

Coping with Fear: Frontier Kibbutzes and the Syrian-Israeli Border War

Orit Rozin
Tel Aviv University

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Recommended Citation

Rozin, Orit. "Coping with Fear: Frontier Kibbutzes and the Syrian-Israeli Border War." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 21.2 (2019): <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.3572>>

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

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CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and CultureISSN 1481-4374 <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>>
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Volume 21 Issue 2 (March 2019) Article 5**Orit Rozin,****"Coping with Fear: Frontier Kibbutzes and the Syrian-Israeli Border War"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol20/iss2/5>>

Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 21.2 (2019)**
Thematic Issue **Materiality and the Time of the Present in Israeli Culture**
Ed. **Oded Nir and Ari Ofengenden**

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol21/iss2/>>

Abstract: In her article "Coping with Fear: Frontier Kibbutzes and the Syrian-Israeli Border War," Orit Rozin discusses the practices and norms of border kibbutzes coping with daily hostilities. The Israel-Syrian border was a constant point of friction. Hostilities erupted over the cultivation and the control of the demilitarized zones and over water resources. Northern Kibbutzes both took part in triggering Syrian violence and were victims of that violence. Covering the interwar period 1956-1967, Rozin traces the subjective emotional reaction of kibbutz members exposed to Syrian violence. Focusing on fear and employing Barbara Rosenwein's concept of emotional communities, she shows that members developed unique cultural practices to cope with the emotional challenge. However, despite genuine feelings and gestures of solidarity demonstrated by the city residents, these emotional norms were considered alien. Rozin shows that the emotional norms developed in the pre-State period and still nurtured in the kibbutzes were losing their grip.

Orit ROZIN

Coping with Fear: Frontier Kibbutzes and the Syrian-Israeli Border War

Introduction

When Israeli and Syrian forces clashed on April 7, 1967, Israel sent its air force into action. The use of air power in such a border incident was unusual; a battle ensued in which Israel Defense Forces (IDF) combat pilots shot down six Syrian MiGs. During the battle the Syrian army shelled several Israeli border settlements. Gadot, a border kibbutz, suffered the worst bombardment. At a meeting of the Central Committee of Mapai, Israel's ruling party, on April 20, Eliezer Shoshani, who then headed the Kibbutz Movement Alliance, an umbrella group of all the kibbutz movements, spoke of what had happened there:

I am afraid that there are still some people in this country for whom what happened in the north was the shooting down of six MiGs, while they are unaware of what happened nearby ... what happened in the border kibbutzes, especially at Gadot ... I hope [that] here, at least, no one is arguing that border settlements are superfluous. You can hear that in [in an editorial in] *Ha'aretz* ... A settlement on the border is a military stronghold, nothing less. All the more so when it is regularly shelled and bombed ... What happens ... is that the soldiers are children or women, it is an army sitting in this stronghold ... It is unthinkable that these people be allowed to feel that [the rest of the country] identifies with them. That is the only thing we can give them. But [whether there is] such identification is open to doubt ... There are waves of sympathy ... that is not identification. Compliments are not effective in this context ... [the people of the kibbutz] remain there, in the ruins of their homes, they and their children. ("Minutes" 55-56)

Shoshani here aims a spotlight at a great drama in Israeli culture. At the time, the Israeli public united emotionally around IDF fighters, in this case the victorious pilots, rather than the bombarded kibbutzes.¹ Yet for Shoshani and (he hopes) the members of his party, the role played by the people on the ground, the farmers who defend and till it, is no less important. Shoshani empathizes with the plight of the inhabitants of the kibbutzes, whose homes were shelled. He is attuned to their emotional needs, and apprehensive about a change of values he observes in Israeli society. He implies that, while the kibbutzes enjoy broad public sympathy and attention, the cultural capital of border kibbutzes (and of the kibbutz movement as a whole) has eroded—even if there has not yet been a decline in the social capital they have always depended on—that is, their political and institutional connections (Bourdieu).² Even worse, for him, is the critical voice of the independent liberal daily newspaper *Ha'aretz*, which (based on a report issued by the state comptroller) cast doubt on whether the economic investment the country made in establishing and maintaining kibbutzes on its frontiers was cost-effective. Such settlements were established and bolstered by soldiers of the Nahal corps, a branch of the army in which soldiers combined active military service with establishing new kibbutzes and providing labor to established ones. In an editorial, *Ha'aretz* argued that Nahal soldiers, most of them promising urban youth movement and high school graduates, were being used to shore up the declining population of the kibbutzes when they could be serving as full-time soldiers and bolstering the officer corps ("Miyom leyom"; "Minutes" 57-58).

This article, covering the period between the Sinai Campaign of 1956 and the Six Day War of 1967, examines the danger faced by the kibbutzes along the Syrian border. I will focus on the fear experienced by the inhabitants and the way they coped with it, given the change in values to which Shoshani alluded. Dangerous situations elicit a range of emotions and feelings—fear, helplessness, anger, and a desire for revenge.³ But fear is the primal and constitutive emotion, and plays a central role in shaping modern communities and societies, as a multitude of studies have shown.⁴ Thus, for the purposes of this limited study, I will concentrate on fear.

While the Israeli public gained a short-lived sense of security after the Sinai Campaign, the specter of insecurity that was a corollary of the Cold War continued to haunt the country, along with anxiety about the military build-ups in neighboring Arab countries. Neither did the victory in Sinai change anything on the Syrian border at the foot of the Golan Heights, where tensions continued to rise.⁵ Border

¹ Proportionately there were many more Kibbutz members in the elite units than the general population of that time. See Near 471-472; Seckbach 108, 115-116, 128-131.

² See also Levi and Peled 123-124; Eisenstadt 252-253.

³ See, for example, "Daato" 1959, p. 1; "Daato" 1960, p. 6. This article is part of a larger project underway; some of these derivative emotions will be discussed there.

⁴ See, for example, Stearns, *American Fear*; Bauman, *Fear*; Plamper, "Fear"; Laffan and Weiss.

⁵ See, for example, Bar-On, "Cki"; "Divrey Haknesset" 5 June 1963, 1770-1778; "Divrey Haknesset" 12 Oct. 1964, 2-14; Heller 218-219, 223, 264, 268-269, 274-275, 279-280, 282, 292, 305, 325, 354-356, 393, 415, 425, 439,

incidents with Syria had been routine since the two countries signed an armistice agreement in July 1949. Most of the friction grew out of differing interpretations of the provisions of that agreement. Among these were the control of territory to the west of the international border that had been taken by the Syrians during the war. Under the agreement, Syria withdrew from these areas, which were designated as demilitarized zones. Israel, however, acted as if it enjoyed full sovereignty in these enclaves, pursuing its economic and political interests, refraining only from deploying military forces. Syria claimed that the final status of these spots had not yet been determined, and that the UN observers stationed there had superior/overriding jurisdiction in the enclaves. The Syrians also presumed that the arrangements put in place by the armistice had as their purpose to restore the status quo ante—that is, the Arab civilians who had lived in these places before the war would be allowed to return, and no further changes would be made. The Syrians thus protested when Israel established new civilian settlements in the enclaves (Bar-On, "Cki" 359; Golan S. 247; Kipnis 45-46). Both sides sought to assert their sovereignty in the demilitarized zones by plowing the land or carrying out other agricultural activities that were often primarily political in their aims. Further points of dispute that exacerbated the tensions were Israel's project of draining the Hula wetlands and disputes over water rights. Hostility increased at the end of the 1950s, compelling Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley to adopt a regime of life resembling that of active military frontier outposts. Children lived in bomb shelters, buildings and livestock were frequently hit by shells and snipers, and work in the fields was carried out under constant danger. Military and civilian casualties became common. The situation grew even more severe after the Israel National Water Carrier, a pipeline that carried water from Lake Kinneret to the country's barren southern regions, went into operation in 1964. Syria responded by seeking to divert the headwaters of the Jordan, the lake's primary tributary. When the Ba'ath party seized power in Damascus in 1963, Syrian rhetoric grew more belligerent. In November 1964 Israel adopted a more aggressive policy. Soviet penetration of the region continued and, in February 1966, a left-wing Ba'ath faction staged a coup in Syria; its desire to gain public legitimacy led it to take an even more radical position against Israel than that of its predecessor. Beginning in 1965, Syria also permitted Fatah, a Palestinian guerrilla organization, to operate along its border with Israel. Israeli civilians were killed and injured in these attacks, further exacerbating the conflict (Segev 209-217; Shemesh; Shlaim 677-680; Bar-On, "Cki" 362-364; Golan S. 262; Zisser 212-213, 219; Kipnis 38-48).⁶

Israel's settlements along the borders, many of them kibbutzes, were the proverbial punching bags that absorbed Syrian and Palestinian attacks (and suffered the effects of Israeli counterattacks as well).⁷ Syrian soldiers and Palestinian guerrillas penetrated these communities to kill their inhabitants, mined their fields and roads, and subjected them to sniper fire and shelling.⁸ Settlements abutting the demilitarized zones frequently sent farmers to cultivate the disputed areas ("Alon Dan" vol. 6, 4-5). Israelis were not just victims of violence directed at them; in their eyes, and the eyes of a large part of the country's political and security establishment, the border settlements served a military purpose.⁹ Members of the kibbutzes were portrayed as fighting to preserve every inch of the nation's territory and as ununiformed soldiers (Magen).¹⁰ Because of the settlements' political importance, the government, the Jewish Agency, and the security authorities did all they could to help, investing large financial and other resources ("Al Gadot" vol. 6, 2).¹¹

443-445, 461; Morris 285-288.

⁶ On conflicts concerning land uses and on Israel's battle against UN claims concerning its authority, see, for example, what David Ben-Gurion said in *Tirshomet* 1960, 25-27; and what IDF Chief of Staff Haim Laskov's is saying in the same meeting (pp. 2-9); And again what David Ben-Gurion says in "Divrey Haknesset" 1 Feb. 1965, 498-499; and what Levi Eshkol's says in "Divrey Haknesset" 6 Jan. 1965, 848; and what Moshe Dayan's says in "Divrey Haknesset" 18 May 1965, 1873-1874; Knesset member Yosef Serlin, "Divrey Haknesset" 17 May 1966, 1437; Levi Eshkol, "Divrey Haknesset" 18 May 1966, 1467; Knesset member Ze'ev, "Divrey Haknesset" 23 May 1966, 1485-1486; "The Prime minister's"; Heller 453, 458.

⁷ See *Tirshomet* 1967, pp. 2-3, 15.

⁸ See, for example, "Divrey Haknesset" 10 Dec. 1958, 520-521; Knesset member Yizhak Raphael, "Divrey Haknesset" 23 May 1966, 1478; "Chablanim."

⁹ Some of the settlements were established for political and security reasons. See Amit; "Captain Shlomo". In the file *ibid* is also a copy of a commendation certificate from 5 Nov. 1961 that the IDF Chief of Staff, Tzvi Tzur, awarded civilians on account of ploughing under fire. See also "Alon Dan" vol. 16, 12; Magen.

¹⁰ The members of kibbutz Tel-Katzir did not have enough lands to support their economic needs and therefore were supported by the Jewish Agency. See Shalev, "Adam."

¹¹ Requests for the provision of assistance and complaints about insufficient aid were common. See, for example, "Kibbutz Gadot"; "Gadot to Yehuda Rabinovich"; "Tel-Katzir"; "Ch. Chefetz"; "Gadot to Ch. Chefetz"; "Bar-Yosef." On provision of assistance see "Gadot secretariat"; "Gadot members"; "A. Ackar"; "Doch matzavi." On the regulation of a financial compensation mechanism see "Divrey Haknesset" 4 Aug. 1959, 2892-2894.

The kibbutzes I will discuss were affiliated with two separate kibbutz movements, and as such their life practices and internal organization differed somewhat. But they faced the same difficulties and responded in much the same ways, producing similar practices of emotional management. I use two principal kinds of sources. The first are internal, by which I mean intra-movement deliberations and the discourse within each community, as expressed in the newsletters that each kibbutz produced. The second group of sources is external—the Israeli national media’s portrayals of the border settlements. As one might expect, less flattering aspects of kibbutz life appear in the material that comes from behind the scenes; the newsletters sought to reinforce kibbutz ideology and unity, and the national press, which reflected a range of political positions, sought to constitute and reinforce solidarity within the national community. Evidence of emotional difficulties, fear, and feelings of guilt at the suffering children endured can, however, be extracted from all these sources, which also reveal the mechanisms used to overcome these feelings. The sources I use here address emotions on a collective basis. By that I mean that they evince feelings that contemporaries assumed were shared by many, and subject these feelings to the supervising and interpreting gaze of a specific group—the organization, members of the kibbutz, or public at large (Bourke, "Fear and Anxiety" 117, 124). I do not, in the present work, make use of personal diaries or letters.¹²

This article is part of a broader project on the Israeli emotional regime. The concept “emotional regime,” a term coined by William Reddy (Reddy 129),¹³ denotes that normative system of emotions produced under a given political regime and ratified by official texts and practices that express and inculcate these emotions. In a previous article, on coping with the danger of Palestinian infiltration of Israeli rural settlements (mostly along the Jordanian and Egyptian borders), I showed that, in the 1950s, the emotional regime of social elites, principally that of the labor movement elite, was aimed at fostering resilience in the face of fear, first among the members of the elite and then among the citizenry as a whole (Rozin). The regime was constructed on the foundation of the culture of the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine prior to independence, and the example of the fortitude displayed by British and Soviet civilians during World War II (Cohen-Levinovsky 219-223).¹⁴ In the present work I examine the endurance of kibbutz communities close to the Syrian border, and whether, over time, the ideology and practices of the emotional regime changed.

Arlie Russell Hochschild proposed as early as 1979 that emotions are governed by social norms. Ideology, she argues, is not just a list of cognitive views; rather, it also includes heuristic information on emotions (Hochschild 566-567). Historians of emotions have looked at the ways in which emotions were reported during different periods. Fear has been a central subject of sociohistorical work as a whole, in particular the work on the modern state.¹⁵ Barbara Rosenwein proposes that we evaluate contemporary emotions by tracking what she calls “emotional communities,” meaning, for example, the family, community, or military unit. Study of the emotions should uncover emotional structures by pinpointing the codes governing emotional expression in communities and by the community’s individual members. It should analyze which emotions the society considers harmful or unfitting, those it admires, and what manners of expressing emotions it accepts and rejects. Rosenwein also points to the feasibility of establishing a large imagined community, the national community (Rosenwein 11). According to Rosenwein, the people of a given period use the discussion of emotions not only to establish collective norms but also to establish the boundaries between communities (12-19). Using her insights, I will show that the ability of the border kibbutzes to withstand the physical and emotional challenges they faced was built into the ideologies and practices developed, and that the way they coped with fear is connected to their collectivist social structure.¹⁶ At the same time, the resilience of these communities depended on their status within the national community.

Before getting into the main body of this study, I want to make two preliminary comments. First, in focusing on fear and the practices the kibbutzes developed to cope with it, I portray the backstage of the Israeli border experience with empathy. Empathy is essential for comprehending the emotions of the subjects of my study. That said, this discussion of the suffering of these civilians neither justifies nor condemns Israel’s security policies, nor does it pass judgment on Israel’s responsibility for the border incidents. This is a study about a subjective emotional reality as reflected in and shaped by different means of discourse. Second, I have limited my discussion here to border kibbutzes and do not include

¹² Diaries as such may express, more than other sources, the tension between the feelings of an individual and the norms of a group. See, for example, Shacham.

¹³ See also Plamper, "The History" 243-244.

¹⁴ In Britain the preferable personality trait was 'British' stoicism. See Grayzel 85-87, 90-91, 96.

¹⁵ For a review of relevant researches see Stearns, "Fear."

¹⁶ Alongside the cooperative social structure a compatible physical structure was built. See Amit.

other types of settlement (moshav settlements, urban ones, and Nahal outposts) because my purpose is to look at the connection, in a time of cultural change, between emotional resilience in the face of fear on the one hand and social status and cultural capital on the other. Furthermore, the kibbutzes faced an especially high level of violence and were thus prominently portrayed in the media (Rozin).

i. Impressions of Border Life: The Construction of an Emotional Landscape in the Press

Journalists who visited kibbutzes along the Syrian border recounted what they saw and heard there, and devoted much space to the human landscape. A writer for *Ha'aretz* relates that the policeman he met at a checkpoint near Tel Katzir, a kibbutz close to the southeastern shore of Lake Kinneret, told him that "all's quiet." When he arrives at the kibbutz, the loudest sound he hears is the clucking of chickens in their coops. His article focuses on the feelings of several young kibbutz members, who just two days before had endured a heavy bombardment. The strain, he writes, is concealed behind a façade of cheerfulness and business as usual. They farm, but also dig defensive trenches and spread camouflage nets. On Friday night they welcome the Sabbath with boisterous singing that must be audible to the Syrians. After lunch on Saturday "a plane was heard—everyone went out to look and asked, 'ours or theirs?'" (Rut).

One of the defining characteristics of life at the kibbutz was thus the back-and-forth movement between quiet and noise, between sounds under the control of the kibbutz members and Israelis as a whole and the sounds controlled by the enemy. Such sounds are part of the way people conceive of the space in which they live. It is also one of the ways that states and national communities conceive of sovereignty.¹⁷ The writer presents the pastoral charm of the kibbutz alongside the fear that, at any moment, this beauty could be stained with blood. The kibbutz's inhabitants' effort to overcome their fears and the danger they face finds expression in the way they downplay the threat and display resilience—in this case by Friday night singing. The journalist portrays the song as a display of defiance. In my view, the singing probably aimed at producing a collective voice and establishing a sonic-sovereign space, and thus served as a collective coping ritual.

When attacks grew more frequent, a style of reporting on the kibbutzes developed that was replete with descriptions of the swing between pastoral tranquility and tension and blood and back again to a good and comforting meal.¹⁸ Quiet seems to promise serenity, but at the same time it is the period of time in which tension builds up toward the next attack. The description of quiet thus has different levels of meaning. Quiet is not (or not just) a return to a state in which those who were under attack reassume their "normal" selves and return to their regular activities. As I will show, individuals used these intervals to process the events they experienced, events that changed the space around them, and to prepare for the next attack—for example, by readying themselves to quickly run for cover (Sloterdijk; Adey). Despite the unique kibbutz way of life, this attention to quiet was not unique to them. It also, for example, characterized the inhabitants of London during the Blitz (Adey).

Reporters, including those not identified with the labor movement, frequently remarked on the grit displayed by the inhabitants of the areas under bombardment. A writer for *Ma'ariv* quotes the secretary of the Tel Katzir kibbutz: "Morale is very high among us. On the whole—we're not upset." Members of the kibbutz are portrayed as amused as they listen to a radio broadcast on the shelling of their kibbutz. After the broadcast, they want to celebrate their fame with a bottle of wine left over from a recent wedding, but the celebration has to be moved into a bomb shelter when another barrage begins. "They went down into the bunkers to have a drink and sing Palmach songs—and did not stop until dawn" ("Ele hem"). In this case, too, it seems likely that singing together, and drinking together—wine was a rare item on the kibbutz menu—was aimed at giving them room to breathe and help them cope emotionally.

In September 1962 a writer for *Ha'aretz*, Ze'ev Schiff, interviewed two men from Tel Katzir after they had plowed a disputed field in armored tractors. Schiff portrays the farmers as doing their jobs well under fire. They are courageous, but that does not mean that they are not afraid. On the contrary, the older of the two men reports that he "feels awful." He says that he is tense and that his heart pounded hard when a bullet hit the seat of his tractor, barely missing him. But the next day he returns to his task. Schiff stresses to his readers that the man is able to overcome his fear ("Madua yorim").¹⁹

Yoel Nir, also of *Ha'aretz*, shares with his readers his feelings about another attack on the kibbutz. His nerves are frayed and his heart twinges as he descends into the bomb shelter. But when he describes

¹⁷ On sound as space see Golan and Azaryahu.

¹⁸ See, for example, Lavie, "Esh". See also Talmi, "Yeladim."

¹⁹ See also Lavie, "Tel-katzir".

some of the farmers he offers a different diagnosis. These were men who had spent two hours under cover, "their gazes frozen, apathetic" (Nir). In other words, his experience and those of the men accustomed to the attacks, who were immune to fear, were different. (Perhaps they felt both calm and fatalistic at the same time, as British civilians reported during air raids) (Adey; Bourke, *Fear* 228). The distinction between the experience of the visitor and that of the members of the kibbutz is important, because it marks an emotional boundary that points to the uniqueness of the kibbutz community.

In other cases, any sense of fear is flatly denied (Galili). A kibbutz member told *Time* magazine that he felt no fear. Instead, he feels satisfaction at doing the right thing in the right place ("Mi ya'asof").²⁰ Rather than undermining self-confidence, danger here imbues life with meaning.

Some of the photographs that accompanied the news coverage of the kibbutzes under fire go beyond portraying the *Yishuv's* standard ideal of masculinity, the farmer defending his—and the nation's—soil. They also seek to express what they see as the inner nature of the kibbutz members. Like the verbal portrayals, the photographs highlight self-possession as the normative emotion, one characteristic of kibbutz culture as a whole ("Ckvar"; "Front page" *Dvar Hashvoa*; Enekave "Hamatben").²¹ The ideological imperative, which mandates sovereign control of territory, is thus bound up with either self-control that overcomes fear, or a denial that there is any feeling of fear at all.

ii. Kibbutz Newsletters: Fear and Coping Mechanism

In this section I will briefly survey the way fear is addressed in the newsletters that each individual kibbutz published for its members. My purpose will be to extract the practices that were used and prescribed for coping with emotional distress.

1. Minimalization

Israel played an active part in the sequence of events that led to a border clash on June 24, 1962 near Kibbutz Dan, located on the northern tip of the country's Galilean panhandle. The kibbutz was given advance notice that a "concert" would begin at 6:30 in the evening ("Alon Dan" vol. 16, 12-13). The use of the word "concert" as a euphemism for a bombardment, and the report of the incident in the kibbutz's newsletter, evince an effort to minimize fear. The account depicts two girls disregarding the crossfire and, instead of running to the bomb shelter like the other members, chatting about a show they had seen. "As the gunfire grows stronger, people try to tell the difference between 'ours' and 'theirs'" (12-13). The use of "ours" indicates an inbuilt sense of belonging to the national collective (Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah).²² At the end of the account, written entirely in the first person plural, one member adds that days of this sort have become routine and that the kibbutz children are accustomed to descend into their bomb shelters. "We have all gotten used to and have come to accept this situation, as if it is all a part of the landscape of our lives. But under this tranquil veneer fear fills the heart. It is fear that reemerges and intensifies on a day like this, and leaves another mark and scar on body and soul" ("Alon Dan" vol. 16, 12-13). This final confession is diametrically opposed to the minimization of danger that is the theme of greater part of the report. With surprising candor, the writer tells of "fear in the heart" (note that he uses the definite article rather than a pronoun—it is an impersonal heart, not my, your, or our heart). The heart here is the collective one of all those living at the kibbutz. Note that this collectivization of fear is a way of distancing it, testimony to the fact that the writer had undergone something that was difficult (and apparently also not acceptable) for him to write about.²³

2. Delayed Response

An incident that began with gunfire on an Israeli border patrol near the headwaters of the Dan River, on Friday, November 13, 1964, escalated into an attack on Israeli positions and Kibbutzes of Dan, Dafna, Shamir, and Hulata, as well as on a moshav, She'ar Yashuv. A number of buildings at Dan, including children's houses, suffered heavy damage. The incident led to a sharp Israeli response. Three IDF soldiers were killed and two members of Dan were injured.²⁴ According to the kibbutz newsletter, "It

²⁰ The article in 'Time' magazine is quoted in 'Al Hamishmar'.

²¹ See also Palti 353-354, 362-368.

²² The analysis of the mentioned discourse, concerning use of pronouns, was inspired by Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah's article.

²³ On the expression and conceptualization of fear see, for example, Rachman 2-3.

²⁴ The incident on November 13th 1964, during which Dan was severely shelled, was a result of an Israeli initiative. See Heller 424; Kipnis 45-48; "Bemahalumat"; "Alon Dan" vol. 17, 13.

was only when we emerged from the bomb shelters at the end of the barrage did we see the destruction, that revealed itself to be worse with each step we took; only then did we really grasp what we had undergone just a short time before. Only when we saw how artillery shells can in a moment raze the painstaking labor of twenty-five years were we first overcome with fear and anxiety" ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 3). The account offers two important insights. First, it was only upon seeing the consequences of the attack that the kibbutz members grasped the full significance of the event. In other words, understanding depended on seeing. Second, fear is a legitimate emotion only after the bombardment ends, that is, when fear can no longer interfere with performing as needed under fire. Once the danger has passed, the kibbutz members can attend to and name their emotions.

3. Reiteration of Ideological Principles

The authors of the Dan newsletter presume that their comrades who underwent a wrenching ordeal, all experience the post-attack period in the same way. They sense that the incident strengthens the ties between the residents of the kibbutz.²⁵ They bring up for discussion the thoughts that the members had when the incident came to an end. "What did the members of Dan talk about that evening? Who knows what they were thinking?" ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 4). This question reflects the writer's movement from the shelling and its aftermath into his personal thoughts, and out into the minds of his fellows. This attention to inner thoughts seems at first to reflect a moment of repose, but a nagging repose in which the events are being processed.²⁶ The writers divide the kibbutz members' presumed thoughts into the desirable and the undesirable: "Perhaps they tried to sum up for themselves the long road from [the founding of the kibbutz] to this evening. Perhaps they thought only of tomorrow, to rebuild, to reinforce, to carry on ... either way, there was one thing they certainly did not think of: leaving ..." ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 4).

4. Mutual Reinforcement

The account of the incident also relates that all is dark as they emerge from the shelters because the kibbutz generator has been destroyed. The members gather in the communal dining room:

At this moment the first sparks of defiance began to appear. Slowly the people gather in the dining room. There, unbelievably, white tablecloths like on every Friday night and ... candles. Each table with a candle of its own. And these candles, their light, their warmth, their flickering, bring faith back into hearts overcome with the trauma of the shelling. No, there was nothing organized [the room had not been prepared or the tables set for the Friday night ceremony and meal], but we stayed anyway. No one wanted to go to their dark rooms. We want to be together!! (2)

By the end of the following week, so the newsletter reports, the members of the kibbutz were already telling themselves "that we withstood it honorably! And we gave ourselves a pat on the back. We complimented ... everyone ... on knowing how to keep our nerves under control" (10). The insistence on observing the weekly ceremony of welcoming the Sabbath and sitting down together for a communal meal reconstituted the community (Lupton 37). Here, the group is shown to be a real source of mutual empowerment. All these practices reconfirmed an ideology that combined communal life and work, and commemorated the fact that the group had functioned well and with emotional restraint in a crisis.

5. Beautification

Another practice that the members of Kibbutz Dan used to cope with both physical and emotional damage was the beautification of their community. "Wounds are everywhere being cured and treated," the newsletter reports. "Believe it or not, we are beautifying ... everything that looks ruined on the outside. But the wounds of the child, the comrade, cannot be seen from the outside. They will appear later" ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 8-9). By *doing*, the kibbutz members seek to cover up the evident destruction, to regenerate their living space and make it useable, and to make it conform to an aesthetic ideal. This practice is also intended to heal psychic wounds. But behind that there is an inkling of recognition that there is also emotional pain, that is *being*, that cannot be completely obscured.²⁷ The forbidden and permitted are manifested in the language—the doing is described in first person plural, while fear is distanced by having no pronoun—the child, not our children; the comrade, not us.

²⁵ For a comparison see Westall 103.

²⁶ For comparison see Bourke, *Fear* 223-224.

²⁷ See Douglas 28.

6. Training and Acclimation

A woman from Kibbutz Dan reports in the newsletter on an encounter with a curious journalist. "What did you feel? Were you afraid? *Yes, we were afraid* [emphasis in the original]. But that is fear that we live with, that we repress deep down within us ... 'Have you adapted?' and [we say], 'Yes, we are used to it,' they don't understand the difference, 'Yes, we are used to it, but we haven't 'adapted,' you never adapt to that ..." ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 9). The fine distinction she makes opens a window into her interior conceptual world. She indicates that the fear that she felt in her first experiences of such attacks (which had involved lesser violence) has faded.²⁸ But in this most recent massive attack her fear surged again. The interview is conducted in the first person plural; the writer and speaker do not discuss the woman's personal feelings but rather those of the collective. Her reply reveals both vulnerability and a conscious effort, on her part and on the part of the community, to conquer that fear. It also underlines the writer's psychological distance from the experience of the kibbutz members and his foreignness among them.

7. Time-Dependent Rituals

In March 1965 the Kibbutz Dan newsletter reports that anxiety is rising in the wake of border incidents in which Syrian tractors and compressors working on the diversion of the Jordan headwaters had been destroyed. The writer praises the members of the kibbutz's Cultural Committee, who have organized the annual festivities despite the difficulties ("Alon Dan" no. 268, 1). In highly tense situations, such observances granted experienced time a regular rhythm, embedded in the annual calendar, that made it possible to hold on to a sense of normalcy (Zerubavel 24-25). These rituals—the carnivalesque Purim holiday in particular—also provided a way to release tensions by means of humor, a festive meal, and song.

8. Humor

Humor was an important way of letting off the steam that built up because of the tense atmosphere of daily life. Satirically, mines unearthed from the demilitarized zone were called a "crop," and when the area came under attack, with gunfire and fires, the Tel Katzir newsletter called it a "sweltering season," on all counts" ("Alon Dan" vol. 6, 4; "Hashavua Batel" vol. 8, 5).²⁹ After an engagement in February 1960, the editors apologize for the newsletter's boring routine content ("Hashavua Batel" vol. 9, 1).³⁰ The clashes produced a folklore of their own, as evidenced by a song entitled "The Shrapnel-Collecting Tune," which I found in the Tel Katzir archive. I quote just a few lines that testify to another coping mechanism—collecting shrapnel—as well as to the place of children in kibbutz society:

The hoped for bell brings tidings: Outside
We have finished counting "landings and launchings"
Ho, we'll break out and run
To the place of the hits and look for finds
Who will be the happy one, the first to arrive
He'll get the fuse, the second the tail

Refrain:
Because for us it's not a hobby
It's history, my friend.
Every piece of shrapnel has a story and has a value
And is dear to our hearts ... and if army officers argue
About what happened here during the incidents
Then they come, no shame, for sure
To the children's house to get news
Because here every tot has been a general since preschool
An expert in military strategic issues ... ("Pizmon")
The press also documented kibbutz humor ("Mimetula").

9. Solidarity and Recognition

The Israeli emotional regime included practices meant to constitute feelings of solidarity among the members of the nation. The state and other institutions, such as the Histadrut, organized ceremonies

²⁸ For a comparison with Britain in WWII see Bourke, *Fear* 228-229.

²⁹ For manifestations of humor see "Hashavua Batel" vol. 8, 9-10; "Hashavua Batel" vol. 16, 1.

³⁰ For more information about boredom as a danger see Nir. Boredom in itself causes deep distress. See Nisbet.

that were meant to instigate, instill, and enhance feelings of solidarity among the citizenry.³¹ While kibbutz members received prominent media coverage, the source of the support that helped them cope with their emotional and physical difficulties was the social solidarity that they felt. I will offer but a single of many examples.

Following the huge destruction at Dan, in November 1964, the newsletter reports that the kibbutz is receiving many visitors—Israeli newspaper correspondents and photographers, ambassadors, military attachés, members of the US Congress, and foreign journalists. Israeli government representatives also arrive—members of the Knesset, cabinet ministers, and officials from the Foreign, Agriculture, Interior, Postal, and Police Ministries, as well as members of security institutions, the Histadrut Central Committee, and the Kupat Holim Clalit medical services organization, from the Agricultural Center (an organization that united kibbutzes and *moshav*-type), from Hakibbutz Ha'artzi (the kibbutz movement with which Dan was affiliated), public organizations, other Galilean kibbutzes, and friends of all kinds ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 6, 13-17). Volunteers arrive, alone and in groups, to help clear the wreckage and rebuild. Thousands of people from all over the country and all parts of the population send messages of identification and solidarity, praising in particular the grit displayed by the kibbutz members (23, 27). Letters and telegrams come in from overseas (7, 15-17, 22-28). Popular performing artists give shows (9-10).

At a cabinet meeting held on the Sunday after the incident, IDF Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin demanded immediate attention to the needs of the kibbutzes that had been attacked. He said that "The people of the settlements behaved exceptionally ... The communities need to be given the feeling that the government stands behind them and provided with the assistance that, in my opinion, they deserve" (*Tirshomet* 1967, 7-8). Rabin intuited that the way the government addressed the plight of the kibbutz residents would affect their emotional experience. He wanted them to feel that the country was behind them, and seems to have presumed that this would help restore their sense of security.

The members of the kibbutz indeed felt that "the hearts of all are with us" ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 10). The Dan newsletter describes the very real emotional contribution provided by public support: "And we learned ... that the word 'encouragement' is not always just a word. Sometimes you feel how it builds and shores you up, helps, and simply—*encourages*" (6).³²

In addition to material assistance, encouragement, and a sense of closeness, the kibbutz members also gained recognition as heroes. Nevertheless, as we saw Shoshani say, the kibbutz movement, and the border kibbutzes among them, had by this time lost some of their cultural power and what had once been an unchallenged status as the country's social elite.

iii. Cracks

The practices of the kibbutz members, the displays of solidarity, and more than anything else the public recognition and material support granted to them by the state, were meant to keep each kibbutz standing—that is, to avert their physical and demographic collapse. Despite the efforts of the kibbutz members to function well, there were many difficulties. The very real nature of the damage can be learned from their internal discussions. For example, in December 1958, after a bombardment of the northern settlements, the Secretariat of Hakibbutz Hameuhad, one of the kibbutz movements, received a report that not a single building remained standing at Kibbutz Hulata. The refrigeration facility had been destroyed, as had all the kibbutz's tractors and vehicles, the kitchen, the warehouse, and the nursery, and many of the sheds that housed both work areas and living quarters. The electrical and water networks had been destroyed. A member had been wounded when a shell hit the shower and another member also using the same facility was suffering from shock. Two shells had struck a bomb shelter and blocked its exits. The Secretariat commended the actions of the members, including the children. Members of the Secretariat arrived at the kibbutz that same night. The members of that body saw the visit to be of prime importance, because it constituted an expression of solidarity and responsibility toward the local members. The Secretariat was told that a concentrated effort was being made to put life on the kibbutz back on track.³³

The full scope of the crisis became evident only when members of the Secretariat met with a delegation from Hulata. The kibbutz members offered a double message. One the one hand, they made

³¹ See, for example, the chain of events on the eve of the Sinai War: Naor 442-449. See also Bar-On, *Moshe* 123-124.

³² Emphases in original.

³³ Journalists and delegations from various institutions visited the kibbutz. See "Yeshivat" 21-22.

an effort to display determination and fortitude; on the other, they spoke about the weak groups among them. At the beginning of the discussion, Haya, a member of the delegation, said: "The kibbutz withstood the test, as did the members, each of whom was in the right place ..." But she followed this immediately by saying: "There is now a problem with the children. Now they can't be left alone and this places a great burden on the members." She pointed to other weak groups as well. One consisted of members' parents who had come to live at the kibbutz, and who were now looking for other places to live. Another was the Nahal contingent, which

has suffered a heavy psychological blow ... They are young people who arrived at the kibbutz a week before the bombardment, did not know what to do with themselves, and became totally confused. The central group of members united after the shelling, but every community has its fringes. We have five families [of Holocaust survivors] who came here from the [displaced persons] camps. If the matter brings on a crisis that cause [the Holocaust survivors] to leave, it will be very difficult for us, we are trying as much as we can to calm them, but there may well be other members who will ask themselves [whether they should stay] and then what will happen next? ... The tragic situation is the Indians [immigrants from that country who had settled at the kibbutz, O.R.]. There simply is no way of talking to them. We don't see any panic or desire to flee among them, but they should not be seen, in the meantime, as additional help but rather as a burden. ("Diyun" 65)

Other members of the delegation spoke of further urgent needs—bomb shelters needed to be repaired and restocked, emergency food supplies had to be replenished, and destroyed homes had to be rebuilt—and in doing so revealed just how bewildered they were. They admitted that they did not know how to make use of volunteers, or how to avoid the need for the kibbutz to enter into arduous negotiations with government officials over reconstruction. They added that many members had left the kibbutz and that there was not enough manpower. "Something has been undone," one member said (66).

At an initial meeting of Hakibbutz Hameuhad's Secretariat, held on December 5, immediately after the attack, the sense was that the army and other state and national institutions were functioning in coordination to provide its inhabitants with support. At the subsequent meeting with the delegation, Haya revealed the fissures and non-uniformity of kibbutz society. Under attack, the appearance of a united community fell apart. The meeting between the members of Hulata and Secretariat also revealed the huge level of financial, logistical, demographic and social support needed to maintain kibbutz life. Kibbutzes located on the front (and others as well) had a difficult time establishing a demographic balance—that is, ensuring that there were enough able-bodied members of an age that enabled them to participate in work and guard duty (Gazit 25; Near 506; Barkai; Lavie, "Hackerem"; Hirschfeld; *Tirshomet* 1967, 26). A speaker at the Secretariat meeting said that "you go from room to room and it's destroyed. The settlements face off against a highly-organized artillery network. Let's presume that all the money [they need to rebuild] is paid out ... tomorrow there will be another bombardment and the farm will be gone" ("Yeshivat" 22). Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, one of the leaders of Hakibbutz Hameuhad, told the meeting that he was worried that, after the border settlements had a chance to come to their senses, there would be another wave of reactions (i.e. that members would leave) (22-23).

The cracks in the picture of gritty kibbutz members demonstrating determination and resilience under fire were also portrayed in the press, at least to some extent. Devorah Hirshfeld, of the labor movement women's monthly *Dvar Hapo'elet*, reports from Tel Katzir that the kibbutz's children know how to get to the bunker just as any other Israeli child knows the way to his neighborhood playground. "Their faces are tenser, and in moments of candor you can, unexpectedly, hear the most rooted and established [members] say: 'But who can bring up children here ...'" Members were leaving, which Hirshfeld terms "routine," and the reason is that they have finally capitulated after "patiently withstanding an unending test of nerves for years and years ... parents of young children do not become more optimistic over the years, even if assistance from the state ... is unlimited" (Hirschfeld; "35 shana").³⁴ At Kibbutz Gadot after heavy shelling in April 1967, Ze'ev Schiff of *Ha'aretz* interviewed a twenty-three-year-old woman holding a toddler of a year and a half. She recounts her time in a bomb shelter during the attack and says that the booms had been horrifying and that the bawling of the babies in the bunker frayed the nerves of the members. "Believe me, it is not simple to bring up children here," she says (Schiff). The children of another kibbutz, Ha'on, on the southeast shore of Lake Kinneret, attended school at Ein Gev, a kibbutz located further up a strip of coast held by Israel between the lake and the Syrian-controlled Golan Heights. During the same attack, no shells fell on Ha'on's residential area, but one of the parents told another *Ha'aretz* correspondent: "Think of the parents who saw Ein Gev under bombardment while their children were there" (Elad).

³⁴ For comparison see also Harris 65.

iv. What about the Children?

For kibbutzes, the kibbutz movements, politicians, the military, and the press, children were caught in the middle of the fighting.³⁵ Following the deadly attack on Dan and its environs in November 1964, the sensationalist weekly *Ha'olam Hazeh* published an account that included three photographs of soldiers and officers, a diagram explaining the incident, another photograph of a Syrian fuel depot in flames, and three photographs of kibbutz children. One of them showed a bird's-eye view of the destruction in the children's house, taken through a hole made by a shell in the building's roof. Three young girls appear in the photograph. Like other photographs ("Esh" 15),³⁶ the picture portrays something that words cannot tell—what might have happened had the children not managed to reach the bomb shelter in time.³⁷

One of Israeli society's central tenets at the time was its duty to protect its children. The duty fell on parents, but also on the community and the state.³⁸ The presence of children at border kibbutzes in times of mortal danger was thus profoundly controversial. On the one side was the adamant ideological principle that children should never be evacuated; on the other, a no less obdurate argument that they should not be exposed to danger and thus must be evacuated (Cohen-Levinovsky 32-61). In the spring of 1958, after an attack on Gadot, parents and caregivers insisted that the children be evacuated, even though the army had not issued orders to that effect. The move stood opposed to the position of the movement to which Gadot belonged, Hakibbutz Hameuhad. Its leader, Yitzhak Tabenkin, ordered the kibbutz members to bring the children back and threatened that the movement would provide no assistance until this was done ("Sicha" 24-25). The kibbutz gave in and the children returned ("Mazckirut merackezet" 18).

A recent study of hegemonic Israeli literature of the 1950s shows that attitudes toward children and childhood were changing. In Yishuv literature of the 1940s children are mobilized in the national effort by means of a military or war narrative. But after the War of Independence, educators, librarians, and parents ceased to see such storylines as conveying proper educational messages and as correct ways of molding the identities of the country's children (Darr 101-102).³⁹ In the 1950s, a protected civilian childhood becomes the ideal, replacing the concept of a mobilized childhood. This new approach, which coexisted for a time with the previous approach, inevitably honed awareness of the incongruence between the childhoods of those on the frontiers who routinely descended into bomb shelters and the rest of the country's children.

Politicians who visited the border settlements always made a point of meeting with children, and of providing the resources needed to protect them: additional bomb shelters, trenches leading from the children's houses to the bomb shelters, and paved roads on which children could be transported to schools located at other kibbutzes (Shalev, "Beyishuvey"; "Alon Dan" vol. 17, 8, 10). The children were also provided with a special kind of social support. After the attack on Dan in November 1964, the kibbutz's children received large numbers of letters and Hanukah presents from all over the country ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 22, 35).

Children's newspapers devoted much space to such incidents and did much to foster national solidarity. While the political differences between their approaches are quite evident, deriving from the political party or movement with which they were affiliated, they were united on a range of national issues. The concept of the frontier was a central one in the construction of national identity, and Israel's long and convoluted borders, and the danger they presented, were a leitmotif in these publications (Shichmanter 160-163).⁴⁰ In the 1950s, children's newspapers focused on the Negev, while in the 1960s they reported at length on the settlements under attack in the north.⁴¹

³⁵ See, for example, "Nizkey."

³⁶ See also "Metosey."

³⁷ See also "35 shana."

³⁸ See, for example, David Ben-Gurion's sayings, "Divrey Haknesset" 10 Dec. 1958, 521.

³⁹ A similar revolution and rejection of militaristic values in education can be found in Britain, at the end of WWI. However, also there it seems as if militaristic components did survive, at least in some of the schools. See Bourke *Dismembering*, 187-188.

⁴⁰ See also Rabi, "Chisul"; Rabi, "Hatigrot"; Chaviv; Gross; "Gader"; "Mishmar"; "Hahitnagshuyot".

⁴¹ See, for example, "Retzach"; "Hatakrit"; "Yeriyot bagvul"; "Hatkafat tagmul"; "Front page" *Ha'aretz Shelano*, vol. 12; "Dam"; "Hatkafa surit"; "Hishtatafti"; Rabi, "Hametichut"; Rabi, "Ma'ase"; Rabi, "Veshuv"; "Mishavu'a leshavu'a" 28 Jan. 1958; "Mishavu'a leshavu'a" 18 Mar. 1958; "Mishavu'a leshavu'a" 8 Apr. 1958; "Mishavu'a leshavu'a" 9 Dec. 1958; "Yeriyot beleil"; "Krav yeriyot"; "Krav leyad."

The articles highlighted the kibbutzes's resilience, including the emotional fortitude of the children.⁴² The cover of the children's weekly *Ha'aretz Shelanu* dated December 30, 1958 displays a photograph of a large group of Hulata's children, swaddled in blankets and sleeping in a jumble on a large platform or bed (Front page, vol. 9). The first inside page explains that this is how Hulata's children sleep when there is an emergency. An article in the same issue tells the story of thirteen-year-old Noa and her experience during the attack. When the fighting broke out, she and the rest of the older children ran to the toddlers' building, grabbed the small children, and ran with them to the bomb shelter. The older children held the younger ones on their laps and sang to them so that they would not be frightened, "but with each 'really good' shell we stopped singing, because we were also a little afraid" ("Hulata"). Noa's story underlines the disparity between a protected and a mobilized childhood. As her story is told, she has internalized normative emotional practice: She admits to fear (although she minimizes it), but also displays exemplary behavior and takes responsibility for others.⁴³ The article is accompanied by numerous photographs, many displaying the damage. One is of a dead starling. Another is of the prime minister and IDF chief of staff sitting with the kibbutz's children. The editors' purpose is to promote solidarity between city children and their peers on the frontiers, and to commemorate the heroism of the latter. At the same time, the article, and even more so the photographs, convey the sense that these children are very different and very distinct from the publication's urban readership (Shichmanter 23-27).

Photographs accompanying another article in *Ha'aretz Shelanu*, this one on an attack on Ein Gev in the spring of 1962, show a huge amount of destruction. The article itself reports that the children are "painfully surveying" the ruins of the library and their classroom, as well as trees that were cut down. They cry when they see the farm's dead and wounded animals. But, "as is the way with children, despite their sadness and pain, they adopted a new hobby: collecting the shrapnel of shells and illuminating charges ("Yaldey"). This article also elicits both identification and difference. The powerful account of destruction and death (which implicitly raises the question of what might have been if the children had not made it to the shelter on time) and the new hobby of collecting battle souvenirs places in sharp focus the difference between the danger of the frontier and the serenity of the city. The children's joy in life, as embodied in the new game, displays their capacity for adjusting to the situation and their way of taking the danger in stride and even greeting it with enthusiasm.⁴⁴ The adult press also devoted considerable attention to the children of the kibbutz (Shalev "Beyishuvey").⁴⁵

Schiff of *Ha'aretz* wrote from Gadot in April 1967 about a conversation he had with an African agricultural trainee there. "Someone shouted to me to run for the bomb shelter," Peter related. "The children cried. I emerged from the thing traumatized." Disregarding the report of this guest, Schiff described his encounter with the kibbutz children: "The children of Gadot are heroes, but they have no trouble admitting that they were afraid during the heavy bombardment ... They know that what happened yesterday is not the end. Ten-year-old Uri Gefen told me: 'Sure we were scared. It's a horrible noise and the shock wave isn't nice'" (Schiff).

Tzvi Lavie, a correspondent for *Ma'ariv*, described the faculties of children growing up in a combat zone. Five-year-old Ofer is an expert "on the differences between artillery and a machine gun and between different kinds of machine guns even before he knows his alphabet." Ofer's father is proud of his knowledge but secretly resentful at the loss of his son's childhood (Lavie "Tel-katzir"). A writer for *Al Hamishmar* wrote that the knowledge of the children of Tel Katzir is evidence that they have grown up too soon (Galili).

Despite complimenting the children and extolling their heroism, adults noticed that they developed emotional difficulties in the wake of the attacks. Gadot reported that, in the days following the heavy bombardment in April 1967, children cried throughout the day and would not leave their caregivers. During the initial nights, every little noise or squeaky door woke them. One teacher said that after the bombardment children sunk into their own thoughts and did not listen to anybody ("Bevatey"). The press also reported the emotional problems that appeared among the children (Nir; Elnekave "Yeriyot").

Children took center stage in the kibbutz newsletters ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 2). Their jokes and witticisms were taken up by the whole community.⁴⁶ Their voice was also heard directly. Some children

⁴² See, for example, Tchernovitz.

⁴³ In this source, as in many others, fear is related to noise levels and to hearing in general. See also Adey.

⁴⁴ War was the best game provided none of your relatives got killed, claimed Westall. Collecting shell and parachute parts was also common in Britain, see Westall 12; Harris 64.

⁴⁵ See also Ben-Porat.

⁴⁶ See, for example, *Al Gadot* no. 102; "Alon Dan" vol. 17, 10.

from Dan, for instance, wrote their own accounts of the shelling for that kibbutz's newsletter ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 28-30). For example, Yehuda, a fifth-grader, wrote:

We sat in one of the rooms and played, and we suddenly heard three shots. We went outside and began to hear rounds of zero-five [Browning machine gun, O.R.] fire. We immediately ran to the bomb shelter and went in ... We began to hear stronger shots which were heavier machine guns and mortars. Ten minutes later the booms of tanks joined the orchestra. I began to get scared because the shooting made a huge amount of noise ... Half an hour later we suddenly heard a huge roar that almost deafened us. The bomb shelter filled up with dust and we could barely breathe. We couldn't see anything either because the shock wave put out the lights. We asked, What happened? And they told us that a shell had fallen on the entrance to our shelter. The shooting continued and we were as frightened as little rabbits. (29-30)

The child's text clearly has been edited. Nevertheless, relative to the adults, this young narrator feels free to describe his feelings, and the editors allow and perhaps even encourage him to express them more freely and more openly than would be acceptable among adults. The implication is that self-restraint and the gritty exterior are learned gradually as part of the socialization process.

Parents, caregivers, and teachers recognized that two sets of values were clashing here. On the one hand there was a responsibility to provide children with a proper and protected childhood; on the other they were to be instilled with the values of overcoming fear and functioning well under fire. As such, they had ambivalent feelings about the early maturation of their children, the military knowledge they acquired, and their ability to function under pressure. The adults had to deal with the physical difficulties that kibbutz life involved even at the best of times, which were exacerbated when their kibbutzes came under attack. In addition to coping with their own distress, they had to keep an eye out on the children's emotional state. Together they placed a burden on the entire community, to the point that in interviews parents admitted that it was difficult to bring up children in such a place. It was not only the difficulty of raising a child in such a place but also the fact that the ethos of child-rearing had changed. Parents and caregivers at the kibbutzes were aware that the "politically-mobilized" childhood that had been the idea a decade or two earlier was no longer seen as proper or healthful for the children of their time.

Conclusion

The cultural repertoire of members of frontier kibbutzes included comprehensive norms regarding the management of emotions. These norms were contingent on gender, age, and connection to and responsibility for child-rearing. The weekly *Hashavua Bakibbutz Ha'artzi* described these norms in detail:

Are people in Dan afraid? ... One thing is clear: no one has panic attacks here. They don't get all worked up with fear. That means they don't lose their heads. And the fear, that unavoidable human weakness, they have shoved deep down into hidden levels of their souls. Their nerves and the "cords of their souls" have acclimatized it into a regular phenomenon that has to be accepted and lived with. At Dan we found people whose spirits were adamant—but their souls were turbulent and their entire beings tense, taut, on alert not only against the enemy but also for self-preservation ... The tension grinds down their strength and their nerves. You cannot get used to it. You cannot overcome it again and again through an unending conscious and psychological effort. (Palgi)

Kibbutz communities developed a wide variety of practices to cope with danger and the fear that came with it, and benefited from demonstrations of solidarity throughout Israeli society. The press, including publications for children, took an active part in fostering national solidarity, seeking to inculcate values of everyday heroism, fortitude, emotional self-control, and accommodation of fear into the politically and socially heterogeneous readership that read newspapers and magazines of different orientations ("Netaken"; Talmi, "Achva").

Journalists, both those of right and left-wing sympathies, exerted themselves to exalt the contribution of the settlers on the frontier and to enlist the urban population in their support and thus unify the nation in body and soul. But they had only limited success.⁴⁷ While the Israeli emotional regime lauded the grit of the kibbutz members, urban dwellers did not feel threatened in the same way that residents of border kibbutzes did. The attempt to implant in the urban psyche a consciousness that they faced the same danger could not overcome the fact that their daily routines and emotional culture were very different. The inhabitants of the kibbutzes on the Syrian border, both men and women, were

⁴⁷ See "Alon Dan" vol. 17, 26; "Press clippings"; Golan A.; "Hashomrim"; Justus; "Yoshvey."

described in the press as possessing unique character traits, and as people who had chosen an exceptional life style (Pundak).⁴⁸ By highlighting their singular emotional and mental capacities, the press actually undermined its own efforts to imbue all of Israeli society with those traits ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 6).

Despite the huge effort journalists made to understand the experiences of kibbutz members, the latter felt a measure of alienation from these visitors. It derived from the understandable disparity between city and kibbutz life, but not just that. It could be seen, for example, in a kibbutz woman's efforts to explain to a journalist the difference between being "used to" the bombardments but "not adapted" to them. The ear cocked to the difference between quiet and noise, trying to distinguish between the roars of friendly and enemy planes and different kinds of ammunition is the ear of a person whose body is ready at any moment to run for his life and rescue all those he or she is responsible for. Both as sensed by kibbutz members themselves and perhaps objectively, the gap between the mind of the person who lives this way for an extended period and the person who is just paying a visit to the frontier is hard to bridge.

The kibbutzes on the Syrian frontier were thus distinct emotional communities whose ways of life, values, and emotional repertoires were different from the conventions of other parts of the population. The Israeli emotional regime, instilled in part by policy makers and the press, were able to build national solidarity and recognition of the role and heroism of their countrymen on the frontier. The sympathy and concern for the kibbutzes in the north was abundant and sincere. Yet heroism and ability to overcome fear were character traits that belonged, in the view of other Israelis, to a small group of people with unique abilities. While this view of the people of the kibbutzes as exceptional personalities may have boosted the image the kibbutz members had of themselves, it also meant that these traits could not serve as a model for all Israelis (Near 522). A writer for Dan's newsletter was well-aware of this paradox when he noted that the idolization of the heroism of the frontier settlers was an obstacle to the adoption of their values and cultural repertoire by the public at large. "Between the lines of awe and veneration," he wrote, "we have the feeling that others see this fortitude of ours as something otherworldly. As if it were unreal, beyond the ordinary ..." ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 12).

The danger faced by the children and youth of these communities was also understood in different ways. Concern for the children mobilized the national community to protect them, including political and military leaders and government officials, but at the same time it drew a clear dividing line between children whose childhood was protected and those who were exposed to danger.⁴⁹

Israeli society as a whole was committed to the safety and welfare of its children. Kibbutz children were already exceptional in that they were raised in children's houses rather than by their parents in a nuclear family. This distinction was augmented by the danger they lived with, voiced by their parents and depicted in particular by photographs showing what might have happened to their children. These things subverted the national community's norm of protecting children from danger. After the bombardment of Dan in November 1964, urban parents refused to allow their children to go to the kibbutzes in the north as volunteers ("Alon Dan" vol. 17, 23-24). After the heavy bombardment of Tel Katzir in April 1967, while a group of teenage volunteers was located there, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol announced at a cabinet meeting that he would no longer allow the kibbutz to host such groups. He feared that if young people were hurt, "It could be a catastrophe with long-term implications, because parents will not let us forget it."⁵⁰ A group of teenagers who were scheduled to go to Gadot to perform several days of volunteer labor was compelled to inform the kibbutz that they were cancelling the trip because of the objections of their parents and, in particular, that of the principal of their high school ("Sha'ot").

The kibbutz movement, while it had not yet lost its political standing, no longer had the cultural cachet that it had once enjoyed. The city and urban life were at the focus of the Israeli culture of the time.⁵¹ The newspaper of Hakibbutz Hameuhad lamented this loss of values: "In every conversation with the people of Gadot, they always come back to that thing called loneliness, the lack of sufficient backing by the public, the need to fight with schools for them to allow a person from Gadot to explain to the students that there is something else to do in this country other than careers and discotheques—

⁴⁸ See also Ben-Porat; Hirschfeld; Gelblum.

⁴⁹ Concern for early maturation is rooted in the term "Yeled Zaken" (old child) which was commonly used after the Armenian Holocaust and the Jewish Holocaust. See, for example, Alterman; Voskanyan 77.

⁵⁰ See *Tirshomet* 1967, 28.

⁵¹ On the laughable and archaic image associated with kibbutz members by mid 1960s one can learn from the skit "Takrit gvul" which was recorded in 1965. See "Takrit gvul." The skit appeared in the record "Bemo'adon hasanter hackaful" (Hed Artzi AN 48-41) from 1966.

in short: the entire relationship between the front line and the rear, 'which lives in a seemingly different country and different world'" ("Sha'ot").

The worth of the cultural capital of the border kibbutzes had, in other words, been greatly devalued. Cultural capital and a sense of social superiority can compensate for a lack of security, and overcoming fear can give life meaning. But as Israel society's values changed, and public attention became focused on the IDF and its professional soldiers—and especially on the operational abilities of its vanguard, the air force—the erstwhile heroes, the kibbutz pioneers, came to feel increasingly isolated. This isolation made it harder for them to cope with the physical and emotional pressure they faced.⁵²

During the *Yishuv* years each man and woman had been a pioneer, a settler, a laborer, and a soldier (at least this was the ideal). Private life was secondary to mobilization for the national cause. After independence, with the establishment of a sovereign government, increasing prosperity of the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the emergence of an industrialized and modern urban society, the roles once combined in the individual were divided up and assigned to distinct groups of people, in some cases specialized professionals. Children no longer had to resemble soldiers, and were granted a right to a childhood. Civilians did not need to play military roles and expected the country's army, the IDF, now equipped with the best military technology, to protect them.⁵³ The Israeli emotional regime metamorphosed. It was not a complete reversal of values, but rather a historical moment in which living and concrete remnants of the old cultural repertoire remained, alongside the growth and consolidation of a new repertoire (Sheinblat).

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⁵² Glorification of the Air Force was also criticized. See Benny Maharshak's sayings, "Mazckirut murchevet."

⁵³ Classification, definition and differentiation processes also characterized the field of work relations. See Molcho.

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This research has been supported by a grant from the Israel Science Foundation (688/15).

Author's profile: Orit Rozin teaches history at Tel Aviv University. Her interests in scholarship include the social, legal, and cultural history of the State of Israel and Mandate Palestine. Lately she has been working on an analysis of Israeli security policies through the perspective of the history of emotions. Rozin's publications include: *A Home for All Jews: Citizenship, Rights and National Identity in the New Israeli State* (Brandeis University Press: 2016); "Infiltration and the Making of Israel's Emotional regime in the State's Early Years," *Middle Eastern Studies* (2016); "The In-between Time from the Rabin Assassination to the 1996 Elections: On Emotions and Their Impact on the Public Sphere," *Israel Studies* (2018). E-mail: <oritr@tauex.tau.ac.il>