Pyrrhic Progress
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Notes

INTRODUCTION


3. The first was an anonymous reader’s comment on my dissertation, and the second was an anonymous reviewer’s comment to an early draft of what became my article, “Conflicts of Quarantine: The Case of Jewish Immigrants to the Jewish State,” *American Journal of Public Health* 102, no. 2 (2012): 243–252.


5. *Yishuv* is the term used to refer to the Jewish community in Palestine prior to the establishment of the state of Israel. Its use also appears in reference to the Jewish community in Israel in the state’s early years.

6. Though the question of regulating the scope and makeup of the immigration was being discussed both by policy makers and the public as early as the fall of 1948, during the initial years of statehood, a definitive selection policy was not implemented. Dvora Hacohen explains that decisions by the Jewish Agency to
regulate immigration came in early 1949. Avi Picard has documented how, following years of discussion and debate, a selective immigration policy was finally implemented in November 1951. Picard clarifies that this policy was considered a temporary arrangement until the state could be stabilized, and Hacohen emphasizes that this policy was always conditional to there being no danger to the Jews in their country of origin. If Jews were endangered in the countries they were living in, the selection policy was invalid. Thus the debate came down to determining whether a community was indeed in danger and in need of being rescued. Avi Picard, Yishay Arnon, and Haim Malka have shown that the repercussions of these decisions were occasionally disastrous, particularly in the case of Morocco and communist Europe. But even as the regulation policy kept many people out, and the rate of immigration plateaued, the numbers of immigrants continued to be substantial. Moshe Lissak’s figures show that in the years 1952–1956, more than eighty thousand immigrants moved to Israel.

7. As is widely discussed, the first scholars to study the mass immigration were Israeli sociologists. Dvora Hacohen’s early work *Immigrants in Turmoil* was a watershed moment where historians of Israel began to see the mass immigration as a topic worthy of careful historical reflection and the post-1948 immigrants themselves as important agents within the Israeli landscape whose particular experiences needed to be understood through archival research. Of course, it also makes sense that historical studies did not begin until this point because enough time had to pass to allow for historical reflection and the opening of archives. Some of the important scholars whose historical studies followed closely after, or were contemporaneous to Hacohen, are Tzvi Tzameret, Yaron Tzur, Mordechai Naor, and Dalia Ofer.

8. Avi Picard’s illuminating *Cut to Measure* focuses on North African immigrants, particularly those from Morocco and Tunisia. Esther Meir and, more recently, Orit Bashkin have written invaluable studies on the experiences of immigrants from Iraq; in his study of Argentinian immigration, Sebastian Klor shows the value of looking at the immigrants who arrived to Israel in smaller numbers; Hanna Yablonka’s groundbreaking work came earlier. Yablonka’s focus has been on the integration of Holocaust survivors in Israeli society; the anthology of works by Egyptian-Israeli author Jacqueline Kahanoff adds to our understanding of the immigration of Egyptian Jews to Israel.

9. Shifra Shvarts is the preeminent scholar on the history of medicine in Israel. Her numerous studies have fundamentally changed the way we understand the Israeli health care system. Sachlav Stoler-Liss continued in Shvarts’ path, with her important scholarship on health promotion and health education during the
mass immigration. Nadav Davidovitch has become a unique and commanding voice in this field, consistently and persuasively questioning systems of power and medical hegemony. Rakefet Zalashik has written the preeminent study on the history of psychiatry in Israel. Historian Ari Barell’s important study on the role of science and technology in Israeli nation-building has led to his fascinating new research on Israel’s Iron Dome antirocket technology. Nurit Kirsch’s important work on genetics straddles both the history of medicine and the history of science. Orit Rozin’s work has introduced the social historian’s discipline to the study of mass immigration. Anat Helman’s study of everyday life in 1950s Israel offers an exciting new take on the culture into which the new immigrants arrived.

10. Two recent publications that do an exemplary job overcoming a simplistic Ashkenazi/Mizrahi discourse are Orit Bashkin’s Impossible Exodus and Avi Picard’s Cut to Measure. Picard unearthed sources that carefully document the details surrounding Israel’s selective immigration policy from the end of 1951—a policy that had disastrous repercussions for immigrants from North Africa. He places them within a broad historical context that defies any possibilities for a reductive perception of the Mizrahi or Ashkenazi experience. The result is an illuminating and erudite historiography. Bashkin has made the immigrant’s own experience central to her research. One of the many important contributions of this exceptional book are the sections where the author examines the creation of the Mizrahi identity, asking what exactly this identity is and how it developed within the Israeli experience for post-1948 immigrants.

11. Orit Bashkin, Impossible Exodus: Iraqi Jews in Israel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 13. This approach of breaking the larger frame of Mizrahi and, similarly, Ashkenazi to examine the particular experiences of distinct immigrant groups could provide a useful entry for additional inquiries into Shaar Ha’aliya.

12. Ibid., 182.

13. Ibid., 212.

14. “Mizrahi solidarity in Israel was forged in the transit camps, schools, kibbutzim, and the Israeli labor market, and grew stronger through the protesting of the state’s policies” (ibid., 209).

15. For example, immigrant camps, labor camps, and transit camps, or ma’abarot. See Lissak, Mass Immigration in the Fifties; Rozin, A Home for All Jews; Hacohen, Immigrants in Turmoil.

### Immigrants to Israel and Shaar Ha’aliya, 1948–1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Shaar Ha’aliya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>101,819</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>239,076</td>
<td>97,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>169,495</td>
<td>127,854</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>173,901</td>
<td>99,602</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>23,375</td>
<td>14,342</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>10,317</td>
<td>6,692</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>17,471</td>
<td>5,338</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>36,758</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>55,494</td>
<td>No numbers available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>69,611</td>
<td>No numbers available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


17. Reports from the World Health Organization (WHO) epidemiological radio bulletin transmissions were received at the Lod air terminal and transmitted to the quarantine stations. Theodor Grushka, *Health Services in Israel* (Jerusalem: Ministry of Health, 1968), 110.


20. Grushka, *Health Services in Israel*, 110. “Body lice, which were occasionally found on immigrants during the period of mass immigration . . . have not been reported in recent years” (39).

21. Ibid., 39.

Edwin Mellen, 1996), 443. Grushka writes that quarantinable diseases were “not endemic in Israel, and the usual internationally accepted procedures are adopted to prevent their introduction” (Grushka, Health Services in Israel, 39).


24. Levy, History of Medicine, 515.


26. “Cutting across modernity’s pluralities, however, are three key characteristics of enforced isolation in the modern era: the flexibility of rationales for segregation or confinement, which often move seamlessly between punishment, protection and prevention; the careful consideration of isolation’s architectural and spatial dimensions; and the subjectification of the isolated, both the official project of modern exclusion and a crucible for the cultivation of selfhood” (Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford, eds., Isolation: Places and Practices of Exclusion [London: Routledge, 2003], 2).


29. Ibid.

CHAPTER 1 — CONFINES


3. For the article that announced the beginning of the “New Historians,” their revisions of contemporary understanding of the 1948 war, and an outline of the


6. Israel’s establishment occurred at a time in history that had left thousands of Jews needing refuge, with the dismantling of the displaced persons (DP) camps in Europe, the rise of Arab nationalism, the contraction of European colonial power, and the escalation of the Israeli-Arab conflict throughout the Middle East. (On the deterioration of life for Jews in Arab lands, see Hacohen, *Immigrants in Turmoil*, 3. On the rise of Arab nationalism and contraction of European colonial power on a global scale, see David Thompson, *Europe since Napoleon* [London: Penguin Books, 1990], 866–875; Todd Shepherd, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006]). All these factors, taking place in the backdrop of the exhilaration and expectation among world Jewry surrounding the establishment of a Jewish state, played a part in the massive influx of Jewish immigrants to Israel following 1948. See Dvora Hacohen, “Medinuyt ha-aliyah ba-asor ha-rishon la-medinaḥ: Ha-nisyonot le-hagbalat ha-aliyah ve-goralam” [Immigration policy in the first decade of statehood: The attempts to restrict immigration and their outcome], in *Kibbutz galuyot: Ha-aliyah le-Eretz Yisrael, mitos u-metzi’ut* [Ingathering of exiles: Aliyah to the Land of Israel, myth and reality], ed. Dvora Hacohen (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1998), 291.


8. Ibid., 5.


10. Ibid.


12. Defining the terms *native* and *immigrant* is a challenge when used in the context of Israeli Jews, particularly in this period. Dalia Ofer addresses the subjectivity
of this concept where people who had arrived in 1946–1947 were considered “veterans,” whereas those who came after 1948 were “immigrants” (Dalia Ofer, ed., *Israel in the Great Wave of Immigration, 1948–1953* [in Hebrew] [Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben Tzvi, 1996]).

13. Hacohen, “Mediniyut ha-aliyah ba-asor ha-rishon la-medinah,” 285. This ideal was expressed in the 1950 law of return: “Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *oleh.*” The text of the law of return can be found at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org.


Helman focuses on humor in the Yishuv and Bashkin focuses on humor found among Iraqi immigrants in the transit camps. Bashkin describes this as the immigrants using “one of the oldest mechanisms in the Jewish historical arsenal for dealing with difficult and absurd situations: their sense of humor” (Bashkin, Impossible Exodus, 30).

27. Mordechai Naor explains that there were four types of transit camps (ma’abarot):

1. Urban: These were closer to cities, where most of the immigrants then worked.
2. Mixed: In these cases, people either worked in cities or in agriculture.
3. Agricultural: The immigrants worked mostly in farming.
4. Independent: These ma’abarot were intended from the start to develop into cities, such as Yeruham or Kiryat Shmona.

29. Moshe Lissak’s breakdown of Israeli settlement policy for immigrants during the mass immigration is as follows:

1. May 1948–mid 1950: Immigrant camps

Ibid., 24.
30. Ibid., 32.
31. Like in the case of Shaar Ha’aliya, there is—to date—no public, state remembrance of the transit camps (ma’abarot) although there has been, for a long time, some discussion of opening a ma’abara museum. The classic literary works that first captured the hardships of life in the transit camps are the works of Shimon Balas (The Maabara, 1964), Sami Michael (Shavim ve Shavim Yoter, 1974), and Eli Amir. Orit Bashkin’s Impossible Exodus is a recent publication that—vividly and
in careful detail—portrays the extreme difficulty of life in the transit camps. See Bashkin, *Impossible Exodus*.

32. Zeev Tzahor, “Ben-Gurion’s Attitude toward the Gola (Diaspora) and Aliyah,” in *Kibbutz galuyot: Ha-aliyah le-Eretz Yisrael, mitos u-metzî’ut* [Ingathering of exiles: Aliyah to the Land of Israel, myth and reality], ed. Dvora Hacohen (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1998), 132.

33. George L. Mosse explains, “Nordau constantly used the phrase ‘recapturing the dignity of the Jew’ in his Zionist writings. This meant creating, as Nordau put it, deep-chested, powerfully built and keen-eyed men. A new type of Jew must be created who could end the threat of decadence among the Jews. The new Jew who would emerge from the wreckage of the diaspora symbolized the regeneration of the Jewish people” (George L. Mosse, “Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 27, no. 4 [October 1992]: 567).


39. European Christian Mission Hospitals first opened in 1838. These hospitals gave free treatment that still came at a cost to the Muslim and Jewish patients: while receiving treatment, they were forced to listen to teachings from the Christian gospel. And then—largely in response to, and out of fear from, the Christian medical proselytization—the local Jewish community finally accepted an offer from the philanthropist Moshe Montefiore to open a Jewish clinic with a Jewish doctor in 1854. Headed by Dr. Shimon Frankel, a German-Jewish doctor who was closely tied to ultra-Orthodox Haredi Jews, this was the first Jewish clinic that opened in Jerusalem, in 1854. Then from 1854 to 1902, five Jewish hospitals opened in Jerusalem, mostly as a result of conflicts in the different Jewish communities and the desire to have a hospital that better responded to the needs of the particular communities. These hospitals were Rothschild, Bikur Holim, Misgav Ledach, Shaarei Tzedek, and Ezrat Nashim. For the history of the first Jewish doctors and hospitals in Jerusalem, see Shifra Shvarts, “Hospital Wars” [in Hebrew], *Et Mol* 27, no. 2 (2001/2). On the history of Palestinian health care, see Nira Reiss, *The Health Care of the Arabs in Israel* (Westview Special Studies on the Middle East) (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991); Sandra Sufian, “Arab Health Care during the British Mandate, 1920–1947,” in *Separate and Cooperate, Cooperate and Separate: The Disengagement of the Palestine Health Care System from Israel and Its Emergence as an Independent System*, ed. Tamara Barnea and Rafiq Husseini (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), 9–31.

40. *Linat Tzedek* is a tradition of nighttime watch over the ill to ensure that they are not alone, while *bikur holim* is the charitable act of visiting the ill. To understand how these traditions were incorporated in Jewish health care in Palestine, see Shvarts, *The Workers’ Health Fund*.

41. These physicians took the place previously held by traditional healers. Later, in what is known as the “fifth Aliya,” numerous German physicians settled in the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine, thus significantly contributing to the persistence of European-trained health care workers. See Shvarts, “Hospital Wars.”


44. Weiss, *The Chosen Body*.


49. CZA, AK 456/4, “Introduction” from Report on Shaar Ha’aliya, 10.8.52.

50. There was a section for the statistical department, Kupat Holim, and a general comments section for the use of the camp administration. CZA, AK 456/2, Administrative Report #7, 30.4.50.

51. CZA, AK 456/5.

52. CZA, AK 456/3, Administrative Report #19, 20.2.51; CZA, AK 456/3, Administrative Report #24, 30.4.51.

53. CZA, AK 456/8, Memories of Shaar Ha’aliya Written by Reznik, after March 1962; CZA, AK 456/3, Administrative Report #19, 20.2.51; CZA, AK 456/2, Exchange of Letters of Complaint and Weisberger’s Response, 8.50.

54. CZA, AK 456/5, “Personal Equipment Card” and “Temporary Card.”

55. Although the procedure was occasionally adjusted over the years, the main components of the processing system appear to have been constant: (1) reception and registration, (2) finding and settling into accommodations in the camp, (3) medical examinations, (4) customs declarations, (5) army arrangements, and (6) final housing assignments. These were the bureaucratic stages that had to be completed before the new immigrants were free to leave the camp for their permanent lodgings throughout the country (CZA, AK 456/5, “Tor Habikoret”).
56. “Behitarvut hamishṭara yatzu keh-2000 olim le ma’abarat” [2,000 Oлим left for ma’abarat with police intervention], Maariv, August 8, 1951; “Bekoach mishṭara maavirim olim meh Shaar Ha’aliya leh ma’abarat” [Oлим are being transferred from Shaar Ha’aliya to ma’abarat through police force], Al Hamishmar, August 8, 1951.


58. The person’s cabin or tent number was recorded on their personal camp card, but there were still cases of people getting lost and of being unable to identify or find the tent or cabin they had been assigned. CZA, AK 456/8, Memories of Shaar Ha’aliya Written by Reznik, after March 1962.

59. “Ehad hamakeer shloshmeot ve hamishim elef” [One who knows 350,000], Amar, 1.4.56.

60. Rhona Seidelman, interview with D., 10.11.05. This interview was conducted as part of a research project directed by Prof. Shifra Shvarts, the Israel Science Foundation, 1217/04.

61. CZA, AK 456/8, Memories of Shaar Ha’aliya Written by Reznik, after March 1962.


63. OHD, (210), 42.

64. CZA, AK 456/6, “Shaar Ha’aliya Facts and Figures,” 1.4.55.

65. CZA, AK 456/1, “Movement of Immigrants through the Shaar Ha’aliya Processing Camp,” 1.10.53–31.3.54.

66. The exact numbers are 77,245 from Iraq; 63,230 from Romania; 46,433 from Poland; 19,673 from Turkey; and 18,303 from Persia. The 69,743 North Africans included communities from Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. Almost 40,000 families came through Shaar Ha’aliya. There were around 25,000 elderly people above the age of 60. Many others (close to 11,000) were what was listed as “family remnants, [ . . . ] the war’s tragic yield” (CZA, AK 456/6, “Shaar Ha’aliya Facts and Figures,” 1.4.55).

More than 300,000 immigrants to Israel from 1949 to 1954 did not go through Shaar Ha’aliya. This number includes approximately 100,000 people who came before Shaar Ha’aliya opened; 35,422 Yemenite immigrants who arrived in 1949 but did not go through Shaar Ha’aliya; and 22,000 to 42,000 people who went through Shaar Ha’aliya Bet. Of the remaining number, some may have gone to live
with relatives, some may have been sick and immediately hospitalized, and others may have had their own financial resources and simply gone to live on their own accord. Moreover, there were certainly people who simply managed to avoid or flee Shaar Ha’aliya.

67. Theft: Amoni, “Beshaarei Ha’aliya”; CZA, AK 456/8, Memories of Shaar Ha’aliya Written by Reznik, after March 1962. Violence: “Ehad hamakeer shloshmeot ve hamishim elef”; Rhona Seidelman interview with C. C., 15.11.05. This interview was conducted as part of a research project directed by Prof. Shifra Shvarts, the Israel Science Foundation, 1217/04; Prostitution: Israel State Archives (hereafter ISA), 79/42 2295/1–5, Police Report, 17.10.50.

68. CZA, AK 456/2, Administrative Report #7, 30.4.50.

69. CZA, AK 456/5, “Temporary Card”; Rhona Seidelman interview with E. S., 27.9.05; Rhona Seidelman interview with S. S., 27.9.05. These interviews were conducted as part of a research project directed by Prof. Shifra Shvarts, the Israel Science Foundation, 1217/04.

70. CZA, AK 456/3, Report on Employees’ Meals, 5.6.49.


72. On food being unsuited to the various culinary traditions, see CZA, AK 456/1, Letter of Complaint, Dr. Berman, 2.2.51. Complaint about food at Shaar Ha’aliya: CZA, AK 456/1, Letter of Complaint, by J. O. [in English], 7.8.51. On wasted food: Weisberger, Shaar Ha’aliya, 75.

73. The most common explanation for why immigrants would not have left Shaar Ha’aliya was that they objected to the permanent residences they had been assigned by the Jewish Agency. The most common interpretation for why they had not left was that they preferred the sheltered existence in the camp (where they didn’t have to work and were given free food) to subsisting independently outside Shaar Ha’aliya. These are explanations and interpretations given by camp administrators and not the immigrants themselves.

74. CZA, AK 456/2, Administrative Order #7, 30.4.50; CZA, AK 456/3, Administrative Order #44, 24.3.52.


76. Amoni, “Beshaarey Ha’aliya”; CZA, AK 456/1, Letter to Editor by J. O., Jerusalem Post, July 1951; CZA, AK 456/1, Letter of Complaint, 8.50.
77. CZA, AK 456/3, Article on Shaar Ha’aliya in Jewish Agency Digest, March 1950. Many of the Shaar Ha’aliya staff members were themselves immigrants, although there are currently no numbers available for exactly how many were immigrants or what their countries of origin were.


79. Weisberger, Shaar Ha’aliya, 70.

80. Sick funds (Kupot Holim) are Israeli medical insurance organizations. The first sick fund began to operate in Palestine in 1913. It was established by Labor Zionists in response to the medical needs of their communities. By the time the state was established in 1948, there were four such funds in existence. For more on the history of Israel’s sick funds, see Shvarts, The Workers’ Health Fund.


82. For a description of the minograph, see Clement F. Batelli, “Youth Interest High in War against Tuberculosis,” Health 73, no. 6 (June 1946).

83. ISA, file 4251/23–57/3 3, Report of Immigrant Health Services on Shaar Ha’aliya, 17.4.53.


85. CZA, AK 456/2, Report on Number of Immigrants Who Entered and Left Shaar Ha’aliya, 23.5.56. The attention given to the treatment of trachoma and ringworm, as well as improved hygiene and sanitation, had greatly diminished the incidence of these diseases in the prestate Jewish community in Palestine (Yishuv). Zipora Shehory-Rubin and Shifra Shvarts, “‘Hadassah’ lev-vri’ut ha-am: Pé’ilutah ha-bri’ut ha-hinukhit shel ‘Hadassah’ be-Eretz Yisrael bi-tkufat ha-mandat ha-brit” [“Hadassah” for the health of the people: The health education work of “Hadassah” in Eretz Israel during the British Mandate] (Jerusalem: Ha-Sifriyah ha-Tziyonit, 2003), 90, 95.

With the mass immigration, the cases of these diseases once again grew in number. The decision to designate a separate area of Shaar Ha’aliya as a ringworm and trachoma institute touched upon some of the state’s most fundamental concerns: immigration, health, and children. According to historian Avi Picard, “the heavy burden on health services, the deterioration of health conditions in Israel due to epidemics and infectious disease, and the dire economic straits led, beginning in 1952, to a policy of selective immigration” (Avi Picard, “Immigration, Health and


88. Stedman, Reference Handbook of the Medical Sciences, 203; Kiple, Cambridge World History of Human Disease, 735.

89. I discuss this more fully in Seidelman, Troen, and Shvarts, “‘Healing’ the Bodies and Souls.”


91. “When the selective immigration policy and the plans to focus on aliya from North African were approved, the Health Ministry and the Immigration Department reached a new agreement. In exchange for having its people put in charge of overseeing aliya preparations in North Africa, the Ministry allowed a small number of ringworm patients (150 per month) to immigrate and be treated in Israel. A camp for ringworm and trachoma patients was set up at Sha’ar ha-Aliyah” (Seidelman, Troen, and Shvarts, “‘Healing the Bodies and Souls,” 42).

92. CZA, AK 456/3, Report to Histadrut on Shaar Ha’aliya Activity, 18.2.55.


94. CZA, AK 456/3, Letter from Dr. Chaim Sheba, 18.12.51.

95. Ibid.

96. CZA, AK 456/3, Report on Ringworm and Trachoma Institute, 8.7.52.

97. The precise number of people treated at the center is not clear. A 1956 document listed 5,487 cases treated for ringworm, as of 1952, and 2,715 for trachoma (CZA, AK 456/2, Report on Number of Olim Who Entered and Left Shaar Ha’aliya, 23.5.56). Modan and his coauthors put the number of immigrant children irradiated in Israel for ringworm in 1949–1960 at 17,000 (Modan et al., “Radiation-Induced Head and Neck Tumors,” 277). However, Modan’s figures also include the other smaller treatment centers in ‘Tel Hashomer and Jerusalem while also taking into consideration the years before the Shaar Ha’aliya center opened. An article marking the closing of Shaar Ha’aliya in 1962 reported that 12,000 children had been treated at the ringworm and trachoma institute, but they do not specify how many had been treated for each disease (Rafael Bashan, “Kol Adam Hamishi Baaretz Yashav Kahn” [Every fifth person in the country sat here], Ma’ariv,
February 9, 1962). This figure is supported by the data in a table from the files of Yehuda Weisberger—director of Shaar Ha’aliya from 1949 to 1957—which tracks the number of children who went through the center from 1952 to 1955, listing approximately 8,000 children in these three years alone (CZA, AK 456/3, Handwritten Chart Titled “Ringworm”).

98. CZA, AK 456/3, Report on Ringworm and Trachoma Institute, 8.7.52.
99. CZA, AK 456/2, WIZO Booklet [in English], August 1952.
100. CZA, AK 456/3, Report on Ringworm and Trachoma Institute, 8.7.52.
101. CZA, AK 456/3, Report to Histadrut on Shaar Ha’aliya Activity, 18.8.55; CZA, AK 456/6, Undated Report on Sha’ar ha-Aliyah activity, probably from 1954/55.
102. CZA, AK 456/1, Administrative Order #61, 16.8.53.
103. CZA, AK 456/1, Newspaper Article on Purim in the Ringworm and Trachoma Institute, undated.
105. CZA, AK 456/1, Report on Ringworm and Trachoma Institute, 8.7.52.
106. CZA, AK 456/3, Letter from Dr. Chaim Sheba, 18.12.51.
108. CZA, AK 456/6, Report in Weisberger File.

110. CZA, AK 456/2, WIZO Booklet [in English], 8.52.
111. CZA, AK 456/3, Report on Ringworm and Trachoma Institute, 8.7.52.
112. “The hair was cut down to a level of 0.5 cm. and the scalp was divided into five fields, each being irradiated on one out of five consecutive days. The irradiation was done at three medical centres. . . . A temporary sterile cap was put on for eighteen to twenty-one days. Subsequently a cap of colophonium and wax was put on the head and taken off immediately after the wax had hardened, leading to a complete epilation of the hair. Some of the children were recalled for a second and even third course of treatment because of a relapse” (Modan et al., “Radiation-Induced Head and Neck Tumors,” 277).
113. ISA, file 57/3 4251/23–2, Letter in Response to a Complaint Made by Weisberger, 23.7.56.

114. This text is from the controversial documentary Yaldei ha-gazezet [The Ringworm Children] (see chapter 4). Here, there are in fact three testimonies that are interwoven to create one voice that expresses the similarity of the experience for different people. (English translation taken from movie subtitles.)


116. Rhona Seidelman interview with D. N., October 9, 2005. This interview was conducted as part of a research project directed by Prof. Shifra Shvarts, the Israel Science Foundation, 1217/04.


119. This issue arose in the discussion that followed the screening of the movie Yaldei ha-gazezet [The Ringworm Children] at the Tel Aviv Cinemathèque.

120. Kraut, Silent Travellers, 275–276.


122. The others included a Hadassah clinic in Jerusalem; the Tel Hashomer hospital; a Kupat Holim (Histadrut Sick Fund) clinic in Tel Aviv; a Hadassah clinic on Balfour Street in Tel Aviv; and a treatment center in Tiberias. Arab children were treated for ringworm at Rambam hospital in Haifa and, as of 1956, in Nazareth. Moreover, patients could also seek treatment from private physicians throughout Israel. See Seidelman, Shvarts, and Troen, “‘Healing’ the Bodies and Souls,” 197.

123. CZA, AK 456/3, Report to Histadrut on Shaar Ha’aliya Activity, 18.2.55; CZA, AK 456/6, Undated Report on Shaar Ha’aliya Activity, probably from 1954/55. Although there is evidence to suggest that some Israeli-born children were sent to Shaar Ha’aliya for ringworm treatment (Shifra Shvarts interview with E. F., Israel Science Foundation, 1217/04), these would only have been cases where the parents had immigrated after 1948 and the child was born during the mass immigration. As a result, although the child would have in fact been Israeli-born, he or she would still have been strongly associated with the mass immigration. Children of “old-timers” who had ringworm tended to be treated in various local clinics run by their respective health care funds.

125. On Shaar Ha’aliya Bet, see CZA, AK 456/3, Untitled Document Written after 1954; and CZA, AK 456/1, “Distribution of the Aliya from Ports of Arrival,” 1.4.51–12.8.54. While one document suggests that twenty-two thousand people went through Shaar Ha’aliya Bet (CZA, AK 456/3, Untitled Document from Weisberger’s Files, Written after 1954), another document claims that the figure was actually forty-two thousand (CZA, AK 456/1, “Distribution of the Aliya from Ports of Arrival,” 1.4.51–12.8.54).

126. CZA, AK 456/3, List of Immigrants to Shaar Ha’aliya. See table 1.

127. CZA, AK 456/3, Letter from Mapai Cell in Shaar Ha’aliya to Mapai Office, Tel Aviv, 23.3.51; CZA, AK 456/6, Shaar Ha’aliya “Facts and Figures,” 1.4.55.

128. CZA, AK 456/6, Report on Changes in Shaar Ha’aliya Administration, 18.2.55.

129. Rafael Bashan, “Kol Adam Hamishi Baaretz Yashav Kahn” [Every fifth person in the country sat here], Ma’ariv, February 9, 1962.

CHAPTER 2 — STRUCTURE


2. Leviticus 13:45.


4. James A. Diamond explains that Maimonides considered leprosy to be a “sign and wonder,” brought on by wicked speech. The leprosy, a warning for the slanderer to change, “began on walls, spread to furniture, then to clothing, and finally to the physical person.” If the person failed to repent as the stages of leprosy escalated, he would finally be forced to dwell apart. This seclusion would force the person to forsake evil speech; by having no one to converse with, the person would be compelled to silence. James A. Diamond, “Maimonides on Leprosy: Illness as Contemplative Metaphor,” Jewish Quarterly Review 96, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 95–122.

However, in his discussion on how Jewish ethics would approach the involuntary confinement of noncompliant patients with active tuberculosis, Fred Rosner has convincingly used the biblical passages on leprosy to illustrate a scenario in which it is permissible to set aside individual rights “to protect the health and welfare of society.” Rosner has refocused the biblical passage onto the benefits to the community, rather than solely the curative and punitive experience for the individual. Rosner suggests that the forced separation of the leper safeguarded the public’s health. Moreover, his article sheds light on the central conflict inherent to the concept of quarantine: the rights of the group versus the rights of the individual. Fred Rosner, “Involuntary Confinement for Tuberculosis Control: The Jewish View,” Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine 63, no. 1 (January 1996): 44–48.


9. Ibid., 59.

10. Ibid., 61.

11. In exploring how the contact with Europeans resulted in devastating illness and death among Native Americans, Alan M. Kraut explains that Europeans were not quarantined by the Native Americans because “use of such a preventive presupposes awareness of risk.” Although isolation and quarantine traditions did exist in Native American culture, there were cases in which Native American tradition called for close contact with their sick and quarantine would have been seen as a cruel and “undeserved ostracism” (Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travellers: Germs, Genes and the Immigrant Menace* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994], 12, 15).


13. Ibid., 910.

14. Ibid., 911.


17. In the preliminary remarks of Birsen Bilmus’s book *Plague, Quarantine and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), she presents an important discussion of this issue among scholars.


19. Ibid.

work also supports this claim. He shows the prevalence of the idea in nineteenth-century America that disease was the fault of the people who were sick: “This melding of the miasmatic theory with a growing fear of contagia served to bind the cause of disease directly to the sufferer” (Kraut, Silent Travellers, 23).


24. Nancy Tomes, The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women and the Microbe in American Life (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 254. This sense of confidence of physicians and scientists that infectious disease could become a concern of the past is evident with some of the earliest proponents of germ theory. Charles Rosenberg explains that once germ theory was proven, there was a sense that it would only be a matter of time before physicians understood all microorganisms. Charles Rosenberg, “Disease in History: Frames and Framers,” Milbank Quarterly 67, no. 1 (1989): 8.

25. Two notable examples of the successful use of quarantine in late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are the 2003 SARS epidemic and the 2014 outbreak of the Ebola virus. Severe quarantine measures were taken in order to end the spread of both of these diseases. In this way, they serve as examples of the successes of quarantine—it can still be both necessary and effective to stop the spread of disease. But as is often the case in the history of quarantine and the panic that can accompany epidemics, we can also find in these stories instances of forcible quarantine that were unnecessary, sometimes racist as well as violating. One of the most famous cases of panicked and unnecessary forcible quarantine in the United States during the 2014 Ebola pandemic was that of Kaci Hickox, a nurse from Texas who had traveled to Sierra Leone to work with Doctors without Borders during the Ebola outbreak. When she returned to the United States, Hickox was quarantined in the airport in New Jersey, though she had no signs that she had the virus. For more on Hickox’s quarantine experience, see Kaci Hickox, “Her Story: UTA


28. There were 122 preexisting buildings, and 134 new ones were added. Central Zionist Archive (hereafter CZA), AK 456/4, Report on Shaar Ha’aliya, 6.52.

29. CZA, AK 456/4, “Boundaries” in Report on Shaar Ha’aliya, 6.52. The one exception in which the internal barbed wire fence was retained was the boundary between the main camp and the smaller southern area that, in 1952, was turned into the Institute for the Treatment of Ringworm and Trachoma.

30. Ibid.


43. Ibid., 54–70.

44. CZA, AK 456/3, “Classification of Diseases, 1949–1954.” The low rate of polio was explained by Ireka Einav, who worked as a pediatric nurse in Shaar Ha’aliya: “We did not have many cases [of polio]. The cases that we had were diagnosed very early” (Ireka Einav, interviewed by Hava Ulman, OHD, [210], 135, March 1, 1993).

45. Stoler-Liss, “Hadrakhah ve-kidum bri’ut be-hevrot rav tarbutiyot” [Health promotion and health education in multicultural societies], 70.

46. Ibid. We know from Michael Davies that there were three epidemics in Israel during the mass immigration: malaria, tuberculosis, and polio (Davies, “Health and Disease,” 448).

47. New immigrants received three months of free health insurance through the Labor-Zionist-affiliated General Sick Fund (Kupat Holim Clalit). At the end of the three months, they would then have to pay a small monthly fee, and they could choose to have their coverage through any one of the four existing (and competing) sick funds. Shvarts, *Health and Zionism*, 187.

48. According to Shvarts, the breakdown of hospitals was as follows: three public hospitals in Jerusalem (Misgav Ladah, Shaarei Zedek, and Bikur Holim) and one public psychiatric hospital (Ezrat Nahim), three hospitals run by the sick fund Kupat Holim Clalit (Belinson, Haemek, and the psychiatric hospital Geha), four Hadassah hospitals (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Tzfat), two birthing centers (Kupat Holim Clalit’s center in Kfar Saba and Tel Aviv’s municipal center at the Kiriya). There were also thirty-one private hospitals or nonprofit health organizations, small institutions that provided public services including care for mental health patients and people with disabilities. In these numbers, Shvarts has not included the hospitals that were in transition, such as British governmental or military hospitals that were run for a while after the establishment of the state but not specifically in May 1948. Shifra Shvarts, “The Birth of Israel Health Care
System—an American Mother and a Russian Father” (lecture, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, September 2000).


50. Ibid., 325.

51. Sternberg, A People Is Absorbed, 17.

52. Ibid., 20, 22, 38.

53. Ibid., 128.

54. The diseases listed as “quarantinable” in Israel at this time were smallpox and louse-borne typhus. Grushka writes, “During the period under review [1948–1965] no cases of quarantinable diseases were reported in the country nor were any registered in Israeli vessels” (Health Services in Israel, 109). See also Nissim Levy’s discussion of quarantine in Israel at this time.


56. CZA, AK 456/6, Letter from Weisberger to Kalman Levin, 9.11.50.

57. CZA, AK 456/3, Letter from Weisberger to PR Office, 28.2.51.

58. CZA, AK 456/8, Memories of Shaar Ha’aliya Written by Reznik, after March 1962.

59. It is not clear whether he had intended to push the boundaries in an attempt to test the guards and the Shaar Ha’aliya administration, but a complaint was filed and the guards were accused of beating the reporter. The police file denies that he was beaten, and Weisberger appears to have stood by the police report, submitting it as the official reply to Davar. CZA, AK 456/2, Police Report on Davar Reporter’s Complaint, 3.12.50.


61. Rafael Bashan, “Kol Adam Hamishi Baaretz Yashav Kahn” [Every fifth person in the country sat here], Ma’ariv, February 9, 1962.

62. This encounter is documented in Refael Sela, “Shaar Le Aliyah oh Mahaneh Hesger?” [A gate for Aliya or a quarantine?], Haolam Hazeh, May 31, 1951.

63. ISA, file 79/5 2177/385,–, Report of General Investigation Department, Haifa Police, 26.11.50.

65. ISA, file 79/5 2177/38–5, Report of General Investigation Department, Haifa Police. 26.11.50.

66. The camp administration tried different approaches to get people to leave. One was to deny subsidized food to people who stayed longer than the administration wanted them to (CZA, AK 456/2, Letter of Complaint to Jerusalem Post, by Y. L. M., 11.53). But the immigrants also fought this policy: In several cases, camp residents joined together to give portions of their own food to those who did not have any. This allowed people to stay on in the camp even as the administration tried to force them out. The other approach taken by the camp administration was forced evacuation: “Bekoach mishtara maavirim olim meh Shaar Ha’aliya leh ma’abarot” [Olim are being transferred from Shaar Ha’aliya to ma’abarot through police force], Al Hamishmar, August 8, 1951; “Behitarvut hamishtara yatzu keh-2000 olim le ma’abarot” [2,000 Olim left for Ma’abarot with police intervention], Maariv, August 9, 1951.

67. CZA, AK 456/2, A series of letters from 1953, including complaints about Shaar Ha’aliya that were sent to the newspaper the Jerusalem Post, notes from the Jewish Agency to Weisberger asking him to respond to the complaints and Weisberger’s response; CZA, AK 456/3, Report on State of Shaar Ha’aliya from Mapai Representatives Working There, to Their Main Center in Tel Aviv, 23.5.51; ISA, 2177/38–5, Shaar Ha’aliya Police File, 50–53.

68. CZA, AK 456/2, Letter of Complaint to Jerusalem Post, by Y. L. M. [in English], 11.53.

69. CZA, AK 456/2, Letter of Complaint from Immigrant, 18.9.1950.

70. CZA, AK 456/1, Letter from August 1951, Series of Documents between the Jewish Agency and Weisberger Regarding a Letter of Complaint about Shaar Ha’aliya from an Immigrant, Including a Copy of the Letter from the Immigrant.

71. CZA, AK 456/4, Survey of Shaar Ha’aliya Buildings and Property, 52. In his description of the hunger strike, Yehuda Weisberger wrote that there were three huts for TB patients. Yehuda Weisberger, Shaar Ha’aliya: The Diary of the Mass Aliya, 1947–1957 [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1985), 126.

72. Sternberg, A People Is Absorbed, 128.

73. Davies, “Health and Disease,” 448.

74. Sternberg, A People Is Absorbed, 129.

75. Rhona Seidelman interview with S. H., October 23, 2005. This interview was conducted as part of a research project directed by Prof. Shifra Shvarts, the Israel Science Foundation, 1217/04.

76. This is an excellent example of how different the experience at Shaar Ha’aliya could have been for a person based on familiarity with languages and proximity
to the Ashkenazi elite. As we see here, having access to the languages of the people in positions of authority—in this case, the (presumably) Ashkenazi doctor—was critical. For this woman, language made the most important difference a mother could possibly imagine: having her child taken away from her or not.

77. CZA, AK 456/8, Booklet from Jewish Agency Public Relations Division, 1.50.


79. This situation firmly aligns with Orit Bashkin’s conceptualization of resistance and her insistence that in this period so many acts—both big and small—were all part of “the victories in the daily and public battles to maintain public dignity” (Bashkin, *Impossible Exodus*).

80. Here, again, I turn to Bashkin’s conceptualization of resistance to help underscore the significance of what was happening at Shaar Ha’aliya. She writes that resistance “came in many manners and forms. In my opinion, Iraqi mothers in transit camps who managed to get their children out of the cycle of poverty by working several jobs; teachers who organized classes and schools, without state permission; and Iraqi children who critiqued the lifestyle of the kibbutzim that hosted them, were no less heroic than those of the more organized groups of the Israeli Black Panthers in the 1970’s. Perhaps they were even more so” (ibid., 11).

81. ISA, 79/42 2295/1–5, Letter from Y. Sheffi to Absorption Department, 10.8.50.

82. ISA, file 79/5 2145/21–5, Report on the Introduction of a Police Presence in *Shaar Ha’aliya*, 19.7.49; CZA, AK 456/1, Letter from Giora Josephtal, 47.49.

83. ISA, file 79/42 2295/1, Report on Shaar Ha’aliya Guards, 13.4.51.

84. In December 1949, after he had helped them arrange a Hanukah party for their unit, the police sent Yehuda Weisberger an effusive letter of thanks expressing their wish for the continuation of a positive relationship. However, these hopes appear to have been seriously disappointed.

85. ISA, file 79/42 2295/1–5, Weisberger Report on Shaar Ha’aliya Police, 28.1.51.

86. ISA, file 79/42 2295/1–5, Report from Shefi on Situation for Police at Shaar Ha’aliya, 28.2.51.

87. Ibid.

88. The problems encountered in the police force were not unlike those of many government bodies in the early years of the state, which were all very new and functioning quite tenuously. On the transition into statehood and the crystallization of these institutions, see Zvi Zameret and Hana Yablonka, eds., *The First Decade* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Tzvi, 1997); Ruth Kark, “Planning, Housing,

89. ISA, file 79/42 2295/1–5, Shefi Report on Situation for Police at Shaar Ha’aliya, 8.50.

90. Ibid.

91. CZA, AK 456/3, Report from Kalman Levin to Giora Josephtal, 24.8.50.

92. ISA, 79/42 2295/1–5, Letter from Giora Josephtal to Y. Shefi, 1.9.50.

93. ISA, file 79/42 2295/1–5, Nehmias Letter, 6.3.51.

94. ISA, file 79/42 2295/1–5, Report on Situation for Guards at Shaar Ha’aliya, 13.4.51.


### CHAPTER 3 — MEANING

1. K. Shabtai, “Shaar Ha’aliya Mishavea Letukinim” [Shaar Ha’aliya desperately needs repair], *HaDor*, April 8, 1951.


3. The one important perspective that is not included in this chapter is that of the immigrants themselves, which is discussed instead in chapter 4. There are rich sources available that document the immigrants’ reactions to Shaar Ha’aliya’s fence, but they are almost all retrospectives. For that reason, I chose to include them as part of the discussion on historical remembrances.


5. The articles’ full titles are as follows:

   “Sailing for the Promised Land (The Story of a Refugee Ship And the Last Lap to Israel)”;  
   “Refugees, on Voyage to Israel, Realize They Will Be Pioneers (Immigrants on the Atzmaut Are Prepared to Face Austerity and Hardships for Life of Hope)”;  
   “Aboard Refugee Ship for Israel No Comfort, But Spirits Are High”;
“Aboard Refugee Ship for Israel A Wedding Adds Gayety to Trip (Couple Who Fled Hungary Are Married by Captain And Again by Rabbi in Ancient Rite);”

“Refugees’ Landing in Israel: ‘It’s Our Land, It Belongs to Us’ (Atzmaut’s 1,700 Passengers Sing ‘Hatikvah’ As Ship Docks at Haifa, and They Disperse to Camps)” and


9. According to Richard Whelan, Capa is said to have left in in the midst of the 1948 war, after a dangerous encounter left him shaken: While taking photographs of the clash between the different Jewish fighting units at the Altalena, he was grazed by a bullet but—by chance—not injured. He packed his bags and booked a seat on the next flight from Tel Aviv to Paris. Ibid., 265.


12. Whelan, *Robert Capa*, 267. Whelan recounts that Capa even considered settling down in Tel Aviv and encouraged his mother to think about moving there (269).

13. One quote that reinforces this idea is as follows: “Capa was always—throughout his entire career—primarily a photographer of people, and many of his pictures of war (even those taken in the midst of battle) are not so much chronicles of events as extraordinarily sympathetic and compassionate studies of people under extreme stress” (ibid., 105).


17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 268.
21. I am intrigued by the idea that Gruber, Cartier, and Capa may all have encountered one another while they were at Shaar Ha’aliya, since their articles were all published in the same month.
22. Perhaps, as Jews, Gruber and Capa both had some degree of connection to the place. But of course, neither of them were Israeli, and neither of them chose to stay in Israel.
24. Ibid., 71.
25. Ibid.
26. Central Zionist Archive (hereafter CZA), AK 456/1, Letter from Kalman Levin to Dr. Berman, 14.3.51.
27. Ibid.
28. CZA, AK 456/4, “Introduction” from Report on Shaar Ha’aliya, 10.8.52. An earlier report, from June 1952, conveyed the camp’s purpose similarly: “The idea for a processing camp came in answer to two problems that the Absorption Department was considering in those days: how to turn the new immigrant into a citizen of Israel in only a few days, and how to protect the Yishuv from diseases that were likely to befall it as a result of this immigration” (CZA, AK 456/4, “Boundaries” in *Report on Shaar Ha’aliya*, 6.52).
29. A copy of this article can be found in Weisberger’s archives. CZA, AK 456/2.
30. This is how Weisberger ended his letter: “Allow me to add that around two months ago there was a man from South America from among the immigrants who presented himself as a journalist and submitted a complaint to the administration that was comprised of almost all the aforementioned points, with the addition of a complaint of beatings the immigrants received from the clerks . . . Following an appropriate investigation a directive came from the Prime Minister’s office to promptly transfer the complainant to an institute for the mentally ill” (CZA, AK 456/2, Letter from Weisberger to PR division, Absorption Department, Tel Aviv, 4.9.50).
31. Weisberger’s position here is one that he took on other occasions. In a letter from Weisberger to the Absorption Department in Tel Aviv, September 4, 1950 (CZA, AK 456/2), he wrote that the quarantine was necessary “to protect the health of the Yishuv from contagious diseases from abroad.”
November 9, 1950, he wrote that “there was ‘[a] need to protect the country’s residents from the danger of the diseases’” (CZA, AK 456/6). There was also the April 1950 report of the “Committee for the Study of Immigrants and their Absorption,” of which Weisberger was a member, that similarly states that the medical examinations at Shaar Ha’aliya “reveal a large degree of sick people who are dangerous to the surroundings” (CZA, AK 456/8, “Absorption Pangs,” Report of Committee for the Study of Immigrants and Their Absorption).

32. ISA, 79/42 2295/1–5, Letter from Y. Sheffi to Absorption Department, 10.8.50.


34. As articulated by Kraut, “knowing that the stigmatized victim is from another place brings with it the reassurance that one’s own body and surroundings are inherently healthy and would remain so were it not for the presence of the stranger” (Alan M. Kraut. Silent Travellers: Germs, Genes and the Immigrant Menace [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994], 26).


38. Ibid., 37.


40. Ibid., 127.

41. Vatik, while difficult to translate, can be understood as a resident who was no longer considered a new immigrant.


43. Avner Holtzman, “The Encounter between Newcomers and ‘Oldtimers’ as Reflected in Hebrew Fiction” [in Hebrew], in Ofer, Israel in the Great Wave of Immigration, xi.


45. “In contrast to the founding fathers, who turned their backs on the Jewish village of Eastern Europe, because of the degeneration they associated with it, the immigrants from Asia and Africa were at peace with their worlds as they had crystallized in the Diaspora [. . .] The identity of the immigrants from the Eastern
countries, which was strong and rooted, posed a threat to the Zionist ethos as a defining power” (Henriette Dahan-Kalev, “Israeli Identity—between New Immigrants and ‘Oldtimers,’” in Ofer, Israel in the Great Wave of Immigration, 181).

See also the infamous series “I Was a New Immigrant for One Month” written by journalist Aryeh Gelblum in 1949. In these articles, Gelblum brought to the Israeli public a detailed account of the terrible conditions for people in Israel’s immigrant camps while also displaying a deep prejudice, as evident in his disparaging depiction of immigrants from “North African and Arab” countries. These articles are a discussion of life in several different immigrant camps. They came out a few weeks after Shaar Ha’aliya opened. “Hodesh Y amim Hayiti Oleh Hadash” in Shimon Rubinstein, The Full Collection of Articles Published by Aryeh Gelblum in “Haaretz” (13.4–6.5 1949) and the Responses to Aliya [in Hebrew], illus. by Gerti Rubinstein (Jerusalem, 2001).


50. Her book mentions numerous walls but Brown explains her decision to focus her analysis on United States / Mexico and Israel/Palestine because they are “the two largest, most expensive, and most notorious of the new walls” (Wendy Brown, Walled States, Waning Sovereignty [New York: Zone Books, 2010], 28).

51. Ibid., 27. Shaar Ha’aliya’s smaller fence also has a place within Brown’s analysis as part of the broader idea of a physical barrier.

52. “Political walls have always spectacularized power—they have always generated performative and symbolic effects in excess of their obdurately material ones. They have produced and negated certain political imaginaries. They have contributed to the political subjectivity of those they encompass and those they exclude. Medieval walls and fortresses dotting the European countryside, for example, officially built against invasion, also served to overawe and hence bind and pacify the towns they encircled. More generally, all walls defining or defending political entities have shaped collective and individual identity within as they aimed to block penetration from without” (ibid., 40).

54. “However architecturally interesting or complex, walls are conventionally regarded as functional instruments for dividing, separating, retaining, protecting, shoring up, or supporting. Whether constructing a building, holding back land erosion, or limning neighbourhoods, walls are ordinarily perceived as intended for a material task. Yet walls are also commonly said to convey moods or feelings by their design, placement, and relationship to built or natural environments. They may set or foreclose political and economic possibilities and be screens for a host of projected desires, needs, or anxieties” (Brown, *Walled States*, 73).

55. Ibid., 74.

56. Ibid., 76.

57. Ibid., 24.

58. Ibid., 22.

59. “In the discourse of civilizational struggle that has superseded Cold War discourse in organizing the global imaginary of liberal democracies, two disparate images are merged to produce a single figure of danger justifying exclusion and closure: the hungry masses, on the one hand, and cultural-religious aggression toward Western values, on the other” (ibid., 33).

60. Ibid., 25.

61. Ibid., 69.


64. Ibid., 107.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., 26.

67. Ibid., 81. This also echoes back to Mary Douglas: “We have seen that powers are attributed to any structure of ideas and that rules of avoidance make a visible public recognition of its boundaries” (*Purity and Danger*, 188).


70. Ibid.

71. Some examples of Brown’s take on theatricality are as follows: “If walls do not actually accomplish the interdiction fueling and legitimating them, if they perversely institutionalize the contested and degraded status of the boundaries they limn, they nevertheless stage both sovereign jurisdiction and an aura of sovereign power and awe” (*Walled State*, 26). She continues, “They also resurrect an image of the state as sustaining the very powers of protection and self-determination
challenged by terrorist technologies, on one side, and neoliberal capitalism, on the other. They are potential spectacles of such protection and self-determination and more generally of the resolve and capacity for action identified with the political autonomy generated by sovereignty” (92).


73. Ibid., 199.

74. Ibid., 208.


77. Ibid., 67.


79. Dally, “The Development of Western Medical Science,” 63.


81. “For a golden moment in the mid-1960’s it was possible to imagine that infectious diseases might some day be eradicated completely” (Patrice Bourdelais, *Epidemics Laid Low: A History of What Happened in Rich Countries* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006], 128).

82. The Doctors’ Trial at Nuremberg (1946–1947) was a watershed event that cast a shadow on the moral authority of European medical science and medical practitioners. The public trial of leading physicians and medical researchers raised questions that eventually created a growing awareness of the atrocities committed in the name of medicine—which we see in the drafting of the Nuremberg Code and eugenics’ fall from grace. These helped mark an era in which declarations of human rights were beginning to permeate the world of medicine, as well as the perception of medical authority, and redefine accepted notions of medical power, the rights of the sick and weak, and boundaries of state power. The late 1940s and 1950s was a period in which the authority and standing of Western medicine was still largely intact but in which the wheels of change were beginning to turn—even if only just barely beginning. On the Nuremberg Doctors’ Trial, the Nuremberg Code, and their impact on biomedicine, see Paul Weindling, “The

83. See, for example, Roy Porter’s description of compulsory vaccinations and examinations in the nineteenth century, Porter, Greatest Benefit to Mankind, 128–140. As Warwick Anderson reminds us, “It is often forgotten that in the name of public health the state is licensed to palpate, handle, bruise, test and mobilize individuals, especially those deemed dangerous or marginal or needy” (Warwick Anderson, Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines [Durham: Duke University Press, 2006], 161).


86. CZA, AK 456/3, Letter from Mapai Cell in Shaar Ha’aliya to Mapai Office, Tel Aviv, 23.3.51. An acronym for “Israel Workers’ Party,” Mapai was the dominant political party in Israel’s early years.


88. Much of this report’s persuasiveness comes from the fact that it does not whitewash or simplify the descriptions of camp life, nor does it overly heroize the staff. While it praises their efforts it does not glorify their practices; it is relatively open about their own shortcomings. The narratives of both the members of Mapai and the director alike are an expression of their frustration—first of all with these circumstances, but then, even more so, with the Yishuv. The sense is that by making Shaar Ha’aliya such an accepted target for criticism, the Yishuv was, in fact, making the staff’s work harder and perhaps making scapegoats out of the people actually trying to do something while the bigger problems (i.e., clashes between the immigrants’ expectations and Israeli absorption policy and nation building) were ultimately beyond their control.

89. CZA, AK 456/3, Letter from Mapai Cell in Shaar Ha’aliya to Mapai Office, Tel Aviv, 23.3.51.


93. CZA, AK 456/6, “Shaara Shel Yisrael” [Israel’s Gate] by Pinchas Yorman.

94. I am convinced that this photo was taken at an earlier date, perhaps before Shaar Ha’aliya opened in 1949. In 1951, it would be practically impossible for the camp to be so empty. Even at the crack of dawn, people would already have been standing in crowded lines.


CHAPTER 4 — MEMORY


3. For the distinctions between memory and remembrance as well as categorization of historical remembrances, see Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006), 276.


6. Tamar Katriel explains that in this way the visitors are “invited to identify with the heroic struggle associated with the survivor’s arrival in the Land of Israel (and, by extension, the new life they sought to build there)” (Tamar Katriel, “From Shore to Shore: The Holocaust, Clandestine, Immigration, and Israeli Heritage Museums,” in Visual Culture and the Holocaust, ed. Barbie Zelizer [New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001], 209).

7. Ibid., 6.

8. The top image on the heritage site’s official pamphlet is a photograph of the camp from behind a barbed wire fence. The Atlit “Illegal” Immigrant Detention Camp, official heritage site pamphlet (2012). The top two of three photographs on the booklet by Mordecai Naor, Atlit Camp, show people in the camp detained behind barbed wire.

9. A sign on the disinfection hut in the Atlit Heritage Museum reads “When [disinfection] was completed, detainees were transferred to residential huts and held behind barbed wire fences. For survivors of the Holocaust, this ‘reception’ was a fresh reminder of the horrors of the German concentration camps.”


11. Ibid., 38.

12. Ibid., 42.

13. Ibid., 43.


16. Naor, Atlit Camp, 55. A few pages later, in the testimony of the Palmach commander who led the raid, there is another brief reference to these men: “In the instructions that I had received regarding the breakout, I was told that three prisoners were suspected of having cooperated with the Nazis and would be left behind in the camp” (64).

17. Ibid., 5.

18. On Shaar Ha’aliya Bet, see Central Zionist Archive (CZA), AK 456/3, Untitled document written after 1954, and CZA, AK 456/1, “Distribution of the Aliya from Ports of Arrival, 1.4.51–12.8.54.” While one document suggests that twenty-two thousand people went through Shaar Ha’aliya Bet (CZA, AK 456/3, Untitled Document from Weisberger’s Files, Written after 1954), another document claims that the figure was actually forty-two thousand (CZA, AK 456/1, “Distribution of the Aliya from Ports of Arrival,” 1.4.51–12.8.54).


20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., xv.


27. Victoria Freeman, “‘Toronto Has No History!’ Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Historical Memory in Canada’s Largest City,” *Urban History Review / Revue d’histoire urbaine* 38, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 21–35.


31. Ibid.


36. Ibid., 9.


39. Ibid., 419.

40. Ibid., 423–424.


45. The line “Nothing was as promised” is followed by “They promised a warm land / there were winds and storms.” But the anonymous “they” making these promises is left to our imagination. Certainly, this could be understood as Jewish Agency representatives. But that “they” could just as easily be friends and family members who had immigrated earlier and who whitewashed their own stories. The only explicit reference to any state agents is the line “המשרד מביא סרטים וכיסאות” (The PR department brings movies and chairs)—which is an innocuous image.


49. One channel that has the entire movie has had almost three thousand views. *The Ringworm Children* testing of large radiation doses on humans, YouTube video, 44:41, posted by vidsupquick on September 8, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMpttef4lg4, accessed December 7, 2012.

50. I am using the English subtitles, translated from the Hebrew, that appear in the film.


53. Seidelman, Troen, and Shvarts, “‘Healing’ the Bodies and Souls,” 197.


55. This was a comment by Dr. Dana Blander following a panel at the Israel Studies Association in UCLA, 2013.


58. Like so many successful, mainstream Israeli musicians, Alberstein began her career during her military service when she served as part of the military band. For more on the Israeli army band and the various routes into the Israeli music scene, see Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).


61. CZA, AK 456/6, Notes from December 28, 1955 for a Presentation on Shaar Ha’aliya at the Twenty-Fourth Zionist Congress.

62. CZA, AK 456/2, Weisberger Letter, 3.9.52.

63. Seidelman, Troen, and Shvarts, “The Press and the War against Ringworm,” in “Healing the Bodies and Souls of Immigrant Children,” 201–204.

64. “Holei gazezet ve-hagarenet mitrapim be-Shaar Ha’aliya” [People ill with ringworm and trachoma heal at Sha’ar ha-Aliyah], *Davar*, May 20, 1955.


70. Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Oral History Division (hereafter OHD), (210), 136, 12.

71. OHD, (210), 138; OHD, (210), 142; OHD, (210), 136.

72. OHD, (210), 138; OHD, (210), 163; OHD, (210), 136.
73. OHD, (210), 158; Rhona Seidelman interview with S. H., 23.10.05. This interview was conducted as part of a research project directed by Prof. Shifra Shvarts, the Israel Science Foundation, 1217/04.

74. Rhona Seidelman interview with V. S. 21.11.05, Beer Sheva, Israel. This interview was conducted as part of a research project directed by Prof. Shifra Shvarts, the Israel Science Foundation, 1217/04.

75. Rhona Seidelman interview with E. S. 27.09.05, Beer Sheva, Israel. This interview was conducted as part of a research project directed by Prof. Shifra Shvarts, the Israel Science Foundation, 1217/04.

76. OHD, (210), 113, 13.

77. OHD, (210), 113, 34.

78. On the Shaar Ha’aliya administration’s perception of Iraqi immigrants as troublemakers, see “Bethitarvut hamishhtara yatzu keh-2000 olim le ma’abarot” [2,000 Olim left for Ma’abarot with police intervention], Maariv, August 8, 1951.

79. OHD, (210), 19.

80. OHD, (210), 122, 4.

81. OHD, (210), 112, 6.


83. OHD, (210), 141, Sylvia Meltzer Interview, 1993.

84. OHD, (210), 138.

85. His words were תחנה מעבר.

86. OHD, (210), 138, Interview with Yaacov Steiner.

87. OHD, (210), 136.

88. From a 1977 quote in the book’s introduction, one gets a sense of the urgency Yehuda felt about his calling: “And yet another mission is before me; to finally write the book on ‘Shaar Ha’aliya’. All the people who worked in absorption of the Aliya after the establishment of the State are disappearing one by one . . . I have been left to tell the story of the Ingathering of the Exiles. I have decided to take all the material with me [to India] and sit down and write—and write” (Yehuda Weisberger, Shaar Ha’aliya: The Diary of the Mass Aliya, 1947–1957 [in Hebrew] [Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1985], 7).

90. In 1949, he was chosen by the Jewish Agency to be the first director of Shaar Ha’aliya. At that time, he had been working as the head of the immigrant absorption center Neve Haim, located near Hadera. Although he officially left his position as Shaar Ha’aliya director only in May 1957, he had been on a leave of absence since 1956 while doing immigration work in Tunis (see CZA, AK 456/1, Administrative Report #81, 14.2.56; CZA, AK 456/2, Letter of Recommendation for Weisberger from Jewish Agency, Outlining Details of His Work from 1947 to 1960, 1.1.60). After leaving Shaar Ha’aliya, he continued his work in absorption in the position of “district supervisor in the Division for the Absorption of Professionals and Olim from Western Countries” (see CZA, AK 456/2, Letter of Recommendation for Weisberger from Jewish Agency, 1.1.60).

91. Weisberger, Shaar Ha’aliya, 63.

92. His remarks often generalize about ethnic groups but do not fall into a simplistic Ashkenazi/Sephardic dichotomy. He is critical of Romanians but not Bulgarians. His description of “Bnei Yisrael” immigrants from India is very derogatory (ibid., 103). He says of Iraqi immigrants that it is a “pity they go bad quickly” (101).

93. Ibid., 71.

94. Ibid. I have translated בתי עולים as immigrant centers.

95. With this in mind, the limited reference to the barbed wire fence, and the absence of any mention of quarantine, are well suited to the place that these subjects have held in Israeli discourse, as discussed in the introduction.


97. Ibid., 22.

98. Ibid., 156.

99. Ibid., 124.

100. Ibid., 125.


CONCLUSION

1. I turn again to Strange and Bashford: “The inseparability and the recurrent intertwining of ‘prevention,’ ‘punishment’ and ‘protection’ reveals the historic connection between all these state-endorsed practices in modernity, as well as between the populations rendered into ‘problems’” (Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford, eds., Isolation: Places and Practices of Exclusion [London: Routledge, 2003], 222).

3. CZA, AK 456/1, Letter from Kalman Levin to Dr. Berman, 14.3.51.

EPILOGUE


2. A partial model for this memorial would be the Museum of the History of Medicine in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. This museum relies on beautiful, enlarged historical photographs.

3. In Hebrew it would be מוזיאון שער העלייה לגלריה ולרפואה, “Muzeon Shaar Ha’aliya Le Hagira Ve Refuah.”


5. A Hebrew transcript of Yishai’s comments can be found at http://wwwynetco.il/articles/0,7340,1-3798115-00.html. A video of his full interview on “Pgoshe et ha itonut” (Meet the press) can be found in the program’s archives, http://www.reshetynetco.il. Numerous responses to these comments came out in the media. For a few of the responses, see Yossi Sarid, “Virusim” [Viruses], Haaretz, November 6, 2009. Rhona Seidelman, “Al mehagrim ve mahalot” [Immigrants, Disease and the Zionist Ethos], Haaretz, November 11, 2009. “Oy le ota busha” [Oh, to the same shame], editorial, Haaretz, November 5, 2009. The talkbacks to each of the articles and videos give an indication of the broad range of issues and opinions that the comments evoked.


7. See Don Seeman, One People, One Blood: Ethiopian-Israelis and the Return to Judaism (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010).


12. Here I am paraphrasing a statement made by a woman shown in the movie *The Ringworm Children*.