to the camps in Germany and Theresienstadt, and attempting to release the Jews there or at least prevent their murder until the Allies arrived. In the last months of the war, communication and transportation were cut off. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people of all nationalities were on the move. As the front advanced into the heart of Europe and the end of the war brought even greater chaos, it became impossible for the Yishuv to reach the survivors. The Executive gave up on rescue efforts and turned its attention to assisting the Jews still left in the liberated areas and to postwar plans.

Conclusion: Rescue and Zionist Policy

Analysis of the Yishuv's attitude toward the rescue of European Jewry centers on the crucial question: How, and to what extent, did the Holocaust affect Zionist policy and ideology while it was happening? Did it change, or at least influence, Zionist policymaking on major issues such as the attitude of the Zionist center in Palestine to the Jews of the Diaspora, immigration priorities, structures and relations within the Zionist movement, attitudes toward the Western world, and the establishment of a Jewish state? In other words, did the Yishuv leaders revise their views enough to face the catastrophe? And did they review their priorities to make the rescue of European Jewry paramount?

Regarding the attitude of the Zionist center in Palestine to the Jews of the Diaspora, the assumption prevailing in Israel since the end of the war has been that the Yishuv respected only those who took up arms; that the rest were considered inferior human beings who went "like lambs to the slaughter".[1] Only the Zionist undertaking in Palestine had succeeded in raising a courageous and resourceful new generation of Jewish youth, the very antithesis of Diaspora Jews. The source material, however, particularly minutes of meetings of leaders, reveals a more complex attitude.

During 1942, when the deportations to the death camps started, the reports that reached Palestine, mainly from the members of the exchange groups, described passive, almost apathetic Jewish communities, mesmerized by fear, especially during roundups and executions; Jewish leaders, members of the Jewish councils in the ghettos, and the Jewish police allowed themselves to be used by the Germans against their brothers. Most leaders in the Yishuv, such as Eliyahu Dobkin and Joseph Sprinzak, refused to comment; they needed time to grasp what had really happened. Others, such as Shneur-Zalman Rubashov

and Israel Galili, a central figure in the Labor movement and in all defense problems, repudiated the public tendency to belittle the Jews of Europe: "We are all from there," received the same education, and "Jewish fate is the same everywhere." Ben-Gurion tried to be realistic: "There are quislings and rascals among every people." Only a few expressed "shame of their weakness" (Yitzhak Tabenkin) and considered Jewish defenselessness "a burning disgrace" (Yitzhak Gruenbaum).[2] There was, then, a mixture of programmatic Zionist declarations against the Diaspora as a concept and as a destructive reality, and deep feeling for the Jews of Europe and their suffering.

The news that reached Palestine at the beginning of the war and especially during 1943 enhanced the prestige of the pioneering youth movements in Europe—and not simply because they had decided to take up arms. They had decided to ignore all ideological and political differences. At the end of April 1943 Ze'ev Shind reported that the youth movements had joined to become one united underground. Similarly, in August Venia Pomerantz reported that the terrible situation in Europe had reconciled all the formerly fanatically partisan movements on the basis of an unprecedented equality "incomprehensible in Palestine." This did not mean that the movements had given up their respective beliefs; in light of the catastrophe, they had simply "discovered more important values." The emissaries now had difficulty even discerning who was writing the letters they received.[3]

The youth movements in Poland also established a common treasury, pooling all their resources, selling clothes and goods in order to send money to their starving comrades in the concentration camps and ghettos. There were heated discussions among the leaders about whether or not they should use the food packages they received from Istanbul and Geneva to keep themselves alive instead of running underground community activities. Antek Zuckermann, one of the foremost youth movement leaders, wrote: "We didn't eat the food; we used the packages to enable us to hold seminars and keep the movement going." It was also well known in Palestine that young movement leaders in Europe endangered their lives over and over again, moving in and out of the ghettos to succor their comrades and their younger charges; they were active in the communities regarding education, public welfare, care for the elderly and the weak, encouraged and inspired—often paying for their zeal with their lives.[4]

The revolt of the Warsaw ghetto in April 1943 stirred the Yishuv profoundly. People were proud but also conscience-stricken. The revolt had taken place with almost no help from the Yishuv and at a

tremendous cost in human life. Indeed, it soon became apparent that the youth movement leadership in occupied Europe might be entirely destroyed, not only as a result of the extermination programs but also because, in the wake of the general destruction of the House of Israel, they would have been ashamed to have remained alive. "A psychosis is taking over . . . to die, down to the last person," warned Melech Neustadt. After the revolt he repeatedly implored the youth movement leaders in Palestine to save those still alive—even against their will—by issuing a directive that they were to leave immediately by whatever ways possible. Neustadt's appeal was discussed in a number of meetings. The issue was whether or not the Yishuv was morally justified in instructing these comrades to abandon their communities, save themselves, and thereby stop the armed uprisings. The question also involved the future of the Yishuv: the numerous revolts in the summer of 1943 would ultimately deprive the Yishuv of the cream of Europe's potential pioneering force. Sprinzak opposed Neustadt: "Who is more significant in this chapter of Jewish history—we or Frumka [Plonicka, a leader of the revolt in Będzin]? Frumka is more significant, and it is questionable if we have the right to drag her away." Shind reminded the disputants that the discussion was largely academic; at that point, toward the end of 1943, there was hardly any permanent address to which they could get any message to the youth movements in Europe.[5] The ghetto uprisings were already fact, and most of the ghettos had already been destroyed.

A formal decision was not reached, apparently. But among the major youth movements in Palestine, Neustadt's view prevailed, and attempts to extricate the activists failed: they refused to leave. When an emissary arrived in Będzin in July 1943 to convince Frumka Plotnicka to leave, she replied, "I have a responsibility for my brethren . . . I have lived with them, and I will die with them." Antek Zuckermann gave a similar answer. Zivia Lubetkin "rejected the outstretched hand" from Palestine; "On principle," she refused to consider leaving. She and Tossia Altman, another famous leader, refused to be included in any of the exchange lists and asked that younger charges be saved in their stead. They did agree to accept South American passports as protection against deportation. As Moshe Daks wrote from Bratislava, "There was an atmosphere of heroism in the movement . . . and that is why our comrades stayed behind and died defending the honor of the Jewish people."[6]

Years later Ruzka Korczak, a leader in the Vilna underground, recalled that

> the first question that Meir Ya'ari asked me when I reached Palestine and visited him in Kibbutz Merchavia, in December 1944, was if I had received the telegram he had sent together with Tabenkin ordering us to try and save ourselves. I told him that Vilna [in Lithuania] was too far away, and we never received it. But even if we had, we wouldn't have obeyed, just as we refused to obey the order we received from Zivia and Tossia not to carry out the revolt because the casualties in Warsaw had been too heavy.[7]

The telegram apparently did reach Będzin, in southwestern Poland. When Chaika Klinger of the local underground arrived in Palestine in March 1944, she told the Histadrut Executive that

> we received an order not to organize any more defense—since those who were still alive were important to the Yishuv as witnesses of what had happened to the movement. It was hard for us to accept that kind of thinking. We felt that it was not permissible for us to remain alive because of what the comrades in Warsaw had done . . . nothing could justify us saving ourselves. We decided to prepare to defend ourselves.

Klinger said her comrades in occupied Europe felt that "in Palestine they didn't properly understand us." The Yishuv should not have construed their joining the partisans or defending themselves to the last person as in any way "renouncing Palestine." The Zionists in Europe had not given up one iota of their ideals. "The pioneering vanguard of a people without the people is of no value. If rescue is the order of the day, then the entire people has to be rescued. If destruction is—then the pioneers will be destroyed, too." Turning to David Remez, who apparently was in tears, she said, "Now is not the time or place to lament the fate of the movement. Our people in the movement went the right way—the only way they could have gone—though tragic and terrible." Remez replied, "I am weeping because we were too late, really late."[8]

The youth movement members were correct in their feeling that the uprisings were not properly understood in Palestine. Dobkin acknowledged, "I am not sure that we can really understand the depth of their tragedy." And Pomerantz asked, "Can we possibly comprehend what a ghetto is, or what an uprising against the Nazis is?" Indeed, leaders in the Yishuv argued that thousands of years of Jewish martyrdom obliged the current generation not to revolt, but to preserve the Jewish people; therefore, "the idea of Masada cannot be tolerated." According to this view, the ghetto fighters were not committing suicide, going to their deaths in desperation, or seeking a beautiful death and a high price for their lives, which were lost to

begin with; on the contrary, they believed in life and in their ultimate victory.[9]

Those leaders living outside Europe in 1943 had no way of understanding that there were no possibilities open for Jews of fighting for military gains or for sheer physical safety, which did not exist anymore, without also fighting to the death to the last man, as at Masada. When they could no longer join the partisans and when they decided to remain in the ghettos and be with the inhabitants to the very end even if those inhabitants refused to join them or accept their idea, and even if this meant fighting alone for the dignity of the Jewish people, those young men and women did in fact choose almost certain death.

Leaders in the Yishuv consistently held to their view of survival: at the beginning of 1944 the Jews left in Slovakia believed that the final stage of the extermination was imminent; it appeared that the Germans were about to invade Hungary and Rumania. Members of the pioneering movements and other Zionists wanted to organize for self-defense and requested directives from Palestine. Yishuv leaders feared that, if events in the satellites followed the pattern of events in Poland the year before, no young leaders would be left from European Jewry. According to Shaul Meirov, "we told them that our national duty was to preserve our existence. Only in the most extreme case was self-defense permissible."[10]

As time passed and more information arrived on conditions in Europe, respect for the Jews in Europe grew—and not only for members of the youth movements. Older Zionist leaders had refused offers from Palestine or from the various undergrounds to help them escape—Gisi Fleischmann in Slovakia, Wilhelm Filderman in Rumania, Rabbi Leo Baeck and Jacob Edelstein in Theresienstadt, Mark Jarblum in France, Chaim Hilfstein and Joseph Salpeter in Poland. Many refused because they knew that dozens of people would be tortured and executed in the wake of their escape.[11]

The emissaries reported to Palestine on the organization of mutual aid among the Jewish communities. The Jews of Rumania were sharing their meager rations with the people in Transnistria and endangering themselves to arrange for the delivery of food, clothing, and medical supplies to them. The Jews of Slovakia helped make life in the forced-labor camps bearable. Furthermore, although they themselves did not have enough, they sent packages to the Slovak Jews deported to Poland and helped organize escape routes from there. Jews in Hungary helped maintain thousands of refugees and extended aid to the Jews of Slovakia, Zagreb, and Poland. The Armæe Juif smuggled thousands out of France, found hiding places for orphans, and

forged documents. Neustadt reflected later, "The Diaspora did not lose the age-old tradition of mutual aid in times of trouble . . . this created moral and spiritual forces in the Jewish communities of Europe."[12]

Stories of individual heroism also spread, of ordinary people with no particular ideological or organizational affiliations. Legends sprang up among the Jews of Europe, and different versions of the same legend reached Palestine and were passed along. But there were also true stories of people who escaped from the sealed camps, despite machine guns and bloodhounds, who swam or crawled through heavily guarded borders, who jumped from speeding trains or hid for months in bunkers; of mothers who committed suicide because they heard orphans would have safe passage to Switzerland; of rabbis such as the brother of the rabbi of Gur and teachers such as Janusz Korczak, who refused to abandon their pupils.

In the emissaries' opinion, people in Palestine knew far too little of "deeds that could serve as educational material for generations to come." As Neustadt wrote later, the "meaning of this heroism wasn't properly understood . . . It didn't get the admiration it deserved. We were unable to comprehend their spirit and their way of thinking."[13] Only now, decades later, is the full significance of their behavior really grasped, of the spiritual courage required, day by day and hour by hour, to face the routine horror and continue the joint struggle for existence—of the family, the movement, the community—while attempting to preserve the values of the Jewish people and of humanity. The Yishuv had always regarded itself as contributing to the spiritual well-being of the Diaspora. Dobkin was the first to claim, as early as May 1942, that in Palestine "we can learn a great deal from them [the Jews of the Diaspora], of the many values they have created." And, if this was the case, asked Dobkin, "What right do we have to lay claim to being the leaders of the Jewish people? Just because we have enjoyed wartime prosperity and were miraculously saved from the great catastrophe? Aren't they our public and spiritual superiors?" The behavior of the Diaspora placed an obligation on the Yishuv to maintain just as high a moral standard and evince just as great a willingness for sacrifice; otherwise, it would cease to be a beacon of light and would not attract people after the war. Avraham Haft, the financial secretary of the Rescue Committee, put it bluntly: "After the war, we will face a supreme court, represented by Frumka and Zivia . . . every one of us must prepare himself, heart and soul, for their verdict and emerge pure and innocent; ready to sacrifice ourselves for the cause and for the people."[14]

During 1943, then, the Yishuv's attitude changed, from disdain for the Diaspora's passivity—and for the emergence of corruption and deterioration in the ghettos' public life, to a steadily growing admiration for demonstrations of human and moral heroism, not necessarily for armed resistance. Even so, few in Palestine properly understood the impossibility of the situation of the Jews in Europe until the middle of 1943; by the time its meaning was clear, it was too late to save the youthful lives lost in the ghetto uprisings.

One notion remained unchanged in the Yishuv: that the Jewish resistance was organized and sustained primarily by Zionist leaders and youth movements. Such a view failed to acknowledge that the Bund and the Communist party also played an important role, and that the Coordination—as the umbrella organization of the Jewish parties and movements was called—spanned the whole spectrum of Jewish political life, although not every one was involved in every place. The Jews in Palestine believed that the education provided by the Zionist movement between the wars had imbued youngsters with the moral values and Jewish self-respect that enabled them to display exceptional personal valor in crushing situations. Zionist education explained the willingness of youth movements and Zionist leaders to reject offers of personal safety and to endanger themselves for the sake of their young charges and for the dignity of the Jewish people.

Did the Yishuv's newfound respect for European Jewry affect immigration priorities? Between the wars, the concept of "selective immigration" prevailed—a preference for young pioneers who were trained for life in Palestine over "just any Jew." From the outbreak of war to the end of 1942, selective immigration remained Yishuv policy: certificates continued to be sent primarily to veteran Zionists and their families and to members of the youth movements.

At the end of April 1943, after the Bermuda Conference, Apollinary Hartglas, the political secretary of the Rescue Committee, wrote a memorandum titled "Notes on Aid and Rescue." Intended for the eyes of "Zionist bodies only," Hartglas analyzed rescue possibilities and concluded that millions of European Jews were doomed. The Yishuv did not have the means to embark on a comprehensive rescue mission, and the Allies were neither capable of nor interested in large-scale rescue. By investing enormous sums and effort, however, the Rescue Committee might be able to save some tens of thousand of Jews. The question was, who should be saved? Hartglas concluded:

> Isn't it reasonable to turn the rescue into a national-Zionist effort and try primarily to save people who can be of benefit to Palestine and the Jewish

> people? It is clear to me that even putting it in such words sounds cruel but, unfortunately, we must . . . save children first because they comprise the best material for the Yishuv. We must save the pioneering youth but only those who have already undergone training and are fit for Zionist work. We must save the veterans who worked for the Zionist organizations since they deserve some consideration from us for their work. They will be able to forgive the Yishuv a good deal, to understand us, and perhaps even to contribute a little more.

Indiscriminate rescue, in Hartglas' view, might even prove harmful. There were already people who had arrived from Teheran and in exchange groups from other places who had no feelings for Palestine or Zionism. They were hostile to Zionist values, shirked work, and tried to lead an easy life at public expense. Who knows—they might return to the Diaspora after the war and slander the Zionist enterprise even though it had saved their lives.[15] Some of the emissaries in Geneva and Istanbul and youth movement leaders in the occupied countries, who refused to save themselves but struggled to rescue the younger members, agreed with Hartglas in unequivocal terms.[16]

Even after Hartglas' memorandum, there appears to have been no discussion of the subject. As news continued to arrive from occupied Europe, it became clear that the complex reality did not permit selective rescue. In mid-1943 the Rescue Committee decided to extend help to any Jew who could be helped. Smugglers and couriers were instructed to "take any Jew . . . any Jewish child" who could still be found.[17] On the other hand, immigration permits continued to be distributed along party lines in the satellite countries, with which communication was better. The Rescue Committee reached an agreement to divide the nine transit visas per country issued weekly by the Turkish government for Jews from Slovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria; one went to Agudat Yisrael, one to the Revisionists, and seven to members of movements affiliated with the World Zionist Organization. And efforts continued to find comrades and Zionist supporters in occupied Europe. Eliezer Kaplan instructed Meirov that no pioneers should be prevented from immigrating because of lack of funds.[18]

Toward the end of 1943, however, it emerged that, of the 857 refugees who had made their way to Istanbul through the Balkans, the majority were members of Agudat Yisrael and wealthy Jews, few of whom had ever given a thought to Palestine. No one from the pioneering movements was among them.

The composition of the immigration—after a year of intense efforts—generated heated arguments in Palestine and resulted in the

first extensive discussions of the subject in the various forums. Most of the leaders supported the decision to save "any Jew who could be found" as the right decision: "If the first seven families saved happened to be from Agudat Yisrael, that is no reason to go into mourning," said Sprinzak. But others, including Neustadt, differed. "There are Jews and there are Jews . . . The first Jew you meet in the street is not necessarily the kind of Jew we are seeking."[19] Zionist activists in occupied Europe were bitter; "I feel as if I had been spat on," wrote one. An investigation revealed three reasons for these results. First, the representative of Aguda Yisrael in Istanbul, Ya'acov Griffle, had submitted a list of party members to the British embassy in Ankara long before the Zionists submitted their lists; as a result, their people were given priority. Second, new immigrants in Palestine, not all of them Zionists, had changed certain lists of Zionists that had been drawn up according to a party key, removing names of members of the youth movements. Finally, and most significant, the decisions about who would be saved were in fact being made in Bucharest, Sofia, and Bratislava contrary to the Rescue Committee's policy. People struggled so furiously that even the few children who succeeded in leaving during 1943 left according to a party key—depending on their parents' affiliation. In this respect, the main fight was between the religious Jews, including the Mizrachi, and the youth movements, a fight "for life and death."[20]

After the investigation the Rescue Committee formulated a new agreement: 60 percent for pioneers (divided according to the relative size of their movements); 25 percent for refugees from occupied countries who reached Hungary; 6 for Agudat Yisrael; and the rest for veteran Zionists, according to the party key. And indeed, in the spring of 1944, after the German invasion of Hungary, Aliya Bet vessels began to arrive from Rumania, and the proportion of pioneering youth among the immigrants grew: on the first there were 35 out of 161 adults (21 percent); on the third, 94 out of 274 (34 percent). But these figures were still not in accordance with the agreement. "It is true that not only Zionists should be saved, but we cannot allow . . . such a high proportion of anti-Zionists." The Histadrut insisted on another investigation and sanctions against the guilty. Meirov admitted that the emissaries in Istanbul had no control over the choice of immigrants in Rumania; telephones and mail delivery were often cut for weeks at a time. The activists on the spot operated according to their own lights. Certainly the Immigration Department and the Rescue Committee had no influence.[21]

In May and July more ships arrived, and the controversy continued.

Forty-five youth movement members had been left in Rumania and their places taken by wealthy people. Judah-Leib Magnes, returning from Istanbul in July, reported: "I don't envy anyone who has to choose the immigrants. One hundred hands are stretched out to you and you can take only ten. If I had seen my father among them, I would have taken him or other members of the family or friends or associates. It is so terribly natural." Two weeks later Kaplan likewise asked all the members of the Rescue Committee to try to understand the "terrible situation" in Rumania, where fear of both the Germans and the Soviets caused people to fight viciously to save themselves and their families.[22]

New quotas were again dispatched from Palestine to Istanbul and then to Rumania: at least 30 percent of the permits were to go to orphans, especially to those from Transnistria; another 30 percent were for pioneers and refugees, especially those from Poland; and the rest were for various organizations and veteran Zionists, with 8 percent going to Agudat Yisrael.[25]

At the end of July, three days after the Horthy declaration, the JAE discussed the composition of possible immigration from Hungary. Ben-Gurion said:

> We are not in a position to bring all the Jews over from there . . . Perhaps we can bring out thousands, perhaps tens of thousands. The question of whom we chose to bring is very serious—to the extent that the choice is ours . . . of course, we will bring over Jews in danger of being killed even if we know for sure that they will leave Palestine within three months. But, if we have a choice between bringing over people who will return to Rumania the minute the war ends and who will be alienated while they are here or people who will remain—then we have to bring those Jews who will remain here.

There would be a "political catastrophe" after the war if a large number of Jews left Palestine just as the Yishuv began to fight for mass immigration. Consequently, priority should be given to immigrants of whom "we can be absolutely sure—children and youth. We will bring them over and educate them and make Hebrew citizens of them." They were also the easiest to care for; they didn't need jobs or housing as adults did, and the American Jews would be ready to provide money for them. Besides the children and youth from Rumania and Hungary, Ben-Gurion declared, "Polish refugees come first."

Gruenbaum opposed a "Zionist criterion" for determining rescue priorities, just as he had previously opposed the party key; world Jewry would simply not understand it and would become critical of the Zionist leadership. Emil Schmorak agreed with him: "As long as

people are threatened with death, it is impossible to choose among them." Ben-Gurion answered them both tersely: "Everyone is threatened. We can only take a certain number of people. If that is the case, we have to take those that will remain. Polish refugees have to be taken first. Veteran Zionists—no. For the future of Palestine, youth and children are more important."[24] Ben-Gurion's position was more extreme than that of Hartglas, who had proposed saving Zionist functionaries out of a sense of obligation.

The argument was not resolved. Predictably, a committee—composed of Ben-Gurion, Gruenbaum, Moshe Shapira, Kaplan, and Rabbi Yehuda-Leib Fishman—was elected to look into the question. What it decided is not known, but on the ships that arrived in August, November, and December very little changed in the composition of the immigrants. There was no change in the management of the immigration in Rumania. The infighting continued.

Thus it seems that the Yishuv's immigration policy did change during the war. Children and youth everywhere, particularly orphans, must be saved first. After that came refugees from the Nazi-occupied areas, particularly Poland: they had suffered the most, and the Yishuv's closest ties were to Polish Jewry and Polish Zionism. These two categories were exempt from the party key. Following them came pioneers and Zionist functionaries from Slovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria, according to a Zionist party key and an allocation for Agudat Yisrael. Then came the rest, as far as possible.

The leaders in Palestine knew that because of British policy and German objections, large-scale rescue would not be followed by immigration to Palestine. There was unanimous agreement, however, that all Jews who could be rescued should be, whatever their eventual destination. On the other hand, there were more limited possibilities of bringing thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands, to Palestine.

The Holocaust did not significantly change Ben-Gurion's views on immigration. During 1943 he harbored hopes for large-scale rescue, but after several failures of these plans he reverted to his original prewar preference for those who would be able to fight to establish a Jewish state.

Ben-Gurion's position was not accepted. Aliya Bet activists continued to bring anti-Zionists or Zionists with a different orientation from their own; Gruenbaum worked honestly with the non-Zionists on the Rescue Committee; Kaplan consistently fought a "Zionist-only" rescue policy, particularly in cases of children and orphans; the emissaries and the Immigration Department in Istanbul brought over whoever managed to reach Turkey; and there were many others who

were convinced that the advantage to the Yishuv could not be the only standard and that humane standards—to the ultimate benefit of the Yishuv's image—had to be applied. Schmorak later maintained that "with regard to rescue, we were not selective." Gruenbaum agreed: when death threatened, "we saved even the blind, the paralyzed, and the insane."[25]

Ultimately the composition of Jewish immigration to Palestine was determined not by theoretical considerations or by decisions made in Jerusalem, but primarily by the struggles conducted on the spot in Europe, particularly between Zionists and the religious non-Zionists. The latter insisted, even in Jerusalem, that the principle of indiscriminate rescue be applied, knowing full well that the Zionists owed them nothing and yet could not, as the self-proclaimed leaders of the Jewish people, abandon them. Ironically, it was probably the non-Zionists' obstinate struggle to be saved through immigration to Palestine that forced the Yishuv to act upon fine nonpartisan ideals.[26]

The dispute over immigration priorities was only one of many inside the Zionist movement, or between Zionism and the Jewish people. There was no attempt to overcome them, to change existing patterns, or to convince leaders to modify their personal styles and occupations in order to face the Holocaust more united. On the contrary: some of the dividing issues even sharpened.

Such was the case of the constant contention between Weizmann and Ben-Gurion. Weizmann was undeniably the leader most admired by the majority of Zionists before the war, yet from the end of 1939 until the fall of 1944 he stayed mostly in England and the United States; he did not visit Palestine once during that period. As a result, none of the committees handling rescue work in the Yishuv had any regular contact with him. Moshe Shertok was in contact with him in London and in the United States, especially in the winter of 1943 and the summer of 1944. Shertok and Weizmann then jointly conducted negotiations with both governments with regard to the Transnistria Plan, the extrication of children from the occupied countries, the rescue of Hungarian Jewry, the bombing of Auschwitz, and related issues. None of these negotiations, however, was undertaken at Weizmann's initiative, and there is little evidence that he launched any others. He made no direct appeals on behalf of European Jewry to either Churchill or Roosevelt, although he met with both more than once during the war. He later acknowledged that while he was in the United States, from April 1942 to July 1943, he "did very little outside [his] scientific work," and the same pattern prevailed when he was in England. By then he was in his seventies, no longer in his prime. Yet

Rabbi Benjamin apparently expressed the feelings of many when he appealed to Weizmann, "Mr. President, get out of the laboratory . . ."[27]

Relations between Weizmann and Ben-Gurion were very strained throughout the war, and in 1943 the rift between them threatened the unity of the Zionist movement. Ben-Gurion had no confidence in Weizmann's pro-British policies or in his ability to lead during the crucial times to come. The situation diverted energy that could have been devoted to the rescue of European Jewry. As Berl Katznelson rebuked Ben-Gurion, "There are far more important problems at the moment than Weizmann. There is the loss of European Jewry."[28]

Some of Ben-Gurion's colleagues also criticized him for his apparent detachment from rescue work. Gruenbaum reproached him for being "barricaded within his own thoughts," for refusing to listen to others. The fact that he made fewer statements about the Holocaust and rescue operations than about other issues, especially those connected with the political future of the Yishuv, led many of his friends to conclude that he "was not involved in the Holocaust."[29] Yet Ben-Gurion was far more involved in rescue work than has generally been assumed—in fundraising meetings in Palestine, in attempts to obtain immigration permits for children, and in Brand's mission. Like others, he put his hopes in exchange programs and the establishment of an international rescue body. He kept abreast of developments; Pomerantz, among others, later recalled that upon returning from Istanbul he would sit with Ben-Gurion "for hours on end, on numerous occasions," to bring him up to date and to evaluate the information with him.[30]

Ben-Gurion's lack of extensive commentary on the subject did not reflect lack of interest: "I'm at a loss for words. I cannot talk about the catastrophe. I do not think the right language has yet been invented."[31] His reticence can be explained by two factors. One was his leadership style, which was to go his own way on all issues: he refused to act under public pressure, did not discuss matters with those closest to him, and paid little heed to the entreaties of his colleagues or his public. The other factor was his evaluation of rescue possibilities; once he concluded, like Hartglas after Bermuda, that there was no possibility of saving the millions and that the Yishuv was unable to force the Allies, much less the Germans, to listen to its claims, he ceased to view the matter as central from the practical point of view and concentrated on the political future of Palestine. With the almost cruel clarity that characterized him, he realized that the Yishuv could save only a limited number of people, and he kept the full significance of these conclusions to himself.

Ben-Gurion turned his attention to postwar goals. Shertok handled

the negotiations for several rescue plans, but much of his time was occupied with enlistment in the British army and the establishment of a Jewish brigade. Gruenbaum became more and more involved in rescue work but did not add authority or means to the Rescue Committee. The question remains: Who in the Yishuv did head rescue operations? Among all the people living in the Yishuv, working in the settlements, at the university, on newspaper editorial boards, or in the many organizations and committees, it seems that no one could be found who was willing to give up all other commitments to deal solely with the rescue of European Jewry. The matter was not referred to Chaim Barlas or Menachem Bader or the other emissaries, all of whom devoted themselves entirely to rescue operations in the neutral countries; nor to Meirov, who was the central figure in all practical activities abroad. What was needed was someone who would have put the subject constantly on the agenda of the Yishuv and whose personal influence would have made the issue a central one. Both Katznelson and Weizmann wielded great personal and moral influence and enjoyed immense popularity—Weizmann among Jews and politicians in the western world, Katznelson in the Yishuv. As Ben-Gurion's closest and most admired friend, Katznelson would have had the best chances of working closely with him.

The lively, even stormy arguments between the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut took place "in the family," among close friends and comrades. And as the Yishuv's executive body, the Jewish Agency was naturally subject to criticism by the other Yishuv institutions. But the criticism leveled at the Agency's rescue policy by the opposition parties—Agudat Yisrael and the Revisionists, especially Etzel—was of a different nature. It stemmed, of course, from intense pain over the great destruction, but it also served as a means to challenge Mapai and the Agency and to question their ability to lead the Yishuv in general. The opposition could allow itself to recommend extreme solutions, such as an open breach with the British, because they were not responsible for the welfare and safety of the Yishuv as the Agency was.[32]

From 1942 through the end of the war, the institutions of the Yishuv had long and detailed ideological and political debates about relations with the Arabs and the Soviet Union, the political future of the Yishuv, and interparty problems. Few discussions dealt with the plight of European Jewry. There were indeed discussions about the practical aspects of rescue (the dispatch of emissaries, the allocation of funds, and so on); but there were few theoretical deliberations on the significance of the destruction of European Jewry and its full implications for the future of Zionism. Perhaps the catastrophe was too great, too overwhelming to be grasped while it was taking place and before its full extent was known. Such deliberations were liable to raise questions not only about the future of Zionism and the Yishuv but also about the continuing existence of the Jewish people in a hostile world and the weight of human values in the systems, Jewish and non-Jewish, that would be set up after the war. Only recently, in the 1970s and 1980s, did these deliberations begin. Their absence during the Holocaust strengthens the conclusion that the response of Yishuv officials at the time was largely a personal matter.

On the other hand, much energy was channeled within the Labor movement to cope with the challenge of Communism and the Soviet Union. Attitudes toward the Soviet Union lay at the root of much of the discord in the Labor movement during the 1940s, and in some circles they caused an ideological and emotional alienation from the problems of the Jewish people.

Communism had always posed a challenge to Zionism, especially when the Soviet Union, after being attacked by Germany in June 1941, led the struggle against fascism and became to many the symbol of this struggle. To a Europe under arms, the USSR also presented a human ideal diametrically opposed to that of Germany; the Soviet soldier was warm, rough, and very human. It was with admiration that the left in Palestine and the rest of the world followed the military fortunes of the Soviet people and the Red Army against the Nazis, and it hoped, despite its many reservations and disappointments, that Soviet society would provide an ideological and human response to the right-wing ideas and all they stood for.

The challenge of Communism forced Zionism to justify its ideology because Zionism pointed to a local and national solution, whereas Communism aimed at a world of equality, without classes and national frictions. The climax of this confrontation occurred just when reports on the extermination were reaching Palestine, at the end of October 1942. The internal discussions of this issue at the Mapai conference in Kfar Vitkin at that very time split the party. Its members quarrelled with a fervor that is incomprehensible today and seems detached from the burning issues of the period.

Eliezer Livne, a Labor movement intellectual, tried to explain this phenomenon some years later:

> The tendency to entertain leftist views of varying degrees is connected with a relative shallowness toward the Jewish people and their fate in the Diaspora, joined to an enthusiasm for religious socialist experiences. That is to say—the energy, the thought, the intuition, and the dedication that should have been applied to Jewish issues were, in part, unknow-

> ingly and unintentionally but nevertheless with enormous force, applied to socialist issues. For Jewish youth at that time, these issues served as a kind of substitute; they exchanged their Jewish beliefs for socialism, which made claims similar to those of religion.[33]

The prominence of leftist tendencies may have accounted in part for the lack of discussion in the Yishuv of Nazi ideology, the centrality of the Jewish issue in it, or the difference between Nazism and the profound anti-Semitism of other peoples. This was so despite the fact that since the time of Theodore Herzl, the father of political Zionism, Zionists had foreseen the catastrophe that anti-Semitism would bring upon the Jews. Ironically, the Jewish left devoted its best minds to questions concerning Soviet Communism, which took almost no notice of Zionism, while ignoring those concerning Nazism, which devoted time and energy to Jewish questions in a way that proved disastrous for the Jews.

The Jews of the free world did not view the Zionist movement or the Yishuv as a source of leadership for rescue operations, and no other source was created. The Jewish Agency Executive did not, and could not, claim to represent even the Yishuv, with all its political, religious, and ethnic factions, let alone the entire Jewish people. The history of the Zionist movement and of the Jewish people in the free world during the Holocaust is one of endless contentions over personal, partisan, institutional, political, ideological, and general issues. The lack of a unified Jewish front under a strong leadership at such a time is in the long run a national problem no less acute than that of the actual rescue possibilities: "Try to juxtapose the news about the annihilation of thousands of Jewish communities and the facts about the dissension and splits within the parties and factions day by day," said the historian Ben-Zion Dinaburg in 1943. "Future generations will examine and recount and record everything we say and do today . . . and I am very much afraid that the verdict of the next generation, the generation of our children, will be extremely severe."[34]

Did this state of affairs interfere with rescue activities and diminish their chances of success? To what extent were they dependent upon factors outside the Yishuv, first and foremost the Allies?

Hopes for rescue operations supported by the Allies were based on a belief in the humanity, stature, and goodwill of Roosevelt and Churchill and the usefulness of direct contacts with them. Although there can be little doubt that the nature of the catastrophe shocked the two leaders, it soon became apparent that their responses were

largely declarative. Their government bureaucracies did nothing to translate their words into action, nor did either head of state try to see that they did: the murder of Jews was only one aspect of a long and bloody world war.

During 1943 it became clear not only that such hopes were unrealistic but also that the Allies were in fact rejecting or hindering every rescue plan laid before them. Some Yishuv leaders, such as Ben-Gurion and Gruenbaum, were pessimistic even before the Bermuda Conference. Others, especially in the Histadrut, still hoped to influence the British by rousing public opinion in Britain or the United States. The chances of influencing the Soviet Union were far slighter, being as they were contingent upon success with the Western powers.

In the 1940s the Yishuv, unlike the Arab countries, had no bargaining card of any importance to the Allies—no oil or other natural resources, no strategic territories. Its manpower, which was considered loyal and skilled, was not particularly necessary after El Alamein. The mostly European Yishuv did not even possess the oriental charm that had enchanted many British officers and officials. Britain continued its prewar policy of rapprochement with the Arab countries even when it was apparent that their loyalties were dubious and their contribution to the war effort practically nil. The governments-in-exile in London had the status of poor relations, with virtually no influence on the three superpowers; and the Yishuv—a minority in a mandated territory—could not hope for more. As far as the Allies were concerned, Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, and Shertok were a tolerated annoyance, ceaselessly pressing, appealing, and demanding despite the war and all the difficulties it involved. In short, the Yishuv's position was even weaker than it had been before the war.

The Yishuv did what it could to exploit the conflicts and differences between the various British and U.S. government bodies and agencies, such as Congress and the administration, or the intelligence, political, and military echelons. The emissaries in Istanbul, for instance, were well aware of the differences between what they called the "good Englishmen"—British intelligence—and the "bad Englishmen"—the Foreign Office, as embodied in the British embassy in Turkey, and especially the Colonial Office, as embodied in the high commissioner and his officials in Palestine. But the possibilities available for influencing Allied policy through such channels were few and far between.

By the second half of 1944 Ben-Gurion appears to have had no illusions left about the Allies' attitude to the suffering of the Jews. On July 10, on the fortieth anniversary of Herzl's death, when it was evi-

dent that no negotiations or bargaining would stop the deportation of the Jews of Hungary and other communities to Auschwitz, he uttered "a long and bitter outcry" against the Allies:

> Why have you mistreated us so—you lovers of freedom and justice, fighters for democracy, liberty, equality, and socialism? Why have you so mistreated the Jewish people, standing by while our blood flows unceasingly . . . without raising a finger, without coming to our aid, without saying to the slaughterer, Enough! . . . Why don't you send arms to our rebels or let us come to them . . .
>
> Would you behave thus if thousands of American, English, or Russian women and old people were burned alive every day? Would you be so silent if Allied babes and sucklings were smashed daily against the paving stones? Why do you discriminate between the Jewish people and every other people on your side? Isn't our blood as red as yours and our honor as precious as yours?[35]

Yet only a few days earlier, Ben-Gurion attacked Gruenbaum for saying, in connection with the immigration of refugees, that "the English will use nice words . . . and then hinder us on all sides just as they are doing over the rescue work." Ben-Gurion answered sharply: "Mr. Gruenbaum's words reek of despair as far as England and the United States are concerned. To whom does he propose that we turn? Left entirely on our own, we will be unable to determine the political regime in Palestine immediately after the war. Does Mr. Gruenbaum have any other suggestions for international political action?"[36]

Before the war, Ben-Gurion had envisaged the future of the Jewish people and of Zionism as a single entity. The events of the Holocaust led him to distinguish between the two. Even if he despaired of Allied support for rescue operations on any scale, he could not risk leaving the Yishuv isolated in the international political arena. Nobody had any illusions about Britain's attitude toward the eventual establishment of a Jewish state. But Ben-Gurion hoped that after the war Britain would be forced by either circumstances, a change of government, or American and world public opinion, to change its policy.

Shertok, as director of the Agency's Political Department, negotiated with the British on immigration and rescue, enlistment and the Jewish brigade, and other issues more than any other member of the Agency. Although his experience with the British was far from encouraging, he too, like Ben-Gurion and Weizmann—who clung to his prewar British-oriented policies—knew that there was nowhere else to turn. "We should, on no account, despair of England. We should in fact, increase our efforts there and not lay all our burdens at America's door."[37] This remained the JAE's policy until the end of 1944.

Perhaps the most incisive analysis of the complex relations between the Yishuv and the Allies at that time came from Eliyahu Golomb when he tried to explain to Joel Brand why the Yishuv acted as it did regarding his mission. "We were not all that much 'Allies' of the English . . . but, without governments, nothing is possible. It was for that very same reason that you turned to the Germans."[38] In other words, seeking the assistance of those in power did not necessarily make one either an accomplice or an ally of that power. With regard to Brand's mission, the negotiations were not between "allies" but between an empire and a frail public dependent on its goodwill.

All these political calculations were, apparently, correct, and the Agency was understandably unwilling to take risks that might have jeopardized the continued existence of the Yishuv, the only remaining shelter for the Jews. On an emotional level, however, it is difficult to accept the fact that logical calculations and common sense arguments prevailed in the face of the continuing annihilation. Nearly all the steps taken by the JAE and the emissaries were within the bounds of "the rules of the game"; Germans living in Palestine were never taken hostage; the Agency did not support the Polish demand for reprisal bombings; there were no attempts to broadcast to Jews under the occupation; there was no persistent attempt to harass the British and Americans through massive strikes, hunger strikes, demonstrations, or hard-hitting exposés of their indifference; no one was dispatched independently to the areas under occupation, and there were no contacts with German authorities to discuss ransom offers. There was no uncontrollable impulse to make an extraordinary response in an extraordinary situation.

Possibly such actions would have changed nothing. The strong public pressure applied in Britain before the Bermuda Conference produced no concrete results. On the other hand, public outrage over the destruction of Hungarian Jewry in Auschwitz did play a role in stopping the transports from Hungary in July 1944 (although Horthy had other good reasons for responding); but it failed to move the Allies to bomb the gas chamber and the crematoria or to extricate the remnant of Hungarian Jewry. Such actions could at least have encouraged the Jewish people to believe that every possibility was being tried.

In retrospect, the Yishuv's faith in the Allies appears somewhat naive. The Allied nations and their leaders were seen as peoples guided by democratic values, their central tenet as the sanctity of human life. Faith in the moral progress of human civilization was a cornerstone of Zionism, and the idea that the Jewish people would find an honorable place in the family of nations pervades Herzl's *Altneu-*

land. Certainly it was logical to hope that such a place would be found after such terrible suffering. Without deeply rooted belief, it would probably have been impossible to continue the Zionist enterprise or go on living as a Jew.

Did the Holocaust affect the Yishuv's major Zionist goal? This goal was defined at the Biltmore Conference in New York in May 1942: the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in western Palestine. To Ben-Gurion, this implied the speedy immigration to Palestine of millions of Jews left homeless at the end of the war, creating a Jewish majority that would constitute the basis for the state. The Biltmore Program was approved by the Zionist Actions Committee in Jerusalem in October of that year. At that time the Yishuv numbered half a million people, and its absorptive capacity was at the core of every discussion of immigration. Ben-Gurion believed that Palestine could absorb many times that number—a revolutionary approach—whereas Weizmann was prepared to settle for the gradual immigration of 100,000 a year after the war; Shertok spoke of the immediate absorption of tens of thousands.[39] It is therefore likely that many of the supporters of the Biltmore Program, both in the United States and Palestine, regarded it as a basis for bargaining while believing, as Weizmann did, that immigration would be much more modest.

From the beginning of 1942 on, the American Jewish press reported frequently on the invading Germans' mass murder of Jews in the Soviet Union; there can be no question that the delegates to the Biltmore Conference had this information. In October reliable reports reached Palestine on the Final Solution, and in November the first exchange group brought news to Palestine from Europe. The Zionist Actions Committee mentioned these reports in its discussions in Jerusalem, but they had no effect on its subsequent approval of the Biltmore Program. The reports referred to the deaths so far of two million Jews, but there were nearly ten million Jews in Europe. Furthermore, there were millions of Jews living on other continents. Thus the general belief prevailed that after the war there would be millions of Jews to bring to Palestine. At the same time Ben-Gurion warned about the precarious position of the Jews in the Muslim countries: "There exists the danger of a terrible slaughter there that would make the slaughter in Europe seem less terrible by comparison." He also foresaw dangers to the Jews in postwar Europe (and his fears proved correct for the Jews of Poland, dozens of whom were murdered when they returned from the camps and forests hoping to find their families and homes). The Zionist enterprise was in danger: "There has never yet been a time like today when we have all been threatened with destruction . . . the destruction of the Jews of Europe is ruinous for Zionism for there will be no one left to build the state of Israel."[40]

One must differentiate, then, between Ben-Gurion's public allegiance to the Biltmore Program and the fears for the future he expressed in less public forums; and between the public presentation of Biltmore as a solution to the plight of the Jews in Europe in a way that would gain the support of the Allies and the Jews of the free world, and the deliberations within the Agency Executive and Mapai that dealt not only with the Jews of Europe but also with the plight of the Jews in Muslim countries.

Had the Zionist Actions Committee voted against the Biltmore Program on the grounds that the millions it intended to save would not be alive at the end of the war, it would have been a declaration of bankruptcy—a position that could not be countenanced. Biltmore was intended for all the "surviving remnant," and in 1943 this term was already being used in Palestine to refer to the more than a million Jews in Hungary and the Balkans, the 800,000 Jews of the Muslim countries, the half million who already lived in Palestine, and, of course, those remaining in the areas under Nazi occupation.

A subsequent issue concerned Zionist priorities. Gruenbaum's declaration that Zionism, or "the war of redemption" for building the Yishuv and establishing a state, conflicted with the rescue of European Jewry roused a storm of controversy. Most Mapai members, let alone the opposition parties, claimed that this was an artificial distinction: the Yishuv did not have the moral right to concentrate only on its own problems and existence just because it despaired of rescue operations; nor did it have the right to desist from making intensive rescue efforts out of fear that they would jeopardize the Yishuv's usefulness as a future haven.[41] In their view, the rescue operation should be considered as at least one of the central tasks of Zionism and a responsibility of the Jewish Agency. Ben-Gurion, however, made it clear in August 1943 in a Mapai Center meeting that he favored a clear distinction between rescue operations and the tasks of the Agency: "a confusion of terms [would be] a mistake both for the Agency and for the assistance given to the Jews of Nazi Europe." The Jewish world had not given the Agency

> authority over the Jewish pocketbook for all Jewish affairs. Unfortunately, there is no such multipurpose organization. There is the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Congress; there is the JDC and there are others, but the institution known as the Jewish Agency is a

> comprehensive Jewish organization for building Palestine. I do not want to say which is more important—building Palestine or saving one Jew from Zagreb. Perhaps it may sometimes be more important to save one child from Zagreb, but these are two different things . . . The Jewish Agency must concern itself with rescue—and it seems to me that it has indeed taken upon itself everything concerning the rescue of Jews by bringing them to Palestine. That is its task . . . the other thing—assistance, saving one more Jew, trying to prevent their eviction . . . it's extremely important. But this requires a different organization and different funds.[42]

A month later, during Diaspora Month, Ben-Gurion spoke at a conference of industrialists and businessmen about a "threefold rescue. First and foremost is the rescue of Jewish men, women, and children. This is enough to make any one of us unrestful until our conscience agrees that every one of us did at least a bit for this rescue." The second was "the rescue of the Yishuv's honor. We were greatly privileged. We were saved . . . not for ourselves alone, just as we did not come here for ourselves alone . . . This imposes a sacred duty upon us," not only to enjoy the economic prosperity of the Yishuv but also to use it to help, in some way, "to save the Jewish people." The third was the rescue of the Yishuv and Zionism. "No change of policy, no reiteration, even in the greatest faith, of the Balfour Declaration will be of any use if, God forbid, the remaining Jews of Europe are destroyed. What hope can there be then for the Jewish people? What will be the fate of the Yishuv in Palestine? I do not want to think about this; the idea is too terrible."[43]

The contradiction between these two statements made only a month apart—that the Jewish Agency's task was the building of Palestine and that rescue was the duty of every person living in Palestine—can perhaps be explained by Ben-Gurion's belief that, although the Jewish Agency did not have the authority to devote time and energy to rescue work, other organizations, such as the Histadrut and the Yishuv in general, should undertake rescue work and that funds from outside the Agency budget could and should be devoted to it. On this distinction, and on another one, he remained consistent throughout. On Herzl's anniversary and during Diaspora Month, both public occasions, Ben-Gurion expressed his emotions vehemently. Yet as a politician he suppressed them; he would not let his rage against Britain or his pain over European Jewry isolate or endanger the Yishuv. This seems to be the core of the endless public and historical debate about Ben-Gurion during the Holocaust.

In any case, any conflict of interest, if one ever really existed, between rescue and developing the Yishuv ceased to be relevant. Once the JAE despaired of large-scale rescue, small-scale operations could go on being carried out alongside the development of the Yishuv and not at its expense while Zionist activity proper continued: new settlements were created, the Palmach and the Haganah were strengthened by arms and more training, and new industrial enterprises were established. There was no practical change in the Yishuv's priorities. Rescue work became one more task among many, but not the most important.

Possibly the Yishuv could have invested more effort, personnel, and money in small rescue operations without damaging either its own development or its relations with the Allies. Perhaps more money, packages, and permits could have been sent; more people could have been smuggled across borders, especially in western Europe to Spain and Portugal; a mission could have been set up in Sweden; more could have been done to supervise activities in Istanbul, and more resourceful people could have been sent there. Maybe a way could have been found to transmit more encouragement, warnings, and information from Palestine or some other location to the areas under occupation, especially to the Nazi satellites. It might have been possible to save a few thousand—perhaps as many as 10,000 or 20,000—more.

But the Agency could not save the millions entrapped between their killers and those who were indifferent to or even interested in their deaths. The Jewish Agency Executive was a leadership caught in a double bind. On the one hand, it had to maintain and nurture the Yishuv so that it would survive and be able to absorb the refugees and fight for its own political future. To this end, it had to maintain its political contacts. On the other hand, a substantial number of the people for whom the Yishuv was being nurtured as a haven were being annihilated.

Today, there are two lapses in particular that disturb Jews: the time gap between events in Europe and the response to them, and the attitude gap between the nature of the Holocaust and the response of the Yishuv.

When the Yishuv finally grasped what was happening, the death camps were already working at full capacity, and trains were speeding toward them from all parts of the continent. The majority of emissaries did not leave for Istanbul until Himmler's deadline for the destruction of Polish Jewry had already passed. When the agreement between the Mobilization Fund and the Rescue Committee was signed,

the revolt in the Warsaw ghetto had already broken out. Himmler's order to stop the slaughter at Auschwitz was issued only months after the stark facts about that death factory had become known. The Jewish Agency and the JDC did not sign an agreement until shortly after the Allied invasion of Normandy and the Balkans. However great the difficulties in communications that delayed transmission of the facts to Palestine and the time required to absorb them, the gap between event and response cannot be fully explained.

The attitude of the Yishuv as a body politic is also disturbing. While the Holocaust was taking place there were, of course, individual leaders and private citizens who felt impelled to respond to the disaster; they volunteered for various tasks, donated large sums of money, pressed for radical action, housed the refugees. About 30,000 men and women joined the British army in order to fight the Nazis, and 5,000 others formed the Jewish brigade in the summer of 1944, fought on the fronts in Europe, and met the survivors with open arms. But the Yishuv continued its daily life as before; there was no mass display of outrage over the Holocaust, and attention was devoted chiefly to domestic problems, political factionalism, accelerated building, settlement, and industrial progress. Jews who have grown up in Israel find it extremely difficult to understand why the Yishuv never launched any unconditional, extraordinary action—outside the rules of the game—some preemptive operation commensurate with the pain and the rage. They are astounded by the Yishuv's failure to understand that, in the long run, the significance of Zionism's political achievements would be undermined if later generations were not sure that the plight of the Jewish people was the chief concern of the Zionist leadership.

However, Israelis today have long since forgotten or are unaware of the difficulties facing the Yishuv at the time. It was a minority in a country ruled by foreigners. It was a social-national experiment in its early stages. Its resources—in manpower, money, and arms—were small. Nor do they realize that, for all its limitations—and in the face of the efficiency of the German death machine and the interference of the Allies—the Yishuv in fact did more than it was ever given credit for—either then or now.

CHRONOLOGY
NOTES
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIOGRAPHICAL GLOSSARY
INDEX

THE BLUE AND THE YELLOW STARS OF DAVID

The Zionist Leadership in Palestine and the Holocaust 1939–1945

DINA PORAT

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