# 3 *A New Hebrew Body*

Judah was a young man of about thirty, a broad-shouldered and powerful giant. When he stood up with his legs apart, wearing high sandals, hands deep in his pockets and his huge chest projecting out, he looked like a firm rock or a solid marble statue. No one could take their eyes off him.[1]

Yosef Luidor, "Judah the Watchman," Palestine, late 1910s

The transformation of the Jewish body was perhaps the most radical change Zionists came up with, and it had far-reaching consequences for Jews and non-Jews alike. The yearning of German Jews in particular for a physical presence – to be seen, acknowledged, respected – was a major force behind the Zionist cultural revolution, which resolved to put Jews back into history in the most concrete sense of the word. After losing their political sovereignty in the second century CE, Jews turned their creative energies inward and built one of the world's first and most enduring imagined communities. For almost two millennia Jews thought of themselves as living in exile, cast out of their homeland. They retreated into isolated faith communities and rarely took any active part in the affairs of other nations. In the Christian world the animosity of the Church perpetuated their minority position. In the Muslim world their inferior status, along with that of Christians, was sanctioned by law. In both realms their political subordination exacerbated these conditions.

In Christian Europe Jewish minority status was especially fraught because of the combination of religious and political forces that shaped it. Religiously, Jews were considered the killers of Christ. The belief that they had not even possessed the courage to commit that crime directly, but did so by proxy, by betraying Jesus to the Romans, who executed him, proved their inherent cravenness to Christians. Politically, surrendering

[1] Luidor, "Judah the Watchman," in *Recklessness*, p. 47.

agency to others meant that Jews were almost always at the mercy of their host societies, sometimes resulting in physical attacks, along with other humiliations. And since resistance would have been severely punished, their reluctance to do so painted Jews as weak and cowardly. Moreover, since few Jews engaged in armed combat until the modern era, and since the concept of courage was often linked to combat, the image of Jews as physically unfit and mentally anxious prevailed in the popular European imagination. True valor is knowing how to suppress one's urges, says an old Hebrew saying: איזהו גיבור, הכובש את ייצרו. The Jew as a clumsy coward was a recurring image in antisemitic visual culture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Enlightenment and its Jewish manifestation, the Haskala, saw the first conscious attempt since antiquity to fight these limitations and restore to Jews the status of political subjects. From a political perspective the agenda of the Haskala was limited: to make a place for Jews at the various national tables in Europe. The price: giving up part of the old Jewish identity and adopting modern ways that would make cultural and political inclusion easier. In addition to general education that introduced Jews to the culture around them – most Jews knew surprisingly little about it, especially in the eastern parts of Europe – physical education was an important part of acculturation as well. It would have a lasting impact on modern Jewish history, primarily in the Yishuv.

## Jewish Athletes

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sport figured prominently in the national education curriculum in Europe. It was considered an important component of forging a modern nation at the time, a way to develop healthy bodies and healthy minds and teach team spirit and cooperation. Exercising young people together prepared them in the most literal sense for membership in the coalescing national community. Training them to work as one and move together was a symbolic projection of the young nation, and coordinated calisthenic exercises were commonly practiced.

In the newer nation-states of Central and Eastern Europe, where most of the continent's Jews lived then, these dynamics were pronounced. In Germany, a major force in the constellation of emerging European nations after 1848, national *Bildung* or self-cultivation through physical exercise was pursued with particular vigor, and Jews were happy to share

in it. The leveling quality of sports allowed them to take spontaneous part in building the new nation and at the same time to change their image as passive and weak. These aspirations were reflected in the names Jews gave their sports clubs: Maccabee, Bar Kokhba, Hasmonean, Hakoah. Judah Maccabee and Shimon Bar Kokhba were ancient Jewish generals, the Hasmoneans were an old Jewish dynasty, and Hakoah means power or force in Hebrew. The idea was not only to encourage Jews to take an active part in the contemporary national sporting culture, but to remind the world of the nation's glorious military past and cultivate Jewish athletes under its banner.

The physical modification of the Jewish body as part of a national regeneration was best expressed by Max Nordau when he spoke of a muscular Judaism. A doctor, Zionist ideologue, and political leader, Nordau was a harsh critic of the *fin de siècle* European bourgeoisie. He censured it for being disconnected from nature, for being inert, for wallowing in decadent pleasures, and he diagnosed it as degenerate. As a remedy, he suggested engaging in sports, getting closer to nature, and exercising a measure of asceticism. Nordau's ideas were not unusual at the time, but his categorical tone, and especially the Jewish context he gave it, were new, and they resonated loudly. Some of them had a lasting effect on Zionist culture and the shape it later took in Palestine.

The affinity between sports and Zionism came a bit later. The call for Jews to quit their old-fashioned ways and join the secular middle classes was a big part of the Haskala; as the poet Y. L. Gordon famously advised, "be a Jew at home and a person outside," היה אדם בצאתך ויהודי באהליך, be Jewish at home and act like regular folk (read: non-Jews) in public. It was a historic change that Zionism scaled up to the national level. Instead of limiting it to individuals, Zionists called for the creation of a national Jewish community that would fit more comfortably into the family of nations.

Initially, the physical regeneration of Jews involved sport mainly. It culminated in the first Jewish Olympic Games, the Maccabiah Games, held in Palestine in 1932. Named after Judah Maccabee, the games had three goals: to help Jewish athletes who were barred from various European competitions with the rise of Nazism; to showcase Jewish physical prowess in defiance of it; and to emphasize the emerging Hebrew nation in Palestine under Zionism. The games continue to this day, but the role of sport as an expression of Jewish strength evolved in the Yishuv to meet the more pressing needs of farming and then fighting.

## Hebrew Farmers

If sport was an immediate way Jews could participate in the life of their nations and prove their mettle, life in Palestine posed other physical challenges. The biggest was the need to develop a land that would support a modern community, which left little time for recreation. Instead, farming and construction work replaced athletics as an expression of Jewish physical fitness and became central tenets of Zionist ideology. Sport continued to be practiced, but it never gained the importance it had for Jews prior to the establishment of the Yishuv.

Farming had become a priority for the proto-Zionists of the Hibbat Zion (Lovers of Zion) movement, which inspired some 30,000 Jews to move to Palestine in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and establish a new kind of Jewish life there that would be rooted in the soil. They built *moshavot* on land they had bought and began a Jewish agricultural renaissance, even if they were not always aware of it, as we learn from documentary evidence of a meeting between one of those new Jewish farmers and Theodor Herzl. In 1899, during his short visit to Palestine, Herzl stopped at the *moshava* of Rehovot. As his carriage approached the village, a mounted group of young men rode toward it with great fanfare, ready to escort the celebrated Zionist leader. An account of that meeting was left by both parties, by Herzl as well as by one of the riders, Moshe Smilansky. Both were deeply moved by it.

For the young Smilansky, who had immigrated to Palestine a few years earlier at the age of sixteen in order to become a farmer, Theodor Herzl was a detached politician, and his so-called Zionism was equally suspect, vague words that had little meaning for the struggling Jewish farmers in Palestine. And yet the sight of Herzl had a strange effect on Smilanskly, who recorded the incident in his journal, noting the leader's tall, dark, and brooding figure, which struck him with awe. "Never before did I experience the trembling that comes with solemn reverence," he wrote; "my knees shook."[2] The encounter with the messianic figure of Herzl contextualized for Smilansky the greater political meaning of his own work in Palestine. Herzl, for his part, was equally moved to see the manly Jewish farmers he had written about come to life before his eyes.

[2] Moshe Smilansky, "Herzl Day in Rehovot" (יום הרצל ברחובות), available at https://benyehuda.org/read/24093.

Describing the meeting in his diary, Herzl wrote how he "had tears in [my] eyes at the sight of those quick and brave horsemen, whom the Jewish peddler boys of Europe may one day resemble."[3] It was a meeting between the visionary and his vision, and a glimpse into history in the very process of its making.

Farming was even more important for the next group of about 35,000 Jewish immigrants, who came to Palestine between 1904 and 1914 with a clear political vision of establishing a Jewish state. They were a disparate group, but included a minority of enthusiasts who shaped the character of the larger group and laid the ideological foundations for the Jewish state-in-the-making in far-reaching ways. In fact, when historians speak about these early twentieth-century immigrants, also known as the Second Aliyah,[4] they often refer to a small coterie of single young men and women, who came to Palestine ready to launch a cultural revolution that would change the nature of the Jewish people and the course of Jewish history. Their passionate belief in working the land with their own hands was the single most important principle that brought that change about. "Only land that will be irrigated with the sweat of our brow will be ours," declared the Zionist apparatchik Menachem Ussishkin.[5]

The sacralization of physical labor by members of the Second Aliyah was fed by a number of trends, such as the desire to fight antisemitic stereotypes of Jews as weak, awkward, effete, and nervous, that were common in European culture, as well as the attraction to socialism as a contemporary political ideology. "He longed for backbreaking work," wrote Yosef Luidor in a short story that gives literary expression to these romantic dreams.[6] "It was delightful to spend the whole day among the fragrant heaps of corn," Luidor wrote in another story, so much so that "sometimes, he felt dizzy with joy and had the sudden urge to throw away the pitchfork, leave the wagon and the horses and jump into the corn and roll around it like a little child."[7] The fact that Palestine was

[3] Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, vol. 2, p. 742, available at https://archive.org/details/TheCompleteDiariesOfTheodorHerzl_201606/.

[4] Aliyah means ascent in Hebrew, a term Zionists use to describe Jewish immigration to Palestine. Historians divide these early waves of immigration into periods, number the groups, and distinguish them by various attributes.

[5] Quoted in Ester Carmel-Hakim, *Hanna Meisel's Lifelong Mission* (שלהבת ירוקה), Yad Tabenkin, 2007, p. 31.

[6] Luidor, "Yoash," p. 63.

[7] Luidor, "Harvest," p. 33.

relatively undeveloped at the time allowed these European immigrants to think of it as empty, a clean slate on which to build a completely new society based on these principles.

Farming was practically fetishized by Zionists, even if most people in the Yishuv lived in towns. Consider the city of Tel Aviv, for instance, which was founded in 1909 and absorbed the bulk of Jewish immigrants who came to Palestine during those years. The rapid expansion of Tel Aviv – the city grew from 3,600 inhabitants in 1914 to 120,000 in 1936 – provided ample opportunities for construction work, and builders occupied an honorable place in the Zionist gallery of muscular Jews. And yet farmers far outranked them in the Zionist imagination as the highest expression of a cultural revolution that set out to renew the Jewish connection to the land and to create a new breed of Jews. "A nation who works its land will be strong and no storm shall move it," wrote the botanist Yitzhak Vilkansky, because "a farmer's plow is the best weapon."[8]

The New Jew or New Hebrew was first and foremost a cultural construction, the stuff of literature. Moshe Smilansky left one of the first sketches of it in a short story he wrote in 1911. Titled "Khawadja Nazer," it is a tale of a young Jewish immigrant, Lazar,[9] who comes to Palestine to work the land. Lazar is a twenty-year-old Russian lad of mixed heritage. Born to a Jewish father and a Russian Orthodox mother, he is drawn to the Land of Israel by the biblical stories he heard as a child. Lazar enters the story with dramatic flair: as he approaches the *moshava* on foot one night, he is ambushed and attacked by two Arab robbers. He overcomes them with ease and, when people from the village rush to his aid, they find that the robbers have been subdued by the strapping Lazar, who is standing over them, smiling calmly. "They didn't beat you?" the men from the *moshava* ask him anxiously. "Let them try," he replies confidently. "And they didn't try to get away?" they press. "All tied up?" he chuckles. In the village, Lazar quickly becomes an expert farmhand. "On his first day he worked the hoe as an expert and on his second day … he left even the experienced Arab laborers behind." In his free time Lazar studies Hebrew and dreams of reaching the Jordan River, which looms larger in his biblical imagination than the Volga of his native Russia. When he finally reaches the Jordan he is

[8] Quoted in Carmel-Hakim, *Hanna Meisel*, p. 31.

[9] The hero's name, Lazar, is mispronounced by the Arabs in the story as Nazer. Khawadja is an Arab honorific meaning "sir" or "mister." https://benyehuda.org/read/37791.

disappointed to see how small it is. But the puny river belies its might; as the giant Lazar jumps in for a swim he is caught by an undercurrent and drowns. An attempt to give him a proper Jewish burial fails when the members of the Jewish burial society discover that he is not circumcised. His body is returned to the river, "and the current carried [it] downstream further and further away upon the waves. … The Jordan has taken him!"

The image of Lazar is a literary manifestation of Nordau's muscular Jews, men who would "rise early and … not weary before sunset … have clear heads, solid stomachs and hard muscles" (see Figure 3.1).[10] The half-breed Lazar may not be Jewish according to *halakhah* (Jewish law), but that made no difference to an anti-clerical Zionism that looked for a new kind of Judaism or Jewishness based on history and heritage, not law. Lazar is a composite of Zionist fantasies. He is fit and strong: on his first day at work in the orchards of the *moshava* he handles back-breaking work with an ease that bewilders all and defies many accounts of the agonies suffered by Jewish immigrants unused to such work. He is brave and defiant: he is an easy match for the local Arabs and takes part in Bedouin war games as an equal. He is sexually attractive: the local Arab girls swoon at the sight of him. He is uncomplicated: Lazar is a man of few words, much better with his hands than with his head, the antithesis of the Jewish scholarly weakling. Finally, the biblical associations of the giant Lazar with both the Jewish Samson and the Gentile Goliath are sanctified by his symbolic death. By drowning in the Jordan River Lazar is baptized as a New Hebrew.

The literary prototype of Lazar and others like him was reinforced by Zionist ideologues such as A. D. Gordon, who touted the redemptive qualities of physical labor. Gordon believed that behavioral change would inspire an internal spiritual transformation; that working the land would figuratively ground Jews and make them into a new and more holistic community. Jewish pietism and mysticism, Hasidism and Kabbalah, provided Gordon with a more traditional context for his romance of individual agency, the idea that one person can make a difference and bring bigger changes. It resonated deeply with young Zionist settlers and provided them with a spiritual guide and a kind

[10] Quoted in George Mosse, *The Image of Man*, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 152.

**Fig. 3.1** A Zionist pioneer holding a pitchfork, 1937. Zoltan Kluger, Jewish National Fund archive.

of philosophy that sanctified their actions by creating a Zionist cult of labor.

"Cult" is not a misnomer. The conquest of labor, as Zionists called it, was the very essence of the Zionist cultural revolution, and it easily overshadowed every other aspect of Yishuv life. It was an anxious reaction to negative images of Jews as unproductive leeches feeding off the healthy body of the nation (see Figure 3.2). And it gave rise to a feisty socialist nationalism that cut into issues of labor and capital. Members of the Second Aliyah who were mistreated by Jewish farm owners

**Fig. 3.2** Zionists wanted to get away from the image of of Jews as bookish and immured, men who looked like these members of Hamizrahi Educational Committee in Staszów, Poland, 1919. Yad Vashem Archive, Wikipedia.

**Fig. 3.3** Zionist settlers rejected traditional Jewish images of masculinity, represented by Torah scholars. Influenced by Romantic Nationalist trends, they looked up to peasants as healthier models, people who lived a simple life close to the land. The first Zionist settlers at the beginning of the twentieth century mimicked the peasants they knew in Eastern Europe. But as they became acculturated to Palestine, fashion and body shape changed in response to local conditions, such as weather and an ideology that emphasized simplicity and reserve. Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Collection, Library of Congress.

**Fig. 3.4** Workers in Kibbutz Gal-On, 1946. Zoltan Kluger, National Photo Collection of Israel, Government Press Office.

suffered their exploitation in the name of Hebrew labor and because they wanted to prove their ability to work as well as if not better than Arab farmhands. "You don't deserve [the sweat of] Hebrew workers!" wrote Alexander Zaïd, who felt used by his Jewish employers. Anyway, "we don't work for you … the sweat of our brow is soaking a Hebrew soil in a Hebrew land" (see Figure 3.3).[11]

Zionist farmers wore their values on their sleeves, literally, and developed a fashion that fit their ascetic lifestyle. A survey of images from the Yishuv period shows that, while farmers in the *moshavot* and early kibbutzim were dressed like Eastern European peasants, including high leather boots and white shirts tucked into long trousers, by the 1920s Hebrew farmers began to reflect Zionist ideology more clearly. Some of these changes were objective, dictated by fashion, weather, or economic considerations, but others were more subjective, dictated by the ideological asceticism of the settlers, especially on the kibbutz (see Figure 3.4).

[11] Alexander Zaïd, *Diary* (לפנות בוקר פרקי יומן), Am Oved, 1975, p. 51.

## Muscular Jewish Women?

If a sense of masculine deficiency was one of the deepest motivations behind the rise of Zionism, it was not an anxiety shared by Jewish women, who were objectified by non-Jews in other ways. Jewish men were often mocked for being effeminate. Jewish women were exoticized. "The figure of Rebecca might indeed have compared with the proudest beauties of England," wrote Sir Walter Scott in his 1819 popular historical novel *Ivanhoe*.

> Her form was exquisitely symmetrical and was shown to advantage by a sort of Eastern dress, which she wore according to the fashion of the females of her nation. Her turban of yellow silk suited well with the darkness of her complexion. The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses, which, each arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls, fell down upon … a lovely neck and bosom.[12]

Jewish religious education played a role in this mix. The Haskala often censured the immured Torah scholar as an obstacle to progress, by which it meant assimilation. Zionists considered him an irrelevant weakling. But since Jewish women did not study Torah, they were left out of this debate. What role, then, were they to play in the Zionist revolution? How could Jewish women relate to Nordau's ringing call for a muscular Judaism that involved more than athletics?[13] An early suggestion by Ahad Ha'am to cast women as wives and mothers in the service of the nation – a common call among nationalists at the time – had little attraction for Zionists, who were much more moved by the egalitarian promise of socialism. Or so they professed.

In reality, practice did not always follow preaching, and in the early days of the Yishuv few women worked in an agriculture that was devoted mostly to cereal production. This was partly because the work was backbreaking. "I spent the whole day out in the field," wrote a young woman who tried; "I grabbed the plow and the oxen … but they

[12] Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*, ch. 7, available at the Gutenberg Project, www.gutenberg.org/files/82/82-h/82-h.htm.

[13] Gerald M. Berg, "Zionism's Gender: Hannah Meisel and the Founding of the Agricultural Schools for Young Women," *Israel Studies* 6: 3 (Fall 2001): 135–165, at pp. 143–144.

ran away and took the plow with them. I ran after them and returned them to the field, but they kept running away from me again and again. When I returned to the barn in the evening, I was completely exhausted and irritated."[14] Women also tried to get into construction work, but progress was slow and frustrating there as well.[15] Most men "think that the role of the idealistic young women who come to Palestine is to serve them," wrote one of them, "and the inexperienced young women accept it and believe that by cooking and serving" they advance the cause of Zionism.[16]

There were a few exceptions to this. At the training farm in Sejera, women were encouraged to do all farm work, and newcomers to the farm were struck by it at first. "At some distance from us," wrote one of them, "[I saw] oxen pulling plows followed by people who didn't look like Arab farmers at all. When we came closer, we were surprised to see that they were women … Esther, Sarah, Zipora, they were wearing *keffiyehs* like the men, long shirts, and wide trousers. So that's what the women here" are all about, the writer concluded with satisfaction.[17]

An attempt to expand the practice was made by Hanna Meisel, a pragmatic visionary, who came to Palestine in 1909 as part of the Second Aliyah and, unlike many of her fellow immigrants, wanted to give her mind to the revolution, not just her body. Labor, she thought, should be fortified with knowledge: agricultural knowledge. Meisel did not want to compete with men, she wanted to work alongside them. Rather than call for a muscular womanhood, she wanted Jewish women to become well-trained farmers and develop a "minor" agriculture of vegetables, dairy, and poultry. She called for the new Jewish woman to "leave the four walls of the house, not for the fields, but for the garden. And [to] bring science with her."[18] She was encouraged by the more egalitarian practices at Sejera, and in 1911 convinced the Zionist establishment to let her open an agricultural school for women.

[14] Quoted in Carmel-Hakim, *Hanna Meisel*, p. 25.
[15] See, for example, the story of Henya Pekelman, who worked as a construction worker in Palestine and left a diary with the story of her difficult experiences: *The Life of a Female Worker in Palestine* (חיי פועלת בארץ), Tel Aviv University Press, 2007.
[16] Quoted in Carmel-Hakim, *Hanna Meisel*, p. 21.
[17] Smadar Sinai, *Women and Gender in Hashomer* (השומרות שלא שמרו), Yad Tabenkin, 2013, p. 57.
[18] Berg, "Zionism's Gender," p. 142.

Surprisingly, Meisel encountered unexpected criticism from her own students, who were happy to study the principles of vegetable gardening and animal husbandry, such as dairy and poultry farming, but not too thrilled to learn household management, which they thought too traditionally feminine. "Kitchen work is a bitter necessity, but why make it into a cause"? wrote one of the students in the school.[19] And despite its early success, the Maidens' Farm (חוות העלמות), as it was called, was forced to close five years later because of World War I. But during its short life the school was a modest success that made a small dent in a cultural revolution that, otherwise, disappointed many women.[20]

Meisel did not feel inadequate as a woman, and she did not want to reform Jewish traditional education, which was not open to women anyway. She was interested in another kind of education, an agricultural education that would allow women to make meaningful contributions to Labor Zionism, and not just play supporting roles. Meisel's ideas inspired similar schemes, such as the Female Workers' Farm (משק הפועלות), a hands-on botanical school for women that was set up in Jerusalem in 1919, and the Bruria Group (משק ברוריה) in Petah Tikva, an agricultural school for observant Jewish women. These initiatives highlighted the great appeal that working the land as a revolutionary act enjoyed at the time and the wish of many women to join that revolution as equals. If Smilansky spoke of a Zionism that stressed the development of a new Jewish masculine body, Meisel spoke of a Zionism that stressed the development of a new Jewish feminine mind. In the context of traditional Jewish culture, both initiatives were revolutionary.

And while Jewish men demonstrated their revolutionary credentials by developing muscles, Jewish women showed theirs by taking off their clothes – by exchanging the layers that covered them in the traditional societies of the Jewish Diaspora for clothes that exposed their bodies and freed them to work in the heat of Palestine (see Figure 3.5). It was a bold statement. In the early part of the twentieth century most women in the West wore dresses. Skimpy fashion was limited to the wealthy, for evening wear or for summer leisure activities. By exposing their bodies, female farmers signaled their participation in the Zionist cultural revolution and found a way to be "womanly" as part of it. It wasn't

[19] Carmel-Hakim, *Hanna Meisel*, p. 45.

[20] For agricultural students at Meisel's Maidens' Farm, see https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1912_3__(קבוצת_העלמות)_מייזל_חנה_מקבוצת_עלמות_בעבודת_גן_הירק_בחצר_כנרת_btm11322.jpeg.

**Fig. 3.5** At the beginning of the twentieth century, female laborers in Palestine still wore dresses. Merchavia 1917. Bitmuna Archive.

**Fig. 3.6** Later, working women exchanged their dresses for shorter clothes that exposed their bodies and signaled their participation in the Zionist cultural revolution more visibly. The skimpy outfits of Zionist working women were, once again, the result of ideology and circumstance. Women's shorts were tailored from dresses brought over by settlers who had no use for them in Palestine. The first models were cut like skirts and fitted with elastic bands at the bottom to allow for freedom of movement without exposing the wearer too much. Later models were shortened for practical considerations of work, climate, and economy. Zoltan Kluger, National Photo Collection of Israel, Government Press Office.

a sexual gesture, even if men did not always understand it. As David Biale tells us in *Eros and the Jews*, the Zionist pioneers were ascetic and prudish.[21] If Jewish men announced their historical subjectivity by flexing their muscles, Jewish women did so by uncovering their bodies in a direct and forthright way (see Figure 3.6).

## Muscular Arab Jews?

The historical forces that gave rise to Zionism were particular to Europe. First, because modern nationalism originated there. Second, because the economic and legal situation of Jews toward the end of the nineteenth century was particularly dire in the eastern parts of the continent. The liberating message of Zionism was received differently by Jewish communities in the Islamic world, though not by all of them. The Jews of Yemen were a notable exception, and in the 1880s a number of them began arriving in Palestine. But their integration into the Yishuv was not smooth. The main difficulty was the religious traditions of the Yemenis, which an anti-clerical Zionism found hard to stomach.

The fact that the Yemeni did not look – well – European did not help either. It did, however, raise hopes that as so-called locals, "who lived like the Arabs, and were also modest, undemanding, and hardworking people," they would be able to endure the climate and the hardships of farming better than Eastern European settlers. In 1912 a group of them was sent to settle a farming community in the north of the country by the Sea of Galilee (see Figure 3.7).[22] It was a miserable failure. None of the Yemenis had any farming experience. Moreover, their insistence on retaining their religious practices ultimately doomed their future as Zionist farmers. It cost them the sympathy and support of the Zionist–socialist establishment, which refused to finance religion.

The issue was widely debated at the time in the Zionist press, which was unanimous about the aim of Labor Zionism: to establish a productive Jewish community in Palestine based on socialist values. Levantine Jews, or Sephardim, as they were often called at the time, were welcome to join that project, but on condition that they adopt these values. "Are we against hiring Sephardi laborers?" asked some of the papers. Surely not. "But they must uphold our national socialist values. If not, what is

[21] David Biale, *Eros and the Jews*, University of California Press, 1997.
[22] Arthur Rupin, *My Life* (חיי), part 2, Am Oved, 1947, p. 103.

**Fig. 3.7** A Yemeni Jewish family in their settlement by the Sea of Galilee, 1910s. Hundreds of Jews from Yemen emigrated to Palestine in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Most of them settled in Jerusalem. In the early 1900s some of them were encouraged to join Zionist farming communities. The experiment failed because of a fundamental clash between the religiosity of the Yemenis and the anti-clerical dogma of Zionism. Leo Kahn, Israel Archive Network project (IAN), Yad Ben Zvi Archive, the Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage, the National Library of Israel.

the difference between a Levantine Jewish laborer and an Arab laborer? They dress the same, act the same, speak Arabic, and are indifferent to our national and socialistic ideals." [23]

After almost twenty difficult years the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) Yemenis were finally moved elsewhere, and their settlement was dismantled. On a personal level many people sympathized with them. On an institutional level they were patronized, and their petitions to build synagogues and set up religious schools for their children were

[23] Yehoshua Kaniel, "Sephardi Jews as Part of the Second Aliyah" (אנשי העליה השניה ובני העדה הספרדית), in Yisrael Bartal, ed., *Studies in the Second Aliya* (העלייה השניה, מחקרים), Yad Yitzhak Ben-Tzvi, 1997, pp. 317–318.

flatly refused. "The lack of a quorum for prayers (minyan) depresses the Yemenis to no end," the authorities admitted, but they still insisted that "we most certainly cannot allow more people to join their community."[24] Like most revolutions, the Zionist cultural revolution was ruthless, and it imposed its values with rigor and severity. The Kinneret Yemenis were willing to work the land, but they didn't understand why they had to shave off their beards and stop praying. Unlike some of the Eastern European Zionists they did not believe there was anything wrong with their old Judaism, and the demand to become a new kind of Jew made little sense to them.

## Jewish Fighters

If the Hebrew farmer in Palestine was created in reaction to antisemitic stereotypes in Europe, then its complement, the Hebrew fighter, was created in reaction to the realities of life in Palestine. Ironically, it was the success of the Yishuv that made it take up arms, as it were. As the Yishuv prospered and grew it displaced the Arab population, who resisted it with increasing determination.

At first, few Zionists imagined that the Arabs of Palestine would resent them. Zionist settlers saw themselves as returning sons and, anyway, believed that their progressive European culture would be welcomed by the natives of an underdeveloped land. "Were not the older inhabitants of Palestine ruined by the Jewish immigration?" asks a character in Herzl's utopian novel, *Altneuland*, "and didn't they have to leave the country" after the Jews arrived? "What a question!" replies the Arab host; "it was a great blessing for all of us."[25] But the realities of settlement changed that, and what began as an economic issue soon turned into a political rivalry that became progressively more violent.

Even before defense became an issue, Zionists thought of their settlement initiatives in surprisingly military ways. They drew heavily

[24] Gur Melamed, "The Kinneret Yemenis" (פרשת תימני כנרת), Master's thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 2005, p. 49, available at www.haskama.co.il/mediation/document/yaman.pdf.

[25] Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland*, book III, available at www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-altneuland-quot-theodor-herzl.

on a military lexicon, and used terms such as conquest, legion, and regiment to speak of farming, road building, and construction. The Labor Regiment, גדוד העבודה, was the name of an early construction cooperative. The word conquest, כיבוש, was frequently used to refer to settlement projects. Farming and construction became the Conquest of the Wilderness, fishing and shipping became the Conquest of the Sea, and the phrase Conquest of Labor instilled the cult of labor by inspiring Jewish workers and keeping Arab workers out.[26]

Military jargon reflected organizational realities and psychological needs. Most of the settlers who worked on those projects were young people with no property or capital, who came to a land that was unfamiliar and less developed than their homelands. Cooperatives not only fit their socialist leanings, they also made sense in the challenging environment of the Yishuv. They allowed for quick and flexible deployment, and they promoted a sense of urgency and mission that energized the self-anointed pioneers and eased the hardships they faced.

Before long, however, fighting became more than just a metaphor. As the Zionist political vision became clearer to Arabs, their objections to it grew. Initial resistance was economic and involved trespassing for the most part. Some of the land Jews bought in Palestine had tenant farmers on it, and they did not like being removed. Grazing habits, especially by nomadic Bedouin, were not always compatible with fixed property lines either. And so the need to protect their property was behind some of the first Zionist defense initiatives, such as Hashomer (The Guard), a security collective that was assembled in 1909 to protect Jewish farms. Hashomer was the biggest and most successful organization of its kind, but it was not the first or only one. The economic and political complexities that Jewish nationalism introduced to a region in turmoil after the dissolution of Ottoman rule led to the creation of other defense initiatives, most of them illicit. This was the background behind the emergence of the Hebrew fighter and an important moment in the evolution of Israeli militarism.

Since traditional Jewish culture idolized scholars rather than fighters, Zionists developed an original Jewish fighting type based on other

[26] Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, University of California Press, 1991 [1989].

sources – none of them were modeled after the growing number of Jewish men who served in European armies or on the defense initiatives of Polish Jews in the early part of the twentieth century.[27] The first inspirational source were the Cossacks, the legendary horsemen of the Ukrainian steppes, who were romanticized in Russo-Ukrainian culture as freedom fighters (see Figure 3.8).[28] Strangely, their strong antipathy toward Jews did not prevent members of Hashomer from adopting them as models and from fantasizing about a "Cossack-like Jewish race" of farmer-soldiers who would lead simple lives close to the land and "develop bodies strong enough to take that land by force."[29]

The second were the Bedouin of Palestine, who were closer at hand and, at first, had more attraction for members of Hashomer, who adopted their dress and customs; they rode horses, covered their heads with the traditional Bedouin headdress, the *keffiyeh*, wore bullet chains across their chests, learned colloquial Arabic, and picked up other traits from the Arab natives of Palestine. The trend began earlier, in fact. In 1891 Zeev Yavetz joyfully reported how "as we were leaving one of the vineyards, we saw an Arab riding toward us, wrapped in a dark cloak and wearing a white cloth that was tied around his head with a rope … [suddenly] he called to us in [perfect] Hebrew… 'Are you an Arab?' I greeted the rider with a smile." Yavetz was delighted to learn that the rider was Jewish and went on to marvel at how authentic he looked, "Why, you are an Arab in every way, the way you speak, the way you ride."[30] The fighting culture and nomadic habits of the Cossacks and the Bedouin appealed to the first Hebrew guards, who lived on the fringes of Zionist settlements to provide protection. It was an unusual colonial paradigm that blended mimicry of the natives with a sense of settler superiority.

But the impact of the Bedouin on Jewish fighting culture was brief. As long as the native Arab population outnumbered the immigrant Jewish community significantly, it made sense to cultivate good relations with them and to borrow from their culture, even if not everyone approved

[27] Derek Penslar, *Jews and the Military: A History*, Princeton University Press, 2013.
[28] Yisrael Bartal, *Cossack and Bedouin: Land and People in Jewish Nationalism* (קוזק ובדווי), Am Oved, 2007.
[29] Ibid., p. 486.
[30] Zeev Yavetz, from a short report titled "Travels in Palestine" (משוט בארץ), quoted in Oppenheimer, *Barriers*, p. 43.

**Fig. 3.8** Cossacks, 1855–1860. Wikimedia.

**Fig. 3.9** Armed Bedouin, nineteenth century. Library of Congress.

**Fig. 3.10** Members of Hashomer organization in Merchavia, 1913. Bitmuna Archive.

of it (see Figure 3.9). Joseph Klausner mocked his contemporaries for their excitement at the sight of young men who "try to pass themselves off as Bedouins, Jews who ride a horse and handle a gun like pros … and exhibit a spirit of savagery that strikes the Arabs with awe." He was certainly glad to see Jews "shedding their diasporic cowardice and scholastic idleness and returning to a vigorous life closer to nature." But not at the expense of adopting a "primitive" and "half-savage" culture, of exchanging one diaspora for another.[31] The issue was resolved after the Yishuv grew and the conflict with the Arabs escalated. Both killed the motivation for cultural identification.

Ultimately, the Cossack model had a greater influence on Zionist militarism because the Eastern European Jewish settlers were more familiar with it and, perversely, more comfortable with it too. "We shall raise our children to live together, work the land, and defend it," wrote the legendary guard, Alexander Zaïd, who went on to describe a Jewish Sparta, where "every boy and every girl, with no exceptions, will learn to use arms and ride noble mares."[32] It was a self-fulfilling prophecy that came to epitomize Yishuv life, an affinity born of necessity and strengthened by logistics. Since the Yishuv could not raise and sustain an army – it had little money, scant infrastructure, and was politically dependent – kibbutz communities became convenient training grounds that were used as barracks too. They kept servicemen hidden from the British and provided extra working hands during harvest times.

The image of the *shomer*-cum-soldier boosted the military credentials of Zionism as a national movement. At times it seemed that the combative spirit that developed in the Yishuv and the rhetoric that went with it were a delayed reaction to centuries of oppression as much as they were a reaction to Arab antagonism. In some cases it led to the abuse of power by members of Hashomer, whose founders adopted a disturbing motto: "Judea has fallen by blood and fire / by blood and fire Judea shall rise again" (see Figure 3.10) It did not bode well for future relations between Arabs and Jews.[33] "We felt the flutter of history's wings," waxed the young Zionist leader Berl Katznelson, after

[31] Joseph Klausner, "Fear" (חשש), *Hashiloach* 17 (1907), pp. 574–576.
[32] Zaïd, *Diary*, p. 62.
[33] Gur Alroey, "In the Service of the Colony, or Arrogant Tyrants?" (משרתי המושבה או רודנים גסי רוח? מאה שנה לאגודת ‹השומר›) *Katedra* 133 (2009): 77–104. (פרספקטיבה היסטורית

enlisting in the Jewish Brigade of the British Army during World War I. "We felt the intensity of the historical moment with unprecedented keenness … and became privy to history's secret."[34] The secret was the opportunity Jews received to show their mettle and to finally avenge their long history of persecution. It became the ultimate expression of Nordau's call for a muscular Judaism. What began as an invitation for Jews to be more athletic turned into the cultivation of a Jewish working body and then a Jewish fighting body that represented the Zionist revolution in the most concrete and personal way.

## Fighting Jewish Women

If women were among the founding members of the first Zionist defense societies, their role in those societies diminished with time. The first Zionist defense initiative was organized in 1907, a secret society called Bar-Giora, after a Jewish general who fought the Romans. In 1909 it evolved into a bigger outfit, Hashomer, a security collective that provided guards to Jewish farming settlements based on changing needs. In 1920, as Arab economic resentment became more political in nature, Hashomer was turned into a more permanent militia, the Hagana (Defense), which became the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) after independence. Women were integral to these societies from the very start. Three women, Manya Shochat, Rachel Yana'it Ben-Zvi, and Zipora Zaïd, earned their military credentials by helping to create these organizations and by serving in them with distinction. But as they grew and expanded, most of the women who later joined them did so in supporting roles.

The hatching ground for Bar-Giora was the Sejera training farm in the Galilee. Women worked side by side with men on the farm, but they were not given many opportunities to share guarding duties, except during emergencies. Rachel Yana'it Ben-Zvi recalled how, during one of those emergencies, she and "Esther stood by the window. Esther had a gun, and she gave me one too. It was my first time as a watchwoman, and in the Galilee too!" The Galilee was the Palestinian Wild West at the time, sparsely populated with Bedouin, who were not always happy about their new Jewish neighbors. "I felt excited and proud and didn't care anymore that I wasn't officially assigned to the post but volunteered for it."[35] During another emergency, Sejera guards were rushed to the

[34] Anita Shapira, *Berl* (ברל), Am Oved, 2000, pp. 135–136.
[35] Rachel Yana'it Ben-Zvi, *We Are Immigrating to Israel* (אנו עולים), Am Oved, 1962, p. 98.

**Fig. 3.11** Zipora Zaïd, 1892–1968. One night, while on guard duty at the farm in Sejera, Zipora saw a figure she didn't recognize approaching her post. "Min haddah?" she asked, using the Arabic for "Who is it?," and drew out her gun. The alarmed figure quickly identified himself as one of her comrades, who had come to check up on her. "Don't ever do it again," she told him, "or else …" From an oral interview with Zipora Zaïd, Central Zionist Archive. Tal Raveh Zeid, late 1920s–early 1930s. Wikimedia.

aid of a neighboring farm and did not allow women to join the expedition. After they left, Zipora and another woman followed the men and caught up with them midway. "The men were shocked to see us. Our doubters were ashamed to look us in the face, and our supporters rejoiced. When we arrived [at the farm] they divided everyone into shifts irrespective of gender" (see Figure 3.11).[36]

The women who joined Hashomer and those who hoped to do so worked hard to qualify for inclusion, but "it wasn't easy for [them] to gain the respect of the men," wrote Alexander Zaïd. "Ostensibly, we

[36] Sinai, *Women and Gender*, p. 69.

were equal members of the collective. In reality, the men were bona fide members while the women, who suffered with us, worked hard, and took care of us, were not officially recognized as members of the collective."[37] It had nothing to do with qualifications. Alexander Zaïd admitted that "Keila [Zipora's sister] was an especially good shot," and that Zipora, his wife, "was an expert horsewoman," better than he was.[38] Many of the women also cut their hair short, dressed like men, and walked around wearing *keffiyeh*s. "I wasn't used to seeing women dressed like men," wrote someone who saw the young Manya Shochat for the first time and thought, "My God, she's a man!"[39] But, beyond the few charismatic female founders, most of the women who later joined Hashomer did not do so as fighters. Even the two women who died defending Tel-Hai in 1920, a Zionist Alamo of sorts, did not change that. Most men still believed that women were not up to the rigors of the job, and farmers refused to hire them as guards. "Throughout my years of service at Hashomer I felt undervalued," wrote a frustrated member, who "could not accept the passive roles women were given. It made me very sad."[40]

The escalating conflict with the Arabs softened some of the resistance to the service of women in combat roles. "We don't want men guarding us anymore," said a delegate to a 1937 conference that finally changed things somewhat. She was probably referring to the feeling of being protected and monitored by men. Still, both farming and fighting in the Yishuv reflected many of the gender divisions of the traditional societies Jews left behind in the Old World. The Zionist revolution, it seems, only went so far.

## Hebrew Dance: Sculpting a New Jewish Body

The Jewish body in Palestine was reshaped by labor, by war, and by the sun. The vibrant dance culture that developed in the Yishuv was meant to add grace to it as well. "Let the liberated, free [Jewish] body be created," Margalit Orenstein wrote in 1925, "straight, full of the rhythm, the power, and the essence of the old-new homeland."[41] Orenstein was a pioneering choreographer and dance teacher. Together with several

[37] Zaïd, *Diary*, p. 61.
[38] Sinai, *Women and Gender*, pp. 68–69; Zaïd, *Diary*, p.46.
[39] Sinai, *Women and Gender*, p. 33.
[40] Ibid., p. 78.
[41] Gabi Aldor, *And How Does a Camel Dance?* (איך רוקד גמל), Resling, 2011, pp. 50–51.

other dance pioneers, most of them women, she laid the foundations for modern dance and folk dance schools in the Yishuv. Both came out of modern dance movements in Europe, like most, but not all, of the Zionist dance pioneers.

Early twentieth-century attempts to get away from classical dance traditions and create a new body language that would fit the post-World War I era better presented a great opportunity for Zionist dance teachers. They were especially keen on two contemporary dance trends. The first was expressionism; the second was mythology and ethnography. The first allowed Hebrew dancers the freedom to sculpt the new Jewish Palestinian space with their bodies, as Orenstein put it.[42] The second enabled them to give their creations a specifically Hebrew character by incorporating biblical and folk motifs.

Like many of the Zionist innovations, the creation of dance was deliberate and self-conscious. But unlike farming or fighting, dance as an art form allowed for a more symbolic expression of New Hebraism, one that could also be performed publicly and ritualized. It is not surprising that both art and folk dancing in the Yishuv began on stage, as choreographed performances for theater, for pageants, and especially for the renewed Zionist holiday calendar.

## *Artistic Dance*

Zionist ideology permeated every aspect of life in Palestine, including the arts. Literature, visual art, music, and dance became symbolic channels for spreading and reflecting the revolutionary ideas of Zionism. But if ideology could be clearly expressed in words and through visual images, abstract arts such as music and dance presented a more difficult challenge.

One way to meet that challenge in dance was by creating works that incorporated ethnic elements and referred to the Bible. Rina Nikova (1898–1972), for instance, an orientalist dancer and choreographer, was adept at it. She traveled to remote corners of Palestine to study how Arab women walked, how they balanced heavy loads on their heads, and how heat and rain affected their movements. Back in her studio she transformed her observations into modern works she practiced with her Yemeni dance troupe.[43] Contemporary audiences were intrigued

[42] Ibid., p. 55.

[43] Nina Spiegel, *Embodying Hebrew Culture: Aesthetics, Athletics, and Dance in the Jewish Community of Mandate Palestine*, Wayne State University Press, 2013, p. 60.

by the results. "Rina Nikova is doing wonders in her achievements of teaching her Yemeni girls discipline without taking away their temper and natural graces," wrote one critic, who nevertheless thought Nikova's orientalism went a bit too far.[44]

Ethnography was a tempting option for choreographers who worked in a near vacuum, cultivating an art form that was relatively absent from Jewish traditional life. It was the first route for many Zionist dance pioneers, such as Rina Nikova, Baruch Agadati, Leah Bergstein, and Yardena Cohen, who tried to do two things at once: to refer to older Jewish traditions, and to give bodily expression to the new Jewish space in Palestine and to its spirit of New Hebraism.

In the early 1920s Baruch Agadati (1895–1976) made a splash in the Yishuv with a series of dance performances that mixed Hasidic, Yemeni, and Arab motifs in new and arresting ways. When he took it to Europe a few years later he was received enthusiastically as a representative of the new Palestinian Hebraism by both Jews and non-Jews. We are honored to have "the excellent and original Hebrew dancer," read a Lithuanian Hebrew newspaper in 1929. It went on to commend Agadati for "combining the devotion and yearning of Hasidic dances with the ecstasy of Yemeni dances and the vigor of the young pioneers in the Land of Israel … [to produce] a most refined and original Hebrew dance."[45] Later, Agadati abstracted ethnographic details into more holistic works, such as a dance he based on anti-Jewish gestures or his popular version of the Hora, an Israeli folk dance based on Eastern European and Bedouin motifs (see Figures 3.12 and 3.13).[46]

The dancer and choreographer Leah Bergstein developed a different approach that mixed biblicism with ethnography, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Bergstein focused on the festival calendar, and her choreography for the Omer celebration on her kibbutz, Ramat Yohanan, became an iconic performance of a reconstructed Hebrew nativism (see Chapter 4).

"Up until [a few] years ago," wrote Orenstein in the late 1920s, "people here in Tel Aviv [did not pay particular attention] to the sea.

[44] Ibid., p. 128.

[45] From a documentary film, *Baruch Agadati*, Israel Broadcast Authority, Bet Ariela Dance Library, Tel Aviv.

[46] For a more nuanced study see Nicholas Rowe, "Dance and Political Credibility: The Appropriation of *Dabkeh* by Zionism, Pan-Arabism, and Palestinian Nationalism," *Middle East Journal* 65: 3 (2011): 363–380.

**Fig. 3.12 & 3.13** Zionist dancers created original modern dances by incorporating ethnic motifs from a variety of sources. Here, Baruch Agadati performs a dance based on Hasidic motifs (left) and a dance based on Arab motifs (right). Bat Sheva and Yitzhak Katz Archive, Information Center for Israeli Art, Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

... Lately, however, there are hundreds of young men and women who celebrate their bodies on the beach, in the sunlight, in the air and in the water."[47] Zionist dance practitioners wanted to capture this new sense of bodily freedom and give it symbolic form. "How does a camel dance?" joked the Austrian-born Orenstein after she moved to Palestine, and went on to create dances such as *The Waves*, in which she tried to capture her new Mediterranean environment and express it through movement.

## *Folk Dance*

Zionist mythology is full of stories about pioneers bursting into song and dancing spontaneously into the late hours of the night, and images of those dance circles abound in Zionist iconography. Exaggerated or

[47] Aldor, *And How Does a Camel Dance?*, p. 55.

not, the stories testify to the great enthusiasm that animated the young men and women who came to the Land of Israel "to build it and be built by it," as they sang. At first settlers vented their energy and passion through dances they remembered from home, mostly in Eastern Europe. Later they expressed their joy in a more original way by dancing a circle dance called the Hora.

The Hora became hugely popular in the Yishuv (see Figure 3.14). As a large and simple circle dance that could go on and on, it became one of the most immediate ways to come together and celebrate the new Jewish community that had formed in Palestine. It was also one of the most recognized symbols of it. The exact provenance of the dance is not clear. It was probably based on similar circle dances that were common in the eastern parts of Europe, in Romania especially, where they were known by the same name, Hora, a derivation of the Greek Khoros, for a group or circle of performers. Hasidic circle dances could have been another influence, as was the Dabke or Debka, as it was called in Hebrew, a local Arab circle dance that captivated Jewish settlers,

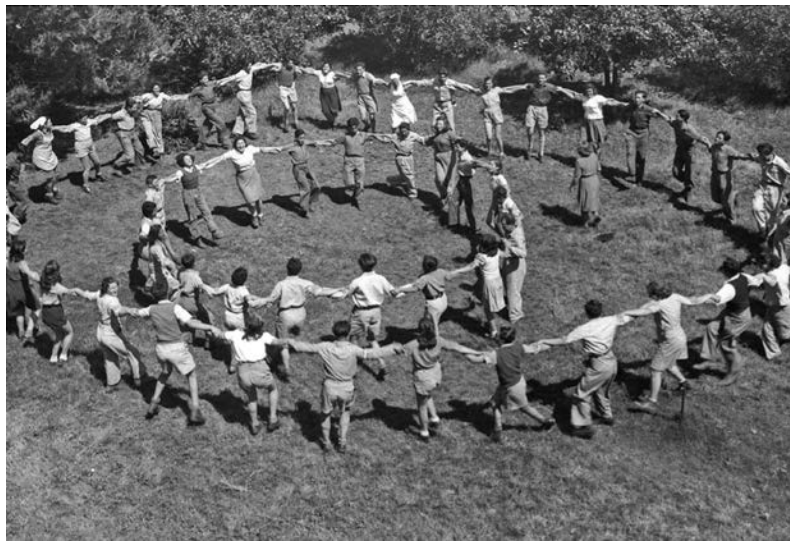

**Fig. 3.14** Agriculture students dancing the Hora, 1946. The circle and the dance steps were borrowed from Eastern European dances. The entwining of the arms by the dancers was adopted from a local Arab dance, the Dabke or Debka. National photo collection, Israel Government Press Office.

who "might have known [the dances] once in the forgotten past and re-recognized them now," as one dancer mused.[48]

Circle dances were already part of life in the *moshavot*, but from the 1920s on they spread widely and became a popular pioneering pastime. The Hora had many variations, was frequently modified, and "became a permanent fixture of communal life," wrote Avigdor Hame'iri. The dance allowed young people "to free themselves from the bonds of exile, from their painful legacy of hatred, low self-esteem, submissiveness, mimicry, and prejudice." The Hora became an outlet for everything. "When we felt happy – Hora! When, God forbid, something bad happened – Hora! When in doubt – Hora! Hora is the essence of our vibrant life. … Hora is our prayer."[49]

The Hora was only the first in a growing list of folk dances that were enthusiastically embraced by a society whose cultural traditions were still meager. Folk dancing, writes Nina Spiegel, was a socialistic art form par excellence that fit Zionism especially well: it was participatory, accessible, required no training, and provided a spiritual connection to land and people without being religious.[50] The new tradition also owed its popularity to passionate innovators and promoters such as Gurit Kadman (1897–1987), who established a national folk-dance festival in 1945. It was a huge success that attracted thousands of people from across the Yishuv. They came to celebrate their new nation by dancing, and to affirm it by watching dances performed on stage. "I am not sure if you could call it folk dancing," Kadman reflected about those early days. "They were only suggestions, hopes, the start of a folk dancing tradition" that would need time to solidify. "Many of the dances were obviously European, with few original numbers, Mizrahi for the most part."[51]

But if only a few of the dances were new, a reporter who covered the second festival two years later, in 1947, was overjoyed "to see the young generation that had grown up in the land, straight bodies, tall, flexible, filled with tension and expression. The joy of life is stirring

[48] Rowe, "Dance and Political Credibility," p. 366.
[49] Naomi Bahat-Ratson, "Is Hora an Israeli Dance?" *Mahol Israel* (1977), available at www.israeldance-diaries.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ANNUAL1977_is_the_hora.pdf, pp. 9–15, at p. 10.
[50] Spiegel, *Embodying Hebrew Culture*, ch. 4 "Creating National Folk Dance," pp. 133–173.
[51] Gurit Kadman, *A Nation Dances* (עם רוקד), Schocken, 1969, pp. 17–18.

in them."[52] It was a crisp summary of the physical evolution that the diasporic Jewish body had undergone under the wholesome influence of a homeland, as Zionists would say. After Jews had hardened their bodies by working their land, after they toughened their spirit by fighting for it, they polished off the transformation with the grace and elegance of dance.

[52] Spiegel, *Embodying Hebrew Culture*, p. 159.