Well over a million Jews served in the armies that opposed Hitler. Tens of thousands died, and thousands were decorated for gallantry. For the most part, they are now forgotten. Yet some 35 Jewish parachutists from Palestine who participated in missions during World War II, including Hannah (Szenes) Senesh[1] and six others who died carrying them out, are still remembered. Why? In this fascinating essay, which examines the myths and truths surrounding Hannah's heroic mission, Louis D. Levine posits a response: The Jewish soldiers of the Allied armies were permitted to fight only in the Second World War. Hannah and the parachutists, however, were the one group allowed to fight in the war within the war, what historian Lucy Dawidowicz has called the War Against the Jews.

Louis D. Levine

The Two Missions of Hannah Senesh

The story of Hannah Senesh—her birth into a Jewish, upper-middle-class Budapest family in 1921; her immigration to Palestine, where she joined a kibbutz; her poetry; her tragic mission as a parachutist—became the stuff of legend almost immediately upon news of her execution at the age of 23 at the hands of the fascist Hungarian authorities. Told and retold, the story has taken on mythic dimensions over the years. According to the highlights of the myth, Hannah was sent on a mission, perhaps suicidal, to save Jews. Just before her dangerous crossing into Hungary, she composed a final poem, *"Ashrei Hagafrur"* ("Happy Is the Match"),[2] that was to become her literary epitaph. Betrayed by those who helped her cross the border, Hannah was immediately captured by the Nazi authorities, imprisoned, and brutally tortured. Despite her captors' best efforts to isolate her, she arranged clandestine meetings with her mother, who had been placed in the same prison. On trial, Hannah mounted her own defense, warning her prosecutors that they would soon stand trial for their crimes. Sentenced to death, she refused to ask for mercy. She died a martyr's death before a firing squad on November 7, 1944.

When one considers that her mission was clandestine, and the war in Europe did not end until May 8, 1945, it is remarkable how rapidly several different narrative versions of Hannah's story became public and took root (Baumel-Schwartz, 2010, p. 53).[3] Her poetry, excerpts from her diary, and short articles about her began to appear in the Hebrew press in the summer of 1945. Two of the poems were set to music and quickly became popular songs. Months later, her kibbutz movement published the first of many editions of her writings, which also included accounts of the mission by two of Hannah's comrades-in-arms. This work has not been out of print in the 65 years since it appeared. Hannah's was a story with "legs."

However, by many measures, the mission to save Jews that she and the other parachutists attempted was a failure, and the myth of Hannah Senesh, like many myths, diverged in essential ways from what actually had occurred. What, then, was Hannah's mission? Why was she sent, what happened to her, and why did her story become so important for the *Yishuv* (the Jewish settlement in Palestine), remaining central in the mythology of the emerging State of Israel?

By September 19, 1939, the two wars that were to consume Europe over the next five and a half years had already begun. Two years later, in December 1941, the first of those wars—the Second World War—had engulfed the entire globe. As President Roosevelt understood and made clear in his January 1942 State of the Union address, "the gargantuan aspirations of Hitler and his Nazis" who sought world conquest were at the heart of the conflict. What Roosevelt did not understand at that time, and perhaps never truly understood, was that Germany had simultaneously launched a second, parallel war when it invaded Poland, what the historian Lucy Dawidowicz has aptly called the War Against the Jews.

None of this was yet apparent when 18-year-old Hannah Senesh arrived in Palestine from Budapest on that mid-September day. Poland was about to fall, but the Western democracies still posed a powerful counterweight to German aspirations in Europe. Now, with the war begun, Britain needed to secure its access routes to the strategically critical Persian Gulf oil supplies and to India, and in this calculation, the Arabs of Palestine were far more important potential adversaries than the Jews. One consideration was that the Arabs might well side with Hitler, while the Jews had no

choice but to throw in their lot with the United Kingdom. British Prime Minister Chamberlain put it succinctly on April 20, 1939: "If we must offend one side, let us offend the Jews rather than the Arabs" (Morris, 1999, p. 158).[4]

The result was the White Paper of May 17, 1939. It represented Britain's political response to its strategic imperative of keeping a lid on Palestine. The terms of the White Paper indicated that Britain would, 10 years hence, create an independent Palestinian state with an Arab majority; it would severely restrict Jewish immigration to Palestine; and it would place draconian restrictions on where Jews could purchase land, completely forbidding it in most districts.

The combination of the German invasion of Poland and the British White Paper presented the Jewish Agency executive board, the leadership body of the *Yishuv*, with a crisis. The invasion of Poland placed the most important reservoir of Jewish immigration to Palestine at risk, and the threat of a wider war in Europe compounded that threat. Even absent the outbreak of war, the White Paper itself would severely restrict immigration. Limited immigration, together with the other provisions of the White Paper, would place the creation of a future Jewish homeland in doubt. Palestine and the *Yishuv* were now integral parts of the conflict.

The *Yishuv* responded as the British had predicted. The Jewish Agency executive board declared:

> At this fateful moment, the Jewish community [in Palestine] has a threefold concern: the protection of the Jewish homeland, the welfare of the Jewish people, [and] the victory of the British Empire. . . . The war . . . is our war, and all of the assistance that we shall be able and permitted to give to the British Army and to the British people we shall render wholeheartedly. (Morris, 1999, p. 161)

The *Yishuv* would soon learn how hard it would be to accomplish these three goals. It was at the intersection of the last two—the sense of corporate responsibility for world Jewry felt by Palestine's Jewish community and the need to help Britain defeat Germany—that Hannah's narrative became part of the larger story.

Hannah spent her first two years in Palestine at the Agricultural School for Young Women at Nahalal. During these years, a number of themes repeatedly surface in her diary. One is her awareness of the calamitous unfolding of the war for the Western democracies. This reaches a crescendo in her diary entry for July 9, 1941, where she writes, "About two weeks ago Germany attacked Russia. Everyone knows that the outcome will determine the fate of the entire world" (Senesh, n.d., 3:182). She was also concerned for the safety of her mother, Kató Senesh, still in Budapest; and her brother, Gyuri, who was studying in Lyons, France. This impinged on her overall happiness at being in Palestine and her infatuation with the adventure of becoming a *halutzah* (pioneer). She had been at the Agricultural School for two years; now she was ready for new challenges. She continues the diary entry just quoted, "I feel I have to do something that is difficult . . . to justify myself. I absolutely hate school now and can't wait to get out of here (Senesh, n.d., 3:183).

On September 7, 1941, Hannah left Nahalal, ending her "chapter of learning and preparations" to "begin a life" (Senesh, n.d., 4:10). In December, after spending some time considering her options, she presented herself as a candidate for membership at Kibbutz Sedot Yam. The year that followed, though, was a difficult one for Hannah. She found life at Sedot Yam isolating and much of the work assigned to her of little consequence [Fig. 1].

FIG. 1: Hannah in her role as *economit* [the person in charge of the kitchen] at Sedot Yam, circa 1943. Collection of the Senesh family.

She had no close friends and yearned for companionship; the spread of the war in Europe now made correspondence with her mother and family in Hungary and her brother in France almost impossible, increasing her sense of isolation.

Most of 1942 was calamitous for the Allies. In Europe, Germany continued to advance into the Soviet Union, and Rommel's campaign in North Africa put Egypt and Palestine under threat as well. The war against the Jews was reaching a climax, as *Einsatzgruppen*, mobile killing squads, slaughtered Jews in the Soviet lands, while Jews from other parts of Europe were deported by the trainload to the killing centers of Poland.

In the war against Germany, it was only the end of 1942 and the early months of 1943 that brought good news to the Allies, when the British defeated Rommel at El Alamein and the Russians surrounded and destroyed an entire

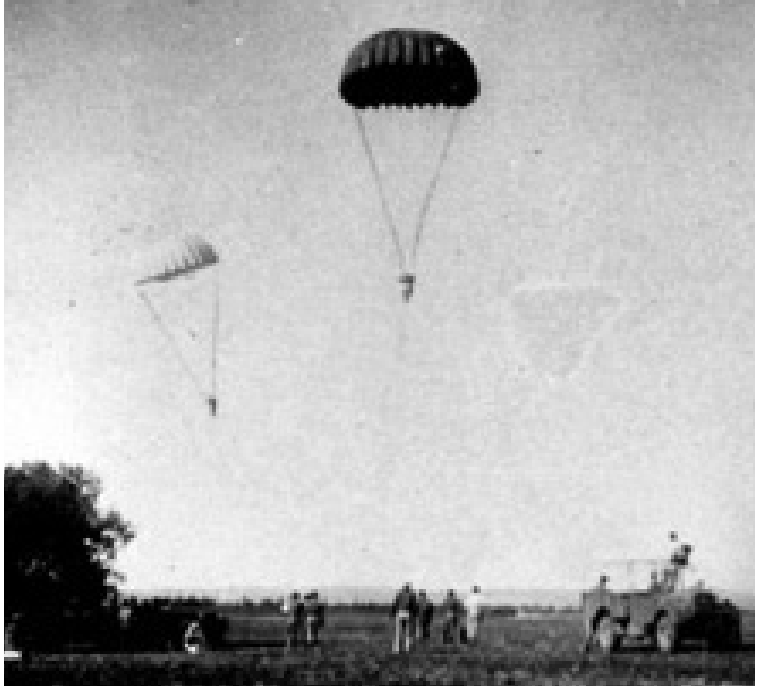

FIG. 2: The only known photograph of the parachutists training in the fields of Kibbutz Kfar Hahoresh. Collection of the Senesh family.

German army at Stalingrad. With these victories, the immediate threat to the safety of the Jews in Palestine passed.

However, the tragic extent of the slaughter of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe was confirmed by the *Yishuv* in late November 1942. The leaders of the Jewish settlement responded to this terrifying news by proposing, among other initiatives, one that would have the entire *Palmach* (the commando unit of the *Haganah*, the underground defense force of the *Yishuv*) penetrating behind enemy lines to assist Jews in resistance and rescue activities (Friling, 2005, 1:285). While this idea never found much support among British military and diplomatic circles, a branch of the British intelligence service and *Yishuv* representatives did broker a secret cooperative agreement in January 1943. The *Palmach* would supply British intelligence with Jewish agents from the *Yishuv*. These agents would penetrate occupied Europe and extricate escaped Allied prisoners of war, together with Jews, from behind enemy lines, bringing both to safety. Here was an opportunity, however modest, to address two of the goals announced at the outbreak of the war—the welfare of the Jewish people and the victory of the British Empire.

During this same period, unaware of the secret agreement being negotiated, Hannah fantasized about leaving Sedot Yam and returning to Budapest, "to assist in organizing Youth Aliyah and also to bring mother [to Palestine]" (Senesh, 1972, p. 167). In 1943, the war against the Jews had not yet come to Hungary, save for Jewish refugees who were seeking haven there from Nazi-occupied countries. Although the Hungarian government had passed restrictive antisemitic laws, and although many Jewish men of military age had been drafted into the Hungarian Army's so-called Labor Battalions, where they were often mistreated, assigned exceedingly dangerous tasks, or even murdered, most of the community continued to live relatively normal lives. Returning to assist the Jews of Hungary was, at least theoretically, feasible.

At the end of February 1943, Hannah's fantasy became less fantastic. Yonah Rosenfeld, a member of the *Palmach* from Kibbutz Ma'agan, sought out Hannah and invited her to join the unit training for the secret mission (Senesh, 1972, p. 169);[5] she would be trained by and work for the *Haganah* and the British. Hannah immediately accepted the invitation, but it was early June before the Secretariat of the United Kibbutz Movement issued her draft orders.[6]

Hannah's training did not actually begin for another six months. By then, much had changed in the European theater of operations. The Soviets had decisively defeated the Germans yet again at the Battle of Kursk, and the Americans and British had secured southern Italy, placing the strategic oil-production facilities at Ploesti, Romania, in range of Allied bombers. Lacking, however, were Allied intelligence networks in the Balkan states. The secret agreement now took on specificity. The *Yishuv* would supply agents who had grown up in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Yugoslavia. These agents would carry out two tasks. One group, the unit to which Hannah was assigned, would set up networks to smuggle Jews and downed Allied airmen out of occupied Europe; the other would collect intelligence and undertake resistance and sabotage missions.

Hannah's preparation for the Parachutist Mission, as it came to be called, was surprisingly brief. November 20 found her at a *Haganah* basic training course that included instruction in small arms, followed by parachute training by the British [Fig. 2].

On January 11, she made a last, brief entry in her diary, noting that she was to leave for Egypt the following week. There, she would receive advanced training in operating a wireless transmitter, in Morse code, and in encoding messages, as well as further briefings on conditions in Hungary.

By this point, the British objective, rescuing downed Allied airmen, was well defined and primary. The *Haganah's* objectives were far less defined and more symbolic. Nobody was naïve enough to expect the parachutists to save very many, if any, Jews, but the parachutists could serve as emissaries from the *Yishuv*. That this symbolic objective was important is underscored by the fact that the leaders of the *Yishuv*—David Ben-Gurion, Berl Katznelson, Yitzchak Tabenkin, and Golda Meir—met with Hannah and four of her colleagues only days before Hannah's departure for Egypt. As one of the parachutists, Shaike (Dan) Trachtenberg, reported, Ben-Gurion instructed them "to pass on wherever we could the tidings of the land of Israel" (Friling, 2005, 1:354).

Hannah finally set out for further training in Cairo on

FIG. 3: Hannah and Gyuri (Giora) Senesh in Tel Aviv on the day of Hannah's departure to Egypt, February 3, 1944. Collection of the Senesh family.

February 3, 1944, having spent the preceding 24 hours with her brother, who had just arrived in Palestine [Fig. 3].

While there, she composed the poem "We Gathered Flowers," which makes clear that she had fully absorbed Ben-Gurion's message:

> We gathered flowers in the fields and mountains. / We breathed the fresh winds of spring; / We were drenched with the warmth of the sun's rays, / In our Homeland; in our beloved home. // We go out to our brothers in exile; / To the suffering of winter; to frost in the night. / Our hearts will bring tidings of springtime, / Our lips sing the song of light. (Bar-Adon, 1947, p. 102)

To her colleague Reuven Dafni, she expressed these sentiments more succinctly. "Even if they capture me, if it becomes known to the Jews, they will at least know that someone tried to reach them" (Dafni, 1993).

Hannah departed Cairo for Italy in early March 1944. A few days later, on the night of March 13, a Royal Air Force airplane piloted by a Polish crew took off from the airfield in Brindisi, Italy, and dropped Hannah, three other Jewish volunteers from the *Yishuv,* and a British officer near the village of Metlika in the mountains of northwestern Yugoslavia. From there, they would proceed overland to carry out various, and sometimes individual, missions. The next three months, spent in Yugoslavia, were dangerous and difficult. Hannah desperately wanted to begin her assignment in Hungary, but the group first had to cross enemy lines to partisan-controlled areas near the Hungarian border and then find ways to cross the border itself. The German invasion of Hungary on March 19 altered and complicated the mission's chances for success, and relations with the partisans were sometimes strained.

During this period, one incident demonstrates Hannah's continued focus on the *Haganah's* objectives for the mission. Early in May, she and two of her fellow parachutists, Reuven Dafni and Yonah Rosenfeld, came to the small Yugoslavian village of Serdice. "We spent two nights there," Rosenfeld (2001) remembered.

> Hannah appeared before a group of partisans and spoke. Among the group was a young Jewish woman. . . . Emotions ran high. We spent the entire night with this young Jewish woman. . . . She had decided to become a Communist, and as such had been drafted to fight with the partisans. . . . The young woman said . . . "You went to Israel. . . . You made the right choice. And I am here. I am a [Communist] partisan, but inside, I have remained a Jew." (p. 6)

Dafni (1948) wrote that a day or two later, Hannah, who had been moved by the evening, handed him the poem *"Ashrei Hagafrur."*

> Happy is the match that was consumed but sparked flames, / Happy is the flame that burned in the secret places of the heart, / Happy are the hearts that knew how to cease beating honorably, / Happy is the match that was consumed but sparked flames. (p. 436)

Whether Hannah saw this young partisan woman as possessed of "the flame that burned in the secret places of the heart," or the parachutists as matches sparking flames among the Jews of Europe, *"Ashrei Hagafrur"* asserted the symbolic value of resisting the Nazis and their allies. At the same time, it recognized how little these isolated bands of partisans and intelligence agents could accomplish in the war against the Jews.

Several weeks later, a small group that had slipped out of Hungary joined the partisan encampment where Hannah was staying. It included, among others, Jacques Antoine Tissandier, an escaped French prisoner of war; two Hungarian Jews, Péter Kallós and Sándor Fleischmann; and "a man who called himself Albert, who claimed to be an agent of the British Secret Service. . . . He had important information that he wished to transmit." (Nussbacher, 1945, paragraph 12) Albert (the code name of Gábor Haraszti) was en route to British headquarters in Bari. There, on June 15, he reported to the deputy chief of Hannah's

British intelligence unit.

> I gave instructions to Minnie [Hannah's British code name] how to go to Budapest. I sent her with a Frenchman [Tissandier] who brought me through [from Hungary to Yugoslavia]. I have talked to Minnie on conditions in Hungary for 6 hours one day and 3 hours another. (Haraszti, p. 1, 1944)

Albert's report continues with further detail.

> It is easy for Minnie to send in word that "A" Force [British Intelligence] are waiting to guide [Colonel Howie, a British officer in Budapest] across. He should reach Yugoslavia very quickly. . . . I have put Minnie in touch with the Polish community, who are very helpful. . . . It is not difficult to escape from most prison camps.

This was current information reflecting the conditions under German occupation and coming from a reliable British agent (who apparently was also Hannah's distant relative).[7] The report makes clear that Hannah's mission was not suicidal and that, for the British, the primary targets of the operation were captured or escaped Allied servicemen, not Jews.

Hannah was the only parachutist to cross into Hungary on the night of June 7. She was accompanied by Tissandier, Kallós, and Fleischmann, who had come to Yugoslavia from Hungary, seeking ways to smuggle people—Allied prisoners of war in Tissandier's case, and Jews in the case of Kallós and Fleischmann—out of danger. Crossing the border turned out to be a complicated affair, but the four eventually made it to the outskirts of the village, which was their destination. Hannah, who had the radio with her, sent a message to Dafni on June 9, informing him that they had arrived.[8] This would be the only message she sent from Hungarian soil.

Hours later, disaster struck. Kallós and Fleischmann, who had gone ahead, were stopped by Hungarian gendarmes, who requested that the two accompany them to the police station in a nearby town. Kallós did not hear one gendarme say to the other that they should release the suspects well short of the purported destination. For reasons still unclear, Kallós drew his pistol and committed suicide. Fleischmann was immediately subdued, and Hannah and Tissandier were quickly captured. Hannah's wireless transmitter was also found. For the next few days, the three were held near where they were captured. During that time, Hannah "fled from the room, quickly ran upstairs to the next floor, a floor with an external balcony. But she was caught and severely beaten. They knocked out her front teeth." (Fleischmann, 1989, p. 51) All three were transported to Budapest and handed over to Hungarian military authorities. The mission had ended before it had really begun.

We know little about what happened to Hannah while she was in Hungarian custody. Another of the Jewish parachutists, Noah Nussbacher (Yoel Palgi), who had crossed into Hungary several weeks after Hannah and had also been captured, claims to have met with Hannah for 90 minutes in September 1944, three months later, and that during the meeting, she told him that she had been tortured in an effort to extract from her the code for the radio. (Nussbacher, 1945, Appendix A, paragraph 5) Unfortunately, when it is possible to check other statements in Nussbacher's report against independent sources, they often prove unreliable. We know that when Hannah revealed her true identity to the Hungarians, they immediately brought her mother, Kató, to the prison. Nussbacher says the Hungarians threatened to torture and kill Kató unless Hannah revealed the radio code, and Kató claims that, despite being pressured, she did not urge Hannah to reveal any secrets (Senesh, 2004, p. 258). After the meeting, Kató was sent home, only to be rearrested later that day by the Gestapo and imprisoned. Days later, Hannah was transferred to German custody and placed in the same Gestapo prison. Her mother, Nussbacher, and other witnesses agree that Hannah appeared to have recovered physically from her initial beating. She looked healthy and did not show evidence of further physical torture; indeed, she seems to have been treated better than other prisoners (Senesh, 2004, p. 277). Mother and daughter remained in German custody for the next three months. Hannah spent much of that time in solitary confinement.

While her arrest definitively ended the British objective for the mission—to rescue Allied airmen—Hannah still attempted to carry out her Haganah objective of serving as a Jewish emissary. Despite her solitary confinement, she had occasion to speak with other prisoners while being transported from the prison to Gestapo headquarters for questioning or while waiting her turn in the anteroom for interrogation. There, she gathered news and, back in her cell, devised a signaling system to disseminate what she had learned. She also used the prison network to send her mother Hebrew lessons, and whenever possible, she spoke to other prisoners, her jailers, and even her Gestapo interrogators about Jewish life in Palestine, understanding the symbolic value of these actions.

During the second week of September, the Gestapo returned Hannah to Hungarian custody. Two weeks later, when her mother was released from custody, she learned that her daughter would stand trial (Senesh, 2004, p. 282). The trial took place on October 28, 1944, before a Hungarian military court. Hannah, accused of treason, was rep-

resented by independent defense counsel chosen by her mother; the counsel later testified that the trial had been fair (Protocol, September 21, 1946, p. 4). Kató, who was able to see Hannah briefly at the conclusion of the trial, says that Hannah characterized the lawyer's defense as "brilliant" (Senesh, 2004, p. 287).

At the trial's conclusion, the court returned a guilty verdict but was unable to decide on her sentence. The prosecuting judge, Capt. Gyula Simon, adjourned the court for eight days and left Budapest on other business. Upon his return, he found an order that Hannah be executed immediately, signed by Colonel-General Ferenc Feketehalmy-Czeydner, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Hungarian Army (Protocol, September 21, 1946, p. 5).[9] We do not know why.

On November 7, 1944, Capt. Simon informed Hannah that she had been sentenced to death and that her request for clemency had been denied. Simon ordered that the sentence be carried out within two hours and changed the method of execution from hanging to a firing squad (Protocol, September 7, 1946, p. 3). Georg Vida, a prisoner who witnessed the execution, reported that Hannah did not allow her executioners to cover her eyes before she was shot. Her body was conveyed to one of Budapest's Jewish cemeteries, where it was buried.

The more than 1 million Jews who served in the armies that opposed Hitler, the 30,000 from the *Yishuv* who fought in British units, the tens of thousands who died, and the thousands who were decorated for gallantry are largely forgotten. Yet Hannah and her fellow Jewish parachutists from Palestine are still remembered and honored. Why?

I would suggest that they are remembered because they are the one identifiable group allowed to fight both the war against the Jews and the Second World War. As Eldad Harouvi (n.d.) contends, many of the parachutists were successful in the mission assigned to them by the British; they helped save hundreds of Allied lives. That, however, is not why they are remembered. Most people who know of Hannah Senesh are not even aware that this was a part of her mission.

It was for their participation in that second war, the war against the Jews, that the parachutists are remembered. In that war, only the *Yishuv* could aspire to fight as a corporate entity. The *Yishuv*, however, was not a sovereign state that could act independently; it needed Britain's permission and logistical support. That permission was not forthcoming. In the end, the parachutists' mission was the most that the *Yishuv* could extract from the British. Even though it came late in the war and would not make a difference, the *Yishuv* would have to settle for the largely symbolic value of having tried. The parachutists had done what they could to contact Jews, tell them they were not forgotten, and assist them when the war ended.

As for Hannah's story? Despite the myth, her primary mission was the British one, not a mission to save Jews. It was not suicidal. Her capture, by the Hungarians, not the Germans, was the result of a tragic mistake, not of a betrayal, and it brought her mission of rescuing Allied airmen to an abrupt end. She may or may not have been tortured by the Hungarians during her first weeks of capture, but once transferred to German hands, she seems to have been well treated. When finally tried by the Hungarians, she sensibly left her defense to her attorney. Most poignantly, she did ask the Hungarians for mercy, which was not granted.

None of these corrections of the myth, however, diminish the power of her story. Hannah understood her mission as a Jewish emissary from the very start. In Egypt, she wrote a poem to "her brothers in exile" that she and others were coming; in Yugoslavia, she spoke about Palestine and the Zionist enterprise at every opportunity and composed the immortal four lines of *"Ashrei Hagafrur."* Even when capture brought her British mission to an end, she continued her *Haganah* mission in prison with anyone who would listen. She seems to have been particularly successful in this effort.

Confirmed information that Hannah Senesh had been executed reached the *Yishuv* by the summer of 1945. Hers was the first of the fallen parachutists' stories to make it back home, and as we noted, her private diary and poems were quickly made public. During the war, the parachutists' mission was necessarily kept secret. When it ended, the symbolic value of the mission was used both inside and beyond the *Yishuv*, and Hannah's story became the primary vehicle for conveying it. Hannah was the young woman who had come from outside to fight in a war that few others had been able to join, and she continued to carry out her mission until her execution. Her accomplishment, even when stripped of the myth, still looms large, and deservedly so, in the collective memory of the State of Israel almost 70 years after her death.

NOTES

1. The anglicized spelling of the Hungarian "Szenes" is used throughout the essay. My research was conducted in part while preparing the exhibition *Fire in My Heart—The Story of Hannah Senesh*, which was on view at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust from October 13, 2010 to August 7, 2011. My profound thanks to Eitan Senesh and the Senesh family for allowing me to use Hannah's material.

When quoting from Hannah's diary, I have checked each entry against the original manuscript. If the published English translation (Senesh, 2004) reflects the original, I have used that edition as the reference. If it does not, and the published Hebrew version (Senesh, 1972) does, I cite that. Otherwise, I have used the original manuscript of the diary (Senesh, n.d.) as the basis for my translations.

2. The opening word of *Ashrei Hagafrur* has been translated both as "happy" (Bar-Adon, 1947, p. 81) and "blessed" (Syrkin, 1947, frontispiece). Dictionaries allow for both translations. I have chosen "happy" because *Ashrei*, as the first word in a Hebrew poem, strongly evokes its use in the biblical Book of Psalms, where it is often found in this initial position, beginning with Psalm 1. Most modern translations of Psalms (New Jewish Publication Society, 1982; New English Bible, 1970; Alter, 2007) translate *ashrei* as "happy," rather than the "blessed" of the Authorized (King James) Version and translations that follow in that tradition (Revised Standard Version, 1952). Furthermore, while there is overlap in the semantic range of "blessed" and "happy," the former connotes a gift, a blessing, bestowed from some external source, that is, God, fate, another person; while happiness can be internally generated. I find it hard to imagine that Hannah, who so savored life, would see death, even "while kindling flame," as blessed; she was not a martyr. Yet she extolled the opportunity to accomplish something extraordinary, and a person might indeed be "happy" with the thought of "kindling flame," even if she were consumed in the act.

3. Also, *Bama'aleh*, August 17, 1945, 5 (Hebrew); D'var Hapoelet, August 20, 1945, 1 (Hebrew).

4. See also the 1939 statement of the Committee of Imperial Defense: "We assume that, immediately on the outbreak of war, the necessary measures would be taken . . . to bring about a complete appeasement of Arab opinion in Palestine and in neighboring countries" (Morris, 1999, p. 155).

5. The sense of the entry is correct, but the editor has taken considerable liberties with the actual text.

6. Kibbutz Me'uchad Archives, Beit Tabenkin, 18/101.

7. Unpublished research notes by László Ritter for the 2008 film. *Blessed is the match: The life and death of Hannah Senesh.* Collection of Katahdin Productions.

8. Haganah Archives 14/454/27.

9. Simon's testimony to this effect was given when he was brought to trial after the war ended; it was confirmed by Andor Szelecsényi, Hannah's defense attorney.

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