

# TEL AVIV

Mythography of a City

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*Tel Aviv's Seashore* by Fery Rosenfeld. Postcard, 1978.  
Courtesy of Maya Fery Rosenfeld, Tel Aviv.

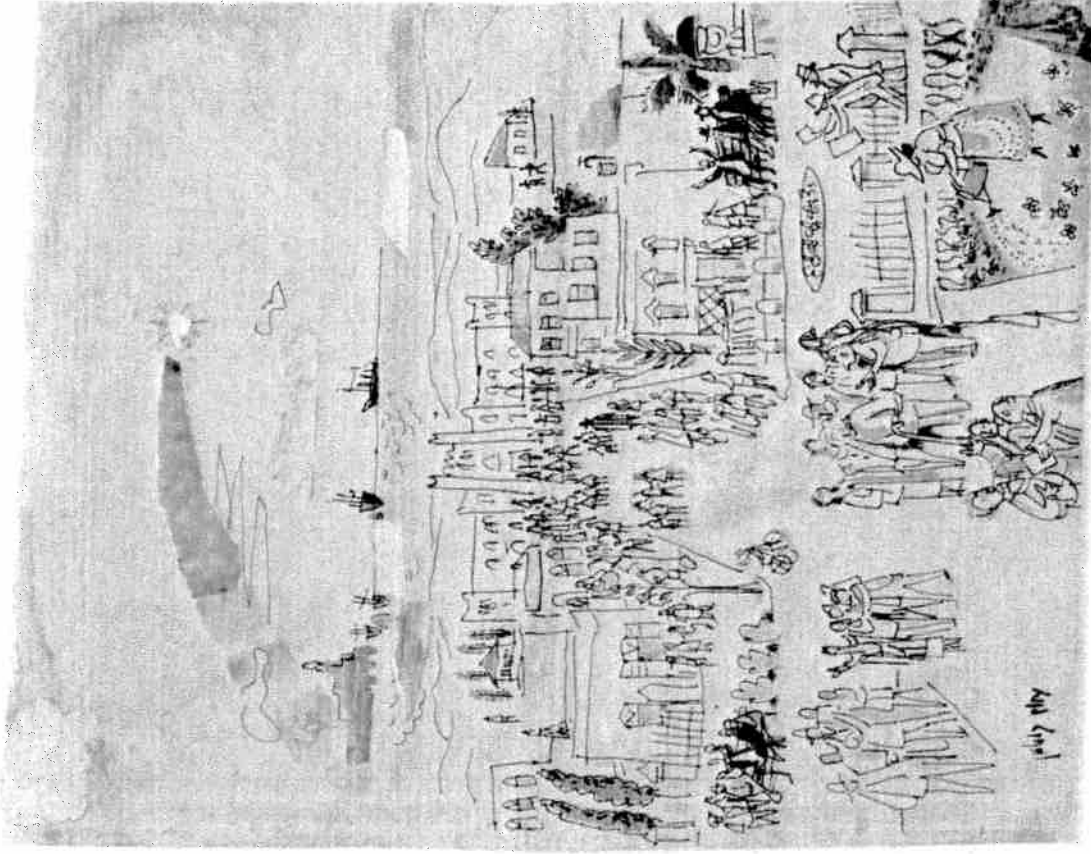
## The First Hebrew City

It may safely be presumed that Tel Aviv is the most discussed city all the world over. It is there, and by now has been there for twenty years, yet there are still philosophers who question its *raison d'être*.

—Zeev Jabotinsky, "The Meaning of Tel Aviv,"  
*Doar Ha'Yom*, 10 April 1929

**The Jewish neighborhood** built by the Ahuzat Bayit settlement company north of Jaffa in 1909 was projected as a garden suburb for those Jewish residents of Jaffa willing and able to raise the money needed to buy a plot and build their home there. The future Tel Aviv was founded with the intention of improving its prospective residents' quality of life. Yet the foundation of a new Jewish neighborhood had an unequivocal Zionist meaning. Of course, this is true of all Jewish settlements established within the framework of the Zionist settlement project. However, from the perspective of Zionist commentators, the meaning of the new neighborhood was anchored in its conceptualization and perception as a unique phenomenon of Jewish national revival in the ancestral homeland. Notably, Tel Aviv occupied a special place not only in the geography of the new Jewish settlement of the Land of Israel but, more important, in Zionist mythology.

Tel Aviv's rapid growth and its transformation from a Jewish suburb of Jaffa into an independent Hebrew town was an important aspect of the building of the Jewish National Home in British Mandate Palestine. The population growth and geographical expansion of Tel Aviv were impressive. Its population increased from 15,000 in 1922 to almost 130,000 in 1939. This demographic growth was reflected in the city's geographical expansion northward in the construction of new buildings and the paving of new streets. Tel Aviv was granted the status of a municipal council in 1922, and it became a city in 1934. These administrative measures were politically significant. With administrative disengagement from Jaffa and the establishment



*Ahuzat Bayit* by Nachum Gumman. Ink drawing with watercolor and glued clippings on paper; 33 by 44 cm, showing the beginning of Tel Aviv with Herzl Street and the Herzliya Gymnasium. Courtesy of the Nachum Gumman Museum of Art, Tel Aviv.

of Jewish self-rule, Tel Aviv concretized the Jewish National Home in British Mandate Palestine in territorial and institutional terms.

Beyond the statistical data and the various urban, social, political, and administrative processes that shaped the history of the city, the fundamental meaning of Tel Aviv was formulated in terms of its conception as the First Hebrew City. As a mythic city, the First Hebrew City conceptualized Tel Aviv as a unique phenomenon within the framework of national revival. On the factual level, Tel Aviv was the first Hebrew (read Jewish) city founded in a Zionist context in Palestine. On the mythic level, the First Hebrew City provided the ideational foundations upon which the city was built to embody a Zionist vision. As a vision, it was a Zionist commitment. Accordingly, it was articulated not only in those aspects of the actual city considered to give expression to its basic essence as a Hebrew city, but also in the public debate on the desirable personality and character of Tel Aviv.

### “Praises and Compliments”

The building blocks used for the construction of the First Hebrew City were praises, compliments, hyperbolic formulas, and poetic exaggerations. On this level of myth, Tel Aviv was not just a city, but “the only and unique city,”<sup>1</sup> “the beautiful city, the joy of the Land of Israel shining like a precious stone on the soil of the reviving homeland,”<sup>2</sup> “the seventh wonder of the world.”<sup>3</sup> In the eyes of its admirers, Tel Aviv was something unique that warranted special care and devotion.<sup>4</sup> Already in 1918 a school textbook extolled it as “the crown of the new Hebrew Yishuv.”<sup>5</sup> Appealing to its residents, the Zionist leader and journalist Nachum Sokolov asserted: “Tel Aviv is an epitome, an example and a model, and you, the sons of Tel Aviv, are the embodiment, the ideal embodied in the Land of Israel. This is a glorious creation of the Zionist spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

In retrospect, one commentator reflected with hardly veiled irony on the innocent enthusiasm that engulfed Tel Aviv in its early days: “Tel Aviv was built in an atmosphere of compliments, praises, and perfumed with the myrrh of love confessions. So much incense, such plenitude of blue wool, and so many legendary tales about an ideal place, a city of wonders, a model and paragon, which the rest of the cities in the world should observe and emulate.”<sup>7</sup>

The scornful criticism that the writer and essayist Avraham Sharon (Shvedron) poured on Tel Aviv contributed to his reputation as “a person fa-

mous for his 'resistance' to Tel Aviv"<sup>8</sup> and as a "notorious prosecutor" of the city." In one of his articles, he quoted a list of praises poured on Tel Aviv by various writers in order to underscore the contrast between Tel Aviv's (self-)image as the "center of the world" and the humiliation inflicted by the response of the Astronomical Observatory in Greenwich to a Tel Aviv resident's query: "To this Tel Aviv, to it and to it only, not to the Land of Israel, are directed the eyes of the House of Israel; Tel Aviv, whose admirers describe it as the most beautiful city in the Near East . . . the city that fills the entire universe with high regard. . . . Regarding this Tel Aviv, the Royal Astronomer announces that there, in Greenwich, no one knows exactly where it is located!!!"<sup>10</sup>

### "A City of Wonders"

The idea of a Hebrew city originated in a proposal made in 1904 by Eliezer ben-Yehuda, the "renewer" of Hebrew speech, to found a Hebrew neighborhood, or a Hebrew town, in Jerusalem in honor of Theodor Herzl, the founding father of modern Zionism who died in August 1904:

To build in memory of Herzl a large, Hebrew neighborhood, a Hebrew town, a town all the residents of which will talk Hebrew, in its streets and public square only Hebrew will be heard and its shops only Hebrew will be spoken. And in this Hebrew town a Hebrew gymnasium will be instituted, and later, if possible, a Hebrew university . . . Hebrew speech and a Hebrew town in Jerusalem and all in honor of Herzl.<sup>11</sup>

The gymnasium opened its gates a year later, but in the coastal city of Jaffa. The Hebrew town envisioned by Eliezer ben-Yehuda was founded in 1909, not in Jerusalem, but adjacent to Jaffa. The Hebrew gymnasium Herzliya commemorated Herzl in its name. The idea to name the new Jewish neighborhood after Herzl was discussed, but in 1910 the founders of the new neighborhood decided by a majority vote to name it Tel Aviv (literally "Hill of Spring," a town in Mesopotamia mentioned in Ezekiel 3:15), the Hebrew title bestowed by Nachum Sokolov on Herzl's utopian *Atneuland* (Old-New Land). Being a gesture in the direction of Herzl's vision, the name was an unequivocal statement about the Zionist meaning of the new neighborhood. Similarly laden with redemptive connotations, Tel Aviv's official motto was "Again I will build thee and thou shalt be built" (Jeremiah

31:4). Mayor Meir Dizengoff later elaborated: "May goodwill prevail, and what is written in the Scriptures—'You will build and be built the virgin of Israel'—will materialize. Build and be built—this is our slogan—and in the days of our lives, in relentless work, together we will realize it!"<sup>12</sup>

In its mythic capacity as "one of the wondrous creations that our people created in this generation of the reviving Land of Israel," Tel Aviv was a symbol of national revival and Zionist restoration, evidence of "the enormous creative power of our people, which desires revival in its ancient country and knows how to transform a hill that is a wilderness into a wonderful hill of spring."<sup>13</sup>

As a mythic city, the First Hebrew City was proposed in 1906 in the prospectus that Akiva Arich Weiss wrote to encourage Jews to buy land to build a new Jewish neighborhood. A constitution of a city as yet unfounded, the prospectus formulated the projected foundation in a redemptive context. The dramatic appeal "let us build us a city in Israel," which appeared at the end of the prospectus, directly alluded to the biblical story of the foundation of Babel ("And they said, go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name lest we be scattered around upon the face of the whole earth" [Genesis 11:4]). Despite the addition "in Israel," which did not appear in the original verse, the call was impregnated with the notion of a cosmic challenge and rebellious zeal. The Hebrew date on which the prospectus was issued—Tish'a Be'Av, the ninth of the month of Av 5669 (31 July 1906)—was weighed down with symbolic meaning: the Ninth of Av commemorates the destruction of both Jewish temples in Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the Romans in 586 B.C.E. and 70 C.E., respectively. In this symbolic sense, the foundation of a new city—and Weiss referred specifically to a city and not to a neighborhood—was intended to signify the transition from destruction to redemption, a powerful idea in Jewish liturgy and eschatology. In 1936, on the occasion of Meir Dizengoff's seventy-fifth birthday, the mayor was also praised as "the builder of the First Hebrew City since the destruction of the Second Temple."<sup>14</sup>

Weiss explicitly referred not to a mere city, but to the First Hebrew City: "its population will be 100 percent Hebrew, Hebrew will be spoken here, where purity and cleanliness will reign, and [where] we will not follow the ways of the gentile nations."<sup>15</sup> These words replicated Eliezer ben-Yehuda's conception of a Hebrew town made two years earlier. On the tenth of Av 5669 (1909), the foundation stone was laid for the Herzliya Hebrew

Gymnasium, the first public institution to be built in the new neighborhood. The building and the institution of a Hebrew high school cast the Zionist meaning of the new settlement in the shape of a commitment to both Hebrew and Hebrew education. The day chosen for laying the foundation stone—the day following the day of mourning for the destruction of the temples in Jerusalem—was a symbolic gesture that cast the motif of Hebrew revival in a redemptive mold.

In 1906, the designation “the First Hebrew City” indicated but an ambitious, even pretentious vision. In the 1920s, however, it became widespread as a reference to Tel Aviv. In 1923, when Meir Dizengoff, the mayor, visited the United States, he was informed about events “in Tel Aviv, which, as is well known, is the First Hebrew City in the entire world.”<sup>16</sup> In 1925, Dizengoff was invited to represent Tel Aviv at an international congress of mayors in Paris. This was the first time that Tel Aviv had participated in such an event. In his speech, Dizengoff defined Tel Aviv as “[t]he First Hebrew City in the world.”<sup>17</sup> However, when he presented Tel Aviv as a city, its residents were still referring to neighboring Jaffa as “*the city*.”<sup>18</sup>

Designating Tel Aviv as the First Hebrew City sought to create an identity between Tel Aviv as an urban experience and the Zionist idea it represented. The tension between the Hebrew City as a vision and destiny, on one hand, and as lived experience, on the other, created an ideational field of force. An articulation of the city’s fundamental quality as a Zionist creation, the First Hebrew City referred to the city in terms that transcended the private, accidental, and transient. From the perspective of the myth, the accidental articulated a sense of purpose; what seemed to be private was but an aspect of a collective endeavor; and the ostensibly transient was in reality an aspect of a vision in the process of realization. Every event, any occurrence or activity, no matter how trivial, embodied the myth in the city’s daily routines and ordinary life.

In this mythical context, every aspect of the city, especially those that contained an element of an original creation, and every characteristic of Hebrewness manifest in the fabric of the city, was constructive of Tel Aviv as the First Hebrew City: “Every purchase of a plot of land, every new building, every paved street being built, every pipe laid or light installed, every Hebrew book printed—all were in a sense a very special epopee.”<sup>19</sup> In its various articulations, the myth cast life in Tel Aviv, prosaic as it might have appeared, in a heroic mold. According to the poet Avigdor Ha’Meiri, life in Tel Aviv oscillated between the transcendental level of Jewish history and the

humdrum experience of paying the water bill.<sup>20</sup> In a mythic context, “all [the residents of Tel Aviv] were joined together in a single lofty idea: to build a Hebrew city of honor and splendor, that befitted both them and the world.”<sup>21</sup>

As a mythic city, the First Hebrew City served as the symbolic scaffold for the building of Tel Aviv in the foundation stage of its history, when it evolved from a “neighborhood to a town” or from “a dream into a city.” In this sense, the myth formulated and propagated the meaning of Tel Aviv in terms of the permanent and absolute, even in a period when the continuous change in its physical and demographic landscape was a basic feature of its existence as a project in progress.

The designation “the First Hebrew City” cast this new urban existence into the mold of a Zionist creation. The mythic city was invoked in festive speeches, in commentaries in the Hebrew press, in foreign and local visitors’ observations, and, last but not least, in the efforts invested by the city’s leaders to shape the Hebrew character of the city. Of special importance were the views of Meir Dizengoff, the first mayor of the city (who remained in office until his death in 1936, except for the period 1926–28, when replaced by David Bloch of the workers’ faction) and a prominent promoter of the mythic city, at least as maintained through the official and slightly hagiographic rhetoric of the 1930s.<sup>22</sup> As Meir Dizengoff consistently repeated, for him, Tel Aviv embodied a vision, which the historian Ilan Troen succinctly terms the vision of the “bourgeois city.”<sup>23</sup> Dizengoff’s ideas, even though they articulated his ideological perspective, had special weight in characterizing the essential qualities of Tel Aviv as variations on the theme of the First Hebrew City.

Foreign dignitaries visiting Tel Aviv in the 1920s and 1930s praised the city’s achievements, and their speeches reflected an image of the city as a unique Zionist endeavor and achievement. The receptions for and especially the speeches delivered by the dignitaries were a platform for swearing allegiance to the vision of the First Hebrew City. The words of praise served to cultivate the city’s self-esteem and image as a success story, particularly in times of hardship. A case in point is the farewell speech delivered in Tel Aviv by the first British high commissioner of Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, before his departure from Palestine, in which he unequivocally praised Tel Aviv: “Tel Aviv is Palestine’s city of wonders. One may compare it with the miraculous cities of the tales of the Arabian Nights, which blossom overnight in the desert.”<sup>24</sup>

The motif “city of wonders” figured prominently during the celebrations of Tel Aviv’s twentieth anniversary in 1929. In his introduction to the anthology entitled *The City of Wonders*, published on the occasion of the anniversary, Aharon Vardi, the editor, mused about “the pangs of magic of this city of wonders, immersed in hidden light that emanates from somewhere in heaven.”<sup>25</sup> In the same year, a French newspaper wrote that Tel Aviv was charged with mystique, though of a national rather than a religious nature.<sup>26</sup> Writing about Tel Aviv, Nachum Sokolov mentioned the “mystery of the period of national revival.”<sup>27</sup> References to “magic,” “wonders,” “hidden light,” and “mystery” ascribed a transcendental dimension to the city. In this context, the commentators’ self-imposed task was to expose the city’s “hidden light” and the “secret glow,”<sup>28</sup> which those people focused on the everyday and the mundane could not see.

The notion of Tel Aviv as “a city of wonders,” as something that is not self-evident and therefore demands an explanation, was also evinced in the attempt to explain the new and enigmatic in terms of the familiar. In 1932, journalist Uri Keisari reported that there were many people “who believe that Tel Aviv is Paris. No more and no less: Paris.”<sup>29</sup> Tel Aviv was also referred to as a “modern Detroit.”<sup>30</sup> A visitor to Tel Aviv in 1936 wrote: “The place at first sight looks a sort of Paris: it has kiosks, too, that advertise amusements and the like. It has cafés, scores and scores of them for every sort of purse; and the cafés have open-air chairs and tables on the broad pavement.” The buildings, however, were not Parisian; “rather they suggest something American, all concrete and flat sided and with acres of windows and with at least the suggestion of sky-scraper height.” Yet this attempt at an analogy was futile as well: “Tel Aviv is not Chicago after all.” Only then did the writer realize that a comparative approach was not exactly helpful: “In the end I gave up, and decided that Tel Aviv was like nothing on earth.”<sup>31</sup> Uri Keisari reached a similar conclusion: “It has something of its own. It is original. It is not a copy at all. The city is like a woman—herself and nothing more.”<sup>32</sup>

### “A City of Dreams”

In its mythic version, the (hi)story of Tel Aviv was one of a “small neighborhood that became a mother city in Israel.”<sup>33</sup> On one plane, the cultivation of the myth was designed to enhance Tel Aviv’s reputation as a definite creation of the national revival. Yet beyond the celebration of the heroic accomplishments of its builders-residents, Tel Aviv also represented the triumph of the

city as a genre of Zionist settlement. This was especially important in a period of Zionist history in which the many variants of the socialist ideology of the Second and Third Aliyot (the immigration waves of 1904–14 and 1919–23, respectively), emphasized agricultural cooperatives as the most appropriate mode of Zionist settlement. Rejection of the city in principle as representing the “old” and corrupt world was prevalent among socialist Zionists who promoted comprehensive social reform of Jewish life as being central to the Zionist revolution. Aharon David Gordon, a mentor of the influential and spiritually oriented “labor religion,” which was strongly influenced by the views of Tolstoy, rejected the city in principle. This was an extreme view in its severity and in its quest for absolute purity and total renewal, but it nevertheless influenced many members of the Zionist Labor movement in its early history.

According to Gordon, national revival entailed the rejection of city life. Only village life could avert the corruptive influence of commerce and money that predominate in the city, thus enabling total fusion of man and nature: “We, and generally anyone who today returns from the city to [manual] work and nature, have already passed the horizon of urban civilization. . . . We are seeking what urban civilization cannot provide, requesting to plug the empty space that it created in our soul, that, as long as it is empty of content, feels as a terrible emptiness.”<sup>34</sup>

Those who did not share Gordon’s utopian vision rendered his approach naïve and impractical: “Of course, from Tolstoy’s perspective, the city should be destroyed, and the houses and the hotels should be demolished. Yet people like Tolstoy cannot build a country.”<sup>35</sup>

In the period of the Jewish National Home under the British Mandate in Palestine (1920–48), the settlement policy of the Zionist institutions promoted cooperative settlement on nationally owned land. This view disapproved of urban settlement because it was based on the principles of free enterprise and private ownership of the land. In the 1920s and the 1930s, official Zionist propaganda concentrated on agricultural settlement projects, prominent among them the settlement of the Emeq (the Jezreel Valley).<sup>36</sup> In the 1920s, the First Hebrew City and the Emeq presented two versions of the Zionist dream: not only two models of settlement, but also two mutually exclusive ideologies of Zionist fulfillment.<sup>37</sup> Even while the Jewish National Fund maintained that “the valley is a dream,” Meir Dizengoff praised Tel Aviv as “the city of dreams.”<sup>38</sup>

Casting the future in the form of a dream is embedded into much vi-

sionary rhetoric because of the prophetic qualities assigned to dreams. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" became a battle cry of the American civil rights movement. In this sense, the dream articulates a creative gap between the present and the future that produces an ideational field of force. For Meir Dizengoff, Tel Aviv was the realization of "a bold dream": "to build the First Hebrew City on the sand of wilderness, on an abandoned seashore, an eternal building, a town of refuge for the spirit, in the time of our revival and redemption."<sup>39</sup> Even if only implicitly, his designation of Tel Aviv as a "city of dreams" meant that the Zionist dream was not limited to the Emeq only. For those who believed that "it is clear that without Tel Aviv the new Yishuv would not be whole," the Emeq and the new Hebrew city were complementary aspects of the renewal project: "Through the conquest of the Jezreel Valley on the one hand and the construction of Tel Aviv on the other, the Jews proved that they are capable of that important work fundamental to civilization."<sup>40</sup> For the Zionist leader Hugo Hermann, "The people in Tel Aviv . . . do business—and build the country—just as the bureaucrats in Jerusalem and the workers in the Emeq do, each one in his own distinct way."<sup>41</sup>

In 1929, Meir Dizengoff reminded the Hebrew-reading public that Herzl contended that "the world is guided not by calculations and profits, but by fantasy." Concerned about an alleged growth of materialistic tendencies, he stressed "the will and desire that have such a great weight in history." In Dizengoff's vision, "Tel Aviv will grow and develop and stretch along the seashore and on both banks of the Yarkon River and will become a beautiful city, a center of Hebrew creativity, in both matter and spirit."<sup>42</sup> From his perspective, the success of Tel Aviv entailed the building of the city on firm ideational foundations.

Meir Dizengoff was unequivocally enthusiastic about the realization of the "daring dream" that made Tel Aviv "the symbol of the new Yishuv."<sup>43</sup> Others warned in the strongest possible terms against the notion that the city, as a generic pattern of settlement, was the culmination of the process of national revival: "We do not deny the value of the city in the framework of renewal, but a warning should be issued, especially on a day of celebration, of the exaggerated extremeness of this. The city is indeed a fact, but it should not be made an ideal. . . . Tel Aviv is a Zionist factor, but one factor only. Zionism will not be rescued by 'Tel Aviv-ness,' this new slogan that many want to incorporate into our lives."<sup>44</sup>

Following the rapid growth of Tel Aviv in the early and mid-1920s, it

was argued that its development was nothing but a "swelling," that it was "a disaster for the Yishuv" and "a cancer that devours the body."<sup>45</sup> This criticism became more conspicuous during the economic crisis of 1926–27: "It is beyond hope. Millions have been invested in sand. Castles were erected in the air. A city was built but is not needed. Dozens of buildings were begun and not finished, standing as if decapitated, with the verdict that it was an error, a mistaken account, bankruptcy, even a 'bluff.'"<sup>46</sup>

The imagery that a fatal illness befell Tel Aviv was commonplace. In 1927, the poet and journalist Avigdor Ha'Meiri wrote an allegorical essay in which he described the history of Tel Aviv as the medical history of a child with symptoms of growth deficiencies and severe diseases. The symptoms included the swelling of body organs, mainly the mouth and the limbs, and the degeneration of other organs, such as the heart, lungs, and brain. Ironically, he diagnosed the disease as *Morbus gasosi*, referring to a common accusation that Tel Aviv's main product was *gazoz* (flavored soda water). In addition, the body was filled with germs, fungi, and parasites of various kinds: "parasites of engineering, germs of literature, fungi of vendors and middlemen, landlord leeches, agent amoebae, speculator worms, and dignitary fleas" that covered the body.<sup>47</sup> The teeth, signifying the city's buildings, were in very bad condition. In this medical parable, the disease was a metaphor for the unnatural and destructive development of Tel Aviv.

According to its critics, Tel Aviv was "a summer resort on sand whose subsistence deluded everyone; a mental delusion of a miserable people trying to deceive itself with illusions and fantasies."<sup>48</sup> This critical evaluation reflected a common Zionist perception that the "negation of exile" meant not only immigrating to and settling the Land of Israel, but also avoiding traditional Jewish occupations such as peddling, which represented the degeneration of Jewish life in exile. Haim Weizmann, the Zionist leader, maintained: "We did not come here to duplicate the life of Warsaw, Pinsk, London, etc. The content of Zionism is the change of all values that characterized Jewish life under the pressure of foreign culture."<sup>49</sup> In the mid-1920s, when Jewish merchants and peddlers from Poland settled in Tel Aviv as part of what has become known as the Fourth Aliya, the city was mockingly compared to the main commercial center of Jewish Warsaw,<sup>50</sup> and Tel Aviv was dubbed "the city of *gazoz* and grocery stores."<sup>51</sup> From the perspective of those advocating cooperative settlement and productive work as a fundamental tenet of pioneering, the residents of Tel Aviv were "idlers" and *liffim-schen* (Yiddish for "people of air," unproductive wheeler-dealers).<sup>52</sup>



From the viewpoint of socialist Zionists, commerce was a *galuti moloch* (in this semantic framework, the term *galuti*, literally “exilic,” was pejorative), and Tel Aviv was mockingly designated “Tel Hanut”—the City of Shops.<sup>53</sup>

In stark contrast to such widespread slanders poured on Tel Aviv, Israel Koralnik wrote in the New York Yiddish newspaper *Der Tag* in favor of the Fourth Aliya’s contribution to Tel Aviv and to national revival in general. According to him, Tel Aviv represented “a phenomenon no less Jewish (maybe even more so) and no less historically important than the socialist cooperatives.”<sup>54</sup> In his view, it served as a bridge connecting Jewish Palestine with European Jewry. This perception prevailed among Tel Aviv’s middle class. According to Ilan Troen, “the capitalist city” promoted by the Jewish middle class was not supposed to fashion a “new Jew,” in contrast to the ideal of the pioneering Labor movement.<sup>55</sup> Koralnik stressed that he felt closer to the Jew of Tel Aviv than to “the idealists who returned to the soil,” those pioneers who had founded cooperative settlements. He felt an affiliation with the Jews selling soda water in Tel Aviv, with whom he shared the same language—namely, “Jewish sorrow, a Jewish sigh.” For him, Tel Aviv represented “a form of life closer to the Jewish–historical one, continuity and not disruption.”<sup>56</sup>

Meir Dizengoff was unrelenting in refuting the “legend” propagated by critics of Tel Aviv that the city “was built on sand and lives on speculation.”<sup>57</sup> Promoting commerce and industry as the city’s economic foundations, he raised the banner of private initiative and firmly believed in private capital, in contrast to national capital, as the appropriate instrument for building up the land. For him, Tel Aviv represented the triumph of the “middle class” and of what he termed “the simple Jew”:

Another victory shown by Tel Aviv after 20 years of existence is the general and popular Jewish victory, designated the “middle class.” The higher echelons treated this urban settlement and the old villages that remind us of the shtetls of Pinsk and Minsk with contempt. And here it is that this simple Jew created something out of nothing, a big city that employs thousands of workers and artisans in industry and handicrafts, a city that trades with Middle Eastern nations. And we pride ourselves in this city of ours, which has been entirely built with Hebrew hands, Jewish capital, and Jewish will, with no distinctions of class. Tel Aviv was founded by the initiative of private citizens.<sup>58</sup>

Publicly, the leaders of the Labor movement held the opposite view: “This is just a baseless legend that private initiative created this miracle with its own hands.”<sup>59</sup> In contrast to Meir Dizengoff’s enthusiastic praise of the “middle class” and the “trading city,” there was disappointment in the alleged *galuti* character of the city, manifested in the number of vendors in its streets: “And whenever I walk its streets it seems to me that the entire city sells ice cream, since the number of ice cream sellers is equal to the number of buildings. And the city appears to me as a new edition of Zivloni Street in Lvov, or Molidovanka in Odessa or Nalewki in Warsaw. Cries and shouts. . . . Is this the middle class people talk about? Is this the way they intend to build a homeland?”<sup>60</sup>

The significance that Tel Aviv’s leaders, most prominently Meir Dizengoff, assigned to commerce as an essential aspect of the city was expressed in the importance accorded to the city’s commercial fairs. Beyond the economic benefits of such fairs, they were also instrumental in buttressing Tel Aviv’s reputation as the “Hebrew Leipzig,” in reference to the German city famed for its international commercial fairs. The first fair took place in 1922. Yet what began as a modest display of local producers, intended to demonstrate the achievements of Jewish industry, developed in the span of just a few years into a busy international fair. In 1934, the fair was relocated to the grounds built in the north of Tel Aviv especially for this purpose.

The symbolic–proclamative value assigned to the fair was also expressed in the combination of the fair and the celebration of the city’s anniversaries. In this form, the fair was not only an economically productive venture, but also a building block of the mythic city. In 1929, when Tel Aviv first celebrated the anniversary of its foundation, the fair and the celebrations were combined.<sup>61</sup> The opening ceremony was attended by the mayor and Sir John Robert Chancellor, the British high commissioner. In his inauguration speech, Meir Dizengoff pointed out the link between the fair and the anniversary and explained the connection between them: “The time of the exhibition coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the city of Tel Aviv, which is a permanent demonstration and a living exhibition of everything that Jewish pioneers can accomplish when they enjoy freedom of action while building the national home in their homeland.”<sup>62</sup>

From a Zionist perspective, the fair and the anniversary were a demonstration of Jewish achievements in British Palestine. From an Arab perspective, the fair was construed in terms of a national humiliation. When the



opening of the Palestine and Near East Exhibition was reported in the Arab-Palestinian *Falastin* of Jaffa, the reporter noted that no more than twenty Arabs attended the ceremony. He quoted the main part of Meir Dizengoff's Zionist speech verbatim. However, his reporting criticized the British Mandate government for allowing the display of the Zionist flag side by side with the British flag. He also complained about what for him was "the exaggerated humiliation inflicted on the Arabic language." Although all speeches were translated into Arabic, the letter sent by the Zionist Executive to the municipality of Tel Aviv was not. According to the reporter, this meant that the letter was directed to the English and the Zionists only, which prompted him to wonder why the fair was named "Palestine Fair [*sic*]" and not the "English and Zionist Fair."<sup>63</sup>

The reporter also pointed out that the absence of Arab exhibitors reflected either the fact that Arab-Palestinian industry was still inferior or that the problems facing Arab-Palestinian industrialists prevented them from competing with the "competent" Jewish industrialists. He also concluded that if indeed the Jews were successful in their drive to export their products to Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, it actually meant that these Arab peoples would be engaged in helping the Jews in building their nation while "suffocating the Arab-Palestinians without knowing it."<sup>64</sup>

Tel Aviv's twentieth anniversary was celebrated as a triumph for the city, something especially significant because the severe economic crisis that had befallen the city in 1926–27 was also interpreted by critics as a proof that the idea of building a city in that place was untenable.<sup>65</sup> In 1934, when Tel Aviv marked its twenty-fifth anniversary, the city was booming economically. The municipal council decided that the celebrations would be held at the time of the fair and "in the form of a big demonstration of the accomplishments of the First Hebrew City with Mr. Meir Dizengoff at its head."<sup>66</sup> Moshe Glickson, the editor of *Ha'aretz* newspaper, elaborated on the connection between the fair and the jubilee:

The Exhibition is a fine framework for the silver jubilee, a superb center for the celebrations. The exhibition and the Levant Fair are evidence of the power of creation and the future of Tel Aviv, convincing proof of what Jewish energy has brought about on the desert sands in this forsaken corner of Asia, of the economic and cultural achievements and future development. The Tel Aviv festival is a festival of new Hebrew creativity, a symbol and guarantee of Hebrew revival in the old-new homeland.<sup>67</sup>

The Arab newspaper *Falastin* reported the jubilee celebrations and mentioned Meir Dizengoff's speech about the importance of Tel Aviv for the "resurrection [*sic*] of the Jewish nation." A few days later Said Halil, the secretary of the Committee of Arab Youth in Jaffa, referred to the Arab boycott of the Levant Fair. He claimed that "false rumors" notwithstanding, the boycott was a success because "a free Arab will not betray his people." He contended that "a few dozens of worthless youth" indeed visited the fair, but, according to him, they were the same people who also made it their habit to visit the nightclubs of Tel Aviv in pursuit of "foul objectives."<sup>68</sup>

### "The City in Progress"

In 1929, when celebrating its twentieth anniversary, Tel Aviv was typically praised as the City of Wonders. In his festive speech on that occasion, Meir Dizengoff emphasized that these twenty years "were years of experiment, troubles and pursuits, birth pangs, difficult beginnings and crises, a form of childhood disease." According to him, the celebration of the twentieth anniversary marked the beginning of a new period in the history of Tel Aviv, a period of "gradual and systematic work."<sup>69</sup> On 12 January 1934, Tel Aviv was formally accorded city status. The influx of German Jews<sup>70</sup> and the ensuing construction boom seemed to transform the city: "A small and modest town, suddenly this town grew, becoming a metropolis, with businesses, banks, factories and coffee shops and theaters and cars."<sup>71</sup> At this stage of the city's history, making sense of the "new" Tel Aviv became a major issue among commentators on and leaders of the city.

On one plane, there was pride in observing that Tel Aviv was becoming a modern and vibrant city. Playing on the city's name, Ham Weizmann remarked that "[I]n Jews from Jewish Palestine is transmitted by three agencies: by telegraph, by telephone, and by Tel Aviv."<sup>72</sup> However, for many observers, the indicators of change were symptoms of a severe crisis.

The city that in the 1920s had been described as "not a city, but a suburb of a city that does not exist,"<sup>73</sup> was now depicted as a city "that is being transformed almost daily, changing its old, parochial appearance into a fine, elegant city-like form." The indicators of change were found "in the beautiful shop windows, in the shining signs, electric multithued advertisements that constantly change their color as if by magic, in amazing coffee shops with balconies and porches overlooking the street—exactly as in avenue de la Paix in Paris, Kurfürstendamm in Berlin or Picadilly Circus in London."<sup>74</sup> From

the perspective of those searching for “fine metropolitan form,” the installation of signposts for bus stops was more than a mere service for passengers, a purely utilitarian issue; it was “a matter of a big city.”<sup>75</sup>

According to an observation made when the city was about to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary, Tel Aviv’s streets had gained “an urban appearance.”<sup>76</sup> Yet the signs of transformation were also found “in the many wrinkles of ugliness and repulsiveness,” such as the beggars in the streets and lonely people “who sit on benches in the Rothschild Boulevard and whose faces are furrowed with desperation.”<sup>77</sup> Among the “dark sides of the city” were noise, dirt, and overcrowding.<sup>78</sup> Also mentioned were “delinquent juveniles” and the “abandoned children” who roamed the streets.<sup>79</sup> One commentator noted signs of premature aging: “‘Young’ Tel Aviv is twenty years old—and already its youth has been erased; the city has become old and its hair white. Wrinkles furrow its crumpling face, its bones have been calcified, its clothes are wearing out and fall off its fresh body—not fresh, its energy wasted and its eyes dripping; [S]uch is Tel Aviv, the First Hebrew City, unique in the entire world.”<sup>80</sup>

In 1933, a keen observer diagnosed that Tel Aviv “is changing its shape and character. It is still in a process of being formed. Its essence can still not be determined.”<sup>81</sup> But in this period of dramatic changes, commentators were preoccupied with an attempt to define the city’s new character. It was largely agreed that Tel Aviv was no longer a small town. The question remaining was whether it had already become a large city or was still in a period of transition. For some, the new look of Tel Aviv indicated that it was already “a modern city.”<sup>82</sup> For others, “Our Tel Aviv is not a small town anymore, but it has not yet become an organized large city.”<sup>83</sup> The crux of the matter was that Tel Aviv was still in a stage of transition: “Tel Aviv is a city in progress. It is still preparing to become a large metropolis. For the time being, it is not a real city, and this is its main deficiency. Tel Aviv is now in an intermediate position, in a period of transition, in a feverish condition which, as is well known, is a condition of crisis.”<sup>84</sup>

This observation formulated the primary aspect of a period of transition: the conflation of old and new and the subsequent confusion that gives rise to a sense of crisis. According to one commentator, Tel Aviv should refrain from “pretensions of idyllic, provincial modesty” and should aspire “to be a city like any other,” meaning that “in Tel Aviv, as in all other cities of the world, there will surely be streets and laneways in which it will be dangerous for people to walk alone at night.”<sup>85</sup>

The criticism directed at Tel Aviv, much of it self-criticism,<sup>86</sup> was integral to any assessment of the city: “No city except Tel Aviv is subject to so much mockery and slander. Mistakes become insolence, troubles become crimes. In the eyes of its many and harsh critics, nothing is proper with this city: public affairs, aesthetic taste, lifestyle and building style, its economic foundations.”<sup>87</sup>

The disdain was widespread, becoming cliché. The writer Sholem Asch reported that before his journey to Palestine, some “honest people” advised him not to let Tel Aviv influence his impressions of Jewish Palestine, and, further, they even advised him to “pass through Tel Aviv with closed eyes.”<sup>88</sup> Dedicated to the vision of Tel Aviv and committed to its success, the Zionist leader and gifted journalist Nachum Sokolov counterattacked the slanders of Tel Aviv: “And the jokers and finicky will not stop. Such wicked people will not repent even at the entrance to hell. Now they say mockingly that everything is just like a castor-oil plant and mushrooms. Actually they are not wicked, but suffer from the malady of melancholy.”<sup>89</sup>

The criticism of Tel Aviv was of two main kinds. One was the sort of criticism that had already appeared in the 1920s, according to which Tel Aviv had a fundamental flaw because it did not represent the “true” process of national revival. Moshe Smilansky, a prominent leader of the Jewish farmers’ association, claimed in 1934 that the development of Tel Aviv delayed the development of other Jewish settlements.<sup>90</sup> In the 1930s, however, this line of argumentation was in retreat because it had become clear that Tel Aviv had passed the point of no return, and its urban foundations could not simply be debunked by invoking mere ideological arguments. The other kind of criticism was a so-called constructive criticism, reflecting a genuine concern for the city and seeking to improve and better it. At a meeting of the municipal council in March 1929, Meir Dizengoff announced his intention to set up a committee for “improving the city.”<sup>91</sup> The constructive criticism was intended to improve both the character and the image of Tel Aviv. For those who considered Tel Aviv “the visiting card and display sign for the entire Land of Israel,” the criticism directed against it was intended to benefit it “so that the First Hebrew City can appear before the world in all its glory.”<sup>92</sup>

Haim Nahman Bialik, the famed national poet who had lived in Tel Aviv since 1924 and was considered a distinguished citizen of the city, declared shortly before his death in 1934: “Our Tel Aviv is sick.”<sup>93</sup> Another commentator diagnosed moral decay: “No doubt this city and its citizens

have been contaminated by the vices originating in the ‘ingathering of the exiles’ and a sense of lawlessness that accompanies the transition from slavery to freedom.”<sup>94</sup> Meir Dizengoff maintained in his speech on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations that the future mission of those committed to the city was to mold its “cultural character.” He detailed what needed repair. In the pamphlet *On Tel Aviv and Its Ways of Life*, issued in October 1934, he enumerated Tel Aviv’s “charges, flaws, and deficiencies.” In his judgment, “As Tel Aviv grows, it increasingly becomes a wild city; it has lost the virtues it had possessed during its childhood as a quiet and modest Hebrew town.” According to the mayor, the problem was a decline in the ideals that had guided the city’s founders: “Instead of the great spiritual ideal of a people building itself a homeland, an ideal emerges that is embodied in materialism—to get rich as quickly as possible, to live in luxury, to enjoy this world of prosperity without limits.”<sup>95</sup>

Fierce, often vicious, highly judgmental, and unmistakably laden with a strong sense of moral superiority, the criticism of Tel Aviv was to a large extent self-criticism formulated in terms of care and concern for the city. The criticism and the praise of Tel Aviv were actually two complementary aspects of its mythic construction as a city that embodied an ideal and represented the realization of a vision. Both the preaching of morality to and the hyperbolic praise of the city measured the city on an ethical scale. Moreover, both had an instructional function: to present Tel Aviv in terms of an ideal type. In an essay against those who would denounce Tel Aviv, one writer—who only a few months earlier had mentioned the “ugliness and repulsiveness” of the city—explained why he found it necessary to praise it this time: “Perhaps it is worthwhile not to preach morality but rather . . . to praise, to compliment and on pedagogic grounds even to exaggerate and to modify Tel Aviv and its homogenous population and to instill good and virtue into its heart. If satisfied, it will develop a will to excel in this way even more.”<sup>96</sup>

In his 1906 prospectus, Akiva Ariele Weiss referred, even if only implicitly, to the biblical foundation of the city, Babel. In 1934, the editor of the socialist-Zionist *Ha’Poel Ha’Tzair* repeated this mythical motif by quoting the entire verse from Genesis (11:4): “We found it like those who found in ancient times the valley of Shin’ar, and we told each other ‘let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name lest we be scattered around upon the face of the whole earth.’”<sup>97</sup> According to the biblical narrative, divine intervention foiled the human

plan to defy God’s authority. The fear that “the First Hebrew City since the destruction of the Second Temple”<sup>98</sup> was also doomed to fail was implicit in the condemnation of the city as being morally corrupt, and not only among those critics who ridiculed it for being nothing more than “sand and *gaʿoz*.”<sup>99</sup>

In contrast to the enthusiasm of those who maintained that Tel Aviv’s accomplishments rendered valid the idea upon which it was founded, there was a persistent fear that it still stood on shaky foundations. This fear was not limited to the ideological opponents of the city as a form of Zionist settlement. In September 1939, the journalist Uri Keisari returned from Europe to British Mandate Palestine. His premonitions about what was about to happen in Europe and the indifference that he encountered back home filled him with apocalyptic rage. Keisari had grown up in Tel Aviv and was not ideologically adverse to city life. On the contrary, in his columns and in the weekly magazine he founded he regularly reported on aspects of the city that went unmentioned in the more “serious” national press of the period. However, the discrepancy between his sense of approaching catastrophe and what was for him the unbearable indifference he encountered in Tel Aviv aroused in him despair. So Keisari left Tel Aviv and traveled to the old settlements in Galilee—“a journey to the past,” as he dubbed it. The contrast between the villages and the tradition and rootedness they represented, on the one hand, and the city and its moral corruption and decay, on the other, was embedded into the Western discourse of the city. For Uri Keisari, the “journey to the past” was one in search of the truth that the city, artificial and ephemeral, had already forgotten. In almost biblical terms, he condemned cities in general and Tel Aviv, the largest of them, in particular: “They founded cities of sand, they built roads of asphalt, they erected tall buildings. But they are just passers-by in this place. They will go away with their gods. The generation of the wilderness. The wind has brought them here—and the wind will take them away.”<sup>100</sup>

A prime mythic function of the First Hebrew City was a moral obligation to its legacy as a unique Zionist creation. This was of special significance as long as Tel Aviv was distinguished as “the first and only Hebrew city” that “for the Jewish people is not just a city, but *the* city!” On 25 March 1937, Petah Tiqva, founded in 1878 and famous in Zionist mythology as “the mother of the Moshavot,” was officially declared a city and became, at least nominally, the second Hebrew city.<sup>101</sup>

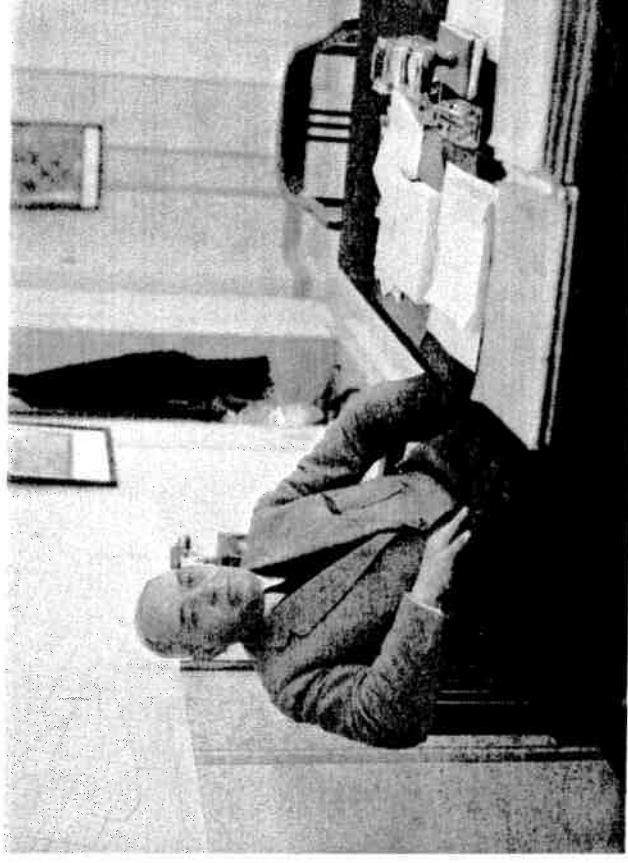
### “The City’s Father”

In his poem “The Building of the Gymnasia,” Nathan Alterman asks, “What is the greatness of the First Ones and how is it articulated?” He answers, “Only in that they claim a stake in the place / That seems to be a lost case.”<sup>102</sup> From a mythic perspective, all residents of Tel Aviv shared in the realization of the vision of building the First Hebrew City, but the glorious heroes of the mythic tale were really the founders. They were honorary guests at festive events where their physical presence served to conflate the mythical past and the ceremonial present. They were the protagonists of history who personified the idea that the city represented. Among the founders, Mayor Meir Dizengoff had a special position. A founding member of the new neighborhood and the first mayor of Tel Aviv, he was first among equals in his mythic capacity as the founding father of the city. His biography and the history of “his” city were combined aspects of Tel Aviv’s foundation. On the level of myth, Meir Dizengoff personified the city and the vision it represented.

The reference to Meir Dizengoff as the “father of the city” was a rhetorical convention that was especially in evidence on ceremonial occasions. The greetings from public institutions conveyed on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday in 1936 were variations on one and the same theme. He was hailed as “the father of the Hebrew city of Tel Aviv, its president and creator”; “the city’s father and its originator”; “the builder of the Hebrew Tel Aviv”; “the founder of the city and its leader”; “the founder of our city and its father”; and “the creator and founder of the First Hebrew City.”<sup>103</sup>

Emphasizing the hagiography was an important aspect of what appeared to be a Meir Dizengoff cult of personality. According to Moshe Smilansky, Meir Dizengoff “was born to Zionism.”<sup>104</sup> His power stemmed from “the wonderful secret that was revealed to him: the secret of compromise”; his dedication to the city he headed was boundless: “The city ‘captured’ Meir Dizengoff, and he gave it the best of his abilities.”<sup>105</sup> Israel Rokach wrote about the connection between the man and the city’s history: “The entire period from the foundation of Tel Aviv until Meir Dizengoff’s death will be designated ‘the Meir Dizengoff’ era, in the way that they refer to a period in the history of peoples after a king or an exalted president.”<sup>106</sup> Another commentator maintained that Meir Dizengoff was “perhaps the most popular man from Dan to Beer Sheva.”<sup>107</sup>

The preparations for Meir Dizengoff’s seventy-fifth birthday had already begun in 1935.<sup>108</sup> Honoring the mayor took various forms. The Jew-



*Meir Dizengoff* by Avraham Soskin. Photograph of Meir Dizengoff at his office desk, early 1930s. Courtesy of the Historical Museum of Tel Aviv-Yafo.

ish National Fund informed the mayor: “We found it appropriate to instruct the children of Israel and women’s circles in the Diaspora about this important event in the history of the Yishuv in general and the history of the Hebrew city in particular.”<sup>109</sup> The city’s employees declared their intention to finance the construction of Zina Dizengoff Circus, which commemorated the mayor’s late wife.<sup>110</sup> A neighborhood committee in the south of the city requested to name the neighborhood after the mayor.

Celebrating the mayor’s birthday with such pomp and ceremony in 1936 was a gesture to the dying mayor. In a sense, the seventy-fifth birthday was also a farewell party. Meir Dizengoff died on 23 September 1936. Articles in the Jewish press reviewed his life, calling him “the father of the First Hebrew City, its head and symbol,”<sup>111</sup> or, in another variation, “the mayor of the first Jewish town . . . the father of Tel Aviv.”<sup>112</sup> The editorial of the *Palestine Post* wrote: “M. Meir Dizengoff was awarded the title he deserved, ‘the father of the city.’ Tel Aviv is his beloved daughter for whom he cared with as much love as any human child could get from a father.”<sup>113</sup> *Davar*, the organ of the Histadrut, the trade union federation, hinted at the political disagreement between Meir Dizengoff and the workers of Tel Aviv: “His thoughts

and deeds did not always conform with the thoughts and aspirations of all the residents of his city, yet his love and concern did not diminish, and until his last breath he did not cease to dream of its growth and glory.”<sup>114</sup> The Arab paper *Falastin* commented that “no doubt his people can be proud of him.” But another Arab paper published in Jaffa, *Al-Aqdam*, reported earlier on Meir Dizengoff’s critical condition with the following words: “Meir Dizengoff [is] at the gate of hell.”<sup>115</sup>

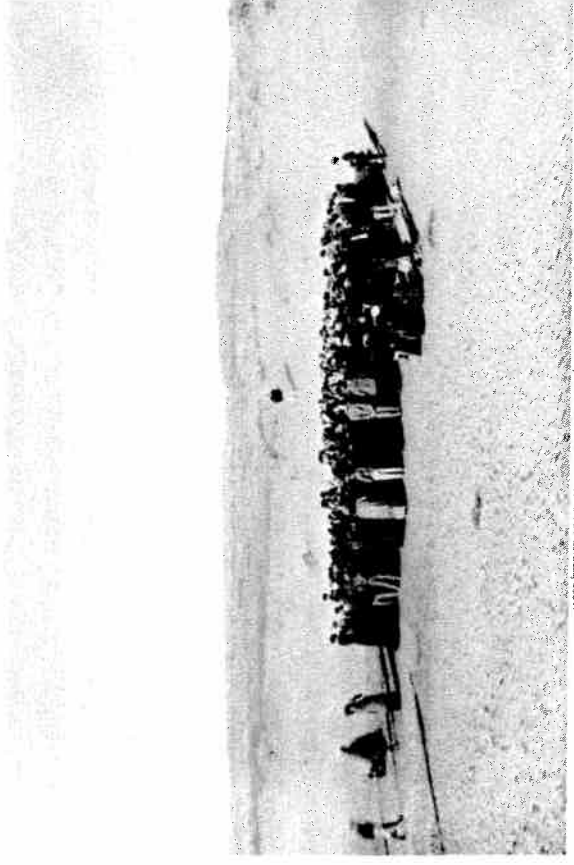
### “Facing the Wilderness”

#### “Sand, Tel Aviv Is Built on Sand”

In the early 1930s, the municipality advertised Tel Aviv to foreign tourists as “the First Hebrew City” and as “the city of wonders that arose on desert sands.” Tel Aviv’s development was manifest in its expansion northward and in the growing number of residents, reaching 130,000 in the late 1930s. It was solidified in the city’s continuous metamorphosis: “[Tel Aviv] develops, expands, and constantly acquires new form.”<sup>116</sup> The sense of constant change was overwhelming: “Tel Aviv is unique. . . . Many couples well remember that in place of this building and that kiosk there was once a sandy hill. Our children will tell their astonished children: once it did not exist and then it was there, built in front of our very eyes.”<sup>117</sup>

In its creation story, the fundamental contrast between the sand and the city was formulated in terms of “before” and “after.” This contrast was graphically displayed in two photographs featured in the anthology *The City of Wonders*, published in 1928. One photo showed desolate sand dunes and was captioned “Before Tel Aviv Existed.” The other became the iconic representation of the foundation: “There is a photo taken on a clear and sunny day in 1908 [sic]: a group of people, in their midst the corner stone, and around them white, empty, cheerless sand.”<sup>118</sup> At the center of the photograph stood a group of people—the founders—surrounded by sands.<sup>119</sup> The founders represented the as yet nonexistent city. This image visually featured the contrast between the city and the sand, the latter slated to disappear in the future with the building and spatial expansion of the city.

In 1912, the historian and literary critic Yosef Klausner wrote: “The neighborhood of ‘Tel Aviv’ is surrounded by sand. When you consider that only three years ago that same sand also covered the place where this pleasant neighborhood now stands, you become confident in the revival move-



*The Lottery of Plots* by Avraham Soskin. Photograph of the Founders of Tel Aviv, 11 April 1909. Courtesy of the Historical Museum of Tel Aviv-Yafo.

ment.”<sup>120</sup> In 1924, a visitor noted that “[t]wo miles away jackals howl and just 15 years ago there was only sand here.”<sup>121</sup> In the mythic story of Tel Aviv, the sand existing in the present tense belonged to the past of the city’s future. The children of Tel Aviv were “the plants of sand.”<sup>122</sup> The poet Nathan Alterman commented: “Sand. Tel Aviv is built on sand.”<sup>123</sup>

The image of Tel Aviv as a city built on sand emerged immediately following its founding and reflected the reality of the city’s early history. In the course of its urban expansion in the 1920s and 1930s, some parts of the city were built in areas where vineyards and orchards had existed.<sup>124</sup> Following the 1948 war and the Arab defeat, former Arab Jaffa was incorporated into Tel Aviv (and in 1950 the city accordingly was renamed Tel Aviv-Yafo). However, the image persisted of a city that was founded on sand and hence was an entirely new creation. Importantly, this image corresponded with the lived experience of residents and commentators who had witnessed the city’s founding and early development, when new buildings and streets appeared where formerly there had been sand.

For the youth of Tel Aviv, the sands were “sands of love, where every young man used to sing Bialik’s sweet-sad poem ‘Let Me In’ to his sweet-heart.”<sup>125</sup> In the Zionist context of building the new Hebrew city, the sand

was the area on which and the raw material with which the city was built. Written in 1927, Yedidia Admon's popular song "My Camel" praised the animal used for delivering coarse sand to construction sites.<sup>126</sup> In Nachum Sokolov's interpretation, the metaphysical aspect of Tel Aviv was "in the secret of transforming the sand lying around into a quarry of gold."<sup>127</sup> In a cynical interpretation, however, converting sand into gold also referred to the huge profits of speculators who had bought plots of sand, selling them later at inflated prices. From another perspective, the city built on sand was a metaphor for the transient character and ephemeral quality of Tel Aviv as a city without solid foundations.<sup>128</sup> From yet another perspective, building on sand crystallized the idea that Tel Aviv represented a purely new beginning. In this mythic sense, the city "on the sands of gold" represented the "new Jewish world that is being built."<sup>129</sup>

"At the beginning there was sand";<sup>130</sup> the foundation myth of Tel Aviv was of a city created *ex nihilo*. The sand upon which it was built was analogous to the marshes in the foundation myth of St. Petersburg, the city that the Russian czar Peter the Great founded in 1703 on the banks of the Neva River. In both foundation myths, the city represented the victory of civilization over wilderness. In 1929, Tawfiq Effendi Massoud, an Arab member of the Syrian Chamber of Commerce, praised the Zionists who "transformed a desolate desert into a settled European city."<sup>131</sup> David Smilansky, one of the founders of Tel Aviv, mused: "Tel Aviv, the first and only Hebrew city, a city built on deserted sandy hills, developed in a very short time, and a small neighborhood became a modern city."<sup>132</sup> In another variation, the story of Tel Aviv told how "on a deserted seashore, in the midst of endless hardships and obstacles, magnificent buildings were built, gardens were planted, factories were established, schools and kindergartens were opened—movement and life began."<sup>133</sup> In this conventional interpretation, the new city represented the creation of life where none had existed. Nathan Alterman expressed a rather original view when he opined that the building of the city was about replacing the wilderness with a new desert: "On the background of wilderness there grows a new desert . . . which will be more magnificent, more cruel, and fiercer than the former one."<sup>134</sup>

In its mythic capacity, the archetypal theme of the struggle between the city and the wilderness evoked heroic allusions and conjured supranatural associations. Referring to Tel Aviv's early days, the writer Dvora Baron described its buildings as "a camp of a conquering army, marching forward with the assurance of victors," while the desert was receding.<sup>135</sup> In the poem

"Facing the Wilderness," Avraham Shlonsky described the building of the city as a struggle with the "demon of the wilderness."<sup>136</sup>

On the occasion of Tel Aviv's twentieth anniversary, Meir Dizengoff proclaimed: "We all have one goal, for we all desire to conquer the desert sand and build a Hebrew city."<sup>137</sup> In Zionist rhetoric, conquest referred to an act of appropriation in the name of the revival project, such as "the conquest of work" and "conquest of the wilderness." In Zionist mythology, the wilderness denoted the pre-Zionist landscape of desolation, neglect, and lack of Jewish presence. A fundamental tenet of the "redemption of the land," the "conquest of the wilderness" meant transformation of wilderness into a site of Zionist activity and its eventual replacement by a Zionist landscape of development and modernization. In particular, it referred to the struggle against a hostile environment, a struggle that required self-sacrifice and heroic deeds.

Zionist ideology conflated the process of national revival and the archetypal struggle of civilization against wilderness. In a lecture delivered in Kovno, Lithuania, in 1930, Haim Nahman Bialik declared that the struggle with the desert was fundamental to the Zionist endeavor: "[W]e come and expel the desert from the land and make it a land of settlement and civilization."<sup>138</sup> In 1936, in a reaction to anti-Jewish rioting by the local Arab population of British Palestine, Haim Weizmann asserted that the Zionist project was "a war of civilization against the desert."<sup>139</sup>

In the mythical conception of conquering the wilderness, the sand was not only the city's foundation, but also its contradiction. The sand was an obstacle and a challenge, and confronting "the curse of the yellow, arid, eye-searing sands"<sup>140</sup> was a heroic endeavor. In this framework of interpretation, the disappearance of the sands was a precondition for and a sign of the settlement project's success. The growth of the city and the disappearance of the sands were two sides of the same Zionist coin. The city was perceived as an island that was to expand indefinitely into the sea of sands surrounding it.<sup>141</sup>

In the context of the city's continuous expansion into the sands that surrounded it, the boundary between the city and the sand was constantly shifting outward, yet at any given moment it was also clearly demarcated by the "last buildings." From the perspective of city dwellers, the "last buildings" marked the "end" of the city. The "last buildings" were on the forefront of the struggle between civilization and the wilderness. In 1935, Avraham Shlonsky poetically elaborated on this confrontation. His poem "The Last Buildings" described an eerie nocturnal landscape on the outskirts of the

city, where “two last skeletons at the end of the city, which is being built,” confronted the wilderness, represented by the heat and the moon, but also personified by ancient demons, awakened by the intrusion of civilization.<sup>142</sup>

“*A European Oasis in the Midst of the Asian Desert*”

The wish to leave the overcrowded and underdeveloped Arab-Jewish city of Jaffa was high on the agenda of Tel Aviv’s founders. David Smilansky, one of the founders, explained: “The narrow lanes of Jaffa were infamous for their dirt, where humans and animals resided together. And in addition to the dirt were noise and commotion, the shouts of Arabs praising their merchandise. Anyone coming from a modern European city found it hard to adjust to these living conditions.”<sup>143</sup> According to Meir Dizengoff, “Life in the narrow, dirty lanes was very difficult, and even the burning love for Zion could not distract from the dirt and the trachoma and the lack of light.”<sup>144</sup>

In contradistinction to Jaffa, the new neighborhood would offer “houses with good hygienic conditions for the middle class.”<sup>145</sup> In the prospectus where Akiva Ariei Weiss envisioned the new city, he emphasized that “[i]n this city we will install paved streets with electric lights. Every house will have running water installed, which will flow through pipes just like in any modern European city, and a sewage disposal system will also be installed to the benefit of the city and its dwellers.”<sup>146</sup> In retrospect, Meir Dizengoff reiterated: “[Our aim was] to build a new Hebrew neighborhood outside the city [Jaffa], with all the amenities and comforts that civilized human beings needed.”<sup>147</sup>

In Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, the modernization of urban infrastructure was central to the notion of progress.<sup>148</sup> Lighting, hygiene, and running water became signifiers of modernity and progress. Not surprisingly, commentators praised the modern aspect of Tel Aviv by referring to its adherence to European norms of progress. The Arab newspaper *Al-Muqabbis*, published in Damascus, reported in 1913 about “[t]he new neighborhood that delights all those who see it with the beauty of its buildings, the width of its streets and its gardens, which remind one of Paris and Europe.”<sup>149</sup> The writer of a 1918 textbook described Tel Aviv as “a European oasis in the midst of the Asian desert.”<sup>150</sup> In a description of Tel Aviv for the 1933 Anglo-Palestine Exhibition, Tel Aviv was praised as “a truly European town, with wide, clean streets and with organized social services.”<sup>151</sup>

As a future projection of the city, the Geddes Plan of 1925, commissioned by Meir Dizengoff, subscribed to progressive ideas of town planning.<sup>152</sup> Beyond its immense influence on the future development of Tel Aviv, the Geddes Plan represented the conviction that designing space through planning was vital for a modern town. On a concrete level, in the 1920s, when the neighborhood became a town, progress was articulated in such technological innovations as electric streetlights and motor cars: “Tel Aviv is flooded in its entirety with electric light. Motor cars roam the streets . . . a splinter of Europe has flown away and found its way here. And beyond the gates of Tel Aviv a black night is clinging to the soil of ancient Arabia.”<sup>153</sup>

According to an observation made in the 1920s, Tel Aviv was “perhaps the most modern, civilized, and comfortable city in the entire East.”<sup>154</sup> The nature of Tel Aviv as a modern, European-like city was expressed by emphasizing the contrast between it and neighboring and mainly Arab Jaffa. In its early days, the new Jewish neighborhood was described as “a small and unique ‘corner of Europe’ in the Asiatic city of Jaffa.”<sup>155</sup> A British officer who visited Tel Aviv in the mid-1930s noted the difference between “the city of Jaffa and its filth,” on the one hand, and Tel Aviv, “the most wonderful city in the Near and Middle East,” on the other.<sup>156</sup> A French journalist who considered Tel Aviv “a city that Europe can envy” also contended that the difference between Tel Aviv and Jaffa was one between “light and darkness, civilization and ignorance.”<sup>157</sup>

The notion of a substantial gap between Tel Aviv and Jaffa was not limited to a Zionist or pro-Zionist perspective only. In 1944, the Arab newspaper *Al-Dijā’a* of Jaffa reported a meeting held at the office of a “renowned” local Arab merchant to discuss “the future of Jaffa.” Those present compared Jaffa’s budget to Tel Aviv’s. They observed that “Tel Aviv creates factories, paves streets, and spends money on education and social affairs,” whereas the much smaller budget of Jaffa was invested in the bank. They complained that things in Jaffa were moving slowly and called on the municipality to invest in “constructive projects” that would induce the city with dynamism and vigor. Following the tenor of the informal gathering, the newspaper called on the municipality of Jaffa to upgrade the seashore, to install canalization, to open schools for poor children, and to plant parks, “as is done in the neighboring city.”<sup>158</sup>

In addition to the stark contrast between the adjacent cities, there was the national context and the growing mistrust and hostility between Arabs and Jews in British Mandate Palestine. The perspectives of Arab Jaffa and

Jewish Tel Aviv were diametrically opposed, but the theme was the same: the neighboring city as an existential threat. From Arab Jaffa's perspective, the sense of threat was the realization that it was increasingly surrounded by Jewish settlements. In response to the news that Jews bought an orchard east of Jaffa, the Jaffa newspaper *Falastin* commented that with Tel Aviv in the north and new Jewish neighborhoods in the south, "[t]he Jews surrounded Jaffa in all directions. . . . [W]ere it not for the sea in the west, they would have surrounded us in that direction too."<sup>159</sup>

Following the anti-Jewish riots in Jaffa in April 1936 and the exodus of some twelve thousand Jews from the city,<sup>160</sup> an article in *Ha'aretz* maintained that Arab Jaffa was about "threat, opposition, and blind hatred." From Jewish Tel Aviv's perspective, Jaffa posed an imminent danger in the wake of the riots. The metaphors used in assessing the danger were unequivocal: "The city of Naples is situated at the foot of Vesuvius, and we have Jaffa on the other side. We are on guard against the Dragon."<sup>161</sup>

#### "A Wild Levantine City"

Although many observers in the 1920s and the 1930s emphasized Tel Aviv's modern character, some noted that the city had distinctly Middle Eastern features. One commentator specifically maintained that Tel Aviv was actually a city of contrasts: "Tel Aviv is at the same time an Occidental and Oriental city, a Jewish and cosmopolitan city, new and primitive."<sup>162</sup> The leaders of Tel Aviv advocated a homogenous Jewish city that would conform to European norms of modernity and "civilized" behavior. The vision of a "civilized" city represented the patronizing perspective of the Ashkenazi majority, which considered the "Oriental" chaotic and primitive. From this perspective, the "Orientals" were not Arabs only, but also Jews from Muslim countries, most notably the Yemenite Jews who lived in Kerem Ha'Teymanim (the Yemenite Quarter). The Carmel Market at the center of the city, where many Arabs and Yemenite Jews sold their merchandise, was likened uncomplimentarily to the bazaars of Istanbul.<sup>163</sup> Thus, for Ashkenazi Jews, the behavior of Yemenite Jews was rude, violent, and noisy, unbecoming of a modern, "civilized" city.<sup>164</sup>

However, the main concern was that Tel Aviv might become like other coastal cities of the Levant—for example, Beirut or Alexandria, which represented a cultural crossbreed, neither Arab nor European. The aim was to avoid a characterization of Tel Aviv as a "city of riffraff and its way of life [as]

that of the [Mediterranean] 'coastal cities.'"<sup>165</sup> For the custodians of Tel Aviv's "civilized" character, the threat facing the city was that of levantinization. As Joachim Schlor suggests, the Levant represented an interface between West and East.<sup>166</sup> The aversion it evoked reflected the fear of the hybrid, which was neither West nor East, but an inferior concoction of both that lacked in authenticity and connoted vulgarity, flawed manners, and boorish behavior. In Hebrew parlance, the terms *levantiniut* (levantinism) and *levantini* (levantine) came to be used pejoratively. "Levantine" were those who lacked cultural depth and civilized manners.<sup>167</sup> Levantinism represented "a lack of solid character and of the civilized and moral foundation for the life of the soul."<sup>168</sup> It was the opposite of discipline and self-control.<sup>169</sup>

The public campaign waged by prominent public figures against the alleged "levantinization" of Tel Aviv in the mid-1930s evinced the notion that the city was losing its Jewish and "civilized" character. Interestingly, the term *levantine* came to denote everything that was unruly about the city and the behavior of its citizens. Warnings against the danger of "levantinization" abounded in 1934, when Tel Aviv celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. This occasion offered an opportunity to discuss the city's character and to warn against negative developments. The theme of levantinization figured prominently in this context. In a lecture delivered in the beginning of 1934, Bialik warned: "A great danger faces our Tel Aviv, that it will become a levantine city, like other coastal cities."<sup>170</sup> In that same year, *Ha'Poel Ha'Tzair*, an ideological organ of Zionist Labor, wrote: "The great danger facing Tel Aviv today is to be one of the seaports of the Orient. It may be a large and wonderful city, very noisy, perhaps with a shiny facade, pseudo-European, yet socially and culturally hollow and corrupt from within."<sup>171</sup>

For Meir Dizengoff, the threat had already become reality, as he charged in 1934: "The more Tel Aviv is growing, the more unlawful it becomes . . . it develops into a noisy city, a wild levantine city, as if its residents were not the great-grandchildren of the ancestors whose feet stood on Mount Sinai and as if the Tel Avivian public is not entirely Jewish and civilized."<sup>172</sup>

Not all residents of Tel Aviv shared Meir Dizengoff's concerns. The daily *Doar Ha'Yom* asked ordinary residents of Tel Aviv for their reactions to the mayor's accusation. One resident maintained that Meir Dizengoff should not be concerned about Tel Aviv's becoming another Alexandria or Beirut. Instead, he should be worried by the possibility of its becoming a suburb of Berlin or Warsaw, meaning that the real danger was not the levantine Middle East, but anti-Semitic Europe.<sup>173</sup>



*“A Bridge Connecting East and West”*

From a mere geographical perspective, Tel Aviv was the western extreme of the East: “The west of the east is Palestine—and the west of Palestine—Tel Aviv.”<sup>174</sup> The West was not a mere geographical position; it was a cultural statement. However, as the interface between East and West, the Levant represented not only a cultural threat, but an economic opportunity as well. It is notable that the name given to Tel Aviv’s commercial fair in 1932 was the Levant Fair.<sup>175</sup> As a Zionist project, the fair was also intended to exhibit the economic accomplishments of Jewish Palestine. Concurrently, the fair was intended by its organizers, the Mischar Ve’Taasia (Commerce and Industry) Company, to assert the place of Tel Aviv as the commercial center of Palestine and to emphasize its role as “[a] mediator between the West and the Near East.”<sup>176</sup> The metaphors employed for the purpose of emphasizing Tel Aviv’s role as a mediator were the bridge and the gate.

Traditionally, the notion of “gate” or “gateway” was associated with Jaffa,<sup>177</sup> the main port of Palestine until the early 1930s, when the British government built the new deep-water port at Haifa. Haifa port was projected to become “the gate to the east” and “the key to India.”<sup>178</sup> Tel Aviv, unlike Jaffa and Haifa, was not (yet) a port city, despite its energetic mayor’s relentless efforts. In a sense, the Levant Fair, in its metaphorical capacity as a gate, was a substitute. It was supposed to make Tel Aviv become “a bridge connecting East and West.”<sup>179</sup> The vision of Tel Aviv as the gateway to the Middle East was presented as a collective aspiration: “We, the sons of Tel Aviv, want to become the gate not only to the Land of Israel but to the entire Middle East.”<sup>180</sup> According to Meir Dizengoff, “If Palestine is the gateway to the countries of the Middle East, then the Levant Fair is the key to this gate.”<sup>181</sup>

The Levant Fair’s emblem was the “flying camel,” designed by its chief architect, Arie El-Hanani. An advertisement for the 1932 fair supplied the following explanation: “This is a symbol of the evolution and development of the [Jewish] Yishuv, which demonstrates Jewish Palestine’s powers of creation in all areas.”<sup>182</sup> The Zionist leader Yitzhak Grimboym explained in 1934: “The symbol of the fair is the flying camel because it renders vision and tempo to the life of the Land of Israel, which had hitherto advanced slowly, like a camel.”<sup>183</sup> According to a popular view, the flying camel was invented by Alexander Evserov, the head of the Mischar Ve’Taasia Company, who shared with Meir Dizengoff the vision of Tel Aviv as the com-

mercial metropolis of the Middle East. “When Evserov chose this Oriental desert animal, he said he chose it to symbolize commerce and industry in the young Tel Aviv. That is why he attached wings to it, wings of vision, in order that the world will know that Jewish vigor extends beyond what is customary and takes off into open space.”<sup>184</sup> According to another explanation that bears the stamp of an urban legend, the origin of the emblem was the disbelief expressed by the Arab mayor of Jaffa regarding the feasibility of a fair. According to this version, the mayor maintained that camels would fly before the fair would become a reality.<sup>185</sup> Thus, the main message of the emblem was defiance.

The “flying camel” was not only the emblem of the Levant Fair, but also a metaphorical expression of the vision of Tel Aviv as the gate to Palestine and the Middle East. The failure of the 1936 Levant Fair signaled the end of this vision, at least temporarily. This fair, designed to be bigger than its predecessors, was meticulously prepared. Yet when its gates were opened, Palestine was in a state of emergency after anti-Jewish riots had broken out in Jaffa in April that year. An article in *Ha’Aretz* a few days after the riots started still designated Tel Aviv as “the city of the east.”<sup>186</sup> Yet upon publication of the article, the vision of cooperation that the fair intended to display and propagate completely collapsed, to be replaced by the grim reality of a violent national conflict between Jews and Arabs, between Jewish Tel Aviv and Arab Jaffa.

**“Tel Aviv Is Destined to Expand across the Entire Country”**

As Meir Dizengoff saw it, “Tel Aviv is considered the first Jewish city, not because its population, its houses, and its property are Jewish, but because it belongs to all of the Jews.”<sup>187</sup> In its mythical conception, Tel Aviv was a collective Jewish creation and a symbol of Zionist restoration. In 1935, the ship *Tel Aviv*, like the city it was named after, was designated “the first Hebrew ship.”<sup>188</sup> At the inauguration ceremony, Meir Dizengoff said: “Who would have thought that the magic name we had given to the Hebrew city built on the desert sands only 26 years ago—would appear before us today as a ship proudly carrying the name and the flag of our city?”<sup>189</sup>

The value assigned to Tel Aviv as a symbol of the revival project was also evident in that the name “Tel Aviv” was given to the café attached to and affiliated with the Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the 1939 New York World’s Fair.

Tel Aviv was a powerful symbol of Jewish independence in the prestate era. In this context, independence had two complementary aspects. One was municipal independence. In the conventional form of the city's official history, municipal independence was acquired in three successive stages: in 1909 the neighborhood was built, in 1921 it became a municipality, and in 1934 it formally became a city.<sup>190</sup> The second aspect of independence was the notion that Tel Aviv embodied Jewish self-rule and thus represented an enclave of Jewish autonomy in British Mandate Palestine. In 1921, a Jewish police force was instituted in Tel Aviv. Jewish policemen were entrusted with preserving law and order in the city, but they were also a realization of the rather abstract Jewish National Home promised to the Jews in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Jewish self-government in Tel Aviv was also important in that it delineated Jewish independence in terms of territorially based self-rule.

On the level of Zionist myth, Tel Aviv was "a model of the National Home."<sup>191</sup> Meir Dizengoff was proud of "the ideal of building a miniature National Home that envelops our entire work here."<sup>192</sup> Nachum Sokolov maintained that Tel Aviv was "[a] fine symbol of a Jewish state . . . that proved even to the greatest skeptics that the Jews are able to build a life for themselves and to conduct their affairs in an orderly and disciplined manner."<sup>193</sup> Meir Dizengoff predicted that in its capacity as a miniature Jewish state, "Tel Aviv is destined to expand across the entire country."<sup>194</sup> From this Zionist perspective, it was actually a city-state, in which the municipal and the national converged: "Tel Aviv's city hall is not only a municipal institution, but a national political asset of the first rank. In this city we wanted to see the cornerstone of our national territorial edifice. In it we wanted to see the symbol of our national independence, the first expression of a free life of creation, the loyal support for building of the congregation of Israel."<sup>195</sup>

The symbolic linkage between Tel Aviv as the embodiment of a Zionist ideal and the city as urban reality was manifest in its street names. Tel Aviv was the first Jewish settlement to give names to streets.<sup>196</sup> Naming streets contributed to the neighborhood's urban character; at the same time, these names were Zionist commemorations, expressions of the mythic conception of the city as a Zionist creation. They introduced official Zionist ideology into the common language of the local landscape. In this capacity, they evinced and celebrated the idea of Zionist restoration in ordinary spheres of everyday life.<sup>197</sup>

The significance of Tel Aviv as an expression of Jewish independence

became dramatically evident in May 1936, when the as yet modest port began operating following the permission granted by the mandatory government. This event was the fulfillment of an old dream for Meir Dizengoff. He considered the port not only as an economic opportunity for the city, but as a declaration of independence from Jaffa. Already in 1912 he had stated: "Soon we will have to open a gate to the sea."<sup>198</sup> In the 1920s, the possibility of building a port was raised again, yet this attempt failed because of categorical opposition from the British authorities. Official permission to construct the jetty in May 1936 was given after the Arab strike paralyzed Jaffa's port. From a Zionist perspective, the new port sealed the separation of Tel Aviv from Jaffa. In 1939, separate telephone directories for the two neighboring cities appeared for the first time.

At first, the port was no more than an anchor for boats. But its significance was symbolic. The rather modest jetty "completed the independence of Tel Aviv and its environs"<sup>199</sup> and signified the realization of the vision of the Hebrew port: "Tel Aviv will have direct access to the sea. Tel Aviv will have the first Hebrew port in the world."<sup>200</sup> The formula "the first Hebrew port" underscored the intimate relationship between the city and the port. The port, which the Zionist leader Moshe Sharett defined as "a Hebrew gate to the sea," and which David Ben-Gurion considered to be the "Hebrew access to the sea," represented a new stage of the revival project: "the conquest of the sea."<sup>201</sup> With the construction of the jetty, Meir Dizengoff proclaimed: "Now we want to conquer the sea. We want our waters, the waters of the Land of Israel, the waters of Tel Aviv."<sup>202</sup>

The general public's enthusiasm was evident in the crowds that came to watch the unloading of the first ship that anchored in the new port.<sup>203</sup> The Zionist meaning of the port was propagated in patriotic speeches and articles and in songs of praise written by prominent composers and poets. With a mixture of detached irony and genuine excitement, Nathan Alterman wrote: "At that night heaven forgave / even the hyperbolic speeches functionaries gave."<sup>204</sup>

Popular culture also articulated the enthusiasm for the new port. A new year greeting card for the Jewish year 5637 (1936–37) depicted the new jetty, with the ship *Tel Aviv* on the horizon. The inscription read: "Long live the port of Tel Aviv!"<sup>205</sup> There was a report about a young man who allegedly wrote to his beloved: "I love you like the port of Tel Aviv."<sup>206</sup> Also mentioned in popular culture were self-ironical references to the gap between the modest reality of the small jetty and the vision of a magnificent port. A

case in point is a report that appeared in the weekly *9 Ba'Erev*: "A Jew who immigrated recently built a kiosk near the port. He installed a container for *gazoz* and bottles of syrup and a dilapidated primus stove, and hung a sign: 'Café-Restaurant Port of Tel Aviv.' People mocked him: 'Do you consider this a restaurant?' The Jew, helpless to escape this mockery, answered while pointing at the port: 'If this is a port—this is a restaurant!'"<sup>207</sup>

Notwithstanding such ironical references, the opening of the port was construed as a major contribution to Tel Aviv that, beyond the obvious economic advantages, embellished the city with additional Zionist function and meaning:

From now on it is not only the First Hebrew City but also the first Hebrew port. A port not only for itself and for the country, but also for the Diaspora and for those who return to the homeland. And the city is reminded of the main reason underlying its foundation: Tel Aviv was built on this location exactly because it is a doorway for Jewish immigrants. The first Jews who immigrated through Jaffa port were also potentially the first builders of Tel Aviv. And most of the Jews to arrive from now on will first get into Tel Aviv and be immersed in its atmosphere, and Tel Aviv will determine their impressions of Jewish Palestine.<sup>208</sup>

The location of the new port was adjacent to the premises of the Levant Fair, and its opening was coincidental with the failure of the 1936 fair, the largest and last of its kind in prestate Tel Aviv. With the opening of the new port, the notion of Tel Aviv as a gate was reinterpreted. Whereas the Levant Fair (and by extension Tel Aviv) was metaphorically construed as Europe's gateway to the Middle East, the newly constructed port of Tel Aviv was interpreted as "the Hebrew gate to the sea." After opening for passengers in 1938, the port was designated "Zion Gate," the gate to Zion.<sup>209</sup> This was the official name. In his inauguration speech, Menachem Ussishkin, the head of the Jewish National Fund, explained: "I give this name to the port that will serve the redeemed on their way to the historical Zion, the real Zion, the eternal Zion."<sup>210</sup> The name "Sha'ar Zion" (Zion Gate) was given to the main entrance to the port and to the street leading to the port.

As a doorway for Jewish immigrants to Palestine, the port affirmed Akiva Arieh Weiss's vision that Tel Aviv would become the entry gate for Jews returning to their ancestral homeland. This notion was graphically articulated in the city's official emblem. Designed by the painter Nachum

התעשיית הציוד של העיירה החדשה בארץ ישראל

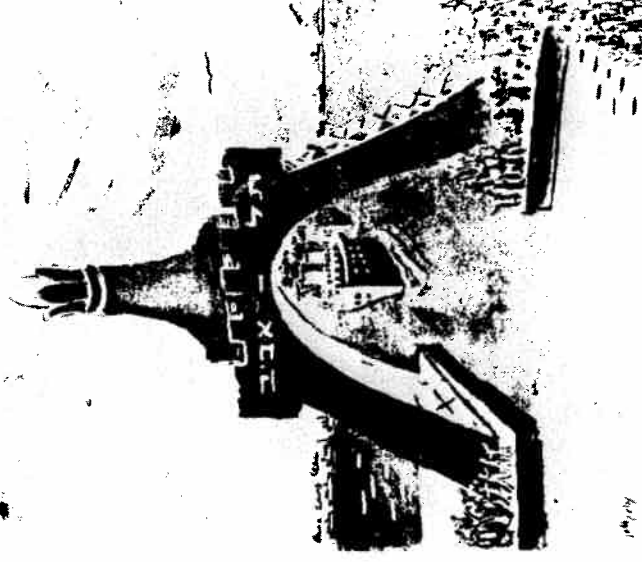
# בבית אביב

ליל 21 יוני 1938

התעשיית הציוד של העיירה החדשה בארץ ישראל

היי מקדש של החדשים  
היום היום

היי ליל ב' כ'



היי ליל ב' כ'

Issue cover for *Davar Le'Yeladim*, a weekly for children, by Nachum Gutman, showing the opening of Tel Aviv's port for passenger ships. On the lighthouse is written "Tel Aviv." Courtesy of the Nachum Gutman Museum of Art, Tel Aviv.

Gutman, the emblem depicted a lighthouse built as an open gate and spreading rays of light. According to the official explanation, "Jews will pass when they return to their homeland" through this gate.<sup>211</sup> On the occasion of opening the port to passengers, the poet Yehuda Karni suggested concretizing the emblem in the port area as a monument that, shaped as a stone gate,

“will symbolize in stone and iron the return to Zion and the role of Tel Aviv in opening the gate for the independence of Israel.”<sup>212</sup>

The connection between Tel Aviv and the establishment of Jewish independence was formally sealed on the fifth of the month of Iyar 5648 (14 May 1948), when the independent state of Israel was proclaimed at the Tel Aviv Museum. The museum, formerly Meir Dizengoff’s private residence, was allegedly located in the area where the founders of Tel Aviv assembled to lay the ground stone of the new neighborhood in 1909.<sup>213</sup> The site was pregnant with symbolic meaning for a linkage between the establishment of the Hebrew city and the foundation of the Jewish state. The end of the Proclamation of Independence stated that the festive act was conducted “on the soil of the homeland in the city Tel Aviv.” The Proclamation of Independence did not refer to Jerusalem, which became the nation’s capital in 1949. The explicit reference to Tel Aviv emphasized its role as the cradle of Jewish independence. To some extent, it played a role similar to that of Philadelphia, where American independence was proclaimed, but which did not become the capital of the United States. With the proclamation of the Jewish state, Meir Dizengoff’s prophetic assertion that “Tel Aviv is destined to expand across the entire country” was fulfilled in terms of Jewish independence.

On 13 May 1948, on the eve of the Proclamation of Independence in Tel Aviv and in the midst of Israel’s War of Independence, Arab Jaffa surrendered to Jewish forces after most Arab residents had fled the city. In 1950, Jaffa was formally annexed to Tel Aviv. Following the unification, those Arabs who remained in Jaffa when it surrendered became citizens of Tel Aviv-Yafo, which meant that, demographically speaking, Tel Aviv-Yafo became a mixed Jewish-Arab city. The annexation also seemed to indicate the end of a story that began in 1909 with the foundation of Tel Aviv as a suburb of Jaffa. In a Zionist interpretation of the period,

The annexation of Jaffa to Tel Aviv, and their unification as Tel Aviv-Yafo is possibly a tangible symbol of an immense transformation. Jaffa and Tel Aviv—two cities that represented a total opposition. The contrast between the Jews’ aspirations for building and creation, and the evil intentions of the Arabs toward the Hebrew Yishuv, became the keystone of the fusion of these two cities under the banner of the First Hebrew City into a unity of development and prosperity.<sup>214</sup>

On another level of Zionist interpretation, the annexation of Jaffa was a symbolic articulation of “the historical connection between the people of Israel and its homeland, between its past, the present, and the future.”<sup>215</sup> From this perspective, Jaffa’s “dowry” to the united city was its history and especially the Jewish chapters of this history. Historical continuation between Jewish revival and the Jewish past in the Land of Israel was a primary motif of the Zionist narrative of national restoration. In this vein, the unification of Jaffa and Tel Aviv provided Tel Aviv not only with the historical depth the new city had lacked, but also underscored historical continuity with the past, the Jewish past in particular. In his introduction to a 1977 book on Tel Aviv, Mayor Shlomo Lahat wrote: “Tel Aviv has existed for seventy years. Jaffa has existed for thousands of years. With the birth of the State of Israel the two became one city, both old and new, Tel Aviv-Yafo.”<sup>216</sup>

### “The Joyful City”

Even in its early years, Tel Aviv, still a small and sedate neighborhood, already had a reputation for frivolity. In 1915, the writer Aharon Reuveni observed: “It has the appearance of permanent festivity. . . . Good life gave rise to a cheerful summer resort on the seashore. Its inhabitants had the appearance of an idle, intelligent community. . . . Every time I come to Tel Aviv I have the impression that this is a special place, a place where no one has the need to do anything, to commit himself to work.”<sup>217</sup>

In the 1920s and especially in the 1930s, Tel Aviv’s reputation as a vivacious amusement center was already established. The poet Nathan Alterman projected Tel Aviv as the “entertainment capital” of Jewish Palestine.<sup>218</sup> It was associated with “permanent restlessness.” In the 1930s, “coffee-shop dwellers [who] continue their life, spin their days and drag the nights”<sup>219</sup> became embedded in the city’s public image. In the opening article of the weekly *9 Ba’Erev*, founded in 1937, the editor explained: “And at 9 P.M., when the sun sets, night life begins, a small window to the far-off is opened.”<sup>220</sup> Following the curfew imposed by the British security forces on Tel Aviv in 1938, the weekly reported with explicit self-irony: “For the first time, after many years, every citizen could wholeheartedly say: ‘I stayed home. I went to sleep at half past nine. I rested.’”<sup>221</sup>

In 1946, Keren Ha’Yesod (the Palestine Foundation Fund) produced a propaganda film that depicted Tel Aviv in color. The short film—seventeen

minutes long altogether—documented the port, factories, schools, construction sites, municipal zoo, and beach. It focused on a family of new Jewish immigrants who had survived the Holocaust and settled in Tel Aviv. The film propagated the image of Tel Aviv as a successful Zionist undertaking. Anyone who did not know the city at first hand and had never heard anything whatsoever about it could not have known that Tel Aviv had a very vivid nightlife. Ostensibly, the city's nightlife did not belong to the image of the city as a hard-working and productive hub of Jewish life, where educational and spiritual pursuits dominated the daily existence of its proud inhabitants. The highly ideological Hebrew dailies were edited and printed in Tel Aviv, but their chronicles of cultural events were limited to symphony concerts, theater performances, and public lectures, which contributed to expanding Tel Aviv's image as the cultural center of Jewish Palestine. Coffee shops, including the literary ones,<sup>222</sup> and nightlife were apparently not deemed serious and hence were unworthy of mention in the serious press. They were included in Zionist depictions of the First Hebrew City only when it seemed necessary to promote the argument that the city was a success story or to protect the city's reputation from slander. A case in point is the description of Tel Aviv that Meyer Weisgal, the American Zionist activist, wrote to a Jewish American audience following his visit to Tel Aviv in the autumn of 1938. At this time, Palestine was experiencing the dreadful consequences of the Arab revolt, when attacks against Jewish settlements and British government forces were routine and the burial of victims was an almost daily occurrence. Meyer Weisgal's intention was to depict Tel Aviv as a haven of normality in a troubled country, a place where life continued in defiance of the harsh conditions: "Tel Aviv attracts me. The thought about sleep disappeared because sleep is the last refuge from boredom. And who, unless he is entirely lacking sensitivity, can be bored in Tel Aviv? And thus, at midnight, to Ginati, Tel Aviv's Café du Dome."<sup>223</sup>

Coffee shops and theater halls, cinemas and restaurants were constituents of the image of Tel Aviv as "the joyful city" that, according to one persistent critic, was prone to exaggerated insouciance and a compulsive tendency toward "appearances and matters of status and ceremony."<sup>224</sup> Among the prominent features of the "ceremonial" were the festivities in Tel Aviv. The Jewish festival of Purim is a celebration of joy and in this capacity exceptional in what is otherwise a rather solemn traditional Jewish calendar. Purim parties were organized by individuals and public halls, hotels and political parties, coffee shops and voluntary organizations. Another important

tradition to emerge in Tel Aviv was the Purim carnival that paraded through the city's streets.

In the 1920s, the Purim festivities in Tel Aviv became a central event in the life of the Jewish Yishuv in British Mandate Palestine. The conflation of the festivities and the host city was also revealed in the special Purim emblem of the city: a personified Tel Aviv wearing a mask and holding two clappers (both are traditional objects associated with the Purim celebration).

The festivities were institutionalized as an official municipal creation in the late 1920s. As long as the mass celebrations of Purim were conducted in Tel Aviv, the number of local residents and tourists was a measure of the success of these festivities.<sup>225</sup> Significantly, many Arabs from neighboring Jaffa also arrived in Tel Aviv for the occasion. A distinguished local tradition, the Purim festivities contributed to the image of Tel Aviv as a metropolis on a par with other cities famed for their carnivals.<sup>226</sup> Yet they were also instrumental in augmenting Tel Aviv's reputation as the "entertainment capital" of Jewish Palestine, as a place where "the Jewish Yishuv in the Land of Israel was learning an important lesson, so natural to every settled people—popular merry-making—which entails neither much reflection nor artificial stimulant, but is a natural expression of a simple human need."<sup>227</sup>



## Nonstop City

[New York] meets the most severe test that may be applied to definition of a metropolis—it stays up all night.

—John Gunther, *Inside U.S.A.*

**The First Hebrew City** was cast in the mold of a Zionist creation. In this interpretive context, every aspect of city life, especially if indicative of growth and development, confirmed the triumph of the vision. When in 1959 Tel Aviv celebrated its jubilee, Mayor Haim Levanon noted that “in this jubilee year Tel Aviv already fulfills its destiny.” The success of the project was evinced in the reputation of Tel Aviv as “a vibrant center of Hebrew literature, journalism, and art of all kinds . . . a big city for God and people, a city full of life and movement.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1959, an album of black-and-white photos of Tel Aviv appeared. It was intended to document “the blazing breath of the city and its soul”; a reviewer complained that the overall portrait the album presented failed to mention many relevant issues. The editors had “ignored the pictures of the idle youth of poor neighborhoods, the outskirts of the city lacking neon lights.” Beyond his social sensitivities, the reviewer also noted that the album overlooked human aspects of everyday life: “sadness, anger, tears. These are also to be found in the city, beyond walls in streets where neon lights are lit.”<sup>2</sup> Perhaps not surprisingly, when the vision of the First Hebrew City was celebrating its success, the gap between the heroic aspect of the myth and the mundane aspect of life in the city was publicly addressed.

The waning of the First Hebrew City in the 1950s and 1960s should also be understood in the broader historical context, namely the end of the foundation phase of Zionist history and the transition “to the era after Zionism.”<sup>3</sup> This transition was manifest in the decline of the pioneering ethos and the appearance of a postpioneering Israeli society. The process was broadly about going from a society totally mobilized around the nation-

building project to a society in which the individual increasingly occupied center stage. The change was of course gradual. Its signs were discernible in the mid-1950s, following the end of state-imposed austerity that was in force in the first years of independence. In the early 1960s, enclaves of affluence were formed, especially among veteran Israelis. The growing "westernization" of Israel was evinced in popular culture, consumption modes, and lifestyle patterns.

The rise of Dizengoff Street as a shopping strip and pastime destination in the late 1950s testified to the changes that Israeli society and culture were undergoing. In the late 1950s and 1960s, this glamorous street contributed a great deal to the image of Tel Aviv as a dynamic and vibrant city. In the 1970s, the street was in decline, however. On a larger scale, the notion that Tel Aviv was in crisis at this time became prevalent among commentators on the city. Newspaper articles discussed the aging of the population and elaborated on planning problems that seemed to cast a shadow on the city's future. Such reporting induced the impression that Tel Aviv, which Nathan Alterman had likened in the early 1930s to a young girl perpetually engaged in having fun, had already reached old age.

But the pessimism that enveloped Tel Aviv in the 1970s gave way in the early 1980s to a new optimism that heralded a new phase in the history of the mythic city. Against the background of profound changes in Israeli society—most notably the breakdown of the political hegemony of Labor and the demise of the pioneering ethos—Tel Aviv underwent a process of reinvigoration that led to its "rebirth" as the Nonstop City. Aware of itself and the opportunities it purportedly offered, the Nonstop City was to a substantial extent created by and in the local weeklies, most notably *Ha'ir*, launched in 1980. Formulated in terms of distinct urban culture, the Nonstop City both articulated and solidified the image of Tel Aviv as a special experience and a unique phenomenon.

### "The New Tel Aviv-ness"

#### *A City "More Tel-Avivan Than Tel Aviv"*

In 1989, Tel Aviv marked its eightieth anniversary. The occasion did not command much public attention. In an ostensibly unrelated event, in March 1989 the Israeli advertisement association gave awards to slogans that spearheaded campaigns launched by member agencies.<sup>4</sup> Among them was the

slogan "Tel Aviv a Nonstop City" created by the Zarfatí-Sternshus Agency for a joint campaign of the Tel Aviv hotel owners' association, the Ministry of Tourism, and the municipality to encourage Israelis to visit Tel Aviv. The agency's creative team considered another alternative slogan, "You feel a city in the air"; but "Tel Aviv a Nonstop City" was the slogan unanimously chosen as the most appropriate to represent Tel Aviv.

On an immediate level, the Nonstop City was "in constant dynamic movement around the clock."<sup>5</sup> The slogan verbalized succinctly the popular notion that "[what] Tel Aviv is all about is first and foremost the tempo."<sup>6</sup> Though implicitly, the slogan formulated a prevalent notion that "the real life takes place in Tel Aviv, and here the essence of Israel is actualized in the most hedonistic sense."<sup>7</sup>

The slogan was conceived in the framework of a particular campaign aimed at encouraging Israelis to visit Tel Aviv, but it was also appropriated by the municipality as a new policy designed to allow businesses to stay open around the clock in some districts. Included in this category were restaurants, pubs, kiosks, and certain shops. The mayor's spokesman explained: "The city lives at night."<sup>8</sup> Beyond this, verbal references to the First Hebrew City also appeared in commercial initiatives. In October 1989, the first nonstop kiosk opened in Tel Aviv. The innovation was a private initiative designed to meet an existing need, as one of the owners explained: "Until then the nights ended in clubs such as Penguin and Liquid, but we knew that a solution was needed like in Amsterdam and New York."<sup>9</sup>

The meaning of Tel Aviv in its mythic capacity as the First Hebrew City was formulated in terms of national redemption. Yet, as noted earlier, already at an early stage of its history Tel Aviv had the reputation of an easy-going, hedonistic city. In the 1920s and still more in the 1930s, it gained a reputation as a dynamic center of recreational activities. Its image as a city that lives by night emerged in the 1930s and has persisted ever since. In an interview on the occasion of the city's fiftieth anniversary, the mayor pointed out the differences between Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa: "Haifa wakes up early, Jerusalem goes to bed early. Tel Aviv goes to bed in the small hours—and wakes up at dawn!"<sup>10</sup> The implication was that Tel Aviv did not sleep at all.

A special issue of *Life* magazine that appeared in 1973 on the occasion of Israel's twenty-fifth anniversary also portrayed the city of Tel Aviv. Two photos adorned the beginning of this article. One was the famous photograph that documented the founders congregated in the middle of sand dunes.

The other, bigger and in double exposure, depicted a crowd having fun in a discotheque. The visual juxtaposition of the two photographs was meant to emphasize the difference between then and now, between its “founders embarking on founding a new city in the sand dunes” and their “less earnest descendants caper[ing] in fancy discotheques like Tiffany’s.” The article portrayed Tel Aviv as a “big, brash, expensive, worldly” city. Though “still somewhat short of real sophistication,” it was alleged to possess “all the features, good and bad, creative and parasitic, of a trendy cosmopolis.” Tel Aviv was “where Israel’s vital juices flow.”<sup>11</sup>

Actually, defining Tel Aviv as a Nonstop City cast certain qualities that had long been considered characteristic of the city in the mold of an essence. Chronologically, the First Hebrew City and the Nonstop City represent two successive stages in the history of the mythic city: the Zionist phase, identified with the era of the First Hebrew City, and the post-Zionist phase, identified with the Nonstop City. On one level of interpretation, it may be argued that the conversion of the First Hebrew City into the Nonstop City formally closed the Zionist stage of the history of the mythic city. On another level, however, the Nonstop City confirmed the ultimate victory of the Zionist vision that underscored the building of the new city.

By 1989, “Nonstop City” became a common nickname: “Eighty-year-old Tel Aviv is a Nonstop City. This is the nickname it was given when it reached eighty. And it is true there is almost no hour without activity in the city that arose from the sand dunes.” In 2002, the notion that “Tel Aviv is a nonstop city” was a given fact, something that needed neither proof nor explanation.<sup>12</sup> Tel Aviv, so the cliché went, “is a city that indeed never stops.”<sup>13</sup> As noted, when Tel Aviv celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1959, it was suggested that by that stage of its history it had become a normal, ordinary city, no longer in need of a nickname to define its distinction and purpose. Yet in 1989 it became evident that the existence of the city without a title and a nickname was of temporary duration only, a transitional stage in the history of the mythic city.

The slogan “Tel Aviv a Nonstop City” provided a title for the municipality’s reinvention of the city. It also resonated with local patriots’ need for a verbal conceptualization of the big-city experience associated with Tel Aviv and with it only. Sure enough, soon after being launched, the slogan acquired the status of a maxim expressive and representative of Tel Aviv’s essence. It appeared on the municipality’s stationery. A newly founded local radio station appropriated the slogan, thereby stressing that it offered non-

stop broadcasting but also alluding to the intimate relationship between itself and the city’s spirit. The name of the ad hoc political list established by Romi Milo, soon to be elected mayor, for the 1993 municipal election was a variation on the already popular slogan. Direct references to the official slogan appeared in the names of eateries and stores, such as Nonstop Falafel or Nonstop Hot Dog.

An interesting issue in connection with the Nonstop City was how a slogan that was created especially to advertise the city to Israelis became a logo on an institutional level and in the sphere of popular culture. From the perspective of an advertisement agency, marketing a city was no different from marketing foodstuffs, a political party, or medical insurance, which had slogans that were praised in 1989 alongside the slogan “Nonstop City.” Yet beyond the commercial-marketing context of the slogan’s creation, its popularity attested that it resonated with the zeitgeist.

The formula First Hebrew City was created to promote the idea of a new Jewish neighborhood, but also to market the plots where the houses of the neighborhood would be built. As a slogan, “the Nonstop City” was invented to attract Israelis to spend their vacation in Tel Aviv. A difference was that whereas the First Hebrew City was phrased before any building of the projected city was erected, the Nonstop City verbalized a common notion about the existing city.

In its mythic capacity, the Nonstop City referred to a city that was constantly active, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.<sup>14</sup> On the immediate level, it was about a well-defined aspect of city life formulated in terms of its lifestyle. The slogan proclaimed the night as a legitimate time for any outdoor activity—be it shopping or recreation. The mental map of the Nonstop City included stores and pastime destinations. In a mythic context, the fact that it was possible to order takeaway in the middle of the night was not a mere convenience, but, according to one Tel Aviv weekly, also “the best reason to move to the city.”<sup>15</sup>

On another plane, as essayist Doron Rosenblum observed in 1985, the Nonstop City was a “huge, metropolitan, artistic city, a city of lights and peccadilloes and theaters, a Manhattanite, Parisian city, more Tel Avivian than Tel Aviv itself.”<sup>16</sup> In this sense, the Nonstop City represented the self-image of Tel Aviv as a city on a par with New York, Amsterdam, Paris, London, or Berlin.

The slogan conceived in 1989 articulated a prevalent notion that in the 1980s Tel Aviv had undergone a profound change for the better. The conceptualization of Tel Aviv as “the most urban city in Israel”<sup>17</sup> had begun al-



ready in the early 1980s in *Ha'ir*, the first Tel Aviv weekly. The local weeklies were instrumental in creating and propagating the image of a dynamic and hedonist Tel Aviv. This connection was significant because in the 1970s the common image of Tel Aviv had been that of a decaying city. This sense of crisis and decay permeated the description of Tel Aviv in Yaacov Shabrai's acclaimed novels *Sof Davar* (The End of Things) and *Zikhron Devatim* (The Memory of Things).<sup>18</sup>

Another aspect of a sense of imminent decay was expressed in articles in the national press that dealt with the urban problems facing Tel Aviv.<sup>19</sup> The title of an article that appeared in June 1980 asked: "Is Tel Aviv dying?" The article portrayed a city with existential problems: "Residents leaving the city, businesses penetrating into residential areas, economic and social gaps, deteriorating neighborhoods, contaminated air and dirt—Is the First Hebrew City destined for a slow death? Will it become a ghost town?" The author noted that "those who are loyal to Tel Aviv believe in a better future for it. Only thus it is possible to explain the devotion to its founders' vision, and their persistence in an attempt to realize it."<sup>20</sup> A few years later the image of the city was totally different. In 1987, journalist Roman Priester referred to the dramatic change, which he assigned to the mayor's efforts: "Shlomo Lahat has woken the city from its sleep and transformed it into a renowned metropolitan center."<sup>21</sup>

From a different perspective and relating to Tel Aviv's pastime culture, Hanoch Marmari, the first editor of *Ha'ir* noted that in October 1980 Tel Aviv was in a transitional phase.<sup>22</sup> But *Ha'ir* not only covered and documented the process of change, but also generated and enhanced it. In contrast to features in the national papers, according to which Tel Aviv was decaying, *Ha'ir* and the other local weeklies that followed in its wake created Tel Aviv, in essayist Doron Rosenblum's words, "as a huge, corrupt, glittering, crowded, horny, creative paper city."<sup>23</sup> The local weeklies were the ultimate guides to the perplexed seeking orientation in the city's cultural maze.<sup>24</sup> The name *Ha'ir*—Hebrew for "The City"—indicated the local weekly's total identification with the city it purported to cover and document. In fact, Tel Aviv's local weeklies made a crucial contribution to molding and conveying a certain image of the city. In *Ha'ir*'s weekly version, which later trickled down into the national press as well, Tel Aviv existed as a hyperdynamic contexture of events and experiences. Media expert Ehud Graf notes that *Ha'ir* created Tel Aviv as a "universal city," whose building blocks were partly of local origin, but mainly "imported from abroad."<sup>25</sup>

On the manifest level, the local weeklies reported on actual events. On another level, however, they molded and augmented the image of Tel Aviv as a big, dynamic, and up-to-date city. They informed the readers about the "correct" cultural orientation and about current trends, thereby conveying the notion that trendiness was a fundamental feature of life in the big city. The heroes of the new weekly pop culture were the celebrities, whom Daniel J. Boorstin characterizes as those famous for being famous.<sup>26</sup> Yet celebrity was egalitarian. The local weeklies created "a culture that transforms a waitress into a culture hero,"<sup>27</sup> where a deceased grocer was "a local myth," and where a place with character—for example, a pet store—was "mythological."<sup>28</sup>

The local weeklies specialized in hype and overstatement. As poet David Avidan observed, "the weeklies' culture created a new, media-constructed and self-conscious Tel Aviv."<sup>29</sup> Doron Rosenblum referred to the "invention of the wordy Tel Aviv" in and by *Ha'ir*:

It is almost unnecessary to note that soon the paper reality of *Ha'ir* was embodied in life itself, till it became impossible to distinguish between appearances and authenticity: the words put the city on its feet. Tel Aviv indeed became diverse, rich, happy, self-conscious, democratic, full of options and in fact overflowing with entertainment and pastime locales and pubs and bars and inns, and art, plenty of art. If reality suffers under a certain artistic poverty—this is reality's fault, not the city's (also that of *Ha'ir*). It is not clear anymore whether all these pastime dens and an infinite number of restaurants and all these instant celebrities were written about in the local weekly and later became reality, or vice versa—founded in reality only to be written about in the local weekly. But who cares? The main thing is what is on one's mind.<sup>30</sup>

In a similar vein, poet David Avidan maintained that "the editors of the local weeklies and the writers often have the feeling that they invented the city. And, indeed, Tel Aviv of the local weeklies appears to be a fictitious city, a fictional place, created to entertain the readers."<sup>31</sup>

#### *Who Is a Tel Avivian?*

In the midst of the praises heaped on Tel Aviv on its twentieth anniversary in 1929, the warning was sounded that "Zionism will not be resolved by 'Tel



Aviv-ness'; this is the new slogan that so many want to incorporate into our lives."<sup>32</sup> In the context in which this warning was uttered, "Tel Aviv-ness" referred to the city as a form of Zionist settlement that combined private initiative with an urban way of life—in contrast to the cooperative settlement on national land favored by Zionist agencies. In 1929, "Tel Aviv-ness" translated place into a way of life and settlement ideology.

The portrayal of the typical Tel Avivian and the effort to define Tel Aviv-ness were embedded into the formulation of the mythic city in different stages of its history. Whereas Tel Aviv-ness represented the essence of the place, the typical Tel Avivian was the hero of the local drama. The Zionist hero of the First Hebrew City was the pioneer aspiring, according to a popular poem, to build his home in Tel Aviv, someone who realized the vision of the First Hebrew City through the venerated Hebrew Work. In a broader context, the Tel Avivian was the new Jew formed in and by the Hebrew city, who was fortunate, as poet Shaul Tchernikhovsky noted, "[n]ot to understand what is *Gallut* [exile], to experience the entire world through the gaze of a purely Hebrew eye."<sup>33</sup>

Beyond the Zionist context, Tel Aviv-ness was depicted as a lifestyle characteristic of a metropolis. In 1939, the Tel Avivian was characterized as "full of enthusiasm and carried away by a capricious public opinion that hastily changes its heroes, its popular coffee shops, and its agenda."<sup>34</sup> In 1959, Haim Levanon, the mayor, noted: "Life! This is Tel Aviv's lifestyle: To live! To effervesce! To act!" The markers of the "Tel Avivian race" were "running, vigor, initiative, vigilance, effervescence!"<sup>35</sup> In 1989, it was maintained that "[t]he Tel Avivian goes out very often. . . . The city has many restaurants and coffee shops. Only their names change. Nonstop."<sup>36</sup>

Drawing the collective portrait of the typical Tel Avivian belonged to the attempt to outline the "new Tel Aviv-ness" of the 1980s. In an essay on this topic, the writer Gabi Nizan suggested that "as a concept, Tel Aviv-ness was created by people with one fundamental common denominator: they are not Tel Avivians; they are new immigrants."<sup>37</sup> In 1992, David Avidan coined the phrase "nouveaux Tel Avivian" to describe the new Tel Avivian as someone who is not necessarily a native of the city, but someone who makes use of the city for his needs.<sup>38</sup>

The fact that Tel Aviv was a city of immigrants was not only significant from a demographic perspective, but also crucial for its cultural history and how its meaning was formulated in different stages of its history. The First Hebrew City was to a substantial extent the city of Jewish immigrants who

settled in Palestine, a fact that augmented its meaning as a Zionist endeavor. Moreover, the common image was of Tel Aviv as the city of youth, full of the joy of life and optimism.<sup>39</sup> From the perspective of those committed to the city as a Zionist project, the city's success was supposed to be evident in the creation of a "natural Tel Aviv," whose residents were not immigrants but natives.

In its mythic capacity, the "new" Tel Aviv emerging in the 1980s was made up "of youth from all over the country who came to launch their careers in Tel Aviv. Here they began their race to the top. This top was associated with art, creativity, sculpting, painting, photographing, writing, perhaps advertising."<sup>40</sup> The so-called new Tel Aviv-ness represented an urban(e) culture substantially created by young people who came to the big city to realize the potential it offered. The big city extended a promise that could not be fulfilled on the "periphery," which in actual terms meant the rest of Israel. The film *Afula Express* (1997, directed by Julie Shles, Norma Productions), representative of this period, features a young couple who have left Afula, a small provincial town in the north of Israel, for the big city to realize their dream of success and self-fulfillment. Tel Aviv's allure was expressive of its reputation as the center of things and as a place where things that mattered happened. Its attraction was a function of its conception as a promise and an opportunity. A young writer who grew up in the southern city of Beer Sheva later recalled: "When I served in the army and would travel to my hometown from the north, and the bus was driving through Tel Aviv or along a bypass whence the towers of the city were visible, my nostrils opened. Tel Aviv always had for me a smell of freedom, liberation."<sup>41</sup>

The contribution of the mainly young immigrants was "the fantasy of the big city" that they brought with them and an urgent need to realize this existential daydream. In an ironical vein, writer Gabi Nizan wrote about the immigrants as the inventors of the new Tel Aviv-ness:

Why did this group feel it so urgent to create the twisted features of the Tel Avivian existence? Why couldn't they just live here like everyone else, go to the grocery store and to the clinic, and drink beer without making a fuss about it? Perhaps because they could do the same things in Kfar Blum and in Afula. Not for this had we come to the only city in Israel. We came to Tel Aviv to be urban. To become Tel Avivians. And if it does not exist—let us invent it.<sup>42</sup>

The investment made by the newcomers from the provinces to realize their urban fantasy was a substantial source of energy that fed the Nonstop City. The constant provision of energy was important also because of the disillusionment of earlier generations engaged in the creation of the big-city fantasy. In 1986, the famed poet Meir Wieseltier wrote about his feeling that “the city is contracting”:

A city is as big as the measure of the hopes you project into it. . . . The feeling that the city disappointed us, that surprisingly it was getting smaller and poorer before our eyes, instead of becoming bigger and richer, is not expressive of a personal disappointment. . . . The city imploded into the external circumstances of its existence and fanatically preserved the most miserable aspects of its being. It fell in love with its smallness, it even developed an inferiority complex and fell in love with it as well.<sup>43</sup>

Implicit in Wieseltier's analysis is that disappointment with the city was itself an aspect of Tel Aviv-ness that reflected generational life cycles. These cycles entailed the replacement of the diminishing hopes of an earlier generation with the sky-rocketing aspirations of a new generation engaged in realizing its fantasy of the big city. In the 1960s and the 1970s, Wieseltier praised Tel Aviv in his poems. Yet even as he complained about the “inferiority complex” that the city had allegedly developed, the local weeklies were engaged in the construction of the contemporary Tel Aviv as a city whose measure was the number of “words [that] put [it] on its feet,” as Doron Rosenblum expressed it. Meir Wieseltier belonged to such an earlier generation; his sense of disappointment was not shared by the rising generation, which was actively engaged in collating the city with a fantasy about the city.

The attempt to define “Tel Aviv-ness” and to characterize the Tel Avivians represented a need to formulate in precise terms what appeared to be rather elusive. At the same time, this attempt was itself an aspect of Tel Aviv-ness as a form of collective self-consciousness in search of a verbal definition. David Avidan observed, “Tel Aviv-ness today is a combination of a way of life and urban awareness.”<sup>44</sup> Part of this awareness was the skepticism regarding the actual existence of such Tel Aviv-ness: “Tel Aviv-ness is nothing but a senseless fiction, an invention of an ephemeral minority (though charming and attractive), that is based only on the fact that no one feels it is important enough to refute it.”<sup>45</sup>

On the immediate level, the claim that “[t]here is no such thing as Tel



Aviv-ness,” that it was but a fiction and a fantasy, was blasphemous. Yet on a deeper level it was reflective of the self-awareness and self-irony that were an aspect of this same Tel Aviv-ness: “Despite the fact that the things most Tel Avivians do are unimportant, they are constantly engaged in commemorating these things. All Tel Avivians are able to do is talk about themselves. There is no such thing as Tel Aviv-ness. It is an invention. All inventions were born to enable people to live in greater comfort. Tel Aviv is actually a fantasy.”<sup>46</sup>

In an ironic reference to this self-indulgent discourse, the name “new Tel Avivians” was used to define the Third World immigrants who settled in the city in the 1990s. In 1997, a series of articles in *Ha'ir* described and deplored the life of those “new Tel Avivians” who came from Ghana, Nigeria, Peru, Romania, China, Thailand, and the Philippines and who lived in the city's poorer southern neighborhoods. Reference to these often illegal and officially nonexistent residents of the city was ironic because they were the shadow citizens who avoided the limelight and existed beyond the pale of the official city celebrated by the local weeklies. The presence of the job-seeking foreigners in the city, however, actually added a multicultural touch. Yet these new Tel Avivians were not included in the city's self-image, which was engaged in inventing itself as a world city, but rather they figured as an issue on the agenda of human and civil rights organizations and as the theme of indignant articles in the local weeklies.<sup>47</sup>

### The Little Apple

In his constitutive pamphlet of 1906, Akiva Arie Weiss also projected that “the same as New York is the main entrance to America, so we have to modernize our city, and one day it will become New York of the Land of Israel.”<sup>48</sup> Here Weiss referred to the function of New York as the main port for immigrants and the container where they were recast in the mold of a new identity. Opening the newly built port of Tel Aviv to passengers in 1938 seemed to vindicate Weiss's vision, yet despite the hype that followed the inauguration ceremony it was the deep-water Haifa Port that was to become the main portal to the state of Israel. In the mid-1960s, when the new and modern port at Ashdod, south of Tel Aviv, began operating, the twin ports of Jaffa and Tel Aviv were closed. Ironically, the notion of Tel Aviv as the “New York of the Land of Israel” did not disappear. It resurfaced in the con-

text of the mythic Nonstop City, though in an entirely different sense from that offered in the constitutive vision of the Hebrew city.

Comparing and likening Tel Aviv to big and famous cities was intended to confirm and recognize its own big-city status. Notably, referring to European cities as a model for emulation was impressed into the city's cultural code. The founders of the new neighborhood sought to build a corner of Europe in the Middle East. In the 1920s and the 1930s, it was generally assumed that "Tel Aviv is a tiny Paris."<sup>49</sup> When publicist Doron Rosenblum mentioned in 1985 that Tel Aviv's self-image was that of a "Manhattanite, Parisian city," he parodied an updated version of provinciality.

From the perspective of a Jew who immigrated to Israel from northern Leningrad in the 1970s, Tel Aviv was the exotic city of the south, "Half Nice, doubtfully Odessa."<sup>50</sup> Yet for many adherents of the new Tel Avivness, New York was the ultimate measure, a model to be emulated and an aspiration. For the new Tel Avivians, Tel Aviv was the local New York: "When I was young, Tel Aviv seemed to be like New York. . . . But I grew up and realized that Tel Aviv is New York."<sup>51</sup> The yearning for New York reflected an aspiration to belong to and be part of the big world. Journalist Ron Meiberg, a prominent marketer of American popular culture in his journalistic writing,<sup>52</sup> admitted: "We all walk in Tel Aviv and feel at heart that it is too small for us, that our natural place is in New York, London, or Paris."<sup>53</sup> The feeling that real life takes place elsewhere is what motivates and constitutes the provincial predicament. The move to the center and an attempt to assimilate there is one kind of a response. Another is the attempt to mold the periphery in the likeness of the center. The attraction of New York was openly admitted: "New York is such a desired model . . . because over there things are not institutionalized. This is a Nonstop City because the most shabby places are open twenty-four hours, not because the municipality decided, but from below."<sup>54</sup>

The reference to New York as a model was expressed in the different nicknames given to Tel Aviv. In an effort to liken Tel Aviv to New York, Tel Aviv was nicknamed the Little Apple—namely, a smaller version of the Big Apple.<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, Tel Aviv's Sheinkin Street, the local version of Greenwich Village, was nicknamed the Tiny Apple.<sup>56</sup> Another nickname was the Big Orange, an appellation that distinguished Tel Aviv in a local context. The export of citrus was a major feature of the economy of Palestine and later of the State of Israel, and the orange groves around Tel Aviv were part of the local setting before they were uprooted to make room for new neigh-

borhoods. Jaffa oranges—named after the port of Jaffa, whence they were exported to Europe—enjoyed international fame. The connection between Tel Aviv and oranges was immortalized in the book *The Trail of Orange Peels*, in which author Nachum Gutman re-created episodes from the life of Little Tel Aviv.<sup>57</sup> As a symbol of the Land of Israel, the orange connected the local and the native and was evocative of Tel Aviv's early history. In an implied reference to Gutman's book, the municipality gave the name "Orange Trails" to the walking routes in Tel Aviv.

According to journalist Thomas O'Dwyer, writing in the *Jerusalem Post*, the nickname "the Big Orange" was a pathetic expression that was reflective of provincial vanity.<sup>58</sup> The 1992 issue of the *Lonely Planet* tourist guide commented:

Unfortunately, the inhabitants of Tel Aviv have a habit of comparing their city to New York: some call it even the Big Orange. Yes, Tel Aviv does boast a collection of cafés, bars and restaurants that attract large cliques of regulars. . . . However, the impact of the diverse backgrounds of its inhabitants, with so many countries represented in a population of just over a third of a million, is lessened by the fact that they are virtually all Jewish, as opposed to the Big Apple's melting pot.<sup>59</sup>

The contemporary notion of Tel Aviv as a local version of New York is representative of a cultural attitude that is in a state of paradoxical contradiction to Weiss's underlying idea that the distinction of the Hebrew city would be that its inhabitants would subscribe to the directive, "We shall not follow the ways of the gentiles." In actual terms, the relationship between Tel Aviv and New York is the one-sided relationship between a cultural center and a periphery that considers the center a model for emulation. In a description meant as self-irony, Tel Aviv was called a "province of New York,"<sup>60</sup> where emulated patterns only emphasized the gap between the original and the copy.<sup>61</sup> New York, but also Paris and London and later Amsterdam and Berlin, were objects of yearning for anyone who felt that Tel Aviv was "too small" for them. "Following the ways of the gentiles" was built into the self-image of Tel Aviv as a big city, but also expressive of provinciality encapsulated in the feeling that the real things happened elsewhere: "Every scent of foreignness, every bit of a foreign accent, was perceived in Tel Aviv as a window to another world."<sup>62</sup> Beyond that, the provinciality was articulated in what Ahad Ha'Am, the father of cultural Zionism, labeled "emulation from

self-denial." As cities of reference, New York, Paris, and London reflected the desire of a city on the margins to be on-line with the real or imaginary center that at any given moment exists elsewhere.

### "City of Refuge"

According to poet David Avidan, Tel Aviv-ness was "at its best a condition of awareness. This is awareness of the fundamental difference between the city and any other place in Israel and identification with the difference as a kind of class solidarity."<sup>63</sup> This alleged awareness was expressed in a type of cultural separatism that exuded snobbism and excluded whatever and whoever was not considered Tel Avivian. The reference to a "state of Tel Aviv"<sup>64</sup> articulated the notion of Tel Aviv as a separate entity qualitatively different from the rest of Israel.

Tel Avivian separatism articulated a sense of superiority over the so-called periphery. From a Tel Avivian perspective, those coming to the city on Sabbath eve from neighboring cities and towns were "alien multitudes" raiding the city and taking control of it. One articulation of the prevalent notion of Tel Aviv as an entity apart was an illustrated depiction of the mental map of Tel Avivians: Tel Aviv at the center, surrounded by the threatening periphery. This map suggested in graphic terms the notion that "every settlement which is not Tel Aviv or is north of it is treated as a remote country district, whose residents are primitives representative of bad taste and ignorance, in short: untouchables."<sup>65</sup>

Another articulation was an article written by journalist Gideon Samet that juxtaposed Tel Aviv and the city of Bat Yam, its neighbor to the south. In this juxtaposition, Bat Yam figured as a symbol of everything that Tel Aviv despised and loathed: "Bat Yam has become a symbol of a gray, graceless, and worrying Israeli average." In this negative capacity, "Tel Avivians who think that their city is a cosmopolitan wonder . . . talk about Bat Yam as a looming cultural threat." Writing on behalf of Tel Avivians who were convinced that their city "signals the future of Israeli civilization," the author was concerned that "the First Hebrew City, the most successful urban product we have created, is only a temporary accomplishment, on its way to become Bat Yam." The problem with Bat Yam, so went the argument, was that it represented the quintessential average, the epitome of evil. The question that bothered Samet was whether Tel Aviv would be able to resist the threat from the south: "How long will it stand fast?"

The sense of an imminent danger notwithstanding, the basic idea underlying the article was that the fundamental cultural contrast between Tel Aviv and Bat Yam mirrored the dilemma faced by Israeli society at large. As Samet put it, "The difference between Tel Aviv and Bat Yam refers to the political essence, therefore most fundamental and important, of our life here . . . a certain resistance against waves of levantinism—all these things that Tel Aviv is still able to provide whereas Bat Yam is not."<sup>66</sup>

Whereas in the 1930s the threat of "levantinism" seemed to endanger Tel Aviv from within, in the 1980s "levantinism" became an external threat, with Tel Aviv being the last bastion of civilization. According to Samet, Tel Aviv and Bat Yam were two mutually exclusive cultural options. Beyond this, the article documented in unequivocal terms Tel Aviv's sense of superiority over the periphery. In another, rather grotesque version of the same Tel Avivian theme, Bat Yam and the adjacent city of Holon were condemned as "a symbol of suburb scraping and of everything that is loathsome, inferior, parasitic, sticky, mimicking, superfluous, of a malignant growth."<sup>67</sup>

The contempt and arrogance felt toward the periphery expressed the need for demarcation as a mechanism of identity formation within the new Tel Aviv-ness. The so-called periphery was the ultimate Other that served to emphasize Tel Aviv as the embodiment of good taste and sophistication. In a zero-sum game, the periphery's cultural inferiority enhanced Tel Aviv's cultural superiority. Yet the contempt for the periphery also exuded a siege mentality. The need for mental demarcation was expressive of the sense that Tel Aviv was the last refuge of the "sane" and "normal" Israel. The adjectives *sane* and *normal* were exclusively used to describe a self-assigned "enlightened" Israel that was alleged to be tolerant, liberal, secular, and, most important, committed to Western culture and values. The enemies of this "enlightened" Israel were right-wing fanatics, religious fundamentalists, Jewish particularists, and levantines.<sup>68</sup> In short, Tel Aviv, in its mythic function as a fortress of enlightenment and progress, epitomized the ethos of the Israeli Left.

The Left's version of an "enlightened" Israel represented the reaction of the old Israeli cultural and political elite to the threat posed by new forces in Israeli society and politics. The 1977 general elections, which Labor lost for the first time in Israeli history, meant the end of the political hegemony of Labor and the beginning of the political empowerment of formerly marginal sectors in Israeli society, such as the political Right, immigrants from Muslim countries, and ultra-Orthodox religious parties.<sup>69</sup> Though formu-

lated in inclusive terms, the version of an “enlightened” Israel offered by the Israeli Left was to a substantial extent patronizing and exclusive. In this broader framework of a culture war between “light” and “darkness,” Tel Aviv figured as a strategic asset in its alleged virtue as a haven of an “enlightened” Israel.

The identification of Tel Aviv with “enlightenment” was clearly apparent during the struggle waged there in the years 1975–85 regarding the opening of cinemas on Sabbath eve. Religious circles objected to what for them amounted to a mass desecration of the Sabbath in the city and a violation of the compromise achieved earlier between secular and religious segments of the populace. For secular activists, the struggle was against religious coercion. They maintained that the issue was not only about secular residents’ rights, but also about Tel Aviv’s being a secular city. From a radical secularist point of view, the struggle was expressive of “the fact that the secular public is alive and kicking and will not give in to a small, power-hungry minority set to determine the way of life of the biggest city in Israel.”<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the conflict represented the worldview of those who “want a free and enlightened Israel.”<sup>71</sup> This formulation positioned the ostensibly local conflict regarding opening entertainment venues on Sabbath eve in the broader context of the struggle between secular “enlightenment” and religious “backwardness.”

The success of the side that advocated opening the city on Sabbath eve augmented the image of Tel Aviv as a secular city. From the perspective of the secular-liberal Left, Tel Aviv was essentially a progressive and enlightened city surrounded by irrational forces. It was a “city of refuge.” Doron Rosenblum admitted: “What keeps us in Tel Aviv is the fear that outside the city’s limits the situation is more desperate.” For him, the distinction of Tel Aviv was its being “a haven and refuge from all the lunacies and sorrows that bite this country.”<sup>72</sup> This was a concise formulation of the notion of Tel Aviv as an enclave where normal life could be pursued. This position entailed a notion of a fundamental difference between Tel Aviv and the rest of the country. Following the landslide defeat of the Left in the 2001 national elections, publicist Eli Mohar, a chronicler of Tel Aviv and a columnist for *Ha’Ir*, offered a small consolation: “[O]ur city should be praised. . . . The stark contrast between our city and other big cities demonstrates again that this is about a country within a country, perhaps a people within a people.”<sup>73</sup>

The notion of Tel Aviv as an island of progress and sanity in an ocean of irrationality and backwardness assumed different forms in accordance with

cultural contexts of the period and the redefinition of progress, but it has persisted as an aspect of the city’s self-image. In a Zionist context, the First Hebrew City represented European notions of progress in the backward Orient. Yearning for Europe and refuting the East in general and the rest of Israel in particular buttressed a sense of self-indulgent estrangement and alienation. In the 1990s, the illusion of a “city of refuge” was shattered following the missile attacks on Tel Aviv during the 1991 Gulf War, deadly terrorist acts, and the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995.<sup>74</sup> Most important, these traumatic events challenged the sense of invincibility that was integral to the notion of Tel Aviv as a safe haven. In November 2000, a few weeks after the beginning of the second Arab–Palestinian Intifada, journalist Yigal Sarna made an attempt to salvage the notion that despite the growing gloom and sense of disillusionment, Tel Aviv continued to offer a sane alternative. In his journey to Tel Aviv, he searched and found traces of normality, signs that not all dreams had collapsed, that there was still place for hope and that this place was Tel Aviv: “This is the city that also now entertains all possibilities: it is New York, it is the larger and detached sister of Gilo [a Jerusalem neighborhood under shelling]. . . . It is the spiritual heart of the country. It is a small city of 380,000 residents; it is admired and despised.”<sup>75</sup>

Unlike Sarna and his effort to stick to a notion of normality, Doron Rosenblum had already lost hope that Tel Aviv was offering an option of normality: “After the missile trauma and the terror, Tel Aviv appeared as a fragile decor and as a trap more than a complacent city or a safe haven.” Furthermore, “After the assassination of Rabin, and with the practically religious rituals at city square, Tel Aviv lost the last three things that constituted its charm: lightheartedness, alienation, and rationality.”<sup>76</sup>

As a characteristic of the mythic city, alienation was laden with ambiguity. On the one hand, it emphasized anonymity perceived as an advantage. On the other hand, it meant a loss of intimacy, lack of human warmth, and a sense of not belonging. According to one literary critic, urban alienation, cynicism, and emptiness were dominant motifs in the depiction of Tel Aviv in the literature of the late 1990s.<sup>77</sup> It was observed that “the city is empty of simple compassion. It is anonymous, power thirsty, extrovert.”<sup>78</sup> Kobi Oz, a popular musician and commentator on culture who grew up in a small town, explained why he retreated to the southern desert town of Yeruham to write a book: “I longed for the hospitality, the good people, and the warmth that are missing in Tel Aviv.”<sup>79</sup> Whereas Tel Aviv was a refuge for



those who preferred the anonymity of the big city, the small town was a refuge for someone who could not bear the alienation of the big city.

Yitzhak Ben-Ner's *City of Refuge*, published in 2000, depicts seven characters of a fictional Tel Aviv.<sup>80</sup> The city the characters populate is permeated with cruelty and aggressiveness, suffering and misery. The author's city of refuge is "a kind of human garbage bin." A literary critic observed that it was evil "that fueled these urban characters and endowed them with life and lust." They "converged into the narrow geographic space of a decaying Israeliness."<sup>81</sup> They live and are active in the center of Tel Aviv, in a respectable area. Yet the city the author depicts is not easy-going and fun loving, but rather oppressive, permeated with and exuding petty human wickedness.

Tel Aviv's reputation as a city of refuge was grounded in its image as a "liberal, post-Zionist"<sup>82</sup> city, which was also evident in the multicultural composition of its population:

Tel Aviv is the only city in Israel where homosexuals and heterosexuals walk about with their heads held high and unafraid; Mizrahi and Ashkenazi; new immigrants from the former Soviet Union and from Ethiopia and veteran Israelis; traditional girls and secular girls with piercing and tank tops; boys with *kippa* [skullcap] on the head and boys with red mohawks and the shirt of a rock group; lawyers and shoemakers, and yes—also ultra-Orthodox Jews.<sup>83</sup>

Notably, this celebratory portrayal of a multicultural city did not include Arabs. They were citizens of the city and were represented in the municipal council, but, with a few exceptions, they lived in Jaffa. Most Tel Avivians considered Jaffa a place apart, not Tel Aviv proper. This portrayal also did not include Third World workers who lived in poorer neighborhoods.

Interestingly, different evaluations of the alleged multicultural composition of Tel Aviv could be found among Jews who emigrated from the Soviet Union. Challenging the politically correct convention, writer Alexander Goldstein portrayed the Third World workers in terms of "Asiatic darkness" and lamented that Tel Aviv was losing its Jewish character.<sup>84</sup> A proponent of the view that Russian culture is superior, painter and poet Mikhail Grobman found Tel Aviv repulsive: "I hate Tel Aviv. I hate Oriental atmosphere and Afro-Oriental climate and palm trees and flies."<sup>85</sup> Literary editor Irina Vrobel-Golobkina contradicted the notion of a multicultural city when she praised Tel Aviv as a "city of Ashkenazim [Jews of European descent]." From

her perspective, Tel Aviv had "something Ashkenazi-Israeli-Russian," unlike Jerusalem, where all were Oriental and ultra-Orthodox Jews.<sup>86</sup>

The visual image of Tel Aviv as a liberal, tolerant, and permissive city included the rainbow flags of members of the gay community in the 1990s. The big city's anonymity and its professed secular and tolerant character were necessary conditions for making Tel Aviv a haven for gays. To those who sought to exercise their sexual orientation as a lifestyle, the big and enlightened city offered an island of liberalism in a conservative ocean. The public presence of the gay-lesbian community in Tel Aviv expressed and was influenced by the change of norms that had swept the West since the 1970s and Israel later. In the wake of this change, what had previously been considered deviant behavior was redefined as a legitimate sexual orientation. Loyal to its self-image as a city on-line with the latest developments and fashions in the West, especially if they were considered progressive and enlightened, the growing openness to gays resonated with the self-image of the new, tolerant, and liberal Tel Aviv-ness.

According to the normative view that homosexuality constitutes illegitimate behavior to be concealed from public eye, the meeting places of homosexuals were parks after dark.<sup>87</sup> The integration of gays into the Tel Avivian mosaic was a gradual transition from a semilegitimate existence in the margins of the city in the early 1980s to the demonstrative and open presence of an organized community in the late 1990s. As in many Western cities, Pride Parades became an annual feature of Tel Aviv. Tolerance toward minorities was on the *Ha'ir's* agenda, and already in the early 1980s there were references, though partly veiled, to the role of homosexuals in the city's nightlife. In a report on a visit to the Penguin Club in August 1982, a writer described the following scene: "On the stairs I saw a couple of guys hugging each other, and no one paid any attention to it. Likewise a pair of girls hugging at the bar attracted no special attention."<sup>88</sup>

In the 1990s, Tel Aviv acquired the reputation of an "international center for gays" and became a popular destination of gay tourism.<sup>89</sup> From the perspective of the local gay community, "In many a sense, Tel Aviv is a little paradise. Perhaps you don't find here the size and diversity of Paris, Amsterdam, or New York, but in the anyhow narrow terms of Israel Tel Aviv is a city of refuge, a focus of recreation and a cultural center for gays. In this city, which maybe will become San Francisco when it grows, there is no problem to hoist the banner of pride."<sup>90</sup>

In 2001, for the first time, the municipality of Tel Aviv sponsored the

gay pride events.<sup>91</sup> For most of the city's residents, the central event was the Pride Parade that marched under the rainbow flags hanging from electricity poles. Yigal Sarua noted approvingly that the city was filled with flags that were not national flags: "This quintessentially Hebrew city . . . is the only city here that can hang without fear the rainbow flags. Tel Aviv is not only a refuge from the incitement and the blood, but also from envy, bigotry, and hatred of the other, and that is why it has long been the real capital city of the country that was Herzl's dream."<sup>92</sup>

### "What Tel Aviv Had to Offer Were the Nights"

*"To Continue Their Daily Routines in the Middle of the Night"*

The Nonstop City was the sum total of events and experiences that defined the dynamic character of life in the city. In a wider sense, every activity that took place in Tel Aviv was constitutive of the Nonstop City. In a narrower sense, the Nonstop City referred to Tel Aviv by night as a set of options including shopping venues and recreational activities, and as a geography of destinations—cinemas, restaurants, pubs, bars, clubs, supermarkets, gyms, and kiosks open round the clock. To a substantial extent, the mythic Nonstop City was a contexture of nightly phenomena and experiences that made the night an essential aspect of Tel Aviv.

In the sense of vibrant nightlife, the Nonstop City abolished a fundamental distinction in culture, namely between a time dedicated to outdoor activities and a time dedicated to rest in a domestic context. The differentiation of different kinds of time is fundamental to culture: "Time plays a key role in the social organization of culture. It indicates borders and transitions, stages and routines in the life of the individual and the group and creates stability and order."<sup>93</sup> The difference between daytime as a site of activity and nighttime as a site of domestic rest is anchored in a cultural agreement, yet it is grounded in the biological need for sleep. Extending human activities to the night is an aspect of the city as civilization also because it repudiates what was perceived as the natural order of things before the invention of artificial light, namely the identification of daytime with outdoor activities and nighttime with indoor activities.

When home is considered the normative territory of the night, going out late at night implies a violation of the normative order. This is the source of the distinction between the day as the site of legitimate activities and the

night as the site of illegitimate activities: "some believe that at a certain hour of the night all decent people go to sleep and all bad people wake up."<sup>94</sup> Here belongs the notion that activities performed late at night, when decent working people are asleep, challenge the normative social order. In particular, these activities are associated with those who defy established norms, such as criminals who use the darkness to conceal their sinister activities, bohemians contemptuous of bourgeois life, and youth not yet integrated into the established framework of work and family.

### *"More Than Just Nightlife"*

The slogan "Tel Aviv a Nonstop City" celebrated nightlife as constituent of the mythic city. However, Tel Aviv's vibrant nightlife has been constitutive of its frivolous reputation since the 1930s. Exploring the character of Tel Aviv's nights and what they meant for the city as a whole was not a mere inquiry, but also productive of the city's self-image. In January 1951, a photo-reportage in the illustrated weekly *Ha'Olam Ha'Zc* posed the question: "Does Tel Aviv have a night life?" The answer was in the affirmative: "Perhaps not like in Paris, which is awake the entire night, but one thing is clear: Tel Aviv does not go to sleep. Only the sleeping times of its residents change."<sup>95</sup> However, the mighty Tel Aviv thus "discovered" was the city of hard-working people whose labor was vital for the well-being of the city.

This picture belonged to an era of austerity and rationing. Things changed in the mid-1950s. In 1959, the journalist Nathan Dunewitz observed that Dizengoff Street was active around the clock.<sup>96</sup> In this period, Tel Aviv by night was chock-full of clubs and entertainment establishments that enhanced the image of a big and vibrant city with a lively nightlife. *Ha'Olam Ha'Zc* observed in 1972 that Tel Aviv's nightlife was "more than just nightlife," but an essential aspect of the city: "What could Tel Aviv offer the denizens of the wide world? In what could it compete with the great metropolises of the world? In its richness? Its magnificence? Its beauty? Its interest? . . . What Tel Aviv had to offer were the nights. Nothing special compared with the commercialized nightlife offered to tourists in developed countries. Something small, limited, but certainly original."<sup>97</sup>

In 1980, a reporter of the just launched *Ha'ir* explored Tel Aviv's nightlife. His conclusion was that the sight of empty streets after midnight was misleading: "Behind doors closed for fear of the law the city lives till morning."<sup>98</sup> In the early 1980s, poet David Avidan praised Tel Aviv's



nightlife: “[Tel Aviv] is the only city in the country that can be considered an equal member in the exclusive club of the best cities of the world. A small tiger, but a real tiger.”<sup>99</sup>

Following the official pronouncement of the slogan “the Nonstop City” in 1989, the press occasionally examined its validity even though it had captured the minds and hearts of ordinary Tel Avivians and city officials. At the center of an article that appeared in August 1989 was the question whether the slogan depicted the real city or exemplified merely creative copywriting. The reporter’s focus was on whether businesses such as gas stations and video rentals really stayed open and till when. The conclusion he reached was that reality was different from the image the slogan propagated, and the slogan was valid only until 8:00 P.M.<sup>100</sup>

Three years later it was asserted that the gap between image and reality was narrowing: “It is customary to define Tel Aviv as the Nonstop City. Unfortunately it stops often. Nevertheless, it is closing the gap between the end of activity and its new beginning. It does not yet have round-the-clock nightlife, but it is active, in certain places, until the small hours.”<sup>101</sup>

The suspicion persisted that the slogan “Tel Aviv a Nonstop City” was hype rather than reality. In 1998, a reporter embarked on a journey “[i]n the footsteps of the myth of the Nonstop City.” His conclusion was that “[m]ore and more hairdressers, gyms, supermarkets, laundries, and other shops are open till morning and enable busy Tel Avivians to continue their daily routines in the middle of the night too.”<sup>102</sup> The reporter’s perspective was rather narrow. Notably he failed to acknowledge the central place of pubs and clubs in the mythic makeup of the Nonstop City.

#### “*Allenby 58 Can Only Exist Here*”

Retrospective references to locales that had ceased to exist belonged to the historical reconstruction of Tel Aviv’s nightlife.<sup>103</sup> In September 1989, when the mythic Nonstop City was officially launched, a short history of Tel Aviv’s nightlife enumerated successive nighttime locales.<sup>104</sup> This historical account did not purport to be precise or comprehensive. Its aim was to identify landmarks of local memory. In this account, history began with the pub Ha’Mozeg, shrouded in the mists of a distant past, and it culminated in contemporary pubs.

In 1988, it was maintained that Tel Aviv’s pubs created “an image of a

city that celebrates its nights in a game of to see and to be seen.”<sup>105</sup> The importance of the pub as a nightly institution could also be inferred from its symbolic function as a metonym of the city. Assi Dayan’s 1992 film *Lijc Avivian pub as a meeting place for strangers representative of different sectors of Israeli society*.<sup>106</sup> The fundamental message of this film is apocalyptic, and the pub is a microcosm of Tel Aviv in particular and of Israel in general.

The development of recreational culture in Tel Aviv in the 1980s was an aspect of a broader phenomenon, namely of Israel’s being transformed into a hedonistic society where the last remnants of the puritan pioneering ethos were publicly discarded. A sociological explanation for the intensity of Tel Aviv’s nightlife was part of its characterization, as the following analysis demonstrates: “When young Americans celebrated peace, love, and rock ‘n’ roll in the 1970s, young Israelis fought and built a nation. Now, when the nation is built, it is their turn to celebrate. A testimony to this is the increasingly growing popularity of late night bars and pubs.”<sup>107</sup>

The featuring of Tel Aviv’s nightlife in the local weeklies was more than a reflection of actual events and experiences.<sup>108</sup> It was also constructive of the image of Tel Aviv as a hub of intense nightlife. At the center of the city’s nightlife of the 1990s was the dance scene, which, along with its network of clubs and parties, was the local aspect of a global phenomenon. The club Allenby 58 was “the flagship of the dance scene in the country.” In 1998, Allenby 58 was crowned the best club by virtue of its being “the biggest, the best designed, and the most appealing to the most crowds.” In that year, on the fifth anniversary of its inauguration, it was declared to be “the place that will change the dictionary entry for the word ‘night.’ The new definitions: scene, culture, way of life, worldview.” In typical hype, the opening of Allenby 58 was described as a watershed in the history of Tel Aviv’s nightlife: “Tel Aviv before is definitely not Tel Aviv after.”<sup>109</sup>

For some, the seemingly boundless intensity of Tel Aviv’s nightlife was a cultural statement. Journalist Ari Shavit commented:

It seems that there is something more than just nightlife, more than another wild night in a hot city. Something which is not just another form of dance of another generation on the threshold of the millennium. But here is a kind of a great rebellion. Confused and undefined and articulate. Lacking in statements and lacking in words. Almost dumb. And neverthe-



less a very active rebellion. Very energetic. It is not so clear against what. Perhaps against Israeli history. Perhaps against Israeli destiny. Perhaps against the Israeli predicament itself.<sup>110</sup>

Shavit claimed that beyond its centrality in Tel Aviv's nightlife of the late 1990s, Allenby 58 was more than a mere club: "Allenby 58 is Tel Avivian. It is a reflection of Tel Avivian society." In this interpretive framework, the club was symptomatic of the city: "Tel Aviv is a hedonistic city. It is very important for the Tel Avivian public to go out and have fun in a goof party. It is less preoccupied with the hardships of everyday life, it is more open, connected to culture and fashion, and is exposed, by virtue of living in this city, to what happens in the world. People here are freer, that is why Allenby 58 can only exist here."<sup>111</sup>

In addition to its function as a landmark of the local dance scene, Allenby 58 was a nodal point in a global, transnational scene and in this capacity enhanced Tel Aviv's global reputation. In the 1960s, Tel Aviv's nightlife was fashioned after imported patterns, which only emphasized its peripheral status. The conscious import of foreign cultural patterns had the effect that local nightlife was always lagging behind that of world centers. The delay, even if its duration became shorter and shorter, was nevertheless an aspect of the location of Tel Aviv on the margin of the world scene. Allenby 58's contribution to Tel Aviv's self-image was in transforming Tel Aviv into one of "the big nightlife cities of the world: the night scene in Tel Aviv is bigger than the night scene in Paris in absolute terms or Amsterdam in relative terms."<sup>112</sup> In 1997, Allenby 58 was considered among the best leading European clubs.<sup>113</sup> International recognition buttressed the reputation of Tel Aviv "as a unique city in the entire world, [which] for the 'scene' is even richer than Paris or Prague."<sup>114</sup> But from an ironic perspective, the Tel Aviv scene was no more than a "mud puddle" that "in recent years assumed gigantic dimensions."<sup>115</sup>

For its proponents, the intensity of Tel Aviv's nightlife in the 1990s was indicative of the vitality of Israeli life. Commenting on the development since the austere 1950s, historian Anita Shapira noted: "Culturally speaking, I am in no doubt that Israel is a cultural center on a world scale. Show me another European country, perhaps with the exception of England, where there is such a concentration of intellectual intensity: in politics, in literature, even in Tel Aviv's nightlife. We are like a little New York. There is here something effervescent, vital."<sup>116</sup>

From a different point of view, Tel Aviv's intense nightlife was represen-

tative of a hedonistic culture that in its more extreme aspects bordered on nihilism<sup>117</sup> and to an extent was expressive of a spiritual void. In this sense, this culture reflected the dark side of Tel Aviv's night.

### "Nonstop Parade"

On Purim of 1998, the Adloyada paraded down Tel Aviv's streets once again. Produced by the municipality, the event was in this year a nostalgic gesture. Until its cancellation in 1936, the Adloyada seemed to be on its way to become a local tradition. It was reinstated in the 1950s, but then it finally became evident that it was an option only, to be produced occasionally, but not a binding tradition. In its heyday in the early 1930s, the Adloyada was not only a mass festive event, but also a demonstration of the Hebrew revival championed by the First Hebrew City. At the same time, it augmented Tel Aviv's frivolous character. Being a secular city par excellence, the Nonstop City was not committed to the traditional Jewish calendar. As noted, in the 1930s the campaign against the year-end parties was an aspect of the officially promoted campaign to preserve the quintessential Jewish character of the First Hebrew City. In the 1950s, the celebration of the end of the year, the "youngest Jewish festival," was an additional component in the city's set of festivals: "My city celebrates this festival with pomp and circumstance. Tel Aviv, as people say, is dressed up to celebrate."<sup>118</sup> Toward the end of 2001, a local weekly offered readers a variety of parties in different styles, among them "alternative," "intimate," "retro," "'feminine,'" and "exclusive."<sup>119</sup> Understood as a statement, ignoring Jewish tradition was expressed in the defiant opening of restaurants and coffee shops on Tish'a Be'Av eve (Ninth of Av, the day in the Jewish calendar commemorating the destruction of the Jerusalem Temples).

During the Jewish festival of Sukkot in 1998, the same year when after a long break the Adloyada marched again, the Love Parade marched for the first time in Tel Aviv. In the 1990s, the parade became an event of a globalized "Dance Nation." As noted by Eli Mohar in *Ha'ir*, introducing the Love Parade into Tel Aviv articulated a desperate quest to belong: "What has not changed is our old, persistent desire to join—to join everyone who is willing to accept us, to [join] everything that has an international scent, and of course to [join] a happy and sympathetic internationale such as the young Dance Nation."<sup>120</sup>

According to one commentary, the newly introduced Love Parade was

a twofold innovation. On the one hand, the event was supposed to augment Tel Aviv's reputation as a "cultural capital" and as a nonstop city that "justifies its reputation." On the other hand, it was hailed as "the first secular festival,"<sup>121</sup> meaning that it was associated with neither religious tradition nor national heritage. As the festival of the "international Dance Nation," the ostensibly "first secular Israeli festival"<sup>122</sup> was the celebration of a secular and cosmopolitan Tel Aviv. The producer of what was called a "weekend of love" maintained that the celebration was more than the concern of the local dance scene. The issue, so the argument ran, was the creation of a new festival representative of contemporary Tel Aviv as an essentially secular city that was connected directly with Europe and that offered an alternative to Jerusalem and the national and religious rites associated with it:

Last Friday something of substantial significance happened in Tel Aviv—the Love Parade became an unshakable new social icon, a new festival added to the festivals of Israel, for which more than 200,000 people voted with dancing. . . . [T]he Love Parade, so symbolically proximate to the anachronistic Jerusalem Parade, put Tel Aviv on the map on par with big cities in Europe such as Berlin, Paris, or Zurich. For the first time Tel Aviv presented itself as it is—a cosmopolitan, open city that is connected on-line with the world.<sup>123</sup>

Actually, the Love Parade was "an annual showcase of Tel Aviv's night scene."<sup>124</sup> Not everyone shared the producers and promoters' unbounded enthusiasm for the new tradition. Some considered "the biggest clubs and music event in the country"<sup>125</sup> to be an expression of moral decay. As noted in irony, some ordinary people were not aware of the difference between a Love Parade and a Gay Pride Parade.<sup>126</sup> Such misunderstandings evinced the extent to which the mythic Tel Aviv excluded all those who did not share the vision of a pluralistic, cosmopolitan, and manifestly tolerant Nonstop City.

### "City of Sins"

*City of Sins*, Ilan Shoshan's television documentary film on Tel Aviv's nightlife, was broadcast for the first time in 1997. The *City of Sins* was an aspect of the Nonstop City. It lasted from midnight to dawn and took place in the streets, in pubs, and in nightclubs. Yet beyond a highly selective documentation of Tel Aviv's nightlife, the film documents a quest both to render

that nightlife decadent, as is clearly evident in the film's title, and to exalt it as an essential aspect of the city. From this perspective, the depicted events, locations, and people, banal as they might be, are constructive of the mythic city. The film juxtaposes Tel Aviv with New York and Jerusalem. In contrast to the alleged identity between Tel Aviv and New York—the statement that "Tel Aviv is New York" appears in the introduction to the film—a short visit to Jerusalem is intended to emphasize the alleged stark contrast between two cities.

The film's *City of Sins* suggests the dark side of Tel Aviv as revealed in the night and in the activities associated with it. Yet, as a characterization of Tel Aviv, the *City of Sins* was the counterpoint of the complacent village. In 1934, the writer Yitzhak Dov Berkowitz condemned the city's moral corruption and offered as an alternative "the good, innocent . . . faraway Jewish villages."<sup>127</sup> The contradiction between the *City of Sins* and the innocent countryside reappeared in the 1990s, when the hyped move of local celebrities from the city to upper-middle-class country retreats became fashionable.<sup>128</sup> This move was more than a change of address. It also meant disengagement from Tel Aviv's feverish way of life in search of a tranquility that was not to be found there.<sup>129</sup> In this context, the stark contrast between the ostensibly simple, clean, friendly, and innocent countryside and the sophisticated, cynical, dirty, and misanthropic *City of Sins* was a recurrent motif.

Sure enough, the *City of Sins* had its ugly side. According to literary critic Haim Nagid, Tel Aviv as depicted in Yitzhak Ben-Ner's *City of Refuge* was "a contemporary Gomorrah where everything was allowed."<sup>130</sup> The choice of Gomorrah as a metaphor for an irremediable evil place was to some extent fanciful because the usual metaphor is Sodom or, alternately, Sodom and Gomorrah. In 1934, when Tel Aviv was condemned as the hub of real estate speculation, it was called Tel Sodom. In 1946, a British journalist characterized Tel Aviv by night as "a kind of a new Sodom and Gomorrah."<sup>131</sup> In 2001, a Sodom was created in the "rumors, tales, half truths, imaginations, drug hallucinations, sexual fantasies, wishes of the heart, baseless boasting" that existed in connection with the alleged unbridled sexual activities taking place in Tel Aviv clubs.<sup>132</sup> Beyond the question whether the contemporary reference to Tel Aviv by night as Sodom was all about an urban legend only, it persistently alluded to the other side of the city, which as early as 1933 was envisioned by Nathan Alterman as the future "entertainment capital" of Jewish Palestine.<sup>133</sup>

**“Things Happen in Tel Aviv”**

Intended to promote Tel Aviv as a tourist destination, the slogan “Tel Aviv a Nonstop City” formulated the essence of the city in terms of its vitality: like New York, it was implied, Tel Aviv was a dynamic, vibrant, and sensual city. As an image expressive of the distinction of Tel Aviv, the “Nonstop City” slogan cast Tel Aviv in the mold of a unique experience that differentiated it from other cities in Israel and put it on par with New York. As a local version of New York, the Nonstop City represented what Tel Aviv desired to be and, according to its proponents, should have become.

The Nonstop City was an officially recognized quest. The mythic power of the slogan was grounded in the notion that it successfully characterized the essence of Tel Aviv as a unique experience. Though referring to the contemporary city, the slogan resonated with the constitutive idea of Tel Aviv as a quintessentially Western-like city. In this sense, it reiterated a fundamental and persistent aspect of Tel Aviv. Its founders sought to build a modern, European-like neighborhood. The commentators on the First Hebrew City also had emphasized its modern, Western character. Toward the end of the twentieth century, the Western orientation of Tel Aviv was cast as an updated nightlife culture and its enlightened constitutive values.

The Nonstop City formulated the demand to recognize the urban(e) aspect of the city as its essential characteristic. It represented a quest and in this sense indicated a sense of inferiority that had to be compensated. Notwithstanding efforts at refutation and challenges to its actual existence, the Nonstop City did not need to be validated on the level of myth; it was a given, with the myth serving as a proof of its validity.

In summer 2002, the municipality replaced the old slogan with a new one, “Things Happen in Tel Aviv.” Like its successful predecessor, this slogan was also launched in the framework of an advertising campaign. An unidentified source in the municipality elaborated that the change was a response to a sense of discontent among residents regarding the old slogan: “There are many residents for whom people from other cities who come to Tel Aviv and take parking places are a problem. In recent years, there has been a feeling that Tel Aviv has evolved, and beyond recreational activities there is interest, production, and quality. The new slogan is directed to Tel Avivians but emphasizes that Tel Aviv is still the most vibrant city in the Middle East.”<sup>134</sup>

It is impossible to argue against the assertion that things happen in Tel

Aviv. Things happen everywhere. Yet beyond the self-evident, the slogan implied something else: things—with no need to detail which specific things—happen in Tel Aviv and not elsewhere in Israel. In this sense, the slogan was sophisticated in how it formulated Tel Aviv’s distinction in terms of the ostensibly obvious. Yet it should be observed that beyond sophistry cloaked in simplicity, the slogan did not offer a new definition of the city’s essence.

The new slogan was intended to replace the old one in official municipal publications. Yet this did not mean that the Nonstop City was bound to disappear. As a slogan, the “Nonstop City” had already become embedded into contemporary cultural consciousness, and its becoming a cliché only indicated its success. The new slogan did not represent a new conception of the city. It was actually no more than a sophisticated variation on the theme of Tel Aviv as a city of opportunities. In this characterization, Tel Aviv was distinct from other places: “What is it about to live in Tel Aviv? It is about expecting that tomorrow something will happen that did not happen to you today. On the other hand, people who live in Ofakim [a small town in the northern Negev Desert] assume that what will happen tomorrow is almost identical to what happened today.”<sup>135</sup>



neighborhood of Tel Aviv where many of the Jews fleeing persecution in Poland settled. Most were traders and small manufacturers, and the area thus assumed the particular character of small shops and workshops. In the 1930s and the 1940s, the area was considered “the center of Tel Aviv’s cultural and commercial life.”<sup>1</sup> In the popular imagination of the period, Sheinkin Street was associated with hectic commercial activities and was emblematic of the petit-bourgeois character of the new neighborhoods built in this period. For proponents of socialist Zionism, who advocated cooperative settlement as a Zionist priority, Sheinkin Street was anathema, the epitome of the negative qualities commonly associated with the old Jewish world of eastern Europe. In this ideological context, the street, associated with the *shtetl* (the small Jewish town of eastern Europe) and bearer of petit-bourgeois values, was in stark contrast to the labor-dominated official Zionist ethos.

As Tel Aviv developed northward, the area that in the 1930s and 1940s was the core of the new city became increasingly a place on the margin of Tel Aviv’s urban experience. In particular, when mentioned at all, Sheinkin Street was a thing of the past, even obsolete, at most reminiscent of a bygone era. In 1976, journalist Mirit Shem-*or* described the appearance of the street: “Sheinkin Street is narrow and long, and on both sides flanked by many shops, and among the shops there are many women with old gowns and slippers.” Devoid of any distinction, the street was dismissed as “simply gray.”<sup>2</sup>

The writer Yoram Kaniuk, following a “nostalgic tour” he conducted in 1983 on Sheinkin Street, agreed that the street was indeed in decline, but his interpretation of what it meant was original. In his view, the apparent neglect and the lack of sophistication were a merit. From the perspective of nostalgia, the street’s special character was a product of time that stood still: a shop “that is a paradise of childhood,” an orthopedic institute “whose showcase looks like one from the 1930s.” In defiance of common wisdom, Kaniuk extolled the street, which for him exuded “an aroma of living space, of comfort, of landlordism, of petit bourgeois wisdom, a wisdom that is becoming increasingly rare.” He juxtaposed the old-fashioned shops there with the expensive boutiques sprouting in the more prestigious areas of the city. Conducive to the good old values, Sheinkin Street represented an urban option that had not materialized in Tel Aviv.<sup>3</sup>



## Sheinkin Street

### “*The Israeli SoHo or Local Village*”

[Sheinkin Street] was the only area of Tel Aviv that smelled of something interesting—the meeting point between what had been and what will be.

—“Why Sheinkin,” *Ma’ariv*, 9 December 1988

**Notwithstanding** the various pubs and clubs, the hub of the Nonstop City, the epitome of the “new Tel Aviv-ness,” was Sheinkin Street. Whereas Dizengolf Street rose to fame when the mythic aura of the First Hebrew City was dissipating, Sheinkin Street, in its capacity as “a human happening,” a media event, and a cultural metaphor not only was actively involved in the mythic construction of the Nonstop City, but also encapsulated it. Celebrated as “the Israeli SoHo or local Village,” trendy Sheinkin became metaphorical for an “alternative” lifestyle and an enlightened worldview, for an artsy scene and a bohemian milieu. In this capacity, it became emblematic of Tel Aviv’s 1980s self-image as a vibrant, up-to-date city.

The mythologization of Sheinkin Street was promoted and supported by the hype generated by the media, notably Tel Aviv’s local weeklies, which not only reported about Sheinkin Street, but also inflated otherwise trivial issues to ostensibly mythic proportions. As a cultural signification of issues and phenomena, Sheinkin Street permeated popular culture in the form of powerful images that substantiated specific notions about its distinct character and function as an icon of popular culture.

### “Simply Gray”

In the 1920s, Tel Aviv expanded rapidly northward; new streets were built, and its population swelled. Sheinkin Street was built in a newly constructed

### “Sheinkin Street Is Alive and Kicking”

When Yoram Kaniuk discovered the somewhat hidden charm of the old Sheinkin Street, the municipality was engaged in a radical attempt at urban renewal.<sup>4</sup> The underlying idea was to perform “heart surgery in Lev Tel Aviv [Hebrew for “the heart of Tel Aviv”].<sup>5</sup> The plan for the renewal of Lev Tel Aviv, which was the district’s official name, was presented to the municipality in February 1980. The idea was to promote the evacuation of offices from residential buildings in the area; the aim was “to revive Lev Tel Aviv and to attract new young residents.”<sup>6</sup> The planning concept was formulated in terms of a district and not a street. Interestingly, according to the chief planner, it was designed to achieve more than urban renewal; the intention was to bestow a new character on the district rather than to revive its old traits: “I see Lev Tel Aviv becoming something like New York’s Village.”<sup>7</sup>

The engine of renewal of Lev Tel Aviv was the transfiguration of Sheinkin Street. By the time Yoram Kaniuk praised the old Sheinkin Street, a transformation process had already begun, in the course of which Sheinkin Street assumed a new character and became Tel Aviv’s center of gravity in the 1980s. Conjured as the “rebirth”<sup>8</sup> or the “second birth”<sup>9</sup> of a street characterized by “a ghetto mentality, old and crumbling buildings, elderly residents and rows of small shops,” the transformation meant that “a decaying and dying street . . . underwent a social, mental, and design metamorphosis, peeled off a few layers of paint and marched into the modern 1980s.”<sup>10</sup>

However, according to the founding myth propagated by the mass media, the reinvention of Sheinkin Street was the realization of the vision of a few individuals who acted on their own, with no connection to or support from the municipal authorities. In the standard version, the “founding father” of the “Israeli Village in Tel Aviv,” or the one “who invented Sheinkin,” was Dani Dothan, “a Jerusalemite [who] formulated the new Tel Aviv-ness.”<sup>11</sup> In this version of the founding myth, the rebirth of the street began when Dothan, a musician and art and culture impresario, moved from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv to found the Sheink-In coffee shop, a place that in retrospect would “determine the fate of Sheinkin to be the most ‘in’ place” in Tel Aviv. In interviews, Dani Dothan himself reiterated that he was indeed the promoter of the transformation. According to him, his intention was to found in Sheinkin Street “a place of art galleries and cafés, of encounter and artistic fermentation, according to the Village model.”<sup>12</sup> The act of founding actually consisted, however, of a series of individual commercial and artistic

initiatives that converged on the same location. These initiatives “dictated the Sheinkinite touch and look,” changed the local landscape and ambience, and contributed to the reputation of Sheinkin Street as a young, bohemian place.

The cumulative effect of these new places was the growing affiliation and association of Sheinkin Street with antiestablishment avant-garde art and a young, radical, antiestablishment culture. Subversive statements and acts buttressed the notion of the artistic avant-garde and contempt for the establishment. Dani Dothan later made it clear that the new Sheinkin Street was closely related to certain ideological and cultural attitudes: “The entrance to Sheinkin entailed belief in peace, solidarity, art, culture, and the media.”<sup>13</sup> In this sense, the bohemian Sheinkin rendered the traditional Western fusion of artistic avant-garde and political radicalism in a local, Israeli idiom, the tenor of which was the rejection of “bourgeois” values and way of life.

The construction of the new Sheinkin Street in popular culture was to a substantial extent an image-engineering process. The local weeklies had a vital role in the promotion of the new Sheinkin Street and the formation of powerful images that constituted the Sheinkin myth. The close and sympathetic reporting provided by Tel Aviv’s local weeklies was a major contribution to cementing the reputation of the street as a special place, “where the real things take place.”<sup>14</sup> The cooperation between the local scene and the local press was mutually beneficial. According to an observer, the local press “was looking for items, and the new residents, most of them engaged in art and aware of the media, provided the goods. There emerged a lively dialogue with the local weeklies.”<sup>15</sup>

According to Dani Dothan, “Sheinkin succeeded as a phenomenon; this is one of the hearts of Israeli culture.”<sup>16</sup> A journalist observed, “Sheinkin Street is not only a street in Tel Aviv, but more than anything else a social concept. . . . Sheinkin Street is a concept that extends far beyond the geographical Sheinkin Street.”<sup>17</sup> At this phase of its history, “Sheinkin” both denoted a geographical location and connoted a composite set of social and cultural phenomena and attitudes. In this symbolic capacity, it became a powerful metaphor for Israeli popular culture.

### “The Sheinkinite Gospel”

In 1993, Yair Lapid, a media star and a writer, explained: “Sheinkin consciously mimics similar streets in the world: Greenwich Village in New



York, Chelsea in London, the Latin Quarter in Paris.”<sup>18</sup> The “rebirth” of Sheinkin Street as a local version of Greenwich Village or SoHo had a substantial role in bolstering the self-image of Tel Aviv as a city on par with New York or London, which in turn reflected an interest shared by commentators and city officials to recast Tel Aviv in the mold of a world city.

In its official capacity, the slogan “Tel Aviv a Nonstop City” encapsulated the notion of Tel Aviv as a dynamic city that was active around the clock.<sup>19</sup> Implicitly, the slogan also formulated the prevalent notion that “[r]eal life takes place in Tel Aviv, and here the essence of Israel is actualized in the most hedonistic sense.”<sup>20</sup> In this wider context, the new Sheinkin Street became emblematic of the new Tel Aviv that was allegedly emerging in the 1980s. In the words of an advertising agent familiar with the local scene,

Many Sheinkinites feel more Tel Avivian than other Tel Avivians. Most people consider the term *Tel Avivian* something positive, people who are at the center of activity, who know how to live. And there is an overlapping between the Sheinkinite and the Tel Avivian. Let us formulate it thus: 50 percent of the shares of Tel Aviv society belong to the Sheinkinites. The rest belongs to the remaining Tel Avivians.<sup>21</sup>

According to Yair Lapid, himself a resident of the neighborhood, Sheinkin Street “generates bohemianism, artistic tendencies, a certain type of intended eccentricity.”<sup>22</sup> The new Sheinkin Street represented the alleged postmodern aspect of Tel Aviv. The historian Anita Shapira noted the “postmodern time of Sheinkin Street and its satellites.”<sup>23</sup> The postmodern condition—as an ideal type of a cultural model—emphasizes the image, most notably the visual image, and tends to prefer diversity to coherence. It is characterized by hostility to conventional authority and by rejection of traditional differences between high and low culture. It is ostensibly artificial and uncommitted, sophisticated and self-conscious.<sup>24</sup> The postmodern character of the new Sheinkin Street was identified with the worldview and lifestyle of the new residents of what became known as the “Sheinkin compound.” It was also evident in the fusions that became a hallmark of the street and part of its charm.

The new Sheinkin Street’s nonconformist image was evident in the notion that the street was a hub of activities and phenomena rendered “alternative.” Its galleries offered “alternative exhibitions,” and its shops offered

“alternative design” and “different clothes.”<sup>25</sup> According to one commentary, in addition to its being “obsessively preoccupied with itself,” Sheinkin Street was suffused with “intentioned strangeness” coupled with its often being ascribed extreme proportions: “More than anything else, Sheinkin Street is a production line of hysteria. Once it’s about beaten children, and once it’s about the rights of homosexuals. Yesterday it was against religious coercion. Tomorrow it will be feminists against advertising on billboards. And everything is noisy and full of excitement, full of affectation, reported in the media ad nauseam.”<sup>26</sup>

### “Intellectuals with Inclinations to the Arts”

In an interview, Dani Dothan maintained that “a Sheinkinite is someone who is identified with the less conservative aspect of life.”<sup>27</sup> As the postmodernist articulation of contemporary Tel Aviv, Sheinkin Street was a new and distinct cultural phenomenon anchored in a well-defined sociological context. John Urry maintains that the appearance of postmodernism is linked to a social change,<sup>28</sup> specifically the substantial growth of what the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called “the new petit bourgeoisie.” According to this thesis, members of the new petit bourgeoisie are engaged mainly in cultural production, especially in the mass media, advertising, publishing, and art. To a substantial extent, they are strongly inclined to innovations in fashion, style, and taste. They are mostly relatively young people, and their group identity is articulated in the idiom of a shared worldview and distinct lifestyle. Diversity and difference, though celebrated, converge to a collective conformity expressed in a shared set of value judgments. Individual divergence is often but a variation on a group theme, the definition of which often changes with fluctuating cultural directions and fashions.

In the popular imagination of the early 1990s, “Sheinkin Street today is becoming more and more like New York’s SoHo in the texture of its population, too, which includes hundreds of artists, media people, poets, writers, and actors.”<sup>29</sup> This view conformed with the conventional image of Sheinkinites as “[i]ntellectuals with inclinations to the arts, film and music makers, advertisers.”<sup>30</sup> Yet other images persisted. The “antireligious image and the sushi seal attached to its residents”<sup>31</sup> associated Sheinkin Street with yuppies. An advertising agent offered a nuanced, ostensibly professional characterization of the Sheinkinites: “It is about people, between 17 and 40+ years old, who feel young. This is a kind of culture that compensates for whatever

these people chose not to achieve in the formal channels of life, such as money or status. A Sheinkinite is a class by itself, a kind of hybridization between the freak of earlier times and a contemporary yuppie.<sup>32</sup>

In the formative years of the new Sheinkin Street, the dominant image was suffused with the flavor of Bohemia; significantly, the image of the Sheinkinites never matured to include their successors, the “bobos” (bourgeois bohemians), David Brooks’s ironic designation of the new American upper class of the 1990s.<sup>33</sup>

From the perspective of the new residents who settled in the area in the 1980s, Sheinkin Street was both a neighborhood with an intimate character—a pleasant and warm island in the midst of the hectic city<sup>34</sup>—and a cohesive community. The contrast to the rich, upper-middle-class neighborhoods of the north of Tel Aviv was integral to the self-image of the Sheinkinites as members of a community of like-minded people who rejected the bourgeois ethos.

The theme of a strong sense of community and solidarity was firmly embedded in the self-image of the new neighborhood evolving around Sheinkin Street:

Sheinkin Street attracts families and young people who share the same attitudes. A similar mentality, an identical education for the children, materialistic issues are not prominent, people even look alike in the way they dress, their interests and occupations. There is something substantial about being a Sheinkinite, which is not extrovert, but real. It is manifest in the warm, direct human relationships, in mutual help in regard to children, in help rendered in finding jobs, since most people here are engaged in theater, film, television, the media, the press, and they help each other.<sup>35</sup>

The notion that the Sheinkinites represented a distinct species was evinced in the attempt to define the essential features of the so-called Sheinkinism (in Hebrew, *sheinkina'ut*). The association with culture and art was of course a fundamental yet rather vague distinction. Another feature was the “manner of talk and walk, dress style, political views.” According to this sympathetic interpretation, Sheinkinism was evinced first and foremost in a distinct “outer message” articulated by “a thin look, black dress, jelly in the hair, dark glasses.” This “outer message”—though suspected of being superficial and perhaps even fake—gradually crystallized into “inner content”

that defined the essence of “Sheinkinism” as “engagement in art, craft, media, and actually culture, money not being one of its characteristics.”<sup>36</sup>

A defining feature of Sheinkinism was the so-called Sheinkin language. A prominent example was the adjective *ultimate*: “In Sheinkin Street everything is ultimate. A shoe lace is ultimate.”<sup>37</sup> Here also belonged typical jargon centered on words such as *fun, like*, and *so*. According to one journalist, there developed a typical language that was markedly different from ordinary language:

You are not talking in the language of ordinary human beings. You discuss. You do not speak in fully formulated sentences, but in essentialisms. Words such as “also,” “so” and “only” are considered as complete sentences. You have to understand them in reference to preceding sentences. Only thus are they retrieved from the realm of the mysterious and the not deciphered and become profound. An ocean of meaning.<sup>38</sup>

According to the essayist and language maven Ruvik Rosenthal, “Sheinkin language is a subtype of the Israeli spoken language,” which should be evaluated in contrast to standard Hebrew and the brutal, “macho” street language. Sheinkinese was “gentle, fragile, somewhat feminine.” This was “a language without nouns and almost no verbs.” Beyond its linguistic features, it was “a language of protest, against the macho language . . . against the dense, hyperpolitical Israeli reality.”<sup>39</sup> Another characteristic was sophistication and a measure of self-irony.

One journalist espoused the idea that Sheinkin Street meant an exclusive club with distinct characteristics. Yet belonging to this club was more than appropriating the established markers of affiliation: “You either have it or you don’t . . . [Y]ou can buy a T-shirt, a jeans jacket, and soft shoes. You can wear an earring and say that you deal with creative dance / creative writing / conceptual happenings. But even then, you do not pass for a resident of Sheinkin. All in all you remain a bourgeois duck disguised as a Sheinkinite.”<sup>40</sup>

The rejection of bourgeois values was fundamental to the new Sheinkin Street. It asserted the need of the “new petit bourgeoisie” to differentiate itself from the bourgeoisie and its values. In retrospect, Dani Dothan explained: “We wanted to be different.”<sup>41</sup> The contempt shown to bourgeois values was constructed of difference evaluated in terms of moral superiority.





Ironically, the old Sheinkin Street and the new Sheinkin Street were both “petit bourgeois,” notwithstanding the obvious differences between the old type and the new variant, whose emergence evinced and facilitated the street’s postmodern character.

### Sheinkin: “A Street with Character”

The fusion of seemingly incompatible elements is characteristic of the postmodern condition. As often mentioned in the Hebrew press, the special feature about Sheinkin Street was the mingling together of shops that seemed to belong to bygone times and shops that represented contemporary trends. The street’s commercial landscape offered a fusion of contradictions: “Sheinkin Street is a fascinating mixture. Old and neglected shops with unfashionable and off-putting merchandise side by side with others, up to date, fully designed, shops that offer the last word.”<sup>42</sup> An aspect of the postmodern character of the place, the fusion of contradictions also included the mingling of old and young, of “Yiddish with Punk,”<sup>43</sup> as well as the ostensibly unique coexistence of ultra-Orthodox and secular residents.<sup>44</sup> The latter combination was rendered significant in the light of the prevalent tension characterizing the relationship of the ultra-Orthodox and the secular elsewhere in Israel. The religious community residing in Lev Tel Aviv was a remnant of the old Sheinkin Street that persisted in spite of and side by side with the new Sheinkin Street. The coexistence of the two groups was embedded in the self-image of the new Sheinkin Street as an island of tolerance and enlightenment.<sup>45</sup>

In June 1989, when the municipality officially introduced the slogan “Tel Aviv a Nonstop City,” an advertisement for businesses located on Sheinkin Street reminded potential customers that Sheinkin was “a street with character” that offered a variety of options: “Come to shop, stroll, and have fun on Sheinkin Street. The street is a unique combination of different businesses. Boutiques, cafés, cosmetics, fashion, restaurants, etc.”<sup>46</sup> Celebrated as trendsetters, the shops of the new Sheinkin Street were reputed to “dictate a new and daring look that is later followed by others.”<sup>47</sup>

For Dani Dohan, “Sheinkin” was a failure in that the idea to make the place a center of the art scene did not materialize. To his regret, “the galleries went, and the boutiques came.”<sup>48</sup> This attitude represented the notion that artistic energies, not commercial ventures, should have become the hallmark

of the new Sheinkin Street. However, the dismissive acknowledgment of failure disavowed the decisive role of cafés and restaurants, whose number reached twenty-eight in 2002,<sup>49</sup> in shaping the image of Sheinkin Street.

Whereas the new cafés represented the updating of the street in contemporary terms of design, the older ones, most notably Café Tamar, evinced continuity between the old and the new Sheinkin. Founded in the 1940s, Café Tamar was a meeting place of regular customers. The café was frequented by journalists working for the left-leaning daily *Davar*, located a block away, and by politicians of various hues. As a place of encounter between journalism and politics, Café Tamar was the hub of information and gossip. The regulars gave the place the character of a members’ club, and, according to reputation, “the people who have been here for decades are a kind of a family.”<sup>50</sup> In April 1981, a short time before the “rebirth” of Sheinkin Street and the transformation of Café Tamar into an institution of the new Sheinkin Street, the café was reviewed in a local weekly. The reviewer mentioned the simplicity of the place and referred to the special atmosphere: “Here sit people who write. Those who do not write are ashamed that they don’t and make an effort to strew around them a layer of scribbled-on sheets of paper and chewed pens. [The café] is explicitly and definitely one of those places that are enveloped in a heavy smell of atmosphere.” Beyond a dismissive reference to “the curse of Formica, the affliction of plastic, and the abomination of iron,” Café Tamar was “one of the last Mohicans of the extinct tribe of coffee shops.” For the reviewer, it was a relic of former times, a coffee shop with a distinct European aroma.<sup>51</sup> It seemingly had a great past, but hardly any future.

Yet three years later another journalist observed that the “area has revived.” For him, “simple furniture, Formica, grapefruit juice, a ventilator, a white refrigerator for cakes, the cacti in the window with thick stems” testified to “the age of the place. To the seniority of the coffee shop.”<sup>52</sup> Café Tamar represented the linkage between the contemporary street and the old Sheinkin. It connected the milieu of old media, most notably the press, and the milieu of “intellectuals who incline toward art, film . . . music, and advertising” identified with the new Sheinkin Street—or, in a more blunt formulation, with the “lunatic aggregate of intellectuals, crazy people, social reformers and idlers” who belonged to the contemporary image of Café Tamar.<sup>53</sup> The mixture of customers was a distinctive factor. Café Tamar was “a coffee shop for intellectuals, journalists, writers, academics, former

Palmahniks [members of the prestate elite pioneering militia], and Sheinkinites.”<sup>54</sup> The appropriation of the café by the Sheinkinites and their associates was declarative of commitment to the cultural heritage of the place. According to one interpretation, the café was “an archaeological mound: it accumulates memories and history, layer after layer.”<sup>55</sup>

At the height of its second career, Café Tamar was Sheinkin Street’s most famous cultural icon. It was “one of the most worn out, denounced, praised, used, pathetic, expected, and talked about” cafés of Tel Aviv.<sup>56</sup> The lines of a popular song from 1988 about a typical Sheinkinite encapsulated the centrality of the coffee shop in the popular image of Sheinkin Street: “Living in Sheinkin / drinking in Café Tamar / wanting to make a short movie.”<sup>57</sup> A later variation was to be found in an advertisement for a car, whose owner was characterized as “living in Sheinkin, parking at Café Tamar.” The ad pictured two young women in the coffee shop. The message was the association of the specific model with the young and liberated milieu of Sheinkin Street.<sup>58</sup>

A prominent feature of the café was the proprietress, Sara Stern. In the 1981 portrayal of Café Tamar, the “proprietress whose rule is absolute”<sup>59</sup> was already mentioned. Later on, her figure acquired mythological proportions: “Sara Stern and her coffee are nothing less than a walking legend!”<sup>60</sup> Her fame as a local hero resonated with the conception of Café Tamar as an institution that transcended the passage of time and offered a sense of permanence in the midst of a constant change.

Whereas Café Tamar represented the bohemian pole of Sheinkin Street, other newly opened cafés represented the up-to-date facet of the street. In 1998, Café Ke’ilu, “the first conceptual coffee shop in the world,”<sup>61</sup> was launched in Sheinkin Street. The name was highly significant: *ke’ilu*, meaning “like” and interpreted as expressive of the tendency “to deny and reshape reality,”<sup>62</sup> was a direct reference to Sheinkinese and in this sense encapsulated the Sheinkin predicament. As Café Ke’ilu soon became known, it was not a “real” business, but an exercise in the virtual reality of a design school: a café-restaurant serving “like” food on empty plates. The project was intended to explore the borderline between the real and the virtual. Locating the project in Sheinkin Street created the impression that it all amounted to a profound statement about the so-called Sheinkin culture in particular and about the Tel Avivian condition in general. As became apparent, “the great success” reported in the local media was a bluff. The neighbors reported that the place was “like full because in reality most of the time it was empty.”<sup>63</sup>



*Café Tamar* by Eddie Gerald. Photograph, 2005, of Sara Stern in front of her café. Courtesy of the photographer.

### “The Most Leftist Street in the Country”

Based on its association with a bohemian lifestyle and its celebration of Western-oriented individualism, Sheinkin Street became a metonym for the vision of a secular, liberal, Western-oriented Israel. Yair Lapid, champion of a secular and liberal Israel, contended that “[t]his street is our control group in anticipation of the day when sane life will prevail” (in Israel, that is).<sup>64</sup> This vision should be understood in the context of the “culture war” and the struggle for hegemony that marked the fundamental fault lines of Jewish society in Israel: between the peace-oriented Left and the nationalistic Right, secular modernity and religious orthodoxy, veteran Israelis of European descent and Jews who emigrated from Islamic countries after independence. Ultimately, the significance of Sheinkin Street for its ideological proponents was that it offered an alternative to everything deemed reactionary according to the enlightened standards of Israel’s cultural elite. Most notably, for secular, left-leaning Israelis it was the answer to the alleged threat posed by religious ultraorthodoxy.<sup>65</sup>

According to common wisdom, Sheinkin Street was “the most leftist street in the country,”<sup>66</sup> “the bastion of the secular Left,”<sup>67</sup> “the bastion of



leftism.”<sup>68</sup> Though differently evaluated, the stereotypical identification of Sheinkin Street with the secular Left was common to both the Left and the Right. Incumbent prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu stated prior to the 1999 general elections, which he lost, that “what is left to the Left is Sheinkin Street . . . and north Tel Aviv.”<sup>69</sup> Prime Minister Ehud Barak posed a rhetorical question to his supporters shortly before the general elections held in February 2001, which he likewise lost: “What is it, are we only in Sheinkin? Don’t we have responsibility for our citizens?”<sup>70</sup> After the elections, Israel Radio reported that at the polling station on Sheinkin Street, Ehud Barak received 71 percent of the votes in those elections, compared with the 38 percent he received nationwide.<sup>71</sup>

In its mythical conception, Sheinkin Street was “the street of peace, hegemony, and the Left.”<sup>72</sup> “[T]hose who shape their worldview in the pubs of Sheinkin Street will never understand those who defend our lives with their body and soul”—in other words, those who did not share the Sheinkin ethos.<sup>73</sup> Beyond the political context of its stereotypical identification with the secular left, Sheinkin Street became also a metaphor for cultural elitism and a patronizing posture. In this critical discourse, it represented the self-centered media and its ignorance of everything that extended beyond the Sheinkin milieu, especially poor neighborhoods and peripheral towns populated mainly by tradition-oriented Jewish immigrants from North Africa.<sup>74</sup> A public debate erupted in November 1997 following the characterization of Army Radio, a popular radio station among young people, as a “radio station with a well-defined social color . . . that broadcasts to and from Sheinkin,” meaning that the cultural orientation of the station was quintessentially leftist, secular, and Ashkenazi (Jews of European descent).<sup>75</sup> The stereotypical association of Sheinkin with a sense of cultural superiority resulted in its becoming a symbol of social and cultural patronage. The negative evaluation of Sheinkin challenged its hegemony in Israeli popular culture. Yet on another level this same challenge confirmed Sheinkin’s power as a cultural metaphor that transcended the geographical location.

### “Just Like Dizengoff”

In 1993, a journalist portrayed and commented on the popularity of the new Sheinkin Street: “And this is the street that on Fridays becomes what Dizengoff Street of the sixties and the seventies was. Hundreds, sometimes even thousands are Sheinking . . . on the pavements, among the cafés, the fa-

mous Sheinkin Garden, and the dress shops.”<sup>76</sup> The success of the new Sheinkin as a popular attraction was evident in that it replaced Dizengoff Street as the place where people congregated to see and be seen.

The decline of Dizengoff Street could serve as a warning that the rise of streets to prominence also entailed the possibility of a later decline. Already in the mid-1990s, references to the seeming decline of Sheinkin Street appeared in the mass media. Some of these references evinced a sense of dis- possession. For “veterans of Sheinkin Street,” the influx of people from the adjacent periphery indicated the end of their privileged position and, by extension, of Sheinkin Street itself. They were aware of the fate of Dizengoff Street: “the street that once was the meeting place of Bohemia . . . in the end became a street for tourists who came to see Bohemia until no single Tel Avivian was left there.” At this stage, media exposure, or rather overexposure, was bemoaned: “Once it was easier to preserve certain features as the exclusive domain of the elite.” But “nowadays, with the local weeklies around, what once took years takes only months.”<sup>77</sup> Paradoxically, the popularity of Sheinkin Street generated among the Sheinkinites a sense of alienation from the actual Sheinkin Street.

From another perspective, the alleged decline of the image of Sheinkin Street was encapsulated in the claim that “Allenby Street is pouring into Sheinkin Street.”<sup>78</sup> This claim is reminiscent of the allegation made in the 1970s that the decline of Dizengoff Street was owing to the so-called periphery’s “invasion” of the ostensibly exclusive territory of Bohemia. A geographically adjacent and bustling commercial thoroughfare, Allenby Street was plain, lacking any sophistication, dirty, and noisy; its shops were open to the street, offering cheap merchandise. Allenby Street catered to simple folk looking for a bargain. Sheinkin Street, at least in the eyes of ardent Sheinkinites, catered to people of quality who were eager for originality and sophistication. A Sheinkin Street shopkeeper observed: “What is sad about the situation in Sheinkin Street . . . is the loss of the concept. Like many streets that are not preserved, [Sheinkin Street] has become commercial. The quality character of a SoHo simmering with art and culture, with young and experimental boutiques, no longer holds. The customers are pouring in from the bazaars of Allenby Street.”<sup>79</sup>

In Dani Dothan’s estimation, Sheinkin Street represented both success and failure: “Sheinkin Street did not become an art center, a place of fertile encounter between artists from different areas, and artistically speaking it is a total failure. However, Sheinkin Street succeeded as a phenomenon.”<sup>80</sup> A

slightly different view considered the alleged “death of Sheinkin Street” actually as its ultimate success: “Sheinkin Street has died, but with its death it has bequeathed us a life that was not so bad.” According to this view, what mattered was not Sheinkin Street itself, but the idea it represented. The success of Sheinkin Street was the idea that “seeped down to many sectors of the populace.”<sup>81</sup>

### “The Great, Mythological Sheinkin Street”

The popular media’s fascination with Sheinkin Street was manifest in how reports and commentaries not only informed about local issues but, more important, served to propagate and solidify certain images. These images referred to real people and real phenomena, yet they were expressive of and conducive to certain ideas about what Sheinkin Street meant or should have meant. With their recurrent circulation in mass media, they were constructive of a powerful myth of popular culture that, transcending the myth’s manifestations and the observable facts it related, purported to reveal the fundamental and ultimate meaning of Sheinkin Street. As Daniel J. Boorstin has observed, when images pervade culture, they do not inform about reality, but become the more important reality.<sup>82</sup>

The new Sheinkin Street, notorious for being “too self-conscious,”<sup>83</sup> took shape among its particular images. The relationship between image and reality was crucial. Some visitors, attracted by the street’s reputation, were disappointed when they encountered the “real” thing: “for us who come from the provinces, who hear about the wonders of Tel Aviv’s Sheinkin Street, it is surprising to discover how boring and neglected the street appears.”<sup>84</sup> In a similar vein, one commentator ironically referred to the “too local glory” of Sheinkin Street. When “the great, mythological Sheinkin Street, Greenwich Village at its best,” was looked at through the eyes of a tourist, a picture very different from the one featured in the local weeklies emerged: “The truth of the matter is, it is rather frustrating. The ignorant tourist, who never in his entire life read a local weekly, who does not understand at all what he sees, does not get excited.”<sup>85</sup>

As constructed in popular culture, the mythic Sheinkin Street transcended reality as experienced by the uninitiated and a few skeptics. On the level of myth, what mattered was not the reality of the street, but shared no-

tions about the street that constituted “common wisdom.” In this context, even some correspondence between myth and reality was enough to sustain the myth: “It may be argued that the real Sheinkin Street is very different from the mythological Sheinkin Street. But there is also something true about the legend.”<sup>86</sup>

## 3. The First Hebrew City

1. Meir Dizengoff on the occasion of the opening of the 1929 fair, *Ha'aretz*, 9 Apr. 1929. Translations from Hebrew and Arabic to English in the text and in cited newspaper titles are mine, except where indicated in the note citations.
2. "For the Celebration of Our City," *Ha'aretz*, 25 Apr. 1934.
3. "Wandering around the Land," *Ha'Glil*, 17 May 1934.
4. See also the speech of Menachem Mendel, Yitzhak Dov Berkowitz's literary character: "[Tel Aviv is] not just a city, but the city of our desire and longing, this only daughter of ours, which is everything for us, our only consolation for old age. We praise this city and boast about among the peoples, tell its virtue to the world, write about it in all the newspapers and exaggerate its praise sevenfold." "Menachem Mendel in Eretz Yisrael. 14th Letter: Menachem Mendel Criticizes Tel Aviv," *Ha'aretz*, 12 Oct. 1935.
5. Yoram Bar-Gal, *Homeland and Geography in One Hundred Years of Zionist Education* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1993), 160.
6. "Yalkut Tel Aviv," *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1934–1936*, 393.
7. "Like All Other Cities," *Ha'aretz*, 10 June 1934.
8. "To the One and to the Many," *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1934–1936*, 208.
9. "Yalkut Tel Aviv," *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1934–1936*, 393.
10. *Davar*, 3 Nov. and 21 Nov. 1936.
11. *Hashkafa* 5, no. 48 (1904), 441.
12. Meir Dizengoff, *Israel in Exile* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1931), chap. 21.
13. Bar-Gal, *Homeland and Geography*, 161.
14. *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1934–1936*, 51.
15. Reproduced in Ilan Shklori, *From Dream to City: Tel Aviv, Birth and Growth: The City That Gave Birth to a State* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Avivim, 1990), 23.
16. Letter to Meir Dizengoff, 3 June 1923, Tel Aviv Historical Archive (henceforth cited as TAHA), 7(6)–28, Tel Aviv.
17. Quoted in Yaacov Yaari-Polskin, *Meir Dizengoff: Life and Deeds* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Ha'Yishuv, 1926), 175.
18. Aharon Ben-Yishai, "Meir Dizengoff—the Father of Tel Aviv" (in Hebrew), in *Tel Aviv: A Literary-Historical Anthology*, ed. Yosef Aricha, 152–58 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Municipal-ity, 1959), 153, emphasis in original.
19. From the speech of Tel Aviv's second mayor, Israel Rokach, on the occasion of the inauguration of the monument to the founders of Tel Aviv, 1951. "The Mayor's Speech," *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv, 1951*, 1.
20. Avigdor Ha'Meiri, "Tel Aviv in Eternity," in *The City of Wonders: Writers and Statesmen on Tel Aviv—for Its Twentieth Anniversary* (in Hebrew), ed. Aharon Vardi, 50–51 (Tel Aviv: Lema'au Ha'Seter, 1928).
21. "Menachem Mendel in Eretz Yisrael. 16th letter: Menachem Mendel's Landlord Speech on Tel Aviv," *Ha'aretz*, 12 July 1935.
22. A special Dizengoff issue in *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1936*.
23. Ilan Troen, "Tel Aviv in the 1920s and the 1930s: Competing Ideologies in Shaping the Character of the Zionist Metropolis" (in Hebrew), *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of*

- Jewish Studies 1989* 1 (1990): 394–97. See also Ilan Troen, *Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs, and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2003), 85–111.
24. Quoted in Gideon Biger and Eli Schiller, "On Tel Aviv," *Ariel* 48–49, no. 1 (1992): 10–11.
  25. Aharon Vardi, introduction to *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 3.
  26. "La colline du printemps," *Journal* (France), 20 Oct. 1929.
  27. Nachum Sokolov, "Notes on My Visit of the Land," *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1932–1933*, 86.
  28. In a story about the fictional city of Laish, a double of Tel Aviv, Mordechai Kharisman wrote about the special light that characterized its nights: "Together with moonlight there emanate many more other lights that fuse into that secret glow." Mordechai Kharisman, "Adam," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 42.
  29. Uri Kersari, "Why I Love Tel Aviv," *Kolnoa*, 29 Jan. 1932.
  30. Josiah Wedgwood, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 91.
  31. From John Gibbons, *The Road to Nazareth* (New York: AMS Press, 1975), 82.
  32. Kersari, "Why I Love Tel Aviv."
  33. Henriette Szold on the occasion of Tel Aviv's twentieth anniversary, *Ha'aretz*, 3 May 1929.
  34. Aharon David Gordon, *Nation and Labor* (in Hebrew), vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Haifa Labor Council and the Zionist Library, 1957), 466.
  35. Yaacov Rubinkowitz, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 70.
  36. See Yoram Bar-Gal, *An Agent of Propaganda for the Land of Israel: The Jewish National Fund 1924–1947* (in Hebrew) (Haifa: Haifa Univ. Press, 1998), 241–53.
  37. Aba Ahimeir noted the ideological enmity of the proponents of the Emec toward Tel Aviv. Aba Ahimeir, *The Death of Yosef Katznelson* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Committee for the Publication of Aba Ahimeir's Writings, 1974), 187.
  38. Meir Dizengoff, "The City of Dreams," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 5.
  39. *Ha'aretz*, 1 May 1929.
  40. Peretz Hirschbein, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 69.
  41. Hugo Hermann, *Palästina: Wie Es Wirklich Ist* (Berlin: Fiba, 1933), 107.
  42. Dizengoff, "The City of Dreams," 5.
  43. Solomon Blumgarten, "From New York to Rehovot," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 23.
  44. "Anniversaries," *Ha'aretz*, 1 May 1929.
  45. Zeev Jabotinsky mentioned these claims in a speech he gave in Tel Aviv in 1926, where he tried to refute them. See his speech in Vardi, ed., *The City of Wonders*, 92.
  46. "Tel Aviv's Day," *Ha'aretz*, 2 May 1929.
  47. Avigdor Ha'Meiri, "The Accused Patient," *Ha'Makhar*, 3 July 1927.
  48. Yitzhak Grinboym, "Tel Aviv," *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1933–1934*, 246.
  49. *Kovetz for Purim 5695* (the official organ of the committee organizing the 1935 Purim celebrations in the municipality of Tel Aviv), 7.
  50. Nachum Sokolov, "The Soul of Tel Aviv," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 292.
  51. "On the Agenda," *Ha'aretz*, 2 May 1929.

52. Moshe Glickson repeated these pejorative references in his "In Defense of Tel Aviv," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 79–80. Glickson explained that he wrote the piece because "[i]t was high time to unwrap Tel Aviv from the shape of slander and mockery."
53. Quoted in Avraham Shmuel Yuris, "Tel Aviv—Tel Hanut," *Ha'Poel Ha'Tzair*, 10 Nov. 1933.
54. Israel Korahnik, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 69–70.
55. Troen, "Tel Aviv in the 1920s," 396–97.
56. Korahnik, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 69.
57. *Yediot Iniyat Tel Aviv 1933–1934*, 161.
58. *Ha'aretz*, 3 May 1929.
59. "Tel Aviv," *Ha'Poel Ha'Tzair*, 11 May 1934.
60. "Is This the City?" *Ha'aretz*, 25 Nov. 1935.
61. The official name of the fair was the Exhibition and Levant Fair, but it was also referred to as the Jubilee Fair. *Ha'aretz*, 8 Apr. 1929.
62. *Ha'aretz*, 9 Apr. 1929.
63. *Falastin*, 11 May 1929.
64. *Ibid.*
65. The editor of *Ha'aretz* commented that the festival was the proof that the city had overcome its mistakes and failures. *Ha'aretz*, 2 May 1929.
66. *Ha'aretz*, 28 Mar. 1934.
67. "Me'Yom Le'Yom," *Ha'aretz*, 2 May 1934.
68. *Falastin*, 3 May 1934.
69. "Tel Aviv's Day," *Ha'aretz*, 1 May 1929.
70. The writer Sholem Asch mentioned the contribution of German Jews to Tel Aviv and to the country in general: "[They] introduced order, comfort, small dogs, window shops that were a delight to behold, cylinder hats, public libraries, good physicians, world famous professors, a flood of clubs and coffee shops with all the labels, including Strudel and Schlagsahne." *Yediot Iniyat Tel Aviv 1936–1937*, 117.
71. "Menachem Mendel in Eretz Yisrael. 16th letter."
72. "Wandering around the Land," *Ha'Olam*, 31 May 1934.
73. Artur Rundt, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 66.
74. "Wandering around the Land," 31 May.
75. See the photo and the inscription in *Ha'aretz*, 10 Aug. 1934.
76. "Artistic Conversations: Journeying the Streets of Tel Aviv," *Ha'aretz*, 2 Feb. 1934.
77. "Like Any Other City," *Ha'aretz*, 10 June 1934.
78. "Wandering around the Land," 17 May. A report on tourism in Tel Aviv mentioned the growing traffic in the streets and the noise that extended into the small hours of the night (*Ha'aretz*, 3 Sep. 1934). On dirt, see the letter to the editor written by Israel Rokach, the deputy mayor. *Ha'aretz*, 6 Sep. 1934. See also Helman, "Cleanliness and Squalor."
79. "Delinquent Children," *Ha'aretz*, 5 Sep. 1934. In this article, the author maintained that "[w]ith the growth of Tel Aviv there also appear the dark sides of the city. Every city attracts and maintains youth and children with delinquent tendencies; the renewal of public life,

the development of traffic in the streets, the display of attractive artifacts in the window shops etc.—all these are strong factors that provoke the instincts of children."

80. "Instructive Lessons to Tel Aviv," *Ha'aretz*, 7 Jan. 1935.
81. *Yediot Iniyat Tel Aviv 1932–1933*, 245.
82. "Artistic Conversations: Journeying the Streets of Tel Aviv," *Ha'aretz*, 23 Sep. 1934.
83. "Neither City nor Town," letter to the editor, *Ha'aretz*, 15 Mar. 1935.
84. "Like Any Other City."
85. *Ibid.*
86. Aharon Zeev Ben-Yishai wrote in the municipal organ: "It seems that there is no other city that criticizes itself like Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv is always the target of criticisms [by] and demands of its residents, especially concerning the forms of public life, its cleanliness, lack of tradition, the behavior of its residents etc." *Yediot Iniyat Tel Aviv 1937–1938*, 118.
87. "On the Agenda," *Ha'aretz*, 2 May 1929.
88. Sholem Asch, "Tel Aviv," *Yediot Iniyat Tel Aviv 1936–1937*, 116.
89. Sokolov, "The Soul of Tel Aviv," 292.
90. "Tel Aviv-ness," *Bustanai*, 27 June 1934.
91. *Ha'aretz*, 18 Mar. 1929.
92. "Instructive Lessons to Tel Aviv."
93. Haim Nahman Bialik's farewell address before he left for Vienna to receive medical treatment, *Ha'aretz*, 3 June 1934. He did not survive his illness.
94. "Tel Aviv."
95. Meir Dizengoff, *On Tel Aviv and Its Ways of Life*, printed as a supplement to *Yediot Iniyat Tel Aviv 1934–1936*, 9–11.
96. "Tel Aviv Hears and Does Not Care," *Ha'aretz*, 6 Mar. 1935.
97. "Tel Aviv."
98. *Yediot Iniyat Tel Aviv 1933–1934*, 51.
99. Aba Ahimeir, *Ironcut: Revolutionary Zionism, Selected Writings of Aba Ahimeir* (in Hebrew) vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Committee for the Publication of Aba Ahimeir's Writings, 1956), 57 (originally published on 5 July 1932).
100. Uri Keisari, *A Journey to the Past* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Limnan, 1941), 8.
101. *Yediot Iniyat Tel Aviv 1937–1938*, 164.
102. Nathan Alterman, "The Building of the Gymnasia," in *Tel Aviv Sonade* by Nathan Alterman and Alex Levac (Tel Aviv: Ha'Kibbutz Ha'Meuhad, 1999), 173.
103. See the special Dizengoff issue in *Yediot Iniyat Tel Aviv 1936*.
104. Moshe Smilansky, "Meir Dizengoff—the City's Father," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 146.
105. *Ibid.*, 148.
106. Israel Rokach, "Hebrew Mayor," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 149.
107. Aharon Zeev Ben-Yishai, "Meir Dizengoff—the Father of Tel Aviv," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 152–58.
108. Memorandum, 20 Oct. 1935, TAHA, 4(6)/13/1517.
109. The main office of the Jewish National Fund, to Meir Dizengoff, 5 Apr. 1936, TAHA, 4(6)/13/1517.

110. Protocol of the committee in charge of the celebrations, 3 Mar. 1936, TAHA, 4(6):13/1517.
111. *Davar*, 24 Sept. 1936.
112. *Ha' Boker*, 23 Sept. 1936.
113. *Palestine Post*, 24 Sept. 1936.
114. *Davar*, 24 Sept. 1936.
115. On reports in the Arab-Palestinian press, see *Yediot Aritvat Tel Aviv 1935–1936*, 158.
116. Shmuel Tchernowitz, "Tel Aviv," in *The City of Wonders*, 64.
117. David Zelman, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, 33.
118. Comment from Hermann, *Palästina*, 109–10. See also the discussion in Shlomo Shva, *Oh Iv Oh Ein: The Romance of Tel Aviv-Yaffo* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Foundation for Literature and Art, 1977), 251–52.
119. On the mythological aspect of the founding, see Feinberg, "Lottery for the Plots of Ahuzat Bayit."
120. Yosef Klausner, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, 22.
121. Milton J. Goell, "Tramping Through Palestine," in Vardi, ed. *The City of Wonders*, 67.
122. "Tel Aviv's Day," *Ha' Aretz*, 2 May 1929.
123. Nathan Alterman, "The Vision of the Camels," in *Little Tel Aviv* (Tel Aviv: Ha'Kibbutz Ha'Meuhad, 1979), 16.
124. See the discussion in Tamar Berger, *Dionysus at Dizengoff Centre* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Ha'Kibbutz Ha'Meuhad, 1998), 79–83.
125. "Menachem Mendel in the Land of Israel, 16th letter."
126. On this song, see "The Charm of My Friend the Camel," *Ha' Aretz*, 5 Apr. 2001, sec. B2.
127. *Yediot Aritvat Tel Aviv 1932–1933*, 86.
128. Douglas Dough, a British officer who served for a while with the Palestine police, opined that the foundations of Tel Aviv were firm: "Though Tel Aviv is built on a sandy beach, nevertheless its foundations are rooted in the hearts and sweat of the Jewish race. The builders of this city will never abandon it and will prefer to die rather than let any foreigner enter their homes." *Yediot Aritvat Tel Aviv 1939–1940*, 159.
129. "Menachem Mendel in the Land of Israel, 2d letter; Menachem Mendel's Entry into Tel Aviv," *Ha' Aretz*, 23 Mar. 1934.
130. Haim Levanon, the mayor of Tel Aviv in the 1950s, in his introduction to the book issued on the occasion of Tel Aviv's fiftieth anniversary, Aricha, ed., *Tel Aviv*, 1.
131. *Ha' Aretz*, 1 May 1929.
132. David Smilansky, "Toward the Twentieth Anniversary," *Ha' Aretz*, 17 Apr. 1929.
133. *Ha' Aretz*, 9 Apr. 1929.
134. Alterman, "The Vision of the Camels," 16.
135. Dvora Baron, "Chronicles," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 55.
136. Avraham Shlonsky, "Facing the Wilderness," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 47–50.
137. "Tel Aviv's Day," *Ha' Aretz*, 1 May 1929.
138. Haim Nahman Bialik, *Spoken Lectures: On Judaism, Culture, Hebrew Language and Culture* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Eretz, 1935), 156.
139. *Ha' Boker*, 23 Apr. 1936. According to Weizmann, continuing the building of the land was the appropriate Zionist response to Arab violence.
140. Yehuda Karni, "Gold Mines in the Sands of Tel Aviv," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 72.
141. Yaacov David Kanizon, "Tel Aviv," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 11.
142. Avraham Shlonsky, "The Last Buildings," *Ha' Aretz*, 5 Apr. 1935.
143. Quoted in Shkhor, *From Dream to City*, 24.
144. Quoted in *ibid.*, 26.
145. *Ibid.*, 34.
146. Quoted in *ibid.* In a similar vein, Arthur Ruppin, the head of the Zionist Bureau, wrote in 1907 about the need to found "a neighborhood of sixty houses in an orderly and systematic manner; to install beautiful and wide streets, and to also take care of hygienic needs, e.g., canalization and plumbing." Quoted in *ibid.*, 35.
147. Quoted in *ibid.*, 26.
148. See Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw, "Fetishizing the Modern City: The Phantasmagoria of Urban Technological Networks," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24, no. 1 (2000), 128.
149. *Al-Muqtadib*, 8 Apr. 1913. Quoted in Shavit and Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv: The Birth of a Town*, 74.
150. Quoted in Bar-Gal, *Homeland and Geography*, 160.
151. "Tel Aviv" (in Hebrew), *Anglo-Palestine Exhibition: Magazine Review and Catalogue* (1933), 62.
152. Gideon Biger, "A Scotsman in the First Hebrew City: Patrick Geddes and the 1926 Town Plan for Tel Aviv," *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 108, no. 1 (1992): 4–8; Volker M. Welter, "The Geddes Vision of the Region as City—Palestine as a Polis," in *Social Utopias of the Twenties: Bauhaus, Kibbutz, and the Dream of the New Man*, ed. Jeannine Fiedler for Bauhaus Dessau and Friedrich Ebert Foundation Tel Aviv, 72–79 (Wuppertal, Germany: Müller and Busmann Press, 1995); Volker M. Welter, "Von Jaffa nach Tel Aviv," *Bauwelt* 83, no. 15 (1992): 836–40; Rachel Kallus, "Patrick Geddes and the Evolution of Housing Type in Tel Aviv," *Planning Perspectives* 12 (1997): 281–320.
153. Avraham Wissotzky, "Green Flame," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 42.
154. Sholem Asch, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 65. The view of Palestine as an underdeveloped country resonated with common European notions about the Orient—that is, the predominantly Arab Near (or Middle) East as both underdeveloped and exotic. In this context, the Western representation of the Orient belonged to a discourse of superiority, wherein the Orient was the inferior "Other." The Hebrew word *Mizrah* (east, Orient) in connection with Palestine figured prominently in the Zionist discourse of the first half of the twentieth century. However, the reference to Palestine as "east" was not a mere replication of a current European perspective or discourse. It was also rooted in Jewish tradition. Jewish poet Yehuda Ha Levi (1086–1145), who lived in Muslim Spain, expressed his yearning to Zion in the famous lines: "My heart is in the east, and I in the uttermost west" (from "My Heart is in the East," c. 1141 C.E.).
155. Boris Schatz, "In the Port of Tel Aviv," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 57.
156. *Yediot Aritvat Tel Aviv 1939–1940*, 159.



157. *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1934–1936*, 393.
158. *Al-Difa* 4, 7 Feb. 1944.
159. Reproduced in *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1934–1936*, 52.
160. On this issue, see Arnon Golan, “The Resettlement of Jewish Refugees in Tel Aviv in the Time of the Arab Revolt,” *Alif Zait* 5 (2004): 59–62. See also *Falastin*, 23 and 27 Apr. 1936.
161. “The Strong City,” *Ha’Aretz*, 22 Apr. 1936.
162. Leon Simon, “Palestine Impressions,” in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 70.
163. Alter Droyanov, *Tel Aviv’s Book* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Book Committee, 1936), 316.
164. Maoz Azaryahu and Arnon Golan, “Noise and the Formation of a Developing Urban Space: Tel Aviv 1926–1940” (in Hebrew), *Iyunim Biktumat Israel: Studies in Zionism, the Yishuv, and the State of Israel* 14 (2005), 85.
165. Moshe Glickson, unedited selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 79.
166. Schlor, *Tel Aviv*.
167. “Levantine,” in *Rav Erezki: A Useful Encyclopedia for the 21st Century*. (Tel Aviv: Sternatzky, 1997), 327.
168. “Levantinization,” *Ha’Boker*, 20 Apr. 1936.
169. The definition of *levantinism* was wide enough to include whatever was deemed “uncivilized.” In 1959, for instance, Seadia Shoshani, deputy mayor of Tel Aviv, included in the category of *levantinism* “tearing away trees and benches in the parks and involvement in conflicts and criminal cases.” *Ma’ariv*, 9 Mar. 1959.
170. Badik, *Spoken Lectures*, 89.
171. “Tel Aviv.”
172. Dizengoff, “On Tel Aviv and Its Way of Life,” 9.
173. “Is There a Danger That Tel Aviv Will Become Levantine?” *Doar Ha Yom*, 7 Dec. 1934.
174. Aharon Zeev Ben-Yishai, “Tel Aviv As It Is,” *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1933–1934*, 278.
175. “Levant Fair” was also the name of the commercial fair in Bari, Italy. Meir Dizengoff was involved in organizing Jewish Palestine’s participation in the Italian fair, which means that the brand-name “Levant Fair” was familiar to those in charge of Tel Aviv’s fair.
176. “Tel Aviv As a Center for Growing Bees,” *Ha’Aretz*, 29 Jan. 1929.
177. Samuel Tolkowsky, *The Gateway to Palestine: A History of Jaffa* (London: Routledge, 1924).
178. “What Is the Difference Between Haifa and Tel Aviv?” *9 Ba’Ezer*, 5 Jan. 1939.
179. Ben-Yishai, “Meir Dizengoff,” in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 156.
180. “Instructive Lessons to Tel Aviv.”
181. *Ha’Aretz*, 2 Mar. 1934.
182. “Toward the Levant Fair,” *Kolnoa*, 22 Jan. 1932.
183. *Ha’Aretz*, 4 Mar. 1934.
184. “Tel Aviv Has Already Known Exhibitions,” *Ma’ariv*, 21 Aug. 1959.
185. Another version of the same story assigned this sentence to an anonymous Jaffa merchant who allegedly had spoken with Arie El-Harim, the fair’s architect. Shva, *Oh! Ir Ohi Em*, 288.
186. “Tel Aviv—the City of the East,” *Ha’Aretz*, 30 Apr. 1936.
187. *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1936*, 182.
188. Advertisement, *Ha’Aretz*, 3 July 1935. See also “What Is a Hebrew Ship?” *Davar*, 31 Mar. 1936. The “Hebrewness” of the ship was also evidenced in the flag—a white-blue flag with the letter P for Palestine.
189. *Ha’Aretz*, 26 Feb. 1935.
190. “Toward Proclaiming Tel Aviv a City,” *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1934*, 51.
191. *Ha’Aretz*, 3 May 1929.
192. *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1932–1933*, 61.
193. Nachum Sokolov, “Tel Aviv,” *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1933*, 61.
194. *Ha’Aretz*, 2 Dec. 1935.
195. “On the Public Account of the Municipality of Tel Aviv,” *Ha’Aretz*, 12 Dec. 1935.
196. On the naming procedure, see Yoram Bar-Gal, “Names to the City of Tel Aviv: A Chapter in the Cultural-Urban History of Tel Aviv,” *Cathedra* 47 (1988): 118–31.
197. In 1912, Yosef Klausner wrote about the pride he felt while walking in the streets of Tel Aviv, a city where a Jew “finds a little consolation: there is still a corner in the world where the Jew can respect his heroes and bestow their names on what he created!” Yosef Klausner, “A World in the Process of Creation,” in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 21–22. A new emigrant reported on the pleasure regarding the fact that the streets are “bearing the names of people who dedicated the best of their power and their best years to the Zionist endeavor, and this is their reward, that the memory of their good deeds” was commemorated in the street signs. “Book of Complaints,” *Ha’Aretz*, 24 Oct. 1935. On the commemorative function of street names, see Maoz Azaryahu, “The Power of Street Names,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14 (1996): 311–30.
198. *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1935–1936*, 43.
199. Itamar Ben Avi, “Our Victory in the Sea” (in Hebrew), in *25th Anniversary of the Port of Tel Aviv 1936–1961*, ed. Dov Lutsky (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1961), 34.
200. Israel Rokach, “The First Hebrew Port in the World,” in *25th Anniversary*, ed. Lutsky, 12.
201. Ben-Gurion considered the “conquest of the sea” the next stage of the national revival: “the conquest of the soil by city people was the great, first adventure of our movement, of our endeavor in the country. A second adventure, great also, and perhaps harder than the first, still awaits us—the conquest of the sea.” David Ben-Gurion, “To the Sea,” in *25th Anniversary*, ed. Lutsky, 6. Itamar Ben Avi, an advocate for an independent state as the ultimate goal of Zionism in a time when the issue was not yet on the official Zionist agenda, stated, “There is nothing like the sea to symbolize the political independence of a state.” In his interpretation, the construction of the port determined “the foundation of our real independence as a people and state . . . from which a new period will begin, and it will only be the starting point to the final goal.” In Ben Avi, “Our Victory in the Sea,” 34.
202. Meir Dizengoff, “Here There Will Be a Big Port,” in *25th Anniversary*, ed. Lutsky, 4.
203. *Ha’Boker*, 20 May 1936.
204. Nathan Alterman, “The Birth of a Port,” in *25th Anniversary*, ed. Lutsky, 66.
205. Rachel Arbel, ed., *Blue-White in Colors: Visual Images of Zionism* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Beit Ha Telitsot and Am Oved, 1996), 82.



206. "The History of the Port," *9 Ba'Erev*, 20 May 1937.
207. *Ibid.*
208. *Ha'Aretz*, 23 Feb. 1938.
209. The name "Sha'ar Zion" (Zion Gate) already appeared in 1924 in what the principal of the Herzliya Gymnasium wrote: "Tel Aviv is now Sha'ar Zion. Here is the barn from which the power is scattered all over the country. . . . Tel Aviv is a kind of a clearing-house [the English term appeared in the original text] through which the entire building material is passing." Ben-Zion Moseison, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 92.
210. *Ha'Aretz*, 23 Feb. 1938.
211. "The Emblem of the City of Tel Aviv," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 377.
212. Yehuda Karmi, "Living Symbol," *Ha'Aretz*, 14 Feb. 1938.
213. Shva, *Oh Ir Ohi Ein*, 317.
214. Matityahu Kabir, "Jaffa's Annexation to Tel Aviv," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 256.
215. *Ibid.*, 257.
216. Shva, *Oh Ir Ohi Ein*, introduction.
217. Aharon Reuveni, "Yes, Actually Who?" *Iron Tel Aviv*, 24 Nov. 1989.
218. Nathan Alterman, "Cities in the World," *Turim* 1, no. 1 (1933): 20.
219. "Seven Days, Seven Nights, Sad Are the Lights," *9 Ba'Erev*, 28 July 1938.
220. "This House!" *9 Ba'Erev*, 11 Mar. 1937.
221. "Seven Days, Seven Nights, Curfew," *9 Ba'Erev*, 7 July 1938.
222. Full of nostalgia, reports on the literary coffee shops of Tel Aviv in the prestate era appeared only much later. See "From Sheleg Ha-Levamon to Kassit," *Ma'ariv*, 14 July 1972; "Literary Coffee Shops in Tel Aviv in the 1930s and the 1940s," *Yediot Aharonot Literary Supplement*, 23 Dec. 1977; "Kassit, Anarat, and Wine-Houses," *Yediot Aharonot Literary Supplement*, 30 Dec. 1977; Shlomo Tanay, "Literary Coffee Shops" (in Hebrew), *Ennol* 14, no. 2 (1988): 11–13.
223. Meyer Weisgal, "Builders of Jewish Destiny: A Thrilling Account of a Visit to Palestine at a Time of Great Peril to a Tremendous Undertaking," *The American Hebrew*, 4 Nov. 1938.
224. "Self-reflections: Will Jerusalem Resemble Tel Aviv?" *Davar*, 23 Apr. 1935.
225. On the impression left by the festivities, see also the report written by a fifth-grade student: "Purim Festival in Tel Aviv," the Talpiot School bulletin, Purim 1933 issue, Archive of Jewish Education, 4.147/5, Tel Aviv.
226. *Ha'Aretz*, 24 Mar. 1932.
227. *Ha'Aretz*, 28 Mar. 1929.
4. "A Hebrew City in All Its Aspects"
1. Yakir Warszawsky, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 24.
  2. Shva, *Oh Ir Ohi Ein*, 248.
  3. "Die Stadt ohne Göttern," *Der Angriff*, 29 Sept. 1934.
  4. *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1937–1938*, 117.
  5. Meir Dizengoff suggested that the Arab families should be represented in the municipal council, and his suggestion was accepted. The representative was reputed not to take an active part in the meetings.
  6. Reciprocating the visit by the village's notables to the town hall, the mayor visited the village and met the elders and the schoolteachers. The villagers asked for improved sanitation and the establishment of medical facilities for adults and children. *Palestine Post*, 15 Feb. 1944.
  7. "Menachem Mendel in Eretz Israel. 2d Letter: The Entry of Menachem Mendel to Tel Aviv," *Ha'Aretz*, 23 Mar. 1934.
  8. Abraham Kahani, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 91–92.
  9. A proclamation to the public, *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1933–1934*, 203.
  10. Aharon Zeev Ben-Yishai, "Christmas Eve," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 52.
  11. Eliezer Shreimman, "Fear," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 53.
  12. Vardi, introduction, 3.
  13. Moshe Beilinson, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 77.
  14. "Tel Aviv," *Anglo-Palestine Exhibition*, 62.
  15. Haim Nahman Bialik, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 89.
  16. Shaul Tchernikhovsky, "There Is Another Tel Aviv," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 293–94.
  17. Asch, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 65.
  18. *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1932–1933*, 245.
  19. *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1934–1936*, 183.
  20. Sholem Asch, "Tel Aviv," *Yediot Iriyat Tel Aviv 1937–1938*, 116.
  21. Simon, "Palestine Impressions," 70.
  22. This particular focus may have resulted from the discussion about the Tel Avivian woman elected as the queen of the Purim festival in Tel Aviv. In 1926, it was announced that the contest was about "the election of the beautiful and typical Hebrew woman in Tel Aviv." Batia Carmiel, *Tel Aviv Dressed and Crowned: Purim Festivities 1912–1935* (in Hebrew), exhibition catalog (Tel Aviv: Museum Ha'Aretz, 1999), 116. In 1926, the queen was of Yemenite origins. In 1929, it was a woman of a distinctly eastern European appearance.
  23. Aharon Vardi, "Our Tel Avivian Women," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 55–56.
  24. Sokolov, "Notes on My Visit of the Land," 86.
  25. *Ha'Aretz*, 3 May 1929.
  26. "Faithful City," *Ha'Olam*, 3 May 1934.
  27. Bialik, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 89.
  28. The issue was hotly debated in a meeting of the Ahuzat Bayit committee held on 20 February 1909. Menachem Shreinkin underscored the value of Hebrew work: "from the first day of our work in the new neighborhood we will have to make an effort that work shall be made by Jews only." See protocol reproduced in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 50–51.
  29. "Tel Aviv," *Ha'Poel Ha'Tzair*, 11 May 1934.
  30. *Ha'Aretz*, 9 Sept. 1934.
  31. "A Faithful City," *Ha'Olam*, 10 May 1934.
  32. "Wandering around the Land," 17 May.
  33. "Toward Bialik Days," *Davar*, 27 March 1935.
  34. Bialik, *Spoken Lectures*, 161.
  35. Eliezer Schweid, *The Idea of Hebrew as Culture* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1995), 300.



73. Quoted in "Café Passé."

74. See two articles that appeared on the occasion of Tel Aviv's ninetieth anniversary (1999): "The Tel Aviv That Is Concealed from View (b)," and "Tales of Tel Aviv," *Zman Tel Aviv*, 16 Apr. 1999.

75. *Zman Tel Aviv*, 9 Oct. 1998.

## 7. Nonstop City

1. Levanon, "Introduction."
2. Maityahu Kalir, Peri Peli, Shabrai Tevet, and Walter Turanovsky, *The Album of Tel Aviv* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Massadah, 1959). For the review, see "People and Things in Their City," *Ma'ariv*, 28 July 1959.
3. "After Zionism!—What?" *Panim el Panim*, 29 May 1959.
4. *Ha'ir*, 24 Mar. 1989.
5. "Yes, Really Who?" *Yediot Aharonot*, 24 Nov. 1989, Tel Aviv supplement.
6. An observation made by Shlomo Buhbut, the mayor of Ma'alot (a small town on the northern periphery of Israel), after visiting Tel Aviv. *Iton Tel Aviv*, 25 Sept. 1992.
7. "Yes, Really Who?"
8. "Tel Aviv Follows Its Slogan: Nonstop City," *Al Ha'Mishmar*, 22 Nov. 1989.
9. "Why a Pitzutzia?" *Ha'ir*, 10 Dec. 1999.
10. "Interview with Ha'im Levanon," *Ma'ariv*, 13 Mar. 1959.
11. Dora J. Hamblin, "The Tel Aviv Look," in *Life Special Report: The Spirit of Israel*, special issue (1973), 56–60.
12. "The Promenade," *AI*, no. 449 (Jan. 2001).
13. "I Used to Go to the Theater," *Ha'Mekomon Tel Aviv-Yafo*, 6 June 2002.
14. On the development of the twenty-four-hour society in the United States, see "Shop Around the Clock in the 24-Hour Society," *International Herald Tribune*, 17 Aug. 2001.
15. *Zman Tel Aviv*, 10 Apr. 1998.
16. Doron Rosenblum, "The Expanding Jurisdiction of the Local Weekly," *Koterc Rashit*, 27 Nov. 1985. Also appeared in *Ha'ir*, 26 Nov. 1999.
17. "The Victory of the Sand over the Rock," *Ha'aretz*, 6 Apr. 2001, sec. B.
18. Yaacov Shabtai, *Sof Danar* (Tel Aviv: Ha'Kibbutz Ha'Meuhad, 1983), and *Zikhron Denuvim* (Tel Aviv: Mifalim Universitaim Le'Hozaha La'Or, 1977).
19. "Tel Aviv: Dirty, Noisy City," *Ha'aretz*, 21 Aug. 1972; "The Young Are Leaving," *Ma'ariv*, 29 Sept. 1978.
20. "Is Tel Aviv Dying?" *Ma'ariv*, 20 June 1980.
21. Roman Priester, "Revolutionizing the City," *Ha'aretz*, 30 Oct. 1987, sec. B.
22. According to the editor, "it should be remembered that in October 1980 Tel Aviv was a yawning city," *Ha'ir*, 26 Nov. 1999.
23. Rosenblum, "The Expanding Jurisdiction of the Local Weekly."
24. On the early history of the local press in Israel, see Dan Kaspi, *The Emergence of the Local Press in Israel: Preliminary Tendencies and Evaluations* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Israeli Academy of Science Press, 1980).

25. Ehud Graf, "From 'White City' to 'Metropolis': The Universal City in Ha'ir," master's thesis, Tel Aviv Univ., 1991, 5.

26. Boorstin, *The Image*, 67.

27. David Avidan, "The Nouveaux Tel Avivians," *Iton Tel Aviv*, 25 Sep. 1992.

28. "Who Didn't Know David from the Grocery Store," *Ha'ir*, 16 Apr. 1999.

29. Avidan, "The Nouveaux Tel Avivians."

30. Rosenblum, "The Expanding Jurisdiction of the Local Weekly."

31. Avidan, "The Nouveaux Tel Avivians."

32. "Jubilees," *Ha'aretz*, 1 May 1929.

33. Tchernikhovsky, "There Is Another Tel Aviv."

34. "What Is the Difference Between Haifa and Tel Aviv?" *9 Ba'Erev*, 5 Jan. 1939.

35. *Ma'ariv*, 13 Mar. 1959.

36. "Yes, Really Who?"

37. Gabi Nizan, "The New Tel Aviv-ness," *Politica*, no. 23 (1988), 37.

38. Avidan, "The Nouveaux Tel Avivians."

39. See, for instance, "Tel Aviv Listens but Does Not Care," *Ha'aretz*, 6 Mar. 1935.

40. "Yes, Really Who?"

41. "David, Uriah, and Me," *Yediot Aharonot*, weekend supplement, 12 Jan. 2001.

42. Nizan, "The New Tel Aviv-ness," 37.

43. Meir Wieseltier, "The City Is Contracting," *Ha'ir*, 31 Jan. 1986.

44. Avidan, "The Nouveaux Tel Avivians."

45. Nizan, "The New Tel Aviv-ness."

46. *Yediot Aharonot*, Tel Aviv supplement, 29 Sept. 1989.

47. "The New Tel Avivians," *Ha'ir*, 5 Oct. 2000.

48. Reproduced in Shkhori, *From Dream to City*, 23.

49. "The Music in the Streets of Tel Aviv," *Ha'aretz*, 2 Apr. 1934.

50. Mikhael Grobman, "Desert Wind Filters Souls" (poem). *Gag* 6 (summer 2002), 97.

51. Ilan Shoshan, *Sin City* (documentary). Israel's Channel 2 (1997).

52. See Ron Meiberg, "The Subjects of Netanyahu," *Ma'ariv*, weekend supplement, 26 Dec. 1997.

53. Ron Meiberg, "The Golden Hills of Bristol," *Ma'ariv*, Tarbut, 6 Feb. 1998.

54. An interview with Dani Dothan, "All the Time He Travels around Himself," *Yediot Aharonot*, Tel Aviv supplement, 29 Dec. 1989.

55. "Till Midnight," *Yediot Aharonot*, Tel Aviv supplement, 12 Aug. 1989. See also "The Promenade."

56. "Co-existence in Sheinkin," *Zman Tel Aviv*, 30 June 2000.

57. Nachum Gutman, *The Trail of Orange Peels: Adventures from Tel Aviv's Beginning* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Yavneh, 1958).

58. Thomas O'Dwyer, "Big Orange Prize Puts the Big Orange on the Literary Map," *Jerusalem Post*, 16 June 2000.

59. Tilbury, *Israel: A Travel Survival Kit*, 221.

60. "Shaking Bottoms," *Ha'ir*, 3 Oct. 2002.

61. "The City's Landscape," *Ha'ir*, 16 Nov. 2000.

62. "Sodom, Tel Aviv," *Iron Tel Aviv*, 29 June 2001.
63. Avidan, "The Nouveaux Tel Avivians."
64. A case in point is a casual remark made by a food critic: "We wiped our eyes and crossed clandestinely the border, into the state of Tel Aviv." "The Wisdom of the Pita," *Ha'Ir*, 24 Oct. 2002.
65. For an angry reaction to the map, see a letter to the editor, *Ha'Ir*, 14 Nov. 1986.
66. Gideon Samet, "The Fear of the National Average," *Ha'Areztz*, 5 Sept. 1986, sec. B.
67. Yaron Fried, "From Here Everything Looks Like a Very Narrow Bat Yam Landscape," *Politica*, no. 23 (1988), 41.
68. For an exposition of this state of mind, see an interview with author and journalist Amos Elon where he enumerates the enemies of this "enlightened" Israel: *Ha'Areztz*, weekend supplement, 13 Feb. 1998.
69. For a detailed discussion of these issues, see Maoz Azaryahu, "It Is No Fairytale: Israel at 50," *Political Geography* 17, no. 2 (1999): 131–47; and Azaryahu, "McIsrael?"
70. *Al Ha Mishmar*, 7 Jan. 1979.
71. *Ibid.*
72. Doron Rosenblum, "The First Home," *Akhhbar Ha'Ir*, 26 Nov. 1999.
73. Eli Mohar, "Points of Light and Small Consolations," *Ha'Ir*, 8 Feb. 2001.
74. On the remembrance rituals following the assassination, see Maoz Azaryahu, "The Spontaneous Formation of Memorial Space: The Case of Kikar Rabin," *Tel Aviv*, *Area* 28, no. 4 (1996): 501–13.
75. Yigal Sarna, "Gilo's Older Sister," *Yediot Aharanot*, weekend supplement, 17 Nov. 2000.
76. Doron Rosenblum, "The First House," *Akhhbar Ha'Ir*, 26 Nov. 1990.
77. "Rabin, Yitzhak, Assassin, Shabtrai Zevi, Shalom, Election Results," *Ha'Areztz*, Sfarim, 15 Nov. 2000.
78. Interview with Ya'acov Weinroth, *Ha'Ir*, 5 Sept. 2002.
79. *Yediot Aharanot*, weekend supplement, 6 Sept. 2002.
80. Yitzhak Ben-Ner, *City of Refuge* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2000).
81. "A Big City Where Everything Is Allowed," *Yediot Aharanot*, 22 Dec. 2000.
82. "Split Identity," *Jerusalem Post Magazine*, 4 Jan. 2001.
83. "In Tel Aviv You Walk Like How You Feel," *Ha'Shinui*, Dec. 2001–Jan. 2002.
84. Alexander Goldstein, "The Invasion" (in Hebrew), in *Zerkalo*, ed. Irina Vrobel-Golobkina, 20–27 (Tel Aviv: Ha'Kibbutz Ha'Meuhad, 2001).
85. "Oh, This Foul Levant," *Time Out Tel Aviv*, 2–9 June 2005.
86. *Ibid.*
87. See "A Routine Round in the Underworld," *Devar Ha'Shanna*, 8 Feb. 1963.
88. *Ha'Ir*, 27 Aug. 1982.
89. "The Life and Death," *Iron Tel Aviv*, 18 Aug. 2000.
90. *Akhhbar Ha'Olam*, 26 Nov. 1999.
91. See the official announcement of the events in *Ha'Ir*, 7 June 2001.
92. Yigal Sarna, "And the Flag of the Gays," *Yediot Aharanot*, 17 June 2001.



93. Jonas Frykman and Orvar Lofgren, *Culture Builders: A Historical Anthropology of Middle Class Life*, trans. Alan Crozier (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1987).
94. "Tel Aviv Wakes Up," *Ha'Olam Ha'Ze*, 18 Jan. 1951.
95. *Ibid.*
96. Dunewitz, *Tel Aviv*, 165.
97. "The Murder of Tel Aviv," *Ha'Olam Ha'Ze*, 10 Jan. 1973.
98. "Steak and Bavaria at 3 A.M.," *Ha'Ir*, 28 Nov. 1980.
99. David Avidan, *Tel Aviv's Nights with David Avidan* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Tiros, 1983), 27.
100. "Till Midnight," *Yediot Aharanot*, Tel Aviv supplement, 12 Aug. 1989.
101. Avidan, "The Nouveaux Tel Avivians."
102. "3 o'clock A.M.," *Zman Tel Aviv*, 13 Feb. 1998.
103. For instance, a feature on the bar Ha'Misbaha described "the totally mythological place" in the north of Dizengoff Street, which "from the early 1980s was for more than a decade one of the most famous locales in the country." See "The Stars Cheated Me," *Yediot Aharanot*, weekend supplement, 4 Oct. 2002.
104. "One Night in the Middle of September We Wandered Between Pubs," *Yediot Aharanot*, Tel Aviv supplement, 22 Sept. 1989.
105. "Problems in the Shadow of Prosperity," *Ha'Areztz*, 14 Oct. 1988, sec. B.
106. See "Yet the Charm of Sin Has Evaporated," *Ha'Ir*—*Camera Obscura*, 13 Sept. 1996.
107. "A Highway to the Bars," *Jerusalem Post*, City Lights, 1 Dec. 1995.
108. Meir Shuitzer, the first deputy editor of *Ha'Ir*, later commented: "Our wish to cover the Tel Avivian night was an innovation. Writing about pubs had hitherto seemed something strange and wild." *Ha'Ir*, 26 Nov. 1999.
109. *Zman Tel Aviv*, 10 Apr. 1998.
110. Ari Shavit, "In Allenby We Invented the 1990s," *Ha'Areztz*, weekend supplement, 26 Nov. 1999.
111. *Ibid.*
112. "Allenby's Fifth," *Iron Tel Aviv*, 26 Mar. 1999.
113. "The Revolution Begins in Tel Aviv," *Ha'Areztz*, 6 Dec. 2000, sec. D.
114. "A Tourist Guide to the Scene," *Ha'Areztz*, weekend supplement, 27 Aug. 1999.
115. "The Scene," *Yediot Aharanot*, 7 Nights, 6 Apr. 2001.
116. Quoted in "In the World of Today, Who Can Claim That Rav Ovadia Is Talking Nonsense?" *Iron Tel Aviv*, 10 Aug. 2000.
117. See the "confession" made by singer Hemi Rodner: "I sanctified the mighty nihilism of Tel Aviv as a way of life." *Iron Tel Aviv*, 25 Aug. 2000.
118. Dunewitz, *Tel Aviv*, 180.
119. *Iron Tel Aviv*, 29 Dec. 2001.
120. Eli Mohar, "Voices of Love," *Ha'Ir*, 16 Nov. 2000.
121. "Nonstop Parade," *Iron Tel Aviv*, 24 Sept. 1999.
122. "And We Loved," *Iron Tel Aviv*, 8 Oct. 1999.
123. *Iron Tel Aviv*, 8 Oct. 1999. The contention that the Love Parade was the first "secu-



lar festival" was exaggerated. In the 1990s, the new "love festival" Tu Be'Av was introduced. However, the central event of this new festival was held in Zemar, on the Sea of Galilee, not in Tel Aviv.

124. Middy newsreel, Israel Radio, Channel B, 4 Oct. 2001.
125. "Nevertheless," *Yotv'Aviv*; 21 Sept. 2001.
126. Mohar, "Voices of Love."
127. "Menachem Mendel in the Land of Israel. 14th Letter."
128. A case in point is the move of actor Moshe Ivgy to Zikhron Ya'akov, a small town on Mount Carmel: "[Ivgy] has moved with wife and two daughters from the city of sins to Zikhron Ya'akov." "The Angry Bull," *Zman Tel Aviv*; 10 Nov. 2000.
129. "Escapism and Defeat," *Jemsaletu Post*, 20 Apr. 2001.
130. "A Big City Where Everything Is Allowed."
131. *London Daily Herald*, 20 June 1946.
132. "Sodom," Tel Aviv."
133. Alterman, "Cities in the World."
134. "After Fifteen Years: Tel Aviv Is No Longer a Nonstop City," *Ma'ariv*; 2 Sept. 2002; *Ha'ir*, 5 Sept. 2002.
135. The film director Uri Inbar, quoted in "Every Dialogue a Malmilian," *Ha'ir*, 12 Dec. 2002.

#### 8. Sheinkin Street: "The Israeli SoHo or Local Village"

1. Keisari, *A Journey to the Past*, 25.
2. Muri Shein-Or, "Sheinkin Street Is Alive and Kicking," *Ma'ariv*; 7 Dec. 1976.
3. Yoram Kaniuk, "All These Good Things in Sheinkin," *Ma'ariv*, weekend supplement, 22 July 1983.
4. *Ha'ir*, 21 Nov. 1980. See also Adam Mazor, "The Recovery of Lev Tel Aviv," *Ariid* (1987): 48–49. The quotation in the heading for this section comes from Shein-Or, "Sheinkin Street Is Alive and Kicking."
5. "Heart Surgery for the Heart of Tel Aviv," *Ha'Arts*, 7 Jan. 1982.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ha'ir*, 21 Nov. 1980.
8. *Ha'ir*, 17 Jan. 1986.
9. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore," *Yediot Aharonot*, weekend supplement, 19 Nov. 1993.
10. *Ibid.*
11. "All the Time He Travels around Himself."
12. *Ibid.*
13. Quoted in "Sheinkin Is Dead, Only Like Living," *Yediot Aharonot*, weekend supplement, 26 May 1995.
14. "Emulation," *Ha'ir*, 17 Jan. 1986.
15. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
16. Quoted in "Sheinkin Is Dead, Only Like Living."



17. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
18. "Sheinkin—a Defense," *Ma'ariv*, weekend supplement, 28 May 1993. The quotation in the heading for this section comes from "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
19. "Yes, Really Who?"
20. *Ibid.*
21. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
22. Quoted in "Sheinkin—a Defense."
23. Quoted in "In the World of Today, Who Can Claim That Rav Ovadia Is Talking Nonsense?"
24. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990), 85.
25. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
26. "Sheinkin—a Defense."
27. "He Was There from the Outset," *Ha'ir*, 25 Oct. 2001.
28. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*.
29. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
30. "Lev Tel Aviv, the Sheinkin Area," *Yediot Aharonot*, Tel Aviv supplement, 25 Aug. 1989.
31. "Places," *Ma'ariv*, 27 May 2001.
32. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
33. David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).
34. "Why Sheinkin?" *Ma'ariv*, 9 Dec. 1988.
35. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
36. *Ibid.*
37. This is how an Arab resident of Sheinkin Street described her impressions of that street. *Morning Show*; Israel Television, Channel 2, 12 Jan. 1998.
38. "An Earring Does Not Make You a Sheinkinite," *Ma'ariv*, weekend supplement, 13 Nov. 1992.
39. Ruvik Rosenthal, *The Language Arena: A Portrayal of Israeli Hebrew* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2001), 140.
40. "An Earring Does Not Make You a Sheinkinite."
41. Interview, Kobi Meidan with Dani Dodhan, Israel Television, Channel 2, 28 June 2001.
42. "Lev Tel Aviv, the Sheinkin Area."
43. "Why Sheinkin?"
44. "Places."
45. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
46. "Sheinkin: A Street with Character," *Yediot Aharonot*, Tel Aviv supplement, 5 June 1989.
47. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore."
48. "All the Time He Travels Around Himself."
49. "The Municipality Decided: No More Restaurants and Cafés in Sheinkin," *Ma'ariv*, 29 July 2002.

50. "A Strudel in the Shadow of the Palm Tree," *Ma'ariv*; Sara Stern's private archive of newspaper clips.
51. "The Curse of Fornica: Café Tamar," *Ha'ir*, 17 Apr. 1982.
52. "Café Tamar: Sheinkin Street," *Hadashot*, 29 Apr. 1984.
53. "Sara Runs," *Yediot Aharonot*, weekend supplement, 3 Sept. 1993.
54. *Zman Tel Aviv*, 8 Dec. 1995.
55. "Like an Archaeological Mound," *Ha'ir*, 28 Mar. 1997.
56. *Ibid.*
57. The Mango Trio, "Living in Sheinkin," 1988.
58. Advertisement to introduce the Hyundai Coupé in Israel, 1997.
59. "The Curse of Fornica."
60. "Beware: Sara Is Nervous!" *Iron Tel Aviv*, 15 Aug. 1997.
61. "The Glass Is Empty of Wine but Is Full of Love," *Iron Tel Aviv*, 15 May 1998.
62. "The States Dictionary," *Ma'ariv*, 16 Apr. 1999.
63. "Back to Reality," *Ma'ariv*, 7 May 1998.
64. "Sheinkin—a Defense."
65. Azaryahu, "It Is No Fairy Tale."
66. "Bibi—Sheinkin Is in Our Hands," *Zman Tel Aviv*, 7 May 1999.
67. "Left in the Cold," *Jerusalem Post*, 29 Dec. 2000, sec. B.
68. From a discussion of the 6 February 2001 election results, Voice of Israel, Reshet Beth, 7 Feb. 2001.
69. "Bibi—Sheinkin Is in Our Hands."
70. "It Is Not Me, It Is You!" *Ha'ir*, 4 Jan. 2001.
71. Voice of Israel, Reshet Beth, 7 Feb. 2001.
72. This characterization appeared in the news of Israel Television, Channel 2, 24 Jan. 2001, in a report about the murder of the two owners of Sheinkin's Yuppy Restaurant in the Palestinian town of Qalqilia.
73. Letter to the editor, *Ma'ariv*, 28 Jan. 1998.
74. *Ma'ariv* weekend supplement, 30 June 2000.
75. "The Voice of Israel: The Army's Radio Is a Station for Favorites," *Yediot Aharonot*, 25 Nov. 1997.
76. "Sheinkin Does Not Dress in Black Anymore." The quotation in the heading for this section comes from "Cages with Sheinkmites," *Zman Tel Aviv*, 31 Dec. 1993.
77. "Sheinkin Is Dead, Only Like Living."
78. "Sheinkin Corner of Allenby," *Ha'ir*, 25 Oct. 2001.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Quoted in "Sheinkin Is Dead, Only Like Living."
81. "The Club Has Been Burned," *Ha'ir*, 25 Oct. 2001.
82. Boorstin, *The Image*.
83. "The Most Frightening Pub in Town," *Ha'ir*, 28 Mar. 1997.
84. "Masters of Taste," *Jerusalem Post Magazine*, 3 Apr. 1998.
85. "In the Eyes of a Tourist," *Ha'ir*, 19 Aug. 1994.
86. "Sheinkin—a Defense."
9. **The White City of Tel Aviv: "And Now the Whole World Knows Why!"**
1. James Morris, "Letter from Tangier," *Encounter* 22, no. 1 (1964), 21.
2. See *New York Times*, 8 Nov. 1992, sec. B; *Buffalo News*, 29 Dec. 1996, sec. H; *China Star-Times*, 1 Oct. 1999; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 5 Mar. 2000, sec. F. Ou Buruham and serial killer who were linked by the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, see Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America* (New York: Crown, 2003).
3. *The Guardian*, 31 Jan. 2000.
4. Quoted in David Dean, *Architecture of the 1930s: Recalling the English Scene* (London: Royal Institute of British Architects, 1983), 89.
5. Avraham Kabak, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 29.
6. Yaacov Fichman, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 32.
7. Shlomo Herberg, "The Conquest of Judea," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 40.
8. Aharon Reuveit, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 44.
9. Korahnik, untitled selection in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 69.
10. Avigdor Ha Meiri, "Tel Aviv from Above," in *The City of Wonders*, ed. Vardi, 55.
11. Blumgarten, "From New York to Rehovot," 23.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Nathan Alterman, "The City and the Sea" (in Hebrew), in *Ha'ar Ha'Shni'i*, vol. (Tel Aviv: Ha Kibbutz Ha Meulad, 1977), 205.
14. Yehuda Karmi, "White House," in *Tel Aviv*, ed. Aricha, 296.
15. Yitzhak Katznelson, "Tel Aviv," in *Yedio Iriyat Tel Aviv 1934–1936*, 81. On political iconography, see Martin Warnke, *Political Landscape: The Art History of Nature*, trans. David McLintock (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1995).
16. Shields, *Places on the Margin*, 47.
17. Herberg, "The Conquest of Judea," 40.
18. Uri Keisari, "Why Do I Love Tel Aviv?" *Kolnoa*, 29 Jan. 1932.
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20. Katznelson, "Tel Aviv."
21. Karl Schwartz, "Artistic Conversations—Tel Aviv in the Seasons," *Ha'aretz*, 2 Sept. 1934.
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25. "A Time-Bomb in Tel Aviv," *Devar Ha'Shanna*, 4 Dec. 1970; "An Overflying Metropolitan," *Ha'aretz*, 12 June 1972; "Paying Ruins, Neglected Buildings," *Ha'aretz*, 16 Nov. 1981.
26. "The Disappearing Tel Aviv," *Ma'ariv*, 9 Nov. 1971.
27. "Bauhaus in Tel Aviv," *Ha'ir*, 12 Dec. 1980.