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RELIGIOUS WOMEN FIGHTERS IN ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE: A NEW GENDER PERCEPTION, OR A PASSING EPISODE?

Lilach Rosenberg-Friedman

> We, the religious pioneer movement, have brought about a revolution in the status of women in traditional religious society, without compromising traditional Jewish morality within our society—and of that we are proud. We are proud of our women members, who carried out their duties under all circumstances—in the community, at work, and in war—as borne out by the women of the Etzion Bloc who were taken prisoner. But we are well aware of how great is the distance between the army and civil society.[1]

These words were spoken in 1949 by Knesset Member Moshe Una, representing the Hapo'el Hamizrahi religious Zionist party, during the Knesset debate on the law that would require compulsory military service for women.

The question of the place of women in the Israel Defense Forces, officially established on May 31, 1948, arose during the term of the first Knesset. The Women's Corps had been formed in April 1948, and after the state's founding the Knesset decided that women without children aged 18–25, whether or not they were married, would be required to serve.[2] However, pressure from the religious parties led to the exemption of religious women from mandatory military service.[3]

The religious bloc's opposition to the integration of religious women into the IDF raises some questions. Religious circles had encouraged the participation of women in the defense forces before the establishment of the state, and religious women had been integrated into the forces that fought in the War of Independence. What was the reason for this turnabout in the stance

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taken by the religious Zionists, who, having supported the military training of religious girls and their participation in the War of Independence, then decided that they should be exempted from military service?

This article has two goals: (1) to tell the story of the participation of religious women in the War of Independence; and (2) to analyze the ambiguity in the religious Zionist movement's position concerning the participation of religious women in military activity and so to disclose a further dimension of that movement's ideology.

The story of the religious women fighters has largely been forgotten and has gone unstudied. This paper is based on archival material and primary sources that had not previously been the object of scholarly attention—including newspapers, memoirs, and oral testimonies—and on personal interviews. I subjected this information to a historical and comparative analysis, in relation to previous studies of women in the military.

There are some problems connected with the documentation that serves as the basis for this study. Much information is lacking, and some of what does exist is imprecise. The scantiness of the data made it difficult to draw generalized conclusions. Nonetheless, the combination of contemporary and retrospective documentation, together with the impression conveyed by the spirit of the sources, has made it possible to sketch the general lines of the women's story. The issue of quantification was particularly difficult. My attempts to estimate the scope of the phenomena described herein met with considerable difficulty, in most cases because of the dearth of statistical data. In most cases, I have been able only to suggest estimates.

The oral documentation was also not without problems. Things tend to be forgotten with the passing of years, and there is a tendency to look back with nostalgia. At the same time, the use of interviews was vital to flesh out issues described in other sources and to shed light on matters that lack documentation. By presenting the story of the religious women soldiers and comparing it to that of other women soldiers, I hope to add a chapter to the history of the period leading up to the foundation of the State of Israel.

GENDER, NATIONALITY, AND THE MILITARY

Gender and Nationality

In recent years, the study of women and gender has begun focusing on the relationship and interaction between gender and nationality. Studies by Mosse, Yuval-Davis, and others point to the importance of gender relations in constructing the phenomena of nation and nationality. The discourse of nationhood emphasizes the crucial role of woman in the national enterprise, assigning her a symbolic role in ensuring the nation's survival and safeguarding its honor.[4] Accordingly, that discourse, perceiving motherhood as women's principal vocation, largely restricts women to the private sphere. Avdela and Psarra, studying the formation of a new nation, showed that women, identified with motherhood and charged with passing on the new social-national role to their children, were seen as playing a major role in the nation's biological, cultural, and political development.[5] National ideologies in different places and times have tended to frame their most prominent symbols along the lines of a gender distinction according to which the men are patriots, and the women are mothers; the former bear the national duty of defense, the latter that of procreation.[6] The increased importance of motherhood at a time of national rebirth led to a greater appreciation of women in the new national society, even if their traditional role did not change.[7]

Studies by Biale and Gluzman draw a connection between Zionism's aspiration to mold a "new Jew," as an antithesis to the "effeminate" Jew of the Diaspora, and the nationalist ideal, which was thought capable of bringing about "correct" gender relations.[8] Masculinity was at the center of the national discourse, The male body "became the symbol of the new society as well as the means to establish it."[9] The roles allocated to the new Hebrew woman in the national enterprise were the traditional roles of women, which, particularly in times of crisis, took on national importance.[10] At the same time, the new national society was supposed to be modern, and so to integrate the concept of equality for women.[11] The ambiguous attitude of the society toward the status of women in an age of national revival is reflected, among other things, in the issue of the participation of women in the defense forces.

Militarism and Masculinity; Domesticity and Femininity

The issue of the place of women in the army and war has attracted great interest in recent years both in scholarship and in politics.[12] Studies have dealt with women's motivations for joining the army, the way they function in the military organization, and the gender relations that typify it. They also treat the image of civil society in light of the integration of women in the army and attempt to address the question of whether the participation of women in the army and in war presents an opening to change in gender relations in society at large.

The association of the army with masculinity is a well-known cultural-social assumption.[13] The studies of Addis and Bloom maintain that the behavioral codes and activities characteristic of a military organization—physical prowess, combat, camaraderie of arms, and defense of the home front—are all perceived as "masculine." The presence of women in the army challenges the masculinity of the organization, giving rise to concern that the enlistment of women may threaten the qualities it needs in order to realize its goals.[14]

Degroot, Addis, Elshtain, and others point to images of masculinity and femininity, those that evince the image of the "fighting man" and the "compassionate nurse," as informing the wartime and military experience of both sexes. Unlike the military masculine image, the feminine image has been envisaged as one of peace, tranquility, domesticity, and health; women create life and do not belong among the elements that cause loss of life.[15] However, other studies, especially that of Ruddick, challenge these images with the claim that men are not necessarily lovers of war and women not necessarily pursuers of peace, and that the "masculinity of war" and the "femininity of peace" are myths.[16] The influence of images of femininity and masculinity on military activity in the pre-state Yishuv is among the issues this article seeks to address.

The Participation of Women in the Yishuv's Defense Forces

As from the period of the Second Aliyah (1904–1914), when they served as members of the Hashomer defense organization, women participated in military activities in the Yishuv, the pre-state Jewish community in Israel. As the Yishuv grew, the need for organized defense grew with it. The Jewish-Arab

conflict, the restrictions of the White Paper, World War II, and the threat it posed to the Jewish community in Palestine all accelerated the formation of a military force. The central military organization in the Yishuv was the Haganah, which was established in 1920 and served as a "people's militia" for the protection of the community. It took instructions from the political leadership and from the 1930s on was supported by most of the Yishuv's political movements. Jewish military activity also took place within the frameworks of the Palmach, the British Army, and the underground resistance movements. Thousands of women were active members of the Haganah and of the other, smaller defense frameworks. The integration of women into the Haganah involved a constant, step-by-step struggle on their part to reach positions of authority and attain new roles.[17]

The women's desire to play an active role in the defense of the community appears to have stemmed from patriotism, with very few declaring themselves motivated by feminist ideals.[18] We may also suppose that at such a difficult time, they preferred to proclaim their nationalist purpose rather than publicly assert feminist views. Nonetheless, the myth of equality between the sexes in the Yishuv drew greatly upon the presence of women in the defense forces, and it was bolstered by stories of the women fighters in the War of Independence.[19] While this myth may have had little basis in reality, the gender relations represented by the woman soldier considerably influenced the image of the Yishuv as embodying an egalitarian, modern society. At the heart of this study lies the contradiction between the Yishuv's declaration of itself as a modern society that believed in women's equality, including their full participation in the defense forces, and its character as a nationalist society that assigned women a traditional role in society and in the military.

Religious Zionist Society and the Issue of Gender

Within this social context, the religious Zionist sector, represented in the Yishuv primarily by the members of the Mizrahi and Hapo'el Hamizrahi movements, had a complex ideological character.[20] Its participation in building the new country required difficult decisions about how to preserve the mores of the past while becoming an integral part of the new Zionist society, whose founding principles included new conceptions of gender relations and

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the roles of the sexes.[21] Men and women alike had to formulate new self-images. Traditional Judaism imposed a strict separation between the roles of women and men, assigning women the “natural” domain of home, husband, and children. The era of national rebirth created a new situation, in which religious women aspired to be part of the national enterprise. Their entry into the public–masculine sphere placed religious women and religious Zionist society at the problematic junction between tradition and change.

To what extent did the involvement of young religious women in the fighting affect the image of religious Zionism? Does the story of these women soldiers bolster the conservative image of religious society, or does it represent the emergence of a new, egalitarian religious society that sought integration within general society? What type of gender images did religious Zionism maintain in wartime, and did they influence the shaping of new perceptions of femininity and masculinity in civilian society? In other words, was the phenomenon of religious women fighters a one-time episode, the result of a temporary national emergency, or did it have its roots in new gender perceptions?

MOBILIZATION OF WOMEN AS A RELIGIOUS NATIONALIST DUTY

Religious Zionists—mainly members of the Hapo‘el Hamizrahi movement and members and graduates of the religious Zionist youth movements—began participating in the defense forces about ten years after the establishment of the Haganah. Their activity was particularly prominent in the 1940s, when thousands of young men and women, educated by these movements to serve the Zionist cause, volunteered for military service as a matter of course.[22] The religious Zionist women who joined the Haganah did not come from any single type of background. They included middle-class members of the Mizrahi movement, pioneering women who had participated in agricultural training programs in Europe before coming to Israel to join in the projects of the Hapo‘el Hamizrahi movement; and young women born in the Yishuv, students and graduates of national-religious schools, and members religious Zionist youth movements, especially Benei Akiva.

The youth movements taught identical Zionist, egalitarian values to boys and girls, breaking down gender barriers and pressing young men and women

alike to take part in the establishment of the nascent state, the settlement of the country, and its defense, including combat duty. However, the goal was not necessarily feminist. The education of girls to fight in their country's defense was not intended to create a model of "religious women fighters" but rather to provide the Zionist endeavor with as large a work force as possible. Girls who had belonged to the religious Zionist youth movements overwhelmingly enlisted in the military organizations, although it is difficult to assess just how many there were.[23]

From the point of view of Jewish law, the aspiration of religious women to be part of the defense effort raises some questions, on both the strictly legal and the ideological levels. Following the biblical injunction that "A woman must not don men's apparel" (Deut. 22:5), the legal debate turns mainly on the issue of women wearing men's clothing and bearing arms. Does the designation of certain items of clothing as "men's apparel" change in different periods and societies? Should weapons be viewed as always pertaining to "men's apparel" and so forbidden to women in perpetuity, or is their gender-specificity subject to change? Should women be permitted to use arms only in self-defense, or also in the defense of others? What rules apply in a war defined as a *milhemet mitzvah*–an obligatory war in which all must take part?[24]

Talmudic sources take a dichotomous approach to the place of women in warfare. On the one hand, the women of Israel were required to do their part in a *milhemet mitzvah*: "In an obligatory war, all must go out to fight, even a bridegroom from his chamber and a bride from under her canopy" (BT *Sotah* 44b). On the other hand, the Talmud also unequivocally states, "It is the way of the man to make war, and it is not the way of the woman to make war" (BT *Kiddushin* 2b). Commentators attempting to contend with this paradox decided that although women are required to contribute to the success of the Jewish army in an obligatory war, it is not their way "to conquer" or "make war." They are must do their part by providing vital services to the fighting soldiers, but "it is not required, nor is it fitting for them to fight on the battlefield."[25]

However, the legal question *per se* was not uppermost in people's minds in the period under discussion, when the Yishuv was engaged in what was perceived as a clear-cut war of national survival (it did came to the fore after the establishment of the state, during the controversy over the law requiring conscription of women into the Israel Defense Forces). From records

of debates at meetings of the Hapo'el Hamizrahi executive, from the testimony of religious women who served in the Haganah, and from articles that appeared in the religious Zionist press, it emerges that the religious Zionist public was more concerned with the ideological issue of how the traditional understanding of women's place could go together with their participation in the war effort.[26]

The traditional religious outlook is expressed in an interpretation of Ps. 45:13: "all glorious is the princess within"—that is, a woman's place is in the home. According to this approach, the place of men in wartime is on the battle lines, while that of women is at the home front, aiding the fighters but not themselves fighting. The penetration of women into the male military domain is perceived as a threat to the structure of traditional society and also as a violation of modesty.[27] There is a fear of the adverse effects on the young women of living within a "freethinking" society, of corruption of morals because of the mixing of the sexes. Furthermore, military service might divert women from their traditional destiny—motherhood—and in this way harm the next generation.[28] In the lead-up to the founding of the state, however, many believed that the very existence of the Jewish people in Eretz Israel was hanging in the balance. It was a time of emergency, and the danger to Jewish lives temporarily suspended considerations related to traditional values. As we shall see, however, these considerations did affect religious Zionism's conception of how women were to function within the military organization.

In the early 1920s, the inclusion of (secular) women in the Haganah was not self-evident. However, when religious girls asked to join the defense forces in the 1940s, they were essentially knocking on an open door. Many women Benei Akiva graduates arrived by way of the Elitzur Guards, established in 1938 as a kind of pre-military battalion for religious youth. They provided physical and spiritual preparation and a recruitment framework for religious youth wishing to join the Haganah, the British army, or the Palmach.[29] Young religious women also came to the Haganah from other movements, such as Berit Hashemona'im; and some, including adults, did not come from any movement.[30]

Recalling their motivations many years later, the religious women who joined the fighting forces recalled seeing their enlistment as a religious, nationalist duty. Hava Tzvieli explained:

> As a young observant women from a religious Zionist home, I felt that it was my duty not to be different from the others, but to maintain my separate [religious] identity by observing the Sabbath and the dietary laws.[31]

Esther Bazak, who joined the Palmach, recalled that she had wanted to fulfill her duty in a situation of national emergency.[32] Tova Ilan, a veteran of the Haganah, also recalled:

> There was not even a single moment of hesitation. . . . The need was shared by everyone. It was clear. For me there was not even the shadow of a doubt.[33]

It was clear to these women that they were participating in the defense of a shared national enterprise, but they were nevertheless set apart by their aspiration to maintain a religious lifestyle even in the context of military life and by their manner of dealing with the consequent problems.

Joining non-religious, mixed-gender units posed great difficulties for young religious women, coming as they did from a "protected" world of strict observance. Penina Rosenblatt, who covertly joined the Haganah in the early 1940s, remarked that the few people who were in on her secret saw her as a rebel whose activities betrayed her religious values.[34] Within the younger generation of religious Zionists in the 1940s, parental authority no longer overruled other considerations. Religious young women who joined the Haganah tended to keep their underground activities from their parents, partly so as not to worry them, but also because they feared that their parents would try to stop them.[35] According to veteran Sarah Adir,

> The religious girls integrated into the ranks of the Haganah and were deeply devoted, all the while withstanding pressure from their parents, who objected to their activities because they feared they would go astray.[36]

The desire to see religious women serving in the Haganah was accompanied by fears that they would be drawn into the irreligious lifestyle of their surroundings and that their moral behavior would be compromised by

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having to keep company with men. Men and women as young as 15 served in the Haganah, and they often spent long periods together, even sleeping in the same quarters. A letter sent out by the security committee of Hapo'el Hamizrahi declared:

> There is no need to spell out the bad influence on the young women. . . . The very fact of their presence causes undesirable talk and dangerous behavior.[37]

According to Tova Ilan, guard duty together with nonreligious young men was problematic for the religious girls, who were exposed to behavioral norms that were foreign to them (and sometimes to the nonreligious girls as well)."[38] They were a religious minority within a female minority. Yet despite this twofold "inferiority," they were not deterred from volunteering:

> As a religious girl I encountered certain problems, but I did not make a big deal about them. We put the problems out of our minds because we felt that the urgency of the hour called for it. We had the feeling that we had to give, to act within the framework of the Haganah, and therefore the religious problems were shunted aside, and we somehow managed without asking rabbis what was permitted and what was forbidden. Everyone decided for herself.[39]

In retrospect, the women stated that despite being in secular company, they behaved in accordance with tradition.[40] The national need prevailed over halachic, ideological, personal, and family difficulties and led to cooperation between men and women and between religious and non-religious fighters.

After separate religious frameworks were formed in the Haganah in the 1930s, the "religious problems" were resolved. The first group to be trained for a service in a separate religious company was established in Jerusalem in 1930 and expanded in 1933–34. The Arab riots of 1936 were a turning point, spurring many new enlistments to the religious army company in Jerusalem, which also had a large platoon of women. The Hapo'el Hamizrahi security department, established in 1937, worked on creating and expanding religious army units. In 1939, the religious companies of the Haganah had over 2,000 members.[41] The development of these units encouraged numerous religious

men and women to join the Haganah. Apart from the women's platoons within the religious companies, the Haganah women's brigade in Tel Aviv included a company whose entire membership, including the officers, was made up of religious women. The separate religious framework enabled its members to observe the Sabbath and dietary laws more easily.[42] Though statistical data is lacking, by the late 1940s, when security was a top priority, there were probably thousands of religious women serving in the Haganah.

Although religious Zionism did not view the training of women fighters as being among its goals, Hapo'el Hamizrahi decided in December 1947 to support an order that mandated it.[43] Two explanations were given for this ruling. The first was that the danger to the existence of the Jewish community required the recruitment of all available human resources. Since it was assumed that Arab women would not participate in the fighting, the participation of Jewish women was viewed as a significant addition to the forces. The second explanation was based on experience. Religious women members of the Haganah were already participating in repelling enemy attacks and other daring activities.

> Recognizing the fighting ability of our women members, we were of the view that it was not only permissible for girls to be trained with arms and take on various military roles, but it was in fact a sacred duty, which should be neither deferred nor diminished.[44]

The leaders of Hapo'el Hamizrahi were aware of the opposing arguments that might be raised by the religious public. However, just as they had not hesitated to disobey their parents and some of their rabbis on the issue of immigrating to and settling Eretz Israel, now too, they believed that duty and the enemy at the gates required a type of behavior that might not be acceptable to all.[45] Their decision, then, was based on the circumstances of the time rather than on a new conception of gender roles. The national goal overwhelmed other considerations, impelling them to act in accordance with the talmudic injunction that "all must go out to fight."

DID THE PRESENCE OF RELIGIOUS WOMEN SOLDIERS AT THE FRONT CHANGE GENDER PERCEPTIONS?

In the Ranks of the Haganah: The Front Line and the Home Front as One

Studies demonstrate the capacity of war to bring about a reversal of roles. Billie Melman has pointed out the blurring of differences between the battlefront and the home front, "between combatants and noncombatants and between roles defined as 'male' and those defined as 'female'" during World War I.[46] The female presence in the military forces changed the ancient notion that men belong on the battlefield and women on the protected home front—at home. However, it appears that the home front can be reestablished on the front lines. In the view of Yuval-Davis, "battlefront" and "home front" are flexible terms that can change their meaning in accordance with the nature of the war while still preserving the gender distinction, because the women are always on the home front.[47] The role taken by religious women in Israel's War of Independence bolsters this argument. The war turned extensive areas of the country into battlefronts and brought women closer to the line of fire, but even at the front, religious women generally assumed home-front roles. For the most part they did not function as combat soldiers but rather did various services for the male soldiers, freeing them for combat. The way the women functioned was a major factor in the perception of the front they were on as the home front.

Like the other women members of the Haganah, the religious women functioned as signalers, medics and first aid providers, kitchen staff, clerks, and guards—jobs that were an extension of women's classic domestic work. Nevertheless, there was something new: the women's own demand to act shoulder to shoulder with the men under fire. This demand was voiced explicitly by a woman member of the reinforcement company in Jerusalem's Mekor Haim neighborhood when she was not permitted to take part in operational military activities. She protested:

> All I want is equality! I am here with the boys—in the guard post, at work, and in defending this place—and I want to be with them everywhere, on attacks and missions, too. I'm no less capable than anybody else. . . . Either I'm given a job in which I'm not discriminated against in relation to the rest of the guys, or I'll pack my things and leave you, and I don't

> care for where! Forgive me for talking like this, but you are the ones who have brought about this situation. Tell me, in what way am I different from anyone else?[48]

By way of compromise, the young women serving in Mekor Haim were given a new task—providing cover as mortar gunners. The weapon was new to the women, but they remained behind the lines. Nevertheless some of the women seem to have experienced a change in their self-awareness, perhaps indicating the assimilation of a new gender perspective that altered the religious woman's traditional image of "taking things in and keeping quiet."

The situation in other locations also attests to the perception of women as belonging to the home front. For example, Mina Levy, a member of Benei Akiva, found herself at Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus, doing guard duty but also providing food services. As the danger mounted, one of the young men asked her to keep a letter addressed to his girlfriend in case anything happened to him. Levy responded, "How do you know what will happen to *me*? After all, we are here together."[49] Even their presence together at the battlefront did not change the men's perception of the women as being on the home front.

In March 1948, about a hundred members of Tel Aviv's religious military company, including fourteen young women, set out for the besieged youth village of Ben Shemen. During their long stay there, the women functioned as medics, clerks, and kitchen workers, did guard duty, and even participated in some of the training exercises.[50] However, though the war placed them at the front together with the men, this did not change the nature of the jobs they carried out. The female soldiers continued to be treated as women rather than as combatants. The women on kitchen duty protested in a rebellion well remembered by their comrades, who recall that they went around carrying guns and demanding to take an active part in military operations. Their rebellion made waves, but it was unsuccessful.[51] One of the men explained, in retrospect, that the women, with the exception of one female medic, did not have clearly defined jobs. Consequently, they were the most natural candidates for the service jobs, especially since this freed the men for combat.[52]

Studies by Degroot and Goldstein show that armies throughout history have been characterized by gender divisions, and that notwithstanding differences among societies and in the nature of wars, gender roles in them

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have been similar. Women, excluded from combat, have fulfilled auxiliary roles, often providing the fighting army with some of its logistic needs and so releasing combat soldiers from the need to do so.[53] The case of the women members of the Haganah, both religious and nonreligious, bears out this distinction.[54]

Nevertheless, the active presence of young religious women in a military setting did represent a reshaping of their identity for the women themselves. Their roles were identical to those of the nonreligious women, and, like them, they often demanded to take part in operational activities. The above examples evince women whose presence together with men at the front convinced them of their ability to dare and to innovate and intensified their aspiration to redefine traditional notions of "masculine" and "feminine." However, it may be assumed that this aspiration was not universal.

Women Fighters in the Religious Settlements: Civilians under Fire

During wars, women civilians may join the battle. In Britain during World War II, women demanded to be allowed to do their part in defending their homes.[55] The situation in pre-state Israel was similar, especially in the border areas. The location of the religious kibbutzim in three principal border areas—the Etzion Bloc, the Beit She'an Valley, and near Gaza in the south[56]—entailed multiple security problems and placed them on the front line when the war broke out. Their women members, willy-nilly, became combatants, contrary to what was expected of them. During the fighting they fulfilled traditional women's roles, refused to be evacuated to safer areas, and some of them bore arms, fought, and fell in battle.

In the settlements that became battle zones, where women numbered about a third to a half of the members, they built fortifications together with the men.[57] Given the identification of women with the home, even mothers could take part in its defense. Nevertheless, family status played a crucial role in the profile of the women fighters. When the security situation worsened, most of the mothers were evacuated together with their children, leaving behind only the young, mostly unmarried women, though some were married without children.

Most of the women fighters who remained in Kefar Etzion were unmarried new immigrants, Holocaust survivors who had arrived in Eretz Israel

only a year or two before to begin a new life. The war, however, had another fate in store for them.[58] They were all imbued with devotion to the place and a sense that they belonged beside the men, even under fire. The need for recruits to guard the settlements was the main factor that allowed these women to fight in the defense of their homes.

Other women fighters, including many of those at Kibbutz Ein Tzurim in the Etzion Bloc, were Benei Akiva graduates, born in the country. Their role in the fighting forces was the high point of a rebellion begun years earlier.

> Only yesterday, they were Benei Akiva girls listening with pounding hearts to their counselor's stories about a settlement movement that combined religious observance with working the land. Later, they left their parents' warm homes to go up into the Hebron hills . . . and build settlements under the most arduous conditions. . . . And now they have become fighters.[59]

In the kibbutz as in the cities, communications and first aid were viewed as natural tasks for women. They worked in the various service occupations, providing food for the men in the battle stations even under great duress. My sources bear no indication that the women were resentful at being limited to such roles. In this time of emergency, all the members performed without question the tasks to which they were assigned. Under the circumstances, moreover, the female role of providing food both to the fighting forces and to those at home took on national significance, a phenomenon that was by no means unique to pre-state Israel.[60] Cooking under battlefield conditions was no mean feat. The arrival of reinforcements swelled the population considerably, but supplies did not always arrive on time, forcing the cooks to improvise. They had to run under fire from one post to another, a role for which they were valued,[61] though they did not merit the glory of fighters.

Alongside their work in the service occupations, the women participated in training exercises, carried arms, and did guard duty alongside the men,[62] often taking over their posts when the men went out on combat missions.[63] The participation of women in guard duty was taken for granted, as the men could not be expected to bear this burden alone, and it does not seem to have given rise to moral dilemmas, even though men and women often guarded together in pairs. This is probably attributable to the conservative nature of the social order, in which "there were strong moral checks."[64]

Tzipora Rosenfeld, a Holocaust survivor, married and the mother of a child who had been evacuated, refused to concede her right to take part in fighting for her home. Choosing the job of "runner," she joined the defenders.

> She found her place within the group, which pulsated with a camaraderie for which they would lay down their lives, and she had a place of honor among them. Under siege, a woman symbolized all of life to the soldier, the memory of a good, caring home, a remnant of all that was noble and sublime; her name was whispered by all the men of arms. . . . She could cast everything aside, even little Yossi, to stay there, bringing her feminine gentleness to the verge of the trenches and the graves and fight alongside the soldiers.[65]

Apart from her help with the guard duty, her presence was important for morale; it created a warm atmosphere and inspired the soldiers. Emotional support was integral to the women's activity,[66] and their presence encouraged the men to show strength and courage. Tzipora, who did a man's job and even guarded alone at one of the posts, became a symbol to the male fighters there. As they said to each other, "If Tzipora is brave enough to guard alone at post number 7, how can you not do it?"[67] This case echoes the experience of other societies, in which a female presence in battle has been seen as encouraging the male soldiers' morale and their motivation to try harder.[68]

As the situation became increasingly grave, a decision was made to withdraw the women from the battle zone. At the crucial moment, they were viewed as women rather than as soldiers performing a vital military task. The fall of the Etzion Bloc was preceded by fierce, bloody fighting. Women medics tended the many wounded under conditions of heavy shelling, tension, fatigue, and uncertainty. In his final moments, the area commander ordered the evacuation of the wounded to Kibbutz Massuot Yitzhak, and Etti Rosenzweig, his secretary, asked that all the girls be evacuated along with them so as to prevent them falling into enemy hands.[69] The fear of the women being molested by the enemy apparently was critical to the decision to evacuate them together with the rest of the "noncombatant" forces.[70]

The fear of women being captured and abused by the enemy occupies an important place in the arguments made against their participation in combat.[71] Some writers maintain that the fear of women being captured and

molested stems from a will to protect the purity of the race and preserve the honor of the family,[72] and that women falling into captivity is degrading to men, in that it demonstrates their inability to protect their women. The women fighters themselves feared capture. Later on, they recalled planning to save the hand grenades they had been allocated to kill themselves together with their captors rather than give themselves up.[73]

Some of the women refused to leave Kefar Etzion for another location, and in any case no one knew where might be safer. The doctor who served in the improvised hospital recalled:

> Naomi, . . . one of the medics, declared that she did not want to leave and would remain in Kefar Etzion. . . . I shouted at her: "I cannot force the others. But you are part of my team, and you must go with me." She refused, and, according to her, I slapped her. . . . This had its effect upon her, and she went with us."[74]

About eight women left with the hospital in the direction of Massuot Yitzhak, but the convoy was fired upon, forcing most of them to return to Kefar Etzion. Only three succeed in reaching Massuot Yitzhak, and their lives were saved.

During the final battle at Kefar Etzion, some of the women demonstrated considerable courage and valor.[75]

> Not only bridegrooms from their chambers and brides from under their canopies went out to the battlefield. Women . . . young girls . . . the wounded and ill . . . fought at Kefar Etzion. . . . "Why are we surrendering?" screamed Tzipora as she came down from the guard post together with the men. . . . She was distraught from the battle.[76]

Women served as medics and signalers in the dark cellar together with the wounded until the last moment.

Those who remained at Kefar Etzion, some 127 people, fell in the fighting. They included 21 women who were killed in the final battle, most of them in the ruins of the cellar of the German monastery, where they were caring for the wounded. With one exception, the women who were killed were either unmarried or married without children.[77] Dozens of women from all over the Etzion Bloc were captured by the Jordanian Legion and taken to

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the Umm al-Jamal prisoner of war camp in eastern Trans-Jordan.[78] In one day, almost all the children of Kefar Etzion became fatherless. Most of the surviving women became widows.

Religious women fighters gained no special place in Israel's collective memory. The story of their valor was incorporated into that of the heroes of the War of Independence. In descriptions of the final days of Kefar Etzion, the women fighters are commemorated along with the rest without any particular gender distinction. Israeli society at large glorified the women fighters of the War of Independence,[79] but religious society did not reserve any special veneration for the image of its women soldiers.

In many societies throughout the world, women have not been accorded the glory of fighting soldiers. They are treated first and foremost as women. Because they are not supposed to have fought, the proof of their fighting ability is instinctively overlooked.[80] Furthermore, it may be assumed that the religious women combat soldiers did not become a symbol in religious Zionist society because they were not the role models that society sought to inculcate. The devaluation of their image in the collective memory of religious Zionism bolsters the hypothesis that it derived from the constraints of circumstance rather than from a new conception of the role of women in society.

CONCLUSIONS

The War Did Not Change Gender Perceptions

Studies from other parts of the world maintain that at least until 1945, women who served in armies did so for patriotic reasons.[81] From the overall gist of the sources examined here, it appears that most of the women who fought in Israel's War of Independence, whether or not they were religiously observant, were motivated to join the military by patriotism rather than by the struggle for equality between the sexes. Their testimonies use no feminist rhetoric. After the war, religious women such as Tikva Irom-Aldubi, commander of a women's company in the Haganah, and Esther Bazak-Shereshevsky, who was a combat medic in the Palmach, even expressed reservations about military service for women.[82]

The religious women who fought on the battlefield were mostly kibbutz members and did not represent the norm among religious women. Those

who did not bear arms, the older women and the mothers who were evacuated together with their children, were perceived as serving the nation just as nobly, in accordance with the model of "the patriotic woman" described by Addis. This category includes the mother who sends her sons out to fight, willingly sacrificing them for the country; the wife who follows her husband to dangerous places and safeguards her man's honor by means of her traditional feminine virtues, such as faithfulness, obedience, and family and domestic aptitudes; the supportive sister; the faithful fiancée; and so on.[83] These models of women's participation in war—that of the "patriotic women" who does not participate in the fighting but supports the male soldiers, and that of the young, unmarried woman who stands beside the soldier to help—existed both among the religious Zionists and in society at large. Even when she bore arms, the woman was not represented as having abandoned her femininity, and consequently the image of the traditional women as "bearer of the values of peace" was unimpaired.

Feminists and scholars are divided in their views concerning the significance of women's military service. Does combat duty for women represent a breakthrough towards the attainment of equal rights in civilian life as well, or does it in fact contribute to the masculine image of the army and further enhance the inequality of the sexes? Some studies, like those exploring the impact of World War I on women's emancipation in Britain, point to wars as influencing the equalization of women's rights.[84] According to Dafna Izraeli, however, though participation of women in the army may appear to evince equality and innovation in society, women are oppressed within the military framework, leading to greater inequality.[85] In Israel and elsewhere, women's occupations took on a new meaning when they were performed on the battlefield, blurring the boundary between the front line and the home front. In most cases, however, this did not essentially change the traditional gender division between women and men, and it did not change their status in civilian life.[86] Women might function well in combat and other non-traditional roles, but this did not change deeply rooted social concepts concerning the roles of the sexes. Even the most heroic participation in battle was seen as a temporary aberration stemming from exceptional historical circumstances, after which they went home to society's traditional gender divisions and to their previous civilian standing.[87]

In the State of Israel, a new model was created, in which women remained in the military even after the war, albeit in female roles. Religious society,

however, conformed to the more usual model: Once the war for survival was over, the woman had to return to her traditional civilian role. Her intrusion into an unmistakably male domain did not signify a revision in how male and female roles in society were conceived.

The Complex Image of Religious Zionism

In traditional societies, women have sometimes been integrated into the army in order to create a style of religious society that is simultaneously fundamentalist and innovative. By this means, they have been used as a vehicle for changing society and reshaping its image.[88] In religious Zionism, women's participation in the defense forces might appear symptomatic of the development of a feminist consciousness and the penetration of new ideas. However, as far as religious Zionism was concerned, this meeting-point between religious and secular Zionism was a one-time episode. Because the women's participation was seen as stemming first and foremost from circumstances rather than from a change in traditional conceptions, it led nowhere, as borne out by the religious parties' opposition to mandatory conscription for women. The consensus between the religious Zionist and the ultra-Orthodox parties on this issue created a sense that the religious Zionists tended toward traditional attitudes in this regard, preferring the preservation of traditional male and female roles rather than partnership with secular Zionism in the adoption of new concepts of gender.[89]

However, certain parts of the religious Zionist movement, including Benei Akiva and the religious kibbutzim, represented a kind of opposition within religious Zionist society. For them, the active participation of religious women in the defense effort heralded a new partnership between men and women in realizing common goals. Benei Akiva, with its ideology of combining religious observance with working the land, and its belief, as a coeducational youth movement, in the full participation of women in public life, felt that it must support the recruitment of girls into the army's Nahal program, in which soldiers combined military activity with working in agricultural settlements. Benei Akiva believed that equality of obligation came before equality of rights. If secular women, by virtue of the Defense Service Law legislated immediately after the establishment of the state, were required to serve, Benei Akiva's female members could not exempt

themselves from this duty.[90] The religious kibbutz movement also came out against the exemption of religious women from conscription, for reasons that included their ideological opposition to the granting of extra privileges to the state's religious citizens; their own needs for the additional working hands supplied by the Nahal groups; and their concern that some young women might use the exemption as an excuse to shirk military service.[91] Thus, both Benei Akiva and the religious kibbutz movement continued the innovative line that religious Zionism had taken during the War of Independence.

Conceptions of gender would appear to be the crux of the issue. When new roles for women are accompanied by a new conceptualization of gender, they herald a process leading to change; otherwise, the innovation is no more than a passing phase. In most cases, participation in the defense forces, though it may have been viewed as quite revolutionary, did not really lead to meaningful change. Even though religious women took on roles in the military framework that did not undermine the tradition, this did not lead the religious Zionist Knesset members to recognize their participation in the army as a worthy and desirable goal.

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Notes

1. Quoted at a meeting of the National Religious Party Executive, May 3, 1973, Religious Zionist Archives (henceforth: RZA), Hapo'el Hamizrahi (henceforth: PM), Movement Activists, Articles, 948.
2. The Women's Corps was modeled upon the ATS, the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service of the British army. In May 1948, it was decided that the women soldiers would be employed in static combat jobs, the defense of settlements, professional and administrative roles, and auxiliary tasks. See M. Pa'il, "From the Haganah to the IDF: The Organization of Israel's Regular Army," in Y. Ben-Arieh (ed.), *The History of Eretz Israel: The War of Independence (1947–1949)* (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 125–126; Z. Ostfeld, *An Army Is Born: Main Stages in the Buildup of the Army under the Leadership of David Ben-Gurion*, I (Tel Aviv, 1994), p. 442.

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3. On the question of the mobilization of religious girls into the army after the establishment of the Israel Defense Forces see M. Una, *On Separate Paths* (Alon Shvut–Gush Etzion, 1984); Z. Ostfeld, *An Army is Born* (above, note 2), pp. 442–443; Y. Yishai, "Myth and Reality in Gender Equality: The Status of Women in Israel," in M. Lissak et al. (eds.), *Israel Towards the Year 2000: Society, Politics and Culture* (Jerusalem, 1996), p. 116; T. Tsameret, "Ben-Gurion in the Early Years of the State: A Comparison of His Attitude toward Religious Zionism with His Attitude toward the Ultra-Orthodox," in N. Ilan (ed.), *A Good Eye: Dialogue and Polemic in Jewish Culture* (Tel Aviv, 1999), pp. 365–367; A.R. Bloom, "Women in the Defense Forces," in B. Swirsky and M.P. Safir (eds.), *Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel* (New York, 1993), p. 133 (in English); *Hapo'el Hamizrahi in the Years 1942–1949: Summaries for the Tenth Convention in Jerusalem, November, 1949,* p. 113, RZA, PM, 1236b; IDF Archives, 1344/49/38, 69/51/9, 679/56/21, 852/56/414, and 852/51/248; minutes of a Women's Organizations Council meeting, November 15, 1948, Labor Movement Archives, 53-6-230IV; and R. Katz, "Equal Rights and the Recruitment of Women," *Hatzofeh*, September 8, 1949, in RZA, Warhaftig, 86.
4. G.L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality, Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York, 1985; in English); N. Yuval-Davis, "Gender and Nation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 16/4 (1993), pp. 621–632 (in English); S.H. Katz, "Adam and Adama, 'Ird and Ard: En-gendering Political Conflict and Identity in Early Jewish and Palestinian Nationalism," in D. Kandiyoti (ed.), *Gendering the Middle East: Emerging Perspective* (London–New York, 1996), pp. 83–105 (in English); N. Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London–Thousand Oaks–New Delhi, 1997; in English). For a description and summary of the literature on race, gender, and national identity see H. Marshall, "Intersections of Gender, 'Race' and Nation," *Feminism and Psychology*, 9/4 (1999), pp. 479–486 (in English). On feminism and nationalism see L.J. Rupp, "Feminism and Internationalism: A View from the Centre," *Gender and History*, 10/3 (1998), pp. 535–538 (in English).
5. E. Avdela, E. and A. Pesarra, "Women's Emancipation in Irredentist Politics in Nineteenth-Century Greece," *Historia*, 5 (2000), pp. 109–110. For a discussion of the role of women as "birth-givers" and mothers of the nation see W. Bracewell, "Women, Motherhood and Contemporary Serbian Nationalism," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 19/1–2 (1996), pp. 25–33 (in English); and N. Yuval-Davis, "Women and the Biological Reproduction of 'The Nation,'" *ibid.*, pp. 17–24 (in English).
6. J. Nagel, "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21/2 (1998), pp. 242–269 (in English).
7. E.J. Yeo, "The Creation of 'Motherhood' and Women's Responses in Britain and France, 1750–1914," *Women's History Review*, 8/2 (1999), pp. 201–218 (in English).

8. Healthy national life would generate a change in the Jewish body and help create a new Hebrew man; see D. Biale, *Eros and the Jews* (Tel Aviv, 1992), pp. 231–232. The effeminate image of the Diaspora Jew was accepted by European culture, anti-Semites and even the Zionists. On the similarity between the anti-Semitic and Zionist discourses see M. Gluzman, "Longing for Heterosexuality: Zionism and Sexuality in Herzl's Altneuland," *Theory and Criticism*, 11 (1997), pp. 145–162.
9. Gluzman, *ibid.*, p. 148.
10. On this phenomenon see G.L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (above, note 4).
11. Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi, for example, believed that equality would come with the realization of the national vision; see her article, "Work and the Woman Worker," in idem, *Bein hazemanim* (Safed, 1916), pp. 25–26.
12. J.S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 1 (in English).
13. See C. Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives* (Boston, 1983; in English); Bloom, *Women in the Defense Force* (above, note 3), p. 137; O. Almog, *The Sabra: A Profile* (Tel Aviv, 1997), p. 381; and I. Beit-El, "Men, Manhood and War: Gender and the First World War," in *Zemanim*, 65 (1998/9), p. 112. According to Dafna Izraeli, the ideal soldier embodies masculine qualities, and military organization and masculinity have become synonymous; see her article, "Women in the Israeli Army," *International Problems, Society and Politics*, 33/63 (1994), pp. 23–24; and see G. Golan, "Militarization and Gender: The Israeli Experience," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 20/5–6 (1997), pp. 581–586 (in English).
14. E. Addis, V.E. Russo, and I. Sebesta, "Introduction," in idem (eds.), *Women Soldiers: Images and Realities* (New York, 1994), p. xi (in English).
15. See G.J. Degroot, "Introduction: Arms and the Woman," in idem and C. Peniston-Bird, *A Soldier and a Woman: Sexual Integration in the Military* (2000), p. 10 (in English); Addis et al., "Introduction" (above, note 14), p. xv; V.E. Russo, "The Constitution of a Gendered Enemy," in Addis et al., *Women Soldiers* (above, note 14), p. 50 (in English). On the contrast between the images of fighting men and of women in the context of the American Civil War and World War II see J. Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York, 1987; in English). On the connection between women and "peace," feminism and pacifism, see also A. Gelblum, "Transcending the Nation: Pacifism and Feminism between the World Wars," *Historia*, 3 (1999), pp. 103–122. The duty of women is to give life, not to take it: Degroot, "Introduction," p. 14; and P. Summerfield, "'She Wants a Gun, not a Dishcloth!': Gender, Service and Citizenship in Britain in the Second World War," in Degroot and Peniston-Bird, *A Soldier and a Woman*, p. 128 (in English).
16. S. Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston, 1989), pp. 143–146, 151, and 154 (in English).

17. According to Tova Manifaz (Zlotnik) in "Women at War in the Haganah" (January 1988, Haganah Historical Archives [henceforth: HHA]), 19,795 women who had been members of the Haganah enlisted in the IDF in 1948, a number that does not include Haganah members who were not of enlistment age. On the place of the women in the Hashomer organization see Y. Goldstein, *The Forefathers of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF): The Bar Giora and Hashomer Underground Associations, 1907–1935* (Tel Aviv, 1994), pp. 61–71 and 217–222; and M. Shilo, "The Many Faces of the Modern Hebrew Women: The Guardswoman as a Test Case," *Criticism and Interpretation*, 34 (2000), pp. 7–17. On the struggle of women to take part in the Haganah and on women's roles in it, see O. Almog, "Women in the Defense Forces: From the Haganah to the Women's Army Corps 1920–1948," M.A. thesis (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1987); and M. Naor, *The Haganah Lexicon* (Tel Aviv, 1992), p. 151. For additional testimonies see HHA 101.4, 190.5, and 118/10.
18. D. Boni-Davidi, "Women and Gender in the Haganah, 1920–1948" (work in progress).
19. Y. Yishai, "Myth and Reality in Gender Equality: The Status of Women in Israel," in Lissak et al., *Israel Towards the Year 2000* (above, note 3), p. 105; see also Y. Buber-Agasi, "The Status of Women in Religion," in D. Izraeli et al. (eds.), *The Double Bind: Women in Israel* (Tel Aviv, 1982), p. 227; G. Doron and D. Schoenker-Schrek, *Waiting for Representation: Women in Politics* (Tel Aviv, 1998), pp. 31–32; and O. Almog, "From Sabra to Yuppie: Changes in the Image and Social Status of the Israeli Woman," *Criticism and Interpretation*, 34 (2000), p. 22; on women fighters in the Palmach see Y. Efron, "Sisters, Fighters and Mothers—The Ethos and Reality of the 1948 Generation," *Iyunim bitkumat Yisrael*, 10 (2000), pp. 353–380.
20. For more about the religious Zionist movements, see, for example M. Una, *On the Paths of Thought and Action: Collection of Articles* (Tel Aviv, 1955); Y. Raphael and S. Shragai (eds.), *The Book of Religious Zionism*, I–II (Jerusalem, 1977); A. Fishman, *Hapo'el hamizrahi 1921–1935* (Tel Aviv, 1979); A. Rubinstein, *A Movement in a Time of Transition* (Ramat Gan, 1981).
21. A. Fishman, "Tradition and Innovation in Religious Zionism," in A. Rubinstein (ed.), *Paths of Rebirth: Studies in Religious Zionism,* I (Jerusalem, 1983), p. 127; A. Fishman, *Between Religion and Ideology* (Jerusalem, 1990), p. 55; E. Schweid, "Religion in a Postmodern Society," *Iyunim bitkumat Yisrael*, 2 (1992), pp. 3–27.
22. In 1938, the Haganah had 17,000 members. About 3,000 were members of Hapo'el Hamizrahi. See N. Gutkind-Golan (ed.), *Torah ve'avodah: Vision and Deed*, II (Tel Aviv, 1993), p. 254; and Malka Taragan, interviewed by Alex Poliakoff-Mayber and Haya Havilio, 1993, HHA 16/29.
23. On women in religious Zionism see L. Rosenberg, *Women and Gender in Religious Zionism: Organization, Settlement, and Defense*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Bar-Ilan University, 2001).

24. T. Admonit, *Within and Against the Current* (Tel Aviv, 1977), pp. 115–116; A. Lichtenstein, "Fundamental Problems in the Education of Women," in B. Rosenfeld (ed.), *Women and Education: A Collection of Articles on Jewish Law and Thought* (Kfar Saba, 1980), pp. 162–163.
25. E.G. Ellinson, "National Service for Girls: A Civilian or Soldier-Teacher Framework?" in M. Ishon (ed.), *Iturim: Studies in Honor of Moshe Krone* (Jerusalem, 1986), p. 331.
26. See, e.g., A.M. Kurtz, Minutes of Hapo'el Hamizrachi meeting, Jan. 7, 1948, RZA, PM 135.
27. R. Katz, "Equal Rights" (above, note 3).
28. Another claim was that women's physiology was unsuitable for fighting. See, e.g., A.Y. Levanon, "Women and War in Israel," *Bamishor*, 4/148 (Feb. 2, 1943), p. 6. For Orthodox Jewish attitudes on this question see Ellinson, "National Service" (above, note 25), p. 334–340; and S. Ashkenazi, *Woman in Judaism* (Tel Aviv, 1956), pp. 140–141. See also Lichtenstein, "Fundamental Problems" (above, note 24), pp. 162–163.
29. Y. Eliash, *Action through Vision* (Tel Aviv, 1983); A. Welner, *Armed Before Your Brethren: The Story of a Religious Company* (Tel Aviv, 1984), pp. 18–22, 28, and 30; M. Friedman, "The Political Struggle to Establish Religious Units in the Haganah," in H. Genizi (ed.), *Religion and Resistance in Mandatory Palestine* (Tel Aviv, 1995), pp. 72, 75.
30. On Berit Hashmona'im see M. Bar-Lev, "The Ideological Foundations of Berit Hashemona'im" in Genizi, *Religion and Resistance* (above, note 29), pp. 155–183; Tikva Irom-Aldubi, the commander of the religious company in the women's battalion in Tel Aviv, joined the Haganah on her own in 1940, even before the religious girls' squad was formed. She was interviewed by Haya Avrahami on January 14, 1985 (RZA 136.10) and by me on October 3, 1999.
31. Hava Tzvieli, "Yom Kippur in Those Days," *Hatzofeh*, September 14, 1999, p. 10.
32. Interview with Esther Bazak, August 17, 1999; T. Eshel, *The Women of the Haganah in Haifa* (Tel Aviv, 1997), p. 99.
33. Interview with Tova Ilan, August 29, 1999.
34. Penina Rosenblatt, quoted in Almog, "Women in the Defense Forces" (above, note 17), p. 36.
35. In a 1993 interview with Haya Havilio, Mina Levy, who was sent to a training course for commanders, remarked that her parents did not know where she was at the time (HHA 16/32); interview with Tova Ilan, August 29, 1999; interview with Esther Bazak, August 17, 1999.
36. Sarah Adir-Satt, quoted in Eshel, *Women of the Haganah* (above, note 32), p. 99.

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37. Letter of January 1, 1939, from the Hapoel Hamizrahi Guarding and Security Committee to Dr. Aharon Bart, RZA, PM, 1219b; activity report of the Security Committee, September 24, 1942, RZA, E 135.
38. Interview with Tova Ilan, August 29, 1999.
39. Rivka Yaakobovitz in *Women Fighters Talk* (Haifa, 1988), quoted in Friedman, "The Political Struggle" (above, note 29), p. 72.
40. According to Hava Zvieli in "Yom Kippur in Those Days" (above, note 31, p. 10), there were three religious girls among the 200 young men and women with whom she served. Thanks to the education they had received, they maintained their independence. Tikva Irom-Aldubi, interviewed on October 13, 1999, had similar recollections.
41. See Welner, *Armed Before your Brethren* (above, note 29); idem, "The Religious Companies in the Haganah," in Genizi, *Religion and Resistance* (above, note 29), pp. 187–210; N. Gutkind-Golan, *Torah ve'avodah*: *Vision and Action*, II (Tel Aviv, 1993), pp. 261–262; Friedman, "The Political Struggle" (above, note 29), pp. 69–112; letter of 3 October, 1938, from S.Z. Shragai to the enlistment office, RZA, PM, 1219b; Tikva Irom-Aldubi, interviewed by Haya Avrahami, January 14, 1985, HHA 136.10.
42. Tikva Irom-Aldubi's fellow commanders were religious women, as emerges from the interview with her conducted by Haya Avrahami and myself; on the company see also HHA 80/380/15, 17, and 20.
43. M.A. Kurtz, "Hapo'el Hamizrahi's Position on the Recruitment of Girls," *Netivah*, 23 (September 5, 1948), p. 8.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. B. Melman, "Turning War into History: 'The Great War,' History and Historians, 1914–1998," *Zemanim*, 65 (Winter 1998/9), p. 19.
47. N. Yuval-Davis, "Front and Rear: The Sexual Division of Labor in Israeli Army," *Feminist Studies*, 11/3 (1985), pp. 649–675.
48. Welner, *Armed Before Your Brethren* (above, note 29), p. 95.
49. Mina Levy, interviewed by Haya Havilio, 1993, HHA 16/32.
50. Meir Izental, interviewed on October 5, 1999, IDF Archive 7633/49/7; on the company in Ben Shemen see Welner, *Armed Before Your Brethren* (above, note 29), p. 171.
51. Interviews with Alter Welner and Meir Izental, both on October 5, 1999.
52. Four girls were officially defined as a "service squad." See the list of service squads from company A, IDF Archive 7633/49/7; interview with Meir Izental, October 5, 1999.
53. Degroot, "Introduction" (above, note 15), pp. 7–8; Goldstein, *War and Gender* (above, note 12), pp. 2, 7–10, and 59–127.

54. The secular women Haganah and Palmach members who had received combat training were mostly not permitted to fulfill combat roles, and they, too, protested, as noted during a seminar on "Women in the Haganah" held on October 1, 1991 (HHA, 16/34).
55. Degroot, "Introduction" (above, note 15), p. 5.
56. For further details see Y. Katz, *The Religious Kibbutz during the Mandate Period* (Jerusalem, 1996).
57. Shaul Raz, *The Sacred Mountain* (Tel Aviv, 1951), p. 46.
58. Gush Etzion Archive (henceforth: GEA), personal files.
59. "And the Girls Returned from the Enemy Land," GEA, 17a.
60. For an example from World War II see M. Morgan, "Jam Making, Cuthbert Rabbit and Cakes: Redefining Domestic Labour in the Women's Institute, 1915–1960," *Rural History*, 7/2 (1996), pp. 207–219 (in English). On how obtaining food in wartime was viewed as a woman's concern see P. Schwartz, "The Politics of Food and Gender in Occupied Paris," *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7/1 (Feb. 1999), pp. 35–45 (in English).
61. H. David, "In Days of Battle," in *Mibayit: Kevutzat Yavneh in the 1948 War*, p. 9; Aliza, quoted in M. Eliav (ed.), *When a Nation Volunteers: Thoughts on the Religious Fighting Youth* (Jerusalem, 1949), p. 79.
62. This was the situation in Tirat Tzevi, Yavneh, Kefar Darom, and the Etzion Bloc; see the testimony of Yehudit in *Mibayit* (above, note 61), p. 55; GEA, personal files, file of Hinde Shnur; letter from Tzipora Rosenfeld to Tzipora Bilig, April, 16, 1948, GEA 20; Miriam Livne, interviewed by Dolly Ben-Eliezer on May 13, 1993, Kibbutz Hadati Archives: Gush Etzion 1948; O. Cohen et al (eds.), *The History of Kefar Darom: The Roots of Our Hold on Eretz Israel* (Kefar Darom, 1987), p. 52; "And the Girls Returned from the Enemy Land," GEA, 17a.
63. Testimony of Sarah Schifman, undated, GEA 8b; Tova Daube, interviewed on July 9, 2000; Simha Cohen, interviewed on June 19, 2000.
64. Simha Cohen, interviewed on June 19, 2000.
65. Raz, *Sacred Mountain* (above, note 57), p. 91.
66. See D. Knohl (ed.), *The War in the Etzion Bloc* (Jerusalem, 1957), p. 444, 585–586; Be'erot Yitzhak /Administration, May 15, 1948, IDF Archives 8284/49/406; N. Aminoah (ed.), *At the Gates of Gaza: The Battle for Be'erot Yitzhak* (Tel Aviv, 1949), p. 15; and M. Or, "The Battle for Tirat Tzevi," in *Misgav: The Faith of Israel in the War of Independence, 1948–1949* (Jerusalem, 1950; no editor noted), pp. 34–35.
67. Raz, *Sacred Mountain* (above, note 57), p. 91.
68. Degroot, "Introduction" (above, note 15); and S.N. Hendrix, "In The Army: Women, Camp Followers and Gender Roles in the British Army in the French and Indian Wars, 1755–1765," in Degroot and Peniston-Bird, *A Soldier and a Woman* (above, note 15), p. 48 (in English).

69. She herself refused to join the evacuees and later took the initiative of replacing the fallen commander, as recalled by the doctor who served in the improvised hospital in Kefar Etzion (GEA, 12e); for more on her courage see the comments of the brigade commander in recommending her for a decoration, IDF Archives 1344/49/130.
70. On evacuating women fighters from the front for fear they would be abused if captured see Efron, "Sisters, Fighters" (above, note 19), p. 365. In Kefar Darom too, it was decided that the girls would be evacuated along with the wounded; see Cohen, The History of Kefar Darom, (above, note 62), pp. 51–52.
71. Efron, "Sisters, Fighters" (above, note 19), pp. 360–361; Bloom, *Women in the Defense Forces* (above, note 3), p. 137.
72. E. Ben-Zedeff, "Someday I'll Also Be a Mythological Journalist: On Israeli Female (vs. Male) Journalists for Military Affairs at the End of the Twentieth Century," *Patuah*, 4 (2000), p. 205.
73. Interview with Tova Daube, July 9, 2000; Rivka Nedivi, interviewed by Dolly Ben-Eliezer, May 13, 1993, Kibbutz Hadati Archive: Gush Etzion 1948.
74. GEA, 12e.
75. About a year after the battle, an article appeared in the daily newspaper *Davar* (March 10, 1949) describing the bravery of the women in the Etzion Bloc: Rachel Zagelstein had been killed by the attackers; another girl had shot down Legionnaires with her pistol (GEA, 16a).
76. Raz, *Sacred Mountain* (above, note 57), pp. 147 and 152.
77. Knohl, *The War in the Etzion Bloc* (above, note 66), pp.572–616; Y. Ben Yaakov, *The Etzion Bloc: Fifty Years of Struggle and Creation* (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 292.
78. IDF Archives, 324/50/104; list of returned prisoners, RZA, PM, B 1231; interviews with Simha Cohen, June 29, 2000, and Tova Daube, July 9, 2000.
79. Judith Tydor Baumel analyzes the changing image of women in Israeli war memorials, from fighter to mature, weeping mother, in "'We Were There, Too': Commemoration of Women in War Memorials in Israel," in M. Shilo, R. Kark, and G. Hasan-Rokem (eds.), *Jewish Women in the Yishuv and the Zionist Movement: A Gender Perspective* (Jerusalem, 2001), pp. 434–456.
80. Degroot, "Introduction" (above, note 15), pp. 9–10 and 13.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
82. Interviews with Tikva Irom-Aldubi, October 13, 1999, and Esther Bazak, August 17, 1999.
83. Addis et al., "Introduction" (above, note 14), p. xv.
84. See, for example, J.R. DeVries, "Challenging Traditions: Denominational Feminism in Britain, 1910–1920," in B. Melman (ed.), *Borderlines: Genders and Identities in War and Peace, 1870–1930* (New York, 1998), p. 265 (in English).

85. Izraeli, "Women in the Israeli Army" (above, note 13), pp. 21, 23–24; and idem, "Gendering Military Service in the Israel Defence Forces," in Degroot and Peniston-Bird, *A Soldier and a Woman* (above, note 15), pp. 256–274 (in English).
86. Addis et al., "Introduction" (above, note 14), p. xv; T. Stone, "Creating a (Gendered?) Military Identity: The Women's Auxiliary Air Force in Great Britain in the Second World War," *Women's History Review*, 8/4 (1999), p. 606 (in English); Degroot, "Introduction" (above, note 15), p. 8.
87. K.M. Coughlin, "Women, War and the Veil: Muslim Women in Resistance and Combat," in Degroot and Peniston-Bird, *A Soldier and a Woman* (above, note 15), p. 223 (in English); R. Pennington, "'Do Not Speak of the Services You Rendered': Women Veterans of Aviation in the Soviet Union," in *ibid.*, p. 171 (in English).
88. For example, M. Graeff-Wassink, "The Militarization of Woman and 'Feminism' in Libya," in Addis et al., *Women Soldiers* (above, note 14), pp. 138–139 (in English).
89. In the opinion of Moshe Una, the decision by Hapo'el Hamizrahi not to enter into a dispute with the chief rabbinate, which declared in 1951 that it was forbidden for women to serve in the army, was a crucial step in the undermining of the status of religious Zionism and the first stage in its capitulation to the non-Zionist religious movements. See Una, *On Separate Paths* (above, note 3), p. 274.
90. On the Kibbutz Hadati movement and Benei Akiva as an opposition within religious Zionism see *ibid.*, pp. 275–278. Benei Akiva favored the recruitment of women into the Nahal Brigade. The movement viewed responsibility to the nation as binding upon each and every individual, especially in the border settlements, in which every member's help counted; not to fulfill this duty was a practical, conscientious, and ideological problem. Unsigned, undated document, RZA, Benei Akiva 261.
91. For more on the position of the Kibbutz Hadati movement see Una, *On Separate Paths* (above, note 90) p. 278; Admonit, *Within and Against the Current* (above, note 24), pp. 111–112 and 116–117.