-1939

The Arab Nationalist violence which erupted in 1936-1939 radically altered the policies of the British Mandatory authorities, the attitude of the Yishuv to the Mandate, and the posture of the Jewish underground military organizations, the Hagana and the IZL. The Mandatory Police Forces were again caught offguard and found that they were unable to restore order without the aid of the Yishuv. In London, there was a growing consensus that some new formula for Palestine must be introduced to preserve wider British interests in the Middle East. Within the Yishuv, the Arab revolt of 1936-1939 served as a catalyst to convince the majority of the Jewish population that a permanent self-defense organization was fundamental to the Yishuv's survival.

As deaths and casualties mounted in early 1936, the Mandatory regime decided that they must ally themselves with the Yishuv, particularly in the countryside, in order to inexpensively and efficiently maintain law and order. The centralists like Weizmann and moderate leftists like Ben Gurion had, since the Balfour Declaration of 1917, considered the British as the legitimate partners of the Zionist Movement; therefore, they eagerly adopted the proposal for joint Anglo-Jewish defense efforts. In addition, the Jewish Agency already possessed the basis for a legal defense force: the underground Hagana. ¹

In July, 1936, the Mandatory government constructed a "Supernumary Police Force," or SPF, composed of approximately 22,000 Jews, who mostly were, or were in the process of becoming, associated with the Hagana. The SPF represented the "legal Hagana;" not the Jewish Army Jabotinsky had advocated for guarding Palestine's frontiers, but legal defense units to protect individual settlements and communities. Although the British provided only 8,000 rifles and minimal training, thousands of young men of the Yishuv received military training, light weapons, and experience from their participation in the SPF. The legal SPF provided an opportune cover for the continued development of the Hagana. The British military generally understood that Anglo-Zionist military cooperation allowed the Yishuv to further its own self-defense capacities, but the Mandatory needed an ally, so from 1936-1938 the British accepted the Hagana's "quasi-legal" status. ²

During the rioting of 1936, even the SPF often proved insufficient to protect Jewish communities. The official Jewish leadership, including Weizmann, recognized that the Hagana needed to expand its operations independently, beyond the joint Anglo-Jewish forces. In 1936 the WZO agreed to allocate sufficient funds for the Hagana to purchase weapons, to hire permanent salaried officers, and to train corps for a permanent "National" Hagana. By 1938, the "Kofer Hayishur" (Community Fund) of the Jewish Agency and the Vaad Leumi contributed directly to the Hagana.

Backed politically and financially, the Hagana Command organized the expanded Hagana office in the Histadrut building in Tel Aviv. The Hagana leadership evolved into an army's General Staff: recruiting from

kibbutzim, private settlements, and cities; training officers and reserves; improving communications and publishing military literature; operating clandestine arms and supply purchases; instituting a small armament industry and an intelligence system; and independently raising funds in Palestine and abroad. Golomb and Ben Gurion drafted the Hagana's constitution which stated that the Hagana was " a general Yishuv confederation which in all of its activities stands above class and party and is only responsible to the higher national authorities." Although the Hagana remained fused to Socialist-Zionism and dominated by the leadership of MAPAI and Ben Gurion, the Hagana was founded in the name of "national defense." Infused with the support of the WZO and the British, the Hagana began to assume the proportions of an inclusive, Yishuv-wide defense force. ³

Under the Hagana's "quasi-legal" status, the British accepted, and even encouraged, the Hagana's initiative in combating Arab guerrillas in the countryside from 1936 to 1938. In the summer of 1936, Yitshak Sadeh formed "Nodadot" (patrols) to track guerrillas back to their bases. Sadeh advised his troops, "don't wait for the Arab marauder. Don't wait to defend the kibbutz. Go after him, move on to the offensive." ⁴ In the autumn of 1937, the British approved the formation of mobile units which received more extensive training and weaponry. The Hagana command authorized Sadeh to form mobile units called "FOSH" (Field Companies) recruited from the ranks of the "Jewish Settlement Police," the rural branches of the SPF. Following in the "Pioneer-Soldier" tradition of HaShomar and G'dud HaAvodah, Sadeh's more militant stance attracted militant young men and women from the rural collective settlements,

predominately from the Socialist Kibbutzim and Moshavim (less structured collective settlements) of HaKibbutz HaMeuchad. Aided by a large influx of youth to kibbutzim and Moshavim in the late 1930s, Sadeh galvanized the settlements into a defense network. Under Sadeh, using such tactics as erecting overnight "Fortress and Tower" settlements, the Kibbutz and Moshav youth became the "vanguard" of the Hagana's "offensive" defense. From this corps of young, militant Socialist-Zionists, under the guidance of Sadeh, emerged the elite, "crack-troops," of the Hagana. ⁵

By 1938, London decided that the Arab Revolt must be suppressed more forcefully and more speedily. The British sent Captain Charles Orde Wingate to organize a commando unit to launch offensive strikes against Arab guerrillas in Palestine and the surrounding region. Drawing from Sadeh's FOSH troops and British Troops, Wingate mobilized an Anglo-Jewish commando team known as "Special Night Squads," or SNS. Between May and September of 1938, Wingate and the SNS led raids into Syria and Lebanon, pacified the Galilee, and, most importantly for the British, secured the Iraq-Haifa oil pipeline. As violence ebbed in 1939, the British dissolved the FOSH units and the SNS, and withdrew Wingate because his adamant pro-Zionist sympathies contradicted those of his military superiors and a fluid British foreign policy. Yet the tactics and personality of Wingate left an indelible impression on young Jewish commanders like Yigael Allon and Moshe Dayan. ⁶

The offensive tactics employed by FOSH and SNS under Sadeh and Wingate effectively helped suppress the Arab Revolt, yet these tactics represented a departure from previous Hagana policy and complicated the position of the Jewish Agency. In 1936, the Jewish Agency and the

Hagana adopted the official position of "Havlaga," or restraint, towards the Arab riots and attacks. The policy of Havlaga posited that Hagana troops would return fire and hold their defensive positions, but that Hagana units would refrain from initiating "counterterror." The Hagana command's policy of Havlaga forbade "the murder of women, children, the passerby and innocent Arabs." ⁷ Havlaga found its roots in the "Practical" Zionist orientation of Ben Gurion, Golomb, and the Hagana Leadership. Settlement, Aliya, and socio-political development were the cornerstones of Zionism. Defense was a reality in Zionism's survival but it represented a secondary front. Golomb noted that Zionism should "not be accomplished by force alone." Nationhood required an "independent Jewish force" for reasons of "political necessity" and for reasons of national psychology and culture, "to turn the oppressed Jew of the Diaspora into an independent Hebrew in his land," ⁸ yet Jewish historical and European revolutionary experience exemplified the dangers of abusive military power. The protagonists of Havlaga wished to steer Zionism and the Hagana off that path. As Ben Gurion saw the period of 1936-1939:

This was a period when ...any objective historian would say that the Hagana stood the supreme test. Not only did it preserve our position in the country, but it enabled us to strengthen it and to extend our settlement and development. Its watchwords were restraint in the face of Arab terror and expansion of our constructive activities as the best answer to Arabs' attempts to stunt our development. Restraint did not mean passivity. Its call was to fight terrorist gangs and never to kill an innocent Arab...I was most firm in turning my face resolutely against indiscriminate violence.

Guided by Havlaga, the Hagana adopted the slogan of "Tohar HaNeshek," or "Purity of Arms," which emphasized the political capabilities of a limited defense posture. Weizmann and Ben Gurion

viewed Havlaga as "morally attractive and politically useful" in making a positive impression on British and world public opinion for Zionism. Havlaga was based on the belief that the Arab masses did not support the revolt, so massive retaliation by the forces of the Yishuv would prove counter-productive. The proponents of Havlaga feared that offensive tactics by the Hagana against Arab guerrillas would provide a pretext for the Mandatory regime to close off legal Jewish immigration at a critical time of rising anti-Semitism in Europe. Ben Gurion and Weizmann believed that the futility of the Arab Revolt and Havlaga worked to the advantage of the Yishuv by solidifying the partnership of Zionism and the British. Because of the British partnership, from 1936-1938, the Hagana had been developing into a formidable national military force. Ben Gurion and Weizmann stressed that Havlaga indirectly benefited the general development of the Yishuv's independent strength by cementing an Anglo-Zionist alliance. ¹⁰

While Havlaga appeared to offer Zionism a strong political and moral foundation in the international political arena, the difficulties of adhering to Havlaga under the cruel realities and constant pressures of warfare generated intense controversy within the Hagana Command and the Jewish Agency. The growing concern for military-security realities over political expediency was symbolized by the appointment in July of 1938 of Yohanan Rattner as Chief of the "National Command." Rattner was a military man, not a politician, by training and temperament, and less concerned with ideology than with security. The more militant leaders of the Hagana, such as Sadeh, pointed to the highly effective, offensive tactics of FOSH and SNS which by the late 1930s had corroded the meaning

of Havlaga. Still, Ben Gurion, as leader of the MAPAI, exercised the strongest influence within the Labor Movement, the Jewish Agency, and, ultimately, the Hagana. The proponents of a more militant Hagana policy remained under the political discipline of the Jewish Agency and the Vaad Leumi. Though its meaning was eroded by the actions of FOSH and the SNS, the Jewish Agency retained Havlaga as the official Yishuv policy during the violence of 1936-1939.¹¹

Jabotinsky, the NZO, and the IZL, having broken from the Zionist "establishment," launched an independent program in response to the Arab Revolt. By the mid-1930s, Jabotinsky feared that unless steps were taken to create an immediate refuge in Palestine, European Jewry would be overrun by Hitler and the Nazis. Jabotinsky's platform called for the "liquidation of the Diaspora" by resettling eight to eighteen million Jews in "greater Palestine." He called for a Mandatory regime dedicated to fulfilling the Balfour Declaration by facilitating massive Jewish immigration and national development in Palestine. He called on the Yishuv and World Jewry to unite under this national banner and exert maximum pressure upon the British government. Jabotinsky stated in 1936 that the Jewish people were "confronted with the dilemma either to fight with the British military forces or be content with the role of cowards and to suffer the consequences."¹² Jabotinsky molded the Betar Youth around the concept of "Maavak," or conflict politics which stressed the danger of Jewish restraint, which would lead to British and international indifference when European Jewry became threatened with destruction. Yet, as a politician, Jabotinsky stressed the organizational, political, and diplomatic front in conjunction with

military power in the fight for a Jewish state. 13

In the late 1930's, Jabotinsky initiated a massive NZO fund raising and publicity campaign to gather support for the Revisionist platform in the United States and Europe. The Betar movement in Europe expanded, trying to mobilize the Jewish communities to make Aliya en mass by offering educational and paramilitary training. Revisionist and Betar offices coordinated the mobilization effort with the IZL. The IZL in Palestine received military aid from Revisionist activities abroad. Both Betar and IZL were well organized amongst the middle-class in Poland. The rightist Polish government, which encouraged Aliya in the interest of ridding Poland of Jews and anti-Semitism, gave arms and training to IZL recruits, including Jewish university students like Menachem Begin. Revisionist offices in Europe concentrated on coordinating illegal immigration with IZL in Palestine. The Revisionists operated illegal immigration, coined "Aliya Bet," which brought 15,000-20,000 immigrants into Palestine during 1936-1939. In May of 1939, the British Intelligence Service, the CID, reported that the Revisionists were sponsoring illegal immigration on a larger scale than any other Jewish group.

Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Party leaders appealed to the WZO and the Jewish Agency for funding to aid the illegal immigration operations, but those requests were denied. Ben Gurion and the official Zionist leadership opposed the Revisionist's illegal immigration activities, fearing that the Mandatory government would be induced to cut off legal immigration. But Jabotinsky's primary concern was the fate of the Jewish millions in Europe. Jabotinsky and his followers

cried out to European Jewry to emigrate to Palestine before disaster struck, while the Zionist "establishment" clung to the twin policies of "gradualism" and Havlaga. ¹⁴ Revisionist Samuel Katz wrote that, "looking back, the Agency's persistence in this suicidal policy seems fantastic." ¹⁵

Under Jabotinsky's banner gathered militant young Jews, hostile towards the anti-Semitic climate of the World, disaffected with the official Zionist movement, and devoted to a revision in Zionist leadership, tactics, and program. IZL militants viewed the weight Weizmann and the Jewish "establishment" gave to Anglo-Zionist relations as treasonous in the circumstances of the late 1930s. The leadership of the IZL took Jabotinsky's militancy and fervor, but saw no optimism in the intransigent Mandatory government. They saw only an apathetic Yishuv dominated by the Socialist-Zionist elites' policy of Havlaga, while Arab Nationalist guerrillas raged around them. Men like Raziell and Stern, who had not participated in Betar, were more infused with militant revolution than the ideology of Revisionism. After the outbreak of Arab violence in 1936, Tehomi, along with Jabotinsky, opposed counterterror, but the younger commanders favored severe reprisals by the IZL. Freed of Tehomi's influence and believing that the official Yishuv and the Hagana were being irresponsible not to forcefully retaliate in kind to Arab violence, the IZL prepared unilaterally for an anti-Arab battle. ¹⁶

By August of 1937, Jabotinsky also appreciated that Havlaga was too narrow a policy to adequately defend the Yishuv, for it gave the attacker the strategic advantage. Jabotinsky gave his approval for the IZL to launch an "active defense" of the Yishuv. After gaining the

consent of Jabotinsky to wage a wider struggle, the IZL proceeded to combat Arab terror with counterterror. IZL definitively abandoned Havlaga by launching retaliatory strikes against the Arab community. One attack in the Arab Market in Jerusalem, under the command of Moshe Rosenberg, in November killed 10 Arabs. The British responded to IZL terrorism by arresting those they managed to catch, while IZL forcefully resisted arrest. The British caught and tried IZL terrorists as criminals while IZL saw themselves as "freedom fighters" engaged in a war of "National Liberation." Shlomo Ben Joseph, a young IZL member, was apprehended by British police for attempting to blow up an Arab bus. During Ben Joseph's trial in the spring of 1938, the IZL intensified assaults on the Arab community. In order to make a political demonstration to Arab leaders and the Yishuv of Britain's impartial opposition to terrorism, Ben Joseph was sentenced to death. But Ben Joseph's hanging on June 29, 1938 galvanized support for the IZL within the Yishuv and gave the IZL its first martyr. After Ben Joseph's execution, David Raziel assumed command of IZL and intensified its terrorist activities. In the summer of 1938, IZL bombings in Arab sections of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa killed a total of 75 Arabs. IZL terror had become part of Palestine's landscape. 17

IZL's terror tactics bothered Jabotinsky deeply. Originally, Jabotinsky opposed terrorism on political grounds, for he hoped that the British government could be coerced into establishing a legal Jewish Army. More importantly, Jabotinsky morally abhorred the idea of Jewish terrorism. At the outbreak of the 1936 riots, Jabotinsky wrote to IZL commanders, stating that "the Jews, in the midst of attack, do not loose

their senses, but are able to restrain themselves." On another occasion, Jabotinsky wrote to IZL command, asking, " where is the heroism in shooting an Arab peasant in the back when he comes on his donkey bringing vegetables to Tel Aviv? And what public advantage is gained by such an act?" ¹⁸ Jabotinsky proudly backed the illegal immigration efforts of the IZL but felt grave moral doubts about reprisals. He asked IZL command, " how can your Irgun people throw bombs in Arab quarters at random, indiscriminately killing women and children? You must at least warn the Arabs in time to evacuate the sections where you are going to retaliate?" In principle, Jabotinsky abhorred the tactics of terror. ¹⁹

For the young IZL militants, Jabotinsky remained their chief ideologue and wielded great influence upon them. IZL's early commanders, such as Rosenberg and Raziel, required Jabotinsky's personal approval. Yet Jabotinsky possessed no distinct position in IZL's structure. Since 1924, Jabotinsky spent most of his time working in Europe, so he was geographically removed from IZL decisions. Because he headed the legal international NZO and the Revisionist World Union, Jabotinsky purposefully removed himself from IZL activities. Ultimately, Jabotinsky was in a poor position to decide on tactical issues regarding Havlaga vs. counterterror. And as the world situation deteriorated and British policy appeared increasingly hostile to Zionism, Jabotinsky began to advocate that forceful, revolutionary pressure had to be instituted by the Yishuv to create a safe Jewish harbor for the threatened millions of European Jewry. Jabotinsky opposed Tehomi's attempted merger with the Hagana in the spring of 1937,

in part, in anticipation of armed confrontation with the British. Yet Jabotinsky was increasingly isolated from militancy. Jabotinsky's attitude and the Revisionist Party's relationship with IZL evolved into a state of complex ambivalence. 20

A struggle evolved between the political forces of the Right, Jabotinsky, Betar, the Revisionist Party, and the NMO on the one hand, and the militant forces of the Right, the IZL and the militant Betarim on the other. Some militant Betarim in Europe, like the young Begin, disputed Jabotinsky's less-than-militant stance towards IZL reprisals and advocated for tougher diplomacy with the Mandatory government. But within Betar, Jabotinsky's seniority and representative authority prevailed. Betar's Political Committee in Palestine attempted to govern IZL, but the political strength lay with the IZL General Staff. During 1937-1938, intense friction surfaced between Betar and IZL. Tension also developed between the IZL and the Revisionist organizations over the responsibility for illegal immigration. But the locus of the dispute was the issue of the authority of Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Party on matters of IZL military operations.

Jabotinsky viewed IZL within a political-diplomatic scheme and believed that military efforts must be coordinated with political efforts. IZL militants like Stern rejected diplomacy completely. 21

In February of 1939, in Paris, Jabotinsky met with Stern, Raziel, and other IZL commanders to formulate a tenable political-military agreement and end the internal strife. In the agreement that was reached, Jabotinsky gained recognition as IZL's commander-in-chief while IZL gained the highest rung in the Betar power structure in Palestine. Yet

the differences regarding their perceptions of the situation in Palestine remained. Jabotinsky retained the official authority but he also remained thousands of miles away from daily conflicts in Palestine. ²²

The tactics of the IZL represented the greatest threat to the authority of the official Yishuv bodies: the Vaad Leumi, the Jewish Agency, and the Hagana. The IZL undermined the Hagana's position as the sole representative of the Yishuv's military force in the eyes of the Jewish community, of the Arabs, of the British, and of the World. In July of 1936, Ben Gurion and Golomb stressed that the IZL must accepted the authority of the Jewish Agency and the policy of Havlaga or the result would be "civil war." Golomb issued this warning in conferences with Revisionist leaders Arie Altman and Jabotinsky. ²³ Jabotinsky responded that he was "not competent to give orders in such matters."²⁴

Indeed, the political lines of communication between the Jewish Agency and the IZL remained confused. And there existed little common ground for negotiation.

The members of IZL believed in the morality of their cause and that the majority of the Yishuv silently supported their tactics, that "Irgun reprisals were generally approved by the man in the street." ²⁵

IZL fighters could not fathom how the Jewish Agency could fail to retaliate for the murder of Jewish civilians while the British disarmed, arrested, imprisoned, and even executed Jews trying to "defend" the Yishuv. And, with all of the Jewish Agency's resources, especially the support of the international Jewish establishment, the Revisionists and IZL fighters were outraged by what they regarded as apathy towards

illegal immigration. 26

Conversely, the official Yishuv leadership viewed the IZL as dangerous, immoral fanatics, undermining years of careful diplomacy. When the IZL killed a Jew dressed as an Arab in Haifa in the summer of 1937, the Hagana arrested the assailant. In turn, the IZL kidnapped a Hagana member and held him as ransom for their comrade, but Ben Gurion refused to compromise. Furthermore, the IZL, desperately low on funds and believing their cause to be crucial to the Yishuv's survival, attempted several bank robberies at Jewish Workers' Banks. Tensions between the Jewish Agency and IZL reached a point where civil war seemed imminent. 27

Although the IZL was numerically smaller than the Hagana, in 1939 possessing about 2000 active fighters compared with the Hagana's over 20,000 members, the IZL was more centrally controlled and cohesive. In addition, the IZL attracted the more activist elements from the Yishuv than did most of the widely dispersed, locally sponsored, Hagana units--with the exception of the FOSH and SNS troops. Yet the Hagana enjoyed the critical advantage of the political and the financial backing of the official Jewish institutions. Both the Hagana and IZL competed for the financial support of World Jewry and the backing of Zionist youth movements, the reservoirs of manpower, within the Yishuv. 28 This fierce competition polarized the two military forces even further, fermenting old animosities and distrust.

Aside from the deeply rooted political hatred that Ben Gurion and most leftist leaders felt towards the Right, IZL's tactics distanced it from the tactics of the Hagana. As Hagana commanders perceived the

situation, the Hagana was fighting the Arab guerrillas in the countryside and establishing Jewish settlements, and the IZL troops were simply not with them. Ben Gurion asked, "how could bomb throwing in an Arab quarter of Jaffa be compared to the heroism of the defense of Tirath Zvi (in the Bet She'en Valley) or the Hagana battles at Hanita (northern Galilee) or the exploits of...Wingate's Special Night Squads, chasing Arab bands to their bases and engaging them there?"²⁹ Tactics and the location of their military activities compounded the differences between the IZL and the Hagana. In essence, the Hagana and the IZL, as products of competing ideologies, were competing for domination of the Yishuv's security structure. True military unity could not exist without true political tolerance.³⁰

In the autumn of 1938 a temporary accord was worked out between IZL and the Jewish Agency through the mediation of Israel Rokhach, a United Revisionist (represented in Vaad Leumi) and Mayor of Tel Aviv. In exchange for cooperating with the Hagana, the IZL would receive some Hagana funds and facilities. IZL would retain autonomous status but any reprisals would require the consent of a joint committee. Jabotinsky and Ben Gurion met in London to solidify the alliance. Jabotinsky agreed to the accord, but Ben Gurion, doubtful of the influence of the Revisionist party upon the IZL, did not believe that the IZL would comply to Havlaga and he suddenly rejected the proposal for reconciliation. Jabotinsky continued to call for a round table conference between the NZO and the WZO leadership. Yet Ben Gurion believed that " the only condition on which the IZL can be brought into our ranks is for it to willingly accept the political discipline of the

Zionist Executive." ³¹

Likewise, the IZL militants like Stern and Raziel feared that cooperation with the Hagana would erode their effectiveness and end their historic mission. As IZL member Yitshak Ben Ami recalled, "we did not believe that the Hagana could be freed from a defensive mentality nor from socialist control and turned into an effective military." ³² They perceived the Hagana as a Socialist dominated "state-within-a state," a military clique serving the interests of the "establishment" elites. Arbitration could not easily mend the wounds separating the two underground military forces within the Yishuv, fostered by over a decade of political hatred. ³³

The IZL and the Jewish Agency were not completely alienated from each other in their struggles during the 1936-1939 violence. The entire Yishuv was united under a common cloak of violence: by 1938, 292 Jews had been killed and 649 wounded by Arab attacks. Everyone suffered during the 1936-1939 conflict regardless of their political affiliation. The Jewish Agency did exert its influence in the cases of young IZL fighters like Ben Joseph to persuade the Mandatory authorities to forego capital punishment. According to Ben Gurion, the Jewish Agency "did everything in our power to avert the death sentence," and he viewed Ben Joseph's hanging as Britian's "first evil act." ³⁴ Though Ben Gurion and his followers detested IZL and its methods, the restless, more militant elements within the Hagana felt sympathetic. Though the Jewish Agency spoke out publicly against the IZL's illegal immigration and denied requests by the Revisionist Party for funds to aid illegal immigration operations, the Hagana accepted 'de facto' the arrival of

Jewish refugees to Palestine regardless of who sponsored the transportation. With the situation in Europe deteriorating, the Hagana also began to sponsor its own clandestine immigration services. In 1938, the Hagana founded the "Mosad," (the Establishment) which brought in 5,000-10,000 illegal refugees during 1938-1939. Both the IZL and the Hagana were dedicated to saving and safeguarding Jewish lives. Yet it was the shifting British policy in Palestine which ultimately brought the opposing parties of the Yishuv closer together. 35

To secure their wider interests in the Middle East, the British searched for a diplomatic approach for a more stable formula for Palestine. In 1937 the Royal Peel Commission proposed a partition of Palestine which would create a Jewish portion, composed roughly of the northwestern quarter of the country, and an Arab portion, composed of the remaining three-quarters, excluding Jerusalem which would remain under British jurisdiction. The Arab leadership flatly rejected the plan. Within the Zionist movement, Weizmann and his followers welcomed the proposal as a promising first step after years of diplomacy. Ben Gurion cautiously favored Partition but the issue threatened to split the MAPAI party. In particular, Kibbutz HaMeuchad and other rural Socialist-Zionists opposed any boundaries to potential Jewish settlement in Palestine. Jabotinsky and his followers rejected the plan as it diametrically opposed the Revisionist program for a "greater Palestine" under absolute Jewish sovereignty. They feared that if the Jewish Agency accepted Partition, then the IZL would be forced to confront the Jewish Agency and the Hagana. The Peel Partition Plan emerged as an issue which might split the Yishuv in two.

The Peel Partition issue never materialized. As the power of Arab Nationalism increased in the Middle East and as the possibility of war with Germany or Russia appeared on the near horizon, London became more concerned with securing her imperial interests in the region. By 1939 Partition plan was revoked. In its place, the British instituted the "White Paper" of May 17, 1939, in order to placate the Arab world. The White Paper limited Jewish land purchases in Palestine and, most significantly, as the situation for European Jewry darkened, it limited Jewish immigration to a mere 1500 per year. At roughly the same time, the Arab Revolt in Palestine was finally put down in the spring of 1939 and the Mandatory government's limited cooperation with the Hagana ended completely. The Mandatory police began disarming, arresting and imprisoning Hagana troops. The dramatic shift in British policy forced the Hagana further underground and forced the Jewish Agency to re-evaluate their program of two decades of Anglo-Zionist partnership. ³⁶

Weizmann and the moderates urged restraint, believing that the British policy could be reshaped in time. Militant elements in the Hagana felt time was running out and placed intense pressure upon Ben Gurion to retaliate against the British. Characteristically, Ben Gurion advocated a middle course. Like Weizmann, he considered Britain a "bad partner" and not an enemy of the Jewish people. Unlike Weizmann, Ben Gurion felt that Britain must be convinced of the immorality of the White Paper and their inability to enforce it. Ben Gurion convinced the Jewish Agency to attack the White Paper via mass demonstrations and an increase in illegal immigration.

The question of how the official Yishuv should react to the White

Paper triggered a power struggle for the control over the Hagana. Within the Vaad Leumi, socialist and non-socialist parties struggled for control. Ben Gurion tried to bypass the National Command and place the Hagana under the direct control of the Jewish Agency Executive with himself at the helm, but his attempt was blocked by the non-socialist parties. In March of 1939, a compromise was reached to reorganize the General Staff under the command of an apolitical figure, Yacov Dori. Though the National Command remained intact, Ben Gurion and the Jewish Agency gained direct control over Hagana intelligence and weapons procurement. Ben Gurion failed to seize direct control of Hagana forces yet he stood at the fulcrum of all policy decisions. 37

Still, the Yishuv remained divided on how to react to the White Paper. The leftist HaShomar HaTzair movement favored a general strike and civil disobedience. Militant elements within the Left favored cooperation with IZL, a united resistance against the Mandatory regime. Yet the crux of the debate was whether the White Paper policy and the desperation of European Jewry warranted severing Anglo-British relations and concentrating the Hagana power on forcibly obtaining an independent Jewish nation. Militants in the Hagana pressured Ben Gurion and Golomb to unleash the Hagana upon the Mandatory regime. Ben Gurion did not dismiss the possibility of someday waging a national "War of Liberation," for after the issuance of the Peel Partition Plan he had ordered the Hagana command to draw up plans for such a contingency. But he deemed that the Yishuv was far too weak to succeed in combating the British forces and that the Anglo-Zionist partnership was not yet defunct. As Ben Gurion commented in late May of 1939, "I do not propose

the slogan of a Jewish state...at this moment...my ultimate objective is not the establishment of a state in only part of the country." Ben Gurion wanted to fight the White Paper but not the Mandatory government itself. ³⁸

Ben Gurion's formula of illegal immigration coupled with mass demonstrations prevailed as the official policy adopted by the Jewish Agency. After the issuance of the White Paper, Jewish Agency sponsored and Hagana directed illegal immigration efforts increased significantly, but the British blockade made illegal immigration difficult, costly, and politically risky. The Histadrut sponsored demonstrations and strikes against the White Paper, but the vast majority of the Yishuv did not participate. Meanwhile, the situation of European Jewry became increasingly critical and the White Paper policy remained firmly in place. ³⁹

Just as the IZL believed that force was the proper response to Arab attacks on the Yishuv, they viewed the British White Paper policy as a direct threat to the survival of the Yishuv's lifeline of immigration. They believed that only an impressive demonstration of Jewish military power would destroy British enforcement of the White Paper. The IZL was prepared to "spare no sacrifice to frustrate and defeat" the White Paper. ⁴⁰ By the spring of 1939, Jabotinsky gave the IZL commanders permission to wage armed resistance against the Mandatory regime as long as the White Paper remained in effect. The IZL began to attack both the Arab community and the Mandatory regime. On February 27, the IZL bombed British administrative buildings in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. On May 17, IZL blew up the Palestine

Broadcasting station. On May 23, IZL killed its first British policeman. IZL blew up an Arab movie theater in Jerusalem on May 29, Palestine's main post office on June 12, and the Jerusalem radio station on July 30. Bombs were placed in telephone booths and in public buildings. Railroads were sabotaged. Shootings occurred in Arab neighborhoods. In August, six British policemen were killed in Haifa. IZL anti-British violence escalated in the urban communities of Haifa, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv. ⁴¹

Simultaneously, under the direction of Eri Jabotinsky (Jabotinsky's son), IZL illegal immigration efforts also accelerated despite a chronic shortage of funds and the obstacles erected by the British navy and the CID. According to Jabotinsky and the IZL leadership, Havlaga was bankrupt and time had run out for gentlemanly diplomacy with the British government. By the summer of 1939, Jabotinsky Revisionists and the IZL had clearly established their policy towards the Yishuv's twin problem of defense against the Arabs and resistance to the White Paper: total armed struggle. ⁴²

Although the Yishuv remained intensely divided over the twin problem of defense against the Arabs and of resistance to the Mandatory's White Paper policy, most of the Yishuv rejected the IZL as a small, dangerous group which harmed the Zionist cause by "marring the record of Palestine Jewry." ⁴³ This outlook was fostered by the continued propaganda efforts of the Jewish Agency and the "establishment" press renouncing the IZL tactics. In June and July, the Jewish Agency published pamphlets condemning terrorism:

Thou shall not kill is a commandment out of the roots of an ancient people... we shall not build... our national future by

imitating the worst of the gentiles ... let us stop this evil at its beginning. Isolate it. Let the Yishuv unite to defend the national homeland from⁴⁴ the terrorists from within as from the enemies from without.

Despite their mutual rejection of the White Paper and simultaneous efforts with illegal immigration, the tactics and political orientation of the Hagana and the IZL in their struggle against the Mandatory policy remained profoundly at odds. ⁴⁵

By the summer of 1939, within the Yishuv, the White Paper had weakened the position of Weizmann and those who still clung fervently to their faith in the "Anglo-Zionist bond," and strengthened the support for the Jabotinsky's program and the IZL's tactics. The Hagana morale suffered from some defections over to the IZL. Militant members clamored for anti-British action in the fashion of the IZL. In June, in response from pressure from these militants and in anticipation of possible armed struggle with the Mandatory forces, Ben Gurion authorized the formation of "Special Squads" from the ranks of the disbanded FOSH and SNS units. The Special Squads were under the direct authority of Ben Gurion and the Jewish Agency, and commanded by a committee composed of Rattner, Hoz, Sadeh, and Israeli Galili. The Special Squads acted as an anti-Arab terrorist unit and a secret police to punish informers, and they planned and trained for an anti-British campaign. In August, the Special Squads set several CID cars aflame, blew a hole in the Iraqi-Haifa oil pipeline, and sank a British immigration patrol boat, the "Sinbad II." Still, these actions were rather "experimental" in character and not orchestrated as an outright rebellion against the Mandatory regime. The Special Squads did draw up plans to assassinate key British officials and attack key government buildings, but Ben

Gurion stalled more assaults upon the British regime. Pressured to restrain by Weizmann, believing that Anglo-Zionist relations were not beyond repair, and judging the Hagana to be unprepared to challenge the Mandatory forces, Ben Gurion reserved the possibility for a Hagana campaign against the Mandatory regime while he continued to concentrate the Hagana's activities on illegal immigration. ⁴⁶

While the Jewish Agency and the Hagana continued to avoid any direct armed clashes with the Mandatory forces, the IZL commanders and Jabotinsky became increasingly convinced that the British would never establish a Jewish commonwealth unless the Yishuv revolted openly against the Mandatory regime. But the IZL campaign of violence fared badly. Constantly in need of weapons and ammunition, the IZL aborted many planned missions. Key IZL members were being apprehended by the British Police, including Raziël and Yacov Merridor who were arrested in March, and Stern who was arrested in May. The IZL campaign in the spring and summer of 1939 was too fragmentary and had no discernible effect on the Mandatory regime. In the English press, events in Europe submerged the reports of anti-British violence in Palestine. The IZL in Palestine could not lead a revolt for national liberation alone. ⁴⁷

With the IZL resistance movement within the Yishuv disintegrating, with the official Yishuv leadership still unprepared to resort to armed resistance, with European Jewry in the deepest peril, with the White Paper firmly imbedded in Mandatory policy, and with the diplomatic channels exhausted, Jabotinsky decided that the time had come for swift, bold action. In late August, he and the IZL High Command formulated plans for massive armed revolt to overthrow the Mandatory regime in

April of 1940. The Polish Army had committed 20,000 rifles, machine guns, and grenades and the IZL possessed 5,000 rifles in warehouses in Warsaw. Approximately 30-40,000 European Betarim trained in preparation for the spring invasion. Jabotinsky and IZL Command estimated about 5000 would manage to evade the British coastal defenses and join the 2000 IZL troops in Palestine. Jabotinsky himself would land in Palestine to lead the coup d'etat and proclaim a provisional government in Jerusalem. Only Stern objected to the plan, which was approved by the IZL command. Jabotinsky and the IZL leadership believed this plan would prove to be the definitive battle for a Jewish Nation. 48

Jabotinsky's scheme was based on the presumption that once a true "War of Liberation" had begun, the Hagana and the majority of the Yishuv would join in the battle. This presumption was extremely optimistic after a decade of political-ideological rivalry between the pro-Jabotinsky Right and the official Yishuv institutions dominated by the Left. Moreover, Ben Gurion, the Jewish Agency, and the Hagana were preparing for the possibility of forcibly pressuring the British to revoke the White Paper, but not to lead the Yishuv into a full-scale battle to overthrow the Mandatory regime. Jabotinsky's presumption posited that Jewish Nationalism would supersede a generation of political differences.

The 1930s had produced two independent Jewish underground organizations, backed by competing political-economic-social ideologies; the Arab Revolt and the oscillating British policy in the years 1936-39 had militarized both sides dramatically. By the end of the summer of 1939, violent, dramatic revolution in Palestine seemed imminent. United

in their opposition to the White Paper, parallel in their illegal immigration efforts, yet divided in their strategies for the future of Jewish Palestine, the IZL and the Hagana seemed to pressed to the brink-- of forming a united Jewish national resistance or of engaging in a futile civil war.

NOTES III

¹ Luttwark and Horowitz, p. 14.

² Rothenburg, p. 25; and Yehuda Bauer, From Diplomacy to Resistance (Philadelphia: Jewish Publishing Society, 1970), p. 11.

³ Perlmutter, p. 29 & p. 32; and Bauer, p. 15.

⁴ Perlmutter, p. 32.

⁵ Rothenburg, p. 26; and Perlmutter, p. 15 & p. 32; and Luttwark and Horowitz, pp. 12-13.

⁶ Rothenburg, p. 26; and Perlmutter, p. 33; and Luttwark and Horowitz, p. 13.

⁷ Bauer, p. 15.

⁸ Perlmutter, p. 30; and Rothenburg, p. 25.

⁹ Perlman, p. 76.

¹⁰ Luttwark and Horowitz, p. 12; and Perlmutter, p. 24; and Rothenburg, p. 25.

¹¹ Luttwark and Horowitz, p. 14.

¹² Schechtman, p. 446.

¹³ Perlmutter, p. 25; and Schechtman, p. 446.

¹⁴ Yitsaq Ben Ami, Years of Wrath; Days of Glory (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1982), p. 160 & p. 232; and Schechtman, p. 423 & p. 16; and Sacher, p. 187; and Bauer, p. 61; and Katz, p. 43; and Nicholas Bethell, The Palestine Triangle (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1979), p. 41.

¹⁵ Katz, p. 24.

¹⁶ Perlmutter, p. 26; and Laqueur, p. 374; and Katz, pp. 10-12.

¹⁷ Rothenburg, p. 26; and Perlmutter, p. 27; and Bethell, p. 44;

and Perlman, p. 79.

¹⁸ Schechtman, p. 453.

¹⁹ Schechtman, p. 453; and Laqueur, p. 375.

²⁰ Schechtman, pp. 447-451.

²¹ Schechtman, p. 416 & pp. 454-457; and Haber, pp. 50-51 & pp.

90-91.

²² Schechtman, pp. 458-459; and Perlmutter, p. 27; and J. Bowyer

Bell, Terror Out of Zion (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), p.

44.

²³ Schechtman, p. 459.

²⁴ Schechtman, p. 451.

²⁵ Katz, p. 24.

²⁶ Ben Ami, p. 211.

²⁷ Laqueur, p. 374; and Bell, p. 43.

²⁸ Bauer, p. 49; and Perlmutter Vol. II, p. 12; and Luttwark and

Horowitz, p. 18.

²⁹ Perlman, p. 78.

³⁰ Perlmutter Vol. II, p. 12.

³¹ Michael Bar Zohar, Ben Gurion-The Armed Prophet (Englewood

Cliffs: Arthur Barker Limited, 1967), p. 68.

³² Ben Ami, p. 110.

³³ Perlmutter, p. 30 & p. 27; and Bauer, p. 15.

³⁴ Perlman, pp. 79-80.

³⁵ Katz, pp. 42-43; and Ben Ami, p. 160; and Rothenberg, p. 26;

and Bell, p. 48.

³⁶ Perlmutter, p. 33.

³⁷ Bauer, p. 53; and Perlmutter Vol. II, p. 12.

³⁸ Horowitz and Lissak, p. 50; and Bauer, p. 36.

³⁹ Bauer, p. 61; and Horowitz and Lissak, p. 182; and Bar Zohar,
pp. 50-53 & p. 68; and Rothenburg, p. 27.

⁴⁰ Bethell, p. 68.

⁴¹ Bell, p. 48; and Sacher, p. 223; and Bethell, p. 41 & p. 156.

⁴² Ben Ami, p. 159.

⁴³ Bethell, p. 42.

⁴⁴ Ben Ami, p. 232.

⁴⁵ Perlmutter, p. 20.

⁴⁶ Bauer, pp. 47-48 & pp. 57-61; and Bethell, p. 73.

⁴⁷ Bauer, p. 15 & p. 67.

⁴⁸ Bell, p. 28; and Ben Ami, p. 233; and Schechtman, p. 482 & p. 41.

CHAPTER IV

THE YISHUV AT WAR: 1939-1945

On September 1, 1939, three notable events occurred. Firstly, the British shot and killed three Jews in a foiled illegal immigration operation, which potentially could have further enraged the Yishuv and moved the Jewish Agency closer to launching severe assaults on the Mandatory regime. Secondly, the Mandatory Police raided the IZL's headquarters and arrested most of the IZL commanders, which potentially could have upset Jabotinsky's coup d'etat scheme. Finally, Hitler's invasion of Poland ignited World War II, overturning the entire existing status quo of Anglo-Zionist relations, of internal Yishuv relations, and of the Yishuv's underground armies.

On September 3, World Jewry, the WZO, and the Jewish Agency voiced their total support for the Allied war effort. Britain may have been a "bad partner" in Palestine but it was still the strongest democracy in the eastern hemisphere combating the Nazis, the most cruel enemy of the Jewish people. The majority of the Yishuv suspended their anti-British animosities fermented by the institution of the White Paper. In September, 1939, the Yishuv demonstrated overwhelming support for the British war effort when over 120,000 men and women of the Yishuv registered for the Allied draft. By late 1939, the Jewish Agency began carrying out a Yishuv-wide enlistment campaign. The Yishuv and the

British seemed united in the war against the Axis. ¹

As in World War I, Weizmann viewed massive Jewish enlistment and the Yishuv's full cooperation with the British war effort as an opportunity to cement the Anglo-Zionist bond and gain post-war reciprocation from London. Weizmann was convinced that Britain would repay the Yishuv's moderation and Jewish cooperation in wartime with a new partition proposal favoring the Yishuv after the war. As in World War I, Weizmann called on World Jewry to enthusiastically enlist and, in December, 1939, he requested the British to establish an official "Jewish Army" composed of 10,000 troops, 4,000 from the Yishuv, to participate with the Allies in the fight against the Axis in the Middle East. But the British government remained wary of post-war obligations and conscious of the greater strategic importance of Anglo-Arab relations, and they continuously postponed establishment of Jewish battalions for most of the war. United in their war against Hitler but divided in their interests in Palestine, Anglo-Zionist relations remained tense and ambivalent throughout the World War II. ²

Despite the almost total support voiced by the Yishuv for the British war effort, the issue of "enlistment" triggered an intense debate within the Vaad Leumi, the Jewish Agency, and the Histadrut over the Yishuv's priorities in wartime. Golomb and other military men worried that enthusiastic enlistment in the British army could leave the Yishuv defenseless. The loudest voices in opposition to massive Yishuv enlistment came from a coalition of groups from the far Left, particularly the various constituents of the Socialist Kibbutz Movement. This far Left coalition argued against sending large numbers of the

Yishuv's manpower to fight in the European theater. Their leading spokesman, Tabenkin, rejected the premise of Ben Gurion and Weizmann that massive Yishuv enlistment would secure Zionism's post-war position with the British:

If we reach a point where we have no value here without the English, then, even in the eyes of the English, we shall have no value...the political and factual center for us is the independent Hagana. That must serve as our springboard...our independent ³army is more important than any under British authority.

Tabenkin and the far Left coalition felt that Ben Gurion and Weizmann were compromising the safety of the Yishuv. In place of unlimited enlistment, the far Left proposed the creation of independent Jewish units to cooperate with the British in defending the Yishuv and the country. After the defense of the land and the Yishuv would be guaranteed, the far Left would consider sending certain auxiliary units to nearby countries. Although the left-wing coalition did not agree on where "defending Palestine" extended, they united in their concern for the defense of the settlements by preventing a massive exodus of Yishuv manpower. ⁴

The more moderate, Left-of-Center, Socialists characteristically favored a compromise of enlistment and activism. Ben Gurion's slogan for the war effort carried a dual message that, "we should help the British in their war as if there were no White Paper, and we should fight the White Paper as if there were no war." Despite the fact that the British continued to stop Jewish immigration at such a tragic hour and in public voiced a decidedly pro-Arab stance, Ben Gurion and Moshe Sharett, a MAPAInik and Head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department, advocated that cooperation with Britain's war effort

potentially offered the Yishuv political advantages and provided an opportunity for thousands of the Yishuv's manpower to gain formal military experience in the professional British Army. Yet simultaneously they believed the Yishuv must resist the White Paper policy in a way that would not endanger the British war effort. The Jewish Agency and the Histadrut should sponsor mass demonstrations against the White Paper and the Hagana should continue its illegal immigration efforts. ⁵

This dispute between Ben Gurion-- and the moderate Left-- and Tabenkin-- and the far Left-- over military priorities was an extension of general differences with regard to Zionist policy and orientation. During the 1930's, the far Left, Kibbutz HaMeuhad in particular, had gained great influence within the Vaad Leumi, the Histadrut, and the Hagana as a bloc within the dominant MAPAI party. But in the 1940's, as the White Paper and war in Europe closed off the stream of young Socialists and as Socialism lost some of its international luster after the Soviet-Nazi Pact, the power of the far Left began declining. The Kibbutz HaMeuchad faction in MAPAI (sometimes referred to as MAPAI B), together with the "HaShomar HaTzair"(The Young Watchman) movement affiliated with Kibbutz HaArtzi, formed a more orthodox Marxist coalition that objected to Ben Gurion's gradual shift to the moderate center. The far Left opposed Ben Gurion's emphasis on "National" over "Class" concerns as a betrayal of Socialist-Pioneering tradition and international Socialism. The growing power of Ben Gurion and the moderate, left-of-center majority in MAPAI, generated intense friction over the economic-political-ideological priorities for the Yishuv.

These disputes during 1939-1941 managed to further diminish the strength of the Hagana. ⁶

During the years 1939-41, the Hagana reached its lowest ebb. Although the Hagana still possessed on paper some 12,000-27,000 competent troops, the numbers depended upon who was counted. About 5000 Hagana troops were classified as "HISH" (Field Soldiers) composed of the best-trained, ex-FOSH and ex-SNS troops; over 20,000 men and women were described as "HIM" (Reserve Soldiers); and several thousand were counted as "GADNA" (Youth Battalions) members. Many of the most fit and best trained troops were among the first to enlist with the British forces abroad.

Despite an inadequately small professional staff, organizational improvements were accomplished. Jacob Reizer, who took over the National Command in November, 1939, and Yacov Dori, of the General Staff, proceeded to reorganize the Hagana's budget and to improve the Hagana's structure by dividing the command into eight separate districts. Later, the Hagana High Command integrated the districts in three major regions: the north, the south, and the central. Despite the objection of both the right-wing urban parties and the left-wing rural parties to the loss of localized control, Reizer's and Dori's changes were implemented. The Hagana's internal structure had been improved and the command made more centralized. ⁷

During 1940, Ben Gurion again tried in vain to wrestle direct control of the National Command into the hands of the Jewish Agency. Ben Gurion's maneuvers precipitated numerous struggles between left-wing and right-wing parties for greater influence in the National Command.

The disputes temporarily came to rest in May, 1941, when a new National Command was formed under the neutral leadership of Moshe Sneh, balanced with four non-Socialists and four Socialist representatives. Golomb remained Commander of the Hagana and Yacov Dori became Chief of the General Staff. On May 15, 1941, the Hagana's National Command published a statement of Hagana principles stating that, "the Hagana is subject to the authority of the World Zionist Organization, together with the people of Israel in Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel) . It stands under their jurisdiction and responds to their command." ⁸ The statement went on to outline the chain of command, the ranking system, and the Hagana's character as the sole, unified, and representative military force of the Yishuv. But both the far Right and the far Left remained disgruntled. Tehomi lead a walk-out of the "Middle-Class Unionist" party who boycotted the National Command for two months and threatened to form their own defense committee. Yet all these internal political battles remained subordinate to a hard reality that, because of the Yishuv's enlistment in the Allied war effort, the Hagana, without sufficient manpower, remained a skeleton of an army. ⁹

The independent strength of the Hagana was further undermined by British wartime policy. With Britain locked in a battle for national survival and increasingly concerned with securing Arab alliances, the Mandantory regime swiftly cracked-down on "the presence of secret arms and underground military organizations among the Jews" and demanded the immediate disarmament of the entire Yishuv. JSP troops, the "legal" Hagana, were disarmed and arrested throughout Palestine. On October 5, 1939, the Mandatory Police Force raided the training base for the

Hagana's Special Squads and arrested forty-three officers, including Moshe Carmel and Dayan, sentencing them for long terms in Acre Prison. This hard blow forced the Hagana further underground and contributed to the disbandment of the Special Squads in December. In January, the Mandatory forces uncovered two important arms caches in northern settlements. Weapons became very scarce and Hagana commanders at the highest levels refused to give up their arms. Throughout the war, the Mandatory forces disarmed, arrested, and imprisoned members of the Hagana depending on the "ebb and flow" of the war effort. ¹⁰

In spite of shortages in manpower, weapons, and funds, the Hagana continued trying to bring in more illegal immigrants fleeing from the advancing Nazi armies. And the British Navy continued to accost the vessels and sent thousands of the refugees to detention camps in Mauritius. On November 24, 1940, the Hagana tried to blow a leak in the "USS Patria" in order to force the disembarkation of the 1400 Jewish refugees; accidentally, the explosion caused the unseaworthy vessel to sink, killing 240 Jews. With the Hagana's part in the tragedy unknown to the public, anti-British hostility boiled within the Yishuv. By the summer of 1940, the Mandatory government was accusing the Jewish Agency of not cooperating in the fight against Hitler, while the Jewish Agency and the Hagana became more defiant of British authority. The working relationship of the Jewish Agency and the Mandatory government deteriorated to an explosively low level. Only the knowledge of a greater common enemy, the Nazis, kept the peace. ¹¹

With the fall of France in June, 1940, the British stood alone against the Axis powers. In search of allies, Churchill, Clement

Attlee, and other British cabinet members voiced their support for a Jewish division. And Nazi occupation of Europe cut off the flow of immigrants to Palestine. The hostilities between the Jewish Agency and the British over the enforcement of the White Paper receded under the weight of the common fear that the Axis might win the war. By the end of 1941, almost 11,000 recruits had been drawn from the Yishuv. The Jewish Agency adopted a policy of unlimited enlistment. During the extent of the war, approximately 27,000-30,000 Jews of the Yishuv served in the Allied forces. These recruits gained technical and practical military training in Allied armies, inculcating a "Professional" military style into thousands of young Jewish warriors. 12

Jews of the Yishuv served with uncommon bravery in commando and espionage operations in Europe, the Balkans, and in the Middle East. The Britain's "Special Operations Executive," or SOE, trained thousands of Jews from the Yishuv whose native languages were German, Italian, or Arabic as agents to infiltrate enemy lines, providing valuable espionage training for the Hagana. The SOE people released Hagana troops from British prisons, and the Hagana repaid the SOE with daring intelligence work in Europe and the Middle East. The Hagana managed secretly to rotate different people through the training to expand the numbers receiving weapons and experience. The British authorities understood that the Hagana was developing its own resources but the desperate war situation overran those considerations. Likewise, Jewish soldiers, the Yishuv, and the Jewish Agency overlooked Anglo-Zionist tensions, and concentrated on winning the World War. 13

Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Party also viewed Hitler and the

Nazi Empire as the primary threat to the Jewish people. On September 5, 1939, Jabotinsky, like Weizmann, proclaimed his and the NZO's full support for the Allied war effort. Jabotinsky pleaded with the British government to accept Jewish Palestine as a loyal base for British wartime operations and lobbied for the establishment of an Allied Jewish division. He vowed to use his influence within the American Jewish community to urge the United States to enter the war in exchange for allowing Jewish refugees to freely enter Palestine. He urged World Jewry to enlist, believing that the fate the European Jewry's millions depended on a swift Allied victory. The World War seemed to be bringing Jabotinsky and the militant Right back within the Yishuv's political mainstream. 14

Jabotinsky instructed IZL command to suspend the revolt against the Mandatory regime for the duration of the war. Yet various opinions circulated within the Revisionist Party, Betar, and the IZL command. Some followed the position of Jabotinsky and enlisted immediately. Most, including Raziell, felt opposed to enlistment until Britain created the distinct "Jewish Army" advocated by Weizmann and Jabotinsky. And some, lead by Stern, who had long resisted the outside authority of Jabotinsky and his "old fashioned Zionism," 15 rejected cooperation with the British entirely until a political settlement was reached in Palestine. Stern pledged to continue the anti-British struggle. Raziell, who accepted Jabotinsky's ultimate authority and wished to maintain the IZL's political link with the Revisionist Party, ordered the IZL to refrain from attacking the British for the duration of the war. Although Raziell possessed the strongest posture within the IZL,

the decision was not accepted unanimously. Aggravated by clashes of personality and ambition, Stern and Raziel engaged in a bitter dispute. Jabotinsky attempted to heal the differences between Raziel and Stern; however, he eventually granted Raziel his full support and ordered Stern to obey. ¹⁶

While the issue of enlistment and cessation of anti-British attacks remained unresolved within IZL, it proceeded to carry out operations. In Palestine, the IZL continued their attacks on the Arab communities and the British continued to arrest them. On November 7, 1939, the British arrested 38 IZL and Betar members, including Stern. Desperately low on funds with their European offices shut down, IZL exhorted money from the Yishuv's middle-class and unsuccessfully attempted to rob several banks, which spread further hostility for the IZL within the Yishuv. In retaliation, the Hagana gave intelligence reports on the IZL to the British CID. By late 1939, with the Mandatory forces cracking-down on Jewish undergrounds, with the IZL rife with internal dispute, with growing sentiment against the IZL tactics, and with many IZL fighters enlisted in the British Army, Raziel ordered a truce with Britain in exchange for the release of IZL prisoners, including Stern. By 1940, the IZL became relatively quiescent in Palestine. ¹⁷

In Europe, the IZL continued its illegal immigration efforts, including the daring rescue of refugees on the Danube. Meanwhile, the Jewish Agency persisted in officially discrediting Revisionist sponsored immigration and refused to issue precious immigration certificates to IZL operatives. Significantly, even in the Jewish Ghetto uprisings in

Eastern Europe, such as the famous Warsaw Ghetto uprising, when Jewish resistance groups in the early 1940's fought the onslaught of Nazi Armies for months, the Revisionist-Betar and the Socialist fighters refused to fight in unity. Likewise, the war failed to unite the IZL and the Hagana in their parallel efforts to rescue Jewish refugees from extinction in Europe. Even in moments of national genocide, the venom of political hatred remained potent. ¹⁸

As the ranks of the European Revisionist Party, Betar, and IZL disappeared under the cloak of Nazi power, the IZL had become a restless military organization without political moorings and without clear tactical objectives. By the summer of 1940, the vacuum in IZL precipitated another feud between Raziel and Stern. In June, 1940, a frustrated Raziel attempted to resign and enlist in the British Army, but Jabotinsky reinstated him. Yet Jabotinsky failed to close the Stern-Raziel rift. Most of Stern's followers objected to the IZL's subjugation to the political bonds of Jabotinsky and the NZO as a detriment to the IZL's function as an independent, "National Liberation" army. Stern saw the Raziel faction as stagnant, while he and his followers were "flexible, innovative, and restless." ¹⁹ In July, Stern and a small group of followers began searching for a new political orientation and a new militant purpose. When Jabotinsky suddenly died on August 3, reconciliation efforts between Raziel and Stern collapsed. By the end of the summer of 1940, the break between the Raziel faction and the Stern faction became permanent. ²⁰

With the Revisionist Party and the Betar movement disintegrating almost into extinction, and with the IZL's resistance against the

Mandatory regime in intermission, Raziel decided to enlist in the fight against Hitler and many of the IZL troops followed his example. By November, Raziel suspended all IZL operations. In December, Altman, of the Revisionist Party and Bert Katznelson, of MAPAI, negotiated and signed a draft treaty of reproachment between the Revisionist Party and the Histadrut. The third section of the treaty referred to unifying the security organizations, the Hagana and the IZL. Yet the wounds of the Arlosoroff killing, the economic differences, and general fear and mistrust prevented reconciliation. MAPAI rejected the treaty. A chance to end the schism within the unifying context of the war was lost. 21

Meanwhile, Raziel and his IZL comrades prepared to lead an attack against the Rashid Ali government in Iraq for the British Army. The ambitious scheme involved exploding oil refineries, gathering intelligence, and kidnapping the Mufti. On May 13, 1941, Raziel was killed and the operation aborted, ending IZL-British cooperation. After Raziel's death, first Aryeh Possak, then Merridor assumed command of the dilapidated IZL. The IZL intelligence Chief, Israel Pritzker, established close connections with the CID to combat "Communism" in Palestine and to spy on Stern and his followers, thereby, widening the chasm between the remnants of the IZL and the Sternists; but, aside from Pritzker's work, all IZL military operations halted. In August, the Revisionist Party and the Jewish Agency reached an agreement on enlistment. Though the agreement was not officially ratified until 1944, most of the remaining IZL members enlisted in the British forces. Pennyless, without charismatic leadership, and lacking a critical mass of members, the IZL had informally dissolved. 22

While the IZL decayed, the Sternist faction found new roots. In September, 1940, Stern founded a new national liberation movement called, " Lohami Herut Yisrael," (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel), or LHI. During 1940-1943, LHI represented 100-300 mostly young, Eastern European Jews who were students of Russian revolutionary history, of personal terror, and of political assassination as an effective, justifiable means to wage a national revolution. Stern also attracted a few Polish Betar members, such as Israel Sheib and Natan Yellin-Mor, and some extremely militant Palestinian-born Jewish youth who had no previous contact with the Revisionist movement. Stern moved LHI far from the ideology of Jabotinsky Revisionism by proclaiming a war, not just on the Mandatory regime or the White Paper, but on Great Britain, on all of Britain's allies, and on European imperialistic oppression of all Middle Eastern peoples. LHI lived "in a pre-1939 world," not only viewing the Arabs as rivals, but also as potential anti-imperialistic allies.²³ LHI believed that the British imperialistic yoke represented the greatest danger to Zionism.²⁴

The LHI never acknowledged the Allied cause against Hitler. In fact, Stern sent LHI's Naftali Lubinczik in late 1940 to contact the Axis powers to gain an anti-British ally. In early 1941, Lubinczik did make contact with a German consul in Beirut, but Pritzker and IZL intelligence uncovered the scheme and informed the CID, who foiled LHI's maneuver. In January, 1942, the British arrested LHI's Freedman Yellin-Mor in Syria, on his way to make contact with the Axis powers in the Balkans. Stern and LHI believed in a total war on Britain, beyond any other ethical or political considerations. Though LHI represented a

small, poorly organized, ill-equipped anarchist group active only in Haifa, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv, LHI terror tied down British soldiers who could have been fighting in the North African desert. ²⁵

LHI radio and LHI posters proclaimed a direct war of terror on British personnel in Palestine. Though LHI was small and politically isolated, its operations of arms theft, extortion, robberies, bombings, and gunbattles poisoned the entire country. In September, 1940, LHI robbed a Anglo-Zionist Bank in Tel Aviv. In December, they blew up the Immigration Office in Haifa. In January, 1941, the LHI shot two Jews while trying to rob a bank. In December, 1941, LHI bombs killed two British policemen and seriously wounded two others. In January, an LHI bomb meant for a British Intelligence officer killed two Jewish policemen. LHI engendered an especially bitter hatred amongst the Mandatory Administration and police forces. ²⁶

The Jewish Agency sponsored newspapers loudly condemned LHI terror and called upon the Yishuv to "put a stop to such unprecedented crimes." ²⁷ Weizmann called upon the Yishuv to repudiate LHI's "tragic, futile, un-Jewish resort to terrorism." ²⁸ Because LHI ignored the war effort and because of their tactics, the vast majority of the Yishuv despised the LHI. Tip-offs by Jewish citizens accounted for many of the British arrests or shootings of LHI terrorists. The British placed a price on Stern's head and displayed his photo in the press and on posters. And both Hagana and IZL intelligence handed over information regarding LHI to the British CID. By 1942, the British security had become more effective in countering LHI assaults. In January, 1942, the Mandatory police shot four, reportedly unarmed, LHI

members in Tel Aviv. In February, 1942, Mandatory police shot and killed Stern. 29

The questionable shootings in January and Stern's controversial "murder" aroused some sympathy for the LHI and built a image of Stern as a "martyred freedom-fighter." The Jewish Agency used its political influence to help reprieve several LHI members from the death sentence. After Stern's death, his deputy, Yacov Zelnik, assumed command and plotted assassinations and kidnappings of British high officials. Yet by the summer of 1942, most of the LHI fighters were apprehended and imprisoned, and Zelnik finally surrendered to the police. With the help of both Hagana and IZL intelligence, the British police and the Yishuv's community rejection kept LHI's terrorist activities at bay and the organization remained quiescent for almost the next two years. The LHI's flurry of violence and call to oust Britain was lost in the horror of the Nazi triumphs. 30

During 1941, the situation for the Allied armies became desperate. With the fall of Ethiopia and the Balkans to the Axis, with the Germans pressing in on Greece and Turkey, with the political swings towards the Fascist-Right in Egypt, with the rise of Rashid Ali in Iraq, with the Vichy-French in power in Syria and Lebanon, and with Rommel moving eastward in North Africa, Palestine suddenly became a cornerstone of desperate Allied hopes. 31

The voices of the Yishuv, particularly from the far Left and the kibbutz movements, which had worried that massive enlistment would leave Palestine defenseless, became shriller. As the young kibbutznik Yigael Allon saw the crisis, " a force protecting the Jewish community is

necessary" while "the Jewish community's best men are fighting in a variety of fronts far from home and protection of the Yishuv may not be forthcoming..." ³² Tabenkin and other left-wing leaders distrusted the British commitment to safeguard Palestine and the Yishuv. The left-wing parties viewed the Yishuv as the last hope of the Jewish people and felt that the rural settlements and kibbutzim must assume full responsibility to assemble a Hagana corps to protect the Yishuv and the physical foundations of the Zionist cause. Even HaShomar HaTzair, which traditionally had opposed extensive militarization efforts, cried out for mobilization to protect the settlements. Although HaShomar HaTzair envisioned a force integrated within the British framework and Kibbutz HaMeuchad wanted a separate command, the far Left united in advocating the basic notion of a permanent, independent Jewish force in the Yishuv.

Yet right-wing parties protested that the Yishuv's primary responsibility required total financial support and enlistment in the Allied war effort. And Ben Gurion argued that the Hagana was already burdened with illegal immigrations in the face of British opposition and that funds and existing manpower must be directed in that direction. The debate persisted as the war situation grew more and more grim. ³³

In early spring of 1941, Rommel launched his first offensive in North Africa, and the British, hard pressed for experienced military manpower, released Hagana, and even IZL, prisoners. The British made an tacit agreement with the Hagana to allow them to assemble a special commando force. In May, 1941, the Hagana National Command appointed a special committee to create an independent force to cooperate with the

British in defending the Yishuv and the region against the oncoming Axis forces. The committee named the corps the "Palmach," or "Strike Company," and fielded many commanders from men who had participated with Sadeh and Wingate in the FOSH and SNS units. Golomb and Sneh convinced the committee to choose Sadeh, as the most logical choice and the best qualified commander, to organize the Palmach into a permanent, independent, professional, and elite Hagana corps. 34

As with FOSH and the SNS, Sadeh recruited from cities, youth movements, private settlements, and, mostly, from the kibbutzim. Many of his troops and almost all of his officers came from the ranks of the young leftist kibbutzniks who had declined to enlist with the British. During the summer of 1941, despite a severe shortage of manpower, weapons and funds, the early Palmach developed into a small commando force of 400-500 troops. In May, the Palmach corps carried out commando raids and intelligence gathering for the British in Syria and raided oil refineries along the Lebanese coast. In June, the Palmach participated as scouts and guides in the Allied invasion of Syria and Lebanon. The early Palmach evolved into an excellent small commando force, yet it failed to address the Yishuv's self-defense needs. 35

In the spring of 1942, the alarming Axis victories in North Africa ignited a heated debate within the Vaad Leumi and the Jewish Agency over the contingencies if Rommel's armies should reach Palestine. The arguments were extensions of earlier discussions on the Yishuv's wartime priorities. Many representatives, from a variety of parties, argued that the Yishuv and Palestine would be crushed by the Axis armies and that plans for withdrawal should be explored. Most parties favored

increased general enlistment coupled with the demand for an immediate Jewish division in the British Army as the most practical response. Distrusting the British commitment to defend Palestine, the far Left advocated an uncompromising defense of settlements and the immediate mobilization of an independent army. They declared that ultimately only an independent Jewish force "could serve as the nucleus for a fight to the end by the Jewish community in Eretz Israel." ³⁶ Although the debate remained unresolved, Rommel's second offensive in the early summer of 1942 and the British government's response in Palestine altered the context. ³⁷

Initially, the British command had rejected joint defense plans, concerned that the Hagana and Jewish Agency would gain a position as "claimant for services rendered." ³⁸ Yet the impending invasion of Rommel's forces encouraged an instant British alliance with the Yishuv. The British army sponsored joint training of Palmach and British troops at Kibbutz Mishmar HaEmek. While many Palmach troops had opposed cooperation and reconciliation with the British as long as the White Paper remained in place, they eagerly accepted the arms and training provided by the British. The British-Palmach force trained in conjunction with the "Carmel Plan." Developed by Sadeh and Rattner, the Carmel plan envisioned a last stand by the Yishuv against the Nazis by fighting a guerrilla war in Palestine's northern hills. The imminent danger, the British financial support, and the recruitment efforts of the far Left, triggered a substantial enlistment in the Palmach. ³⁹

Kibbutz HaMeuchad's efforts to attract Jewish youth to the kibbutz movement and to leftist politics went hand in hand with the mobilization

of the Palmach. In November, 1941, Palmach was composed of about 460 troops, of whom about 100 came from kibbutzim of the far Left. By April 1942, the Palmach amounted to 842 members, of whom over 600 were from the kibbutzim of the far Left, 350 from HaKibbutz HaMeuchad, 200 from Kibbutz HaArtzi, and 70 from Hever HaKvutzot (another kibbutz movement). By the late summer of 1942, the Palmach numbered over 1,300 troops and 65% came from twenty-eight communities of the far Left's Kibbutzim, especially from the settlements of Kibbutz HaMeuchad. From its inception, the Palmach's leadership and character was linked to the left-wing of Socialist-Zionism. The far Left viewed the Palmach as its prodigy, as a symbol of courageous national self-defense in the face of the Nazi invasion. 40

The invasion never came and the "Carmel Plan" was never tested. With the British victory at El Alamein in November, 1942, the tide of the North African war shifted and British-Palmach cooperation abruptly ended. The British Mandatory forces began confiscating arms and arresting Hagana commanders. The Palmach training at Mishmar HaEmek ended and the Palmach resumed its status as a "subversive organization." The British implemented arms searches on the kibbutzim, arrested Palmach commanders, and held politically motivated trials over arms issue to prove to the Arabs that British "impartial" justice had returned to Palestine. The sudden shift in Mandatory policy forced the Palmach underground and inspired a growing militancy in the official Zionist organizations. 41

During 1942, the first detailed reports on the Holocaust reached the leaders of World Zionism, inspiring a sense of urgency to create a

Jewish refuge. In the summer of 1942, the famous Biltmore conference of the WZO adopted a more clearly defined "Nationalist" program which specified a "Jewish State" as the post-war goals of World Zionism. The Biltmore program represented a defeat for the "gradualist" constituents of Weizmann and a victory for Ben Gurion and the more "activist" elements in the Jewish Agency. In November, following the Biltmore resolution, defining independent "Statehood" as post-war goal of Yishuv, the Hagana High Command began laying the basis for constructing a "National Army," while the official Yishuv leadership began debating a comprehensive defense policy. ⁴²

The crux of these debates was again the military and financial priorities of the Yishuv in wartime. The issue of the Palmach, which suffered severe budgetary problems during 1941-42, surfaced immediately. Without British funding for the Palmach, the burden would be shouldered by the Yishuv. Right-wing parties, especially the "Middle-Class Unionists," (who had been boycotting the Hagana's National Command at the time of the Palmach's inception) vehemently opposed sponsorship of the Palmach; non-Socialist parties emphasized that enlistment in the Allied armies and financial aid to the Allied war effort were the imperative national duty. Left-wing parties continued to assert the necessity of maintaining a permanent Jewish defense force and pointed to the achievements of the Palmach. The far left also voiced concern for preparing for the possibility of fighting the British after the war. According to Tabenkin, the leftist bloc "viewed the Palmach as the nucleus of a concentrated Jewish power which was destined to decide the fate of Zionism at the the end of the war." ⁴³

Ben Gurion emphasized that the Hagana and related funds should be directed towards illegal immigration especially in anticipation of the refugees after the war. Ben Gurion and Golomb still believed enlistment and the eventual formation of Jewish battalions should be the present objectives. Yet the crucial factor with regard to the Palmach appeared to be money, which was very, very scarce. 44

With so much voiced opposition in the Vaad Leumi and the Jewish Agency, and without British financial assistance, the Palmach's continued existence seemed doubtful until Kibbutz HaMeuchad offered an original proposal. Conceived of by Israel Livartosky and Sadeh, and advocated by Israel Galili and Tabenkin, the Palmach troops would be totally supported, housed, fed, and equipped by some of the communities of Kibbutz HaMeuchad in exchange for two weeks per month of labor for the kibbutzim. For Kibbutz HaMeuchad, the solution would solve the shortage of manpower on kibbutzim caused by enlistment and fulfill their demands for more vigilant self-defense, developing a corps of the "Pioneer-Soldiers" as envisioned by Trumpeldor. 45

The right-wing parties objected to the large budget for such a small army and feared the formation of a "Red Army," or a "Cossak Elite." Indeed, Ben Gurion and other critics from MAPAI also feared that the Palmach would evolve into the private army of the radical Left. The debate over the Palmach's future again related to the broader disputes raging within the Socialist-Zionist movement and within the MAPAI party. But the novelty of the scheme, the growing anti-Zionist behavior of the British, and the fact that the scheme solved the financial issue, convinced many MAPAI'niks to support the plan. Ultimately, a compromise

formula was reached, sending 40% of kibbutzim youth to Palmach, 30% to the JSP-Hagana, and 30% to British Army. Though the debate over the Yishuv's preferences for its underground military continued, the Palmach endured the internal strife to become wedded to the kibbutzim of the far Left. 46

During 1943, the Palmach struggled through a difficult period of transition with the new labor-military structure. A group of Palmach men led by Natan Peled declared their opposition to the Palmach's marriage with the leftist kibbutzim and stressed the importance of maintaining an army's independent, apolitical posture. Some 100-150 men dropped out of the Palmach's ranks due to the Palmach's sectarian character. Recruiting became difficult with manpower scarce and the Palmach's numbers dipped to almost 1000.

Yet, slowly, the Palmach's prestigious reputation as a fighting corps earned it the backing of other elements in the Yishuv's Left, specifically from Kibbutz HaArtzi, the second largest kibbutz movement in Palestine. The HaShomar HaTzair and its "Hakshora" youth movement, which had an enormous following in pre-World War II Europe, were based on non-militaristic and anti-elitist values, emphasizing Socialism, Pioneering, and Nationalism; but the disaster in Europe combined with continued Arab and British opposition to Zionism made their original idealism appear obsolete and empty. In search of a new platform, HaShomar HaTzair began making overtures to HaKibbutz HaMeuchad regarding cooperation in the Palmach during 1943.

The two kibbutz movements inched their way toward an accommodation. They debated the Palmach's structure and character,

enlistment, and role of officers, and their problems with recruitment. Tabenkin and HaKibbutz HaMeuchad argued for a fixed number of fighting elite, for professional soldiers with a totally independent command. HaShomar HaTzair's position outlined a two year service followed by reserve duty to create a mass militia of superior troops with a large body of junior officers who would also serve in the Hagana, and serve as the officers in a future Jewish Army. In the end, considerations of "National" loyalty to the Hagana's National Command tabled the HaKibbutz HaMeuchad proposal and bolstered the HaShomar HaTzair formula. By 1944, HaShomar HaTzair and Palmach signed a formal recruitment agreement aiding the Palmach with its manpower shortage and giving Hakshora a national purpose. ⁴⁷

Under the sponsorship of the kibbutzim and leftist youth movements, the Palmach expanded and developed during the years 1943-1945. By the end of 1944, the Palmach contained over 1500 troops; by the summer of 1945, boosted by the Hakshara youths, the Palmach numbered 1900, with substantial units in such urban communities as Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Peta Tiq'vah. Although officially under the Hagana National Command, the Palmach established an independent command structure organized into four regional battalions: the Galilee, the Jezreel Valley, the Judean Hills, and the Negev. And with the minimal resources available, the Palmach began training small naval, air, and reconnaissance units near Tel Aviv. Most significantly, the Palmach emerged as an elite underground force, a strategic reserve of expert commando troops for special tasks, with a unique military character. ⁴⁸

The Palmach's distinctiveness originated from the character of its troops. Most of the officers, with exceptions like Sadeh, were young. Yigal Allon assumed command of the Palmach in May, 1945, at age 28. In addition, one-fifth of the recruits were young women. The Palmach became a "youth movement in arms." As a "fighting kibbutz," the Palmach's spartan life attracted sons and daughters of leftist elites of Kibbutzim and Moshavim. As Galili expressed it, "the Palmach was in the kibbutz of the settlement movement" and the young "Sabras"(native-born Israelis) who participated "were the followers of the doctrines of pioneer Zionism--simple, monolithic, and strong." ⁴⁹ With an unusually high percentage of officers, 60%, the Palmach mirrored the egalitarian solidarity of the kibbutz by fostering a combination of "freedom and discipline, laxity and responsibility" in the relations between commanders and troops. By 1945, over 90% of all the Palmach's senior officers and over 40% of its rank-and-file were members of Kibbutz HaMeuchad. Kibbutzniks of the far Left represented the original and principle fabric of the Palmach. ⁵⁰

The Palmach's special character was fostered, not only by the background of the recruits, but also by the nature of their training. Political training and military training were combined. Out of 493 training hours required of Palmach officers, 120 hours were devoted to political-ideological indoctrination. The Palmach's training stressed individual initiative, leadership, discipline, and "cadre-building." All the youthful, idealistic, egalitarian, and vigorous qualities of kibbutz life, coupled with militant Socialism, were infused into the corps of the Palmach, into young kibbutznik-fighters like Allon, Dayan, Yitshak

Rabin, and Chaim Bar-Lev. The Palmach developed an elitist 'esprit de corps' as the vanguard of the "Pioneering-Nation Building" Left, as the direct descendent of the "Pioneer-Soldier" tradition.⁵¹

Ben Gurion and the other critics of the Palmach correctly anticipated that the Palmach would emerge as a proud symbol and the military arm of the far Left. But the Palmach also became the first elite and professional corps of the underground Hagana. Likewise, in early 1944, the far Left affiliates of MAPAI formally split to create the independent parties of "HaTunua La'Ahdut HaAvoda" (The Movement for the Unification of Labor), under the leadership of Tabenkin, and the smaller "Left Poeli Zion." Yet, they remained within the political circumference of the official Yishuv. The Palmach became the "crack-troops" of the Hagana, produced much of the Hagana's leadership, and remained loyal to the Hagana's National Command. Despite the dominance of the far Left over the Palmach staff, which caused suspicion among moderates in the MAPAI, the Palmach was widely recognized as a disciplined body and obedient to the Yishuv government. The far Left "battled" Ben Gurion and his MAPAI bloc only in the Histadrut, the Vaad Leumi, and Jewish Agency.⁵²

During 1943, as the underground Hagana grew in strength, spearheaded by the evolution of the Palmach, Anglo-Zionist Relations worsened. Since the tide of the World War had turned in their favor, the British lost interest in Jewish enlistment and requests for a Jewish battalion. Mapping out Britain's post-war strategic-diplomatic interests in the region, the British Foreign Office feared the potential for a Jewish revolt. On January 9, the British seized a Palmach truck,

arrested two Palmach men, and confiscated the truck's 10,000 bullets. On March 6, the Palmach raided a British armory and recovered the confiscated ammunitions "with interest." In early 1943, a Jewish infantry battalion in Palestine was sent abroad, contrary to the assurances given by the British at the end of 1940. On April 29, the British police searched the Jewish Agency office in Tel Aviv, striking another blow to Anglo-Jewish relations. In protest, the Jewish Agency temporarily closed its enlistment offices. On March 29, the British government offered a post-war reconstruction plan based on the continuation of the White Paper, generating angry public demonstrations from the Yishuv and stern formal protests from Zionist leaders. During the summer of 1943, the public trial of two Hagana men, Eliyahu Reichlin and Eliyahu Leusrkin, indicted for stealing arms and ammunition, was made into an international condemnation of the Jewish Agency. In July, the British arrested Weizmann's bodyguard for possessing a handful of ammunition. In the Fall, the British began massive arms searches in the kibbutzim. On November 16, a kibbutznik was killed during an arms search at Ramat HaKovesh, in the north. The British actions stimulated mass anti-British sentiment within an already embittered and traumatized Yishuv. 53

While the British strictly policed the Yishuv and closed the gates of Palestine to Jewish refugees, the Yishuv received ever increasing news regarding the true extent of the Holocaust. The entire Yishuv was embittered by the vivid memories of most of the wartime illegal immigration operations that ended in disaster, like the fate of the "USS Struma." Forbidden to enter Palestine in December, 1941, the Struma

harbored in Turkey until the ship was banished to the Black Sea, where the archaic vessel sank and all its 769 passengers perished in February, 1942. Then in April, 1943, at the Allied Bermuda conference, the British government reiterated that Palestine could not be considered a place of refuge for the remnants of European Jewry following the war. The "civilized" world seemed indifferent to the immense sufferings of the Jewish people, infecting the entire Yishuv with despair and interest in rapid salvation. 54

The Hagana did organize some successful ventures, such as the "Underground Railroad," built of bribes, connections, and daring, which rescued 4,000 Iraqi and Persian Jews. Information also circulated about the valiant fighting of Jewish resistance groups in the doomed Jewish ghettos of Europe. Yet most intelligence reports echoed with messages of thousands, possibly even millions, of Jews being slaughtered in Europe. In desperation, during 1943-1944, Golomb recruited 250 Hagana and Palmach volunteers and composed a bold plan to parachute commandos behind German lines, into ghettos, and lead an orchestrated resistance movement. Thirty-two Hagana and Palmach troops did parachute into the Balkans, including the young poet Hanna Szenech, but the Nazis caught and executed many of the commandos, and crushed the staged revolts. In early 1944, despite the pleas of Yishuv leaders, the British command cancelled the parachute scheme. Similarly, despite the pleas of Jewish leaders in London and Washington, the Allied air forces, engaged in day and night bombings over Germany, rejected proposals to bomb concentration camps. In the eyes of the Yishuv, even the Allies, especially the British, shouldered a degree of "War Guilt" for the

Holocaust. 55

In the winter of 1944-1945, the Yishuv's official bodies debated the post-war response to Britain. The General Zionists, moderate MAPAIniks, and even HaShomar HaTzair, argued that the situation had not yet arrived at a state of emergency and the Yishuv should not resort to anti-British violence. HaShomar HaTzair opposed using force to resist arms searches, stressing that the situation had not yet reached a state of "maximal emergency;" but the majority of the left-wing argued for more forceful reaction. ⁵⁶ More militant right-wing parties, MAPAIniks like Golomb, and the Kibbutz HaMeuchad faction prophesied that conflict with the Mandatory was inescapable. As Golomb put it, "we shall be forced to fight a zealot's war and the war will be the foundation over which the political roof can be laid." ⁵⁷

Weizmann argued for moderation and restraint in spite of the tragic climate of the moment, for the Yishuv to wait until the war ended before making any fateful decisions. But even Ben Gurion and moderate MAPAIniks felt that Weizmann acted too compromisingly towards the British. In November, Ben Gurion temporarily resigned from the Chairmanship of the Jewish Agency to protest British policy and the obsolescence of the conciliatory posture of Weizmann. Although the official Yishuv leadership failed to reach a definite plan and timetable, the consensus favored restraint until the culmination of the war, the continuation of illegal immigration, and a "wait and see" attitude towards Anglo-Zionist relations. Depending upon post-war British policy in Palestine, the possibility that the Hagana might battle with the Mandatory forces following the war had appeared on the

near horizon. 58

With the Allies gaining the offensive against the Nazis, with the German forces beaten out of North Africa, and with the safety of Palestine assured, war drums, long subdued by the danger of an Axis victory, sounded in the "unofficial" quarters of the Yishuv. As the British continued to enforce the White Paper, to turn away escaping refugees, while the news about the Ghetto resistance and nightmarish facts about the reality of Hitler's "Final Solution" surfaced, the uneasy truce between the militant Yishuv and the British began to unravel. The tragic prophecies of Jabotinsky had come true and the militant, revolutionary program of the far Right gained credence and increasing support. 59

By 1943, however, enlistment and inactivity had eroded the ranks of the IZL. In the autumn of 1943, Merridor tried to organize a united resistance movement from the remnants of the IZL and LHI, and from the restless elements in the Hagana. But LHI had no faith in cooperation with the Hagana and LHI-IZL relations remained tense. IZL intelligence had been informing on LHI during 1941-1942 and the old scares of the Raziell-Stern conflict lingered. On September 3, 1943, the LHI killed Israel Pritzker, the skillful IZL intelligence officer. As LHI's Yellin-Mor recalled, "after our split with the IZL, hard feelings grew up...and hard feelings between comrades-in -arms can be worse than between enemies." 60

LHI refrained from joining but some restless Hagana men responded affirmatively. Binyamin Eliau and Yosef Idelberg of the Hagana in Haifa and even some Palmach fighters in the Jerusalem company, including Sadeh

and Shimon Avidan, showed interest in establishing a joint political body dedicated to ending British rule and to forming a Jewish national army. Merridor and Lankin of the IZL, and Colonel Aharon of the Hagana formed a triumvirate council which founded an underground body called, "Am Loham"(Fighting Nation). Am Loham formulated plans for assassinating and kidnapping British high officials, but the unity failed to last very long. In December, Hagana Intelligence uncovered Am Loham's existence. Fearing the IZL initiated merger would adversely effect the Hagana, the Hagana High Command ordered its men to withdraw immediately. A few Hagana men defected to the IZL but most complied with the order. Am Loham fell apart. The revolt against the Mandate would not be "united." 61

In December, 1943, the ranks of IZL swelled from a small influx of Polish Betarim and from the Jewish soldiers arriving in General Wardyslaws Ander's "Free Polish Army" which had swept through Russia, Persia, and into the Middle East. Many of these men had been hardened by brutal imprisonment under Stalin. They were also gripped by the knowledge that their families were dying in Hitler's ovens, and convinced that the Allies refused to do enough to save them. Of the 4000 Polish Jews in Ander's corps, some 1000 elected to stay in Palestine, including Menachem Begin. 62

After some difficulty, Begin, a well-known former Betar leader, obtained his release from Ander's regiment. LHI's Sheib tried to recruit Begin to assume command of LHI with the hope that Begin could reunite LHI and IZL. But as a disciple of Jabotinsky, Begin envisioned constructing a professional, underground resistance and he disapproved

of the personal-terror tactics of the LHI. After the collapse of Am Loham, Merridor relinquished command and Begin was appointed Supreme Commander of the IZL. 63

Begin started to reorganize and to rejuvenate the IZL. He named Merridor as his deputy with orders to build a general staff, recalled enlisted IZL soldiers from Allied armies abroad, and successfully recruited from the Yishuv's middle-class and Sephardic communities. Indeed, the Yishuv's slowly growing oriental urban community, which lacked a Socialist tradition, provided Begin with 25%-35% of his recruits. By early 1944, the IZL possessed approximately 1000-1500 fighters and emerged as a small, yet superbly organized, resistance movement. Equally essential, Begin reinstated formal fund raising in Palestine and abroad, and he developed the infrastructure of a political-underground movement to replace the shattered support of the NZO. 64

Revisionist leaders like Altman envisioned the IZL as a military arm merely to threaten the Mandatory government into negotiation, but Begin felt the time for negotiations had past. He broke the remaining links which the IZL kept with the vestiges of the Revisionist Party, which was limping back towards the Yishuv's political center. Like Jabotinsky, Begin stressed "maximal pressure for maximal demands." Begin believed that the Jewish people must fight to make themselves a free nation living in a land of their own. Begin proclaimed, "a Jewish State is now necessary to save us. Our people are living on a volcano." The IZL's logo, an arm clenching a rifle superimposed over a map of "greater Israel" with a slogan reading, "Rak Kak," or "Only thus," advertised

their maximal goals via the most militant means. Another IZL slogan, "in Blood and fire Judah fell, in blood and fire Judah shall rise again,"(which paradoxically was also the symbol of the original HaShomar) stressed the national trial of life or death that lay ahead for the Jewish people. ⁶⁵

Begin viewed the "political factor" as the key ingredient. Though Begin reserved the power of ultimate choice over IZL's targets, he granted full tactical command to the IZL general staff and concentrated on IZL's political aims. Although he maintained contact with LHI and respect for their cause, he opposed the LHI's personal-terror tactics as counter-productive, stressing that, "if you kill an individual, there will be another individual." ⁶⁶ Begin, like Jabotinsky before him, stressed that terror must be orchestrated with political timing, that targets must be chosen with politics in mind. Begin understood that the IZL's military punch must be combined with a vigorous propaganda campaign of posters, newspapers, pamphlets, and radio broadcasts. ⁶⁷ Begin recognized that, for the IZL successfully to gather support for a war against the Mandatory forces, IZL initially needed tacit approval from the Yishuv, to seize "the proper balance of official condemnation and public toleration." ⁶⁸

By 1944, convinced that the Allies could not lose the war, that diplomacy with the Mandatory regime would prove useless without a Jewish show of force, and that the Jewish Agency behaved apathetically and debated esoterically in the face of the desperate situation, Begin and IZL prepared to act. On February 1, 1944, Begin "declared war" on the British Mandatory regime. With the war against the Nazis still in

progress, Begin stipulated that British military targets were not to be attacked. And to stress the distinction between the IZL and LHI, Begin emphasized that IZL terror was "never against individuals" but a "War of Liberation" against the institutions, administration, and police forces of the Mandatory regime. IZL posters denounced the British:

There is no longer an armistice between Jewish youth and the British administration in the Land of Israel, which hands our brothers over to Hitler...Four years have passed since the war began and all the hopes in your hearts have evaporated...the British regime has sealed its shameful betrayal of the Jewish people...there no longer is an armistice between the Jewish people and the British administration...our people are at war with this regime. ⁶⁹

In most cases, the IZL command warned British personnel before their attacks, yet casualties were unavoidable. In February, IZL launched a wave of anti-British attacks, blowing up the Tax and Immigration offices in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa. In late February, they blew up CID stations in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa. In March, IZL blew up the Mandatory Police Headquarters in Tel Aviv and CID headquarters in Haifa. In May, they seized a government radio station in Ramele. In July, IZL gutted the Land Registry Office in Jerusalem, killing two Arab constables. In August, IZL raided three CID barracks and stole their weapons. In September, the IZL attacked four British police stations, killing four Arab policemen and seizing large quantities of weapons and ammunition. On September 27, the IZL sounded a Shofar (a ceremonial ram's horn) on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, an act outlawed since the riots of 1928. Two days later, the IZL attacked a Mandatory stronghold at Tegar Fort in Haifa. From February to October, 1944, the IZL's "Revolt" gathered momentum, prestige, and support. ⁷⁰

Meanwhile, LHI emerged from hibernation. After Stern's death, Zelnik's surrender, and the purging of another leader named Giladi, a triumvirate of Yellin-Mor, Sheib, and Yitzak Shamir assumed leadership of the LHI. With Yellin-Mor in prison, Shamir reorganized the group, set up various branches, laid down rules, established a propaganda department, and enlisted a permanent strike force. After twenty-three LHI people escaped through a tunnel at the Latrun prison in November, 1943, including Yellin-Mor, the LHI regrouped. New members were added from the trickle of Polish refugees and from Ander's corps. By 1944, LHI numbered some 300-400 fighters, including six women. When the IZL revolt started in February, 1944, the LHI unilaterally joined in the fight against the Mandatory and began terrorizing British personnel. According to Yellin-Mor, "the Irgun were only attacking buildings. And we were laughing at them...the British would simply reconstruct the buildings with our money. We thought it more effective to aim at the lives of the British." ⁷¹

The LHI terrorized British personnel with guns and booby-trapped mines. In February, the LHI killed two British policemen. They also blew up a car in attempting to assassinate a British official which killed two policemen and a Jewish bystander. And they engaged in numerous gunbattles with the police, and attempted to bomb Mandatory vehicles. In March, they shot three policemen in Tel Aviv. In August, they made several attempts to kidnap and assassinate Sir Harold MacMichael, the British High Commissioner. In September, they shot the highly effective, British agent Tom Wilkin. The LHI spread fear and hatred amongst the Mandatory authorities and throughout most of the

Yishuv. 72

Ostracized by the Jewish community and hunted by the police, the disorganized LHI lived the nomadic life of fugitives. Unlike the IZL, the LHI possessed no secret armories, always carried personal weapons, and resisted arrest. As Yellin-Mor explained:

Our slogan was 'kill or be killed, but don't be arrested.' Prison could have destroyed our movement. Conditions in the detention camps were not bad and many people were broken. They became neutral. And I admit that in 1944, most Jews were quite satisfied with British rule...if you had taken a vote, perhaps 80-90% would have given you a good opinion of the British. But that is not the point they were the alien power and we had to fight them to gain our freedom, whether they were liberal or inhuman. 73

During the spring and summer of 1944, Begin's and the IZL command's attempts to merge LHI with the IZL ended in frustration. Begin urged Shamir to abandon LHI's personal terror tactics which caused British reprisals and arms searches that hurt the IZL and, therefore, their mutual war on the Mandatory. Though there still existed hard feelings between the IZL and LHI members over Jabotinsky's doctrines, essentially, their aims ran parallel since the IZL had declared war on the British. By the end of the summer, Yellin-Mor agreed to cooperation but not a complete merger. By October, they established a tacit working agreement that specified the LHI would relinquish the policy of carrying personal weapons, a tactic which had led to numerous and useless clashes with Mandatory police, and would coordinate their strikes with the IZL. From February to October, 1944, Jewish terror against the Mandatory regime was coordinated and frequent. 74

Yet while the LHI and IZL made war on the British, Anglo-Jewish Agency relations suddenly improved. In the spring of 1944, Churchill

finally ordered the formation of a "Jewish Army Group" attached to the British Eighth Army and mobilized from Jewish recruits already enlisted in British forces. By that summer, a Jewish Brigade finally emerged, consisting of 3,500 troops and 350 officers. Some of the Yishuv's leadership received the establishment of the Jewish Brigade with mixed feelings, as "too little too late," or as a deception to remove more Jewish soldiers from Palestine; but most perceived of it as a thaw in Anglo-Zionist affairs. Ben Gurion and Sharett felt the Jewish division offered additional military experience to thousands of Jews from the Yishuv and Weizmann promoted it as a major diplomatic achievement. At this same time, the British government intimated that a new partition plan for Palestine, more generous to the Yishuv than the Peel Plan of 1937, was being considered in London and in Washington. Anglo-Zionist relations appeared to be warming. It appeared that the cooperation, the moderation, and the patience exhibited by the Yishuv would indeed be rewarded after the war. 75

Yet the terrorism of the two "dissident" organizations provided a constant thorn in the side of Weizmann's "British reciprocation" formula. By 1944, despite the protests of the far Left bloc, the Jewish Agency and the WZO were gradually incorporating the remnants of the Revisionist Party into Zionism's "official" political sphere. When the IZL first declared war on the Mandatory regime in February, Ben Gurion and most of the Jewish Agency felt that the Revisionists had betrayed the agreements implicit in the Biltmore program. Most of the non-Socialist and Socialist parties supported the Biltmore platform and agreed to wait for the unveiling of British post-war policy, with the

notable exception of HaShomar HaTzair (which sought independent agreement with the Arabs subsequent to any plans for statehood). Ben Gurion sent Dov Joseph of the Jewish Agency to confer with Revisionist Leaders. Joseph quickly discovered that the Revisionist Party, greatly diminished in stature by the war, held no influence with the IZL. Within the WZO, some wished to negotiate with the "Committee for a Jewish Army," an IZL sponsored group in America, led by Pierre Van Paissen; but Ben Gurion argued persuasively that, since the IZL excluded themselves from the WZO, then they could not expect recognition. Ben Gurion became increasingly convinced that the LHI and, especially, the IZL represented a serious challenge to the Jewish Agency's authority and an extreme threat to the Zionist cause as military-political machines outside the compromising influence of the Yishuv's official political arena. 76

As the British police force became ever more exasperated and alarmed by rising Jewish terrorism, the Mandatory administration began applying immense pressure on the Jewish community to help curb the violence. The British threatened to make severe reprisals against the entire Yishuv if the Jewish Agency failed to combat Jewish terrorism. Most right-wing, religious, and leftist parties in the Vaad Leumi opposed cooperating with the British police as long as the White Paper still remained in effect. Both moderate General Zionists like Weizmann and moderate MAPAIniks like Ben Gurion and Sharett argued persuasively that the dissidents' defiance of the Yishuv "establishment" jeopardized potentially fruitful, and delicate, Anglo-Zionist negotiations. Nearly everyone agreed that some "political action" must be taken against the

dissident organizations. 77

On April 2, 1944, the Jewish Agency published its official policy on the dissident organizations which called for voluntary efforts to stop the terror, the extortion, and the propaganda of the IZL and LHI by isolating the groups' members within the Yishuv. Ben Gurion supported the media blitz against the dissidents but warned that the Hagana might resort to stronger measures, that "if there is no alternative, we shall face force with force. It will be a tragedy but a smaller tragedy than the danger inherent in a small group gaining control over the entire Jewish community." 78

The Jewish Agency hoped community isolation and vigilant efforts by the Mandatory police might quickly exhaust the IZL and the LHI. In April, two LHI members were arrested for killing a British policeman after a tip-off from the Hagana intelligence. Because of an IZL informant, the British arrested fifty IZL men, including Arie Ben Eliezer of the High Command. In conjunction with police action, the official Jewish press vigorously condemned the IZL and LHI as "criminal Lunatics...deeply despised by every member of the Jewish community." 79 The Jewish Agency issued public statements, declaring that the "deadly hand which directed these operations is unwittingly or maliciously helping the enemies of the Jewish people." 80 After LHI and IZL attacks in March, the Jewish Agency declared a day of protest and fasting. The Jewish Agency hoped that an energetic media campaign, voluntary community isolation, and the muscle of the Mandantory would manage to suffocate the dissident organizations. 81

After the April resolution, the Hagana protected the Yishuv from

extortion and the WZO establishment disrupted IZL fund raising in the United States. But the Jewish Agency's "anti-dissident" strategy failed to dislodge the IZL's support in Palestine. IZL counter-propaganda muffled the Jewish Agency's media machine. And British police operations played into the hands of the IZL-LHI's strategy by harassing much of Jewish population. Likewise, British corporal punishment only generated sympathy from the Jewish community. Most importantly, the British CID found the Jewish communal reluctance to inform on fellow Jews an impenetrable barrier and Mandatory police failed to arrest the ring-leaders of the LHI and IZL. The dissident organizations were badly hurt by arrests, shootings, imprisonment, and deportation of their members, but not bled to death.

While the British government began making overtures regarding the establishment of a Jewish state, they sternly warned the Jewish Agency that Jewish terrorism must first be eliminated. The paths of the British Government and of the Jewish Agency seemed to run more and more parallel, and Ben Gurion, Weizmann, and Moshe Sharret became more and more determined not to let the LHI and the IZL obstruct their course. With the anti-dissident campaign as outlined in April failing, Ben Gurion reluctantly agreed to attempt reaching a negotiated accord with the IZL and the LHI. 82

From August to late October, 1944, Ben Gurion sent Sneh, who knew Begin in Poland, and Golomb to persuade the dissidents to comply to the authority of the Jewish Agency. Golomb met several times with LHI's Yellin-Mor but to no avail. Golomb argued that LHI terror violated communal discipline, undermined the international status of the Jewish

Agency, and jeopardized the political negotiations with Britain. But LHI was so deeply underground, so isolated, and so out of touch with diplomacy, that Golomb's arguments proved fruitless.

Yellin-Mor countered that LHI's tactics exaggerated the strength of the underground and placed the Palestine problem in the international spotlight. He refused to accept that diplomacy could change Mandatory policy. He told Golomb that sooner or later the Hagana "would have to start fighting the British too, otherwise the Jewish Agency would lose control over the people here," so even if the Hagana "was only considering the possibility of one day having to fight the British, he ought to come to terms with the IZL and us." ⁸³ Golomb and Yellin-Mor found little common ground for discussion. ⁸⁴

The more protracted conferences with Begin, Eliahu Lankin, and the the IZL command were also marked by different basic assumptions. Sneh and Golomb noted that the IZL terror tactics would upset the Jewish Agency's delicate negotiations with Britain regarding a partition plan. Sneh stressed that Begin was out-of-touch with Anglo-Zionist diplomacy. IZL's terror tactics, Sneh argued, were inappropriate to international situation, hurting the war effort, and giving Britain an excuse to suppress a Jewish state. Golomb noted that British searches for IZL terrorists had uncovered Hagana workshops and arms caches, which weakened the Yishuv's overall defenses. Golomb and Sneh noted that the Jewish Agency represented the legitimate spokesman for the Yishuv's majority, "the elected leadership of the entire Jewish community," ⁸⁵ and that the IZL defied that authority. Most emphatically, Golomb stressed that the IZL did not represent the Yishuv, yet they had taken

it upon themselves to act as representatives. The Hagana was the Yishuv's official underground army, yet the IZL performed military operations unilaterally. ⁸⁶

Begin insisted that the IZL would continue to fight the Mandatory regime. He believed that the IZL's demonstration of Jewish power and determination gave dignity to the Zionist cause, presented a positive image of Jews, pressured the British regime, raised international awareness of the Palestine problem. Begin and the IZL staff decried the British as "Nazis" for their war guilt, confirmed in July by Foreign Minister Anthony Eden's refusal to bomb the Hungarian railway lines to the concentration camps. Britain deserved the punishment it received. Begin believed the British would never voluntarily leave Palestine and that the Jewish Agency was being baited into apathy.

As for a partition plan, there existed "no good partition agreement," Begin remarked, "the homeland is a unity and cannot be cut up." ⁸⁷ As for the Jewish Agency's rightful authority, "we cannot accept that you have a monopoly in the political field," Begin said, "for we also have political objectives, and they are no less legitimate than yours." ⁸⁸ On several occasions, Begin reiterated that the IZL was prepared "to view Ben Gurion as the leader of the community...as the man who must manage the political and military war...but on one condition--that he should begin the war on the foreign ruler." ⁸⁹ By the end of October, Golomb and Sneh were firmly convinced that Begin could not be persuaded to call off the IZL revolt. At their last meeting on October 31, Golomb warned Begin that if he did not comply to the Jewish Agency's authority, the Hagana would take steps to "finish" the IZL. ⁹⁰

By mid-October the partition plans for Palestine rapidly gained momentum in London and Washington. Both Churchill and Roosevelt voiced their support for creating a Jewish state. Churchill and other traditionally pro-Zionist British statesmen intimated to Weizmann that they personally favored the creation of an independent Jewish state. But part of the price was the eradication of Jewish terrorism. The British demanded that the Jewish Agency respond in one of two ways: the Hagana intelligence must gather and submit a list of names for British security to investigate; or the Hagana must act independently to crush the dissident organizations. Providing a list risked the chance that the IZL intelligence might also submit a list of names regarding the Hagana and Palmach; and a Yishuv-wide British police operation might generate more anti-British hostility and might uncover strongholds, arms caches, and vital information of the Hagana. Independent Hagana action risked igniting a civil war. If the Hagana took forceful action against fellow Jews, it would violate the image it had established with such policies as To'har HaNeshek and Havlaga. Such action would constitute a "corrupt use of weapons" and break sacred ethnic boundaries. ⁹¹

During late October and early November, the Jewish Agency debated whether the Hagana should take anti-dissident action. The far Left, particularly Ahdut HaAvodah and Left Poeli Zion, opposed cooperation with the British and emphasized that the Palmach would refuse to take part in anti-dissident action. Rabbi Yehuda Fishman of Mizrahi, and Yitshak Gruenbaum, Pertez Bernstein, and Yitzhak Schmorak of the General Zionists, spoke out against a war between "brothers" and cooperating with the British while the White Paper policy remained fixed. Fishman

noted that "as long as the White Paper exists, those who execute it are our enemies,"⁹² that without the White Paper there would not be Jewish terrorism. Gruenbaum and Fishman supported an intense propaganda campaign and submitted that the British should be informed that the Jewish Agency would not aid the Mandatory in an anti-terrorist campaign unless the White Paper was repealed.⁹³

As the negotiations with Begin and Yellin-Mor failed to deliver results and as the British government and Weizmann pressured the Jewish Agency to act, Ben Gurion, Sharett, Golomb, and even Sneh strongly advocated forceful action by the Hagana and cooperation with the British police forces. Sharett proclaimed that, "civil war would be worth while if it could save our future and salvage our chances, which are clearly discernable on the political horizon...by cooperating with the authorities we prove to them and to the whole world that we oppose terrorism..."⁹⁴ Golomb stressed that, "if the Yishuv did not want to commit political suicide, it had to wake up to the fact that something was creating a stink right under its nose."⁹⁵ Golomb argued that if anti-dissident measures were not taken, then the British government might draw the conclusion that "we have not yet earned the right to independence and that it cannot rely on us in this particular corner of the Middle East."⁹⁶ Sneh advocated for the Hagana's full cooperation "with the authorities and with the police."⁹⁷ The Jewish Agency Executive could not reach a consensus, so the matter went before the Vaad Leumi.

While the Yishuv's representatives debated the issue of anti-dissident action, Ben Gurion and Golomb prepared militarily for

that scenario. On October 18, Golomb returned from London to announce a new campaign would begin to end Jewish terrorism:

The dissident organizations are causing untold damage to Zionist diplomacy. Thus it is no longer possible simply to condemn terrorism. Information and education will no longer do the job, neither will the articles written in the daily press. If there is no alternative, we will have to fight these crazy and damaging actions. ⁹⁸

On October 20, Golomb ordered Avidan and Allon to assemble and train 170 "politically reliable" men for anti-dissident action. The Hagana command accepted Galili's demand that Palmach involvement in anti-dissident action would be voluntary. Most of the anti-dissident squad consisted of left-wing kibbutzniks of the Palmach and Hagana who adamantly opposed Revisionism and suspected the political intentions of the IZL. Meanwhile, Hagana intelligence continued to gather information on the dissidents as they had since April, the IZL and LHI leaders were repeatedly warned of the consequences of non-compliance, and the official Yishuv leadership continued to discuss anti-dissidents methods. ⁹⁹

The leading advocate for swift Hagana action against the LHI and the IZL was Ben Gurion, who feared the growing military-political strength of the dissident movements. The opponents of Ben Gurion's "anti-Fascist crusade" believed that Ben Gurion was only trying to strengthen the position of himself and MAPAI in the Yishuv. Gurion understood the inherent political danger if the Hagana took military action to suppress the dissidents, for as he remarked in 1941:

Perhaps sometimes dictatorship is necessary, especially during a big historical crisis. But there is always a danger in it because it is in the nature of dictatorship that it loves to perpetuate itself even when it turns into a destructive and harmful force. ¹⁰⁰

But Ben Gurion believed that, not only his own power and authority was at stake, but that the dissidents' growing strength threatened the entire Zionist enterprise. The dissidents' "revolt" could not succeed in driving the British regime out of Palestine, Ben Gurion argued, but the LHI and IZL violence offered the British an excuse for harsh countermeasures against the Yishuv, turned the world's attention away from the plight of European Jewry, upset the Partition scheme by arousing the Arabs, and, most importantly, represented a direct threat to the Jewish Agency's authority. ¹⁰¹

After a heated debate with many dissenting voices, the Vaad Leumi voted to take unilateral action against the terrorists without involving the British. Although the Jewish Agency publicly protested the Mandatory government's deportation of 251 detainees to Eritrea on October 25, objecting to removal of any Jew from Palestine, they were deeply absorbed in their anti-dissident plans. By October 25, the Inner Zionist Council confirmed that drastic measures were indeed required. On October 26, the Jewish Agency press announced a "unanimous decision" that "the Yishuv and all its powers will do their best to stop terror," though it made no mention of the methods to be used.

The political risks involved caused the Jewish Agency to remain ambivalent and indecisive. An all-out effort was rejected in favor of a more limited operation involving surveillance, disrupting IZL operations, and in some cases arrests. The operation was designed to break the internal security, the financial structure, and the morale of the dissident organizations. The Palestine Post declared that, "the authorities may rest assured that the Yishuv as a whole has its own

accounts to settle with the terrorists" and would help the Mandatory "eradicate a dangerous cancer." 102

Meanwhile, IZL's revolt continued, a IZL-LHI merger gradually solidified, and LHI continued to pursue its independent operations. Lord Moyne, British Colonial Secretary, was widely regarded within the Yishuv as a war criminal and an anti-Semite. Rumors circulated of his alleged insensitivity to the plight of Jews perishing in the Europe. He was associated with the Struma tragedy and with Britain dropping the Joel Brand Plan of exchanging thousands of Allied trucks with Germany for the lives of thousands of Jewish children. The hostility that the IZL and the LHI held for British officials like Moyne was well known. Moyne symbolized British power in Middle East, and LHI had already tried to kidnap him. As Yellin-Mor explained, " we weren't in a position to kill Churchill in London, so the logical second best was to hit Lord Moyne in Cairo." 103

On November 6, LHI's Eliahu Hakim and Eliahu Bet-Tsouri assassinated Lord Moyne and his driver in Cairo. The news of Moyne's killing shook the Middle East and Great Britain. Begin and the IZL commanders, furious that the LHI operation was taken without prior knowledge, broke off IZL relations with LHI. In London, Moyne's assassination appalled the British government. As a close personal friend of Moyne, Churchill felt aggrieved and angry. On November 17, Churchill solemnly addressed the House of Commons:

If our dreams for Zionism should be dissolved in the smoke of the revolvers of assassins and if our efforts for its future should provoke a new wave of banditry worthy of the Nazi Germans, many persons like myself will have to reconsider the position that we have maintained so firmly for such a long time. 104

British Zionists like Churchill and Lord Gort threatened Weizmann that if the Jewish Agency failed to demonstrate its utter refutation of anti-British terror, the partition resolution would be withdrawn and Zionist dreams of independent statehood would be buried. Deeply shocked by Moyne's killing and alarmed by the British reaction, Weizmann instructed the Yishuv to eradicate terrorism and warned, "that I shall not be able to continue with my political work if terrorism is not suppressed...it must be to prove to Mr. Churchill that we earn what is given to us." ¹⁰⁵

When the Jewish Agency Executive met on November 18-19, LHI's act had provided a pretext for the Jewish Agency to take stiffer measures against Jewish terrorism. In the Jewish Agency Executive, only Fishman still objected to any Hagana action against the LHI and the IZL, while Gruenbaum and Sharmok objected to cooperating with the Mandatory forces. Ben Gurion and the majority prevailed. In public speeches on November 20, 1944, Ben Gurion and Moshe Sharett declared war on the dissident movements and announced a four-point program for the Yishuv citizenry: dismiss from workplaces and schools all terrorist or those who aid terrorists; refuse shelter or protection to terrorists; resist threats or extortion by the terrorist organizations; and "to render all necessary assistance" to the Hagana and the Mandatory police in stamping out terrorism. Sharett proclaimed that, "terrorism in Palestine is calculated to wreck the chances of our political struggle and destroy our internal peace...our very existence here is at stake." ¹⁰⁶ On November 21, at a Histadrut convention, Ben Gurion declared:

All the long tradition of Jewish mercy must be forgotten, if we are to have mercy in the future... I say that the terrorists

constitute a far greater danger to us than they do to the authorities and the police...without cooperating with them we shall fail to rid ourselves of this evil and all who do not cooperate are helping the terrorists. 107

Believing in Britain's post-war promises and believing that IZL and LHI terrorism jeopardized British's goodwill towards Zionism, Ben Gurion ordered the mobilization of the Hagana's anti-dissident squad, in an operation known as the "Season," a hunting season on the dissidents. 108

The Hagana waged a one-sided civil war on the IZL and the LHI. In mid-November, the Season opened on the LHI with the Hagana kidnapping a LHI member and seizing the LHI archives in Haifa. Yellin-Mor threatened Golomb with retaliation against the Jewish Agency and the Hagana command. But LHI was already weakened by arrests, small, poorly armed, and isolated. Still, the LHI was a tightly knit group with few informers and dangerous because the LHI carried personal weapons at all times. Dayan negotiated with LHI's Joseph Liebshtein and the LHI agreed to interrupt their activities to avoid an encounter with the Hagana. The LHI member was released. Golomb made false, or halfhearted, overtures for a merger of LHI into the Hagana, promising increased activism against the British; but he had already achieved his prime objective, the elimination of the LHI from the Season. The LHI halted their operations for six months and the Hagana halted their attacks on LHI. By mid-December, the Hagana turned their full attention toward the IZL. Tactically, Golomb had eliminated the possibility of uniting LHI and IZL against the Hagana. The Jewish Agency viewed LHI as merely a "classic terrorist group," while the IZL represented the greatest challenge to the political hegemony of Ben Gurion and the Jewish Agency. 109

The Hagana's operation possessed two specific goals: close down the dissidents' source of funds in the Yishuv and detain the dissident commanders. The Hagana successfully cut off IZL funding but internment of the IZL officers proved difficult. As an underground army, the Hagana found it difficult to hold the IZL men for very long in homes or apartment buildings. Many were released because of the protests of local residents. And despite the Hagana's greater total numbers, the IZL did not concern itself with defending settlements as did the Hagana, so the Hagana's ability to concentrate troops in one place was not vastly superior to the IZL.

To effectively eliminate the IZL, the Jewish Agency confronted the choice between more visible and direct assaults on the IZL, such as assassinating or executing the IZL leadership, or cooperation with the Mandatory forces to gain imprisonment facilities. Both choices involved the grave breeches of ethnic solidarity and the potential political risks of infuriating the general Yishuv against the Jewish Agency. Yet Ben Gurion and Golomb recognized that any potentially controversial actions taken by the Hagana would be supported by the political-propaganda backing of the official Yishuv media. They elected to cooperate with the British police. 110

By January, the Hagana and the CID coordinated their assault on the IZL fighters and its infrastructure. Hagana officers Teddy Kollek and Reuven Shiloah acted as liaisons and accompanied British on raids to avoid the arrest of Hagana people. IZL members, pro-Jabotinsky Revisionists, or sympathizers lost their jobs, were expelled from school, and were evicted from their premises. In total, about 250

Palmach men under Allon and Avidan carried out tracing, track down, and arresting operations. The anti-dissident squads abducted IZL members and sympathizers, took them to kibbutzim or caves, and interrogated them as to their activities in the organization, their officers' names, and any missions they had, or would, carry out. Sometimes the treatment was ruthless. In the case of Eli Tavin, the IZL Intelligence Chief seized on February 27, 1945, the Hagana held him for over a year, during which time they tortured him with ritual executions and brutal tactics.

At first, the Hagana resolved to hold their own prisoners, but, since hiding places were limited, the Hagana began handing their prisoners over to the CID. Eventually, the Hagana stopped their abductions and just handed information directly over to the CID, who carried out the job. The Hagana provided names of wealthy local supporters, addresses of printing presses, and bank accounts. Although there existed controversy over the quality of the names, with some CID officials complaining that the Hagana was censoring names to work off old political vendettas, the damage to the IZL was heavy. In total, the Hagana handed some 700-1000 names of persons and institutions over to the CID. Some 300-500 IZL suspects were captured and turned over to the police, including Lankin, Merridor, and Landau of the IZL High Command. By early March, the Season appeared to be crushing the IZL's organizational structure. 111

The Season created a major crisis within the IZL High Command. With funds drying up, with weapons caches being confiscated and impounded, and with comrades being captured, tortured, imprisoned, or deported for detention in East Africa, many IZL commanders naturally

called for the most obvious response: full retaliation against the Hagana. In the eyes of the IZL, the dominating Left had used the machinery of the Yishuv and "joined the Nazi-British in a war against us." ¹¹² Begin raged on IZL radio and in the IZL press, likening the Hagana's Season to the murderous fratricide of "Cain" and declaring that "we shall repay you Cain." Yet Begin steadfastly refused to initiate an all-out civil war. Begin hoped the political tide within the Yishuv would shift against the Season policy. He recognized that only the British would gain from a battle between the Hagana and the IZL. Begin's proposal for restraint, "for no halt in the battle against the occupying power and no civil war," ¹¹³ was reluctantly adopted as IZL policy. Begin engineered an IZL policy which placed ultimate Nationalist objectives over the immediate survival of the IZL, national patriotism over sectarian interests. Civil war was avoided. ¹¹⁴

In the spring of 1945, Golomb announced that "the Organized Yishuv has brought terrorist activity to a standstill." The Season had halted IZL extortion, smuggling, and robberies, but the arrests gained much more publicity. Public opinion within the Yishuv could not tolerate the Hagana's "ethnic breach" for long, despite the Jewish Agency's energetic propaganda campaign. The biblical injunctions, such as "your destroyers shall go forth from you," ¹¹⁵ warning of the dangers of civil war, had been ignored. Within the Hagana, there evolved much tension and resentment over the Hagana's role in the Season.

Most of the leadership of the far Left and the Palmach, who had refused to sanction or participate in the Season, spoke out bitterly against the operation, pressuring Ben Gurion to close the affair.

Within the most militant circles of the Hagana, there existed much respect and sympathy for the IZL and LHI. Many Hagana officers had shared British prison cells in Palestine and in Mauritius with LHI and IZL fighters, so, though there remained great political differences, they felt a degree of respect and admiration for the dissidents as fellow prisoners and as fellow warriors. Many prominent Palmach commanders resented their inactivity and murmured against the policy of restraint. Some even defected to join the dissident organizations. In the struggling Hagana, general morale among the rank-and-file and the officers was exceedingly low. The Season evolved into a major public relations disaster for the Hagana. ¹¹⁶

In May, 1945, Golomb and Sneh announced the end of the Season operation, though Hagana intelligence continued to relay information to the British until mid-June. On balance, the Season proved a dismal failure for the Jewish Agency and the Hagana. From October to May, IZL terrorism was quelled and the IZL infrastructure had clearly been maimed; but the IZL was not destroyed. Much of the IZL's higher echelons alluded capture, most notably, Begin himself. The Hagana's quite visible action against fellow Jews corroded the image of the "establishment," blemished the Hagana with fratricide, and generated sympathy and support for the IZL. The IZL had actually added many new recruits during the Season. The persecution of the IZL coupled with Begin's policy of restraint adorned the IZL leadership "with a mantle of national responsibility." ¹¹⁷ Most significantly to the Jewish Agency, the Season produced criticism from the Mandatory administration for its limitations and failed to produce any concrete promises or concessions

from London. By cooperating with the Mandatory regime and by resorting to a demonstration of force, the Jewish Agency had revealed its lack of true sovereignty over the Yishuv, underscored Britain's continued supremacy, and conceded recognition to the power of the dissident organizations. 118

In the war years of 1939-1945, the Yishuv struggled to help defeat the Axis powers, to defend the Yishuv, to promote the immigration of Jewish refugees to Palestine, and to accommodate an oscillating British policy. From this collage emerged distinct underground military bodies backed politically by the far Right and by the far Left. The far Left's commitment to defending the kibbutzim and the country from the Axis threat spawned the development of the Palmach; the Palmach, despite the political competition between the far Left bloc and Ben Gurion's MAPAIniks, became the loyal, elite corps of the official national underground force, the Hagana. From the other side of the political spectrum, from the ruins of the Jabotinsky Right, two schisms evolved, the LHI and the IZL-- each armed with differing ideology, tactics, and purpose, yet both dedicated to ending the British Mandate in defiance of the official Yishuv leadership. In 1944, the growing strength and impact of the IZL and LHI orchestrated "revolt" conflicted with the Anglo-Zionist diplomacy efforts of the official Yishuv, precipitating a joint Hagana-British campaign, the "Season," against the dissident groups. In May, 1945, the Season ended in failure with the Hagana badly tarnished and with the dissidents intact and still in revolt. As the war in Europe drew to a close, the official Yishuv waited to witness whether their patient compliance with the British would be rewarded or

whether the Hagana might need to find new game to hunt.

NOTES IV

¹ Rothenburg, p. 27; and Perlmutter, p. 33; and Frankel, p. 70.

² Ben Ami, pp. 332, 352; and Bauer, pp. 84, 94.

³ Bauer, p. 95.

⁴ Bauer, p. 94.

⁵ Ben Ami, p. 240; and Bethell, p. 90.

⁶ Bauer, pp. 84-96; and Perlmutter, pp. 16, 34; and Merhav, pp. 102, 361.

⁷ Bauer, pp. 97, 130, 136-137; and Horowitz and Lissak, pp. 55, 77; and Rothenburg, p. 31; and Horowitz, p. 19.

⁸ Bauer, p. 114.

⁹ Bauer, pp. 97, 130, 136-137; and Horowitz and Lissak, pp. 55, 77; and Rothenburg, p. 31; and Horowitz, p. 19.

¹⁰ Rothenburg, p. 27; and Bethell, p. 78; and Bauer, pp. 100-102.

¹¹ Bauer, pp. 105-107; and Bethell, p. 93.

¹² Bethell, p. 90; and Yigael Allon, The Making of Israel's Army (New York: Universe Books, 1970), p. 110.

¹³ Bauer, p. 94, 110-112; and Rothenburg, p. 28; and Perlmutter, p. 34; and Bethell, pp. 101-103.

¹⁴ Schechtman, p. 482; and Ben Ami, p. 237; and Bethell, p. 77.

¹⁵ Ben Ami, p. 359.

¹⁶ Bell, pp. 51-53; and Haber, pp. 91-92; and Schechtman, p. 489; and Ben Ami, p. 241; and Bauer, p. 130.

¹⁷ Bauer, pp. 130, 311; and Bethell, pp. 90, 125; and Haber, p. 93; and Ben Ami, pp. 267, 301.

¹⁸ Ben Ami, pp. 276-277.

¹⁹ Ben Ami, p. 361.

²⁰ Bell, p. 53; and Bauer, p. 312; and Laqueur, pp. 376-77; and Haber, pp. 91-93; and Bethell, pp. 106, 131-133; and Schechtman, p. 490; and Ben Ami, p. 241.

²¹ Bethell, p. 134.

²² Bell, p. 53; and Y.S. Brenner, "The Stern Gang" Middle Eastern Studies (1965), p. 4; and Bauer, p. 312; and Laqueur, pp. 376-77.

²³ Bell, p. 64.

²⁴ Bethell, p. 125; and Bell, pp. 62-66; and Haber, p. 150.

²⁵ Horowitz, p. 18; and Laqueur, p. 376; and Bell, pp. 63-64; and Bethell, p. 126; and Sacher, p. 247.

²⁶ Bethell, p. 127; and Bell, pp. 62-72; and Sacher, p. 247.

²⁷ Bethell, p. 127.

²⁸ Sacher, p. 247.

²⁹ Brenner, p. 6; and Haber, p. 95; and Bethell, pp. 127-130; and Bell, pp. 62-72; and Bauer, p. 311.

³⁰ Laqueur, p. 377; and Brenner, p. 6; and Haber, p. 95; and Bethell, pp. 127-130; and Bell, pp. 62-72; and Bauer, p. 311.

³¹ Bauer, p. 129.

³² Perlmutter, p. 34.

³³ Bauer, pp. 76, 176-177.

³⁴ Allon, pp. 108-110; and Rothenburg, p. 28; and Horowitz, pp. 19-20; and Bethell, pp. 103-104; and Sacher, p. 234.

³⁵ Allon, pp. 108-110; and Rothenburg, p. 28; and Horowitz, pp. 9-20; and Bethell, pp. 103-104; and Sacher, p. 234.

³⁶ Bauer, p. 223.

³⁷ Rothenburg, p. 29; and Bauer, pp. 183, 222-23; and Bar Zohar, p. 73.

³⁸ Bauer, p. 193.

³⁹ Bauer, pp. 192-194, 282-285; and Sacher, p. 235.

⁴⁰ Perlmutter, p. 16; and Laqueur, p. 330; and Bauer, pp. 167, 189, 210.

⁴¹ Bauer, p. 191; and Bethell, 139.

⁴² Sacher, pp. 245-246; and David Ben Gurion, Israel: A Personal History (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Inc., 1971), p. 75; and Bethell, p. 139.

⁴³ Bauer, p. 289.

⁴⁴ Bauer, p. 147, p. 177.

⁴⁵ Laqueur, p. 330; and Rothenburg, p. 29; and Perlmutter, pp. 38-40; and Bauer, p. 204-207.

⁴⁶ Bauer, p. 207, pp. 209-211.

⁴⁷ Bauer, p. 296, pp. 301-304.

⁴⁸ Rothenburg, p. 29; and Bauer, p. 333.

49 Perlmutter, p. 37.

50 Horowitz, p. 20, 25; and Bauer, pp. 344-45; and Perlmutter, pp. 37-38.

51 Horowitz, p. 20, 25; and Bauer, pp. 334-45; and Perlmutter, pp. 37-38; and David Shimshoni, Israeli Democracy (London: Collier MacMillan Publishers, 1982), p. 181.

52 Bauer, p. 308-311; and Merhav, pp. 94-104, 361; and Horowitz, p. 25.

53 Bauer, pp. 266-272.

54 Sacher, pp. 237-238; and Bauer, pp. 274-277, 313; and Rothenburg, p. 33.

55 Bauer, p. 274-277; and Sacher, p. 237, 240; and Munya Mardor, Haganah (New York: New American Library, 1966), pp. 114-115.

56 Bauer, p. 272, 306.

57 Bauer, p. 306.

58 Bethell, p. 151.

59 Ben Ami, p. 350; and Bethell, p. 152; and Bauer, p. 313.

60 Bethell, p. 126.

61 Bell, p. 86, 107; and Perlmutter, p. 51; and Bethell p. 142; and Bauer, p. 313, 320.

62 Haber, p. 88, 96; and Sacher, p. 266; and Horowitz and Lissak, p. 88; and Bethell, p. 152; and Begin, p. 79; and Stefan Korbonski, "The Unknown Chapter in the Life of Menachem Begin" East European Quarterly, Vol.3 (1979), pp. 375-376.

⁶³ Haber, p. 88, 96; and Sacher, p. 266; and Horowitz and Lissak, p. 88; and Bethell, p. 152; and Begin, p. 79; and Korbonski, pp. 375-376.

⁶⁴ Haber, p. 88, 96; and Horowitz and Lissak, p. 88; and Bethell, p. 152; and Begin, p. 79; and Korbonski, pp. 375-376.

⁶⁵ Jay Y. Gonen, A Psychohistory of Zionism (New York: Manson/Charter, 1975), p. 94, 276.

⁶⁶ Bethell, p. 157.

⁶⁷ Bethell, pp. 153-54; and Haber, pp. 110-111; and Bell, p. 119; and Katz, pp. 83-84.

⁶⁸ Bell, p. 106.

⁶⁹ Rothenburg, p. 33; and Bethell, p. 156.

⁷⁰ Bethell, p. 174; and Bell, pp. 155-162.

⁷¹ Bethell, p. 161.

⁷² Bell, pp. 87-93; and Brenner, p. 9.

⁷³ Bethell, p. 161.

⁷⁴ Bethell, pp. 155-57; and Horowitz, p. 18; and Ben Ami p. 362; and Haber, p. 114, 148; and Bell, pp. 87-90, 126; and Katz, p. 89; and Ben Ami, p. 558.

⁷⁵ Sacher, p. 242; and Bauer, pp. 348-350.

⁷⁶ Bauer, p. 320, 236, 230, 247-248, 312.

⁷⁷ Bauer, p. 320, 236, 230, 247-248.

⁷⁸ Haber, p. 135.

⁷⁹ Bethell, p. 157.

80 Bethell, 157.

81 Bethell, pp. 157-158.

82 Bell, p. 119-121; and Bauer, pp. 321-322; and Brenner, p. 10.

83 Bethell, p. 161.

84 Bethell, pp. 178-179; and Bauer, p. 314; and Bell, p. 121.

85 Haber, p. 140.

86 Bauer, p. 316; and Bethell, pp. 178-180; and Haber, pp. 136-

142.

87 Bethell, p. 179.

88 Haber, p. 140.

89 Haber, p. 138.

90 Bell, p. 89, 316; and Bethell, pp. 178-179; and Begin, pp.

140-142.

91 Gonen, p. 58; and Bauer, p. 323.

92 Michael J. Cohen, "The Moyne Assassination" Middle Eastern

Studies (1979), p. 366.

93 Cohen, pp. 3676-368; and Bethell, p. 179; and Bauer, p. 328.

94 Cohen, p. 367.

95 Bethell, p. 179.

96 Michael J. Cohen, Palestine and the Great Powers 1945-1948

(Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 367.

97 Bethell, p. 179.

98 Haber, p. 134.

99 Bauer, p. 331; and Cohen, "The Moyne Assassination." p. 366.

100 Gonen, p. 57.

101 Bauer, pp. 316-318.

102 Horowitz, p. 19; and Bell, p. 125, 128; and Bethell, p. 178;
and Bauer, pp. 324-326; and Bethell, p. 176.

103 Bethell, p. 171, 181; and Katz, pp. 170-171; and Cohen, "The
Moyne Assassination," pp. 362-268; and Bethell, p. 181.

104 Bell, p. 126.

105 Sacher, p. 248; and Ben Ami, p. 362, 365; and Bar Zohar, p.
75; and Bethell, p. 187.

106 Cohen, "The Moyne Assassination," p. 368.

107 Bethell, p. 184.

108 Bar Zohar, p. 75; and Bell, p. 125; and Cohen, "The Moyne
Assassination," p. 368.

109 Bell, p. 128; and Horowitz and Lissak, p. 59; and Haber, p.
141; and Ben Ami, p. 352, 363; and Bauer, p. 320, 329.

• 110 Bell, pp. 126-128; and Ben Ami, p. 313; and Bauer, p. 326.

111 Horowitz, p. 19; and Bell, pp. 129-133; and Haber, pp. 140-
142; and Begin, p. 145; and Rothenburg, p. 34.

112 Ben Ami, p. 352.

113 Ben Ami, p. 353.

114 Bell, p. 134; and Haber, pp. 142-145, 148; and Perlmutter,
p. 42.

115 Isaiah 49:17.

116 Horowitz, p. 19; and Haber, p. 134, 142; and Ben Ami, p.
357; and Ben Ami, p. 240; and Perlmutter, p. 52.

117 Bell, p. 135.

¹¹⁸ Horowitz and Lissak, p. 58; and Rothenburg, p. 34; and Bauer, pp. 332-333.

CHAPTER IV

UNEASY ALLIANCES: 1945-1948

In May, 1945, the war in Europe ended and the Yishuv looked towards London to see what the future held. The British Labor Party, which had voiced its full support of Zionism during the elections, won an upset victory over Churchill and the Conservatives, who had delayed deciding on the Palestine issue since the Moyne assassination. The Yishuv rejoiced in the Labor victory which seemingly harkened to the speedy establishment of a Jewish state. Yet when the Labor Party assumed office in the summer of 1945, under the leadership of Clement Attlee, they quickly dispelled the enthusiastic hopes of the Jewish people.

British post-war policy in Palestine, engineered by Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, "became what the Revisionists had always contented it was: one based solely on British interests, and incompatible with Zionist ambitions." ¹ No Zionist proposal appeared at the post-war Peace Conference and Britain asked an indifferent world to absorb Jewish refugees. Britain gave every indication that it had no intention of relinquishing Palestine while it paid increasing tribute to the value of Anglo-Arab relations.

The Jewish Agency gradually realized their hopes in the new government were misplaced. After the British government formally opposed a Jewish Agency message sent in May, requesting permission to transfer one million refugees to Palestine, Weizmann's "Anglo-centric" Zionism

was devastated. Anglo-Zionist relations became strained to the breaking point. By the summer's end, with the assumptions under which the WZO and the Jewish Agency had operated during World War II shattered, the official Zionist leadership faced a difficult re-evaluation of strategy with regard to Anglo-Zionist relations, the urgency of Jewish statehood, and the role of the Hagana. ²

By the end of the summer of 1945, the whole world knew the extent of the catastrophe which had befallen European Jewry. Yet the western democracies remained reluctant to absorb the thousands of Jewish refugees who had survived. World Jewish leadership felt a desperate sense of urgency about saving the remnants of European Jewry. In light of the refugee crisis, the WZO and the Jewish Agency possessed three priorities: facilitate the immigration of the refugees to Palestine; alert public opinion, particularly in the United States, to the Jewish plight and need for a state; and mobilize the Yishuv, socially, politically, and militarily, to assume the responsibilities and challenges of nationhood. ³

Ironically, the same war which devastated one-third of World Jewry enhanced the professionalization and the quality of the Hagana troops. The returning soldiers from the Yishuv boosted the ranks of the Hagana to 25,000-35,000 members. Yet there still existed great deficiencies of funds, arms, and manpower. The Hagana HISH units possessed only 700 trained officers and only 3,000-4,000 full-time, well-trained, troops. The Palmach numbered about 2,000, representing the Hagana's only professional, mobile force available for combat. With the majority of WZO funds directed towards refugee related efforts, little remained for

"defense." Despite the Hagana's independent, large-scale fund drives in the United States and in Palestine, "defense" was only slowly becoming a priority within the Zionist cause by 1945. The weapons situation was dismal, with the Hagana-Palmach possessing about 10,000 rifles, 600 machine and sub-machine guns, and 4,000 pistols in questionable condition. Moreover, the Hagana continued to suffer from problems with recruiting from amongst the war-weary returning soldiers and refugees, and from amongst the urban Yishuv. Much of the Yishuv's urban middle-class still remained apathetic regarding Jewish self-defense. The unpopular Season affair and the Hagana's traditional left-wing orientation deterred many talented and dedicated urbanites from joining, or sent them to the dissident organizations. Throughout 1945-1947, the underground Hagana, presumed as the backbone for a future Jewish national army, grew in strength, and recovered from the tarnishing Season affair, at a dangerously slow pace. ⁴

Meanwhile, the IZL and the LHI militants found the Jewish Agency's indecisive discussions "hairsplitting" and their debate "eccentric," when force seemed the only way to create a Jewish state. ⁵ In May, both undergrounds resurfaced and resumed operations. Financially devastated by the Season, both LHI and IZL turned to robbery and extortion. With the weight of the Holocaust pressing on them and seasoned British troops arriving in Palestine, the IZL reverted, somewhat, to LHI methods by terrorizing British personnel. In May, the IZL displayed posters and pamphlets warning Jews, Arabs, and other citizens to avoid government buildings. Soon afterward, the IZL initiated a series of mortar bombings on Mandatory buildings and

telephone poles. The mortar bombs had a jarring, demoralizing effect on British troops and administrative personnel. In July, the IZL ambushed a British army truck, killed the driver, and stole large quantities of high explosives. In late July, they blew up a railway bridge. With the IZL's revolt coordinated with the LHI and rapidly gathering support in the Yishuv during the summer of 1945, Begin paused to see what the British response would be. ⁶

The British responded to the threat of a Jewish revolt by turning Palestine into an armed camp. During 1946, the Mandatory government augmented the heavily armed Palestine Police Force and established the Transjordanian Frontier Force which patrolled the border. In addition, the British transferred the 1st Infantry Division, the 6th Airborne Division, the 3rd Infantry division, and air and naval units, from the European theater to secure Palestine. This formidable array of well over 80,000 troops symbolized that the Mandatory regime intended to remain in Palestine and was prepared to suppress a Jewish uprising. ⁷

With the stubborn maintenance of the White Paper, with the failure of British post-war policy to grant concessions to the Zionist cause, and with beleaguered Jewish refugees held in detention camps in Cyprus or in Europe, the Jewish Agency faced a choice they had long dismissed--forcibly resisting the Mandate. The Hagana and Jewish Agency confronted three choices for resistance: begin open assaults-terrorism on the Mandatory regime; focus on illegal immigration, new settlements, and political demonstrations; or adopt a combination of the two choices, a synthesis which could be described as "constructive warfare." ⁸

Indeed, most Hagana commanders felt a classic guerrilla war to be

impossible with the Arabs in the mountains, with a landscape void of forests or jungles, with the overwhelming British military occupying strategic locations with well-trained, well-outfitted troops, and with the British Navy blockading the Mediterranean. ⁹

The issue of open resistance to the Mandate polarized the Jewish Agency. Weizmann and the moderate General Zionists, supported by HaShomar HaTzair and Mizrachi, objected to an assault on the Mandate. Most of the political center, wished to maintain the Yishuv's ties with Britain, yet, under the circumstances, they viewed violence as a legitimate extension of the Zionist political battle. Golomb defined a new role for the Hagana by stating that, "the use of force is required for freedom of settlement, immigration, development, and autonomy." ¹⁰ Sneh argued that, "Britain is not an enemy...it is a bad partner. We shall hit him to make him a good partner, but he is not an enemy." ¹¹ During the summer and autumn of 1945, more of the power once possessed by Weizmann, and his Anglo-Zionist oriented following, passed to Ben Gurion, and his moderate, Yishuv-oriented constituency. The proposal of Ben Gurion and the majority, for a limited resistance against the British, was adopted. The new Hagana policy would still focus on illegal immigration yet would involve a limited struggle, avoiding British and Jewish casualties, for political and ethical reasons. ¹²

As the Jewish Agency became increasingly defiant towards the British and moved closer towards open acts of defiance, Sneh and Galili suggested that, the dissident organizations might be brought into the moderating influence and control of the Jewish Agency within the context of a united resistance. The Season had proved the deficiencies of the

Hagana-Palmach to act as the Yishuv's sole underground military institution; the Jewish Agency's plan for a "controlled" resistance could be spoiled by the independent actions of the LHI and the IZL. During September, Galili and Sneh made contact with IZL and LHI to propose a union of the dissident undergrounds with the Hagana. Both the IZL and the LHI expressed interest in cooperating in an anti-British campaign. 13

On September 23, Sneh cabled Ben Gurion in Paris to suggest that, if the Hagana perform "one serious incident," 14 British policy might be jarred. Golomb and Sneh argued that the recent desertion of twenty-five Palmach troops to the dissident organizations symbolized the Yishuv's eagerness for a demonstration of Jewish military strength and a merger of the Hagana with the IZL and the LHI would certainly increase that strength. With most of the Hagana tied to defending the settlements, the addition of the IZL and the LHI would bolster Jewish military might in the cities. Furthermore, Sneh believed that a united resistance movement composed of the Hagana, LHI, and the IZL, would prevent the two dissident groups from engaging in independent, reckless terrorism, which would engendered the wrath of British Army and drag the Yishuv into a vortex of violence and anarchy. 15

In October, Ben Gurion instructed Sneh and Galili to contact the High Command of IZL and LHI. Yellin-Mor and the LHI staff quickly agreed to cooperate, but refused to merge with the Hagana. And despite the still festering wounds caused by the Season, Begin and the IZL also agreed to cooperate in an anti-British campaign. But Begin urged the Hagana to adopt a more extensive program, for a national "war of

liberation." Begin's program called: for the immediate establishment of a Jewish provisional government; for the formation of Jewish national courts and exchequer to boycott the Mandatory regime; for the unification of international fund drives; and for the creation of a united "Liberation Army" under a supreme military command; and for an immediate war on the Mandatory power. Begin believed that the Yishuv could indeed oust the war-weary British from Palestine. ¹⁶

Sneh, Golomb, and the Hagana High Command thought that the Yishuv would be crushed in an all-out clash with the British Army. The Hagana command wanted to merely stage a recognizable show of force to lever at the negotiating table, "as a warning and an indication of much more serious incidents that would threaten the safety of all British interests in the country, if the government did not grant the Zionist requests." ¹⁷ Sneh stressed that the attacks must be ideologically-politically appropriate, an attack on British institutions and not on British personnel. Begin refused to join the Hagana and LHI in a complete union, doubting the "staying-power" of the Jewish Agency in a war against Britain and the reliability of LHI after the Moyne assassination. But Begin pledged full cooperation and skeptically, yet enthusiastically, accepted a united Jewish military front. ¹⁸

In spite of some objections from the left-wing representatives in the Jewish Agency about cooperating with the militant Right, on November 1, the IZL, the LHI, and the Hagana reached an agreement, forming the "Tenuat Hameri HaEvri," the "Jewish Resistance Movement," or JRM. The JRM would be a Jewish underground "guided by a single authority which would control a single fight." ¹⁹ The IZL and the LHI would be

permitted to act independently in matters of fund raising and arms procurement, particularly vital to IZL, which as a result of the Season, faced a drastic shortage of arms and funds. But most importantly, any military operations would proceed only after the approval of a joint committee, called "Committee X," headed by Sadeh of the Palmach, Amihai Paglin of the IZL, and Yackov Banai of LHI. The JRM agreement required representatives of the three military bodies to meet every two weeks to determine policy and to select targets. Ultimately, the Hagana set the tone for the JRM committee. The attacks would not be against individuals and due warning would be given in sabotage operations to prevent loss of human lives. In the autumn of 1945, the three underground organizations, which for years had been separated by tactics, politics, and ideology, remained distinct, yet had agreed to act in concert. 20

Even before the final ratification of the JRM agreement, the JRM slowly initiated its anti-British campaign. In October, Hagana radio, "Kol Yisrael " (Voice of Israel), renewed its illegal broadcasts, condemning the Mandatory regime. On October 11, the IZL raided a British Military camp in Rehovot. In late October, British clashed with Hagana troops at the northern settlement of Kfar Giladi and the Palmach attacked Athlit Transit Camp, freeing 208 immigrants. On October 31, the Hagana and Palmach blew-up over 200 railways with some 500 explosions, suspending all rail traffic in the country, and sunk three British patrol ships. That same night, the LHI attacked the oil refiners in Haifa and the IZL attacked Lydda railway station.

The JRM was not without some internal discord. The IZL's Rehovot

raid was bigger than agreed upon. Hagana radio condemned it and even LHI complained that its staff had not been informed. Begin apologized, blaming two overzealous junior officers, and the incident created no further difficulties. The IZL complained that the Hagana had not fully informed them regarding the Hagana attack on October 31st at the Lydda junction, accounting for several IZL casualties. And many in the Jewish Agency feared an all-out British reprisal after the deployment of the Sixth Airborne Division in Palestine in September. But the morale of the Hagana, IZL, and LHI was high, inspired to fight for Yishuv and brothers in Europe and confident after the impressive October 31st raid. In spite of internal tensions, the JRM remained intact.

For the next eight months, the three undergrounds concentrated on attacking major British installations and on illegal immigration efforts, while the Jewish Agency accompanied the rebellion with publicity campaigns in London and Washington. Although the existence of the JRM would be kept secret, the Jewish Agency wanted the attacks to symbolize that British military might could not prevent independent Jewish military action. 21

The undergrounds and the Yishuv citizenry became more and more defiant of the British authorities. In November, the Vaad Leumi declared a "General Strike," precipitating a burst of Jewish-British violence which claimed six Jewish lives and injured sixty others, mostly teenagers and children. A Hagana attack on the Sidna Ali coastguard station, part of the lookout system for illegal immigrant ships, ended in a shootout at the Jewish settlements of Hogla and Givat Haim which claimed six Jewish lives. In late November, the Hagana seized a large

British weapons cache. In December, the IZL attacked British police and administration buildings. In January, news of the massacre of Jewish detainees in Eritrea spread anti-British sentiment and stirred violence. In late January, the Hagana hijacked a British train and stole the company payroll. In February, 1946, the Palmach blew-up a radar station near Haifa and attacked four police stations. In late February, the Hagana unsuccessfully attempted to seize complete control over Tel Aviv, to keep the British forces out, to facilitate the landing of illegal immigrants. An IZL attack on three British airfields extensively damaged or destroyed twenty-two British aircraft. In March, the IZL destroyed seven RAF Spitfires and stole weapons from the RAF barracks and Sarafand Army Camp. In April, the IZL blew-up five bridges and raided the Ashdod railway station. In May, the LHI attacked railway workshops and installations near Haifa. As anti-British sentiment fermented within the Yishuv, the Jewish Resistance Movement accelerated into high gear. ²²

Although the JRM continued to combat the British, there existed many underlying tensions, generated by political and tactical differences, between the underground organizations. Though the Jewish Agency and the Hagana had set the terms of the JRM's November, 1945, agreement, the IZL and the LHI spearheaded the majority of the resistance operations, while the Palmach-Hagana conducted most of the post-World War II efforts of illegal immigration. In addition, the infrequent Hagana-Palmach anti-British operations were aimed at inflicting material damage, and they went to extraordinary lengths to avoid British casualties. But the LHI operations continued to be aimed

at British personnel and to try to assassinate British high officials.

In February, 1946, LHI raided a British bank and killed two Jews. In April, the LHI led an attack on the barracks of the Sixth Airborne Division, stealing weapons, but resulting in the death of seven British soldiers. In May, LHI shot seven policemen in Tel Aviv. Likewise, IZL's daring missions also had led to many British casualties. In January, IZL's raids on police stations killed ten policemen and wounded eleven.

The fundamental difference lay in the fact that the Hagana, under the direction of Jewish Agency, remained concerned with the diplomatic arena and viewed the Britain as bad partner; Hagana operations were more carefully executed, limited in scope, and politically timed. Yet the LHI and IZL made the strategic assumption that the Yishuv should make war on the Mandatory regime and that "the great events would thus take care of themselves." ²³ The IZL and the LHI felt engaged in a war of national liberation against the English enemy and that British casualties were expected, unavoidable, and justifiable. The JRM remained intact, yet shakey, under the weight of these fundamental differences. ²⁴

The raising tide of international recognition for the plight of Jewish refugees also threatened to tear apart the fragile JRM. In spring of 1946, the American proposal for allowing the immediate entry of 100,000 refugees into Palestine was greeted with approval by most quarters of the Yishuv, but not by LHI. LHI feared the proposal would extinguish the revolt by placating the population. A major immigration deal might have placed the JRM on precarious ground. As Yellin-Mor explained, if Britain allowed a substantial influx of Jewish refugees in

the spring of 1946, then the underground "would have been forced to stop all operations for as long as immigration continued. The view of the masses of the Yishuv would have been, 'let's absorb 100,000 immigrants and then we shall see'." ²⁵ An appealing immigration offer, temporarily restoring the Jewish Agency's confidence in British government, might have "driven a wedge" in the JRM, isolated LHI and IZL, and convinced the Jewish Agency to renew another Season campaign in the hope of winning further concessions from London. ²⁶

Yet the British remained too concerned with Anglo-Arab relations and underestimated strength of the Jewish undergrounds. The American proposal evaporated and the British did not allow a massive immigration, which might have soothed Anglo-Jewish relations and indirectly broken the unity of the JRM. Instead, the British responded to Jewish underground violence with demonstrations of force. The British police and soldiers performed sweeping cordon, search, patrol, and detaining operations. These British security efforts uncovered a few secret arms caches and lead to the arrest of a handful of the underground fighters; yet the more general result was the harassment of Yishuv citizenry, which only stirred and intensified anti-British sentiment and support for the militant undergrounds. The Mandatory regime's forceful response to Jewish terrorism played into the hands of the undergrounds. ²⁷

From November, 1945, to July, 1946, Jewish Agency-British relations remained extremely tense. The Jewish Agency continued to stress illegal immigration, quietly tolerate terrorism, and publicly denounce the British policies. The Mandatory regime continued to press the Jewish Agency to stop terrorism; yet, while Jewish Agency publicly

condemned terror, the Yishuv's official leadership acted increasingly more defiant of British policy. In January, 1946, Ben Gurion summed up the feelings and policy of the Jewish Agency

Without in the least condoning the acts committed, the Executive considers the policy at present pursued by the Mandatory government, which is based on the violation of fundamental provisions of the Mandate, to be primarily responsible for the tragic situation which has developed in Palestine. The Executive cannot agree that it can in fairness be called upon to appear in the invidious position, assisting the enforcement of that policy..."²⁸

In late February, 50,000 people, including Jewish Agency leaders, attended the funeral for the four Palmach men killed in a raid, demonstrating their defiance of British policy. Hagana radio voiced an impassioned epitaph that, "not one drop of their sacred and innocent blood flowed in vain. It would not drop on the soil unless it had soaked through the walls of slavery and corroded the chains which for generations have fettered salvation and light."²⁹ In early June, Hagana intelligence discovered a British "Hit-List" for members of the Hagana-Palmach which further infuriated the Jewish Agency; Hagana radio publicly denounced the British by declaring, "let the Yishuv, the diaspora, and the whole world know that we shall fight." Anglo-Jewish Agency tensions cemented the Hagana's commitment to the JRM.³⁰

The Hagana, the IZL, and the LHI submerged their differences and continued to unite in their assault on the Mandatory regime. On June 10, the IZL stopped three trains, ordered the passengers to disembark, and destroyed the trains. On June 17, 1946, the JRM orchestrated their most extensive attack on the Mandatory regime in a operation known as, "the Night of the Bridges." Ten of all eleven road and rail bridges in Palestine were knocked out. The British were shocked and impressed.³¹

Meanwhile, the secrecy of JRM added to the tensions between the Hagana, the IZL, and the LHI. With most of the Yishuv unaware of the JRM's existence, the Jewish Agency sponsored press continued to denounce the IZL and LHI for their acts of terror. IZL contended that the Hagana Command was excluding them from arms acquisition raids. The LHI blamed the Hagana command for poor coordination on June 17 attack which caused several LHI deaths. On June 18, the IZL abducted two British officers from the Tel Aviv Officers' Club. They used the Britons to ransom for the lives of two IZL members, Yosef Shimshon and Michael Ashbel, captured and sentenced to death by a British court. While Jewish Agency condemned the death sentence, Ben Gurion disapproved of kidnappings and publicly denounced the IZL. The kidnappings were also condemned by Hagana radio and in official Yishuv press. Despite these tensions, the JRM was not yet unravelling. 32

By late June, 1946, the Mandatory government lost patience with Jewish violence and with the Jewish Agency. By mid-1945, the CID had broken the Hagana code and intercepted communiques between Sneh, Galili, and Ben Gurion, regarding the JRM and the Jewish Agency's role in organizing it. On June 29, the British police launched operation "Agatha," also known as "Black Shabbath." Thousands of British troops and police, backed by armor and air units, scoured the entire Yishuv. Because the CID lacked enough information on the dissident groups to effectively strike at them and because of British perturbation with the Jewish Agency, Agatha was directed more at Yishuv establishment than at IZL or LHI.

Agatha became a nationwide search-and-arrest operation designed to

break the Hagana and the Palmach, and to "reorganize" the Jewish Agency. British police arrested leading Yishuv officials, such as Gruenbaum and Bernard Joseph of the General Zionists, Rabbi Fishman of Mizrachi, Wolfgang Von Weisal of the Revisionist Party, Yitshak Ben Aharon of Achdut HaAvoda, and Sharett of MAPAI. In total, the British forces took over 2,200 persons into custody, searched 27 settlements, and captured fifteen major Hagana arms caches. Yet Agatha failed to destroy the Hagana because many of its higher echelons, including Galili, Sneh and Sadeh, alluded capture. "In order to break the Hagana," Galili reflected, "they would have had to use drastic violence, something that they were unable to do because of the nature of the British democracy." ³³

With the exception of a large arms cache seized at Meskek Yagur, the Hagana's infrastructure was not impaired, though Agatha did force the Hagana further underground. And with Ben Gurion in Europe, the British failed to radically change the Jewish Agency's leadership. Yet the British gained much incriminating evidence regarding the Jewish Agency's role in underground terrorism. Most significantly, Agatha achieved partial success by intimidating the Jewish Agency into avoiding further direct encounters with the British forces. ³⁴

In early July, the JRM's Committee X felt that something must be done to the British to make amends for Agatha. The IZL had eyed an attack on the British Secretariat Headquarters in the King David Hotel for over a year. Together, Sadeh and Paglin worked out the details on the King David Hotel operation, called operation "Tsedek," (meaning "Justice"). The JRM committee hoped that an assault on the King David Hotel would serve as a symbol that British force alone could not rule

Palestine and possibly destroy the incriminating documents seized during Agatha. Ben Gurion gave his approval from Europe via Sneh and the operation received final approval by the JRM Committee. The IZL attack on the King David Hotel would be coordinated with parallel assaults by LHI on the nearby David Brother's Building and by the Hagana on the Bat-Galim arms depot. Galili and Sneh made it clear to Paglin that the explosion must come outside of business hours and, after much debate, the committee decided on thirty minutes warning time to avoid casualties. The JRM believed that this daring attack would receive international acclaim and might jar the intransigent British government. ³⁵

At the same time, the Jewish Agency, shocked by Agatha, began to reconsider the wisdom of the JRM. Few leaders of the WZO and of the Yishuv were even aware of the JRM's existence, including Weizmann. In early July, the British published information implicating the Jewish Agency and the Hagana in the JRM. Weizmann, believing the British government was moving steadily towards a partition plan, felt surprised, indignant, and outraged that the Hagana had engaged in acts with the dissidents which could undo his diplomatic work. Weizmann feared that "terrorism would get out of control and create an ideology of violence which would destroy the liberal and humane element in Zionism, thus leading to a chauvinistic lack of realism." ³⁶ Weizmann threatened to resign as President of the WZO unless the Hagana halted all its direct anti-British missions. ³⁷

Reluctantly, Sneh and the Hagana command bowed to Weizmann's ultimatum and conveyed to JRM Committee an order to postpone all

anti-British missions. With the JRM's continued existence in jeopardy, Sneh informed the IZL and the LHI of the postponement of the King David Hotel operation and the Hagana cancelled its parallel scheme at Bat-Galim arms depot. Though Sneh's messages to Begin later became a matter of dispute, there were clearly a series of postponements, specifically on July 19 and 21. With the order to halt all operations, the JRM's future remained in doubt. ³⁸

Yet IZL decided to proceed with the King David Hotel operation. On July 22, the IZL successfully bombed one of the nerve centers of the British civil and military administration in Palestine. The IZL explosives leveled one wing of the hotel, killing 91 and wounding 45 persons. The King David Hotel explosion reverberated in newspaper headlines throughout the world, in the British government, and in the Yishuv. ³⁹

The explosion of the King David Hotel caused an eruption of controversy within the Yishuv which would never cease. The Jewish Agency loudly condemned the IZL and Ben Gurion decried the IZL as "the enemy of the Jewish people." ⁴⁰ The Hagana command, particularly Galili, stated that Begin acted for independent political reasons and without regard for human life, claiming the IZL gave insufficient warning time. ⁴¹ But the IZL asserted that three separate warning telephone calls were given and received. Begin insisted that IZL "did not want to hurt one living soul. The ethics of the IZL demanded every possible precaution to prevent civilian casualties." ⁴² IZL blamed the loss of life on "the British tyrants who played with human life," ⁴³ on the negligence of British General Sir John Shaw. The IZL considered

the King David Hotel a "human tragedy," but pointed out the positive effects of gaining international press for Palestine issue, particularly in British press. ⁴⁴

IZL members and supporters claimed Begin had no arterial political aims in carrying out the King David Hotel operation, that Begin felt that "there was time enough for ideological power struggles after the state was declared," ⁴⁵ and that "Begin had no interest in rushing into acts which might give Ben Gurion the excuse to unleash the Palmach and MAPAI for a civil war." The IZL and the LHI had gained respectability in JRM by participating with the "official" Yishuv underground, the Hagana-Palmach. More importantly, the JRM had given the LHI and the IZL the freedom to concentrate their resources on waging larger assaults on the Mandatory regime without having to face the Hagana as an additional foe. With the JRM arrangement under intense criticism following the King David affair, the Hagana command asked the IZL to claim full responsibility for the explosion. In the interest of preserving the JRM, Begin agreed to accept full public responsibility. Begin and the IZL did not want the JRM to collapse. ⁴⁶

But the JRM was now doomed. On July 30, the British responded to the King David disaster with an operation called "Shark." Operation Shark was a punitive measure carried out by 16 infantry battalions, 3 armored regiments, and 2 artillery regiments, and supplemented by thousands of police. The British forces cordoned off Tel Aviv for four days, imposed a curfew, and searched for IZL, LHI, and Palmach-Hagana commanders. The British forces confiscated a few Hagana arms caches and arrested almost 800 people. But, with the exception of LHI's Shamir,

all of the undergrounds' higher echelons, particularly Begin, the prime target of the operation, alluded capture. Like operation Agatha, operation Shark failed to accomplish its tactical goals and further harassed the Yishuv populous, but intimidated the Jewish Agency. ⁴⁷

After operation Agatha, the King David affair, and operation Shark, Ben Gurion, who had been wary of cooperating with the dissidents from the JRM's inception, wanted the Hagana withdrawn from the underground union. Like most leftist politicians, Galili, a constant advocate against terror-tactics, also vehemently opposed the continued cooperation and tacit recognition given to the "dissidents" by the existence of the JRM. The far Left even pressed for a renewed war on the IZL and LHI. And Weizmann, utterly appalled by the summer's events, demanded the immediate disbandment of the JRM. Only Sneh pressed for a continuation of JRM, but he was in the minority. In protest, Sneh resigned from his position as Chief of the Hagana's National Command, to be eventually replaced by Galili. The repercussions of the King David Hotel-Shark episode brought other more left-wing commanders into the High Command of Hagana. Without Sneh, known for his sympathies for the Right, the link which had held JRM together vanished. By late August, the Hagana had formally withdrawn from the JRM. The JRM union, which, after years of polarization, rivalry, and fermenting hatred, had brought the Jewish military-political underground movements together, terminated. ⁴⁸

By the end of the summer of 1946, Jewish Agency propaganda machine began condemning Jewish terrorism more loudly and earnestly. The Jewish Agency decided to again emphasize diplomatic pressure, public

demonstrations, and media campaigns to alter British policy and world opinion. And the Hagana Command was instructed to concentrate completely on illegal immigration and engage in no more direct Hagana-British clashes. The Hagana Command decided to restrict armed operations of Hagana-Palmach to sabotaging coastal installations and vigorously resist deportations of ships laden with refugees, the majority of whom the British sent to Cyprus.

Although the vast majority of ships failed to evade British naval and coastal patrols, from May 1945 to May 1948, the Hagana brought in 30,000-40,000 illegal immigrants into Palestine. As the British intensified the blockade, Hagana demolition teams sabotaged British ships and Hagana land units organized interception plans, creating ruses to decoy the British while immigrants landed. The Hagana even ordered passengers to physically resist deportation efforts to further tax the British forces. Moreover, the bursting detention camps in Cyprus overtaxed the war-weary British Navy, Army, and Airforce, and generated intense international political pressure, placed upon London to resolve the plight of Jewish refugees. ⁴⁹

The IZL also continued their efforts to bring in immigrants, accounting for the arrival of 8,000-15,000 immigrants in the post war years with only a handful of ships at their disposal; but their efforts were constantly undermined by WZO interference with IZL fund raising in the United States. And, though they acknowledged that "finally the Hagana was doing the job" ⁵⁰ with regard to illegal immigration, the IZL and the LHI scorned the Hagana's new tactics of ordering immigrants to resist arrest, which resulted in Jewish civilian casualties, as

"resistance by proxy." ⁵¹ The IZL and the LHI felt the essential war was the fight against the Mandatory regime, not at sea, but on the soil of Palestine.

Undeterred by the British police efforts, the LHI and IZL continued to attack transports, military camps, installations, and British personnel. By the end of 1946, IZL membership had grown to 2500-3000, of which some 800-1000 were full-time effectives. LHI membership reached 800-1000, of which 150-200 were full-time effectives. In addition, the IZL infrastructure continued to grow. IZL's Eli Tavin organized an IZL recruitment program among the Jewish detainees in Europe, while Eliezer Ben Eliezer rejuvenated the IZL's fund raising efforts in the United States despite the constant interference of the Zionist "Establishment." The LHI and the IZL had developed and sharpened their skills for waging larger assaults during the JRM period. During autumn of 1946 to autumn of 1947, the IZL and LHI revolt accelerated into full-swing. ⁵²

Freed from the moderating influences of the JRM, the IZL and LHI returned to an all-out war on the Mandatory regime. In September, LHI killed the highly effective Sergeant T.G. Martin, who had been in charge of operation Shark, and began laying hundreds of deadly booby-trapped mines. The IZL initiated a series of bombings on British embassies in Europe by gutting the British embassy in Rome in October. In late October, the IZL blew up a series of road and rail networks, and a police vehicle. In November, the IZL blew up the Mandatory Tax Office in Jerusalem. From October to December, Jewish terrorism killed over 100 British troops. In December, IZL abducted four officers and flogged

them in retaliation for the flogging of IZL men by British authorities. In January, the IZL began abducting hostages to lever against captured IZL fighters. In a joint mission on March 4, Arce prison was attacked, leaving eight IZL and LHI men killed, five arrested and three sentenced to death. In March, the IZL bombed the British Officers' Club in Jerusalem, killing twenty British officers. In mid-March, the LHI destroyed two oil transport trains and, after the British imposed martial law, mined the urban roadways. In late March, LHI attempted bombings in England and attacked oil refineries in Haifa, while it launched campaigns of personal terror in Haifa, Jerusalem, and Rehovot. In April, the LHI destroyed the Headquarters of the British mobile force near Tel Aviv. In May, the LHI and the IZL made a massive assault on the Acre prison, led by Dov Shimshon, and, among the 131 Arabs and 120 Jews who escaped, 29 IZL and LHI men were freed at the cost of nine killed and five arrested. 53

For all these spectacular events, the IZL and the LHI orchestrated hundreds of smaller incidents of arson, robbery, sniping, and bombings. The revolt made a powerful impact on the morale and fortitude of the British forces in Palestine. Though the LHI and the IZL undergrounds also suffered casualties, they were far fewer than the British casualties. The IZL and LHI were winning this war of attrition.

The LHI and the IZL turned Palestine into a battleground. By winter of 1946, the British evacuated all non-essential civilians and the remainder moved into fortified compounds known as "Bevingrads." In response to Jewish terror, British turned to more savage reprisals, curfews, searches, and arrest operations. In mid-March, the British

designed operation "Elephant," to give the Jewish community "a taste of the consequences of their continued passive attitude towards terrorism." ⁵⁴

Although operation Elephant arrested 24 known IZL or LHI members, it also closed down businesses, harassed innocent citizens, and fostered greater sympathy for the IZL and the LHI within the Yishuv. The Mandatory courts sentenced captured underground fighters to death in more than 20 cases; however, the IZL often countered British justice by kidnapping British officers to ransom them for the lives of the their comrades. The British forces failed to maintain law and order, while the international press coverage transmitted the incidents of British-Jewish violence at a time when sympathy was growing for the plight of Jewish refugees. By the early spring of 1947, the British authority in Palestine was collapsing and Bevin announced that the British government had decided to hand the Palestine problem over to the United Nations. ⁵⁵

During the 1946-1947 winter, following the collapse of the JRM, while the IZL and the LHI combated the British forces, the Jewish Agency debated protractively and indecisively whether the British could be moved towards a partition of Palestine and establish a Jewish state, or whether the Hagana-Palmach should renew a campaign of anti-British resistance. Then the British handed the problem over to the United Nations, changing the context of the discussion.

While the UNSCOP committee began preparing its report in the spring and summer of 1947, the Jewish Agency steered a twin policy of trying to gain international sympathy for a Jewish state and, at the same time, restore their relations with the British government. Despite

the objections of many representatives in the Jewish Agency to partition, Abba Hillel Silver in particular, the UNSCOP seemed to be heading in that direction, so Ben Gurion and Moshe Sharett hoped that Britain could be persuaded to help implement a viable partition plan. To this end, Ben Gurion, Sharett, and Golda Meir negotiated with Bevin in London. In order for Britain to consider the Zionist position, Bevin stressed that Jewish terrorism must be quelled and pressed the Jewish Agency for a renewal of another "Season" on Jewish dissidents. For their part, the Jewish Agency officials stressed that without British concessions on immigration, the Yishuv would not cooperate with British authorities. Although no definitive understanding was reached, Ben Gurion, looking for improved Anglo-Zionist relations and worried over the growing support for the dissident organizations and program, promised the British to renew an anti-dissident campaign. ⁵⁶

Ben Gurion engineered a "small Season," designed to contain the dissidents and win British approval. In June, the Jewish Agency sponsored a massive anti-dissident propaganda campaign. Sharett asked foreign correspondents, "not to reprint the activities of the underground organizations so much in terms of glorification which encourage the terrorists and undermines the efforts of the responsible Jewish institutions to isolate them and to deny them the sympathy of the public." ⁵⁷ The Jewish Agency press blamed the IZL and the LHI for acts of sabotage and the murder of British and Jewish policeman. On June 12, the British reciprocated by releasing all Hagana and Palmach men in British prisons in Palestine.

Ben Gurion also instructed the Hagana to foil dissident terrorism.

On June 12, the Hagana blew up an IZL arms dump. On June 17, the Hagana prevented a IZL raid on a British camp near Rehovot. On June 19, the Hagana foiled a daring IZL plan to tunnel under the Citrus House officer's club in Tel Aviv and blow it up. Begin and the IZL command had hoped the Citrus House operation would impress UN committee that "Jewish determination to bring British rule to an end," and "believed that this operation might well prove the decisive blow of the revolt." 58

The Hagana saved the British officers, though Hagana commander Zeev Werba accidentally blew himself up trying to defuse the explosives. Most of the ranking British officials attended Werba's funeral and the Jewish Agency-Hagana's anti-dissident campaign achieved an extremely positive image in British press. Anglo-Zionist relations seemed to be mending at the expense of the dissident undergrounds. 59

In early July, Ben Gurion, pleased with the apparent improvement in Anglo-Zionist relations, remained concerned that Jewish terror might upset the UNSCOP's move towards partition. He ordered 200 Palmach troops assembled to launch an anti-dissident operation in the pattern of the "Season." The Hagana threatened, beat-up, and arranged the exile of several IZL members. But the Yishuv was quickly outraged by these actions. Influential Yishuv leaders, specifically Rokach and Silver, found out about Ben Gurion's scheme, interceded on behalf of the dissident organizations, and protested that a renewal of the Season which might plunge the Yishuv into civil war. In addition, within the ranks of the Palmach-Hagana, there existed little enthusiasm to renew an anti-dissident struggle. Allon and the Palmach eventually refused to participate. Many restless officers were openly sympathetic to the

IZL. The Yishuv's general mood, in spite of the Jewish Agency's attempt to heal Anglo-Zionist relations, remained decidedly anti-British. 60

While the Jewish Agency unsuccessfully attempted to bridge British-Zionist tensions, the Hagana-Palmach continued to engage in illegal arms acquisition and illegal immigration. During the summer of 1947, the saga of the ship "Exodus" and her 4,500 refugees, many hand-picked Hagana men and women under the instructions of Palmach commander Ike Aranne, unfolded. Resisting deportation to Cyprus or transshipment to France, the British eventually forced the former Holocaust survivors aboard the Exodus to return to Germany. The Exodus episode gained international attention for Jewish plight, raised anti-British sentiment around the world, and solidified the Jewish community's anger towards the British. In late July 1947, Hagana launched two attacks on British radar stations near Haifa and damaged a transshipment vessel; Hagana-Palmach commanders ordered their units to sink British ships if they attempted to interfere with immigration efforts. After the Exodus, the Jewish people lost all faith in Britain. 61

Meanwhile, the IZL criticized the Hagana for using Exodus immigrants, instructing them not to unload in France, as political pawns in a struggle against the British. And the IZL was outraged that no minority proposal for Jewish state consisting of all of Palestine had been submitted to the UNSCOP by the Jewish Agency. In July, ignoring the protests of Ben Gurion and Sharett, and the threats of the Hagana, Begin met with UN committee representatives to explain the IZL platform, as inherited from Jabotinsky. Yet the IZL remained chiefly concerned

with continuing combating the British, particularly in the presence of the UNSCOP. ⁶²

During Exodus episode, the IZL concentrated in saving their captured men from death sentences. IZL considered that the British had been duly warned to observe "prisoner-of-war conventions" with regard to captured "Freedom Fighters." On July 30, the British hung three IZL men, captured in the Acre prison raid. In response, the IZL in turn hung two British officers, Sergeants Marvin Paice and Clifford Martin, kidnapped as ransom since June. In bitter retaliation, the British instituted operation "Tiger," in August, involving some 5,000 troops and interrogating almost 1500 people. The British even arrested many prominent Jews suspected of IZL sympathies, such as the mayors of Netanya, Tel Aviv, and Ramat Gan. And some British troops, in anger and frustration, broke into undisciplined rampages of rioting, beating, and harassment throughout the Yishuv. ⁶³

During the late summer of 1947, the IZL-LHI forces and the British forces engaged in a blood-bath. In August, the LHI attacked trains near Haifa and Hederah. In September, LHI killed a British policeman in a raid on a Barclays' Bank in Haifa and the IZL blew-up the British police Headquarters in Haifa. From August 1945 to September 1947, Britain suffered over 200 killed by Jewish terror in Palestine, compared with under 50 killed on the side of Jewish undergrounds. The summer violence, the Exodus affair, the hanging of the two British officers, and the angry British responses, left the UNSCOP with the impression that the Mandatory regime could not maintain control over Palestine. As the situation between Arabs and Jews also became more tense, UNSCOP was left

with the impression that the Mandatory regime could not maintain control over Palestine. After observing the events in Palestine during the summer of 1947, the UNSCOP committee decided on a majority proposal for a partition of Palestine. ⁶⁴

In early autumn, the Jewish Agency and the dissident organizations remained intensely at odds. The Jewish Agency had condemned the IZL's execution of the two officer's as "a bloodthirsty deed contrary to all human standards." ⁶⁵ In September, Jewish Agency pamphlets warned the Yishuv that the dissident organizations "gain their livelihood by gangsterism, smuggling, large-scale drug traffic, armed robbery, organizing the black market, and thefts." ⁶⁶ The Hagana announced that all possible measures would be used to root out terrorism, while the IZL countered with threats of assassinating Jewish Agency officials. The Hagana continued to shadow IZL men, and both the Hagana and the IZL engaged in mutual kidnappings and beatings. In October, the Hagana shot two IZL men in Rishon Le-Zion. The IZL responded with a scathing wallposter campaign against Ben Gurion and the Jewish Agency. At the same time, the WZO and the Jewish Agency geared up for a massive international publicity campaign in support of partition, while Begin and the IZL propaganda refuted the very notion of partition. Begin renounced the UN proposal as illegal and not binding on the Jewish people, for "Jerusalem will always be our capital...the Land of Israel will return to the People of Israel, the whole of it, and forever." ⁶⁷

Though both undergrounds threatened civil war, with the talk of partition, the inter-Yishuv conflicts became overshadowed by increasing talk in both the Arab community and the Jewish Yishuv of war. ⁶⁸ The

Arabs had watched the Jewish underground organizations attack the British from the sidelines for years, and had learned from the tactics of Jewish terrorism. With the talk of partition, the Palestinian Arabs lost patience with the role of spectators. Incidents of Arab-Jewish community violence escalated.

Despite rising Arab-Jewish tensions, the LHI continued to assault British personnel, believing that the British announcement to evacuate was a bluff to lower the Jewish defenses. With Shamir imprisoned in Eritrea, Yellin-Mor had piloted the LHI political towards the extreme Left, so that LHI believed British imperialism was responsible for raising Arab-Jewish tensions, and that an Arab-Jewish war could still be avoided. Yet with the approaching thunder of a possible Arab-Jewish civil war in Palestine, the attentions of the Hagana-Palmach and the IZL, turned away from the British and from each other, and focused on preparing for a struggle with the Arabs. 69

By the mid-1947, the Hagana stood unprepared to defend the Yishuv in a major Arab-Jewish civil war or a larger war involving Palestine's Arab neighbors. In essence, the Hagana remained structured along lines of 1936-39 riots, emphasizing localized, static defenses. There existed no system of national mobilization. On paper, the Hagana-Palmach could claim 45,000 registered men and women, yet the majority of these were HIM (reserve) forces, inadequately trained and armed. The only mobile force, the 3,000 Palmach troops, possessed only 400 professional staff. Despite efforts to evade the British blockade and to secretly import weapons, a dangerous deficiency existed. The Hagana possessed only 17,600 rifles, 900 machine guns, and 800 mortars, and no anti-tank or

anti-aircraft weapons. And the fledgling air force, established in early November, had merely eleven planes. The Hagana-Palmach was unprepared to wage lengthy guerrilla war, and certainly not a full-scale war. ⁷⁰

With the Hagana under these conditions, Ben Gurion, named Director of the Jewish Agency's Security Affairs in late 1946, foresaw a major war, not a guerrilla campaign, and advocated general mobilization and the establishment of a conventional, unified army. Yet not all of the Jewish Agency representatives shared Ben Gurion's outlook. Some believed that Arab-Jewish tensions could be resolved through negotiation, and that Jewish mobilization might escalate a wider conflict. In September, Galili, Head of the Hagana National Command, argued in the National Council of the Histadrut that, whether there would be a civil war with Palestinian Arabs or an invasion of regional Arab armies, the Histadrut must authorize the Hagana command to "conscript any member for guard, command, and training duties." ⁷¹

Simultaneously, Galili and the far Left urged restraint with the Arabs and action against Jewish extremists. When speaking of mobilization, Galili envisioned worker's militias in the fashion of the Palmach, but Ben Gurion pressed for non-voluntary, universal conscription. In October, Ben Gurion ordered Hagana to produce a general enlistment plan. In mid-November, 1947, the Vaad Leumi finally consented to mobilize six HISH brigades. But still mobilization proved difficult in a war-weary Yishuv, fragmented by an array of social and political differences. In late November, Ben Gurion sent emissaries to purchase weapons in America and Europe. But the British occupation continued to hamper Hagana efforts to draft and train troops, and to import and

retain arms and ammunition. The Hagana's preparations for war proceeded amidst chaos, dispute, and opposition.⁷²

On November 29, the UN vote for a partition of Palestine triggered an explosion of Arab-Jewish clashes. Politically divided over enlistment and the character of the army, confused over the strategic assessments, and restricted by the British occupation, the Yishuv faced the difficulties of an Arab-Jewish civil war in Palestine from December 1947 to May 1948.⁷³

As Palestine's Jewish-Arab civil war intensified, the Hagana slowly evolved into the framework for a regular army. By December, 1947, the Hagana finally had a substantial budget and the National Command evolved into a general headquarters or GHQ with four fully operational regional commands. Yet the Palmach and HISH brigades mobilized slowly. In December, the Hagana-Palmach together possessed only 4,000-5,000 "effectives," mobilized troops, ready for action. The Jewish Agency was not yet an official government to enforce conscription, so the initial calls for all citizens 17-25 to enlist went unheeded. With the difficulties mobilizing the Yishuv population, not all Hagana members had been called up by as late as February and non-members as late as March. Most of the Hagana members remained tied to defending the settlements.

Almost all Jewish troops were poorly equipped. All the Hagana-Palmach units faced drastic shortages of uniforms, blankets, boots, canteens, and, of course, weapons. In late December, the Hagana still had no heavy weapons, only 700 light machine guns, 200 medium machine guns, 700 mortars, and only enough ammunition for three days of

fighting. Arms and ammunitions trickled in from France and Italy, and Zionist agents had, by early 1948, secured the substantial Czechoslovakian arms deal; but the problem to transport the weapons through the British blockade had still not been overcome.

The Jewish Agency realized that the British would not maintain law and order. And the British persisted to impede Hagana's development by barring the importation of arms, by preventing the influx of fresh troops, and by confiscating Jewish arms on the pretext of maintaining order in a land rife with war. Facing the twin problems of British opposition and the Hagana's lumbering development, the Hagana and the Jewish Agency, tried to avoid a massive crack-down by the British forces until they withdrew in May and an escalation of Arab violence involving the neighboring Arab armies. Ben Gurion and the Hagana High Command adopted a "Havlagah" strategy in the first months of the war. ⁷⁴

With the Yishuv's military situation critical, interest in political-military unity grew. Beginning in mid-December, Begin, Landau, and Katz met with delegations from the Jewish Agency, though not with Ben Gurion, who refused to negotiate with the dissidents. These talks were strained, protracted, and difficult. Although the Arab-Jewish civil war brought the interests of the IZL and the Hagana-Palmach into greater alignment, the animosities, mistrust, and different political-military assumptions persisted.

The IZL opposed the Jewish Agency's emphasis on "punitive operations" and "moderation and non-provocation" towards the Arab attacks. Instead, the IZL launched a major counterterror campaign and mounted offensive attacks on the Arab community, bombing Arab markets

and making hit-and-run attacks on Arab businesses and cafes. Similarly, the IZL resisted British arms confiscations and decried the Hagana for permitting disarmament of its troop at such a critical time. IZL was furious over the Zionist establishment's interference in the fierce competition for funds in the United States. The IZL chastised the Jewish Agency for not doing enough, sooner, to mobilize and arm the Yishuv. Begin scolded the Jewish Agency's hopes for an international Peace Keeping Force as "wishful thinking." In addition, they feared that Weizmann faction might delay statehood. The IZL agreed to accept authority of a new Provisional government if established before May 15; if not, Begin threatened to establish independently, or in concert with others. ⁷⁵

Most importantly, the IZL opposed partition, particularly the relinquishment of Jerusalem. Some in IZL felt Begin should declare Provisional government, especially Hillel Kook and Eri Jabotinsky, to prevent partition. According to Begin, his greatest worry in the early months of 1948 "was that the Arabs might accept the United Nation's plan. Then we would have had the ultimate tragedy, a Jewish state so small that it could not absorb all the Jews of the world." ⁷⁶ Begin rejected the UN Partition boundaries and called for the immediate formation of a united Jewish Army to conquer all of Palestine. The IZL felt the Jewish Agency-Hagana's policies endangered the Yishuv and the future of a Jewish nation; while Ben Gurion and his followers believed the same of the IZL. ⁷⁷

In early 1948, as Arab-Jewish violence escalated, Hagana-IZL relations became more and more tense. As the Hagana gradually

militarized, the IZL lost support in Palestine and abroad, and the IZL became threatened with severe arms and funds shortages. The Jewish Agency constantly appealed to the Yishuv not to support IZL and LHI. In addition, there were outright incidents of beatings, interrogations, and kidnappings between the IZL and the Hagana.

In January, the rival undergrounds arranged a prisoner exchange. The Hagana men were released and returned, but the Hagana claimed that IZL's Yedidia Segal escaped from their custody before being released. Segal never appeared and was found dead three days later in the Arab village of Tireh. IZL broke negotiations with Jewish Agency until, at IZL's insistence, a public inquiry committee investigated the incident. In February, Hagana men threw hand-grenades into a crowd attending a IZL rally and fund raiser at Mograbi Square in Tel Aviv. Many in the crowd were wounded. Some IZL commanders urged Begin to retaliate. In spite of the larger Arab-Jewish struggle, the Hagana and the IZL broke off negotiations as the possibility of Jewish civil war still loomed. ⁷⁸

Then in late February and March, as Arabs and British troops both became more hostile towards the Yishuv, the Jewish Agency-Hagana war policy shifted. In late February, British police in Jerusalem disarmed four Hagana men and abandoned them to an angry Arab mob, who mutilated the Jews. By March, the exhausted British restated their intention to evacuate Palestine in May and increasingly handed strategic positions over to Arab soldiers. And IZL and Hagana Intelligence reports circulated of British complicity in Arab terrorist attacks, such as the bombing of the Palestine Post Building and of Ben Yahuda Street. Though Ben Gurion ruled to avoid committing large forces before the Mandate

expired, wishing to avoid offering the Mandatory forces a pretext to wage a full-scale attack on the Yishuv, he took the calculated risk of ordering Hagana-Palmach troops to resist arms confiscations.

Within the Yishuv and Hagana command, criticism also grew of Ben Gurion's strategy of not surrendering one kibbutz, avoiding anti-British clashes, and hoping that the defensive, static posture of Hagana-Palmach troops would preserve some Jewish territorial continuity. Some condemned this tactic as an antiquated extension of Havlaga. In spite of the difficulties of procuring weapons and recruiting troops, by early March, 1948, there existed six HISH brigades and three Palmach brigades and the Hagana-Palmach could claim some 21,000 effectives. By late March, the Hagana Command, Commander Yigael Yadin in particular, insisted to Ben Gurion that restraint was obsolete. Ben Gurion ordered a limited offensive thrust, an "active defensive," in the north and central regions, and set plans for major offensives when the British evacuated. Havlaga ended forever as the Hagana-Palmach prepared for an offensive strategy. 79

As the IZL saw the transformation of the war and of Jewish Agency tactics, "Ben Gurion and his Hagana Commanders finally awakened to the grim reality, to the fact that the infant nation was naked and alone in a hostile world." 80 During the winter of 1947-1948, the LHI continued to launch independent, and deadly, attacks on British troops in Jerusalem and Rehovot, resulting in almost 100 British casualties; but under the shadow of an invasion of Arab armies when the British departed, the Hagana's and the IZL's interests converged. In early March negotiations were resumed. IZL's Kook and Lankin met with Sneh to

hammer out problems with fund raising and differences over their attitudes towards the British. The Hagana and IZL undergrounds finally groped for reconciliation. ⁸¹

On March 8, the Hagana-IZL discussions evolved into a working agreement. Begin restated that after independence he would dissolve the IZL into a national army. The IZL command agreed that, in situations of static defense, IZL troops would follow the orders of Hagana commanders. All IZL operations would require Hagana approval in advance. In turn, IZL could resist arms confiscations irrespective of Hagana policy and the Hagana accepted the principle of IZL reprisals or arms raids against the British if executed after joint approval. Moreover, the Jewish Agency and the Zionist establishment promised not to interfere with IZL immigration efforts, fund raising, and independent weapons procurement, but the IZL had to refrain from robbery or extortion. The IZL would not receive any official Yishuv funds and would retain an entirely separate command.

IZL opposed suggestions of immediate unification fearing the Jewish Agency might still postpone the declaration of independence; if statehood was declared IZL would accept a provisional government's authority everywhere except in Jerusalem, which was outside the Jewish portion of partition. By mid-March time, IZL came above ground and decided to concentrate its military muscle on Jaffa, Ramele-Lydd, the Haifa area, and Jerusalem. Although Ben Gurion and followers postponed ratification of the IZL-Hagana agreement in the Zionist Council for seven weeks, the two largest, rival Jewish undergrounds reached an understanding not unlike the defunct JRM-- the Hagana and the IZL

remained distinct, yet they agreed to fight in concert. ⁸²

As the IZL and the Hagana sought reconciliation, the Arab-Jewish war intensified and the situation in isolated Jerusalem became critical. The convoy system, which supplied Jerusalem with all her vital military supplies and food, collapsed. In late March, Ben Gurion and the Hagana command authorized the implementation of operation "Nachshon," designed to break the blockade of Jerusalem by securing the heights above the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road. The Nachshon offensive received a boost from the first shipment of Czech arms of 4500 rifles and 200 machine guns arriving on the IZL's ship "Nora." ⁸³ In early April, the Palmach seized such villages as Kastel and Saris, in the Jerusalem region. But in Jerusalem itself, the Hagana situation remained weak. ⁸⁴

David Shaltiel, Hagana commander of the Jerusalem sector, a French Foreign Legion veteran, and an advocate of orthodox military procedures, was forced to rely on the relatively strong LHI and IZL units around Jerusalem. Yet Shaltiel had played a large role in the "Season," as the Hagana Intelligence Chief, and he and the "dissident organizations" felt strong mutual distrust. Shaltiel argued repeatedly with LHI and IZL commanders in Jerusalem, Yehoshua Zettler and Mordechai Raanan, over tactics and weapons distribution. Since January, the lack of coordination between David Shaltiel and IZL-LHI troops contributed to Jerusalem's situation weak, particularly in the besieged Jewish quarter of the Old City. On April 7, Shaltiel learned of IZL-LHI plans to attack the Jerusalem suburb of Deir Yassin. Shaltiel approved the attack on Deir Yassin, specifying:

I have no objection to your carrying out the operation provided you are able to hold the village... I warn you against blowing up the village, which would lead to the flight of inhabitants and the occupation of the destroyed and empty houses by foreign forces.⁸⁵

On April 9, the LHI-IZL unit, under Ranaan's command, approached the village of Deir Yassin with about 100 troops. According to the LHI-IZL troops, they used a loudspeaker to warn civilians to leave. Some villagers fled but many stayed. The LHI-IZL troops attested that the Arabs opened fire and heavy fighting ensued. When Arab prisoners suddenly began shooting, the LHI-IZL men recalled, the fighting became even more bloody, evolving into a hand-to-hand, house-to-house struggle. The LHI-IZL units suffered over 40 casualties. After a full day of battle, the village was "subdued." 220 Arabs, many women and children, had been killed.⁸⁶

Shaltiel arrived the evening after the battle and refused to accept responsibility for the attack's outcome. Hagana troops openly criticized LHI-IZL troops when a Hagana unit, under Yeshurvin Schiff, replaced Ranaan and IZL-LHI unit. Shaltiel ordered Schiff to disarm the dissident troops, but Schiff protested that the Hagana troops would refuse to insight a civil war. To the press, Shaltiel claimed that the Hagana entered to clean up shameful scene. He denied that Deir Yassin was a "military operation" and claimed "the IZL and LHI soldiers stood and slaughtered men, women, and children...not in the course of the operation, but in a premeditated act which had as its intention slaughter and murder only."⁸⁷

In the following days, the British and Red Cross logged Deir Yassin as an atrocity. The Jewish Agency suspected that Ranaan and the

dissidents were trying to break Ben Gurion's delicate negotiations on an accord with Abdullah, which gave TransJordan the "Triangle" (the West Bank) and East Jerusalem in exchange for peace. The Jewish Agency press bitterly condemned the LHI-IZL as "fascists" and "murderers," and the attack as a blemish upon the honor of the Jewish people. ⁸⁸

Some LHI members, such as Yellin-Mor, decried the Arab-Jewish conflict and rebuked the assault on Deir Yassin; but according to the IZL, and the LHI in Jerusalem, Deir Yassin represented a glorious military victory. Begin insisted that at Deir Yassin, "none of our men carried out a massacre. It was very tragic but there was no massacre." Ranaan and Zetler disclaimed any atrocities and Begin contended that, "civilians who disregarded our warnings suffered inevitable casualties." ⁸⁹ Moreover, the IZL felt appalled by Ben Gurion's apologetic letter to "the enemy" Abdullah. ⁹⁰ They claimed that the Jewish Agency used Deir Yassin to discredit their organization. The controversy never subsided, remaining shrouded in conflicting explanations, versions, and excuses. The Deir Yassin incident contributed to the panic and flight of thousands of Palestinian Arabs, became the battle-cry in future Jewish-Arab bloodshed, and further infected the deep wounds separating the Yishuv's military bodies. ⁹¹

Despite Deir Yassin, the Yishuv's different military organizations, pressed together by a common enemy in a war of community survival, submerged their differences and focused on the Arabs. In mid-April, the secret agreement between Hagana and IZL outlined on March 8th was officially ratified, despite the opposition of Ben Gurion and many leftist representatives in Zionist executive. In late April and

early May, as the Hagana-Palmach forces conquered Haifa, Tiberias, Safed and much of the lower Galilee, the IZL command drew up plans to attack Jaffa. Jaffa represented the IZL's biggest military mission. Begin hoped to alleviate the threat that Jaffa posed to the neighboring Jewish city of Tel Aviv, sabotage what they believed would be a final plot by British forces to secure a bridgehead in Palestine, and to press Jewish military forces beyond the UN Partition boundaries which he repudiated. 92

Rebounding from a stinging defeat at the village of Manshiya, the IZL attacked Jaffa on April 25 under Paglin's command. After two days of fierce combat, the 500-600 IZL troops became bogged down. Although the Jewish Agency and the Hagana Command had originally condemned the attack, on April 27, Galili and Yadin approved the continuation of the attack under the terms of the March 8th agreement.

Begin gave his commander, Paglin, 24 hours to reach the sea, and, thereby, split the town in half. Paglin and the IZL succeeded. On April 28, the Hagana joined in the attack, in conjunction with their operation "Chametz," which involved encircling the town. The IZL provided cover fire for Hagana troops. April 30, the British moved in tanks and counterattacked. The IZL stopped the tanks at great cost and the battle evolved into a stand-off. In the Jaffa operation, the IZL suffered 42 killed, and 400 wounded. As IZL and Hagana soldiers held the battle lines together, Hagana commanders were instructed to avoid clashes with IZL personnel. And IZL commanders were informed that:

For the time being this is to inform you that wherever there are IZL positions, they will from now on come through the command of the Hagana area commanders, through IZL position commanders. The IZL will not undertake any action unless agreed upon beforehand with the Hagana. This includes acquisition of arms from the British Army. The IZL will be prepared to

undertake operations on request of the Hagana High Command. 93

On May 11, the British withdrew, and the Hagana and IZL troops marched in jointly, to fully secure the almost abandoned city by May 13. 94

The conquest of Jaffa represented perhaps the IZL's finest hour, and certainly the finest hour of Hagana and IZL cooperation. Yet underlining the joint military victory were the persistent differences of political outlook. Many Jewish Agency representatives and the official Yishuv newspapers criticized the IZL's unilateral actions in Jaffa, claiming that the assault only provided material for Arab propagandists and that Jaffa could have been taken without a fight. Yet the IZL described Jaffa as the IZL's "greatest operation, which changed the face of the struggle in Palestine, this time with a conscious purpose, breaking across the frontiers of partition." 95

Nevertheless, despite different political aims and IZL apprehensions that the Jewish Agency would stall on declaring statehood, in early May, Begin continued to reassert that he had placed the IZL under the Hagana's operative orders, would disband after the declaration of statehood, and would support the state. In mid-May, the newly established "National Administration" (formed from the Jewish Agency in late April in anticipation of statehood), began working out a formal, and seemingly final, agreement with Begin and the IZL. The Hagana and the IZL appeared to be functioning together, to be fighting the same battle. 96

During the post-war period of May, 1945, until July, 1946, Britain's apparent anti-Zionist policy drove all the Yishuv's underground military bodies-- Hagana, Palmach, LHI, and IZL-- together

in a "Jewish Resistance Movement." Despite significant internal tensions regarding both political vision and military tactics, the JRM endured for over nine months. But the dramatic events of the summer of 1946-- such as operation Agatha, the King David Hotel affair, and operation Shark-- precipitated the demise of the JRM. From autumn of 1946 until autumn of 1947, the Hagana-Palmach and the IZL-LHI forces waged independent and conflicting campaigns. The Jewish Agency tried to steer a complex course of trying to attract international support for a Jewish state and restore relations with the British, while instructing the Hagana to continue facilitating illegal immigration. The LHI and IZL chose the straightforward course of waging a revolt-in-arms against the Mandatory regime. In the autumn, as a partition of Palestine and a Jewish-Arab war drew nearer, the relations between the Yishuv's undergrounds remained bitter and tense. The Hagana-Palmach forces slowly mobilized while adopting a military policy of restraint. As the LHI continued to assault the evacuating British, the IZL launched attacks on the Arab community and chastised the Jewish Agency's more restrained political-military strategy. But the escalating Arab-Jewish violence drove the IZL towards the Hagana-Palmach, which gradually was emerging as the skeleton of the future national army. In the early spring of 1948, the IZL and the Hagana commands groped for reconciliation, in spite of intense political-military differences on the battlefield-- such as at Deir Yassin and at Jaffa. By May, 1948, the Hagana-Palmach and the IZL seemed united in an uneasy alliance for the sake of "national" survival.

NOTES V

¹ Bell, p. 147.

² Joe Kimche, Seven Fallen Pillars (London: Secker and Warburg, 1950), p. 157; and Brenner, p. 16; and Bethell, pp. 193, 203, 207; Perlmutter II, p. 11; and Bauer, p. 350; and Cohen, p. 370; and Haber, 151; and Bell, p. 137.

³ Perlmutter, p. 49; and Bauer, p. 350.

⁴ Perlmutter, II, p. 14; and Perlmutter, pp. 49-50; and Cohen, p. 68; and Bauer, p. 306; and Shimshoni, p. 181.

⁵ Katz, p. 88.

⁶ Bethell, pp. 208-209; and Bell, p. 150.

⁷ Rothenberg, p. 36; and Bauer, p. 306; and Bell, p. 151.

⁸ Allon, pp. 23-24.

⁹ Allon, p. 112.

¹⁰ Bauer, p. 305.

¹¹ Bauer, p. 305.

¹² Bethell, p. 217; and Allon, p. 113, and Bauer, pp. 350-351; and Kimche, p. 146.

¹³ Cohen, pp. 69-70; and Bell, pp. 142, 145; and Sacher, p. 257. and Bethell, p. 210; and Horowitz and Lissak, pp. 59, 174.

¹⁵ Cohen, pp. 69-70; and Bell, pp. 142, 145; and Sacher, p. 257; and Bethell, p. 210; and Horowitz and Lissak, pp. 59, 174.

- ¹⁶ Ben Ami, p. 362.
- ¹⁷ Bell, p. 142.
- ¹⁸ Ben Ami, p. 362.
- ¹⁹ Bethell, p. 215.
- ²⁰ Haber, p. 152; and Begin, pp. 186, 205; and Katz, p. 88; and Cohen, p. 72; and Bell, p. 142; and Horowitz, p. 22.
- ²¹ Cohen, pp. 69, 71; and Bethell, p. 216; and Brenner, p. 17; and Haber, pp. 152-153.
- ²² Bethell, pp. 217-227; and Bell, pp. 150-165; and Brenner, p. 21.
- ²³ Bell, p. 163.
- ²⁴ Bethell, pp. 221-238; and Bell, p. 160-166.
- ²⁵ Bethell, p. 236.
- ²⁶ Bethell, p. 237.
- ²⁷ Bell, p. 151.
- ²⁸ Cohen, p. 77.
- ²⁹ Bethell, p. 227.
- ³⁰ Bethell, pp. 238-239, 245.
- ³¹ Horowitz, p. 22; and Bethell, p. 245.
- ³² Cohen, p. 83; and Begin, pp. 203, 199; and Katz, p. 91; and Rothenberg, p. 37; and Haber, p. 154; and Bethell, p. 245.
- ³³ Bethell, p. 253.
- ³⁴ Ben Ami, pp. 366, 373-376; and Begin, p. 215; and Rothenberg, p. 37; and Bell, pp. 157, 167; and Cohen, p. 85.
- ³⁵ Bethell, p. 253; and Ben Ami, p. 377; and Haber, p. 160.
- ³⁶ Bethell, p. 286.

- 37 Ben Ami, p. 377; and Begin, p. 210; and Bell, p. 153.
- 38 Ben Ami, p. 378; and Bethell, p. 254; and Harry Sacher, p. 190.
- 39 Sacher, p. 267; and Haber, pp. 161-164.
- 40 Bell, p. 173; and Bar Zohar, p. 85.
- 41 Horowitz, p. 23; and Bethell, p. 258.
- 42 Bethell, p. 258.
- 43 Bethell, p. 263.
- 44 Ben Ami, p. 379.
- 45 Ben Ami, p. 389.
- 46 Begin, p. 308; and Haber, pp. 161-164; and Ben Ami, p. 392; and Katz, p. 95; and Brenner, p. 21.
- 47 Rothenberg, p. 37; and Bethell, pp. 271-277.
- 48 Katz, p. 95; and Bell, pp. 173-174; and Ben Ami, p. 380; and Haber, p. 157; and Kimche, pp. 157, 17.
- 49 Cohen, p. 89; and Sacher, pp. 265, 269; and Allon, pp. 113, 116.
- 50 Katz, pp. 115, 118.
- 51 Katz, p. 96; and Bell, p. 178.
- 52 Ben Ami, pp. 411; and Bethell, p. 291; and Haber, p. 182; and Cohen, p. 171; and Brenner, p. 21.
- 53 Ben Ami, pp. 411-413; and Bethell, pp. 291, 299-304; and Brenner, p. 22; and Haber, p. 182; and Cohen, pp. 171-240.
- 54 Bethell, p. 304.
- 55 Bell, p. 180; and Rothenberg, p. 36.
- 56 Katz, p. 122; and Bethell, pp. 304-305.

57 Katz, p. 148.

58 Katz, p. 152.

59 Katz, p. 152; and Cohen, p. 243; and Bethell, pp. 317-318;
and Ben Ami, p. 416.

60 Ben Ami, p. 424; and Katz, pp. 150, 242, 162.

61 Katz, p. 166; and Bethell, p. 342; and Sacher, p. 282.

62 Katz, pp. 162, 168, 174.

63 Bell, pp. 222-228; and Cohen, p. 247; and Bethell, pp. 336-
339; and Haber, p. 186.

64 Bethell, p. 347.

65 Cohen, p. 244.

66 Harry Sacher, Israel: The Establishment of the State (London:
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1952), p. 192.

67 Harry Sacher, p. 192.

68 Bell, pp. 260-261; and Katz, p. 180.

69 Bell, pp. 260-261; and Katz, p. 180; and Brenner, p. 24.

70 Rothenberg, p. 37.

71 Rothenberg, p. 37.

72 Rothenberg, p. 37.

73 Rothenberg, p. 38.

74 Bethell, p. 352; and Rothenberg, p. 38; and Sacher, pp. 301-
304.

75 Ben Ami, pp. 432, 434; and Katz, pp. 182, 189-192; and Bell,
262; and Haber, p. 207.

76 Bethell, p. 354.

⁷⁷ Ben Ami, pp. 432, 434; and Katz, pp. 182, 189-192; and Bell, 262; and Haber, p. 207.

⁷⁸ Bell, p. 263; and Katz, pp. 194-195.

⁷⁹ Bell, pp. 262, 269; and Rothenberg, p. 38; and Sacher, p. 304; and Allon, p. 117.

⁸⁰ Ben Ami, p. 437.

⁸¹ Bell, pp. 257, 264; and Katz, pp. 189, 203-204, 210; and Brenner, p. 23; and Ben Ami, pp. 435, 446.

⁸² Bell, pp. 257, 264; and Katz, pp. 189, 203-204, 210; Harry Sacher, p. 192; and Ben Ami, pp. 435, 446.

⁸³ Katz, p. 213.

⁸⁴ Bell, p. 269; and Sacher, p. 300; and Ben Ami, p. 440.

⁸⁵ Dan Kurzman, Genesis 1948 (Cleveland: New American Library Inc., 1970), p. 140; and Bell, p. 292; and Katz, pp. 214-216; and Haber, p. 208.

⁸⁶ Ben Ami, pp. 441-442; and Bethell, p. 255.

⁸⁷ Bell, p. 296.

⁸⁸ Kurzman, p. 140; and Haber, p. 209.

⁸⁹ Begin, p. 164.

⁹⁰ Katz, p. 216.

⁹¹ Ben Ami, pp. 444-45; and Bethell, p. 256; and Kimche, pp. 217-222; and Haber, p. 211; and Kurzman, p. 145; and Netanel Lorch, The Edge of the Sword (New York: Putman & Company, 1961), p. 92.

⁹² Cohen, p. 332; and Ben Ami, p. 458.

⁹³ Lorch, pp. 109-110.

⁹⁴ Bell, pp. 229-310; and Kurzman, pp. 175-188; and Lorch, p. 108; and Harry Sacher, p. 132.

⁹⁵ Katz, p. 218.

⁹⁶ Haber, pp. 212-214; and Bar Zohar, p. 126; and Kimche, pp. 222-225.

CHAPTER VI

UNIFICATION OF THE ISRAELI ARMY: 1948-1950

In the spring of 1948, as the Yishuv prepared for statehood and a war of national survival, Ben Gurion assumed the official role as both political and military leader of the inchoate Jewish nation. During April, the Jewish Agency formed the "National Administration" with its executive "Council of Thirteen," chaired by Ben Gurion. Ben Gurion assumed power as chief civilian executive and representative, and as chairman of the "Committee for Security," as the prospective Defense Minister for the future Jewish state. Despite international, particularly American, and some WZO pressure to postpone, Ben Gurion and his followers felt determined to declare a Jewish state. Likewise, despite the existence of disparate, rival political-military bodies and traditions within the Yishuv, Ben Gurion stubbornly envisioned sculpting a professional, unified, apolitical army.

Ben Gurion faced the challenges, not only of leading a new nation through a war of national survival, but the internal political challenge of forming a unified, professional-style, apolitical army. Ben Gurion recognized that the formation of such an army required the realization of several fundamental goals: nationalize, formalize, and depoliticize the army; establish the supremacy of civilian government in determining matters of war and peace; make the Defense Minister the final arbitrator in civil-military conflicts; allow the Defense Ministry to prescribe the

the character and professional standards of the officer corps; and centralize and streamline the process of military decision-making. ¹

The two great challengers to Ben Gurion's goals were the IZL and the Palmach. The IZL and, to a lesser extent, the LHI represented military-political threats outside the influence of Ben Gurion and the political center. The Palmach and the far Left, since they participated in the official Yishuv government, threatened the center more internally as a rival to the political aspirations of Ben Gurion and MAPAI. Perhaps more importantly, the Palmach represented the heir to a radically different military style-- the Pioneer-Soldier tradition-- from the Professional tradition which Ben Gurion hoped to institute. ²

Within the official military forces, the Hagana and the Palmach, there existed grave conflicts of authority, stemming in part from their underground institutional roots. The Vaad Leumi, in the process of becoming the "National Assembly," remained responsible for choosing the Hagana High Command. The National Administration was charged with appointing the Hagana's National Command, while they had also established Ben Gurion at the helm of the Committee for Security. And the Palmach possessed its own supreme command. Authority remained decentralized and the chain of command confused-- a situation incompatible with a truly unified "national" army.

On another level, all the undergrounds had basically fought with limited weapons and limited training, were restricted to mostly land forces, lacked discipline, and were geared for mostly defensive maneuvers-- a situation incompatible with a nation facing the probable onslaught of several Arab armies, needing to mobilize the entire Yishuv

and a mixed multitude of new immigrants. Ladened with the vestiges of their long underground period, the transformation of the Yishuv's highly publicized, voluntary undergrounds into a compulsory, professional army evolved into a major political battle in the midst of the 1948-1949 War. ³

In late April, 1948, during a period of relative calm-- following the Jewish victories over the Palestinian irregulars and before the coming of the Arab invasion precipitated by the exit of the British and the declaration of statehood proposed for May 15th-- Ben Gurion launched his campaign to remold the Jewish community's military structure and character. With the LHI stunned into inaction by the departure of the British and the developing Arab-Jewish war, and with the IZL moving closer towards a full alliance with the Hagana, Ben Gurion focused on solidifying his hold over the Hagana-Palmach command and abolishing the political, underground character of the Hagana-Palmach.

Ben Gurion's central problem was the Palmach. Though representing the crack-force and the majority the trained officers of the Hagana, the Palmach was linked to the newly formed MAPAM Party, created by a merger of HaShomar HaTzair and Achdut HaAvoda (Kibbutz HaMeuchad).

The approach of national independence brought the various factions of the far Left together under the MAPAM banner. Under the leadership of Tabenkin and Yitshak Ben Aharon, MAPAM represented a far Left, pro-Soviet stance. MAPAM favored a negotiated binational state as the solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict and, in theory, advocated Havlaga related tactics. MAPAM felt Ben Gurion and MAPAI had betrayed the Socialist-Zionist tradition and international Socialism, and wanted to mold the society of the coming Jewish nation in the Kibbutz-Palmach

mold.

Yet Ben Gurion and MAPAI wanted to steer the future Jewish state on a neutral course, yet leaning towards West. Ben Gurion appreciated Soviet support for a Jewish state in the UN vote and the Czech arms deal as a product of Soviet interests in ousting Britain from the Middle East. Ben Gurion rejected Communism and the idea of a binational state, and believed a major battle with the Arabs was rapidly approaching. As an extension of earlier confrontations between Ben Gurion and the far Left, the Palmach's marriage to the MAPAM party placed it at political odds with Ben Gurion. ⁴

Beyond the Palmach's political character, its military character also placed it at odds with Ben Gurion's aspirations. The Palmach possessed an independent command and Palmach commanders exhibited a tendency to disregard the Hagana's central command decisions when they conflicted with their own ideas. In late March, the Palmach had even demanded that the Negev front be placed exclusively under their command, to which Ben Gurion had refused. Ben Gurion saw the Palmach as dangerous "power hungry renegades from the egalitarian Left." ⁵ And he regarded the Palmach's kibbutz-like structure as appropriate for fighting a guerrilla or underground war, but ill-suited for conventional warfare. Ben Gurion wanted to mold Israel's army into the British model, instilling distinction of rank, military etiquette, and discipline. Ben Gurion rejected the Palmach's partisan, underground tradition and egalitarian, voluntaristic military style as the basis for a national army. ⁶

By May, 1948, general mobilization boosted the Hagana's numbers to

approximately 32,000 effectives, compared to the Palmach's 3000-3500 troops. Yet the Palmach played a disproportionately large role in the official Yishuv forces, accounting for most of the field commanders and eight of twelve senior commanders. Unlike the IZL or the LHI, the Palmach's recognized loyalty and legitimacy with regard to the official Yishuv government earned it the admiration of the majority of the Yishuv. In addition, the Palmach's success on battlefield, and its voluntaristic and egalitarian mystic contributed to its popularity. The Palmach's popularity, coupled with the Palmach's larger representation in army than in the electorate, made it a difficult institution to uproot. Because of its political roots, its military style, and popular, influential position in the Palmach-Hagana command structure, Ben Gurion viewed the Palmach as a political-military cliché which would undermine the forthcoming army's posture as the instrument of the civilian government. ⁷

The greatest obstruction between the authority of Ben Gurion as Defense Minister and the Palmach command was the National Command, another vestige of the underground days. The Head of the National Command, the post of "RAMA," headed by Galili, acted as intermediary between the Chiefs of Staff (or "Ramatkal"), the Hagana Command, the Palmach Command, and the Council of Thirteen. Galili, a MAPAM representative popular with the generals and with the cabinet, championed the Palmach's internal autonomy. In the spring of 1948, the grave military situation added to the difficulties involved in modifying or changing the Palmach, so Ben Gurion began his strategy to unify the army, to gain legal and absolute control over the army command, to

eliminate any other authority between the General Staff and himself, and to start whittling down the Palmach, by abolishing the National Command and ousting Galili. ⁸

On April 21, despite opposition from almost every party, Ben Gurion announced the National Command would be dissolved. The announcement had no real effect and the National Command remained intact. On April 26, Ben Gurion summoned Galili and intimated his dissatisfaction with the state of the Hagana-Palmach command structure and with the evolution of the Palmach into private army cadre dominated by a single party. Ben Gurion stressed that there existed no clear chain of command, no clearly defined process of appointments, and not enough discipline in the troops. Ben Gurion proclaimed that the underground days were over and informed Galili that the National Command was thereafter abolished.

Galili returned that evening to suggest changes in the Palmach's structure in response to Ben Gurion's criticisms. Galili suggested that the Palmach did not need an independent command, the Palmach could be divided into a number of different districts, and there could be a general tightening of discipline. But Galili was vehemently opposed to the loss of his own position. According to Galili, there must be an intermediary between Prime Minister and general staff of army, to safeguard against totalitarianism, and he represented the most suitable person. The contest between Ben Gurion and Galili over the fate of the National Command remained unresolved. ⁹

On April 27, MAPAM and MAPAI representatives met separately and together, while Ben Gurion and Galili restated their positions. Ben

Gurion asserted that "the Defense portfolio is the most important one in the Executive"¹⁰ and should not be the property of a minority party. Tabenkin and Ben Aharon of MAPAM refuted Ben Gurion's plans for a professional Army along British lines by asserting that the Hagana had a clear "working-class character" and the "pioneering elements" were the Hagana's essence. Ben Gurion insisted that he absolutely rejected the "doctrine of a political or workers' army."¹¹

On April 30, when the National Administration and Council of Thirteen formally assumed its official interim position as the Yishuv's government, Ben Gurion reasserted that he would accept the role as Prime Minister and Defense Minister in the Provisional Government only if he was given complete control over the command and the character of army. On May 2, Ben Gurion offered Galili a position as deputy Defense Minister in a new organization for the command. He then informed the Chiefs of Staff and the National Command of the National Command's abolition, stating that "in the future, the Chiefs of Staff will receive their orders directly and solely from the head of the Security Forces or his delegate..."¹²

On May 3, the Chiefs of Staff-- Eliyahu Ben Hur, Zvi Ayalon, Moshe Zadok, and Yadin-- met with Ben Gurion to discuss the issue of Galili and the National Command. With the illness of Chief of Staff Dori complicating the matter, the generals argued with Ben Gurion not to dismiss Galili and disrupt the traditional Hagana-Palmach chain-of-command. That same day, Galili sent note to Ben Gurion stating that, "I've thought over your proposals again. I cannot and do not wish to act and participate in the kind of setup you propose."¹³

On May 4, the Council of Thirteen gathered for a stormy meeting. Most ministers objected to altering the command system, especially with a major war looming on the horizon. Ben Gurion was isolated. Many ministers complained furiously that Ben Gurion had not consulted the council before taking action. MAPAM representatives violently opposed abolition of the National Command and the ouster of their political comrade Galili, demanding that the order be repealed immediately. Most of the representatives agreed, even the MAPAI ministers, with the exception of Sharett. Ben Gurion repeated that he would accept the Prime Ministry and Defense Ministry only if his plans for a unified command were accepted. He emphasized that:

The Army and all its components must be subject to the authority of the people, which at this point means the authority of the National Administration. All activities of the Hagana, or of an Army, must be in accordance with the decisions of the elected authorities. This is true in regard to the activities of a platoon commander, a brigade commander, and the Chief of Staff. The organizational structure that has existed until now constitutes a grave threat to our existence. Anarchy and a state are two contradictory conceptions, especially in a time of war, even more so when it is a war of survival. ¹⁴

Furthermore, Ben Gurion specified that the Defense Minister must act as "Head of War" and the General Staff as an "Instrument of War" in order for the civilian government to maintain ultimate hegemony over the army. ¹⁵

On May 5, the Chiefs of Staff again requested that Ben Gurion retreat from his attempt to abolish the National Command. But Ben Gurion refused "to be a partner to any arrangement under which soldiers--members of the Hagana, of the Palmach, or what ever the name--are not subject to a single authority." Galili sent a note to Ben Gurion restating that he would resume his functions "on the condition that I am

given a grade between you and the Chiefs of Staff." ¹⁶ Ben Gurion refused to budge.

On May 6, the Chiefs of Staff sent a threatening note to Ben Gurion:

The situation at the front just now calls for a commanding authority at the head of the Hagana. The abolition of the post of Chief of the National Command and the illness of the head of the Chiefs of Staff have left the Hagana without a leader having authority to command the brigades and direct the Chiefs of staff. This state of affairs has already proved disastrous for the conduct of the war during the past three days. The Chiefs of Staff... consider that the days to come will be decisive for the conduct of the war and the preparations for May 15. They cannot continue to assume their heavy responsibilities while this matter remains unsettled. They demand the reinstatement of Israel Galili until definite arrangements are made. If the matter is not settled within twelve hours from now, the Chiefs of Staff will no longer consider themselves responsible for the conduct of the war.

The letter was signed by Yadin, Zvi Ayalon, Israel Ben Hur, Moshe Zadok, and Yosef Avidar. The ultimatum represented a outright revolt against the authority of Ben Gurion. With the military situation critical and with the United States and the WZO pressing for a postponement on statehood, the generals' threat carried added clout. Ben Gurion's position as leader of the Yishuv was at stake.

On May 6, Ben Gurion confronted the five signatories of the ultimatum and categorically refused to comply. As a small concession, he suggested that Galili could continue as his deputy. Confronted by Ben Gurion's unshakable stance, and with the proposed time until statehood dissolving, the Chiefs of Staff agreed to continue with their duties. This surrender by the Chiefs of Staff represented the turning point. On May 9, Galili took up his duties as a deputy. Though his position remained vague, he eventually took charge of mobilization,

manpower, and military specialists. Ben Gurion was winning in the struggle for political authority over the army. ¹⁸

Though Ben Gurion had apparently won, the controversy continued in the government and in the press. Without the mediating influence of the National Command, MAPAM leaders appreciated that Ben Gurion's political-military plans directly threatened the Palmach. A Mapam journalist wrote:

...any attempt to adapt the Hagana to the apparatus of an accepted regular army by disbanding the Palmach, eliminating the experienced and loyal commanders of the Hagana would have one result: impairing the fighting capacity and pioneering strength of all the Hagana brigades and paving the way for military careerism... disbanding the Palmach would mean breaking the backbone of the Hagana. ¹⁹

MAPAM representatives continued to attack Ben Gurion in cabinet meetings, accusing him of "totalitarian intentions," ²⁰ and of endangering the safety of the settlements by dismantling the traditional Hagana-Palmach framework.

According to Ben Gurion, "in accepting the Ministry of Defense, I had but one aim-- to ensure our country's security. As head of the armed forces, I acknowledge no political party." ²¹ On May 12, Ben Gurion again informed the National Administration that he refused to accept the post as Defense Minister unless the coming Provisional Government possessed direct control over a unified military command. As Ben Gurion recalled:

I made it clear to the Provisional Government, when it delegated the defense portfolio to me...that I would accept the ministry only under the following conditions: 1) The Army that would be formed and all its branches be subordinated to the government of the people and only that government. 2) All persons acting on behalf of the Army or the Hagana will act only according to a clearly defined function, established by the government of the people. The procedure which prevailed in the

Hagana could not and would not prevail when the army of Israel will be established. ²²

Furthermore, Ben Gurion insisted that "multiplicity of authorities is very dangerous." The army must be "subject to the role of the people," he said, and "all who act... in the army, must act only in those areas of authority delegated them by the elected government." ²³

With the approaching thunder of an Arab invasion on May 15th and the related crisis over the statehood issue, MAPAI ministers and representatives rallied around their leader. Though Ben Gurion continued to the fight hesitations of his colleagues, disapproval from military leaders, and outcries from the far Left, Ben Gurion successfully gained the twin post of Prime Minister and Defense Minister. By mid-May, he had eliminated the National Command before the statehood would have given it `de facto` legal status, and placed himself in the best position to unify the Yishuv's military bodies under the banner of the civilian government. ²⁴

While seizing the reins of the embryotic army, Ben Gurion began to steer a new course for the Hagana-Palmach command. In an effort to remove the inefficiency and confusion in Hagana-Palmach's chain of command, the undefined procedure of appointments and promotions, and the general lack of discipline and training, Ben Gurion had attempted to find a foreign senior commander willing to assume overall command. He sought someone experienced in conventional warfare and in directing a large-scale force who could act as a political neutral to facilitate unification of the Yishuv's disparate political-military bodies. Ben Gurion recruited American Colonel David Marcus and Canadian Major Ben Dunkelman, but no senior commanders could be seduced from abroad.

This failure forced Ben Gurion to rely on local military talent and upon himself to develop and unify the emerging Jewish army. With Chief of Staff Dori ill, normally Sadeh would take over operational command. Yet Ben Gurion, wary of Sadeh's association with the Palmach and unconventional warfare, ordered him to take over command of newly mobile Eighth Brigade, easing him out of the High Command. Ben Gurion appointed the relatively apolitical Yigael Yadin, to assume the position of 'de facto' Chief of Staff, though he retained his title as Head of Operations branch at GHQ. Together, Ben Gurion and Yadin would shape the future Israeli Army. ²⁵

By May 14, when Ben Gurion declared the independence of the State of Israel, he had achieved the central position to sculpt a professional, unified, political Army. The dismissal of Galili and the abolition of National Command represented a critical first step. Yet both the Palmach and the IZL still claimed special status with regard to the central command.

After the Declaration of Statehood came the invasion of the combined Arab armies of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Transjordan. With all available units engaged and with the survival of the new State of Israel in doubt, Ben Gurion was forced to wait to disband the Palmach. With their fighting capabilities needed and with their prestige still too high, Ben Gurion backed off from his plans to dissolve the Palmach and concentrated on national survival. ²⁶

Though overshadowed by the imperative of defeating the invading Arab armies, Ben Gurion maintained his "domestic" organizational-political goals: solidifying his dominance in the new

"Provisional Government" and consolidating Israel's inherited military bodies. With the Palmach, aside from the dimension of its leftist political connections, there was the issue of military style--the Palmach's scorn for formal military etiquette and ritual, and its bonds to egalitarian-voluntaristic ideals, and informal, collectivist values. With the IZL, it was not so much an issue of style, for the middle-class IZL were believers in formal protocol and a unified, centralized authority--yet their authority was Begin and the IZL High Command, and not Ben Gurion and the Provisional Government. In the midst of the invasion, Ben Gurion kept a watchful eye on the still independent actions of the dissidents, the LHI and, particularly, the IZL. 27

Yet, in mid-May, it appeared that Israel's Declaration of Independence, the ensuing Arab invasion, and the departure of the British forces, would dispel Ben Gurion's apprehensions about the dissident organizations.

On May 15, the British--who suffered from 338 subjects killed in Palestine in three years of post war involvement, from general and economic war-weariness, from a shift in international opinion which deplored British policy in Palestine and sympathized with the Jewish refugees, and from a failure of British policy to appease both the Arabs and the Jews while fulfilling her own interests--departed from Palestine. The British Mandate of almost two decades ended, and with it seemingly ended a primary factor which had galvanized the dissident organizations together and placed them in opposition with the official Zionist leadership. Though the IZL and LHI played a larger direct

military role in ousting the British, the burgeoning Hagana -- after years of careful preparations, training, recruitment, arms procurement, and official status-- clearly assumed the role as the nucleus of an emerging national army in the face of the Arab invasion on all fronts. 28

Begin and the IZL emerged above-ground and broke their anonymity. In a time of national peril, they appeared to keep their earlier pledge of supporting the Provisional Government after the Declaration of Independence. On May 15, Begin proclaimed on IZL radio:

The Irgun Zvai Leumi is leaving the underground inside the boundaries of the Hebrew independent state...now... there is no need for a Hebrew underground. In the State of Israel we shall be soldiers and builders. And we shall respect its government, for it is our government... 29

The Hebrew revolt of these last four years has been blessed with success...the State of Israel has arisen...the words of your Irgun fighters were not vain words: it is Hebrew arms which will decide the boundaries of the Hebrew State. 30

Begin's announcement carried a dual message, promising to support the government and alluding to joining a forthcoming national army within Israel's official UN boundaries; yet the IZL would maintain its integrity and purpose as an underground political-military body outside those borders. Begin reserved the right to fight against the UN Partition boundaries which, he believed, had never been scared and would eventually be crossed. 31

On May 16, Levi Eshkol, Galili, and David Cohen of the Provisional government met with Begin, Landau, Merridor and Katz to discuss shortages of funds for some withstanding arms purchases of the IZL. According to IZL sources, the IZL offered the Hagana the joint use of the newly purchased LST ship, the "Altalena," (Jabotinsky's pen name) to transport badly needed men and weapons to Israel. IZL asked the Hagana

to buy the craft for 150,000-250,000 dollars in exchange for transporting 1000 Hagana men from Europe to Israel, thereby repaying the IZL's debt.

On May 17, Eshkol and Galili contested that the Altalena's cover had been blown, that the vessel was known by agents throughout the Mediterranean. The Hagana turned down the IZL's offer for collaboration on the Altalena venture. Nevertheless, the two sides apparently put aside a generation of suspicion and reasserted the March 8th and April 26th agreements. IZL again promised cooperation with, and subordination to, the Hagana command until the official establishment of the new Israeli Army and the dissolution of the IZL. ³²

On May 26, the "Tzava Hagana LeYisrael," the "Israeli Defense Force," or IDF formally came into existence as Israel's first national institution. The Provisional Government's "Order #4," specified that the IDF would be structured under unity of command, universal conscription, requiring soldiers to take an oath to the State, and prohibiting "the establishment or maintenance of any other armed force outside of the IDF..." Ben Gurion saw the legislation as a triumphant symbol that "the Hagana shed its character as an underground organization and has become a regular army." ³³ The legal precedent was established for a unified Israeli Army. ³⁴

Meanwhile, after statehood was declared and the British had finally departed, the LHI had been in a quandary. Their whole ideology had been entwined in the war against imperialistic Britain. Throughout early 1948, the LHI command had continually doubted that the British would really leave and they were shocked and dismayed by the evolution

of Arab-Jewish conflict. During May, the splintering LHI command debated whether to remain a secret organization or to disband entirely. A smaller Jerusalem faction of about 100-150, under Zettler and Shieb, remained intact to continue fighting for a unified Jewish Jerusalem. In Tel Aviv, the largest faction decided to join the IDF en bloc, while Yellin-Mor focused on creating his newly inaugurated "Fighters' Party," which had assumed a Communist orientation. On the afternoon of May 28th, some 700-850 LHI fighters marched together into an IDF recruiting camp near Tel Aviv and joined the nation army. Except in Jerusalem, the LHI ceased to exist. ³⁵

Meanwhile, the IDF's negotiations with the IZL proceeded gradually and smoothly. On May 28, Merridor, the IZL's chief liaison with the IDF, announced that the IZL was ready to merge totally with the IDF. On June 1, Begin ordered his IZL men to begin to join the army and again declared over the IZL radio that, "in that part of the country which Hebrew law reigns, there is no need for a Hebrew underground. In the State of Israel we shall be builders and soldiers." ³⁶ On June 2, the IDF and the IZL signed a treaty for a merger. At the signing, Begin remarked, "In exultation and joy I sign the agreement to form a unified Hebrew Army; we had dreamed about this throughout all our years in the underground." ³⁷

The treaty specified that the IZL would be drafted into separate battalions, that IZL facilities, arms, supplies, equipment must be given over to IDF, and that IZL Headquarters could be used for one month to facilitate the merger, then it must be dissolved. The IZL could conduct no further IZL fund raising, arms importation, or weapons purchases.

The agreement was binding everywhere in Israel except in Jerusalem, which was still an "international city" and where the Hagana, LHI, and IZL remained separate military bodies. By June 3, the IZL's integration into the new Israeli Army began. On June 4, IDF radio announced that the IZL was acting in full cooperation with the IDF. ³⁸

Yet by mid-June, the IZL's integration into the IDF preceded haltingly, and the June 2nd agreement was only partially fulfilled. There were shining examples, like the newly mobilized Eighth Armored Brigade formed, under Sadeh's command, by a composite of Palmach, Hagana, and IZL troops. But, though the IZL Headquarters did supervise enlistment, only about 1000 IZL members had enlisted in IDF battalions. IZL fund raising outside Israel continued, which the IZL justified as legitimate for its forces operating in Jerusalem and claimed that some of the funds were directed toward their legitimate political movement, the newly formed "Herut" (Freedom) party. With the arms shortage critical, the IZL handed over arms in small quantities to the IDF and allocated most of its stockpiles to its troops in Jerusalem. The IZL's arms acquisition continued and its contacts were not handed over to Hagana Intelligence. And the IZL experienced difficulty integrating into a "National Army" which was at heart the Hagana, the same Hagana of the Season affair. They showed a reluctance to dissolve after years of struggle and comradeship. The IZL was clearly not disbanding in the haste exhibited by LHI. ³⁹

Meanwhile, lingering political differences and the progress of the war irritated IDF-IZL relations. From May 14 to June 11, the new State of Israel withstood the onslaught of the combined Arab armies. The IDF

repulsed the Lebanese and Syrian armies to hold onto the Galilee and stopped the Egyptian advance in the south. The Arabs lost their offensive momentum and the war evolved into a stalemate. Yet Transjordan's Arab Legion repulsed the IDF at Ramla, Lydda, Jenin, and Latrun. And the Egyptians and the Arab Legion were pressing in on Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, the situation was grim. On May 19-22, poor communications between IZL's Ranaan, LHI's Zettler, Palmach commanders Uzi Narciss and Rabin, and IDF regional Commander Shaltiel contributed to the failure of an attack on the Zion Gate, designed to lift the siege of the isolated Jewish Quarter in the Old City. Within the Jewish Quarter, a Palmach unit under Mordechi Gazit, a Hagana unit under Moshe Russnak, and an IZL unit under Isser Nathanson refused to cooperate fully, contributing to the loss of the Jewish Quarter on May 23. In the end, the groups were united only in blood and defeat. 40

In the hope of reinstituting a peaceful partition, the UN and the United States mediated a truce beginning on June 11. Ben Gurion, Yadin, and the IDF High Command welcomed the chance to regroup, and absorb arms and new immigrants into the struggling Israeli forces. Yet Begin and his colleagues in the Herut party, voiced vehement opposition to the original UN partition boundaries and viewed the truce as virtual surrender. Against a background of the tensions over the IZL's merger into the IDF, the emotional loss of the Jewish Quarter in Old Jerusalem, and Herut-IZL's outrage over the partition issue and the implications of the ceasefire, the Altalena incident unfolded. 41

In May, the IZL had secured a massive arms deal with the French,

approximately five million dollars worth, through the offices of French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault, in exchange for IZL guarantees of protection for the French Catholic institutions in Palestine. Prolonged talks with the French and troubles purchasing the arms caused a serious delay in loading the shipment aboard the Altalena. In addition, the IZL claimed, Hagana Intelligence Chief Chaim Ben Menachem, tried to prevent the Altalena from leaving the French port by preventing the grant of an entry permit into Palestine. Not until June 11th did the Altalena sail from Port de Bouc. The ship was heavily laden with 5000 rifles, 270 machine guns, three million bullets, anti-tank weapons, and over 900 IZL men. Enough weapons for six battalions-- a treasure for a arms-thirsty nation in a desperate war, or a chance to boost the IZL's independent strength and program substantially. ⁴²

The IZL did believe that "with adequate equipment, the IZL could, in those weeks, have broken the back of the Arab forces on the central front and the combined Jewish forces could have pressed on to the Jordan." ⁴³ IZL's Ben Ami attested that "if the weapons promised for the Altalena had reached Israel as late as May 15, the IZL would have pushed for safer borders." ⁴⁴ Yet the creation of the State of Israel and of the IDF, the IZL's June 2nd agreement to merge with the IDF and disband everywhere except in Jerusalem, and the political disputes over the Partition boundaries and the truce, obscured the role of the Altalena and its valuable cargo.

On June 11, a BBC newscast reported that the Altalena had departed from France with an undisclosed cargo. Begin and the IZL command claimed they did not know if the BBC report was accurate. Begin and his

assistants tried to warn the Altalena crew to delay arrival until the landing arrangements with regard to the truce and the IDF had been sorted out. But there were difficulties with the radio aboard the Altalena and the IZL command in Israel could not reach the vessel as it steamed towards the shores of Israel awaiting instructions. ⁴⁵

On June 15, Begin, Ben Eliezer, Merridor, Landau, and Paglin contacted Eshkol, Cohen and Galili, informing them of the ship's departure from France and revealing its contents. The IZL leaders later claimed that the IDF representatives already knew about the Altalena's contents from French agents. Yet the IDF representatives voiced only surprise and consternation over the IZL mission. Eshkol criticized the secrecy in the mission. Galili and Eshkol demanded a message sent to ship to delay arrival. IZL radios continued to try to make contact, but they were unsuccessful.

On June 16, after supposedly reporting to Ben Gurion, Galili reversed himself and asked Begin to land the ship as quickly as possible. They discussed the financial aspects of the arms, but Begin agreed that the arms belonged to the nation. Both parties agreed that the details of the landing, unloading, and distribution of the Altalena's arms would be worked out in the coming days. ⁴⁶

During June 17-19, Begin and the IZL staff met with IDF representatives, Galili, Cohen, and Pinchas Vazeh, to discuss the problems of landing and unloading the vessel, and of storing and allocating the weapons and ammunition. Begin finally agreed to Kfar Vitkin as the landing site, an old, loyal Labor settlement north of Tel Aviv. Yet the IZL remained confused over whether the IDF would indeed

help unload the cargo. Galili had refused at first; yet, after consulting with Yadin, Cohen conveyed a message that the IDF would help. Cohen specified that the cargo would be stored in government warehouses with IZL and IDF men jointly on guard.

Begin would not agreed to the government warehouses, and suggested joint IDF-IZL guards at IZL storehouses. Later, Galili met with Begin to pass what was supposedly a note from Ben Gurion reading, " you will have to accept our full demands or you will bear full responsibility for the consequences and the responsibility will be very heavy indeed. Unless you change your mind, we will wash our hands of unloading the arms." ⁴⁷ Eventually, Begin accepted Galili's terms of the unloading and storage, interpreting that Ben Gurion would thereby tolerate the entire operation. ⁴⁸

The issue of the Altalena's weapons distribution ignited a heated debate in IZL command. Paglin cried that the IZL troops serving in the Army deserved the weapons and demanded that entire shipment be unloaded by IZL men. Most of the IZL staff opposed handing the entire cargo over to the IDF, though Hillel Kook disagreed. When Begin and Galili debated the issue of weapons distribution, he told Galili that his commanders protested handing the Altalena's cargo directly over to the IDF. Begin claimed he wanted his IZL "boys" well armed when they enlisted in the IDF and wanted to augment IZL troops in Jerusalem. Begin wanted 20% to go to IZL troops in Jerusalem and 80% for IZL men in IDF. Begin argued that the IZL had searched for, purchased, and transported the armaments, so "it is only natural that we should equip our own men first." ⁴⁹ Eventually Galili agreed to 20% for IZL Jerusalem troops but refused to

offer any special consideration for former IZL troops in the IDF. Ultimately, Begin retained his demand for 20% of the weapons for IZL troops in Jerusalem and the remainder could be distributed according to the IDF General Staff. Galili did not voice any further objection. Begin then demanded that former IZL men in the IDF should get first priority on weapons. But Galili refused.

By June 19, the ship arrived off shore. Begin's staff urged him not to compromise, suspicious of the Left and Ben Gurion. But Begin complied with Galili's terms. Begin clearly wanted to overcome the IZL-IDF's difficulties in negotiation and for the Altalena's unloading to proceed unhindered. The June 17-19 conferences remained controversial with regard to their contents and what information Ben Gurion received, but the IZL command had clearly been given the green light for the Altalena landing. On June 19, Begin ordered the Altalena to harbor at Kfar Vitkin. 50

On June 20, Altalena dropped anchor 40 yards from Kfar Vitkin's jetty. To avoid being detected, the IZL decided to postpone the unloading until nightfall. David Cohen restated to Begin his promise that the IZL could expect IDF assistance with the unloading. Palmach men were sent to inspect the shipment and Yadin himself came to observe and to assess the situation. Yadin reported IZL roadblocks, manned by IZL troops in IDF uniforms. When Galili sent his liaison officer to arrange a conference with Begin at a nearby IDF camp was told by Paglin that, if Galili wanted to meet with Begin, Galili should come to Begin on the beach. The officer reported Paglin's comment and that the IZL men looked very tense. Ben Gurion received these reports. 51

According to Ben Gurion, he did not learn of the Altalena mission until June 20th. Whatever the truth regarding when he first heard of the vessel, by June 20, Ben Gurion had learned of the IZL mobilization around Kfar Vitkin and he clearly intended to take action to eliminate the IZL.

He called for an emergency meeting of the cabinet and, supported by Sharett, made a case against the IZL. Sharett stressed the IZL action could cause a fateful breach in the ceasefire and demanded that at least 500 IDF troops should be sent to secure the beach at Kfar Vitkin. Ben Gurion made a grave and passionate appeal to the cabinet:

This affair is of the highest importance. There are not going to be two states, and there are not going to be two armies. Begin will not be allowed to do what he likes. I don't even want to discuss, just now, the political and international implications of this breaking of the truce; politics don't interest me in time of war...but we have to decide whether we are going to offer power to Begin or order him to cease his independent activities. If he does not submit, we will fire on him...⁵²

Some ministers tried to suggest solutions other than forceful action against the IZL. Some wanted to temporize and some talked of arresting Begin alone. The cabinet sent for Galili and Yadin. They reported that two battalions would be needed to put down the IZL. Backed by the military staff, Ben Gurion pressed for forceful action. He warned the cabinet that, "if the IZL operation succeeds, we will be faced with a much greater clashes later. By acting tonight we will prevent blackmail tomorrow...the IZL must be disarmed at all cost."⁵³ Eventually, the cabinet ministers approved use of IDF force if the IZL leaders refused to cooperate. Only Gruenbaum opposed. Ben Gurion ordered Yadin to prepare for action at Kfar Vitkin.⁵⁴

On the morning of June 21, a multitude of IZL men had gathered on the beach at Kfar Vitkin and began unloading weapons and ammunition from the Altalena. Most of the IZL men on the beach were not yet assigned to the army, but some had deserted their IDF units to participate. Some even took IDF vehicles. At the same time, Major General Sadeh relayed Yadin's order to Lieutenant Colonel Dayan and his Alexandroni brigade to proceed to Kfar Vitkin, surround the beach, foil the IZL unloading operation, arrest the IZL troops, and transfer the weapons and ammunition to IDF stores. 55

During the afternoon, Dayan broke IZL roadblocks surrounding Kfar Vitkin, arresting and disarming IZL men. Meanwhile, the Alexandroni brigade's deputy commander, Dan Evan, surrounded the beach. Evan issued a directive to the Altalena's Captain Dan Fein, demanding that the IZL surrender and hand over all weapons. And Galili sent Natanya Mayor Oved Ben Ami, a IZL sympathizer, to persuade Begin not to risk a confrontation. By all accounts, Begin did not take ultimatum seriously and ignored it. By misreading the ultimatum and the situation, Begin cut himself off from potential channels of communication. The refusal to acknowledge the ultimatum furthered the suspicion and tension on the beach. 56

Assessing the situation differently, Paglin, the IZL operational commander on the beach, and Begin argued, first by radio, then on the shore, whether to proceed. Paglin wanted to reload the ship and sail to friendlier shores, or head back out to sea until the cease-fire ended. Begin did not believe the IDF would fire on fellow Jews. He asserted that the IZL had "nothing to fear" from the IDF. Paglin requested to be

relieved and Begin reluctantly complied. Merridor took over operational command but quickly reached Paglin's assessment. Katz wanted to sail the vessel to Yugoslavia, while Kook wanted to return to France. Begin insisted that, "Jews don't shoot at Jews."⁵⁷ But finally, the IZL commanders convinced Begin to sail to Tel Aviv, where the presence of IZL members and middle-class sympathizers would help with the unloading and deter IDF interference.⁵⁸

By that evening, the IDF had established roadblocks around Kfar Vitkin and IDF troops had formed on hillside overlooking the IZL's pontoon bridge. By then, Ben Gurion had ordered Galili and Yadin not to negotiate-- either the IZL would obey the orders of the Provisional Government or the IDF would open fire. At Sadeh Dor, a small airfield outside Tel Aviv, Boris Senior, a former IZL member, and pilot in fledgling Israeli Airforce was told to ready his plane to bomb the Altalena; shocked by the order, he eventually only ran a reconnaissance flight. In addition, two Navy corvettes, the "Wedgewood" and the "Elath," appeared out at sea to provide artillery support. The IZL was surrounded by the IDF.⁵⁹

At about 7:00 p.m., Begin started to address his men on the beach about going to Tel Aviv, just as the IDF opened fire. IDF machine gun fire and mortars hammered the IZL men on the beach. IZL commanders managed to shove a reluctant Begin into a launch, which safely reached the Altalena. Soon Begin and the Altalena sped south to Tel Aviv, alluding the IDF corvettes. On the Kfar Vitkin beach, the IZL fought the IDF for several hours, trying to break the semi-circle around them. Eventually, the pinned-down IZL commander surrendered. All IZL arms

were handed over to the IDF, and the crates on the beach were confiscated. The IDF arrested these IZL men and medically treated their wounded. The IDF-IZL battle at Kfar Vitkin was over. 60

During the night, Paglin and handful of IZL troops tried to take over the city government in Tel Aviv's suburb of Ramat Gan, but IDF troops apprehended them en route. Meanwhile, Begin and the crew aboard the Altalena cruised passed Tel Aviv harbor. At about 2:00 a.m., June 22, the Altalena ran aground on the beach, 200 yards from shore, opposite the luxury hotels which housed, among others, UN officials and foreign journalists. Begin felt the proximity to the hotels and the numbers of IZL sympathizers in the Tel Aviv region offered enough protection to carry out the unloading operation. Soon after daylight, large crowds gathered near the beach, including more IZL men who had deserted their posts in the IDF. Eventually, as many as two battalions of enlisted IZL men deserted. Under the direction of Begin and Fein, small boats began shuttling loads from the Altalena to the shore. 61

After receiving reports of the battle at Kfar Vitkin and Begin's escape towards Tel Aviv, Ben Gurion conferred with the IDF Naval Operations Officer and discussed various opinions, yet none seemed "immediate" enough. Ben Gurion feared that delay might mean an escalated civil war. He ordered Yadin to bring enough troops to Tel Aviv to force the IZL's unconditional surrender.

Soon afterward, at an emergency cabinet meeting, in the interest of avoiding more bloodshed and avert a civil war, some ministers wanted to negotiate a compromise solution with the IZL. Ben Gurion addressed the cabinet, describing the Altalena's significance:

What happened endangers our war effort and... it endangers the state. For the state cannot exist as long as it has no army and no control over the army. This is an attempt to destroy the army and...to murder the state... fight we must. The moment the army and the state give in to another armed force, there will be nothing left for us to do. ⁶²

Ben Gurion added that if the IZL did have "5000 rifles and 250 guns, then what they are doing now is nothing compared to what they will do shortly...then we shall have two states and two armies." ⁶³ Ben Gurion refused to negotiate with the IZL. Ministers Fishman, Gruenbaum, and Shapiro, opposed the immediate initiation of a fratricidal clash, arguing for negotiations with Begin. Yet during the meeting, news arrived of the IZL unloading the Altalena in Tel Aviv. With the sole exception of Fishman, the cabinet swiftly approved action against the IZL. ⁶⁴

Yet in Tel Aviv, the IDF forces were initially unprepared to stop the IZL. Under command of Allon and Rabin, the government forces had only the staff and clerks from the Palmach's nearby headquarters at the Ritz Hotel, joined later by a handful of Palmach troops from the Yiftach, Negev, and Carmeli brigades. The Palmach troops failed to prevent IZL men and supporters from reaching the beach. As street clashes and gunfights evolved, the IZL threatened to take over west Tel Aviv. Simultaneously, an IZL battalion engaged a IDF battalion at Beit Dejen, several miles outside Tel Aviv. In the Ritz Hotel, Allon was cut off. He saw a launch heading from the Altalena with men and weapons, and heavy machine guns mounted on Altalena's deck. Allon asked Yadin for artillery support to contain the fighting. Yadin contacted Ben Gurion. Ben Gurion approved Yadin's request and he telephoned Allon at the Ritz hotel, stating, "we are being faced with open revolt. Not only is Tel

Aviv in danger of falling into rebel forces, but the very future of the State is at stake." ⁶⁵ Yadin ordered a field gun brought up. ⁶⁶

Aboard the Altalena, when the shooting started, Fein ordered the ship's troops to return fire. But Begin countermanded his order. Begin tried to radio to Landau on shore to arrange a ceasefire, but without success. He tried to direct his men to stop shooting through a loudspeaker, but it was blown off. IZL members claimed the IDF ignored white flags of surrender, while Palmach commanders attested that several summons for surrender were issued to the IZL and ignored.

At Ben Gurion's residence in Tel Aviv, a contingent led by Mayor Rokach tried to convince Ben Gurion to declare a truce and negotiate with Begin, to avert civil war. Ben Gurion argued that the government faced a serious issue of authority in the country. Ben Gurion refused to call off the IDF. During this meeting, word came that the Altalena was on fire. ⁶⁷

At about 4:00 p.m., a field cannon fired shells at the ship, possibly intended as a warning. But the second shell plowed into Altalena's deck, exploding ammunition and fuel. Though the ship was aflame, Begin ordered the crew not to surrender. But Fein raised white flag and ordered the crew to abandon ship. Begin was forced to abandon ship and his troops on the beach surrendered, though Begin himself managed to allude capture. The IZL had suffered 14 and 69 wounded, and the IDF lost 2 men and suffered 6 wounded. The IDF salvaged only 25% of the precious arms aboard. The battle for the Altalena was over. ⁶⁸

During the night of June 22-23, IDF security forces rounded up IZL men in the Tel Aviv area and throughout the country, even raiding the

Herut party headquarters in Metsudat Zeev. Hundreds of IZL members were arrested, including key figures. That night, Begin delivered an emotional broadcast over IZL radio, giving a long account of the Altalena affair, underscoring Israel's need for weapons, and ennumerating the Provisional Government's broken promises. Yet Begin urged his compatriots not to seek retribution and drag the nation into civil war. "IZL soldiers," Begin proclaimed, "will not be a party to fratricidal warfare." ⁶⁹ At the end of his broadcast, Begin wept. To many of his faithful followers who listened to the broadcast, it sounded as if the old resistance leader had finally been broken. But as Begin wrote later, "sometimes, as the Altalena taught us, it is essential that tears should take the place of blood." ⁷⁰

On June 23, Israel Sheib, of LHI in Jerusalem, contacted Begin in Jaffa, urging Begin that the time had come for LHI and IZL to seize power in Jerusalem and establish an independent government there. But Begin refused. In the explosive atmosphere at a meeting of some 200 remaining IZL officers, many pressed Begin for retaliation. But he resolutely ordered his men not to resist the IDF and urged them to join the army, to turn to defend the nation against the Arab threat. He pleaded against a "war of brothers." Just as in the Season affair, Begin's interest in the "national" welfare superseded his partisan political interests, quelling the escalation of a possible civil war. ⁷¹

In late June, IZL sympathizers waged a propaganda campaign trying to explain their position regarding the Altalena incident. IZL argued that they had delayed unloading at Kfar Vitkin to gain the cover of night, to protect the mission against UN observers. They felt that

previous agreements and negotiations were ignored, that Ben Gurion deceived them in the preliminary negotiations in May and early June, sending up a "smoke screen" and tricking them into landing at Kfar Vitkin. Or perhaps Galili, entangled in the MAPAM-MAPAI struggle with Ben Gurion over the Palmach, had orchestrated a diversion. They cited their landing at Kfar Vitkin as evidence that the IZL had no treasonous intentions. They believed Ben Gurion and MAPAI, and MAPAM, wanted to prevent a successful landing of the Altalena because it would have proved a great boon to Herut's election campaign. ⁷² As IZL's Ben Ami reviewed the Altalena Affair, "Ben Gurion had put together his case carefully. Nothing would deter him from the course he had embarked upon years ago, the liquidation of the opposition he hated and feared most--Jabotinsky's heritage." ⁷³

In the week following the Altalena's destruction, moderate, religious, and right-wing representatives in the Provisional Government severely criticized Ben Gurion for his handling of the Altalena affair. Many argued that the cabinet did not question the evidence enough and condemned the cabinet for not inviting Begin to testify before resorting to violence. But Ben Gurion rebutted that if the Altalena had not been destroyed, Israel would have been destroyed by private armies. Ben Gurion referred to the "Sacred Howitzer" which saved the state. He argued that, "there is no country in the world that can allow private persons or private organizations to introduce, without its government's permission, even the smallest quantities of arms, let alone large quantities of rifles, machine guns and ammunition." ⁷⁴ And Galili offered what became the "official" version of the Altalena Affair by

insisting that the Government was "surprised in the dead of the night by news that the boat was approaching our shores. Our demands that the boat be handed over unconditionally to the government and to the army were rejected." ⁷⁵ Though two ministers resigned over the controversy, the general public opinion sided with the government. Because of the influence of the official media and the prevailing fear of renewed Arab-Israeli violence, the population rallied around their leader, Ben Gurion. In late June, the Provisional Assembly gave Ben Gurion a massive vote of confidence. ⁷⁶

Overcoming the great political risks of breaking the truce, spurning a disastrous civil war, witnessing a IZL victory in Tel Aviv, or fostering a corrosive political scandal, Ben Gurion successfully used the showdown over the Altalena to erase the IZL. Regardless of whether Begin truly intended to use the Altalena's weapons for a coup d'etat in Israel, an offensive in Jerusalem, or to upset the partition boundaries elsewhere, Ben Gurion used the Altalena incident to eradicate the IZL as a formidable underground political-military institution, as a threat to the authority of the Provisional Government and the power of the IDF. Regardless of whether Ben Gurion had been ill-informed by Galili, had lured the Altalena and the IZL into a deadly trap, or had been startled into swift, forceful action on June 20th, Ben Gurion had utilized the Altalena incident as a timely and decisive maneuver.

The Altalena Affair occurred during the first truce in the Arab-Israeli conflict-- after Ben Gurion had assumed the twin role of Prime Minister and Defense Minister, and after the IDF, possessed with the legal status of the "national army," had grown in size and

strength. Just as Ben Gurion's traditional enmity and mistrust of the IZL undoubtedly influenced his and his followers actions in the Altalena incident, Begin and the IZL's traditional repugnance for the Left and rejection of the Zionist "establishment" undoubtedly made it difficult for them to shake off their underground mentality and loyalties, and dissolve swiftly and quietly into the IDF. The Altalena Affair, in one bold stroke, clearly marked the end of the IZL outside Jerusalem. ⁷⁷

After the Altalena's destruction, Begin recognized the legality of the Provisional Government, despite his dislike and opposition to the policies of the Left. And though his "image as the victorious resistance leader was badly tarnished," ⁷⁸ Begin concentrated on building the Herut party and campaigning for a "greater Israel" which included Jerusalem and the Triangle (West Bank). "There was no fratricidal war in Israel," Begin later wrote, "to destroy the Jewish State before it was properly born. In spite of everything--there was no civil war." ⁷⁹ For his part, Ben Gurion turned his attention to eradicating the small dissident bands in Jerusalem, dismantling the Palmach, unifying the nation and the Army, and winning the next phase of the "War of Independence."

During the remainder of the first truce in the war, from late June to early July, most of the former IZL troops, except those in Jerusalem, joined or rejoined the IDF. On June 27, Ben Gurion and the IDF General Staff swore in all the soldiers of the IDF in a ceremony which "served to intensify the realization that unifying forces outweighed the divisive factors." ⁸⁰ The many disparate elements, accustomed to different military experience, tactics, and training, still had to be

welded together into a synchronized national army; yet, after June 27th, with the exception of the dissidents in Jerusalem, the symbolic pledge for unity had been made.

Aside from the continued shortage of weaponry and the general lack of adequate training, the greatest problem of the new Army continued to be a lack of unity and discipline. Indeed, the IDF was built on the framework of the undergrounds, which had been based on shared ideals and common background-- no longer adequate as new immigrants arrived, the army grew, and as the borders to be protected became Israel's national boundaries. The problem of the IDF's discipline and chain-of-command continued to be aggravated by conflicts between Ben Gurion and the General Staff, and by the independence of the Palmach commanders.

Since Ben Gurion's showdown with Galili over the National Command in early May, serious conflicts of authority had occurred. Ben Gurion's order on May 24, to disband the Palmach Command, was ignored. In fact, the MAPAM reconstructed a new Palmach Command. Ben Gurion discovered that his orders transmitted through Galili had often been altered and his appointments to command were not always carried out. Ben Gurion received constant reports of lack of discipline everywhere, including in the higher ranks. In early June, Palmach units at Kiryat Anavim near Jerusalem had seized arms, vehicles, and rations belonging the "IDF" without authorization. Despite orders by Ben Gurion, the supplies and equipment were not relinquished. On the Jerusalem front, relations between Colonel Marcus and Palmach brigades neared the breaking point several times. And Marcus' accidental shooting on June 10, further raised Ben Gurion's suspicions of Palmach disloyalty. 81

Also during the first truce, Ben Gurion set up a highly centralized command, determined to personally direct the conduct of war. Meanwhile MAPAM continued to pressure Ben Gurion to restore Galili and the National Command. In June, Ben Gurion began making promotions and postings aimed at installing as many non-political, British-trained officers as possible, in the hope of weakening the grip of Palmach and MAPAM on the IDF and reshaping a professional, British-styled officer corps. Then he appointed British-trained Mordechai Makleff and Shlomo Shamir to the High Command to replace Palmach-MAPAM generals Galili and Ayalon. Ben Gurion's appointments triggered an explosion of condemnation both from MAPAM and the General Staff. As Ben Gurion told the MAPAI Council in mid-June, the Palmach represented a continuing problem, that "instead of being a pioneering force...at the disposal of the whole community, an attempt was made, and is still being made, to create a sectarian unit under the control of a single party...the Palmach is now part of the IDF and must share the same status as other army units." 82

Ben Gurion's assault on the Palmach aggravated the already tenuous relationship of Ben Gurion and the General Staff. Though Yadin had been Ben Gurion's choice for an interim Chief of Staff in Dori's absence, their working relationship was far from harmonious. They had clashed over the tactics in the ill-fated Latrun operation of May 23-24, when Ben Gurion wanted direct assault while Yadin wanted an indirect attack. The Latrun disaster precipitated numerous disputes between Yadin and Ben Gurion. Yadin objected to the Prime Minister's interference in operational and personnel matters. On June 29, the acting Chiefs of

Staff, Yadin, Galili, Yosef Avidar, Moshe Zadok, and Zvi Ayalon accused Ben Gurion of heavy-handed, incompetent direction of the war effort. In a showdown like the one on May 6th, the Chiefs of Staff all handed in letters of resignation. ⁸³

On June 30, Ben Gurion addressed the Council of Thirteen, explaining that the letters of resignations were:

...a result of us not having accepted the proposals of three people--Galili, Yadin, and Ayalon-- for the reorganization of the High Command. I did not approve the plan as it appeared to me to be yet another attempt to transform the whole army into the army of a certain party...What this business really amounts to is an attempt at revolt by the Army. A war is being waged on me...I demand that a committee⁸⁴ of three ministers examine the matter and draw conclusions.

As a result of Ben Gurion's request and the Chiefs of Staff's resignations, on July 3, five ministers formed a special ministerial committee. Headed by Gruenbaum, the Minister of Interior, the committee investigated the conduct of the war and the organization of the Army.

While the MAPAM press assailed Ben Gurion for trying "to starve the Palmach into submission," claiming that "he wants a dictatorship over the army," and that he was "set against MAPAM kibbutzim," ⁸⁵ the testimony of Palmach witnesses before the special committee assailed Ben Gurion's military authority and competence. Galili testified, giving a dismal portrait of the military situation and emphasizing that the removal of National Command caused a complete collapse in the chain-of-command. Galili stressed that Ben Gurion's intentions had been militarily disastrous, complained of excessive centralization, and attacked Ben Gurion's interest in foreign commanders. The Chiefs of Staff brought in field commanders as witnesses giving evidence of Ben Gurion's military incompetence. Yadin offered more restrained

criticism, yet attacked Ben Gurion's attitude, his distrust of the General Staff, and his tactics at Latrun and in Jerusalem. Furthermore, Yadin lauded the Palmach as bold and disciplined force which played a major role in defending the state against the Arab invasion and most recently against the IZL. ⁸⁶

Ben Gurion countered with examples of the Palmach's insubordination. He claimed that Rabin issued orders, approved by Galili, for Palmach commanders to accept orders emanating only from Palmach Headquarters. He described Uzi Narciss' conflict with Shaltiel, the IDF regional commander, over weapons for Jerusalem. Ben Gurion explained that eight of thirteen brigade commanders were MAPAM members and he spoke against political influence in army. He proclaimed that all soldiers and officers in the Army must "enjoy the same conditions and operate within the limits set by the Provisional Government, and when there are elected institutions, by those institutions." ⁸⁷

But the testimony weighed against the Prime Minister. On July 6, Gruenbaum's committee told Ben Gurion that the majority favored the appointment of two military "directors" to assist Ben Gurion. One would act as liaison between Ben Gurion and High Command, or, in essence, a reinstatement of the National Command format, with Galili as the likely candidate for the intermediary position. The committee's decision apparently erased all the achievements of Ben Gurion in early May. ⁸⁸

A few hours after their verdict, Ben Gurion sent a letter to the cabinet:

I offer my resignation as Prime Minister and as Minister of Defense. I am ready to place myself at your disposition, as adviser on matters of security, without the right to vote... in order that the Government's time should not be wasted, I ask you

to put aside your proposals for reorganizing the Defense Ministry, if you wish me to continue at its head... 89

His ultimatum triggered a stormy debate in the cabinet. MAPAM ministers complained of Ben Gurion's dictatorial methods, excessive concentration of power, and incompatibility with other political and military leaders. Yet Moshe Sharett and eventually other MAPAI ministers supported Ben Gurion. Aware of Ben Gurion's immense popularity and influence, and with less than two days before the end of the truce on July 8 and the renewal of the war, the cabinet voted to retain Ben Gurion. Galili retired from his post to spend years in the political wilderness. Ben Gurion's position as political-military leader was not challenged again for the duration of the war. 90

Meanwhile, the practical organization of the IDF continued. The debate over the High Command ended in a compromise. The Palmach's Moshe Carmel obtained northern regional command, Makleff a multi-Brigade formation, Sholmo Shamir the eastern front, and the Palmach's Allon the critical central front. Yadin remained acting Chief of Staff, while Ben Gurion solidified his position as Commander-in-Chief. Ben Gurion succeeded in issuing standard uniforms, formal military courtesies, badges of rank, and separate officers' mess. Yet many of these new "Professional-style" arrangements were boycotted until the end of the war, for they threatened the informal, egalitarian style of the Palmach, the Pioneer-Soldier tradition. The prevalence of Palmach commanders and Palmach units remained the key obstacle to Ben Gurion's plans to unify, depoliticize, and professionalize the IDF's policy and character. 91

The Arab-Israeli fighting resumed from July 9 to July 19. During this short period of warfare, the IDF, was strengthened by growing

numbers of troops, mostly released refugees from Europe and Cyprus, and weaponry, acquired mostly from Czechoslovakia. The IDF amounted to some 50,000-60,000 troops, distributed in seven regular brigades, one armored brigade, and three Palmach brigades. The augmented IDF launched several minor offensives. The IDF captured Lod and Ramleh, relieving the pressure on Tel Aviv. The IDF captured Nazareth, and held the line in the Galilee and in the southern desert. The IDF checked the Syrians in the north, the Iraqis and Transjordanians in the east, and the Egyptians in the south. Yet on the Jerusalem front, where the IDF, the LHI, and the IZL forces remained separate, the situation of the Jewish forces remained shaky. ⁹²

Though the Jewish forces captured a number of key positions surrounding west Jerusalem, there were a number of disastrous attacks, which further antagonized the disparate Jewish military groups. While IDF and LHI troops won a victory at Ein Karim, the IZL, under Ranaan, blamed Shaltiel and the IDF for withdrawing artillery support from IZL troops mauled at Malha, outside Jerusalem. Controversy flared over the failure of IDF and LHI troops to support an IZL unit of 65 men, under the command of Yehuda Lapidot, in an ill-fated attack against Egyptians at Ramat Rahel. In Jerusalem itself, the relations amongst the approximately 600-700 IDF (Hagana-Palmach), the 400-500 IZL, and the 100-150 LHI troops were extremely tense. ⁹³

The IZL's and the LHI's old problem of poor communications with Shaltiel resurfaced, particularly over the issue of launching, the long postponed operation "Kedem," an assault Jerusalem's Old City. Shaltiel, concerned with pushing the Egyptians out of the southern Jerusalem

region and maintaining the security of the Jewish New City, postponed a campaign on the Old City; however, the IZL and the LHI, emotionally charged with the prospect of capturing the ancient capital and the Temple Mount, pressed Shaltiel throughout mid-July to launch a joint attack. Ranaan threatened Shaltiel that the IZL-LHI forces would attack the Old City whether alone or in concert with the IDF. ⁹⁴

On July 17, the combined Jewish forces finally launched operation Kedem. But the LHI unit, encountering heavy resistance, failed to breach the walls at Jaffa Gate. The IZL forced their way into the Old City at the New Gate, but the IDF forces, after their new "Conus" explosive device failed to shatter the walls at Zion Gate, were forced to retreat. On the evening of July 19, Ben Gurion, over the objections of Dori, Allon, Yadin, and much of the General Staff, ordered Shaltiel to ceasefire and accept the negotiated truce if the Arabs stopped firing. The Arab troops guarding the ancient walls ceased fire. And Shaltiel called off operation Kedem.

Ranaan raged at Shaltiel for his reluctance to disregard the truce and push ahead until the West Bank and Jerusalem had been won. Shaltiel threatened Ranaan that if the IZL failed to observe his orders to retreat, the IDF would cut off vital supplies to the IZL and allow no evacuation route for the wounded IZL soldiers trapped in an opening of the New Gate, via the IDF positions at the nearby Notre Dame cathedral. Bitterly, Ranaan complied. But the IZL and the LHI in Jerusalem continued to condemn Shaltiel in the following weeks, blaming him for the failure of operation Kedem. And the relationship of IZL's Ranaan and LHI's Zettler also deteriorated. The failure of operation Kedem

caused the LHI in Jerusalem to dissolve into a zealous few, and intensified IDF-IZL antagonisms. 95

Throughout July, the Jerusalem issue continued to intensify the bad relations between the "dissident" groups and the Israeli Provisional Government in Tel Aviv. In early July, Ben Gurion sent Golda Meir, Dayan, and other envoys to meet with Abdullah to bargain over prospects for a peace agreement. Rumors circulated that the Old City and the Triangle would be given to Transjordan in exchange for a peace treaty. Simultaneously, Count Folke Bernadotte, the UN special envoy, issued his peace plan, calling for the internationalization of Jerusalem and the restoration of the 1947 UN Partition Plan boundaries. Bernadotte gathered American, British, and international support for his blueprint. Ben Gurion felt determined to gain Jerusalem without alienating international opinion against the young Jewish State. Meanwhile, Begin and the Herut party doubted Ben Gurion's resolve to seize all of Jerusalem and circulated a petition to include Jerusalem in the Jewish State, supported by religious parties and a wide spectrum of other parties. Jerusalem represented an issue which could polarize the Provisional Government. And with their dreams of Jerusalem and a unified Palestine at stake, the remaining forces of IZL and LHI in Jerusalem felt greater and greater pressure to enact militant solutions. 96

In early August, the IZL captured five Britons, believed to be spying for the Arabs in Jerusalem. The British government pressed the Israeli Provisional Government for their immediate release. Ben Gurion sent Bernard Joseph, chairman of the new Jewish Civil Administration in

Jerusalem to demand the release of the five Britons. After protracted and embittered negotiations, IZL complied and released their prisoners, with the stipulation that they be tried by a Jewish court. The incident further convinced Ben Gurion that the time had come to eliminate all dissident political-military bodies. ⁹⁷ The questionable status of Jerusalem had given the dissidents "a welcome opportunity to postpone the inevitable self liquidation, which in revolutionary politics is a painful process." ⁹⁸

In mid-August, Ben Gurion ordered government representatives to negotiate an integration of LHI and IZL in Jerusalem into the IDF. Gruenbaum negotiated with Begin and Katz for dissolution of IZL in Jerusalem. Yet the negotiations bogged down under traditional hostilities, political differences, and the uncertain status of the Provisional Government with regard to Jerusalem. Finally, Ben Gurion lost patience and the IDF threatened to liquidate the IZL if it failed to come to terms. By mid-September, terms between the IDF and the IZL in Jerusalem were negotiated. The IZL units would disband and IDF troops would enter into the positions held by the IZL. Yet the IZL units would remain intact and would not be sent out of Jerusalem. All the terms were predicated upon provisional rule in Jerusalem. Gruenbaum could not obtain authorization from Ben Gurion. Ben Gurion would not be pressured into declaring a definitive position on Jerusalem. The Provisional Government and the dissidents in Jerusalem remained at odds. ⁹⁹

In late summer, Count Bernadotte struggled to implement his peace plan and to impede any further Israeli offensive military efforts. He

had incurred the hatred of many LHI and IZL in Jerusalem. The dissidents feared Bernadotte's diplomacy and had often demonstrated publicly against him. On September 17, three men in an unmarked jeep assassinated Bernadotte and his assistant, French Colonel Serut, in Jerusalem. Though the assassins escaped and were never fully identified, it was widely presumed that the "Fatherland Front," actually a splinter of the deteriorating LHI, organized Bernadotte's assassination. Most probably, Shieb and Yellin-Mor ordered Zettler to direct the murder. The assassination sent waves of shock and bitterness throughout the world. Ben Gurion seized upon the reaction to Bernadotte's assassination as a pretext for a massive crack-down on the LHI and IZL in Jerusalem. 100

On September 19, the Israeli cabinet decided unanimously to approve Ben Gurion's proposal to take action against the dissidents. The IDF imposed a curfew, arresting hundreds of LHI and IZL fighters, financial supporters, and sympathizers, including LHI's Yellin-Mor and his lieutenant Mattityahu Shulevitz. The remnants of the LHI were shattered forever. On September 20, Yadin issued an ultimatum to the IZL in Jerusalem, to disband within 24 hours and to hand in all weapons. If the dissidents refused, the IDF would take severe action against them:

...accept in practice as well as in theory the law of the state regarding the army, mobilization, and arms, to hand over all arms in their possession to the IDF, to disband the special units of the IZL, to transfer all those liable for military call-up to the IDF, and the status of the IZL is to be like the status of every other Jew. If the demands of the government are not met, the Army will come, using all means at its disposal. 101

With their dreams of a "greater Palestine" shattered and with the prospect of facing the quite formidable IDF, the IZL command in Jerusalem decided not to plunge Israel into civil war. At a press conference on September 21, Katz, acting as IZL spokesman, declared:

Rejection of this ultimatum would involve considerable bloodshed. The strength of the Irgun Zvai Leumi in Jerusalem is sufficient to ensure that any attack would involve the attackers in heavy losses. We are not prepared to shed the blood of Hagana soldiers whose lives the government is so lightly prepared to throw away. We are consequently informing the Hagana army this morning of our acceptance of the ultimatum and the members of the IZL will be told to join the Hagana Army.¹⁰²

In late September, Israel witnessed the orderly transfer of the IZL's men and arms into IDF. Dayan, recently appointed as the central regional commander at the behest of Ben Gurion, supervised the orderly unification of IDF troops in the Jerusalem region. Despite the vocal dissatisfaction of IZL groups in the diaspora, the IZL closed its Swiss bank account. Former IZL fighters submitted to IDF discipline. Most focused their political energies on the development of the Herut party, "which was to campaign for the restoration of our national territory...on a new plane, in a different climate, against the background of an independent sovereign state, with its own life and significance."¹⁰³ Late September, 1948, brought the final end of IZL and LHI. The Jabotinsky-rooted undergrounds were "part of history, the terror out of Zion past."¹⁰⁴

By September, the IDF had expanded into powerful army exceeding 80,000 troops, including paratroopers, armored brigades, air force, and navy. The long truce, from July to October, offered opportunity for the IDF to more adequately train many new recruits and to absorb an influx

of military hardware, principally from the Czech arms deal, which included heavy artillery and fighter planes. The lull in the fighting also permitted Ben Gurion to attempt to eliminate the last vestige of the IDF's underground heritage-- the Palmach.

By late September, the dissident undergrounds in Jerusalem were eliminated, the IDF had imported enough Czech arms that Ben Gurion could risk appearing anti-leftist in Soviet-bloc eyes, and the IDF's growth had made the Palmach's separate units more expendable. Indeed, many Palmach commanders were already dispersed as officers in the regular army. The time had arrived to united the entire army along standard military lines. Ben Gurion saw no need for an independent Palmach and moved to eradicate the Palmach's separate headquarters. 105

The separate Palmach command was clearly inefficient from an administrative stand point, but the crux of the issue was the future political and military character of the army. With Palmach units and commanders involved in many of the IDF's spectacular victories, the Palmach's prestige and mystique burgeoned. The Palmach's elitist posture appeared in recurrent conflicts over the the chain-of-command between the IDF High Command and the Palmach Command.

On Sept 7, Dori met with the Palmach's Allon, Uri Brenner, and Eliezer Shoshani to discuss the question of Palmach authority. Dori raised the issue of the incompatibility of two armies within one nation. Palmach commanders made the distinction between "loyal" Palmach units and "unreliable" units, and emphasized the indispensability of the Palmach to the nation. This conference at a strictly "military level" arrived at no resolution. 106

On September 14, MAPAM delegates met with Ben Gurion to debate the positive and negative qualities of the Palmach, and the over-all state of the Army command. Tabenkin stressed that "when an operation had to be carried out against the IZL and the LHI, the Palmach was sent." Allon argued that the "Palmach is essential for military and political reasons... a unified Palmach guarantees the character of the army." ¹⁰⁷

Tabenkin and other MAPAM representatives argued that the Palmach aided the settlement movement by infusing the collectives with an added national purpose. Then the MAPAM representatives reopened the old argument, criticizing Ben Gurion's military authority and competence. Ben Aharon pressed Ben Gurion on resurrecting Galili's position and claimed discrimination against MAPAM-associated commanders in the General Staff. ¹⁰⁸

Ben Gurion argued that Palmach could not have an independent staff within a national army. "With the creation of the state," Ben Gurion pointed out, "the entire army is subordinate only and solely to one authority, the government of Israel, and its organization has been adapted to the war needs of regular armies and not to the tradition of the Hagana." ¹⁰⁹ Ben Gurion stressed that the Palmach was an "anomaly." The MAPAM delegates remained unconvinced. ¹¹⁰

At the end of September, Ben Gurion ordered Dori to relay an order to disband the Palmach Command. On September 29, Dori sent the order to Palmach General Headquarters, written in very apologetic terms. Dori tried to soften the blow by explaining that the new command structure would be worked out between the IDF General Staff and the Palmach High Command and that the three Palmach brigades deployed more "efficiently."

The Palmach appealed to the IDF General Staff, while MAPAM organized angry editorials, protest meetings, petitions. MAPAM made Ben Gurion's assault on the Palmach into national scandal. ¹¹¹

MAPAM represented a small constituency, but the Palmach had won great popularity amongst many Israelis outside MAPAM, who defended the Palmach on the grounds of their courage on the battlefield. MAPAM argued that Palmach represented the repository of Zionist pioneering spirit. As Allon described the Palmach's role in the IDF:

The Palmach included all the pioneer youth movements, which combined their agricultural training with their military training for special battle exploits; at the same time, they did not segregate or isolate themselves from the rest of their units, but formed a nucleus for the entire force which included masses from rural settlements, the colonies, the cities, and the new immigrants...anyone familiar with military practice will know how to evaluate unit tradition as a heartening factor in battle. Most of the IDF's units were lacking in tradition; the Palmach had behind it ¹¹² an organizational, social, and professional tradition.

Ben Gurion denied that the Palmach had a monopoly on "pioneering status." In a letter to a wounded Palmach soldier in October, he wrote:

I do not believe that pioneering is the monopoly of the select few, a special privilege of a spiritual aristocracy. I am a great believer in the common folk, all Israel and every one in Israel, and if the seed of pioneering is sown in all army units, we shall be privileged to witness a blessed harvest. There is no need or justification for the setting apart or singling out of certain brigades as pioneering brigades or to consider all other brigades as non-pioneering ones. ¹¹³

In an effort to remove the issue from Ben Gurion's legal authority, MAPAM demanded that the issue be decided by the Histadrut's general council, the supreme ruling body of Labor Zionism. MAPAM was better represented in the Histadrut than in the Provisional Government. In early October, before the Histadrut's general assembly, Ben Gurion insisted that the army's character was a "national" issue, not a "class"

issue. The representative national government must command ultimate authority over the Army and, therefore, an issue of the Army's structure should not be decided within the Labor Movement. And Ben Gurion refused to accept "any barrier or organizational distinction between one Jew and another...in the army." ¹¹⁴ As Ben Gurion wrote privately to a friend, "if one party maintains a private army, all the parties will organize private armies of their own..." ¹¹⁵

The battle over the Palmach, in the autumn of 1948, represented a contest between the two largest parties in Israel and in the Zionist Labor Movement, debating the character of the Army and the State at large. In late October, Ben Gurion, MAPAI, and their coalition allies were victorious. 65% of Histadrut's assembly voted against a MAPAM resolution to preserve the Palmach Command. The Labor Movement had expressed a mandate that the army must be unified, under the ultimate command of the representative, national government.

By late October, action was finally taken to disband the Palmach and evacuate Palmach Headquarters. On November 7, the Palmach Command issued its final order to disband. Except for the Palmach Welfare Office, which aided bereaved families and wounded soldiers, the Palmach Headquarters closed forever. Though the MAPAM-MAPAI debates continued, structurally, the IDF's command was finally unified. ¹¹⁶

In mid-October, Israel's attention turned away from the MAPAI-MAPAM struggle over the Palmach, as the truce collapsed and the fighting resumed. The IDF, numbering over 80,000 effectives, launched a series of major offensives. In November, the IDF pushed the Syrians out of Galilee. In December, Allon, transferred to command the southern

front, and his troops drove the Egyptians from the Negev. By end of December, Allon broke into the Sinai and captured El Arish, resulting in an armistice with Egypt, negotiated in January, 1949, and signed in February. In early March, the IDF captured the southwest shores of the Dead Sea and secured the eastern Negev. Though still poorly equipped, the IDF was the strongest army in the region. The dramatic IDF victories led to armistices with Lebanon in March, Jordan in April, and with Syria in June. The war of 1948-49, the "War of Independence," was over. 117

Throughout 1948, "the Israeli Army was made in action." 118 As Ben Gurion recalled, "due to the matters of war and the declaration of independence, no final decision concerning the organization of the IDF took place in the meetings of the Provisional Government." 119 But during 1949-1950, Ben Gurion, backed with a strong, political mandate, engineered the basic blueprint for the IDF's democratic civil-military posture, based on the model which he had pursued for years.

In January, 1949, as the IDF's victories brought the War of Independence to a close, the State of Israel held its first elections. Riding on the crest of his role as traditional leader of the Yishuv, as the leader who had unified the disparate Zionist groups, and as the victorious Commander-in-Chief of the IDF, Ben Gurion and MAPAI won a solid victory at the polls. Out of a vast array of prospective political parties, MAPAI captured 46% of the vote. MAPAM placed second, capturing 19%, while Begin's Herut mustered 11.3%, and Yellin-Mor's Fighters' Party grasped about 1%. Ben Gurion's election triumph consolidated his twin position as both civilian and military leader, as

Prime Minister and Defense Minister, placing him at the head of the "War Cabinet," composed of the Chiefs of Staff and the "Defense and Foreign Policy Committee" of the Israeli Knesset (Assembly). 120

With the conclusion of the war, in the spring and summer of 1949, began heated debates over the shape of the new Army. The Cabinet and the Knesset at large debated new issues, such as the national defense budget and the required service of religious persons and women. Yet the hottest debate was the continuing Ben Gurion-MAPAM struggle over the Army's general character, the final contest over the "Professional" verses "Pioneer-Soldier" traditions. 121

Having failed to see the new Israeli society emerge along the lines of the leftist kibbutzim and still shocked by the dissolution of Palmach, MAPAM reasserted their familiar arguments in a final attempt to place the Palmach stamp on the developing structure of the IDF. The MAPAM format for the IDF opposed conventional conscription, conventional military discipline, and centralized authority. MAPAM advocated a "People's Army," along lines of the Republican armies of the early Spanish Civil War. MAPAM envisioned an elitist corps of politically schooled and highly motivated youth in localized, mobile units. The Palmach's organization and discipline had been associated with group consciousness, the individual soldier, and the volunteer spirit. 122

In the new Army, MAPAM acknowledged the need for some degree of formal discipline, but insisted that "internal discipline" was equally as important. Allon remarked that:

The education for discipline should be oriented to the activation of consciousness...the more a fighter will identify with the mission of the army as a whole and the task of his unit in particular, the stronger and more sincere his discipline will

be...the importance of the formal framework should not be dismissed , but ¹²³ woe to the army which has to rely on this exclusively.

Most importantly, MAPAM advocated that the Army's morale could best be maintained by wedding military training with agricultural schooling, to product local military bodies of Pioneer-Soldiers. In short, MAPAM wished to see the IDF organized as had been the already legendary Palmach.

Yet Ben Gurion maintained his determination to establish a professional-styled army. Ben Gurion rejected territorial defenses based on settlements and local popular militias infused with doctrinaire Socialist and elitist ideals. Ben Gurion wanted an army infused with a strictly national, apolitical consciousness. Party politics and doctrine had no place in a national army. The security of the state should not be restricted to a party elite. Ben Gurion wanted a "nation in arms" and not a "class in arms." ¹²⁴ Security decisions were the responsibility of the elected government and the electorate. Ben Gurion pointed to the great mission of unification which lay ahead as immigrants from Europe, Asia and Africa began arriving. Universal conscription offered a powerful tool for national unification. Ben Gurion prophesied:

The primary function of the IDF has been to safeguard the State. However, this is not its sole function. The Army must serve... to educate a pioneering generation, healthy in body and spirit, courageous and loyal, which will unite the broken tribes and the diasporas, to prepare itself to fulfill the historical tasks of the State of Israel... ¹²⁵

In addition, Ben Gurion insisted that voluntarism was obsolete because of Israel's numerical inferiority and the skill requirements of modern weaponry. Ben Gurion wanted a regular army, open for all to

enlist, with a pay scale, ranks, military police, a small professional officers corps, and a large reserve. An army modelled specifically upon the British Army, in which many Israelis, including Ben Gurion himself, had served. ¹²⁶ Ben Gurion's program for a Professional Army was backed by such military figures as Avigur, Dori, and Yadin. But more importantly, after leading the nation through war, dissolving the undergrounds, and winning in Israel's first elections, Ben Gurion possessed the prestige, popularity, and political clout to mold the Israeli Army in his image. ¹²⁷

The debates culminated in September, 1949, when the Knesset enacted the "Defense Service Law," representing the legal blueprint for the IDF. The Defense Service Law specified that-- with the notable exceptions of non-Jewish citizens, married women and mothers, and rabbinical students-- all Israeli men and women, ages 18-29, were eligible for conscription. Universal conscription, Ben Gurion told Knesset, was designed "to prepare the entire people for defense, to give the youth, Israeli born and immigrant, pioneering and military training, to maintain a permanently mobilized force adequate to withstand a surprise attack and hold out until the reserves were mobilized." A soldier's two years (later changed to three) of basic service would be followed by a reserve obligation until age 49, a reserve system modelled after the Swiss system. The Defense Service Law also specified the integration of civilian transportation, hospitals, communications, and construction into the military infrastructure, emphasizing the dual civil-military role. Israel would indeed be a "nation in arms." ¹²⁸

As a small concession to MAPAM, dissatisfied with the low military

priority given to settlements, the Defense Service Law's article 'F' read, "after completion of basic military training, twelve months of the recruit's active tour of duty will be devoted to agricultural instruction." ¹²⁹ Article 'F' was designed to boost "Noar HaLutzi LoHemet," (Fighting-Pioneer Youth) or NAHAL battalions, inaugurated by Ben Gurion in November 1948 to symbolically replace the Palmach. Yet article 'F' was harshly criticized by middle-class and right-wing parties, as unnecessary training which would reduce combat readiness and professional competence. Never applied in Naval, Air Force, and special commando units, Provision 'F' quickly became a dead letter. By December 1949, Ben Gurion obtained power to eliminate it. Though NAHAL remained as a service option, as technical requirements in army advanced and army grew with Israel's general population explosion, territorial defense based on small settlements soon became a "romantic anachronism." ¹³⁰

The Defense service law-- followed soon thereafter by Veteran's Service Bill and the Military Jurisdiction Bill-- provided Ben Gurion and Yadin, who formally replaced Dori as Chief of Staff in November of 1948, with the legal authority to construct a unified service-- incorporating Naval, Air Force, and ground branches under the same General Staff, eliminating any in-service rivalry. Perhaps more importantly, Ben Gurion and Yadin legalized their composition of a small, unified, professional Officer Corps, banding political cliches and establishing a merit system for determining appointments, promotions, and pay.

Ben Gurion and Yadin struggled in immediate post-war years to enforce discipline, against the volunteer spirit and egalitarian

individualistic grain of Yishuv, which "usually implied social consciousness ... usually associated with ideological belief and party affiliation." ¹³¹ Some Israelis equated discipline and hierarchy with militarism. As Ben Gurion explained:

I remember very well the fears expressed by a few members of the opposition parties...having in mind perhaps the armies of the dictatorial regimes in the countries from which they came; some Knesset members took exception to the idea of a regular army, even as a nucleus of the IDF, fearing that it would become careerist, reactionary, and fascist. ¹³²

In the Hagana, there was no military discipline and discipline is not acquired on the day a private joins the army. Discipline demands tradition, example, law, and order. The members of the Hagana were volunteers, serving a few hours a week or a month, but it is impossible to have an army without discipline, as it is impossible to have a state without a government and laws. ¹³³

In particular, MAPAM decried the professionalization of IDF officers, fearing career cadres would form "barracks elite." Ironically, that was just what Ben Gurion feared from the ex-Palmach officers. ¹³⁴

Ben Gurion feared the Communist influence on officers with MAPAM connections and wanted to establish an Officer Corps which projected democratic ideals, strictly national loyalty, and formal discipline--not the collectivist principles, elitism, and partisan loyalties. To that end, Ben Gurion and Yadin wage a campaign to retire ex-Palmach, or MAPAM associated, officers throughout 1949-1950.

As the war ended, six of twelve field commanders, two of four front commanders, twenty of forty-five colonels, and 40% of all lieutenant-colonels and majors were Palmach veterans who held positions in the IDF. Yet the Palmach's three brigades-- Hareli, Yitfah and Hanegar-- were the first to be demobilized and then totally disband. Ben Gurion discouraged ex-Palmach men from remaining in IDF. Many

Palmach veterans-- as well as LHI and IZL veterans-- found the IDF's avenues of promotion closed to them. Those MAPAMniks who remained as senior officers in the IDF were most often restricted to staff and training functions and were rarely given operational commands. Many MAPAMnik officers resigned in frustration or in protest. ¹³⁵

Throughout 1949-1950, Ben Gurion and Yadin retired most ex-Palmach officers and filled the higher echelons with British-trained officers like Makleff, or with "politically reliable" MAPAMniks like Assaf Simshoni, Moshe Netzer, and Dayan, or with Hagana "old hands" like Chaim Laskov.

The most controversial act of Ben Gurion's "witch-hunt" on Palmach veterans occurred in spring of 1949. Ben Gurion claimed Allon, the former Palmach supreme commander, had disobeyed his orders by making a disputed penetration into the Sinai desert of Egypt. Allon, supported by most of the General Staff, argued that his penetration had been for sound, national security reasons. MAPAM protested, but Ben Gurion replaced Allon in southern command with Dayan, emerging as one of Ben Gurion's proteges. The southern commanders, the majority being MAPAMniks, protested the ouster of their chief, but they cooperated with Dayan in the transition, with no acts of dissidence or even of overt dissidence towards the government, preventing a potential crisis.

Some Palmach veterans stayed in the IDF, like Rabin, Chaim Bar Lev, David Elazeer, Amos Horev, and Uzi Narciss. Yet Allon's departure triggered the exodus of a considerable number of experienced officers from the IDF. In 1949, the IDF lost the services of such Palmach veterans as Shimon Avidan, Shmuel Cohen, Nahum Golan, Natan Sarig,

Yossef Tabenkin, and Sadeh. Ben Gurion made no effort to persuade them to stay. 136

In the immediate post-war years, Colonel Makleff, another Ben Gurion protege, noted:

The bulk of those who resigned were the ones who had political aspirations. The lower echelons of the Palmach officers, who were able to contribute to forming the young army, for the most part remained. Had senior commanders remained in the IDF, we would have been compelled to waste another two years in disputes over organization. Thus, matters were decided far quicker, and we didn't have to waste valuable time on sterile discussion. 137

The exodus of Palmach officers-- and the exclusion of LHI and IZL commanders-- from the IDF Officer Corps created temporary mediocrity, yet, in the long term, expedited the process of depoliticalization. The IDF lost much valuable military experience, but the censorship of Palmach, LHI, and IZL military leadership dampened the internal controversy over the organization and the character of the new Army. 138

From May 1948 through 1950, the new State of Israel struggled in a war of national survival while Ben Gurion struggled to dissolve the underground organizations-- their mentality, structures, policies, and military traditions. In the spring of 1948, Ben Gurion skillfully eliminated the confused chain-of-command in the Hagana-Palmach structure, placing himself in the twin role as both political and military leader of Israel. In the early summer, the LHI dissolved and the IZL was destroyed, in a showdown with the new "Israeli Defense Force," in an incident called the Altalena Affair. The LHI and the IZL continued to fight on in Jerusalem, inspired by political differences with the Provisional Government and the uncertain future of Jerusalem. But Ben Gurion used the pressure of the burgeoning IDF to totally

disband the dissident organizations in the late summer. After disposing of the LHI and the IZL, Ben Gurion mustered the political clout to disband the last vestige of the underground days, the Palmach. As the War of Independence ended in early 1949, Ben Gurion gained the political mandate to shape the new Army in his own image. In immediate post-war period, Ben Gurion engineered the IDF into a united and professional army, under the ultimate command of the civilian government, which he had championed for so long. By 1950, the IDF and Israel had implanted the seeds of a "democratic civil-military tradition."

NOTES VI

¹ Perlmutter, p. 55.

² Shimshoni, p. 183; and Perlmutter II, p. 15.

³ Sacher, p. 478; and Ben Gurion, p. 248; and Bar Zohar, p. 109.

⁴ Avraham Avi Hai, Ben Gurion: State Builder (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1974), pp. 275, 111, 82; and Merhav, pp. 111-112; and Rothenberg, p. 60; and Shimshoni, p. 185; and Horowitz, p. 44; and Bar Zohar, p. 109.

⁵ Kurzmann, p. 245.

⁶ Bar Zohar, p. 98; and Perlmutter, p. 52.

⁷ Avi Hai, pp. 275, 111, 82; and Rothenberg, p. 60; and Shimshoni, p. 185; and Horowitz, p. 44; and Kurzmann, pp. 243-244.

⁸ Rothenberg, p. 60; and Sacher, p. 317; and Shimshoni, p. 185; and Horowitz, p. 44; and Bar Zohar, p. 110.

⁹ Sacher, p. 317; and Ben Gurion, pp. 85-86.

¹⁰ Ben Gurion, p. 86.

¹¹ Ben Gurion, p. 88.

¹² Bar Zohar, p. 112; and Perlmutter, p. 57.

¹³ Bar Zohar, p. 112.

¹⁴ Ben Gurion, p. 76.

¹⁵ Perlmutter, p. 55; and Bar Zohar, p. 112.

¹⁶ Ben Gurion, p. 76.

- 17 Bar Zohar, p. 113.
- 18 Bar Zohar, p. 114.
- 19 Kurzmann, p. 245.
- 20 Bar Zohar, p. 114.
- 21 Bar Zohar, p. 114.
- 22 Perlmutter, p. 54.
- 23 Avi Hai, p. 111.
- 24 Sacher, p. 330.
- 25 Rothenberg, p. 60.
- 26 Bar Zohar, p. 114.
- 27 Bell, p. 128; and Ben Ami, p. 157.
- 28 Bethell, pp. 359, 256.
- 29 Begin, p. 375; and Katz, p. 229.
- 30 Ben Ami, p. 448.
- 31 Haber, p. 216; and Katz, p. 229.
- 32 Ben Ami, pp. 464, 466; and Bell, p. 318; Bar Zohar, p. 134;
and Katz, pp. 228, 321.
- 33 Avi Hai, p. 112.
- 34 Ben Gurion, p. 109; and Lorch, p. 238; and Rothenberg, p. 57;
and Horowitz, p. 37.
- 35 Brenner, p. 24; and Bell, p. 316.
- 36 Ben Ami, p. 464.
- 37 Ben Ami, p. 474.
- 38 Ben Gurion, p. 132; and Bar Zohar, p. 135; and Begin, p. 158;
and Lorch, p. 239; and Ben Ami, pp. 465-474.

³⁹ Lorch, p. 239; and Haber, p. 216; and Bell, p. 316; Harry Sacher, p. 274.

⁴⁰ Bell, p. 328; and Allon, p. 118; and Kurzman, pp. 375-376; and Horowitz, p. 33; and Begin, p. 160.

⁴¹ Bar Zohar, p. 134; and Rothenberg, p. 63; and Lorch, p. 255.

⁴² Lorch, p. 255; and Ben Ami, pp. 466, 485, 479; and Haber, pp. 215-216; and Bar Zohar, p. 133.

⁴³ Katz, p. 229.

⁴⁴ Ben Ami, p. 472.

⁴⁵ Bell, p. 321; and Begin, pp. 154-155.

⁴⁶ Haber, p. 217; and Ben Ami, p. 489; and Bell, p. 321; and Katz, pp. 238-242.

⁴⁷ Bell, p. 321.

⁴⁸ Ben Ami, p. 490.

⁴⁹ Bar Zohar, p. 135.

⁵⁰ Haber, p. 218; and Bar Zohar, p. 135; and Ben Ami, pp. 494-495; and Begin, p. 168.

⁵¹ Haber, p. 218; and Katz, p. 242.

⁵² Bar Zohar, p. 135.

⁵³ Ben Gurion, p. 166.

⁵⁴ Bar Zohar, p. 135; and Katz, p. 245; and Ben Gurion, pp. 165-166; and Bell, p. 322; and Ben Ami, p. 499-500.

⁵⁵ Haber, p. 220; and Lorch, p. 255; and Bar Zohar, p. 135.

⁵⁶ Haber, pp. 219-220; and Katz, p. 249; and Ben Ami, pp. 502, 505; and Bar Zohar, p. 135.

⁵⁷ Ben Ami, p. 509.

⁵⁸ Haber, p. 221; and Ben Ami, pp. 508-509.

⁵⁹ Ben Ami, p. 506; and Bell, p. 324.

⁶⁰ Bar Zohar, p. 136; and Lorch, p. 255; and Ben Ami, p. 511-514; and Sacher, p. 329.

⁶¹ Haber, pp. 221-223; and Bar Zohar, p. 136; and Bell, p. 323; and Horowitz, p. 38.

⁶² Avi Hai, p. 114.

⁶³ Bar Zohar, p. 135.

⁶⁴ Haber, p. 222; and Bar Zohar, p. 136; and Ben Gurion, p. 171; and Ben Ami, pp. 515-516.

⁶⁵ Bell, p. 324.

⁶⁶ Haber, p. 222; and Bar Zohar, p. 137; and Lorch, p. 256; and Bell, p. 325.

⁶⁷ Ben Gurion, p. 172; and Ben Ami, p. 521; and Begin, p. 174.

⁶⁸ Haber, p. 223; and Katz, p. 245; and Ben Ami, pp. 518, 521; and Bell, p. 325; and Avi Hai, p. 113.

⁶⁹ Bell, p. 326.

⁷⁰ Begin, p. 176; and Katz, p. 250; and Bell, p. 327.

⁷¹ Haber, p. 224; and Katz, p. 251; and Bar Zohar, p. 137.

⁷² Katz, pp. 245-249; and Bell, p. 322; and Ben Ami, pp. 494-500; and Haber, p. 224; and Begin, pp. 169-172.

⁷³ Ben Ami, p. 503.

⁷⁴ Lorch, p. 255.

⁷⁵ Bell, p. 327.

⁷⁶ Ben Gurion, p. 173; and Haber, p. 225; and Bar Zohar, p. 137; and Katz, p. 290.

⁷⁷ Haber, p. 225; and Katz, p. 253; and Bell, p. 327; and Sacher, p. 330; and Perlmutter, p. 51.

⁷⁸ Ben Ami, p. 521.

⁷⁹ Begin, p. 176.

⁸⁰ Lorch, p. 257; and Katz, p. 262.

⁸¹ Bar Zohar, pp. 139-140; Ben Gurion, pp. 259, 164.

⁸² Ben Gurion, pp. 162-163.

⁸³ Bar Zohar, p. 140; and Ben Gurion, pp. 118, 126; and Kurzmann, p. 496.

⁸⁴ Bar Zohar, p. 141; and Kurzmann, p. 497.

⁸⁵ Bar Zohar, p. 141.

⁸⁶ Bar Zohar, p. 142.

⁸⁷ Ben Gurion, p. 76.

⁸⁸ Kurzman, pp. 498-499; and Bar Zohar, p. 142; and Perlmutter, p. 57.

⁸⁹ Bar Zohar, p. 142.

⁹⁰ Bar Zohar, p. 143.

⁹¹ Kurzman, p. 501; and Rothenberg, p. 61.

⁹² Allon, p. 120; and Rothenberg, p. 57.

⁹³ Katz, pp. 256-257; and Bell, p. 332.

⁹⁴ Rothenberg, p. 56; and Bell, pp. 331-334; and Katz, p. 272; and Kurzman, pp. 538-542.

- ⁹⁵ Rothenberg, p. 56; and Bell, pp. 331-334; and Katz, p. 272; and Kurzman, pp. 538-542.
- ⁹⁶ Katz, p. 253; and Bell, p. 316.
- ⁹⁷ Katz, p. 255; and Kurzman, p. 565.
- ⁹⁸ Bell, p. 317.
- ⁹⁹ Bar Zohar, pp. 137, 143; and Katz, pp. 273-274, 280; and Ben Gurion, p. 262.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bell, p. 340; and Kurzman, pp. 547, 556; and Lorch, p. 344.
- ¹⁰¹ Avi Hai, p. 114.
- ¹⁰² Katz, p. 279.
- ¹⁰³ Katz, p. 282.
- ¹⁰⁴ Bell, p. 344.
- ¹⁰⁵ Rothenberg, p. 61; and Barr Zohar, p. 144; and Ben Gurion, p. 246.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ben Gurion, pp. 241-242; and Avi Hai, p. 116.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ben Gurion, p. 258.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ben Gurion, p. 242.
- ¹⁰⁹ Avi Hai, p. 116.
- ¹¹⁰ Avi Hai, p. 116.
- ¹¹¹ Horowitz, p. 44; and Avi Hai, p. 117.
- ¹¹² Horowitz, pp. 72-73.
- ¹¹³ Horowitz, p. 73.
- ¹¹⁴ Rothenberg, p. 62.
- ¹¹⁵ Avi Hai, p. 117.

116 Ben Gurion, p. 259; and Lorch, pp. 395-397; and Horowitz and Lissak, p. 190; and Perlmutter, p. 52.

117 Rothenberg, p. 56.

118 Allon, p. 124.

119 Perlmutter, p. 60.

120 Ben Ami, p. 521; and Allon, p. 120; and Merhav, p. 342.

121 Ben Gurion, p. 373.

122 Perlmutter, p. 60; and Kimche, p. 235; and Horowitz, pp. 82-83.

123 Horowitz, p. 82.

124 Shimshoni, p. 176.

125 Perlmutter, p. 66.

126 Horowitz, p. 83; and Kimche, p. 238.

127 Sacher, p. 478.

128 Rothenberg, p. 72; and Avi Hai, p. 120.

129 Rothenberg, p. 72.

130 Rothenberg, p. 74; and Perlmutter, p. 72; and Avi Hai, pp. 120, 122; and Allon, p. 39.

131 Horowitz, p. 82.

132 Moshe Perlman, Ben Gurion Looks Back (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), p. 150.

133 Horowitz, p. 82.

134 Perlmutter, p. 59; and Merhav, p. 198.

135 Rothenberg, p. 62; and Horowitz, pp. 72, 74; and Avi Hai, p.

111.

¹³⁶ Perlmutter, p. 62; and Horowitz, pp. 83, 101; Avi Hai, p.

125.

¹³⁷ Zeev Schiff, History of the Israeli Army (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), p. 53.

¹³⁸ Rothenberg, p. 76; and Horowitz, p. 74; and Avi Hai, p. 116.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Of every tribe, a thousand throughout all the tribes of Israel, ye shall send to war. (Numbers 31:5)

The IDF of 1950 is essentially the IDF of today. Over the last thirty-six years, the IDF's size, operational structure, arsenal, and level of military sophistication has changed. Yet the basic principle of a unified, professional, and apolitical army, under the ultimate command of the civilian government, has only further entrenched itself into Israeli society since the IDF's inception.

The legacy of the competing Zionist undergrounds-- particularly some characteristics of the Palmach-- can still be traced to a few specific qualities within the IDF: its high proportion of officers to rank-and-file; its emphasis on officers leading their men into battle; and its encouragement of individual or unit initiative on the battlefield. As it was in the Hagana-Palmach, kibbutzniks continue to supply the IDF with a disproportionately high number of elite troops. Yet the human and political energy of the former political-military bodies has been funnelled into Israel's democratic political forum and has never interfered with the unity of the IDF, nor the IDF's basic command structure. After years of political-military factionalism, the unification process of 1948-1950 has proved phenomenally successful. ¹

The descendants of the rival political-military factions of pre-state Zionist history have all made gradual moves towards Israel's political center. Ben Gurion continued at the helm of the dominant MAPAI party until 1963, except for fifteen months between 1953-1955. He and his cabinets continued to shape the IDF Officer Corps with MAPAI-niks-- like Makleff, Laskov, and Dayan, who all served as Chiefs of Staff under Ben Gurion. Even after Ben Gurion, MAPAI, or a MAPAI-related alignment, continued to win at the polls, dominate the Israeli government, and serve as the final arbitrator in military matters until 1977.

The Kibbutz Movement, the far leftist ideology, and the MAPAM party suffered a gradual loss of political influence and popularity in the 1950s and 1960s. In late 1960s, MAPAM's moderate factions, Achdut HaAvoda and Rafi, split off from the Communists and eventually joined MAPAI, forming today's Labor Alignment. This shift towards the Left-of-Center corresponded with the return of Palmach veterans-- like Galili and Allon-- into the Israeli political spotlight; and the rise of Palmach veterans-- like Rabin, Chaim Bar-Lev, and David Elazer-- to the positions of Chief of Staff and Defense Minister. The once bitter MAPAM-MAPAI, Ben Gurion-Palmach, struggles over political and military programs dissolved into reconciliation and unity. ²

Likewise, the bitter Left-Right, Hagana-IZL, struggles have been moderated and institutionalized by Israeli democracy. Yellin-Mor's Fighter's party quickly dissolved. But Begin and the Herut party, with their free-enterprise and "Greater Israel" program, spent years in the role of opposition in the Knesset. Yet, time and Herut's merger with

various other middle-class parties moderated their program, earned them increasing respectability, and moved them into the political Right-of-Center.

In 1967, Begin's Gahal coalition joined MAPAI in a National Unity Government. In the late 1960s and 1970s, the issue of the occupied territories taken in the 1967 War, the shock of the 1973 War, and the growing political clout of Israel's oriental Jews vaulted Begin's Likud coalition onto a power base roughly equal to that of Labor, and, finally, into the government in 1977. During Likud's rule, non-Laborite military leaders-- like Ezer Weizmann, Ariel Sharon, Raphael Eytan, and Moshe Ariens -- gained the top military spots in the General Staff and in the Defense Ministry. The political descendants of the Jabotinsky Right and the Socialist-Zionist Left have emerged as the two largest, most powerful Israeli parties and the most influential in determining the IDF High Command's leadership. ³

The IDF High Command's leadership is not divorced from politics because it reflects the policies of the legally elected government. The IDF's higher echelons have been shaped in response to the political character of Israel's elected government, yet the IDF's higher echelons have never influenced the civilian government's character.

And the IDF's middle and lower echelons remain strictly professional and apolitical. Promotions and selection for particular units are made for reason of merit, and matters of manpower and resource distribution are made for reasons of efficiency and national defense. The soldiers' training is based on developing competence and national loyalty. And with most Israeli adults serving in the IDF, no political

orientation comes to prevail, no party patronage occurs, even within specific Army units. Like Israel's democratic political system, the IDF rank-and-file represents the Israeli society at large. The IDF has emerged as Ben Gurion prophesied, as the great unifying, nationalizing, and democratizing factor in Israeli society. ⁴

After five major wars and countless smaller engagements, the relationship of Israel's civilian government and the IDF has not been without conflict and controversy: the Lavon Affair in the mid-1950s, underscoring the tensions between the powers of the Prime Minister and the Defense Minister; the conflicts between the General Staff and the Air Force in the 1950s; the IDF's closure of Bedouin lands in 1972; the reports of negligence following the 1973 War; or the 1982 scandal involving the massacres of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, which pitted a judicial committee against the Defense Minister and his Chief of Staff. Time has proved that the IDF is not sacrosanct from public scrutiny, nor governmental castigation. ⁵

Though military heroes have flooded into the Israeli political marketplace, assuming greater public and symbolic roles, Israel possesses specific laws forbidding senior officers from holding political office and military commands simultaneously. No general has ever tried "Bonapartism," to stage a private revolution, to bully the civilian government, or perform a coup d'etat. Israel has specific laws forbidding paramilitary undergrounds or terrorist groups. The essential civilian-Military equilibrium is maintained -- the civilian government governs the nation and commands the army, while the Army remains the "instrument" of the elected government. The Prime Minister, the Defense

Minister, and the cabinet make the ultimate decisions on matters of military management, national security, and war.

Given Israel's tumultuous political and cultural environment, the danger of Israel evolving into a "Barracks State," a militaristic-authoritarian society exists, but that possibility still appears remote. Israel's democratic civil-military tradition persists, ever since the great unification of the IDF in 1948-1950. ⁶

Why did the unification of the IDF succeed? Certainly the Yishuv-Israeli society before 1950 represented a highly literate and relatively homogeneous one, with common European roots; yet the diverse, and usually antagonistic, political differences somewhat negate this factor. Certainly the Yishuv was --as Israel continues to be-- united under the weight of common enemies: the Nazis, the British, or the Arab world. Yet the presence of external enemies did not wholly prevent the development of serious internal, political, and -- as in such cases as the Season and the Altalena Affair-- military clashes.

More crucial is the fact that each rival political-military group possessed a strong democratic and nationalist element within their ideologies. The WZO-Jewish Agency was clearly democratic in character and the Hagana-Palmach ultimately took orders from these official political bodies. Jabotinsky's NZO, and even the IZL and the LHI, were political organizations first and military bodies second. Their leaders --such as Raziell, Stern, Begin, and Yellin-Mor-- gained their positions of power through their organizations' elections. Neither could be accurately described as Fascist or strictly authoritarian in structure. Their essentially democratic backgrounds allowed for a smoother

transition into Israeli democracy.

Likewise, the rival undergrounds all possessed a Jewish nationalist dream which superseded their partisan political interests at crucial times. The LHI did dissolve in 1948 without resorting to fratricidal violence. Begin in particular played a major role in preventing civil war-- exemplified both during the Season and the Altalena Affair. And the Palmach-MAPAM troops remained loyal to nation despite their political struggles with Ben Gurion and the demise of the "Pioneer-Soldier" tradition. The nationalist and democratic commonalities of the rival groups resulted in a phenomenal absence of "major" military clashes. The successful realization of the nationalist dream and a democratic Israeli political system galvanized the IDF. The different groups did, and still do, serve in the IDF, while their leaders shout out their differences in the Knesset instead of "shooting-it-out." ⁷

The IDF's unification also succeeded because a strong political center did indeed develop. Ben Gurion and MAPAI did represent the Yishuv-Israeli majority, which possessed the foresight to constantly push for the development of a formidable army, organized with universal conscription and along professional lines. In addition, the Yishuv's involvement with the British and in the World Wars provided the basis for a "Professional Soldier" tradition.

Most importantly, the unification of the IDF was a product of Ben Gurion's skillful, bold, stubborn, timely, and astute political leadership: his patient development of the IDF until it could force the disbandment of the LHI and the IZL; or his gradual political assault on

the National Command, on the underground traditions, and on the Palmach and the MAPAM military program. Much of the credit for the successful unification of the IDF and the establishment of a democratic civilian-military tradition -- and therefore, for the success of the Zionist revolution itself-- must go to Ben Gurion. ⁸

Until recently, Jewish undergrounds, Jewish "dissidents," appeared to be a relic out of Israel's bloody past. Yet in the spring of 1984, Israel witnessed the discovery of a most dangerous and disturbing development. Israel's internal security force, "Shin Bet," infiltrated and uncovered the existence of a new Jewish underground. This underground represents a new type in Zionist history-- ultra-orthodox zealots associated with the Gush Emunim Movement, which has spearheaded the drive for Jewish settlement on the West Bank. Israeli agents arrested 27 men on terrorist charges. The list included a rabbi, rabbinical students, some reserve paratroopers, and tank commanders. IDF military courts began holding military trials for those IDF officers who were implicated. This new underground has been connected to the 1980 bomb attacks on Arab mayors, the 1983 assault on Arabs students at Hebron Islamic College, the attempt to plant explosives in the Dome of the Rock (Al Aqsa) mosque, and the recently foiled plot to blow up Arab buses at rush hour. The motto of these new terrorists appears to be "an eye-for-an-eye," in retaliation for Arab violence against Jews. ⁹

Just how extensive this new underground truly is, and what the repercussions of its existence will be, remains to be seen. Yet the discovery of the new underground has profoundly disturbed Israeli society. Most of the major parties and press have loudly condemned the

new terrorists-- for the development of a new paramilitary organization presents a direct challenge to the ultimate sovereignty of the Israeli government and the unity of the IDF. The new terrorists strike at the heart of Israel's "democratic civil-military tradition," forged in the hot fires of Zionist history.

NOTES VII

¹ Michael Handel, Israel's Political-Military Doctrine (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1973), pp. 13-15.

² Rothenberg, p. 75; and Sacher, p. 478; and Duni Zamir, "Generals in Politics" Jerusalem Quarterly Vol.20 (1981), pp. 26-34.

³ Shimshoni, p. 432; and Bell, pp. 348-353; Zamir, pp. 17-20; and Haber, p. 255; and Kimche, p. 137.

⁴ Zamir, p. 34; and Perlman, p. 150; and Shimshoni, p. 186; and Perlmutter, p. 66; and Horowitz and Lissak, p. 191.

⁵ Shimshoni, pp. 187, 219.

⁶ Shimshoni, pp. 156-161, 177-180, 219; and Avi Hai, p. 124; and Perlman, p. 177; and Gonen, p. 59.

⁷ Allon, p. 44; and Horowitz and Lissak, pp. 23, 132-171; and Shimshoni, pp. 7-8.

⁸ Avi Hai, pp. 275-276; and Perlmutter, p. 54; and Handel, p. 11.

⁹ James Kelly, "What Next for Israel?" Time (July 9, 1984).

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